

# INTERIM MANAGEMENT REPORT OF FUND PERFORMANCE

For the period ended June 30, 2023

Index Fund

## **NBI Canadian Bond Index 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 interim management report of fund performance contains financial highlights, but does not contain the complete interim financial statements of the investment fund. You can get a copy of the interim 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, 500, Place d'Armes, 12th floor, Montreal, Quebec, H2Y 2W3, by visiting our website at [www.nbinvestments.ca](http://www.nbinvestments.ca), by visiting SEDAR's website at [www.sedar.com](http://www.sedar.com), 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

### Results of Operations

For the six-month period ended June 30, 2023, the NBI Canadian Bond Index Fund's Series O units returned 3.00% compared to 2.48% for the Fund's benchmark, the Morningstar® Canada Liquid Bond Index™ (CAD). Unlike the benchmark, the Fund's performance is calculated after fees and expenses.

The Fund's net asset value dropped by 76.09% over the period, from \$250.80 million as at December 31, 2022 to \$59.97 million as at June 30, 2023.

The decline stemmed mainly from net redemptions by unitholders of the Fund.

A relative calm settled over the markets in the second quarter of 2023, offering investors some respite after a prolonged period of elevated volatility. Indeed, despite a few jolts caused by the failure of certain U.S. regional banks, the combination of slowing inflation and the resilience of the U.S. economy was enough to inspire optimism in the markets. Apart from the strong performance of the U.S. equity market and especially its technology giants, the main asset classes ended the period little changed, with bonds slightly underperforming equities.

On the economic front, data continues to send out often contradictory signals, underlining the uniqueness of the current cycle. Specifically, the weakness of indicators linked to the manufacturing sector and the significant contraction in the price of several commodities point to a deterioration in economic activity. However, the service sector remains resilient thanks to relatively upbeat consumers, which are supported by excess savings and a strong labour market. The end result is an economy that, for the time being, continues to show weak but positive growth, putting off fears of recession until later.

Abroad, the EAFE developed countries also performed well, buoyed by an economic situation in Europe that proved less dire than expected, as well as renewed enthusiasm for Japanese equities. Although lower, the Canadian stock market also posted gains that were slightly higher than those of emerging markets, a region undermined by a lacklustre economic recovery in China.

Finally, the majority of commodities declined during the first half of 2023, illustrating deflationary pressures against a background of restrictive monetary policies. Nevertheless, the price of gold managed to record gains, supported by an increasingly tense geopolitical context and a marginally weaker U.S. dollar. Meanwhile, the Canadian dollar appreciated against the greenback, benefitting notably from the Bank of Canada's preference for additional interest rate hikes.

However, the flip side of a stronger-than-expected economy is the recent persistence of inflation, much to the dismay of central banks. The Bank of Canada is a case in point; after announcing a pause in its monetary tightening cycle in January, it finally decided to raise its policy rate again in June, taking the markets by surprise. Meanwhile, even though the Federal Reserve took a break in June, it hinted that there could still be two more rate hikes this year, starting with the July meeting. Clearly, the prospects of rate cuts before the end of the year seem increasingly unlikely, as the return to more accommodative policies will have to wait.

Under these circumstances, the Fund outperformed its benchmark. This strategy seeks to replicate the returns of the benchmark and any divergence during the period may be attributed to tracking errors.

### Recent Developments

As the current economic climate remains highly uncertain, the manager continues to anticipate significant market volatility. In the best-case scenario, a better balance in the labour market would lead to a deceleration in wage growth and core inflation, thus opening the door to less restrictive monetary policies. Yet, while not impossible, this scenario seems unlikely at this stage, as the cautionary signals continue to mount.

As such, although the manager still expects a sustained decline in inflation and an imminent pause in interest rate hikes, the combination of restrictive monetary policies, a vulnerable job market, and weak corporate earnings prospects calls for a more defensive investment strategy. What's more, several early signs of an economic slowdown are pointing towards the second half of the year, when the impact of previous rate hikes should become more tangible.

On May 1, 2023, the Fund's independent review committee (the "IRC") was increased to four members when Stéphanie Raymond-Bougie was appointed as IRC member.

### 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"), a direct or 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. ("NBII"), which is a wholly-owned subsidiary of the Bank. Therefore, NBII 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 NBII as consideration for its services.

### Portfolio Manager

The Manager has appointed National Bank Trust Inc. ("NBT"), an 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

NBII acts as principal distributor for the Fund. In this capacity, NBII buys, sells and swaps securities through Bank branches and the National Bank Investments Advisory Service in Canadian provinces and territories, and through external registered representatives. Fund securities are also offered by National Bank Financial Inc. (including its division National Bank Direct Brokerage), CABN Investments (a division of NBII) 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.

### Brokerage Fees

The Fund may pay broker's commissions at market rates to a corporation affiliated with NBII. The brokerage fees paid by the Fund for the period are as follows:

	Period ended June 30, 2023
Total brokerage fees	5,791.14
Brokerage fees paid to National Bank Financial	5,791.14

### Holdings

As at June 30, 2023, National Bank Investments Inc. held 352.73 Fund securities for a value of \$2,607.46, which represented close to 0.0042% 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.

As at June 30, 2023, National Bank Trust Inc. held 1.47 Fund securities for a value of \$10.56, which represented close to 0.0000% of the net asset value of the Fund at that date. Transactions between National Bank Trust 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 NBII 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 NBII and without taking into account any consideration relevant to an entity related to NBII. 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, NBII, to National Bank Trust Inc. ("NBT"), a wholly-owned indirect 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>
Series O	N/A*	—	100.00%

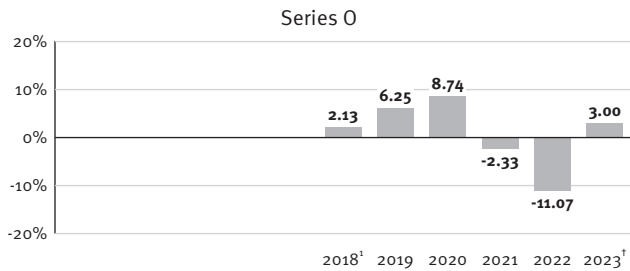
<sup>†</sup> Includes all costs related to management, investment advisory services, general administration and profit.

### Past Performance

The performance of the Fund's series presented below is 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 chart indicates the performance for the Fund's series during the years shown, and illustrates how the performance has changed from year to year. It shows, 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 May 22, 2018 (commencement of operations) to December 31, 2018.

<sup>(1)</sup> Returns for the period from January 1, 2023 to June 30, 2023.

## 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.

### Series O

Net Assets per Unit <sup>(1)</sup>		Commencement of operations: May 22, 2018				
Accounting Period Ended	2023 June 30	2022 December 31	2021 December 31	2020 December 31	2019 December 31	2018 December 31
<b>Net Assets, Beginning of Accounting Period Shown<sup>(4)</sup></b>	6.99	8.12	8.56	10.36	10.13	10.00
<b>Increase (Decrease) from Operations (\$)</b>						
Total revenue	0.12	0.23	0.23	0.29	0.30	0.18
Total expenses	—	—	—	—	—	(0.01)
Realized gains (losses)	0.31	(0.13)	0.01	1.74	0.08	0.06
Unrealized gains (losses)	(0.22)	(1.00)	(0.43)	(0.34)	0.07	0.38
<b>Total Increase (Decrease) from Operations (\$)<sup>(2)</sup></b>	0.21	(0.90)	(0.19)	1.69	0.45	0.61
<b>Distributions (\$)</b>						
From net investment income (excluding dividends)	—	0.23	0.23	0.63	0.32	0.06
From dividends	—	—	—	—	—	—
From capital gains	—	—	0.01	2.05	0.08	0.02
Return of capital	—	—	—	—	—	—
<b>Total Annual Distributions (\$)<sup>(3)</sup></b>	—	0.23	0.24	2.68	0.40	0.08
<b>Net Assets, End of Accounting Period Shown<sup>(4)</sup></b>	7.20	6.99	8.12	8.56	10.36	10.13

### Ratios and Supplemental Data

Accounting Period Ended	2023 June 30	2022 December 31	2021 December 31	2020 December 31	2019 December 31	2018 December 31
Total net asset value (ooo's of \$) <sup>(5)</sup>	59,970	58,305	65,126	65,693	1,049,471	383,492
Number of units outstanding <sup>(5)</sup>	8,329,270	8,346,367	8,021,052	7,675,980	101,263,462	37,839,571
Management expense ratio (%) <sup>(6)</sup>	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.03
Management expense ratio before waivers or absorptions (%)	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.03
Trading expense ratio (%) <sup>(7)</sup>	0.01	0.01	—	0.01	0.01	0.09
Portfolio turnover rate (%) <sup>(8)</sup>	22.27	26.18	5,437.09	23.65	81.10	280.40
Net asset value per unit (\$)	7.20	6.99	8.12	8.56	10.36	10.13

### Series PW\*

<sup>(1)</sup> Please note that this Series is offered by way of private placement.

Net Assets per Unit <sup>(1)</sup>		Commencement of operations: May 22, 2018				
Accounting Period Ended	2023 June 30	2022 December 31	2021 December 31	2020 December 31	2019 December 31	2018 December 31
<b>Net Assets, Beginning of Accounting Period Shown<sup>(4)</sup></b>	7.49	8.45	8.91	10.38	10.13	10.00
<b>Increase (Decrease) from Operations (\$)</b>						
Total revenue	0.10	0.26	0.25	0.30	0.30	0.18
Total expenses	—	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Realized gains (losses)	0.12	(0.17)	0.01	2.07	—	0.06
Unrealized gains (losses)	2.33	(1.22)	(0.46)	(1.46)	0.81	0.37
<b>Total Increase (Decrease) from Operations (\$)<sup>(2)</sup></b>	2.55	(1.14)	(0.21)	0.90	1.10	0.60
<b>Distributions (\$)</b>						
From net investment income (excluding dividends)	0.05	0.02	0.24	0.30	0.29	0.06
From dividends	—	—	—	—	—	—
From capital gains	0.01	—	0.01	2.07	0.09	0.02
Return of capital	—	—	—	—	—	—
<b>Total Annual Distributions (\$)<sup>(3)</sup></b>	0.06	0.02	0.25	2.37	0.38	0.08
<b>Net Assets, End of Accounting Period Shown<sup>(4)</sup></b>	7.66	7.49	8.45	8.91	10.38	10.13

### Ratios and Supplemental Data

Accounting Period Ended	2023 June 30	2022 December 31	2021 December 31	2020 December 31	2019 December 31	2018 December 31
Total net asset value (ooo's of \$) <sup>(5)</sup>	1	192,496	1	1	1	37,915
Number of units outstanding <sup>(5)</sup>	147	25,716,298	146	142	112	3,741,081
Management expense ratio (%) <sup>(6)</sup>	0.12	0.12	0.05	0.05	0.12	0.12
Management expense ratio before waivers or absorptions (%)	0.12	0.13	0.05	2.30	0.12	0.12
Trading expense ratio (%) <sup>(7)</sup>	0.01	0.01	—	0.01	0.01	0.09
Portfolio turnover rate (%) <sup>(8)</sup>	22.27	26.18	5,437.09	23.65	81.10	280.40
Net asset value per unit (\$)	7.66	7.49	8.45	8.91	10.38	10.13

- <sup>(1)</sup> This information is derived from the Fund's Annual Audited Financial Statements and Interim Unaudited 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.
- <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 June 30, 2023

### Portfolio Top Holdings

	% of Net Asset Value
Government of Canada, 3.00%, due November 1, 2024	8.8
Bank of Montreal, 3.19%, due March 1, 2028	5.6
Government of Canada, 2.00%, due June 1, 2028	5.5
Government of Canada, 2.25%, due June 1, 2029	4.4
Fédération des caisses Desjardins, Floating, due May 26, 2030	4.0
Scotiabank, 2.29%, due June 28, 2024	3.5
Toronto-Dominion Bank, 2.50%, due December 2, 2024	3.4
Government of Canada, 1.25%, due June 1, 2030	3.2
Rogers Communications Inc., 6.75%, due November 9, 2039	3.2
North West Redwater Partnership / NWR Financing Co. Ltd., 4.25%, due June 1, 2029	2.9
AltaLink LP, 4.92%, due September 17, 2043	2.8
Government of Canada, 2.00%, due December 1, 2051	2.6
Scotiabank, 2.62%, due December 2, 2026	2.5
iShares, Canadian Universe Bond Index ETF	2.4
Province of Ontario, 2.70%, due June 2, 2029	2.4
Scotiabank, 3.10%, due February 2, 2028	2.3
Greater Toronto Airports Authority, 7.05%, due June 12, 2030	2.2
Enbridge Pipelines Inc., 2.82%, due May 12, 2031	2.2
Province of Ontario, 6.50%, due March 8, 2029	2.0
Government of Canada, 2.75%, due December 1, 2048	1.9
Enbridge Inc., 4.24%, due August 27, 2042	1.7
Choice Properties Reit, 3.56%, due September 9, 2024	1.6
Province of Ontario, 4.60%, due June 2, 2039	1.6
Province of Quebec, 2.30%, due September 1, 2029	1.5
Cash, Money Market and Other Net Assets	0.1
	74.3

Net asset value ..... \$59,971,442

### Sector Allocation

	% of Net Asset Value
Corporate Bonds	49.5
Federal Bonds	26.6
Provincial Bonds	20.7
Exchange Traded Funds	2.4
Municipal Bonds	0.7
Cash, Money Market and Other Net Assets	0.1

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 Web site 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.sedar.com](http://www.sedar.com).