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Tantalum adds weight with four new hires

Cape Town-based Tantalum Capital has added to its team with four new hires recently, having seen strong growth in assets under management in the past 12 months.

James Montgomery and Mohamed Mitha have joined as junior analysts on the investment side.

Montgomery, a CFA, previously spent two years at Ginsburg Asset Consulting, where he covered investment manager research, portfolio construction and risk management. Prior to that he was with Stenham Advisors, researching hedge fund managers and strategies around the world.

Mitha, a chartered accountant, spent two years with Woolworths as a planning and strategy analyst, primarily responsible for forecasting the group's financial performance. He completed his articles at Ernst & Young, working in various industries including retail, energy and insurance.

Simone Blanckenberg, Tantalum's COO and head of strategy and product development, said the new junior analysts would be mentored by the team as part of its strategy of ensuring business longevity. Tantalum's two previous hires Chris Cheetham and Eduard Pienaar, who joined three years ago, are now fully fledged analysts.

Tantalum now has a 16-strong team. Rob Oellermann took over formal daily management of the multi-strategy and equity funds after Morne Marais stepped down from in-



Simone Blanckenberg

volvement in the business and funds in April 2013 due to personal reasons.

Tantalum has also added weight on the operational side, with Richard Flint and Nicolai de Greef joining in July.

De Greef, a dealer, was previously a client relationship manager at Coronation Fund Managers, focusing on international clients. Prior to that he spent a year at Curo Fund Services (formerly JP Morgan Administration Services), managing the international team and overseeing the administration of local hedge funds. From 2010 to 2012 he was part of the hedge fund operations team at London-based Henderson Global Investors.

Flint spent three years at Maitland Fund Services, most recently as the client services manager for all hedge fund clients. Prior to that he worked with Barclays Global Inves-

tors in London in various operational roles including trade settlements/confirmations and trade support.

Tantalum has successfully extended the track record of its hedge fund mandates and gained meaningful traction on the long-only side, leading assets to more than double since last April, from R1.3 billion to R3.3 billion.

This includes R1.4 billion in its fixed income franchise and R900 million in balanced mandates.

The flagship Tantalum MNC Fund has just passed the nine-year mark, delivering a net 14% over a rolling 12 months on volatility of around 6%, in line with its targets.

The global resources strategy now has assets of R70 million, with the rand-based portfolio gaining a net 24% over a rolling 12 months in rand terms.

The Tantalum Fusion Fund, a fixed income hedge fund, has protected capital well in a difficult period and is now at R100 million, gaining 8% over a rolling 12 months.

In addition to its long-only institutional mandates, plans are also under way to launch two unit trusts – a fixed income fund and a low equity fund – which will sit on the Efficient Group's Boutique Collective Investments platform.

Blanckenberg added that all of Tantalum's products were an extension of its core investment thesis of fundamental bottom-up research, with a focus on indepth coverage of all sectors it invests in.

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