

Goal-Based Investing Index Series- Highlights

October 2018 Highlights

- In each index series, the GHP replicates a Goal Price Index, so the negative returns posted by Goal Price Indices translate into equally negative returns for the various GHPs. This happened in September, with all GHPs displaying negative returns. The most negative returns are those of the GHPs with the longest duration, that is the highest exposure to interest rate risk: the GHP for retirement income starting in 2058 had a return of -9.32% , versus -2.54% for the 2023 GHP;
- Equities in the PSP have displayed positive performance over the summer, with a return of 7.76% from the beginning of July to the beginning of October (7.77% for the S&P 500 with dividends reinvested), although the rise is slowing down, with a return of 0.96% in September (0.94% for the S&P 500). Since the beginning of the year, the PSP has grown by 11.10% (10.97% for the S&P 500);
- The dynamic investment policy implemented in the Goal-Based Investing Indices commands a higher allocation to equities when the PSP outperforms the GHP, and conversely, a lower allocation when it underperforms. In view of the outperformance of the PSP with respect to the GHP over the past months, the dynamic portfolios are now mainly invested in the PSP. This is especially true for the most distant retirement dates for two reasons: first, these strategies have by design a higher allocation to equities, like standard target date funds, and second, the return spread between the PSP and the GHP is higher for these indices than for the short-maturity ones. For retirement in 2038 or after, all strategies are now fully invested in the PSP, so the September performance of these indices coincides with that of the PSP;
- If good PSP performance were to persist in the next few months and interest rates were to rise again, the dynamic strategies would remain largely invested in the PSP until January 2019, where the allocation will be revised for all indices and will be set back to the allocation of a target date fund;
- Recent outperformance of the PSP with respect to the GHPs has resulted in outperformance of each Goal-Based Investing Index with respect to its GHP between January 2018 and October 2018. The natural benchmark for each index is its GHP, and outperformance of the index means that an investor who would have entered the dynamic strategy would have seen an increase in the purchasing power of his/her savings in terms of replacement income or retirement wealth;
- This recent outperformance also implies good probabilities of reaching aspirational goals, which are levels of replacement income or retirement wealth greater than 100% of the initial purchasing power. For all investors retiring in 2028 or later, the probability of increasing the initial purchasing power by 30% at least is greater than 70% . Investors who have more time to retirement and plan to retire in 2038 have more than 80% chances of seeing an increase by 50% or more.

July 2018 Highlights

- Since January 2018, the PSP (the equity portfolio) has outperformed all GHPs (replicating the Goal Price Indices). As a result, and in line with the rule-based allocation policy, all indices have a substantial allocation to the PSP, but the effect is more pronounced for long horizons, because equity allocation tends to increase with the horizon, like in standard target date funds: the 2023 indices for an income goal have 53.3% in PSP, the 2038 ones have 86.0% and the 2058 ones are 100% invested in PSP. These numbers will not decrease significantly until market conditions change and feature rising bond prices and falling equity prices;
- In June, however, the PSP posted a slightly negative return of -0.15% , while GHPs had positive returns (e.g., 2.53% for the 2038 index for an income goal). As a result, indices had either small positive or negative returns (e.g., -0.15% for the 2058 index for an income goal, and 0.19% for the 2023 index). Negative returns were posted by those with the heaviest PSP allocation, i.e. by those with the longest horizons;
- Probabilities of reaching aspirational goals are very close for the index and for the deterministic target date fund, meaning that these strategies are close in terms of upside potential. But the indices have much greater probabilities of respecting the annual loss objective, especially over long horizons: the 2058 target date fund has only a 19% chance of respecting this goal when the goal is expressed in terms of replacement income.

A Few Keys to Understand Index Values

- These indices represent the value of a dynamic portfolio strategy invested in a performance-seeking portfolio (PSP) and a goal-hedging portfolio (GHP). The GHP replicates the performance of a Goal Price Index;
- Each Goal-Based Investing Index has the same characteristics (wealth or income objective and retirement year) as the Goal Price Index that its GHP replicates;
- By construction, and because the annual cost-of-living-adjustment (COLA) is constant (2% per year), an index for a wealth goal with COLA has exactly the same performance as the index with the same characteristics (wealth objective and retirement year) but with no COLA;
- The PSP is taken to be the a broad equity index, namely the US cap-weighted index calculated by ERI Scientific Beta;
- Together with index values, the website reports the index composition (past and current) and the estimated probabilities for the index to reach “aspirational goals”, defined as levels of retirement wealth or replacement income that an individual was unable to secure with his/her resources in January 2018 but that he/she expects to reach by retirement if markets perform sufficiently well;
- Probabilities are also reported for a deterministic target date fund invested in equities and a standard bond portfolio.

About the EDHEC-Princeton Goal-Based Investing Index Series

The EDHEC-Princeton Goal-Based Investing Index Series is a joint initiative of EDHEC-Risk Institute and the Operations Research and Financial Engineering (ORFE) Department of Princeton University which aims to promote the use of state-of-the-art goal-based investing principles in retirement investing. At the start of this initiative is the recognition that none of the existing “retirement products” provides a completely satisfying answer to the threefold need for security, flexibility and upside potential. Annuities offer security, but at the cost of fees and surrender charges. Target date funds have more moderate costs and they have growth potential, but they offer no guarantee in terms of wealth at the horizon or in terms of replacement income. This is a concern because the evolution of accounting and prudential regulations have led to a massive shift from defined-benefit pension to defined-contribution pension schemes across the world, implying a transfer of retirement risks from corporations to individuals.

To foster interest in the investment industry for the launch of new forms of retirement investment *solutions*, EDHEC-Risk Institute has partnered with Princeton University’s ORFE department to launch the EDHEC-Princeton Retirement Goal-Based Investing Index series. The first family of indices, called the Retirement Goal Price Index series, represents the price of \$1 of retirement wealth or \$1 of replacement income per year. This number, which is available for a range of retirement dates, can be used to evaluate the purchasing power of savings in terms of retirement wealth or retirement income and answer the question: are my savings sufficient to secure my wealth or income objective? The second family, the actual Retirement Goal-Based Investing Index series, represents the performance of improved forms of target date funds invested in a goal-hedging portfolio (GHP) and a performance-seeking portfolio (PSP). The role of the GHP is to replicate changes in the price of retirement wealth or replacement income, i.e. to replicate the performance of a Goal Price Index. The PSP is introduced to have a chance to increase the purchasing power of savings, which will happen in effect if the PSP outperforms the GHP. If it underperforms, the allocation policy implemented in the improved target date fund ensures that short-term losses in purchasing power are limited in size: in the Index series, the cap is set to 20% per year. In a nutshell, the investment rule is to increase the percentage allocation to the PSP as long as it performs well with respect to the GHP and to reduce it when the situation reverses.

To design the EDHEC-Princeton Goal-Based Investing Index series, EDHEC-Risk Institute has built on its expertise in the fields of asset-liability management and goal-based investing. This expertise has been developed since the Institute’s foundation in 2001 through a number of partnerships with prestigious industry players, including notably the leading provider of comprehensive wealth management and investment services Merrill Lynch, who supported a research chair on goals-based wealth management. The values of the indices are published on EDHEC-Risk Institute website at

<https://risk.edhec.edu/indices-investment-solutions>

Also available on the website are research papers on goal-based investing and its application to the retirement problem, the detailed construction rules of the indices and a number of articles published in the general or the financial press.