

# Market Commentary

Third Quarter 2022

## Introduction

Ellington Income Opportunities (EIO) performance was relatively flat in the third quarter with volatile market conditions persisting. After rallying in late July and the beginning of August, interest rates and credit spreads sold off as investors priced in hawkish central bank developments. Credit spreads, as measured by the corporate high yield index, tightened over 150 basis points intra-quarter before giving up all these gains and then some. Many structured credit assets experienced similar volatility over the time period. Spreads for on-the-run structured products fluctuated in tandem with broader moves in liquid credit indices, though pockets of the structured market experienced less drastic moves. Despite a difficult environment, the fund has continued to perform well on a relative basis to the broader credit market and we think is positioned to take advantage of the substantial opportunities that now exist within the securitized credit markets.

## Market Environment

A focus on more mature assets aided performance in Q3. Strong primary issuance amidst a backdrop of weaker demand has pushed on-the-run spreads wider. Seasoned assets tend to trade with a lower beta to general credit markets given lower fundamental risk, thus experiencing more stable performance.

The fund's credit and interest rate hedges were an important component of returns in the third quarter. Maintaining exposure to higher yielding structured credit assets without taking an explicit rates-oriented view has been a central tenet of our investment process in this fund, helping to preserve capital in a year where realized rate volatility has been elevated.

Exposure to UK and European assets hurt performance in Q3 as sweeping fiscal policy changes caused heavy selling pressure from pension funds and other liability-driven investors in the region. Asset prices have also been dampened due to other funds needing to sell assets to meet redemptions. This is a risk in investing in less frequently traded assets as this fund does. Although these assets underperformed, we view it as an opportunity to add risk given the technical nature of the widening. Additionally, the fund hedges currency risk on non-dollar assets and thus was insulated from moves in foreign exchange markets.

## Fund Outlook

Having reached the second half of 2022, it is notable in retrospect how quickly market narratives flipped from a "reach for yield" to one of more defensive positioning. In our view, the current market is one of the most attractive entry points for structured products in quite some time. Assets that traditionally have had little to no credit risk, even in the face of harsh economic shocks, now trade at some of the widest levels in product history. However, the current trading environment is extremely challenging as spreads have steadily widened this year without a clear catalyst for reversal. Although spread volatility may persist, the carry profile on the fund's assets have improved as well, which may create a strong entry point with an attractive upside.

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