

COMPANY SNAPSHOT	COMPANY NAME Vietnam Phoenix Fund Limited	INVESTMENT MANAGER Duxton Capital (Australia) Pty Ltd	TOTAL NET ASSETS USD \$20.5 million
	PORTFOLIO MANAGER	WEBSITE	EMAIL
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# **CLASS A – Continuation Shares**

NAV/Share	LEAD SERIES	STRUCTURE	LIQUIDITY		
	\$0.9482	Open-End Fund	Monthly		
The voting rights of all share classes are proportional to the value of shares at the most recent valuation date. As at 29 December 2023, the aggregate voting rights are <b>20,540,108</b> .					

**NAV Per Share** 1.40 USD 1.20 1.00 0.80 0.60 0.40 Rebased NAV prior 0.20 to restructuring 0.00 Dec 16 -5 β Dec 21 Dec 22 <sup>-</sup> 4 5 ഉ 20 Dec 23 Dec 1 Dec . Dec Dec Dec Dec

USD (%)		Cumulat	ive Retur	n		Annu	alised Re	eturn
	ТМ	3М	6М	YTD	١Y	3Y	5Y	7Y*
VPF A (Lead Series)	3.1%	-1.9%	2.2%	13.7%	13.7%	5.0%	9.0%	8.3%
VNIndex	3.2%	-1.8%	-2.0%	9.2%	9.2%	-0.9%	3.9%	6.9%

\* Includes historical performance of Vietnam Phoenix Fund prior to the restructuring as of 31 Dec 2016. Past performance is not an indicator of future performance.

Top Gainers	Price Change	Contribution to NAV Return
Asia Commercial Bank (ACB)	+8.9%	+0.75%
FPT Corporation (FPT)	+4.6%	+0.58%
Mobile World (MWG)	+11.2%	+0.52%
Top Laggards	Price Change	Contribution to NAV Return
Vietcombank (VCB)	-5.2%	-0.47%
Airport Corporation of Vietnam (ACV)	-2.8%	-0.10%
PetroVietnam Gas (GAS)	-1.3%	-0.04%

# **IDENTIFIERS**

ISIN CODE	KYG9363R1056
<b>BLOOMBERG TICKER</b>	VTNPHXA KY
SEDOL	BDHXLD2

## **TOP 10 HOLDINGS (%)**

FPT CORP	10.5
ASIA COMMERCIAL BANK	9.0
VIETCOMBANK	8.2
HOA PHAT GROUP	7.3
REE CORP	5.6
MB BANK	5.4
SSI SECURITIES CORP	5.4
GEMADEPT CORP	5.2
MOBILE WORLD	4.6
KHANG DIEN HOUSE	3.6
TOTAL	64.8

### **SECTOR ALLOCATION (%)**

FINANCIALS	34.8
REAL ESTATE	13.2
INFRASTRUCTURE	11.3
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY	10.5
CONSUMERS	8.0
CONTRUCTION MATERIALS	7.3
OTHERS*	14.9
TOTAL	100.0

\*Includes Cash & Accruals

### **ASSET BREAKDOWN (%)**

LISTED EQUITIES	97.9
CASH AND ACCRUALS^	2.1
TOTAL	100.0
^Adjusted to include pending redemptions.	

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# CLASS A – Continuation Shares

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# INVESTMENT MANAGER'S REPORT

## Portfolio Overview and Commentary

As of 29 December 2023, the NAV per share of the Lead Series Class A shares increased by 3.1% MoM. The Ho Chi Minh Stock Exchange Index ("VN-Index") increased by 3.2% during the reporting period.

The main contributors were Asia Commercial Bank (ACB, +8.9%), FPT Corporation (FPT, +4.6%), and Mobile World (MWG, +11.2%). In contrast, the main laggards were Vietcombank (VCB, -5.2%), Airport Corporation of Vietnam (ACV, -2.8%), and PetroVietnam Gas (GAS, -1.3%).

In terms of YTD performance, the NAV per share of Class A has increased by 13.7%, outperforming the VN-Index which increased by 9.2%.

**Asia Commercial Bank's ("ACB")** share price rose by 8.9% during December 2023. The share price was supported by investors' expectations of the bank's high potential credit quota for 2024. The State Bank of Vietnam has set a credit growth of 15% for FY2024, higher than an estimate of 13.5% for FY2023.<sup>1</sup> Based on ACB's strong financial performance and high credit ranking, we expect ACB to be granted one of the highest credit growth quotas for FY2024.

ACB posted strong earnings growth in 9M 2023 at 11.2% YoY in PBT, one of the highest earnings growth levels within the Vietnamese banking industry. The main contributors to the bank's earnings growth were (1) an increase of 9.3% YoY in net interest income to VND 18.7 trillion. This resulted from a credit growth of 8.7% YTD, and a deposit growth of 7.6% YTD. However, there was a decrease of 23 bps in net interest margin ("NIM") as ACB reduced its lending interests competitively to attract customers; (2) a 50.6% YoY increase in non-interest income to VND 5.7 trillion. The strong growth was driven by a significant gain in FX trading and investment securities of VND 1.1 trillion (+98.7% YOY) and VND 1.5 trillion (vs. a net loss of VND 254 billion in 9M 2022), respectively. In contrast, the main laggards to the bank's earnings growth were (1) a 4.2% YoY increase in operating expenses as ACB continued to expand its headcount; (2) provision expenses jumped to VND 1.5 trillion compared to a provision reversal of VND 180 billion in 9M 2022 as non-performing loans ("NPL") ratio rose by 19bps YoY to 1.21% as at the end of Q3 2023. However, ACB's NPL ratio remained one of the lowest NPL ratios among Vietnamese banks. This has also been maintained while its loan coverage ratios reached 95% at the end of September 2023, one of the highest levels among Vietnamese banks.

We remain confident in ACB's sustainable growth. The bank's premium retail client base with solid asset quality and well-oriented loan portfolio, coupled with its prudent balance sheet management and aggressive loan provisions provide a strong competitive advantage, that enables ACB to mitigate economic downturns and headwinds better than its peers and keep its financial performance resilient. We expect these advantages to continue to serve as the primary foundation for the bank's future earnings growth.

1. Source: https://www.channelnewsasia.com/business/vietnamcentral-bank-sets-2024-credit-growth-cap-banking-system-15-4020701



**FPT Corporation's ("FPT")** share price continued to increase by 4.6% in the reporting month. The share price was supported by the stock market's strong sentiment, coupled with FPT's strong results for 11M 2023.

For 11M 2023, FPT posted total revenue of VND 47.2 trillion (+20.3% YoY), PBT of VND 8.5 trillion (+19.2% YoY), and NPAT of VND 6.0 trillion (+19.0% YoY). The global IT services business remained the largest earnings contributor with revenue of VND 22.1 trillion (+29.0% YoY) and PBT of VND 3.7 trillion (+28.2% YoY). High demand for IT spending was witnessed in all FPT's overseas markets. The Japanese market posted the strongest revenue growth of 46.0% YoY in terms of VND (+54.0% YoY in terms of JPY) as Japanese clients expanded their IT spending toward digital transformation.<sup>2</sup> Japan was followed by the APAC market with total revenue increasing by 30.2% YoY to VND 4.5 trillion. <sup>2</sup>

We believe that FPT is likely to maintain its resilient growth due to several factors including: (1) FPT's position in global markets is expected to expand rapidly through its partnerships and M&A activities; (2) the company maintains a strong order backlog to supply global IT services with a total value of VND 24.8 trillion (+20.7% YoY) as end of November 2023; (3) as a provider of IT services at a "budget" price range, FPT is expected to benefit from tightening in IT spending as clients potentially shift to FPT as a reasonable service provider; (4) as the dominant provider in the domestic market, FPT is expected to benefit from an accelerating disbursement of public sector IT budget in 2023-2024. Over the long term, we expect FPT's digital transformation services to be a key growth driver for the company due to the accelerating demand for cloud services, big data, artificial intelligence, and other digital transformation projects from corporate clients both domestically and internationally. Vietnam's government has targeted an increase in the digital economy's share of GDP from 5% in 2019 to 20% in 2025.<sup>3</sup>

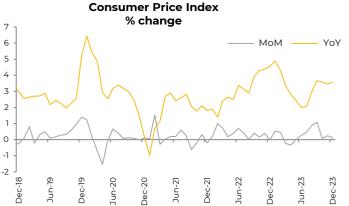
**Vietcombank's ("VCB")** share price remained weak in December 2023 with a decrease of 5.2% MoM as investors remained concerned about the bank's credit growth. For FY2023, VCB's loan book was estimated to grow by 10.6%, much lower than last year's level of 18.8%. VCB is estimated to record a PBT of ~41.2 trillion (+10.2% YoY), remaining a high ROA and ROE at 1.8% and 21.7%, respectively. The bank is guiding for a growth of 15% in its earnings in 2024.<sup>4</sup>

Whilst we remain confident in VCB, we see headwinds such as soft consumer demand and a gloomy real estate market to persist in the short term. However, we expect Vietnam's economy will continue to recover in the medium term and that VCB will continue to maintain its leading position in the Vietnamese banking sector. VCB's scale and its best-in-class credit rating position the bank well to be one of the biggest beneficiaries of Vietnam's economic recovery, particularly in trade, finance, and international settlement. This is also supported by VCB's resilient asset quality. As at the end of December 2023, VCB's NPL ratio was estimated to reach 0.97%. This represented the lowest NPL ratio compared to VCB's local peers. VCB's loan coverage ratio reached approximately 280%, the highest level among Vietnamese banks. Furthermore, its fund cost is expected to be reduced further by increasing the current account savings account (CASA) and a potential private placement which is planned to be completed in later 2024.<sup>4</sup>

- 2. Source: FPT's earnings report 11M 2023 3. Source: Decision No. 411/QD-TTg 2022
- 4. Source: VCB's management



-10%



The Vietnamese stock market recovered strongly after its poor performance last year. The VnIndex increased by 9.2% in USD terms, marking it as the best-performing ASEAN stock market for 2023. Despite several macro-economy headwinds and weak operational results for corporates, capital flows returned to the stock market due to (1) a low-interest rate environment after the State Bank of Vietnam (SBV) cut policy rates multiple times (2) improved sentiment across sectors, particularly the real estate sector, given by investors' positive assessment of the supporting policies of Vietnamese government; (3) the government's anti-corruption campaign was relatively quiet in 2023. The average trading volume in 2023 decreased by 11.1% YoY.

**GDP remained weak** – Despite Vietnam's Gross Domestic Product ("GDP") growth rate accelerating in Q4 2023 to 6.7% from 5.5% in Q3 2023, Vietnam posted GDP growth of 5.0% YoY for 2023, down from 8.0% in 2022. The country did not reach its government's GDP growth target of 6.5% YoY. The main causes for weak GDP growth were slowdowns in the industrial and construction sectors which only rose by 3.7%, contributing 37.1% to total GDP. The agriculture, forestry, and fishery sectors also only rose by 3.8%, contributing 12.0% to the total GDP. With an export-oriented manufacturing industry, Vietnam was impacted strongly by global demand weakness. The Manufacturing Purchasing Index remained below 50 for 10 out of 12 months in 2023. Furthermore, China- the main customer for Vietnam's agriculture products, posted a slower-than-expected recovery post re-opening.

In contrast, the main contributor to GDP growth in 2023 was the services sector, with an increase of 6.8% YoY, contributing 42.5% to total GDP. Despite a shortage of income in manufacturers, Vietnam's wholesale and retail services sales remained resilient with a growth of 8.8% YoY, while sales in hospitality services posted growth of 12.2% YoY, recovering from its low base last year. The total international arrivals tripled YoY in 2023 to 12.6 million tourists, representing 80.2% of the country's pre-pandemic levels (2019 level).

**Higher CPI** – Vietnam's consumer price index ("CPI") rose by 0.12% MoM and 3.58% YoY in December 2023. The hikes in medical fees and tuition fees in some provinces remained the main contributors to CPI growth this month.

For FY2023, Vietnam's CPI rose by 3.25%, well below the government target of 4.5%. The CPI growth resulted from (1) an increase of 7.4% in education services prices as some provinces and private schools continued to raise back tuition fees for new semesters; (2) an increase of 6.8% in housing and construction materials prices. Despite weak demand in the domestic market, construction market prices rebounded in 2023 due to weaker supply and higher demand from China and India. Home rental prices remained high due to a lack of supply. On the other hand, the increase in electricity prices (a 3.0% increase from May 2023 and a 4.5% from November) and foodstuffs (pork and rice prices) were offset by lower consumption, lower fuel prices, and a 2% VAT cut from 1 July 2023.



**PMI remained below 50** – The Vietnam Manufacturing Purchasing Index increased slightly from 47.3 in November to 48.9 in December 2023. The business confidence of manufacturers remained low due to a conservative global demand outlook and uncertain material price forecasts for 2024.

**Foreign Direct Investment remained resilient** – in 2023, Vietnam attracted USD 28.1 billion (+24.4% YoY) of newly registered and additional FDI from existing investors. Newly registered FDI was the driver for this improvement with a total of 20.2 billion (+62.2% YoY). The manufacturing sector continued to attract foreign investors the most as it accounted for 64.2% of total FDI in 2023, followed by the real estate sector which accounted for 12.7% of total FDI, and the utility sector which accounted for 6.5% of total FDI.

Singapore remained the largest foreign investor in Vietnam with a total investment of USD 6.8 billion (+5.4% YoY), contributing 18.6% of total FDI. Japanese investors have become the second largest FDI source with a total investment of USD 6.6 billion (+37.3% YoY), contributing 17.9% of total FDI. Vietnam also witnessed robust FDI inflows from Hong Kong (China) and mainland China post China's reopening.

In terms of disbursement, total disbursed FDI rose by 3.5% YoY to USD 23.2 billion despite the gloomy global business environment.

**Trade continued to improve** – According to Vietnam's Custom, in December 2023, Vietnam exported USD 31.5 billion (+8.4% YoY and +1.2% MoM) and imported USD 29.4 billion (+7.7% YoY and -1.3% MoM) worth of goods. For FY2023, the country exported USD 354.7 billion (-4.5% YoY) and imported USD 326.4 billion (-9.1% YoY) worth of goods, generating a trading surplus of USD 28.3 billion (+128.2% YoY). Consumption weakness from key trading partners strongly impacted Vietnam's trade. The US – Vietnam's largest export partner, witnessed a decrease of 11.3% YoY in export values to USD 91.0 billion. On the other hand, China – the largest import partner of Vietnam, witnessed a decrease of 6.2% YoY in import values to USD 110.6 billion.

# PF VIETNAM

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\*Formerly known as DWS Vietnam Fund Limited. The Fund was renamed to Vietnam Phoenix Fund Limited following the resignation of Deutsche Asset Management (Asia) Limited as Investment Manager on 30 September 2016. Following the resignation of Deutsche Asset Management (Asia) Limited Duxton Asset Management Pte Ltd was appointed the Investment Manager of Vietnam Phoenix Fund Limited. On 1 May 2020 Duxton Asset Management Pte Ltd resigned as Investment Manager and Duxton Capital (Australia) Pty Ltd was appointed.

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