

# Triple Point Guide to Venture Capital Trusts





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# Finders Not followers

We invest early because finding growth is more rewarding than following it.

All images throughout this guide are taken from our VCT 'Finders not followers' campaign.



# Understanding Venture Capital Trusts

Venture Capital Trusts (VCTs) have been part of the investment landscape since 1995. They were introduced by the government to encourage people to invest in unlisted early-stage companies that were previously not available to individual investors. Why? Because smaller companies are considered the "backbone" of the UK economy – creating jobs, economic growth and world-class innovation.



#### The VCT structure

A VCT is a public limited company (plc). This means its shares are listed on the London Stock Exchange. As with other publicly-traded companies, a VCT must:

- Hold an Annual General Meeting (AGM) where shareholders can vote on key decisions
- Publish an Annual Report, produce independently audited accounts and maintain strict corporate governance requirements
- Have an independent Board of Directors to supervise its activities and strategy

### What types of VCTs are available?

Broadly speaking, there are three distinct types of VCT; generalist, specialist, and VCTs that invest in companies listed on the Alternative Investment Market (AIM).

- 1. Generalist VCTs: These invest in VCT-qualifying companies across a range of different industries and business sectors. The aim is to assemble a well-diversified portfolio of companies without being too heavily invested in one or two areas.
- Specialist VCTs: These VCTs are more closely focused on finding and investing in companies operating in a specific sector or industry.
- 3. AIM VCTs: These VCTs invest in VCT-qualifying companies listed on AIM, which is the 'junior' market of the London Stock Exchange. As AIM is a publicly traded market, shares in AIM companies are easier to buy and sell than shares in unlisted companies (although second-hand VCT shares are no longer eligible to claim upfront income tax relief).

### Evergreen vs limited life VCTs

Most VCTs are 'evergreen' VCTs, which means that they don't plan to wind up after a set period of time and aim to offer investors the potential for investment growth spanning several years. There are also some 'limited life' VCTs available, which intend to close shortly after the minimum five-year holding period for VCT shares has ended. When this happens, the VCT closes by selling its portfolio of assets and distributing the proceeds to the VCT shareholders.

### VCT tax reliefs

A VCT gives investors the opportunity to share in the success of these exciting and growing smaller companies. But recognising that not all growing businesses will succeed, and that many will fail, the government introduced several tax benefits that would make investing in a VCT more tax-efficient. These reliefs are:

- Up to 30% upfront income tax relief claimed via Self-Assessment tax return or if PAYE, by contacting HMRC
- Tax-free dividends paid by the VCT over the lifetime of the investment - these don't need to be declared on your tax return
- Tax-free growth on the value of the VCT investment

We talk about these tax reliefs more on page 7.



### VCT new share offers

To raise funds to make new investments, or follow on investments, VCTs will announce new share offers, for a limited time only, where investors are invited to buy shares through an offer for subscription. When you invest in a VCT, you own shares in the VCT itself, not shares in the companies held within the VCT portfolio. However, owning VCT shares means you do get to participate in the overall success of the portfolio.

Do note that tax treatment depends on the individual circumstances of the investor and is subject to change. Investor's capital is at risk and target returns are not guaranteed.

### How much can you invest in a VCT?

A VCT investor can claim income tax relief on up to £200,000 invested each tax year. But you can't claim more income tax relief than the amount of tax you owe. To keep the income tax relief you've claimed, you must hold your VCT shares for at least five years (otherwise you must repay any upfront income tax that has been claimed). Importantly, income tax relief can be claimed against both earned and unearned income (such as income received from a rental property).

### What happens when you decide to sell?

Like any publicly-traded shares, VCT shares can be bought and sold on the open market. However, selling VCT shares has some unique considerations due to the tax reliefs associated with them. For example, if you sell VCT shares before the five-year minimum holding period has ended, you will have to inform HMRC and repay any upfront income tax relief already claimed.

Also, because second-hand VCT shares do not offer income tax relief, the market for selling VCT shares is limited, and investors who try to sell their VCT shares via a stockbroker have to accept a much lower price than they would expect. To help address this issue, some VCTs offer a 'buy back' facility where existing investors can sell their shares back to the VCT at a discount to their net asset value (usually at a discount of between 5% and 10%). However, these buy back facilities are subject to Board approval and are therefore not guaranteed, so you should check the VCT prospectus before you invest to see the full terms of any buy back facility.

Tax treatment depends on the individual circumstances of the investor and is subject to change. Investor's capital is at risk.

## VCTs as an investment opportunity

### Giving investors access to UK innovation

The UK is the second most active and capital-intensive venture capital market in the world (only surpassed by the US), and more billion-pound companies are created here than anywhere else. According to the Department for Business and Trade, the UK has created 114 innovative companies that have a market value of more than \$1 billion.<sup>1</sup> This means investors seeking growth, innovation and entrepreneurship can find it right here in the UK.

It's no surprise, therefore, that VCTs - which make it possible for UK investors to own their own stake in a venture capital portfolio – are going from strength to strength. According to the Association of Investment Companies (AIC), over the last three tax years (2021/22, 2022/23 and 2023/24) VCT fundraising totalled over £3 billion.<sup>2</sup> These inflows into VCTs reflect the strong demand from people keen to invest in UK smaller companies, while also claiming the generous tax incentives they offer.

### The importance of diversification

Aside from the growth potential that comes with owning a portfolio of ambitious early-stage companies, one of the most important aspects of owning a VCT is the diversification it can offer to investors. A VCT will invest in a carefully-made selection of companies, many of which will be at different stages of their development. This helps to spread the risk associated with investing in young and growing start-ups. VCTs also have investment restrictions, such as limits on the maximum investment in a single company, which encourages further portfolio diversification. You can read about these restrictions on page 13.

Investor's capital is at risk. Tax treatment depends on the individual circumstances of the investor and is subject to change.

### Why is the UK such a great place to start and grow a business?3



### It's an academic powerhouse

The UK is home to four of the top ten universities in the world.<sup>4</sup> This makes the UK an exceptional place for raising capital to fund business innovation spun out of academic research.



### A business-friendly environment

The UK offers a range of tax reliefs designed to encourage home-grown start-ups and attract international companies. The UK is also one of the most investor-friendly countries in the world, encouraging investment through tax-efficient investment vehicles such as VCTs and the Enterprise Investment Scheme.



### Excellence in the industries of the future

The UK is a hotbed of innovation in key industries shaping all of our futures. These industries include life sciences and healthcare, fintech (financial technology), and deeptech (technology based on scientific advances and discoveries, or on engineering innovation). In 2023, the UK was ranked 4th out of 132 economies featured in the 2023 Global Innovation Index.5

Source: UK Department for Business and Trade https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-business-and-trade / https://www.theaic.co.uk/aic/news/press-releases/vct-fundraising-is-third-highest-on-record 3 Source: UK Department for Business & Trade

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> https://www.topuniversities.com/university-rankings/world-university-rankings/2024 <sup>5</sup> https://wipo.int/edocs/pubdocs/en/wipo-pub-2000-2023-section1-en-gii-2023-at-a-glance-global-innovation-index-2023.pdf

# The tax reliefs you can claim as a VCT investor

Although investors should always consider the investment potential associated with owning shares in a VCT, investors can also claim the following valuable tax reliefs after they've made their investment:



Up to 30% upfront income tax relief



Tax-free dividends paid by the VCT over the lifetime of the investment



Tax-free capital gains on the sale value of their VCT investment – so no Capital Gains Tax (CGT) to pay An individual investor can invest up to £200,000 in VCTs per tax year and can therefore claim income tax relief of up to £60,000, depending on the value of their investment. But to benefit fully from the available relief, you must have paid or owe as much income tax during the tax year in which you bought the VCT shares. To keep any income tax relief claimed from HMRC, you must hold your VCT shares for at least five years. Importantly, income tax relief can be claimed against both earned and unearned income (such as the annual income you get from a rental property). Please note: income tax relief is only available on newlyissued VCT shares, and cannot be claimed on VCT shares bought or sold on the secondary market.

Once you have invested into a VCT, you will be sent a Share Certificate and a Tax Certificate. These are both important documents and it is important that you keep these in a safe place.

## VCT tax reliefs for three types of VCT investor

Here we've shown three different types of VCT investor, and the income tax relief they can claim on their investment. But claiming tax relief is only one aspect of investing in a VCT. Alongside helping to reduce an income tax bill, VCTs have many other uses. They can help to create a more diversified portfolio through exposure to different firms and sectors for investors. They can also provide a useful income stream through tax-free dividends.

However much you choose to invest in a VCT, they can be a helpful part of your long-term financial planning.

	VCT investor A:	VCT investor B:	VCT investor C:
	An everyday investor	A business owner with an income tax liability	A high net worth individual
Amount invested in the VCT	£3,000	£25,000	£200,000
30% income tax relief claimed	£900	£7,500	£60,000
Effective cost of the investment	£2,100*	£17,500*	£140,000*

<sup>\*</sup> These amounts do not include any fees charged by the investment manager.

#### Please note

The above information is based on current tax rules as at 6 April 2024 and is only an illustration of how income tax relief could apply. We strongly encourage you seek advice from a financial adviser to assess your personal circumstances. Tax rules and reliefs are subject to change and can be removed by the UK government at any time.

# Who invests in VCTs? Three tax planning examples

The following examples are imaginary scenarios of how many people use VCTs as part of their regular financial planning. They are all drawn from real-life experiences of working with financial advisers and their clients. These examples should not be considered as tax advice, and we always recommend talking to a financial adviser before making any investment decisions.

#### **EXAMPLE 1**

Using a VCT to offset taxes on pension income

#### **EXAMPLE 2**

Business owners who want to extract profits from their business tax-efficiently

#### EXAMPLE 3

Landlords who want to make their rental income tax-efficient



**EXAMPLE 1** 

## Using a VCT to offset taxes on pension income



Recently retired clients often find it frustrating that the money they take out of their pension is still subject to income tax. For example, Marie has recently retired with a pension pot of £800,000. She wants to take out £50,000 from her pension, of which 25% (£12,500) will be tax-free, while the remaining £37,500 will be taxable.

After Marie's personal allowance of £12,570 is taken into consideration, it means £24,930 is subject to income tax. As Marie is a basic rate taxpayer, this means her pension income of £50,000 leaves her with an income tax bill of £4,986. However, there is a way to ensure Marie, and other retirees like her, pay zero income tax on future pension income withdrawals.

Marie discusses her situation with her financial adviser, who talks through the benefits and the risks of investing in a Venture Capital Trust. Marie's adviser tells her that if she invested £16,620 into a VCT, she would be able to claim 30% income tax relief on her investment, which equals £4,986 (her income tax liability). This effectively makes Marie a non-taxpayer.

Also, because most VCTs have an annual dividend target, Marie can expect to receive an annual tax-free income from her investment. VCT dividends are completely tax-free and there's no HMRC requirement to declare them on tax returns.

The potential for regular tax-free VCT dividends could prove especially attractive for retirees, considering the tax-free dividend allowance was reduced to just £500 on 6 April 2024. As a reminder, basic rate taxpayers will be required to pay dividend tax at a rate of 8.75%, while higher rate taxpayers will pay 33.75%.

For simplicity, this illustration does not take into account investment growth or charges for the investment. It is based on the current tax rules and personal allowances as at September 2024, which could be subject to change. Tax rules and reliefs are subject to change and the availability of tax reliefs for investors will also depend on their personal circumstances.



EXAMPLE 2

## Business owners who want to extract profits from their business tax-efficiently



Raj is a design consultant with his own limited company. Raj pays himself a salary up to the tax-free personal allowance of £12,570, and he pays himself an annual dividend of £50,000. However, he is aware that paying himself through dividends has become less tax-efficient down the years.

When the dividend allowance was introduced in 2016, the first £5,000 of dividend income received was tax-free. However, the allowance was lowered to £2,000 in the 2018/2019 tax year, and cut to £1,000 in the 2023/2024 tax year. In the 2024/25 tax year, the dividend allowance has been halved again, so only the first £500 of dividend income received will be free from tax.

At present, Raj's dividend payment is taxed as follows:

- He can claim a £500 tax-free allowance
- The next £37,200 is taxed at 8.75%
- The remaining £12,300 is taxed at 33.75%. This leaves Raj with an income tax bill of £7,406. It means that withdrawing £62,570 from his limited company annually leaves him with just £55,163 after tax.

Raj discusses his situation with his financial adviser, who talks through the benefits and the risks of investing in a Venture Capital Trust. His adviser tells Raj that if he made an investment of £24,687 into a VCT, he would be able to claim 30% income tax relief on his investment, which equates to £7,406, provided Raj holds his VCT shares for the minimum five-year holding period.

VCTs often target a free dividend, so Raj can expect to receive an annual tax-free income from his investment. VCT dividends are completely tax-free and there's no HMRC requirement for Raj to declare them on his tax returns. As a result of his investment, Raj effectively wipes out his income tax liability, giving him an annual income of £62,570 plus a tax-free income from the VCT.

For simplicity, this illustration does not take into account investment growth or charges for the investment. It is based on the current tax rules and personal allowances as at September 2024, which could be subject to change. Tax rules and reliefs are subject to change and the availability of tax reliefs for investors will also depend on their personal circumstances.

EXAMPLE 3

## Landlords looking for tax-free income



Many landlords are facing a dilemma, as their rental income results in an income tax burden. This income can't be put directly into their pension, while selling the property would trigger an unwelcome capital gains tax bill.

Emma owns a portfolio of buy-to-let properties that currently generates an annual income of around £60,000 (after any allowances and deductions). Her property portfolio is her only source of income.

At present, Emma's income from her property portfolio is taxed as follows:

- She can claim a £1,000 tax-free property allowance
- She pays income tax on the remaining £59,000 of income
- This leaves Emma with an annual income tax bill of £11,032

Emma discusses her situation with her financial adviser, who tells her that through a Venture Capital Trust, property owners can claim tax relief on their rental income. Emma's adviser talks through the benefits and the risks of investing in a VCT, and explains if she made an investment of £20,000 into the Triple Point Venture VCT, she would be able to claim 30% income tax relief on her investment. This equates to £6,000, provided she holds her VCT shares for the minimum five-year holding period. As a result of her investment, Emma reduces her income tax liability from £11,032 to £5,032.

Also, because most VCTs target annual dividends, Emma can expect to receive an annual tax-free income from her investment, and there's no HMRC requirement for Emma to declare VCT dividends on her tax returns.

For simplicity, this illustration does not take into account investment growth or charges for the investment. It is based on the current tax rules and personal allowances as at September 2024, which could be subject to change. Tax rules and reliefs are subject to change and the availability of tax reliefs for investors will also depend on their personal circumstances.



### Here are some of the VCT qualification rules $% \left( 1\right) =\left( 1\right) \left( 1\right) \left$

The company	To receive funding from a VCT, companies must be established in the UK and carry out what HMRC calls a 'qualifying trade'. Most trades are allowed, but with a number of exceptions that HM Treasury do not believe are in need of additional financing support, including energy generation, dealing in land of financial activities, farming, forestry, and running hotels.	
Company size	A company can qualify for VCT investment provided it has gross assets of £15 million or less at the time of the investment, or £16 million immediately afterwards. Companies must have fewer than 250 full-time employees at the time of the investment.	
Company maturity	VCTs should make their first investment into companies that are less than seven years old.	
Investment amounts	A company is allowed to receive up to £5 million of VCT or other tax-efficient funding in any 12-month period, with a cap of £12 million over its lifetime. A VCT can invest up to 15% of its funds under management in a single company.	
Knowledge-intensive companies	The investment rules are slightly different for companies that are defined as being 'knowledge-intensive'. This means companies that are carrying out research, development or innovation at the time they are issuing shares.  Knowledge-intensive companies can get VCT funding if they have fewer than 500 employees.	
VCTs also have strict rules to follow	Because VCTs are public limited companies, they have to follow UK listing rules. They also have to stay within current VCT regulations. For example, after a VCT has raised money from investors, it has three years to invest that money. Additionally, at least 80% of the VCT's portfolio must be invested in VCT-qualifying companies, with the remaining 'non-qualifying investments' held in cash or cash equivalents. If a VCT doesn't stick to these rules, it could lose its VCT status and investor portfolios could potentially have their tax reliefs withdrawn.  As the VCT scheme was created by the UK government, the rules relating to VCT tax rates, and which companies qualify under the scheme, are determined by HM Treasury. This means HM Treasury can change tax rates, tax reliefs and change the definition of a VCT-qualifying investment in the future.	

# The tax reliefs you can claim as a VCT investor

This page is intended to help explain the steps involved with claiming the income tax relief available through your VCT investment, but it shouldn't be considered as tax advice. If you have any further questions on claiming tax relief, we suggest you talk to a professional financial adviser, wealth planner or accountant who will be happy to advise you further.

How you claim income tax relief will depend on how you complete and submit your tax return.

## If you complete a Self-Assessment tax return online



In Section 3 of your online tax return, you will see a question that asks: "Do you want to claim other tax reliefs and deductions, for example, community investment tax relief, venture capital trust shares, maintenance/alimony payments?".

In Section 4, under the subsection "Other tax relief and deductions", type in the total amount of your VCT investment for the tax year that you want to claim income tax relief on. If you have paid too much tax after the tax relief has been deducted, HMRC will either repay the excess amount by cheque or directly into your bank account.

## If you complete a paper version of your Self-Assessment tax return



To claim income tax relief on a paper version of your tax return, you'll need to complete an Additional information form known as form SA101. At the top of the 'Other tax reliefs' box on page Ai 2, you should write the amount of your VCT subscription that you want to claim income tax relief on. Once your tax return has been completed, post this along with your SA101 form to your tax office.

## Claiming income tax relief if you don't file a tax return



If you don't usually file a Self-Assessment tax return, you can send your VCT tax certificate to your local tax office. They should then issue the tax relief due, either by changing your PAYE code or issuing a tax refund, or they may ask you to complete a Self-Assessment tax return.



# Understanding VCT risks

Every potential VCT investor should understand the risks associated with making an investment. We've outlined the most important risks below, but if you have any questions about how these risks relate to you and your personal circumstances, we suggest you contact a professional financial adviser to discuss them in more detail.

### Your capital is at risk

Investing means your capital is at risk and you could lose all your money. The value of your investment, and any income from it, can fall as well as rise, and you may not get back the full amount you invested. A VCT is high risk investment and may not be suitable for all investors, and it is generally accepted that some investments within a VCT portfolio will fail. You should not consider investing in a VCT unless you already have a diversified investment portfolio.

## VCT shares should be viewed as a long-term investment

Before deciding whether to invest in a VCT, you should be prepared to hold your shares for at least five years. Should you sell your VCT shares before the minimum five-year holding period, you will be required by HMRC to repay any income tax relief you have claimed.

### Past performance is no guide to the future

The past performance of any VCT, or indeed any other investment, is not a reliable guide to its future performance. There is no guarantee that the anticipated future returns from a VCT investment will be achieved.

### Investments in unlisted companies can be volatile

Shares in smaller, unlisted VCT-qualifying companies can be more volatile than investments in companies listed on the main market of the London Stock Exchange. The value of shares in such companies can fall or rise more sharply than shares in larger companies. Smaller companies also fail at a higher rate than larger, more established companies, which can affect the overall performance of a VCT portfolio. The value of the VCT shares may fall below the original amount invested. The market price of the shares may not fully reflect the underlying net asset value. Dividends are not guaranteed and therefore may not be paid.

### VCT shares may be difficult to sell

Shares in a VCT are harder to sell than shares in companies listed on the main market of the London Stock Exchange. This is because VCT shares usually trade on the open market at a discount to the most recently-published net asset value. Also, as second-hand VCT shares are not eligible for upfront income tax relief, you may have to sell at a lower price than the net asset value of the shares.

### The tax risks associated with a VCT

Tax treatment depends on the individual circumstances of each investor, it is not guaranteed and is subject to change. The ability to claim tax reliefs may be lost by investors taking or not taking certain steps. Before choosing to invest, you should seek advice from your financial adviser or tax planning adviser on whether a VCT is the right investment for you, and whether you can claim the available tax reliefs.

Tax legislation can change. While the tax reliefs outlined in this guide are correct at the time of going to print, and are based on current tax legislation, practice and interpretation, HM Treasury can change tax rates, tax reliefs and change the definition of a VCT-qualifying investment in the future.

# Introducing the Triple Point Venture VCT

The exceptional companies of tomorrow are the ones you won't have heard of today, operating in business-to-business (B2B) sectors people rarely come into contact with, but where the greatest return potential can be found.



The Triple Point Venture VCT finds these companies first, by investing at an earlier stage into software companies creating targeted disruption in sectors such as healthcare, fintech, artificial intelligence (AI), and climate-based software. Importantly, the VCT is managed by a future-focused investment team – all experts at finding and supporting rapidly growing B2B software companies with strong founders.

### We believe it pays to invest early

Although investing into more mature companies reduces some of the risks associated with venture capital, it also means paying a higher price for the shares, reducing the potential return for VCT investors. Instead, the Triple Point Venture VCT finds outlier companies and typically invests when they are generating less than £1 million of annual revenue, because this earlier stage of their growth journey is where meaningful returns begin.

### New share offer

The Triple Point Venture VCT is now open for investment, giving investors access to a portfolio of 50 ambitious early-stage companies, and the opportunity to claim significant tax incentives including income tax relief of up to 30%, and tax-free capital gains and dividends.

Being a younger VCT means it gives regular VCT investors genuine diversification at the portfolio level while complementing their other VCT holdings in more mature companies. It also works for newer VCT investors – especially business owners who see the potential in owning a B2B-focused portfolio in the current climate.

### Reasons to invest



### A ready-built B2B portfolio

Now in its seventh fundraising year, the Triple Point Venture VCT gives clients access to a portfolio of already-growing B2B start-ups, because B2B businesses become acquisition targets at almost double the rate of business-to-consumer businesses.<sup>7</sup>



## A more diverse portfolio means greater exit potential

It gives clients access to a diversified portfolio of 50 B2B companies across 20 different sectors. A more diverse portfolio means more exit opportunities.



### Dividend target of 5p per share

It has an annual dividend target of up to 5p per share while also offering the potential for long term capital growth.

### Now open for investment

To find out more about the Triple Point Venture VCT, find out about our investment process and download planning scenarios to help you identify opportunities with your clients, please visit vct.triplepoint.co.uk.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Income tax relief is available on the first £200,000 invested.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> Triple Point and Beauhurst research (2022).





## Who are Triple Point?

We design investments to help solve people's problems, and we work hard to make sure investing with us is always as straightforward as possible.

Whether you are looking to grow your wealth, leave a legacy, or simply to invest in the things that matter to you, we have the knowledge, the insight and the vision to help you complete your investment journey.

We focus on putting capital to work in areas such as the energy transition, property lending and public and private sector funding that make commercial sense for our investors, their advisers, and the stakeholders we partner with. Our success is built on unlocking new investment opportunities, and we believe in the good that capital can do, because how we invest today matters for future generations.

### Triple Point key facts



Triple Point launched in 2004, and today we manage more than £3.6 billion<sup>8</sup> on behalf of our investors.

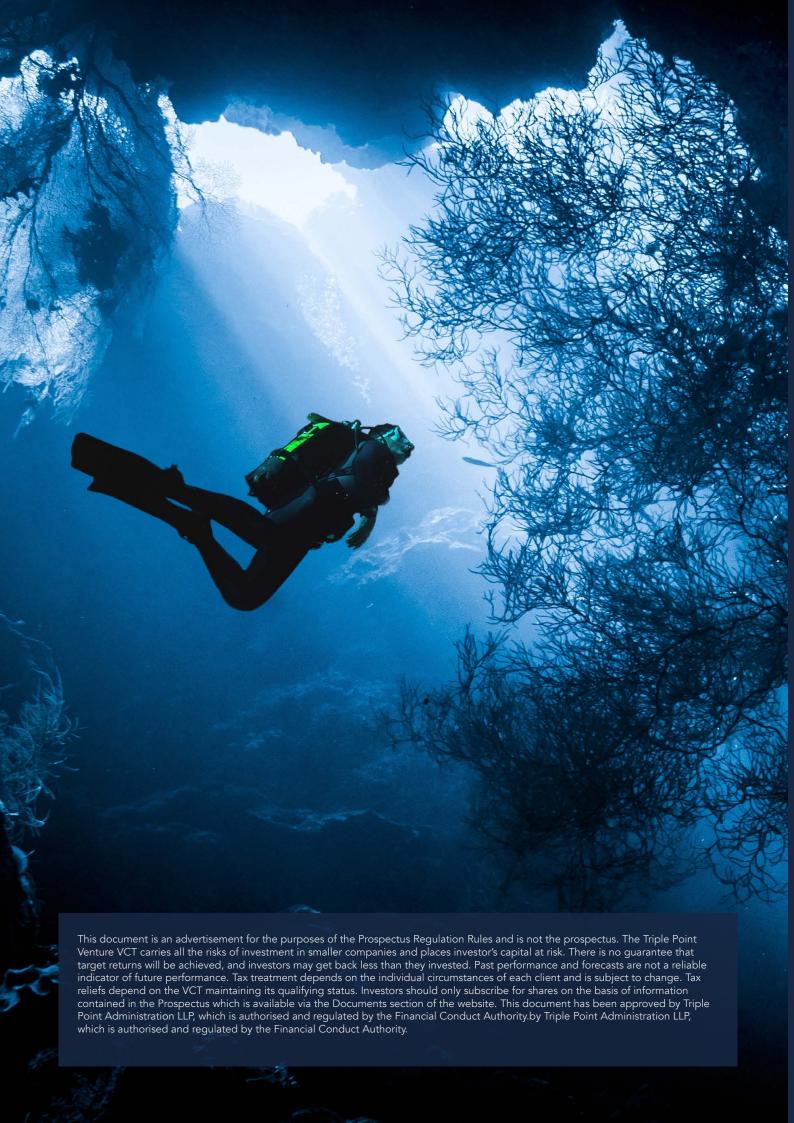


As a certified B-Corp, we have met high international standards for social and environmental performance, transparency and accountability.



Triple Point was named ESG Champion of the Year at the 2023 Growth Investor Awards.

To know more about how Triple Point can help you to invest tax-efficiently, either talk to your financial adviser or visit triplepoint.co.uk.





When it comes to identifying and investing in outstanding early-stage companies, we know where to look and what we're looking for.







For more information about Triple Point please contact a member of the team:



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