



EM Alpha

Frontier carry trades are alive: sell 3m **USDUZS NDF**

Short USDUZS: the carry looks attractive

We go short USDUZS through 3m NDF (open: 12,674, target: 12,374, stop: 12,902, carry: circa 0.8% per month). The spot reference is 12,374. The risk is an earlier-thananticipated devaluation of the UZS. The USDUZS NDF market is illiquid, so we plan to hold our NDF position until maturity. We select a 3m NDF because: 1) we have more conviction in UZS stability over the next 3 months; and 2) the 1m and 2m NDFs do not offer enough carry to enter the trade.

UZS: devaluation under control, at least for now

We reiterate our view that that the authorities will likely continue to keep the UZS on a steady 4-5% annual devaluation track, which we view as part of a longer-term transition to a 5% inflation target. We admit there is a lingering risk of 5-10% one-off exchange rate adjustments in case of any major external shocks. However, we also note that after the latest 5% adjustment in 3Q23, the risk of another move appears low, at least over the next few months.

Recovering RUB reduces devaluation pressures on UZS

The August devaluation coincided with the USDRUB approaching the psychological level of 100. The World Bank estimated that Russia accounted for close to 80% of total personal remittances to Uzbekistan in 2023. Therefore, a weak RUB may weigh on Uzbekistan's current account through the negative impact on flows of personal remittances, which cumulatively accounted for nearly 18% of GDP in inflows last year. However, with the RUB recovering by about 10% off its 2023 lows, pressure for another round of devaluation should be relatively low.

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GEM FI & FX Strategy **Emerging Markets Global**

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For a list of open trade recommendations and trade recommendations closed in the last 12 months, see Global Emerging Markets Weekly: 1,000 investors - no consensus 08 December 2023

Abbreviations

NDF is non-deliverable forward

UZS is Uzbekistani som

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