Forum One - VinaCapital Vietnam Fund (VVF)

28 March 2024

VinaCapital
Class A NAV/share: USD25.45

VVF is an actively managed UCITS-compliant fund that invests in equities and equity-related securities of companies that are based in Vietnam, with an objective to deliver long-term capital growth, through bottom-up stock picking and disciplined risk management. This UCITS is a product pursuant to Article 8 SFDR.

PERFORMANCE SUMMARY				
	Fund ¹	VN-Index		
March 2024 (m-o-m)	3.6%	2.4%		
YTD	15.5%	11.8%		
3-year annualized	11.7%	0.3%		
5-year annualized	12.5%	4.3%		
Annualized since inception ²	11.4%	6.8%		
Accumulated since inception ²	155.5%	77.8%		
Sharpe ratio (annualized since inception ²)	0.46	0.25		
Standard deviation (annualized since inception²)	20.8%	22.2%		
Tracking error	7.8%			

- 1. Fund information calculated from Class A shares, on a net basis
- 2. Class A inception date: 14 July 2015

30 28 26 24 22 20 18 16 14 12 10 8 6

Past performance is not necessarily guidance to the future.

SECTOR ALLOCATION 10% 15% 20% 25% 30% 35% 40% 45% Banks 17.8% Consumer Staples 17.8% Industrials ■ VVF 7.4% Information Technology Non-bank Financials ■ VNIndex Consumer Discretionary Real Estate Utilities Cash

TOP HOLDINGS						
Ticker	Market Cap (USDmn)	Sector	% of NAV	2024F PE	2024F ROE	
GMD	983	Industrials	9.4%	16.5	16.2%	
FPT	5,968	Information Technology	7.4%	18.8	26.3%	
QNS	714	Consumer Staples	7.0%	7.9	23.3%	
STB	2,403	Banks	7.0%	6.1	18.0%	
MWG	3,014	Consumer Discretionary	6.5%	33.9	8.9%	
TCB	6,756	Banks	5.1%	7.4	15.3%	
VHC	710	Consumer Staples	4.8%	13.1	14.0%	
MBB	5,417	Banks	4.7%	5.5	20.9%	
NLG	673	Real Estate	4.1%	28.0	6.1%	
CTG	7,700	Banks	4.1%	7.9	16.5%	
VVF Port.				10.7	16.9%	
VN-Index				12.1	13.8%	

Source: Bloombera. VinaCapital's estimates

MONTHLY COMMENTARY

MANAGER'S COMMENTARY

The stock market's strong momentum continued into March 2024, with the VN Index increasing 2.4% MoM and 11.8% YTD. The positive market sentiment spilled over to nearly all sectors, most notably Consumer Discretionary (+8.1% MoM), Brokers (+7.6% MoM), and IT (+6.6% MoM). Liquidity stayed at a high level, reaching USD 1.08 billion in average daily trading value on HOSE in March 2024, compared to USD 848mn in February and USD 637mn for full-year 2023. Though retail investors were quite active in March, sentiment gradually became more cautious over the course of the month when the VN-Index fluctuated around its 15-month high.

The fund generated a strong 3.6% return (USD terms) in March, outperforming the market by 1.1% and increasing our YTD outperformance to 3.6%. Our alpha for the month was driven by our stock picks in the Financials, Consumer Discretionary, and IT sectors, which have generated returns for the portfolio of 3.2%, 10.0% and 6.3%, respectively, on a MoM basis. Financials was our biggest alpha generator in the month, and several private banks, including TCB and MBB, showed strong performance on the back of an expected rebound in their businesses this year. For Consumer Discretionary, MWG (Mobile World) is our key investment in the retail space given the recent inflection moves in its grocery minimart business. One sector that strongly outperformed the market in March (which we do not own) was Materials, with steel/rubber companies reporting good export numbers for the month.

Key holding update: Vinh Hoan Corporation

Among our portfolio's top-10 holdings, Vinh Hoan Corporation (VHC) has emerged as one of our key holdings for the year 2024. VHC is the largest pangasius exporter in Vietnam. Pangasius is one type of large catfishes native to Southeast Asia and Vietnam is the largest exporter in the world, accounting for >90% of global exports. Pangasius processing is a crowded industry with over 400 producers in Vietnam (with Top 10 accounting for around 45% of total pangasius export in 2023), and we consider pangasius fillet a type of commodity, subject to the cycles of a short-duration commodity product.

Despite the cyclical nature of the industry and high level of competition, we consider VHC a high-quality company. Since its listing at end-2007, the company has generated average ROCE of 26% during the 16 years period from 2009 to 2023 (lowest - 2023 of 14%, highest - 2018 of 44%), while its sales increased by 4x during the same period. The company has not raised external capital since listing, except for three small tranches of ESOPs in the last 16 years; its founder retained majority stake of 42.3%. The company has paid a cash dividend every year since 2014, and in 2024, management announced a cash dividend of VND2,000/share, translating into dividend yield of nearly 3%, on projected payout ratio of ~50-60% of 2024E net profit. Net profit margin declined to 9.2% in 2023 from an average of 13.6% during the previous five years (2018-2022) but is still ~1.5x the average of 6.2% during the prior five-year period (2013-2017).

More importantly, its next largest competitor recorded a net profit margin of just 0.9%, showing the strong competitiveness of VHC in a challenging industry. The company has managed to deliver solid results on the back of: 1) vertical expansion along the supply chain (hatchery, feed mills, farming, high value-add downstream products such as collagen/gelatin); 2) diversification into consumer-related products relevant to the company (acquisition of a nearby shrimp chips and rice-paper products producer, establishment of a frozen fruit/vegetable business); 3) a healthy balance sheet (net cash position at end-2023) with strong operating cashflows. We consider 2023 to be a trough year for the industry, both in terms of volume demand and pricing. In 1Q24, we see positive signals in both volume and price of pangasius market, while management also indicated high order book in 2Q24. The company is currently traded at 2024 PER of 14.7- 18.3x based on management's guidance, which is not screamingly cheap, but we see room for margin improvement and strong expansion pipeline in the coming years.

Vietnam is an export-oriented economy, and many local companies have been benefiting from this theme. Besides VHC, we have exposure to several export-related sectors, including consumer products, IT outsourcing, industrial property, and port operation.

On the macro picture, we see recovery in exports and monetary/fiscal stimulus of the government as the two major growth drivers for the economy in 2024. The market has well-recovered from the 3Q23 correction but we also expect volatility in the near term given uncertainty in global economic and geopolitical outlook adding to some domestic challenges. Our strategy remains buying the companies that generate sustainable earnings growth in the long-term. On a forward basis, our portfolio is currently trading at 2024E PER of 10.7x on robust earnings growth of 24.7%, which is at a discount to the broader market.

MACRO COMMENTARY

Vietnam's GDP growth recovered from 3.4% yoy in 1Q23 to 5.7% in 1Q24, driven entirely by the ongoing recovery of the country's manufacturing sector. However, weak consumer sentiment weighed on consumption during the quarter, and a modest depreciation in the VN Dong prompted the State Bank of Vietnam to somewhat tighten monetary policy.

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MACRO INDICATORS				
	2023	Mar 2024	YTD 2024	у-о-у
GDP growth ¹ (%)	5.1		5.7	
Inflation ² (%)	3.3	4.0	3.8	
FDI commitments ³ (USDbn)	28.1	1.7	5.7	34.9%
FDI disbursements (USDbn)	23.2	1.8	4.6	7.1%
Imports (USDbn)	326.4	31.1	85.0	13.9%
Exports (USDbn)	354.7	34.0	93.1	17.0%
Trade surplus/(deficit) (USDbn)	28.3	2.9	8.1	
Exchange rate (USD/VND) ⁴	24,265	24,791		

Sources: GSO, Vietnam Customs, SBV, MPI, Bloomberg

Latest quarterly GDP performance | 2. Inflation: year-on-year change | 3. Excluding Share Cap Contribution
 BBG-USDVND Spot Exchange Rate

VVF FUND INFOR	MATION
Fund Launch Date	14 July 2015
Legal Entity Identifier (LEI)	5493003GR1U7LK7K6767
Trading Period	Daily Subscriptions/Redemptions
Fund Size	USD88.7m
Incorporation	Luxembourg
SFDR Classification	Article 8
Registered	UK, The Netherlands, Germany, Singapore, Austria, Switzerland, Sweden, France
Management Company	Edmond de Rothschild Asset Management (Luxembourg)
Fund Manager	VinaCapital Fund Management JSC
Depository Bank	Edmond de Rothschild (Europe)
Auditor	PwC Societe Cooperative Luxembourg
Swiss Representative	First Independent Fund Services Ltd, Klausstrasse 33, CH-8008 Zurich, Switzerland
Swiss Paying Agent	NPB Neue Privat Bank AG, Limmatquai 1/am Bellevue, P.O. Box, CH-8022 Zurich, Switzerland
Fund Platform Availability	Allfunds, Clearstream, Fundsettle, MFEX, Attrax, FIL Fondsbank (FFB)

CONTACT DETAILS

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MONTHLY COMMENTARY (cont'd)

Vietnam's export recovery was driven by a 30% yoy surge in computer and electronics exports, and by a 26% jump in exports to the US (versus a 21% plunge in 1Q23). The jump in computer and electronics exports is an Asia-wide phenomenon that we have discussed repeatedly in recent months; consumers have been upgrading their laptops to more powerful Al-capable machines. That said, global smartphone sales have only recently started to recover, resulting in Vietnam's smartphone exports only growing 10% yoy in the first quarter.

In addition, confidence among manufacturers in Vietnam hit the highest level in one and a half years in March, as did the rate that factories hired new workers. Furthermore, disbursed FDI grew by 7% yoy in Q1 to USD4.6b (or circa 5% of GDP), and the pipeline of registered FDI projects (which includes both new factories and expansions of existing factories) rose 35% to USD5.7b, all of which bode well for the health of the manufacturing sector in upcoming quarters.

All of that said, Vietnam's manufacturing PMI actually dipped from 50.4 in February to 49.9 in March as factory orders contracted. This is surprising given the economic resilience of the US, which is Vietnam's largest export market at over one-quarter of total exports.

In contrast to the decline in Vietnam's PMI to below the '50' expansion-contraction threshold, China's manufacturing PMI increased from 49 in February to 50.8 in March driven by a surge in that country's new orders sub-index from 49 to 53. The rise in China's factory orders, coupled with widespread reports that Chinese companies have been dumping some of their excess industrial production onto world markets at discounted prices, suggests that some foreign firms are currently redirecting their purchases from Vietnamese to Chinese factories.

US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen recently raised concerns about this issue with Chinese policy makers, and we will continue monitoring the situation to assess potential impacts on Vietnam's economy. We also note that a modest depreciation in the USD-CNY exchange rate since late-2023 may also be supporting China's exports to some extent, although the USD-VND exchange rate also depreciated at a comparable rate during that period.

Further to that last point, the USD-VND exchange rate depreciated by an additional 0.6% in March, and by 2.2% YTD to 24,791, prompting the State Bank of Vietnam (SBV) to drain USD7b from Vietnam's money market during the month by selling one-month T-Bills to the country's commercial banks.

The SBV's actions helped lift short-term interbank interest rates in Vietnam from below 1.5% at the beginning of March to around 2.5% by the end of the month, somewhat alleviating one factor weighing on the value of the VN Dong. US Dollar interest rates are well above VN Dong interest rates, prompting both local savers and commercial bank treasury departments to exchange money from VND to USD.

Furthermore, the ongoing rally in gold prices is also putting depreciation pressures on the VN Dong. Local savers – who have a strong affinity for gold – have been motivated to buy more gold, and their purchases essentially entail exchanging VND into USD.

Next, CPI inflation in Vietnam remained at 4% yoy in both February and March. This indirectly puts depreciation pressure on the VN Dong by discouraging savers to deposit money in VND-denominated bank accounts, which now pay less than 3% for short-term deposits at most banks.

All of that said, Vietnam's ~8%/GDP trade surplus and ~5%/GDP FDI inflows equated to nearly 13% of GDP in Q1, which represents an enormous inflow of US Dollars into Vietnam. This is in turn is a major source of support for the country's currency.

KEY TERMS							
	Class A	Class B	Class C	Class D	Class G	Class H	Class I
Currency	USD	USD	EUR	EUR	JPY	USD	USD
Min. Investment	500,000 ¹	5,000	500,000 ¹	5,000	10,000,000 ¹	5,000,000 ¹	10,000,000 ¹
Management Fee	1.25%	2.00%	1.25%	2.00%	2.00%	1.25%	1.00%
Bloomberg	FOVCPVA LX	FOVIEBU LX	FOVIECE LX	FOVIEDE LX	FOVCPVG LX	FORMVIN LX	FOVCPIU LX
ISIN	LU1163030197	LU1163027052	LU1214542463	LU1214545136	LU1286783011	LU2552457918	LU2560055225

¹ The minimum initial subscription amount may be waived at the discretion of the Investment Manager.

Disclaime

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