

# Liquid Insight

## Well behaved USD

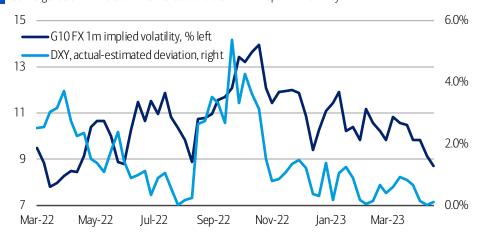
## Key takeaways

- Our fundamental and agnostic frameworks show DXY roughly in line with estimated levels and consistent with low FX volatility.
- GBP stands out as overbought due to seasonals and BoE expectations; we like to fade recent strength.
- While we are bearish NZD crosses, it screens as oversold suggesting caution on nearterm shorts.

## By Adarsh Sinha

## Chart of the Day: G10 FX volatility vs. actual/estimated DXY deviation

Convergence of DXY to estimated levels consistent withdrop in FX volatility



Source: Bloomberg, Estimated DXY change based on macro factors: 1) China – reflation PCA, 2) Fed policy – 2y rate differentials, 3) Energy prices – BCOMEN Index, 4) Global equities – MSCI World

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## USD well behaved, GBP & NZD not so much

The USD has been well behaved in a manner of speaking – both our fundamental (macro drivers) and agnostic (PCA) frameworks show the DXY index is roughly in line with estimated levels. This convergence may partly explain the drop in FX volatility this year (Chart of the Day). Within G10 FX, GBP stands out as overbought due to seasonals and BoE expectations; we like to fade recent strength. Meanwhile, commodity currencies (ex CAD) generally look oversold, especially NZD – while we are bearish, this suggests caution on near-term NZD shorts.

#### 25 April 2023

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## Liquid Insight

24-Apr-23

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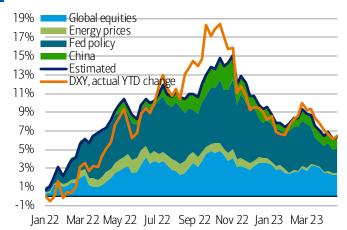
## DXY has been "well behaved", consistent with low volatility

Since 2022 we have run a simple out-of-sample exercise as a cross check for whether DXY dollar levels are consistent with its external macro drivers. This is based on a regression of weekly changes in the DXY index on 2y rate differentials, MSCI World, energy prices and China reflation sentiment. Exhibit 1 shows that even as the DXY has approaches its lows, the 2022-to-date move can be entirely attributed to these drivers.

Looking at the contributions in 2023 specifically, Exhibit 2 shows that policy differentials and equity resilience have made similar contributions to DXY depreciation, with some added impulse from the drop in energy prices. It is notable that China's contribution is effectively zero as our China reflation sentiment indicator has returned to beginning-of-2023 levels, consistent with our view that China reopening is no longer sufficiently priced in (Liquid Insight 23 March 2023). The convergence of actual vs. estimated levels of DXY may partly explain the drop in FX volatility (Chart of the Day).

## Exhibit 1: DXY index – actual vs. estimated move (& contributions) based on key drivers

2022-to-date

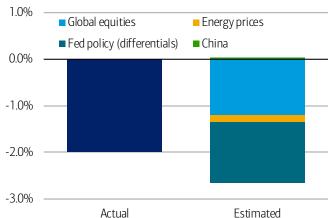


Source: Bloomberg, Note: China - reflation PCA, Fed policy - 2y rate differentials, Energy prices -BCOMEN Index, Global equities - MSCI World BofA GLOBAL RESEARCH

## 1.0%

Exhibit 2: DXY index - actual vs. estimated

2023 year-to-date



Source: Bloomberg, Note: China - reflation PCA, Fed policy - 2y rate differentials, Energy prices -BCOMEN Index, Global equities - MSCI World

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### An agnostic approach to external drivers - GBP and NZD stand out

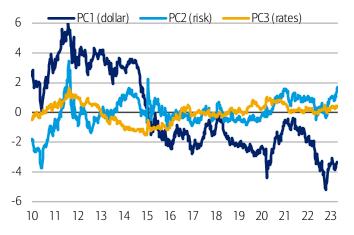
In contrast to the above approach, we also make a more agnostic assessment of recent FX moves. Specifically, we update our principal component analysis (PCA) approach to identify drivers of G10 FX. We apply PCA to G10 pairs (vs. USD), extracting three components that explain the bulk (94%) of the co-movement between the exchange rates (Exhibit 3). To the extent these are "drivers" affecting all currencies, we assume they capture external factors. Looking at simple correlations of these components with market prices allows us to infer the underlying fundamental drivers, which we have previously identified as the US dollar, risk and rates.

Exhibit 4 compares the actual vs. estimated performances of G10 pairs in 2023 year-todate, using weekly data (until 21 April). This period captures a wide range of crosscurrents for the USD. The estimated performance is out-of-sample, based on individual betas of each G10 pair (as well as the DXY index) to the three PCA components since 2010. We highlight the following key takeaways.

At an aggregate level - proxied by the DXY index - USD strength has been largely consistent with what the PCA factors would imply, similar to the more fundamental assessment above. While it is slightly weaker than the estimated move, this is largely due to its constituents – GBP, EUR, CAD are part of the DXY index but AUD, NOK & NZD are not. More generally, most currencies are within +/- 1.5pp of their estimated changes.

- GBP has exceeded its estimated move the most within G10 FX potentially driven by positive seasonals as well as residual risk of Bank of England rate hikes. However, with little evidence of foreign investors returning to fund the UK's current account deficit, our bias is to fade this resilience in the coming months (see the report GBP As good as it gets? 19 April 2023). The shifting focus from rate differentials to growth differentials as a driver of FX is likely to weigh on GBP too (see the report The growth regime for FX 11 April 2023).
- On the other hand, commodity currencies (ex CAD) have weakened by more than
  estimated, potentially reflecting the drop in commodity prices that is not obviously
  captured by the PCA factors. NZD underperformance stands out and while this is
  consistent with our fundamental view (restrictive RBNZ policy adds to downside
  growth risk), it suggests caution against selling at current levels. Indeed, NZD has
  been the best performing commodity currency so far this week.

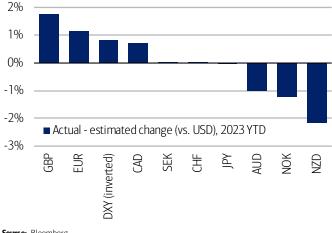
# **Exhibit 3: G10 FX - three principal components**All factors have moves in favor of weaker USD vs. G10



**Source:** Bloomberg, Note: PCA factors extracted from G10 pairs vs. USD - higher (lower) factor associated with weaker (stronger) USD.

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# **Exhibit 4: Actual vs. PCA-based changes (vs. USD), 2023 YTD** Most currencies within +/- 1.5pp of estimated performance



Source: Bloomberg

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## **Notable Rates and FX Research**

- Global Rates, FX & EM Year Ahead 2023 Year Ahead 2023: Pivot ≠ Peak, 20 Nov 2022
- Still not landing, Global FX Weekly, 21 Apr 2023
- Pushing to the Limit, Global Rates Weekly, 21 Apr 2023
- Behind last week's USD roller-coaster, Liquid Cross Border Flows, 17 Apr 2023

## Rates, FX & EM trades for 2023

For a complete list of our open trade recommendations, as well as our trade recommendations closed over the past 12 months, see the reports below:

Global FX Weekly: Still not landing 21 April 2023

Global Rates Weekly: Pushing to the Limit 21 April 2023



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