

# ANNUAL MANAGEMENT REPORT OF FUND PERFORMANCE

For the period ended December 31, 2024

## Short-Term and Income Fund **NBI Canadian Core Plus Bond Fund**

### Notes on forward-looking statements

This report may contain forward-looking statements concerning the Fund, its future performance, its strategies or prospects or about future events or circumstances. Such forward-looking statements include, among others, statements with respect to our beliefs, plans, expectations, estimates and intentions. The use of the expressions "foresee", "intend", "anticipate", "estimate", "assume", "believe" and "expect" and other similar terms and expressions indicate forward-looking statements.

By their very nature, forward-looking statements imply the use of assumptions and necessarily involve inherent risks and uncertainties. Consequently, there is a significant risk that the explicit or implicit forecasts contained in these forward-looking statements might not materialize or that they may not prove to be accurate in the future. A number of factors could cause future results, conditions or events to differ materially from the objectives, expectations, estimates or intentions expressed in such forward-looking statements. Such differences might be caused by several factors, including changes in Canadian and worldwide economic and financial conditions (in particular interest and exchange rates and the prices of other financial instruments), market trends, new regulatory provisions, competition, changes in technology and the potential impact of conflicts and other international events.

The foregoing list of factors is not exhaustive. Before making any investment decision, investors and others relying on our forward-looking statements should carefully consider the foregoing factors and other factors. We caution readers not to rely unduly on these forward-looking statements. We assume no obligation to update forward-looking statements in the light of new information, future events or other circumstances unless applicable legislation so provides.

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This annual management report of fund performance contains financial highlights, but does not contain the complete annual financial statements of the investment fund. You can get a copy of the annual financial statements at your request, and at no cost, by calling 1-888-270-3941 or 514-871-2082, by writing to us at National Bank Investments Advisory Service, 800 Saint-Jacques Street, Transit 44331, Montreal, Quebec, H3C 1A3, by visiting our website at [www.nbinvestments.ca](http://www.nbinvestments.ca), by visiting SEDAR+'s website at [www.sedarplus.ca](http://www.sedarplus.ca), or by contacting your advisor. You may also contact us using one of these methods to request a copy of the investment fund's proxy voting policies and procedures, proxy voting disclosure record, or quarterly portfolio disclosure.

## Management Discussion of Fund Performance

### Investment Objective and Strategies

The NBI Canadian Core Plus Bond Fund's investment objective is to provide a high level of income and sustained capital growth. The fund invests directly, or indirectly through investments in securities of other mutual funds or through the use of derivatives, in a diversified portfolio composed mainly of fixed-income securities of Canadian issuers with various maturities and credit ratings.

The portfolio sub-advisor seeks to achieve its objective by investing actively and mainly in Canadian fixed-income securities based on an in-depth and cyclical analysis aimed to project economic and financial data. The portfolio sub-advisor has significant latitude to pursue opportunities across the Canadian fixed income space and the flexibility to invest across different sectors, credit ratings, durations and maturities. The fund may invest up to 35% of its net assets in sub-investment grade securities. It is expected that investments in foreign securities will not exceed approximately 30% of the fund's net assets. The fund may use a responsible investment approach, as described in the fund prospectus, this approach being one of many components of the investment strategies used to help achieve the fund's investment objective.

### Risks

The global investment risk of the Fund remains as described in the simplified prospectus or any amendments thereto and Fund Facts.

### Results of Operations

For the twelve-month period ended December 31, 2024, the NBI Canadian Core Plus Bond Fund's Advisor Series units returned 4.48% compared to 4.23% for the Fund's benchmark, the FTSE Canada Universe Bond Index (CAD). Unlike the benchmark, the Fund's performance is calculated after fees and expenses. Please see the *Past Performance* section for the returns of all of the Fund's series, which may vary mainly because of fees and expenses.

The Fund's net asset value rose by 295.03% over the period, from \$94.53 million as at December 31, 2023 to \$373.43 million as at December 31, 2024.

This increase was primarily due to investors purchasing units of the Fund.

Over the course of 2024, the yield curve has steepened considerably, with short-term rates falling and long-term rates rising. For example, two-year maturity rates decreased by 0.96% and 30-year maturity rates increased by 0.30%. On the sector side, there was a broad-based narrowing of credit spreads and the largest change in corporate bonds. The differences between the provinces and municipalities also narrowed, but the movement was less pronounced than on the corporate side.

In this context, the Fund has outpaced by its benchmark.

The main contributors were Duration (0.13%), Curve (-0.06%), Sector (0.88%), Choice of securities (0.40%).

### Recent Developments

For 2024, the duration of the Canadian Core Plus Bond Fund remained at the index level. The Fund continues to have an overweight in 10-year bonds while the exposure to 5-year bonds is lower than that of the index.

Several central banks continued their monetary easing in December, but the pace could slow in the coming months. Like the Bank of Canada, the European Central Bank and the Federal Reserve eased monetary policy by cutting their key interest rates by 0.25% in December. The U.S. decision was widely expected, but investors turned their attention to the summary of economic forecasts. It shows that the Federal Reserve will take a cautious approach at future meetings. Instead of lowering the cost of money by 1.0% in 2025 as planned in September, committee members now expect two decreases for a total of 0.50%.

The Fed chairman mentioned in his speech that the key rate is now close to its neutral point and that monetary policy is still a little restrictive. Committee members expect growth to accelerate in 2025 and inflation to remain persistent. Without having clearly identified it, the members seem to have taken into consideration the different economic policies of the next Trump administration in their economic assessments. Excess demand in the economy will be further boosted by Trump's measures, while tariffs could add to existing inflationary pressures. The bulk of the monetary easing work in the United States seems to us, that only adjustments remain to be made.

## Related Party Transactions

National Bank of Canada ("the Bank") and its affiliated companies' roles and responsibilities related to the Fund are as follows:

### Trustee, Custodian, and Registrar

Natcan Trust Company ("NTC"), an indirect wholly-owned subsidiary of the Bank, is the Fund's trustee. In this capacity, it is the legal owner of the Fund's investments.

NTC acts as registrar for the Fund's securities and the names of securityholders. NTC also acts as the Fund's custodian. The fees for NTC's custodial services are based on the standard rates in effect at NTC.

### Agent for securities lending transactions

NTC acts as the agent for securities lending transactions acts on behalf of the Fund in administering securities lending transactions entered into by the Fund. NTC is an affiliate of the Manager.

### Fund Manager

The Fund is managed by National Bank Investments Inc. ("NBI"), which is an indirect wholly-owned subsidiary of the Bank. Therefore, NBI provides or ensures the provision of all general management and administrative services required by the Fund's current operations, including investment consulting, the arrangement of brokerage contracts for the purchase and sale of the investment portfolio, bookkeeping and other administrative services required by the Fund.

The Manager pays the operating expenses of the Fund other than its "Fund costs" (defined below) (the "variable operating expenses"), in exchange for the Fund's payment to the Manager of annual fixed-rate administration fees with respect to each series of the Fund.

The administration fees are equal to a specified percentage of the net asset value of each series of the Fund, calculated and paid in the same manner as the Fund's management fees. The variable operating expenses payable by the Manager include, but are not limited to: transfer agency and recordkeeping costs; custodial costs; accounting and valuation fees; audit fees and legal fees; costs of preparing and distributing financial reports, simplified prospectuses, annual information forms, Fund Facts, continuous disclosure material and other securityholder communications; and costs of trustee services relating to registered tax plans, as applicable.

In addition to administration fees, the Fund shall also pay certain Fund costs, namely: taxes (including, but not limited to, GST/HST and income taxes); costs of compliance with any changes to existing governmental or regulatory requirements introduced after August 1, 2013; costs of compliance with any new governmental or regulatory requirements, including any new fees introduced after August 1, 2013; interest and borrowing costs; costs related to external services that were not commonly charged in the Canadian mutual fund industry as at August 1, 2013; Independent Review Committee costs, including compensation paid to IRC members, travel expenses, insurance premiums and costs associated with their continuing education; and variable operating expenses incurred outside of the normal course of business of the Fund.

The Manager may, from time to time and at its sole discretion, decide to absorb a portion of a series' management fees, administration fees or Fund costs.

As described under the heading *Management Fees*, the Fund pays annual management fees to NBI as consideration for its services.

### Portfolio Manager

The Manager has appointed National Bank Trust Inc. ("NBT"), a direct and indirect wholly-owned subsidiary of the Bank, as the portfolio manager for the Fund. A flat fee is payable annually to NBT for its management services.

### Distribution and Dealer Compensation

National Bank Savings and Investments Inc. ("NBSI") acts as principal distributor for the Fund. In this capacity, NBSI buys, sells and swaps securities through external registered representatives. Fund securities are also offered by National Bank Financial Inc. (including its division National Bank Direct Brokerage) and other affiliated entities. Brokers may receive, depending on the distributed series, a monthly commission representing a percentage of the average daily value of the securities held by their clients.

### Holdings

As at December 31, 2024, National Bank Investments Inc. held 212.01 Fund securities for a value of \$2,213.37, which represented close to 0.0006% of the net asset value of the Fund at that date. Transactions between National Bank Investments Inc. and the Fund were carried out in the normal course of business and at the Fund's net asset value as at the transaction date.

### Independent Review Committee Approvals and Recommendations

The Fund followed the standing instructions of its Independent Review Committee with respect to one or more of the following transactions:

- Purchasing or holding the securities of a related issuer, in particular, those of National Bank of Canada;
- Investing in the securities of an issuer when an entity related to the manager acts as an underwriter for the placement or at any time during the 60-day period after the end of the placement;
- Purchasing or selling securities to another investment Fund managed by the manager or a company in the same group;
- Purchasing or selling debt securities on the secondary market, through related brokers that are main brokers in the Canadian debt securities market (in accordance with an exemption received from the Canadian Securities Administrators);
- Entering into foreign exchange transactions (including both spot transactions and forward transactions) with National Bank of Canada.

The Manager has implemented policies and procedures to make sure that the conditions applicable to each of the above transactions are met. The applicable standing instructions require that these transactions be carried out in accordance with NBI policies, which specify, in particular, that investment decisions pertaining to these related party transactions must be made free from any influence by an entity related to NBI and without taking into account any consideration relevant to an entity related to NBI. Furthermore, the investment decisions must represent the business judgment of the securities advisor, uninfluenced by considerations other than the best interest of the Fund and must achieve a fair and reasonable result for the Fund.

### Registered Plan Trust Services

NTC receives a fixed amount per registered account for services provided as trustee for registered plans.

### Administrative and Operating Services

The provision of certain services was delegated by the Fund Manager, NBI, to National Bank Trust Inc. ("NBT"), a direct and indirect wholly-owned subsidiary of the Bank. These include accounting, reporting and portfolio valuation services. The fees incurred for these services are paid to NBT by the Fund manager.

## Management Fees

The Fund pays annual management fees to the Fund manager for its management services. The fees are calculated based on a percentage of the Fund's daily net asset value before applicable taxes and are paid on a monthly basis. Under the *Distribution* heading, expenses include the broker's compensation consisting of the maximum annual trailer fees and sales commissions paid to brokers. Under the *Other* heading, the fees relate mainly to investment management, investment advisory services, general administration and profit. The breakdown of major services provided in consideration of the management fees, expressed as an approximate percentage of the management fees is as follows:

Series	Management Fees	Distribution	Others <sup>†</sup>
Advisor Series			
Front-end load	0.95%	52.63%	47.37%
Series F	0.45%	—	100.00%

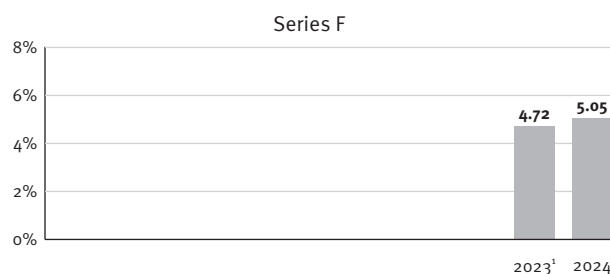
<sup>(†)</sup> Includes all costs related to management, investment advisory services, general administration and profit.

## Past Performance

The performance of each series of the Fund is presented below and calculated as at December 31 of each year. It assumes that all distributions made in the periods shown were reinvested in additional securities and does not take into account sales, redemption charges, distributions, or optional charges that would have reduced returns. Past performance of a series of a Fund does not necessarily indicate how it will perform in the future.

### Annual Returns

The bar charts indicate the performance for each the Fund's series in existence greater than one year during the years shown, and illustrate how the performance has changed from year to year. They show, in percentage terms, how much an investment made on January 1 (or made commencing from the start of the series) would have grown or decreased by December 31 of that year, in the case of the Annual management report of fund performance, or by June 30, in the case of the Interim management report of fund performance.



<sup>(1)</sup> Returns for the period from June 1, 2023 (commencement of operations) to December 31, 2023.

## Annual Compounded Performance

The following table shows the Fund's annual compound returns for each series in existence greater than one year and for each of the periods ended on December 31, 2024, compared with the following benchmark:

- FTSE Canada Universe Bond Index (CAD)

### NBI Canadian Core Plus Bond Fund

	1 year	3 years	5 years	10 years	Since inception
Advisor Series <sup>1</sup>	4.48%	–	–	–	5.59%
Benchmark	4.23%	–	–	–	8.20%
Series F <sup>1</sup>	5.05%	–	–	–	6.20%
Benchmark	4.23%	–	–	–	8.20%

<sup>1</sup>Commencement of operations: June 1, 2023

A discussion of the Fund's relative performance in comparison to the index (or indices) can be found in the *Results of Operations* Section of this report.

### Index Description

The **FTSE Canada Universe Bond Index** is composed of over 900 bonds with a term to maturity of more than one year and tracks the performance of the Canadian Bond market.

## Financial Highlights

The following tables show selected key financial information about the Fund and are intended to help you understand the Fund's financial performance for the accounting periods shown.

### Advisor Series

Net Assets per Unit<sup>(1)</sup>

Commencement of operations: June 1, 2023

Accounting Period Ended	2024 December 31	2023 December 31
<b>Net Assets, Beginning of Accounting Period Shown</b> <sup>(4)</sup>	10.24	10.00
<b>Increase (Decrease) from Operations (\$)</b>		
Total revenue	0.39	0.25
Total expenses	(0.13)	(0.07)
Realized gains (losses)	0.07	0.01
Unrealized gains (losses)	0.35	0.47
<b>Total Increase (Decrease) from Operations (\$)</b> <sup>(2)</sup>	0.68	0.66
<b>Distributions (\$)</b>		
From net investment income (excluding dividends)	0.20	0.19
From dividends	—	—
From capital gains	—	—
Return of capital	—	—
<b>Total Annual Distributions (\$)</b> <sup>(3)</sup>	0.20	0.19
<b>Net Assets, End of Accounting Period Shown (\$)</b> <sup>(4)</sup>	10.49	10.24

### Ratios and Supplemental Data

Accounting Period Ended	2024 December 31	2023 December 31
Total net asset value (000's of \$) <sup>(5)</sup>	4,989	213
Number of units outstanding <sup>(5)</sup>	475,662	20,853
Management expense ratio (%) <sup>(6)</sup>	1.21	1.19
Management expense ratio before waivers or absorptions (%)	1.21	1.28
Trading expense ratio (%) <sup>(7)</sup>	—	—
Portfolio turnover rate (%) <sup>(8)</sup>	32.98	9.82
Net asset value per unit (\$)	10.49	10.24

### Series F

Net Assets per Unit<sup>(1)</sup>

Commencement of operations: June 1, 2023

Accounting Period Ended	2024 December 31	2023 December 31
<b>Net Assets, Beginning of Accounting Period Shown</b> <sup>(4)</sup>	10.25	10.00
<b>Increase (Decrease) from Operations (\$)</b>		
Total revenue	0.41	0.24
Total expenses	(0.06)	(0.03)
Realized gains (losses)	0.06	0.01
Unrealized gains (losses)	0.27	0.32
<b>Total Increase (Decrease) from Operations (\$)</b> <sup>(2)</sup>	0.68	0.54
<b>Distributions (\$)</b>		
From net investment income (excluding dividends)	0.29	0.21
From dividends	—	—
From capital gains	—	—
Return of capital	—	—
<b>Total Annual Distributions (\$)</b> <sup>(3)</sup>	0.29	0.21
<b>Net Assets, End of Accounting Period Shown (\$)</b> <sup>(4)</sup>	10.47	10.25

### Ratios and Supplemental Data

Accounting Period Ended	2024 December 31	2023 December 31
Total net asset value (000's of \$) <sup>(5)</sup>	368,442	94,317
Number of units outstanding <sup>(5)</sup>	35,180,993	9,202,673
Management expense ratio (%) <sup>(6)</sup>	0.63	0.54
Management expense ratio before waivers or absorptions (%)	0.63	0.63
Trading expense ratio (%) <sup>(7)</sup>	—	—
Portfolio turnover rate (%) <sup>(8)</sup>	32.98	9.82
Net asset value per unit (\$)	10.47	10.25

## Series O\*

<sup>(\*)</sup> Please note that this Series is offered by way of private placement.

Net Assets per Unit<sup>(1)</sup>

Commencement of operations: June 1, 2023

Accounting Period Ended	2024 December 31	2023 December 31
<b>Net Assets, Beginning of Accounting Period Shown</b> <sup>(4)</sup>	10.24	10.00
<b>Increase (Decrease) from Operations (\$)</b>		
Total revenue	0.40	0.24
Total expenses	—	—
Realized gains (losses)	0.06	0.01
Unrealized gains (losses)	0.11	0.26
<b>Total Increase (Decrease) from Operations (\$)</b> <sup>(2)</sup>	0.57	0.51
<b>Distributions (\$)</b>		
From net investment income (excluding dividends)	0.37	0.25
From dividends	—	—
From capital gains	—	—
Return of capital	—	—
<b>Total Annual Distributions (\$)</b> <sup>(3)</sup>	0.37	0.25
<b>Net Assets, End of Accounting Period Shown (\$)</b> <sup>(4)</sup>	10.44	10.24

### Ratios and Supplemental Data

Accounting Period Ended	2024 December 31	2023 December 31
Total net asset value (000's of \$) <sup>(5)</sup>	1	1
Number of units outstanding <sup>(5)</sup>	106	103
Management expense ratio (%) <sup>(6)</sup>	—	—
Management expense ratio before waivers or absorptions (%)	—	0.09
Trading expense ratio (%) <sup>(7)</sup>	—	—
Portfolio turnover rate (%) <sup>(8)</sup>	32.98	9.82
Net asset value per unit (\$)	10.44	10.24

## Private Series\*

<sup>(\*)</sup> Please note that this Series is offered by way of private placement.

Net Assets per Unit<sup>(1)</sup>

Commencement of operations: June 1, 2023

Accounting Period Ended	2024 December 31	2023 December 31
<b>Net Assets, Beginning of Accounting Period Shown</b> <sup>(4)</sup>	10.24	10.00
<b>Increase (Decrease) from Operations (\$)</b>		
Total revenue	0.40	0.24
Total expenses	(0.04)	(0.02)
Realized gains (losses)	0.06	0.01
Unrealized gains (losses)	0.12	0.25
<b>Total Increase (Decrease) from Operations (\$)</b> <sup>(2)</sup>	0.54	0.48
<b>Distributions (\$)</b>		
From net investment income (excluding dividends)	0.33	0.23
From dividends	—	—
From capital gains	—	—
Return of capital	—	—
<b>Total Annual Distributions (\$)</b> <sup>(3)</sup>	0.33	0.23
<b>Net Assets, End of Accounting Period Shown (\$)</b> <sup>(4)</sup>	10.44	10.24

### Ratios and Supplemental Data

Accounting Period Ended	2024 December 31	2023 December 31
Total net asset value (000's of \$) <sup>(5)</sup>	1	1
Number of units outstanding <sup>(5)</sup>	106	102
Management expense ratio (%) <sup>(6)</sup>	0.40	0.41
Management expense ratio before waivers or absorptions (%)	0.40	0.50
Trading expense ratio (%) <sup>(7)</sup>	—	—
Portfolio turnover rate (%) <sup>(8)</sup>	32.98	9.82
Net asset value per unit (\$)	10.44	10.24

- <sup>(1)</sup> This information is derived from the Fund's Annual Audited Financial Statements. The net assets per unit presented in the financial statements might differ from the net asset value calculated for fund pricing purposes. The differences are explained in the notes to the financial statements.
- <sup>(2)</sup> Net assets and distributions are based on the actual number of units outstanding at the relevant time. The increase or decrease from operations is based on the average number of units outstanding over the accounting period.
- <sup>(3)</sup> Distributions were paid in cash or reinvested in additional units of the Fund, or both.
- <sup>(4)</sup> The net assets are calculated in accordance with IFRS.
- <sup>(5)</sup> This information is provided as at the last day of the accounting period shown.
- <sup>(6)</sup> Management expense ratio is based on total expenses including sales taxes for the accounting period indicated (excluding commission, other portfolio transaction costs and withholding taxes) and is expressed as an annualized percentage of daily average net value during the accounting period. The management expense ratio includes, if necessary, the management expenses from its underlying funds, as described in Article 15.2 of Regulation 81-106.
- <sup>(7)</sup> The trading expense ratio represents total commissions and other portfolio transaction costs expressed as an annualized percentage of daily average net asset value during the accounting period. The trading expense ratio includes, if necessary, the trading expenses from its underlying funds, as described in Article 15.2 of Regulation 81-106.
- <sup>(8)</sup> The Fund's portfolio turnover rate indicates how actively the Fund portfolio's manager manages its portfolio investments. A portfolio turnover rate of 100% is equivalent to the Fund buying and selling all of the securities in its portfolio once in the course of the accounting period. The higher a Fund's portfolio turnover rate in an accounting period, the greater the trading costs payable by the Fund in the accounting period, and the greater the chance of an investor receiving taxable capital gains in the accounting period. There is not necessarily a relationship between a high turnover rate and the performance of a Fund.

## Summary of Investment Portfolio

As of December 31, 2024

### Portfolio Top Holdings

	% of Net Asset Value
NBI Senior Loan Fund - Series O	5.4
Province of Ontario, 4.10%, due March 4, 2033	4.8
Province of Ontario, 2.65%, due December 2, 2050	3.2
Province of Quebec, 3.60%, due September 1, 2033	3.0
Canada Housing Trust, 3.55%, due September 15, 2032	2.8
Canada Housing Trust, 1.95%, due December 15, 2025	2.4
Government of Canada, 2.75%, due December 1, 2055	2.2
Province of Quebec, 3.10%, due December 1, 2051	2.1
Canada Housing Trust, 4.15%, due June 15, 2033	1.6
Province of British Columbia, 4.15%, due June 18, 2034	1.6
Province of Ontario, 4.15%, due June 2, 2034	1.5
Government of Canada, 3.25%, due December 1, 2034	1.3
Province of Ontario, 1.35%, due September 8, 2026	1.3
Scotiabank, 2.95%, due March 8, 2027	1.2
Province of Quebec, 2.30%, due September 1, 2029	1.2
Province of Quebec, 4.40%, due December 1, 2055	1.1
Sun Life Financial Inc., Floating, due July 4, 2035	1.0
Province of Ontario, 2.55%, due December 2, 2052	1.0
Province of Quebec, 1.50%, due September 1, 2031	1.0
Province of Quebec, 2.85%, due December 1, 2053	1.0
Reseau de Transport Metropolitain, 4.40%, due June 4, 2029	1.0
Royal Bank of Canada, Floating, due November 24, 2080	0.9
Toronto-Dominion Bank/The, Floating, due October 31, 2027	0.9
City of Trois-Rivières, 3.60%, due October 16, 2029	0.9
Cash, Money Market and Other Net Assets	0.7
	<u>45.1</u>

Net asset value..... \$373,433,431

### Asset Mix

	% of Net Asset Value
Canadian Corporate Bonds	45.2
Provincial Bonds	32.7
Federal Bonds	12.1
Fixed Income Funds	5.4
Municipal Bonds	3.1
Derivative Products	(0.2)
US Bonds	0.8
Cash, Money Market and Other Net Assets	0.9

The above table shows the top 25 positions held by the Fund. In the case of a Fund with fewer than 25 positions, all positions are indicated.

The Summary of Investment Portfolio may change due to ongoing portfolio transactions of the investment Fund. A quarterly update is available. Please consult our website at [www.nbinvestments.ca](http://www.nbinvestments.ca).

If this investment Fund invests in other investment funds, please consult the prospectus and other information about the underlying investment funds on the website indicated above or on SEDAR+'s website at [www.sedarplus.ca](http://www.sedarplus.ca).