



## Risk warnings and information on financial instruments

This Document is intended to give you a general description of the nature and risk inherent to a range of financial instruments and services that may be available to you as client of ours, as well as more general risks associated with investment markets. You should note that this document cannot disclose all the risks and other significant aspects of those instruments, services or markets.

We would like to emphasise that where you classify as a retail client, you should pay particular attention to the present document considering the fact that your level of experience, knowledge and expertise is lower than that of a professional client or eligible counterparty. You should therefore read attentively and make sure you understand the below. There are risks involved in relation to any investment.

We have set an outline of some general risk warnings that are relevant to most asset classes and investment strategies and of which you should be aware:

- a) You should always remember that you may not get back the amount originally invested as the value of the investments, and the income from them can go down as well as up. There are no guaranteed returns. The price or value of an investment will depend on fluctuations in the financial markets that are outside our control;
- b) Past performance is not a guide to future performance;
- c) The value of an individual investment may fall as a result of a fall in markets depending, for example, on the level of supply and demand for a particular financial instrument, the investors or market perception, the prices of any underlying or related investments or other political and economic factors;
- d) With regard to investments designated to be held for the medium to long-term or with limited liquidity or with a fixed maturity date or with significant up-front costs, you should be aware that early redemption may result in lower than expected returns, including the potential for loss to the amount invested;
- e) Trading in off exchange investments, that is investments which are not traded under the rules of a regulated market or exchange or where there is no recognised market, and which are not settled through a regulated clearing house, exposes the investor to the additional risk that there is no certainty that the market makers will be prepared to deal in such investments and as a consequence there might be no secondary market for such investments. There may also be restrictions in relation to access and liquidity, for example, investments may only be made or redeemed on certain dates or with prescribed period of notice. You should be aware that it may be difficult to obtain reliable information about the current value of such investments or the extent of the risks to which they are exposed;
- f) You will be exposed to concentration risk where there is an insufficient level of diversification in your account and you are excessively exposed to one or a limited number of investments;
- g) Correlation risk refers to the probability that the actual correlation between two assets or variables will behave differently than what anticipated. The consequence is that your portfolio could be riskier than originally envisaged. Correlation is a term used to compare how one asset class might behave in comparison to another asset class. Assessing the correlation between different assets in your portfolio is important in managing the riskiness of the account;
- h) Volatility is a statistical measure of the tendency of an individual investment to feature significant

fluctuations in value. Commonly, the higher the volatility, the riskier the investment;

i) Regulatory/Legal risk is the risk from regulatory or legal actions and changes which may reduce the profit potential of an investment or cause a loss on your investment. Legal changes could even have the effect that a previously acceptable investment becomes illegal or if affects the tax treatment of your investment may impact its profitability. Such risk is unpredictable and may depend on various political, economic and other factors;

j) Operational risk, such as breakdowns or malfunctioning of essential systems and controls, including IT systems, can impact the ability of closing your investments or otherwise transact.

In addition to the above, there are three types of generic risks that you should review and understand before dealing in financial instruments. The Risk Types are generically referred to below as Market Risk, Liquidity Risk and Credit and Default Risk

## **1.1 Market Risks**

### **Interest Rate Risk**

Interest rate sensitivity means that prices change relative to current and future interests rate expectations. For example, if interest rates are expected to rise the price of a fixed rate bond may fall and consequently a sale of the bond at such time crystallise a loss. Conversely, a fall in interest rates may result in the increase in value of a fixed rate bond. Interest rate changes may also directly or indirectly impact the value of other financial instruments that do not provide for a return on a fixed rate basis.

### **Inflation Risk**

The risk that the rate of price increases in the economy deteriorates the returns associated with an investment. The real value (the value adjusted for the impact of inflation) of an investment will fall as a result of the rate of inflation exceeding the rate of return of the investment. This risk has the greatest effect on fixed-rate inflation-linked bonds, which have a set interest rate from inception. For example, if an investor purchases a 4% fixed bond and the inflation rises to 8% a year, the bondholder will lose money on the investment because the purchasing power of the proceeds has been greatly diminished.

### **Exchange Rates Risk**

Exchange rate changes may cause the value of investments to rise or fall relative to the base currency, any movement in currency exchange rates may have a favourable or an unfavourable impact on the profit or loss of the investment.

### **Emerging Markets Risk**

Emerging Markets generally have limited transparency, liquidity, efficiency and regulations compared to developed markets, the reaction of the local financial markets to news and other geo-political events may result in a more extreme variation in prices of emerging market instruments compared to developed markets.

## **1.2 Liquidity Risk**

Liquidity risk is the inability to buy or sell an investment at the desired time, or to transact in an instrument at all. When a delay occurs, such delay may affect the price at which such asset can actually be bought or sold. Also, instruments that are illiquid or that trade in lower volumes may be more difficult to value or to obtain reliable information about their value.

Liquidity risk is linked to a variety of factors such as:

- the particular terms and conditions of an instrument;
- the fact that the instrument is not publicly traded or listed on an exchange;
- adversely perceived market developments;
- the fact that the ownership of an investment is highly concentrated in one or small number of investors;

- a reduced number of financial institutions operating as market maker in the relevant financial instruments. For example, in the case of securitised derivatives (such as structured products), the only market maker might be the issuer itself (or an affiliated entity), who might provide a limited undertaking to act as market maker;
- the fact that market participants may attempt to sell holdings at the same time as the investor, and there may be insufficient liquidity to accommodate these sales.

These factors may exist at the time of investment or may arise subsequently.

### **1.3 Credit and Default Risks**

Counterparty or credit risk arises if a party connected to a transaction is unable to meet its obligations. In certain circumstances these risks may mean that you will not get back the sum invested, or the return anticipated from such transaction.

#### **Insolvency Risk**

Our insolvency or default, or that of other parties involved with your transaction, may result to positions being liquidated without your consent. In certain circumstances, you may not get back the actual assets which you posted as collateral and you may have to accept any available payments in cash.

#### **Bail-in Risk**

This is the risk that the financial instruments of certain issuers, including banking institutions, investment firms and certain banking group companies, may be subject to action taken by governmental, banking and/or other regulatory authorities, for example to address banking crises pre-emptively, whether or not the express terms of a financial instrument anticipate such action. The relevant authorities may have broad discretion on the action they may take, and their powers may be extended in response to particular events.

Examples of the action they may be able to take could include the following:

- the reduction, including to zero, of the principal of the bonds/debentures of such issuers;
- the conversion of such bonds/debentures into equities or other instruments of ownership (resulting in the dilution of ownership interests of existing shareholders);
- the variation of the terms, including with respect to maturity and/or the payment of interest, of such bonds/debentures; and
- shareholders being divested of their shares.

#### **Financial Instruments and investments**

Set out below is an outline of the risks associated with certain types of financial instruments.

### **1. Shares and other equity-like instruments**

#### **1.1 Equities or shares**

Equities or shares represent shareholder's rights and interests in a company. One share represents a fraction of a company's share capital and a shareholder may benefit from an increase in the value of the share, although this is not guaranteed. Shareholders may also qualify for dividend payments, but these are paid only at the discretion of the company's management. A shareholder has no right to return of capital and the shares could become valueless in the event of insolvency of the company.

A shareholder's return from investing in the equity will depend to a large extent on the market price of the equities at the time of the sale. The market price of an equity is determined by a number of factors that affect the supply and demand for that equity, including, but not limited to:

- fundamentals about the company: such as profitability of the company and strength of the

- company's management;
- domestic and international factors: such as the exposure of the company to international events or market factors;
- sector specific factors: such as the economic cycle of a specific industry and changes in the prices of commodities or in consumers' demands.

Shares in smaller companies may carry an extra risk of losing money as there can be a big difference between the buying price and the selling price of these securities. If shares in smaller companies have to be sold immediately, you may get back much less than you paid for them. The price may change quickly, and it may go down as well as up.

Shares are generally a fairly volatile asset class - their value tends to fluctuate more than other financial instruments such as bonds. Holding shares is high risk - if you put your money into one company and that company becomes insolvent then you will probably lose most, if not all, of your money.

### **1.2 Penny shares**

There is an extra risk of losing money when shares are bought in some smaller companies or in companies of which the shares are traded at very low prices compared to their nominal value, such as "penny shares". There may be a (relatively) big difference between the buying price and the selling price of these shares. If they have to be sold immediately, you may get back much less than you paid for them.

## **2. Warrants**

A warrant is a time-limited right to subscribe for shares, debentures, loan stock or government securities, and is exercisable against the original issuer of the securities. A relatively small movement in the price of the underlying security results in a disproportionately large movement, unfavourable or favourable, in the price of the warrant. The prices of warrants can therefore be volatile. It is essential for anyone who is considering purchasing warrants to understand that the right to subscribe which a warrant confers is invariably limited in time with the consequence that if the investor fails to exercise his right within the predetermined time-scale then the investment becomes worthless. You should not buy a warrant unless you are prepared to sustain a total loss of the money you have invested plus any commission or other transaction charges. Some other instruments are also called warrants but are actually options (for example, a right to acquire securities which is exercisable against someone other than the original issuer of the securities, often called a "covered warrant").

## **3. Money-market instruments**

Money-market instruments are collective investment schemes which invest money in cash or cash equivalents, such as short term loans to the government that pay a fixed rate of interest. The loan is for a period, generally no longer than six months, but occasionally up to one year, in which the lender takes a deposit from the money markets in order to lend (or advance) it to the borrower. Unlike in an overdraft, the borrower must specify the exact amount and the period for which he wishes to borrow.

## **4. Fixed interest or bonds**

Fixed interest, bonds or debt securities are payment obligation of a party, usually referred to as the issuer. Bonds have a nominal value, which is the amount that, subject to Credit and Default Risk, will be returned to the bondholder when the securities mature at the end of the investment period. The nominal value of a bond is distinct from its price or market value. Bonds can be bought or sold in the market (like shares) and their price can vary from day to day. A rise or fall in the market price of a bond does not affect, subject to Credit and Default Risk, what you would get back if you hold the bond until it matures.

While the price of a bond is subject to market's fluctuations, when close to maturity the market price tends to reflect the bond's nominal value. The factors which are likely to have a major impact on the value of a bond are the perceived financial position of the issuer and changes to market interest rate expectations.

For some bonds there may be a restricted market and it may be more difficult to deal in them or obtain reliable information about their value (and it might be more difficult to establish a proper market in them

for the purposes of making a subsequent sale).

The risk associated with investing in bonds include, but are not limited to:

- Interest Rate Risk;
- Inflation Risk;
- Credit and Default Risk.

If an issuer is in financial difficulty, there is an increased risk that they may default on their repayment obligations. In this event, little or no capital may be recovered, and any amounts repaid may take a significant amount of time to obtain.

## **5. Commodities**

Commodity based investments, whether made by investing directly in physical commodities, for example gold, or by investing in companies whose business is substantially concerned with commodities or through commodity linked products, may be impacted by a variety of political, economic, environmental and seasonal factors. These relate to real world issues that impact either on demand or on the available supply of the commodity in question. Other factors that can materially affect the price of commodities include regulatory changes, and movement in interest rates and exchange rates. Their value can fall as well as rise, and in some cases an investment in commodity linked products might result in the delivery of the underlying.

## **6. Mutual Funds**

A mutual fund is a scheme under which assets are held on a pooled basis on behalf of a number of investors. It may be structured in a number of ways, for example, in the form of a company, partnership or trust. The level of risk of investing in a mutual fund depends on the underlying investments in which the scheme is invested and how well diversified it is. Investments may typically include bonds and exchange traded equities but depending on the type of scheme may include derivatives, real estates or riskier assets. There are risks relating to the assets held by the scheme and investors should check and understand the type of assets included in the pool and the scheme's investment strategy.

## **7. Exchange Traded Funds (ETFs) and Exchange Traded Products (ETPs)**

ETFs and ETPs are investment funds and other securities that are traded like shares and which invest in a diversified pool of assets such as shares, bonds or commodities. In general, they track the performance of a benchmark or financial index and the value of the investment will fluctuate accordingly. Some ETFs and ETPs employ complex techniques or hold riskier assets to achieve their objectives, for more details please review carefully the "Risk Disclosure For Trading Leveraged, Inverse And Volatility-Based Exchange Traded Products".

## **8. Structured products**

Structured products are the generic name for products which provide economic exposure to a wide range of underlying asset classes. The level of income and/or capital growth derived from a structured product is usually linked to the performance of the relevant underlying assets. Structured products are generally issued by financial institutions and therefore the products are subject to the credit risk of the issuer. If the issuer is unable to repay sums due under the terms of the product, this may affect the returns under the structured product and result in a total loss of the initial investment. Before you make a decision to invest in a structured product you should review the "Risk Disclosure Statement for Trading Structured Products (including warrants) with Interactive Brokers".

## **9. Derivatives, including futures, options and contracts for differences**

### **9.1 Derivatives generally**

Derivatives are financial instruments whose prices are derived from an underlying asset. Examples of derivatives include futures, options and Contracts for Differences. Transactions in derivative instruments involve a higher risk than a direct investment in the underlying asset. As the derivatives' value is dependent on the future value of underlying assets, a movement in the value of the underlying assets may

result in an amplified change in the value of the derivative.

## **9.2 Futures**

Transactions in futures involve the obligation to make, or to take, delivery of the underlying asset of the contract at a future date, or in some cases to settle the position with cash. They carry a high degree of risk. The "gearing" or "leverage" often obtainable in futures trading means that a small deposit or down payment can lead to large losses as well as gains. It also means that a relatively small movement can lead to a proportionately much larger movement in the value of your investment, and this can work against you as well as for you. Futures transactions have a contingent liability, and you should be aware of the implications of this, in particular the margining requirements, which are set out in paragraph 10.6.

## **9.3 Options**

There are many different types of options with different characteristics subject to the following condition.

**Buying options:** Buying options involves less risk than selling options because, if the price of the underlying asset moves against you, you can simply allow the option to lapse. The maximum loss is limited to the premium, plus any commission or other transaction charges. However, if you buy a call option on a futures contract and you later exercise the option, you will acquire the futures. This will expose you to the risks described under "futures" and "contingent liability investment transactions."

**Writing options:** If you write an option, the risk involved is considerably greater than buying options. You may be liable for margin to maintain your position and a loss may be sustained well in excess of the premium received. By writing an option, you accept a legal obligation to purchase or sell the underlying asset if the option is exercised against you, however far the market price has moved away from the exercise price. If you already own the underlying asset which you have contracted to sell (when the options will be known as "covered call options") the risk is reduced. If you do not own the underlying asset ("uncovered call options") the risk can be unlimited. Only experienced persons should contemplate writing uncovered options, and then only after securing full details of the applicable conditions and potential risk exposure.

**Traditional options:** Certain London Stock Exchange member firms under special exchange rules write a particular type of option called a "traditional option." These may involve greater risk than other options. Two-way prices are not usually quoted and there is no exchange market on which to close out an open position or to effect an equal and opposite transaction to reverse an open position. It may be difficult to assess its value or for the seller of such an option to manage his exposure to risk.

Certain options markets operate on a margined basis, under which buyers do not pay the full premium on their option at the time they purchase it. In this situation you may subsequently be called upon to pay margin on the option up to the level of your premium. If you fail to do so as required, your position may be closed or liquidated in the same way as a futures position.

## **9.4 Contracts for Differences**

Futures and options contracts can also be referred to as contracts for differences. These can be options and futures on an index, as well as currency and interest rate swaps. However, unlike other futures and options, these contracts can only be settled in cash. Investing in a contract for differences carries the same risks as investing in a future or an option and you should be aware of these as set out in paragraphs 9.2 and 9.3 respectively. Transactions in contracts for differences may also have a contingent liability and you should be aware of the implication of this as set out in paragraph 10.6.

## **10. Risks relevant to certain types of transactions and arrangements**

### **10.1 Off-Exchange transactions**

Transactions that are conducted off-exchange ("OTC Transactions") may involve greater risk than dealing in exchange traded instruments because there is no exchange market through which to liquidate your position, or to assess the value of the instruments or the exposure to the risk.

#### **OTC Transactions carry a higher settlement risk.**

Settlement risk is the risk that the counterparty does not deliver the security (or equivalent assets) as

required under the agreed terms. This results in one party to the transaction not receiving the securities or assets they are entitled to. This risk increases where it is not possible to exercise netting where the amounts delivered by each party will partially or completely cancel each other out.

Liquidity Risk as described above is higher in OTC Transactions. There is no exchange market through which to liquidate your position, or to assess the value of the OTC Transaction or the exposure to risk. Bid and offer prices need not be quoted, and even where they are, they will be established by dealers in these instruments and consequently it may be difficult to establish what is a fair price.

### **10.2 Off-exchange transactions in derivatives**

It may not always be apparent whether or not a particular derivative is arranged on exchange or in an off-exchange derivative transaction. While some off-exchange markets are highly liquid, transactions in off-exchange or "non-transferable" derivatives may involve greater risk than investing in on-exchange derivatives because there is no exchange market on which to close out an open position. It may be impossible to liquidate an existing position, to assess the value of the position arising from an off-exchange transaction or to assess the exposure to risk. Bid prices and offer prices need not be quoted, and, even where they are, they will be established by dealers in these instruments and consequently it may be difficult to establish what is a fair price.

### **10.3 Foreign markets**

Foreign markets will involve different risks from the EU markets. In some cases, the risks will be greater. The potential for profit or loss from transactions on foreign markets or in foreign denominated contracts will be affected by fluctuations in foreign exchange rates.

### **10.4 Commissions**

Before you begin to trade, you should obtain details of all commissions and other charges for which you will be liable. If any charges are not expressed in money terms (but, for example, as a percentage of contract value), you should obtain a clear and written explanation, including appropriate examples, to establish what such charges are likely to mean in specific money terms. In the case of futures, when commission is charged as a percentage, it will normally be as a percentage of the total contract value, and not simply as a percentage of your initial payment.

### **10.5 Collateral**

If you deposit collateral as security with us, the way in which it will be treated will vary according to the type of transaction and where it is traded. There could be significant differences in the treatment of your collateral, depending on whether you are trading on a recognised or designated investment exchange, with the rules of that exchange (and the associated clearing house) applying or trading off-exchange. Deposited collateral may lose its identity as your property once dealings on your behalf are undertaken. Even if your dealings should ultimately prove profitable, you may not get back the same assets which you deposited and may have to accept payment in cash.

### **10.6 Contingent liability investment transactions**

Contingent liability investment transactions, which are margined, require you to make a series of payments against the purchase price, instead of paying the whole purchase price immediately. If you trade in futures contracts for differences or sell options, you may sustain a total loss of the margin you deposit with us to establish or maintain a position. If the market moves against you, you may be called upon to pay substantial additional margin at short notice to maintain the position. If you fail to do so within the time required, your position may be liquidated at a loss and you will be responsible for the resulting deficit. Even if a transaction is not margined, it may still carry an obligation to make further payments in certain circumstances over and above any amount paid when you entered the contract.

### **10.7 Gearing or leverage**

Gearing or leverage is a strategy, with a view to enhancing the return from, or the value of, an investment involving the following:

1. borrowing money;

2. investing in one or more instruments, such as warrants or derivatives, for which a relatively small movement in the value or price of the underlying rights or assets results in a larger movement in the value or price of the instrument;
3. structuring the rights of holders of an investment so that a relatively small movement in the price or value of the underlying rights or assets, results in a larger movement in the price or value of the investment; and
4. you may lose more than you had initially invested.

You should be aware that the strategy used or proposed for the gearing may result in:

1. movements in the price of the investment being more volatile than the movements in the price of underlying rights or assets;
2. the investment being subject to sudden and large falls in value; and
3. you are getting back nothing at all if there is a sufficiently large fall in value in the investment.

### **10.8 Suspensions of trading**

Under certain trading conditions it may be difficult or impossible to liquidate a position. This may occur, for example, at times of rapid price movement if the price rises or falls in one trading session to such an extent that under the rule of the relevant exchange trading is suspended or restricted. Placing a stop-loss order will not necessarily limit your losses to the intended amounts, because market conditions may make it impossible to execute such an order at the stipulated price.

### **10.9 Clearing house protections**

On many exchanges, the performance of a transaction by us (or third party with whom we are dealing on your behalf) is "guaranteed" by the exchange or clearing house. However, this guarantee is unlikely in most circumstances to cover you, the customer, and may not protect you if us or another party defaults on its obligations to you. On request, we will explain any protection provided to you under the clearing guarantee applicable to any on-exchange derivatives in which you are dealing. There is no clearing house for traditional options, nor normally for off-exchange instruments which are not traded under the rules of a recognized or designated investment exchange.