

REPORT

of Fund Performance for the year ended December 31, 2022

**EQUITY FUNDS** 

FÉRIQUE Canadian Equity Fund

This Annual Management Report of Fund Performance contains financial highlights but does not contain the complete annual financial statements of the Funds that you hold. You can get a copy of the annual financial statements at your request, and at no cost, by calling Services d'investissement FÉRIQUE's client services at 514-788-6485 (toll-free 1-800-291-0337), by writing at Gestion FÉRIQUE, Place du Canada, 1010 de La Gauchetière Street West, Suite 1400, Montréal, Québec H3B 2N2, or by visiting our website at ferique.com or SEDAR at sedar.com. You 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 and quarterly portfolio disclosure.

There may be management fees and expenses associated with an investment in a mutual fund. Management expense ratios vary from one year to another. Please read the Prospectus before investing. Mutual funds are not guaranteed or covered by the Canada Deposit Insurance Corporation or another government deposit insurer. Their values fluctuate frequently and past performance may not be repeated.

A Note on Forward-looking Statements

This report may contain forward-looking statements about the Funds, their future performance, strategies or prospects, and possible future Fund actions. The words "may", "could", "should", "suspect", "outlook", "believe", "plan", "anticipate", "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 Funds 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 Funds. 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

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

in laws and regulations, judicial or regulatory judgments, legal proceedings and catastrophic events.

and are provided in good faith but without legal responsibility.

As at December 31, 2022

# Management Discussion of Fund Performance

### **Investment Objective and Strategies**

The FÉRIQUE Canadian Equity Fund seeks to maximize the total return through capital appreciation rather than income maximization. The value of the capital thus varies and the investment horizon is long-term. For this purpose, the portfolio is essentially composed of all classes and categories of common shares.

Money is mainly invested in all classes of common shares of Canadian corporations listed on a stock exchange, as well as in convertible bonds, preferred shares, income trusts, rights, exchange-traded funds and warrants.

The FÉRIQUE Canadian Equity Fund is managed by two portfolio sub-managers who use different styles, namely Connor, Clark & Lunn Investment Management Ltd. (CC&L), which manages 60% of the portfolio; as well as Franklin Templeton Investments Corp. (Franklin Templeton), which manages 40% of the portfolio.

CC&L's approach consists in identifying opportunities stemming from divergences between the results of its fundamental analyses and current market expectations. It uses detailed macroeconomic and bottom-up analyses to adjust sector and capitalization allocations.

The other portfolio sub-manager, Franklin Templeton, aims to discover well-managed companies with long-term success derived from their sustainable business model. The team believes that these companies will provide stable earnings and dividend growth thereby contributing to an increase in the stocks' prices. The investment process is centred on research and focuses on superior return on equity and financial health, as well as steady and above-average income, and earnings and cash flow growth throughout the cycle.

#### Risk

The risks of investing in the Fund remain the same as those described in the Prospectus. This Fund is intended for investors with a medium risk tolerance who want to invest in the long term. It can also be used as the core equity component of a diversified investment portfolio.

### **Results of Operations**

The FÉRIQUE Canadian Equity Fund posted a net return of -2.4% for the fiscal year ended December 31, 2022. Its benchmark, the S&P/TSX Composite Index, posted -5.8% for the same period. Contrary to benchmark returns, which include no investment fees, Fund returns are expressed net of management and operating expenses payable by the Fund.

On a relative basis, the Fund outperformed its industry median<sup>1</sup>, which posted -5.2%, net of management fees for the fiscal year.

#### CC&L

The past year was a challenging period for equity markets as a result of decades-high inflation, the most aggressive interest rate hiking cycle in a generation and the largest armed conflict in Europe since World War II. These factors prompted recession fears, causing the S&P/TSX Composite Index to decline 5.8% in 2022.

The portfolio delivered negative returns but outperformed its benchmark. Stock selection drove performance and sector positioning detracted slightly. Stock selection in the Financials, Information Technology, Utilities and Energy sectors contributed to relative returns.

Overweight positions in stocks with strong fundamentals were the key driver of relative performance. Within the Financials sector, the overweight to property and casualty insurers Definity Financial Corporation and Intact Financial Corporation contributed to relative performance. In Information Technology, the portfolio's overweight to defensive companies such as Constellation Software and Descartes Systems Group was rewarded. Within the Energy sector, an overweight to natural gas producers Tourmaline Oil and ARC Resources added value. However, the positive stock selection was counterbalanced by the underweight allocation to the sector, as it was the top performer in the market in 2022.

Given the year's macroeconomic events, the portfolio sub-manager shifted the portfolio toward more defensive companies that can thrive in a high-inflation, slow growth environment. During the year, the portfolio sub-manager downgraded its economic growth outlook, albeit off high levels, to factor in the increased risk of a recession caused by rising geopolitical tensions, surging inflation and very restrictive monetary policy. The portfolio sub-manager increased the allocations to defensive sectors like Utilities, Consumer Staples and Communication Services and reduced exposure to cyclical ones, such as Financials and Materials. It decreased the underweight to the Energy sector to reflect a change in outlook caused by soaring energy prices. This was the most significant change made to the portfolio's sector allocation during the year. Natural gas producers have lower ESG risk and a 40% smaller carbon footprint compared to traditional oil producers. The portfolio sub-manager sees natural gas as a transition fuel that will allow the world to move to cleaner sources with a lower carbon footprint than traditional oil producers. As a result, additions to the portfolio in the Energy sector were focused on natural gas-exposed companies regardless of their valuation multiples (above-average valuation multiples are acceptable due to the companies' lower ESG risk).

### Franklin Templeton

The portfolio's large allocation to cyclical value stocks and defensive non-cyclical stocks with above-average fundamentals and valuation profiles contributed considerably to relative outperformance.

Security selection and sector allocation significantly bolstered relative returns. Security selection of select holdings within the Information Technology and Energy sectors helped the most, but was partially offset by some holdings in Financials.

More specifically, positions in ARC Resources, Tourmaline Oil and Suncor Energy in the Energy sector added substantial value. Other notable contributors included Metro and Alimentation Couche-Tard in Consumer Staples, as well as Dollarama in Consumer Discretionary. Conversely, Brookfield Corporation in Financials and Open Text in Information Technology were among the main detractors.

From a sector allocation standpoint, the Fund's positioning in Information Technology and overweight to outperforming Consumer Staples sector helped returns, but were partially offset by the underweight to the outperforming Materials sector.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Source: Median return of similar funds according to Fundata, as at December 31, 2022.

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The portfolio sub-manager saw investment opportunities to rebalance the portfolio during the year. Taking advantage of the relative weakness or strength in share price and of the recent outperformance of Energy holdings to sell on strength, Franklin Templeton added five new positions to the portfolio. The portfolio sub-manager introduced positions in TELUS International and Kinaxis in Information Technology, FirstService Corporation in Real Estate and in Brookfield Asset Management and Brookfield Corporation in Financials. These additions were funded by rebalancing the portfolio and liquidating four holdings (Total Energy Services in Energy, Lundin Mining Corporation in Materials, Rogers Communications in Communications Services and First Capital REIT in Real Estate). The portfolio sub-manager follows a low-turnover strategy but will continue to make decisive changes when opportunities arise.

By the end of the year, the largest sector allocations were to Financials, Energy, Industrials and Consumer Staples. The portfolio was most overweight to the defensive, non-cyclical Consumer Staples sector and meaningfully overweight to the Information Technology sector following the addition of new holdings and the substantial drop in the sector's benchmark weight in 2022. The Fund was most underweight to the Materials and Financials sectors.

### **Recent Developments**

#### CC&L

The portfolio sub-manager maintains a cautious stance regarding economic growth and equity market outlook over the near term. Central banks' aggressive interest rate hikes and balance sheet reductions tend to impact the economy with a certain lag. As a result, leading indicators are pointing to a deterioration of economic growth conditions. The yield curve remained inverted between 3 months and 10 years at the end of 2022. Such inversions have preceded the past four recessions.

While expectations have fallen over the past six months; corporate earnings are still predicted to grow in Canada and the United States in 2023. The portfolio sub-manager believes these forecasts are too optimistic, given the deteriorating economy.

Despite this gloomy short-term outlook, 2023 will likely be a transitional year. The portfolio sub-manager anticipates a relatively mild recession and an economic recovery that begins in late 2023.

However, if inflation stays high for longer than anticipated, central banks could be forced to aggressively tighten back their monetary policy, which would affect the portfolio's outlook for 2023.

The portfolio will remain most overweight to companies that can deliver resilient earnings growth in a high-inflation and lower-growth environment. The portfolio sub-manager also started to add marginal positions in cheaper, more cyclical companies that are predicted to outperform during the recovery. It will continue to seek such opportunities in the coming quarters.

A major secular theme for the portfolio, the world's long-term transition to net-zero carbon emissions has implications for various segments of the Canadian equity market. In the United States, the *Inflation Reduction Act* will promote spending on renewable sources of energy.

#### Franklin Templeton

Despite signs that investors are regaining confidence, North American markets continue to be affected by stubbornly high inflation, rising key interest rates and a reduction in available liquidity on markets due to central banks shrinking their balance sheet. In North America, inflation, as measured by the Consumer Price Index, peaked in June before easing up. However, central banks in developed markets were concerned by this high inflation and responded by aggressively raising their key interest rates.

The effects of high inflation and rising interest rates are slow to percolate through the economy. However, rising wages and debt servicing costs, along with a softening macroeconomic environment, could spur negative operating leverage and earnings pressure for businesses. Earnings are still expected to grow in 2023, albeit now at a slower pace. Earnings forecast may still be downgraded, as bottom-up projections customarily avoid predicting negative growth.

As a result, while the earnings forecast for 2023 may prove overly optimistic, the portfolio sub-manager believes that the portfolio's outlook is generally positive.

The portfolio sub-manager primarily focuses on defensive, non-cyclical companies, to build a high-quality, risk aware portfolio of holdings that are well positioned to get through a more challenging economic environment and to thrive during the recovery.

There was no change in the composition of the FÉRIQUE Funds Independent Review Committee (IRC) during 2022. The mandate of Mr. Jude Martineau, Chairman of the IRC will end on March 31, 2023. Ms. Louise Sanscartier was appointed as Interim Chairman of the IRC for the period April 1, 2023 to June 9, 2023 and Mr. Yves Frenette was appointed as an IRC member for a three-year term beginning April 1, 2023.

### **Related Party Transactions**

The Manager of the Fund is Gestion FÉRIQUE, a not-for-profit organization. Gestion FÉRIQUE receives management fees to cover its expenses with respect to the day-to-day business and operations of the Fund, as reported under the Management Fees section. These expenses include the portfolio manager's fees, the fees relating to the marketing and distribution of the Fund, as well as the administration fees of the Manager.

Services d'investissement FÉRIQUE (SIF) is a not-for-profit subsidiary of Gestion FÉRIQUE registered as a group savings plan brokerage and financial planning firm, and acts as distributor of units of the Fund. A percentage of the management fees paid by the Fund to Gestion FÉRIQUE is used to cover the expenses of SIF with respect to its day-to-day activities.

Gestion FÉRIQUE is responsible for the operating expenses of the Fund, excluding the expenses of the Independent Review Committee and the filing fees, in return for an administration fee, as reported under the Management Fees section.

For the fiscal year ended December 31, 2022, portfolio sub-managers CC&L and Franklin Templeton did not enter into any related party transactions as it pertains to the management of the FÉRIQUE Canadian Equity Fund (\$0 as at December 31, 2021).

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### Financial Highlights

The following tables show selected key financial information about the Fund and are intended to help the reader understand the Fund's financial performance for the accounting periods shown.

	Years ended				
Net Assets per Unit <sup>(1)(5)</sup>	Dec. 31 2022 (12 months)	Dec. 31 2021 (12 months)	Dec. 31 2020 (12 months)	Dec. 31 2019 (12 months)	Dec. 31 2018 (12 months)
	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Net assets, beginning of accounting period (4)	92.67	78.26	74.15	61.62	70.55
Increase (decrease) from operations					
Total revenues	2.84	2.33	2.11	1.97	1.82
Total expenses	(1.01)	(1.03)	(0.83)	(0.82)	(0.77)
Realized gains (losses)	6.59	7.88	0.71	1.50	0.83
Unrealized gains (losses)	(10.45)	11.33	3.53	10.98	(9.14)
Total increase (decrease) from operations (2)	(2.03)	20.51	5.52	13.63	(7.26)
Distributions					
From dividends	1.56	0.95	1.09	0.98	1.04
From capital gains	4.75	5.18	_	_	0.50
Total annual distributions (3)	6.31	6.13	1.09	0.98	1.54
Net assets, end of accounting period (4)	84.12	92.67	78.26	74.15	61.62

<sup>(1)</sup> This information is derived from the Fund's Annual Audited Financial Statements. The net assets per unit presented in the financial statements could differ from the net asset value calculated for fund pricing purposes. The differences are explained in the notes to the financial statements.

<sup>(5)</sup> In this document, the word "units" indicates Series A units.

	Years ended Years				
Ratios and Supplemental Data	Dec. 31 2022 (12 months)	Dec. 31 2021 (12 months)	Dec. 31 2020 (12 months)	Dec. 31 2019 (12 months)	Dec. 31 2018 (12 months)
Net asset value (in thousands of \$) <sup>(1)</sup>	645,294	704,826	557,334	522,284	455,243
Number of units outstanding (1)	7,670,851	7,605,533	7,121,159	7,043,822	7,387,798
Management expense ratio (%) <sup>(2)</sup>	1.05	1.10	1.10	1.10	1.05
Management expense ratio before waivers					
or absorptions by the Manager (%)	1.05	1.10	1.10	1.10	1.05
Portfolio turnover rate (%)(3)	51.82	40.56	52.58	40.13	48.77
Trading expense ratio (%)(4)	0.06	0.05	0.08	0.06	0.08
Net asset value per unit (\$)	84.12	92.67	78.26	74.15	61.62

<sup>(1)</sup> This information is provided as at December 31 for the comparative accounting periods.

### **Management Fees**

Fees payable by the Fund include management fees and operating charges. Operating charges are made up of administration fees and Fund expenses. Management and administration fees are calculated and credited daily and paid monthly.

Management fees include, among others, the portfolio manager's and/or sub-manager's fees, the fees relating to the marketing and distribution of the Fund and the Manager's administration fees.

Administration fees include, among others, registrar custodian fees and fiduciary fees, expenses relating to accounting and valuation of the Fund, auditors' and legal advisors' fees and reporting fees

to unitholders. Fund expenses are made up of regulatory filing fees and expenses of the Independent Review Committee.

For the year, annualized management fees charged to the Fund before government taxes amounted to 0.91% and are detailed as follows:

Management fees: 0.84%Administration fees: 0.07%

<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 weighted average number of units outstanding during the accounting period. This table is not intended to show a reconciliation between net assets per unit at the beginning and at the end of 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 International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS).

<sup>(2)</sup> Management expense ratio is based on total expenses for the stated accounting period (excluding commissions, other portfolio transaction costs and withholding taxes on dividend income) and is expressed as an annualized percentage of the daily average net asset value during the accounting period.

<sup>(3)</sup> The Fund's portfolio turnover rate indicates how actively the Fund's portfolio 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 during the accounting period. The higher a Fund's portfolio turnover rate in the accounting period, the greater the trading costs payable by the Fund during the accounting period, and the greater the chance of an investor receiving taxable capital gains during the accounting period. There is not necessarily a relationship between a high turnover rate and the Fund's performance.

<sup>(4)</sup> The trading expense ratio represents total commissions and other portfolio transaction costs expressed as an annualized percentage of the daily average net asset value during the accounting period.

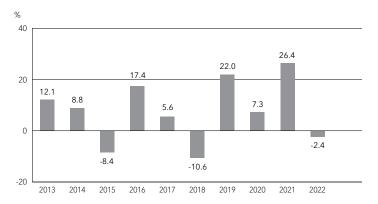
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### Past Performance

The performance information assumes that all distributions made by the Fund in the periods shown were reinvested in additional securities of the Fund. The information does not take into account purchase, redemption, investment or other optional charges that would have reduced returns or performance. The Fund's past performance is not necessarily indicative of how it will perform in the future.

#### **Annual Returns**

The bar chart shows the Fund's annual 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 December 31 of each financial year or on the last day of the year.



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

	1 year	3 years	5 years	10 years
FÉRIQUE Canadian Equity	(2.4)	9.8	7.6	7.2
S&P/TSX Composite Index	(5.8)	7.5	6.8	7.7
Median*	(5.2)	6.5	5.4	7.2

<sup>\*</sup> Median return of all investment funds of the same category according

### **S&P/TSX Composite Index**

The S&P/TSX Composite Index is the benchmark index used for the entire medium and large capitalization Canadian market securities. This index is the most diversified in Canada, representing close to 90% of market capitalization of all Canadian corporations listed on the Toronto Stock Exchange.

### Comparison with the Index

The Fund posted a net return of -2.4% for the fiscal year ended December 31, 2022, compared to -5.8% for its benchmark index. Contrary to benchmark returns, which include no investment fees, Fund returns are expressed net of management and operating expenses payable by the Fund.

### Portfolio Overview

The Top 25 Holdings in the Portfolio	% of net asset value	
Royal Bank of Canada	6.6	
Toronto-Dominion Bank	5.7	
Canadian National Railway Co.	4.0	
Canadian Pacific Railway Co.	3.6	
Brookfield Corp.	3.2	
Alimentation Couche-Tard Inc.	3.1	
Bank of Montreal	2.9	
Agnico-Eagle Mines Ltd.	2.9	
Canadian Natural Resources Ltd.	2.6	
TELUS Corp.	2.5	
Enbridge Inc.	2.3	
Cash, Money Market and Other Net Assets	2.3	
Waste Connections Inc.	2.2	
Scotiabank	2.1	
Suncor Energy Inc.	1.7	
CGI Group Inc., Class A	1.7	
Nutrien Ltd.	1.7	
Fortis Inc.	1.6	
TC Energy Corp.	1.6	
Tourmaline Oil Corp.	1.6	
Dollarama Inc.	1.6	
ARC Resources Ltd.	1.5	
Constellation Software Inc.	1.5	
Franco-Nevada Corp.	1.4	
Metro Inc.	1.4	
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Weighting by Sector	% of net asset value	
Financials	28.2	
Energy	16.4	
Industrials	14.7	
Materials	8.6	
Consumer Staples	8.3	
Information Technology	6.8	
Communication Services	4.7	
Utilities	4.6	
Consumer Discretionary	3.8	
Cash, Money Market and Other Net Assets	2.3	
Real Estate	1.4	
Health Care	0.2	
Net Asset Value	\$645,293,697	

63.3

The allocation of the portfolio may vary due to the transactions carried out by the Fund. A quarterly update is available.

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### Other Material Information

The S&P/TSX Composite Index ("Index(es)") and associated data are a product of S&P Dow Jones Indices LLC, its affiliates and/or their licensors and has been licensed for use by Gestion FÉRIQUE® 2023 S&P Dow Jones Indices LLC, its affiliates and/or their licensors. All rights reserved. Redistribution or reproduction in whole or in part are prohibited without written permission of S&P Dow Jones Indices LLC. For more information on any of S&P Dow Jones Indices LLC's indices please visit www.spdji.com. S&P® is a registered trademark of Standard & Poor's Financial Services LLC ("SPFS") and Dow Jones® is a registered trademark of Dow Jones Trademark Holdings LLC ("Dow Jones"). Neither S&P Dow Jones Indices LLC, SPFS, Dow Jones, their affiliates nor their licensors ("S&P DJI") make any representation or warranty, express or implied, as to the ability of any index to accurately represent the asset class or market sector that it purports to represent and S&P DJI shall have no liability for any errors, omissions, or interruptions of any index or the data included therein.

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Additional information about the Funds is available in the Funds' Prospectus, Annual Information Form, Fund Facts and Financial Statements.

You may obtain a copy of these documents, free of charge and on demand:

- by contacting the Manager, Gestion FÉRIQUE, at 514-840-9206 (toll-free at 1-888-259-7969);
- by contacting the Principal Distributor,
   Services d'investissement FÉRIQUE at 514-788-6485 (toll-free at 1-800-291-0337) or client@ferique.com;
- by visiting ferique.com or sedar.com.