

# AN INTRODUCTION TO FIXED INCOME ETFS & USE CASES FOR PENSIONS AND INSURANCE

## **Exchange Traded Funds**

What are they?



ETFs are funds that hold a portfolio of securities (like a mutual fund) but also trade on an exchange.

Diversified funds that trade on exchange and are open ended

**Key features** 

Diversification

Liquidity

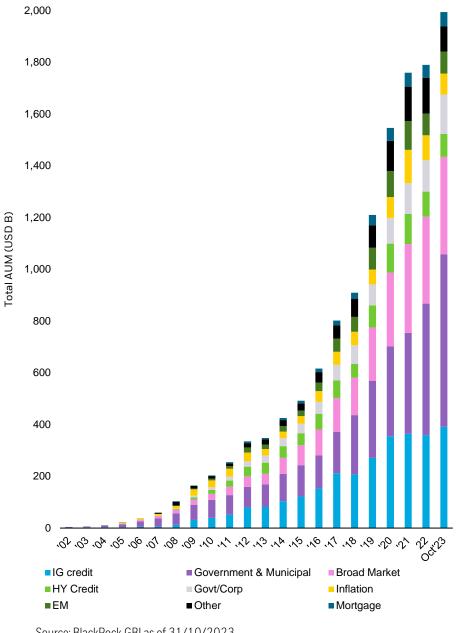
Transparency

Flexible access and range

Cost effectiveness

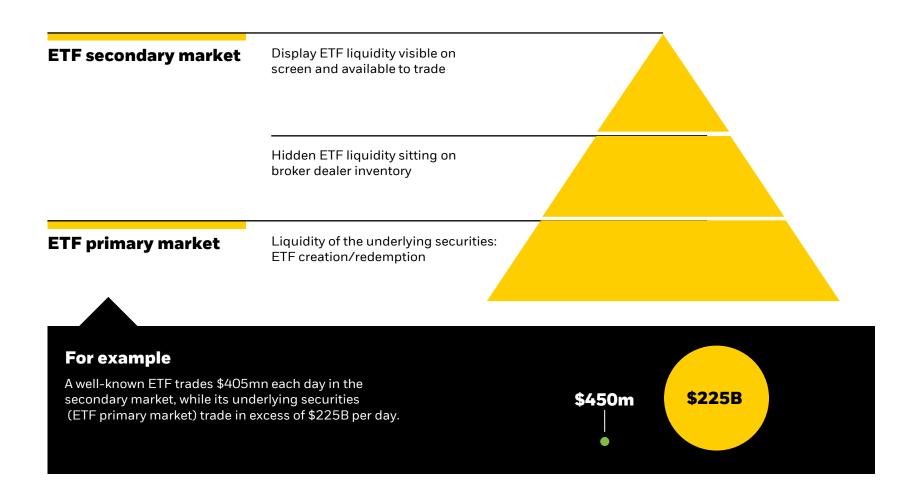
Source: BlackRock, as of 31/10/2023. For illustrative purposes only.

# Globally, from 17 bond ETFs & **USD 6B AUM in** 2003, to >1,500 bond ETFs & **USD 2T in 2023**



Source: BlackRock GBI as of 31/10/2023

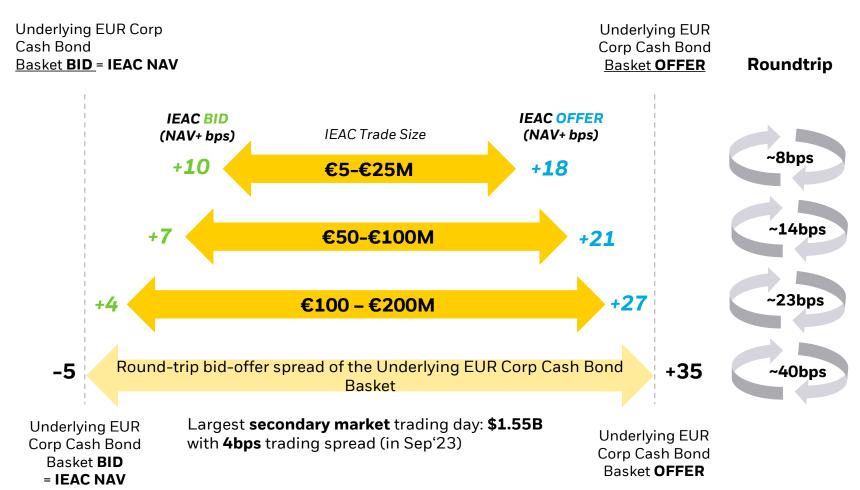
# ETF secondary market provides an additional layer of liquidity



Source: Bloomberg, TRACE, as at 31/10/2023. All amounts given is USD. For illustrative purposes only. Underlying securities refer to the stocks or bonds held within the ETF.

## **Enhanced Liquidity**

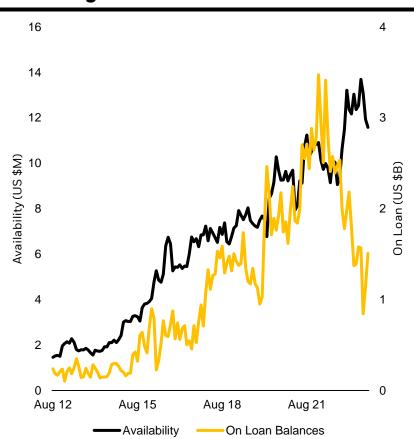
# **Bond ETF Liquidity Paradigm iShares Core € Corp Bond UCITS ETF (IEAC)**



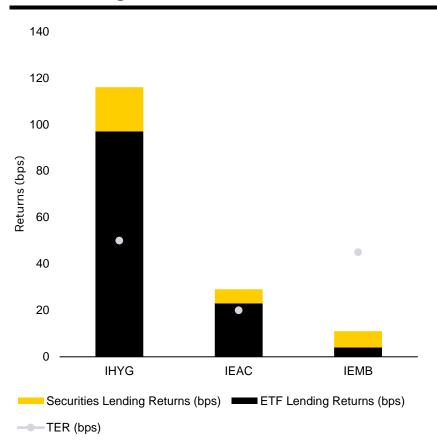
Source: BlackRock, as of 9<sup>th</sup> November 2023. For illustrative purposes only. Indicative quotes based on T NAV trade on IEAC, as of 9<sup>th</sup> November 2023. Pricing may vary on different trading days.

## FI ETF Ecosystem continues to evolve

# Lending availability has grown while demand hit new highs in 2022.



#### **Unit lending returns**



Past performance is not a reliable indicator of current or future results and should not be the sole factor of consideration when selecting a product or strategy.

With securities lending there is a risk of loss should the borrower default before the securities are returned, and due to market movements, the value of collateral held has fallen and/or the value of the securities loan has risen.

LHS chart: source: IHS Markit, as at 31/10/2023 for iShares Fixed Income UCITS ETFs; RHS chart: source: IHS Markit as at 31/10/2023. ETF lending returns are for the 12 months ended 31/10/2023. Underlying lending returns are for the 12 months ended 30/09/2023. \$\frac{1}{2}\$ refers to USD.

Popular asset owner use cases for fixed income ETFs

01

**LIQUIDITY** 

**MANAGEMENT** 

STRATEGIC
PORTFOLIO
REBALANCING
AND THE
IMPLEMENTATION
OF TACTICAL
VIEWS

05

02

**EFFICIENT** 

**MARKET ACCESS** 

COMPLEMENT PRIVATE MARKETS ALLOCATIONS 03

REDUCE THE TOTAL COST OF OWNERSHIP

5 06

AN
ALTERNATIVE
TO
DERIVATIVES

Use cases are for illustrative purposes only and not meant to be an exhaustive list of applications. The strategies discussed are strictly for illustrative and educational purposes and are not a recommendation, offer, or solicitation to buy or sell any securities or to adopt any investment strategy. There is no guarantee that any strategies discussed will be effective.

# ETFS FOR DB PENSIONS

## The use case for ETFs through the life cycle of DB Schemes

#### Benefit from ETF unit lending revenue across all use cases



# Initiating or changing a mandate

#### The challenge

Cost-efficient access to markets can **take time**, forcing schemes to **sit in cash / old asset allocation** as they wait for new mandate to be set up.

Cash drag from cash awaiting private markets capital calls.

#### **How ETFs help**

ETFs give you **immediate & cost- efficient** market access and can be traded through custodians. **In-kind transfer** of assets allow you to transfer holdings into a mandate with ease.

**Innovative Fixed income ETFs such as ibonds** can be used earn income while waiting for capital calls.



# Ongoing management

#### The challenge

**Urgent liquidity requirements** e.g. collateral / margin calls given typical 4-5 day period to receive cash from pooled vehicles

**Declining** underlying bond markets **liquidity** can create **portfolio rebalancing** challenges.

**Reduced diversification** of exposures.

#### How ETFs help

ETFs benefit from **secondary market liquidity** which allow quicker and cheaper trade.

**1–2-day** period from trade instruction to cash receipt for ETFs allows margin top quickly.

**Wide range** of ETFs allows access to broad and precise exposures.



#### **Endgame investing**

#### The challenge

Typically *increase of credit allocation* in approach to buyout can be *costly and slow*.

Lack of transferability of credit to insurer and time and cost of resulting liquidation

**Unexpected cashflow requirements** at point of **market illiquidity** for self-sufficiency strategies

#### How ETFs help

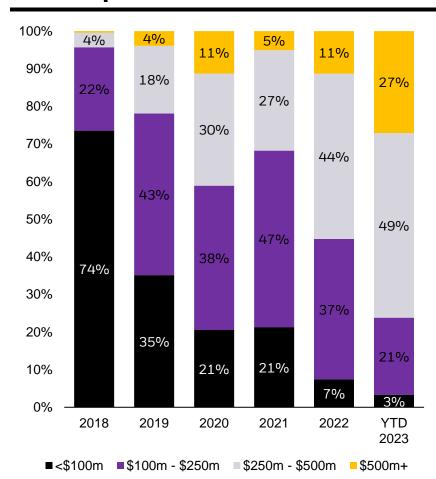
ETFs can be **more transferable** to insurers than other vehicles helped by their **liquidity and transparency** 

ETFs tend to **trade more often in periods of uncertainty** as investors turn to these instruments to navigate uncertain macro environments.

Sustainable ETFs for ESG integration

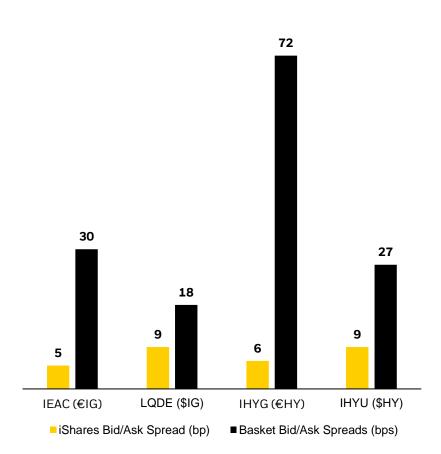
## ETFs are cost effective trading tools

# Proportion of days by daily traded volume of a € IG Corporate bond ETF



Source: Bloomberg, as of 31/10/2023

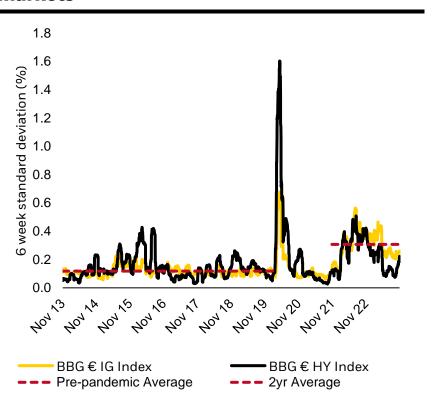
#### 3-Month Average Bid/Ask Spread (Bps)



Source: BlackRock, as of 31/10/2023. Tightest average spreads for ETFs for the 3-month period ending September 2023 is provided. Basket spreads provided are for the 3-month period ending October 2023.

# ETFs as a transition tool to minimise risk cost effectively

# 6-week standard deviation within € credit markets



€ Inv. Grade Credit	Interim exposure via ETF - 6 weeks	No interim exposure
IEAC trading spread	0.05%	
<b>IEAC Total Expense Ratio</b>	0.02%	
IEAC unit lending revenue	0.03%	
Cost of IEAC into Standard € IG Index	0.08%	0.30%
Total cost (including unit lending)	0.12%	0.30%
Total cost (without unit lending)	0.15%	0.30%

€ High Yield Credit	Interim exposure via ETF - 6 weeks	No interim exposure	
IHYG trading spread	0.08%		
<b>IHYG Total Expense Ratio</b>	0.06%		
IHYG unit lending revenue	0.11%		
Cost of IHYG into Standard € HY Index	0.18%	0.72%	
Total cost (including unit lending)	0.21%	0.730/	
Total cost (without unit lending)	0.32%	0.72%	

Past performance is not a reliable indicator of current or future results and should not be the sole factor of consideration when selecting a product or strategy. Returns shown are those of unit lending not the performance the fund has achieved. With securities lending there is a risk of loss should the borrower default before the securities are returned, and due to market movements, the value of collateral held has fallen and/or the value of the securities loan has risen. Source: IHS Markit. Return to lendable is defined as the total lending income generated by all the ETF unit loans, divided by the average market value of all the ETF units available for lending, during the 12 months ending end of October 2023 Source: Bloomberg, BlackRock, bigxyt, OneTick as of 31/10/2023. Assuming a 75% overlap between the ETF and the client's desired benchmark. Trading spreads stated are tightest average spreads over the 3 months ending 31/10/2023. Cost of trading underlying is calculated using weighted average basket spreads of the ETFs as per end of 31/10/2023.

# iShares ETFs offer market access in all environments – and tend to trade even more during volatile markets

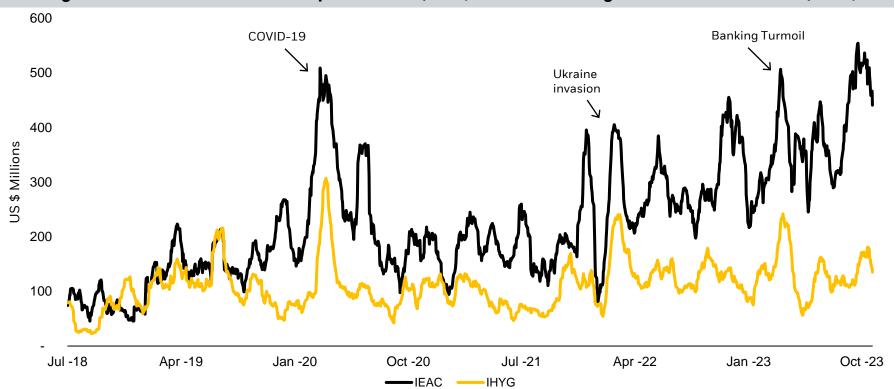
**During volatile periods, many fixed income ETFs have displayed:** 

**INCREASED VOLUMES** 

PRICE DISCOVERY

TIGHT TRACKING

#### 20d avg traded volume of iShares € Corp UCITS ETF (IEAC) and iShares € High Yield Bond UCITS ETF (IHYG)

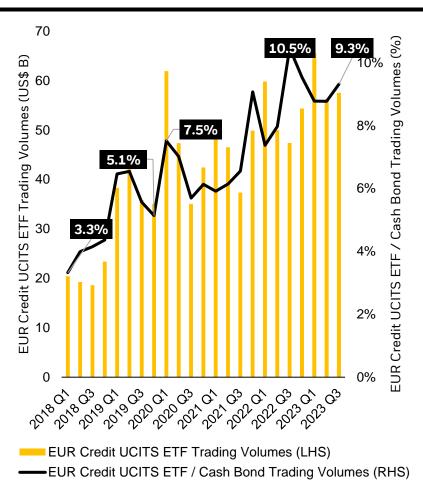


Note: Volumes are based on 20D ADV.

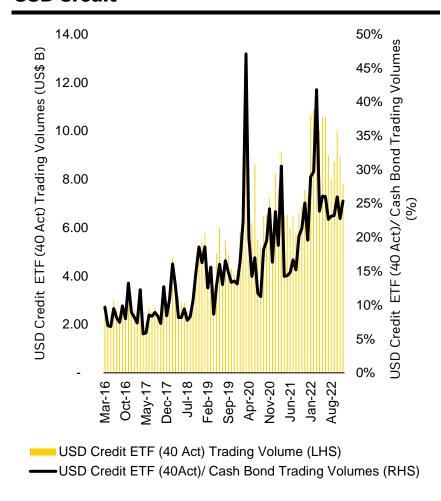
Source: BlackRock, Bloomberg, as of 31/10/2023. There can be no assurance that an active trading market for shares of an ETF will develop or be maintained.

# Trading in credit ETFs rose relative to individual bonds

# **EUR Credit UCITS ETFs as % bond market turnover**



#### **USD Credit**



Source: Bloomberg, BlackRock, TRAX of 30/09/2023.

Source: Bloomberg, BlackRock, TRAX of 31/12/2022.

## **Diversify within markets**

#### Case study: iShares Core Global Aggregate Bond UCITS ETF

Provides access to more than 11,000 bonds covering government bonds, corporate bonds and securitised assets

#### The challenge

A EUR-based multi-asset investor seeking to implement a broad strategic asset allocation view on global bonds at an attractive cost with operational ease without taking currency risk.

#### The action

Long-term allocation to *EUR hedged share class* of fixed income ETF:

iShares Core Global Aggregate Bond UCITS ETF EUR Hedged (AGGH)

#### The outcome

# iShares Core Global Aggregate Bond UCITS ETF EUR Hedged (AGGH)

- Benchmark index: Bloomberg Global Aggregate
   Index
- Bonds in ETF: 13,000+
- Total Expense Ratio: 0.10%
- Share class: EUR Hedged

#### Why index more

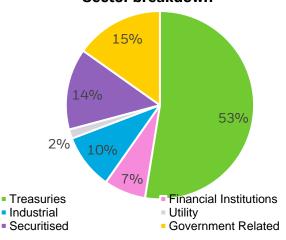


Diversification in one trade



Cost-efficient access to global bond market

#### Bloomberg Global Aggregate Index – Sector breakdown



Source: BlackRock as of 31/10/2023.



Outsourced currency hedging

# **ETFS FOR DC PENSIONS**

## The use case for ETFs through the phases of DC

#### Benefit from ETF unit lending revenue across all use cases



#### **Accumulation**

#### The challenge

Cost-efficient access to new & diversifying markets can be challenging.

Changing asset allocation can be timeconsuming and costly

#### **How ETFs help**

The **breadth of ETFs** available and their **cost efficiency** and **liquidity** makes for easier access to **diversifying asset classes**.

This *improved risk efficiency* of portfolios and can improve member outcomes



#### **At Retirement**

#### The challenge

There tends to be a build up of cash in portfolios as retirement approaches e.g. in anticipation of tax-free lumps sum withdrawal is some countries

However, same day liquidity is often not required, and members sometimes retire over a period so this cash allocation can persist

#### **How ETFs help**

Cash yields can be enhanced by accessing ETFs e.g. UltraShort Bond ETFs that are often more diversified and /or better yielding



# Post Retirement / Decumulation

#### The challenge

As the industry looks to develop post retirement solutions, a key challenge is balancing the need for relative certainty around income in the near term and the need to generate longer term returns to combat inflation and longevity risk.

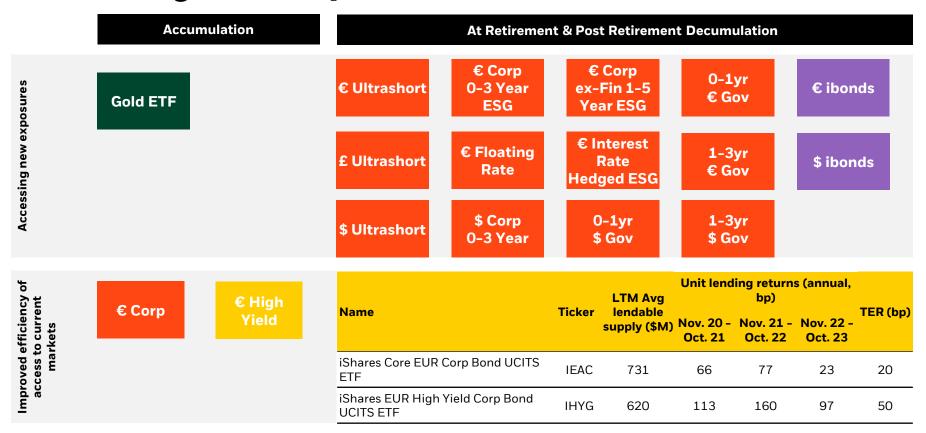
#### **How ETFs help**

Innovative Fixed income ETFs such as ibonds can be used to build more robust cashflow generation in the near term.

The **broader ETF** range can be used to create a **diversified growth** engine to generate **longer term returns** 

Sustainable ETFs for ESG integration

## ETFs through out the phases of DC



Past performance is not a reliable indicator of current or future results and should not be the sole factor of consideration when selecting a product or strategy. Returns shown are those of unit lending not the performance the fund has achieved. With securities lending there is a risk of loss should the borrower default before the securities are returned, and due to market movements, the value of collateral held has fallen and/or the value of the securities loan has risen. Source: IHS Markit. Return to lendable is defined as the total lending income generated by all the ETF unit loans, divided by the average market value of all the ETF units available for lending, during the 12 months ending end of October 2023, 2022, and 2021. Figures provided do not include fees paid to lending agents. Additional lending supply may impact ETF Unit return to lendable. For illustrative purposes only. ESG considerations are evaluated alongside a number of other considerations, and/or would not be the sole consideration when making investment decisions.. Source: BlackRock, as 31/10/2023.

## **ETF Wrapper Efficiency: EUR IG Case Study**

#### Unit lending & lower trading costs drive ETF efficiency

Wrapper	Index Exposure				Benc	hma	ark	AUN	M	Inc	eption Date	Duration (years)		YTM (%)
ETF	iShares Core € Co	orp Bond U	CITS ETF		Bloomb Corporate			€12.	5B	06	/Mar/2009	4.34		4.50
IMF	iShares Euro Inve Bond Index Fund		ade Corporat	:e	Bloomb Corporate	_	I .	€1.3	B	09	/Feb/2012	4.33		4.51
Vrapper	Fund Name	TER	Sec Lending		Holding Cost		Indicative Trading Spreads		Ex-Ante	тсо	Example Unit Lending	TCO After Unit Lending	le	Average 12m ndable supp (US \$m)
ETF iShares	s Core € Corp Bond ETF	0.20%	- 0.06%	=	0.14%	+	0.05%	=	0.199	/ <sub>0</sub> -	- 0.23%	= -0.04%		731
	s Euro Investment Corporate Bond Index E)	0.12%	- 0.07%	=	0.05%	+	0.45%	=	0.50%	<b>%</b>				
1.0%														
0.8%														
Ownership (%) 0.6% 0.4% 0.4% 0.2%														
o.4%														
Ost of 0.0% 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0	6	12	18		24		30		36		42	48	54	60
-0.2%	Ü	12	10		2-4		30		30		72	40	34	00
-0.4%														
-0.6%							Time (Month	ıs)						
IMF ETF with Unit Lending ETF														

RISK: Past performance is not a reliable indicator of current or future results and should not be the sole factor of consideration when selecting a product or strategy. With securities lending there is a risk of loss should the borrower default before the securities are returned, and due to market movements, the value of collateral held has fallen and/or the value of the securities loan has risen. Source: BlackRock, bigxyt, OneTick, IHS Markit, as at 31/10/2023 unless otherwise stated. Please note that OCF on D share classes were used for "TER" on the IMFs. Trading spreads on ETF are based on 3m spreads as at 31/10/2023. Tightest spread across share classes and listings is used. Spread on IMF as of 06/11/2023. Securities lending return is based on the 01/10/2022 – 30/09/2023 period. "Example Unit Lending" is defined as the total lending income generated by all the ETF unit loans, divided by the average market value of all the ETF units available for lending, during the 12 months ended 31/10/2023. Figures provided do not include fees paid to lending agents. Additional lending supply may impact ETF Unit return to lendable. Please note, where Average Lendable Supply is <USD 75mn the data set is small & therefore historical Average Return to lendable data is not reliable.

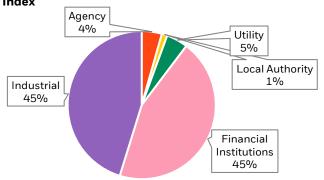
## **Cash Continuum**

#### Access exposures across the yield curve...

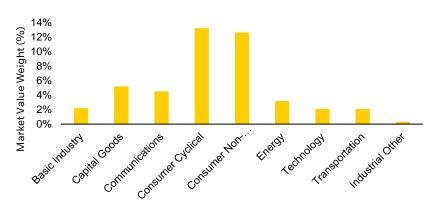


#### ...with broad diversified ETFs





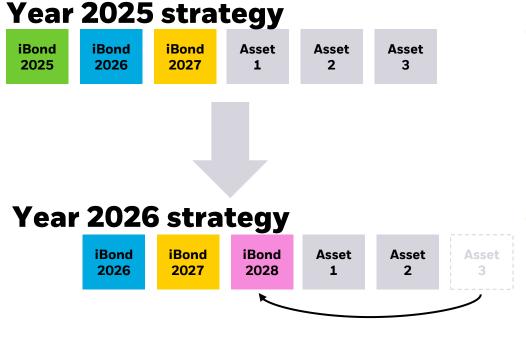
#### Sector breakdown of Industrials within the index



Source: BlackRock, as of 31/10/2023

# iBonds allow building bond ladders - post retirement income

Relative income certainty in short term and return generation in long term





### Income

From ibonds means no need to sell assets near term to generate income. Hence portfolio robust to ride out short term market volatility



# **Diversification**

within ibonds and of growth assets improves risk efficiency of portfolio



# Liquidity

of ETFs mean derisking can be quick and cheap and timed opportunistically / delayed to avoid market turmoil

Source: BlackRock, per 31/10/2023. For illustrative purposes only. Include: Diversification and asset allocation may not fully protect you from market risk.

# **ETFS FOR INSURERS**

# The use case for ETFs for different types of insurers

#### Benefit from ETF unit lending revenue across all use cases



#### The challenge

#### **Pensions Risk Transfer**

- Insurer is typically short credit spreads as price lock portfolio is typically significantly /solely government bonds
- Insurers receives premium in cash / government bonds and often needs to urgently trade these into credit can be time consuming and costly.

#### With Profits

 Implementing quick and cost-efficient changes to strategic and tactical asset allocation

#### **How ETFs help**

ETF *liquidity* provides *quick market* access and ETF ecosystem facilitates *in-kind exit* from ETF and into desired bonds

The **breadth**, **cost-efficiency** and **liquidity** of ETFs makes for more dynamic portfolios and easier access to **diversifying asset classes**, **improving the risk efficiency** of portfolios



#### The challenge

Implementing quick and cost-efficient changes to strategic and tactical asset allocation

#### **How ETFs help**

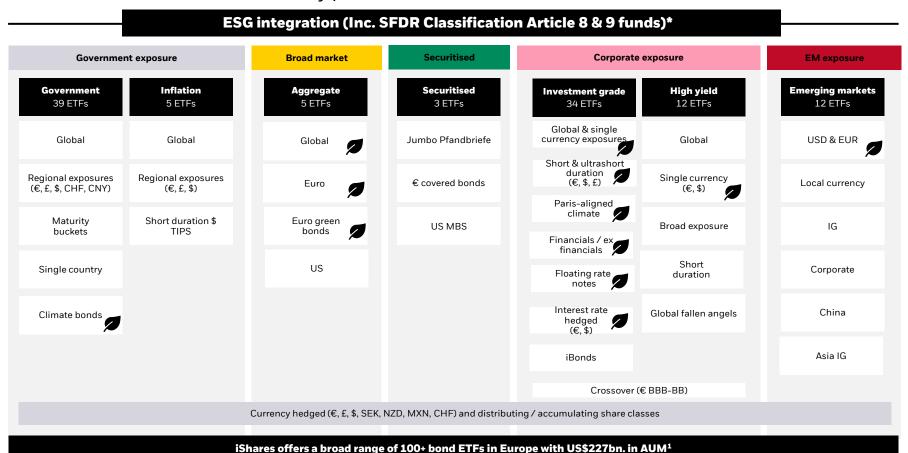
The **breadth**, **cost-efficiency** and **liquidity** of ETFs makes for more dynamic portfolios and easier access to **diversifying asset classes**, **improving the risk efficiency** of portfolios

Sustainable ETFs for ESG integration

# **APPENDIX**

# iShares fixed income UCITS ETF range

From broad market exposures to precise pockets, iShares fixed income ETFs offer efficient building blocks needed to reach almost every part of the fixed income market



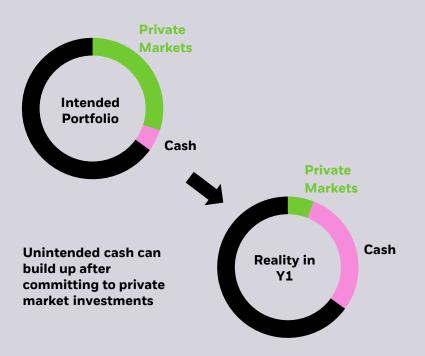
ESG products available

This information is for illustration purposes only. It should not be relied upon by the reader as investment advice or recommendation regarding the iShares funds.

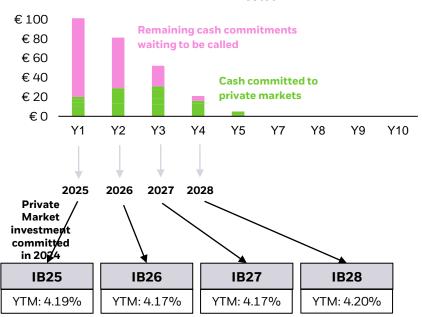
Source: BlackRock, as of 31/08/2023. <sup>1</sup>Source: BlackRock, as of 31/08/2023. Note: European ETF offering only.

# iBonds ETFs as a tool for capital call management

An institutional investor with alternative investments can utilise iBonds ETFs to **generate income** whilst **maintaining the liquidity** required to meet regular capital calls.



Capital Calls from Private Markets and remaining cash commitments waiting to be invested

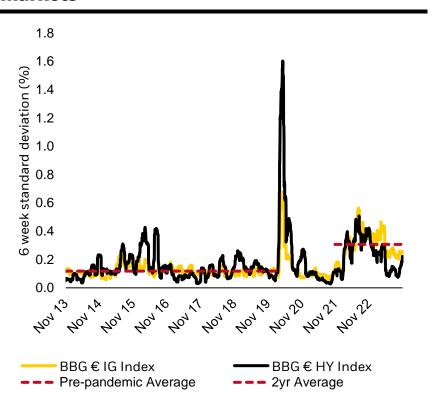


Cash can be invested into **iBonds ETFs that mature in line with expected capital call dates**, although liquidity allows
flexibility to sell sooner if required.

Source: BlackRock, Aladdin, as of 30 September 2023. Yield to Maturity (YTM), iShares iBonds Dec 2025 Term € Corp Bond UCITS ETF (IB25), iShares iBonds Dec 2026 Term € Corp Bond UCITS ETF (IB26), iShares iBonds Dec 2027 Term € Corp Bond UCITS ETF (IB27), iShares iBonds Dec 2028 Term € Corp Bond UCITS ETF (IB28),

# ETFs as a transition tool to minimise risk cost effectively

# 6-week standard deviation within € credit markets



€ Inv. Grade Credit	Interim exposure via ETF - 1 year	No interim exposure
IEAC trading spread	0.05%	
IEAC Total Expense Ratio	0.20%	
IEAC unit lending revenue	0.23%	
Cost of IEAC into Standard € IG Index	0.08%	0.30%
Total cost (including unit lending)	0.10%	0.2007
Total cost (without unit lending)	0.33%	0.30%

€ High Yield Credit	Interim exposure via ETF - 1 year	No interim exposure
IHYG trading spread	0.08%	
IHYG Total Expense Ratio	0.50%	
IHYG unit lending revenue	0.97%	
Cost of IHYG into Standard € HY Index	0.18%	0.72%
Total cost (including unit lending)	-0.21%	0.72%
Total cost (without unit lending)	0.76%	0.1290

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# **DISCLAIMERS**

#### **Disclaimers**

This document is marketing material: Before investing please read the Prospectus and the PRIIPs KID available on www.ishares.com/it, which contain a summary of investors' rights.

#### **Risk Warnings**

Investors should refer to the prospectus or offering documentation for the funds full list of risks.

**Capital at risk.** The value of investments and the income from them can fall as well as rise and are not guaranteed. Investors may not get back the amount originally invested.

Past performance is not a reliable indicator of current or future results and should not be the sole factor of consideration when selecting a product or strategy.

Changes in the rates of exchange between currencies may cause the value of investments to diminish or increase. Fluctuation may be particularly marked in the case of a higher volatility fund and the value of an investment may fall suddenly and substantially. Levels and basis of taxation may change from time to time.

BlackRock has not considered the suitability of this investment against your individual needs and risk tolerance. The data displayed provides summary information. Investment should be made on the basis of the relevant Prospectus which is available from the manager.

The products mentioned in this document are intended for information purposes only and do not constitute investment advice or an offer to sell or a solicitation of an offer to buy the securities described within. This document may not be distributed without authorisation from BlackRock.

#### **Product Risks**

#### iShares \$ Corp Bond UCITS ETF USD (Dist)

Counterparty Risk, Credit Bail in Risk, Liquidity Risk

#### iShares \$ High Yield Corp Bond UCITS ETF USD (Dist

Counterparty Risk, Credit Risk, Liquidity Risk, Combined Credit and Non-investment Grade Risk

#### iShares € High Yield Corp Bond UCITS ETF

Combined Credit and Non-investment Grade Risk, Counterparty Risk, Credit Risk, Liquidity Risk

#### iShares Core € Corp Bond UCITS ETF EUR (Dist)

Counterparty Risk, Credit Bail in Risk, Liquidity Risk

#### iShares Core Global Aggregate Bond UCITS ETF USD (Dist)

Counterparty Risk, Credit Risk, Currency Risk

#### iShares iBonds Dec 2025 Term € Corp UCITS ETF EUR (Acc)

Counterparty Risk, Credit Risk, Defined Term Fund Risk, ESG Screening Risk (ETF), Liquidity Risk

#### iShares iBonds Dec 2026 Term € Corp UCITS ETF EUR (Acc)

Counterparty Risk, Credit Risk, Defined Term Fund Risk, ESG Screening Risk (ETF), Liquidity Risk

#### iShares iBonds Dec 2027 Term € Corp UCITS ETF EUR (Acc)

Counterparty Risk, Credit Risk, Defined Term Fund Risk, ESG Screening Risk (ETF), Liquidity Risk

#### iShares iBonds Dec 2028 Term € Corp UCITS ETF EUR (Dist)

Counterparty Risk, Credit Risk, Defined Term Fund Risk, ESG Screening Risk (ETF), Liquidity Risk

#### iShares J.P. Morgan \$ EM Bond UCITS ETF USD (Dist)

Counterparty Risk, Credit Risk, Currency Risk, Emerging Markets Risk, Liquidity Risk

#### iShares Euro Investment Grade Corporate Bond Index Fund

Counterparty Risk, Credit Risk, Liquidity Risk

#### **Description of Product Risks**

#### **Counterparty Risk**

The insolvency of any institutions providing services such as safekeeping of assets or acting as counterparty to derivatives or other instruments, may expose the Share Class to financial loss.

#### **Credit Bail in Risk**

The issuer of a financial asset held within the Fund may not pay income or repay capital to the Fund when due. If a financial institution is unable to meet its financial obligations, its financial assets may be subject to a write down in value or converted (i.e. "bail-in") by relevant authorities to rescue the institution.

#### **Liquidity Risk**

The Fund's investments may have low liquidity which often causes the value of these investments to be less predictable. In extreme cases, the Fund may not be able to realise the investment at the latest market price or at a price considered fair.

#### **Credit Risk**

Credit risk, changes to interest rates and/or issuer defaults will have a significant impact on the performance of fixed income securities. Potential or actual credit rating downgrades may increase the level of risk.

#### Combined Credit and Non-investment Grade Risk

Changes to interest rates, credit risk and/or issuer defaults will have a significant impact on the performance of fixed income securities. Non-investment grade fixed income securities can be more sensitive to changes in these risks than higher rated fixed income securities. Potential or actual credit rating downgrades may increase the level of perceived risk.

#### **Combined Credit and Non-investment Grade Risk**

Changes to interest rates, credit risk and/or issuer defaults will have a significant impact on the performance of fixed income securities. Non-investment grade fixed income securities can be more sensitive to changes in these risks than higher rated fixed income securities. Potential or actual credit rating downgrades may increase the level of perceived risk.

#### **Currency Risk**

The Fund invests in other currencies. Changes in exchange rates will therefore affect the value of the investment.

#### **Defined Term Fund Risk**

The Fund may be more concentrated in certain industries or sectors than a fund that tracks a broader index. The composition and risk and reward profile of the Fund will be different during its last year as the corporate bonds mature. The Fund may not be suitable for new investment in its final year or in the period approaching its final year.

#### **ESG Screening Risk (ETF)**

The benchmark index only excludes companies engaging in certain activities inconsistent with ESG criteria if such activities exceed the thresholds determined by the index provider. Investors should therefore make a personal ethical assessment of the benchmark index's ESG screening prior to investing in the Fund. Such ESG screening may adversely affect the value of the Fund's investments compared to a fund without such screening.

#### **Emerging Markets Risk**

Emerging markets are generally more sensitive to economic and political conditions than developed markets. Other factors include greater 'Liquidity Risk', restrictions on investment or transfer of assets and failed/delayed delivery of securities or payments to the Fund.

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