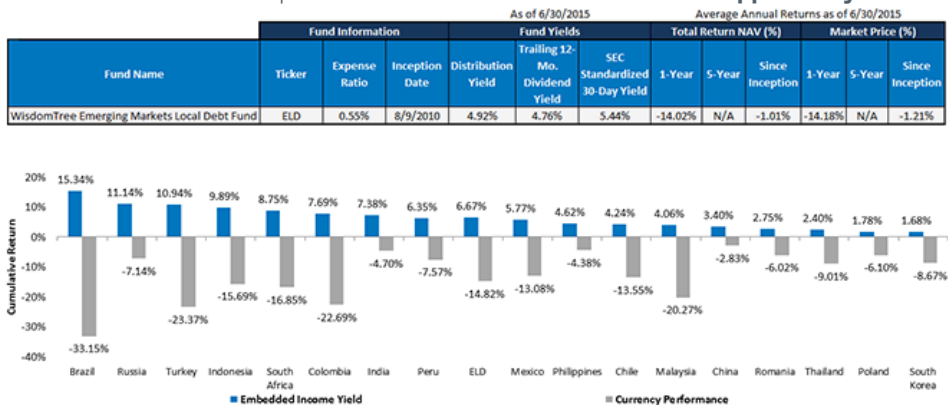


# EMERGING MARKET DEBT: DOWN BUT NOT OUT

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10/01/2015

**What Took Emerging Market Debt Down in 2015?** In a word, currency. If we look at the performance of the [J.P. Morgan GBI-EM Global Diversified Index](#) —an important benchmark for emerging market debt in local currency—it was down 14.86% through September 25, 2015. The currency impact was 16.23% over this period, meaning that the return on the locally denominated bonds themselves was actually positive.<sup>1</sup> While there is no question that these currencies can be [volatile](#) and difficult to predict, the bonds themselves could have some attractive [valuation](#) characteristics. So how do we capitalize on this potential? At WisdomTree, we’ve been managing a structured [active](#) approach for our [Emerging Markets Local Debt Fund \(ELD\)](#) for more than five years, because we think that country [fundamentals](#) are better indicators of potential opportunities in these markets. Similar to what we saw in the J.P. Morgan index above, ELD’s return at [net asset value \(NAV\)](#) year-to-date through September 25, 2015, was -13.17%, but the impact of currency was -14.82%, meaning that ELD’s underlying bond positions—in local currency terms—were also positive. **We Asked Ourselves Two Simple Questions: 1. How far have the emerging market currencies in ELD declined against the U.S. dollar thus far in 2015?** Simply put, greater declines mean these moves may have reflected more risks. **2. What do the country positions in ELD show in terms of potential income generation, with their [embedded income yields](#) being one specific measurement?** While by no means the only (or a perfect) measure, this metric does lend itself to thinking about relative valuation potential in these markets. **The Yield Opportunity in Emerging Market Fixed Income**



Sources: WisdomTree, Bloomberg; with data on embedded income yield as of 9/25/2015, and data on currency performance for the period from 12/31/2014 to 9/25/2015.

Performance is historical and does not guarantee future results. Current performance may be lower or higher than quoted. Investment returns and principal value of an investment will fluctuate so that an investor’s shares, when redeemed, may be worth more or less than their original cost. Performance data for the most recent month-end is available at [www.wisdomtree.com](http://www.wisdomtree.com).

WisdomTree shares are bought and sold at market price (not NAV) and are not individually redeemed from the Fund. Total returns are calculated using the daily 4:00 p.m. EST net asset value (NAV). Market price returns reflect the midpoint of the bid/ask spread as of the close of trading on the exchange where Fund shares are listed. Market price returns do not represent the returns you would receive if you traded shares at other times.

Below, we comment on the performance environment that we’ve seen from December 31, 2014, to September 25, 2015, nearly three-quarters of the

way through the year:

- **Brazil Stands Out:** The recent downgrade by Standard & Poor's<sup>2</sup> that pushed Brazil's sovereign credit rating below [investment grade](#) is only a single item on a list of issues plaguing Brazil this year. The currency has lost approximately one-third of its value against the U.S. dollar. However, the positions in ELD show an embedded income yield of more than 15%. It is impossible to say whether the currency will depreciate further, but the fact of the matter is that this potential income is very high—and the reason that it gets this high is to compensate investors for perceived risk.
- **ELD at 6.67%:** The embedded income yield of the aggregate ELD portfolio is 6.67%. The journey to this point in 2015 has included a currency depreciation of -14.82%, as stated above, but the truth of the matter is that in the current environment, any measure of potential income above 6.5% is not without significant risk.

**U.S. Federal Reserve Remains "on Hold"** We now know that the Fed did not raise [rates](#) at its September policy meeting. Does that mean emerging market currencies remain challenged for the rest of the year? Since the vast majority of emerging market exposure—both within equities and within fixed income—is not [currency hedged](#), this is a major issue that can impact most emerging market investments. Recently we spoke with [Western Asset Management's head of emerging market debt](#), and he thought the most value in various emerging market debt asset classes was in this [local currency sovereign](#) market. Fears of the Fed rate hike—whenever it may come—may largely already have been anticipated and accounted for with the sharp falls the currencies have already experienced. For those positioning for a stronger U.S. dollar versus developed market currencies such as the euro and the yen, adding emerging market currency exposure on either the debt or equity side could offer a nice complement and diversifying element to those stronger-dollar-oriented portfolio allocations. [Click here to view WisdomTree Emerging Markets Local Debt Fund \(ELD\) prospectus.](#)

<sup>1</sup>Sources: Bloomberg, JP Morgan; with data measured from 12/31/14 to 9/25/15. <sup>2</sup>Source: Joe Leahy, "S&P Cuts Brazil's Credit Rating to Junk," Financial Times, 9/10/15.

#### Important Risks Related to this Article

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Fixed income investments are subject to interest rate risk; their value will normally decline as interest rates rise. In addition, when interest rates fall, income may decline. Fixed income investments are also subject to credit risk, the risk that the issuer of a bond will fail to pay interest and principal in a timely manner or that negative perceptions of the issuer's ability to make such payments will cause the price of that bond to decline. Unlike typical exchange-traded funds, there is no index that the Fund attempts to track or replicate. Thus, the ability of the Fund to achieve its objective will depend on the effectiveness of the portfolio manager. Due to the investment strategy of this Fund, it may make higher capital gain distributions than other ETFs.

Diversification does not eliminate the risk of experiencing investment losses. Hedging can help returns when a foreign currency depreciates against the U.S. dollar, but can hurt when the foreign currency appreciates against the U.S. dollar.

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For standardized performance and the most recent month-end performance click [here](#) NOTE, this material is intended for electronic use only. Individuals who intend to print and physically deliver to an investor must print the monthly performance report to accompany this blog.

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## DEFINITIONS

**JP Morgan Government Bond Index – Emerging Markets (GBI-EM) Global Diversified** : The JP Morgan GBI EM Global Diversified tracks the performance of local currency debt issued by emerging market governments, whose debt is accessible by most of the international investor base. The index incorporates a constrained market-capitalization methodology in which individual issuer exposures are capped at 10%, (with the excess distributed to smaller issuers) for greater diversification among issuing governments.

**Volatility** : A measure of the dispersion of actual returns around a particular average level.&nbsp;nbsp;.

**Valuation** : Refers to metrics that relate financial statistics for equities to their price levels to determine if certain attributes, such as earnings or dividends, are cheap or expensive.

**Active** : Funds that attempt to outperform the market by selecting securities a portfolio manager believe to be the best.

**Net Asset Value (NAV)** : The calculated assets minus liabilities divided by shares outstanding. NAV is the straightforward account of the actual assets in the fund.

**Embedded Income Yield** : Represents the annualized rate of return generated by a fund's investments in both fixed income securities and derivatives exclusive of interest rate changes and movement in foreign exchange spot rates. The calculation is intended to capture the Fund's potential to earn income return over the following year given current holdings and market conditions. The embedded income yield will differ from the portfolio's yield to maturity, due to the incorporation of derivatives in the embedded income yield. Embedded income yield and portfolio yield to maturity may differ from a Fund's actual distribution and SEC yield and do not reflect Fund expenses.

**Investment Grade** : A rating given to a municipal or corporate bond. It is a relatively favorable rating by either Moody's or Standard & Poor's indicating a higher chance an issuer performs interest and principal obligations as promised by the terms of the debt issuance.

**Rate Hike** : refers to an increase in the policy rate set by a central bank. In the U.S., this generally refers to the Federal Funds Target Rate.

**Currency hedging** : Strategies designed to mitigate the impact of currency performance on investment returns.

**Local currency sovereigns** : debt denominated in local currencies issued by an emerging market government.