

PORTFOLIO SOLUTION

# RBC SELECT CHOICES BALANCED PORTFOLIO

December 31, 2023

Portfolio Manager RBC Global Asset Management Inc. ("RBC GAM")

The Board of Directors of RBC Global Asset Management Inc. approved this annual management report of fund performance on March 7, 2024.

## A Note on Forward-looking Statements

This report may contain forward-looking statements about the Fund, its future performance, strategies or prospects, and possible future Fund action. The words "may," "could," "should," "suspect," "outlook," "believe," "plan," "anticipate," "estimate," "expect," "intend," "forecast," "objective" and similar expressions are intended to identify forward-looking statements.

Forward-looking statements are not guarantees of future performance. Forward-looking statements involve inherent risks and uncertainties, both about the Fund and general economic factors, so it is possible that predictions, forecasts, projections and other forward-looking statements will not be achieved. We caution you not to place undue reliance on these statements as a number of important factors could cause actual events or results to differ materially from those expressed or implied in any forward-looking statement made in relation to the Fund. These factors include, but are not limited to, general economic, political and market factors in Canada, the United States and internationally, interest and foreign exchange rates, global equity and capital markets, business competition, technological changes, changes in laws and regulations, judicial or regulatory judgments, legal proceedings and catastrophic events.

The above list of important factors that may affect future results is not exhaustive. Before making any investment decisions, we encourage you to consider these and other factors carefully. All opinions contained in forward-looking statements are subject to change without notice and are provided in good faith but without legal responsibility.

This annual management report of fund performance ("MRFP") contains financial highlights but does not contain the complete annual financial statements of the Fund. You can get a copy of the financial statements at your request, and at no cost, by calling 1-800-463-FUND (3863), by writing to us at RBC Global Asset Management Inc., P.O. Box 7500, Station A, Toronto, Ontario M5W 1P9, or by visiting our website at www.rbcgam.com/regulatorydocuments or SEDAR+ at www.sedarplus.ca. Security holders may also contact us using one of these methods to request a copy of the Fund's proxy voting policies and procedures, proxy voting disclosure record, or quarterly portfolio disclosure.



#### MANAGEMENT DISCUSSION OF FUND PERFORMANCE

#### **Investment Objective and Strategies**

The Fund is a strategic asset allocation fund, which focuses on providing long-term capital growth with a secondary focus on modest income. The Fund maintains a balance of investments across several asset classes by investing in funds managed by RBC GAM or an affiliate of RBC GAM, as well as in funds of other companies (collectively called the "underlying funds").

The Fund's target weightings for each asset class are 40% for fixed income, 15% for Canadian equities, 25% for U.S. equities, 15% for international equities and 5% for emerging-markets equities. The actual allocation to each asset class will be no more than 15% above or below its target weighting for the fixed income asset class, and no more than 10% above or below the target weighting for the equities asset classes.

### Risk

There were no significant changes to the investment objective and strategies that affected the Fund's overall level of risk during the reporting period. The risks of investing in the Fund and the suitability of the Fund for investors remain as discussed in the Simplified Prospectus.

#### **Results of Operations**

The Fund's net asset value rose to \$253 million as of December 31, 2023, from \$242 million at the end of 2022. The increase was due to investment returns, partially offset by net redemptions.

Over the past year, the Fund's Series F units gained 11.5%, which underperformed the 12.8% rise in the benchmark. The broad-based index 1 rose 6.7% and the broad-based index 2 rose 11.8%. The Fund's return is after the deduction of fees and expenses, while benchmark and broad-based index returns do not include any costs of investing. See the Financial Highlights section for the management expense ratios and the Past Performance section for the returns of any other series, which may vary because of differences in management fees and expenses.

Economic growth in 2023 was faster than many economists had predicted at the beginning of the year, defying risks that included inflation exceeding central-bank targets, the highest borrowing costs in about 16 years and two wars on Europe's doorstep. By the end of the period, growth and inflation had begun to slow, prompting investors to anticipate that central banks were moving closer to rolling back a portion of the rate hikes that had taken place since early 2022.

The Fund's neutral position in equities and overweight position in fixed income had a positive impact on performance. Bonds recovered to post gains in 2023 as signs of economic slowdown, especially in

Canada and Europe, pushed down longer-term yields and triggered the speculation about policy-rate cuts. The lack of a recession made the job of policymakers harder, with fears persisting that lower rates, if they occurred, would rekindle inflation. Canada's 10-year benchmark yield ended the year down slightly at 3.11% but earlier touched 4.24%, the highest since July 2007. Canadian government bonds, with a return of just under 5%, outperformed U.S. fixed income, as the weaker Canadian economy pushed domestic yields down faster than yields on Treasuries. Eurozone government bonds outperformed those in North America and Japan, with the German bond market returning about 7% and Italy's about 11%. Returns in the fixed-income segment of the portfolio were boosted by the RBC Global Corporate Bond Fund and the RBC Bond Fund.

A distinguishing characteristic of the U.S. stock-market rally was the small number of issues powering the advance. While the "Magnificent 7" – the seven largest stocks in the S&P 500 by market value – in some cases more than doubled, most stocks lagged the index's returns significantly. The S&P 500 Index and some benchmarks in Europe reached near-record levels during the period. In emerging markets, China was a significant exception to what was otherwise an upbeat story. The removal of the country's remaining pandemic restrictions was taken as a positive, but consumers and businesses did not spend and invest as had been expected. Overall, emerging markets underperformed developed markets. Returns were bolstered by the Fidelity U.S. Focused Stock Fund and the NBI International Equity Fund.

# **Recent Developments**

An economic slowdown appears to be underway, with businesses and consumers feeling the drag of higher interest rates and two years of exceptionally high inflation. Global trade is contracting, businesses are scaling back investments and the frenetic hiring of the past two years is on the wane, albeit gradually. The portfolio manager continues to look for a mild contraction in the U.S., Canada, the UK and the eurozone during the first half of 2024, although pathways to an economic soft landing are evident and the odds of such an outcome are improving as inflation moderates and the cost of borrowing declines.

Against this backdrop, the portfolio manager believes that central banks are likely to cut their benchmark interest rates at some point over the next year, setting up a more positive backdrop for bond returns. While the portfolio manager continues to expect stocks to outperform bonds over the longer term, the premium associated with holding equities relative to fixed income is perhaps not properly compensating investors for the risk of an economic downturn. Given the balance of risks and opportunities against both short-term and



long-term investment horizons, the portfolio manager added to the Fund's fixed-income allocation over the past quarter, boosting the bond weight above neutral for the first time in two decades.

Effective January 1, 2023, the management fees for Series A units were fixed at 1.87%.

Effective January 1, 2023, Suromitra Sanatani was appointed as Chair of the Independent Review Committee ("the IRC"). Effective February 1, 2023, Joanne Vézina was appointed as a member of the IRC. Effective March 1, 2023, Enrique Cuyegkeng was appointed as a member of the IRC.

## **Related-Party Transactions**

### Manager, Trustee and Portfolio Manager

RBC GAM is an indirect, wholly owned subsidiary of Royal Bank of Canada ("Royal Bank") and is the manager, trustee and portfolio manager of the Fund. RBC GAM is responsible for the Fund's day-to-day operations, holds title to the Fund's property on behalf of its unitholders, provides investment advice and portfolio management services to the Fund and appoints distributors for the Fund. RBC GAM is paid a management fee by the Fund as compensation for its services. The Fund pays a fixed administration fee to RBC GAM, which, in turn, pays certain operating expenses of the Fund. Both the management fee and fixed administration fee are calculated and accrued daily as a percentage of the net asset value of each series of units of the Fund. RBC GAM, as trustee, earns a fee, which is paid by the manager from the fixed administration fee paid by the Fund.

RBC GAM or its affiliates may earn fees and spreads in connection with various services provided to, or transactions with, the Fund, such as banking, brokerage, securities lending, foreign exchange and derivatives transactions. RBC GAM or its affiliates may earn a foreign exchange spread when unitholders switch between series of funds denominated in different currencies. The Fund also maintains bank accounts and overdraft provisions with Royal Bank for which Royal Bank may earn a fee. Affiliates of RBC GAM that provide services to the Fund in the course of their normal businesses are discussed below.

#### **Distributors**

RBC GAM, Royal Mutual Funds Inc., RBC Direct Investing Inc., RBC Dominion Securities Inc. and Phillips, Hager & North Investment Funds Ltd. are principal distributors of, or may distribute certain series of units of, the Fund. Dealers may receive an ongoing commission based on the total value of their clients' investment in certain series of units of the Fund.

#### Registrars

RBC GAM, RBC Investor Services Trust ("RBC IS") or Royal Bank (or a combination thereof) are the registrars of the Fund and keep records of who owns units of the Fund. The registrars earn a fee, which is paid by the manager from the fixed administration fee paid by the Fund.

#### Custodian

RBC IS is the custodian and holds the assets of the Fund. RBC IS earns a fee as the custodian, which is paid by the manager from the fixed administration fee paid by the Fund.

## Securities Lending Agent

To the extent the Fund may engage in securities lending transactions, RBC IS may act as the Fund's securities lending agent. Any revenue earned on such securities lending is split between the Fund and the securities lending agent.

#### Other Related-Party Transactions

Pursuant to applicable securities legislation, the Fund relied on the standing instructions from the Independent Review Committee with respect to one or more of the following transactions:

Related-Party Trading Activities

- (a) trades in securities of Royal Bank;
- (b) investments in the securities of issuers for which a related-party dealer acted as an underwriter during the distribution of such securities and the 60-day period following the conclusion of such distribution of the underwritten securities to the public;
- (c) purchases of equity, debt securities or mortgages from or sales of equity, debt securities or mortgages to a related-party dealer, where it acted as principal; and

#### Inter-Fund Trading

(d) purchases or sales of securities of an issuer from or to another investment fund or managed account managed by RBC GAM.

The applicable standing instructions require that Related-Party
Trading Activities and Inter-Fund Trading be conducted in
accordance with RBC GAM policy and that RBC GAM advise the
Independent Review Committee of a material breach of any standing
instruction. RBC GAM policy requires that an investment decision in
respect of Related-Party Trading Activities (i) is made free from any
influence of Royal Bank or its associates or affiliates and without
taking into account any consideration relevant to Royal Bank or its
affiliates or associates, (ii) represents the business judgment of the
portfolio manager, uninfluenced by considerations other than the best
interests of the Fund, (iii) is in compliance with RBC GAM policies
and procedures, and (iv) achieves a fair and reasonable result for
the Fund. RBC GAM policy requires that an investment decision in
respect of Inter-Fund Trading is in the best interests of each Fund.

#### **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 past five years or for the periods since inception. This information is derived from the Fund's audited annual financial statements.

#### Change in Net Assets Per Unit (\$)

							Annual Distributions <sup>2</sup>					
			Increase (De	ecrease) from	Operations1		From					
		Total		Realized	Unrealized		Income		From			Net Assets
For the Year/	Net Assets	Revenue	Total	Gains	Gains		(Excluding	From	Capital	Return		End of
Period Ended	Beginning of Year/Period	(Loss)	Expenses	(Losses)	(Losses)	Total	Dividends)	Dividends	Gains	of Capital	Total	Year/Period
Series A												
Dec. 31, 2023	13.30	0.51	(0.30)	0.73	0.43	1.37	-	(0.08)	(0.76)	(0.03)	(0.87)	13.81
Dec. 31, 2022	16.32	0.48	(0.31)	0.72	(2.77)	(1.88)	_	(0.05)	(1.17)	_	(1.22)	13.30
Dec. 31, 2021	15.43	0.32	(0.35)	1.50	0.04	1.51	_	_	(0.62)	_	(0.62)	16.32
Dec. 31, 2020	14.53	0.32	(0.30)	0.49	0.42	0.93	-	(0.02)	(0.10)	-	(0.12)	15.43
Dec. 31, 2019	13.10	0.35	(0.30)	0.71	1.09	1.85	_	(0.06)	(0.33)	_	(0.39)	14.53
Series F												
Dec. 31, 2023	10.25	0.40	(0.12)	0.56	0.34	1.18	_	(0.14)	(0.59)	(0.06)	(0.79)	10.63
Dec. 31, 2022	12.58	0.37	(0.13)	0.56	(2.07)	(1.27)	(0.01)	(0.14)	(0.91)	-	(1.06)	10.25
Dec. 31, 2021	11.78	0.25	(0.14)	1.15	0.01	1.27	-	-	(0.48)	-	(0.48)	12.58
Dec. 31, 2020	11.09	0.25	(0.13)	0.37	0.40	0.89	(0.02)	(0.11)	(80.0)	-	(0.21)	11.78
Dec. 31, 2019	10.00	0.27	(0.13)	0.55	0.82	1.51	(0.01)	(0.15)	(0.25)	_	(0.41)	11.09

<sup>1</sup> Net assets and distributions are based on the actual number of units outstanding at the relevant time. The increase/decrease from operations is based on the weighted average number of units outstanding over the financial period. This table is not intended to be a reconciliation of beginning to ending net assets per unit.

## **Ratios and Supplemental Data**

As at	Net Asset Value Per Unit (\$)	Net Asset Value (\$000s)	Number of Units Outstanding (000s)	Management Expense Ratio (%) <sup>1</sup>	MER Before Absorption (%) <sup>1</sup>	Portfolio Turnover Rate (%) <sup>2</sup>	Trading Expense Ratio (%) <sup>3</sup>
Series A	1 οι οιπε (φ)	(φοσσο)	Cutotananig (0000)	Expense ridite (78)	7 (D00) ption (70)	Turriovor Flato (70)	Expense ridde (70)
Dec. 31, 2023	13.81	194 438	14 081	2.15	2.15	20.23	0.03
Dec. 31, 2022	13.30	189 335	14 232	2.15	2.15	20.37	0.03
Dec. 31, 2021	16.32	238 485	14 615	2.16	2.16	6.59	0.02
Dec. 31, 2020	15.43	243 827	15 798	2.16	2.16	9.39	0.02
Dec. 31, 2019	14.53	254 554	17 520	2.16	2.16	9.73	0.03
Series F							
Dec. 31, 2023	10.63	58 197	5 475	1.18	1.18	20.23	0.03
Dec. 31, 2022	10.25	52 446	5 119	1.18	1.18	20.37	0.03
Dec. 31, 2021	12.58	57 098	4 538	1.18	1.18	6.59	0.02
Dec. 31, 2020	11.78	47 249	4 010	1.18	1.18	9.39	0.02
Dec. 31, 2019	11.09	42 653	3 845	1.19	1.19	9.73	0.03

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> The management expense ratio ("MER") is based on the direct expenses charged to the Fund and the Fund's proportionate share of the expenses of underlying funds, if any, for the stated period, excluding commissions and other portfolio transaction costs, and is expressed as an annualized percentage of the daily average net asset value during the period. RBC GAM may, at its discretion and without notice to unitholders, waive or absorb certain operating expenses. MER includes the waiver or absorption by RBC GAM of certain operating expenses, while the MER before absorption shows the MER prior to operating expenses being waived or absorbed by RBC GAM.

Effective January 1, 2023, the management fees for Series A units were fixed at 1.87%. If the changes to the management fees would have been in effect throughout the financial year ended December 31, 2022, the adjusted MER for each series of the Fund would be: Series A – 2.15%.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Distributions are reinvested in additional units of the Fund or paid in cash.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> The Fund's portfolio turnover rate gives an indication of the level of activity employed by the portfolio manager. 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 year. The higher the portfolio turnover rate in a year, the greater the trading costs payable by the Fund in the year, and the greater the chance of an investor receiving taxable capital gains in the year. There is not necessarily a relationship between a high turnover rate and the performance of the Fund. The portfolio turnover rate is not applicable to money market funds.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> The trading expense ratio represents total commissions and other portfolio transaction costs of the Fund and the Fund's proportionate share of such costs of underlying funds expressed as an annualized percentage of daily average net asset value during the period. The trading expense ratio is not applicable to fixed-income transactions.



#### **FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS (cont.)**

#### **Management Fees and Administration Fees**

Management fees and administration fees of each series of the Fund are payable to RBC GAM and calculated at the following annual percentages, before GST/HST, of the daily net asset value of each series of the Fund. The management fee, breakdown of services received in consideration of the management fee, as a percentage of the management fee, and the administration fee for each series are as follows:

	Management	Breakdown o	f Services	Administration	
	Fees*†	Distribution	Other <sup>‡</sup>	Fees	
Series A	1.87%	53%	47%	0.05%	
Series F	1.00%	-	100%	0.05%	

<sup>\*</sup> Effective January 1, 2023, the management fees for Series A units were fixed at 1.87%. For the period ended December 31, 2022, the actual average management fee rate was: Series A – 1.87%.

#### **PAST PERFORMANCE**

The performance information shown assumes that all distributions made by the Fund in the periods shown were reinvested in additional units of the Fund and would be lower if distributions were not reinvested. The performance information does not take into account sales, redemption, distribution, optional charges or income taxes payable that would have reduced returns or performance. Past performance does not necessarily indicate how the Fund may perform in the future. A fund with more than 10 years of performance history is only permitted to disclose the past 10 years.

## Year-by-Year Returns (%)

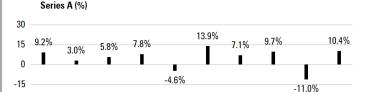
2015

2016

2017

-30 2014

The bar chart indicates the Fund's performance for each of the years shown, and illustrates how the Fund's performance has changed from year to year. The bar chart shows, in percentage terms, how much an investment made on the first day of each financial year would have grown or decreased by the end of the financial year.



2018

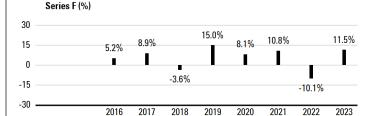
2019

2020

2021

2022

2023



<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>†</sup> Prior to January 1, 2023, the management fee payable in respect of Series A units of the Fund was a variable fee and was determined on a basis such that all fees and expenses that comprise the management expense ratio ("MER"), other than the additional cost of the GST/HST, were equal to a specified percentage of the average net asset value of this series of the Fund ("Specified Percentage"). The Specified Percentage included the management fee, administration fee of 0.05%, taxes (other than the additional cost of the GST/HST), other fund costs and any fees and expenses of the underlying funds. The Specified Percentage for Series A units was 2.05%.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>‡</sup> Includes all costs related to management, trustee, investment advisory services, general administration and profit.



#### PAST PERFORMANCE (cont.)

#### **Annual Compound Returns (%)**

The table shows the annual compound returns for each series of the Fund and for each of the periods indicated ended on December 31, 2023, compared with the following benchmarks:

The benchmark is composed of:

38% FTSE Canada Universe Bond Index

25% S&P 500 Total Return Index (CAD)

15% S&P/TSX Capped Composite Total Return Index

15% MSCI EAFE Total Return Net Index (CAD)

5% MSCI Emerging Markets Total Return Net Index (CAD)

2% FTSE Canada 30 Day TBill Index

The broad-based indexes are as follows:

Broad-based index 1 – FTSE Canada Universe Bond Index
Broad-based index 2 – S&P/TSX Capped Composite Total Return Index

	Past Year	Past 3 Years	Past 5 Years	Past 10 Years	Since Inception
Series A	10.4	2.5	5.6	4.9	_
Benchmark	12.8	3.9	7.4	7.1	_
Broad-based index 1	6.7	-2.8	1.3	2.4	_
Broad-based index 2	11.8	9.6	11.3	7.6	-
Series F	11.5	3.5	6.7	_	5.8
Benchmark	12.8	3.9	7.4	_	6.7
Broad-based index 1	6.7	-2.8	1.3	_	1.1
Broad-based index 2	11.8	9.6	11.3	-	8.7

The returns of each series may vary because of differences in management fees and expenses. Benchmark and/or broad-based index returns do not include any costs of investing. See Management Discussion of Fund Performance for a discussion of performance relative to benchmark and/or broad-based indexes.

Series F units have been available for sale to unitholders since July 4, 2016.

Inception dates are not provided for series that have been in existence for more than 10 years.

Advisor Series units with a deferred sales charge option were re-designated as Series A units effective April 11, 2022.

## INDEX DESCRIPTIONS

FTSE Canada Universe Bond Index This index is designed as a broad measure of the Canadian investment-grade fixed-income market and includes bonds with maturities of at least one year.

S&P 500 Total Return Index (CAD) This index is a capitalization-weighted index measuring the Canadian-dollar performance of 500 widely held common stocks representing all major industries in the United States. The index gives investors a broad measure of the overall performance of the U.S. stock market.

S&P/TSX Capped Composite Total Return Index This index is the amended capitalization-weighted index measuring the performance of selected securities listed on the Toronto Stock Exchange, with no individual stock exceeding 10% of the overall weight.

MSCI EAFE Total Return Net Index (CAD) This index is a broad measure of the Canadian-dollar performance of stocks from developed equity markets covering countries in Europe, Australasia and the Far East. The net total return index reinvests dividends after the deduction of withholding taxes, using (for international indexes) a tax rate applicable to non-resident institutional investors who do not benefit from double taxation treaties.

MSCI Emerging Markets Total Return Net Index (CAD) This index is a broad measure of the Canadian-dollar performance of emerging-market equities. As of May 2010, the index consisted of the following 21 emerging-market country indexes: Brazil, Chile, China, Colombia, Czech Republic, Egypt, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Mexico, Morocco, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Russia, South Africa, South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand and Turkey. The net total return index reinvests dividends after the deduction of withholding taxes, using (for international indexes) a tax rate applicable to non-resident institutional investors who do not benefit from double taxation treaties. FTSE Canada 30 Day TBill Index This index is a measure of the performance of Canadian short-term cash investments.

#### **SUMMARY OF INVESTMENT PORTFOLIO**

(after consideration of derivative products, if any) As at December 31, 2023

#### **Investment Mix**

	% of Net Asset Value
Fixed Income Funds	39.1
United States Equity Funds	24.7
International Equity Funds	20.4
Canadian Equity Funds	15.1
Cash/Other	0.7

## Top 25 Holdings\*

% of Net A	sset Value
NBI International High Conviction Equity Private Portfolio	15.5
Fidelity U.S. Focused Stock Fund	13.5
RBC Global Corporate Bond Fund - Series O	9.1
RBC Bond Fund - Series O	7.4
Phillips, Hager & North Total Return Bond Fund - Series O	7.2
Phillips, Hager & North U.S. Multi-Style All-Cap Equity Fund - Series 0	6.9
RBC Canadian Equity Fund - Series 0	5.4
RBC Canadian Dividend Fund - Series 0	4.6
TD U.S. Mid-Cap Growth Fund	4.3
Franklin Bissett Canadian Equity Fund	3.9
RBC Emerging Markets Equity Fund - Series 0	3.6
Phillips, Hager & North Short Term Bond & Mortgage Fund - Series 0	3.3
BlueBay Global Monthly Income Bond Fund - Series O	2.2
RBC Global Bond Fund - Series O	2.2
Phillips, Hager & North High Yield Bond Fund - Series O	2.2
BlueBay Global Investment Grade Corporate Bond Fund (Canada) -	
Series 0	1.8
BlueBay European High Yield Bond Fund (Canada) - Series O	1.4
BlueBay Global Sovereign Bond Fund (Canada) - Series O	1.3
IA Clarington Canadian Small Cap Fund - Series I	1.2
Cash & Cash Equivalents	0.7
RBC Emerging Markets Small-Cap Equity Fund - Series 0	0.7
RBC Emerging Markets Dividend Fund - Series 0	0.6
RBC Canadian Money Market Fund - Series 0	0.5
RBC Global High Yield Bond Fund - Series O	0.5
Total	100.0

<sup>\*</sup> The Fund holds fewer than 25 holdings.

The Summary of Investment Portfolio may change due to ongoing portfolio transactions of the Fund and a quarterly update is available at www.rbcgam.com/regulatorydocuments.

The Simplified Prospectus and other information about the underlying funds are available on the investment fund's designated website and on SEDAR+ at www.sedarplus.ca.