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EUROPEAN COVERED BOND COUNCIL

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This 20th edition of the ECBC European Covered Bond Fact Book builds on the success of previous editions. Chapter I presents an analysis of eleven key themes of the year, offering an overview of the Industry's perspective on these, such as the latest developments on sustainable, green and social covered bonds as well as the reporting requirements, and updates on investors' perspectives, liquidity and the third country equivalence.

Chapter II provides a detailed explanation of covered bond fundamentals, the state of play on the latest implementations of the Covered Bond Directive and of Basel III, the Capital Markets Union (CMU), the Liquidity Coverage Ratio (LCR), Solvency II, bail-in mechanisms (MREL and TLAC), and covered bond protection. This chapter also includes articles outlining the repo treatment of covered bonds by central banks, investigates the relationship between covered bonds and other asset classes, such as senior unsecured and government bonds, and describes the USD, GBP and domestic currency denominated covered bond markets.

Chapter III presents an overview of the legislation and markets in 42 different countries, demonstrating the worldwide success and recognition, and the continued spread of the asset class. Chapter IV sets out credit rating agencies' various covered bond methodologies. Chapter V is a newly introduced chapter on the System Providers of the Covered Bond industry.

Chapter VI provides a description of trends in the covered bond market, as well as a complete set of covered bond statistics up to the end of 2024.

The ECBC welcomes the broad range of views expressed in this latest edition of the Fact Book and thanks all contributors whose enthusiasm and dedication have once again produced an outstanding publication. Particularly, we would like to express our gratitude to the Chairmen of the ECBC Fact Book and Statistics & Data Working Groups, Mr Sascha Kullig and Mr Joost Beaumont, respectively.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS 11

FOREWORD 23

Foreword ... 23
By Stefano Patruno, Chairman of the ECBC, Moderator of the ECBC European Secured Notes (ESN) Task Force, Head of Incoming Regulation Impact Assessment, INTESA SANPAOLO and Luca Bertalot, EMF-ECBC Secretary General

About the ECBC ... 29

ECBC Members ... 31

Covered Bond Label ... 33

CHAPTER 1 - KEY THEMES OF THE YEAR 41

1.1 Foreword ... 43
By Sascha Kullig – Chairman of the ECBC Fact Book Working Group, Association of German Pfandbrief Banks (vdp)

1.2 Supporting the Real Economy, SME Financing, Securitisation and ESN ... 44
By Elisa Coletti, Intesa Sanpaolo, Claudio Domingues, Millenium BPC, Per Anders Öjar Törnqvist, Danske Bank A/S and Stefano Patruno, Chairman of the ECBC, Moderator of the ECBC European Secured Notes (ESN) Task Force, Intesa Sanpaolo

1.3 A Sustainable Housing Market: Towards a New Ecosystem Supporting the Transition Economy ... 51
By EMF-ECBC Secretariat

1.4 Covered Bonds as Financing Instrument for Green and Social Investments ... 59
By Ralf Berninger, SFIL, Antonio Farina, S&P Global, Rodger Rinke, LBBW Sjors Hoppenbrowers, RABOBANK, Maureen Schuller, ING, Sabrina Miehs, Association of German Pfandbrief Banks (vdp)

1.5 Covered Bonds: Between Innovation and Tradition ... 75
By Antonio Torío, Asociación Hipotecaria Española, Bodo Winkler-Viti, Berlin Hyp, Claudio Domingues, Millennium bcp and Sjors Hoppenbrouwers, Rabobank

1.6 The Success Story of the Covered Bonds Directive: What's Next? EBA Call for Advice ... 83
By Elena Bortolotti, Chairwoman of the ECBC Rating Agency Approaches Working Group and Barclays, Joost Beaumont, Chairman of the ECBC Statistics & Data Working Group and ABN AMRO, Claudio Domingues, Millennium BCP and Stefano Patruno, Chairman of the ECBC, Moderator of the ECBC European Secured Notes (ESN) Task Force, Intesa Sanpaolo

1.7 Covered Bond Investors – Navigating Wide Spreads vs Swaps Against Higher Public Sector Deficits ... 89
By Florian Eichert, Crédit Agricole CIB, Frederik Kunze, Nord/LB and Niek Allon, Moderator of the ECBC Investor Task Force and Nationale-Nederlanden Bank

1.7.1 The Attractiveness of Investments in Covered Bonds from a Bank Treasury Perspective ... 94
By Olaf Pimper, Commerzbank

1.8 A Global Perspective for the Covered Bond Industry ... 97
By Antonio Farina, S&P Global Ratings, Maureen Schuller, ING Bank N.V. and Sascha Kulling, Chairman of the ECBC Fact Book Working Group, Association of German Pfandbrief Banks (vdp)

1.9 Liquidity and Trading Volume in the EU Covered Bond Markets ... 106
By Joost Beaumont, Chairman of the ECBC Statistics & Data Working Group and ABN AMRO, Jonny Sylvén, ASCB, Kristoffer Fahnøe Lynggaard, Finance Denmark, Steffen Dahmer, Chairman of the ECBC Market Related Working Group and J.P. Morgan

1.10 Assess and Classify Exposure to Physical Climate Risks – A Case for an EU-Wide Framework? ... 114
By Ariane Remmel, vdpResearch, Per Anders Öjar Törnqvist, Danske Bank, Rainer Rettinger, vdp

CHAPTER 2 - GENERIC SECTION 121

2.1 Overview of Covered Bonds 123
By Joost Beaumont, Chairman of the ECBC Statistics & Data Working Group and ABN AMRO, Cristina Costa, Barclays, Tim Lassen, Association of German Pfandbrief Banks

2.2 Regulatory Issues 141
By Frank Will, Chairman of the ECBC EU Legislation Working Group and HSBC Florian Eichert, Crédit Agricole CIB, Alexandra Schadow, LBBW

2.3 The Repo Treatment of Covered Bonds by Central Banks 163
By Frank Will, HSBC & Chairman of the ECBC EU Legislation Working Group

2.4 Covered Bonds vs. Other Asset Classes 189
By Florian Eichert, Crédit Agricole CIB, Frank Will, HSBC & Chairman of the ECBC EU Legislation Working Group

2.5 ESG Regulatory 202
By Sanna Eriksson, Deputy Chairwoman of the ECBC, OP Mortgage Bank, Maureen Schuller, ING Bank N.V., Sabrina Miehs, Association Of German Pfandbrief Banks, Larissa De Barros Fritz, ABN AMRO Bank N.V.

CHAPTER 3 - THE ISSUER'S PERSPECTIVE 215

3.1 Armenia 217
By Svetlanna Maleryan, Central Bank of Armenia and Edmond Vardumyan, National Mortgage Company RCO

3.2 Australia 225
By Chris Dalton and Robert Gallimore, Australian Securitisation Forum

3.3 Austria 231
By Jochen Deiss, Raiffeisen-Landesbank Steiermark AG, and Heiko Langer, Erste Group Bank AG

3.4 Belgium 237
By Dries Janssens, Belfius Bank

3.5 Brazil 243
By ABECIP – The Brazilian Association of Real Estate Loans

3.6 Bulgaria 247
By Michael Teig, UniCredit, Petar Ivanov, Nikolay Bebov, Damyan Leshev, Eversheds Sutherland (Bulgaria)

3.7 Canada 253
By Lily Shum, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC)

3.8 Chile 261
By Patricia Perez, Antonio Procopio and Fernanda Vasquez, Banco Santander Chile

3.9 Croatia 265
By Edin Karakaš and Sven Plašćar, Žurić i partneri Kinstellar

3.10 Cyprus 273
By Christina Kypri-Georgiadou, Bank of Cyprus

3.11 Czechia 281
By Petr Vybíral, Allen Overy Shearman Sterling (Czech Republic) LLP, organizační složka

3.12 Denmark 287
By Mette Saaby Pedersen, Finance Denmark, Svend Bondorf and Birna Arnbjarnardóttir, Nykredit

3.13 Estonia 293
By Jane Eespõld, Oliver Ämarik, Merylin Tihomirova, Law Firm

3.14 Finland 301
By Timo Ruotsalainen, Aktia Bank plc

3.15 France 307
By Cristina Costa, Barclays; Jennifer Levy, Natixis; Marc Nocart, Caisse de Refinancement de l'Habitat and Gregory Rousseau, Crédit Foncier

3.16 Georgia 317
By Rada Tomova, Head of Regional Policy Partnerships, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and David Abesadze, Head of Securities Market Supervision Department, National bank of Georgia

3.17 Germany 323
By Tim Lassen and Steffen Stachna, Association of German Pfandbrief Banks

3.18 Greece 329
By Alexander Metallinos, Potamitis Vekris Law Firm

3.19 Hungary 335
By Rita Bozzai, MBH Mortgage Bank and Ádám Polt – OTP Mortgage Bank

3.20 Iceland 341
By Eiríkur Dór Jónsson and Kristín Erla Jónsdóttir, Arion Bank

3.21 Ireland 349
By Group Legal Services team, Bank of Ireland and Nick Pheifer, DEPFA BANK

3.22 Italy 355
By Marco Marino, Italian Banking Association

3.23 Japan 361
By Hirokazu Tanaka, SMBC and Elena Bortolotti, Chairwoman of the ECBC Rating Agency Approaches Working Group and Barclays

3.24 Latvia 365
By Agneta Rumpa, Hannelora Voiciša, Santa Rubīna, Sorainen, Richard Kemmish, consultant and Jacek Kubas, EBRD

3.25 Lithuania 371
By Tomas Kontautas, Lina Aleknaitė-van der Molen and Andrius Pilitauskas, Sorainen

3.26 Luxembourg 375
By Frederik Kunze, NORD/LB, Frank Will, HSBC & Chairman of the ECBC EU Legislation Working Group and Dries Janssens, Belfius

3.27 The Netherlands 381
By Joost Beaumont, Chairman of the ECBC Statistics & Data Working Group and ABN AMRO, Cas Bonsema, Rabobank and Maureen Schuller, ING Bank N.V.

3.28 New Zealand 391
By Deemple Budhia, Australian Securitisation Forum (New Zealand representative)

3.29 Norway 395
By Kjartan Bremnes and Michael H. Cook, Finance Norway

3.30 Panama 401
By Frank Will, Chairman of the EU Legislation Working Group, HSBC

3.31 Poland 405
By Konrad Szymczyk, mBank Hipoteczny and Dariusz Popiołek, PKO Bank Hipoteczny

3.32 Portugal 413
By Cláudio Domingues, Millennium bcp

3.33 Romania 421
By Nicoleta Ruxandescu, Alpha Bank Romania

3.34 Russia 427
By Tim Lassen, vdp, Berlin

3.35 Singapore 435
By Chris Ngooi, DBS Bank

3.36 Slovakia 439
By Slavomíra Páleníková, Andrej Zeher, National Bank of Slovakia

3.37 Slovenia 445
By Dr Michael Teig, UniCredit Bank AG

3.38 South Korea 451
By Hoin Lee, Jackie Yang, Kim & Chang and Frank Will, Chairman of the EU Legislation Working Group, HSBC

3.39 Spain ... 459
By Gregorio Arranz, Spanish Mortgage Association External Legal Advisor

3.40 Sweden ... 467
By Jonny Sylvén, Association of Swedish Covered Bond Issuers (ASCB)

3.41.1 Switzerland – Swiss Pfandbriefe ... 473
By Robert Horat and Markus Müller, Pfandbriefbank schweizerischer Hypothekarinstitute AG

3.41.2 Switzerland – Contractual Law Based Covered Bonds ... 479
By Paul Oates, UBS, and Marco Brück, Valiant Bank

3.42 Turkey ... 485
By James Taylor, Mayer Brown International LLP and Güneş Yalçın, Özmen Yalçın

3.43 United Kingdom ... 491
By Ian Stewart, UK RCBC and Moderator of the ECBC ESG Bonds Task Force

3.44 United States of America ... 503
By Steffen Dahmer, Moderator of the ECBC Liquidity Task Force & Chairman of the ECBC Market Related Issues Working Group, J.P. Morgan

CHAPTER 4 - RATING AGENCIES & METHODOLOGY 509

4.1 Credit Rating Agency Approaches: Introduction ... 511
By Elena Bortolotti, Barclays, Chairwoman of the ECBC Rating Agency Approaches Working Group

4.2 Morningstar DBRS Covered Bond Rating Methodology ... 515
By Ketan Thaker and Christian Aufsatz, Morningstar DBRS

4.3 Fitch Ratings Covered Bond Rating Methodology ... 525
By Hélène Heberlein and Cosme de Montpellier, Fitch Ratings

4.4 Moody's Covered Bond Rating Methodology ... 533
By Jane Soldera, Nicholas Lindstrom and Juan Pablo Soriano, Moody's Ratings

4.5 S&P Global Ratings Methodology for Rating Covered Bonds ... 541
By Barbara Florian and Antonio Farina, S&P Global Ratings

4.6 Scope Ratings Covered Bond Rating Methodology ... 547
By Karlo Fuchs and Mathias Pleißner, Scope Ratings

CHAPTER 5 - SYSTEM PROVIDERS 553

5.1 Enhancing Transparency and Creating Synergies in the Covered Bond Market: Bloomberg's Contribution ... 555
By Sven Gerhardt and Rene Foertsch, Bloomberg

5.2 Evitec Solutions Fostering Transparency and Synergy in Covered Bond Management ... 559
By Nikke Ruokolainen, Evitec Solutions

5.3 Hypoport BV: the Role of Technological Innovation in Covered Bonds ... 562
By Daniel Goudsmit, Hypoport BV

5.4 TXS GmbH – Market Leader for Digital Pfandbrief and Refinancing Solutions from Germany ... 566
By Tim Geissler, TXS GmbH

CHAPTER 6 - COVERED BOND STATISTICS 571

6.1 Introduction and Methodology ... 573
By Joost Beaumont, Chairman of the ECBC Statistics & Data Working Group and ABN AMRO

6.2 Statistics ... 582

6.2.1 Total ... 582

6.2.2 Total 2024 statistics by type of assets ... 583

6.2.3 Sustainable covered bonds ... 584

6.2.4 Australia ... 585

6.2.5 Austria ... 586
6.2.6 Belgium ... 587
6.2.7 Brazil ... 588
6.2.8 Canada ... 589
6.2.9 Cyprus ... 590
6.2.10 Czechia ... 591
6.2.11 Denmark ... 592
6.2.12 Estonia ... 593
6.2.13 Finland ... 594
6.2.14 France ... 595
6.2.15 Germany ... 596
6.2.16 Greece ... 597
6.2.17 Hungary ... 598
6.2.18 Iceland ... 599
6.2.19 Ireland ... 600
6.2.20 Italy ... 601
6.2.21 Japan ... 602
6.2.22 Luxembourg ... 603
6.2.23 The Netherlands ... 604
6.2.24 New Zealand ... 605
6.2.25 Norway ... 606
6.2.26 Panama ... 607
6.2.27 Poland ... 608
6.2.28 Portugal ... 609
6.2.29 Romania ... 610
6.2.30 Singapore ... 611
6.2.31 Slovakia ... 612
6.2.32 South Korea ... 613
6.2.33 Spain ... 614
6.2.34 Sweden ... 615
6.2.35 Switzerland ... 616
6.2.36 Turkey ... 617
6.2.37 United Kingdom ... 618
6.2.38 United States of America ... 619
6.2.39 Annex: European Central Bank exchange rates with the EURO, year end ... 620

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FOREWORD

Housing lays the foundation for freedom, dignity and opportunity, paving a solid path towards lasting peace and shared prosperity. Housing policies for their part represent a major social lift, with the potential to support each and every citizen in realising their future expectations. Alongside these, the development of solid long-term funding strategies, which facilitate lenders' access to capital markets and therefore optimise and enhance public resources in this critical sector, is of paramount importance in Europe and around the world. Any sound capital markets solution linked to the housing sector will not only relieve public resources but also reinforce market harmonisation and efficiency in the mechanism of transmission of monetary policies, securing financial stability, affordability and sustainability, whilst facilitating labour mobility and investment opportunities for citizens in the single market.

The lack of affordable housing in Europe has been worsening since the Global Financial Crisis and even more since the Covid Pandemic, particularly affecting larger cities. Such a lack of affordable housing highlights an increasing concern for Europe's social equality, economic growth and productivity as, inter alia, it hampers workers' mobility, the possibility for students to complete their education and the need of the most vulnerable to own or rent a house or a flat at affordable conditions. The Affordable Housing Initiative, newly announced in the European Commission's Renovation Wave Strategy for Europe, aims to ensure access to adequate and affordable housing for all Europeans, while also promoting energy efficiency and environmental sustainability. At the heart of this initiative is the recently announced **European Affordable Housing Plan**, which will provide a roadmap to tackle the root causes of the crisis.

The publication of the 20th edition of the European Covered Bond Council (ECBC) Covered Bond Fact Book this year comes at a critical geopolitical moment and at the dawn of a new political agenda for the European Institutions. In addition to the emphasis placed on ensuring access to affordable housing for all, the new agenda envisages a new role for the Capital Markets Union (CMU) Initiative against the backdrop of the European Banking Authority's (EBA) assessment of the EU covered bond framework. Changing priorities in Brussels, with the Omnibus Simplification Package, augur radical changes to the regulatory landscape. All of these developments are taking place in conjunction with the recently launched initiative on Saving and Investments Union (SIU), which takes forward the debate initiated by the CMU initiative.

Market dynamics and developments are called to design a new capital markets paradigm and resources, the way forward for the covered bond market in the wake of the imminent delivery of the EBA's report. During the recent months of market turmoil, lenders have been able to secure access to capital market funding by relying on the 250 year old DNA of covered bonds and their macroprudential characteristics, including low volatility, exceptionally low transaction execution risk, outstanding credit ratings and decreased refinancing costs, which limits banks' reliance on less stable funding and interbank markets.

It is against this background that the EMF-ECBC (European Mortgage Federation – European Covered Bond Council) remains committed to strengthening the European housing market and the Single Market by serving as a catalyst supporting the banking sector and uniting leading market and academic experts to shape an affordable, sustainable housing ecosystem.

Established in 1967, the European Mortgage Federation (EMF) is the voice of the European mortgage industry, worth over €9 trillion at the end of 2024 (EU27 and UK, Norway, and Iceland). In 2004, the EMF founded the European Covered Bond Council (ECBC), bringing together covered bond market participants worldwide, including issuers, analysts, investment banks, rating agencies, and a wide range of other stakeholders. ECBC members represent over 95% of covered bonds outstanding, which were worth over €3.3 trillion globally (of which €2.9 trillion in the EU27, UK, Switzerland, Norway, and Iceland) at the end of 2024.

Through its membership, our organisation represents more than 2,000 financial institutions in more than 60 jurisdictions encompassing the entire mortgage credit value chain from retail to funding activities. We stand ready to assist the EU institutions by sharing knowledge, advice, best practices, cooperating, and supporting the housing agenda with an ecosystem approach, bringing affordability, energy efficiency, and renovation solutions over the coming years. In particular, we believe that we can provide a tangible contribution with our expertise in developing and leading global market initiatives such as the Covered Bond Label with its specific disclosure section of the Harmonised Transparency Template for Green & Sustainable Covered Bonds, the Energy Efficient Mortgage Initiative (EEMI), Energy Efficient Mortgage Label, the International Secondary Mortgage Market Association (ISMMA) and a global housing finance database (HOFINET). These initiatives, where innovation and harmonisation of best practices have already facilitated a leveraging of the market to scale-up efficiencies, demonstrate both the capacity and willingness of our sector to assume and play its full role.

The EMF-ECBC has played a prominent role as a market catalyst through its efforts to monitor and align best practices in promoting dual recourse instruments to support funding in housing, the public sector, and the real economy.

Furthermore, through its technical committees, working groups, and task forces, the EMF-ECBC has developed technical knowledge and centres of competence in both the mortgage and covered bond businesses, with a focus on retail considerations, property valuation, prudential regulation, and funding strategies, to name but a few key areas. By adopting a "think-tank" approach and adhering to a clear global market governance structure, the EMF-ECBC has applied this expertise to help minimise market disruption and ensure the wider adoption of best practices in financial markets.

At the same time, through the initiatives highlighted above, it has sought to deliver active coordination and implementation of an operational market toolkit aimed at harmonising procedures, standards, definitions, and solutions.

Mortgage lenders and capital markets have played and will continue to play a crucial and catalytic role in supporting economic transition, providing the means to respond to local, regional and national needs – especially with regards to access to housing, with an overarching European financial infrastructure which also supports the EU's leadership in ESG policies as a geopolitical financial model. In this context, designing an affordable and sustainable housing ecosystem that supports citizens, investors, and lenders is an opportunity to generate both macro- and micro-economic growth models.

In this context, the EMF-ECBC is proposing constructive ideas which can help in creating a sustainable and affordable Housing Ecosystem:

1. Market governance and coordination between public and private sector stakeholders

2. Capital Markets support and guarantee schemes

3. Additional funding options to scale up capital markets resources for a Housing Ecosystem

Honing in on capital markets, in the context of capital market development in a potential long-term alignment with the SIU debate, it is essential to underline the critical complementarity in securing optimisation of access to capital markets played by both covered bonds and securitisation. These are two key tools for bank funding and capital markets development, albeit each with distinct structures, risk profiles and regulatory frameworks.

In the context of the current political debate, these instruments play unique but mutually reinforcing roles in the financial ecosystem offering:

1. Diverse Funding Sources: Covered bonds and securitisation offer banks diverse funding options. Covered bonds offer stable, long-term funding with lower risk, while securitisation allows banks to achieve efficient capital management with the benefit of redeploying capital in segments of interest and free up regulatory capital. There is very little overlap between the two investor groups, and the complementarity in the funding mix allows the use of both tools, mobilising two very different parts of the market to the needs of housing finance.

2. Market Stability and Resilience: The dual recourse nature of covered bonds contributes to financial stability, particularly in times of crisis. By distributing risk across a broad base of investors, securitisation enhances market resilience through accrued risk sharing and supports credit availability.

3. Enhanced Liquidity: Both instruments contribute to market liquidity. Covered bonds are typically highly liquid, making them attractive for institutional investors. Securitisation can create liquidity for less liquid asset classes, broadening access to funding.

4. Investor Diversification: Each asset class's different risk profiles and structures attract a wide range of investors, from conservative to risk-seeking. Diversifying the investor base enhances the robustness and depth of capital markets.

5. Regulatory Balance: Harmonised regulatory frameworks for covered bonds and securitisation under the CMU ensure high standards of transparency, quality and investor protection, fostering trust and participation in European capital markets.

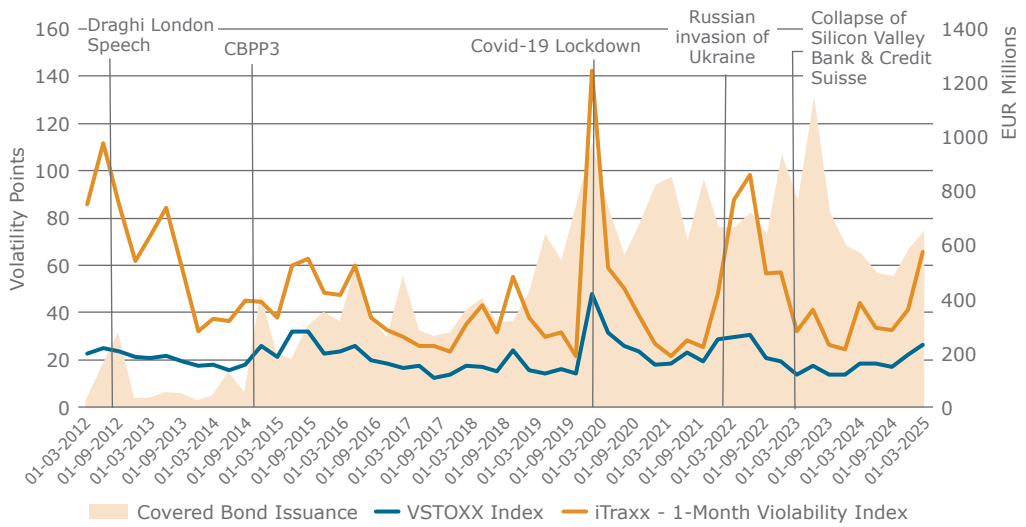
6. SME Financing: European Secured Notes (ESN) and SME securitisation are mutually complementary as ESNs would be issued based on an issuance programme, therefore acting as a resilient funding instrument for SMEs, especially in times of market volatility where issuers can react quickly according to the economic context, whereas securitisations would finance SMEs through investors' differing risk appetites and would be issued via stand-alone transactions in periods of market stability. Furthermore, ESNs are also complementary to the importance of balance sheet SME securitisations, which are currently allowing banks to off-load portions of their regulatory capital, allowing new credit issuance to the real economy.

7. Economic Growth: Both instruments support economic growth by improving banks' and businesses' access to finance. Covered bonds provide stable funding for mortgages and public sector projects, while securitisation facilitates credit for a wide range of economic sectors, including SMEs and consumer lending.

This strategic complementarity also offers unique value in terms of the ability of these asset classes to support housing solutions and the transition to a climate-neutral economy due to their pivotal role in forging a path to sustainable growth, stability, and shared prosperity. Capital market solutions continue to evolve and expand, transcending borders and bridging gaps between capital markets and the real economy.

During the recent years of market turmoil, also impacting the levels of customer deposits, lenders have been able to secure access to capital market funding by relying on covered bonds and their macroprudential characteristics. This anti-cyclical, long-term financing instrument has become a pillar of EU financial stability and is the nexus between harmonised European financial innovation and the traditions that sit within national legal frameworks. Together, via the harmonisation and convergence of efforts through the entry into force of the Covered Bond Directive and the ongoing pursuit of third-country equivalence for non-EEA countries, our industry continues to seek to address geographical barriers.

> Figure 1: Covered Bond Labelled Issuance over time showing anti-crisis access to Capital Markets



The **VSTOXX** Indices are based on EURO STOXX 50 realtime options prices and are designed to **reflect the market expectations of near-term up to long-term volatility** by measuring the square root of the implied variance across all options of a given time to expiration.

The European **iTraxx** indices trade 3, 5, 7 and 10-year maturities, and a new series is determined on the basis of **liquidity** every six months.

Source: Bloomberg & Covered Bond Label

The covered bond market continues to evolve and expand, transcending borders and bridging gaps between capital markets and the real economy. Beyond the purely financial aspects, for most jurisdictions the introduction of covered bonds has also resulted in the provision of more affordable mortgages, more funding choices for lenders and more long-term borrowing options for consumers when they make the biggest investment of their life.

In this context, the ECBC Covered Bond Fact Book represents an industry transparency and information toolkit offering a deep-dive into the covered bond world, summarising the latest market trends, providing a statistical overview and compiling detailed legal information, jurisdiction by jurisdiction. Moreover, the Fact Book sheds light on the potential of this asset class to support the transition to a climate-neutral economy through covered bonds' pivotal role in forging a path to sustainable growth, stability, shared prosperity and, in the end, a brighter future for all.

The ECBC Covered Bond Fact Book together with the Covered Bond Label comparative database serve as a map and compass, guiding market participants, regulators and policymakers through the intricacies of the covered bond market.

The Fact Book represents the collective effort of our community to produce a prime academic and statistical benchmark publication, whilst coordinating a discussion forum encompassing the collaborative spirit and the different cultures of ECBC members.

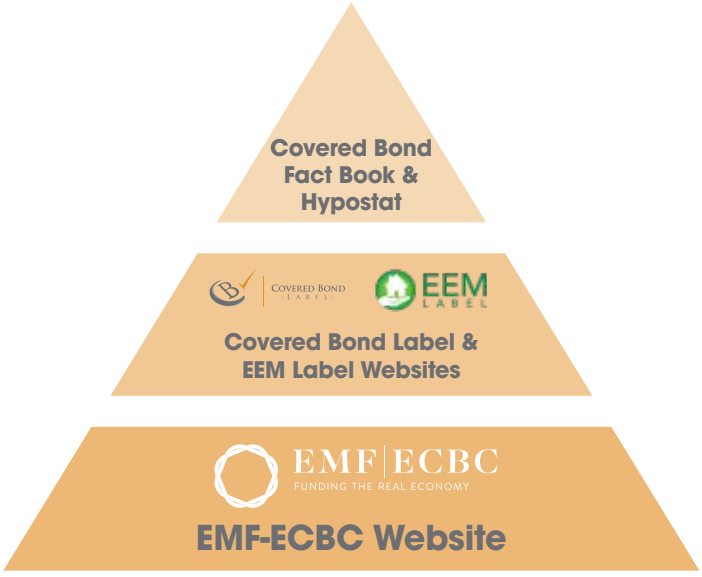
Over time, this community has been able to foster a covered bond philosophy with clear macroprudential characteristics for investors, thereby ensuring capital market accessibility and financial stability for mortgage and housing markets.

On a daily basis, capital market participants need complete and accurate information to support regulatory compliance with the Covered Bond Directive, LCR eligibility and ESG-related diligence matters, to name but a few priorities, and this need is growing all the time. This is where the ECBC comes into its own. The ECBC-led Covered Bond Label[1],has become a qualitative benchmark as an informative gateway into the covered bond space.

Most recently, the ECBC has completely refreshed its Comparative Database[2] on global covered bond legislative frameworks, which is embedded in the Covered Bond Label website.

At the same time, it has sought to deliver active coordination and implementation of initiatives aimed at harmonising procedures, standards, definitions and solutions, for example via the Covered Bond Label and its Harmonised Transparency Template (HTT), the Energy Efficient Mortgages Initiative (EEMI)[3] or the Energy Efficient Mortgage Label (EEM Label)[4] and its Harmonised Disclosure Template (HDT).

Significantly, all of this know-how and expertise can be accessed by way of a unique information "pyramid" which offers market participants with direct and rapid access to a wide variety of information and data on specific national markets or on European/global market and policy trends. The content and structure of this pyramid is fine-tuned on a regular basis with market participants.



The operational entry level of the pyramid is the EMF-ECBC website[5] through which the EMF-ECBC provides access to all position papers, studies and analysis produced by its technical committees and working groups, offering a valuable window into the potential of current and future legislative and market evolutions. The EMF-ECBC website furthermore provides links to its member organisations, giving an insight into the experts behind the knowledge.

Stepping up a level, the next layer of the pyramid consists of the Covered Bond Label website, where around EUR 2 trillion of covered bonds outstanding are officially registered. The Covered Bond Label website offers a unique level of transparency as the data it holds is managed directly by issuers, ISIN by ISIN, on: (1) liabilities'

1 www.coveredbondlabel.com
2 https://compare.coveredbondlabel.com
3 www.energyefficientmortgages.eu
4 www.energy-efficient-mortgage-label.org
5 https://hypo.org

characteristics; (2) cover asset data via the Harmonised Transparency Template (HTT); and (3) the features of national legislation, which are summarised and comparable at global level. In a similar way, on the ESG lending side, the EEM Label website offers transparency in the energy efficient mortgages space for consumers, lenders and investors. The pyramid's cornerstone lies in the compliance with disclosure requirements, with the Covered Bond Label's HTT being fully aligned to Article 14 of the Directive.

At the top of the pyramid are the EMF-ECBC's flagship publications offering a deeper dive into market dynamics and legislative developments: the ECBC Fact Book and the EMF Hypostat. The ECBC Fact Book crowns the Covered Bond Label website and Comparative Database with its insights into key themes and trends having impacted the covered bond space in the previous year, national legislation, summaries of the overarching macroprudential value and regulatory treatment of the asset class, as well as synopses of rating agencies' methodologies. Through the Hypostat, the EMF-ECBC delivers a unique analysis of trends in Europe's mortgage and housing markets, offering a comprehensive asset side perspective of mortgage market dynamics and national characteristics for investors and other market participants.

At the global level, the ongoing prospect of a third-party equivalence regime is boosting the interest in adopting covered bond legal frameworks and helping to make compliance with the qualitative standards foreseen in the Directive a clear point of reference for regulators and legislators.

Access to information, market guidance and harmonisation efforts are the secret ingredients which make the covered bond space a unique area of the market rooted in stakeholder confidence that, in turn, represents the real essence of the crisis management capabilities of the covered bond asset class.

The EMF-ECBC has always sought to be part of the solution and has activated the Industry's best resources to monitor, analyse, discuss and guard against potentially negative impacts for mortgage, housing and funding markets worldwide, amalgamating different cultures and market perspectives in a common way forward. Over the years, this approach has become the true fil rouge of our industry's modus operandi, and we are always ready to adapt to challenges whilst preserving asset quality and ensuring consumer and investor protection.

Our myriad of market-led initiatives reinforce the role of the European mortgage market as a driver for growth and risk reduction. As identified in the Report *"Assessing real estate risks and vulnerabilities: Hidden cracks in the financial system?"* prepared by the Economic Governance and EMU Scrutiny Unit (EGOV) of the European Parliament in April 2025 at the request of the European Parliament's Economic and Monetary Affairs Committee (ECON), there is a growing need for strengthening oversight, improving data collection, and adjusting regulations. This Report concludes that too many national segmentations remain across Member States, there is ample room for bringing national markets closer to the best practice, and that asymmetries should be investigated, aiming to promote a faster alignment towards best practices. The EMF-ECBC stands ready to continue its support and commitment to EU institutions toward effective policies for affordable housing and resilient financing conditions.

After so many years of activities and successful market initiatives, there is no doubt that we are stronger together and we would like to thank all ECBC members for their inputs, engagement and continued support. We would particularly like to express our gratitude to the contributors to this year's publication for their work in ensuring that this 20th edition of the ECBC European Covered Bond Fact Book remains:

> The leading source of covered bond market intelligence; and

> The primary source for aggregate covered bond market data and statistics, and a comparative framework analysis.

Stefano Patruno
ECBC Chairman

Luca Bertalot
EMF-ECBC Secretary General

ECBC
EUROPEAN COVERED BOND COUNCIL

ABOUT THE ECBC

The European Covered Bond Council (ECBC) is the platform that brings together covered bond market participants including covered bond issuers, analysts, investment bankers, rating agencies, systems providers and a wide range of other interested stakeholders. The ECBC was created by the European Mortgage Federation (EMF) in 2004. As of September 2025, the Council has over 120 members across 30 countries and many different market segments. ECBC members represent over 95% of covered bonds outstanding. In 2014, the ECBC and the EMF unified under a common umbrella entity, the Covered Bond & Mortgage Council (CBMC) with the intention to further develop synergies, share market best practices, achieve convergence across the whole value chain of the Industry, and, in parallel, to act as a market catalyst in origination and funding techniques.

Against this background, the ECBC seeks to represent and promote the interests of covered bond market participants at the international level. The ECBC's main objective is to be the point of reference for all matters regarding the covered bond industry and operate as a think-tank, as well as a lobbying and networking platform for covered bond market participants.

ECBC STRUCTURE

The ECBC Plenary Meeting is a bi-annual discussion forum where all ECBC members gather to discuss issues and to establish strong networking links.

The ECBC Steering Committee, headed by the ECBC Chairman, and composed of representatives from the major covered bond issuing jurisdictions in Europe and industry experts, is responsible for the day-to-day activities of the ECBC. The Committee convenes once per quarter and addresses strategy related questions. Furthermore, the Steering Committee coordinates the programmes of work of the various ECBC working groups and task forces.

ECBC WORKING GROUPS

- **The EU Legislation Working Group** has over the past years successfully lobbied at EU and international level to obtain appropriate treatment for covered bonds. As its name suggests, this Working Group monitors EU legislation with a specific relevance for covered bonds. Most recently, this has included Basel III and CRD IV/CRR, with a focus on the Net Stable Funding Requirement (NSFR) and the Fundamental Review of the Trading Book (FRTB).
- **The Technical Issues Working Group** represents the technical think-thank of the covered bond community, drawing on experts from across the Industry to tackle key issues for the sector. The Working Group tackles subjects relating to covered bonds such as the use and treatment of derivatives in the cover pool, bankruptcy remoteness and latest market developments. The Working Group manages and updates a database which provides an overview of covered bond frameworks across the EU and globally and enables their features to be compared (this is accessible at www.ecbc.eu).
- **The Market Related Issues Working Group** discusses topics such as the MiFID review and conventions on trading standards and the market-making process.
- **The Statistics and Data Working Group** is responsible for collecting and publishing complete and up-to-date information on issuing activities and volumes outstanding of covered bonds in all market segments. With over 30 different covered bond jurisdictions and numerous issuers, the collection of data is of utmost importance, particularly given that the ECBC data is increasingly viewed as the key source of covered bond statistics.
- **The Covered Bond Fact Book Working Group** is responsible for the development and publication of the annual ECBC Covered Bond Fact Book. This publication covers market developments, as well as legislative frameworks in different countries and provides comprehensive market statistics.

> **The Rating Agency Approaches Working Group**, examines the rating approaches applied by credit rating agencies for covered bonds and, when necessary, convenes meetings and publishes position papers accordingly.

> **The Global Issues Working Group** focuses exclusively on covered bond issues from a global perspective in an effort to create synergies between traditional, new and emerging covered bond markets. The Working Group aims to allow the development of a more level playing field for all at a global level, helping to enhance transparency and convergence, and ensure a proper recognition of the macro prudential value of the covered bond asset class internationally.

ECBC TASK FORCES

In addition to the working groups, the ECBC has established a number of topical Task Forces which consist of relevant covered bond market and legal experts from various jurisdictions at the EU and global levels: ECBC Implementation Task Force, ECBC Task Force on Extendable Maturity Structures, ECBC European Secured Notes (ESN) Task Force, ECBC Transparency Task Force, ECBC Liquidity Task Force, ECBC Swap Task Force, ECBC Investor Task Force and ECBC ESG Bonds Task Force.

The ECBC's overarching objective remains to further strengthen its role in facilitating communication amongst the different covered bond stakeholders, by working as a catalyst in defining the common features that characterise the asset class and in facilitating improvements in market practices, transparency and liquidity.

More information is available from https://hypo.org/ecbc/

Luca Bertalot,
EMF-ECBC Secretary General

ECBC MEMBERS

A&O SHEARMAN

ABECIP – THE BRAZILIAN ASSOCIATION OF REAL ESTATE LOANS AND SAVINGS

ABN AMRO

AIB MORTGAGE BANKS

AKTIA BANK PLC

ALPHA BANK A.E.

ALPHA BANK ROMANIA

ASN BANK NV

ASSOCIATION OF DANISH MORTGAGE BANKS (REALKREDITRÅDET – FINANS DANMARK)

ASSOCIATION OF SWEDISH COVERED BOND ISSUERS – ASCB

AUSTRALIAN SECURITISATION FORUM (ASF)

AXA HOME LOAN SFH

BANCO BPM S.P.A.

BANCO COMERCIAL PORTUGUÊS S.A. (GOH PORTUGAL)

BANK OF IRELAND MORTGAGE BANK

BANK OF MONTREAL (BMO) – CAPITAL MARKETS

BARCLAYS CAPITAL SERVICES LTD.

BAUSPARKASSE SCHWÄBBISCH HALL

BAYERISCHE LANDESBANK – BAYERN LB

BELFIUS BANK

BERLIN HYP AG

BLOOMBERG DATA

BNP PARIBAS

BNP PARIBAS FORTIS BELGIUM

BPIFRANCE

CAISSE DE REFINANCEMENT DE L'HABITAT – CRH

CAISSE FRANCAISE DE FINANCEMENT LOCAL – CAFFIL

CANADA MORTGAGE AND HOUSING CORPORATION – CMHC

CANADIAN IMPERIAL BANK OF COMMERCE – CIBC

CHIOMENTI

CITIGROUP GLOBAL MARKETS GERMANY

CLIFFORD CHANCE LLP

COMMERZBANK SECURITIES

CREDIT AGRICOLE CORPORATE AND INVESTMENT BANK

CREDIT AGRICOLE HOME LOAN SFH

CREDIT FONCIER DE FRANCE / COMPAGNIE DE FINANCEMENT FONCIER

CREDIT MUTUEL – CIC HOME LOAN SFH

CRÉDIT MUTUEL ARKÉA

CRELAN HOME LOAN

CRIF

DANISH SHIP FINANCE

DANSKE BANK

DBRS MORNINGSTAR CREDIT RATINGS

DEUTSCHE BANK AG

DLR KREDIT A/S

DNB BOLIGKREDITT

DUTCH ASSOCIATION OF COVERED BOND ISSUERS – DACB

DZ BANK

DZ HYP

EUROPEAN AVM ALLIANCE (EAA)

EUROPEAN DATAWAREHOUSE GMBH

EVITEC SOLUTIONS

FÉDÉRATION DES CAISSES DESJARDINS DU QUÉBEC

FINANCE FINLAND

FINANCE NORWAY – FNO

FITCH RATINGS LTD

FT LIVE

GROUPE BPCE

GRUPO BBVA

HSBC UK BANK PLC

HUNGARIAN BANKING ASSOCIATION

HYPOPORT/INTERTRUST

ING BELGIUM

ING GROUP

INTESA SANPAOLO

ISLANDSBANKI HF.

ITALIAN BANKING ASSOCIATION – ASSOCIAZIONE BANCARIA ITALIANA – ABI

JP MORGAN

JYSKE REALKREDIT A/S

KBC BANK

KOREA HOUSING FINANCE CORPORATION – KHFC

LA BANQUE POSTALE HOME LOAN SFH

LANDESBANK BADEN-WÜRTTEMBERG – LBBW

LANDESBANK HESSEN-THÜRINGEN – HELABA

LINKLATERS BUSINESS SERVICES LLP

LLOYDS BANKING GROUP

LUMINOR BANK AS

LUXEMBOURG BANKERS' ASSOCIATION – ABBL

MAYER BROWN

MBANK HIPOTECZNY

MODE FINANCE

MOODY'S

MÜNCHENER HYPOTHEKENBANK EG

NATIONAL BANK OF GREECE S.A. – NBG

NATIONAL HOME MORTGAGE FINANCE CORPORATION

NATIONALE NEDERLANDEN BANK N.V. (NN BANK)

NATIONWIDE BUILDING SOCIETY

NATIXIS

NATWEST MARKETS

NIBC BANK N.V.

NIEDERER KRAFT FREY LTD

NOMURA INTERNATIONAL PLC

NORDDEUTSCHE LANDESBANK GIROZENTRALE

NORDEA BANK AB

NYKREDIT A/S

OP MORTGAGE BANK

PBB DEUTSCHE PFANDBRIEFBANK AG

PFANDBRIEF & COVERED BOND FORUM AUSTRIA

PFANDBRIEFBANK SCHWEIZERISCHER HYPOTHEKARINSTITUTE

PKO BANK HIPOTECZNY

RABOBANK

REALKREDIT DANMARK A/S

ROYAL BANK OF CANADA – RBC

S-BANK PLC

S&P GLOBAL RATINGS

SANTANDER UK PLC

SCOPE GROUP

SOCIÉTÉ GÉNÉRALE CORPORATE & INVESTMENT BANKING

SOCIÉTÉ GÉNÉRALE SOCIÉTÉ DE CRÉDIT FONCIER – SG SCF

SP MORTGAGE BANK

SPANISH MORTGAGE ASSOCIATION – ASOCIACION HIPOTECARIA ESPAÑOLA – AHE

SUMITOMO MITSUI BANKING CORPORATION (SMBC)

SVENSKA HANDELSBANKEN – STADSHYPOTEK

SWEDBANK AB

TAO SOLUTIONS

THE ASSOCIATION OF BANKS IN SINGAPORE – ABS

THE MORTGAGE SOCIETY OF FINLAND

TXS GMBH

UBS

UK REGULATED COVERED BOND COUNCIL – UKRCBC

UNICREDIT GROUP

VALIANT BANK AG

VERBAND DEUTSCHER PFANDBRIEFBANKEN – VDP

September 2025

COVERED BOND LABEL

The Covered Bond Label is a quality Label which responds to a market-wide request for common qualitative and quantitative standards and for an enhanced level of transparency and comparability in the European covered bond market.

The Label:

> Establishes a clear perimeter for the asset class and highlights the core standards and quality of covered bonds;

> Increases transparency;

> Improves access to information for investors, regulators and other market participants;

> Has the additional objective of improving liquidity in covered bonds;

> Positions the covered bond asset class with respect to regulatory challenges (CRD IV/CRR, Solvency II, redesign of ECB repo rules, etc.).

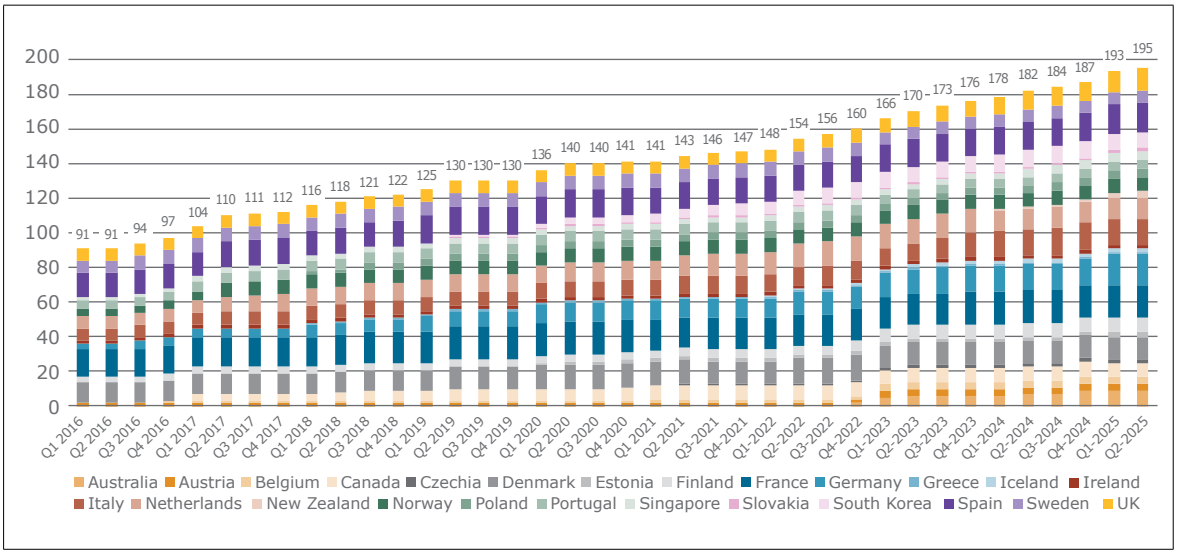
The Covered Bond Label Foundation (CBLF) was founded by the EMF-ECBC in 2012 and it was developed by the European issuer community, working in close cooperation with investors, regulators, and rating agencies and in consultation with all major stakeholders. The Label website became fully operational in January 2013, with the first Labels being granted since then.

As of August 2025, visitors can find the Harmonised Transparency Template (HTT) and 14 National Transparency Templates, 158 issuer profiles and information on 195 labelled cover pools with issuance data on more than 5,600 covered bonds amounting to a total face value of almost EUR 2.5 tn.

The Label is based on the Covered Bond Label Convention (the one currently in force is 2025 Label Convention, please see below), which defines the core characteristics required for a covered bond programme to qualify for the Label.

The Covered Bond Label Foundation (CBLF) granted the first Non-European Economic Area (non-EEA) Label in 2015. In February 2016, the first non-EEA global issuer published the HTT. Currently, 48 out of 195 pools are from outside the EEA.

> Figure 1: Evolution of Labelled Cover Pools



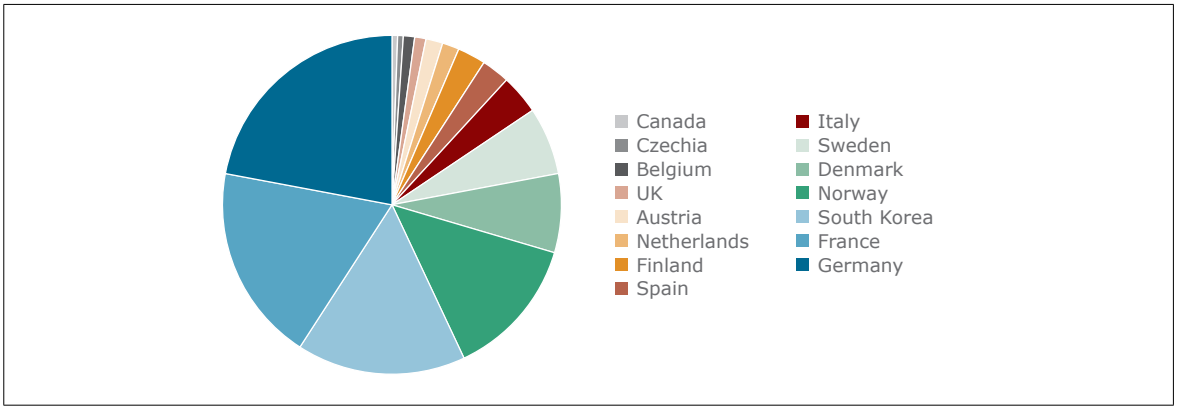
The HTT is the worldwide standardised, Excel-based form that issuers who have been granted the Covered Bond Label use to disclose information on their covered bond programmes. Definitions and format of the disclosed information are standardised to increase comparability and transparency between issuers and between jurisdictions. Standardisation facilitates investors' due diligence, enhancing overall transparency in the Covered Bond market. The HTT, designed to be fully compliant with the current legislative environment undergoes constant review, stirred by the Covered Bond Label Committee and the Covered Bond Label Advisory Council, so to be always up-to-date with regulatory and market requirements.

The HTT presents a significant achievement in terms of convergence of market best practices and a substantial step forward in enhancing transparency in the covered bond space both in Europe and across the globe. The HTT is a particularly positive step for the market and especially for global investors, who will be able to perform their due diligence activities more easily and obtain issuers' data ranging from asset and liability side information to legislative details from different countries in a more comparable way. Over the last couple of HTT revisions the HTT presents also various datapoints on the ESG dimension, such as data on EPC, age structure and energy demand of dwellings used as collateral for mortgages in the cover pool and information on CO2 emission. These additions prove the proactiveness of the Covered Bond Label Community to provide relevant and timely data in order to promote the high transparency and comparability standards for which the Label is known for.

The addition of ESG data in the HTT rests on the steadily growing attention being paid by our members to the issuance of sustainable covered bonds, which are becoming an increasingly important feature of the European financial landscape. What has started in 2017 as a just a self-certification operated by labelled covered bond issuers to flag with a green leaf on the covered bond label website those bonds which are considered sustainable has now reached significant proportions with over 183 outstanding bonds in 16 jurisdictions and 51 banks accounting for over EUR 116.5bn. From the latest figures available this volume amounts to nearly 5% of total covered bond outstanding in July 2025, and to 5% in terms of new issuances during the first half of 2025.

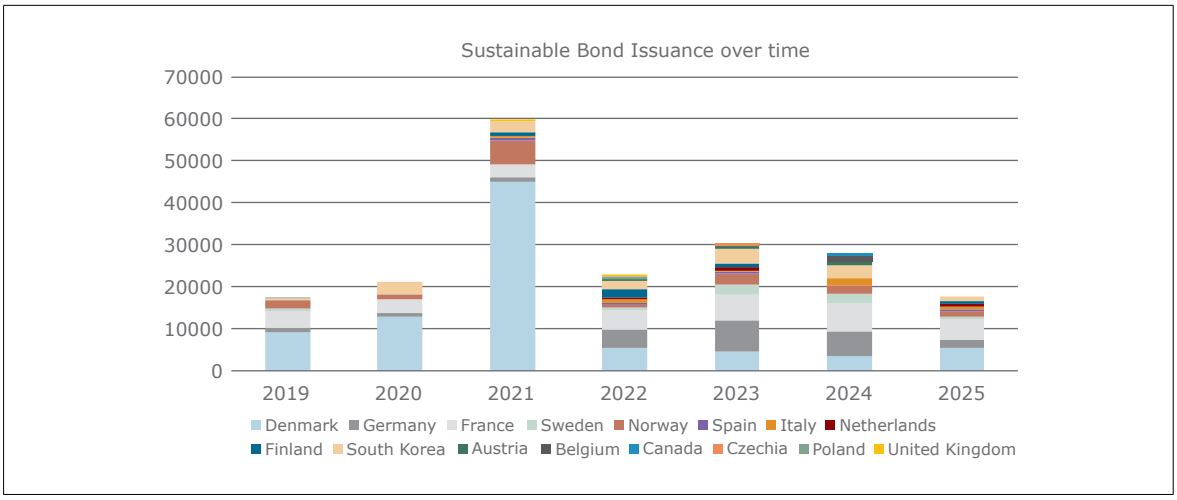
Considering these increasing numbers the Covered Bond Label aims as well to increase the data availability on both the ESG data in general and the underlying assets of sustainable covered bonds in particular.

> Figure 2A: Outstanding Sustainable Labeled Covered Bonds (Status August 2025)

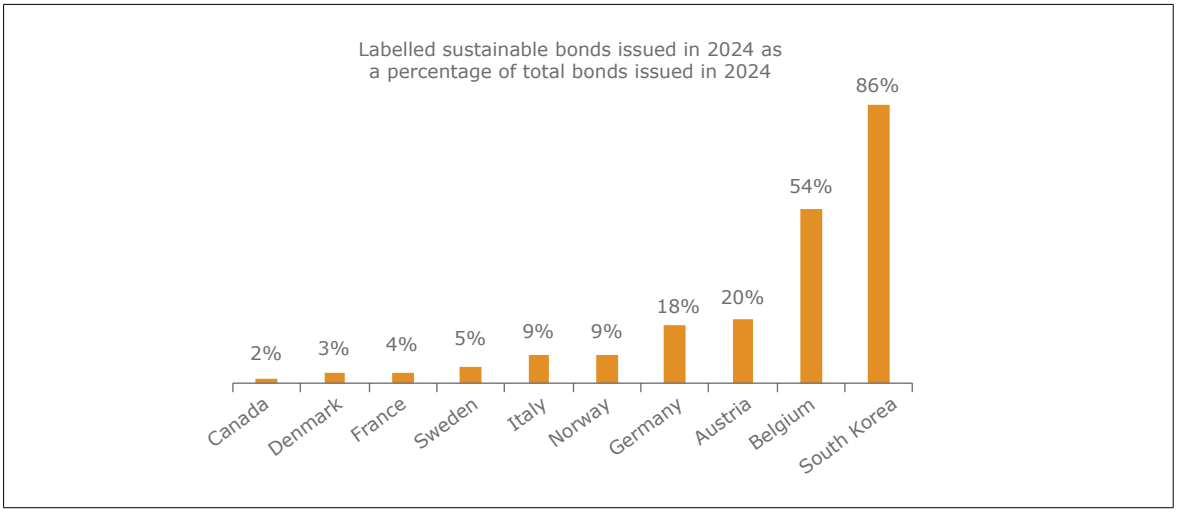


Source: Covered Bond Label

> Figure 2B: Sustainable Covered Bond issuance in EUR bn



> Figure 2C: Progression of sustainable Covered Bonds as a percentage of total issuance



Source: Covered Bond Label

2025 Covered Bond Label Convention

Following the structural changes of the Convention in 2022 in order to accommodate the Covered Bond Directive, for this year no particular changes have been included.

Here the text of the 2025 Covered Bond Label Convention:

Covered bonds are debt securities, backed by mortgage, public sector or ship assets, and characterised by a twofold bondholders' protection mechanism rooted in a dedicated covered bond legal framework.

In more details:

I. Legislation safeguards:

a) The Covered Bond (CB) programme is embedded in a dedicated national CB legislation;

b) The bond is issued by or bondholders otherwise have full recourse, direct or indirect1, to a credit institution which is subject to public regulation and supervision;

c) The obligations of the credit institution in respect of the cover pool are supervised by public supervisory authorities.

II. Security features intrinsic to the CB product:

a) Bondholders have a dual claim against:

i. The issuing credit institution as referred to in point I b);

ii. A cover pool of financial assets2 (mortgage, public sector or ship assets), ranking senior to the unsecured creditors.

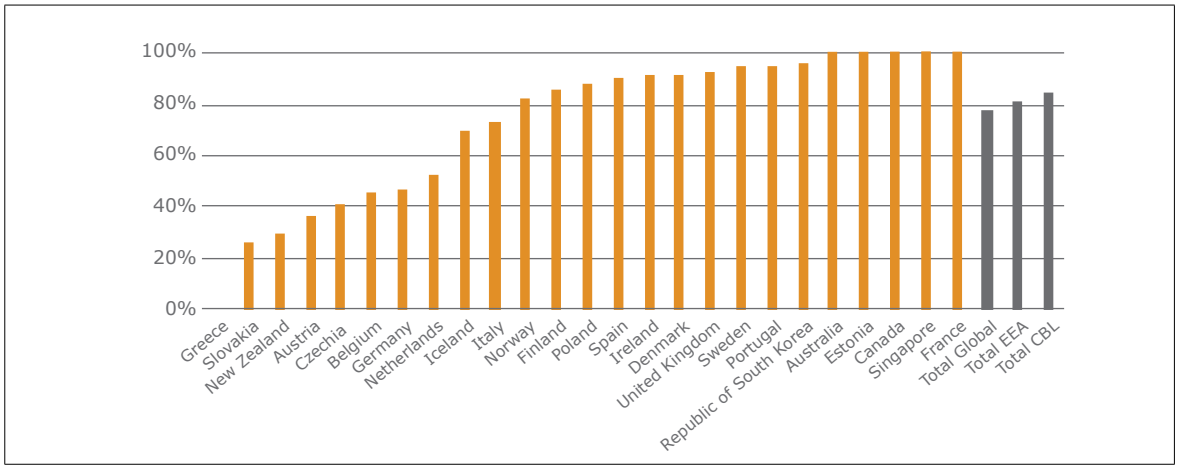
b) The credit institution has the ongoing obligation to maintain sufficient assets in the cover pool to satisfy the claims of covered bondholders at all times.

c) Issuers are committed to providing regular information enabling investors to analyse the cover pool, following the Harmonised Transparency Template3 and in compliance with the transparency requirements of Article 14 of the Covered Bond Directive (Directive (EU) 2019/2162).

For further information on the Covered Bond Label Convention, visit https://www.coveredbondlabel.com/

Besides the Convention and the updates finalised on the website, a revised Comparative Database has been set-up where to analyse and compare the legislative texts and key features of covered bond laws throughout the globe.

> Figure 3A: Market share Covered Bond Label by outstanding

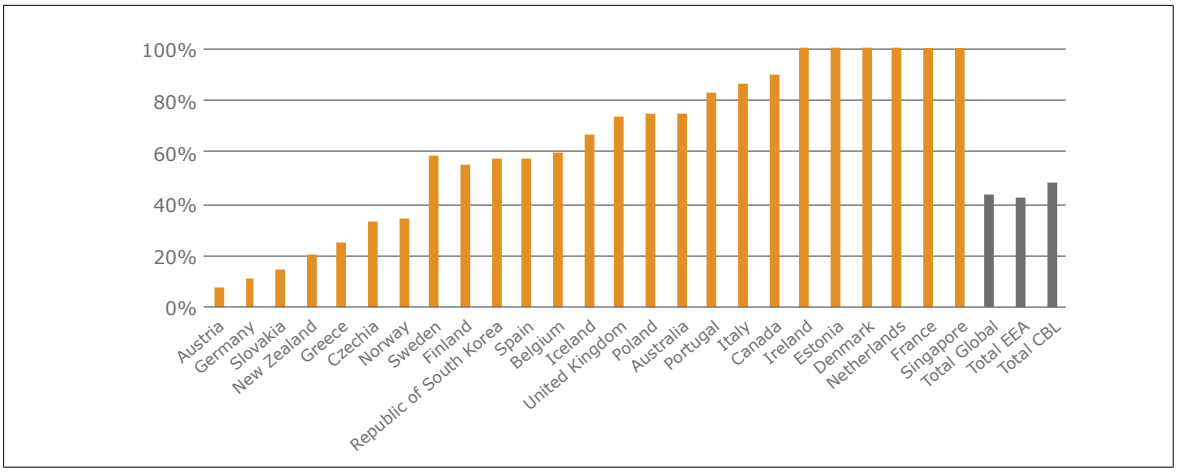


1 Including pooling models consisting only of covered bonds issued by credit institutions.

2 The financial assets eligible for the cover pool (including substitution assets and derivative instruments) and their characteristics are defined in the national covered bond legislation which complies with the requirements of the Covered Bond Directive (Directive (EU) 2019/2162, as well as those articles which specify its implementation, including a waiver for the requirement for the issuer to be based in the European Economic Area (EEA), allowing non-EEA LCR compliant covered bonds programmes to be eligible for the Label. Non-EEA Labels will be identified on the Covered Bond Label website in a different graphic solution to EEA Labels.

3 The enhanced Harmonised Transparency Template 2023 will enter into force at the end of the first quarter of 2023 and will be a binding requirement for the granting and renewal of the Covered Bond Label.

> Figure 3B: Market share Covered Bond Label by issuer



The data on the total covered bond market is based on end-2023 values, whereas data on the Covered Bond Label is based on data of July 2023.

LABELLED COVER POOLS

AUSTRALIA

Australia and New Zealand Banking Group Limited, *ANZ Covered Bond Programme*

Bank of Queensland Limited, *BOQ Covered Bond Programme*

Bank of Queensland Limited, *BOQ Soft Bullet Covered Bond Programme*

Bendigo and Adelaide Bank Limited, *BEN Covered Bond Programme*

Commonwealth Bank of Australia, *CBA Covered Bond Programme*

ING Bank (Australia) Limited, *IBAL Covered Bond Programme*

Macquarie Bank Limited, *Macquarie Bank Limited*

National Australia Bank, *NAB Covered Bond Programme*

Westpac Banking Corporation, *Westpac Covered Bond Programme*

AUSTRIA

Erste Group Bank AG, *EGB Mortgage Cover Pool*

Erste Group Bank AG, *EGB Public Sector Cover Pool*

UniCredit Bank Austria AG, *Credit Mortgage*

UniCredit Bank Austria AG, *Credit Public Sector*

BELGIUM

Argenta Spaarbank NV, *Argenta Spaarbank European Covered Bonds*

Belfius Bank NV/SA, *Belfius Mortgage Pandbrieven*

Belfius Bank NV/SA, *Belfius Public Pandbrieven*

BNP Paribas Fortis NV/SA, *BNP Paribas Fortis Mortgage Pandbrieven*

CANADA

Bank of Montreal, *Bank of Montreal Cover Pool*

Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce, *CIBC Legislative*

Equitable Bank, *EQB Covered Bond (Legislative) Programme*

Fédération des caisses Desjardins du Québec, *CCDQ Covered Bond (Legislative) Guarantor Limited Partnership*

National Bank of Canada, *National Bank of Canada Legislative Covered Bonds*

Royal Bank of Canada, *RBC Covered Bond Guarantor LP*

The Bank of Nova Scotia, *Scotiabank Covered Bond Guarantor Limited Partnership*

The Toronto-Dominion Bank, *TD Legislative Covered Bonds*

CZECHIA

Komercni banka, a.s., *Komercni_banka_HZL_EUR_0001*

UniCredit Bank Czech Republic and Slovakia, a.s., *HZL_UCB*

DENMARK

Danish Ship Finance A/S, *Capital Center A*

Danish Ship Finance A/S, *General Capital Center*

Danske Bank A/S, *Cover Pool C - Commercial*

Danske Bank A/S, *Cover Pool D - Denmark*

Danske Bank A/S, *Cover Pool I - International*

DLR Kredit A/S, *Capital Centre B*

Jyske Realkredit A/S, *Capital Center E*

Nordea Kredit Realkreditaktieselskab A/S, *Nordea Kredit Capital Center 1*

Nordea Kredit Realkreditaktieselskab A/S, *Nordea Kredit Capital Center 2*

Nykredit Realkredit A/S, *Nykredit Capital Centre E*

Nykredit Realkredit A/S, *Nykredit Capital Centre H*

Realkredit Danmark A/S, *Capital Centre S*

Realkredit Danmark A/S, *Capital Centre T*

ESTONIA

Coop Pank AS, *Coop Pank AS Residential Mortgage Cover Pool*

LHV Pank AS, *LHV CB1*

Luminor Bank AS, *Luminor Bank AS Euro Medium Term Note and Covered Bond Programme*

FINLAND
Danske Mortgage Bank Plc, *Pool 1*
Nordea Mortgage Bank Plc, *Nordea Mortgage Bank cover pool*
Nordea Mortgage Bank Plc, *Nordea Mortgage Bank Cover Pool 2*
OP Mortgage Bank, *OP Mortgage Bank EMTCB*
OP Mortgage Bank, *OP Mortgage Bank EMTCN*
S-Bank Plc, *S-Bank Cover Pool*
Sp Mortgage Bank Plc, *SP-01*
Sp Mortgage Bank Plc, *SP-02*

FRANCE
Arkéa Home Loans SFH, *Arkéa Home Loans SFH*
Arkéa Public Sector SCF, *Arkéa Public Sector SCF*
AXA Home Loan SFH, *AXA Home Loan SFH*
BNP Paribas Home Loan SFH, *BNP Paribas Home Loan SFH*
BPCE SFH, *BPCE Home Loan SFH*
Caisse de Refinancement de l'Habitat, *CRH*
Caisse Française de Financement Local, *CAISSE FRANÇAISE DE FINANCEMENT LOCAL*
CCF SFH, *CCF SFH*
CIF Euromortgage, *CIF Euromortgage*
Compagnie de Financement Foncier, *Compagnie de Financement Foncier*
Crédit Agricole Financement de l'Habitat, *CA FH SFH*
Credit Agricole Home Loan SFH, *Credit Agricole Home Loan SFH*
Credit Agricole Public Sector SCF, *Credit Agricole Public Sector SCF*
Crédit Mutuel Home Loan SFH, *Crédit Mutuel Home Loan SFH*
Crelan Home Loan SCF, *Crelan Home Loan SCF*
La Banque Postale Home Loan SFH, *La Banque Postale Home Loan SFH*
MMB SCF, *MMB SCF*
SG SCF, *Société Générale SCF*
SG SFH, *Societe Generale SFH*

GERMANY
Bausparkasse Schwaebisch Hall AG, *BSH Mortgage Pfandbrief*
Berlin Hyp AG, *BHH Mortgage Pfandbrief*
Commerzbank AG, *CMZB Mortgage Pfandbriefe*
Commerzbank AG, *CMZB Public Sector Pfandbriefe*
Deutsche Pfandbriefbank AG, *pbb Mortgage Pfandbrief*
Deutsche Pfandbriefbank AG, *pbb Public Sector Pfandbrief*
DZ HYP AG, *DZ HYP Mortgage Pfandbrief*
DZ HYP AG, *DZ HYP Public Sector Pfandbrief*
HCOB, *HYP Pool*
HCOB, *Ship*
Landesbank Baden-Württemberg, *LBBW Mortgage Pfandbrief*
Landesbank Baden-Württemberg, *LBBW Public Sector Pfandbrief*
Münchener Hypothekenbank eG, *MHB Mortgage Pfandbrief*
NATIXIS Pfandbriefbank AG, *NPB Mortgage Pfandbrief*
NORD/LB Norddeutsche Landesbank Girozentrale, *NORD/LB – Public Sector*
NORD/LB Norddeutsche Landesbank Girozentrale, *NORD/LB – Mortgage*
UniCredit Bank GmbH, *HVB Mortgage*
UniCredit Bank GmbH, *HVB Public*

GREECE
Alpha Bank S.A., *Alpha Bank Covered Bond Programme I*

ICELAND
Arion banki hf., *Sértryggð Skuldabréf – Covered Bonds Issued under the Icelandic Covered Bond Act no. 11/2008*
Landsbankinn hf., *Cover Pool*

IRELAND
AIB Mortgage Bank u.c., *ACS (Asset Covered Securities)*
Bank of Ireland Mortgage Bank, *ACS (Asset Covered Securities)*

ITALY
Banca Monte dei Paschi di Siena, *MPS Covered Bond*
Banca Popolare di Sondrio S.p.A., *POPSO Covered Bond*
Banca Sella S.p.A., *SELLA CB*
BANCO BPM, *Bpm OBG2*
Banco di Desio e della Brianza SpA, *Desio OBG*
Cassa di Risparmio di Bolzano SpA, *SPK OBG S.r.l.*
Crédit Agricole Italia S.p.A., *Crédit Agricole Italia OBG S.r.l.*
Credito Emiliano Spa, *Credem CB s.r.l.*
Iccrea Banca SpA, *Iccrea Covered Bond Srl*
Intesa Sanpaolo S.p.A., *ISP CB Ipotecario S.r.l.*
Intesa Sanpaolo S.p.A., *ISP OBG S.r.l.*
Intesa Sanpaolo S.p.A., *UBI FINANCE S.r.l.*
Mediobanca - Banca di Credito Finanziario S.p.A., *Mediobanca Covered Bond S.r.l*
Südtiroler Volksbank Banca Popolare dell'AltoAdige, *Voba CB S.r.l.*
UniCredit S.p.A., *UniCredit OBG srl*

NETHERLANDS
ABN AMRO Bank N.V., *ABN AMRO Covered Bond Programme*
Achmea Bank N.V., *Achmea Bank SB Cover Pool*
ASN Bank N.V., *ASN Covered Bond Company B.V.*
Coöperatieve Rabobank U.A., *Rabobank*
ING Bank N.V., *ING Bank*
ING Bank N.V., *ING Bank Soft Bullet*
Knab N.V. (formerly Aegon Bank), *Knab CPT Cover Pool*
Knab N.V. (formerly Aegon Bank), *Knab SB Cover Pool*
Nationale-Nederlanden Bank N.V., *NN Bank Soft Bullet cover pool*
NIBC Bank N.V., *NIBC Conditional Pass-Through Covered Bond Programme*
NIBC Bank N.V., *NIBC Soft Bullet Covered Bond Programme*
Van Lanschot Kempen NV*, *Van Lanschot Kempen N.V. SB Covered Bond Programme*

NEW ZEALAND
ANZ Bank New Zealand Limited, *ANZ NZ Covered Bond Programme*
ASB Bank Ltd, *ASB Covered Bond Pool*
Bank of New Zealand, *BNZ Covered Bonds Programme*
Westpac New Zealand Limited, *WNZCBL*

NORWAY
DNB Boligkreditt AS, *DNB Boligkreditt mortgage cover pool*

Eika Boligkreditt AS, *Eika Boligkreditt AS (EIKBOL)*

Møre Boligkreditt AS, *Møre Boligkreditt mortgage cover pool*

Nordea Eiendomskreditt AS, *Nordea Eiendomskreditt cover pool*

SpareBank 1 Boligkreditt, *SpareBank 1 Boligkreditt (SpaBol)*

Sparebanken Sør Boligkreditt AS, *Sparebanken Sør Boligkreditt AS cover pool*

Sparebanken Vest Boligkreditt, *Sparebanken Vest Boligkreditt AS*

SR-Boligkreditt AS, *SR-Boligkreditt mortgage cover pool*

POLAND

ING Bank Hipoteczny S.A., *ING Bank Hipoteczny S.A.*

mBank Hipoteczny S.A., *Mortgage Cover Pool*

Pekao Bank Hipoteczny SA, *Pekao BH - public sector*

Pekao Bank Hipoteczny SA, *Pekao BH - mortgage*

PKO Bank Hipoteczny Spółka Akcyjna, *PKO Bank Hipoteczny SA*

PORTUGAL

Banco BPI, S.A., *BPI Mortgage Cover Pool*

Banco Comercial Português, S.A., *BCP Residential Mortgages*

Banco Santander Totta, S.A., *Banco Santander Totta, S.A.*

Caixa Económica Montepio Geral, *Montepio Soft-bullet Covered Bond Programme*

NOVO BANCO, S.A., *NOVO BANCO*

REPUBLIC OF KOREA (SOUTH)

KEB Hana Bank, *KEB Hana Bank USD5 billion Global Covered Bond Programme*

Kookmin Bank, *Kookmin Bank USD7 billion Global Covered Bond Programme*

Korea Housing Finance Corporation, *KHFC 2020 EUR 1 billion Social Covered Bond due February 2025*

Korea Housing Finance Corporation, *KHFC 2020 EUR 500 million Social Covered Bond due July 2025*

Korea Housing Finance Corporation, *KHFC 2021 EUR 1 billion Social Covered Bond due June 2026*

Korea Housing Finance Corporation, *KHFC 2021 EUR 550 million Social Covered Bond due October 2028*

Korea Housing Finance Corporation, *KHFC 2022 EUR 600 million Social Covered Bond due March 2025*

Korea Housing Finance Corporation, *KHFC USD 15 billion Global Covered Bond Programme*

Shinhan Bank, *Shinhan Bank USD5 billion Global Covered Bond Programme*

SINGAPORE

DBS Bank Ltd, *DBS Bank Limited USD 20 billion Global Covered Bond Programme*

Maybank Singapore Limited, *Maybank Singapore Limited USD 10 billion Global Covered Bond Programme*

Oversea-Chinese Banking Corporation Limited, *OCBC Limited USD 10b Global Covered Bond Programme*

Standard Chartered Bank (Singapore) Limited, *Standard Chartered Bank (Singapore) Limited USD 5 billion Covered Bond Programme*

United Overseas Bank Limited, *United Overseas Bank Limited USD15 billion Global Covered Bond Programme*

SLOVAKIA

Prima banka Slovensko, a.s., *PB Cover Pool 1*

Všeobecná úverová banka, a.s., *VUB CB Mortgage*

SPAIN

ABANCA Corporación Bancaria, *S.A., ABANCA Corporación Bancaria, S.A.*

Banco de Sabadell, S.A., *Covered Bond Programme Banco Sabadell*

Banco Santander S.A., *Santander Mortgage Covered Bonds*

Banco Santander S.A., *Santander ECA Covered Bonds*

Bankinter, S.A., *Bankinter, S.A.*

BBVA, *Covered Bond Programme*

BBVA, *Public Sector Covered Bond Programme*

BBVA, *Export Finance Covered Bond Programme*

CaixaBank SA, *Mortgages Loans CAIXABANK*

CaixaBank SA, *Public Loans CaixaBank S.A.*

Caja Rural de Navarra, *Sociedad Coop. de Crédito, Covered Bond*

Eurocaja Rural, *Eurocaja Rural*

Grupo Cooperativo Cajamar, *Cajamar Mortgage*

Grupo Cooperativo Cajamar, *Cajamar Sector Public*

Ibercaja Banco S.A., *Ibercaja Banco S.A.*

Kutxabank S.A., *Kutxabank S.A.*

Unicaja Banco, S.A., *Unicaja Banco Mortgage Covered Bonds*

SWEDEN

Länsförsäkringar Hypotek AB, *Länsförsäkringar Hypotek AB*

Nordea Hypotek, *Nordea Hypotek cover pool*

Skandinaviska Enskilda Banken AB (publ), *SEB Cover Pool*

Stadshypotek AB (publ), *Stadshypotek Swedish Pool*

Stadshypotek AB (publ), *Stadshypotek Norwegian Pool*

Swedbank Mortgage AB, *Swedbank Mortgage cover pool*

The Swedish Covered Bond Corporation, *The Swedish Covered Bond Corporation*

UNITED KINGDOM

Barclays Bank UK Plc, *Barclays Bank UK Plc*

Clydesdale Bank PLC (trading as Virgin Money), *Clydesdale Bank PLC (formerly Virgin Money plc) Programme*

Coventry Building Society, Coventry *Building Society HSBC UK, HSBC UK*

Leeds Building Society, *LBS Covered Bond Programme*

Lloyds Bank plc, *Lloyds Bank plc EUR60bn Global Covered Bond Programme*

National Westminster Bank Plc, *NatWest Covered Bond Programme*

Nationwide Building Society, *Nationwide Covered Bond LLP*

Paragon Bank PLC, *Paragon Covered Bond Programme*

Santander UK plc, *Santander UK plc*

Skipton Building Society, *Skipton Building Society*

TSB Bank plc, *TSB Covered Bonds LLP*

Yorkshire Building Society, *YBS Covered Bonds*

CHAPTER 1 - KEY THEMES OF THE YEAR

1.1 FOREWORD

By Sascha Kullig – Chairman of the ECBC Fact Book Working Group,
Association of German Pfandbrief Banks (vdp)

The ECBC Covered Bond Fact Book can rightly be described as an encyclopedia of the covered bond universe. It is an excellent reference work for those new to the subject, as well as experts who have been familiar with it for years, wish to keep up to date with current developments and think ahead. The annual chapter on current key themes relating to covered bonds is particularly interesting for the latter group.

Priorities in Brussels have changed. In view of the significantly altered geopolitical and economic situation, the focus is now on reducing bureaucracy, simplification, growth, defence and affordable housing, to name just a few of the hot topics. Covered bonds can and will play an important role in all these areas. Linked to this is the Saving and Investment Union (SIU) initiative, which aims to reduce regulatory burden for securitization so that this instrument can also be used more widely again. This chapter provides valuable information on all of this, as well as on the potential creation of European Secured Notes, which could close a gap in refinancing SME loans.

Despite the new priorities sustainability issues remain highly important. Dismissing climate change, with all its implications for nature, societies, and financial markets as irrelevant would be disastrous. Now that the market segment of ESG covered bonds has been established, we have included key information on this market in the Generic Section for the first time this year. Meanwhile, the ESG articles in this chapter address topics such as impact reporting and investor demand. They also cover ESG risk management and the potential standardisation of corresponding risk assessments.

Even though the Covered Bond Directive was only introduced 6 years ago, it may soon be due for its first revision. The EBA's recommendations to the EU Commission could provide important insights in this regard. (Unfortunately, the EBA report was not yet available at the time of writing.) One of the key points in the EBA report will be the recommendation on the possible introduction of a third-country equivalence regime. As the global perspective has always been a key concern for the ECBC, attention will also be focused on this, given that covered bonds have long since become a global product.

Covered bonds are a crisis-proven traditional refinancing instrument. At the same time, both the community and the product continue to show how innovative they are. Consequently, one article deals with distributed ledger technology, blockchain covered bonds, and the use of artificial intelligence. The new technologies will slowly but surely change the financial markets. The chapter is rounded off with detailed information on investor demand and the liquidity situation in the covered bond market.

I would like to thank all the authors for their hard work alongside their regular daily tasks. This demonstrates their commitment to and enthusiasm for covered bonds. I hope you, dear readers, enjoy reading the articles in this key themes chapter.

1.2 SUPPORTING THE REAL ECONOMY, SME FINANCING, SECURITISATION AND ESN

By Elisa Coletti, Intesa Sanpaolo, Claudio Domingues, Millenium BPC, Per Anders Öjar Törnqvist, Danske Bank A/S and Stefano Patruno, Chairman of the ECBC, Moderator of the ECBC European Secured Notes (ESN) Task Force, Intesa Sanpaolo

THE EUROPEAN AWAKENING

Europe's postwar model, anchored in the imperative of the continent's reconstruction, offered social security, industrial strength, a harmonised legal and regulatory setting, while delivering prosperity and political stability, for decades. However, its heavy structures – suited to an era of slower change and national economies – are now coming under pressure from intensifying demographic trends, productivity languishing for years under the weight of an increasingly complex legal environment, and a shifting global order calling for a more competitive and self-reliant Europe.

Regarding competitiveness, concerns are not new, as business leaders have long warned of underinvestment, slow digital adoption, stringent ESG requirements, and declining industrial resilience. However, the publication of flagship reports by Mario Draghi, Enrico Letta, and Christian Noyer, led Brussels to officially frame this stagnation as a strategic emergency[1]. Mario Draghi in particular is adamant on the negative impact of the regulatory context as it stands.[2]

European defence, for decades reliant on NATO to which U.S. is the central contributor, and therefore long treated as a marginal budget line, is now seen as a matter of sovereignty.[3] Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine was a wake-up call, but the deeper strategic rupture emerged from Washington. Europe's longstanding reliance on U.S. military power, once a given, turned a liability, especially under the renewed scepticism of NATO, which president Donald Trump brought from his first mandate.

The political response is converging. Then Chancellor Olaf Scholz and President Emmanuel Macron have called for a European defence-industrial base to match the continent's strategic weight. Already back in 2021, then NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg summed up the shift: "It is not only about spending more. It is also about doing so together."[3]

On the regulatory front, the Omnibus package, launched in March 2025, aims to boost competitiveness with proposals for simplification in fields like sustainable finance reporting, sustainability due diligence, EU Taxonomy, carbon border adjustment mechanism, and European investment programmes, which shall "reduce complexity of EU requirements for all businesses, notably SMEs and small mid-caps […], while still enabling companies to access sustainable finance for their clean transition"[4].

However, regulatory streamlining is not enough. In contrast to the U.S., where capital markets dominate, Europe remains a bank-financed economy – especially for SMEs. As a response, the *Capital Markets Union* developed into the broader *Savings and Investments Union* (SIU), with a more holistic approach encompassing the entire EU financial system, whereby capital markets and the banking sector together will enhance the effi-

1 Mario Draghi, Future of European Competitiveness, European Commission, September 2024; Enrico Letta, Much more than a market, European Commission, April 2024; Christian Noyer, Developing European Capital Markets to Finance the Future - Proposals for a Savings and Investments Union, report for French Prime Minister, April 2024.

2 "But innovation is blocked at the next stage: we are failing to translate innovation into commercialisation, and innovative companies that want to scale up in Europe are hindered at every stage by inconsistent and restrictive regulations." (Mario Draghi in "Future of European Competitiveness").

3 Jens Stoltenberg, Speech by NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg at the 67th Annual Session of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly; Olaf Scholz and Emmanuel Macron, remarks at the Munich Security Conference, February 2024.

4 European Commission, Omnibus package for regulatory simplification, February 2025. "Commission simplifies rules on sustainability and EU investments, delivering over €6 billion in administrative relief" (Press Release, 26 February 2025).

cient channelling of savings into investments[5]. Securitisation, with its legal framework currently under review, plays a role in placing traditional bank loans' underlying risk with capital market investors.

The creation of a business-friendly environment is crucial. The scale of required investments for the deployment of this new and enhanced industrial capacity it's hardly achievable without the private sector, financed by both the capital markets and the European banking sector.

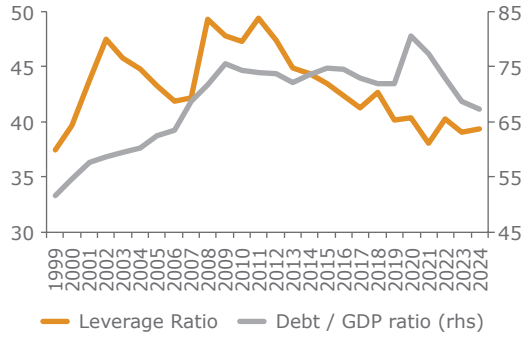
That is why the attention is turning to Europe's industrial backbone: its SMEs. Taking the defence sector for example, in the *Joint White Paper on European Defence Readiness 2030*, the European Commission identifies SMEs as key providers of innovation and agility in defence technologies. The €7.3 billion *European Defence Fund* (EDF) for 2021–27 explicitly supports SME participation, with up to €840 million estimated to be allotted for the 2023–2027 period. Already, more than 2,500 SMEs are embedded in Europe's defence supply chains[6]. But more broadly, meeting the EU's competitiveness, energy, and defence ambitions will require an estimated €500 billion in additional annual investment[7]. This is a political and institutional challenge that will define Europe's future.

In the next two sections, we will examine how Europe might begin to close this gap: first, by understanding the needs and potential of SME financing; and second, by retooling its financial infrastructure through instruments like European Secured Notes (ESNs) and securitisation technology – so that European loans and savings can be converted into European investments, growth and prosperity.

TRENDS IN FIRMS FINANCING

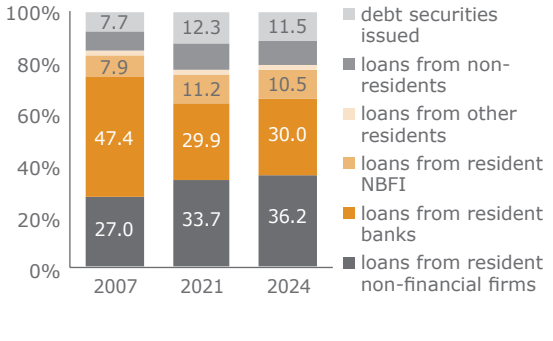
European firms, small and medium-sized companies in particular, still rely significantly on bank lending, despite recent increases in the issuance of corporate securities and credit sourced from other financial intermediaries. However, since the Great Financial Crisis, the financial structure of companies has strengthened considerably. Leverage has fallen from 49.4% in 2008 to 36.4% in 2024 for non-financial companies in the euro area, thanks in part to their stronger capitalisation. In addition, the composition of financial debt has changed: the share of bonds, between 2007 and 2024, has grown from 7.7% to 11.5% of total financial debt; bank financing has declined, from 47% in 2007 to 30% in 2024, while debt exposure with non-bank intermediaries (from 7.9% to 10.5%) and with foreign financing sources has increased.

> Figure 1: Debt of non-financial corporations as a ratio of total financial liabilities and Debt securities and loans as a ratio of GDP (%)



Source: ECB

> Figure 2: Composition of corporate financial debt



Source: Bank of Italy

5 "Questions and answers on the Savings and Investments Union" (March 2025).

6 European Commission, Joint White Paper on ReArm Europe Plan/Readiness 2030, April 2024.

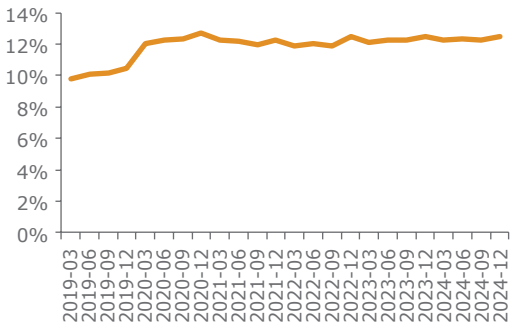
7 Estimates from European Investment Bank and European Commission, cited in Draghi Report (2024) and EIB Investment Report 2023–24.

At the individual company level, bank credit and market financing generally coexist. Indeed, it is rare for euro area firms to fund themselves exclusively via financial markets. Roughly 22% of euro area firms with more than 20 employees tap the bond market, besides obtaining bank loans. In this regard, a recent ECB study[8] found that firms with bank funding are generally less productive than competitors which do not rely on bank loans as a source of external financing. This result is consistent with the objectives of the Savings and Investments Union (SIU), as a more diversified funding structure could potentially enhance the productivity of euro area firms.

SMEs have also seen a change in their financial structure in recent years. In particular, in the context of the global increase in non-bank financing, a market for debt securities for new and small issuers in the euro area is developing. A recent study[9], focused on firms entering the bond market for the first time on or after 2010, found that most new issuers are significantly smaller than historical issuers, consist of private firms, and lack a credit rating from a large rating agency. This market appears to be more like a private debt market than a traditional bond market and seems to be drawing relatively more from the pool of traditional bank borrowers. However, according to the results of the study, there is evidence that new issuers tend to substitute only a part of their bank loans with bonds. In conclusion, banking intermediaries are still important for small and new issuers, and this blurs the conventional dichotomy between intermediated and market financing.

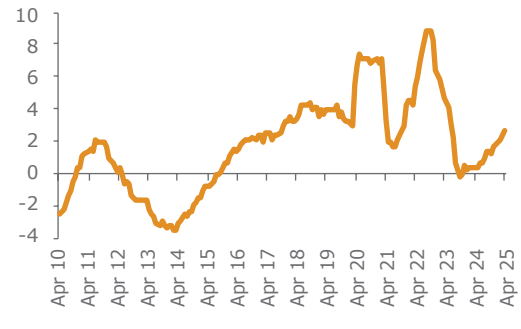
At the end of 2024, loans to SMEs accounted for around 12.5% of total loans and advances of banks in the European Union (based on the sample of EBA's Largest Reporting Institutions). This share has remained broadly stable since the outbreak of the pandemic, whereas in 2019 it was around 10%. This could reflect the fact that most of the public intervention schemes announced at the early stages of the pandemic were in fact targeted at SMEs.

> Figure 3: SME loans over total loans and advances of EBA reporting EU institutions (% share)



Source: EBA and our calculations

> Figure 4: Trend in loans to non-financial corporations in the Euro area (yoy % change)



Source: ECB

Alongside the structural changes already briefly mentioned, the evolution of lending to businesses has recently been influenced by the great geopolitical uncertainty that is holding back fixed investment. In 2024, bank lending to businesses remained weak due to still tight credit conditions and low credit demand, while showing signs of recovery since the second half of 2024. Bank lending to firms strengthened gradually in the first months of 2025, growing at an annual rate of 2.6% in April after 1.7% in December 2024, while corporate bond issuance was subdued. Lending to small firms continued to decline, falling by 2.1% in April, a trend that has

8 Desislava Andreeva et al, Low firm productivity: the role of finance and the implications for financial stability, ECB, Financial Stability Review, November 2024.

9 Olivier Darmouni, Melina Papoutsi, May 2022, Non-bank lending to mid-size firms in Europe: evidence from corporate securities, ECB, Working paper.

been ongoing since mid-2021. Surveys of banks and businesses showed an improvement in lending conditions, implemented through lower interest rates. However, credit demand from companies remained weak, mainly due to sufficient internal funds to finance their business plans, such that the share of firms applying for bank loans remained relatively low. This pattern was consistent across company sizes, with a higher percentage of large firms (35%) reporting applications for bank loans compared to SMEs (18%)[10].

SECURITISATION AND ESN AS VIABLE FINANCIAL TOOLS: HOW TO STRIKE THE RIGHT BALANCE

In this section we will address the refinancing of SME bank credit portfolios (SME assets) through complementary financial technologies and instruments, exploring the differences and the characteristics of both SME securitisation and European Secured Notes (as referred to in the Covered Bond Directive (CBD), meaning a dual recourse funding instrument collateralized by SME assets and regulated by a specific EU legal framework).

Our intention is to demonstrate that these instruments are indeed compatible and complementary and align with the objectives of the SIU. As will be clear in the following paragraphs, securitisation is typically a tool fit for regulatory capital management and for the refinancing of certain categories of assets, whereas ESN is much more cost-efficient and best suited to be a pure funding instrument.

a) Peculiarity of SME assets and their treatment in structured finance transactions

SME assets typically have a short to medium maturity (compared, for instance, to mortgages), and therefore need refinancing at a higher pace. In securitisation, issued notes repayment follows the amortization of the underlying portfolio. Therefore, in order to obtain a longer tenor on the notes, the portfolio needs a pre-defined replenishment period, when expiring assets are replaced with new ones, thus extending the amortization period of the collateral portfolio.

Typically, in a securitisation the characteristics of the replacement assets are set in advance in order to ensure asset quality throughout the life of the transaction. The reason for adopting stringent criteria is the limited recourse nature of the issuance itself: the only claim investors have is represented by the securitised portfolio, therefore its evolving composition needs to follow strict criteria to avoid its deterioration as the sole source of proceeds to repay the notes.

Conversely, in a dual recourse transaction, like a covered bond – which ESNs aim to replicate – that feature, even if broadly inscribed in specific legislation and regulation, is somehow softened. This is because (i) bonds are issued in the context of a programme, where its segregated portfolio (cover pool) must cover all issued notes, at all times (coverage requirement); (ii) the credit quality of the cover pool is managed dynamically by the issuer, adjusting the overcollateralization (OC) levels in order to ensure adequate protection and also excluding non-performing receivables from the portfolio, thus ensuring the coverage requirement is continuously met by performing assets (this is not the case in securitisation); (iii) investors enjoy a first recourse on the issuer and, in case of issuer insolvency, or other contractual events, they have exclusive recourse over the cover pool; (iv) repayment of the bonds is typically through either bullet or soft bullet structures, instead of the amortising notes typical of securitisations.

According to the Covered Bond Directive the cover pool must be continuously adequate and cover principal, interest, and ongoing expenses. The eligibility criteria for replenishing assets mirror the initial collateral quality but allow more flexibility than securitisations.

Why are these features important? From a financial perspective, conditions evolve over the years and, for example, the interest accruing on the bonds may also increase or decrease over time. It is therefore essential to ensure the overall coverage of the interest payments on the bonds by the interest accruing on the evolving cover pool.

10 Source: Survey on the Access to Finance of Enterprises in the euro area, First quarter of 2025, ECB, April 2025.

From a business perspective, the terms, sectors, and geographic distribution of SME loans may also change according to the bank's commercial strategies. The issuance programme therefore ensures portfolio quality over time while allowing certain features to be adapted. This is critical for providing long-term funding stability to the issuer. Once set up, and as long as sufficient collateral exists, the issuer can issue notes based on market opportunities and funding strategy.

On the contrary, securitisations are bespoke transactions, typically structured for a single issuance. For the SME sector this difference is crucial, and it is clear dual-recourse funding instruments would enable refinancing the issuer's SME portfolio for longer periods of time, irrespective of changes in general financial conditions, or of how the issuer's origination business evolves. On the other hand, once certain conditions are met, securitisation allows the originating bank to free up regulatory capital, as well as meeting different risk appetites through the issuance of senior and more subordinated tranches. Securitisation is also an efficient way to refinance less standard SME loans, whereas ESN, acting as a programme on larger volumes of collateral assets, may favour more standardised SME portfolios.

In sum the two instruments – securitisation and ESN – are highly complementary and may both be used according to the objectives of the issuing bank and the respective market access windows.

b) requirements of the Securitisation Regulation

The Securitisation legislative package (a specific Regulation complemented by the CRR prudential provisions) was published in 2019. The goal of its current review is to simplify the framework by removing unnecessary burdens that do not enhance product robustness and have so far hindered the securitisation market's recovery since the Great Financial Crisis[11]. Over time, EU institutions have promoted securitisation to help develop the Capital Markets Union, encourage risk sharing through financial markets, and support financing for the real economy.

There are a couple of aspects worth mentioning on the treatment of SME securitisations. So far, such transactions have represented a small percentage of all traditional (funded or "cash") securitisation issuances, where the main asset class are residential mortgage-backed securities. Indeed, rather complicated regulatory requirements have so far discouraged the execution of funded SME securitisations[12].

On the contrary SMEs are one of the main asset classes used for synthetic securitisations, where typically originators keep the assets on their balance sheet and only sell part of the risk to specialised investors. Synthetic SME deals have proven to be an excellent means for financial institutions to manage their credit risk and capital needs, while promoting the participation of market players interested in investing in SME exposures[13].

c) what role for ESN? And for securitisation?

An instrument governed by specific EU legislation and building on the dual recourse features would appeal to both issuers and investors, with the dual protection conferring comfort to certain categories of investors, while allowing banks to issue lower risk bonds at spreads way lower than those expected for a securitisation deal or even for unsecured senior bond issuances. Let us briefly explore the motivations for issuers and investors.

ESN, as a pure funding instrument, would afford the bank time flexibility according to market opportunities (as do traditional covered bonds in the mortgage credit space), building on the ability of a dual recourse instrument to mitigate volatility in financial markets. In addition, ESN would allow adapting certain collateral characteristics over time, while preserving its overall main criteria and quality. Finally, it is important to mention that covered bond programmes require dedicated internal structures and specific control functions – entailing structural and

11 According to AFME statistics, European issuances amount globally to EUR244.9 bn at the end of 2024, whereas amounts issued were still higher just after the GFC (eg. €376.8 bn in 2011 – all figures including UK), AFME, Association for Financial Markets in Europe).

12 In 2024 the SME segment accounted only for € 9.8 bn of new funded issuances, out of total of € 244.9 bn (Source AFME).

13 In 2024, issuance of SRT transactions on SME and corporate loans accounted for € 107.5 bn out of a total of € 155.7 bn (source AFME).

running costs – and a constant dialogue with supervisors. This is the reason why, in most countries, issuers are larger institutions. ESN would be subject to much of these features and conditions.

	ESN	SME securitisation
Investor Security	dual recourse	recourse limited to the collateral portfolio
Cover SME Assets Suitability	for standard loans	for non-standard, alternative, more complex credit facilities
Bank Capital Relief Suitability	no	yes
Funding Cost / Investor Return	lower	higher
Investor Diversification	lower – single tranche	higher – multiple tranches with distinct risk profiles
Adaptability to bank's loan asset origination policies	higher – more principle-based asset eligibility	lower – stricter eligibility criteria

On the other hand, banks wishing to achieve both funding and capital relief for their SME portfolio may also use securitisation (traditional or synthetic), through bespoke transactions. Securitisations may be executed by banks under specific circumstances to refinance specific portfolios. They are one-off transactions where costs are primarily incurred at inception. For small portfolios (and often small institutions), securitisations are more widely used, notwithstanding the higher yield on the notes typically demanded by investors. Plus, less standard credit assets are likely to be more efficiently financed through securitisation.

Investors are bound by their specific guidelines and their risk-reward appetite. Therefore, those investors focusing on dual recourse instruments would evaluate the issuer's strength and the analysis of the collateral would matter only for the recourse in case of issuer-related event of default. Investors specialized in securitisation, on the contrary, would focus on the collateral and on the structural features of the transaction, evaluating the specific risks embedded in the relevant transaction.

d) concrete examples of SME dual recourse transactions on the market and the way forward

Large banks financing SMEs are exploring all available tools to fund their portfolios, especially after the phase-out of the ECB's TLTROs, which supported lending for years. Synthetic securitisations already provide capital relief and allow new lending within existing capital, but also this instrument needs regulatory updates to unlock its full potential.

Although no dedicated EU legislation exists yet, some dual recourse transactions backed by SME portfolios have recently entered the market[14], receiving public rating by major ECAIs. These deals demonstrate strong interest from issuers and certain investors in innovative SME-backed structures. We estimate that new transactions would increase significantly if tailored legislation for ESN were introduced[15].

CONCLUSION

As outlined in the first part, the EU's vast needs for investments and innovation are crucial to maintaining competitiveness and strategic autonomy. The Union's advancements in decarbonisation and overall sustainability will further bolster its global leadership. Achieving these objectives relies significantly on the private sector's role in financing, channeling private savings, and providing expertise and best practices.

14 Two transactions were carried out by the BPCE Group, Aval Master FCT (June 2024) and Capitole Master FCT (December 2024).

15 The ESN Task Force set up by the ECBC published in July 2024 a Blueprint, where reflections were made on certain aspects of the regulatory treatment of ESN, as well as the main characteristics of the product which need to be regulated in a specific EU legislation. In particular the success of the ESN instrument lies primarily in the bail-in exemption (as for traditional covered bonds), a dedicated RW in the prudential framework and ECB eligibility.

SMEs are strategic due to their capacity for flexibility and innovation in international markets. The gradual extension of ESG targets to SMEs enables them to contribute to the transition while retaining agility. For instance, the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive's goals for buildings require financial backing from both banks, and SMEs leading the retrofitting efforts.

So, despite SMEs' lower loan financing needs resulting from their current high liquidity and improved access to capital markets, the banking sector remains crucial for supporting their investments and innovation initiatives, and we encourage policymakers to introduce all necessary reforms in EU banking and financial markets regulation.

Initiatives like fostering SMEs' capital bases, promoting IPOs, boosting private equity, and directing private savings toward investments are essential. Yet, for SMEs in general and especially micro enterprises, bank credit is still a crucial tool, as direct capital market participation remains challenging. Thus, accessible and cost-efficient bank funding is vital, with ESNs and securitisation playing a complementary role in restoring EU competitiveness.

1.3 A SUSTAINABLE HOUSING MARKET: TOWARDS A NEW ECOSYSTEM SUPPORTING THE TRANSITION ECONOMY

By EMF-ECBC Secretariat

Ongoing current geopolitical challenges, resulting energy security concerns and climate change are making it increasingly necessary to radically rethink the regulatory framework and market best practices of the European housing finance sector. The pressure to accelerate the pace and scale of coordination of national and European policies is real and ever-increasing, and has had – and continues to have – a profound impact on political and legislative debates around key files, including the EU Taxonomy, the Energy Efficiency Directive, the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive, (EPBD), the implementation of the final Basel III reforms and, more generally, as part of a long-term financial framework based on public-private cooperation, a crucial strategy for driving an inclusive energy transition across the EU, establishing an ecosystem that can unlock all available potential, opportunities, and resources in all issues related to digitalisation, affordability and sustainability.

The housing and housing finance sectors are key to the development of a clear market roadmap that will enable the European Union (EU) to achieve its goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Indeed, according to the United Nations Environment Programme Finance (2022), housing is a strategic sector not only because homes are the main place where people spend their lives and, increasingly, work, but also because buildings account for 40% of CO2 emissions in continental Europe.

The scale of the investment needed to improve the energy performance of more than 220 million[1] homes to meet the EU's energy saving targets is immense and cannot be achieved by the public sector alone. The private finance sector in the EU has a central role to play in the transition to a more sustainable economy, reducing energy poverty for households, especially those that struggle to meet the transition challenges, safeguarding consumers' wealth in terms of disposable income and asset value, and supporting economic growth and job creation.

In this context, if the 2030 targets are to be achieved, almost 500,000 homes in Europe must be renovated each week.One key instrument within this broader effort is green mortgages. Today, the mortgage market is equivalent to around 46% of the EU's GDP[2]. Stimulating the development and offering of green mortgages is crucial to achieving a climate neutral economy, as highlighted by the Energy Efficient Mortgages Initiative (EEMI)[3], which seeks to introduce an integrated greener, sustainability-focused approach to purchasing, renovating, and living in homes. At the heart of the EEMI are efforts to boost and support consumer demand for building energy renovation by way of an energy efficient mortgage "ecosystem" , aligning strategies and actions through a new, innovative market mechanism focused on a green "fulcrum" of products, services and data. Based on consumer research, market research and value chain analysis conducted over a number of years, the EEMI has boiled the findings down into core elements which are being brought together in an EEMI "ecosystem". The EEMI Ecosystem is intended to guide consumers towards financial and technical solutions which support them in the energy renovation of their homes. In essence, by combining market innovation, digitalisation and green financing instruments across the whole value chain and seamlessly integrating all market participants into a new value chain, the EEMI Ecosystem will optimise the end-to-end customer journey and experience, deploy market interventions and partnerships that support delivery and maximise benefits for consumers.

Concretely, the EEMI Ecosystem platform is focused on the delivery of a seamless customer renovation journey by way of a three-pillar structure, comprising:

1 Green Finance Institute. (2024). Unlocking the trillions: Public-private innovation to deliver the EU's renovation wave ambition. https://www.greenfinanceinstitute.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/Unlocking-the-Trillions-Public-private-innovation-to-deliver-the-EUs-renovation-wave-ambition.pdf

2 https://energyefficientmortgages.eu/home-eemi-7/

3 https://energyefficientmortgages.eu/

1. A **simulator** to support consumers in understanding their energy efficiency renovation needs and guide them through the most cost-efficient renovation solutions. The simulator also provides an indication of the potential value increase of the property, energy savings and CO2 footprint reduction after the renovation project, as well potentially eligible public support mechanisms.
2. Access to **financing options** by way of the Energy Efficient Mortgage Label (EEML), which is also intended as a quality and transparency benchmark targeted at market participants, including consumers, lending institutions, investors and public authorities. On the Label platform, labelled lending institutions have the possibility to be directly contacted by potential customers who can request an indicative financing offer for their renovation project by submitting the output of the simulation delivered under pillar 1 or other project quotes. Moreover, on a product feature grid consumers have the possibility to succinctly assess the key characteristics of each labelled product and guide themselves towards the most efficient and cost-effective financial products. All these efforts seek to scale-up the EEMI's work, demonstrating the end-to-end customer journey and the EEM life-cycle.
3. A **directory of accredited suppliers**, including both a popular and an ESG rating system, previously constructed through a partner EU-funded project "TranspArEEnS" and a "marketplace" where not only consumers and SMEs can interact, but also all other relevant market participants providing and requiring a service or product in support of the improvement and financing of the EU's building stock. In order to access the marketplace, the SME needs to be able to satisfy three conditions: (1) provide an ex-ante and ex-post EPC free of charge; (2) present an ESG score – if a score is not available, our Partner Crif (Synesgy) is able to provide one to SMEs on their website free of charge; and (3) guarantee that the works undertaken deliver the projected energy savings.

To help bring this "ecosystem" to life, the EEMI launched a new EU-funded project in October 2024: DeliverEEM – Delivering the Energy Efficient Mortgage Ecosystem. Working together with a consortium of expert partners, the project aims to accelerate the practical implementation of the ecosystem, with a particular focus on the following areas:

1. De-risking EE investments for financial institutions;
2. Enhancing the articulation of ESG factors in property valuation;
3. Optimising financial operating models with a focus on ESG;
4. Coordinating an integrated renovation supply chain; and
5. Putting consumers at the heart of the transition.

All actions are also expanding the EEMI's tools, including decarbonisation blueprints, valuation checklists, and the GreenBEES simulator. All objectives will be underpinned by significant and comprehensive capacity building through webinars and workshops targeted variously at market participants, incl. financial institutions, investors, valuers, SME, rating agencies, and on leveraging real-market testing through demonstrator showcases in Denmark, Hungary, and Italy.

THE ENERGY EFFICIENT MORTGAGE LABEL (EEML)

As indicated above, at the heart of the EEMI Ecosystem lies the Energy Efficient Mortgage Label (EEML)[4], launched in 2021 as a quality benchmark for consumers, lenders and investors to support recognition of and confidence in energy efficient mortgages. The Label not only aims to mitigate risks, but also to advance innovation and best practices through a range of tools and capacity-building initiatives. This includes conducting instances of promotions to discover pioneering companies and initiatives operating at the intersection of technology and sustainability. This is achieved through access to relevant, quality and transparent information

4 https://www.energy-efficient-mortgage-label.org/

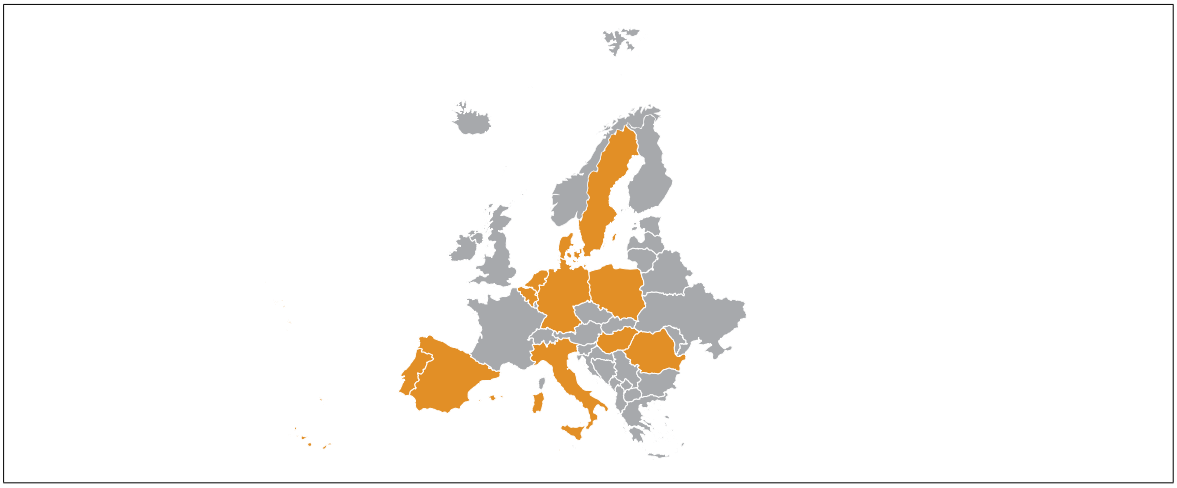
for potential borrowers, regulators and other market participants. In addition, the Label aims to facilitate a process of standardisation to secure and enhance overall regulatory recognition of the asset class.

The Label is built around the EEML Convention[5] and a process of self-certification, both of which are overseen by the label governance[6] structure consisting of: the Label Committee, the Label Secretariat and the Label Advisory Council.

The EEML has been developed using the Covered Bond Label[7] as a blue-print, which is managed by the EMF-ECBC and can look back on a 10-year success story, a period during which it has established itself as the global reference point and data collection benchmark for the over EUR 3 tn outstanding covered bond asset class. The intention is that the EEML emulates this goal in relation to energy efficient mortgages and in the wider field of financing of energy efficient renovation, scaling-up volumes and best practices in respect of both ESG-related retail activities and funding policies.

The initiative comes at a pivotal point in time, where efforts are underway at EU level to redesign the regulatory and monetary policy framework to address climate change and transition risks. As of July 2025, 23 pioneering lending institutions from 11 countries[8] have adopted the EEML, covering the four corners of the Old Continent, large and small lending institutions, traditional banks and FinTech platforms.

> Figure 1: Geographical breakdown of EEM Label lending institutions



Source: EEM Label Data

KEY ELEMENTS OF THE EEM LABEL

To be part of the EEML, interested parties need to self-certify that they are a lending institution with products aligned with the EEML Convention, for which they need to disclose relevant information using the Harmonised Disclosure Template (HDT)[9], at least on a quarterly basis. A dedicated Harmonised Reporting Template[10] has been developed for Retrofitting Loans with which to provide the relevant disclosure on leases, targeted and non-targeted loans.

5 https://www.energy-efficient-mortgage-label.org/about-us/convention
6 https://www.energy-efficient-mortgage-label.org/governance/structure
7 https://www.coveredbondlabel.com/
8 https://www.energy-efficient-mortgage-label.org/issuers/directory
9 https://www.energy-efficient-mortgage-label.org/hdt
10 https://www.energy-efficient-mortgage-label.org/hrt

The EEM Definition and the Label Convention

The EEM definition was launched in December 2018 and consists of high-level, principles-based guidelines for the technical assessment and valuation of eligible properties. The definition provides clear eligibility criteria for assets and projects that can be financed by energy efficient loans, and for the tagging of existing assets in banks' portfolios. The EEM definition provides the protocols to ensure appropriate lending secured against properties that are likely to have both lower credit risk and support climate change mitigation and adaptation.

In the context of the EEM Label, this definition currently forms the basis of the Convention and serves as the technical benchmark of the Label:

> *Energy Efficient Mortgages (EEMs)[11] are intended to finance the purchase/construction and/or renovation of both residential (single family & multi-family) and commercial buildings where there is evidence of: (1) energy performance which meets or exceeds relevant market best practice standards in line with current EU legislative requirements and/or (2) an improvement in energy performance of at least 30%.*

> *This evidence should be provided by way of a recent EPC rating or score, complemented by an estimation of the value of the property according to the standards required under existing EU legislation. It should specifically detail the existing energy efficiency measures in line with the EEM Valuation & Energy Efficiency Checklist.*

> *Lending institutions are committed to providing regular information enabling investors to analyse the Energy Efficient Mortgage products, following the Harmonised Disclosure Template or the Harmonised Reporting Template, depending on the type of labelled loan.*

Importantly, the EEM Label Committee is working on the revision of the Definition/Convention to ensure alignment, as appropriate, with the EU Taxonomy.

Finally, it is worth noting here that in recognition of the availability of different types of energy efficient/green financing products, the EEM Label website also provides the possibility to label unsecured consumer loans for energy efficient renovation purposes.

Closing the data gap by providing the housing sector with global ESG data disclosures best practices: The Harmonised Disclosure Template and Harmonised Reporting Template

The Harmonised Disclosure Template

With a growing focus on sustainable finance – from regulators, market participants and investors alike – transparency and disclosure are becoming crucial drivers in harmonising best practices and in mitigating the "green-washing" risk in the financial sector, securing investors' confidence and financial stability. Considering this, the Harmonised Disclosure Template (HDT) allows for improved comparability of energy efficiency mortgages. The key is to establish centralised and up-to-date qualitative and quantitative information, which will be available for investors, regulators and other market participants.

The objective is to stimulate the creation of a positive incentive sequence across the mortgage value chain for more consistent and standardised data collection and management, as well as to better link loan information, property and energy efficiency characteristics in a single common template. Standardisation will support investor due diligence, facilitate regulatory reporting requirements in this area and enhance overall transparency in the EEM and (covered) bond markets. To strike the balance between the standardised structure valid for all labelled EEM products and the national peculiarities in reporting specific data points such as the breakdown of loan size, the HDT provides for the introduction of nation-specific breakdowns managed by national coordinators.

11 Footnote to definition: In the context of the EEM Label the term "mortgage" refers to residential and commercial property loans which fall within the scope of the Capital Requirements Regulation (Regulation 2013/575/EU) and/or Mortgage Credit Directive (Directive 2014/17/EU) or under equivalent legislation outside of the EEA.

The HDT is based on the Master Template delivered under the Energy efficient Data Protocol & Portal (EeDaPP[12]) Project, which organises EEM "input" data and is also inspired by the successful Harmonised Transparency Template (HTT) of the Covered Bond Label. Indeed, efforts have also been undertaken to align the HTT and the HDT as much as possible to facilitate completion and due diligence by banks which have both an EEM Label and the Covered Bond Label. The HDT is furthermore fully compliant with existing regulatory and market disclosure requirements.

The HDT must be completed for each labelled EEM product at least every quarter and has the following structure:

> **A1. EEM General Mortgage Assets**: Tab where information on the general mortgage portfolio is requested (e.g. location, size, ESG, repayment type, LTV, NPL, type of building). The information is also subdivided for type of real estate (residential or commercial).

> **B1. EEM Sustainable Mortgage Assets**: Tab which requests the same set of information as tab A1, but focused only on the subset of mortgages which are EEM compliant.

> **EEM Harmonised Glossary**: Tab where definitions and further comments on the sections of the HDT can be introduced.

> **Optional Taxonomy Tab**: Tab where lending institutions can provide some high-level indication on the EU Taxonomy of their mortgages.

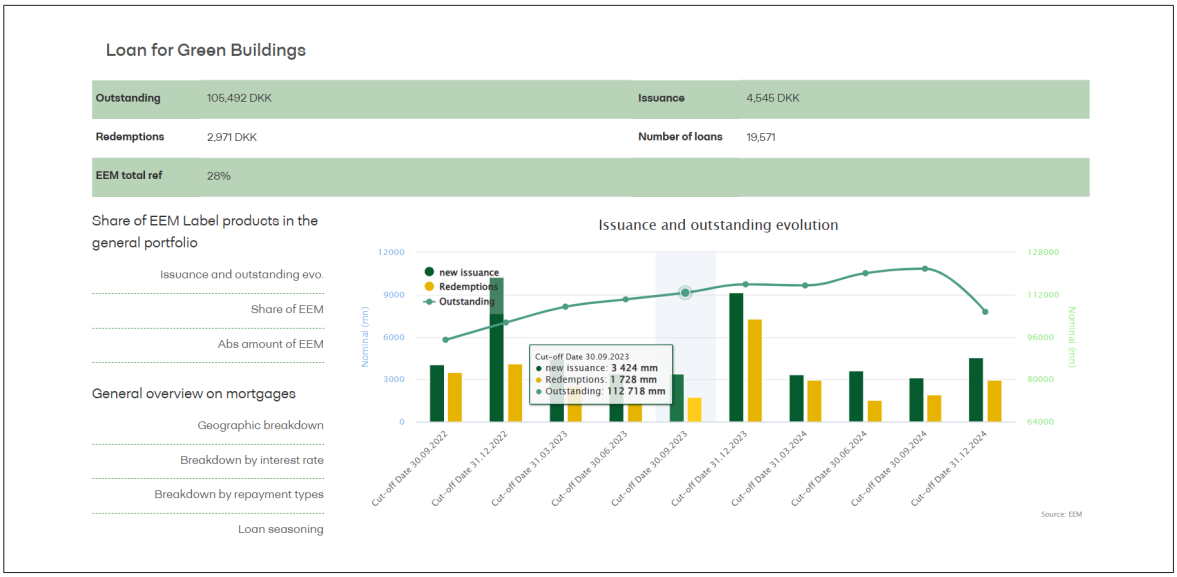
In order to be aligned with market best practices and regulatory requirements, the HDT undergoes an annual revision process which culminates with the approval of the updated HDT in September/October. This effort is supported by both the lending institution community and by the Disclosure Working Group comprising national coordinators[13], EEML Committee members and interested representatives of the lending institutions, to support the Secretariat in gathering potential amendments to the HDT based on suggestions related to overarching and national-specific reporting and disclosure issues.

Currently, 23 lending institutions have disclosed HDTs on 24 products that are available on the EEM Label website. As with the Covered Bond Label, for the EEML the HDTs are exclusively publicly available via the lending institutions' own websites. A reporting tool using direct links to these HDTs creates a graphical representation of the data contained therein on the EEML website, as shown in Figure 2.

12 The **Energy Efficiency Data Protocol and Portal (EeDaPP) Initiative** – led by European Mortgage Federation-European Covered Bond Council (EMF-ECBC), Ca' Foscari University of Venice, CRIF, European DataWarehouse, Hypoport, SAFE Goethe University Frankfurt and TXS – aims to design and deliver a market-led protocol, which will enable the large-scale recording of data relating to energy efficient mortgage assets, via a standardised reporting template. The data will be accessed by way of a common, centralised portal, allowing for continuous tracking of the performance of the energy efficient mortgage assets, thereby also facilitating the earmarking of such assets for the purposes of energy efficient bond issuance.

13 https://energyefficientmortgages.eu/national-hubs/

> Figure 2: HDT data presentation on the EEML website



Source: EEM Label website: https://www.energy-efficient-mortgage-label.org/products

The Harmonised Reporting Template

In the same fashion as the HDT reports data on EEM Labelled mortgage products, the Harmonised Reporting Template (HRT) focuses on retrofitting loans intended to support consumers in improving the energy performance and/or reducing environmental risk vulnerability of their dwelling. The HRT is inspired by the work already done in the HTT and HDT, as well as by reporting templates from the ECB and reporting templates used for private finance loans by various market participants.

The HRT must be completed by all lending institutions which present a labelled retrofitting loan starting from cut-off date Q2 2023. It is structured as follows:

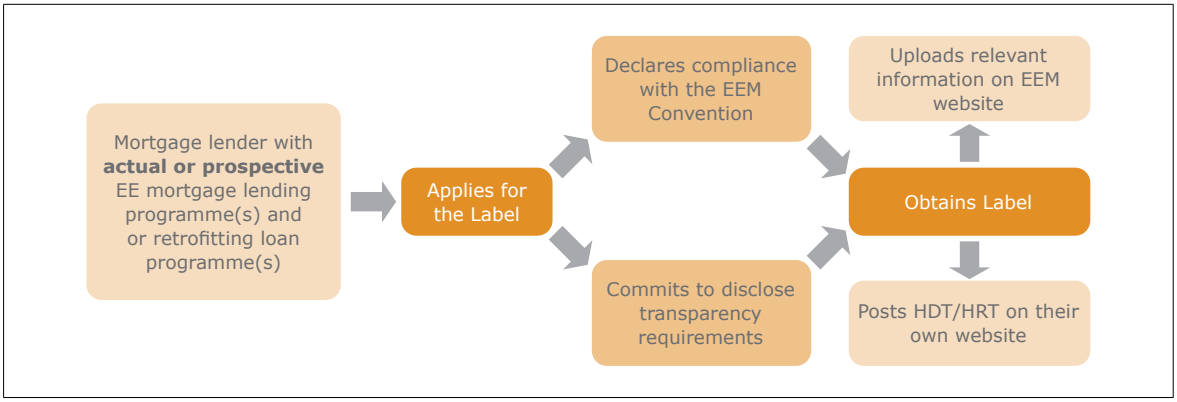
- **A1. EEM Loans**: Tab where information on retrofitting loans is reported. Contrary to the HDT there is only one loan-specific tab including all EEM labelled loans as collecting information on the general loan portfolio to be used as a reference with respect to the EEM labelled loans would not provide a useful datapoint. Against this background the information is reported by dividing the retrofitting loans into three categories: leases, targeted loans and non-targeted loans. The information to be provided, besides the size and location, repayment type and interest rates, focuses on the division of the dedicated use of the loans, namely whether it is used for financing housing energy efficiency or renewable energy.
- **EEM Harmonised Glossary**: Tab where definitions and further comments on the sections of the HRT can be introduced.
- **Optional Taxonomy Tab**: Tab where lending institutions can provide some high-level indication on the EU Taxonomy of their mortgages.

Self-certification

As indicated above and once again drawing on the experience of the Covered Bond Label, the EEML is based on a process of self-certification, according to which lending institutions signal their compliance with the Convention. The process of self-certification is detailed in Figure 3.

The self-certification process highlights and is testament to a real ESG engagement and strategy for EEM labelled lenders. This process of self-certification has proven to work very efficiently in relation to covered bonds, as a result of subsequent scrutiny by other market participants, including investors and rating agencies, of the publicly disclosed HTT, representing a form of "third-party verification". This has given rise to a market-led mechanism which effectively polices itself with the result being that the cost of not accurately disclosing data or falsely declaring compliance with the Convention is high in terms of reputation and potential impact on the underlying product or ratings. This helps to mitigate any risk of "greenwashing".

> Figure 3: EEM Label Self–Certification Process



Source: Energy Efficient Mortgage Label

CONCLUSION

The Energy Efficient Mortgages Initiative (EEMI) continues to lead the market towards a fundamental, cultural change in the housing sector by proposing coordinated and integrated solutions at global level for retail, funding, marketing and risk analysis strategies in the banking sector. The EEMI is accompanying lenders in building common best practices and delivering new green products and solutions for consumers, whilst supporting the appetite for ESG assets in capital markets and mitigating "greenwashing", thereby facilitating investors' due diligence and reinforcing the overall financial stability perspective in the ESG space.

The Initiative is actively seeking to scale-up volumes, solutions and opportunities for the entire value chain with the end goal of delivering into the hands of consumers a real and affordable microeconomic advantage when renovating their homes.

Against this backdrop, we must remember that the real decision-makers in the housing transition economy are the owners of properties who need to be encouraged to make informed decisions for the future benefit of their family and society, looking at the world from a new perspective. This revolutionary change in behaviour should be supported by the appropriate toolbox of incentives, regulation and subsidies. The banking sector is ready to provide the necessary support along the customer journey by supplying new green financing products and renovation opportunities.

Such an exercise should not be seen as "just" a philanthropic decision taken by already environmentally conscious people who also tend to be more affluent. This needs to be a win-win solution, especially for those families for whom it is more difficult to make ends meet and who are more likely to live in less energy-efficient homes and for whom running and living costs represent a larger share of their budget. Indeed, our homes, the place where we raise our children, are at the heart of our lives and interests: exactly like the word "Home",

οϊκος (oikos) at the heart of the ancient Greek word "oikonomia". A sustainable economy must be built around the concept of "home", the cornerstone of citizens' interest, centred on an ESG "ecosystem" that promotes green values and raises environmental awareness.

Through the EEMI and its Ecosystem, the mortgage and covered bond industries are proactively laying the foundations for a market paradigm that secures both economic growth and financial stability. This, it is hoped, will support a green "Renaissance" rooted in a new perspective of affordability, sustainability, digitalisation and social inclusion, to fund the hope for a better, greener future.

1.4 COVERED BONDS AS FINANCING INSTRUMENT FOR GREEN AND SOCIAL INVESTMENTS

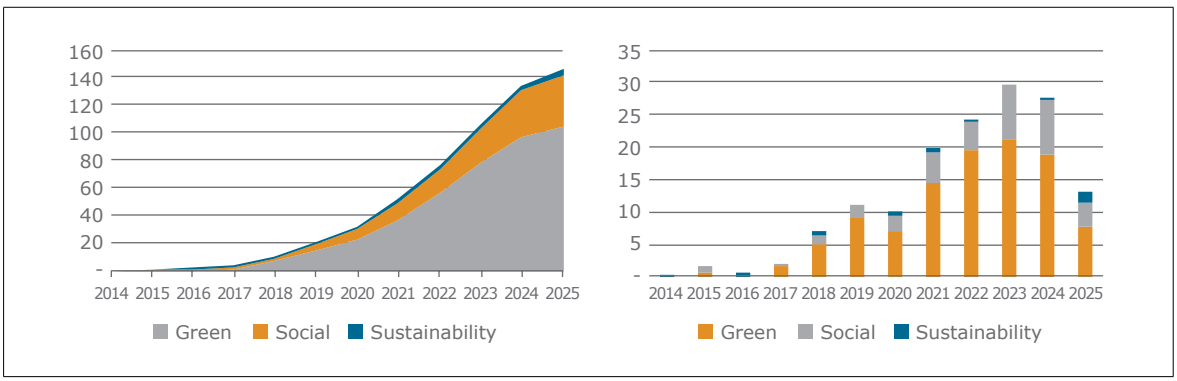
By Ralf Berninger, SFIL, Antonio Farina, S&P Global, Rodger Rinke, LBBW
Sjors Hoppenbrowers, RABOBANK, Maureen Schuller, ING, Sabrina Miehs,
Association of German Pfandbrief Banks (vdp)

MARKET OVERVIEW

Sustainable covered bonds have been growing steadily for more than a decade now. Starting with the first issue of a sustainable covered bond in 2014, a significant market has developed for this asset class. After the first EUR benchmark sustainable covered bond transaction was launched in 2015, the market share has since gradually expanded. In the current year, sustainable covered bonds in the EUR benchmark segment have a market share of 12% of primary market activity. The market for sustainable covered bonds has also outgrown its infancy in terms of the number of issuers. To date, 86 issuers from 21 different jurisdictions have issued sustainable covered bonds. In 2024 alone, there were 59 issues of public and privately placed sustainable covered bonds of various sizes and currencies, which gives an impression of the rapid growth of the market for sustainable covered bonds. As at the end of June 2025, the outstanding volume of publicly placed sustainable covered bonds amounted to just under EUR 122 billion. These have so far been issued in 9 currencies, with EUR-denominated issues standing out. The EUR accounts for over 75% of all issues and 86% of the outstanding volume. The privately placed sustainable covered bonds account for an additional volume of over EUR 18 billion and include issues in three other currencies.

The limiting factor for further growth in the market continues to be the limited ESG assets. In addition, issuers base their considerations on the current funding levels (senior vs. covered funding) as well as the funding advantages to be achieved ("greenium") and placement security.

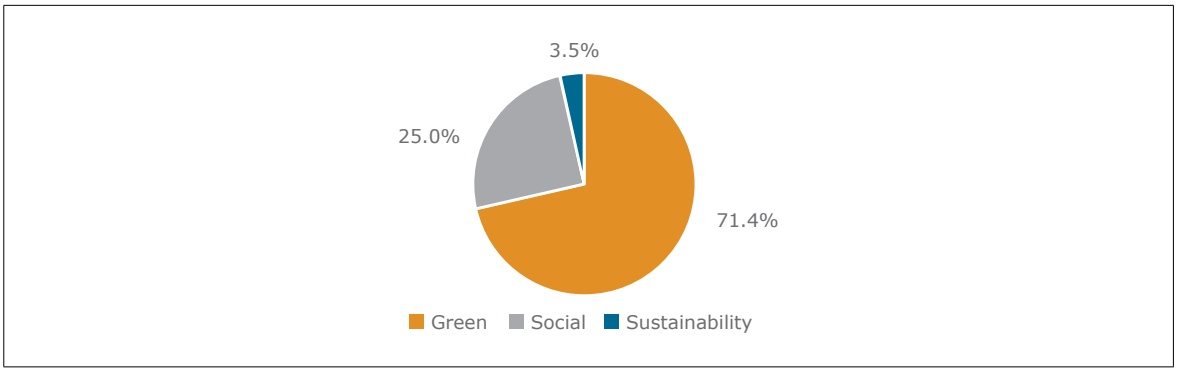
> Figure 1: Sustainable covered bonds: Strong market growth and high issuance activity



Aggregated issue volume in EUR bn. Source: Bloomberg, LBBW Research

In general, sustainable covered bonds are issued in various formats, ranging from green to social to sustainability covered bonds. The issue proceeds therefore play an important role both in the area of green transformation, particularly in the building sector, and in the area of social housing, which are the two main uses of sustainable covered bonds. In addition, there are many other variations in the use of proceeds. A look at the use of proceeds of sustainable covered bonds reveals a clear trend towards green covered bonds, which account for around 71.4% of the volume of all Sustainable covered bonds issued to date. Social covered bonds account for 25.0% and sustainability covered bonds for 3.5% of the issued volume.

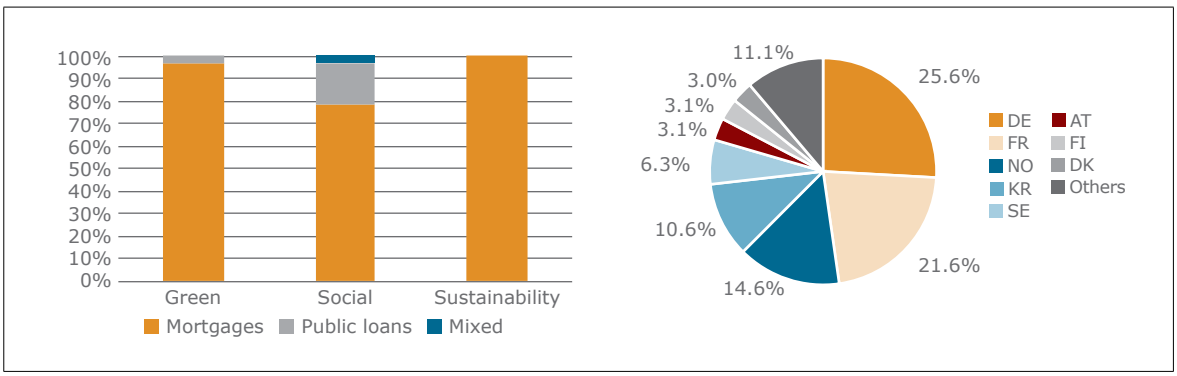
> Figure 2: Sustainable covered bonds: Strong focus on green covered bonds



Source: Bloomberg, LBBW Research

Looking at the type of cover for sustainable covered bonds, it is noticeable that most covered bonds are secured by mortgages, with a share of 92%. Public sector covered bonds are in second place with 7%. With a share of 1%, mixed types of cover do not play a significant role. If a distinction is made between the different types of sustainable covered bonds, the greatest variety of cover types is found in social covered bonds.

> Figure 3: Types of cover for sustainable covered bonds; country distribution of issuance activities



Amount outstanding. Source: Bloomberg, LBBW Research

In terms of issuing countries, Germany dominates with a 26% share of the volume issued, followed by France (22%), Norway (15%) and South Korea (11%). In the most important benchmark index for covered bonds, the iBoxx Euro Covered, the proportion of sustainable covered bonds is over 10%, which underlines the fact that Sustainable covered bonds are a key component of the market. At the end of 2023, the share was only 8.4%. The volume of sustainable covered bonds in the index has now grown to a total volume of EUR 94 billion.

SUSTAINABLE COVERED BONDS FINANCE A BROAD VARIETY OF ASSETS

Sustainable covered bonds are mostly issued in accordance with the four pillars of ICMA's voluntary Green Bond Principles (GBP), Social Bond Principles (SBP) or Sustainability Bond Guidelines (SBG), and have a dedicated environmentally sustainable and/or a social use of proceeds. Sustainability-linked bonds (SLB) remain scarce in the banking segment and have not yet been issued in covered bond format.

These ICMA frameworks promote best practices through global guidelines, emphasizing the importance of impact and disclosure in the sustainable bond market.

> GBP were first introduced in 2014, marking the beginning of a structured approach to green finance in the bond market;

> SBP followed in 2017, replacing earlier guidance and addressing the growing need for financing projects with social impact;

> SBG were introduced in 2018 to support bonds that combine both green and social objectives.

The Principles put emphasis on transparency and integrity of the information that is disclosed and reported by issuers through four core components and two key recommendations.

> Figure 4: Sustainable covered bonds seek alignment with the GBP, SBP and SBG

Four components of alignment					
I	**Use of proceeds:**		Employment generation, and programs designed to prevent and/or alleviate unemployment stemming from socioeconomic crises, including through the potential effect of SME financing and microfinance		
	Green			**Social**	
1	Renewable energy	√	1	Affordable basic infrastructure	√
2	Energy efficiency	√	2	Access to essential services	√
3	Pollution prevention and control	√	**3**	**Affordable housing**	**√**
4	Environmentally sustainable management of living natural resources and land use	√	4	Employment generation, and programmes designed to prevent and/or alleviate unemployment stemming from socioeconomic crises, climate transition projects and/or other considerations for a "just transition" (such provision and/or promotion could include SME financing and microfinance)	√
5	Terrestrial and aquatic biodiversity	√			
6	Clean transportation	√			
7	Sustainable water and wastewater management	√			
8	Climate change adaptation	√			
9	Circular economy adapted products, production technologies and processes, and/or certified eco-efficient products	√	5	Food security and sustainable food systems	√
			6	Socioeconomic advancement and empowerment	√
10	Green buildings	√			
II	**Process for project evaluation and selection:**		Issuer to outline due diligence in terms of how it identifies and ultimately decides on suitable projects		
III	**Management of proceeds:**		Clearly state how the proceeds from the sustainable bonds will be used		
IV	**Reporting:**		The issuer of the sustainable bond should provide regular updates and transparent information concerning projects, proceed utilisation and allocation		
Key recommendations for heightened transparency:					
i	Green, social or sustainability bond frameworks				
ii	External reviews				

Source: ICMA

The ICMA promotes two recommendations for transparency.

(i) Issuers should explain the alignment of their sustainability bond with the four core criteria in an ESG bond framework. In doing so, issuers are encouraged to also incorporate any relevant information on their overall ESG strategy.

(ii) Issuers are recommended to seek pre- and post-issuance assessment by an external review provider to ensure that projects financed and the reporting are aligned with the use of proceeds and commitments set out in the bond framework. Also, issuers should consult the Guidelines for External Reviews for recommendations and explanations on the different types of reviews.

The exclusivity of assets that secure green/social bonds versus non-exclusivity

A key feature of use of proceeds bonds is that they (re)finance an earmarked portfolio of new or existing eligible green and/or social assets. This portfolio may have an overlap with assets that are eligible as cover pool assets but does not necessarily have to.

The ICMA Principles make a clear distinction between secured green/social bonds where the net proceeds are used to (re)finance sustainable assets that exclusively secure the green/social bonds only (**secured green/social collateral bonds**) versus those where the (re)financed sustainable assets may or may not secure the specific bond in whole or in part (**secured green/social standard bonds**).

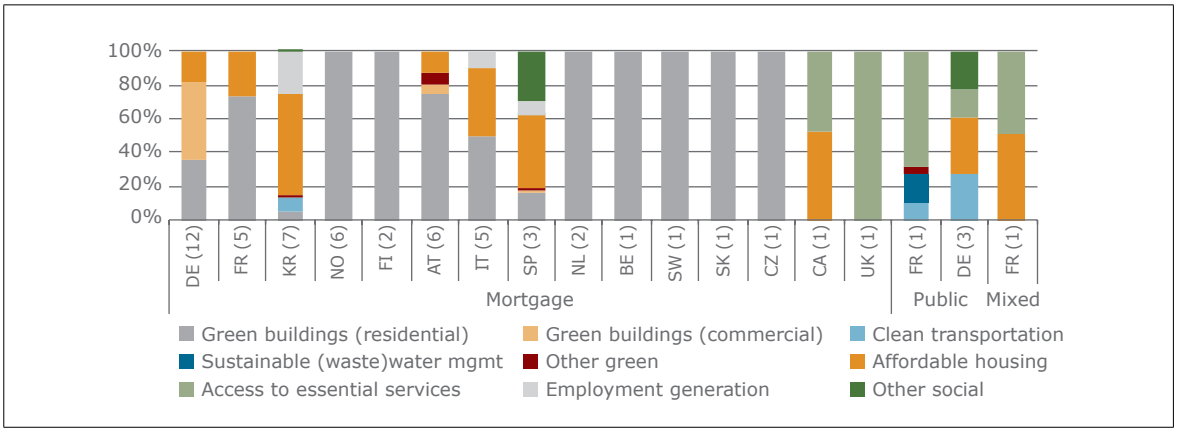
At this point only the social covered bonds issued by one of the South Korean covered bond issuers meet the definition of secured green/social collateral bond. All other sustainable covered bonds outstanding would fit into the category secured green/social standard bond.

Within the latter category of bonds, there are sustainable covered bonds that allocate proceeds to a portfolio of sustainable loans that are not part of the cover pool. Separate from their use of proceeds, these sustainable covered bonds are secured by sufficient cover assets meeting the asset eligibility criteria stipulated by law and/or the bond programme documentation.

However, most sustainable "standard" covered bond issuers would generally strive to have sufficient eligible green and/or social loans in the cover pool to at least match the amount of sustainable covered bonds outstanding. For that reason, these loans not only have to meet the criteria stipulated in the sustainable bond framework, but also the asset eligibility criteria under the respective covered bond legislation or programme documentation. It is important to bear in mind that sustainable and vanilla covered bonds issued against one cover pool do have the same preferential claim on both the sustainable and non-sustainable assets that are part of the cover pool.

Some banks issue both green and social covered bonds against the same cover pool, either under one single sustainability bond framework, or via separate green and social frameworks. In turn, there is also an example of a covered bond issuer that issues both social public sector covered bonds and social mortgage covered bonds via the same social bond framework. Moreover, proceeds can be assigned to a distinct portfolio of assets per bond, or to a broader portfolio of sustainable assets (re)financed by multiple sustainable (covered) bonds (portfolio approach). The latter approach is most common.

> Figure 5: Use of proceeds sustainable EUR covered bonds*



* Shares of the sustainable proceed allocations as available by end June 2025. The amounts outstanding per country are in bold above the bars. Only EUR denominated covered bonds with a minimum EUR 250 mn size are included. The number of issuers per country are in brackets.
Source: Issuer information, ING

Green **mortgage covered bonds** primarily finance energy-efficient commercial or residential buildings (64% of all use of proceeds), with green residential real estate loans being the most important use of proceeds category (51%). Banks with mortgage cover pools (partly) comprised of social housing loans often issue social

or sustainability mortgage covered bonds. Affordable housing loans represent 21% of the sustainable covered bond use of proceeds aggregate.

Access to essential services is the most important use of proceeds category for sustainable **public sector covered bonds** (6% of all use of proceeds). Public sector covered bonds were at first solely issued in social format to finance community projects in areas of healthcare and education. However, there are nowadays also public sector covered bonds outstanding with a green use of proceeds, (re)financing among others clean transportation projects (2% of all use of proceeds).

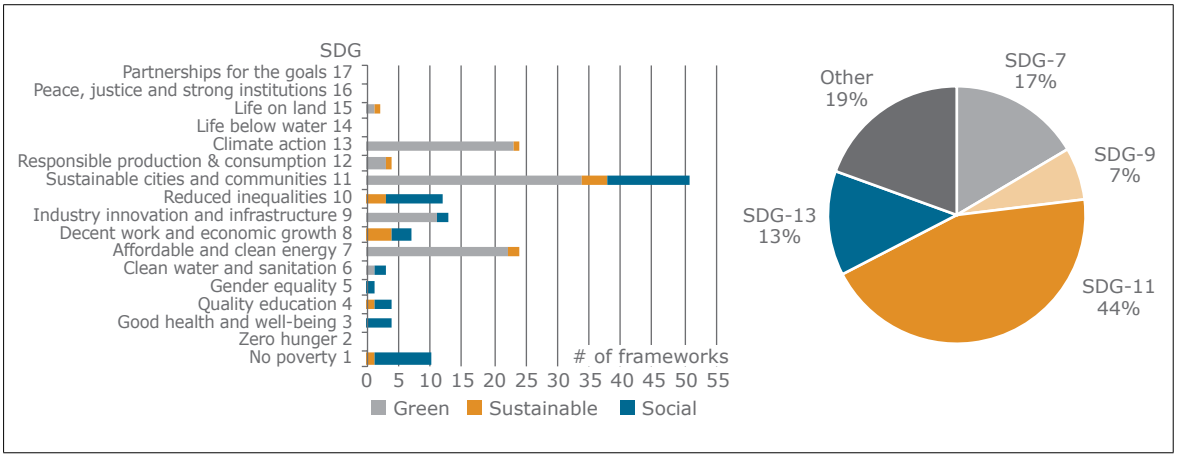
Matching the use of proceeds with the sustainable development goals

Sustainable covered bonds generally also aim to support the achievement of the United Nations sustainable development goals (SDG), established in 2015. Green use-of-proceeds bonds tend to align with a narrower set of SDGs compared to those focusing on social objectives. Among them, sustainable cities and communities (SDG 11) is the most frequently targeted goal.

While most sustainable bond frameworks indicate which SDGs are supported per use of proceeds category, only few banks report the exact allocation of proceeds to specific SDGs. To estimate how sustainable covered bond proceeds are distributed across the SDGs, we applied a pro-rata matching of the reported proceed allocations to the SDGs associated with each use of proceeds category. This analysis suggests that 44% of all sustainable covered bond proceeds support SDG 11 – sustainable cities and communities. This is followed, at a considerable distance, by SDG 7 – affordable and clean energy (17%), SDG 13 – climate action (13%) and SDG 9 – industry, innovation and infrastructure (7%).

> Figure 6: SDGs contributed to by sustainable covered bonds

> Figure 7: Share of proceed allocations to different SDGs



* Only for sustainable EUR covered bonds
Source: Issuer information, SPO providers, ING

Impact reporting – Time to take stock

Besides issuer disclosures on use of proceed allocations, impact reporting for green and social covered bonds is a key instrument for ensuring the transparent and credible use of the funds raised. It allows investors, regulators and the public to understand how and to what extent environmental and/or social goals have been achieved. For issuers, it is about demonstrating transparency and credibility to investors.

If the covered bond issuer is a credit institution that issues other forms of green or social bonds, such as senior unsecured, rather than a specialised institution that issues only covered bonds, the impact report will often show data related to the whole green or social portfolio. In rare cases, the issuer discloses a separate impact report for the cover pool.

> Figure 8: Many issuers are guided by recognized frameworks such as:

Standard	Description
ICMA GBP ICMA SBP ICMA SBG	Annual, transparent impact reporting as best practice is a key component. Recommends: - The use of qualitative and, where feasible, quantitative performance indicators - The disclosure of the underlying methodology and/or assumptions used - Adoption of guidance provided by the Harmonized Framework for Impact Reporting
ICMA Harmonised Framework for Impact Reporting (Green Bonds) ICMA Harmonised Framework for Impact Reporting for Social Bonds	- Provides metric-specific KPIs and methods (e.g. CO_2 savings per EUR million invested) - Provides qualitative and quantitative performance indicators (e.g. number of people who benefit)
Minimum standards for Green Pfandbrief Minimum standards for Social Pfandbriefe	Based on GBP Based on SBP Impact report needs to be made available via link on vdp website to issuer's own website
SDG reference	Environmental impacts are often also assigned to the SDGs
EU Green Bond Standard (GBS)*	Binding for "European Green Bonds", including mandatory impact reporting

*Until 30th June 2025 there has not yet been a covered bond issued as EU GB. Source: own illustration, vdp

Impact reporting involves presenting the environmental and social impact achieved by projects financed by green, social or sustainability bonds in quantitative and qualitative terms. As the objectives of financing green or social projects differ, the indicators used to measure the impact of the proceeds from issuance depend primarily on the intended use. While carbon performance is one of the key performance indicators for green covered bonds (whether they finance or refinance green buildings or green transport), the indicators for social covered bonds are more varied due to the vast range of potential projects that can be financed.

The ICMA Harmonised Framework for Impact Reporting (for green bonds) provides various core indicators to measure the energy and carbon performance, water efficiency and savings, waste management and certification standards of green buildings, where available. For green buildings, for example, the ICMA core indicators for energy and carbon performance are

> kWh/m² of Gross Building Area (GBA) p.a.; and % of energy use reduced/avoided vs local baseline/building code

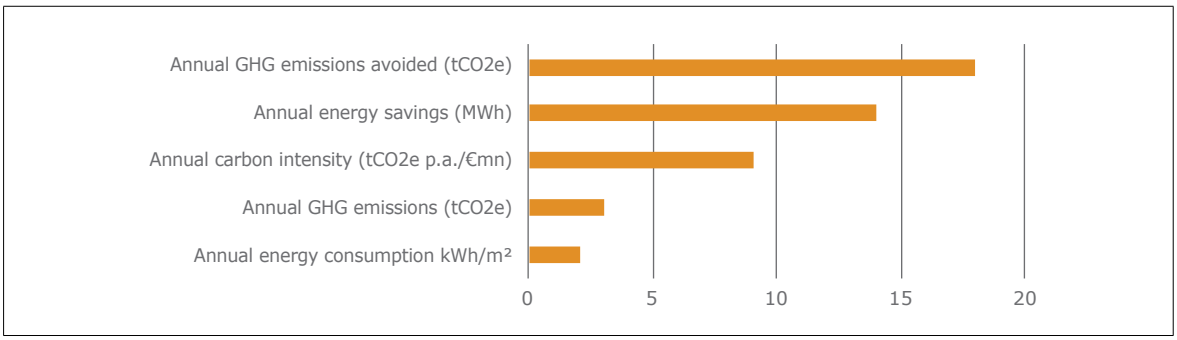
> kgCO2/m² of GBA p.a; and annual Green House Gas (GHG) emissions reduced/avoided in tonnes of CO2 equiv. vs local baseline/baseline certification level; and/or

> % of carbon emissions reduced/avoided vs local baseline/baseline certification level.

The issuers of green covered bonds, which are used to finance or refinance green buildings, typically only report on the core indicators of energy and carbon performance. When the performance indicators of a selected group of eighteen impact reports from the largest green covered bond issuers in twelve countries were examined, it was found that each issuer reported 'GHG emissions avoided (tCO_2e)' and that fourteen reported on 'Annual energy saving (MWh/m² or kWh/m²).' Fewer than half of the reports indicated carbon intensity (tCO_2e per million euros), and only a few disclosed the absolute amount of GHG emissions in tonnes of CO_2e or energy

consumption in kWh per square metre. Some of the reports even break down these figures even per building type or provide further figures.

> Figure 9: Green buildings: Absolute annual GHG emissions (tCO^2/m^2) are rarely disclosed



Number of green bond impact reports disclosing energy and carbon performance indicators
Source: 18 impact reports from issuers of green covered bonds located in AT, BE, CZ, FI, FR, DE, IT, NL, NO, SK, SP, SE, vdp

Although the methodologies used to calculate impact metrics, which avoid energy consumption and GHG emissions, differ slightly from one another, covered bond issuers generally calculate impacts in a two-step process. For that metrics such as energy consumption, a benchmark or reference value, energy sources, emission factors are necessary.

Two-step process (methodology principles):
1. Energy savings are calculated as the difference between the building energy consumption and the respective benchmark.
2. Determination of the avoided CO2-emissions: Energy savings are multipiled with specific carbon emissions factors.

> Impact is typically calculated per m^2 and year. To calculate the total energy savings rescpectively, the total CO2-savings, the calculated energy savings or the CO2-savings per building are multiplied with the building area.

> As a last step the total CO2-savings are multiplied by the LTV ratio (Loan balance to value of the collateral) to calculate the bank's financing share of the CO2-savings.

To calculate these metrics, information on the energy consumption of the underlying property, benchmark or reference value, and the energy sources and emission factors is necessary.

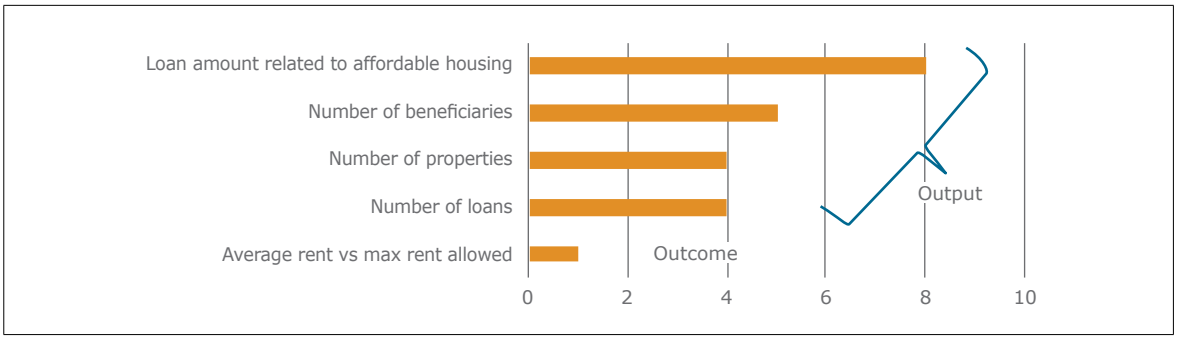
The primary data source for the energy consumption of the collateral is the building's EPC. For buildings where banks are unable to obtain actual energy consumption figures, they typically estimate energy savings based on building certificate requirements, national building requirements, year of construction and/or floor area. To achieve this, a combination of different sources is often required.

The benchmark for specific energy consumption (kWh/m^2) is usually determined based on the average energy demand of comparable building types, as provided by national data sources.

CO_2 emissions are calculated using standard conversion factors for specific energy sources (i.e. electricity mix and district heating supply) for a given region or country. Impact reports generally disclose the source of the emission factors and sometimes list the factors for various energy sources in a table, along with the applied factor(s). Sources range from national statistics created by federal agencies, industry initiatives or associations.

When it comes to the approaches used to assess and disclose GHG emissions, issuers either use national standards or those developed by the Partnership for Carbon Accounting Financials (PCAF), or they engage consultants who develop their own approaches.

> Figure 10: Affordable housing: Impact indicators are a main challenge



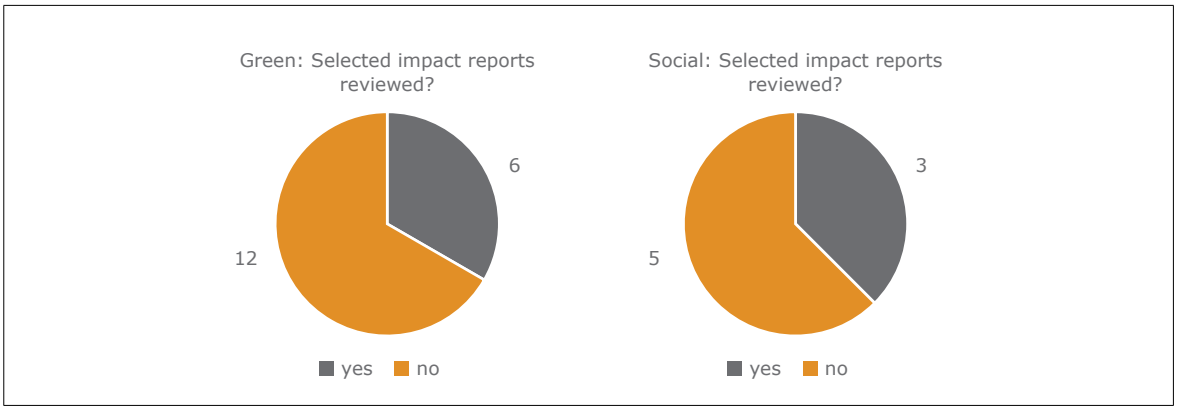
Number of social/sustainability bond impact reports disclosing social indicators
Source: 8 impact reports from covered bond issuers from AT, CA, DE, SP, FR, SKO, SE, vdp

Impact reporting on social projects financed by a covered bond issuer refers to the ICMA Harmonised Framework for Impact Reporting on Social Bonds. This framework provides various indicators to measure the impact of social projects.

Output indicators typically focus on the number of people benefiting from relevant projects or the products resulting from an organisation's activities. For the category affordable housing, examples of output indicators include the number of individuals or families benefiting from subsidised housing, the number of affordable dwellings built, and the number of homeless people supported. Outcome indicators measure improvements or changes in this area, including rental costs compared to regional or national rent indices and reductions in the number of people experiencing poor housing and homelessness. Impact indicators address longer-term outcomes, such as those proposed by the framework for affordable housing: improved safety and shelter.

Examining a selected group of eight impact reports from the largest social covered bond issuers in seven countries, refinancing projects of affordable housing, it was found that all reports specified the loan amount related to affordable housing. Typical output indicators, such as the number of beneficiaries and the number of properties or units financed, were also disclosed. However, only one report included an outcome indicator.

> Figure 11: The majority of impact reports are not reviewed externally



Source: 18 impact reports from issuers of green covered bonds located in 12 countries, 8 impact reports from issuers of social/sustainability covered bonds located in 7 countries, vdp

When it comes to external reviews, few issuers ask auditors or external reviewers to inspect documents and provide an assessment. Verifications differ in terms of scope, verifying either 'and' or 'or' (sometimes with limited assurance) that

> impact indicators have been prepared in compliance with the green bond framework,

> they align with best market practices using the recommended metrics by ICMA Harmonised Framework for Impact Reporting

> that issuers **adopt an appropriate methodology to report the impact** generated by **providing comprehensive disclosure** on data sourcing, calculation methodologies and granularity, reflecting best market practices and/or

> **the methods for measuring impact indicators have been properly applied**

> nothing has come to our attention that causes us to believe that the impact indicators are not measured, in all material respects, in accordance with the methodology disclosed

MARKET DYNAMICS / PRICING / RELATIVE VALUE

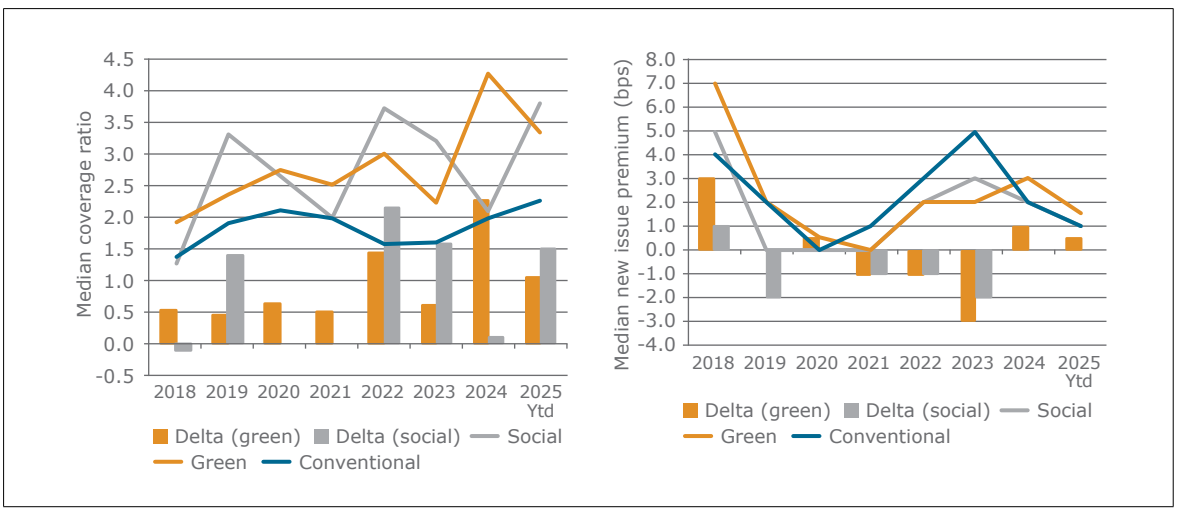
Market dynamics:

Green and social covered bonds benefit from the same high security standards as regular covered bonds. At the same time, printing in green or social format involves additional costs for an issuer (i.e. additional ESG reporting, drafting and maintaining a framework, costs of SPO(s)). Hence one could assume that issuers are only willing to make these investments if printing a green or social bond compensates for these costs.

Primary market data:

From figure 12 it can be derived that both green and social covered bonds – measured by the (median) coverage ratios of their order books – are able to attract larger order books than regular covered bonds and therefore have the benefit of reduced execution risk compared to conventional format. It is important to note, however, that the social covered bond market remains relatively small, and our findings for this subtype are based on a limited set of jurisdictions.

> Figure 12: Median coverage ratio and median new issue premium on EUR benchmark covered bonds (Austria, Germany, France, Netherlands, Finland, Norway and Sweden) versus green and social covered bonds



Source: Rabobank Research

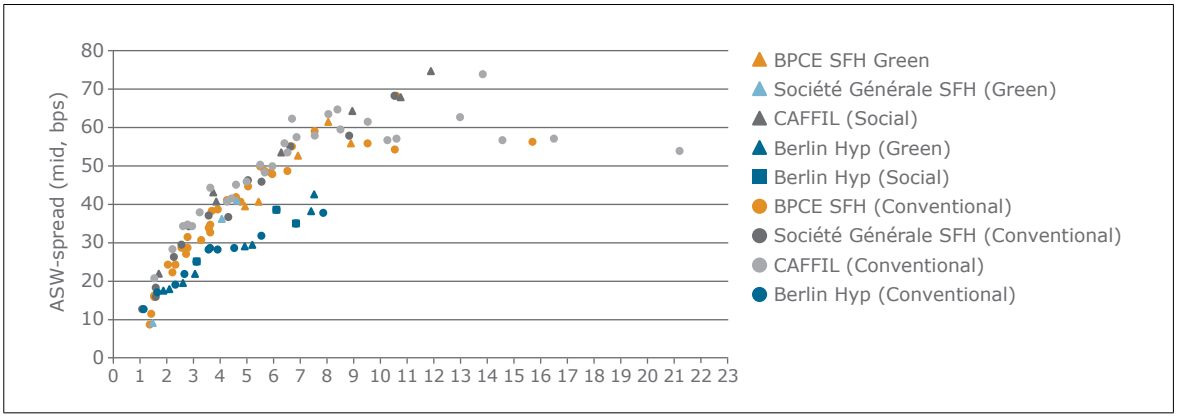
At the same time, market data on new issue premiums (NIP) as displayed in figure 12 indicates that green covered bonds were able to benefit from lower NIPs compared to regular covered bonds between 2021 and 2023. However, since 2024 we observe a different story: the median NIP for green issuances is higher than for conventional bonds. This effect is mainly driven by timing differences and issuer specific reasons. During 2024, NIPs were higher at the start of the year, a period with relatively more green covered bonds. Market conditions improved throughout the year and as a result less green issuance was printed when conditions improved and hence NIPs were lower. For the year 2025 YTD, only a few green covered bonds have been issued, making firm conclusions difficult. As a result, a single observation can already give a distorted picture. The overall conclusion for 2025 is that there is no visible greenium.

Our analysis of social covered bonds reveals a similar trend with the NIP differential between social and conventional covered bonds having disappeared over the past 18 months.

Secondary market data:

A different perspective can be generated by studying secondary market data. In doing so, we compare ASW-based average spreads on 21 June 2025 for issuers with both green and conventional covered bonds. In order to isolate (jurisdictional) spread differentials, we created two selections: (i) a German issuer and (ii) two French issuers. These market snapshots offer limited insights. Berlin Hyp shows a very modest greenium in the range of 1bp around their 3-year point on the curve, specific to one bond, with no clear greenium elsewhere on its curve. Similarly, among the French issuers, only two BPCE bonds show a greenium near the 5-year mark, with no consistent pattern across the rest of their curves. A similar issuer-level analysis, conducted for two institutions with both conventional and social covered bonds outstanding, indicates that there is no direct evidence of a social premium in the pricing of social covered bonds. This suggests that, at least for these issuers, the market does not consistently differentiate in terms of pricing.

> Figure 13: A selection of French and German issuers with conventional covered bonds and green or social covered bonds outstanding



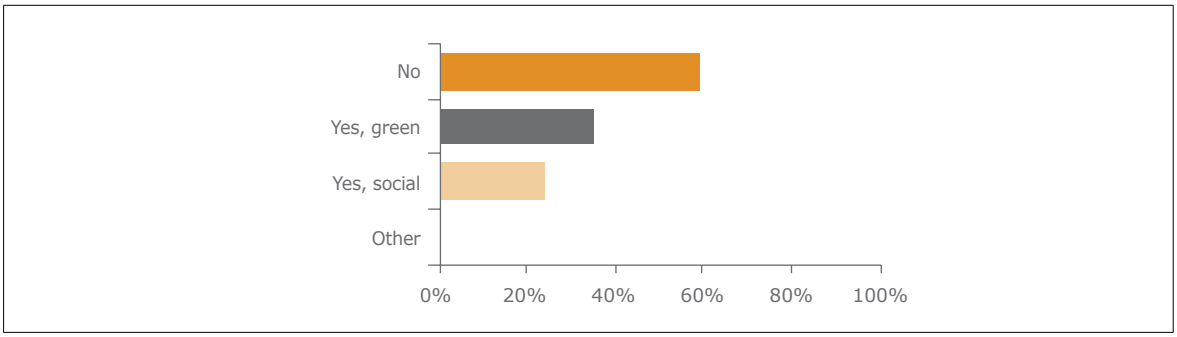
Source: Rabobank Research

INVESTOR DEMAND

As illustrated above, sustainable covered bonds have generally been significantly oversubscribed in the primary market. Bankers report that a more diverse investor base is looking at these instruments, with both sustainability focused funds (e.g. SFDR Article 8 and 9 funds) and traditional covered bond investors placing orders. This incremental demand has not yet consistently translated into a greenium, but several market participants believe that this wider investor base could support sustainable issuance, for example during a market correc-

tion or the current high interest rate environment. As part of the ECBC covered bond investor survey, we asked investors how they were positioned on ESG topics. (The results of the complete investor survey can be found in Chapter 1.7 of this Fact Book). Although 35% of the respondents indicated that they have a green mandate and 24% have a social mandate, 59% have no specific ESG mandate.

> Figure 14: Do you have a specific ESG mandate?



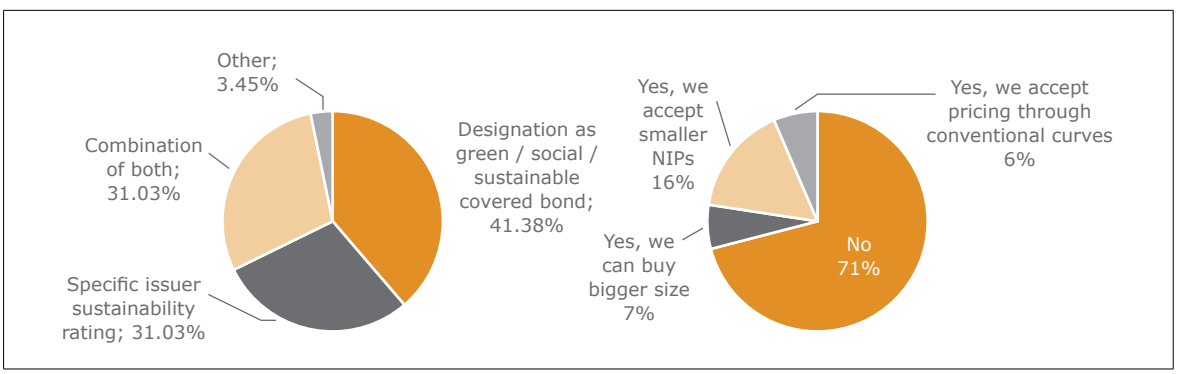
Multiple answers possible. Source: Covered bond investor survey, ECBC Covered Bond Fact Book 2025

But even traditional covered bond investors generally view sustainable issuance favourably. Most have introduced qualitative or quantitative sustainability considerations into their investment policies, and green or social covered bonds tend to meet more of their sustainability objectives. Most of the surveyed investors focus on the ESG credentials specific to the covered bonds, rather than on the issuer's ESG credentials. Most sustainable covered bond issuers have received second party opinions on the alignment of their sustainability frameworks with the ICMA principles, while it remains to be seen if the EU GBS will be widely adopted in this market.

And while 76% of the investors surveyed look at green and social covered bonds in the same way as traditional covered bonds, 15% stated they can accept smaller NIPs and 12% can either buy bigger size or accept pricing through conventional curves.

> Figure 15: What makes a covered bonds investment "ESG compliant"?

> Figure 16: Do you look at covered bonds issued as green or social bonds differently to conventional covered bonds?



Multiple answers possible. Source: Covered bond investor survey, ECBC Covered Bond Fact Book 2025

Investors identify three main sources of concern with respect to the sustainability characteristics of these covered bond programmes. The first is the lack of asset segregation, because upon issuer insolvency, eligible green or social assets will be mixed with other non-green assets in the cover pool. This resembles what would

happen to investors in a standard green use of proceeds bonds, as they would have the same claims against the issuer's insolvency estate as non-green investors. The second is a lack of liquidity – sustainable covered bonds are generally easy to sell but very difficult to buy. Third is the complexity of disclosure standards relating to sustainability and/or climate-related issues and the risk of misrepresentation by issuers, perceived as greenwashing. While the structural issue of asset segregation will probably not be addressed until we see more exclusively sustainable assets covered bond programmes (i.e. secured collateral bonds), increased issuance volumes could assuage the second concern, and new rules and disclosure standards which aim to enhance transparency and consistency on sustainability-related issues may help with the third.

In terms of investor behaviour, also central banks can significantly affect the covered bond market, not only as buyers, but also by setting standards for collateral eligibility and by providing banks funding on favourable terms. In July 2022 the ECB decided to tilt its corporate bond holdings toward issuers with better climate performance and to limit the share of assets issued by entities with a high carbon footprint that can be pledged as collateral under its collateral framework. The ECB also indicated to accept, as of 2026, only collateral from companies and debtors that comply with the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive if they are in scope of this directive. Moreover, when the ECB finalised the review of its operational framework in March 2024, it announced that it will introduce long-term structural refinancing operations and consider a structural bond portfolio once the Eurosystem's balance sheet begins to grow durably again, taking into account legacy bond holdings. While the ECB has not announced the details of these initiatives, it will have the tools to significantly affect the sustainable covered bond market, if it decides to do so.

PUBLIC SECTOR COVERED BONDS AS A KEY INSTRUMENT TO FINANCE GREEN AND SOCIAL INVESTMENTS BY THE LOCAL PUBLIC SECTOR

1. Introduction

In the European Union, local governments are responsible for well over 50% of total public investments. A significant part of these investments contributes to achieving key social and environmental objectives in sectors such as education, public transportation, public healthcare, waste management and water management.

Local authorities primarily use the loan market to finance these investments. In many European countries, public sector covered bonds are used to refinance a significant share of these loans to local government entities.

2. Eligibility of local government lending under european covered bond regulation

Loans to local authorities or guaranteed by local authorities within the European Union are eligible as cover pool assets compliant with the definition provided by article 129 of the CRR. Several additional conditions apply for loans to local authorities outside the European Union:

1. To be eligible for the preferential treatment …, bonds …shall be collateralized by any of the following eligible assets:

(a) exposures to or guaranteed by central governments, ESCB central banks, public sector entities, regional governments or local authorities in the Union;

(b) … exposures to or guaranteed by …third-country regional governments or third-country local authorities that are risk weighted as exposures to institutions or central governments and central banks … and that qualify for the credit quality step 1 …, and exposures within the meaning of this point that qualify as a minimum for the credit quality step 2 …, provided that they do not exceed 20 % of the nominal amount of outstanding covered bonds of the issuing institutions

Financing green and social investments

Local governments exercise a wide range of responsibilities across Europe. Key responsibilities include:

> Local infrastructure, including the local rail and road network;

> Primary and secondary education;

> Local and regional public transportation

> Basic services such as drinking water supply, sewerage, waste collection and treatment;

> Urban planning and development;

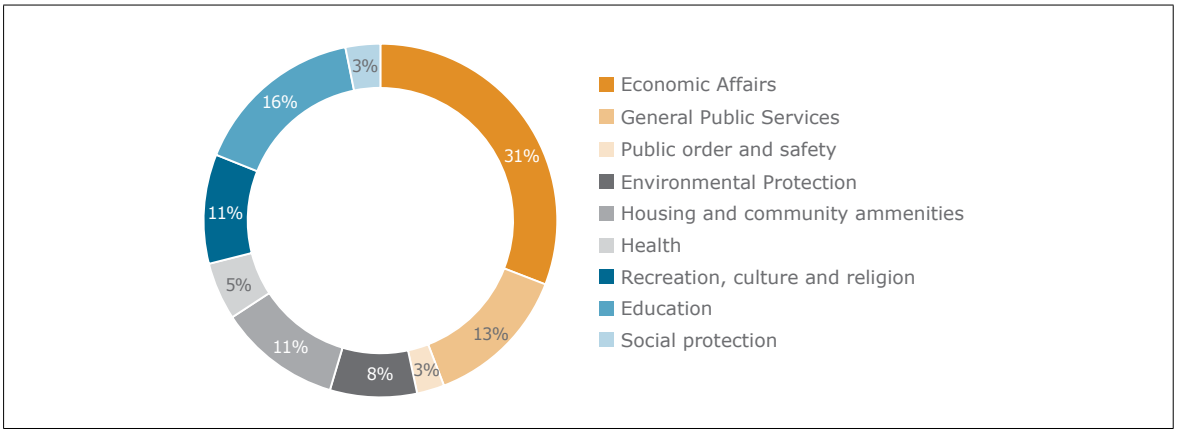
> Parts of the public health care system;

> Public order and safety, in particular municipal police forces, and emergency and fire-fighting services;

> Social housing

The total volume of investments by local governments in the European Union amounted to EUR 268 billion for the year 2023. A significant share of these investments has important social and environmental benefits. Public education represented more than 15% of these investments, with environmental protection (including waste management and water management) representing around 8%, and public healthcare representing around 5% of total local government investments.

> Figure 17: Local Government Investments by Function



Source: Eurostat, 2023 data

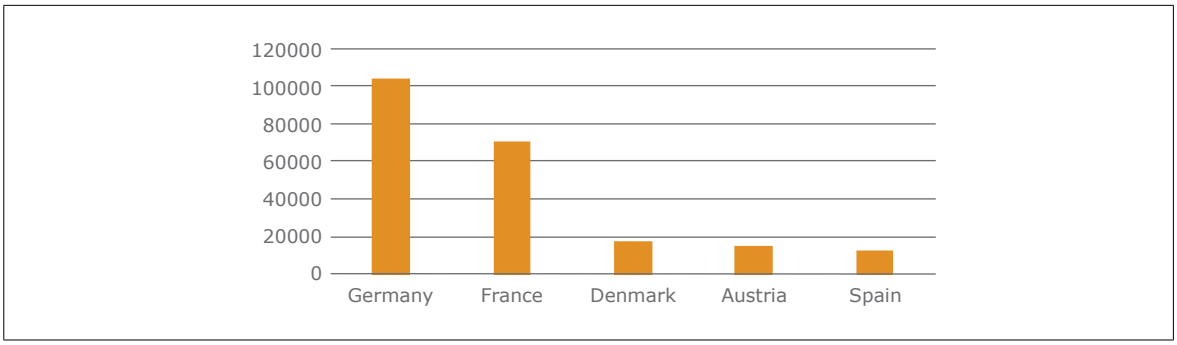
3. Financing sources for local government investments

With a few exceptions, local governments generally lack the critical size for direct bond issuance on capital markets. For local authorities, direct bond issuance represents generally less than 10% of outstanding debt, with local governments across Europe relying almost exclusively on the loan market as source of funding.

4. Local government financing provided by covered bond issuers

Covered bonds represent an attractive refinancing instrument for local government lenders. Covered bonds provide issuers with the possibility to provide a large number of small loans to local government borrowers, and to refinance these assets via the issuance of liquid covered bond transactions. For investors, these instruments provide a high degree of liquidity and a strong credit quality. Germany and France are currently by far the largest markets in terms of issuance with over EUR 170 billion outstanding covered bonds for these two markets together, equivalent to more than 75% of the overall public sector covered bond market.

> Figure 18: Outstanding public sector covered bonds by country 2023 (EUR m)

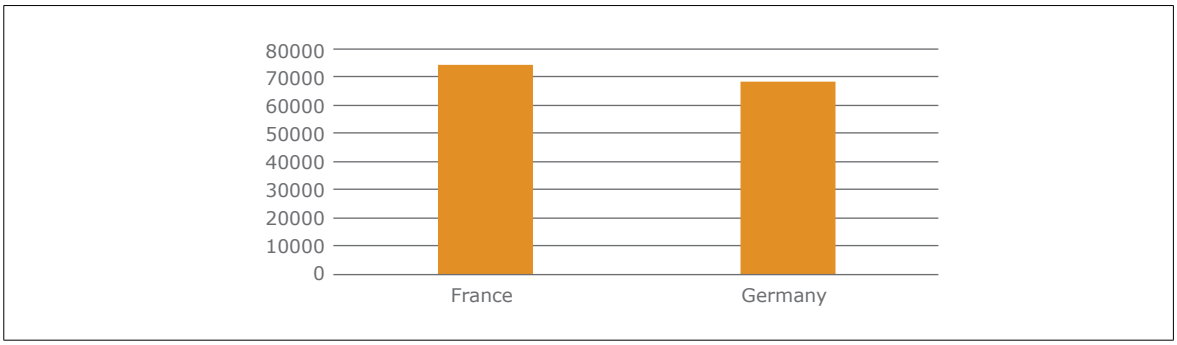


Source: ECBC

Public sector covered bonds are well established in a number of European countries. Issuance is dominated by French and German issuers representing over 75% of outstanding volumes.

These covered bonds play a key role for the financing of local government investments. Consolidated cover pool exposures to French local government entities totaled EUR 74 billion[1] at the end of 2024. For German local government entities, total cover pool exposures at the end of 2024 amounted to EUR 68 billion[2].

> Figure 19: Cover pool exposures to local government entities (EUR m, 31.12.2024)



Source: Quarterly reporting published by vdp, Compagnie de Financement Foncier, SG SCF, Arkéa SCF, Caffil

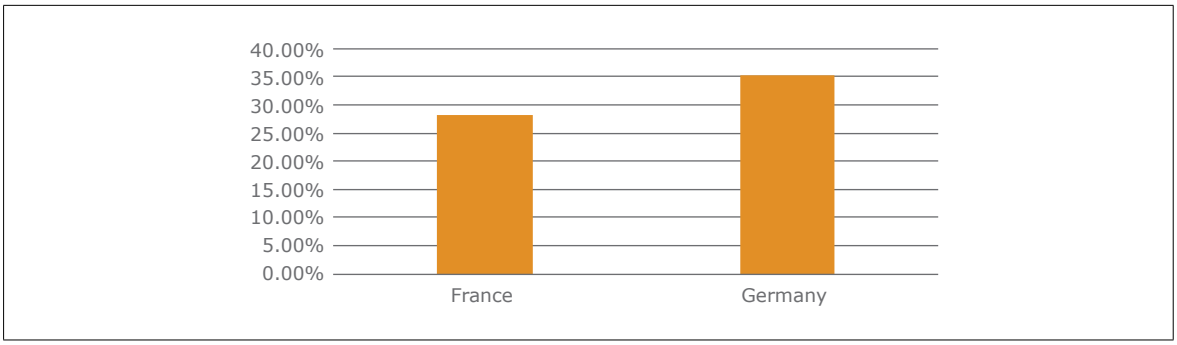
Financing provided by covered bond issuers represents a significant share of the total financing raised by local government entities. For France, exposures by covered bond issuers represent close to 30% of total local government debt. For Germany, loans held in public sector cover pools is equivalent to around 35% of total German local government debt[3].

1 This figure includes both public sector and mixed cover pool exposures.

2 This figure only includes the local government level, and does not include exposures to German federal states.

3 As there are important differences between local public sector and private sector accounting rules, these figures only represent estimations.

> Figure 20: Estimated share of local government debt refinanced via covered bonds (as of 31.12.2024)



Source: ECBC Covered Bond Label Templates, vdp, Eurostat

5. Issuance of green and social public sector covered bonds

Loans by public sector covered bond issuers will generally take the form of general purpose loans financing the overall investment budget of a local authority.

In recent years, several issuers have set up frameworks for green and social public sector covered bonds. The main challenge has been to link the lending provided by covered bond issuers to specific green and social projects.

One potential solution is to set up specific loan contracts linked to local authorities' social or green investments. The loan contract will typically contain the necessary information to identify eligible investments, and to collect the appropriate impact reporting data.

An alternative approach is to provide financing to entities with activities limited to activities with green or social objectives, for example public hospitals, public education facilities or municipal water boards.

Investments by local authorities often have both environmental and social objectives at the same time. As an example, the construction of a new school will be an investment in public education, but at the same time it may also be considered a green project, if the construction is an energy efficient building. Another example would be the construction of a new tramway line with a focus on providing clean local public transportation, but at the same time providing important social benefits.

Green and social public sector covered bonds have been issued with financing provided to areas including healthcare, water management, waste management and clean public transportation. However, green and social bond issuance under public sector covered bond format has remained relatively limited compared to issuance of green and social mortgage covered bonds.

Green public sector covered bonds

There are currently two issuers of green benchmark public sector covered bonds with a total of five outstanding benchmark transactions.

The proceeds of these transactions have been allocated to the following project categories:

- Clean transportation
- Sustainable water management
- Waste management
- Renewable energy
- Energy efficiency of construction

In addition, one recent green public sector covered bond transaction has also included the financing of green export contract benefiting from a public guarantee, in addition to green investments by local authorities.

Social public sector covered bonds

There are currently nine outstanding social public sector covered bond benchmark transactions by two issuers.

These transactions have financed social public sector investments across the following categories:

- Essential services including healthcare, education and research
- Social housing
- Public drinking water supply
- Social cohesion including programmes for urban renewal and rural revitalization, and digital inclusion

One recent social public sector covered bond transaction has been issued to finance social export contracts with social benefits, in addition to social local public sector transactions.

1.5 COVERED BONDS: BETWEEN INNOVATION AND TRADITION

By Antonio Torío, Asociación Hipotecaria Española, Bodo Winkler-Viti, Berlin Hyp, Claudio Domingues, Millennium bcp and Sjors Hoppenbrouwers, Rabobank

BACKGROUND/TRADITION/RECENT HISTORY

The discussion about innovation in covered bonds has always been relatively simple, "If it's not broken, don't fix it". In this context, taking some perspective, we are talking about a financial product that has stood the test of time for more than 200 years. In 1769 an edict of Frederick the Great, established the Pfandbrief, an instrument that would become the cornerstone of the European housing finance industry. In the following centuries, all other European nations steadily enacted covered bond legislation with one key objective: to provide banking systems with a cost-efficient financing instrument that could improve prosperity by facilitating the acquisition of a home for families and businesses. Since then, covered bonds have become the traditional pillars of European mortgage financing.

No product or service, however, can prevail without adapting to the times. Technologically, the de-materialization of securities into book-entry system and the implementation of "*delivery versus payment*" settlement were milestones that in the late 1900's bullet-proofed an already great product. From a transparency perspective, the adoption of the Covered Bond Label in 2012, a truly new common standard on disclosure, came to align transparency practices, simplifying comparisons for investors. The impeccable track record of the product, plus these developments, made European covered bonds the instrument of choice for everyone during the crises plaguing capital markets since 2007. Used as highly secure investments, either posted as collateral for central bank facilities, or simply launched as market-openers after periods of high volatility, covered bonds simply became the Swiss-army knife of funding products in the European capital markets of the early 21st century.

INTRODUCTION TO INNOVATION/TECHNOLOGY

During recent years the world has experienced an unprecedented wave of technological advancements covered bond markets couldn't simply ignore. Particularly, the exponential evolution of computational capabilities, fast data transfer, and the creation of advanced tools like Distributed Ledger Technology (DLT) and Artificial Intelligence (AI) foretell a new wave of transformation in all economic sectors. Thus, this chapter dives into these two latest trends and how they've been affecting the covered bonds space. Furthermore, it explores any future use-cases and how the covered bond product could benefit from further adoption of these technologies.

1. Distributed Ledger Technology:

As already described by our colleague Karsten Rühlmann in his article on digitalization[1] published in the 2021 ECBC Fact Book, DLT is one technology that, if implemented correctly, could be transformative in the covered bond value chain. Operational cost savings, lower settlement risks, and enhanced transparency are only a few of its potential benefits. However, some unaddressed issues remain that hinder implementation, from security concerns in the creation and exchange of tokens to market fragmentation, which is a natural enemy of cost efficiencies. Regulatory uncertainties regarding the dematerialization of financial instruments are still preventing market wide adoption. This is why the evolving "proof of concept" transactions that took place during 2024, under the umbrella of the Eurosystem and the imminent use of our own CBDC (Central Bank Digital Currency), the so-called Digital Euro, are so important. They will help us all to determine which aspects of the technology are readiest for implementation. All of this is taking place in an increasingly competitive global environment in which not moving forward simply means falling behind.

1 ECBC Factbook (2021): "*1.9 Digitalization of Covered Bonds: opportunities and challenges*"

What is DLT?

DLT refers to a decentralized system for recording transactions across a network of computers, where each participant holds a synchronized copy of the ledger. Unlike traditional systems that rely on a Central Securities Depository (CSD), centralized, trusted, third-parties, to maintain official ownership records, with settlement occurring typically on T+2 basis, DLT enables real-time, shared recordkeeping without a central authority, while also allowing the automatic processing of associated rights and obligations, such as coupon and principal payments, through so called "smart contracts". DLT is an umbrella term including those more commonly used decentralized digital databases (registers) that record transactions and other data in a continuous chain of blocks. Hence the term "blockchain", sometimes incorrectly used as synonym of DLT, which is characterized by three essential properties:

(i) Security:

The blocks are linked using a cryptographic hash function: so-called "hashes". This allows data of any size, such as text, to be mapped in a code with a fixed character length. Each change to the input data leads to a completely different hash result and would therefore be detected immediately by the network if anyone tried to change it (e.g. the term "Covered Bond" is expressed by the following hash using the SHA-1 hash function: "099f0e164141187ff2d5696a27d082c03f95cb59"). By the time it is recorded on a blockchain this information is made unchangeable[2]. The blockchain is usually operated by a decentralised network with each network participant (known as a validator) owning a copy of the entire blockchain concerning a particular asset (e.g. a bond). When a new transaction is entered into the network, the validators check the validity of the transaction on the basis of defined consensus mechanisms and ensure that it fulfils all the necessary criteria. If this is the case, the transaction is included in a new block and added to the blockchain with a timestamp. This creates a secure, seamless, and unalterable history of all transactions on that asset that can be viewed and verified by every member of the network.

(ii) Digital:

Digitization is achieved through tokenisation, i.e. the representation of an asset on the blockchain, including the rights and obligations it contains. In the case of securities, these are so-called security tokens. The security token represents ownership of the underlying asset and, unlike conventional securities, is not held in a securities account but in a wallet. This means that the holders of a security no longer have a physical document, nor are the securities held in a centralized platform, but as an electronic record in a decentralized environment such as the blockchain.

(iii) Automation:

Automation can be achieved through smart contracts. Smart contracts are simple programs that run on a blockchain. They are executed only when all relevant contractual conditions are met and can be used to automate the associated process steps (such as payments or transfers of ownership) without the need to involve a third party for processing.

Historical overview

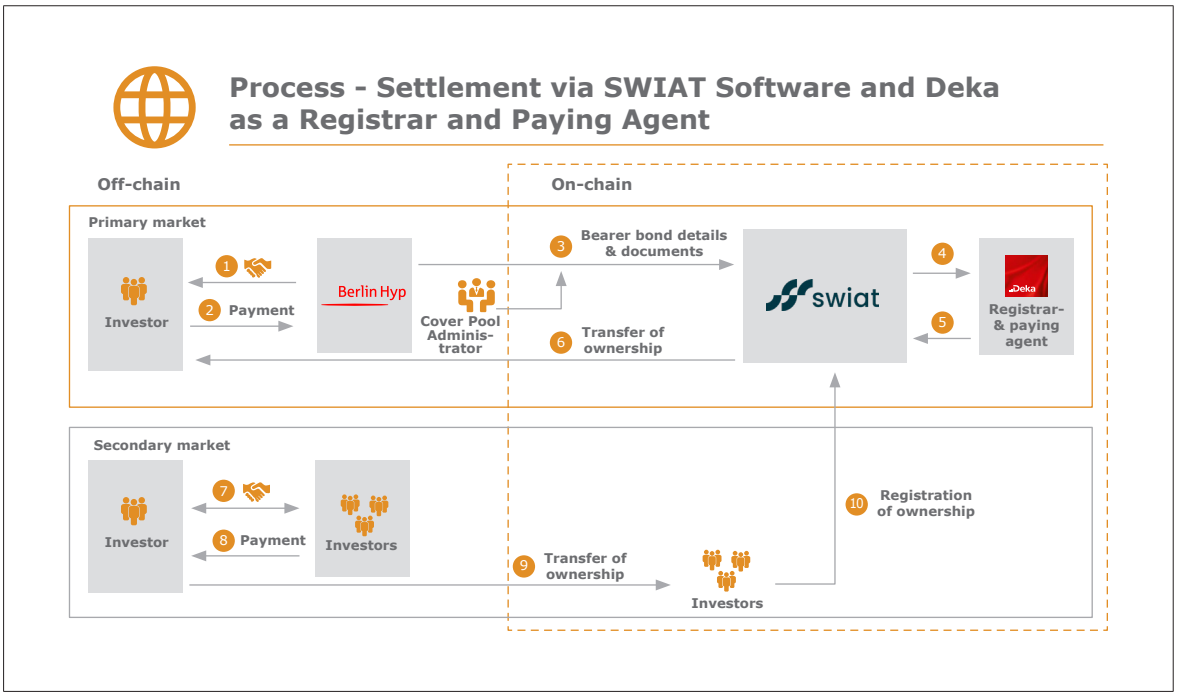
In 2019 Société Générale SFH issued the first digital covered bond ("obligations de financement de l'habitat") with a size of EUR 100 million as a security token on the Ethereum public blockchain. This pilot transaction was fully subscribed by Société Générale. Subsequently, five years passed before the occurrence of the first syndicated digital covered bond: Berlin Hyp executed a three-year Mortgage Pfandbrief on 2nd August 2024, which was fully placed with external investors. A few weeks later, Natixis Pfandbriefbank issued a EUR 100m

2 Example provided by https://www.hashgenerator.de/

digital (registered) covered bond placed with one investor. Figure 1 on the next page provides a timeline including key DLT milestones over the last six years.

The case study of Berlin Hyp's Blockchain Pfandbrief

Berlin Hyp executed its Aaa-rated digital transaction on the private, fully permissioned "SWIAT" private blockchain[3], supported by the German Electronic Securities Act (eWpG), which came into force in 2021. The Berlin Hyp Pfandbrief was only the second crypto bearer security[4] based on the eWpG and followed a EUR 100 million syndicated transaction by KfW, launched a few weeks earlier. When the eWpG came into force, an important change was also made to the Pfandbrief Act (PfandBG). Section 8 (3) of the PfandBG was amended so that for a Pfandbrief issued as an electronic security in accordance with the eWpG it is not necessary to be authorised by the cover pool monitor's signature on the securities certificate. Instead, the new electronic issue can also be put into circulation by depositing the cover pool monitor's authorisation with the cryptosecurities registrar. In the absence of electronic central bank money, the securities issue took place entirely on the "SWIAT" blockchain, yet the payment processes had to be handled conventionally, off the blockchain. It would have been technically possible to process payments on the blockchain, yet that requires using electronic commercial bank money. However, this would have created an additional settlement risk, which was avoided . The following diagram shows the individual process steps in the primary and secondary markets and illustrates which take place on-chain and which off-chain.



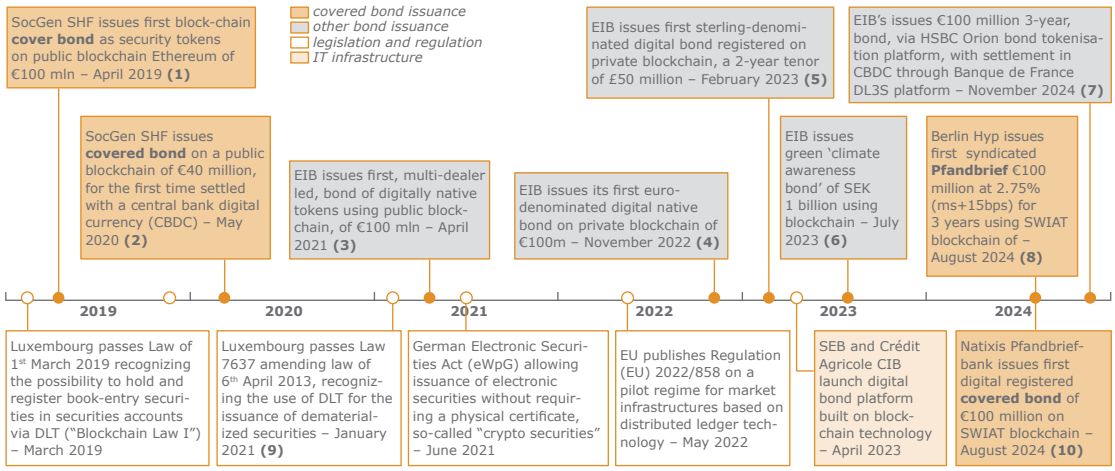
Key Learnings

3 SWIAT is also a decentralised peer-to-peer network yet, as private, is coordinated by an organization who oversees access to the network and carries out joint protocol changes with the participants; permissioned means only authorised participants can take part in the network and its transactions.

4 "crypto securities", as DLT-based securities are also known under the new German Electronic Securities Act.

The transaction has provided some key learnings from both the issuer and investor perspective:

> Figure 1: A timeline with relevant DLT milestones outstanding



1) first covered bond issued as a security token directly registered on a public blockchain (Ethereum) while settled in traditional manner in Euros; rated Aaa/AAA by Moody's and Fitch, fully subscribed by Societe Generale, parent company of issuing entity, first pilot project developed by Societe Generale and Societe Generale FORGE, an internal startup launched by the Group's intrapreneurial programme Internal Startup Call.

2) following on the footsteps of the first digital issuance, issued on the same basis (on Ethereum), with same ratings Aaa/AAA by Moody's and Fitch, also fully subscribed by Societe Generale, but with settlement in the central bank digital currency (CBDC) for interbank settlements issued by Banque de France, through their private blockchain platform.

3) Digital bond issued on a public blockchain platform (Ethereum), leveraging distributed ledger technology (DLT) for registration and settlement, in collaboration with Goldman Sachs, Santander, and Societe Generale; in partnership with Banque de France, issue payments from underwriters to the EIB were recorded on-chain as Bank of France's CBDC; a digitally native token is one that originates and exists exclusively on a blockchain, rather than being a digital representation of an off-chain asset.

4) "Project Venus". Co-operation of two central banks (Banque de France (BdF) and the Banque centrale du Luxembourg) and three international private banks (Goldman Sachs Bank Europe, Santander and Société Générale, as joint-lead managers). The former provided a digital representation of euro central bank money in the form of token (CBDC). The EIB issued a series of bonds on a blockchain, where investors purchased and paid for the security tokens using traditional currency. JLMs then settled underwriting using a representation of central bank money, the wholesale CBDC. This was the first syndicated digital bond issued by a public institution to be admitted on the Luxembourg Stock Exchange's Securities Official List and first digital bond executed under Luxembourg law.

5) two-year digital bonds bearing a variable rate of interest, registered in a private blockchain for their legal ownership with the public blockchain mirror record providing increased transparency on an anonymized basis (as stated by EIB); BNP Paribas, RBC Capital Markets and HSBC were issuance as joint lead managers. Private and public blockchains are operated and accessed via HSBC Orion, HSBC's distributed-ledger technology (DLT)-based bond tokenisation platform.

6) Bond issued on a public permissioned blockchain (PoCRNet) using a digital bond platform built on blockchain technology launched by Crédit Agricole CIB Swedish-based bank SEB. This platform uses a new type of blockchain validation logic called 'proof of climate awareness (PoCR) protocol', that enables an energy consumption 'comparable to' non-blockchain systems, incentivizing participating blockchain nodes to 'continually improve' their infrastructures' environmental footprint, by remunerating each node for its efforts according to a formula linked to its environmental impact evaluated with the Life-Cycle Assessment ISO standard: the lower the environmental footprint it is, the larger the reward.

7) Utilized new technologies for settlement of wholesale financial transactions recorded on distributed-ledger technology (DLT) platforms in central bank money: its wholesale central bank digital currency (CBDC) programme. Settlement took place in central bank money (CBDC) via Banque de France (Bdf)'s DL3S platform (the 'central bank blockchain') through 'exploratory cash tokens'. The 'market blockchain' was the HSBC Orion bond tokenisation platform, interoperating with DL3S in real time.

8) announced on 22nd July and settled on 6th August, first digital Mortgage Pfandbrief, rated Aaa by Moody's, structured under the German Electronic Securities Act (eWpG), on a private and permissioned blockchain from SWIAT GmbH. SWIAT is a Frankfurt-based software developing company for financial market infrastructures, shareholders including DekaBank and LBBW. These banks were the lead managers, are current secondary market makers, and holders of the Pfandbrief in the form of a collective entry on behalf of investors. Metzler Bank was key anchor investor. Dekabank acts as crypto securities registrar. White & Case LLP provided legal advice.

9) Legislation allows secure electronic recording systems (including DLT) for issuing dematerialized securities (listed or unlisted), complementing the 1st March 2019 law on DLT-based registration and transfer of book-entry securities. It also expands central account holder eligibility for unlisted debt to Luxembourg and EU credit institutions and investment firms.

10) DekaBank was an investor an also acted as registrar and paying agent

Source: Bloomberg, Rabobank Research

(i) Investor education:

There is huge interest in digital securities. Berlin Hyp had contact with numerous investors during the two-week marketing phase. A global investor call and a call held specifically for (German) savings banks alone attracted 135 participants. However, it also became clear that many investors still have a need for knowledge and have not yet undergone corresponding New Product Processes. To this end, they need support from intermediaries specialising in crypto securities.

(ii) ECB eligibility:

From an investor's perspective, the lack of ECB eligibility for digital securities is an obstacle and thus presents a significant impact on investor demand. It will be important for the future success of crypto securities to ensure their eligibility for central bank borrowing.

(iii) LCR eligibility:

The limited demand due to the lack of ECB eligibility also means that most crypto securities do not reach the minimum volume required for LCR eligibility. This is a clear disadvantage, especially for covered bonds that are otherwise categorised as highly liquid in the benchmark format.

(iv) Risk weighting:

The Basel Committee is reviewing the extent to which crypto assets issued on public blockchains should be assigned different – higher – risk weightings from 2026. A comparable review in connection with private blockchains is not currently planned but cannot be ruled out. In order to keep potential damage away from investors, Berlin Hyp has therefore decided to convert the Blockchain Pfandbrief into a traditional certificated security in the terms and conditions should the risk weightings be increased for regulatory reasons.

(v) Documentation:

MTN programmes usually provide for the safekeeping of any drawings with a CSD and clearing via a clearing house. In the case of digital securities, both tasks are performed by the crypto securities registrar. Berlin Hyp's Blockchain Pfandbrief was therefore documented in separate bond terms and conditions.

(vi) Rating considerations:

Issues outside MTN programmes are not automatically rated by the rating agency mandated with the programme rating. Instead, it must be commissioned separately. The Berlin Hyp Blockchain Pfandbrief was rated by Moody's. The rating is determined and assigned differently than for conventional Pfandbriefe. In addition to the covered bond analysts, a team of digital assets analysts will also assess the instrument. The focus here is particularly on the security and performance of the decentralised network and the blockchain technology used. It is also important that it is clearly documented what happens to the asset if the technology used or the digital securities registrar is no longer available. Doubts or obvious deficiencies in the robustness of the DLT network do not lead to a different credit rating for the instrument, but to none being issued at all.

(vii) Technology:

The settlement on the "SWIAT" blockchain worked smoothly. T+2 was chosen for security reasons. Same-day settlement would have been perfectly possible too.

(viii) Increased efficiency:

This is the greatest benefit from the issuer's point of view. The lengthy issuing process with a settlement period of usually five bank working days can be shortened to same-day settlement. In this way, the issuer achieves savings, not least by avoiding interim refinancing via senior unsecured instruments.

There is still some way to go before digital covered bonds replace their traditional counterparts, as the conditions for a level playing field need to be created. Once that is achieved, issuers and investors will increasingly favor crypto securities. The efficiency gains described above are a clear advantage. Added to this is the high level of security resulting from the immutability of the information on the blockchain. This also suits covered bonds particularly well, as security is their central element.

Regulatory developments and considerations

Current EU legislation and regulation is not yet at the stage where it can advance the development of a liquid secondary market for digital bonds. The Central Securities Depositories Regulation (CSDR)[5], in particular Article 3, requires issuers to ensure that any transferable security admitted to trading on venues (e.g., Euronext, Deutsche Börse) is registered in book-entry form in a CSD. Similarly, Article 23 of the Markets in Financial Instruments Regulation (MiFIR)[6] requires securities traded by investment firms to be traded on a regulated market. While both regulations entered into force in 2018 the EU introduced a temporary exemption to address these barriers, through Regulation (EU) 2022/858, also known as the EU DLT Pilot Regime, which came into force in March 2023. This initiative aims to test the settlement, listing and trading of DLT-based bonds, and assesses whether such an exemption could encourage the development of digital bond infrastructure.

The EU DLT Pilot Regime, a three-year trial renewable in three-year increments, introduced frameworks such as DLT Settlement Systems (DLT SS) and DLT Trading and Settlement Systems (DLT TSS) to be operated by authorised entities therein. These allow digital bonds to be issued and admitted to trading on regulated markets in Europe, potentially increasing secondary market liquidity. The scheme may serve as a testing ground for future legislation that would permanently enable the full lifecycle of digital bonds to operate in a regulated environment through DLT SS and DLT TSS.

At an individual country level, the Netherlands is the only major market whose existing securities legislation appears to be able to accommodate the issuance of DLT bonds. Elsewhere, Luxembourg adapted their regime for dematerialized securities, France adapted its regime for registered securities, and Germany passed its new German Electronic Securities Act to accommodate the issuance of DLT-based bonds. Later Italy and Spain adapted their legislation to be compatible with the EU DLT Pilot Regime and set the stage for bids to operate DLT SS and DLT TSS. Poland was the latest country to amend its securities law framework and adapt its existing regime for dematerialized securities to allow registration in DLT accounts or in DLT registers.

2. Artificial Intelligence

The financial landscape is undergoing a transformative shift with the advent of AI. AI is rapidly changing the way humans interact with technology, the so-called "Large Language Models" (LLMs) that have stormed user interfaces. They are in the initial stages of providing, through natural language prompts,

5 Regulation (EU) 909/2014.

6 Regulation (EU) 600/2014 that together with MiFID II (Directive 2014/65/EU) form the MiFID II Framework.

tools to analyze large and intricate data sets to better understand and predict behaviors. As AI technologies continue to evolve, their applications are becoming increasingly relevant in various domains, including the covered bond market. In this article, we will explore potential use cases focusing on its impact on issuers, rating agencies and investors. Some of these use-cases are expected to materialize soon, while others are still seen as long-term prospects.

(i) Issuers:

In pool selection, AI algorithms have the potential to assist by optimising the composition of the cover pool. They could help identify the best assets for inclusion in a cover pool and which composition would achieve the lowest level of overcollateralisation. In doing so, AI could potentially deliver dynamic outcomes that automatically consider dynamic events such as house price changes, concentration limits, prepayments, loan-to-value ratios, interest rate adjustments, arrears and any new bond issuances, thereby ensuring a continuous optimization between assets and outstanding bonds. AI could also predict cash flows and potential risks, thereby giving issuers the possibility to create different stress scenarios, especially if they are able to leverage on rating agency assumptions and modelling.

Other applications of AI include the calculation of the carbon footprint of cover pools, as well as streamlining legal processes. Among the use cases we foresee for the latter are assisting in drafting prospectuses via specific interfaces, particularly to those chapters that focus on issuer specific information and where financial figures are included. One other, in combination with blockchain technologies, could be the drafting and reviewing of bond documentation, which is currently still a largely manual process. Increased standardisation and automation could streamline this process, accelerating it and reduce the likelihood of operational or manual errors. Lastly, to the extent that investor reporting activities are not yet fully automated, AI could be instrumental in optimising the workload of generating these periodic reports.

(ii) Rating agencies:

The major rating agencies are already utilizing AI algorithms in various ways, such as for data collection, data analysis and to streamline or reduce repetitive tasks. AI enhances their capabilities by facilitating improved financial analytics and insights, handling complex tasks like dissecting financial reports, generating nuanced insights, and making informed predictions. AI-driven solutions accelerate daily tasks such as monitoring stock, bond or commodity prices and managing client interactions.

Despite these benefits, AI also introduces an array of challenges and risks for credit rating agencies. One primary concern is the potential for algorithmic bias, where AI systems may inadvertently incorporate historical biases present in data, leading to unfair or inaccurate results. Moreover, as AI models become increasingly complex, the transparency and interpretability of decision-making processes can diminish, making it difficult for stakeholders to understand and trust AI-driven "black box" assessments. There is also the issue of data privacy and security, as AI systems require extensive data sets, which can be vulnerable to breaches or misuse. Furthermore, regulatory and compliance challenges arise, as existing legal frameworks may still not be equipped to handle the rapid advancements in AI technology. These risks necessitate rigorous oversight and continuous improvement of AI systems to ensure they deliver reliable and ethical outcomes in credit rating operations.

(iii) Investors:

The key benefits for investors include amongst others the ability to analyze large and intricate data sets to better understand and predict behaviors. The new models will enhance analysts' understanding of market trends, simplifying their work and enhancing their insights of the underlying risk drivers. These models will allow market participants to receive tailor-made analysis, to fit their desired risk exposure. This will enable improved methods for analyzing cover pools, a better grasp of risk drivers, and more effective comparisons of cover pools and covered bond programs across various issuers and jurisdictions, all contributing to greater transparency.

CONCLUSION

Covered bonds have evolved as a centuries-old financial instrument to become a resilient cornerstone of European housing and public sector finance. While investor protection has long dictated a cautious approach to innovation, recent advances in DLT and AI are now reshaping the landscape without compromising covered bonds' unique safety features. Pilot digital covered bond transactions – like Berlin Hyp's blockchain-based Pfandbrief – have demonstrated clear benefits in transparency, efficiency, and automation, though regulatory, infrastructural, and market-readiness challenges remain. Meanwhile, AI is beginning to offer powerful tools for issuers, investors, and rating agencies – enhancing risk assessment, optimizing pool composition, streamlining documentation, and improving reporting processes. As regulatory frameworks continue to adapt, particularly through the EU DLT Pilot Regime, the path toward mainstream adoption of digital and AI-enhanced covered bonds becomes clearer. Long-term success will depend on harmonized legislation, investor education, and a level playing field that preserves the product's historic security and credibility while embracing technological progress. The challenge ahead lies in balancing innovation with the safety and reliability that define the covered bond. The question is no longer whether the market will evolve, but how decisively it will choose to do so.

1.6 THE SUCCESS STORY OF THE COVERED BONDS DIRECTIVE: WHAT'S NEXT? EBA CALL FOR ADVICE

By Elena Bortolotti, Chairwoman of the ECBC Rating Agency Approaches Working Group and Barclays,
Joost Beaumont, Chairman of the ECBC Statistics & Data Working Group and ABN AMRO,
Claudio Domingues, Millennium BCP and Stefano Patruno, Chairman of the ECBC,
Moderator of the ECBC European Secured Notes (ESN) Task Force, Intesa Sanpaolo

INTRODUCTION

Within the broader vision of the Capital Markets Union, the harmonisation of covered bond frameworks stands out as one of the EU's more tangible regulatory achievements. The 2019 adoption of the Covered Bond Directive (CBD) marked a critical step in aligning national regimes under a shared set of principles, designed to enhance transparency, safeguard investor confidence, and deepen the integration of EU capital markets.

Article 31 of the Directive anticipated the need for reflection and adaptation. It required the European Commission (EC), working closely with the European Banking Authority (EBA), to assess how the framework is functioning in practice. In mid-2023, the EC issued a formal Call for Advice (CfA), scope of which included an assessment of the merits of introducing a third country covered bond regime (see article 1.8), as well as of the possibility of introducing a dual-recourse instrument named European Secured Note ("ESN") (see Article 1.2 "Supporting the real economy, SME financing, securitisation and ESN"). The report is reportedly expected to be published at the end of the summer of 2025, with EBA expected to provide both technical assessments and, where relevant, regulatory recommendations.

Specifically on covered bonds, the use of extendable maturity structures, once a niche design feature, has gained notable traction across several jurisdictions. This has prompted a closer examination of their prudential implications, especially under stressed conditions. In parallel to this, EBA has been assessing how institutions implementing the CBD's liquidity buffer requirements, including whether these provisions are proving effective in mitigating funding liquidity risk. Attention is also being devoted to minimum overcollateralization requirements and how suitable are the CBD's baseline thresholds, and finally, as the framework enters its sixth year of operation, also to how widely the "European Covered Bond" label has been adopted, how it is perceived by market participants, and whether it is delivering the intended benefits in terms of transparency and market differentiation.

This article explores each of these evolving themes, contextualizing them within the broader objectives of the CBD and the growing maturity of Europe's covered bond market.

TRIGGERS FOR EXTENDABLE MATURITIES

As part of the harmonisation effort, the CBD introduced for the first time European-wide legislation for the concept of extendable maturities, and in particular the need to harmonise the various extension options that many covered bond programmes had contractually introduced. To assure investor protection, Art.17 of the CBD clearly outlines the requirements issuers need to meet to be able to issue covered bonds with extendable maturities. Namely, the CBD requires Member States to include objective triggers specified in national law, and not at the discretion of the issuer, as conditions for covered bonds to extend.

Looking at how the extension features have been transposed into national covered bond frameworks, we can group the triggers into two main groups: (i) countries where the extension is a tool available for the covered pool administrator to avoid the insolvency of the issuing entity, and (ii) countries where the extension can occur, or be decided upon, prior to the insolvency of the issuing bank, and will be triggered simply via non-payment of principal or interest on the covered bonds, even if still subject to conditions. It is not surprising that each Member State has identified slightly different triggers; finding one solution fits all would have been arduous mainly due to the fact that across Member States we have at least three covered bond issuance models: ring-fencing on balance sheet, specialist banking model and SPV guarantor structure.

As part of the CfA, EBA has been mandated to assess if extension features are sufficiently disclosed to allow investors to assess the risk and benefits of extendable covered bonds. Furthermore, EBA are considering if more harmonisation is required when it comes to identifying the extension triggers. Should the CBD prescribe what the objective triggers should be?

LIQUIDITY BUFFER

Linked to the maturity extension triggers is the calculation of the liquidity buffer while Art.16 comma 2 of the CBD prescribes how the liquidity buffer should be calculated stating that the cover pool liquidity buffer shall cover the maximum cumulative net liquidity outflow over the next 180 days, discretion was left to the national regulators to assess if the expected or the extended maturity date should be considered when including principal payments in the programme outflows. We focused our analysis on the top 12 Member States by covered bond issuance volumes and can report that only 3 countries being Denmark, Germany and Spain include covered bond principal payments as outflows at all times in the liquidity buffer calculation while the other 9 all allow issuers to calculate the liquidity buffer using the extended maturity date in case of soft bullet or conditional pass-through covered bonds.

The liquidity buffer calculation is another feature that the EBA is scrutinizing as part of its mandate from the EC. In particular, EBA is assessing how each EEA member state has exercised its discretion when implementing Art.16 CBD with regards to the inclusion on principal 180 days before the expected or the extended maturity date. As mentioned above it is clear that most of the EEA countries have opted to use the extended maturity date in the calculation of the buffer, however if this is the case, EBA is querying if other liquidity mitigants should be in place.

MINIMUM OVERCOLLATERALIZATION

Another requirement that was left to transpose at the national regulators' discretion was the minimum over-collateralization amount. Regulation (EU) 2019/2160 allows national regulators to set the minimum level of overcollateralization between 2% and 5%. Our analysis shows that various Member States have introduced distinct levels of overcollateralization for different types of cover pool assets, for example in Germany, the nominal overcollateralization required is 2% if the cover pool assets are either mortgages or public sector assets while for shipping and aircraft cover pools the overcollateralization requirement in 5%. Focusing on cover pools backed by residential mortgages, out of the 12 jurisdictions assessed, Denmark, Germany[1], Sweden, Austria and Finland have transposed a 2% minimum overcollateralization amount while for the remaining seven (ie France, Spain, Netherlands, Italy, Norway, Belgium and Portugal) require a 5% overcollateralization amount. It is interesting to see how in some jurisdictions the statutory overcollateralization is higher than what the rating agencies require to assign the rating to the covered bond.

LABELLING

Finally, when looking at how each Member State has transposed the labelling requirement (Art.27 CBD) it is clear that each national regulator has focused on giving the ability to their issuers to issue European Covered Bonds (Premium) or European Covered Bonds (Ordinary). European Covered Bonds (Premium) are covered bonds which are compliant with both the CBD and Art. 129 of the Capital Requirements Regulation (CRR) while European Covered Bond (Ordinary) only comply with the requirements of the CDB. Furthermore, we note that of the 12 Member States analysed none seem to have transposed the ability to issue European Covered Bonds backed by assets such as auto loans or public undertakings. Finally, we have seen divergence amongst Member States on how grandfathered covered bonds should be labelled, there are some jurisdictions like Spain and Belgium where once the covered bond programmes have been updated to become CBD and CRR compliant, all covered bonds issued from the programme pre or post 8 July 2022 have been/can be labelled as European Covered

1 The German Pfandbriefe Law also requires an additional OC of 2% on a net present value basis.

Issuer Country	OC Requirement		Liquidity Buffer Calculation	Extension Triggers
Denmark	2% nominal 2% nominal 2% nominal	CRR Compliant - Residential CRR Compliant - Commercial CRR Compliant - Ships	> Principal included at all times	> A refinancing failure trigger and an interest rate trigger
Germany	2% NPV + Nominal 2% 2% NPV + Nominal 2% 5% NPV + Nominal 5% 5% NPV + Nominal 5%	Public Sector Mortgage Ship Aircraft	> Principal included at all times	> Following an Issuer bankruptcy/resolution the cover pool administrator may decide to extend
France	5% nominal 5% nominal	All types	> If the Issuer issues soft bullet covered bonds then the extended maturity date will be used to calculate the liquidity buffer	> Issuer bankruptcy/resolution > Lack of liquidity: breach of liquidity rules > Issuer failure to pay
Spain	5% nominal 5% nominal	Mortgage Public Sector	> For soft bullet covered bonds, the final maturity date is used to calculate the liquidity buffer	> Issuer bankruptcy/resolution > Lack of liquidity; breach of liquidity rules > Other: The declaration of non-viability of the issuer in accordance with Art. 8 of Law 11/2015 of 18 June 2015 on the recovery and resolution of credit institutions and investment services firms The existence of serious disturbances affecting the national financial markets, where this has been assessed by the Macroprudential Authority Financial Stability Board (AMCESFI) by means of a public communication.
Sweden	2% nominal and NPV	All types	> If the Issuer issues soft bullet covered bonds then the extended maturity date will be used to calculate the liquidity buffer	> The maturity may be extended subject to such extension being permitted by the Swedish FSA as a result of it being deemed likely that the extension will prevent insolvency.
Netherlands	5% nominal	Taking CRR LTV cut-off limits into account	> Calculation of the net liquidity outflow shall be assumed that the principal amount of the covered bonds is to be repaid on the extended maturity date	> Issuer bankruptcy/resolution > Issuer failure to pay
Italy	5% nominal	Residential	> Principal included only if covered bonds extend	> Issuer event of default (includes failure to pay) > The Guarantor has insufficient moneys available under the Priority of Payments to pay the guaranteed amounts corresponding to the final redemption amount in full, in respect of the relevant series of OBG
Norway	5% nominal 2% nominal	Mortgage or commercial real estate Public sector	> Calculation of the liquidity buffer requirement for covered bonds allowing for maturity extensions may be based on the extended maturity date	> Issuer bankruptcy/resolution > Other > The Issuer is likely to fail in the near future and there is no reasonable prospect that any alternative measures can prevent the issuer from failing.
Austria	2% nominal (or optional 2% PV)	All types	> The liquidity buffer requirement for covered bonds is calculated based on the contractual final maturity date, or the extended maturity date if the extension has already been triggered	> Only under issuer insolvency it is at the discretion of the special trustee to trigger a maturity extension
Finland	2% market value 5% market value	If CRR 129 article 3a met If not met	> Calculation of the liquidity buffer requirement for covered bonds allowing for maturity extensions may be based on the extended maturity date	> Lack of liquidity; actual/potential breach of liquidity rules > Other: Issuer unable to obtain conventional long-term funding
Belgium	5% value of cover asset basis	On a value of Cover Asset basis	> If the Issuer issues soft bullet covered bonds then the extended maturity date will be used to calculate the liquidity buffer	> Issuer bankruptcy/resolution > Issuer failure to pay
Portugal	5% nominal 10% nominal 10% nominal	Mortgages and public sector (CRR Compliant)* Mortgages (CRR Compliant) backed by commercial mortgages allowing maximum LTV of 70%* Public Sector (non-CRR-compliant) ** pursuant to CRR requirements*	> Principal included only if covered bonds extend	> Issuer failure to pay > Other: Withdrawal of the issuer's banking licence. CMVM can object to maturity extension

Source: https://compare.coveredbondlabel.com/frameworks

Bond (Premium) while in most other jurisdictions only covered bonds issued post the update of the programme to comply with the new covered bond package can benefit from the European Covered Bond (Premium) label.

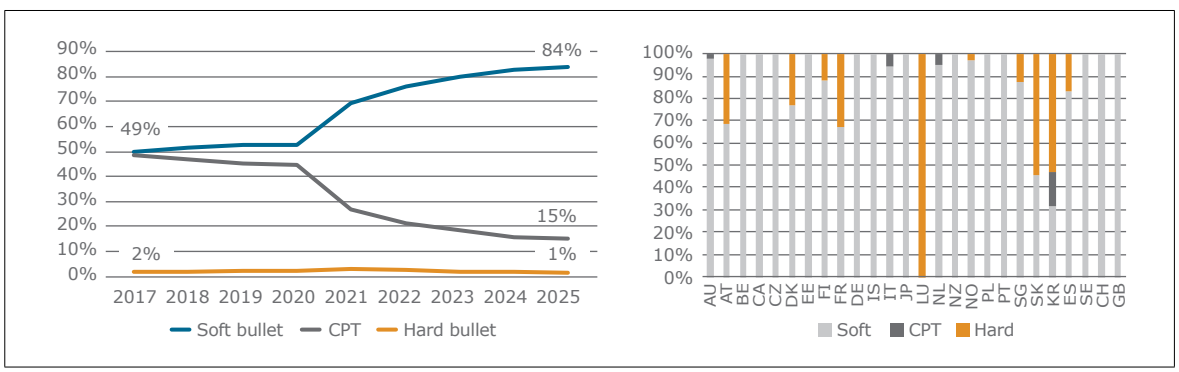
HOW THE CBD IS SHAPING THE MARKET

The sections that follow give an overview of some of the changes introduced via the CBD and how they are shaping the covered bond market.

Soft bullet dominant structure

One of the key features of the new CBD was the inclusion of conditions for extendable maturity structures. This was likely due to the emergence in the market of covered bonds with extendable maturities, either in soft bullet or conditional pass-through (CPT) format, over the past years. Indeed, already back in 2017, 49% of euro bench-mark covered bonds in the iBoxx index had a soft bullet structure, while 1.8% had a CPT structure, leaving 49% of traditional hard bullet covered bonds. In June 2025, only 15% of hard bullet covered bonds remained in the iBoxx euro covered bond index, while 84% of the bonds in the index were soft bullets and 1.5% CPT covered bonds. So, the transposition of the CBD into national covered bond laws has resulted in a further rise in the share of covered bonds with extendable maturities, now that an increasing number of countries have included the possibility for issuers to issue covered bonds with extendable maturities. German Pfandbriefe, which account for 21% of the total index, moved, for instance, from hard to soft bullets in 2021. Overall, the difference between the share of hard and soft bullet covered bonds in the total index widened from 0% at the end of 2017 to 69% in June 2025.

> Figure 1: Outstanding amounts of covered bonds in iBoxx euro covered bond index by maturity structure over the years (left, % share in total) and by country (June index, % share)



Source: Bloomberg, ABN AMRO, 2025 data is June index

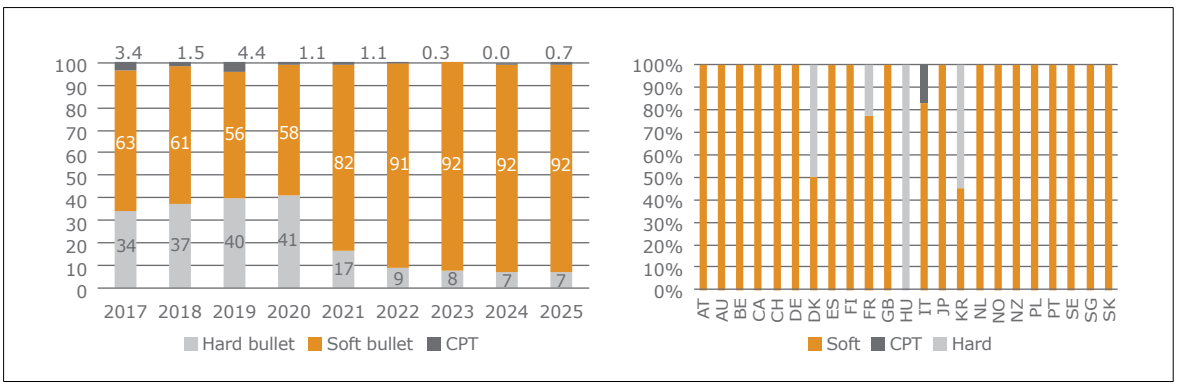
A breakdown of outstanding covered bonds by maturity type and country shows that only Luxembourg has only hard bullet covered bonds outstanding (but only one bond as well), while in Spain and South Korea slightly more than 50% of outstanding covered bonds are still in hard bullet format. Austria and France are also jurisdictions where around one third of outstanding euro benchmark covered bonds are hard bullets. But most jurisdictions (60%) that are included in the index have only soft bullet covered bonds outstanding, while some (three in total) have a combination of only soft bullet and CPT covered bonds. Interesting in this respect are the Netherlands, where in 2013 the first CPT covered bond was issued. However, all the issuers that initially opted for this structure have now switched to soft bullet covered bonds. This has more than halved the share of outstanding Dutch CPT covered bonds in total Dutch covered bonds in the index to 5% between 2017 and 2025 and this share will move to zero over time.

As said, the CBD has stimulated more and more countries to embrace the maturity extension structure when transposing the CBD into national law. As a result, soft bullet covered bonds will further enlarge their footprint,

with CPT covered bonds slowly disappearing. This was clearly visible in the issuance data. In 2020, 58% of the total volume of new supply were soft bullet covered bonds, while still 41% had a hard bullet structure.

Last year, the share of soft bullet covered bonds in total issuance rose to 92%, with 7% having a hard bullet structure and 1% a CPT structure. At the time of writing, these shares have not changed, indicating that soft bullets have become by far the dominant structure in the covered bond market. Moreover, hard bullet covered bonds will remain to be issued by mainly French issuers that have been committed to hard bullet structure, while one Hungarian issuer issued an inaugural euro benchmark covered bond in hard bullet format in June 2025.

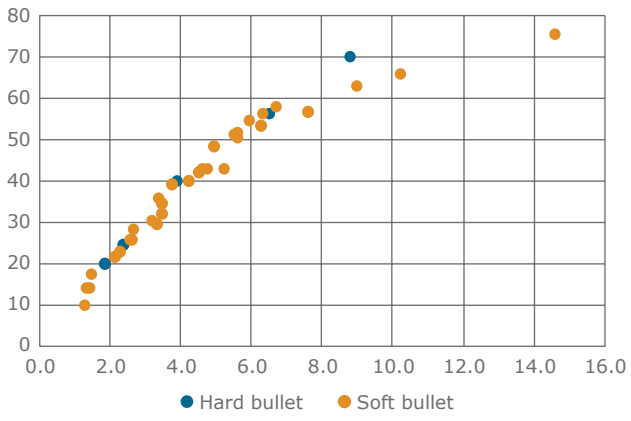
> Figure 2: New issuances of covered bonds in iBoxx euro covered bond index by maturity structure over the years (left, % in total) and by country (in H1 2025, % share)



Source: Bloomberg, ABN AMRO

The increasing dominance of soft bullet covered bonds has gone hand in hand with investor confidence in investing in covered bonds with maturity extension features. A couple of issuers have both hard and soft bullet covered bonds in the iBoxx index, which allows for a good comparison of any price differences between both structures. The chart below, taken from a French issuer, shows that there seems to be no price difference between hard and soft bullet covered bonds, underlining that investors do not see any difference in the risks attached to these bonds. A similar picture arises when looking at other issuers. As such, it seems that soft bullet covered bonds will remain the standard of the covered bond market, as both issuers and investors appreciate the structure.

> Figure 3: Pricing soft bullet covered bonds of one French issuer, x-axis is years-to-modified duration, y-axis: z-spreads in bps



Source: Bloomberg, ABN AMRO

Smooth transition to Premium Label

The transposition of the new CBD in national laws was a lengthy process. Regulators in some countries only released all details of the updated covered bond framework just ahead of the CBD becoming effective as of 8 July 2022, while in some other countries the details were published even months after the deadline passed. Still, the transition to the new regime has gone smoothly. The first Premium-labelled euro benchmark covered bond was issued on 18 July 2022 by German bank LBBW and the covered bond market has welcomed many more since then, with the first Portuguese and Italian Premium covered bonds arriving in April and June 2023. Almost all euro benchmark covered bonds that were issued after 8 July 2022 have the Premium label, while in some countries also covered bonds issued before 8 July 2022 have been labelled Premium following an update of the issuers' covered bond programmes. As such, a large portion of the index already consists of Premium-labelled covered bonds, and this will only grow over time.

CONCLUSION

In a Union of 27 member states with vastly different legal traditions and covered bond legacies, some spanning centuries already, others scarcely decades, harmonisation once seemed a lofty goal. Yet, with the adoption and full transposition of the Covered Bond Directive (CBD), what was once ambitious has become a resounding regulatory and market success. The principle-based architecture of the CBD, combined with the European Commission's deliberate engagement of industry expertise, notably through the ECBC and dedicated working groups, has proven both pragmatic and visionary.

The Directive has helped shape a common understanding of covered bonds, while allowing for measured national discretion in areas such as overcollateralisation, liquidity buffers, and maturity extensions. Its influence is visible in the now-dominant role of soft bullet structures, the widespread uptake of the "Premium" label, and the broad investor acceptance of these innovations. Yet, the journey is not complete.

As EBA finalises its response to the Commission's Call for Advice, with expected insights on extension triggers, liquidity risk mitigants, and the transparency of structural features, the CBD enters a new phase of fine-tuning. The forthcoming report will assess whether this foundational framework can evolve further, potentially accommodating third-country regimes or even the introduction of a new dual-recourse instrument, the European Secured Note (ESN).

Against a backdrop of shifting geopolitical realities and persistent financial market fragmentation the Savings and Investment Union is currently seeking to address, the CBD stands as a model of cooperative regulatory progress. Its legacy may well lie not only in the harmonisation it achieved, but in the institutionalised dialogue it fostered between regulators, legislators, and market participants, and not least in its capacity to adapt with cohesion to what comes next.

1.7 COVERED BOND INVESTORS – NAVIGATING WIDE SPREADS VS SWAPS AGAINST HIGHER PUBLIC SECTOR DEFICITS

By Florian Eichert, Crédit Agricole CIB, Frederik Kunze, Nord/LB and
Niek Allon, Moderator of the ECBC Investor Task Force and Nationale-Nederlanden Bank

INTRODUCTION

After issuers focussed on unsecured supply early in 2025, covered bond issuance almost caught up with 2024 by end H1 producing a fourth year running with net positive supply. While covered bonds have at times been tight vs SSA sectors this year, interest in the asset class has remained high from a broad range of investors. While many of the 2023 and 2024 newcomers from credit space have been monitoring rather than buying in size this year, it has been central bank / official institutions out to 5Y as well as insurance / pension fund buyers at the long end who have become more active than in 2025.

While analysing the evolution of primary market distribution statistics is crucial to get an idea about high level shifts in demand, they only tell some of the story. Hence, as last year, we have decided to run a broader investor survey that allows us to go into more detail and to give you as complete a picture of the covered bond buyer base and their preferences as possible. After all, covered bond investors are looking at wide spreads vs swaps on the one hand but at the same time, they are faced with more public sector supply. And while discussions around de-dollarisation or a shift away from US Treasuries might prove supportive for EUR as well as USD covered bonds, higher Bund supply and possible tighter Bund-ASW spreads would prove damaging to at least covered bond spreads vs swaps. In other words, we're living through volatile times and are looking at a number of potential structural breaks. And as covered bonds have proven over the years, they are a really good place to hide, sit and wait.

OVERVIEW OF COVERED BOND INVESTOR BASE

The strong migration of investors into covered bond markets from previous years has not been reversed as the relative attractiveness compared to both rates products and corporate bonds has still been on investors' minds. This was especially true for last three months of 2024.

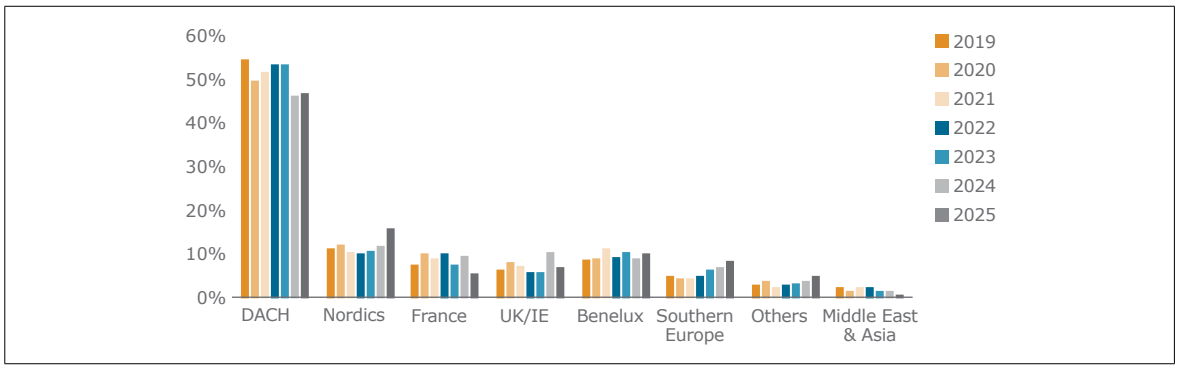
For the below, we again refer to the investor allocations of EUR benchmark primary market transactions, which are the largest segment in the covered bond universe. Especially early 2025, supply showed some weakness, which at least theoretically, gave issuers room to manoeuvre when allocating bonds. In terms of allocation by region, it is still obvious that the major share of the newly placed benchmarks goes to accounts in the DACH region (mainly Germany). As a matter of fact, the share of the DACH region has been up marginally. At 46.9% it is slightly above previous year's figures (2024: 46.2%). In turn, growth was particularly evident in the Nordics (15.9% after 12.0% in 2024). Benelux and Southern Europe regions have been also on the rise, whereas UK and France Investors have had a smaller share so far in 2025. Having said that, it should also be borne in mind that, due to the pronounced home bias in covered bonds, a higher issue volume in individual countries also "benefits" the allocation.

Regarding the distribution by investor type, the "Central Banks & Official Institutions" category dropped between 2022 and 2023 due to the end of the CBPP 3 (offset by more "Banks"). Their share did hold steady in 2024, though and moved up marginally in 2025. "Banks" have maintained the largest share so far this year (i.e. 44.6%) making them the most important group of buyers of covered bonds in the EUR benchmark segment. The categories "Asset Managers & Funds" as well as "Insurance & Pension Funds" come in a bit weaker in the year to date view. The real money investors have a combined share of 34.1%.

The picture by "tenor" has also not changed recently. It is relevant to emphasize the supply side again, because issuers' interest for longer term funding has not dramatically changed in recent months with the bulk of supply coming in the belly of the curve. Still, for tenors out to 10Y, banks dominate the investor statistics across

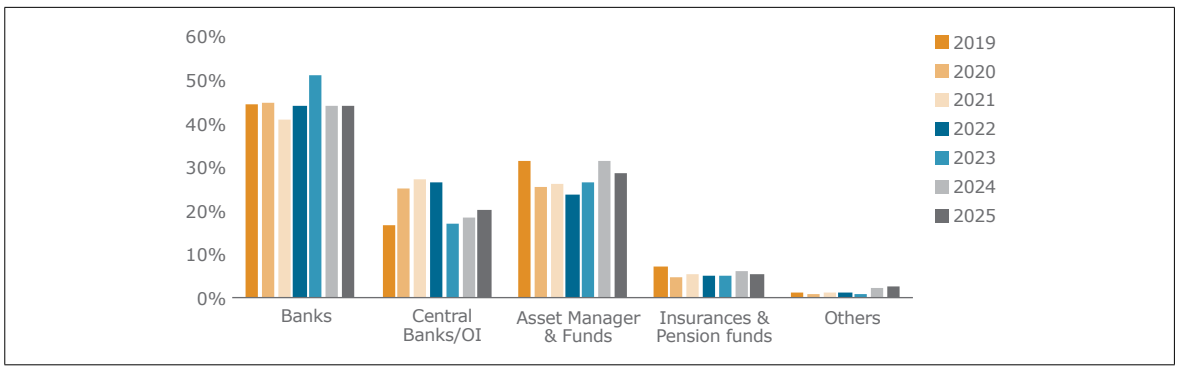
maturity buckets. However, in the >10y bucket, "Insurance and Pension Funds" have really picked up the pace driven by higher yields. They have doubled their share over the past three years to a level just above 30% and hence more or less on par with bank treasuries.

> Figure 1: Investors from DACH region still dominate



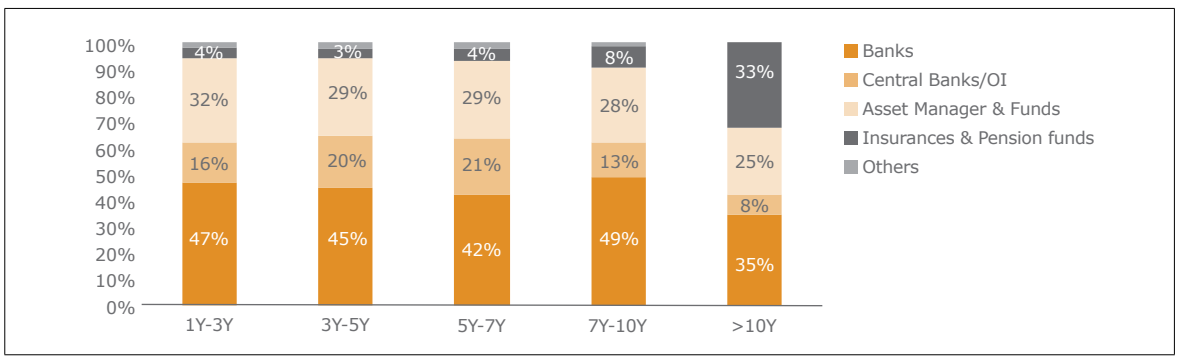
Source: Nord/LB

> Figure 2: Banks still with largest investor share



Source: Nord/LB

> Figure 3: Investor distribution by initial maturity bucket (2025 ytd)



Source: Nord/LB

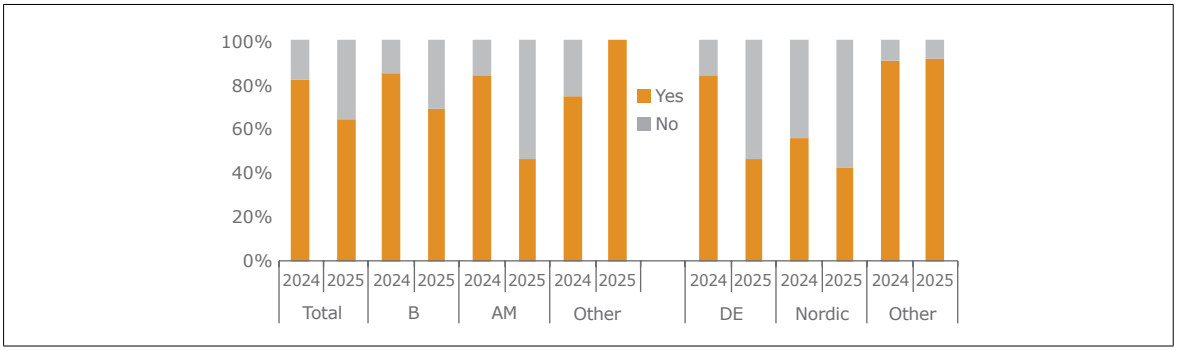
INVESTOR SURVEY

To get systematic feedback on a number of topics, we conducted an online investor survey in the second half of June. We received responses from 33 covered bond investors covering a broad range of investor types and regions. The questions focussed on (1) investors' level of activity and motivation in covered bond markets, (2) their main concerns, (3) third country equivalence and (4) what role ESG plays in their day to day covered bond investments.

Activity levels

Investors have been increasing their exposure to covered bonds since 2022, first bank treasuries and just as they began to slow down into H2 2023 and again in 2024, we saw asset management buying pick up. With 2025 being the fourth year with net positive supply and valuations vs EGBs and SSAs tighter than in previous years, it is no wonder that investors are slowly starting to get to activity levels in covered bond markets that they feel comfortable with. In last year's survey, almost 80% of all investors we surveyed stated they were still building up exposure. This number has dropped to 65% in this year's edition. The drop has been especially pronounced on the asset management side where only half still see higher activity levels. In turn, central bank / official institutions as well as insurance / pension fund buyers are still reporting more activity than last year. While many of the investors, who have become more active, have focused on primary markets, around half have also focussed on buying in secondary markets as well (similar to last year's survey results).

> Figure 4: Have you become more active in covered bond markets compared to previous years? Comparing 2025 vs 2024 survey results

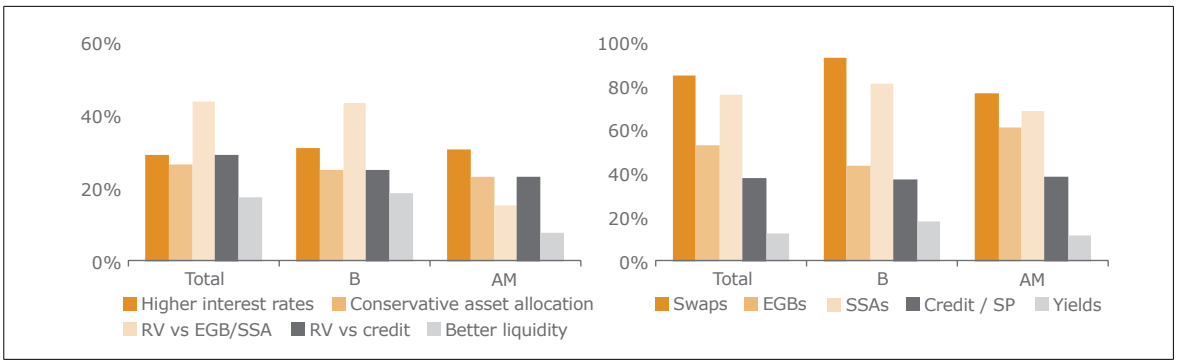


Source: CACIB

The drivers for investors' interest in the asset class has above all been relative value vs EGBs and SSAs. In times of tightening Bund-ASW spreads, covered bonds tend to outperform sovereign bonds and this has drawn interest from investors (44%). Higher yields have played a similar role to attractive RV vs credit and a more conservative asset allocation (29%). Those investors who have slowed down slightly have mostly mentioned an increased allocation to EGBs and SSAs (35%) as well as expected covered bond spread widening vs swaps (12%).

Last but not least, with so many different investors active in covered bond markets these days, we wanted to get a feel for the most relevant benchmarks or ways to assess relative value. The most common angle still is valuations against swaps as well as SSAs, the classic approach taken by bank treasuries. Amongst asset managers, valuations against EGBs are relevant too, and especially for aggregate portfolio managers, this angle does make sense. While outright yields are relevant for insurance and some bank treasury buyers, the answer did not have any relevance in our survey.

> Figure 5: In case your level of activity has picked up, what has been the main driver and how do you currently assess relative value of covered bonds (multiple answers possible)?



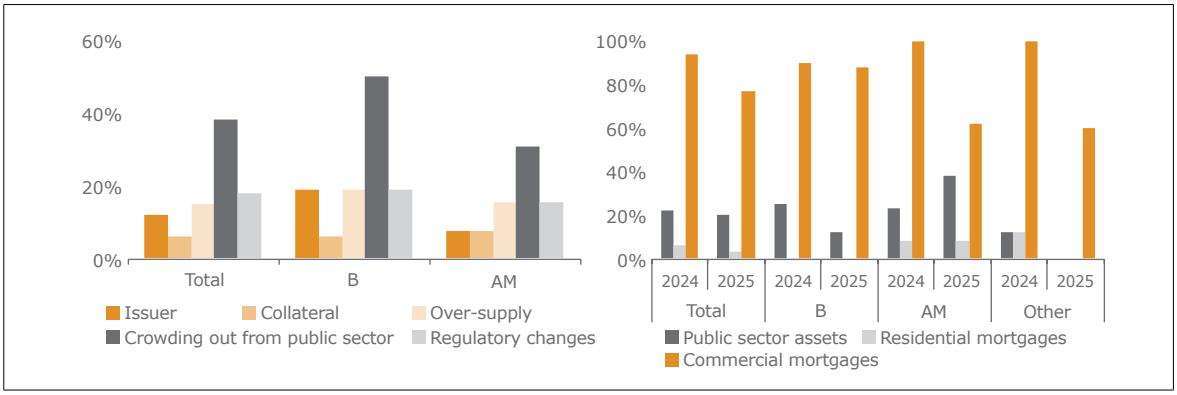
Source: CACIB

Concerns

Looking at the world today, there are plenty of potential concerns that even investors in a high quality asset class such as covered bonds cannot fully ignore. The responses in our survey actually highlight both the volatile world as well as the stability of the covered bond asset class. Less than 20% see issuer quality as a concern and even less are concerned with collateral quality. The main concern, especially for bank treasuries is for covered bonds to be crowded out by public sector supply spiking on the back of additional infrastructure and military expenditures in the coming years. At the same time, slightly more than half of the investors we surveyed expect structurally tighter covered bond – sovereign bond spreads because of this potential increase in public sector supply.

If we do zoom in on cover pool quality, of course, commercial real estate assets are still seen as the main source of concern. However, amongst the asset managers we surveyed, concerns have receded with only around half still mentioning CRE. At the same time, their concerns around public sector assets are growing slowly. Across all of our responses, public sector assets are not yet a concern, though.

> Figure 6: What are your main concerns around covered bonds at present and if you are concerned around collateral quality, which assets are you most concerned about? (multiple answers possible)



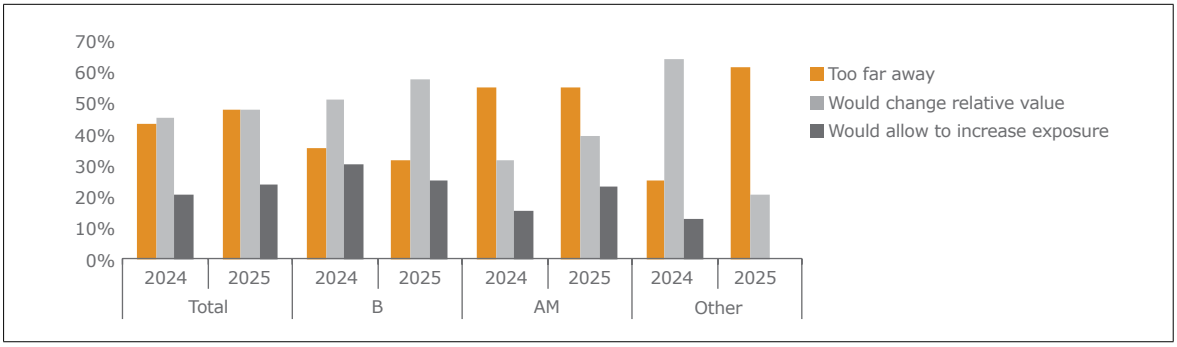
Source: CACIB

Third country covered bond equivalence

With the Covered Bond Directive (CBD) implementation a few years behind us, the focus on the regulatory side has clearly been on third country covered bond equivalence, not only since the shock announcements and

then pausing of proposed rules by the UK PRA. Similar to last year responses show that third country covered bonds getting better regulatory treatment would change the way investors look at relative value. If banks can work with lower risk weights or LCR haircuts, the costs of carrying a position drops and so does the required spread. Even for asset managers this is true to some extent despite them only being indirectly impacted. For around half of the respondents in our survey (up marginally from last year), third country covered bond regime is still too far away to be relevant today.

> Figure 7: What is your view on covered bond third country equivalence as foreseen in the CBD (multiple answers possible)?



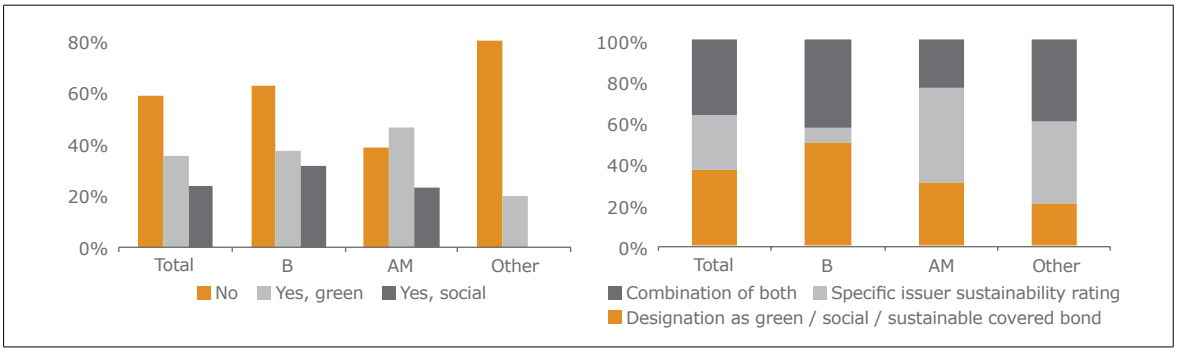
Source: CACIB

ESG

While covered bond issuance in green, social or sustainable format has been growing in recent years, it still only represents a small share in overall volumes. Often, the availability of data on the ESG credentials of balance sheet assets has been a constraining factor. With spread differentials between ESG and conventional covered bonds negligible, banks have also often chosen to use these assets for senior preferred, non-preferred or even tier 2 issuance rather than covered bonds.

The fact that we are still talking about an evolving market has led to different approaches to ESG across covered bond investors. Less than 40% of respondents state that they have a specific ESG mandate also covering covered bonds with the green angle more prominent than social, especially amongst asset managers. The diverse nature of our survey responses also continued with respect to our question what makes a covered bond investment "ESG compliant". The designation as green / social covered bond by the issuer is good enough for just below 40% of the respondents while two third look at specific issuer sustainability ratings or a combination of both.

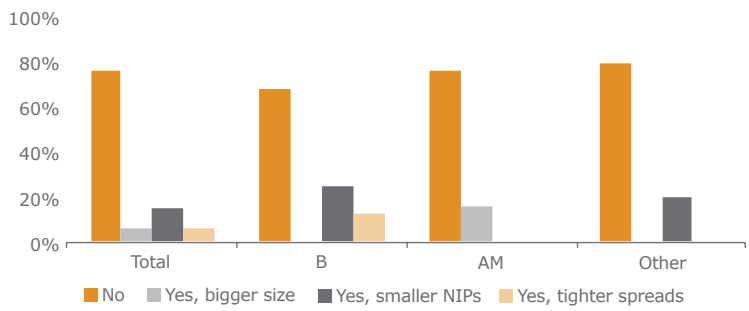
> Figure 8: Do you have a specific ESG mandate in covered bond markets (multiple answers possible) and what makes a covered bond investment "ESG compliant"?



Source: CACIB

Last but not least, investors we surveyed do not make a difference between ESG and conventional covered bonds when it comes to assessing relative value. Looking at data from primary markets, ESG covered bonds have tended to have stronger order books and slightly smaller new issue premiums. However, they have often failed to trade at materially tighter spreads vs conventional ones. The survey results reflect this as well as around 75% of respondents (unchanged from last year's survey) do not look at ESG covered bonds differently. A mere 15% accept smaller NIPs but less than 10% would buy in bigger size and / or accept tighter secondary market spreads.

> Figure 9: Do you look at covered bonds issued as green or social bonds differently to conventional covered bonds (multiple answers possible)?



Source: CACIB

1.7.1 The Attractiveness of Investments in Covered Bonds from a Bank Treasury Perspective

By Olaf Pimper, Commerzbank

Investments in Covered Bonds have proven extremely valuable for banks in recent years, particularly concerning the fulfilment of regulatory requirements such as the Liquidity Coverage Ratio (LCR). Covered Bonds are recognized in Europe as high-quality liquid assets (HQLA). This classification makes them indispensable for banks aiming to efficiently manage their liquidity ratios, as they regularly provide higher credit spreads than other HQLA assets, especially government bonds, regions, supranationals, and agencies.

The regulatory foundations that ensure banks meet their liquidity requirements while strengthening the stability of the entire financial system are crucial. Covered Bonds are inherently low-risk, have high valuation certainty, display low volatility compared to riskier assets, and function as funding instruments even during times of severe stress. Covered Bonds successfully passed the litmus test last year when uncertainty about the US mortgage market arose again. Commercial real estate (CRE) markets were affected, and Covered Bond spreads from banks with exposure to the US CRE market initially widened massively. Unlike the early 2000s when the spread expansion practically knew no end, the confidence in Covered Bonds had grown so much that the affected banks' Covered Bonds were bought. Additionally, the funding market functioned, enabling the return of the affected banks to the primary market in less than half a year.

A significant argument for the great trust in Covered Bonds is the transparency requirements stipulated in the European Covered Bond Directive (CBD). The requirements from Article 14 foster a high degree of market transparency. The Harmonized Transparency Template (HTT) developed by the European Covered Bond Council (ECBC) has established itself as the leading instrument to deliver CBD-required information to investors. Standardization of reports and provision of comparable information greatly facilitate the due diligence process for investors.

Another cornerstone for bolstering trust in the asset class and easing due diligence was the introduction of the "European Covered Bond Premium." This can be seen as a milestone in market regulation. The designation "European Covered Bond (premium)" acts as a quality seal, signalling that the Covered Bonds meet the stringent requirements of Article 129a of the Capital Requirements Regulation (CRR). The assessment is no longer the responsibility of the investor but is conducted by national regulators and published on their respective websites. This allows banks and investors to make well-informed decisions quickly, trusting in the quality of the underlying assets.

Currently, the European Banking Authority (EBA) is tasked by the European Commission to review the CBD. I believe that this directive can rightly be considered a European success model. Various countries outside the EU and Europe use dual recourse techniques, including dedicated legislation, cover pool administrators, transparency requirements, liquidity buffers, and many other safety mechanisms, to enable their banks to access affordable funding. Banks, in turn, can pass on these cost savings to their customers, allowing them to fulfil the dream of owning a home.

For Covered Bond investors, this provides additional diversification options, which are crucial during economic uncertainty or central bank-driven quantitative easing (QE). QE has led to a "crowding-out" in many European HQLA markets, where banks increasingly struggled to find profitable, high-quality liquid assets at the time.

Apart from reviewing the CBD, the EBA has been tasked with creating proposals for a third-country equivalence regime for Covered Bonds. Due to the current absence of such a regime, some investors exhibit uncertainty regarding the treatment of Covered Bonds from third countries. It would be beneficial to create regulatory frameworks that facilitate investments in international Covered Bonds, further enhancing portfolio diversification and stability.

Another innovative aspect that increases interest in Covered Bonds is the possibility of developing European Structured Notes (ESNs) based on the proven techniques of Covered Bonds. The "dual recourse" approach could be combined with different underlying assets, providing additional risk diversification and increasing the flexibility of banks in asset allocation.

In summary, Covered Bonds represent a highly attractive investment form a bank treasury perspective. They offer not only a sensible option to meet regulatory requirements but also a combination of yield, security, and transparency. By promoting diversification and creating a stable investment environment, Covered Bonds are well-positioned as a key instrument in banks' investment strategies.

The bottom line

After a slow start to the year, covered bond supply has picked up and we're looking at a net positive pace for the fourth year running. While 2025 has not seen a similar surge in the number of new investors as 2024, demand has continued to be strong for the asset class. After real money accounts stepped up their pace in 2024, it has rather been central banks / official institutions out to 5Y and insurance / pension buyers at the long end to pick up the pace with banks focussing more on SSA sectors for much of 2025.

Looking at the results of our investor survey, more than half of our respondents plan to still build up exposure in the asset class further with spreads vs swaps and SSAs the main angle to assess relative value. Concerns have shifted from covered bond specific ones towards external factors such as tighter Bund-ASW spreads and increased public sector supply possibly crowding out covered bonds. Issuer or collateral quality are not a major concern at this point and even CRE assets are seen as less problematic than in 2024.

Turning to regulation, a third country equivalence regime for covered bonds would be welcomed by investors. It would lead to a reassessment of relative value and to some extent larger holdings above all amongst bank

treasuries who would cherish the opportunity for further diversification of their holdings. However, it would also (albeit to a lesser extent) impact asset managers' behaviour.

Last but not least, ESG covered bond issuance has been growing but it has still played a relatively small role in terms of volumes as issuers often chose to use eligible assets for issuance further down the capital structure. For the investors in our survey, approaches to ESG in covered bond markets also differ. Less than 40% have a specific mandate for ESG covered bonds and while some are happy to work with the issuer designations of a bond being green or social, others take a more holistic view and score the issuers with their own internal assessments rather than look at the bond in question. What most have in common, though, is that similar to last year's survey, they do not materially differ between conventional and ESG covered bonds when it comes to spread valuations. Smaller new issue premiums are accepted by some but only few are happy to buy ESG covered bonds inside conventional ones.

1.8 A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE FOR THE COVERED BOND INDUSTRY

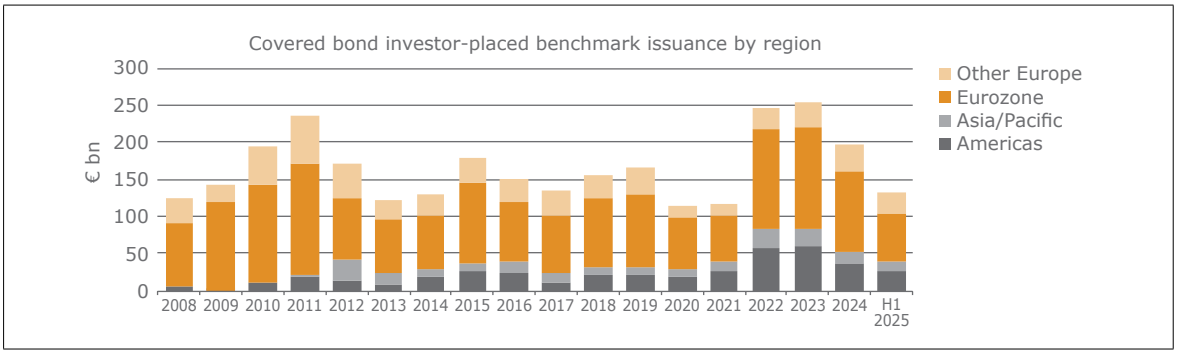
By Antonio Farina, S&P Global Ratings, Maureen Schuller, ING Bank N.V. and
Sascha Kulling, Chairman of the ECBC Fact Book Working Group,
Association of German Pfandbrief Banks (vdp)

GLOBAL ISSUANCE REMAINS STRONG DESPITE GEOPOLITICAL TENSIONS

Global investor-placed benchmark covered bond issuance reached almost EUR 138 billion in the first half of 2025, slightly up from EUR 135 billion in the equivalent period in 2024.

Despite a slowdown in April 2025 due to market volatility sparked by U.S. announcements on trade tariffs, covered bond issuance has since bounced back strongly, supported by slower growth in banks' deposit funding and faster growth in their loan books. Benchmark issuance by non-European banks has also increased towards the elevated levels of 2022 and 2023, helped by the raising scheduled redemption in Australia and Canada. We expect global issuance to remain robust in the rest of 2025, reaching similar levels to those in 2024.

> Figure 1: Global Issuance Strong Despite Geopolitical Tensions



YTD—Year-to-date as of June 30, 2025. Source: S&P Global Ratings

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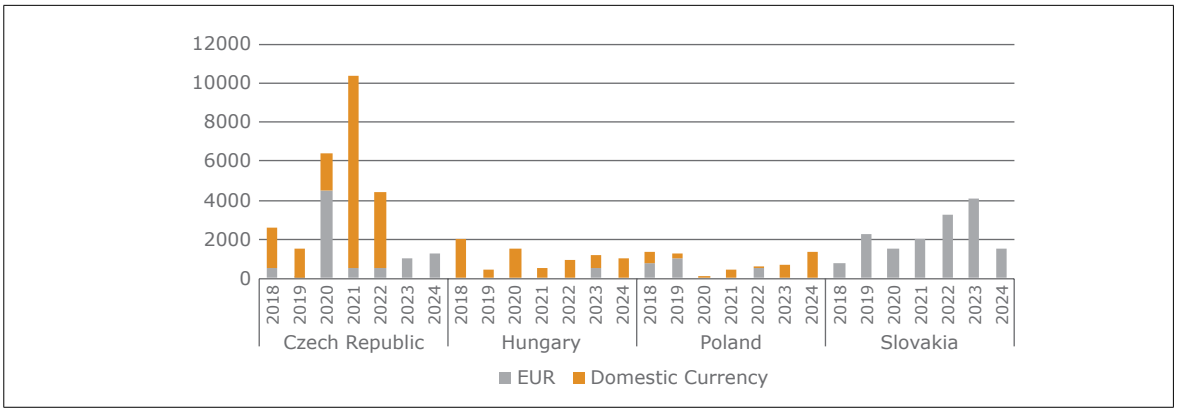
BANKS LIQUIDITY CONSTRAINS BENCHMARK CEE ISSUANCE

In the first half of 2025, euro-denominated benchmark covered bond issuance in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) already exceeded the entire 2024 amount, but overall volumes remain fairly limited compared with other regions. We expect that euro-denominated issuance will remain subdued, due to ample bank liquidity and, in some instances, vibrant local-currency markets.

Domestic issuance, predominant in countries such as the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland, is partially replacing international issuance, while euro-denominated issuance is robust in countries that have already joined the euro, such as Slovakia and Estonia. Slovakian banks continued to be the most active in the euro-denominated benchmark sector. In June, a Hungarian and a Polish bank issued investor-placed international covered bonds after years of absence from this segment of the market, but domestic currency issuance remains predominant in many CEE countries which have not joined the euro.

The EU's harmonization directive – which introduced a common definition of covered bonds across Europe – has not yet led to issuance in EU countries that previously lacked dedicated legislation, such as Croatia and Bulgaria. Bulgaria will join the euro in 2026, potentially facilitating issuance. But when Croatia joined the euro in 2023 local banks did not set up covered bond programs. Here, as in many CEE countries, ample liquidity is disincentivizing the issuance of covered bonds.

> Figure 2: Most Issuance In CEE Is In Local Currency



Source: ECBC

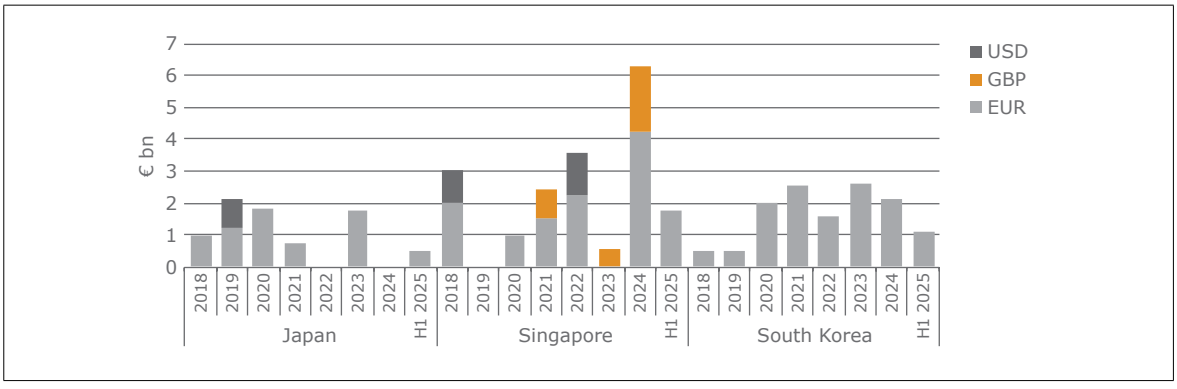
Several countries are negotiating their accession to the European Union. As part of the accession process, they need to reform their national laws to align with EU rules, regulations and standard. The introduction of local covered bond legislation could be part of these reforms, but we don't expect international issuance anytime soon, due to the length and uncertainties of the accession process and the size of the local banking systems.

LEGISLATIVE DEVELOPMENTS WILL DRIVE GROWTH OUTSIDE EUROPE

Korea and Singapore pioneered covered bond issuance in developed Asia. As local banks' primary funding source is customer deposits, their main motivation in establishing covered bond programs was to manage asset-liability mismatch risk and diversify their funding sources. In 2018, the first covered bond program was set up in Japan. Because there is no dedicated local covered bond legislation, the program was based on a contractual structure.

Despite abundant liquidity, Asian banks remained active in the covered bond market. This is testament to the strategic importance that covered bonds play in their funding strategies.

> Figure 3: Strong Asian Issuance Despite Abundant Liquidity



YTD—Year-to-date as of June 30, 2025. Source: S&P Global Ratings
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We expect that the availability of customer deposits and limited loan book growth will continue to constrain issuance in developed Asia. In developed markets growth will probably come from new issuers entering exist-

ing markets, as well as legislative and regulatory initiatives. For example, in Japan, dedicated regulation or legislation could incentivize new banks to set up programs. But we see greater growth potential in developing countries, in Asian and beyond, where we expect housing finance needs to grow substantially, but legislative developments will be essential.

In 2022, almost a decade after the introduction of the draft law, Morocco approved the first dedicated covered bond framework in Africa. While covered bonds can play a significant role in supporting housing finance in the continent, the experience in Morocco shows that the legislative process can take longer than expected. Georgia also approved dedicated covered bond legislation in 2022. We understand that covered bonds will initially be used as collateral under existing funding operations with the central bank and only at a later stage will they be distributed to private investors, probably initially domestic ones. This points to the challenges that traditional covered bonds may experience as they expand outside Europe.

Covered bonds – an overwhelmingly European phenomenon for most of their 250-year history – have recently proved very popular in new markets such as Australia, Canada, Korea and Singapore. These developed economies aligned their models to European best-practice: local banks typically issue 'AAA'-rated covered bonds, backed by prime residential mortgage loans, and under an established legal framework. But the greatest growth potential is probably in emerging markets, where the middle-class will expand the most in the coming decades. Countries such as China, India, Mexico, and Indonesia could greatly benefit from a dual recourse instrument helping them mobilize private capital toward financing their growing economies. But as dual recourse financing expands in these markets, we can expect to see new issuers, assets, structures, and ultimately investors, challenging the established definition of what constitutes a covered bond.

While covered bonds in new markets have so far primarily targeted the traditional European investor base, Brazilian covered bonds have initially attracted domestic investors. And we have seen how Georgian banks will initially use covered bonds as collateral under the local central bank's liquidity facility, rather than placing them with international investors. More generally, we can expect that a larger share of covered bonds issued outside Europe will target domestic investors, at least initially. While covered bonds are typically issued by banks, we anticipate an increasing interest from non-bank financial institutions, such as housing finance companies in India, or even non-financial entities. And some of these new issuers will consider covered bonds backed by non-traditional assets, such as the recent examples of Indian covered bonds secured by gold loans or vehicle loans, or Turkish covered bonds backed by unsecured loans to small and mid-sized enterprises (SMEs). Turkish banks have issued SME covered bonds since unsecured SME loans are eligible collateral under the local legal framework. Banks elsewhere may consider issuing SME covered bonds even if SME loans are not eligible collateral under the local framework, or even in the absence of a local framework. This is because in certain legal contexts covered bonds can be issued without a dedicated legal framework. Issuers can establish programs that replicate the main features of legislation-enabled covered bonds by means of contractual arrangements (so-called structured covered bond programs). For example, the first two Japanese programs have been established based on a contractual structure, due to the lack of a dedicated legislation. Such contractual arrangements grant greater flexibility outside of an established legal framework, for example in terms of eligible collateral.

The global success of covered bonds will lead more issuers to use the covered bond label for their dual-recourse issuance. This will create benefits but also risks. New issuers and investors will benefit the entire covered bond market – by increasing its depth and systemic importance –, the development of local capital markets – by improving liquidity and broadening the investor basis –, and society at large – by funding the growth of housing markets and economies. But new issuers, assets, and structures may also introduce risks to an asset class characterized by an unblemished credit history. In Europe, the harmonization directive mitigates this threat, by introducing a common definition aligned with regional best practices. Outside Europe, market participants and regulators may be tempted to align their frameworks to the definitions of the Directive, especially if Euro-

pean regulatory authorities decide to grant equivalent treatment to covered bonds issued by credit institutions outside the European Economic Area.

THIRD COUNTRY EQUIVALENCE

Since July 2022, the regulatory treatment of covered bonds within the European Union (EU) is based on a harmonization framework which consists of a directive, that introduces a common definition of covered bonds, and a regulation, that amends the EU's Capital Requirements Regulation. The directive also defines the pathway to achieve third country equivalence, the alignment of the regulatory treatment of covered bonds issued by credit institutions inside and outside the European Economic Area (EEA).

Article 31 of the directive stipulates that the European Commission (EC) will submit a report on third country equivalence to the European Parliament and Council, which may be accompanied by a legislative proposal on whether or how an equivalence regime should be introduced. The EC's assessments of equivalence are usually based on technical advice from European Supervisory Authorities, such as the European Banking Authority (EBA). In July 2023 the EC issued a call for advice (CfA) to the EBA on the performance and review of the EU Covered Bond Directive, including third country equivalence. The EC requested a response from the EBA before the end of June 2025. However, at the end of July no proposal has yet been published.

Based on information available, it is likely the EBA will recommend a principles-based approach for third country equivalence, which would give third country legislators and their markets the necessary flexibility to adapt the rules to national specifics.

Most likely, the EBA's proposal on third country equivalence will cover the following areas: 1) issuance by a credit institution; 2) existence of a legal framework; 3) dual recourse; 4) asset segregation (bankruptcy remoteness); 5) eligible cover pool assets (quality requirements for asset types, derivatives, loan-to-value (LTV) ratios, and valuation); 6) coverage requirements; 7) special public supervision; 8) liquidity rules; and 9) transparency (reporting and disclosures). In essence, the EBA will propose that the third-country covered bond law would have to address the requirements of the Covered Bond Directive, while the requirements of Art. 129 CRR could be part of issuers' programmes.

Striking the right balance between the safety features of product components and the necessary flexibility for third countries and their market traditions will be challenging. A principles-based proposal certainly offers the opportunity to master this fine balancing act. It would therefore be desirable for the EU Commission to follow this proposal and transpose it into European law accordingly. Considering that a potential legislative proposal must be adopted through an ordinary legislative procedure at a European level, the overall schedule might be stretched to 2026 or even beyond.

Notably, any final decision on third country equivalence will be made by the EU-Commission on a case-by-case basis. The Commission has discretionary leeway, whereby reciprocity, i.e. the treatment of covered bonds from the EU in the third country, is likely to play a role, as are political considerations.

European covered bonds receive preferential regulatory treatment that extends beyond risk weightings to include:

- Favorable treatment under the liquidity coverage ratio and the net stable funding ratio standards;
- The definition of exposure and investment limits;
- The eligibility rules as collateral in central bank liquidity schemes; and
- The exemption from bail-in.

While the Basel III reforms implementation has enabled preferential risk weights for covered bonds purchased by banks outside Europe, not all countries that have already implemented the Basel III reforms have decided to provide such favorable treatment.

Importantly, covered bonds issued by credit institutions outside the EEA and purchased by European investors still receive less favorable regulatory treatment than covered bonds issued by EEA-based credit institutions.

Several aspects of the equivalence regime remain both uncertain and potentially significant from a market perspective. In particular:

Does 'country by country' equivalence preclude contractual features addressing shortfalls in the regime?

Several more detailed requirements of the Covered Bond Directive are not addressed by existing covered bond laws but instead by voluntary features adopted by issuers under contract law or covenants of their covered bond programs. If equivalence is decided on a country-by-country basis (rather than issuer-by-issuer) how will equivalence work when one issuer has introduced voluntary features but another has not?

In one covered bond regime currently under development, many mortgages do not meet the EU's definition of eligible collateral, while others do. One issuer has indicated that it would voluntarily exclude such mortgages from its program to gain an equivalence ruling from the EU. As this is a voluntary feature that may not be copied by peers, is this sufficient?

Can upgrades to a covered bond law make a regime non-equivalent?

Several articles in the directive are optional (the "if...then" articles, for example, if a covered bond law allows derivatives, then the member state must lay down certain rules). In some non-EU countries such rules might not be included in the covered bond law, for example because there is no functioning derivative market or the covered bond law does not lay down rules for derivative counterparties. This should not prevent equivalence. But, what if a derivative market subsequently develops and issuers decide to hedge exposures by including derivatives in the pool? Will this mean that an equivalent regime could then become ineligible for equivalence?

Will reciprocity be required? And how will it be defined?

If covered bonds from a non-EU country benefit from preferential treatment for EU investors, it seems only reasonable that EU issued covered bonds should be fairly treated by investors in that non-EU country. This may seem an academic point, given the EU is almost entirely an importer of covered bonds. But as the more sophisticated non-EU markets (such as Australian dollars or Sterling) develop their own covered bond investors it will become increasingly important.

That said, what does 'fair treatment' mean? Does it mean investors in that country must treat EU covered bonds like they would treat domestic covered bonds? Or, does it mean that all covered bond prudential rules will be aligned with those outstanding in the EU? Given some EU rules derogate the Basel rules (for example, their eligibility in the EU as first tier liquidity assets for bank treasurers) this might be difficult for some jurisdictions to accept.

What will equivalence grant a country?

Although important, the EU's definition of an equivalent covered bond is not the only definition used in the EU. In particular, central banks will not necessarily be bound by an equivalence ruling when setting their collateral framework rules – a very significant factor for many investors. Whilst it would seem reasonable for all central banks to follow the EU's definition it cannot be taken for granted.

CURRENT ALIGNMENT WITH THE DIRECTIVE

Established in 2015, the European Covered Bond Council's Global Issues Working Group (GIWG) aims to promote a better global understanding of covered bonds and foster convergence between countries towards similar market solutions, infrastructure, and regulatory treatment.

Over the past few years, the GIWG has analyzed the alignment of global covered bond regimes with the covered bond harmonization directive. In February 2024 the GIWG published a Concept Note on third country equivalence, the result of a consultation with market participants such financial analysts, issuers' representatives and investment bankers, and local authorities.

The analysis revealed full alignment with the dual-recourse requirements and an almost full alignment with the bankruptcy remoteness and asset segregation requirements. On the other hand, virtually none of the global regimes provide for intragroup or joint funding options. However, the lack of alignment with these requirements is not particularly relevant because, for example, the intragroup covered bond funding is only an option for national legislators. Hence there is no obligation to implement it globally.

The directive already allows for non-EU assets to be included in cover pools if they meet the directive's eligibility criteria, and their realization is similarly legally enforceable to EU assets. Most global covered bond regimes have established asset eligibility criteria that already partially meet the directive's requirements.

Asset coverage may require further clarification. This is because non-EEA regimes provide for nominal coverage but are not always as detailed as the directive about the type of cover pool assets that should contribute to the coverage requirement. The minimum required nominal overcollateralization level of 5% as specified in the amended Article 129 of the CRR is only included in one single third country legal framework.

But issuers often meet this requirement on a contractual level, and if voluntary overcollateralization is considered too, all jurisdictions would meet this requirement.

Most global covered bond jurisdictions do not explicitly provide for a 180-day liquidity rule, but their frameworks often include other types of liquidity provisioning. While commonly allowed, the use of extendable maturity structures is also not necessarily enshrined in law. And while non-EEA frameworks lack objective extension triggers, maturity extension triggers are, where applicable, mostly detailed in the contractual terms and conditions.

Global covered bond regimes are subject to covered bond public supervision, but the law does not explicitly require competent authorities to have the expertise, resources, operational capacity, powers, and independence necessary to conduct public covered bond supervision.

Global covered bond regimes require permission from the relevant authority to issue covered bonds, but some countries lack detailed requirements for permission. Supervision provisions in insolvency or resolution regimes are also often not as detailed as stipulated in the directive, while the global frameworks differ significantly in their reporting requirements to the authorities.

GLOBAL DEVELOPMENTS AND THIRD COUNTRY EQUIVALENCE

Country differences in risk weight treatment of covered bonds remain

Considering the potential importance of reciprocity, it is important to be aware that, even with the implementation of the Basel III reforms, not all non-EEA jurisdictions introduced a favourable risk weighting for covered bonds. Countries that do, mostly adopted one-on-one the criteria for such preferential risk weight treatment along the lines of the Basel-III reforms. The majority of these third country regions do not discriminate between the risk weight treatment of home country and third country covered bonds. The EEA and UK are the only ones that, currently, do.

THE BASEL III REFORMS' REQUIREMENTS FOR PREFERENTIAL RISK WEIGHT TREATMENT

The Basel III reforms of December 2017 paved the way for preferential treatment of covered bonds outside Europe, subject to the following criteria:

Definition of Covered Bonds

Covered bonds are defined as bonds issued by a bank or mortgage institution subject by law to special public supervision designed to protect bondholders. In line with the law, bond proceeds must be used to finance assets capable of covering the claims attached to the bonds during their term. In the event of a failure of the issuer these proceeds would be used on a priority basis for the (re)payment of the principal and accrued interest.

Asset Eligibility

The eligible cover pool assets are restricted to:

> Claims on/guaranteed by, sovereigns, their central banks, public sector entities or multilateral development banks.

> Claims secured by residential real estate with an LTV ratio of 80% or lower that meet the applicable requirements on, for example, legal enforceability, the claim of the bank over the property and the ability of the borrower to pay.

> Claims secured by commercial real estate with an LTV ratio of 60% and lower that meets the applicable requirements.

> Claims on banks that qualify for a 30% or lower risk weight up to 15% of outstanding covered bonds.

> Additional collateral may also include substitution assets and derivatives entered into for the purpose of hedging risks related to the covered bond programme.

Overcollateralisation

The nominal overcollateralisation should be at least 10%. Where national legislations do not provide for a 10% minimum overcollateralisation, the issuing bank should regularly disclose that the 10% requirement is met in practice.

Disclosure requirements

For covered bonds to be eligible for preferential treatment, the banks investing in the covered bonds should be able to demonstrate that it receives (at least semi-annually) portfolio information on at least:

> The value of the cover pool and the outstanding covered bonds.

> The geographical distribution and type of cover pool assets, loan size, interest rate and currency risks.

> The maturity structure of the cover pool assets and covered bonds.

> The percentage of loans more than 90 days past due.

Implementation differs by country

Singapore, South Korea and Japan fully implemented the BCBS requirements for the preferential risk weight treatment of covered bonds. Australia also introduced a favourable risk weight treatment, but only for rated covered bonds. Switzerland made a distinction between Swiss legislative covered bonds and foreign covered bonds. While all covered bonds issued in accordance with the Swiss covered bond law (Pfandbriefgesetz) will

benefit from a 10% risk weight under the standardised approach, foreign covered bonds will benefit from a favourable risk weight treatment along the lines of the BCBS criteria.

In Canada, the Office of the Superintendent of Financial Institutions (OSFI) adopted the asset eligibility and disclosure requirements for covered bonds of the Basel reforms, but with a minimum overcollateralisation requirement of 5%. Credit quality step (CQS) 1 rated covered bonds meeting these requirements still only benefit from a 20% risk weight. If the requirements are not met, the covered bonds are risk weighted based on the external credit rating of the issuing bank. New Zealand does not have separate risk weights for covered bonds. Claims on a bank are risk weighted according to their rating grade. For rated exposures with an original maturity of more than three months these risk weights are comparable to the old Basel III requirements.

Since 1 January 2021, the UK defines "CRR covered bonds" referred to in Article 129 of the CRR as bonds issued by UK credit institutions and subject to special supervision. The UK has initially been insistent, that from 1 January 2027 onwards with the implementation of the Basel reforms, it would continue to apply a preferential risk weight treatment to only UK covered bonds. Non-UK covered bonds would then, by default, also face a four times' higher 45% LGD compared to "CRR covered bonds" (11.25% LGD) under internal models. However, in a policy update from July 2025, HM Treasury proposed the introduction of an Overseas Prudential Requirements Regime (OPRR) to identify overseas covered bond jurisdictions that could in the future receive equivalent prudential treatment.

> Figure 4: Applicable risk weight treatment to rated covered bonds in a selection of global covered bond regions

External covered bond rating	AAA to AA-	A+ to A-	BBB+ to BBB-	BB+ to BB-	B+ to B-	Below B-	Asset eligibility	Min OC	Disclo-sure	Effective	Effective as per Basel III reforms
Australia	10%	20%	20%	50%	50%	100%	√	10%	√		1 Jan '23
Canada	20%	30%	50%	100%	100%	150%	√	5%	√		1 Feb '23
Japan	10%	20%	20%	50%	50%	100%	√	10%	√		31 Mar '24
New Zealand	20%	50%	50%	100%	100%	150%	-	-	-	1 Oct '23	-
Singapore	10%	20%	20%	50%	50%	100%	√	10%	√		1 Jul '24
South Korea	10%	20%	20%	50%	50%	100%	√	10%	√		1 Jan '23
Switzerland	10%	20%	20%	50%	50%	100%	√	10%	√		1 Jan '25
UK	10%	20%	20%	50%	50%	100%	√	-	√	1 Jan '21	1 Jan '27
EEA	10%	20%	20%	50%	50%	100%	√	5%	√	8 Jul '22	1 Jan '25
Basel III (old)	20%	50%	50%	100%	100%	150%					
EEA/UK (old)	10%	20%	20%	50%	50%	100%					

Source: National regulators, ING

Equivalence and the LCR treatment of third country covered bonds in the EU

Third country covered bonds are already eligible as level 2a high quality liquid assets under the EU LCR delegated regulation if they meet the applicable requirements. An EU third country equivalence decision will make little difference in that regard, unless the EU would decide to link LCR level 1 eligibility to the third country equivalence recognition for risk weight purposes. Even without such an outcome, a positive equivalence ruling could, for LCR level 2a considerations, still serve as a welcome confirmation that the supervisory and regulatory arrangements of third countries are similar to those applied in the EU.

The LCR treatment of covered bonds outside the EU

Most major covered bond jurisdictions outside Europe recognize covered bonds as level 2a qualifying liquid assets (subject to a 15% haircut). The criteria for the LCR eligibility of covered bonds are typically more lenient than in the EU and mostly based upon the basic Basel Committee stipulations.

Accordingly, in Australia PSA 210 facilitates the use of covered bonds as LCR level 2a eligible assets. However, APRA momentarily does not recognize any level 2 assets as qualifying for HQLA purposes. This may change in the future, if APRA decides to include covered bonds in its definition of HQLA following the July 2025 review of the Council of Financial Regulators' (CFR) into small and medium-sized banks.

Only the UK LCR eligibility criteria are comparable with the EU. The UK Prudential Regulation Authority (PRA) accepts eligible UK covered bonds as level 1 assets that can benefit from a 7% haircut, and eligible non-UK covered bonds as level 2a assets subject to a 15% haircut if they meet the applicable requirements. In April 2025, the UK PRA announced the phasing out of the LCR eligibility of non-UK covered bonds over time, while stalling this decision days after pending its further clarification. Against the backdrop of the intended establishment of an equivalence regime for non-UK covered bonds, the PRA decided in July 2025 to not re-launch its phasing out plans.

> Figure 5: Haircut treatment of covered bonds for liquidity coverage ratio (LCR) requirements in different countries

HQLA	Minimum rating	EU	UK	Minimum rating	Australia	Canada	Japan	Singapore	South Korea	Switzer-land	Minimum rating	New Zealand
Level 1	AA-	7%	7%	AA-	15%	15%	15%	15%	15%	15%	AAA	19%*
Level 2A	A- (AA- 3rd country)	15%	15%									
Level 2B	-	30%	30%									

*The 19% haircut applies to covered bonds issued on a single name basis. Liquid asset eligibility varies from 0-5% subject to an asset encumbrance ratio

Source: National regulators, ING

New Zealand never adopted the Basel liquidity metrics (LCR and net stable funding ratio) but uses its own liquidity measurements, such as the one week and one month mismatch ratio and the one-year core funding ratio. 'AAA' rated residential mortgage-backed securities, including covered bonds, currently qualify as primary liquid assets (PLA) in New Zealand. However, the Reserve Bank of New Zealand (RBNZ) is reviewing its liquidity policy and plans to tighten the eligibility criteria for qualifying liquid assets (PSLA/HQLA) to those that do not solely derive their liquidity from central bank collateral eligibility. Covered bonds will lose their eligibility as liquid assets on these grounds but will qualify for a new Committed Liquidity Facility (CLF) that may be established.

To access the ECBC Global Concept Note on Third Country Equivalence for Covered Bonds and other interesting publications, scan the QR code below.

1.9 LIQUIDITY AND TRADING VOLUME IN THE EU COVERED BOND MARKETS

By Joost Beaumont, Chairman of the ECBC Statistics & Data Working Group and ABN AMRO,
Jonny Sylvén, ASCB, Kristoffer Fahnøe Lynggaard, Finance Denmark,
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INTRODUCTION

The Covered Bond benchmark segment started in the 90s as an interbanking market-making (head-to-head) market, transformed later into a pure investor market-making market supported by a large number of determined and committed liquidity providers. A functional repo market constantly increases the liquidity, as a consequence of which the covered bond benchmark market is one of the most significant and liquid market segments.

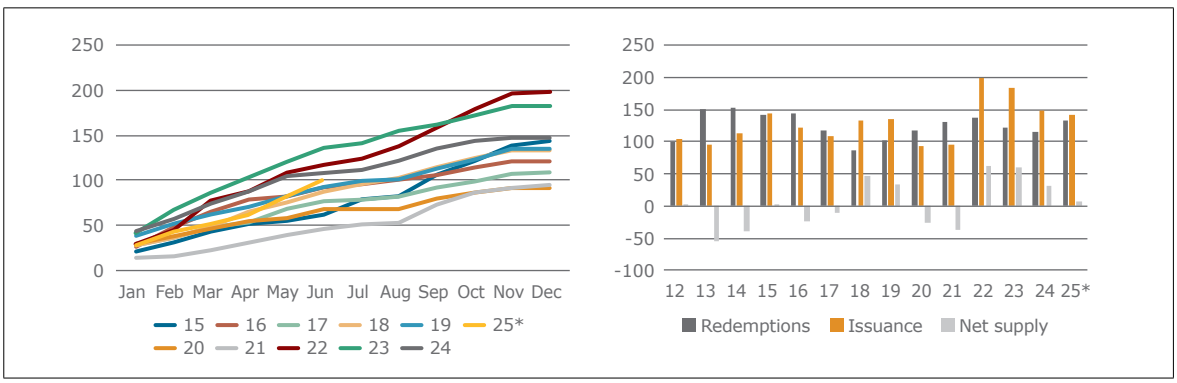
Covered bonds are viewed in different ways: thanks to their nature and rating some view them as part of the rates world, others clearly see credit elements and consider covered bonds as the strongest product in the credit world.

As is the case for any other market in the rates or credit world, the covered bond market faces regulatory requirements which result in a more prudent approach to trading books in terms of balance sheet allocation. In short, while bank inventories have gone down in general, investors are receiving competitive prices for significant sizes from the committed liquidity providers.

However, the tide turned in 2022 when the covered bond market started to grow again after it had been shrinking for two years after the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, which induced central banks to introduce large monetary support measures. These have now come to an end. Furthermore, the Eurosystem decided to first stop purchasing covered bonds in the primary market from March 2023 onward, while it completely withdrew from the covered bond market in July 2023, as the central bank will no longer reinvest maturing covered bond principals that it bought under its asset purchase programme that started in 2014 at all. At the same time, issuers have increased the average new issue size of new deals in recent years, with most new deals having a size of more than EUR 1bn. Their share has remained roughly stable in the past ten years (with some fluctuations) and compares to the GBP covered bond market, where issue sizes have increased, as more than half of new deals had a minimum issue size of GBP 1bn from 2019 onward, up from GBP 500-750mn before. Meanwhile, in USD's the "regS only" market often targets 600mn (to match the regulatory important 500mn + EUR equivalent) while 144a or SEC registered deals are often larger than/or at least USD 1bn. The Swedish or Danish Kroner Covered benchmarks can grow over time to a significant size often larger than in Euro or Dollar benchmarks. Obviously smaller benchmark volumes often lead to smaller secondary turnovers given that the various covered bond markets are dominated by a majority of buy and hold investors.

> Figure 1: Issuance of euro benchmark covered bonds, benchmark cumulative EUR bn

> Figure 2: Gross and net supply of euro covered bonds, EUR bn

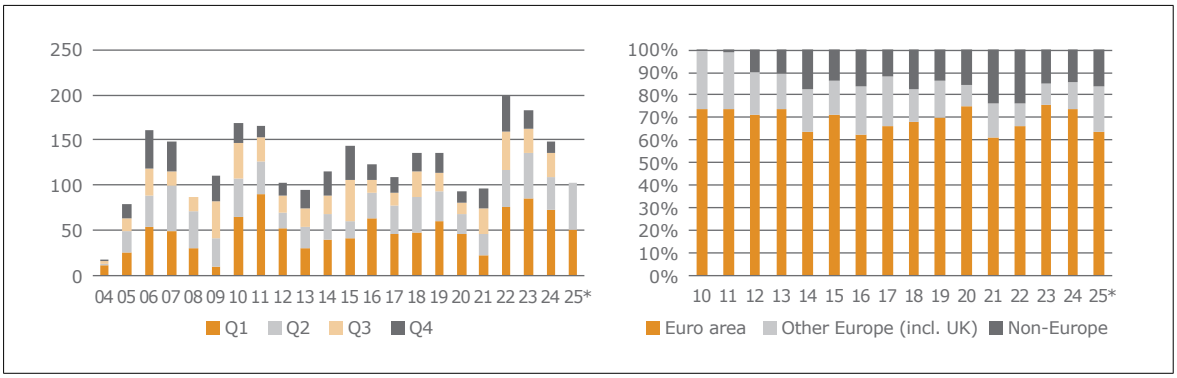


Source: ABN AMRO, Bloomberg, *H1 2025

In summary, it indeed seems that liquidity conditions are further improving, after it had been negatively affected by a few years of negative net supply, lower-sized deals, a change of regulatory requirements and the nature of the investor base, especially the ECB as big buy and hold investor. In fact, many traditional investors perceive the covered bond benchmark market now as way more liquid and tradeable, with the caveat we touch on a little later. Gross supply of euro benchmark covered bonds was around EUR 102bn during the first half of 2025, which was below the levels seen in the previous three years, although it was still well above volumes of new issuance during H1 2012-2021. In the past three years, supply of covered bonds was supported by repayments of the large amounts that banks borrowed in the ECB's targeted longer-term refinancing operations (TLTRO), large refinancing needs due to redeeming covered bonds, and relatively favorable new issue conditions in the covered bond market (supported by the widening in covered bond spreads since 2022). Indeed, the latter was clearly underlined by the on average negative new issue premiums that new bonds offered in H1 2025, which reflected strong demand for new deals, as order books were on average three times larger than deal sizes. Last year, deals were on average 2.8 times covered, while this was orders books were 'only' twice the deal size in 2023. As said, the strengthening demand allowed issuers to issue new deals at, or even below, fair value levels. Furthermore, the volume of new supply of euro benchmark covered bonds exceeded that of redemptions by around EUR 23bn, implying that the covered bond market continued to grow during H1 2025. For 2025 as a whole, we expect net supply to be less positive given that issuance is likely to be less than redemptions in H2 2025. Overall, we see the market growing by EUR 8 to 10bn in 2025. This would follow upon the almost EUR 32bn of net positive supply in 2024 and the more than EUR 60bn of positive net supply in both 2022 and 2023. In 2022-2024, the covered bond market grew by around EUR 155bn, which was more than compensating for the EUR 60bn shrinkage of the covered bond market in 2020 and 2021. The positive net supply, the exit of the Eurosystem from the market and new investors (re)joining the market should support liquidity in the covered bond market.

> Figure 3: Issuance of euro benchmark covered bonds by quarter, EUR bn

> Figure 4: Issuance of euro benchmark covered bonds by region, % share in total issuance



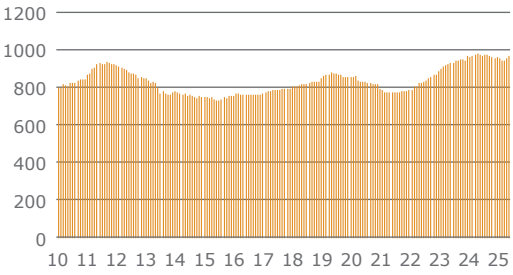
Source: ABN AMRO, Bloomberg, *H1 2025

A regional breakdown (see graph above right) shows that euro area issuers account for the majority of new issuance of euro benchmark covered bonds. However, while their share rose in the past three years, it declined during H1 2025. This is likely related to the fact the euro are banks have fully repaid TLTRO loans during these years, with funding needs now depending on redemptions and balance sheet growth. A country split shows that France and Germany remain the largest countries in term of issuance, accounting for almost half of total supply, but that issuers from Norway, Sweden, and Australia/New Zealand stepped up issuance in H1 2025 compared to 2024. The share of non-European issuers stood at 16% in H1 2025, roughly in line with their

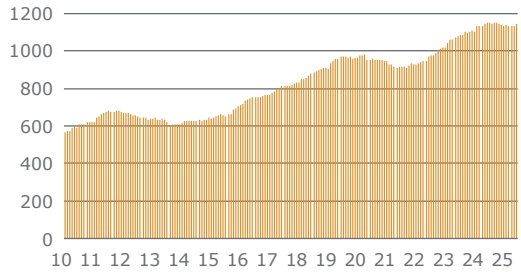
share in 2023 and 2024, while that of other EU countries increased to 20%, up from 12% in 2024, and the highest level since 2017.

The fact that the covered bond market grew so strongly in recent years has also been reflected by a rise in the total outstanding volume of euro benchmarks in the covered bond indices. The Bloomberg-Barclays euro covered bond index had, for instance, an outstanding amount of EUR 964bn in June 2025. Although this is a similar number as a year ago, it marks a 22% increase versus the start of 2022, while the number still hoovers at historically high levels. The number of bonds in the index stood at 1145 in June 2025, also close to the the highest number ever (1151 in June 2024).

> Figure 5: Outstanding amount in the Bloomberg-Barclays EUR covered bond index, EUR bn



> Figure 6: Number of bonds in the Bloomberg-Barclays EUR covered bond index



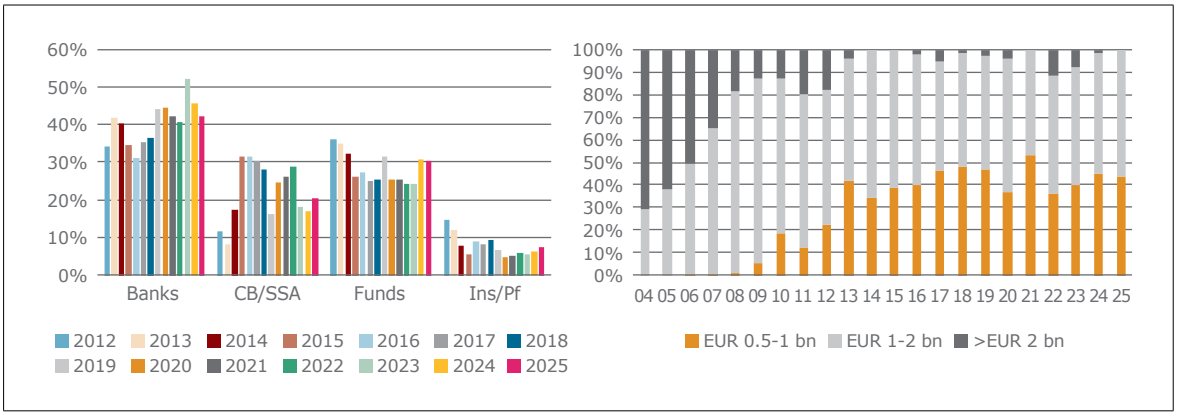
Source: Bloomberg

Let us again look at the evolution of the investor base as an angle for liquidity. If the share of buy-and-hold investors has risen in the past few years, this should have reduced liquidity of covered bonds. Figure 7 shows the average allocation share per investor type in new euro benchmark deals. The graph nicely illustrates the crowding out impact of the Eurosystem's CBPP3, but also the impact of the central bank's exit in 2023. The share of central banks/SSAs was 17% in 2024, down 29% in 2022 (when the Eurosystem was still an active buyer of covered bonds). In H1 2025, their share increased somewhat to 21%, suggesting that some central banks probably re-entered the covered bond market now that the Eurosystem itself is no longer an active buyer. It could also be that other central banks/official institutions have entered the market.

While asset managers were most ousted by the central bank at the time of the ECB's asset purchase programme, they have come back to the market. Indeed, their allocation share of new euro benchmark covered bonds has risen to around 30% in 2024 and 2025, up from 24% in previous two years. The return of asset managers likely reflects the increase in relative value that covered bonds offer versus senior bank debt due to the spread widening during the continuous underperformance of covered bonds versus senior preferred bonds, which has reduced the pick-up investors get from investing in senior preferred bonds versus covered bonds. As asset managers can be regarded as the most active portfolio managers, it seems fair to conclude that the change in the investor base should support liquidity of covered bonds. Meanwhile, banks are still the largest investors in covered bonds with an allocation share in new deals of 42% in H1 2025. Although this is well below the 52% share in 2023, it brings their share back at levels seen in 2019-2022 and still confirms that covered bonds are an attractive asset class in their LCR portfolios. Unfortunately, most banks are buy-and-hold investors, so this does not support liquidity in the end.

> Figure 7: New euro benchmark covered bond deals, broken down by investor type, % share

> Figure 8: New euro benchmark covered bond deals, broken down by issue size, % share



Source: ABN AMRO, Bloomberg

Finally, the larger the issue size, the better the liquidity. Although issuers increased deal amounts in early 20s (except for 2020), the share of deals with an issue size below EUR 1bn rose in 2024 and remained stable in H1 2025. The graph above-right depicts the share of new deals broken down by issue size. The share of deals with an issue size below EUR 1bn was 44% in the H1 2025, which was in line with the average in the prior ten years. Meanwhile, 56% of new euro benchmark deals had a minimum deal size of at least EUR 1bn, which is therefore still the majority. Together with the growth of the covered bond market, this suggests that liquidity conditions should improve in the covered bond market over time, although evidence of this is not yet convincing.

After the CBPP3: Trading activity in covered bonds barely recovered[1]

The year prior to last, we argued that the recovery in liquidity could take some time once CBPP3 purchases are discontinued (Fact book 2023[2]); today, we may could say the recovery period appears even longer. We mainly look at trading volume as one of the best measures of market liquidity for covered bonds.[3] In fact, trading activity did not really get going after the end of net purchases in mid-2022. In 2019, when CBPP3 net purchases were stopped for the first time, activity increased significantly, but it was different in 2022: Less than 2% of the covered bond volume was traded per month (Figure 9). Eurosystem turnover is included in these data. While the increase was more pronounced in 2019, both periods are not fully comparable. On the one hand, the primary market was more active in 2022 than in 2019, which would have argued for a larger liquidity increase in 2022. On the other, more buy and hold mentality thanks to low inventory, attractive spreads and other investment strategies plus the CBPP3's typical primary market order after the net stop was higher in 2022 than in 2019, which would have indicated lower secondary turnover by the Eurosystem and thus a smaller liquidity increase in 2022. Ultimately, the dominant buyer groups differed in both years, as well: the gap left by CBPP3 was filled by banks and asset managers in 2019; while the latter remained more cautious three years later. Therefore, it is debatable whether the low increase in liquidity after the net stop in 2022 is unusual. However, activity remained low for sure, and amid the additional withdrawal of CBPP3 last year at the latest one could have hoped for a noticeable surge in activity.

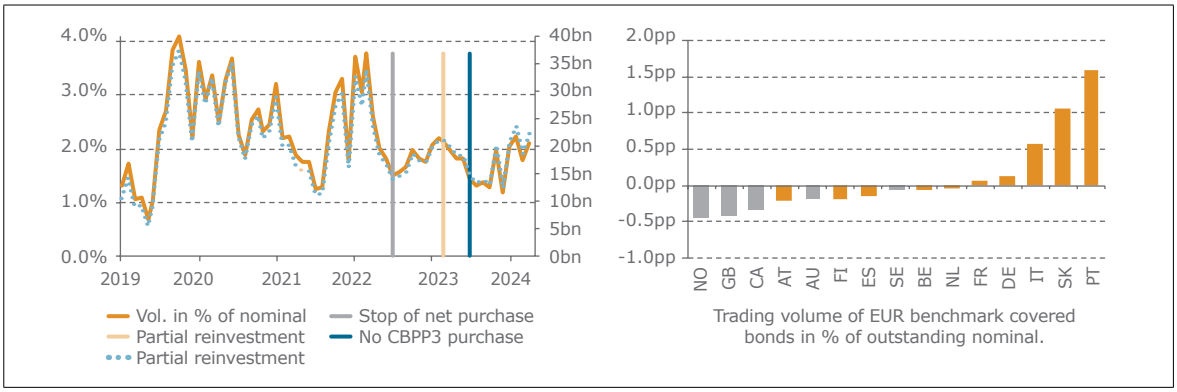
1 Section drafted with the support of Michael Weigerding, Deutsche Bank.

2 An electronic copy of the Fact Book 2023 is available upon request to the EMF-ECBC Secretariat.

3 Our data are based on several trading venues and OTC data providers aggregated by Bloomberg and are likely to cover most of the market.

> Figure 9: Trading volume of selected EUR benchmark covered bonds

> Figure 10: Change in the average relative trading volume after the APP stop



Source: Bloomberg, Deutsche Bundesbank

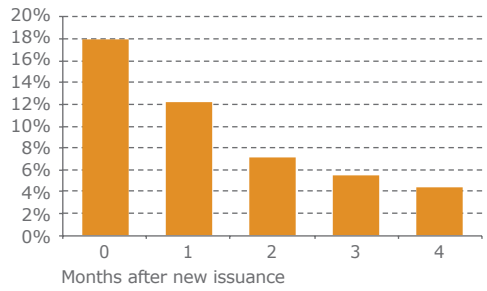
The complete stop of CBPP3 purchases in mid-2023 has not pushed trading volume markedly upwards, either, average trading volume did not even double when looking at euro-area paper only. Comparing them to the lows of 2023 have climbed from over 1% to just under 2% of the nominal monthly volume. There is already a clear a gap to the levels from 2020-22 (up to 3%), and activity would have to double or triple again to reach the levels seen before the start of CBPP3 in 2013/14. In the case of covered bonds outside the euro area, average monthly turnover has even reduced slightly after the end of CBPP3.

In principle, this results in a predictable increase in turnover for CBPP3-eligible paper compared to non-eligible ones, but the difference is not large and probably not particularly significant from a statistical point of view. This is highlighted by a regional split (Figure 10), which compares the average turnover from July 2022 to June 2023 with that from July 2023 to April 2024.

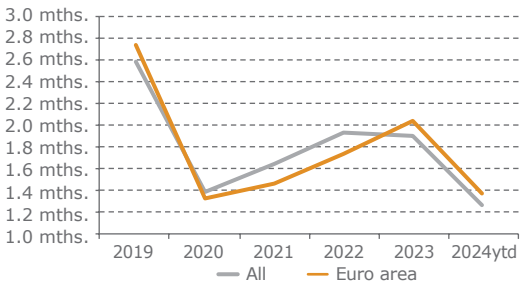
On the one hand, this development is somewhat remarkable, given that the APP stop would have argued for a stronger recovery of liquidity in the covered bond market. The increased share of asset managers in the investor base and the stronger issuing activity would have also been factors that should have strengthened activity (see above). On the other hand, it may simply take longer for the market to recover from the CBPP3 purchases and for more bond volumes to land with market participants keener to trade. With ongoing redemptions and new issues, this environment could in principle materialize at some point.

After all, while their secondary market trading volume increased slightly in the month of the new issue itself, it remains low immediately afterwards. Typically, covered bonds have a few weeks after placement in which they are traded on a larger scale. Faster money investors leave the trade and term, strategic and even buy and hold investors enter the trade. On average since 2019, monthly turnover halved within 1.8 months, and it decreased again within a further 1.8 months (Figure 11). This half-life for turnover of new bonds has shrunk noticeably with the withdrawal of CBPP3 in 2022. From 2022 to 2024, the half-life almost decreased by 2 (Figure 12). Half of the covered bond turnover now disappears within one month rather than two. Adjusting for seasonal effects, there is still a small decline this year. Covered bonds from the euro area are performing slightly better than their counterparts from this perspective. Therefore, it cannot be expected that new covered bonds will soon spur the trading volume of the overall market.

> Figure 11: Post placement: trading activity of EUR benchmark covered bonds



> Figure 12: Half-life of new covered bonds' relative trading volume during their first four months



Source: Bloomberg, Deutsche Bundesbank

In sum, although an increase in secondary market activity is likely limited in the near future, despite the growth of the market and more asset manager active, it seems to us – and to market participants alike – that this probably wouldn't hurt market liquidity when needed. The current level of turnovers probably constrain the growth of the investor base in specific areas. Tough market contacts confirmed that they are satisfied with the current liquidity situation and in extreme stress scenarios, we know from experience that this opens up trade ideas for sophisticated and/or new investor bases.

THE SWEDISH COVERED BOND MARKET

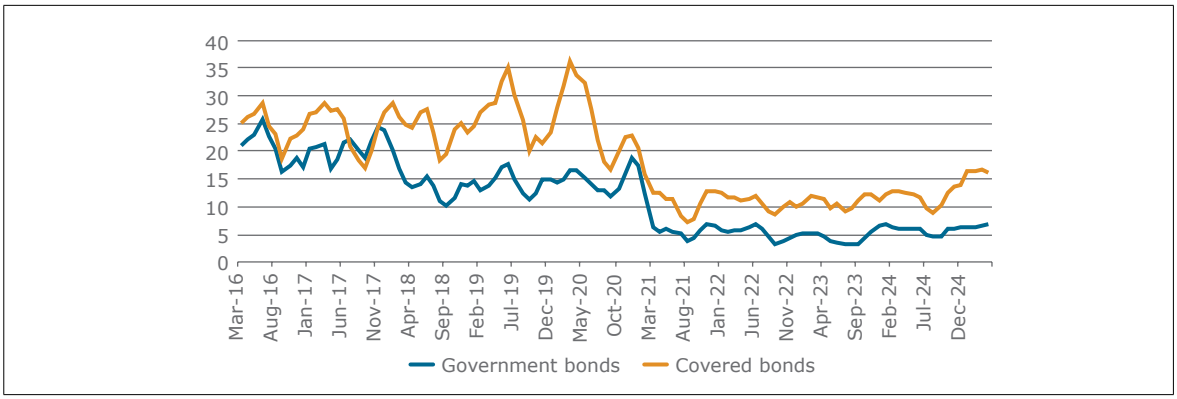
The Swedish domestic market for covered bonds is of great importance for the domestic capital market. Before Sweden implemented a law for covered bonds in 2004 a liquid market for mortgage bonds had at least been around since the beginning of the 80's. The outstanding volume of covered bonds in SEK was EUR 224.9 bn at year end 2024. That was more than twice as much as the outstanding volume of government bonds.

Swedish bond market investors appreciate liquidity. The large banks issue their covered bonds as benchmarks, which means that large amounts are issued and that several dealers are contracted to show both bid and offer prices. Also, only benchmarks are deliverable in the future market. When a new benchmark bond is issued, the issuers make sure that the amount issued meets the requirements for a benchmark sized deal. After the initial day of issuance, the issuer can, without further notice, issue "on tap". The benchmark bonds can reach volumes of SEK 60 bn. Sweden has a liquid and smoothly operating repo market with almost all banks involved in the trading. The issuers offer their market makers a repo-facility in their own bonds. The repo transaction is viewed as a 'sell-buy back' or 'buy-sell back' deal and the ownership of the security has to be transferred.

Overall, this system has been working for a long period of time. The recently implemented legislations have not been observed to have had any significant effects on the liquidity in the Swedish covered bond market. Although, because of a rather aggressive QE during the pandemic, the liquidity was hurt. Many foreign investors left the Swedish market. During the fall of 2024 and the beginning of 2025 many investors have returned, and the liquidity has improved. The Riksbank is now shrinking its holding of covered bonds, but the central bank is still owning 7.4 percent of the stock of bonds in SEK. Over 1/3 of the outstanding bonds are kept by foreign investors. Domestic banks just keep 13 percent of the covered bonds.

The daily turnover in the spot market for covered bonds was SEK 12.1 bn during 2024 and SEK 44.9 bn in the repo market. The repo market has always been larger than the spot market. In the figure below [Figure 13] it is only the spot markets turnover that is shown. In the beginning of 2025, the average daily turnover increased to SEK 16.7 bn.

> Figure 13: Daily turnover, 3m moving average, without repos, SEK bn



Source: Riksbanken

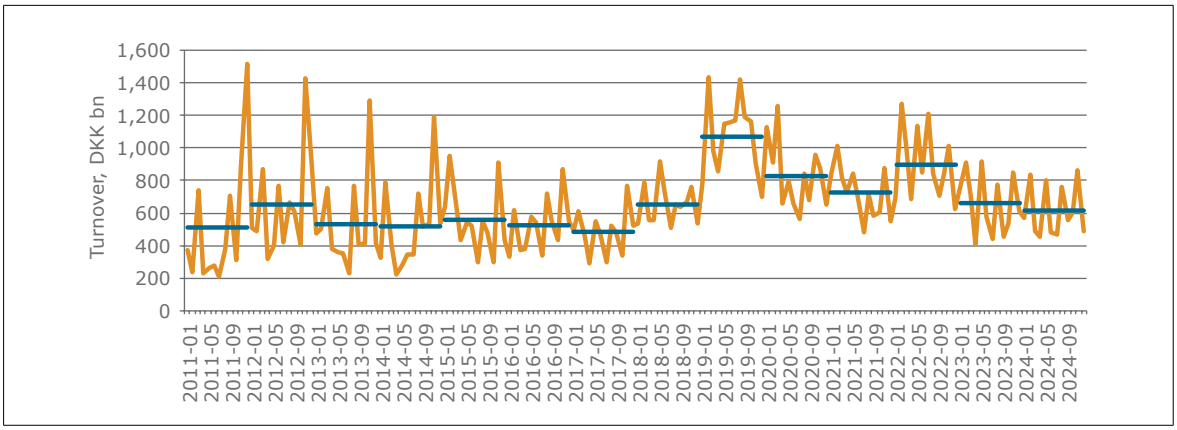
THE DANISH COVERED BOND MARKET

The type of bonds making up the Danish covered bond market fall into three major segments: callable bonds, bullet bonds and floaters with or without a cap. The market comprises a great number of securities, but the vast majority of the nominal value is concentrated on a relatively small number of large series. With an outstanding volume of EUR 460 bn the Danish covered bond market is one of the largest in Europe. Trades in mortgage covered bonds are reported to Nasdaq Copenhagen, including over the counter trades and excluding repos.

Average monthly turnover reported to Nasdaq Copenhagen including over the counter trades and excluding repos in the period 2011 – 2024 came in at around DKK 656 bn (app. EUR 88 bn). In 2024 average monthly turnover was DKK 610 bn (app. EUR 82 bn), cf. Figure 14. On average this means that approximately 18 percent of the outstanding volume was traded every month of 2024.

After the financial turmoil and the increasing interest rates that impacted the financial markets globally in 2022, the Danish covered bond market was in 2023 back to a more normal state with a turnover corresponding to the average over the last 13 years. In 2024, the turnover in Danish covered bonds was slightly lower than in 2023. The market maker function of universal banks is handed a central role providing liquidity in the covered bond market, as professional investors are mostly unwilling to buy in small batches. Market makers are the main source of liquidity in the Danish covered bond market.

> Figure 14: Turnover in Danish covered bonds, monthly turnover in DKK bn.



Source: Nasdaq Copenhagen

Note: Data is for nominal value Non-Repo Mortgage Covered Bond transactions including OTC. Horizontal lines indicate yearly averages. From 2018 a new transaction reporting was implemented. Data before and after 2018 is not directly comparable.

Pass through, tap issuance, quarterly refinancing auctions and frequent early repayment activity are all characteristics of the Danish covered bond market, which among other more universal factors affect the level of market turnover. The strict balance principle deployed by Danish mortgage banks incorporates pass through of payments between borrowers and investors. Covered bonds are tap issued and sold in the market on a daily basis in sync with borrowers' demand for mortgage loans. Following the initial tap issuance, mainly bullet bonds and to an extent floaters, are refinanced by the issuance of new bonds at refinancing auctions over the life of the loan.

Borrowers' early repayments influence liquidity in the Danish covered bond market. Any Danish covered bond can be bought back by the borrower at the current market price and delivered to the issuing mortgage bank – the buyback option – or in the case of fixed rate mortgages it is also possible to redeem at par. This type of early redemption activity gives rise to an increase in transactions both when bonds are bought back (the buyback option), and when new bonds are issued.

1.10 ASSESS AND CLASSIFY EXPOSURE TO PHYSICAL CLIMATE RISKS – A CASE FOR AN EU-WIDE FRAMEWORK?

By Ariane Remmel, vdpResearch, Per Anders Öjar Törnqvist, Danske Bank, Rainer Rettinger, vdp

1. INTRODUCTION

The European property market faces increasing threats from climate change and extreme weather events. Such events will directly affect communities and their individuals, their economies and the value of their properties. In addition, there are secondary effects to be expected on the financial services industry as well as on the broader society. It would therefore be beneficial to all stakeholders to have better transparency and higher awareness of potential impacts from physical climate risks today and in future leading to building standards with increased levels of climate change resilience. To achieve such a goal, an EU-wide framework with standardised and comparable data to assess and classify the vulnerability of buildings from acute and chronic physical climate risks in a systematic manner would certainly be useful. Such a framework could create transparency and facilitate the efficient use of resources, facilitating the process of making the European property stock more resilient. Additionally, it could support the financial stability of European covered bond markets and provide investors with standardized and comparable data.

However, an assessment of each individual building in the EU with its property-specific characteristics and their available mitigants like insurances or structural elements, would be a huge undertaking and might not be feasible soon. This article provides insights to solutions available in the market as of today on portfolio and single asset level using climate prediction models applied to specific geo-locations and their buildings. There will also be an insight into an initiative having made first experiences with the development on a climate resilience certificate.

2. DEFINING THE CHALLENGES

Climate Change

Climate change refers to the long-term change in the Earth's climate in terms of changes in average temperatures, precipitation patterns and the frequency of extreme weather events over a period of at least 30 years or more. Since 1970, the climate has warmed faster and more strongly than ever before. In its publications, the IPCC[1] has shown that the current climate change is mainly man-made and that the rise in temperature cannot be explained without considering human action.

The consequences are diverse and closely linked: glaciers are melting, resulting in rising sea levels, an increase in extreme weather events, destruction of ecosystems and loss of biodiversity. Moreover, extreme weather also affects social stability, health risks, and is a cause for famine. These extreme weather events have in EU-law[2] been classified in two categories: acute and chronic physical risks (see fact box).

1 IPCC Sixth Assessment Report (AR6), Working Group I – „The Physical Science Basis" (2021), https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg1/downloads/report/IPCC_AR6_WGI_SPM.pdf

2 Umwelt Bundesamt (2022) How to perform a robust climate risk and vulnerability assessment for EU taxonomy reporting?, How to perform a robust climate risk and vulnerability assessment for EU taxonomy reporting? Recommendations for companies - final draft

Fact Box: Acute & Chronic Physical Risks

In its 'Guide on climate-related and environmental risks'[3] published in 2020 the European Central Bank defines the key terms for acute and chronical physical risks. Climate change is seen as having two main channels affecting financial institutions: physical risk and transition risk. In this article the focus is on Physical risks.

These risks may be subdivided into

- **Acute Physical Risks**: when it arises from extreme events, such as droughts, floods, forest fires and storms.
- **Chronic Physical Risks**: when it arises from progressive shifts, such as increasing temperatures, sea-level rises, water stress, biodiversity loss, land use change, habitat destruction and resource scarcity[4].

These parameters are key to the long-term value of real estate and will be the way by which climate change may affect the financial performance of mortgage portfolios and covered bonds.

Costs to Stakeholders

Climate change directly affects individuals and as these events become more frequent the effects will increase in magnitude. Effects can be direct, for example, repair costs following a flood or other natural events. They may also be indirect, rising insurance premia, higher financing costs or a reduced ability to obtain insurance and financing if risks become too high. It is also possible that the value of properties, e.g. in flood-prone areas, may fall[5].

Society is also experiencing the effects from climate change, both practically and financially. For example, the recent flooding of Valencia in 2024 triggered costs of more than EUR 10 bn in damages[6] or the 2021 flooding in the Ahr-Valley in Germany resulted in costs exceeding EUR 40 bn. Germany provided EUR 30 bn aid and insurance companies paid EUR 8.5 bn in claims[7].

Adaptations to climate change is therefore needed. Heat protection, flood protection and adapting the sewage system are common examples. Municipalities are facing significant investment requirements. State funding programs will be required. However, resources are limited, and they must be put to the most efficient use[8].

The non-life insurance industry faces a major challenge – financially and strategically. When extreme weather phenomena become more frequent this will increase premia and potentially make properties uninsurable if the frequency of events become too high[9].

Physical climate risks also affect banking. Firstly, because extreme weather conditions may result in damage that reduces collateral value and secondly because the insurance cover is only in place for the next twelve months, while mortgage loans can have maturities of up to 50 years. After an insurance claim the insurance provider might not be willing to renew the cover. This could trigger a significant mismatch with far-reaching consequences for the banking sector[10].

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3 Guide on climate-related and environmental risks

4 ESMA TRV Risk Analysis – Assessing portfolio exposures to climate physical risks, October 2024 ESMA50-524821-3468 TRV Article: Assessing portfolio exposures to climate physical risks

5 Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft und Energie (BMWE) "(2024): Kosten des Klimawandels – Neuste Erkenntnisse aus der Forschung. BMWE - Kosten des Klimawandels – Neuste Erkenntnisse aus der Forschung

6 The Weather Network (2024): Economic impact of floods in Spain could rise to over 10 billion euros. Economic impact of floods in Spain could rise to over 10 billion euros – The Weather Network

7 GDV (2021): Naturgefahrenreport 2021, download-naturgefahren-report-data.pdf

8 Umwelt Bundesamt (2022): Anpassung auf kommunaler Ebene. https://www.umweltbundesamt.de/themen/klima-energie/klimafolgen-anpassung/anpassung-an-den-klimawandel/anpassung-auf-kommunaler-ebene?)

9 GDV (2023): Klimaschäden könnten zu Verdopplung der Prämien in der Wohngebäudeversicherung führen. Klimaschäden könnten zu Verdoppelung der Prämien in der Wohngebäudeversicherung führen

10 Anwalt.de Services AG (2025): Klimarisiken in der Kreditvergabe: Neue Herausforderungen für Banken. Klimarisiken in der Kreditvergabe: Neue Herausforderungen für Banken

Regulation and Data

Both banks and insurances are asked by their regulators to measure and quantify the effects of climate change on their financial risks. These analyses require detailed data that still is hard to come by and proxies and estimates are often the only possible option.

Standardised property-level information is essential for effective risk management. First, it enables accurate assessment of potential consequences for the institution. Second, it supports customer relationship management. Third, it allows institutions to clearly communicate risk levels to counterparties and investors. These considerations highlight the importance of data availability and standardisation.

Although property-level data remains incomplete, standardised methods for assessing exposure to physical climate risk have been developed – primarily by the reinsurance industry, rating agencies, and various start-ups.

Benefits of Standardisation

Financial markets rely on standardisation, transparency, and predictability. In the context of climate risk, analytical tools for risk assessment are increasingly converging toward standardised methodologies, although discrepancies in classification and quantification persist. Harmonising climate-related risk metrics would enhance the comparability of key risk indicators across institutions.

Moreover, detailed property-level information is essential not only for fostering transparency but also for managing complexity. Introducing a climate resilience certificate or rating system for properties could support the analysis of complex sets of factors in a uniform way.

Crucially, the technical specifications of buildings vary significantly, and these differences play a critical role in determining a structure's resilience relative to others. Evidence suggests that such characteristics can influence the outcome of stress events. Therefore, systematically capturing and integrating real estate attributes would contribute to more accurate and reliable property valuations.

3. ASSESSING VULNERABILITY OF BUILDINGS TO PHYSICAL CLIMATE RISKS

The analysis of physical climate risks requires the integration of property-specific data with geographical, geological, and meteorological information. Building characteristics help determine the potential consequences of extreme weather events, while geographical and geological data inform both the likelihood and severity of such events. Meteorological information primarily contributes to assessing the probability of extreme weather occurrences.

This analysis can be conducted at varying levels of precision. While proxies and modelled data may suffice for aggregate-level assessments, the impact of climate risks can differ significantly between individual properties. Consequently, property owners have a vested interest in ensuring that their assets are accurately evaluated.

In the interim, financial institutions and investors have several approaches available for assessing both acute and chronic physical climate risks. These frameworks differ primarily in the climate models employed, the granularity of geolocation data, and the extent to which they account for existing mitigation measures. The following sections present two widely used methodologies from the reinsurance industry, which are particularly popular among banks in the European Union. These examples demonstrate how climate risk can be assessed at both the portfolio and individual property levels. Additionally, a growing number of providers offer physical climate risk assessment tools. For instance, rating agencies have begun incorporating physical climate risk modules into their ESG-Scorings. Moreover, some climate risk data is publicly available at no extra cost.

Methods to Quantify Physical Climate Risk

The reinsurance industry was among the first to develop physical climate risk models aimed at quantifying risk in absolute and relative terms over short-, medium-, and long-term horizons. To estimate the potential

financial impact of physical climate risks, these models typically multiply the expected intensity of a hazard by asset vulnerability curves. These curves represent the estimated damage to buildings across different regions, accounting for variations in building types, construction materials, and local building codes.

In simplified terms, multiplying this risk indicator by the cost of rebuilding a property yields the expected monetary loss – expressed in euros – due to physical climate risk, whether at the portfolio or individual asset level. For instance, this type of indicator can serve as a standardised metric for quantifying the financial cost of climate change. Munich Re refers to this metric as the "Climate Expected Loss."[11]

Another way to get around this issue was developed by the German natural hazard assessment tools K.A.R.L.®[12] and VIDA[13]. K.A.R.L.® combines the natural hazard and location analysis with an object analysis to identify the quantified or qualified risk. Therefore, K.A.R.L. looks at various building types that differ according to the type of use and the number of floors. Types of use are, for example, single/two-family houses (with or without cellar), multi-family houses and office buildings, hospitality, flat-roofed halls and shopping centers. The number of floors provides further information about the potential impact of a natural hazard on the property. For each building cluster, a specific construction type is assumed that corresponds to the German building standard.

This framework assigns buildings to specific vulnerability clusters, even if the type of construction or the building material might differ. Nevertheless, it offers the possibility of obtaining a risk classification from the analysis that is close to the actual vulnerability of the property.

Furthermore, the clustering facilitates the analysis. The building clusters can also be determined in a very short time without the need for an on-site inspection or review of documentation. This makes the system economical to use.

In cases of very important buildings, it might be necessary and useful to carry out an individual classification to obtain an accurate assessment. However, such building surveys are costly and take time.

Acute physical risks, such as floods, storms and hailstorms, can be quantified by K.A.R.L.. The severity is set at different intensities (100-year event, 200-year event, etc.) and shows what a specific event would cost, referring to the restoration costs of the object. Considering the 1-year event up to the 10,000-year event, it is also possible to calculate an average damage per year. If this average annual loss is 1% per annum, it means that statistically the building would be a total loss after 100 years, which is classified as a high risk. To provision for such a damage frequency, 1% of the value needs to be provisioned every year.

On the other hand, it is not easy to calculate financial damage for chronic physical risks. To assess the cost of a 1°C increase in global average temperature it is necessary to work with a broader risk classification based on a traffic light system: no risk, low risk, medium risk, or high risk. This recommendation was suggested by the German Federal Environment Agency in 2022[14]. This classification makes it possible to estimate the extent of possible damage without detailed inputs. A low risk means that although damage is possible, it is expected to be minor and therefore more or less negligible. A high risk, on the other hand, means that you should urgently consider possible adaptation measures because there is a high risk of damage occurring.

The process described here is not carried out in the same way by all providers in the market. Each provider of natural hazard and climate risk analyses has developed their own individual calculation methods to identify, describe or quantify the risk.

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11 MunichRe, Climate Financial Impact edition (2025) Climate Financial Impact Edition | Risk Management Partners

12 K.A.R.L.® (Köln.Assekuranz Risiko Lösungen) (2025) https://www.koeln-assekuranz.com/en/naturgefahren-analyse and vdpResearch GmbH (2025): https://www.vdpresearch.de/leistungen/k-a-r-l/

13 VIDA.place GmbH (2025) https://vida.place/ and vdpResearch GmbH (2025): https://www.vdpresearch.de/leistungen/vida/

14 Umwelt Bundesamt (2022) How to perform a robust climate risk and vulnerability assessment for EU taxonomy reportig?, How to perform a robust climate risk and vulnerability assessment for EU taxonomy reporting? Recommendations for companies - final draft

It is also important to note that such models typically do not incorporate the specific characteristics of individual properties or account for bespoke risk mitigation measures, as would be evaluated through an individual building survey.

Impact on Property Valuations

There have been many studies showing a positive impact on valuations resulting from improved building energy efficiency through renovation. At the same time, it is increasingly recognised that climate-related and environmental risks have the potential to affect collateral values negatively and should therefore be carefully understood and managed.

Indeed, in Expectation 8 of its Guide on Climate-related & Environmental Risks, the ECB, for example, requires financial institutions "… to consider climate-related and environmental risks in their collateral valuations" and "give particular consideration to the physical locations and the energy efficiency of … real estate". Therefore, there is an urgent need to accelerate the development of a market where energy efficiency and climate related risks are firmly embedded and reflected in valuations.

Building on the foundation of the 2017 Energy Efficient Mortgage Initiative (EEMI) Valuation Checklist & Guidance, and in close consultation with valuers from the European Mortgage Federation's (EMF) Valuation Committee, the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS), and the International Valuation Standards Council (IVSC), the EMF-ECBC and its expert partners are advancing their efforts under a new EU-funded project within the EEMI framework.

As part of this initiative, the consortium is undertaking a comprehensive review, update, and expansion of the EEMI Valuation Checklist & Guidance. The objective is to ensure that the tool fully captures all ESG-related risk drivers that influence property value, thereby equipping valuers with the necessary resources to integrate relevant building characteristics and climate- and environment-related risk considerations into their assessments.

In parallel, the project is developing a complementary sustainability assessment aligned with the evolving EU regulatory and supervisory landscape. This includes a particular focus on the EU Taxonomy, the revised Capital Requirements Regulation (CRR), and the recast Energy Performance of Buildings Directive (EPBD), ensuring consistency with key legislative and policy frameworks.

To support implementation and capacity building, the initiative also includes the creation of targeted education and training materials for both valuers and financial institutions. These resources will be delivered through webinars and workshops, aimed at upskilling professionals and fostering a deeper understanding of sustainability-related valuation practices across the financial and real estate sectors.

Climate Resilience Certificates (CRC)

In 2021, Gävle a town 250 km north of Stockholm experienced a cloudburst resulting in 161mm of rain in 12 hours, 101mm of which fell within two hours the night between August 17 and 18. The results were severe floodings and massive destruction of property and infrastructure. This disaster triggered a research project focusing on the variation of damages and the reasons for why some properties were severely damaged while adjacent buildings were relatively unharmed.

The resulting project managed by RISE, a government research consultancy, gathered a broad representation from the real estate industry, construction, banking and insurance. The resulting report proposed a Climate Resilience Certificate system, described in the Swedish Research Institute RISE report by Thidevall et al.[15], designed to provide a standardized assessment of property resilience against physical climate risks.

15 Thidevall et al. (2023): https://www.diva-portal.org/smash/record.jsf?pid=diva2%3A1773448&dswid=-4595

The system proposes an A-G classification, like energy performance certificates, to rate properties based on their resilience to climate-related acute and chronic physical climate risks. This classification can help property owners, banks, insurance companies and other stakeholders better understand the degree of resilience of a particular property against the effects from climate change and better prepare against the risks they might face with increasing volatile climate.

Access to comprehensive data is a requirement for the effective implementation of Climate Resilience Certificates. Therefore, the continued work by RISE, the DaSaKlim-project, focuses possible data gathering structures and necessary support, including roles and responsibilities for public and private stakeholders in Sweden.

Ultimately, the results of the Climate Resilience Certificates could unlock its full potential if they were used as real input parameter for the vulnerability curves to calculate the expected loss caused by climate hazards, just like real EPCs are used to assess the transition risks derived from the degree of CO2 Emission. In an integrated European market where property finance and insurance activities are cross border activities it is key to achieve comparability and transparency to efficiently allocate scares financial resources.

4. CONCLUSION

There is a growing interest in the analysis and quantification of acute and chronic physical climate risk. The reinsurance industry pioneered the development of assessment tools to qualify and quantify physical climate risk using their experience in modelling climate impacts enriched with their comprehensive data. Their tools provide today climate risk analysis capabilities for individual properties or for large real estate portfolios. The analysis can be done as of today or with the use of various scenarios projected into the future until the end of the century in various time buckets.

In their calculations the degree of vulnerability of individual properties is based on approximations. This is where the climate resilience certificate comes into play. By establishing an EU-wide framework to assess properties for their resilience against potential climate hazards and classify the degree of their resilience, European properties are better prepared for climate change. This would also support financial stability and provide investors with standardized and comparable data. Ultimately this may contribute to maximize the long-term value of the European property stock to the benefit of citizens and societies alike.

Key preconditions for effective climate risk management include comparability, enhanced market transparency, robust price discovery mechanisms, stress testing, and accurate property valuations. Given the integrated nature of financial markets within the European Union, standardisation efforts should be further developed with an EU-wide framework in mind.

As this article has outlined, several climate risk management solutions are already available, albeit often relying on approximations. The introduction of a climate resilience certificate could significantly enhance the availability of granular, bottom-up data on the condition and risk profile of individual properties.

Such a certificate would not only reflect a shared recognition of the importance of climate resilience but could also serve as a catalyst for broader standardisation efforts. While implementing such an initiative across the EU would require substantial effort, it holds the potential to drive meaningful progress toward a more transparent and resilient property market.

CHAPTER 2 - GENERIC SECTION

2.1 OVERVIEW OF COVERED BONDS

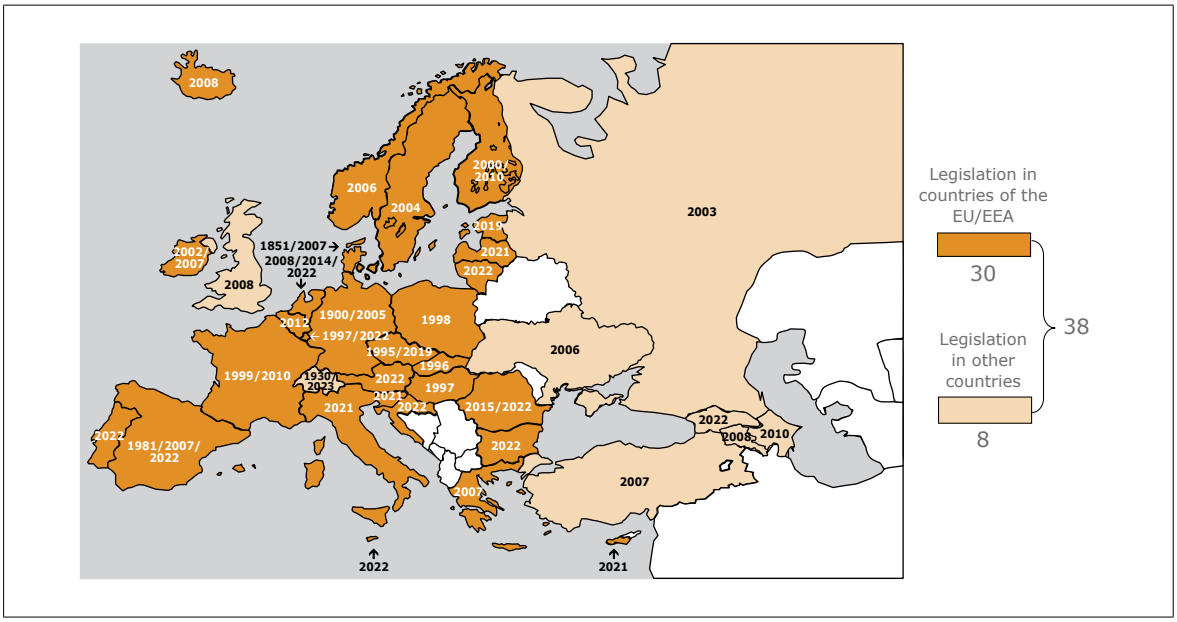
By Joost Beaumont, Chairman of the ECBC Statistics & Data Working Group and ABN AMRO,
Cristina Costa, Barclays, Tim Lassen, Association of German Pfandbrief Banks

I. INTRODUCTION

The covered bond is a pan-European product with a long-standing history. Decisive milestones in its development were laid in Prussia (1770), Denmark (1797) and France (1852). Traditional issuers ranged from public law "Landschaften" to private mortgage banks with the covered bond instrument over time evolving from a fungible mortgage instrument to a bond, issued by a bank. Initially, the instrument's aim was to finance agriculture, but it later concentrated more on housing and commercial real estate.

Over the past 25 years, the covered bond market has developed into the most important segment of privately issued bonds on Europe's capital markets, with volume outstanding as of end-2024 of over EUR 3.3tn. Today, there are active covered bond markets in about 30 different European countries (please refer to the covered bond statistics section in chapter 6 for more information). The covered bond market has also expanded beyond European borders to become a global product: countries such as Australia, Brazil, Canada, Croatia, Georgia, New Zealand, Singapore, South Korea, have established covered bond legislation, and others are looking to establish CB frameworks.

> Figure 1: Covered bond legislation in Europe (as of May 2025)



Source: vdp

Why are covered bonds so popular?

Covered bonds play an important role in bank wholesale funding, as they provide lenders with a cost-efficient instrument of long-term funding for mortgage or public-sector loans and offer investors good quality credit exposure on credit institution. Furthermore, the instrument has proved its resilience as a funding instrument at various occasions during the financial and sovereign crisis. During the COVID-19 pandemic as well as following the Ukraine war, covered bonds have shown their safe haven status and proved to be one of the only

asset classes able to restore investor confidence and ensure issuers access to the debt capital markets in volatile times. This was once again confirmed after the flaring up of market turmoil related to US import tariffs. The high importance of covered bonds from the financial system is demonstrated by the regulatory privileges these instruments enjoy in various areas of EU financial market regulation. The new EU legislation on covered bonds in Europe effective from July 2022 further reinforced the conditions for granting preferential capital treatment to covered bonds by adding further requirements. At national level, in addition to the introduction of new covered bond legislations, there have been continuous evolutions/amendments to existing legislations, underlying the commitment of issuers, investors and regulators to take on board the best practice standards and further reinforce and enhance the quality of the asset class.

Covered bonds as a long-term funding tool for the real-economy: the example of housing finance

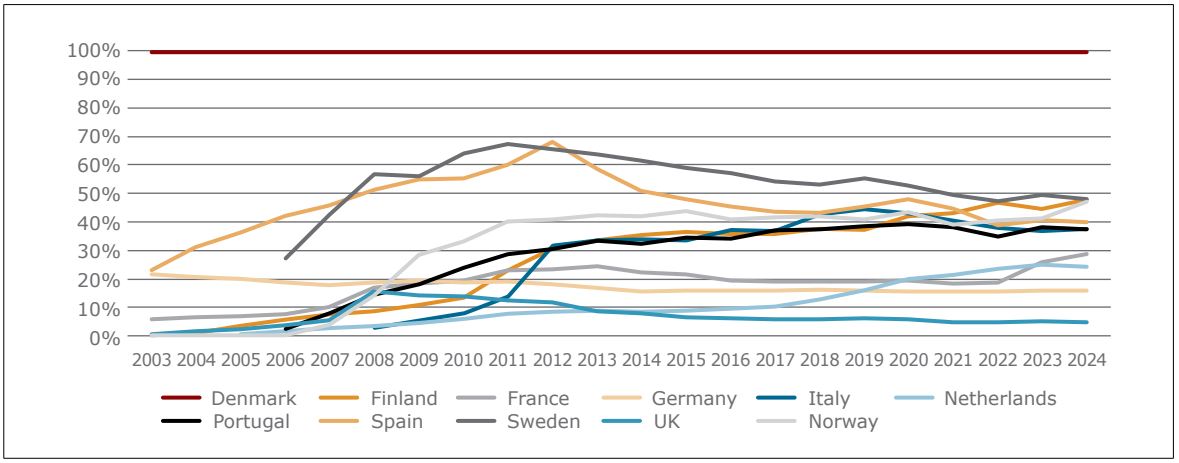
Covered bonds are an effective tool to channel long-term financing for high quality assets at reasonable cost. They improve bank's ability to borrow and lend at long-term horizons and, hence, represent a stable source of funding for key banking functions such as housing loans and public infrastructure, including defense. In this regard, we believe that covered bonds represent a key funding tool for the (European) banking industry.

The use of covered bonds as a funding tool depends largely on the size of the domestic mortgage market, and the availability of alternative funding tools for banks (and their costs). The figure below shows that in most countries mortgage backed covered bonds account for at least 30% of outstanding mortgage loans. Most of the countries have now reached stable relative size of the covered bond market after a phase of strong growth in 2007/2008, and a more moderate growth subsequently.

Prerequisites of a covered bond system are:

- Specific legislation on Covered Bonds,
- Independent and specific (government) oversight,
- Specific regulatory support,
- Equal tax treatment with government bonds,
- Specific protection of covered assets.[1]

> Figure 2: Mortgage backed covered bonds as % of residential mortgage loans



Source: EMF-ECBC

1 Including – among others – efficient systems for (1) registration of real estate and pledges over real estate, (2) foreclosure and (3) bankruptcy. With these questions in detail deals the Round Table "Security Rights over Immoveable Property (www.vdpmorrtgage.com).

Benefits of covered bonds

From an issuer's perspective, covered bonds enable banks to enhance their funding profile and manage their liquidity. Benefits provided by covered bonds include:

> Providing banks a diversification of their funding mix, allowing asset liability management (ALM) teams to better adapt their funding strategy to market conditions;

> Extending the maturity profile of the liabilities, allowing banks to better match their long-term asset portfolios;

> Enabling issuers to increase diversification of the investor base, both in terms of geography and investor type, in particular to the more conservative investors. This phenomenon can also be evidenced by issuers turning to the issuance of ESG covered bonds, as they seek to broaden their investor base;

> Transforming less liquid mortgage loans into covered bonds which are eligible as collateral for central bank liquidity (including own use); and

> Servicing the industry as one of the most reliable funding tools, even in times of turmoil.

From an investor's perspective, the major strengths and regulatory advantages of covered bonds can be summarized as follows:

> Dual recourse to the issuer and a cover pool of high-quality assets (and therefore higher recovery in case of liquidation of the CB issuer);

> Higher rating and higher rating stability than unsecured debt;

> Lower risk-weighting for EEA covered bonds bought by EEA banks under the EU's CRR;[2]

> Eligible as liquid assets under the EU LCR regulation;[3]

> Exemption from bail-in under EU's BRRD;[4]

> Privileged treatment of covered bonds under the EU large exposure rules;[5]

> Favourable treatment under Solvency II;[6]

> Higher investment share for funds in UCITS Directive;[7]

> Favourable repo treatment at the European Central Bank (ECB)[8] and other central banks.

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2 Art. 129 Regulation (EU) No 575/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 June 2013 on prudential requirements for credit institutions and investment firms and amending Regulation (EU) No 648/2012; Official Journal of the European Union L 176/1 – 337 dated 27 June 2023.

3 Art. 10 (1)(f), (2); art. 11 (1)(c)(d); art. 12 (1)(e); art. 15 (2)(b)(c)(f); art. 17 (1)(b); art. 28 (3)(a)(b) Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2015/61 of 10 October 2014 to supplement Regulation (EU) No 575/2013 of the European Parliament and the Council with regard to liquidity coverage requirement for Credit Institutions; Official Journal of the European Union L 11, 1 – 36 dated 17 January 2015.

4 Art. 44 (2) subpara 1(b); subpara 3; art. 76 (2)(e); art. 79 Directive 2014/59/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 May 2014 establishing a framework for the recovery and resolution of credit institutions and investment firms and amending Council Directive 82/891/EEC, and Directives 2001/24/EC, 2002/47/EC, 2004/25/EC, 2005/56/EC, 2007/36/EC, 2011/35/EU, 2012/30/EU and 2013/36/EU, and Regulations (EU) No 1093/2010 and (EU) No 648/2012, of the European Parliament and of the Council; Official Journal of the European Union L 173, 190 – 348 dated 12 June 2014.

5 Art. 387; 400 (2)(a) CRR) (and Basel Committee on Banking Supervision (BCBS) rules (Rules 2023, 30.37 – 30.40)).

6 Art. 180 (1); 187 (1) Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2015/35 of 10 October 2014 supplementing Directive 2009/138/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council on the taking-up and pursuit of the business of Insurance and Reinsurance (Solvency II); Official Journal of the European Union L 12/1 – 797 dated 17 January 2015.

7 Art. 52 (4) Directive 2009/65/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 July 2009 on the coordination of laws, regulations and administrative provisions relating to undertakings for collective investment in transferable securities (UCITS); Official Journal of the European Union L 302/32 – 96 dated 17 November 2009.

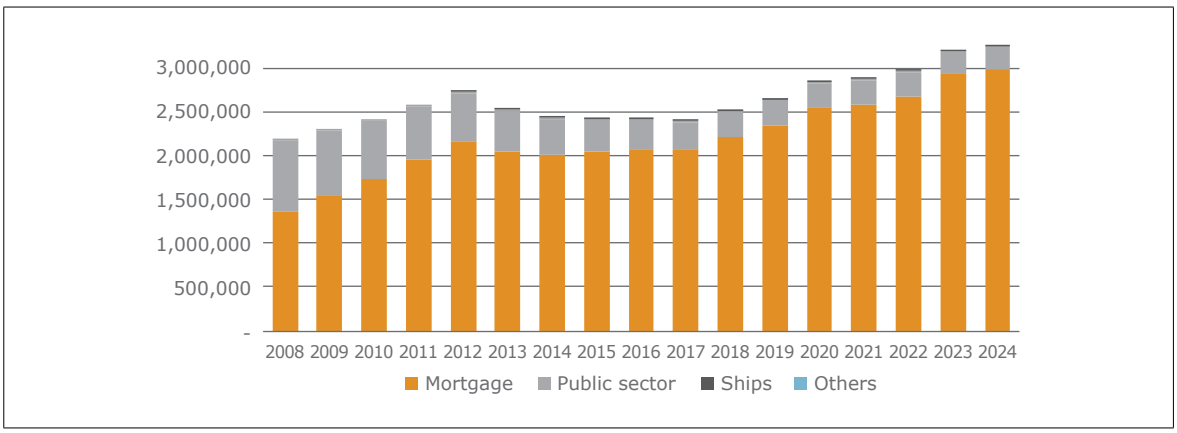
8 Since 29 June 2023, all covered bonds and multi-Cédulas are assigned to haircut category II.

Resilient bank funding instrument

Covered bonds are the most reliable funding source, as they make banks less susceptible to adverse market conditions. They often offer issuers better wholesale capital market access, lower transaction execution risk, and decrease the reliance on senior unsecured funding and interbank markets. This is especially true during times of crises. During the European sovereign crisis of 2011-2012, and even more recently, covered bond issuers of some jurisdictions had, for instance, cheaper access to wholesale funding markets via covered bonds than their respective distressed sovereigns.

The development of covered bonds has also been shaped by regulation. The 2014 EU Liquidity Coverage Directive established covered bonds as eligible for Level 1 and Level 2A High Quality Liquid Assets (HQLA). As a result, bank treasuries have become regular buyers of covered bonds to include in their liquidity portfolios.

> Figure 3: Total outstanding covered bonds by underlying assets, 2008 to 2023



Source: EMF-ECBC – Covered bonds outstanding at the end of 2023.

II. EU HARMONISATION OF COVERED BONDS

On 7 January 2020, the legislative package for the EU-wide harmonisation of covered bond (CB) frameworks entered into force, with the new measures having become effective from 8 July 2022.

The harmonisation package consists of a Covered Bond Directive (CBD) and an amendment of Article 129 of the CRR, which distinguishes the core group of traditional secured bonds issued by a credit institution more clearly from other kinds of covered bonds. The CBD regulates the requirements for covered bonds, which before were only laid down in a rudimentary fashion in Article 52(4) of the UCITS Directive; this provision has been accordingly amended and now refers to the CBD. Others, like the Bank Recovery and Resolution Directive (art. 2 (1)(96) BRRD) still refers to art. 52(4) UCITS Directive, which itself refers to the CBD. Given that the CBD has become the new single reference point for regulation related to covered bonds, various other provisions on covered bonds in other directives that refer to Article 52(4) of the UCITS Directive are thus also indirectly amended.

1. Principle-based harmonisation

The regulatory discussion on the creation of the CB harmonisation package was characterised by the "principle-based harmonisation" aimed at by the EU regulatory framework. This means that the EU provisions lay down the minimum requirements for secured bonds issued by credit institutions and, in a number of ways, leave room for particularities and detailed regulations at the national level; this has also been the (almost) unanimous petition of CB issuers and other market participants. This is of fundamental importance both for understanding the regulatory package and for interpreting the individual provisions.

While the CBD builds on the essential traditional quality features of covered bonds, it leaves national legislators a wide margin of leeway in shaping their national CB laws. This is also illustrated by the fact that the CBD contains both mandatory and optional provisions. Some mandatory provisions also contain optional elements, and vice-versa.

2. Covered Bond – Directive

The recitals of both parts of the CB harmonisation package are worth reading, as they explain the aim of the harmonisation project and locate the new rules within the existing set of rules for covered bonds. The definitions listed in Article 3 of the CBD are also important for understanding individual provisions. The CBD consists of the following Titles:

I. Subject matter, scope and definitions (Articles 1-3)
II. Structural features of covered bonds (Articles 4-17)
III. Covered bond public supervision (Articles 18-26)
IV. Labelling (Articles 27)
V. Amendments to other Directives (Articles 28-29)
VI. Final provisions (Articles 30-34)

2.1 Dual recourse

Article 4 of the CBD describes the most important element of covered bonds, dual recourse. Although this term has been in use for a long time, there is often confusion as to what its two components should be. In fact, there are three components, as Article 4(1) of the CBD clearly illustrates in listing components a) – c):

a) a claim against the credit institution (the CB issuer); this is the most important difference to securitisations (such as asset-backed securities and mortgage-backed securities) where the investor has a claim against an SPV as a non-bank;

b) in the case of the insolvency of the CB issuer, a claim against the cover pool; and

c) if the cover pool is insufficient, a claim against the insolvency estate of the CB issuer. If this third claim is regarded simply as a consequence of a), then "dual recourse" is the correct term, otherwise "triple recourse" would be more precise.

2.2 Bankruptcy remoteness of covered bonds

Article 5 of the CBD makes only brief mention of the fact that payment obligations attached to covered bonds are not subject to automatic acceleration upon the insolvency or resolution of the CB issuer.

This ensures that investors will receive their capital and interest payments at the time specified in the terms and conditions of the issuance, even if the CB issuer becomes insolvent. This "timely payment" is a key requirement in investors accepting low interest rates and in rating agencies granting covered bonds high ratings.

As simple as this sounds, difficulties arise when determining the time specified in the terms and conditions of the issuance. The "hard bullet" versions of covered bonds have a fixed maturity. However, most legislators allow this date to be extended under certain conditions. Many credit institutions use this for their CB issuances, which are then called "soft bullet" covered bonds or conditional pass-through (cpt) covered bonds. Article 17 of the CBD addresses this issue. For the extension of maturities of CB, please refer to section 2.9 below.

2.3 Eligible cover assets

In 2013, Article 129 of the CRR established the first uniform, EU-wide, and directly binding provision[9] on which cover assets could be used to back a covered bond in order to achieve a favourable risk weighting. These requirements continue to apply.

a) Article 6 of the CBD goes beyond the framework of Article 129 of the CRR and allows for additional cover assets. If such cover assets (going beyond Art. 129 CRR) are included in a cover pool, the covered bonds issued on this basis would lose their preferential treatment in accordance with Article 129 of the CRR, but can make use of the other special provisions directly linked to the CBD or other EU directives that refer to the CBD.

   Furthermore, according to Article 27 of the CBD, a covered bond whose cover assets meet the requirements of Article 129 of the CRR may be labelled as a "European Covered Bond (Premium)". However, the term "Premium" may not be used for covered bonds that go beyond this group of cover assets. In the meantime, the term "Directive-only covered bond" is sometimes used for these bonds in order to simplify matters and to distinguish them from "CRR Covered Bonds".

b) Article 6(1) of the CBD provides for four categories of eligible cover assets:

   (1) Assets that are eligible pursuant to Article 129 of the CRR:[10] These are mainly traditional assets, especially claims related to property financing, public financing, and ship financing. In this context, the following LTV ratios[11] apply to property and ship assets: residential immovable property mortgages 80%; commercial immovable property mortgages 60%;[12] and maritime liens on ships 60%.

   (2) High-quality cover assets:[13] exact criteria for the high quality of cover assets are not provided. Rather, it lists requirements that a cover asset has to fulfil by consisting of a claim for payment[14] and a collateral asset.

   These cover assets can also be property and ship financing that exceed the LTV ratios provided in Article 129 of the CRR, while collateral assets can also be provided as "physical collateral assets"[15] or as "assets in the form of exposures".[16] In the case of a mortgage loan, the collateral asset would be a lien encumbering a property (and thus a physical collateral asset).

   These physical collateral assets can be both movable and immovable assets.[17]

   For physical assets pledged as cover asset, the following requirements shall be met:

      A. there are valuation standards that are generally accepted among experts and appropriate for the asset in question,[18]

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9 Requirements for cover assets for covered bonds were included for the first time in point 68 of Part I of Annex VI of Directive 2006/48/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 June 2006 relating to the taking up and pursuit of the business of credit institutions. This directive together with Directive 2006/49/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 June 2006 on the capital adequacy of investment firms and credit institutions were usually collectively referred to as the "CRD I Package". For more details on the CRD rules for covered bonds, see Engelhard, Covered Bonds and the EU Capital Requirements Directive, ECBC, European Covered Bond Fact Book, 1st Edition, 2006, p. 179 (pp. 180 et seq.).

10 Point (a) of Article 6(1) of the CBD.

11 Loan to Value ratio. Article 129 of the CRR leaves it open as to whether national CB legislators define these LTV limits in absolute or relative terms (i.e., whether exceeding the loan amount leads to the result that the entire loan may not be used for cover, or whether the virtual division of the loan into a part for cover purposes and part outside of cover is permitted). The national CB laws differ considerably in this respect.

12 This can be exceeded up to a maximum level of 70% if the total assets pledged as collateral for the covered bonds exceed the nominal amount of CB outstanding by at least 10%.

13 Point (b) of Article 6(1) of the CBD in conjunction with Article 6(2) and Article 6(3) of the CBD.

14 In the case of a mortgage loan, eligible claims for payment would be, for example, claims for payment of interest and principal.

15 Point (a) of Article 6(3) of the CBD.

16 Point (b) of Article 6(3) of the CBD. Public register would be the land register or the ship register. Using such collateral, a covered bond can not be labelled as "European Covered Bond (Premium)" (Article 27(2) CBD) but only as "European Covered Bond" (Article 27(1) CBD).

17 Point (a) of Article 6(3) of the CBD.

18 Article 6(3)(1)(a)(half sentence 1) CBD.

B. there is a public register in which the ownership[19] and claims to these assets provided as cover are recorded:[20] The public register offers protection by providing interested third parties with access to information on the[21]

> identification of the encumbered **asset** provided as cover,

> the allocation of **ownership rights**, and

> the documentation[22] and allocation of **encumbrances**, and

> the **enforceability** of security interests.

These provisions in Art. 6 CBD enable EU Member States to provide for covered bonds secured by claims secured by movable property.

As there are no registers for many assets "*Member States may provide for an alternative form of certification of the ownership of and claims on that physical collateral asset, insofar as that form of certification provides protection that is comparable to the protection provided by a public register*."[23] The EU legislator has thus opted for a broad recognition of national covered bond regulations and national certification and recognition schemes.

(3) Public undertakings:[24] these include claims on loans to or guarantees by public undertakings within the meaning of Article 2 of the Transparency Directive.[25]

The reference to this legal definition of public undertakings makes the scope of this category very broad.[26] With its goal of classifying as many companies as possible as "public" (thus making them subject to transparency requirements), the EU Transparency Directive does not aim to define a group of high quality public borrowers or guarantors. Its application was a political compromise to settle the dispute about the scope of counterparties eligible for cover.

Further requirements are set out in Article 6(4) of the CBD. These contain several terms that are subject to interpretation, such as "provide essential public services" and "subject to prudential supervision".

(4) Claims against credit institutions and insurance undertakings: On the one hand, recital 16 of the CBD makes it clear that credit institutions and insurance undertakings should not be considered public undertakings. In consequence, claims against them cannot be eligible for cover in accordance with point (c) of Article 6(1) of the CBD.

On the other hand, however, they fulfil the requirements for public supervision in accordance with point (b) of Article 6(3) of the CBD. This means that any claim for payment, for whatever legal reason, to cover European covered bonds is eligible if it is guaranteed by a credit institution or insurance undertaking.

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19 Ownership should be recorded in a public register to ensure enforceability, CBD, recital 16, para. 1, sentence 4.

20 Art. 6(3)(1)(a)(half sentence 2) CBD.

21 Art. 6(3)(3) CBD.

22 In this context, *documentation* means that the encumbrances are documented in the register, i.e., they are visible.

23 Last sentence of Article 6(3) of the CBD.

24 Point (c) of Article 6(1) and Article 6(4) of the CBD.

25 Recital 16 of the CBD. Commission Directive 2006/111/EC of 16 November 2006 on the transparency of financial relations between Member States and public undertakings as well as on financial transparency within certain undertakings, Official Journal of the European Union of 17 November 2006, L 318/17.

26 In accordance with the legal definition in Article 2 of the EU Transparency Directive 2006/111/EC, a public undertaking means "any undertaking over which the public authorities may exercise directly or indirectly a dominant influence by virtue of their ownership of it, their financial participation therein, or the rules which govern it. A dominant influence on the part of the public authorities shall be presumed when these authorities, directly or indirectly in relation to an undertaking: (i) hold the major part of the undertaking's subscribed capital; or (ii) control the majority of the votes attaching to shares issued by the undertakings; or (iii) can appoint more than half of the members of the undertaking's administrative, managerial or supervisory body;…."

In discussions, the European Commission stressed that the aim of the negotiations was to allow payment claims against credit institutions and insurance undertakings for European Covered Bonds (without Premium) to be accepted as eligible for unlimited covered (i.e., not only payment claims guaranteed by them). The collateral asset required by point (b) of Article 6(3) of the CBD is in these cases the "ongoing public supervision of the counterparty's operational soundness and financial solvability" of the credit institution or insurance undertaking. Although the wording of Article 6 of the CBD is ambiguous, clarification is made in recital 16. Its mention of claims against credit institutions and insurance undertakings not only relates to guarantees, but directly to these claims.[27]

c) Given the multitude of conceivable cover assets, Article 10 of the CBD aims to make covered bonds more or less uniform in order to ensure homogeneity in the national transposition by the EU Member States, without however defining how this is to be interpreted. Article 10 of the CBD[28] leaves it to national legislators to decide how to regulate homogeneity. The more cover assets a national CB law permits, the more important it becomes to distinguish between them.

d) The complicated topic of allowing derivative contracts in the cover pool is regulated separately in Article 11 of the CBD.

2.4 Segregation of cover assets

Article 12 of the CBD prescribes the segregation of cover assets but does not regulate it. It is thus left to Member States or, at their discretion, even to the issuers to ensure segregation.

a) The legal structures of covered bonds cannot be harmonised:

The basic legal structures of covered bonds vary widely and have developed over many years (in some cases centuries). In order to make it easier to compare and contrast these diverse forms, they are usually categorised in five different CB models based on the issuer: specialised funding institutions (vehicles), traditional specialized credit institutions, universal credit institutions, SPV models, and pooling models.

The fundamental differences are particularly evident in the rules governing the link between covered bonds and their cover assets, which are crucial for the segregation of both parts (of critical importance in the event of insolvency of a CB issuer) from the remaining assets of a CB issuer. The legal structure interacts with the degree of specialisation of CB issuers and their ability to integrate into banking groups, so any change in this legal structure would also affect the group structure.

Right from the start of the harmonisation work, the European Banking Authority (EBA) and the European Commission realised that the harmonisation of these fundamental features would not be feasible. It would have been necessary to intervene profoundly in the existing structures of active CB issuers and in well-functioning CB markets without being able to estimate the consequences and effort involved even approximately, and nobody wanted to examine the accounting and tax consequences of a model change in detail.

As such, Article 12(1) of the CBD only provides the following:

> All cover assets have to be identifiable.[29] This can be done through entry in a cover register, as stipulated in most CB laws in EU Member States. This can also be achieved by establishing a separate legal entity

27 In order to make this even clearer, on 12 September 2019, the EU expert group for the alignment of the various translations decided to change the order of the wording of recital 16 so that the statement that claims against credit institutions and insurance undertakings should be eligible for cover is presented in such a neutral manner that their direct eligibility for cover becomes even clearer. This change has been incorporated in a corrigendum, thus adopted and published with the CBD.

28 Recital 18 of the CBD is also clear in this respect.

29 Point (a) of Article 12(1) of the CBD.

for the cover pool[30] or even for the CB issuers,[31] so that the cover pool and total assets of this fully specialised company are basically identical; a cover register to decide on the distribution between the cover pool and the insolvency assets in the event of CB issuer insolvency is thus not necessary.

> The respective CB law has to provide for segregation of assets.[32]

> The cover assets have to be protected from any third-party claims.[33]

Limiting the provisions to these basic statements means that principle-based harmonisation also applies here, and the design is left to the national CB legislators.

b) Foreign cover assets and segregation of assets

The most challenging discussion in this context focuses on the questions of whether and to what extent foreign cover assets can be integrated into a cover pool or segregated under insolvency law – or, in other words, whether the protection of CB investors regulated by national law also extends to cover assets located abroad.

All CB laws aim to protect CB investors in the event of the insolvency of the CB issuer. If the registered office of the CB issuer is in the same country as the cover assets, the legislator may regulate the allocation of cover assets to the covered bonds because both are located in its territory and therefore subject to its regulatory competence.

Segregation of assets should also apply if the cover assets are located outside the country in which the CB issuer has its registered office. However, this is obviously no longer entirely in the hands of the national legislator.

This gives rise to two main questions: Could other parties than CB creditors seize cover assets abroad in order to gain access to the payments of the loan debtors? Could secondary or territorial insolvency proceedings be opened abroad in respect of the assets of the CB issuer there and, if so, would the preferential treatment of CB creditors under the CB law of the home country of the CB issuer be respected in foreign insolvency proceedings?

c) Cover assets from EU Member States

In answering these questions, the creation of the Directive on the Reorganisation and Winding-up of Credit Institutions[34] is of great importance for the legal area of the EU. This had to be transposed into national law by EU Member States by 5 May 2004.

This EU directive follows the principles of country of origin and universality. This means that the authorities and courts of the country in which the credit institution has its registered office are competent for recovery measures and consequently also for measures taken by banking supervisory authorities in advance of or to prevent insolvency, which have to take effect in all other EU Member States.[35] This also applies to the opening and performance of winding-up proceedings.[36]

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30 This is the case with the CB SPV models in Italy, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom; here, the SPV is not a credit institution, but guarantees the covered bonds issuances of the universal credit institution with its assets acquired from the universal credit institution. This is also the preferred CB model outside Europe (e.g., in Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and Singapore).

31 France and Norway bear mentioning here. In these countries, the special purpose company is a credit institution that acquires the cover assets from a universal bank parent company and issues the covered bonds itself.

32 Point (b) of Article 12(1) of the CBD.

33 Point (c) of Article 12(1) of the CBD.

34 Directive 2001/24/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 4 April 2001 on the reorganisation and winding up of credit institutions, Official Journal of the European Union L 125/15 of 5 May 2001.

35 Recitals 6 and 7, as well as Articles 3(1) and 3(2) of the Directive on the Reorganisation and Winding-up of Credit Institutions.

36 Recitals 14 and 16, as well as Articles 9 and 10 of the Directive on the Reorganisation and Winding-up of Credit Institutions.

Creditors other than CB creditors cannot attach cover assets in other EU countries and thus cannot gain access to the payments of local loan debtors. It is not possible to open secondary or territorial bankruptcy proceedings against the assets of the CB issuer in other EU countries. The protective effect of the national CB laws is therefore fully effective within the countries of the EU.

d) Cover assets from third countries

The legal situation becomes more complicated with respect to cover assets located in third countries.[37] Neither national nor EU legislators can create regulations that impact third countries and override international enforcement and insolvency law or directly interfere with regulatory sovereignty of third countries. Consequently, attachment and secondary bankruptcy proceedings in third countries cannot be excluded by domestic legal measures. The EU CB legislator was aware of this. As such, the requirements of Article 12 and Article 7 of the CBD have to be considered in conjunction.

Article 7(1) of the CBD explicitly allows EU Member States to include assets from third countries as cover assets. Although Article 7(2) of the CBD contains requirements for comparability, these relate to collateral assets and their enforceability.[38]

The scope for flexibility in this area is also a consequence of principle-based CB harmonisation.

2.5 Cover pool monitors and public supervision

The provisions of Article 13 of the CBD on the "cover pool monitor" and, in particular, of Articles 18 to 26 of the CBD on "covered bond public supervision" are groundbreaking, as there has been nothing comparable on covered bonds in EU law before.[39] Without the intensive work of the European Banking Authority (EBA), this density of regulation would not have been possible.

The very fact that Article 13 is located in Title II of the CBD (i.e. Structural features of covered bonds), and Articles 18 et seq. are located in Title III of the CBD (i.e. Covered bond public supervision), shows the decision of the EU legislator that the activity of a cover pool monitor cannot be considered part of public supervision.

It was highly disputed whether the function of a cover pool monitor should be required at all and how its independence should be structured. Here too, principle-based harmonisation is evident: As there are CB cover pool monitor regulations in most, but not all, Member States, the entire cover pool monitor provision has been regulated only as a possibility (i.e., as an optional provision, which, however, contains some mandatory requirements if the decision is made to set up such an authority). In addition, various versions of independence have been permitted with mention made both of a "cover pool monitor … separate and independent from the credit institution",[40] as well as of an "internal cover pool monitor"[41] when the function is not separate from the credit institution. However, neither the selection criteria nor the economic relationship[42] with the CB issuer are regulated for either cover pool monitor version, so this too remains within the scope of the national CB legislator's freedom of design.

Regarding interpretation of this CBD provision, it is reported that there is the opinion that a cover pool monitor system is out of the scope of Art. 13 CBD, if the FSA appoints the cover pool monitor, whereas Art. 13 (1) 1 CBD says: "Member States may require that credit institutions issuing covered bonds appoint a cover pool monitor …". This would mean that the binding rules of Art. 13 CBD do not apply, although cover pool monitors exist.

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37 According to EU law, third countries are countries outside of the EU and the EEA.

38 The content of this was adopted from Section 18(1) of the German Pfandbrief Act.

39 Article 52(4) of the UCITS Directive and all EU provisions on covered bonds that use the same wording or refer to it only contain the provision that there has to be "special public supervision". However, it has never been clarified how the terms "special" and "public" should be interpreted.

40 First sentence of Article 13(3) of the CBD.

41 Second sentence of Article 13(3) of the CBD.

42 In particular, the remuneration for the work of the cover pool monitor.

The attention to detail with which Articles 18 to 26 of the CBD regulate various issues concerning the competences and procedures of CB competent authorities is remarkable. In particular, the list of administrative penalties detailed in Article 23 of the CBD is extremely long. These provisions are the result of the deliberations of the EBA's CB working group, which brought together and (in part) summed up the existing national provisions.

2.6 Investor information

The provisions included in Article 14 of the CBD have been largely taken from Article 129(7) of the CRR, which require covered bond issuers to regularly publish information on credit risks into national CB law.[43]

Here too, the CBD aims at principle-based harmonisation. As such, if it does not regulate its objectives in detail, rather, it is up to the national CB legislators to decide on the details and scope, which will be based on existing standards.

The connection between this provision and Article 6 of the CBD is obvious. The wider the range of eligible cover assets permitted by national CB law beyond the traditional cover assets, the greater the consideration that needs to be given to including transparency provisions for the associated credit risks.

2.7 Coverage requirements

Article 15 of the CBD contains provisions on coverage principles[44] and coverage calculation. Although the nominal principle is provided for in general, national CB legislators may also allow for other principles of calculation, the details of which have to be regulated in national CB laws.[45]

For the first time, an EU provision has stipulated that winding-down costs are to be taken into account in the coverage calculation:[46] "the expected costs related to maintenance and administration for the winding-down of the covered bond programme."

In order to avoid the time-consuming and costly calculation of winding-down costs according to current (and therefore frequently changing) demand, EU Member States may allow their national CB laws to calculate these winding-down costs on the basis of a "lump sum calculation".[47]

The European Commission has confirmed that the minimum overcollateralization already provided for in many countries can be used as this lump sum. However, these lump sums cannot be used twice. Thus, anyone using a statutory overcollateralisation provision to cover winding-down costs cannot use the same amount again to meet the overcollateralisation provisions of Article 129 of the CRR. This is already apparent from the fact that the calculation of coverage and the calculation of overcollateralisation are regulated by different pieces of legislation (i.e., the CBD and Article 129 of the CRR).

2.8 Requirement for a cover pool liquidity buffer

Article 16 of the CBD introduces a new element to EU legislation on covered bonds, as the requirement to maintain a liquidity buffer for the "next 180 days" can be found neither in Article 52(4) of the UCITS Directive, nor in Article 129 of the CRR. The aim of this provision is to enhance the quality of covered bonds by increasing the probability that CB creditors will receive timely payment in the event of the insolvency of a CB issuer.

43 Point (d) of Article 14(2) of the CBD.

44 Article 15(2) of the CBD.

45 Article 15(6) of the CBD. This allows the continuation of the net present value calculation of cover as it is currently regulated in a lot of national CB laws.

46 Point (d) of Article 15(3) of the CBD.

47 Second sentence of Article 15(3) of the CBD.

Article 16 of the CBD had to be brought into line with the LCR requirements[48] of general banking supervision law,[49] which lay down criteria for the eligibility of covered bonds as "liquid assets".

Following a consultation period, the amendment to the LCR delegated regulation was published on 10 February 2022[50]. The amended LCR delegated regulation addresses the double-counting issue in the liquidity buffer by treating liquid assets in the cover pool that are held as part of the liquidity buffer up to the amount of the net liquidity outflow within the next 30 days as unencumbered.[51] In addition, the new rules clarify how the netting principle will work when calculating the liquidity buffer. The Regulation has a binding legal force throughout every EU Member State and entered into force on the twentieth day following that of its publication in the Official Journal of the European Union (i.e. from 8 July 2022).[52]

Article 16(5) of the CBD simplifies matters further by permitting national CB legislators to allow maturity extension provisions to be taken into account in the calculation of the liquidity buffer. This also means that the liquidity buffer would only be required for interest liabilities falling due in the next 180 days if either no principal amounts fall due in this period or if principal amounts falling due according to the original payment schedule could be postponed by at least this period.[53]

2.9 Conditions for extendable maturity structures

For a number of years now, numerous CB issuers throughout Europe have outlined in their terms and conditions of issuance that the maturity of their covered bonds may be extended under certain conditions.[54] Given the major significance of this development, it was necessary to include the topic in the CBD.

Article 17 of the CBD grants EU Member States the possibility of allowing the issuance of covered bonds with extendable maturity structures; this is therefore an optional provision. However, at the same time, mandatory requirements apply to these provisions if they are used. The national CB laws can either regulate all details of maturity extension themselves,[55] or limit themselves to the basic principles and leave further design to the CB issuers.

A minimum requirement is that the national CB law has to specify the objective triggers for maturity extension (i.e., these may not be at the discretion of the CB issuer).[56] These maturity extension triggers are to be specified in the contractual terms and conditions of the covered bond.[57] When introducing provisions for maturity extension into national CB laws, the question thus arises of whether this is also possible for covered bonds that have already been issued (i.e., are in circulation). This can occur in two ways:

First, the CB issuer could ask the CB holders for their consent to a subsequent amendment of the terms and conditions of issuance (this approach could be quite costly). Second, Article 30 of the CBD may be applied,

48 Liquidity coverage ratio. Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2015/61 of 10 October 2014 to supplement Regulation (EU) No 575/2013 of the European Parliament and the Council with regard to liquidity coverage requirement for Credit Institutions.

49 Article 412 of the CRR regulates the requirement that banks have to be able to provide liquidity for the next thirty days even under stressed conditions.

50 Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2022/786 of 10 February 2022 amending Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2015/61 to supplement Regulation (EU) No 575/2013; Official Journal L 141/1 – 5 dated 20 May 2022.

51 This, however, weakens covered bonds to a certain extent, as in the event of the insolvency of a CB issuer, for the first 30 days, the liquidity buffer would not be part of the cover assets segregated under insolvency law, but rather would be part of the general insolvency estate.

52 Already during the work on the CBD, it was suggested that the LCR Delegated Regulation should stipulate that the cover assets should not be treated as encumbered for the purposes of the LCR liquidity analysis, so that they could be counted towards the LCR.

53 In the CB issuance practices of soft-bullet covered bonds to date, a maturity extension of one year is common, and some even go beyond that. Polish CB law also regulates maturity extensions of one year. There are no known provisions on extensions for less than 180 days.

54 For an overview of this topic, see Rudolf, Extendable maturity structures – the new standard, ECBC, European Covered Bond Fact Book 2019, pp. 85 et seq.

55 The first country to include detailed provisions for maturity extensions in its CB law was Poland, which did so in 2016.

56 Point (a) of Article 17(1) of the CBD.

57 Point (b) of Article 17(1) of the CBD.

according to which covered bonds issued until 8 July 2022 may be labelled as "Directive-only covered bonds" if, for example, they do not comply with the requirements of Article 17 of the CBD.[58]

A provision is also required whereby a maturity extension does not affect the ranking of CB investors or invert the sequencing of the original maturity schedule.[59] In this respect, it has already been intensively discussed whether this would exclude any change in the sequencing of the servicing of covered bonds in the event of the insolvency of a CB issuer.

Based on the precept of principle-based harmonisation of CBs, it is generally agreed that the CBD does not intend to interfere with the basic structure of CB systems[60]. As such, this provision should be narrowly interpreted as well. Thus, the provision only prohibits changes in the sequencing that would result from the maturity extension and would be to the disadvantage of investors.

2.10 Labelling

Article 27 of the CBD lists two protected labels:

The label "European Covered Bond" may be used for covered bonds that meet the provisions of national law transposing the binding rules of the CBD that apply in the country where the CB issuer has its registered office; and

The label "European Covered Bond (Premium)" may only be used for covered bonds that also meet the requirements of Article 129 of the CRR.

Not every national CB law has to explicitly protect the labelling in the languages of all other EU countries. It is sufficient when a general provision is selected, such as that contained within Article 27 of the CBD.

2.11 Transitional measures

The Directive includes generous grandfathering provisions. The aim is to get a smooth transition towards the new Directive, which should prevent any unintended market distortions.

The grandfathering provision of Article 30(1) of the CBD permits covered bonds issued until 8 July 2022 to be designated as covered bonds in accordance with the CBD, even if they do not meet the requirements of various expressly mentioned provisions of the CBD.[61]

However, during the implementation the question was asked in a few countries, whether Art. 30 CBD does not allow to apply the provisions, mentioned in Art. 30, to CBs, which were issued before 8 July 2022.

The purpose of Art. 30 CBD was ensuring that all outstanding (UCITS compliant) covered bonds maintain their status quo as CBs even beyond 8 July 2022. The Article was conceived as a plain vanilla grandfathering provision preventing that the new CBD 'infects' existing cover pools and CB markets. Existing covered bonds (issued before 8 July 2022) should be "exempt" from certain new requirements of the Directive (see recital 41). The CB Directive aims at a principle-based harmonization (see recital 5). Therefore, Member States have a lot of discretion how to regulate their national covered bond law in detail. The scope of the grandfathering was conceived product specific. The nature of a principle-based harmonization gives room to national discretion, whether the provisions mentioned in Art. 30 CBD should be applicable only to covered bonds, which will be issued after 8 July 2022 or to CBs issued before as well.

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58 However, without the additional label of "European" (and definitely not of "Premium") that results from the interaction of Articles 27 and 30 of the CBD.

59 Point (e) of Article 17(1) of the CBD.

60 Articles 5 – 12, 15, 16, 17 and 19 of the CBD.

61 For the application of Article 30 of the CBD when a statutory provision introduces an extension of maturity without (subsequent) changes in the terms and conditions of issuance, see 2.9) above.

With Art. 30 CBD it should be avoided that member states impose CBD provisions to outstanding CBs, which make no sense or would create a large burden to the CB issuers or even create turbulences in the CB market.

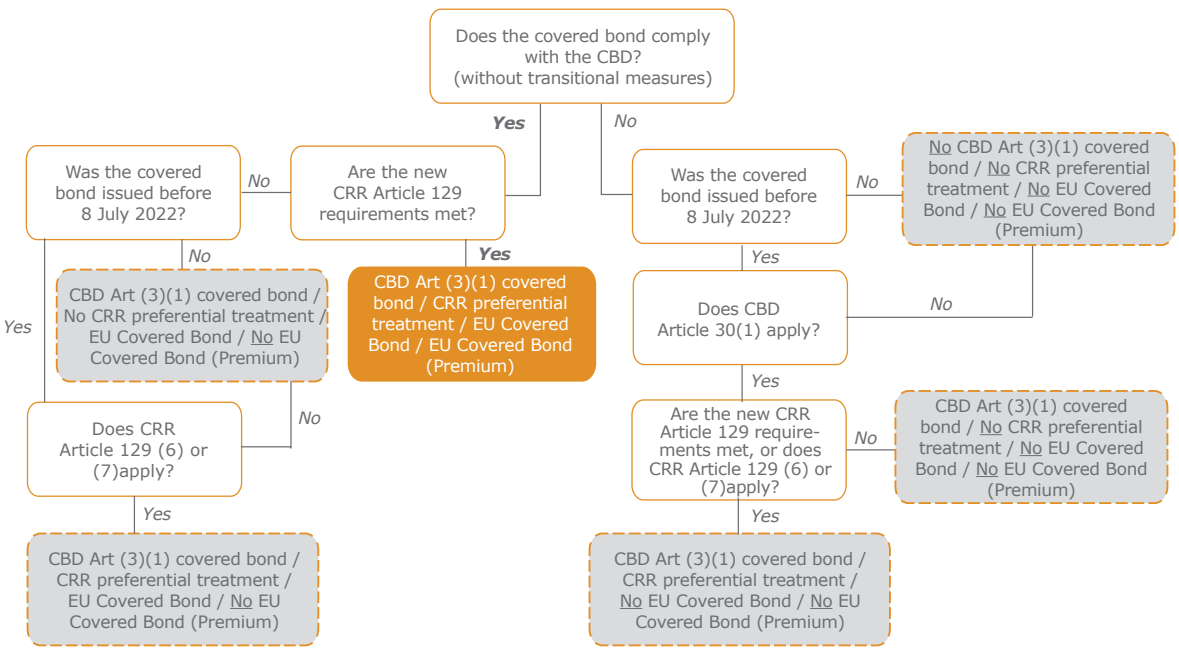
However, it does not mean that it is not allowed to apply these provisions, mentioned in Art. 30 CBD, to outstanding CBs where it makes sense.

All those provisions, which only make sense when being applied both to outstanding and new CBs, may be applied to both groups of CBs. This is obvious when there is only one cover pool for all outstanding and new CBs. It was not the purpose of Art. 30 CBD to oblige Member States or national legislators to create new and separate cover pools for new issuances.

During the harmonization procedure there was not mentioned an understanding of Art. 30 CBD not allowing Member States to apply the provisions for outstanding CBs as well. Such an understanding would have reverted the underlying principle of the grandfathering, which was understood as an important pillar of a smooth transition to the new and more harmonized CB regime. Its intention was clearly ensuring the continuation of existing cover pools and prevention of the appearance of new cover pools in order to safeguard the homogeneity and unity of the European covered bond market, avoiding adverse impacts of the new legislation for CB investors.

Therefore, the wording of Art. 30 CBD is misleading and has to be interpreted in a way that follows the principles of the CB harmonization.

> Figure 4: Transitional measures versus Labelling provisions



Source: Maureen Schuller, ING, CECBC Warsaw 2022, Panel 1

3. Content of the amendments of Article 129 CRR in 2019[62] and in 2024[63]

Minimum level of overcollateralization

The most important amendment to Article 129 of the CRR is the provision on the minimum level of overcollateralisation. This minimum level of overcollateralisation is to be calculated based on the liabilities referred to in Article 15(2) and (3) of the CBD (Article 129(3a)(1) CRR, Article 3(14), 15 CBD).

In accordance with the first sentence of Article 129(3a) of the CRR, the minimum level of overcollateralisation is to be 5%. Here too, principle-based harmonisation comes into play, in that the third sentence of Article 129(3a) of the CRR grants the EU Member States the authority to set a lower level of overcollateralisation or to authorise their competent authorities to set such a level, provided that the minimum level of overcollateralisation is not lower than 2%.

The reduction applies to all immovable property cover assets whose valuation is subject to the mortgage lending value. For other cover assets, "the calculation of overcollateralisation is based on a formal approach where the underlying risk of the assets is taken into account";[64] such a reduction must therefore be risk-adjusted.

Grandfarthering

Art. 129 CRR now contains a grandfathering provision as well, which was discussed during implementation procedures.

Art. 129 (7) CRR as of 8 July 2022 states that covered bonds issued before 8 July 2022 and that fulfill all requirements of Art 129 CRR that were valid at the time of its issuance shall not be subject to the requirements laid down in the new paragraphs 3a and 3b and shall be eligible for preferential treatment under paragraphs 4 and 5 until their maturity. Hence, Art. 129 (7) CRR covers a grandfathering for outstanding covered bonds. Art. 129 (3a) CRR as of 8 July 2022 requires an OC and Art. 129 (3b) as of 8 July 2022 determines the eligibility of substitution assets.

Since Art. 129 (7) CRR refers to Art. 129 (3a) and (3b) only, the new requirement of Art. 129 (3) CRR (monitoring of property values) needs to be fulfilled for outstanding CBs as well.

However, this does not fit to the fact that Art. 129 (3a) and (3b) CRR refer to loans and not to CBs.

Therefore, those CB programs, where CB legislation does not foresee the opening of new cover pools but rather the continuation of existing cover pools, cannot benefit from this grandfathering provision of Art. 129 (7) CRR, and therefore need to fulfil the requirements of Art. 129 (3a) and (3b) CRR for outstanding CBs as well.

Liquidity buffer and overcollateralization for preferential treatment

It may be discussed until when it is necessary to fulfill the requirements of Art. 16 CBD regarding liquidity buffer and Art. 129 CRR regarding OC to enjoy preferential treatment according to Art. 129 CRR: Until opening of an insolvency procedure over the CB issuer or also during this insolvency procedure?

OC and liquidity requirements aim at ensuring full and timely payment of CBs, if the CB issuer is insolvent. In insolvency procedure over the CB issuer, OC and liquidity buffer should be used for this purpose, if necessary. This means that the requirements cannot be upheld in insolvency procedure. Even though this is not stated explicitly in CBD and CRR, this must be interpreted according to the aims of these provisions.

62 Regulation (EU) 2019/2160 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 November 2019 amending Regulation (EU) No 575/2013 as regards exposures in the form of covered bonds (OJ L, 328/1-6, 18.12.2019) as part of the covered-bond-package.

63 Regulation (EU) 2024/1623 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 31 May 2024 amending Regulation (EU) No 575/2013 as regards requirements for credit risk, credit valuation adjustment risk, operational risk, market risk and the output floor (OJ L, 2024/1623, 19.6.2024; CRR III).

64 Point (a) of the third sentence of Article 129(3a) of the CRR.

However, the CBs of an insolvent CB issuer very likely will not be treated as CBD and/or CRR compliant CBs, if they do no longer have sufficient OC and liquidity buffer.

Upward revision of values[65]

Since 1 January 2025 for asset valuation for new loans the property value (PV) has to be used (Art. 229(1)(b) CRR). For funding purposes by covered bonds the CBD is still lex generalis for CB eligibility: Thus for valuation for funding still the Market Value or the Mortgage Lending Value has to be used (Art. 6(5)(a) CBD); voluntarily the PV might be used (Art. 6(5) CBD: "a current valuation at *or at less than* market value or mortgage lending value". Art. 129 CRR as lex specialis for CB preferential treatment does not stipulate other valuation rules than the CBD.

In addition to the CBD Art. 129 (3)(1), 208 CRR introduce monitoring and review requirements for cover assets' valuation. Art. 6(5) CBD, 208 CRR do not exclude an upward revision of the value of cover assets. This upward revision may be limited by a backward looking approach (Art. 129(3)(2), 229(1)(e) CRR). Due to Art. 129(3)(2) CRR it is in the national discretion not to use this limitation, if the property is valued at or at less than the market value or the mortgage lending value[66].

It has to be admitted, that it is surprising that Art. 129(3)(2) CRR includes a derogation of a subarticle (Art. 229(1)(e) CRR), if the whole Art. 229 CRR is not applicable for CB-funding purposes.[67]

4. European Commission and EBA tasks

Through Article 31 of the CBD, the EU legislator has given several tasks to the European Commission and the EBA to complete:

- By 8 July 2024: The development of an equivalence regime for the regulatory treatment of covered bonds issued by third-country credit institutions;[68]
- By 8 July 2025: The submission of a report on the implementation of the Directive in national law, as well as on the developments regarding permissions to issue covered bonds, cover assets, overcollateralisation, cross-border investments in covered bonds, the issuance of covered bonds with extendable maturity structures, and any recommendations for further action;[69]
- By 8 July 2024: The commissioning of a study on the risks and benefit arising from covered bonds with extendable maturity structures;[70]
- By 8 July 2024: The adoption of a report on the possibility of introducing a dual-recourse instrument named a European Secured Note (ESN).[71]

The EBA received a Call for Advice (CfA) from the European Commission in July 2023 on the review of the EU covered bond framework, where input and technical advice is requested to conduct the review referred to in Article 31 of the Covered Bond Directive (CBD). The CfA mandates EBA to provide by June 2025 an assessment on five topics, four of which follow directly from Article 31 and relate to: 1. the performance and functioning of the covered bond framework; 2. the merits and design of a third country equivalence covered bond regime; 3. the need of updating the EBA assessment on European Secured Notes; 4. the risks and benefits of covered

65 Art. 129(3)(2) CRR, introduced by pt. 59(b) of Regulation (EU) 2024/1623.

66 If rigorous criteria for the assessment of MLV have been laid down in statutory or regulatory provisions.

67 The CBD package (Art. 1(1)(c) Regulation 2019/2160) replaced the former Art. 129(3) CRR, which included at that time a reference to Art. 229 CRR.

68 Article 31(1) of the CBD.

69 Article 31(2) of the CBD.

70 Article 31(4) of the CBD.

71 Article 31(5) of the CBD.

bond with extendable maturities. The commission has also added a request to provide an overview on the topic of 5. green covered bonds and ESG in cover pools.

In April 2024, the EBA arranged an industry roundtable in Paris to obtain more insights and opinions of CB issuers, investors, analysts and rating agencies.

III. ECBC COMPARATIVE DATABASE

The implementation of the CBD has also implied that the ECBC's legislative comparative database (see here https://compare.coveredbondlabel.com/) needed to be updated. The database provides a comprehensive overview of the key legal details of the new/ updated covered bond legislation in individual countries. As such, it improves transparency about how national legislators have transposed the CBD into national laws, given the highly principle-based character of the CBD. It also includes links to national covered bond legislation and in some cases also links to lists of European (Premium) labelled covered bonds.

In Summer 2024 the database of the international project "Round Table Covered Bond Legislation" went public (rtcbl.pfandbrief.de). In order to improve understanding of the national law on Covered Bonds, the vdp together with the members of the Round Table Covered Bond Legislation (RTCBL), have developed this public database. The Database contains comprehensive information about the present legal regime applicable to issuers of Covered Bonds in more than 20 countries. This complex material is presented in a series of maps on which countries which take the same approach are coloured the same. This allows the user to see the similarities and differences between legal systems at a glance in an overview. The Round Table Covered Bond Legislation aims to make a scholarly contribution to comparative examination of the areas of law which are significant for Covered Bonds.

IV. SUCCESS OF THE INSTRUMENT

To conclude, the covered bond is one of the key components of European capital markets, providing a stable funding tool to banks and a high-quality investment to investors. The volume of covered bonds outstanding at the end of 2024 amounted to over 3 tn EUR (covered bonds covered by mortgage loans, public-sector loans and ship loans). In descending order, the five largest issuing countries in the EU in 2022 were Denmark, Germany, France, Sweden and Spain.

Covered bonds play an important role in the financial system and thereby contribute to the efficient allocation of capital and ultimately economic development and prosperity. The importance of covered bonds is also evidenced by the broad variety of different bond formats and currencies under which the product is issued and by the large investor base. Both subjects are addressed in the key themes section.

> Figure 5: Volume outstanding covered bonds in Europe end of 2024 in EUR million

	Public Sector	Mortgage	Ships	Others	Mixed Assets	TOTAL
Austria	17,530	95,516	-	-	-	113,046
Belgium	1,711	55,727	-	-	-	57,438
Cyprus	-	650	-	-	-	650
Czechia	-	14,953	-	-	-	14,953
Denmark	18,505	435,825	5,401	-	-	459,731
Estonia	-	2,500	-	-	-	2,500
Finland	-	51,353	-	-	-	51,353
France	74,540	376,098	-	-	50,970	501,609
Germany	101,070	296,841	1,569	-	-	399,481
Greece	-	9,840	-	-	-	9,840
Hungary	-	5,125	-	-	-	5,125
Ireland	-	12,652	-	-	-	12,652
Italy	-	160,775	-	-	-	160,775
Latvia	-	-	-	-	-	-
Luxembourg	3,294	-	-	300	-	3,594
The Netherlands	-	222,045	-	-	-	222,045
Poland	201	3,804	-	-	-	4,006
Portugal	600	39,531	-	-	-	40,131
Romania	-	-	-	-	-	-
Slovakia	-	14,955	-	-	-	14,955
Spain	8,290	188,626	-	11,586	-	208,502
Sweden	-	224,876	-	-	-	224,876
Total EU	225,742	2,211,693	6,970	11,886	50,970	2,507,261
Iceland	-	6,697	-	-	-	6,697
Norway	1,946	145,619	-	-	-	147,565
Total EEA	227,687	2,364,008	6,970	11,886	50,970	2,661,523
Australia	-	81,026	-	-	-	81,026
Brazil	590	18,282	-	-	-	18,872
Canada	-	205,903	-	-	-	205,903
Japan	-	5,600	-	-	-	5,600
New Zealand	-	8,448	-	-	-	8,448
Panama	-	-	-	-	-	-
Singapore	-	19,011	-	-	-	19,011
South Korea	-	15,826	-	-	-	15,826
Switzerland	-	168,800	26,600	-	-	195,400
Turkey	-	-	-	-	-	-
United Kingdom	95,196	-	4,824	-	-	100,020
United States	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total non EU	97,732	675,212	31,424	-	-	804,368
Total non EEA	95,786	522,896	31,424	-	-	650,106
Grand Total	**323,473**	**2,886,905**	**38,394**	**11,886**	**50,970**	**3,311,629**

Source: EMF-ECBC

Notes: Please refer to section 6 for additional information on the ECBC statistics.

2.2 REGULATORY ISSUES

2.2.1 COVERED BONDS AND EU BANKING REGULATIONS

By Frank Will, Chairman of the ECBC EU Legislation Working Group and HSBC

Over the last two decades, covered bonds were able to ensure a preferential regulatory treatment compared to many other asset classes reflecting the strengths and low risks of the product. The most important regulatory rules include the Bank Recovery and Resolution Directive (BRRD) which exempts covered bonds from bail-in, the Liquidity Coverage Ratio (LCR) which categorises covered bonds as highly liquid assets and Solvency II which grants low spread risk factors to covered bonds. Arguably, the most important piece of legislation is the European Covered Bond Directive and the amendments of the Capital Requirements Regulation (CRR) which came into force on 8 July 2022 and has further harmonised the covered bond market in Europe. The CRR assigns low risk weights to qualifying covered bonds. The risk weightings are a very important factor in the investment decision of banks which have become again the largest buyer segment of new EUR covered bond issues following the withdrawal of the ECB over the last few years.

In addition, there are currently several other initiatives by European and global regulators under way which could have wider implications for the covered bond product and the issuers of covered bonds. Below we provide an overview of the planned or currently discussed major regulatory amendments which could affect covered bonds.

I. COVERED BOND HARMONISATION

In January 2020, the covered bond harmonisation package entered in force and the EU member states had until 8 July 2021 to transpose it into national law, leaving scope for limited national discretion. The provisions of the national laws had to apply at latest 12 months after the transposition deadline, i.e. the amended national laws had to apply from 8 July 2022. Several EU member states missed that deadline but in the meantime of all major covered bond countries have implemented the relevant primary and secondary legislation. The CRR amendments on the other hand did not have to be transposed into national law (as EU regulation is directly applicable) and applied from 8 July 2022. The EU approach in harmonising the covered bond market is largely principle-based and consists of two parts:

- The EU directive on covered bonds replaced the provisions of Art. 52 UCITS and defines the key structural elements that should be common to all EU Covered Bonds. The covered bond directive acts as the point of reference for prudential regulatory purposes. It also introduces a European covered bond label.
- Amendments to Art. 129 CRR include additional requirements that covered bonds have to fulfill in order to benefit from a preferential capital treatment. This includes a new 5% minimum overcollateralisation (OC) requirement. National regulators may, however, apply a lower minimum OC if certain conditions are met. The limit cannot, however, be lower than 2%.

Figure 1 summarises the key features of the directive and the CRR amendments.

Figure 1: Covered bond harmonisation by the European commission

Covered Bond Directive	Amendments of Art. 129 CRR
> Requirements for regulatory recognition of covered bonds; replacement of Art. 52 (4) UCITS > Base-line covered bond definition (dual recourse, segregation of assets, bankruptcy remoteness, public supervision, liquidity buffer) > Structural features include soft bullet and CPT features > Extended transparency requirements (moved from CRR)	> Enhanced requirements for preferential capital treatment > Credit risk related features: - eligibility of cover assets - substitution assets - LTV limits - minimum OC between 2-5%

Source: HSBC, EBA

Assessment by the European Commission of the performance of the EU Covered Bond Directive

In July 2023, the European Commission asked the EBA for technical advice on the assessment on the topics the European Commission is required to conduct according to Article 31(2) of the Covered Bond Directive (CBD). These topics include an (i) evaluation of the performance and functioning of EU covered bond markets as well as assessments (ii) on whether the coverage and liquidity requirements have contributed to mitigating the liquidity risks associated with covered bonds, (iii) on the risks and benefits of the various form of collateral, (iv) on asset encumbrance levels (and trends) and the contribution of covered bonds to those levels and (v) on the overall implementation of the CBD carried out by EEA member states, with a particular focus on the use of national discretions.

The Commission also asked EBA to provide advice on several other topics that the Commission is due to assess. According to Art. 31 (1) CBD, the Commission must conduct an assessment of (1) third country equivalence, (2) European Secured Notes (ESN) and (3) covered bonds with extendable maturities. The Commission also added 'Green covered bonds and ESG risks of cover pools of covered bonds' to the list of topics. The original deadline for the EBA report was 30 June 2025.

The EBA report is expected to incorporate feedback received from national competent authorities and the industry. A quantitative analysis of the market will probably also be part of it. The report will likely focus on (1) the harmonisation of the eligibility of cover assets in the Covered Bond Directive, (2) the establishing a third-country regime based on reciprocity, (3) an update on EBA's conclusions on ESNs, (4) the potential introduction of further safeguards on covered bonds with extendable maturities, (5) the introduction of principle-based disclosure on climate risks for real estate cover assets and (6) on harmonising the treatment of assets in the Covered Bond Directive with the general credit risk framework.

Regarding the establishment of a third country equivalence regimes, EBA's cost-benefit analysis essentially supports the introduction of these regime. According to the EBA, an overarching principle will be the reciprocity of these treatment with third country authorities. Fundamentally, the main scope of the equivalence assessment will be the principles of the Covered Bond Directive. However, compliance with CRR provisions to obtain the Premium label can be added on top of these requirements by contractual checks on the list of covered bonds provided by the third country authority. Prerequisites for the initiation the assessment will the comparability of the third country's definition of credit institutions and the quality of supervisory framework. The assessment of technical aspects are then the next steps in the process. This includes an assessment of maturity of the third country covered bond market.

Regarding extendable maturities, the EBA suggest the introduction of additional safeguards for covered bonds with extendable maturities and an enhanced involvement of the national competent authority in the maturity extension process. This includes ensuring the objectivity of the triggers for extending maturity and inquiring the role of the issuer in the run-up to the realisation of the trigger (i.e., its unavoidability). There could be also stricter requirements for the use of the final maturity in the calculation of the liquidity buffer and a proposal of a plan for its reconstitution in case of depletion

Regarding European Secured Notes (ESN), EBA acknowledges that there are opportunities and interest for the development of ESN instruments. However, the lack of harmonisation and capital mobility typical of SME loans calls for a cautious approach, EBA's opinion.

One of the main takeaways from the EBA report is EBA's perception of the EU covered bond market as an important funding tool for EU credit institutions which has proven to be well-functioning and resilient. At the same time, the EBA highlighted that the EU covered bond legal frameworks are still not fully harmonised across member states. This creates opportunities for further alignment, in terms of understanding and comparability of the national systems, thereby allowing for a more integrated covered bonds market. The EBA also suggests a harmonised and consistent climate risk disclosure at cover pool level in a proportionate manner.

The EBA also suggested to align certain aspects with the general credit risk framework of the CRR III. These aspects include the eligibility for preferential risk treatment of cover assets in the form of mortgages, in particular the alignment of the requirements for Premium covered bonds with the general credit risk treatment (e.g., limitations on the use of real estate under construction). The valuation methods applied to immovable properties and the treatment of covered bonds in case of of defaulted issuer are other points.

II. BASEL III

In December 2017, the Basel Committee on Banking Supervision (BCBS) published the Basel III reform package. It encompasses a long list of changes including a revision to the Standardised Approach, a cutback on the (advanced) internal ratings-based approach and the introduction of an output floor which will be phased in over five years from 50% in 2023 to 72.5% in 2028. The output floor limits the extent to which banks' risk-weighted assets generated by internal models can be lower than calculated by the standardised approaches. The EU recently concluded finalised the legislative process of updating the Capital Requirements Regulation (CRR) to reflect the amendments at Basel level. The revised Basel III standard will take effect from 1 January 2023 (following the above mentioned 1-year deferral in response to the COVID-19 crisis). As regards the European Union, the amended Capital Requirements Regulation will enter into force on 1 January 2025 with the exception of the FRTB (Fundamental Review of the Trading Book), which has been postponed to 1 January 2027. The output floor started at the beginning of 2025 with reduced percentage of 50% and will gradually increase to 72.5% in 2030.

Moreover, the reforms introduced preferential risk weights for covered bonds and define the minimum standards that covered bonds must fulfil: According to the Basel document, "covered bonds are bonds issued by a bank or mortgage institution that are subject by law to special public supervision designed to protect bond holders. Proceeds deriving from the issue of these bonds must be invested in conformity with the law in assets which, during the whole period of the validity of the bonds, are capable of covering claims attached to the bonds and which, in the event of the failure of the issuer, would be used on a priority basis for the reimbursement of the principal and payment of the accrued interest."

In order to be eligible for the lower risk weights, cover assets are limited by the Basel Committee to:

- claims on, or guaranteed by, sovereigns, their central banks, public sector entities or multilateral development banks;
- claims secured by residential real estate with a LTV ratio of 80% or lower;
- claims secured by commercial real estate with a LTV ratio of 60% or lower; or
- claims on, or guaranteed by banks that qualify for a 30% or lower risk weight. However, such assets cannot exceed 15% of covered bond issuances.

That means covered bonds backed by ship or aircraft loans will not benefit from a preferential risk weight under the Basel rules. Moreover, the required minimum overcollateralisation (OC) is set at 10% on a nominal basis. Importantly, the 10% level does not have to be required by law. However, if the minimum OC is not required by law, the issuer has to publicly disclose on a regular basis that its cover pool meets the required 10% minimum OC.

Moreover, "substitution assets (cash or short-term liquid and secure assets held in substitution of the primary assets to top up the cover pool for management purposes) and derivatives entered into for the purposes of hedging the risks arising in the covered bond program" may form part of the cover pool.

Finally, the Basel Committee sets out minimum disclosure requirements. The bank investing into covered bonds must demonstrate to its national supervisors that:

(a) it receives portfolio information at least on: (i) the value of the cover pool and outstanding covered bonds; (ii) the geographical distribution and type of cover assets, loan size, interest rate and currency

risks; (iii) the maturity structure of cover assets and covered bonds; and (iv) the percentage of loans more than 90 days past due;

(b) the issuer makes the information referred to in point (a) available to the bank at least semi-annually.

Risk weights

Should the covered bond fulfill the requirements set out above, the risk weight should be determined by the issue-specific rating or – if the covered bond itself is unrated – by the risk weight of the issuer as set out in figures 2 and 3.

FIGURE 2: RISK WEIGHTS FOR RATED AND UNRATED COVERED BOND EXPOSURES

Rated Covered Bonds:					
Issue-specific covered bond rating	**AAA to AA-**	**A+ to A-**	**BBB+ to BBB-**	**BB+ to B-**	**Below B-**
"Base" risk weight	10%	20%	20%	50%	100%

Unrated Covered Bonds:							
Risk weight of the issuing bank	**20%**	**30%**	**40%**	**50%**	**75%**	**100%**	**150%**
"Base" risk weight	10%	15%	20%	25%	35%	50%	100%

Source: BIS, HSBC

However, to reduce the dependence on external ratings, "banks must perform due diligence to ensure that the external ratings appropriately and conservatively reflect the creditworthiness of the covered bond and the issuing bank. If the due diligence analysis reflects higher risk characteristics than that implied by the external rating bucket of the exposure (ie AAA to AA-; A+ to A- etc), the bank must assign a risk weight at least one bucket higher than the "base" risk weight determined by the external rating. Due diligence analysis must never result in the application of a lower risk weight than that determined by the external rating". Therefore, in some cases a higher risk weight than shown in figure 1 might be applicable.

Market impact

As most benchmark programmes already fulfil most of the necessary requirements – only the OC is slightly lower in some cases – the effort of the covered bond issuers to fulfil these new Basel requirements should be manageable. Regarding investor demand, the new rules – which apply since January 2023 – should help to further broaden the investor base for covered bonds on a global scale. In light of the shrinking covered bond holding under the ECB's purchase programmes, demand by European bank treasuries plays a more important role for the covered bond market. The preferential risk weights of covered bonds under Basel III should broaden the non-European investors base and should support the growth of global covered bond markets.

III. CAPITAL MARKET UNION: EUROPEAN SECURED NOTES (ESN)

Back in February 2015, the European Commission published a Green Paper on "Building a Capital Markets Union". The aim of the Capital Markets Union (CMU) is to improve long-term financing of the European economy by overcoming the adverse effects of financial fragmentation in Europe and to achieve a better allocation of financial resources across Europe. The Green Paper focuses, in particular, on the SME sector in Europe and argues for a much broader approach on long-term financing going well beyond traditional funding provided by banks.

In response to the European Commission initiative, the European Covered Bond Council (ECBC) suggested in May 2015 the introduction of a new dual recourse financial instrument in the European Union to address a funding segment located between the traditional covered bond and high-quality securitisation: the so-called European Secured Notes (ESN). The ESN would benefit from the market best practices of both traditional covered bonds (for funding purposes) and securitisation (for funding and risk-sharing purposes). Such an instrument could be backed by SME loans or other types of assets, such as infrastructure loans, and could contribute to the CMU growth objective.

In June 2018, the European Banking Authority (EBA) published its recommendations on ESNs. The EBA emphasised the importance of separating ESNs from traditional covered bonds and estimates that the aggregated pool of collateral (SME and infrastructure exposures) that would be available for re-financing through ESNs could be as high as EUR 4 tn. As SME ESNs would be structured as dual recourse instruments, the EBA considers – with some adjustments – all of its Best Practices Guidelines on covered bonds to be appropriate for SME ESNs. The EBA proposed stricter cover asset eligibility criteria compared to covered bonds – both at loan and pool levels – to account for the higher risk of SME exposures compared to traditional collateral for covered bonds. Moreover, the EBA recommends a mandatory overcollateralisation of at least 30%.

According to the EBA, a preferential risk weight under the CRR would not be appropriate based exclusively on the underlying assets. However, given the structure of the ESN, a different risk weight requirement compared with unsecured exposure could be considered, which should take into account:

> The dual-recourse character of the instrument;

> The overall consistency of the CRR capital framework between exposure classes;

> A clear distinction between SME ESNs and covered bonds that should be maintained to avoid potential negative side effects on the covered bond market.

The prudential treatment of SME ESNs under the LCR cannot be assessed currently as the instrument does not exist yet and its liquidity cannot be measured. However, given ESNs are issued by credit institutions and fundamental features of covered bonds are met, a preferential investment threshold under UCITS could be considered, according to the EBA. Along the same lines of argument, an exemption from posting collateral under EMIR could be considered. Last but not least, SME ESNs should be exempted from bail-in under the BRRD in line with other secured liabilities.

In contrast to SME ESNs, a dual recourse structure would not be appropriate for infrastructure exposure, according to the EBA, "given the bespoke nature, the complex structure and the lack of granularity characterising infrastructure loans." More specifically, the infrastructure project asset class is more heterogeneous and covers a wide range of very diverse assets. Moreover, the credit risk of infrastructure loans is much higher during the construction phase than in the operational phase. The EBA therefore recommends restricting cover assets to project finance loans in the operational phase. As the EBA advised against dual-recourse for infrastructure ESNs, it did not assess the potential regulatory treatment. However, the EBA views the introduction of an EU infrastructure bond as an off-balance-sheet instrument for high-quality project finance loans as something worth considering.

The ESN project has gained in importance due to both the launch of the European Commission's new CMU Action Plan in September 2020 and the potential use of ESNs as a recovery tool. In accordance with the provisions of the Covered Bond Directive and as also indicated in the CMU Action Plan, the European Commission must prepare a report on the potential of ESNs in Europe and may choose to propose a subsequent legislative initiative. In this context, the Commission has asked EBA for advice and set the deadline for the EBA advice at 30 June 2025. Against this backdrop, the ECBC – via its ESN Task Force – has accelerated its work on the ESN concept through dialogue with ECBC member institutions as well as important external stakeholders such as the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), the European Investment Bank (EIB) and a wide array of other interested parties including investors, issuers, rating agencies and business associations. In April 2021, the ECBC prepared the ESN Blueprint highlighting areas where a common understanding has been achieved amongst ECBC members and stakeholders from across the EU based on market analysis and best practices. The Blueprint focuses on three main areas: (i) the business case, (ii) eligibility criteria and (iii) the analysis of structural features.

From a banking industry perspective, the introduction of ESNs as standardised dual-recourse funding tool to refinance SME loans would be an interesting funding alternative for banks. While it may be of limited added value in the current compressed yield environment, it can gain in importance if the market levels start to normalise and

the risk premiums demanded by market participants increase. It could also play an important role in the recovery process in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. As highlighted by the EBA it is crucial to maintain a clear distinction between ESNs and covered bonds given the higher risk of the underlying SME collateral compared to mortgage and public sector assets. Crucial for the success of such a tool in terms of new issue volumes and achievable funding levels would also be a positive regulatory recognition of this financial instrument.

IV. NET-STABLE FUNDING RATIO (NSFR)

The Basel III framework and the Capital Requirement Regulation (CRR) introduced two liquidity standards: The Liquidity Coverage Requirement (LCR) and the Net-Stable Funding Ratio (NSFR). While the LCR rules have been phased-in in Europe since October 2015, the NSFR rules enter into force in June 2021. At the Basel level, the NSFR came into force for internationally active banks on 1 January 2018.

Principally, the NSFR is calculated as the ratio of Available Stable Funding (ASF) to Required Stable Funding (RSF), which has to be greater than 100%. ASF and RSF are calculated on the liabilities and assets, respectively, weighed by specific factors. These factors depend among others on the remaining maturity, the type of assets and the encumbrance status.

$$NSFR = \frac{\text{Available Stable Funding (ASF)}}{\text{Required Stable Funding (RSF)}} \geq 100\%$$

Covered Bonds with a maturity of more than 1 year benefit from a very favorable ASF ratio of 100%. The table below provides a sample of ASF ratios.

Liabilities	ASF ratio
Own funds	100%
Covered Bonds (maturity > 1 year)	100%
Deposits	90%
Covered Bonds (maturity > 6 months but < 1 year)	50%
Covered Bonds (maturity < 6 months)	0%

V. LIQUIDITY COVERAGE RATIO (LCR)

In October 2014, the European Commission published its delegated act on the liquidity coverage ratio (LCR) which requires banks to hold a certain amount of liquid assets to cover their net cash outflows over 30 days. The LCR has been phased-in since October 2015 and was fully implemented at the beginning of 2018 which was one year earlier than demanded by the Basel standard.

In a stress scenario when a bank needs its liquid assets, its LCR levels could (temporarily) fall below 100%. However, the bank would be required to immediately notify the competent authorities and submit a plan for the timely restoration of the LCR to above the 100% threshold.

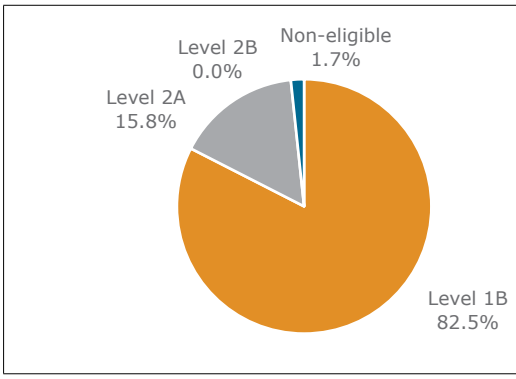
As the liquidity buffer is to reach a considerable level of a bank's balance sheet (10% or more of the total assets of an average EU bank according to European Banking Authority (EBA) estimates), the implementation of the LCR is likely to sustain the demand for eligible bonds.

Figure 3 provides a breakdown of the EUR benchmark covered market by LCR level. As of July 2025, more than four-fifths of the covered bonds are Level 1, 16% are Level 2A and 0% are Level 2B following the redemption of the last Greek covered bond. Just 2% of the EUR benchmark covered bonds are not LCR eligible.

The breakdown of the actual liquidity buffers shows that the share of covered bonds in the LCR portfolios is relatively small as most banks tend to focus on cash, central bank reserves and government bonds to fulfil their LCR requirements. According to the European Banking Authority (EBA) figures as of the year-end 2024, Level 1 assets

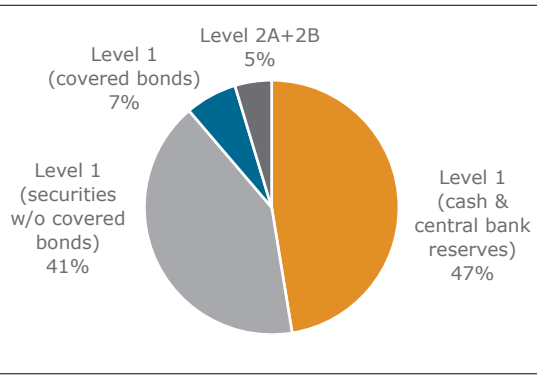
(excluding covered bonds) made up about 88% of the liquid buffers, including 47% cash & central bank reserves and 41% other eligible Level 1 securities. In contrast, the share of Level 1 covered bonds amounted to 7% while Level 2A and Level 2B assets (including but not limited to covered bonds) added up to about 5% (Figure 4).

> Figure 3: Classification of covered bonds



Source: HSBC, Bloomberg (only EUR benchmark covered bonds; as of 22 July 2025)

> Figure 4: Usage of Covered Bonds



Source: EBA, as of year-end 2024

Quick overview of the various LCR classifications

Level 1 assets ('Extremely High Quality Liquid Assets') include cash, deposits at the central bank, all types of bonds issued or guaranteed by the EU Member States' central government, covered bonds that meet certain conditions, as well as certain agency and supranational issues. Regarding the classification of EU sovereign bonds, no distinction was made between member states as that could have led to a fragmentation of the internal market and potential contagion risk.

Level 2A assets ('High Quality Liquid Assets') include exposures to regional governments, local authorities or public sector entities (PSEs) with a risk weight of 20% and covered bonds with a credit quality step 2 rating (at least A-) and non-EU covered bonds rated at credit quality step 1 (at least AA-). Corporate bonds with at least credit quality step 1, a minimum issue size of EUR250m and maximum maturity of 10 years at the time of issuance are also classified as Level 2A.

Level 2B assets ('High Quality Liquid Assets') incorporate high quality securitisations for RMBS, auto, SME and consumer loans and high quality covered bonds that do not meet the rating threshold of Level 1 and 2A. Shares meeting certain conditions and corporate bonds with at least credit quality step 3 (at least BBB-), a minimum issue size of EUR250m and maximum maturity of 10 years at the time of issuance are accepted as Level 2B.

Classification of covered bonds

Level 1 HQLAs include covered bonds that meet certain conditions, including being issued by an issuer in the European Economic Area (EEA), having a credit quality step 1 (at least AA-), a minimum size of EUR500m equivalent and a minimum overcollateralisation of 2%. The rating threshold will be based on a second-best rating approach in line with capital requirement rules (CRR) rather than on the ECB's best rating rule. Whilst other Level 1 assets are not subject to either liquidity buffer limits or to a haircut to their market value, Level 1 covered bonds will be subject to a 70% cap in the liquidity buffer and a 7% haircut.

Level 2A HQLAs include:

> EEA covered bonds with a credit quality step 2 rating (A- or better), a minimum size of EUR250m equivalent and minimum overcollateralisation of 7%;

- EEA covered bonds with a credit quality step 1 rating (AA- or better) and an issue size below the EUR500m threshold (but still meeting the minimum size of EUR250m equivalent) need a lower minimum overcollateralisation of 2%;
- Non-EEA covered bonds rated at credit quality step 1 (AA- or better) with a minimum overcollateralisation of 7%. There is no minimum size requirement. However, bonds with a size of EUR500m equivalent or more only need a minimum overcollateralisation of 2%. Moreover, the national covered bond law has to fulfil the CRR or UCITS requirements other than the issuer being based in EU.

Level 2A covered bonds can be used for up to a maximum of 40% in the liquidity buffer and are subject to a 15% haircut.

Level 2B HQLAs can be used for up to a maximum of 15% in the liquidity buffer and are subject to a minimum haircut varying between 25% and 50%. High quality EEA covered bonds that do not meet the rating threshold of Level 1 and 2A fall under this category. There are additional requirements for the cover assets which are limited to public sector and central bank exposures in EEA countries, residential mortgages (max 80% LTV) and guaranteed residential mortgages. The haircut for these covered bonds is relatively high at 30% and the cap is set at 15%.

Furthermore, in order to qualify, EEA covered bonds must be UCITS or CRR compliant. Non-EEA covered bonds must have a national covered bond law. In addition, all covered bonds must fulfil the transparency requirements of Article 129 (7) CRR.

Basel's LCR rules are less favourable

The BCBS LCR rules are less favourable than the EU regulation. Under the Basel rules, covered bonds are defined as bonds issued and owned by a bank or mortgage institution that are subject by law to special public supervision designed to protect bondholders. Issue proceeds must be invested in conformity with the law in assets which, during the entire period until the maturity of the bonds, are capable of covering the preferential claims of the covered bond investors.

On top of that, covered bonds have to (i) be rated AA- (second-highest rating), (ii) have a proven track record as a reliable source of liquidity reflected by a maximum price drop of 10% over 30-day period of stress, (iii) be traded in large, deep and active repo/cash markets with a low level of concentration, and (iv) cannot be issued by the submitting bank itself. Covered bonds meeting these criteria qualify as Level 2A assets rather than Level 1 as under the EU rules and are therefore subject to a haircut of 15% and a cap of 40%.

In July 2017, the BCBS stated that the LCR rules in the EU are not fully aligned with international standards. In particular, the inclusion of high-quality covered bonds as Level 1 assets was criticised. The EU responded to the BCBS comment by highlighting that "the limited broadening of HQLA definition reflects European or national specificities and remains largely consistent with the Basel III LCR Standards. In particular, evidence demonstrates the equivalent liquidity of the additional assets included and, therefore, the choice made is fully consistent with the spirit of the Basel Committee's agreement. [..] The inclusion, under strict conditions, of extremely high-quality covered bonds in Level 1 is motivated by the liquidity patterns of these instruments, which, over long periods of observation, including times of stress, have exhibited liquidity characteristics equivalent to other eligible Level 1 assets".[1]

VI. LEVERAGE RATIO

In order to "prevent institutions from excessively increasing leverage" (European Commission, November 2016), the Basel Committee and the EU have created an additional defence line: the leverage ratio. The leverage ratio complements the risk-weighted capital requirements "by providing a safeguard against unsustainable levels of leverage and by mitigating gaming and model risk across both internal models and standardised risk

1 Basel Committee on Banking Supervision: Assessment of Basel III LCR regulations – European Union, July 2017.

measurement approaches" (Basel Committee, December 2017). The BCBS requires banks to maintain a leverage ratio of 3%. Global Systemically Important Banks (G-SIBs) are subject to even higher ratios. EU banks had been required to disclose the leverage ratio since the beginning of 2015 and the 3% leverage ratio became binding in the EU on 28 June 2021.

VII. CAPITAL REQUIREMENT REGULATION (CRR)

The CRR came into force on 1 January 2014. It assigns relatively low risk weights to covered bonds meeting certain criteria. As part of the covered bond harmonisation process, the covered bond section in the CRR was overhauled. The CRR amendments entered into force on 8 July 2022. Under current rules, only secured securities that qualify as covered bonds under the new EU Covered Bond Directive are eligible for the preferential risk weights of the CRR. On top of that, these covered bonds have to meet the additional eligibility criteria for cover assets of Article 129 CRR.

These encompass a comprehensive list of eligible cover assets in Article 129 (1) and include loan-to-value (LTV) limits for real estate loans and ship mortgages as well as minimum rating requirements for credit institution exposures. Article 129 (3a) defines the required minimum overcollateralization of 5% (national regulators may, however, apply a lower minimum OC of not less than 2% if certain conditions are met).

Standardised Approach

Covered bonds fulfilling the aforementioned criteria are eligible for a preferential risk weight under the CRR. In contrast to previous regulation, the risk weights under the Standardised Approach are based on the covered bond ratings rather than the issuer ratings. Figure 5 shows that covered bonds rated at least AA-/Aa3 qualify for a 10% risk weighting which increases to 20% for bonds being rated from A+/A1 to BBB-/Baa3. For non-investment grade covered bonds rated at least B-/B3 the risk weight is 50%.

Figure 5: Risk weightings of rated covered bonds under the Standardised Approach

Credit quality step (covered bonds)	1	2	3	4	5	6
Covered bond rating	AAA to AA-	A+ to A-	BBB+ to BBB-	BB+ to BB-	B+ to B-	below B-
Covered bond risk weight	10%	20%	20%	50%	50%	100%

Source: EU, HSBC (Mapping of credit quality steps to rating is based on the second-highest eligible rating in case of split-ratings)

In case of unrated covered bonds, the risk weighting is linked to the issuer rating. However, the risk weights of the covered bonds are significantly lower than those for senior unsecured exposures. As of 1 January 2025, the following risk weight table of unrated covered bonds applies (Article 129 (5) CRR):

Figure 6: Risk weightings of unrated covered bonds under the Standardised Approach

Risk weight of the exposures to the institution	Risk weight of covered bonds
20%	10%
30%	15%
40%	20%
50%	25%
75%	35%
100%	50%
150%	100%

Source: EU, HSBC

Non-CRR compliant covered bonds are generally treated as exposures to credit institutions according to Art. 120 CRR. The risk weighting of the bonds, however, will be based on the actual issue/programme rating rather than the issuer rating (Art 139 (1) CRR). This means that a AAA-rated non-CRR compliant covered bond issued by a single-A rated issuer would have a 20% risk weight (rather than a 50% risk weight).

The Internal Ratings-Based Approach (IRBA)

Under the CRR, banks can opt for using approaches based on internal ratings. Under these Internal Ratings-Based Approaches (IRBA), risk weight calculations are based upon a complex formula. This formula uses as inputs the probability of default within a one-year horizon (PD), the loss given default (LGD), the exposure at default (EAD) and the effective time to maturity (M) of the individual securities.

Under the Foundation IRB (FIRB), financial institutions have to estimate PD based upon their internal risk-scoring models; PD refers to the exposure to the corporate/institution, not the bond itself, and is floored at 0.03%. M should be set to 0.5 years in case of repo transactions and to 2.5 years when assessing all other exposures; M can upon approval from the regulator also be fixed at actual maturity but not shorter than one year and not longer than five. Covered bonds meeting the aforementioned eligibility criteria may be assigned an LGD value of 11.25%.

If a financial institution opts for the Advanced IRB (AIRB) instead, it will have to assess all risk components on an individual basis. Under both approaches, irrespective of the country or region within which the bank holding the covered bond is incorporated, the PD to be employed will always only reflect the PD of the issuer. The PD of the collateral pool is not relevant. In no case can the PD be less than 0.03%. Institutions that opt for the advanced approach may use an LGD lower than 11.25%. Those banks will also use the actual M, though the value will be capped for value below 1 and value above 5.

Figure 7 below shows the risk weighting for different PD assumptions and maturities. In all cases, the LGD is set at 11.25%. In case of the FIRB, the maturity is set at M = 2.5 years – this is highlighted in grey in the figure. The PD is based on Moody's default statistics (for the years 1983-2019), floored at 0.03%. A covered bond issued by a bank with an internal issuer rating equivalent to single-A (which translates into a 1-year PD of 0.06%) and a maturity of 5 years would have a risk weight of 5.81% under the FIRB and of 9.81% under the AIRB.

Figure 7: Internal risk weights of covered bonds under the FIRB and the AIRB

Issuer rating equivalent	PD used	Maturity in years					
		1	2	2.5	3	4	5
Aaa/AAA	0.03%	2.01%	3.22%	3.83%	4.43%	5.65%	6.86%
Aa/AA	0.03%	2.01%	3.22%	3.83%	4.43%	5.65%	6.86%
A/A	0.06%	3.41%	5.01%	5.81%	6.61%	8.21%	9.81%
Baa/BBB	0.17%	7.14%	9.47%	10.64%	11.80%	14.13%	16.46%
Ba/BB	0.85%	18.05%	21.37%	23.04%	24.70%	28.02%	31.34%
B/B	3.21%	29.79%	33.05%	34.69%	36.32%	39.59%	42.85%
below B	9.52%	45.63%	48.70%	50.24%	51.78%	54.85%	57.93%

Source: EU, Moody's, HSBC (FIRB: M= 2.5 years; PD is based on Moody's figures and is floored at 0.03%)
With regard to the relevant insurance regulation at European level, please refer to the following article.

UK regulatory treatment of non-UK covered bonds

In July 2025, the UK Prudential Regulation Authority (PRA) and the His Majesty's Treasury (HM Treasury) provided updates on the prudential treatment of non-UK covered bonds under UK capital and liquidity rules. This could have an impact on the third-country equivalence recommendations by the European Banking Authority (EBA) and subsequent decisions by the European Commission which among other factors will likely be based on reciprocity.

On 15 July 2025, the PRA announced its decision to not proceed with the Modification by Consent (MbC) process which was paused on 17 April 2025. To recap, on 8 April 2025, the PRA offered an MbC to amend Article 11 (1)(d) of the Liquidity Coverage Ratio (LCR) part of the PRA Rulebook, allowing UK banks that incorrectly applied a rule regarding the inclusion of third-country covered bonds as Level 2A High Quality Liquid Assets (HQLA) to continue using non-UK covered bonds as HQLA which were held at the end January 2025. However, newly non-UK covered bonds did not fall under this exemption. In light of the market feedback, the PRA decided on 17 April 2025 to pause the process to consider technical comments and requests for clarification from stakeholders. In light of HM Treasury's policy update on the future prudential treatment of non-UK covered bonds on 15 July 2025, the PRA decided not to re-launch the MbC. Pending finalisation by HM Treasury's long-term approach to equivalence of non-UK covered bonds, the PRA does not expect UK banks to alter their approach to LCR inclusion of non-UK covered bonds, including for new issuances.

Also on 15 July 2025, HM Treasury published a Policy Update of its 'Applying the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 model of regulation to the UK Capital Requirements Regulation'. The new Policy Update explains the next steps which HM Treasury plans to take to implement the Basel 3.1 standards and revoke parts of the UK Capital Requirements Regulation (CRR). It also considers introducing Overseas Prudential Requirements Regimes (OPRR) that will clarify the equivalence of non-UK covered bonds and their prudential treatment under UK capital and liquidity rules.

Under current UK CRR rules, a large number of equivalence regimes specify which activities or exposures in non-UK jurisdictions are deemed equivalent. Following Brexit, more than 270 EU equivalence decisions and 40 EU equivalence regimes were 'onshored' into UK law, according to HM Treasury. The UK plans to replace existing equivalence regimes inherited from the EU with UK-tailored 'Overseas Recognition Regimes'. HM Treasury "intends to restate existing equivalence decisions made under [the old] equivalence regimes so that jurisdictions currently deemed equivalent are treated as designated under the Overseas Prudential Requirements Regimes and the effect of the current decisions is preserved" (HM Treasury, July 2025). The new rules should also be sufficiently flexible to allow the recognition of additional exposures or activities in the future. In terms of covered bonds, HM Treasury is considering whether covered bonds should be designated under the new Overseas Prudential Requirements Regimes (OPRR).

Currently, the preferential regulatory treatment of covered bonds in the UK is essentially limited to UK covered bonds. However, HM Treasury is considering to potentially widen this approach to non-UK covered bonds where "the regulation and supervision of covered bonds in overseas jurisdictions may result in similar levels of investor protection" (HM Treasury, July 2025). According to HM Treasury, this could strengthen the financial stability, the safety and the soundness of the UK banking sector. It could also help to improve the liquidity of the UK market for non-UK covered bonds and enhance the UK's competitiveness as a financial services hub. The new OPRR might grant a more favourable prudential treatment of designated non-UK covered bonds in terms of capital as well as liquidity requirements. Moreover, HM Treasury stated that it "would ensure [that] any designation under the Overseas Prudential Requirements Regime did not create cliff edges in treatment for overseas covered bonds issued prior to the designation".

HM Treasury has asked for feedback on the Overseas Recognition Regimes and key CRR definition. It has also invited banks to provide evidence on the effects of the inclusion of non-UK covered bonds and to highlight which jurisdictions have the most material and liquid covered bond markets. The consultation period ends on 5 September 2025. HM Treasury plans to publish a draft of the UK's OPRR later in 2025. Moreover, it intends to publish transitional regulations and make appropriate revocations of the UK CRR in a manner that gives PRA sufficient time to ensure implementation of Basel 3.1 on 1 January 2027.

2.2.2 INSURANCE REGULATION – SOLVENCY II

By Florian Eichert, Crédit Agricole CIB

The Solvency II Directive (2009/138/EC) is what the Capital Requirements Directive (CRD) IV is for the banking world – a regulatory regime that introduces risk based capital charges. It was adopted by the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union in November 2009. Implementing the directive was, however, far from done at this point with multiple delays occurring over the following years. During this period, a number of amendments to the original Solvency II Directive had become necessary to be in line with EU's implementing measures according to the Lisbon Treaty of 2009 and EU's new supervisory structure by introducing the European Insurance and Occupational Pensions Authority (EIOPA). These amendments were implemented through the so-called Omnibus II Directive, which was passed by the European Parliament on 11 March 2014. The EC finally adopted the Delegated Regulation (EU 2015/35) containing implementing rules for Solvency in October 2014. The first set of implementing rules was then adopted in March 2015, with the second set of guidelines following suit in the third quarter of 2015. Solvency II finally then came into effect on 1 January 2016.

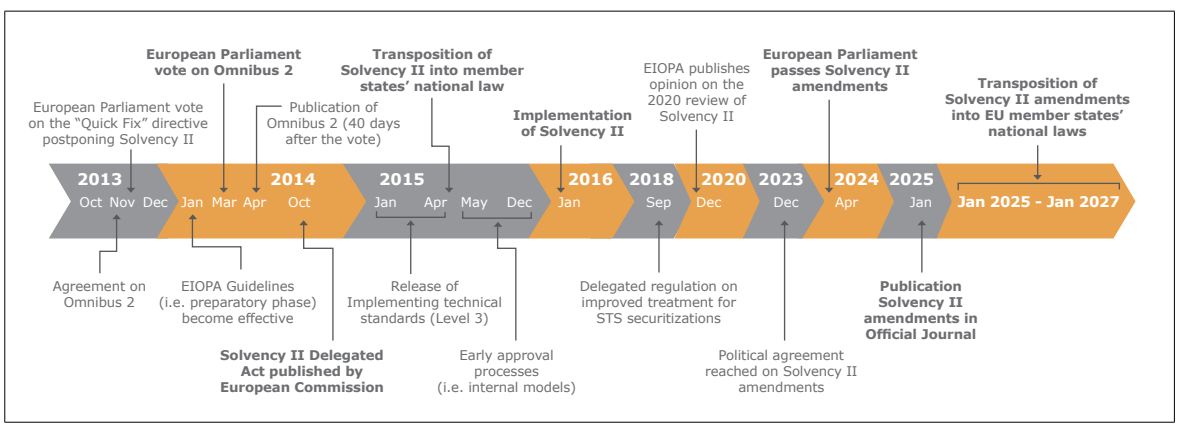
What is true in football also applies to regulation and after the game is typically before the game. Hence, the Solvency II Directive asked the European Commission to review certain areas by January 2021. EIOPA published an opinion on the review in December 2020 stating[1] that "From a prudential perspective, EIOPA is of the view that overall the Solvency II framework is working well and no fundamental changes are needed at this point in time, but a number of amendments are required to ensure that the regulatory framework continues as a well-functioning risk-based regime."

Proposed amendments of the Solvency II Directive focused on promoting long-term investments, simplifying requirements for small and non-complex undertakings, address sustainability and climate risks as well as introduce macro-prudential rules around liquidity risk and recovery and resolution planning to prevent systemic risk.

After political agreement in December 2023 and approval in the European Parliament in April 2024, the amendments to Solvency II were published in the Official Journal of the European Union on 8 January 2025. Member States will have two years to transpose the rules with measures to apply from 30 January 2027 the latest.

For the spread risk sub module, which impacts covered bonds directly, the amended rules do not contain any material changes, though.

Figure 1: Timeline of implementation Solvency II



Source: European Commission, Crédit Agricole CIB

1 https://www.eiopa.europa.eu/publications/opinion-2020-review-solvency-ii_en

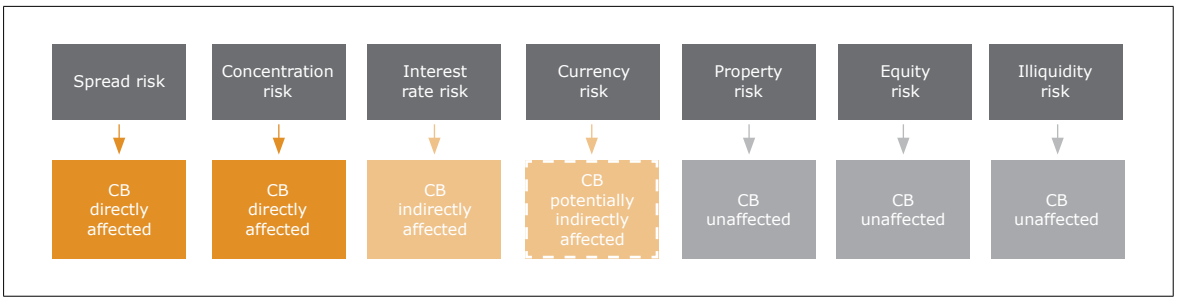
OVERVIEW OF SOLVENCY II – WHERE ARE COVERED BONDS IMPACTED?

Solvency II is a highly complex framework which addresses a vast number of different sources of risks that all interact with each other to come up with a final solvency capital requirement (SCR). Risks range from market risk to underwriting risk, longevity risk or default risk on loan exposures.

Covered bonds are mainly affected by the market risk section and specifically mentioned in the spread risk and concentration risk modules.

One final remark before going into the details. Covered bonds in the context of Solvency II still mean covered bonds in line with Article 52(4) of the UCITS Directive 2009/65/EC. Unlike in banking regulation (i.e. LCR delegated act, adjusted Article 129 CRR), Solvency II was not adjusted to take into account the Covered Bond Directive.

> Figure 2: Market risk modules in Solvency II and their relevance for covered bonds



Source: EIOPA, Crédit Agricole CIB

SPREAD RISK MODULE

The spread risk module is the biggest single investment specific driver of capital charges under Solvency II. Interest rate risk is an even bigger driver of capital charges overall but other than spread risk is driven by the overall asset and liability structure of an insurance company and not by the individual asset purchased.

EIOPA describes spread risks as the "results from the sensitivity of the value of assets, liabilities and financial instruments to changes in the level or in the volatility of credit spreads over the risk-free interest rate term structure." In other words, we are talking about the spread vulnerability in volatile scenarios. Spread risk applies to virtually all fixed income instruments apart from sovereign debt rated AA- and better.

Since insurance companies are longer-term investors than banks, capital charges for investments are also significantly higher than they are for banks. In addition to this, they are not only driven by credit risk, as is the case for the standardised approach in banking regulation, but are also determined by a combination of rating and duration. The weaker the rating and the longer the investment, the higher the capital charge. The spread risk module capital charges are expressed as a charge per year of duration.

The Solvency II review we mentioned above has not resulted in further changes to spread risk capital charges for fixed income investments. We did have a number of adjustments lower for securitisation assets over the years. After the introduction of simple, transparent and standardised securitisation products (STS) in place since December 2017, Solvency II capital charges were lowered for STS products in September 2018 via a delegated regulation for example.

The treatment of covered bonds has not changed since the introduction of Solvency II in 2016. They receive preferential treatment under the spread risk module if they comply with the following criteria:

> They have a credit quality step 0 or 1 which means a minimum rating of AA-;

> They meet the requirements defined in Article 52(4) of the UCITS Directive 2009/65/EC (as mentioned above, there has not been an amendment of the Solvency II delegated act to reflect the existence of the Covered Bond Directive).

For covered bonds that fulfil the UCITS Directive and are rated AAA, a spread risk factor of 0.7% applies per year of duration up to 5Y while AA- to AA+ rated ones have a factor of 0.9%. Covered bonds that do not meet these requirements are treated as senior unsecured exposure. Capital charges are 0.2% higher per duration year.

Determining the duration of a bond is straightforward when it comes to hard bullet covered bonds. Soft bullet structures (as well as to a much lesser extent) conditional pass through (CPT) covered bonds have however become more common often raising the question which maturity is the relevant one. As far as we are aware, Solvency II looks at the extended maturity when determining the spread risk capital charge in the standardised approach. In the IRB approaches investors can work with an expected final maturity date. For soft bullet covered bonds the extra 12 months are thus not major, especially under an IRB approach. For CPT deals that can in theory extend by up to 38 years the story looks slightly different though. Even in an IRB approach, spread risk capital charges under Solvency II will be higher for a comparable hard bullet covered bond with the same original maturity and one reason why some CPT issuers recently switched to issuing soft bullet covered bonds was to be able to extend further out the curve.

When looking at the numbers it is also important to mention that the percentages do not relate to 8% of the invested notional as is the case in the banking world but to the actual invested notional. A 10% risk-weight on covered bonds essentially means a 0.8% capital charge for a bank. Talking about 0.7% capital charge in Solvency II for an equally rated 1Y covered bond also means 0.7% capital relative to the invested notional. The longer the duration of the bond is, the higher the Solvency charge becomes in both absolute terms as well as relative to bank capital charges. While the AAA covered bond with a 1Y maturity is treated slightly better under Solvency II, (0.7% vs. 0.8%), the relationship reverses from year 2 onwards. For an AAA rated 10Y covered bond, insurance companies have to hold 6% of the invested notional in capital, which is 7.5 times as much as banks.

> Figure 3: Formulas for the Solvency II capital charge calculations for covered bonds and other asset classes

Credit quality	Up to 5 years	5 to 10 years	10 to 15 years	15 to 20 years	20 years +
AAA covered	0.7% * D	3.5% + 0.5% * (D -5)	6% + 0.5% * (D -10)	8.5% + 0.5% * (D -15)	11% + 0.5% * (D -20)
AA + to AA- covered	0.9% * D	4.5% + 0.5% * (D -5)	7% + 0.5% * (D -10)	9.5% + 0.5% * (D -15)	12% + 0.5% * (D -20)
A+ to A- covered	1.4% * D	7% + 0.7% * (D -5)	10.5% + 0.5% * (D -10)	13% + 0.5% * (D -15)	15.5% + 0.5% * (D -20)
BBB+ to BBB- covered	2.5% * D	12.5% + 1.5% * (D -5)	20% + 1% * (D -10)	25% + 1% * (D -15)	30% + 0.5% * (D -20)
BB+ to BB- covered	4.5% * D	22.5% + 2.5% * (D -5)	35% + 1.8% * (D -10)	44% + 0.5% * (D -15)	46.6% + 0.5% * (D -20)
Unrated covered	3.0% * D	15% + 1.7% * (D -5)	23.5% + 1.2% * (D -10)	29.5% + 1.2% * (D -15)	35.5% + 0.5% * (D -20)
EU member states' direct central government exposure / guaranteed by EU member central governments (irrespective of rating)	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
AAA to AA- sovereign third country	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
A+ to A- sovereign	1.1% * D	5.5% + 0.6% * (D -5)	8.4% + 0.5% * (D -10)	10.9% + 0.5% * (D -15)	13.4% + 0.5% * (D -20)
BBB+ to BBB- sovereign	1.4% * D	7% + 0.7% * (D -5)	10.5% + 0.5% * (D -10)	13% + 0.5% * (D -15)	15.5% + 0.5% * (D -20)
BB+ to BB- sovereign	2.5% * D	12.5% + 1.5% * (D -5)	20% + 1% * (D -10)	25% + 1% * (D -15)	30% + 0.5% * (D -20)

Credit quality	Up to 5 years	5 to 10 years	10 to 15 years	15 to 20 years	20 years +
AAA corporate	0.9% * D	4.5% + 0.5% * (D -5)	7.0% + 0.5% * (D -10)	9.7% + 0.5% * (D -15)	12.0% + 0.5% * (D -20)
AA+ to AA- corporate	1.1% * D	5.5% + 0.6% * (D -5)	8.4% + 0.5% * (D -10)	10.9% + 0.5% * (D -15)	13.4% + 0.5% * (D -20)
A+ to A- corporate	1.4% * D	7% + 0.7% * (D -5)	10.5% + 0.5% * (D -10)	13% + 0.5% * (D -15)	15.5% + 0.5% * (D -20)
BBB+ to BBB- corporate	2.5% * D	12.5% + 1.5% * (D -5)	20% + 1% * (D -10)	25% + 1% * (D -15)	30% + 0.5% * (D -20)
BB+ to BB- corporate	4.5% * D	22.5% + 2.5% * (D -5)	35% + 1.8% * (D -10)	44% + 0.5% * (D -15)	46.6% + 0.5% * (D -20)
AAA STS securization	1.0% * D	5.0% + 0.6% * (D -5)	8.0% + 0.6% * (D -10)	11% + 0.6% * (D -15)	14.0% + 0.6% * (D -20)
AA + to AA- STS securization	1.2% * D	6.0% + 0.7% * (D -5)	9.5% + 0.5% * (D -10)	12.0% + 0.5% * (D -15)	14.5% + 0.5% * (D -20)
A+ to A- STS securization	1.6% * D	8% + 0.8% * (D -5)	12.0% + 0.6% * (D -10)	15% + 0.6% * (D -15)	18.0% + 0.6% * (D -20)
BBB+ to BBB- STS securization	2.8% * D	14.0% + 1.7% * (D -5)	22.5% + 1.1% * (D -10)	28% + 1.1% * (D -15)	33.5% + 0.6% * (D -20)
BB+ to BB- STS securization	5.6% * D	28.0% + 3.1% * (D -5)	43.5% + 2.2% * (D -10)	54.5% + 0.6% * (D -15)	57.5% + 0.6% * (D -20)

Source: EIOPA, Crédit Agricole CIB

> Figure 4: Solvency II capital charges for covered bonds and other asset classes

Credit quality	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
AAA covered	0.7%	1.4%	2.1%	2.8%	3.5%	4.0%	4.5%	5.0%	5.5%	6.0%	6.5%	7.0%	7.5%	8.0%	8.5%
AA + to AA- covered	0.9%	1.8%	2.7%	3.6%	4.5%	5.0%	5.5%	6.0%	6.5%	7.0%	7.5%	8.0%	8.5%	9.0%	9.5%
A+ to A- covered	1.4%	2.8%	4.2%	5.6%	7.0%	7.7%	8.4%	9.1%	9.8%	10.5%	11.0%	11.5%	12.0%	12.5%	13.0%
BBB+ to BBB- covered	2.5%	5.0%	7.5%	10.0%	12.5%	14.0%	15.5%	17.0%	18.5%	20.0%	21.0%	22.0%	23.0%	24.0%	25.0%
BB+ to BB- covered	4.5%	9.0%	13.5%	18.0%	22.5%	25.0%	27.5%	30.0%	32.5%	35.0%	36.8%	38.6%	40.4%	42.2%	44.0%
Unrated covered	3.0%	6.0%	9.0%	12.0%	15.0%	16.7%	18.4%	20.1%	21.8%	23.5%	24.7%	25.9%	27.1%	28.3%	29.5%
AAA to AA- EU sovereign	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
A+ to A- EU sovereign	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
BBB+ to BBB- EU sovereign	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
BB+ to BB- EU sovereign	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
AAA to AA- sovereign	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
A+ to A- sovereign	1.1%	2.2%	3.3%	4.4%	5.5%	6.1%	6.7%	7.3%	7.9%	8.5%	8.9%	9.4%	9.9%	10.4%	10.9%
BBB+ to BBB- sovereign	1.4%	2.8%	4.2%	5.6%	7.0%	7.7%	8.4%	9.1%	9.8%	10.5%	11.0%	11.5%	12.0%	12.5%	13.0%
BB+ to BB- sovereign	2.5%	5.0%	7.5%	10.0%	12.5%	14.0%	15.5%	17.0%	18.5%	20.0%	20.5%	22.0%	23.0%	24.0%	25.0%
AAA corporate	0.9%	1.8%	2.7%	3.6%	4.5%	5.0%	5.5%	6.0%	6.5%	7.0%	7.5%	8.0%	8.5%	9.0%	9.5%
AA+ to AA- corporate	1.1%	2.2%	3.3%	4.4%	5.5%	6.1%	6.7%	7.3%	7.9%	8.4%	8.9%	9.4%	9.9%	10.4%	10.9%
A+ to A- corporate	1.4%	2.8%	4.2%	5.6%	7.0%	7.7%	8.4%	9.1%	9.8%	10.5%	11.0%	11.5%	12.0%	12.5%	13.0%
BBB+ to BBB- corporate	2.5%	5.0%	7.5%	10.0%	12.5%	14.0%	15.5%	17.0%	18.5%	20.0%	21.0%	22.0%	23.0%	24.0%	25.0%
BB+ to BB- corporate	4.5%	9.0%	13.5%	18.0%	22.5%	25.0%	27.5%	30.0%	32.5%	35.0%	36.8%	38.6%	40.4%	42.2%	44.0%
AAA STS securization	1.0%	2.0%	3.0%	4.0%	5.0%	5.6%	6.2%	6.8%	7.4%	8.0%	8.6%	9.2%	9.8%	10.4%	11.0%
AA + to AA- STS securization	1.2%	2.4%	3.6%	4.8%	6.0%	6.7%	7.4%	8.1%	8.8%	9.5%	10.0%	10.5%	11.0%	11.5%	12.0%
A+ to A- STS securization	1.6%	3.2%	4.8%	6.4%	8.0%	8.8%	9.6%	10.4%	11.2%	12.0%	12.6%	13.2%	13.8%	14.4%	15.0%
BBB+ to BBB- STS securization	2.8%	5.6%	8.4%	11.2%	14.0%	15.7%	17.4%	19.1%	20.8%	22.5%	23.6%	24.7%	25.8%	26.9%	28.0%
BB+ to BB- STS securization	5.6%	11.2%	16.8%	22.4%	28.0%	31.1%	34.2%	37.3%	40.4%	43.5%	45.7%	47.9%	50.1%	52.3%	54.5%

Source: EIOPA, Crédit Agricole CIB

The capital charge differences between AAA and AA rated covered bonds are noticeable but not huge (1% difference for 10Y). The moment covered bonds drop into single A space and thus lose their preferential treatment, differences start to become very pronounced though (4.5% difference for 10Y) and with BBB (14.0% difference for 10Y) and BB covered bonds (29% difference for 10Y) they become massive.

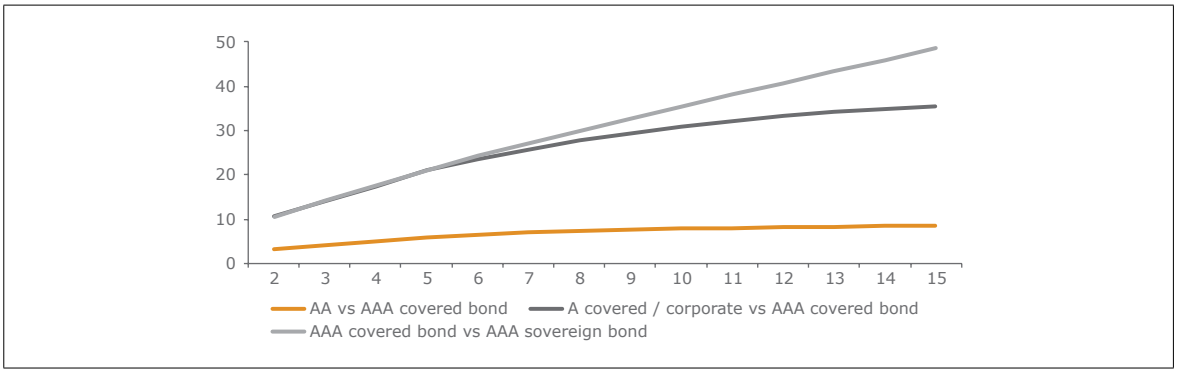
When looking across asset classes, it becomes apparent that Solvency II favours sovereign debt over corporate and covered bonds. Nonetheless, differences between corporates and equally rated covered bonds are not massive (1.2% difference for 10Y AAA).

Despite improvements in how securitisation deals are treated, the highest quality securitisation have around three times the capital requirement of AAA covered bonds in 5Y (10.5% vs. 3.5%) and three and a half times in 10Y (21% vs. 6%). For lower rated ABS, the difference to equally rated covered bonds in for example 10Y is 23% (30% vs. 7%).

Trying to translate the different capital requirements into spread numbers that one product has to yield in excess of another is not a straightforward exercise. After all, spread risk is merely one factor and there are many others driving the final SCR. It also depends on the return on equity an insurance investor needs to generate. Nonetheless, we have tried to estimate the additional yield required to cover the extra capital from this risk module.

- We have calculated the average capital charge for a buy and hold investor over the whole life of the investment;
- We have then assumed an ROEs of 10% to calculate the extra return needed to fulfil this return requirement.

> Figures 5: Spread in bp needed to compensate for additional capital between differently rated covered bonds, corporates and sovereign bonds (bp)



Source: EIOPA, Crédit Agricole CIB

CONCENTRATION RISK MODULE

The concentration risk is defined by the EIOPA as "the risk regarding the accumulation of exposures with the same counterparty" which means that large exposures on a single issuer should be limited. Other concentration types dealing with geographical area, industry sector or the like are not considered though.

Similar to the spread risk module, covered bonds receive a preferential treatment here in the sense that the concentration threshold is much higher at 15% than it would be for equally rated corporate debt for which exposure to a single counterparty is limited to 3%. In addition to this covered bonds are considered as a distinct single name exposure, regardless of other exposures to the same counterparty. In other words, buying covered bonds does not impact the ability or limit the quantity of unsecured exposure towards the issuer an insurance company can buy.

> Figure 6: Concentration risk thresholds by bond type and rating

Type of bond	Rating	Concentration threshold
Corporate bonds, sub + hybrid debt, ABS, CDO	AAA – AA	3.0%
	A	3.0%
	BBB	1.5%
	BB or lower	1.5%
Covered Bonds	AAA – AA	15.0%
Exposure to EEA state, multilateral development banks, international organisations, ECB	–	none

Source: EIOPA, Crédit Agricole CIB

BOTTOM LINE

Solvency II (SII) is probably the regulatory regime in which ratings still play the biggest role and in which sovereign debt is given the biggest advantage over private-sector debt. It is true that in bank regulation EU member states do still have a 0% RW; but since Solvency II is calibrated for long-term investors and covers credit risk as well as market volatility risk, the absolute capital charges are a multiple of those for banks and relative differences are magnified.

Apart from the comparison with sovereign debt, highly rated UCITS-compliant covered bonds (SII has not changed references to the Covered Bond Directive as the CRR has) do fare relatively well overall. They get preferential treatment in both the spread risk and concentration risk modules as long as they are rated at least AA-. Unlike for banking regulation such as the LCR delegated act, there has been no change in reference from UCITS to the Covered Bond Directive in the case of Solvency II.

Non-UCITS-compliant covered bonds are treated as senior unsecured exposure but as long as they are highly rated, capital charge differences to UCITS-compliant covered bonds are not major. Capital charges for covered bonds do, however, start to go up the moment ratings drop to below AA-. After all, even UCITS-compliant covered bonds are then treated as senior unsecured exposure without any preferential treatment. While the step to single-A ratings is still manageable, dropping to BBB and below means that capital charges become very onerous. Fortunately, there are virtually no covered bonds left in these rating categories these days.

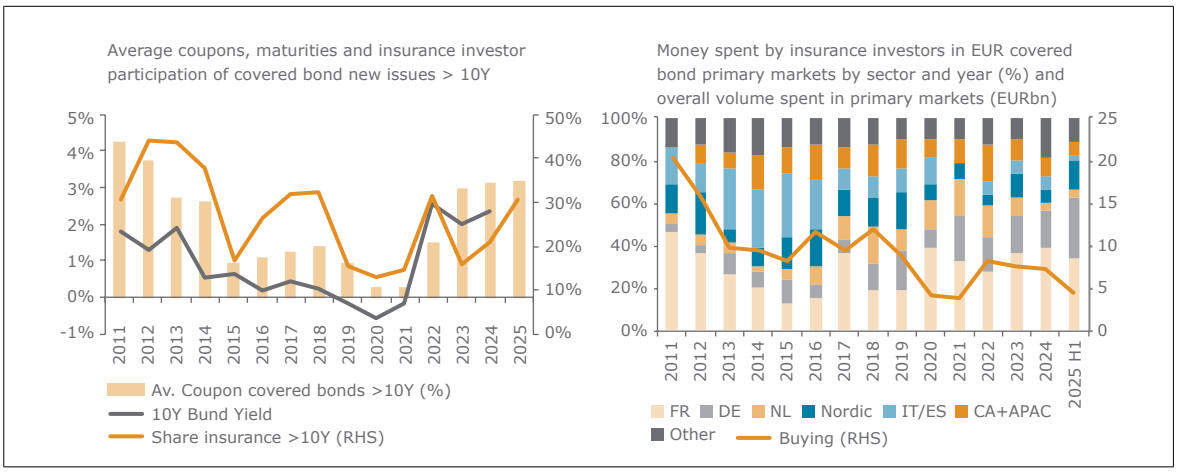
In addition to the spread risk capital treatment, overall capital charges under Solvency II are also determined by the size of the asset–liability mismatch. Long-dated covered bonds are an asset class that is able to close the gap to insurance companies' long-dated liabilities while giving the added security of the underlying framework, product support and collateral.

In any case, for insurance companies, the far bigger problem in the years up to 2022 had been the low absolute yields, tight spreads and flat spreads curves in EUR markets. Before the CBPP 3 started in 2014, insurance companies' share in covered bond new issues with maturities longer than 10Y was as high as 45% (2013). In 2021, new issues above 10Y had an average maturity of 17.5 years, yet, average coupons dropped to 0.3%. As a consequence, the average insurance sector participation at the long-end was as low as 14%.

Since 2022, we have seen yields and consequently coupons surge. We also no longer have inverted swap curves and average covered bond coupons of new issues have been well above 3% since last year. Hence, for those accounts with money to invest, covered bonds have offered diversification benefits and a still meaningful pick-up above EGBs despite tighter Bund-ASW spreads and at the short end also SSAs that are well sufficient to cover the additional capital charges. As a result, insurance sector buying in covered bond markets has picked up again. In 2024, 10Y+ new issues have seen 20% participation from the sector again while this figure has surpassed the 30% mark in H1 2025.

While the share of insurance buyers in new issues has risen, absolute amounts spent on covered bonds have not and we are still well below the amounts spend pre-QE. After all, insurance companies are still faced with: (1) limited inflows and hence fresh money to deploy in covered bond markets, (2) existing holdings often trading well below par making switches difficult without realising losses on existing positions and (3) still some commitments in alternative asset space that need to be serviced before deploying money in classic fixed income markets. However, a lack of long-end covered bond supply has been at least as much part of the story.

> Figure 7: Insurance participation in EUR benchmark covered bond new issues



Source: Bloomberg, Covered Bond Report, Crédit Agricole CIB

2.2.3 MREL AND TLAC AND PROTECTED COVERED BONDS

By Alexandra Schadow, LBBW

Bail-in framework is further strengthened

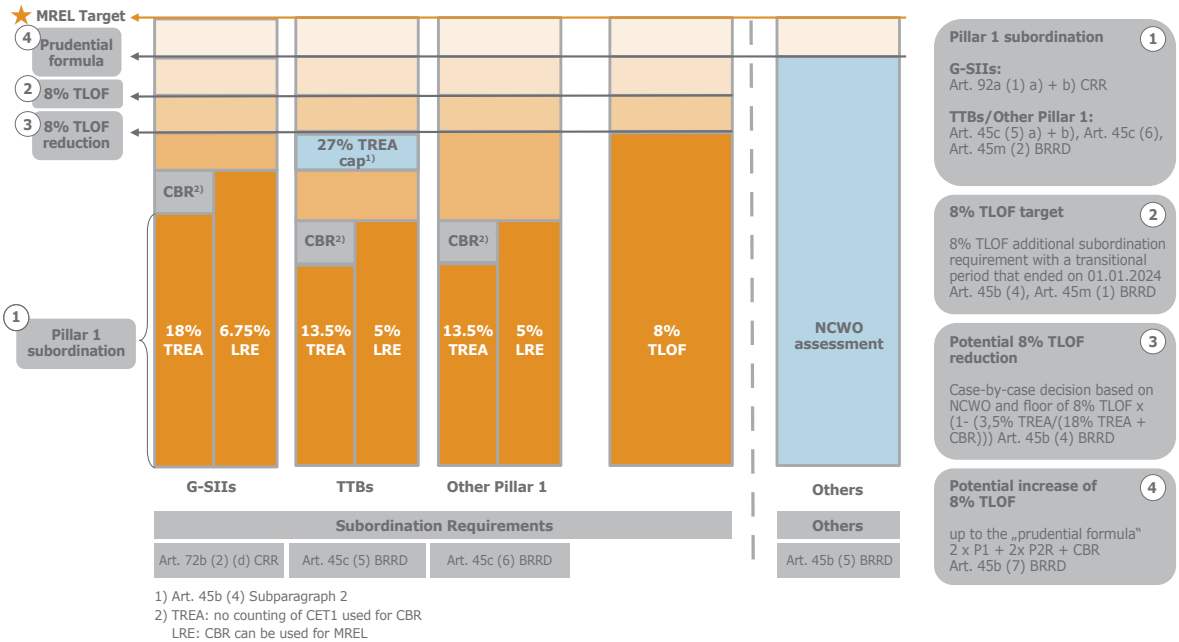
If a financial institution finds itself in difficulty and the supervisory authority determines that it is "failing or likely to fail", the bank may be put into resolution if certain conditions are met. Four tools are available under resolution: sale, bridge institutions, asset separation, and bail-in. Under a bail-in, the resolution authority is given powers to write down liabilities or convert them into equity in order to absorb losses and carry out recapitalization measures. This approach presupposes that all institutions have sufficient "bail-in-able" capital. To this end, Article 45 of the first BRRD (Bank Recovery and Resolution Directive; Directive 2014/59/EU) defined a separate minimum requirement for own funds and eligible liabilities (MREL). The same idea underlies the total loss absorbing capacity (TLAC) requirement, which in 2015, through FSB (Financial Stability Board), applied only to global systemically important institutions (G-SII). In its reform package of 23 November 2016, the EU Commission presented proposals for numerous amendments to CRD (Capital Requirements Directive; Directive 2013/36/EU), CRR (Capital Requirements Regulation; Regulation 575/2013), BRRD, and SRMR (Single Resolution Mechanism Regulation; Regulation 806/2014), also called the "banking package". A key issue in this connection was the integration of TLAC requirements into the European legislative framework and their interaction with MREL. A central demand in this context was the introduction of a new asset class known as "senior non-preferred" and its position in the insolvency hierarchy. By means of an urgent procedure, Article 108 BRRD II was adopted on 12 December 2017 to create this new asset class throughout Europe and define the insolvency hierarchy. The directive (Directive 2017/2399/EU) is restricted to just two types of subordination – contractual and structural. The directive had to be transposed into national law by 29 December 2018.

After the whole banking package was adopted on 20 May 2019, publication in the European Official Journal followed on 7 June 2019. The amendments of BRRD, CRD, CRR, and SRMR came into force on 27 June 2019. While CRR II was directly applicable, SRMR II should only be applied from 28 December 2020. The BRRD II and CRD V directives had to be transposed into national law also by 28 December 2020. On 18 April 2023, the EU Commission presented proposals to amend the BRRD, the SRMR and the DGS (Deposit Guarantee Scheme) as part of the Crisis Management and Deposit Insurance (CMDI) framework. The goal is to strengthen the bail-in framework further. It is currently the task of the EU Parliament to reach an agreement as part of the trilogue with the Council to adopt the CMDI framework. In addition, the EU Council and the EU Parliament reached a trilogue agreement on 11 December 2023 on amendments to the CRR and CRD, which primarily relates to Basel III. The final legal texts for CRR III/CRD VI were published in the EU Official Journal on 19 June 2024 and came into force 20 days later.

A significant idea regarding the combination of TLAC and MREL was the different treatment of various institutions. For this there are the categories G-SIIs, top-tier banks (TTBs) with total assets of more than EUR 100 bn, other Pillar 1 banks with a potentially systemic risk, and all other institutions. A harmonized minimum level applies to G-SIIs as in the case of TLAC. This is to become a Pillar 1 requirement and is found in the CRR. From January 2022 onwards, G-SIIs have to maintain TLAC corresponding to 18% of total risk exposure amount (TREA) and 6.75% of the leverage ratio exposure measure (LRE) as a minimum. However, EU rules with minimum subordination requirements go beyond this. G-SIIs must fulfil the maximum of the following different ratios: the higher of 18% TREA + combined buffer requirements (CBR); 6.75% of LRE; or 8% total liabilities and own funds (TLOF), with the possibility for supervisory authorities to permit a lower level, but greater than 8% TLOF x (1-(3.5% TREA/(18% TREA + CBR))). Moreover, institution-specific add-ons are possible. These are, however, included in BRRD and SRMR as Pillar 2 requirements. For top-tier banks, the Pillar 1 requirement will be the higher of 13.5% TREA + CBR; 5.0% of LRE; or 8% TLOF with the possibility of a lower level but limited to 8% TLOF x (1-(3,5% TREA/(18% TREA + CBR))). Furthermore, there will be a cap at 27% TREA. By contrast, other institutions are not subject to an exact ratio for MREL. This is only a Pillar 2 require-

ment, which is determined on a case-by-case basis for each bank and which is set out in detail in BRRD and SRMR. While the methods used to calculate the two requirements were harmonized – namely, the two points of reference total risk exposure amount and leverage ratio exposure measure – they still differ considerably in terms of subordination. In contrast to TLAC, liabilities still do not generally have to be subordinated to count towards MREL. A general subordination requirement will be explicitly introduced for G-SIIs. Especially for other banks, the authority may demand this on a case-by-case basis. However, it is worth mentioning at this point that all banks including G-SIIs can use senior preferred up to 3.5% of RWA for the fulfilment of MREL, with the approval of the resolution authority. However, this rule is used very differently depending on the country. The complexity of the regulations for the various institutions has increased dramatically in the course of the legislative process. This is likely to further intensify the proposed amendments now being put forward. In addition, the resolution authorities are granted a high degree of further flexibility to impose additional requirements.

> Figure 1: MREL Overview for G-SIIs, TTBs, other Pillar 1 banks and other institutions (Banking package)

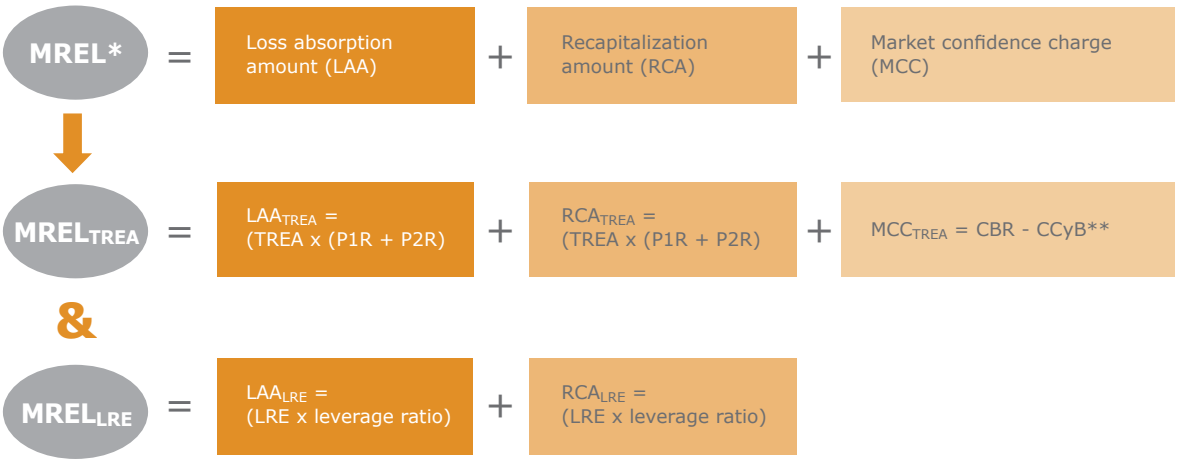


Sources: Banking package, SRB, LBBW Research

It is the task of SRB (Single Resolution Board), which is based on BRRD, SRMR, and the Delegated Act 2016/1450 of 23 May 2016, to set MREL requirements for each institution. The currently valid SRB policy under the banking package was published on 7 May 2024. The two components, namely loss absorption and recapitalization, are still the main factors in the measurement of the MREL requirements. Both MREL requirements loss absorption amount (LAA) and recapitalization amount (RCA) must be fulfilled in the measured variables of LRE and TREA. Within RCA expressed in TREA there may also be a component to maintain market confidence referred to as the "market confidence charge" (MCC). The main components are the minimum Supervisory Pillar 1 requirements (P1R) and the Supervisory Pillar 2 requirement (P2R), which are based on the individual SREP process of a single institution. While LAA must be met by each bank, RCA can be set at zero. However, this applies only to banks that are subject to liquidation under regular insolvency proceedings. All components are added up and result in the overall requirement. The final MREL target had to be achieved by January 1, 2024. The overwhelming majority of banks have already closed their shortfalls according to the SRB Dashboard

from Q3 2024. The average MREL final target stood at 28.0% TREA (incl. CBR). The MREL shortfall amounted to 472 EUR mn, which still has to be closed by Greek (435 EUR mn) and Slovenian (37 EUR mn) banks.

> Figure 2: Simplified approach for MREL requirements on the basis of SRB policy 2024



Legend:
*SRB default formula
**SRB policy May 2023
TREA = Total risk exposure amount; Article 92 (3) CRR
LRE = Leverage ratio exposure measure; Article 429 and 429a CRR
P1R = Supervisory Pillar 1 requirement; Article 92 (1) CRR
P2R = Supervisory Pillar 2 requirement; Article 104a CRD
CBR = Combined buffer requirement; Article 128 CRD
CCyB = Countercyclical Capital Buffer, Article 128 CRD

Sources: Banking package, SRB, LBBW Research

Covered bonds in light of TLAC and MREL

Covered bonds are explicitly excluded from bail-in by the rules of Article 44 (2) b) BRRD. This includes covered bonds as defined in Art. 3 (1) of Directive (EU) 2019/2162 or, with regard to a bond that was issued before 8 July 2022, covered bonds that are UCITS-compliant (Directive 2009/65/EC Article 52 (4)). There is just one restriction that allows covered bonds to be bailed in: Namely, if the liabilities from the covered bond exceed the corresponding collateral in the cover pool and the resolution authority believes a bail-in for the "uncovered" part is appropriate. This would, however, correspond to a cover shortfall, which is not allowed by law. The covered bond exception in Article 44 (2) b) BRRD is unaffected by the proposed changes to BRRD. Covered bonds will continue to enjoy special protection.

Regarding TLAC and MREL, the EU banking package includes a category of "eligible liabilities" in Chapter 5a of CRR. Under Article 72a (2) (e) CRR of this chapter, covered bonds are classified as being not eligible. This means that covered bonds, being exempted from bail-in, are not eligible for MREL. However, EU legislation (Article 3 Delegated Regulation 2016/1450) requires that the resolution authority must identify all liabilities that are excluded from bail-in. MREL must also be met with regard to all exclusions. The main objective is to build up a correspondingly sufficient MREL buffer so that bail-in exceptions do not have to be written down or converted.

In general, a standardized approach applies to the measurement of MREL. Nevertheless, the resolution authority may adjust the standardized approach to take account of the institution's business model, funding profile, and overall risk profile. This decision is based on the results of the SREP process. An upward or downward adjustment may be made. It must, however, reasonably reflect the institution's resolvability. With regard to business models, MREL already provides for mortgage credit institutions to be treated differently. However, there is one exception in BRRD for mortgage credit institutions financed by covered bonds. If they are not

allowed to receive deposits, the resolution authority may exclude them from the MREL requirement. This, in turn, is only possible in a realizable winding-up under a national insolvency procedure or other types of measures in accordance with BRRD resolution tools and in line with the resolution objectives. This exception is found in Article 45a (1) BRRD.

Overall, covered bonds retain their privileged status as a funding instrument. Covered bonds will remain an important part of the liability side of banks. The costs of refinancing covered bonds are still very attractive for issuers and, in our opinion, create a counterweight to the relatively expensive senior non-preferred bonds. Moreover, in the current market environment, covered bonds once again demonstrated their character as a safe haven instrument with comparatively low spread volatility. In the end, it remains to be said that the higher the MREL cushion of a bank becomes, the better protected the covered bond is.

2.3 THE REPO TREATMENT OF COVERED BONDS BY CENTRAL BANKS

By Frank Will, HSBC & Chairman of the ECBC EU Legislation Working Group

I. CENTRAL BANK REPOS: THE SAFETY NET FOR THE BANKING SYSTEM

As part of their monetary policy, central banks across the globe provide liquidity to the banking sector. This is often done in form of repo transactions which require the eligible counterparties to provide collateral in order to receive liquidity from the central banks. The central banks typically have strict eligibility criteria for these collateral assets and demand different haircuts for certain assets, depending on the credit quality of the assets and their maturity.

The role of covered bonds in monetary operations varies by jurisdiction, not least since the nature of those operations is quite heterogeneous across jurisdictions. Broadly speaking, covered bonds receive a more favourable treatment amongst those countries in which they play a more pivotal role in the funding of the domestic banking sector. This applied primarily in terms of eligibility of covered bonds as collateral for repo operations, but also in terms of the haircuts. At many of the major central banks (at least some types of) covered bonds are eligible as collateral in the discount window for emergency lending. During the COVID-19 pandemic many central banks broadened their eligibility criteria, set up asset purchase programmes or term funding facilities to support their domestic banking sector. However, most of these measures have already ended or are running out.

> Figure 1: Comparing the eligibility of covered bonds for monetary policy operations

Central Bank	Operation	Covered Bonds eligible?	Eligible Covered Bonds	Currency	Minimum Rating	Rating Treatment	Minimum Size	Own-name Covered bonds?
ECB	Repo Operations (Main and Long term refinancing operations)	Yes	Legislative Covered bonds (EEA and non-EEA G10 countries)	EUR, USD, GBP, JPY[1]	BBB-	Best Rating	n/a	Yes
Fed	SOMA Operations	No	None	USD	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Discount Window	Yes	German Pfandbriefe	AUD, CAD, CHF, DNK, EUR, GBP, JPY, SEK	AAA	Lowest Rating	n/a	No
BoE	Operating Standing Facilities, Short term OMOs	No	n/a	GBP, EUR, USD, AUD, CAD, CHF, SEK	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Level B Collateral (ILTR, DWF, CTRF and FLS)	Yes	UK, French, German regulated covered bonds		Broadly equivalent to AAA	Rating references are indicative. Bank of England forms its own independent view	GBP 500m or EUR 500m (depending on issuance currency)	No
	Level C Collateral (ILTR, DWF, CTRF and FLS)	Yes	UK, US[2] & EEA (based on the location of the underlying assets)		Broadly equivalent to A-/A3		None	Yes

1 Under the ECB's Temporary Framework, foreign currency-denominated debt instruments from EEA based issuers constitute eligible collateral for Eurosystem credit operations since 2012. In addition to the haircuts applicable to similar EUR-denominated securities, a further mark-down will be applied (16% for USD and GBP, 26% for JPY).

2 Only in case of SME loans, commercial real estate loans and certain Export Credit Agency guarantee loans.

Central Bank	Operation	Covered Bonds eligible?	Eligible Covered Bonds	Currency	Minimum Rating	Rating Treatment	Minimum Size	Own-name Covered bonds?
SNB	Repo operations, Standing Facilities	Yes From 2015 on, Covered Bonds must be eligible under the Swiss LCR framework	Any covered fulfilling the eligible security and rating criteria, but not issued by a Swiss bank	CHF	Security and issuer's country: AA-/Aa3	Second-highest Rating	CHF 100 m	No
			Any covered fulfilling the eligible security and rating criteria, but not issued by a Swiss bank	EUR, USD, GBP, DKK, SEK, NOK	Security: AA-/Aa3 with various exceptions Issuer's country: AA-/Aa3		EUR 1 bn USD 1 bn GBP 750 m DKK 7.5 bn SEK 10 bn NOK 10 bn	
Norges Bank	Repo Operations	Yes	Any covered fulfilling the eligible security criteria	NOK, SEK, DKK, EUR, USD, GBP, JPY, AUD, NZD, CHF, CAD	Domestic currency: None but BBB- for favourable liquidity category (II not III)	Second-highest-Rating	Domestic currency: NOK 300 m	Yes
					Foreign Bonds: A/A2		Foreign currency: equivalent to EUR 100 m	
Reserve Bank of Australia (RBA)	Repo Operations	Yes	Any covered bond fulfilling the eligible security criteria	AUD	AAA or BBB- for domestic covered bonds >1Y	Lowest rating (of at least two rating agencies)	None	No
Reserve Bank of New Zealand (RBNZ)	Repo and/or Swap of NZ Government Bonds	No	None	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Overnight Repo Operations, Bond Lending Facilities	Yes	Any covered bond fulfilling the eligible criteria on the cover pool composition	NZD	AAA from at least two rating agencies. If more than two ratings, then at least two agencies must rate the issue AAA, and no rating is below AA+		None	No
Bank of Canada	Standing Liquidity Facility	Yes	Canadian covered bonds	CAD	AAA (sufficiently high quality)		n/a	No
Danmark National-bank	Credit facilities	Yes	Danish covered bonds	DKK / EUR	n/a		EUR 1 bn or equivalent in DKK (higher haircut for smaller issue size)	n/a
Riksbank	Repo operations, Standing Facilities	Yes	EEA (based on the location of the underlying assets)	SEK USD, GBP, DKK, EUR, JPY, NOK	AA-	Lowest rating	SEK 100 m (or the equivalent in foreign currency)	n/a

Source: HSBC, Central Banks

II. EURO AREA: ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR COLLATERAL IN EUROSYSTEM OPERATIONS

The ECB has been a key source of liquidity for banks in the Eurosystem during the credit crunch, the European debt crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic through its repo operations. Within the ECB's liquidity operations, covered bonds play a very important role. While in certain periods during the sovereign and banking crisis the benchmark covered bond market was shut for many issuers out of Europe's periphery, the ECB continued to provide liquidity to those banks which were able to post their own covered bonds as collateral. Many covered bond programmes have therefore been set up not just as an additional funding channel for the banks, but also in order to allow those banks to use the repo facilities at the ECB as means to access liquidity in a closed wholesale market. Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the TLTRO programme allowed Eurozone banks to lower their funding costs. Many of them used retained covered bonds as collateral for the TLTRO programme.

In March 2023, the ECB began quantitative tightening (QT) and did not reinvest a monthly amount of EUR15bn of the redemptions under the asset purchase programme (APP) until June 2023. Since July 2023, the entire amount of APP redemptions including any maturing covered bonds under the CBPP3 are no longer reinvested by the ECB.

ECB repo operations

Article 18.1 of the Statute of the European System of Central Banks and of the European Central Bank states that the ECB and the national central banks may conduct credit operations with credit institutions and other market participants, as long as lending is "based on adequate collateral"[3]. According to the ECB, adequacy means firstly, that collateral must protect against losses in credit operations, and secondly, that there must be sufficient collateral potentially available to ensure that the Eurosystem can carry out its tasks.

Consequently, underlying assets have to fulfil certain criteria in order to be eligible for Eurosystem monetary policy operations. The Eurosystem has developed a single framework for eligible assets common to all Eurosystem credit operations (the "single list"). There is no collateral differentiation between monetary policy instruments or intraday credit, and a single auction rate is applicable to different types of collateral in tender operations. The scope of eligible collateral is broad and includes secured assets like covered bonds and ABS, the latter of which can be backed by receivables such as residential and commercial loans (secured and unse cured), auto loans, lease receivables etc., provided they satisfy certain eligibility criteria (set out below), as well as unsecured claims against governments, credit institutions or corporates.

The Eurosystem additionally applies risk control measures in the valuation of underlying assets. The value of the underlying asset is calculated as the market value of the asset less a certain percentage ("valuation haircut"). The haircut-adjusted market value of the underlying assets used in its liquidity-providing reverse transactions must be maintained over time. This implies that if the value, measured on a regular basis, of the underlying assets falls below a certain level, the national central bank will require the counterparty to supply additional assets or cash (margin call). Similarly, if the value of the underlying assets, following their revaluation, exceeds a certain level, the counterparty may retrieve the excess assets or cash. The current eligibility of assets in the ECB framework and recent changes to this are set out below:

> Figure 2: Eligibility of assets in the ECB framework

Criteria	Standard Collateral Rules
Type of Asset	> Debt instrument, including covered bonds with (a) a fixed, unconditional principal amount (except for ABS) or (b) an unconditional principal amount that is linked to only one euro area inflation index at a single point in time, containing no other complex structures > Coupon should be zero coupon, fixed-rate coupon, multi-step coupon or floating-rate coupon linked to an interest rate reference or yield of one euro area government bond with a maturity of one year or less or inflation indexed
Definition of Covered Bonds	> Legislative covered bonds include EEA covered bond and non-EEA G10 covered bonds (issued in accordance with their national covered bond law) > Covered bonds with external, non-intra group MBS as well as both internal and external public sector ABS in the cover pool are no longer eligible as collateral for repo transactions > Covered bonds which are neither legislative covered bonds nor multi cédulas, became ineligible 1 January 2021
Rating	> The minimum rating threshold is BBB- (S&P) / Baa3 (Moody's) / BBB- (Fitch) / BBBL (DBRS) / BBB- (Scope Ratings) based on a "best rating approach", so only one rating at this level is required for eligibility > The use of third-party rating tools will be phased out
Place of Issue	> European Economic Area (EEA)
Settlement Procedures	> Transferable in book-entry form > Held and settled in the euro area

3 Protocol on the Statute of the European System of Central Banks and of the ECB, Article 18.1.

Criteria	Standard Collateral Rules
Acceptable Market	> Debt instrument must be admitted to trading on a regulated market or a non-regulated market as specified by the ECB
Type of Issuer/ Guarantor	> Central banks, public sector entities, agencies[4], credit institutions, financial corporations other than credit institutions, non-financial corporations, multilateral development banks or international organisations > The recognition of an entity as multilateral development bank or international organisation based on an ECB assessment is no longer possible
Place of Establishment of the Issuer/ Guarantor	> Issuer must be established in the EEA or in non-EEA G10 countries/guarantors must be established in the EEA
Currency of Denomination	> EUR, USD, GBP, JPY[5]

Source: HSBC, ECB

In December 2017 the ECB announced several fundamental changes to its eligibility criteria which entered into force in April 2018.

> The ECB removed the favourable treatment of floating rate assets. Instead of applying a low uniform haircut to all variable assets, the new valuation haircuts are based on the residual maturity of the assets.

> The residual maturity for own-use covered bonds will be defined as the maximum legal maturity, taking into account any extension periods of soft bullets and conditional pass-through covered bonds.

> Unsecured bank bonds issued after 16 April 2018 that are subject to statutory, contractual or structural subordination as well as unsecured bank debt from non-EEA issuers are ineligible as repo collateral. Senior preferred unsecured bank bonds remain eligible as collateral.

> Commercial mortgage-backed securities (CMBSs) lost their collateral eligibility, owing to their relatively complex nature.

In December 2022, the ECB announced the results of the most recent review of its collateral risk framework and decided on several measures to improve the overall consistency of the framework, which took effect in June 2023.

> Valuation haircuts for own-use covered bonds were set to 8% (Credit Quality Steps 1&2) and 12% (Credit Quality Step 3).

> Valuation haircuts for marketable and non-marketable assets were set to pre-pandemic levels.

> The longest residual maturity category (prev. >10Y) was split into three new categories, 10 to 15Y, 15-30Y, and more than 30Y.

> The flat 5% theoretical valuation markdown was replaced with a maturity-graduated markdown schedule (this extended its application to all theoretically value marketable assets except those falling under haircut category I)

> The distinction between jumbo and other covered bonds was phased out, assigning all covered bonds and multi-cédulas to category II.

> Reassign EU-Bonds to category I from category II. According to the ECB, this move reflects the higher liquidity of EU-Bonds.

4 "agencies" are issuers or guarantors of debt instruments that the ECB has classified as agencies.

5 Under the ECB's Temporary Framework, foreign currency-denominated debt instruments from EEA based issuers constitute eligible collateral for Eurosystem credit operations since 2012. In addition to the haircuts applicable to similar EUR-denominated securities, a further mark-down will be applied (16% for USD and GBP, 26% for JPY).

In November 2023, the ECB accepted Scope Ratings as the fifth rating agency in the Eurosystem Credit Assessment Framework (ECAF). The acceptance included sovereign, corporate, financial institutions and covered bonds ratings. In June 2024, ABS for added to the list of eligible assets.

In February 2025, the ECB decided to change the rules on the use of external credit ratings. Accordingly, the second-best rating will apply for private sector assets such as unsecured bank bonds, covered bonds and assets issued by non-financial corporations as well as non-eurozone public sector assets. For private sector assets with only one rating, where the second-best rule therefore cannot be applied, a one-notch downgrade will be applied to the available rating. For eurozone public sector assets, the first-best rating approach will continue to apply. The change to the rating rules will enter into force no earlier than 18 months from the publication date of the press release (21 February 2025). ECB stated that the exact date will be announced well in advance, together with technical details.

In June 2025 the ECB announced the launch of a single collateral management system consolidating the previously existing 20 collateral management systems operated by the national central bank.

> Figure 3: ECB haircuts by liquidity category and residual maturity

Credit Quality	**Residual maturity (years)**	**Category I** (Government Bonds, EU Bonds, ECB debt certificates)		**Category II** (Local & Regional Govt, Supras & Agencies, legislative Covered Bonds*, Multi-cédulas*)		**Category III** (Debt instruments issued by non-financial corp.*)		**Category IV** (Unsecured Bank Bonds*)		**Category V** (Asset-backed securities*)
		fixed or floating	**zero**	**fixed or floating**	**zero**	**fixed or floating**	**zero**	**fixed or floating**	**zero**	
Step 1 and 2 (A- or higher)	0-1	0.5	0.5	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	7.5	7.5	4.0
	1-3	1.0	2.0	1.5	2.5	2.0	3.0	10.0	11.5	5.0
	3-5	1.5	2.5	2.5	3.5	3.0	4.5	12.0	13.0	7.0
	5-7	2.0	3.0	3.5	4.5	4.5	6.0	14.0	15.0	9.0
	7-10	3.0	4.0	4.5	6.5	6.0	8.0	16.0	17.5	12.0
	10-15	4.0	5.0	6.5	8.5	7.5	10.0	18.0	22.5	18.0
	15-30	5.0	6.0	8.0	11.5	9.0	13.0	21.0	25.0	20.0
	>30	6.0	9.0	10.0	13.0	11.0	16.0	24.0	31.5	22.0
Step 3 (BBB+ to BBB-)	0-1	5.0	5.0	5.5	5.5	6.5	6.5	11.5	11.5	
	1-3	6.0	7.0	7.5	10.5	9.5	12.0	18.5	20.0	
	3-5	8.5	10.0	11.0	16.0	13.0	18.0	23.0	27.0	
	5-7	10.0	11.5	12.5	17.0	15.0	21.5	25.5	29.5	
	7-10	11.5	13.0	14.0	21.0	17.0	23.5	26.5	31.5	
	10-15	12.5	14.0	17.0	25.5	19.5	28.0	28.5	35.0	
	15-30	13.5	15.0	20.0	28.5	22.0	31.0	31.5	39.0	
	>30	14.0	17.0	22.0	32.5	25.0	35.5	34.5	43.0	

Source: ECB (as of July 2025, last change March 2023)

(*Assets that are theoretically valued will be subject to an additional haircut depending on the expected residual maturity or in the case of Category V, the weighted average life of the asset (additional haircuts are, in increments as above: 1.5%, 2.5%, 3%, 3.5%, 4.5%, 6%, 8%, 13%); additional valuation markdowns for own- use covered bonds of 8% for Credit Quality Step 1&2 and of 12% for Credit Quality Step 3).

Following the UK's withdrawal from the EU, the following assets are no longer eligible:

- unsecured debt instruments issued by credit institutions or investment firms, or by their closely-linked entities, that are established in the UK
- ABS whose issuer or originator is established in the UK
- ABS in which the acquisition of the cash-flow generating assets by the SPV is governed by UK law
- ABS in which clawback rules are governed by UK law (Article 76 of the General framework)
- assets denominated in GBP, JPY or USD whose issuer is established in the UK

- assets with guarantees governed by UK law or where the guarantor is established in the UK, unless the guarantee is not needed to establish the credit quality requirements for the specific debt instrument
- credit claims for which the facility agent is a credit institution located in the UK

Based on the UK's status as a non-EEA G10 country, euro-denominated debt instruments issued by entities established in the UK, but which do not fall into the categories listed above, will continue to be accepted as eligible collateral.

Debt instruments listed on the London Stock Exchange must also be admitted to trading on at least one acceptable market as defined by Article 68(1) of the General framework in order to remain eligible for collateral purposes, provided all other eligibility criteria are met.

Classification of covered bonds within the Eurosystem operations

The ECB considers covered bonds to be a liquid asset class. Hence, covered bonds benefit from preferential liquidity class classification and favourable haircut valuations for repo transactions with the ECB when compared with other assets such as ABS. Moreover, unlike senior bank debt, the ECB will accept self-issued "covered bank bonds" as collateral (see below for more information on this). Thus, like certain forms of ABS, covered bonds allow issuers to make assets held on their balance sheets eligible for the ECB's liquidity operations. This is very much in line with previous ECB statements which note that "covered bonds possess a number of attractive features from the perspective of financial stability".

The Eurosystem does currently not provide an official definition of what classifies as "covered bond". In general, the Eurosystem accepts EEA legislative covered bonds and non-EEA G10 covered bonds (issued in accordance with their national covered bond law) as collateral as long as they otherwise fulfil the general eligibility criteria. As of June 2023, the ECB categorized covered bonds as having haircut category II, removing the previous distinction between jumbo and non-jumbo covered bonds.

Covered bonds and "close link" exemption

Covered bonds also benefit from certain preferential treatments compared with other bank debt when it comes to self-issued bonds. The ECB states that "irrespective of the fact that a marketable or non-marketable asset fulfils all eligibility criteria, a counterparty may not submit as collateral any asset issued or guaranteed by itself or by any other entity with which it has close links"[6]. This means that banks cannot, for example, use their own senior unsecured debt directly as collateral with the ECB.

The main exemptions from the "close links" rule remain "EEA-legislative covered bonds". Self-issued covered bonds can be used by counterparties as collateral, i.e. an issuer can use its own covered bonds and there are no close link prohibitions. Since February 2020, such covered bonds must have an issue rating.

Conclusion on covered bond treatment

The ECB, to a greater extent than any of its central bank peers, has both outlined and demonstrated its support for the covered bond market in the past. This was most obviously the case with its three covered bond purchase programmes since 2009. Perhaps even more important is the ECB's positive stance towards covered bonds, which the institution maintains for several reasons.

Firstly, the ECB has focused on the importance of covered bonds as a means for banks to access long-term funding: "Issuing covered bonds enhances a bank's ability to match the duration of its liabilities to that of its mortgage loan portfolio, enabling a better management of its exposure to interest rate risk. Other secured

6 "Close links" means the counterparty is linked to an issuer/debtor/guarantor of eligible assets by one of the following forms: (i) the counterparty owns directly, or indirectly, through one or more other undertakings, 20 % or more of the capital of the issuer/debtor/guarantor; or (ii) the issuer/debtor/guarantor owns directly, or indirectly through one or more other undertakings, 20 % or more of the capital of the counterparty; or (iii) a third party owns more than 20 % of the capital of the counterparty and more than 20 % of the capital of the issuer/debtor/guarantor, either directly or indirectly, through one or more undertakings [ECB, "The Implementation on Monetary Policy in the Euro Area", February 2011]

funding products, such as repos, are unlikely to have the same asset-liability matching attributes offered by covered bonds. These factors are all the more pertinent today given the increasing role of short-term refinancing in banks' balance sheets. In certain instances, rolling over short-term funding might be less expensive or better in terms of reputation, but this could pose challenges to the management of assets and liabilities at some point. In addition, to improving banks' structural asset-liability mismatch, covered bonds offer a wider geographical diversification, as issuers tap into a larger European market."[7] Moreover, a further key advantage comes from the absence of effective risk transfer and the desirable incentives this creates for the originating banks. As former ECB president Trichet noted: "Importantly, covered bonds do not involve the transfer of the credit risk implied by underlying assets from the issuer to the investor. The credit risk stays with the originator, preserving the incentives for prudent credit risk evaluation and monitoring."[8] Such positive attitude is still reflected in the ECB's current favourable treatment of covered bonds within its repo operations as they are allocated in a very favourable liquidity category (as covered bonds rank alongside the debt of issuers such as the ESM, EIB and the explicitly guaranteed German agency KfW).

III. THE UK: ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR BANK OF ENGLAND OPERATIONS

Latest changes to the framework

In 2014, the Bank of England introduced the concept of collateral pooling to simplify the management of the collateral it received by the banks for its monetary operations. Instead of providing liquidity against collateral by way of repurchase transactions, participants can pool their collateral across certain facilities (e.g. Short-Term Repo, Operational Standing Facility (OSF), Indexed Long Term Repo (ILTR) and Discount Window Facility (DWF)). According to the Bank of England, the pooling model to simplify the process for managing the collateral, enhance operational efficiency and reduce operational risks.

Before the introduction of the Single Collateral Pool (SCP) model, the Bank of England's SMF and intraday liquidity operations were repo transactions whereby individual securities were held as collateral against the central bank's exposures to that participant. The SCP model aggregates a participant's collateral position thereby significantly reducing the volume and frequency of transactions needed to provide collateral to the Bank of England.

Covered bonds under the Sterling monetary framework

The Bank of England operates a rather stricter regime than the ECB in terms of eligible collateral within the Sterling Monetary Framework. The BoE defines three collateral sets, which are eligible to varying degrees for its monetary operations: (1) level A collateral set, (2) level B collateral set, (3) level C collateral securities as well as level C loan collateral.

Within the Sterling monetary framework operations, covered bonds are only included within the Level B and Level C collateral securities sets, both of which are eligible for the following facilities: (1) Indexed Long-Term Repo OMOs, (1) Discount Window Facility, (3) Contingent Term Repo Facility as well as (4) the various term funding schemes.

The eligibility criteria for covered bond inclusion can be found below:

7 European Central Bank, "Covered Bonds in the EU Financial System", December 2008.

8 Keynote address by Jean-Claude Trichet, Munich, 13 July 2009.

> Figure 4: Bank of England's covered bond eligibility criteria

	Level B	Level C Collateral Securities
Eligible currencies	GBP, EUR, USD, AUD, CAD, CHF, and SEK	
Geography	UK, French and German regulated Covered Bonds	-
Rating Requirements	Broadly equivalent to AAA	Broadly equivalent to A3/A- or higher
Minimum Size	At least £500m or EUR500m (depending on issue currency)	n/a
Own Name Covered Bonds	No	Yes
Underlying assets	UK/EEA prime residential mortgages, social housing loans or public sector debt	UK/US*/EEA public sector debt, social housing loans, SME loans, commercial real estate loans, UK/EEA residential mortgages

Source: Bank of England, HSBC (as of July 2025, latest change August 2024) *backed by Export Credit Agency guarantee loans

Rating references are only used to indicate the broad standards of credit quality that are expected by the Bank of England and are no longer prerequisites for eligibility. The BoE rather forms its own independent view of the risk in the collateral taken and only accepts collateral that it can value and where the risk can be effectively managed.

For the Level B collateral set, only a subset of the covered bond universe is eligible. The criteria are based on a combination of both credit quality (hence underlined by the AAA rating-equivalent requirement) and liquidity.

For example, covered bonds from Nordic issuers, one of the core covered bond markets with an acknowledged safe haven status, are not included in the Level B collateral set. In the past, Spanish covered bonds that fulfilled the rating requirement were included but have since been removed from the list of eligible assets.

Covered bonds do not qualify for the Bank of England's Level A collateral set which is restricted to Gilts (including gilt strips), Sterling Treasury bills, Bank of England securities, HM Government non-sterling marketable debt and Sterling, euro, US dollar and Canadian dollar-denominated securities (including associated strips) issued by the governments and central banks of Canada, France, Germany, the Netherlands and the US.

> Figure 5: Haircuts for various covered bond types*

	float.	<1 yr	1-3 yrs	3-5 yrs	5-10 yrs	10-20 yrs	20-30 yrs	>30 yrs
Covered bonds (backed by UK or EEA public sector debt, social housing loans or residential mortgages)	12	12	14	15	17	19	22	24
UK, EEA or US covered bonds (backed by SME loans or commercial mortgages)	25	25	27	28	30	32	35	37
UK, EEA or US covered bonds (backed by ECA guaranteed loans)	3	3	5	6	8	10	13	15

Source: Bank of England, HSBC (as of July 2025) *an additional haircut of 5% will be applied for own-use covered bonds

As mentioned above, the Bank of England conducts a number of different monetary policy and liquidity insurance operations. Figure 6 shows the eligibility of different collateral sets for the various operations and facilities:

> Figure 6: Eligibility of different collateral sets for the various operations and facilities

Sterling Monetary Framework operations & lending facilities	Level A	Level B	Level C
Intraday Liquidity	Yes	No	No
Operational Standing Facilities	Yes	No	No
Short-term Repo	Yes	No	No
Indexed Long-term Repo	Yes	Yes	Yes

Sterling Monetary Framework operations & lending facilities	Level A	Level B	Level C
Discount-Window Facility	Yes	Yes	Yes
Contingent Term Repo Facility	Yes	Yes	Yes
US Dollar Repo	Yes	Yes	Yes
TFSME Lending Facility	Yes	Yes	Yes

Source: Bank of England, HSBC (as of July 2025)

Operational standing facilities

The Operational Standing Lending Facility provides a ceiling for the overnight interest rates through its overnight lending facility (against the Level A collateral set), which is usually set at 25bp above the Bank of England rate. The Operational Standing Deposit Facility is an unsecured overnight deposit with the central bank, which is currently set 25 bps below the Bank of England rate. This is designed to limit volatility in overnight interest rates by providing an arbitrage mechanism to prevent money market rates moving far from the bank rate and allowing participating banks to manage unexpected frictional payment shocks.

Indexed long-term repo operations

Indexed long-term repo operations are provided by the Bank of England to provide indexed liquidity insurance without distorting banks' incentives for prudent liquidity management and to minimise the risk being taken onto the BoE's balance sheet. These operations are indexed to the bank rate, allowing counterparties to use the facility without having to take a view on the future path of the Bank rate (and also reducing the BoE's exposure to market risk). In these operations banks can borrow against three collateral sets: Levels A, B and C. Levels B and C include covered bonds meeting the aforementioned criteria. Level C securities must be delivered to the Bank in advance of the operation, and all loan collateral must be pre-positioned.

The BoE typically offers funds in long-term repo operations once a month for period of six months, though the frequency can be adjusted to provide flexibility. Currently, ILTR auctions take place weekly.

The BoE does not provide a simple schedule of long-term operations, as is the case for the ECB. Instead it operates a unique auction design. Participants submit bids for a nominal amount of liquidity and a spread in basis points to the bank rate. Banks can submit separate bids against Level A collateral or against Level B and C collateral (where covered bonds are eligible). Multiple bids can be placed against any of the three collateral sets[9].

The auction then prices using a "uniform price" format, meaning all successful bidders (those bidding for liquidity at a higher price than the clearing spread) ultimately pay only the clearing spread.[10] The BoE specifies the clearing spreads for all the three collateral sets. Bids are ranked and accepted in descending order of the bid spread until the BoE's supply preferences have been met. Thus, when pledging covered bonds in the BoE's long-term indexed repo operations, the ultimate cost to a bank will depend on the spread set for the Levels B and collateral sets in the auction. Crucially, the auction is flexible as both the proportion of the total amount allocated to each collateral set as well as the total quantity of funds are based on the pattern of bids received. This determines the amount of liquidity, against which covered bonds can potentially be pledged. So, in this system the amount of liquidity on offer against the Level B and C collateral sets depends not only on demand for long-term repos on these assets but also on those in the Level A collateral set.

9 There is no restriction on the number of bids, the aggregate value of bids or the total value of bids received from a single participant.
10 The rationale here is to avoid participants basing their bids on assumptions about others' behaviour.

Discount window facility

The discount window is a bilateral facility used for emergency lending to an institution; providing liquidity insurance. It allows participants to borrow Gilts (or in certain cases even cash) against a wider range of potentially less liquid eligible collateral. It acts as a "liquidity upgrade of collateral", hence, the wider range of eligible collateral. Fees are paid when the Gilts are returned to the BoE in return for the original assets. Drawings have a 30-day maturity and can be rolled for longer temporary liquidity needs.

Collateral, which can be pledged, encompasses all the collateral sets Level A, B and C. The fees charged for the discount window depend upon the type of collateral used and the proportion of eligible liabilities, which the lending would represent.

For lending provided in return for Gilts[11] the fees (in basis points) for the different categories of collateral are set out below:

> Figure 7: Overview of the fees for the different categories of collateral

Fees (basis points)			
Collateral % of Eligible Liabilities	**Level A**	**Level B**	**Level C**
0-5%	25	50	75
5-15%	Marginal cost rises linearly with quantity borrowed		
>15%	Prices agreed bilaterally with the Bank of England		

Source: Bank of England, HSBC (as of July 2025)

Contingent term repo facility (CTRF)

The CTRF is a contingency liquidity facility that the BoE can activate in response to actual or prospective exceptional market-wide stress to undertake operations against the full range of eligible collateral (Levels A, B, C). This includes own-name covered bonds. Collateral is expected to be pre-positioned prior to an operation. The BoE activated the CTRF in March 2020 in the light of the Covid-19 pandemic. The size of the operation was unlimited at a fixed rate of Bank Rate plus 15bps. The final operation took place in June 2020.

> Figure 8: Summary of the BoE's monetary operations

	Operational Standing Facilities	**Indexed Long-term Repo**	**Discount Window Facility (DWF)**
What is the primary purpose of the operation?	Monetary policy implementation; Bilateral liquidity insurance to deal with frictional payment shocks	Liquidity insurance	Bilateral liquidity insurance
What is being borrowed?	Deposit facility: n/a Lending facility: sterling cash	Sterling cash	Gilts (in certain circumstances also cash)
Eligible Collateral	Deposit facility: n/a Lending facility: Level A	Level A, B and C	Level A, B and C
Fee	Deposit facility: 25 bp above bank rate Lending facility: 25 bp below bank rate	Auction determined uniform spread indexed to Bank Rate	Fee dependant on size of drawing and collateral delivered
Maturity	Overnight	6 months	30 days
Frequency	Available daily	Weekly	Available daily

Source: Bank of England, HSBC (as of July 2025)

11 In the event that cash is lent instead, then the fee is the indexed bank rate in addition to the fees shown in the Figure 9; though such fees can vary at the bank's discretion.

Additional disclosure requirements for residential mortgage covered bonds

The Bank of England requires additional disclosure and transparency for RMBS and covered bonds backed by residential mortgages. The BoE requirements include anonymised loan level information for securities from these two asset classes. This must be provided for investors, potential investors and "certain other market professionals acting on their behalf." The information must be provided on at least a quarterly basis and within one month of an interest payment date. Since December 2012, any covered bonds backed by mortgages which do not fulfil the criteria became ineligible for use in any of the Bank of England's monetary policy operations.

Loan-level reporting also includes "the requirement for credit bureau score data" to be made available. This needs to be provided within a three-month period of the transaction's origination and must be updated on a quarterly basis to enhance comparability between the various providers.

IV. THE US: ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR FEDERAL RESERVE OPERATIONS

The monetary policy operations of the Federal Reserve System work rather differently to those at the ECB or the Bank of England. The Federal Reserve Bank of New York implements monetary policy on behalf of the Federal Reserve System, as mandated by the Federal Open Market Committee (FOMC). Monetary policy is implemented through sales and purchases on the System Open Market Account (SOMA) at the Federal Reserve Bank of New York. This account is used both to maintain the overnight target rate for the federal funds rate (i.e. the US policy rate), as well as to undertake large scale asset purchase programmes decided upon by the FOMC. In particular, the three rounds of asset purchases (quantitative easing), the first consisting of Treasury securities, GSE debt and GSE-guaranteed MBS, the second solely of Treasuries and the third of agency MBSs, as well as the reinvestment of the coupons and principal payments received from the first round of QE, have all gone through this account. Currently, covered bonds are not eligible for any SOMA operations, which are restricted to US Treasury Bills, Notes and Bonds (including TIPS), Federal Agency securities[12] and MBS guaranteed by Fannie Mae, Freddie Mac and Ginnie Mae; all of which must be denominated in USD. None of the additional operations put in place during the first stage of the financial crisis are currently still in place, meaning the only significant other monetary operation is the discount window.

Covered bonds and the discount window

Following the redemption of the last US covered bond in November 2016, only **AAA-rated Jumbo German Pfandbriefe** are eligible for the discount window. For the AAA requirement, the lowest rating of S&P, Moody's and Fitch is relevant.

"In general, the Federal Reserve seeks to value securities collateral at a fair market value estimate. Margins are applied to the Federal Reserve's fair market value estimates and are designed to account for the volatility of the value of the pledged security over an estimated liquidation period. Securities are valued using prices supplied by external vendors. Securities for which a price is unavailable from the Federal Reserve's external vendors will receive zero collateral value."[13]

The haircuts applied to the various assets eligible for use in the discount window are outlined below. Notably the foreign currencies eligible for the discount window are AUD, CAD, CHF, DKK, EUR, GBP, JPY and SEK.

The haircuts applied to covered bonds in the discount window operations are not very high and only marginally higher than those for Treasuries. For example, for tenors of 5-10 years, USD-denominated Pfandbriefe are subject to a haircut of only 4%, the same as supranational paper or GSE bonds. Nonetheless, the eligibility criteria for foreign-issued covered bonds are very strict, including solely German Pfandbriefe. All other covered bonds effectively appear to be treated in the same manner as unsecured bank debt, i.e. they are excluded from

12 Fannie Mae, Freddie Mac and Federal Home Loan Bank.
13 Federal Reserve Collateral Guidelines as 26 March 2018.

the discount window. Even other well-developed legislation-based covered bond types, such as Obligations Foncières or any of the various Nordic covered bonds, have not been included.

> Figure 9: Overview of the margins for securities in the discount window

		Margins for securities (by Maturity in yrs)				
Asset Class	**Asset Type**	**0-1**	**>1-3**	**>3-5**	**>5-10**	**>10**
US Treasuries	Bills/Notes/Bonds/Floating Rate Notes/Inflation Indexed	1	1	2	3	5
	STRIPs	4				6
GSEs	Bills/Notes/Bonds	2	2	3	4	6
Foreign Government Agencies	AAA-BBB rated USD denominated	2	2	3	4	6
	AAA rated foreign denominated	6	6	7	7	9
Foreign Government, Foreign Government Guaranteed and Brady Bonds	AAA-A rated USD denominated	2	2	3	4	9
	BBB rated USD denominated	3	3	4	6	10
	AAA-BBB foreign denominated	6	6	7	8	11
Supranationals	Bills/Notes/Bonds USD denominated	3			4	6
	AAA rated foreign denominated	6	6	7	8	11
Corporate Bonds (Non-Financial)	AAA-A rated USD denominated	2	3	4	6	8
	BBB rated USD denominated	3	4	6	8	10
	AAA rated foreign denominated	7	8	8	10	13
German Jumbo Pfandbriefe	**AAA rated USD denominated**	**2**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**6**
	AAA rated foreign denominated	**6**	**6**	**7**	**9**	**10**
Asset Backed Securities	AAA-A rated	2	2	4	9	10
	BBB rated	3	4	5	10	11
	CDOs- AAA rated	13		15	23	36
	CLO- AAA rated	9		13	27	30
Agency Backed Mortgages	Pass-throughs	2	2	3	4	6
	CMOs	3			4	6
	CMBs	2	2	3	4	6

Source: Fed (applicable as of July 2025, last change: 1 July 2025)

There is also a separate schedule for the percentage margin applied to loans, of which some are also eligible for the discount window facility. A further stipulation from the Fed is that obligations of the pledging depository institution (or of an affiliate) are not eligible collateral, ruling out own-name covered bonds.

V. SWITZERLAND: ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR SWISS NATIONAL BANK (SNB) OPERATIONS

SNB monetary policy operations

In 2019, the Swiss National Bank (SNB) introduce the SNB policy rate which it uses in taking and communicating its monetary policy decisions. Repos are its preferred open market operation, which are conducted in parts by auctions, which are typically held every day, either in the form of a volume tender (fixed rate tender, which is the norm) or by variable rate tender. The SNB can also conduct bilateral repo operations to affect money market operations during the course of the day. All these repo transactions must be 100% collateral ised. The terms are set on a daily basis and the maturity of the operations may vary from one day to several months. Hence, the SNB does not have distinct long-term repo operations in the same manner as the ECB or the BoE. Furthermore, the SNB can issue its own debt certificates (SNB Bills) as a means of absorbing liquidity through its money market operations when targeting the policy rate (or range). Such debt certificates can also be posted back to the SNB in the context of its repo operations (but cannot be used by banks to satisfy their minimum reserve requirements).

Under the SNB's typical volume tender, each counterparty offers for the amount of liquidity it is willing to provide for a given repo rate. If the total volume of offers exceeds the SNB's predetermined allotment volume, the SNB reduces the amounts offered proportionally. Each one of the counterparties receives the interest rate they bid. SNB Bill auctions are, as a rule, conducted in the form of a variable rate tender. Counterparties submit their offers comprising the amount of liquidity they are willing to provide and price at which they would do so. Counterparties can submit multiple bids, including at different interest rates. The SNB obtains liquidity from the participants that have made offers at or below the highest interest rate accepted by the SNB, paying the participants the interest rate stated in their offers.

In addition, the SNB provides standing facilities (a liquidity shortage facility and an intraday facility). For such facilities the SNB does not actively intervene in the market but rather "merely specifies the conditions at which counterparties can obtain liquidity[14]." Repo transactions within the context of standing facilities must cover at least 110% of the funds obtained. The remaining monetary policy operations used by the SNB are an intraday facility for banks, foreign exchange swaps with various central banks, as well as foreign exchange purchases (a means of intervening into foreign exchange markets affecting CHF). The SNB can also create, purchase or sell derivatives on receivables, securities, precious metals and currency pairs.

Covered bonds and other collateral eligible for SNB repo operations

For monetary policy operations the SNB has a standard collateral set which does not distinguish between collateral eligible for different operations. This is in line with the ECB but in contrast to the BoE policy. The SNB accepts a slightly wider set of collateral for its operations. In this sense, the SNB operates much more like the ECB than the Fed or BoE, with the latter restricting eligible assets of short-term monetary policy operations to only the highest-quality liquid government securities, with the exclusion of covered bonds.

Following the adoption of the Swiss Liquidity Ordinance which translates the LCR framework into Swiss law, the SNB has also redefined its collateral policy aligning it to the new liquidity provisions from 2015 onwards. The changes should ensure that all collateral eligible for SNB repos also fulfils the criteria for high-quality liquid assets (HQLA).

Only collateral included in the list of eligible collateral for SNB repos may be pledged in the repo transactions. In order to be eligible, the collateral assets must fulfil the following criteria:

- be issued by central banks, public sector entities, international or supranational institutions, multilateral development banks and private sector entities
- securities issued by financial institutions are generally not eligible. However, covered bonds issued by financial institutions are eligible, provided the issuer is not a domestic financial institution or its foreign subsidiary. Moreover, securities issued by Pfandbriefbank schweizerischer Hypothekarinstitute AG and Pfandbriefzentrale der schweizerischen Kantonalbanken AG are also eligible.
- the securities have to be denominated in CHF, EUR, USD, GBP, DKK, SEK or NOK.
- the issuer must be domiciled in Switzerland, in the European Economic Area (EEA), or in the UK, if the security is denominated in a foreign currency. Securities issued by international or supranational organisations may be admitted as eligible collateral even if the issuer is domiciled in a third country.
- have a fixed principal amount with an unconditional redemption,
- have a fixed rate, floating rate or zero coupon,
- have a minimum volume of CHF 100 mln for securities denominated in Swiss Francs; for foreign currencies minimum volumes are listed below,

14 Guidelines of Swiss National Bank (SNB) on Monetary Policy Instruments.

> be traded on a recognised exchange or a representative market in Switzerland, a EEA member state or in the UK with price data published on a regular basis. The same requirements apply to distributed ledger technology (DLT) securities.; and

> fulfil the country, securities and issuer rating requirements (second-highest rating of the three rating agencies S&P, Moody's and Fitch is at least AA-/Aa3. If only one credit rating is available, this shall be used).

> Securities can be delivered through SIS, with Switzerland, the UK, EU or an EEA member state as intermediate and ultimate securities deposit.

As such, covered bonds are eligible, as long as they are not issued by a domestic Swiss bank (or a subsidiary abroad) with the exception of the Swiss Pfandbrief institutions. The criteria for the various classes of eligible assets are further split between foreign and Swiss Franc denominated criteria:

> Figure 10: Eligibility criteria for Swiss Franc and foreign currency securities

	Currency of Issue	Min. Rating of Creditor's Country of Domicile	Min. Rating of Security	Minimum issue size	Additional Criteria
Swiss Franc Securities	CHF	AA-/Aa3*	AA-/Aa3**	100 CHF m	Securities of foreign issuers must be listed on SIX Swiss Exchange
Foreign Currency Securities	EUR, USD, GBP, DKK, SEK, NOK	AA-/Aa3* (and must be domiciled in Switzerland, the UK or an EEA member state)	AA-/Aa3**	1.0 bn EUR; 1.0 bn USD; 750 m GBP; 7.5 bn DKK; 10.0 bn SEK; 10.0 bn NOK	–

* Securities of supranational organisations may be eligible irrespective of rating of country of domicile.

** Based on the second-highest rating; if only one credit rating is available, this shall be used. For securities issued by public sector entities and the Swiss Pfandbrief institutions which do not have a securities rating, the issuer rating may be used instead. Swiss public authorities, Swiss Pfandbrief institutions, the central issuing office of Swiss municipalities and Swiss issuers with explicit guarantee from Swiss Confederation are excluded from this requirement.

Source: SNB, HSBC (as of July 2025, last change: December 2023)

All securities contained in the list of collateral eligible for SNB repos form part of the SNB GC Basket and fulfil the criteria for high-quality liquid assets (HQLA) as defined in the Liquidity Ordinance. Based on their characteristics, the securities in this collective basket are assigned to additional baskets. The L1 Basket contains Swiss franc and foreign currency securities issued by, as a rule, central banks, public sector entities and multilateral development banks. The L2A Basket contains all other securities from the SNB GC Basket. In addition, Swiss franc securities are pooled in an L1 CHF Basket and an L2A CHF Basket. As is the case with all central banks, the SNB can decide on a case-by-case basis which securities are eligible for its repo operations. Its rules explicitly state that it "may reject the inclusion of securities or withdraw securities that were previously included in the list, without providing any justification."

Own-name covered bonds

The SNB publicly states that it does not accept counterparties' own securities or "those issued by persons or companies which, directly or indirectly, hold at least 20% of the capital or the voting rights in a counterparty or, conversely, in which the counterparty holds such rights". Nonetheless it explicitly states that "this 20% rule does not apply to participations in Swiss Pfandbrief institutions". Although it is not explicitly stated in official documents, SNB officials confirmed to us that own-name covered bonds cannot be included within the boundaries set by the definition of eligible collateral.

VI. NORWAY: ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR NORGES BANK OPERATIONS

Norges Bank monetary policy operations

The policy rate of Norges Bank is the sight deposit rate: the rate of interest banks receives on their overnight deposits (up to a quota) at Norges Bank. In October 2011, quotas were introduced defining the size of deposits banks could hold with Norges Bank on sight deposit rate terms. Banks' reserves with Norges Bank in excess of the quota were remunerated at a rate equal to the sight deposit rate minus 100bp, giving banks a strong incentive to holding surplus reserves at the low reserve rate. Unlike other central banks, the key policy rate is not a target for overnight interest rates realised in money markets. Instead, the sight deposit rate forms a floor for very short-term money rates, whilst the overnight lending rate charged to banks for overnight loans (for "D-Loans", see below) is the other though less important interest rate, which forms a ceiling for very short-term money rates. This is typically set 100bp above the key policy rate. Norges Bank uses F-deposits (fixed-rate deposits) to remove unwanted liquidity from the system.

In terms of providing liquidity, Norges Bank provides intraday and overnight loans ("D-Loans"), which must be 100% collateralised. The bank also provides longer term liquidity through "F-loans" (fixed-rate loans), repurchase agreements and currency swaps. F-loans are ordinary fixed-rate loans with a given maturity provided against acceptable collateral "in the form of approved securities." The interest payable on such loans is deterined by a multi-price ('American') auction. Just as in the case of the SNB, Norges Bank determines the total amount to be allotted in such an operation. Bids for the loans are ranked in decreasing order and allotments are made until the total amount is distributed, with all counterparties paying their respective bid price. Such loans also must be 100% collateralised.

Norges Bank has primarily granted "F-loans" to financial institutions rather than longer-term repo operations, following previously unsuccessful attempts to encourage the use of repo facilities. F-loans are provided for a number of different maturities, much like the longer-term ECB-refinancing operations. Longer maturity F-loans were provided during the credit crunch.

The collateral set eligible for short-term "D-loans" at Norges Bank is identical to that for the longer-term "F-loans" as Norges Bank only uses a single collateral set for all its operations. Its collateral rules group differ ent securities into various liquidity categories, much like the ECB (see below for further details).

Covered bonds and other collateral eligible for Norges Bank repo operations

In order to be eligible as collateral, securities must be listed on Norges Bank's website and have to fulfil the following eligibility criteria:

Type and Jurisdiction

- Bonds, notes and short-term paper issued from Norwegian and foreign issuers
- Securities issued outside the EEA may be accepted provided that Norges Bank has legal confirmation that there are no problems associated with the realising of the collateral
- Norwegian bond and money market funds (confined to investing in bonds, notes and short-term paper that are eligible under the current rules) are eligible as collateral provided that they are managed by a management company registered in Norway whose unit holdings are registered with the Norwegian Central Securities Depository (VPS) and that Norges Bank has access to price information from Oslo Børs Informasjon
- Securities must be registered either in the VPS or at Euroclear Bank or Clearstream Banking

Credit rating

> Securities issued by foreign issuers and bonds, notes and short-term paper issued by Norwegian private entities are subject to credit rating requirements.

> For securities issued by Norwegian entities a credit rating of the issuer is sufficient in the absence of a credit rating of the securities instrument. This does not apply to covered bonds.

> Norges Bank accepts credit ratings from S&P, Fitch, Moody's, Scope or Nordic Credit Rating (NCR) whereby the second-best credit rating will apply if a security or issuer has more than one rating. The lowest acceptable credit rating for bonds with foreign issuers is A/A2, while the lowest acceptable credit rating for bonds issued by Norwegian issuers is BBB-/Baa3[15].

Listing

Securities issued by private entities are subject to listing requirements.

> Securities issued by private entities must be listed on a stock exchange or other market places approved by Norges Bank.

> The listing requirement does not apply to notes and short-term paper.

Requirements relating to minimum volume outstanding

Securities issued by private entities are subject to requirements relating to minimum volume outstanding. In light of the Covid-19 crisis, the following temporary measures apply:

> Securities in NOK must have a minimum outstanding volume of NOK 300 m, whilst securities in a foreign currency must have a minimum volume equivalent to EUR 100 m.

> For securities other than Norwegian government securities, a borrower may not pledge more than 20% of the issue's (ISIN) volume outstanding (this was temporarily increased to 100% in light of the COVID-19 pandemic).

Currency restrictions

> Securities shall be denominated in NOK, SEK, DKK, EUR, USD, GBP, JPY, AUD, NZD, CAD or CHF. For securities denominated in a currency other than NOK an additional haircut of 6-8% (depending on the currency) is applied.

Multilateral development banks, government-guaranteed and regional debt securities

Norges Bank may, subject to an assessment, exempt securities with irrevocable and unconditional government guarantees from the listing and minimum outstanding volume requirements.

ABS and other restrictions

> Asset Backed Securities (ABS) must have a AAA credit rating from S&P, Fitch, Moody's or Scope at the time of collateralisation and must be assessed by Norges Bank as what are termed "true sale" ABSs and must not be secured on commercial property loans.

> Only the most senior tranche will be accepted as collateral and the borrower cannot pledge more than 20% of the volume outstanding of any deal.

> Securities that are directly or indirectly linked to credit derivatives are not eligible as collateral. Nor will instruments such as convertible bonds, inflation-linked bonds, inverse floating rate bonds, FRN Caps or subordinated loans be eligible.

15 The lowest acceptable credit rating for notes and short-term paper issued by foreign entities is A-1 from S&P or the equivalent rating from Fitch or Moody's, while the lowest acceptable credit rating for notes and short-term paper from Norwegian issuers is A-3 from S&P or the equivalent rating from Fitch or Moody's.

> Covered bonds may account for a maximum of 70% of the market value of the pledged securities after haircut for each borrower.

Own-name covered bonds

A bank may pledge covered bonds and ABS as collateral even if the securities are issued by the bank itself or by an entity that is part of the same corporate group as the bank. Own-name covered bonds are subject to an additional haircut of 5%.

Haircuts

The haircuts applied to the market value of a security are set out by category below:

> Figure 11: Norges Bank haircuts by category and residual maturity (% of market value)

Liquidity Category	Liquidity Category I		Liquidity Category II		Liquidity Category III		Liquidity Category IV	
Eligible Collateral	> AAA rated Government Bonds > Money market and bond funds confined to investments in the above securities		> Government bonds rated AA+ to A > *Covered bonds (AAA to AA-)* > Norwegian local government paper (AAA to BBB-) > Foreign local government paper (AAA to A) > Government-guaranteed paper > AAA rated corporates		> *Covered bonds rated A+ to A* > Norwegian local government paper (no rating requirement) > Corporate bonds rated AA+ to A > Units in eligible money market and bond funds not included in Category 1		> *Covered bonds* (A- to BBB-) > Norwegian corporate bonds rated A- to BBB-	
Maturity	Fixed	Floating	Fixed	Floating	Fixed	Floating	Fixed	Floating
0-1 year	1	1	3	3	4	4	8	8
1-3 years	3	1	5	4	6	5	11	10
3-7 years	5	1	7	5	10	7	17	14
7-15 years	7	1	10	6	13	9	22	17
15+ years	10	1	15	7	20	12	30	25

Source: HSBC, Norges Bank (as of July 2025, last change: November 2022)

Notes: Securities in foreign currencies are subject to a further 6-8% haircut depending on the currencies, own-name covered bonds to a further 5% haircut. If Norges Bank does not have sufficient price information on securities, the value will be determined on the basis of the nominal value, less an additional haircut depending on the bond's rating.

If Norges Bank does not have sufficient price information on securities [registered in a foreign securities depository], the value will be determined on the basis of the nominal value, less an additional haircut depending on the bond's rating. The additional haircut is determined as follows:

> 15 percentage points for a rating of AAA from S&P or the equivalent rating from Fitch, Moody's, NCR or Scope.

> 20 percentage points for a rating of AA+, AA or AA- from S&P or the equivalent rating from Fitch, Moody's, NCR or Scope.

> 30 percentage points for a rating of A+ or A from S&P or the equivalent rating from Fitch, Moody's, NCR or Scope.

VII. AUSTRALIA: ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR RESERVE BANK OF AUSTRALIA (RBA) OPERATIONS

The Reserve Bank of Australia (RBA) expresses its desired stance on monetary policy through an operating target for the cash rate, the money market rate on overnight interbank funds. The RBA targets this through its short-term open-market operations ("domestic market operations"). The same collateral set is also applicable to the longer-term operations provided.

When the RBA buys securities under repurchase agreement, it does so in two broad classes of securities: government-related securities and private securities. Since the mid-1990s, the RBA has gradually widened the range of highly-rated securities that it is prepared to accept in response to the decline in available government debt and taking into account the changing structure of financial markets.

Covered bonds and RBA eligible securities for reverse repos

In order to be considered as eligible by the RBA, all securities, including covered bonds, must fulfil the following criteria:

- **Currency**: The security is denominated in Australian dollars and traded in Austraclear. The RBA will not accept securities that trade as Euro-entitlements.
- **Rating**: The lowest credit rating assigned to a security or its issuer by Moody's, S&P and Fitch will be used to assess eligibility and eventual haircut. For covered bonds only, security ratings are considered as long as at least two ratings are available. Otherwise, the issuer ratings will be considered.
- **Structured bonds**: "Highly structured" securities are not eligible.
- **Own name bonds**: "Unless otherwise advised" securities issued by the bank itself or related entities are not eligible. A related party is deemed to be an institution that has a significant relationship to the credit quality of the security, including members of the same group and where one entity owns more than 15% of another. The list of eligible securities denotes the related parties for specific securities or programmes. This 'related party exemption' also applies to covered bonds and, as such, "own name covered bonds" are not eligible for RBA repo operations.

The current set of eligible securities and the respective minimum rating requirements are given below:

> Figure 12: Eligible securities and minimum rating requirements

	Minimum Rating
General Collateral	
Australian Government Securities	no minimum rating required
New Zealand Government Securities	no minimum rating required
Semi-governments Securities	no minimum rating required
Issues by Supranationals and Foreign Governments	AAA*
Securities with an Australian or New Zealand Government Guarantee	no minimum rating required
Securities with a Foreign Sovereign Government Guarantee	AAA*
Private Securities	
Securities (including Covered Bonds) issued by authorised deposit-taking institutions (ADIs)	
- residual maturity of 1Y or less	Any public rating
- residual maturity > 1Y	BBB- (min. 2 ratings)
Asset Backed Securities	AAA
Commercial paper (residual maturity 1Y or less)	BBB/A-3 (min. 1 rating), BBB- (min. 2 ratings)
Corporate bonds (residual maturity >1Y)	BBB (min. 1 rating), BBB- (min. 2 ratings)
Other securities	AAA

* Minimum rating requirement waived for securities issued and/or guaranteed by the New Zealand government

Source: RBA, HSBC, (as of July 2025)

These include covered bonds denominated in AUD which have to be issued in the Kangaroo market (i.e. onshore) to be eligible for Repo transactions with the RBA. The RBA is willing to accept "other AAA assets" which include covered bonds, as well as senior unsecured bank debt as long as it is rated AAA and denominated in AUD. The RBA accepts both legislative and structured covered bonds. As is the case with all central banks, the RBA retains the right to reject any particular security or securities from any issuer and specifically states that it will not accept "highly structured" securities. This does not apply to covered bonds, but to CDOs or similar structures.

Figure 13 below shows the margin ratios used by the RBA to discount the market value of securities purchased under reverse repos. They are applied according to the following formula:

purchase price = market value / (1 + margin / 100)

> Figure 13: Margin ratios of securities purchased under reverse repos

	Minimum Rating	Margins			
		0-1 years	1-5 years	5-10 years	>10 years
Government-related Securities					
Australian Government Securities	n/a	1	2	2	2
Semi-Government Securities	n/a	1	2	2	2
Securities Issued by Supranationals & Foreign Governments	AAA	2	3	4	4
Securities with an Australian Government Guarantee	n/a	2	3	4	4
Securities with a Foreign Government Guarantee	AAA	2	3	4	4
Private Securities					
ADI-issued Securities including Australian Covered Bonds	AAA	6	7	8	10
	AA–	10	12	14	16
	A–	12	14	16	18
	BBB-	18	22	26	30
	Public credit rating	24	n/a	n/a	n/a
Asset-backed Securities					
> Standard	A-1 or AAA	10-15	10-15	10-15	10-15
> Other	A-1 or AAA	15-40	15-40	15-40	15-40
Other Private Securities	AAA	6	7	8	10

Source: RBA, HSBC (as of July 2025, last change: March 2023)

An additional 3% haircut may apply to asset-backed securities if no market price is available.

VIII. NEW ZEALAND: ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR RESERVE BANK OF NEW ZEALAND (RBNZ) OPERATIONS

RBNZ monetary policy operations

Since March 1999 the RBNZ has implemented monetary policy by setting the Official Cash Rate (OCR), which is reviewed seven times a year. The monetary operations of New Zealand are composed of (a) Liquidity Operations, (b) Standing Facilities and (c) Other Domestic Operations. The Open Market Operations (OMO) of the Reserve Bank of New Zealand (RBNZ), including *overnight repo transactions* and issuance of RBNZ bills (to remove unwanted liquidity) fall within the "Liquidity Operations", as do FX Swaps and Basis Swaps operations. The Standing facilities are made up of the Overnight Reverse Repo Facility and a Bond Lending Facility. Finally, "Other Domestic Operations" consist of the repurchase or swapping of New Zealand government securities.

The following securities are eligible for the RBNZ's overnight repo transactions within the Liquidity Operations and the Bond Lending Facilities (part of the Standing Facilities):

> New Zealand Government Treasury bills;

> New Zealand Government bonds;

- New Zealand Government inflation-indexed bonds; and
- Other (non-New Zealand Government) Securities as approved by the RBNZ.

Covered bonds fall within this final definition, as long as they comply with the eligibility criteria. These are set out in the section below. Covered bonds are not eligible for other RBNZ monetary operations. The eligibility of securities for the 'Overnight Reverse Repo' under the RBNZ Standing Facilities is restricted solely to New Zealand Government bonds, Treasury bills and RBNZ bills. For the "Other Domestic Operations", the RBNZ from time to time offers to either repurchase and/or swap New Zealand Government securities. Purchases may be for the RBNZ's own account or on behalf of the Crown.

Covered bond eligibility for RBNZ operations

As explained above, covered bonds are eligible for the RBNZ's overnight repo transactions within the Liquidity Operations and the Bond Lending Facilities, as long as they fit the following criteria:

Rating

- Issues are rated AAA by at least two acceptable rating agencies. In case of more than two issue ratings, at least two agencies must rate the issue AAA, and no rating should be lower than AA+.
- The issuer has a credit rating from at least two acceptable rating agencies.

Cover pool

- The cover pool must be comprised of New Zealand originated first registered mortgages on New Zealand residential properties.
- The mortgage collateral is owned by a special purpose vehicle (SPV) that is bankruptcy remote from the originator.
- The loan-to-value ratio for each individual mortgage does not exceed 80%.
- Mortgages with loan to value ratios that exceed the 80% level will be removed from the cover pool and replaced with qualifying mortgages.
- For all loans the originator has, before approval, documented, assessed and verified the ability of the borrower to meet repayment obligations.
- Only loans that are performing have been included in the pool (non-performing loans are defined as those that are 90 days or more past due).
- "Asset monitors" independent from the trustee and the originator verify calculations relating to asset coverage tests and any other key ratios and provide these, and any other relevant reports, to the RBNZ on a regular basis.

Price sources

- Covered bond pricing is available on at least 80% of days via the NZFMA's NZ Credit Market Daily Pricing Service. Pricing is available at all month-ends.

Currency

- Issues are denominated in New Zealand dollars (NZD) only.

Settlement

- Covered bonds are lodged and settled in NZClear. Eligibility criteria for lodgement into NZClear include having a suitable registrar and paying agent.

Own-name bonds

> Covered bonds are repo-eligible on a two-name basis only, thus removing the possibility of issuers posting 'own-name' covered bonds to the RBNZ.

Of course, as is the case for all central banks, the RBNZ reserves the right to refuse an asset for any reason and is not required to disclose such reasons. In particular, "it should be noted that if the credit rating of the issue falls below the Reserve Bank's threshold, then the issue will cease to be eligible in the Reserve Banks' operations."

Thus, the RBNZ applies relatively strict criteria in setting eligibility for covered bonds, in particular, the requirement that the cover pool can only comprise New Zealand originated for registered mortgages on New Zealand residential properties currently restricts the use of the repo facility to covered bonds issued by domestic banks (or New Zealand subsidiaries of foreign banks using domestic loans). Nonetheless, if a foreign issuer were to have eligible loans in the pool (and fulfil all the other criteria), their covered bonds could also be eligible. Covered bonds are also subject to the strict requirement of being NZD-denominated, consistently with the rules for all other securities; even bonds issued or guaranteed by foreign governments must be NZD-denominated. Therefore, US Treasuries or Bunds in their domestic currencies would technically not be eligible for the RBNZ's operations.

The full haircuts matrix can be found below. It shows that NZD Covered bonds receive relatively benign haircuts, in line with two-name basis NZD-denominated RMBS, but significantly better than single-name RMBS. Ultimately, the eligibility criteria for repo are strict but eligible covered bonds receive a highly favourable treatment.

> Figure 14: Haircut matrix

Eligible Security	Minimum Rating	Haircut		
		0 ≤ 1 yr	1 – 5 yrs	≥ 5 yrs
NZ Government & RBNZ				
Treasury Bills	AA+	1%	2%	3%
Bonds				
Inflation-linked Bonds				
RBNZ Bills	n/a	1%	2%	n/a
Green Bonds	AA+	1%	2%	3%
Acceptable Kauri issues (NZD)				
Liquidity Category 1 Country*	AAA	3%	4%	5%
	AA- to AA+	6%	7%	8%
Liquidity Category 2 Country**	AAA	4%	5%	6%
	AA- to AA+	7%	8%	9%
Bank Securities (NZD)				
Bank bonds – NZ Registered Banks only	AAA	5%	6%	8%
	AA- to AA+	8%	9%	10%
	A- to A+	10%	12%	15%
	BBB- to BBB+	15%	17%	20%
NZ Registered Bank RCD's	A-1 and above	10%	n/a	n/a
	A-2	20%	n/a	n/a
Local Authorities (NZD)				
Bonds	AAA	3%	4%	5%
	AA- to AA+	6%	7%	8%
	A- to A+	10%	12%	15%
	BBB- to BBB+	15%	17%	20%
CP	A-1 and above	6%	n/a	n/a
	A-2	15%	n/a	n/a

Eligible Security	Minimum Rating	Haircut		
		0 ≤ 1 yr	1 – 5 yrs	≥ 5 yrs
State-Owned Enterprises (NZD)				
Bonds	AAA	5%	6%	8%
	AA- to AA+	8%	9%	10%
	A- to A+	10%	12%	15%
	BBB- to BBB+	15%	17%	20%
CP	A-1 and above	10%	n/a	n/a
	A-2	20%	n/a	n/a
Corporate Securities (NZD)				
Bonds	AAA	5%	6%	8%
	AA- to AA+	8%	9%	10%
	A- to A+	10%	12%	15%
	BBB- to BBB+	15%	17%	20%
CP	A-1 and above	10%	n/a	n/a
	A-2	20%	n/a	n/a
Securities issued/guaranteed by Foreign governments				
NZD Denominated	AA+ to AAA	6%	7%	8%
	A-1+			

Source: RBNZ, HSBC (as of July 2025, last change: December 2022)

* Liquidity Category 1: Austria, Australia, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Singapore, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom and United States.

** Liquidity Category 2: Czechia, Hong Kong, Ireland, Malta, Spain and South Korea.

> Figure 15: Haircut matrix

Eligible Security	Minimum Rating	Haircut	
		< 3 years	≥ 3 years
Asset Backed Securities (NZD)*			
Bonds	AAA	10%	15%
CP	A-1+	10%	n/a
RMBS (NZD; on a single name basis)*			
Bonds	AAA/A-1+	19%	19%
CP			
RMBS (NZD; on a two name basis)			
Bonds	AAA/A-1+	5%	8%
CP			
Covered Bonds (NZD)			
Bonds	AAA	5%	8%

Source: RBNZ, HSBC (as of July 2025, last change: December 2022)

* The RBNZ assumes that these are not traded in the secondary market and no market price is available;

** The Reserve Bank will not accept securities from an institution which is obliged to provide more than 50% of the liquidity provision.

IX. CANADA: ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR BANK OF CANADA MARKET OPERATIONS

The Bank of Canada uses a number of permanent facilities to conduct market operations:

> **OR/ORR**: The Bank conducts Overnight Repo (OR) and Overnight Reverse Repo (ORR) operations are conducted to further support the effective implementation of monetary policy. OR inject liquidity intraday while ORR withdraw liquidity intraday.

- **Overnight Standing Repo Facility**: The Bank makes this standing facility available to Primary Dealers on an overnight basis at the upper limit of the operating band (Bank Rate).
- **Term Repo Operations**: These operations, where assets are acquired temporarily through the secondary market, are conducted to manage the Bank of Canada's balance sheet and to promote the orderly functioning of Canadian financial markets.
- **Standing Liquidity Facility**: The Bank of Canada provides access to liquidity through its Standing Liquidity Facility (SLF), to institutions participating directly in Lynx. Under the provisions of the Bank of Canada Act, the Lynx advances (the overdraft loans) are required to be made on a secured basis. The collateral used to secure these loans must be acceptable to the Bank of Canada, and an appropriate margin is applied. Notwithstanding the eligibility criteria listed below, the Bank of Canada retains the right of refusal for any asset.
- **Standing Term Liquidity Facility (STLF)**: Under the Standing Term Liquidity Facility (STLF), the Bank of Canada can provide loans to eligible financial institutions in need of temporary liquidity support if the Bank has no concerns about the institution's financial soundness. This programme is an addition to the standing liquidity facility and functions very similarly to the latter. However, it is characterized by a greater range of eligible collateral.

Canadian covered bonds as eligible collateral of the Standing Liquidity Facility. The covered bonds have to fulfil the following criteria and conditions, which apply equally to the Standing Term Liquidity Facility:

- Only covered bonds from programmes that are registered with the Covered Bond Registrar (CMHC) and are compliant with the federal legislative framework for covered bonds are eligible, i.e. Canadian Registered Covered Bonds.
- The Covered Bonds must be rated equivalently to a rating of AAA.
- Eligibility is restricted to covered bonds denominated in Canadian Dollars and US Dollars.
- Covered bonds are typically count towards the 5% issuer concentration limit. The combined amount of covered bonds, term ABS and ABBCP originated or sponsored by a single institution pledged by an Lynx participant cannot be more than 5% of the total collateral value of that participant. No more than 20% of an institution's pledged collateral may be comprised of municipal government or private sector securities including covered bonds. Banks cannot submit their own covered bonds as collateral.
- Soft-bullet covered bonds are eligible as collateral.

> Figure 16: Haircuts for various asset classes and maturity brackets

Collateral type	up to 3 months	>3-12 months	>1-3 years	>3-5 years	>5-10 years	>10-20 years	>20-35 years	>35 years
Securities issued by the Government of Canada*	0.25%	0.5%	1.0%	1.5%	2.0%	3.5%	6.0%	6.5%
Government of Canada – stripped coupons and residuals	0.25%	0.5%	1.5%	2%	2.5%	4.5%	7.0%	9.5%
Securities guaranteed by the Government of Canada (excl. NHA mortgage-backed securities)*	1.25%	1.5%	2.0%	2.5%	3.0%	4.5%	8.0%	8.5%
NHA mortgage-backed securities	2.25%	2.5%	3.0%	3.5%	4.0%	5.5%	9.0%	9.5%
Government of Canada guaranteed – stripped coupons and residuals	1.25%	1.5%	2.5%	3.0%	3.5%	5.0%	8.5%	10.0%
Securities issued by a provincial government*	1.5%	1.75%	2.5%	3.0%	3.5%	5.0%	8.5%	9.0%

Collateral type	up to 3 months	>3-12 months	>1-3 years	>3-5 years	>5-10 years	>10-20 years	>20-35 years	>35 years
Provincial government – stripped coupons and residuals	1.5%	1.75%	3.0%	3.5%	4.0%	5.5%	9.0%	16.0%
Securities guaranteed by a provincial government*	1.75%	2.0%	3.0%	3.5%	4.0%	5.5%	9.0%	9.5%
Provincial government guaranteed – stripped coupons and residuals	1.75%	2.0%	3.5%	4.0%	4.5%	6.0%	9.5%	17.5%
Securities issued by a municipal government	2.0%	2.25%	3.5%	4.0%	4.5%	6.0%	10.5%	11.0%
Bankers' acceptances, promissory notes, commercial paper, including those of foreign	2.25%	2.5%	–	–	–	–	-	–
Term Asset-backed securities	3.75%	7.5%	8.0%	9.0%	12.0%	16.0%	16.5%	17.0%
Asset-backed CP	3.75%	7.5%	–	–	–	–	-	–
Covered bonds*	**2.25%**	**2.5%**	**4.0%**	**5.5%**	**6.0%**	**9.0%**	**15.0%**	**15.5%**
Corporate and foreign-issuer bonds	2.25%	2.5%	4.0%	5.5%	6.0%	9.0%	15.0%	15.5%
Securities issued by the US Treasury*	1.0%	1.25%	1.75%	2.25%	3.5%	6.0%	9.0%	–

Source: Bank of Canada, HSBC (as of July 2025; last change: January 2025)

* An additional 4% will be added to the margin requirements for USD-denominated securities to account for foreign exchange risk.

X. DENMARK: ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR DANMARKS NATIONALBANK

Eligible counterparties can pledge securities as collateral which comprises of securities issued or guaranteed by the Kingdom of Denmark, bonds issued by KommuneKredit as well as the Danish covered bonds. Moreover, bonds issued by Føroya Landstýri (the government of the Faroe Islands) also qualify. The securities must be registered with Euronext Securities and traded at NASDAQ OMX Copenhagen. The securities must be denominated in DKK or EUR, in the latter case an additional exchange-rate haircut of 3% is deducted. At the request of the account holders and subject to specific assessment, Danmarks Nationalbank may also include other assets in the collateral basis for credit facilities in DKK.

The collateral value of the securities is calculated on the basis of their official price on NASDAQ OMX Copenhagen on the preceding day, including accrued interest, less a securities-specific valuation haircut. If an asset has not been traded on the previous banking days, a theoretical price set by Danmarks Nationalbank is used for the calculation of its collateral value. The haircut applied by Danmarks Nationalbank for eligible securities depends on the liquidity category and the remaining maturity:

- **Category 1**: Securities issued by the Kingdom of Denmark
- **Category 2***: Mortgage bonds (ROs), covered bonds (SDOs) and covered mortgage bonds (SDROs) with a circulating volume of more than 1 bn euro or the equivalent value in Danish kroner. The bonds must also be comprised by a price-quoting system approved by Danmarks Nationalbank for this purpose and have at least three price quoters
- **Category 3**: Other ROs, SDOs and SDROs, as well as bonds guaranteed by the Kingdom of Denmark and bonds issued by KommuneKredit
- **Category 4**: Bonds issued by the government of the Faroe Islands.

> Figure 17: Haircuts for eligible securities with fixed or variable coupon rate**

Remaining maturity	Category 1	Category 2*	Category 3	Category 4
0-1 year	0.5%	1.0%	1.5%	4.0%
1-3 years	1.0%	1.5%	2.0%	6.0%
3-5 years	1.5%	2.5%	3.5%	8.0%
5-7 years	2.0%	3.5%	4.5%	10.0%
7-10 years	3.0%	4.5%	5.5%	12.0%
> 10 years	5.0%	8.0%	8.0%	14.0%

Source: Danmarks Nationalbank, HSBC (as of July 2025)

* Inactive as of July 2025

** When a theoretical price is used, an additional haircut of 5% is deducted for all types of securities, except for securities issued by the Kingdom of Denmark. An exchange-rate haircut of 3% is deducted when securities in euro are pledged as collateral for credit facilities in DKK.

XI. SWEDEN: ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR THE RIKSBANK

The Central Bank of Sweden, the Riksbank is accepting covered bonds as collateral for Open Market Operations. This includes loans on an intraday and overnight basis as well as Repos with longer maturities.

Eligibility of assets

In order for an asset to be accepted as collateral, the outstanding volume for each issue must be at least SEK 100 mn (or the equivalent in another currency). Also, the securities must be denominated in one of the following currencies: USD, GBP, DKK, EUR, JPY, NOK or of course the Swedish Krona (SEK). The issuer must be domiciled in either the USA, Australia Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Canada, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, New Zealand, Portugal, Switzerland, Spain, United Kingdom, Sweden, Germany or Austria.

The asset also ought to meet the following criteria concerning its credit rating:

- It must have at least a credit rating of AA-
- The credit rating must be confirmed by the credit rating agencies that the Riksbank acknowledges: Standard & Poor's, Moody's and Fitch Rating
- It is not possible to replace the credit rating of a security through a possible guarantor's credit rating.
- For securities which are not issued by credit institutions, confirmation of only the issuer's credit rating is acceptable
- If there are several credit ratings, at least two of the credit ratings must meet the Riksbank's rating requirements
- The Riksbank can always chose to assess the credit quality in a way different from the rating agencies to decide whether an asset may be utilized as collateral

Covered Bonds

Covered Securities, such as Covered Bonds, must meet the requirements in Article 52.4 of Directive 2009/65/ EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 July 2009 on the coordination of laws, regulations and administrative provisions relating to undertakings for collective investments in transferable securities (UCITS). This means that, covered assets outside of the EEA cannot be regarded as such and can therefore not be seen as collateral.

Collateral value of covered bonds (market value with a haircut) may amount to a maximum of 60% of the total collateral value. The value issued by an individual issuer or a group may amount to a maximum of 50% of total collateral value. In addition, own-issue covered bonds are not accepted as collateral.

Valuation of the collateral

When it comes to the asset valuation for both the Intraday Credits as well as the Repo-operations, the Riksbank differentiates between three major categories of assets, called 'liquidity classes'.

> Figure 18: Liquidity classes as defined by the Riksbankir

Liquidity class	Category 1	Category 2	Category 3
Types of assets	- securities issued by governments - securities issued by central banks - other receivables at central banks	- securities issued by international organizations - securities guaranteed by governments - securities issued or guaranteed by municipalities, county councils or equivalent foreign local authorities - covered securities* - securities issued by so-called agencies**	Other eligible securities

Source: Riksbank, HSBC

* Such as covered bonds

** The following are considered to be agencies: Agence francaise de developpement (France), BNG Bank (Netherlands), Bpifrance Financement (France), CADES (France), CDC (France), Erste Abwicklungsanstalt (Germany), European Financial Stability Facility (EFSF) (Luxembourg), Federal Home Loan Mortgage Corporation (USA), Federal National Mortgage Association (USA), FMS Wertmanagement (Germany), Fondo de Reestructuración Ordenada Bancaria (FROB) (Spain), Instituto de Crédito Oficial (Spain), KfW (Germany), L-Bank Baden-Württemberg (Germany), Landwirtschaftliche Rentenbank (Germany), Nedwatershaps Bank (Netherlands), NRW.Bank (Germany), Union Nationale Interprofessionelle pour l'Emploi dans l'industrie et le Commerce (France).

On the basis on the classification outlined in Figure 18, the following haircuts (Figure 19) are applied. It is noteworthy, however, that extra haircuts will be applied if the asset is valued theoretically. This is not the case if it has been issued by the Riksbank. Also, for assets denominated in a currency other than the Swedish Krona, a further haircut is applied to reflect the foreign exchange risk (4% for EUR, DKK and NOK; 5% for GBP; 6% for USD and 9% for JPY).

> Figure 19: Haircuts applied to securities by the Riksbank*

Remaining maturity	Category 1			Category 2			Category 3		
	Fixed rate	Variable rate	Zero coupon	Fixed rate	Variable rate	Zero coupon	Fixed rate	Variable rate	Zero coupon
0-3 year	3.0%	1.0%	3.0%	3.0%	3.0%	5.0%	8.5%	6.0%	9.0%
3-5 years	4.0%	2.0%	7.0%	5.0%	4.0%	10.0%	11.0%	8.5%	14.0%
5-7 years	5.0%	5.0%	9.0%	7.0%	6.0%	15.0%	15.0%	12.0%	27.0%
7-10 years	6.0%	6.0%	12.0%	10.0%	10.0%	20.0%	20.0%	17.0%	35.0%
> 10 years	7.0%	7.0%	20.0%	15.0%	14.0%	25.0%	35.0%	30.0%	40.0%

Source: Riksbank (as of July 2025; last update: May 2025)

* A haircut of 0.5% will be applied to account balances with central banks. Haircuts are not applied to account balances with the Riksbank and to securities issued by the Riksbank.

XII. COVERED BONDS AND REPOS: CONCLUSION

The comparison of the various treatments of covered bonds by some of the major central banks underlines the special status of covered bonds. In our opinion, this is driven by the macro-economic benefits of covered bonds through the provision of cheap residential (and commercial) mortgages and by giving banks a stable and relatively low-cost additional funding channel. However, there is no uniform approach and stances towards covered bonds by the various central banks differ considerably. Broadly speaking, covered bonds receive more favourable treatment in those countries where they play a more pivotal role in the funding of the domestic banking sector. This applies primarily in terms of eligibility of covered bonds as collateral for repo operations, but also in terms of haircuts.

2.4 COVERED BONDS VS. OTHER ASSET CLASSES

By Florian Eichert, Crédit Agricole CIB,
Frank Will, HSBC & Chairman of the ECBC EU Legislation Working Group

I. INTRODUCTION

Historically, we have observed a clear ranking of the various asset classes with sovereign bonds trading at the tightest levels followed by sub-sovereigns and agencies, and then covered bonds followed by senior unsecured debt. However, with the financial crisis, the subsequent sovereign debt crisis, quantitative easing (QE) by the Eurosystem and more recently quantitative tightening (QT) as well as expectations for higher public sector debt to finance defence and infrastructure projects, this ranking as well as the spread differences have at times been profoundly shaken up.

There have been phases when covered bonds – instead of trading with a significant pick-up over the sovereign – became the tightest domestic debt instrument, especially in the case of lower rated countries. During the COVID-19 pandemic, senior unsecured debt on the other hand widened to levels vs. covered bonds well in excess of their pre-crisis levels only to come back to trade exceptionally close to covered bonds. Moreover, investors viewed the emergence of non-preferred senior debt as additional protection for senior preferred while at the same time, materially reducing senior preferred issuance volumes. The large asset purchases by central banks during QE then resulted in credit spread compression on the one hand while at the same time it created a squeeze on Bunds and surging Bund-ASW spreads. QT then reversed the move on Bund-ASW compressing spreads between EGBs and covered bonds again. In short, it has been quite a rollercoaster ride in recent years.

In this article, we do not want to focus too much on the very latest developments. Instead, we will take a look at how spreads have evolved across these products over longer periods of time, assess what the rationale is for the differences and show how investors decide between them.

II. SPREAD OVERVIEW COVERED BONDS VS. SOVEREIGN DEBT AND SENIOR UNSECURED

Since 2014, spreads between covered bonds and sovereign / SSA debt in EUR markets have been driven to a large extent by the monetary policy stance of the European Central Bank (ECB). When the first round of QE started in October 2014 the ECB only included covered bonds and ABS in the scope of eligible purchases. This led to a substantial tightening of spreads between covered bonds and public sector debt. When the Eurosystem then announced the expansion of QE to public sector debt, the differences widened again.

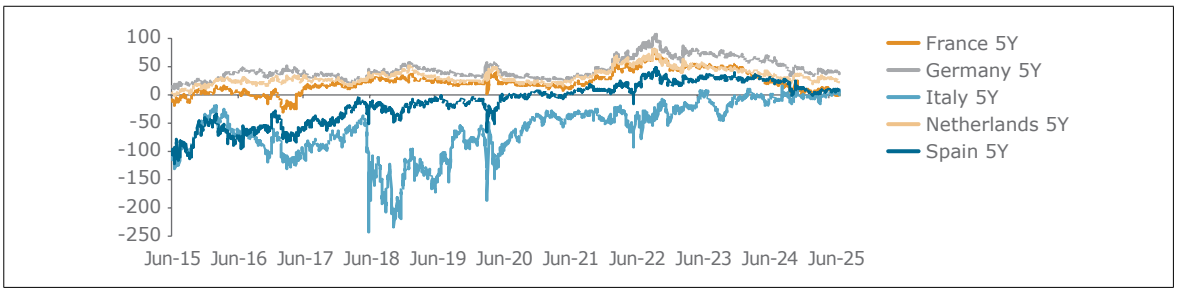
With the emergence of deeply negative EUR rates in 2019, covered bonds then struggled to follow sovereign debt (EGB) down into the rabbit hole and their spreads to core EGBs especially at the short end moved materially wider initially. However, as investors adjusted to the new situation, their reluctance to buy also covered bonds below 0% yield faded and spreads to EGBs and SSA bonds normalized again.

The beginning of the COVID-19 crisis early 2020 then yet again changed the dynamics. On the one hand monetary policy became even more accommodative and the newly introduced PEPP focused primarily on public sector purchases. At the same time, however, primary market dynamics changed with sovereign and SSA funding needs shooting up while covered bond issuance dropped on the back of rising deposits and long-term central bank liquidity.

The exit from the exceptionally accommodative monetary policy has pushed up volatility in rates and swap markets and with stress in Bund and repo markets as well as heavy hedging flows in swap markets, swap spreads became exceptionally wide. At the same time, issuance volumes in covered bond markets surged. As a result, EGBs were able to rally against swaps, covered bonds did not, which in turn pushed spreads vs EGBs to the widest in ten years. Since then, QT as well as expectations for high public sector debt issuance to finance defence and infrastructure projects have led to swap spreads turning negative with rates products

across EGB, SSA and covered bonds widening vs swaps. As a result, the yield differentials between the various rates asset classes are currently again closer to their long-term average.

> Figure 1: Spread evolution between 5Y covered and local sovereign bonds by country (bp)



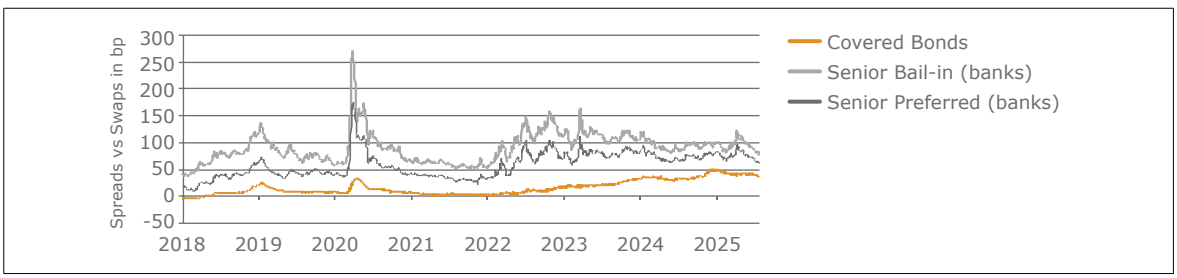
Sources: Bloomberg, Crédit Agricole CIB

Bank treasuries generally have a broad range of funding channels available including deposits, covered bonds, securitisation and unsecured funding. All of these various funding tools have their pros and cons from an issuer perspective. Senior unsecured funding is probably the most flexible form as it does not restrict the composition of the asset side. Covered bonds on the other hand require the issuers to maintain a cover pool of high quality assets backing the bonds. Moreover, regulatory rules and rating agencies often require that the mismatch between the cover assets and outstanding covered bonds is limited and that the covered bond issuer holds a certain amount of overcollateralisation (OC). In particular, the rating agencies often demand high OC level going well beyond the legal requirements.

From an investor perspective, the secured character of covered bonds combined with their favourable regulatory treatment (low risk weights, exemption from bail-in under BRRD, LCR-eligibility, etc.) make them an attractive investment usually reflected in significantly lower spread levels than senior unsecured debt.

In a risk-on environment, the spread differentials between senior unsecured bank debt and covered bonds tend to be relatively low. In a compressed yield environment, investors in search of yield are inclined to accept the higher risk of unsecured paper in return for a relatively small risk premium. This is particularly true for shorter-dated senior unsecured paper and for bonds issued by strong institutions, where the downside risks are often regarded as being smaller. However, if the market is in risk-off mode the yield differentials between both asset classes tend to be higher as well as more volatile. Figure 2 show the divergent spread impact of the COVID-19 crisis on the spreads of covered bonds on the one hand and on those on senior non-preferred and senior preferred on the other hand. During risk off periods, unsecured bank debt tend to underperform covered bonds which was for instance the case during the market turmoil surrounding the closure of Silicon Valley Bank (SVB) in the US and the takeover of Credit Suisse by UBS in March and April 2023.

> Figure 2: Covered Bonds vs Senior Prefered and Senior Non-Preferred Bank Bonds



Source: S&P Dow Jones Indices, HSBC

From an issuers perspective the choice between the various funding instruments has become more complex and is no longer simply a function of lower funding costs. In the world of TLAC (Total Loss-Absorbing Capacity) and MREL (Minimum Requirement for Own Funds and Eligible Liabilities), bank treasuries have to ensure a minimum level of bail-in-able debt, which could be achieved by issuing senior unsecured debt. Many EU banks issue senior non-preferred debt to fulfil the requirements for bail-in-able debt. Moreover, covered bonds limit the issuer's flexibility regarding the underlying cover assets and cause higher administrative costs (e.g. hedging, additional ratings, cover pool administrator) compared to senior unsecured bonds. If the spread between both asset classes is lower than the difference in administrative costs and the costs for the reduced flexibility, then it is often more attractive to issue senior unsecured debt. This holds even more true if an issuer needs to raise the amount of bail-in-able liabilities.

The observed generally low spread differentials between covered bonds and senior unsecured bonds are in stark contrast to the regulatory developments over the last few years. Covered bonds are exempted from bail-in under the Bank Recovery and Resolution Directive (BRRD) which is also reflected in the more covered bond-friendly rating methodologies of the major rating agencies (see separate section below). However, we believe these factors continue to have only a limited impact on spreads, as technicals (supply volumes, absolute yield levels and central bank policies) will remain the dominant spread drivers. Moreover, even with BRRD and Single Resolution Mechanism (SRM) in place, many senior unsecured investors still view it as unlikely that there will be a senior bail-in of large, systemically important institutions, especially since many issuers had to build up a buffer of senior non-preferred bonds, making a bail-in of senior preferred bonds less likely. The senior unsecured ratings of many covered bond issuers have already been upgraded due to the increase of bail-in-able securities.

III. WHICH FUNDAMENTAL FACTORS DRIVE COVERED BONDS VS. SENIOR UNSECURED?

Comparing covered bonds and senior unsecured bank debt is ultimately a choice of where to invest within a bank's capital structure. Both asset classes are senior bank liabilities. Senior unsecured debt is structurally subordinate to covered bonds due to covered bond holders' preferential claim on the cover pool, on which senior unsecured creditors have a claim on only after covered bond holders and other preferred creditors have been fully repaid.

The relative value between both asset classes is driven by various aspects:

- **Probability of default**: Covered bonds are structured to survive an issuer event of default and not to accelerate automatically. As a result, the *conditional* probability of default (PD) of a covered bond (i.e. probability of payment interruptions on the covered bonds post issuer default) should typically be lower than the senior unsecured PD, which represents the cap for the covered bond PD. The strength of the covered bond framework plays a major role here. This includes provisions for an effective segregation of cover assets and privileged derivatives in an insolvency scenario as well as (structural) features to mitigate liquidity risks such as liquidity buffers or different repayment structures. The introduction of senior non-preferred debt in many European countries has created an additional buffer for senior preferred debt, reducing the PD of such instruments.
- **Recovery rate**: Different recovery rates are a major determinant between covered bonds and senior unsecured paper. In a default scenario, covered bond holders benefit from the double recourse to both the cover pool and to the issuing bank, ranking pari-passu with senior unsecured investors should the cover pool be insufficient for a full recovery. Senior secured issuance structurally subordinates senior unsecured creditors, reducing their recovery expectations. Both the overcollateralisation (OC) level and the quality of the collateral are decisive factors for the expected recovery of a covered bond relative to senior unsecured bonds. As normally only high quality assets are included in the cover pool and the sometimes very high level of OC reduce both the quantity and the quality of the assets (directly) available to senior unsecured bondholders.

- **Bail-in risk**: Systemic support has been the main determinant for the very low default rates on senior unsecured bonds despite a number of bank failures that occurred during the financial crisis. However, bail-in risk has become a new factor to the relative value equation. While covered bonds have been generally exempted from bail-in under the European bank resolution framework (with the exception of any undercollateralised part), senior unsecured creditors can be subject to bail-in under the Bank Recovery and Resolution Directive (BRRD) before resolution funds are tapped or taxpayer money is injected. However, as mentioned above, senior non-preferred bonds are subordinated to the traditional senior unsecured debt. This relatively new asset class reduces the bail-in risk for senior preferred unsecured investors.
- **Regulatory treatment**: Covered bonds are treated favourably to senior unsecured paper in a number of regulatory frameworks, such as the Capital Requirements Regulation (CRR) where lower risk-weights are assigned to covered bonds, the liquidity coverage framework where senior unsecured paper are not eligible while most covered bonds qualify as either Level 1B or 2A (Level 2B does not really play a role anymore), and Solvency II where covered bonds benefit from lower risk factors or the UCITS Directive allowing for higher investment limits in covered bonds. Unfavourable regulatory treatment can either exclude certain investor groups or lead to higher spreads being demanded as compensation for additional cost of holding senior debt compared to covered bonds.
- **Central bank repo eligibility and haircuts**: For bank investors, central bank repo eligibility is an important factor when structuring their liquidity portfolios. If eligible, central banks apply higher haircuts to senior unsecured bank paper than covered bonds. Higher haircuts increase banks' funding costs as the haircut part of the bond posted as collateral needs to be funded using alternative sources.
- **Rating stability and differential**: Rating agencies used to link their rating on covered bonds to the issuer/senior unsecured rating. The senior unsecured rating was the floor for the covered bond rating, with the uplift depending on asset-liability mismatches, recovery rates, and legal and structural aspects. In light of the new BRRD, all major rating agencies developed new frameworks at least partly decoupling covered bond ratings from the issuer rating. In essence, senior unsecured ratings benefit less from government support, while the gap between covered bonds and the issuer rating is wider. While even in the past covered bond ratings tended to be less volatile than senior unsecured bonds, this is the case even more under the revised criteria.

> Figure 3: Pros & cons of covered bonds vs. senior unsecured from an investor's point of view

Advantages of Covered Bonds	Advantages of Senior Unsecured Debt
> Double recourse to issuer and cover pool > Higher rating than unsecured debt > Lower risk weighting for CRR-eligible Covered Bonds bought by EEA banks > Favourable treatment under Solvency II > Generally better liquidity through larger issue size > Favourable repo treatment at ECB and other central banks > Most covered bonds are eligible as liquid assets under the CRR > No risk of bailing-in of the secured claim	> Higher yield levels (although 'spread give up' is at low levels at least at the short end of the curve) > Improved investor protection through higher capital requirements and implementation of senior non-preferred buffer > Often high turnover despite smaller deal sizes (due to lower portion of buy-and-hold investors)

Source: HSBC

1. Differences in regulatory treatment

Liquidity Coverage Ratio (LCR)

The liquidity coverage ratio which was first introduced by the Basel Committee on Banking Supervision in December 2009 requires banks to hold a stock of unencumbered high quality liquid assets to meet 30 days cash outflows under an acute stress scenario. Meanwhile, the net stable funding ratio (NSFR) measures the amount of longer-term, stable sources of funding employed by a bank relative to the liquidity profiles of the assets and the potential for contingent calls on funding liquidity arising from off-balance sheet commitments and obligations.

While highly-rated covered bonds form part of the set of liquid assets, senior unsecured bank bonds do not qualify. Next to cash, deposits at central banks, all types of bonds issued or guaranteed by EU Member States' central government, certain agency and supranational issues, Level 1 HQLAs (High Quality Liquid Assets) include covered bonds that meet certain conditions: They must be issued by an institution out of the European Economic Area, be credit quality step 1 (i.e. a rating of AA- or better), have a minimum size of EUR 500m as well as a minimum overcollateralisation of 2%. Whilst other Level 1 assets are not subject to liquidity buffer limits or haircuts to their market value, Level 1 covered bonds will be subject to a 70% cap in the liquidity buffer and to a 7% haircut.

Level 2A assets include regional governments, local authorities or public-sector entities with a risk weight of 20% and covered bonds with a credit quality step 2 rating and non-EU covered bonds rated at credit quality step 1. Also, corporate bonds with at least credit quality step 1, a minimum issue size of EUR 250mn and maximum maturity of 10 years at the time of issuance are classified as Level 2A.

Level 2B incorporates high quality securitisations for RMBS, auto, SME and consumer loans and high quality covered bonds that do not meet the rating threshold of Level 1 and 2A. Shares meeting certain conditions and corporate bonds with at least credit quality step 3, a minimum issue size of EUR 250mn and maximum maturity of 10 years at the time of issuance are accepted as Level 2B.

The classification of covered bonds as Level 1 and Level 2 means that many European bank treasuries use covered bonds in addition to sovereign, agency and supranational debt in order to optimise their liquid asset portfolio under both liquidity and risk-return considerations. The spread impact on covered bonds, however, has been limited – even after the end of the CBPP3 purchases and the larger fragmentation of the market – as spreads in covered bond sector are mainly driven by other factors such as the quality and risks of the underlying assets.

Risk-weights

In times of rising minimum requirements for regulatory capital, risk-weights applied for the calculation of a bank's stock of risk-weighted assets have gained further importance. Regulatory capital is a bank's most expensive source of funding and bank investors are optimising their portfolios taking into account the capital consumption of their positions.

Bank investors based in the European Economic Area (EEA) can apply preferential risk-weights for covered bonds, fulfilling the criteria laid down in Article 129 CRR compared to senior unsecured bank bonds. A lower risk-weight means that banks have to hold less regulatory capital against a given position which benefits the average funding cost and thus the spread which is required. Covered bonds not fulfilling those criteria receive the same treatment as senior unsecured bonds. *Please refer to Article 2.2 of the Generic Section, for details on the determination of risk-weights for covered bonds*.

Bail-in

In the EU, the Bank Recovery and Resolution Directive (BRRD) was adopted in 2014 together with the Single Resolution Mechanism (SRM). The BRRD defines the triggers for a resolution of a failing bank in the EU and provides the necessary tools while the SRM centralises the decision-making process for the large and cross-

border banks in the Euro Area. At the heart of the BRRD lies the bail-in tool. The bail-in tool, which aims to ensure that shareholders, sub-debt and senior unsecured investors will bear the losses of a struggling bank rather than the taxpayers, has become available to most EU governments as of the beginning of 2016. The possibilities for governments to support banks will be narrowed considerably and senior unsecured is at risk of burden-sharing after equity, sub debt and senior non-preferred.

Covered bonds have been excluded from the list of bail-in-able liabilities. Where appropriate, resolution authorities could exercise bail-in powers to a part of a secured liability that exceeds the value of the assets, i.e. any under-collateralised part or senior unsecured residual claim.

BRRD/SRM implementation: Most countries follow in France's footsteps

The BRRD/SRM is implemented at national level since the insolvency laws vary from country-to-country, making a one-size-fits-all solution for all European banks complicated. France was one of the first countries to implement the new European bail-in directive by modifying the hierarchy of claims in case of a resolution and introducing a new category of senior debt that counts toward Total Loss Absorbing Capital (TLAC)/MREL. This new category of senior debt is referred to as senior non-preferred (SNP) and is subordinated to other senior obligations but ranking senior to the traditional subordinated debt. The French banks continue to be able to issue traditional senior debt. Many other European countries such as Spain, Italy, Austria, Denmark or and Sweden have followed into France's footsteps and also introduced MREL/TLAC-eligible senior non-preferred bonds as new asset class, ranking below senior-unsecured bonds.

Germany initially opted for a different approach but has amended its approach in the meantime. Since 21 July 2018 German banks are able to decide whether to opt for senior preferred or senior non-preferred debt. Plain vanilla senior unsecured bonds issued before that date are subordinated to the new senior preferred debt (but rank pari passu to senior non-preferred debt) and structured senior unsecured instruments. According to Article 64 of the ECB guidelines, in order to be eligible as repo collateral, marketable debt instruments cannot be subordinated to other debt instruments of the same issuer. Thus outstanding German plain-vanilla senior unsecured bank bonds, which had been issued before 21 July 2018, lost their ECB repo eligibility at the end of 2018.

In order to build up a sufficient capital buffer, banks have actively issued non-preferred bonds. That reduced the remaining wholesale funding needs and thereby negatively affects supply in (preferred) senior unsecured and to a certain extent even in covered bonds. Moreover, the introduction of the new asset class already had a positive impact on senior unsecured ratings as the senior non-preferred buffer offers additional protection from bail-in for senior unsecured investors. That could – at least in theory – reduce the spread between senior unsecured bonds and covered bonds.

UK: ring fencing of covered bonds

Since 1 January 2019, UK banks with a three-year average in retail deposits of over GBP 25bn must legally separate their core retail banking services from their investment and non-EEA banking activities. The goal of this structural reform was to support financial stability by making banking groups simpler and easier to 'resolve', ensuring that "if either the ring-fenced or the non-ring-fenced part of the bank fails, it will be easier to manage the failure in an orderly way without the need for a government bail-out". Building societies are exempted from ring-fencing.

The ring-fenced part primarily includes the domestic UK retail business, while the non-ring-fenced part mainly comprises the corporate and investment banking business of the banks. The residential mortgage business remains part of the ring-fenced bank and the covered bonds are issued out of the ring-fenced entity. Rating agencies reacted and the issuer ratings of several ring fenced entities were upgraded, while the non-ring-fenced entities were downgraded.

Moreover, Moody's stated in a sector comment that the inclusion of UK covered bonds within the ring-fenced banks (RFBs) "is credit positive for covered bonds as the RFB structure decreases the likelihood of bank failure and, as

a consequence, the likelihood that banks will cease making payments under the covered bonds". In its report, Moody's emphasised the importance of the credit strengths of the issuers as one of the key drivers of the covered bond ratings and indicated that "the credit profiles of RFBs will be in line with or stronger than those of the existing banks, reflecting the less complex and less diversified business models of the RFBs relative to existing banks".

2. Ratings

Amended rating methodologies

In light of the bank resolution regimes, the major rating agencies have introduced amended methodologies for covered bonds. As a result, the average gap between issuer and covered bond ratings has widened. On the one hand, covered bonds are explicitly exempted from bail-in and the changes of the rating methodologies by the agencies reflect the preferential treatment of covered bonds under the new resolution regimes. On the other hand, issuer downgrades in some cases partly offset this positive effect. Nevertheless, the overall net effect of the introduction of the bail-in rules has been positive for the covered bond ratings.

From an analytical perspective, it is crucial that the starting point of the covered bond ratings is not the senior unsecured rating as the bailing-in of senior unsecured debt no longer automatically triggers an issuer default. The resolution measures principally aim at maintaining a going-concern entity. The fact that covered bonds are exempted from bail-in measures means that a different starting point for the covered bond rating has to be used. The recent changes of the rating methodologies address, at least partly, this new situation.

Structural subordination

Differences in recovery expectations are another main determinant of the relative value between covered bonds and senior unsecured. Against this backdrop, rising concerns from senior unsecured investors about structural subordination have been a factor supporting the covered bond market. The increased use of covered bond funding by banks over the last several years means that more assets were ring-fenced. As assets in the cover pool are not available to cover the claims of senior unsecured investors in case of issuer insolvency[1], market participants have started to worry about the growth in covered bond issuance and the subsequent reduction of assets available to unsecured investors in an insolvency scenario. This problem has been exacerbated by rating agencies' demands for higher overcollateralisation levels, which in most cases significantly exceed the legal overcollateralisation requirements and further reduce the amount of assets available for investors outside the cover pool.

While we understand the concerns in the market, we think asset encumbrance discussions often tend to overstate the problem arising from structural subordination through covered bonds while ignoring other sources of encumbrance (including contingent encumbrance when a bank's financial situation deteriorates) such as central bank repos/liquidity assistance as well as ignoring offsetting factors. The use of covered bonds usually results in lower funding costs for the banks and significantly broadens the investor base allowing issuers to tap rates investors such as central banks. In addition, it is a more stable funding base. Even if the unsecured market is closed for an issuer, the bank may still be able to access the wholesale markets by using covered bonds or, in a worst case scenario, it can retain the bonds to repo them with central banks such as the ECB. Moreover, the potential issuance volume of covered bonds is not unlimited. The availability of eligible assets is a restricting factor for covered bond issuance, putting a cap on the actual issuance potential. Also, the aforementioned requirements from rating agencies of high overcollateralisation levels further reduce the available headroom for covered bond issuance.

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1 If all the covered bonds of an insolvent issuer have been repaid and the claims of all covered bond investors have been satisfied, the remaining assets in the respective cover pool would generally be made available on a pro-rata basis to the senior unsecured investors. Moreover, in some jurisdictions, such as Germany, in case of issuer insolvency senior unsecured investors would have access to assets in the cover pool that are obviously not necessary to cover the outstanding covered bonds and related liabilities. Given the dynamic character of the market, a very high hurdle must be overcome in order for this process to trigger, and we would expect that only in very few, selected cases the insolvency administrator of the cover pool would agree to such a transfer.

IV. WHICH FUNDAMENTAL FACTORS DRIVE COVERED BONDS VS. SOVEREIGN AND SUPRA/AGENCY DEBT…?

Despite the fact that covered bonds in a number of countries have at times traded well inside their sovereigns, sovereign risk does fundamentally impact covered bonds. In fact, it impacts them in all aspects – quality of the issuer, cover pool quality, liquidity and refinancing risk as well as ratings.

> Issuers especially those with a strong domestic presence are directly impacted by a weakening sovereign. Their business prospects deteriorate as a weaker sovereign and a weaker economic situation go hand in hand. In addition to this, many bank treasuries hold substantial volumes of their own sovereign debt making them directly susceptible to widening sovereign spreads.

> Cover pool assets are impacted as weaker economic growth usually means higher unemployment and thus higher NPL ratios.

> With very few exceptions, covered bonds are not pass-through securities. Hence bullet bonds refinance granular loan portfolios and there are mismatches that need to be refinanced. Should a sovereign run into trouble, issuers will find it harder and harder to refinance liquidity mismatches either via further issuance, third party liquidity lines or portfolio sales. Covered bond programs backed by pools that might not even have any problems credit quality wise could thus be impacted negatively.

> For rating agencies sovereigns play a major role in rating covered bonds. They link issuer ratings to that of the sovereign unless an issuer has a substantial presence in other countries as well. They factor in sovereign bond spreads into their cash flow cover pool models thus driving up OC requirements in times of sovereign stress. And last but not least, Fitch, Moody's and S&P all operate with sovereign ceilings for structured finance instruments including covered bonds.

Bottom line is that sovereign risk plays too big of a role for covered bonds to ignore it. Nonetheless, there are reasons why at times covered bonds can very well trade inside their respective sovereign bond curves that go beyond merely differences in regulatory treatment. We have listed the main points below. Unlike in previous years, we no longer include the ECB's bond purchases as a factor given that QT has driven the Eurosystem's share in the eligible benchmark universe from as high as 46% to below 28% at the end of June 2025.

Rating stability

Despite rating agencies factoring in sovereign ratings into covered bond ratings, they do allow for some uplift above the sovereign. The maximum depends on the rating agency and collateral type but it can reach up to six notches with Moody's or Fitch for example. Covered bond ratings can thus withstand pressure on sovereign ratings to a large extent. Only once the maximum uplift above the sovereign is used up do they start to move lower as well.

Italian covered bond ratings for example have been much more stable historically than the Italian sovereign itself. In turn, in Portugal, investors who were prohibited from holding non-investment grade debt had Portuguese covered bonds as the sole alternative and spreads of Portuguese covered bonds thus traded as much as 200bp inside the Portuguese sovereign. As Portugal was upgraded into investment grade again in 2018, Portuguese covered spreads moved back into positive territory vs the sovereign.

> Figure 4: Covered bond vs. sovereign bond ratings

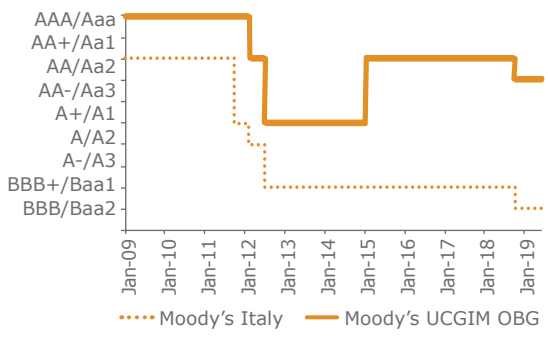
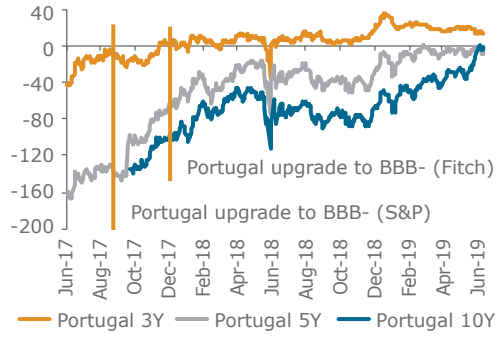


Figure 5: Portuguese covered bond vs sovereign spread (BP)



Sources: Bloomberg, CréditAgricole CIB

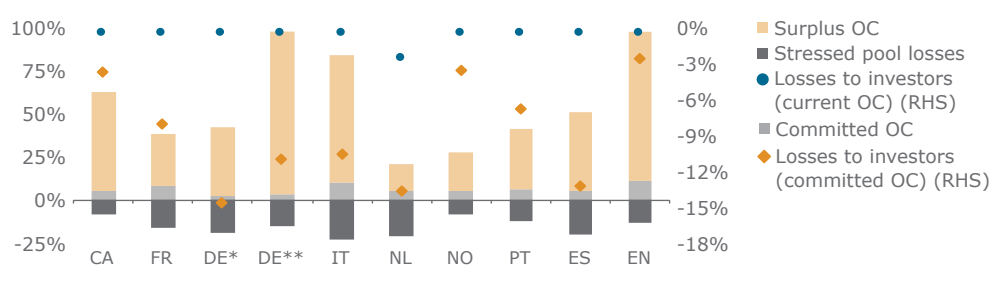
Tail risk – expected recoveries

Especially for buy-and-hold investors, an argument to defend negative covered-sovereign bond spreads is the expectation that tail risks for covered bond investments are smaller than they are for sovereign debt. Especially during the sovereign crisis, long-term investors began to feel more comfortable with the collateralised claim of covered bonds than sovereign debt itself.

However, the validity of this statement does depend on the cover pool, the covered bond framework and the issuer itself. High quality residential mortgage backed covered bonds from a country with a strong framework that are issued by a systemically important bank will stand a much better chance than lower quality public sector backed covered bonds issued by a small issuer. It is also important to stress that the weaker a sovereign is, the more relevant these tail-risk considerations become. For stronger sovereigns, better liquidity and regulatory treatment of their bonds are the main drivers for the spread to covered bonds.

It is hard to estimate cover pool recoveries based on issuer reporting. However, rating agencies such as Moody's publish the results of their own cash flow modelling of cover pool assets and liabilities. Moody's stressed pool losses are the loss the agency expects should a cover pool be wound down. One can use this number and apply it to a pool which is left with legal minimum OC to come up with an estimated recovery rate. For Italian mortgage cover pools for example the estimated loss is just above 10% if the bond was purchased at par (average committed OC of 11% and stressed pool losses of 23%).

> Figure 6: OC vs Moody's stressed pool losses Q2 2025, estimating loss given defaults on covered bond exposures (%)



Sources: Moody's, Crédit Agricole CIB *German pools with less than 15% CRE exposure; ** German pools with more than 15% CRE exposure

These estimated pool recovery figures can be used to either estimate cash prices below which a purchase should result in a positive return even if the bank and the covered bonds were to default. It can, however, also be used as a proxy for the required haircut on a sovereign bond that would make the covered bond the better option. In the Italian case, should a sovereign haircut on Italy be in excess of 10%, the expected recovery on the OBG would be higher, if not, sovereign debt would be the better option.

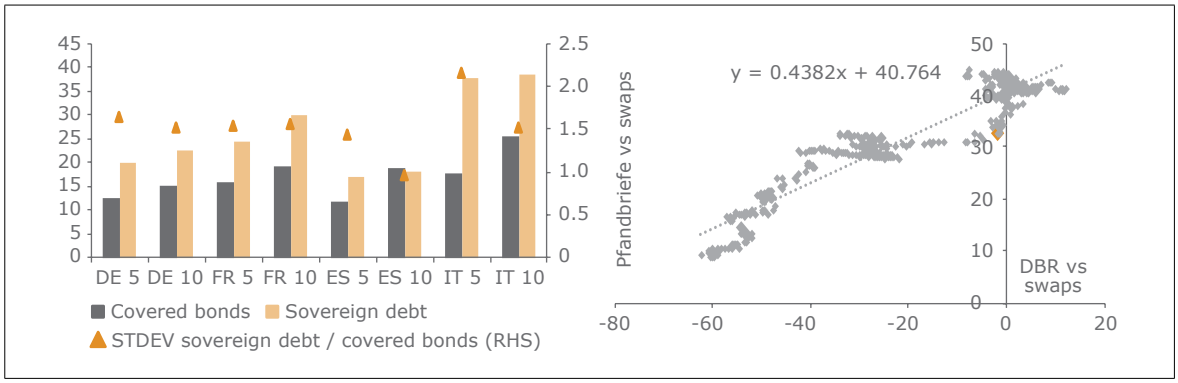
What this calculation does not take into account though is the probability that some banks can very well survive a sovereign debt restructuring and that, irrespective of potential pool recoveries, covered bonds could be the better choice. Countries need to maintain a basic level of banking services after all during and after a sovereign debt restructuring. National Bank of Greece is the best example for this.

Of course, recoveries based investing took place above all at the height of the sovereign crisis when peripheral covered bonds were trading well below par. At the current prices, the investors who focused on this have long moved on from covered bond markets. However, for long-term investors that want to assess tail risks, the recovery assessment vs. sovereign debt can still make sense.

Spread stability

A main argument pro covered bonds over the years is their spread stability relative to virtually all other products. While even German Bunds experienced intra-day volatility of 20bp and more over the past two years, covered bonds have remained extremely stable with volatility only a fraction of the corresponding EGBs. Looking at this relationship from a slightly different angle, the beta between covered bonds and Bund valuations vs swaps has historically been around 0.4, meaning 10bp widening of Bunds against swaps leads to around 4bp widening of covered bonds against swaps and 6bp tightening against Bunds. In other words, while covered bonds cannot decouple fully from sovereign debt, they tend to outperform EGBs in a spread widening environment.

> Figure 7: 2019-2025 Standard deviation ASW spreads covered bond vs. sovereign bond (BP) and relationship between Pfandbrief valuations vs swaps and swap spreads (BP)



Source: Bloomberg, Crédit Agricole CIB

Spread volatility is less of a problem for long term buy and hold investors but certainly causes problems for asset managers valuing their funds' assets. It also causes problems for banks VAR calculations. While European banks do not have to hold capital for European sovereign debt, they do have to hold capital to cover the volatility of their trading assets. And the more volatile an asset is the more capital banks have to hold. Spread stability of covered bonds thus reduces the capital consumption difference to sovereign debt.

One of the reasons for this lagging of covered bonds is certainly the different investor base and less active trading, which were factors even long before QE. Buy and hold investors traditionally play a more important role in covered bond markets while trading accounts are more active in EGB markets and it has at times needed

new issuance to lead to a repricing of covered bond spreads. The end of net settlements for the APP and PEPP as well as surge in issuance volumes over the past three years has started to improve broader liquidity also in covered bond markets. However, this is above all valid for the more recent vintages as the older stock pre 2021 is still and will continue to be owned by the Eurosystem leaving a meagre tradeable free-float.

Regulatory treatment

Differences in regulatory treatment between covered bonds and other asset classes are described at length in the respective chapters, there is no need to repeat this here. When it comes to the difference to 0% risk weighted sovereign and SSA exposure, a bank treasurer owning 10% risk weighted (RW) covered bonds needs to factor in an extra 10% capital charge as well as higher LCR haircuts. For a target ROE of 10% we are thus talking about roughly 8bp of extra capital cost while the higher LCR haircut requires more covered bond holdings to achieve the same LCR result and thus some extra funding and again some extra capital. Taken together, the combined effect for banks are typically between around 10-15bp for level 1, 10% RW covered bonds or around 20-30bp for level 2A, 20% RW ones. For covered bonds that are not repo eligible with central banks such as the ECB, banks typically factor in an extra element of liquidity cost vs sovereign / SSA debt.

Solvency II does have an even more pronounced capital related effect on covered bond spreads vs EGBs / SSAs for insurance companies. However, given their much lower level of activity in covered bond markets in recent years, issuers have been able to price long-end new issues almost flat to shorter dated debt relying on bank treasuries and asset management accounts instead.

V. HOW DO INVESTORS MANEUVER BETWEEN THE PRODUCTS?

Covered-senior

We believe that one of the reasons for dislocations in spreads between unsecured and secured bank debt has been the limited overlap of senior unsecured and covered bond investors. Many investors still cannot directly play opportunities that arise between both asset classes. The main reasons for the limited overlap are in our view: (1) central banks and sovereign wealth funds are large buyers of covered bonds but not of senior unsecured debt, (2) banks are one of the biggest investor groups in covered bonds and regulatory provisions favour covered bonds, (3) asset managers and pension funds often have higher limits for covered bonds than for senior unsecured bank debt, and (4) both asset classes are usually bought for different dedicated portfolios. In addition, covered bonds are sometimes used to enhance the yield of sovereign bond portfolios without diluting the average rating, or added to genuine credit portfolios to improve the portfolio rating quality.

Anecdotal evidence from analysing order books over time, however, suggests that the overlap in the investor base has increased in recent years due to a higher participation of credit investors in new covered bond issues. We expect this trend to continue over the coming years and credit investors to account for a growing portion of covered bond order books going forward, not least because of the bail-in risk for European senior unsecured debt and the relative value opportunities this will create between these two asset classes.

Furthermore, in the current low-yield environment, spreads between covered bonds and senior unsecured paper are, to a large extent, driven by technicals such as the ECB purchase programme which maintain spreads often at a level below fundamental values.

Covered-sovereign / SSA

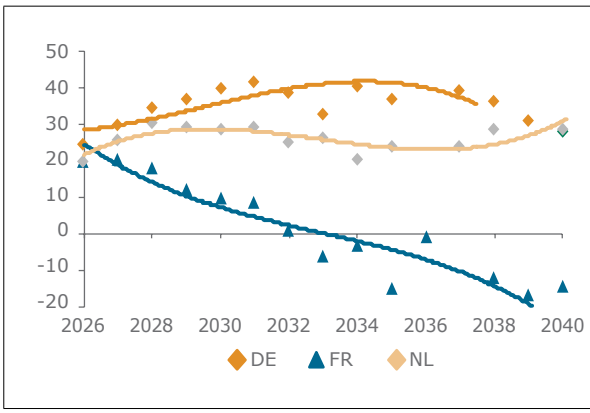
There is a material overlap in the investor bases between covered bonds and EGB / SSA debt. After all, for bank treasuries, they are all LCR eligible assets and thus compete with each other with the difference in regulatory (higher capital charges and LCR haircuts), central bank treatment (higher repo haircuts and different purchase programme dynamics) and liquidity being main drivers.

We mentioned the different regulatory cost above. While they are often not the main driver between EGB and covered bonds (often spreads between the two are well in excess of the regulatory costs and levels of liquidity are just too different), the approach is very valid vs SSAs. At covered-SSA spreads well above the regulatory minimum costs, banks tend to go for covered bonds, at spreads inside this, they typically prefer the more liquid SSAs such as the EU, KFW or EIB or less liquid SSAs such as German Länder with the better regulatory treatment.

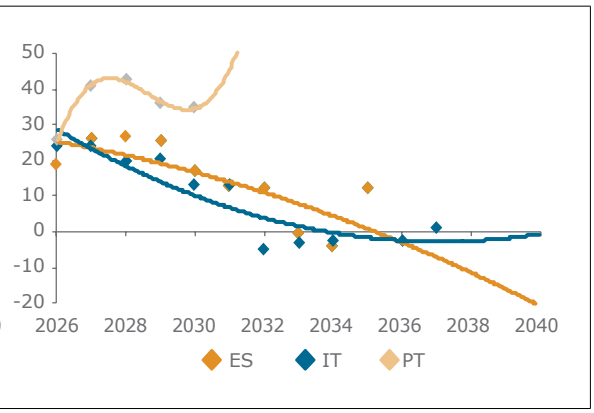
There has been less overlap between covered bonds and sovereign / SSA markets in recent years for asset managers (AM). There are of course externally managed LCR funds in countries such as Germany or France for which covered bonds are eligible investments in the same way they are for banks directly. However, bigger rates portfolios have typically focused more on EGBs at the wider spreads vs swaps and higher yields or they have traded liquid SSAs such as the EU. Covered bond outperformance against Bunds have left them looking less stand-out as they did when swap spreads were closer to 100bp in 2022. However, the tighter valuations of credit against covered bonds has led to more aggregate portfolios also looking at covered bonds.

When comparing covered bonds to EGBs using a very simplified approach, on the one end there is the higher liquidity of sovereign debt and lower capital charges compared to covered bonds while on the other end, spread stability and potentially higher ratings and recoveries can speak in favour of covered bonds. The liquidity and capital charge arguments pro EGBs are valid across the curve. However, while spread stability as well as recoveries are no major topics at the very short end, they become more relevant the longer the bond's tenor. As a result, covered bond – EGB spread curves typically slope downwards with countries such as Germany or the Netherlands being exceptions. After all, the 10Y Bund is being used as a liquid flight-to-quality instrument leading to rather wide spreads of Pfandbriefe at the long end too.

> Figure 8: Covered govie spread curves per country (bp)



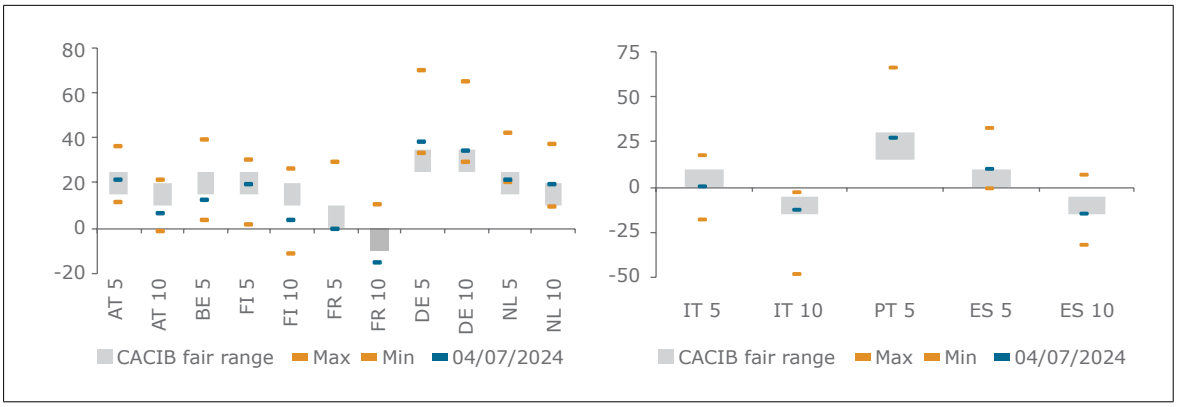
> Figure 9: Covered govie spread curves per country (bp)



Sources: Bloomberg, Crédit Agricole CIB

Below we show our estimate fair value ranges between covered bond and sovereign debt by country.

> Figure 10: 5y /10y EUR covered bonds vs. local sovereign debt (bp)



Sources: Bloomberg, Crédit Agricole CIB

VI. WRAP UP

While there is a material overlap in the investor base between covered bonds and sovereign / SSA debt, this overlap is less pronounced for senior preferred debt. After all, covered bonds are LCR eligible assets that sit in the same bank portfolios as sovereign / SSA debt while for asset managers they can serve as higher yielding but still highly rated and stable alternatives in aggregate portfolios. However, while in the past, QE, low yields, tight spreads and little issuance drove credit investors to focus further down the capital structure than pay much attention to covered bonds, this has changed with the start of QT and the rise in yields and spreads, making covered bonds more attractive for a broader range of investors. At the same time, elevated funding needs from SSA issuers such as the EU has attracted interest from rates investors and swap spreads turning negative earlier this year has made EGBs look attractive vs swaps. Still, covered bonds continue to offer a lower beta vs swaps than EGBs and are thus a good alternative for those expecting elevated public sector supply to finance defence and infrastructure projects in the coming years and hence further Bund weakness against swaps.

Despite many distortions over the past few years, the fundamental drivers of the relationship between covered bonds and EGBs / SSAs as well as senior debt, have not gone away. They may sometimes be less visible but they will not lose their long-term relevance.

In the same way, covered bonds will remain an important product for a wide range of investors. In fact, at present, they sit rather comfortably between the other asset classes with the pick-up over EGBs offering an incentive while the stability argument shines especially strongly in a market that is facing structural breaks driven by geopolitical events. We wrote in last year's ECBC fact-book that covered bonds are too strategic a product for investors to abandon permanently. And while we did see investors move into either credit or EGBs / SSAs in the past, many of them have indeed come back over the last couple of years in light of higher yields, wider spreads and more supply.

2.5 ESG REGULATORY

By Sanna Eriksson, Deputy Chairwoman of the ECBC, OP Mortgage Bank, Maureen Schuller, ING Bank N.V., Sabrina Miehs, Association Of German Pfandbrief Banks, Larissa De Barros Fritz, ABN AMRO Bank N.V.

I. INTRODUCTION

Since the European Commission launched its Sustainable Finance Action Plan in 2018, covered bond issuers have been increasingly navigating the growing landscape of regulatory requirements designed to enhance transparency and accountability around disclosure of sustainability-related data. Key building blocks include EU Taxonomy Regulation (EUT), Sustainable Finance Disclosure Regulation (SFDR), Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CS3D), Energy Performance of Buildings Directive (EPBD) and Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD). Overall, these regulations represent a comprehensive reform of sustainability risk analysis and reporting, ensuring a consistent flow of ESG information throughout the financial system and the broader economy. In February 2025, the European Commission released a legislative package (Omnibus I) to simplify requirements in the field of sustainable finance reporting and due diligence. This initiative aims to enhance the competitiveness of EU companies by reducing regulatory burdens. The Omnibus is currently being discussed in European Parliament, with trialogue negotiations planned to start after October 2025.

This section provides a comprehensive overview of the existing sustainability regulations most relevant for covered bond issuers and expected changes with the proposed Omnibus package of the European Commission. By highlighting the regulatory requirements and recent developments, we aim to support issuers in understanding their obligations and implications of integrating sustainability into their funding strategies.

II. EU TAXONOMY

The EU Taxonomy regulation in a nutshell

The EU Taxonomy came into force in July 2020. It provides a unified classification system for sustainable activities and is an important pillar within the EU sustainable finance framework.

At this point, the EU Taxonomy identifies six environmental objectives. An economic activity is considered environmentally sustainable and thus EU Taxonomy aligned if it:

- **Contributes substantially** to one of the six environmental objectives identified:
  1. Climate change mitigation;
  2. Climate change adaptation;
  3. Sustainable use and protection of water and marine resources;
  4. Transition to a circular economy, waste prevention and recycling;
  5. Pollution prevention and control;
  6. Protection and restoration of biodiversity and ecosystems.
- **Does not significantly harm** (DNSH) any of these environmental objectives;
- Is carried out in compliance with the **minimum safeguards** (MS); and
- Complies with the technical screening criteria (TSC) for substantial contribution (SC) and for DNSH to the other environmental objectives.

The climate delegated act of June 2021 sets the TSC for the climate mitigation and climate adaptation objectives (1-2) and the conditions for avoiding significant harm to the other objectives (including 3-6). These criteria became applicable per 1 January 2022. The environmental delegated act of June 2023 defines the criteria for

making substantial contribution and doing no significant harm to the remaining four environmental objectives and has been applicable since January 1, 2024.

> Figure 1: The identified economic activities per environmental objective 1-6

	Economic activities	Environmental objectives					
		1	2	3	4	5	6
1	Forestry	√	√				
2	Environmental protection and restoration activities	√	√				√
3	Manufacturing	√	√	√	√	√	
4	Energy	√	√				
5	Water supply, sewerage, waste management and remediation	√	√	√	√	√	
6	Transport	√	√				
7	**Construction and real estate activities**	√	√		√		
8	Information and communication	√	√	√	√		
9	Professional, scientific and technical activities	√	√				
10	Financial and insurance activities		√				
11	Education		√				
12	Human health and social work activities		√				
13	Arts, entertainment and recreation		√				
14	Disaster risk management		√	√			
15	Services				√		
16	Accommodation activities						√

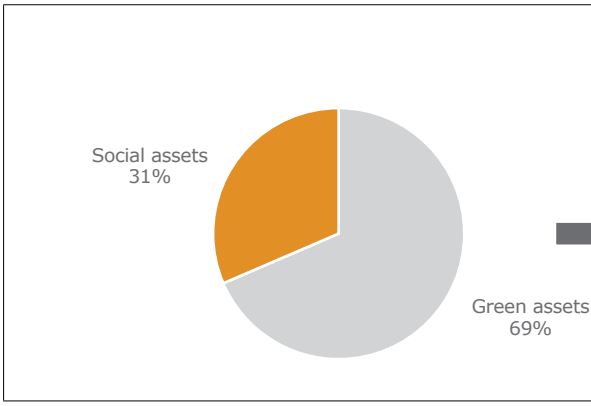
Source: European Commission, ING

Real estate activities

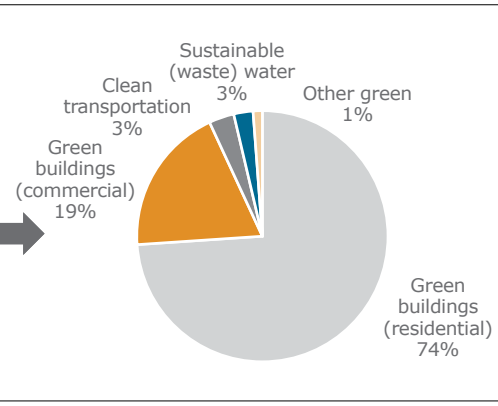
Due to the dominance of mortgage assets in covered bond collateral pools, the TSC for **construction and real estate activities** are the most relevant for green covered bonds. Under the EU Taxonomy, real estate activities can contribute substantially to climate change mitigation, climate change adaptation or to the transition to a circular economy, with climate change mitigation being the most important objective for green covered bond issuance.

Figure 3 confirms that of all the EUR sustainable covered bond green asset allocations, 93% finance energy-efficient building loans.

> Figure 2: Asset allocations by type (covered € 92 bn)*



> Figure 3: Green asset allocations by type (covered € 68 bn)*



*Covered EUR supply (size ≥ € 250 mn)
Source: Issuer allocation reports, ING

The climate delegated act divides the construction and real estate activities in seven sub-categories. Two of them are **low-carbon activities** that themselves contribute substantially to one of the Taxonomy's environmental objectives. These are generally most important for the selection of green real estate assets:

> Construction of new buildings.

> Acquisition and ownership of buildings.

One is a **transitional activity**:

> Renovation of existing buildings.

The remaining four activities are all **enabling activities**. These include the installation, maintenance and repair of:

> Energy-efficiency equipment

> Charging stations for electric vehicles in buildings (and parking spaces attached to buildings)

> Instruments/devices for measuring, regulation and controlling energy performance of buildings

> Renewable energy technologies.

Figure 4 summarises the TSC for the climate change mitigation, climate change adaptation, and transition to a circular economy objectives. The overview only shows a subset of the criteria for SC and DNSH, solely for the low carbon and transitional construction and real estate activities.

> Figure 4: Selection of TSC for construction and real estate activities

Substantial contribution			Do no significant harm		
Climate change mitigation	**Climate change adaptation**	**Transition to a circular economy**	**Climate change mitigation**	**Climate change adaptation**	**Transition to a circular economy**
Buildings built pre-2021 > EPC = A > Top 15% building stock (PED)	**Buildings built pre-2021** > Implementation of physical and non-physical adaptation solutions for material physical climate risks (identified via CRVA)		**Buildings built pre-2021** > EPC ≤ C > Top 30% building stock (PED) > Building is not dedicated to fossil fuels activities	**Buildings built pre-2021** > CRVA to identify material physical climate risks > Adaptation solutions to address material physical climate risks	
Buildings built after 2021 > PED ≤ NZEB -10%; as built EPC > Buildings ≥ 5000 m²: thermal integrity testing, calculation life-cycle GWP	**Buildings built after 2021** > Implementation of physical and non-physical adaptation solutions for material physical climate risks (identified via CRVA)	**New constructions** > ≥ 90% non-hazardous waste is recyclable > Cap on use (non-recycled) primary raw materials (eg 70% concrete, bricks, glass)	**Buildings built after 2021** > PED ≤ NZEB; as built EPC > Building is not dedicated to fossil fuels activities	**Buildings built after 2021** > CRVA to identify material physical climate risks > Adaptation solutions to address material physical climate risks	**New constructions** > ≥ 70% non-hazardous waste is recyclable > Operators limit waste generation > Circular building design
Renovations > Compliance with EU rules for major renovations, incl. on cost-optimal minimum energy performance > 30% PED improvement	**Renovations** > Implementation of physical and non-physical adaptation solutions for material physical climate risks (identified via CRVA)	**Renovations** > ≥ 70% non-hazardous waste is recyclable, > Cap primary raw materials (85% concrete, bricks, glass) > ≥ 50% is original building	**Renovations** > Building is not dedicated to fossil fuels activities	**Renovations** > CRVA to identify material physical climate risks > Adaptation solutions to address material physical climate risks	**Renovations** > ≥ 70% non-hazardous waste is recyclable > Operators limit waste generation > Circular building design

Source: European Commission, ING

To contribute to the climate change mitigation objective, buildings built as of 2021 should have a primary energy demand that is 10% lower than a country's threshold for 'nearly zero-energy buildings' (NZEB) applicable for new buildings in the EU per 2021. Buildings built before 31 December 2020 should have an energy performance certificate (EPC) class A. These buildings are also Taxonomy compliant if they belong to the top 15% most energy efficient buildings of the regional or national building stock built before 2021.

Even if an economic activity contributes substantially to the climate change mitigation objective, Taxonomy alignment also requires that no significant harm is done to the other environmental objectives. Not doing significant harm to the climate change adaptation objective is most crucial, as these DNSH criteria apply to all construction and real estate activities. They require a climate risk and vulnerability assessment (CRVA) to identify physical climate risks such as floods and an adaptation solutions plan to reduce these risks if material.

Meeting the DNSH criteria is most challenging for the construction of new buildings and the renovation of existing buildings. These criteria stretch well beyond doing no significant harm to the climate change adaptation objective alone. For the acquisition and ownership of buildings built per 2021 the substantial contribution criteria for new buildings apply. However, it is our understanding that the same DNSH provisions must be met as for buildings built before 2021. For any building acquisition, it is only important to not cause significant harm to climate change adaptation.

The European Commission does aim to further simplify the Taxonomy's technical screening criteria, in particular the DNSH criteria, upon a more detailed review. The most challenging ones, on pollution prevention and control, are already tackled as part of Omnibus I.

Sustainable economic activities must also comply with the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises and UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, including the ILO declaration on the Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, the eight fundamental conventions of the ILO and the International Bill on Human Rights (minimum safeguards). The Platform on Sustainable Finance clarified in October 2022 that households are not deemed to be covered by the minimum safeguards under the EU Taxonomy. However, the European Commission Notice C/2024/6691 of November 2024 (FAQ37) on the compliance with the TSC and minimum safeguards by producers of goods and service providers to retail clients, left some unclarity if alignment could be claimed for borrowers that purchased their house from contractors. In February 2025 the Platform on Sustainable Finance reiterated though that credit institutions should be relieved from a minimum safeguard assessment on their retail exposures, e.g. through the clarification that this obligation should only apply to direct corporate clients.

> Figure 5: Mitigating climate change through construction and real estate activities
The 'do no significant harm' criteria that construction and real estate activities should meet

	Construction of new buildings	Renovation of existing building	Energy efficiency equipment	Charging stations	Devices for energy performance regulation	Renewable energy technologies	Acquisition & ownership of buildings
Climate change mitigation	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Climate change adaptation	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Sustainable use and protection of water and marine resources	✓	✓					
Transitions to a circular economy, waste prevention and recycling	✓	✓					
Pollution prevention and control	✓	✓	✓				
Protection and restoration of biodiversity and ecosystems	✓						

✓ = Contributing substantially to ✓ = Doing no significant harm to

Source: European Commission, ING

III. THE EUROPEAN GREEN BOND STANDARD (EUGBS)

The EuGBS is a voluntary standard introduced as part of the broader EU Action Plan on Financing Sustainable Growth, with the regulation applying from 21 December 2024. Its main features encompass rules on the use of proceeds, transparency and independent external verification.

At the core of the EuGBS lies the requirement that proceeds must be fully aligned with the EU Taxonomy. Allocation of proceeds can be done following either the gradual (also called bond-by-bond) or the portfolio approach. In the portfolio approach, proceeds are in the form of fixed or financial assets (such as loans and mortgages) created within five years after the bond issuance and allocated on an aggregate basis. In this case, issuers must ensure that the total value of the portfolio exceeds the value of EuGBS-aligned bonds (EuGB). Financial institutions are mostly expected to make use of the portfolio approach. For EuGB-covered bonds, proceeds should be allocated to financial assets, but the associated loans are not required to be included in the cover pool. Under the gradual approach, proceeds may also be directed toward capital and operating expenditures. Issuers are only required to ensure alignment with the EU Taxonomy by the time the bond reaches maturity.

When using the gradual approach, EuGBS allows issuers to only have 85% of proceeds aligned with the EU Taxonomy (flexibility pocket). In this case, the remaining 15% must be allocated to activities that are in the context of certain international support in accordance with certain internationally agreed guidelines, or to economic activities that comply with the EU Taxonomy apart from the TSC.

The EuGBS includes a grandfathering clause in the event that the TSC and DNSH are amended. If the proceeds are allocated using the portfolio approach, assets not meeting the amended TSC can remain part of the portfolio for seven years at most after the application of the amended TSC.

The table below summarises the main requirements of the EuGBS in comparison to the ICMA Green Bond Principles. The EuGBS subjects issuers of European green bonds for instance to stricter transparency requirements. The required (pre-issuance) green bond factsheet and (post-issuance) allocation and impact reports, will only provide information on the level of the green asset portfolio. Hence, for EuGB covered bonds, disclosure must not be done at the cover pool level unless the entire cover pool refers to the green asset portfolio. The EuGBS also has specific disclosure and exclusion requirements for securitisation notes. These include information on the Taxonomy eligibility and alignment, and compliance with the DNSH criteria of the underlying assets.

The EuGBS also offers an optional disclosure regime for issuers that choose to make use of the EuGB (pre- and post-issuance) templates under regular green bond issuances. This regime allows for reporting in a standardised way, providing investors with easily accessible and comparable information. The voluntary templates for pre- and post-issuance have become available in the Official Journal end of July 2025.

> Figure 6: Comparison between EuGBS and ICMA Green Bond Principles

	EU GBS green bond	ICMA green bond
Eligibility	Proceeds must be invested in activities that 100% align with the EU Taxonomy. Under flexibility rules, up to 15% of proceeds can be invested in economic activities that meet, but are not officially covered by, the taxonomy requirements	Proceeds must be invested in projects with environmental benefits, with an indicative list of categories provided
Timing for allocation	Full allocation before maturity (gradual approach) or full allocation before issuance (if using the portfolio approach, which is only applicable to fixed or financial assets)	No requirement of allocation before maturity
Types of assets/ expenditures	Fixed assets, capex, opex (incurred no more than 3yrs before issuance), financial assets (created no later than Sy after issuance) and assets and expenditure of households	Assets, investments and other related and supporting expenditures such as R&D
Process for Evaluation & Selection	Issuer must inform how issuance contributes to (i) the broader environmental strategy of issuer, with a clear link to its transition plans (the latter only if applicable), and (ii) the iissuer's KPIs for Taxonomy-aligned assets and expenditures (if applicable)	Issuer must inform investors about the environmental sustainability goals of the green projects, the criteria used to categorize these projects, and the methods employed to identify and manage any associated social and environmental risks
Management of proceeds	Proceeds can be managed on a bond-by-bond basis, or on aggregate (portfolio approach) if proceeds are allocated in full on issuance	Proceeds can be managed on a bond-by-bond basis, or on aggregate (portfolio approach) Proceeds should be tracked by the issuer in an appropriate manner and attested to by the issuer in a formal internal process
Pre-issuance documentation	European green bond factsheet	Green bond framework
Pre-issuance verification	Mandatory	Recommended
Prospectus	Issuer need to publish a prospectus using the term European green bond or EuGB	Use of proceeds towards green projects should be appropriately described in the bond's legal documentation
Allocation report	Annually until full allocation, which should include update on Cap Ex plan if applicable. If using the portfolio approach issuers must demonstrate that the total value of "green" assets exceed the total value of o/s EU GBS bonds	Annually until full allocation
Impact report	Only required after full allocation of proceeds	Annually until full allocation
Post-issuance verification	Mandatory on allocation report; optional for impact report	Recommended
Additional documentation	If allocation towards capex or opex, the issuer must publish a Cap Ex plan, which needs to be reviewed by an external reviewer	

Source: ABN AMRO

IV. THE ENERGY PERFORMANCE OF BUILDINGS DIRECTIVE (EPBD)

The revised EPBD entered into force in all EU countries in May 2024. The EPBD is a cornerstone of the European Union's strategy to enhance energy efficiency and reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the building sector. Buildings are the largest energy consumers in Europe, accounting for approximately 40% of energy use and over one-third of energy-related greenhouse gas emissions. The EPBD aims to address these challenges by setting ambitious targets and standards for both new and existing buildings. The overall goal to achieve is zero-emission and a fully decarbonised building stock by 2050.

GHG Emissions Reduction: Cut greenhouse gas emissions from buildings by at least 60% by 2030 compared to 2015 levels.

Residential Buildings:

> Each Member State must define a national trajectory to reduce average primary energy use by 16% by 2030, and 20–22% by 2035.At least 55% of the reduction must come from renovating the worst-performing buildings.

Non-Residential Buildings:

> Introduce Minimum Energy Performance Standards (MEPS) to renovate:

- 16% of the worst-performing buildings by 2030, 26% by 2033

New Buildings:

> All new buildings must be zero-emission:

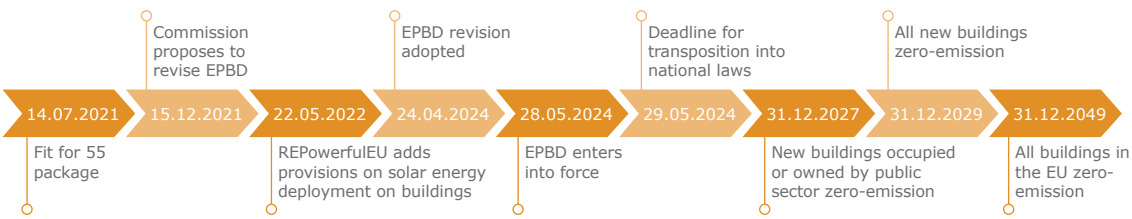
- From 2028 for publicly owned buildings
- From 2030 for all other new building

Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) Labelling System

The EPC labelling system is a critical component of the EPBD, providing a standardised measure of a building's energy efficiency:

1. **Purpose**: The EPC labels provide clear information on the energy performance of buildings, helping owners, tenants, and potential buyers to make informed decisions. They also play a crucial role in identifying buildings that require energy efficiency improvements.
2. **Classification**: Buildings are rated on a scale from A+ (most energy-efficient) to G (least energy-efficient). The A+ label is applied to zero emission buildings (label A) that also contribute on-site renewable energy to the energy grid. The labels reflect the building's energy consumption and efficiency measures.
3. **Impact on Green Assets**: The EPC system directly impacts the classification of green assets. Buildings with higher EPC ratings are more likely to be considered Taxonomy eligible/aligned, meaning they meet the criteria set out by the EU Taxonomy for sustainable investments.

> Figure 7: EPBD Implementation timeline



Source: EPRS, vdp

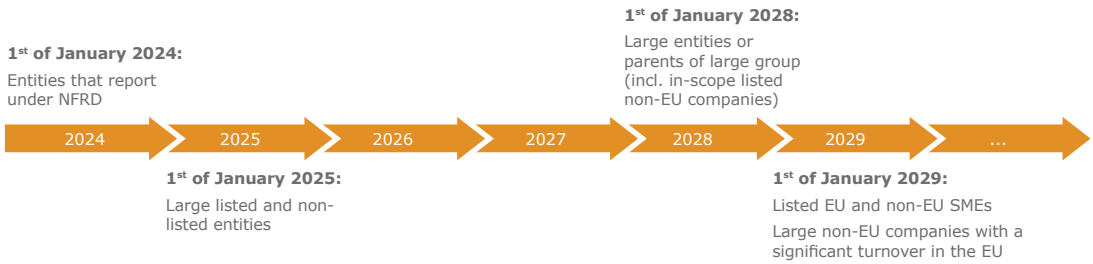
V. SUSTAINABILITY REPORTING

Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD)

The CSRD entered into force on January 5, 2023 and was introduced in response to a revision of the Non-financial Reporting Directive (NFRD). It marks a further expansion of both the scope of reporting as well as the number of companies required to report. Most importantly it paves the way for establishing European sustainability reporting standards (ESRS) and integrates sustainability reporting in the annual report. Companies subject to the CSRD will have to report according to the ESRS.

The ESRS are issued in the form of EU regulations (delegated acts), which is particularly important, as even though the CSRD will have to be implemented into national law, the ESRS will become binding upon issuance. Under the proposed Omnibus package I, the timetable for reporting under the CSRD was pushed forward, particularly for entities that have not yet started implementing the CSRD. However, even with this shift in timelines, full implementation is still expected to be reached by 2029 (see Figure 8).

> Figure 8

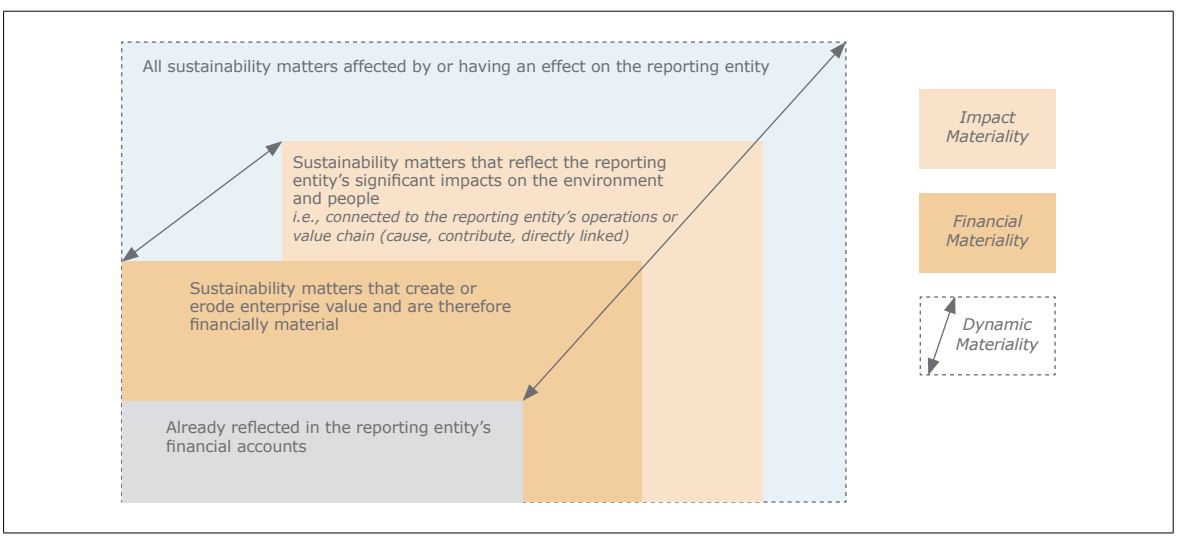


The Omnibus proposes to change the definition of large companies by increasing the minimum number of employees from 250 to 1,000. This, in turn, would decrease the number of companies in scope of the CSRD by approximately 80%.

European Sustainability Reporting Standards (ESRS)

European sustainability reporting is based on the concept of double materiality. This means that a company should account both for material financial effects that sustainability matters result in ("outside in") as well as the material impact on the individual, society and the environment that result from its operations ("inside out"). In the ESRS the "outside in" perspective is represented by Risk, the "inside out" perspective by Impacts and any positive potential effects from the transition to a sustainable economy by Opportunities. Together they are referred to as IRO (Impact, Risk and Opportunity).

> Figure 9: The concept of double materiality



Source: EFRAG Final Report on the Proposals for a relevant and dynamic EU Sustainability Reporting Standard-setting, ABN AMRO Group Economics

The ESRS widens the scope of sustainability disclosures to not only the scope of operations, but also to the whole value chain (upstream and downstream). The ESRS as a starting point is based on a materiality assessment, where only material IROs need to be disclosed. However, it also contains certain mandatory disclosures which companies need to provide regardless of whether these are deemed material or not. These mandatory disclosures belong to the fields of due diligence processes, principal adverse impacts, incentive schemes linked to sustainability matters and provisions for value chain information.

The information gathered and reported under ESRS is also relevant for other regulatory initiatives. For example, financial institutions can use the reported information to, in turn, disclose the **Principle Adverse Indicators** (PAI) under the Sustainable Finance Disclosure Regulation (SFDR), and report on environmental impacts under the Pillar III of the Capital Requirements Regulation.

ESRS will consist of two layers of standards instead of previously three, if the proposed Omnibus package is accepted. These layers are:

(i) sector agnostic, that apply to all; and

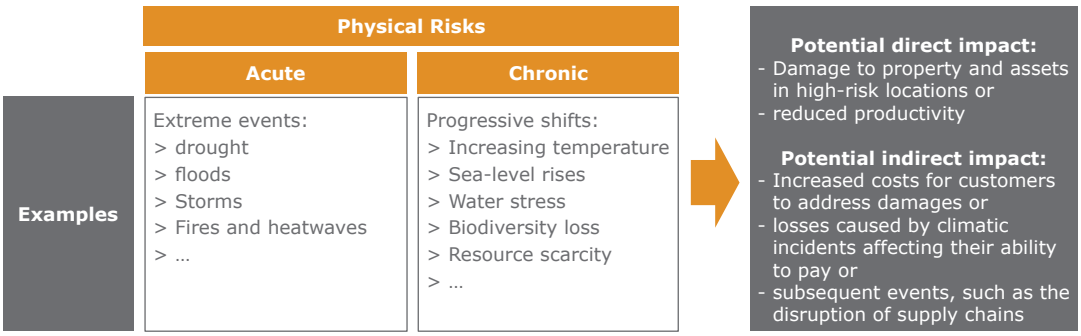
(ii) entity level, which is supposed to capture any material IROs that are not captured by the other layer.

The Omnibus also agrees on a revision of sector agnostic standards with the aim of substantially reducing the number of data points.

Each layer also covers all three sustainability matters (E, S and G) and reflects reporting areas under three key management dimensions: strategy, implementation, and performance measurement.

Under the CSRD/ESRS, there are important parts of the disclosures that apply to covered bonds. For instance, acute and chronic physical risks are highly relevant topics for the value and insurability of the collateral assets that back the bonds (see Figure 10).

> Figure 10: Examples of physical risks



Source: EBA report on management and supervision of ESG risks for credit institutions and investment firms EBA/REP/2021/18, ECB: Guide on climate-related and environmental risks, November 2020, Helaba Research & Advisory

Green Asset Ratio / Pillar III

Companies within the scope of the CSRD are also required to make disclosures under the Taxonomy regulation. These refer to mainly the proportion of activities that align with the EU Taxonomy. For financial institutions, this is reflected in the form of the **Green Asset Ratio (GAR)**, which measures the proportion of Taxonomy-aligned assets to total covered assets in a credit institutions' current (GAR stock) and future portfolios (GAR flow). In this context, covered assets refer to all assets besides sovereign exposures and trading portfolios. Furthermore, loans to SMEs are excluded from the denominator of the GAR, resolving the asymmetry issues of the ratio.

The Omnibus also aims to reduce the number of entities in scope of the GAR reporting, extending the mandatory requirements only to entities that employ more than 1,000 employees and/or have a net turnover of more than EUR 450m, with voluntary disclosure possible for those with less turnover. The Omnibus also proposes to exempt companies from assessing Taxonomy alignment if the activity is not financially material for their business (i.e. represents less than 10% of a company's revenues, capex or assets).

The GAR, along with other sustainability KPIs such as the Banking Book Taxonomy Alignment Ratio (BTAR), is also included in the **Pillar III** disclosure requirements on ESG risks. These are developed by the European Banking Association (EBA) as part of their mandate under the Capital Requirements Regulation (CRR). The Pillar III ESG disclosures, which apply exclusively to banks, are statistical rather than risk based. They require the collection of data from customers not covered by ESRS reporting, such as households and micro companies.

In line with the European Commission's Omnibus proposal, the EBA has also recently launched a consultation on proposed amendments to the implementing technical standards (ITS) of the Pillar 3 disclosure requirements related to ESG risks. The consultation, which is open for feedback until 22nd of August 2025, proposes a proportionate approach for ESG disclosures based on the institution's type, size and complexity, as well as alignment of the scope and definition of the GAR with the EUT. In addition, in order to increase transparency on the ESG risks associated with covered bonds, the existing ESG disclosure template is extended to include information on the ESG risks of cover pool of covered bonds.

Sustainable Finance Disclosure Regulation (SFDR)

The **SFDR** is also an important regulatory initiative within the EU. Effective from early 2021, it applies to financial institutions operating in the EU that (i) provide investment or insurance advise, (ii) produce and sell financial goods, or (iii) provide portfolio management services.

The foundation of SFDR is the PAI (Principal Adverse Impact), which consist of a list of sustainability metrics that need to be reported on and incorporated into the financial institution's investment policies and decisions. While covered bonds do not fall under the definition of a "financial product" as per the SFDR, investments in those instruments are considered "direct investment in investee companies" and are therefore part of entity level PAI disclosures. In other words: investors will not be required to disclose, for example, how the covered bond considers PAI on sustainability factors (product level disclosures), but they will have to disclose how their investment strategy in general consider PAIs on sustainability factors (and this shall include investments in covered bonds). Furthermore, as per the SFDR, sustainable investments must ensure that the investee company (i.e. the covered bond issuer) follows good governance practices and does no significant harm to environmental or social objectives, as defined by the investor.

As part of the EU's agenda for competitiveness and simplification, a revision of the SFDR is anticipated in the fourth quarter of 2025.

Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CS3D)

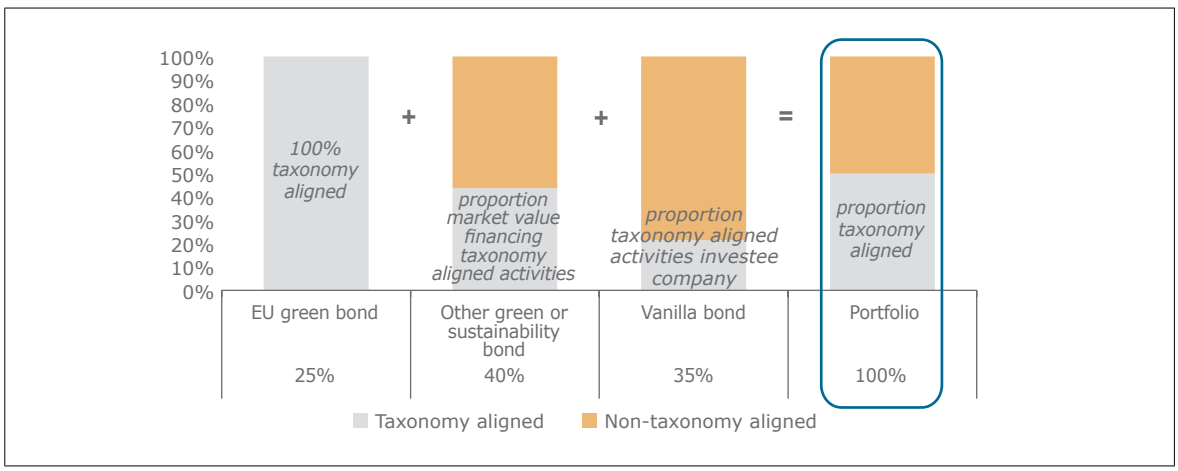
The CS3D codifies the requirements for companies (including those in the financial service) to respect human rights and to identify, end, prevent or mitigate human rights violations and environmental effects in the company's own operations. This also introduces a requirement for the directors of EU companies to set up and oversee due diligence processes integrating them into corporate strategy. Key to the CS3D is also the requirement for entities to develop and implement a climate change mitigation transition plan. The Omnibus package proposes to postpone the deadline for Member States to transpose the CS3D into national law by one year. Hence, also the entry of application was postponed by one year. This implies that transposition should be done by July 2027, with application only as of July 2028.

The importance of Taxonomy compliance for green covered bonds

As we previously discussed, the Taxonomy regulation forms an integral part of not only the EuGBS, but also EU regulation promoting sustainable reporting via the SFDR and CSRD. These disclosure regulations have the consequential side-effect that companies (including banks) face increased scrutiny on the sustainability of their activities, among others from investors that must show to what extent their investments consider sustainability aspects. Banks therefore have good reasons to strive for the best possible Taxonomy alignment of their green assets. These stretch well beyond the purpose of green bond issuance.

For Taxonomy disclosure purposes, the SFDR, CSRD and EU GBS work as communicating vessels. This is illustrated by an indicative investment portfolio comprised of bonds in figure 11 based on the regulatory technical standards on disclosures under the SFDR. These apply since 1 January 2023 to financial market participants such as insurance companies, pension funds, and investment firms.

> Figure 11: Taxonomy related disclosures will impact green and vanilla bonds differently



Source: European Commission, regulatory technical standards adopted on 6 April 2022, ING

The key performance indicator measuring the Taxonomy compliance of financial products is calculated as the ratio of the market value of investments in environmentally sustainable (ie Taxonomy aligned) activities versus the market value of all investments. Environmentally sustainable investments can (among others) include the following:

> **Bonds** issued under the future voluntary **EU GBS** = 100% market value;

> **Other debt securities** where a proportion of the proceeds is used exclusively on **environmentally sustainable activities** = proportion of the market value corresponding to the share of the proceeds used to finance Taxonomy aligned economic activities;

> **Debt instruments** and equities in **investee companies** = market value of the proportion of debt instruments/equities reflecting the proportion of activities of the investee companies that is associated with environmentally sustainable economic activities.

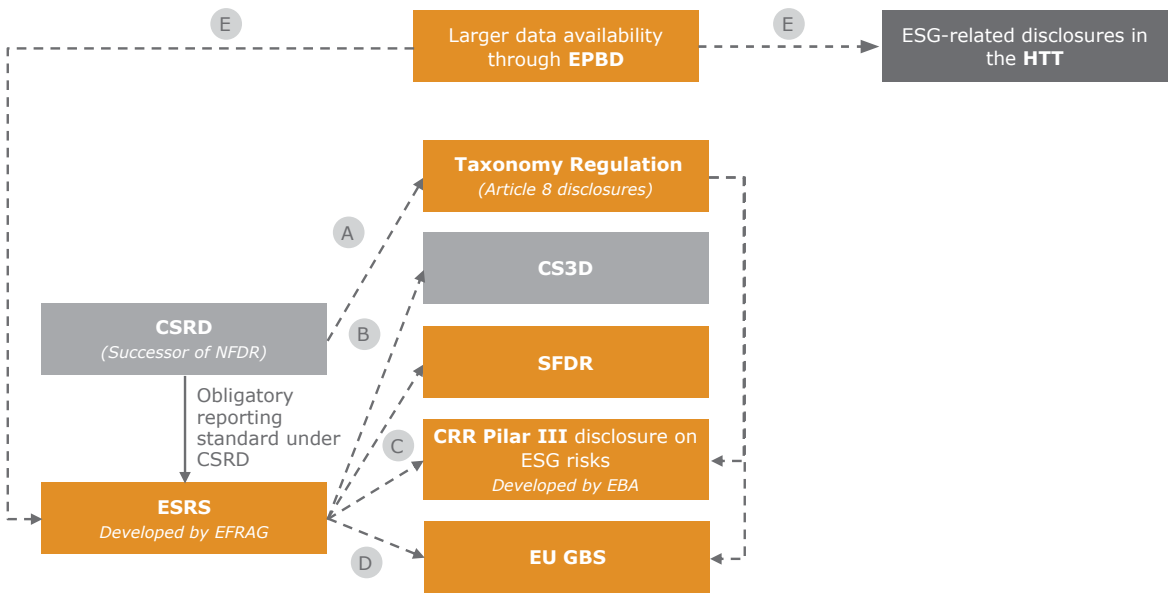
  For banks, this proportion comes down to the share of environmentally sustainable economic activities as disclosed under the Green Asset Ratio.

This illustrates that the Taxonomy-related disclosure requirements may impact all bonds, whether marketed with a sustainable use of proceeds or not. The Taxonomy compliance of vanilla bonds will also be considered via the issuer's overall portion of environmentally sustainable activities.

The intentions of the ECB to introduce climate change related disclosure requirements for collateral will only further strengthen the need for ESG information. As of 2026, the ECB intends to solely accept marketable assets and credit claims from companies and debtors that comply with the CSRD. This requirement applies only to companies within the scope of the CSRD and should therefore not affect bonds of institutions falling out of scope of the CSRD due to the Omnibus 1 package. In light thereof, the ECB and the ESAs also support better and harmonised disclosures of climate related data for assets that do not fall under the CSRD, such as covered bonds and asset-backed securities.

The EBA has been assessing the relevance of introducing cover pool ESG disclosure requirements as part of its response to the European Commission on the call for advice on the EU covered bond framework. These disclosures should either be embedded within the Pillar 3 framework or become part of the transparency requirements of Article 14 of the Covered Bond Directive. At the time of writing the EBA's reply was yet to be published. Meanwhile, in the absence of an explicit requirement under the EU Covered Bond Directive, the EBA proposed in its draft ITS of May 2025, to include cover pool disclosures on climate change transition risks within the Pillar 3 framework. Large institutions should make these disclosures semi-annually, and large subsidiaries and other listed institutions annually. Small and non-complex institutions (SNCI) and "other non-listed" banks are exempted from such disclosures.

> Figure 12: The sustainability regulatory landscape



A Information reported by NFDR companies will feed into Taxonomy regulation disclosures

B The ESRS due diligence disclosures will lay the foundation and be part of the reporting under the CS3D

C Information reported through the ESRS/CSRD will also be used for reporting requirements under the SFDR and the CRR Pillar IIII

D There is overlap between some of the reporting requirement under the ESRS/CSRD (such as on transition plans), which is also part of the EU GBS

E The EPBD is expected to enhance data availability and reliability, which in turn can be used for reporting requirements (which could be as per EU regulation, such as the ESRS/CSRD, or product-specific, such as the HTT for covered bonds and the STS templated for securitisations)

Source: ABN AMRO. Orange boxes indicate Regulation, grey boxes indicate Directives, blue box indicates other market or regulatory initiatives.

CHAPTER 3 - THE ISSUER'S PERSPECTIVE

3.1 ARMENIA

By Svetlanna Maleryan, Central Bank of Armenia and Edmond Vardumyan, National Mortgage Company RCO

I. FRAMEWORK

Covered bonds are issued in Armenia according to the Law on Covered Mortgage Bonds (hereinafter Law) adopted in 2008 and majorly reformed in 2018 with expert support from KfW, modernizing the framework in line with international best practices.

Major changes that the reform introduced were:

> regulation of centralized covered bond issuance.

> updated and redefined list of assets eligible for the pool. The Law clearly defines the assets that can be used as substitute assets and what the maximum percentage of such assets in the whole pool may be.

> clarification of the asset valuation and revaluation processes. It introduced rules for the case of a significant collateral value decline. Earlier, a reform on mortgage consumer protection had introduced early repayment rules for mortgage loans that permit yield maintenance indemnities and thus improved the matching of cover assets and liabilities.

> establishment of a public cover asset register and refining the functions of the cover pool controller.

> ensuring the ring-fencing of assets in case of insolvency of issuer (in centralized scenario, that of participants as well) by changing the Law on Bankruptcy of Banks, Credit Organizations, Investment Companies, Investment Fund Managers and Insurance Companies.

II. STRUCTURE OF THE ISSUER

According to the Law, the issuer can be either a bank or a credit organization. Those institutions are regulated and supervised by the Central Bank of Armenia and are subject to license requirement, capital requirement, liquidity requirement etc.

There are two scenarios of covered bond issues: a standard one and a centralized one.

In the standard one the issuer of the covered bonds, an individual bank or credit organization, uses its own assets to create a cover pool and issue the bonds.

In centralized issuance scenario the issuer may use other banks' or credit organizations' (called "participants") mortgage assets as collateral in order to create a cover pool and issue the covered bonds. The cover pool of a centralized issuer consists of refinancing loans to the participants. The mortgage loans posted by the participants to back the refinancing loans must fulfil all the requirements just as if the participants were individual covered bond issuers. The law provides for segregation of assets in case of participant's insolvency and thus the respective pool of mortgage loans backing the refinancing loans are moved from participant's balance sheet to that of central issuer (or to other issuer, including participant as the case may be) without entering the insolvency process.

III. COVER ASSETS

Main assets

The assets that are eligible for covered assets pool are mortgages that comply with the following:

1) the real estate subject to mortgage is located on the territory of the Republic of Armenia, or the security of the mortgage is a right for construction of real estate on the territory of the Republic of Armenia;

2) the mortgage represents a first priority claim on the underlying asset;

3) the amount of the loan at the time of inclusion into the pool does not exceed 70% of the estimated market value of the collateral (real estate);

4) The mortgage contract includes early repayment clause in accordance with the Law on Housing Mortgage Credit.

Substitute assets

Where cover assets are to be removed from the asset pool prior to full fulfilment of obligations on mortgage bonds on grounds listed below, the issuer will have the right to include substitute assets in the pool. However, those assets should not at any time exceed 10% of all the assets. The law clearly defines what those substitute assets can be: cash, bonds issued by or guaranteed for timely payment by the Republic of Armenia, and other assets defined by normative acts of the Central Bank of Armenia.

Limitations

In any case the Law provides for some limitations for derivative instruments which may be used in the asset pool. Only the following derivatives may be used:

1) the derivative serves to reduce asset-liability management risks between cover assets and covered bonds issued;
2) the derivative does not require the cover pool estate to post maintenance margin and observe margin calls;
3) upon insolvency of the issuer the derivative excludes netting for the benefit of the derivative counterparty with other claims against the issuer or other derivatives in the cover;
4) upon insolvency of the issuer the derivative is not terminated.

Removing assets from the asset pool

The asset is removed from the asset pool when the asset is terminated (including early repayment of loan, amortization etc.), the asset has been categorized as non-standard, doubtful or loss according to Armenian legislation, or the asset does not meet the eligibility requirements of the Law on covered bonds. The assets must be substituted by other eligible assets (main or substitute). The assets may be removed from the registry without the obligation to substitute them by other assets only when the removal does not amount to breach of adequacy of cover requirement and the remaining cover assets comply with the requirement of the law on covered bonds.

IV. VALUATION AND LTV CRITERIA

Valuation and revaluation

The valuation of real estate is to be performed by a person who:

- is licensed for real estate valuation in accordance with Armenian legislation
- has at least 2 years of experience
- has not been involved in the process of loan provision
- has a professional liability risk insurance for at least the amount equal to five thousand times the minimum wage

The Central Bank may by its normative acts introduce additional rules and methods for valuation of real estate for the purposes of including them into the cover assets pool. In case the valuation may be performed in more than one way and those provide for different results, the minimum among the results will be taken into account.

The real estate is to be revaluated at least once in three years, and if the real estate has a commercial purpose – once a year.

Besides, the real estate has to be revaluated, by a licensed real estate appraiser or according to real estate price index calculated in the manner prescribed by the Central Bank of Armenia, if the real estate prices have substantially fallen (i.e. more than 10%) in the market.

Loan to Value

The amount of the loan at the time of inclusion into the pool should not exceed 70% of the estimated market value of the collateral (real estate).

If the amount of a mortgage loan registered in the cover pool exceeds 85% of current mortgage lending value of collateral (real estate), the issuer may either post additional assets for the excess of 85% as additional collateral or reduce the loan amount funded by the cover to 85%. In case of posting additional assets, the cash flows derived from these assets do not accrue to the bondholders except for the case of the insolvency of the issuer.

V. ASSET – LIABILITY MANAGEMENT

Covered bonds will be backed by dynamic mortgage pools and hence covered bond programs will be subject to asset-liability mismatches. A number of asset-liability management rules have been introduced to mitigate the associated risks and improve risk transparency.

The amount of outstanding liabilities on mortgage bonds must be backed by adequate cover:

1) the total nominal value of assets within cover pool must be at least equal to the total nominal value of mortgage bonds;
2) the receivable amounts on cover assets must be at least equal to the payable amounts against mortgage bonds;
3) the net present value of cover assets must at any moment exceed at least by 1 percent the net present value of all liabilities on mortgage bonds.

The Central Bank has determined stress-testing methodology for the issuers. For the stress test the yield curve is shifted upwards and downwards based on the volatility of interest rates for selected maturities, but not less than 2%. Stress test horizon is 25 days and the confidence level is defined to be 99%.

The bonds issued should be denominated in the currency in which the cover assets are denominated. The assets comprising a single asset pool should be denominated in the same currency.

The issuer of covered bonds is required to maintain a schedule of cash flows, both actual and expected, on the assets included in the cover pool, which, inter alia, includes information on early repayments and overdue payments. The cash flow information shown in the schedule must allow identifying assets, including mortgages, substitute assets and derivatives from which those cash flows have been received.

The schedule must also include projections regarding future unanticipated payments, namely for early repayments of loans, or early performance of obligations arising out of bonds or derivative instruments.

The outstanding liabilities on covered bonds must be at any moment backed by adequate cover on a present value basis after stress-testing, and the expected duration gap, i.e. expected aggregate duration of assets minus expected aggregate duration of liabilities, must not be lower than 3 months to avoid negative maturity transformation risk..

VI. TRANSPARENCY

The registry

The Central Bank maintains the registry of the cover assets of the covered bond program. The registry maintains information on all the assets comprised in the cover pool, namely:

> for land and building or for the permission for construction – Cadastre number, the duration for the permission for construction, its number and date, land/building address, limitation on use of land, if any;

- for mortgage loans – loan agreement number and date, loan register code, loan ID, purpose of the loan, loan amount, loan currency, repayment schedule and maturity date, annual interest rate, secured asset (real estate) value, borrower identification;
- for covered refinancing loans – information as referred to in point above, in addition segregation rights for the benefit of central issuer in case of centralized issue;
- for derivatives – type of derivatives, nominal amount for each type of contract, intrinsic value of each type of derivatives, market value/net present value of derivatives, as well as information on the transaction counterparty;
- other information defined by the Central Bank normative legal acts.

All parties concerned may have an access to information, contained in the cover register, on collateralization of assets.

Access to other information contained in the cover register is restricted to the Central Bank, to the Cover Pool controller, the issuer and the Mortgage Administrator.

Information constituting banking secrecy, contained in the cover register, can only be disclosed in the manner prescribed by law.

The controller of the pool performs the control of the registry. The controller must give his approval in order for the asset to be registered in the pool. Registration of asset without such approval is void.

Information by the issuer

The issuer must prepare, file to the Central Bank and place on its website monthly statements on issuance of mortgage bonds.

Monthly statements must include information on loans comprising the asset pool and information on the real estate, which is the secured asset for those loans.

In the centralized issuance mode, the monthly statements must in addition provide information on the refinancing loans.

Monthly statements must contain the following aggregate information:

1) information about real estate collateral:
   - Property type
   - Property values
   - Purpose of use
   - Property location
2) Information about assets:
   - Cover assets breakdown by nominal amount, loan amount to property value ratio, maturity, expected duration, seasoning, coupon, interest rate reference rate for floating rate loans, region, purpose of loan, and type of collateral
   - Number and amount of cover assets fully and partially repaid during the reporting period
   - Number and amount of substituted assets during the reporting period
   - Reason of substitution by number and amount of assets during the reporting period
   - Loans with higher than 85 percent loan amount in the cover to property value ratio at the end of the reporting period, which were not substituted.
   - Size of the corresponding cash collateral account
   - Number and amount of assets added to cover pool during the reporting period

- > Net present value of assets at the end of the reporting period
- > Change in net present value of assets from the last reporting period

3) Information about Derivatives:

- > Types of derivatives contracts
- > Nominal amount of each type of contract at the end of the reporting period
- > Intrinsic value of each type of derivatives at the end of the reporting period
- > Change in intrinsic value of derivative portfolio from the last reporting period
- > Change in net present value of derivatives from the last reporting period

4) Information about Liabilities:

- > Covered bond breakdown by maturity or first call date for bonds with embedded options, type of covered mortgage bond issued (fixed or floating), coupon, and duration
- > Net present value of covered bonds

5) Information about assets & liabilities management:

- > Nominal coverage test, yield coverage test, duration gap, net present value ratio of assets and liabilities

6) Other information defined by the Central Bank's normative legal acts

The participants must also provide loan-by-loan information on historic and scheduled cash flows as well as other information to the centralized issuer enabling it to fulfil its duties defined by law.

VII. COVER POOL MONITOR AND BANKING SUPERVISION

Controller and its Function

The law provides for the notion of controller of the asset pool and his functions.

The controller of the asset pool is the person whose activity is aimed at protecting the bondholders' rights. He imposes control over the cover register and the adequacy of cover assets to liabilities on mortgage bonds, ensuring the bonds are at all times covered adequately, assets are able to be identified and segregated.

The controller checks the compliance with eligibility requirements of the asset before including it into asset pool. He analyses the real estate valuation reports and may demand that only a part of value of the real estate be included in the asset pool.

As soon as a derivative instrument is registered in the registry, the controller informs all the counterparties of the issuer that have signed a derivative instrument with him.

The controller is also responsible for informing the Central Bank about breaches made by the issuer.

The controller inter alia follows the real estate market prices and when notices a substantial (i.e. more than 10%) fall, requires the issuer to reevaluate the real estate comprised in asset pool.

The law obliges the controller to act in the best interests of the bondholders.

Access to information

The law provides for the necessary access to information by controller. For instance, the issuer is obliged to monthly provide the schedule of cash flows to the controller. The issuer is also obliged to form an expectation of the aggregate duration of assets and liabilities and report the expected aggregate duration gap to the

Cover Pool controller. Concerning the requirement for expected aggregate duration of assets exceeding that of liabilities by 3 months, the issuer is obliged to report on it to the controller at least weekly.

The controller may at any time check all the documents concerning the covered bonds and asset pool maintained by the issuer.

Upon the request by the controller the issuer is obliged to provide information on the payments made on loans, as well as any change concerning the assets that might be of interest for the bond-holders.

Controller requirements and appointment

The controller is appointed by the issuer. Every issuer must have a controller. The controller may control multiple asset pools of the same issuer.

The Law provides for clear eligibility criteria for the controller, to insure the person is bona fide and that there is no conflict of interest.

The Central Bank is to establish the cover pool controller's evaluation procedure and professional adequacy criteria.

Supervision of controller

The controller is supervised by the Central Bank of the Republic of Armenia.

Central Bank supervision

The Central Bank of Armenia is the mega-regulator of the financial sector in the Republic of Armenia, which means CBA is the authority for regulation and supervision of the whole financial sector, including banks and credit organizations.

The Law includes special provisions empowering the Central Bank to supervise banks and credit organizations in the context of covered bond issuance.

Besides the issuers, the Central Bank supervises the controllers as well.

The Central Bank may impose sanctions on issuers and/or its management if:

1) The information contained in the registry is incorrect or inconsistent;
2) The adequacy of cover assets or their eligibility requirements were violated;
3) norms, deadlines and public disclosure procedures on reports were violated, and/or the reports contained untrue or inconsistent information;
4) Issuer did not disclose information subject to disclosure by law on covered bonds;
5) Issuer failed to fulfil an assignment provided by the Central Bank in a manner established the law on covered bonds;
6) provisions of the law on covered bonds, other normative legal acts on its basis and internal statutory acts of Issuer were violated.

Upon discovering such violations, the Central Bank of Armenia may impose warning and order (to cease the violation, to recover etc.), fine (may not exceed 1% of the nominal capital of the issuer), revocation of Administrator's license.

VIII. SEGREGATION OF COVER ASSETS AND BANKRUPTCY REMOTENESS OF COVERED BONDS

The law provides that the issuer may not dispose of the cover assets, except in cases of substituting assets in cases provided by the law. The controller controls that each of the assets may be identified at all times and ensure it can be segregated in case of insolvency of issuer (or a participant, in case of centralized issue).

In case of insolvency or ceasing of license of the issuer, the Central bank appoints a duly qualified mortgage administrator to manage the covered assets.

The mortgage administrator has a fiduciary duty towards the bondholders and is obliged to act in their best interests.

From the moment of ceasing of the license or insolvency decision, the administrator must ensure that all the payment received in connection with covered assets are segregated from issuer's other assets and are paid to a special account opened for these purposes.

The administrator may cease the payments to bondholders or participants for up to three months. In the interests of bondholders, the Central Bank may extend this period for another three months.

In the centralized issuer case, at the time of registration of the refinancing loan by the central issuer in the registry, the first-preference right to the segregated assets in case of participant's insolvency is registered as well. As soon as the participant is insolvent, those assets are segregated and may either be registered on central issuer's name or, by central issuer's consent to another issuer.

The bondholders retain the claim towards the refinancing loans and have the first-preference rights for:

> refinancing loans included in the cover pool and any cash flow deriving from those loans;

> and the mortgage loans which are in the balance sheet of the participant organization and their underlying secured assets (real estate).

The assets included in the centralized issuer's cover pool and their cash flows may be disposed of solely to satisfy the claims of the bondholders and no other creditor of the centralized issuer will have any claims over the assets included in the cover pool and their cash flows until all the claims by bondholders are satisfied. After satisfaction of all the claims by the bondholders, the remaining assets, if any, are returned to the insolvency estate of the insolvent organization for other creditors' claims.

The bondholders are paid on pari passu basis. If the assets comprised in the asset pool are not sufficient to satisfy the claims of bondholders, the latter become unsecured creditors for the purposes of insolvency proceedings for the remaining, unsatisfied part of their claims.

IX. RISK-WEIGHTING & COMPLIANCE WITH EUROPEAN LEGISLATION

Armenia is not a member of the European Union and it is developing its own risk-weighting regime for covered bonds. There is currently no special regulation for the risk weighting for covered bonds. The most severe risk weight of covered bond denominated in AMD is 100% and 150% for covered bond denominated in FX. At the same time, depending on the issuers' external rating the risk weight can be lesser.

For the most up-to-date information, please consult the new ECBC Covered Bond Comparative Database webpage on the Covered Bond Label website www.coveredbondlabel.com or via the following QR code:

3.2 AUSTRALIA

By Chris Dalton and Robert Gallimore, Australian Securitisation Forum

I. FRAMEWORK

The legal framework is principally contractual, with a statutory overlay enshrined in the Australian Banking Act (Cth) 1959 (Banking Act). The Banking Act contains certain minimum requirements for a covered bond programme (which are discussed in greater detail below) including requirements as to the assets eligible for inclusion in the cover pool, the appointment of a cover pool monitor, the requisite qualifications for a cover pool monitor, minimum overcollateralisation requirements and a cap on issuance. The Banking Act also empowers the Australian bank regulator, the Australian Prudential Regulation Authority (APRA), with certain powers including the power to determine Prudential Standards in relation to covered bonds.

II. STRUCTURE OF THE ISSUER

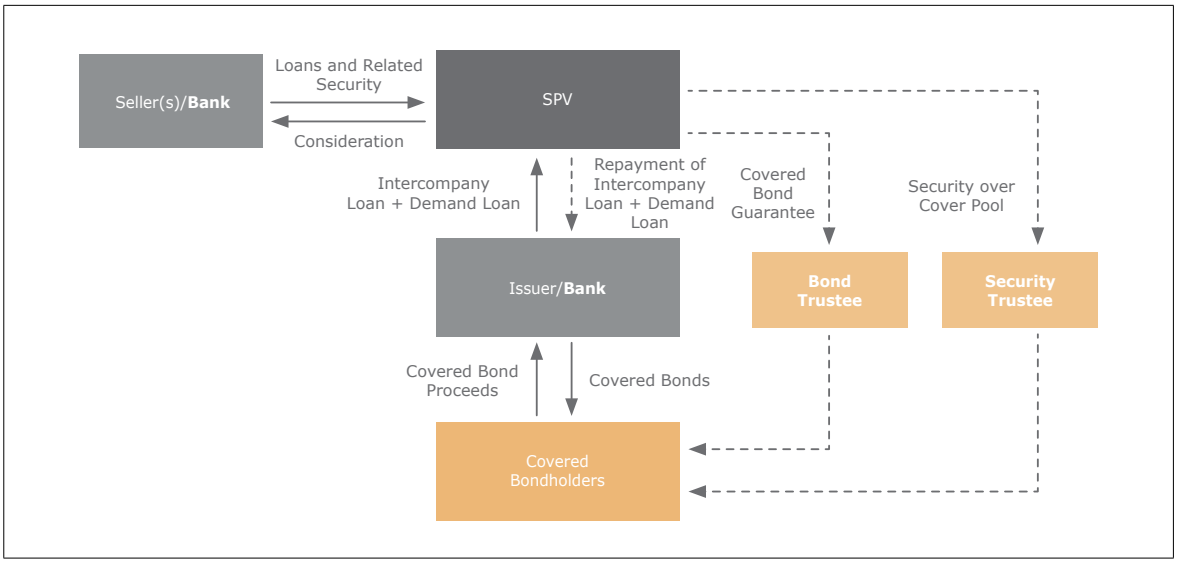
Australian banks, referred to under the Banking Act as "authorised deposit-taking institutions" or "ADIs", are the issuers of covered bonds; not SPVs or any other entity. However, a covered bond special purpose vehicle (the Covered Bond Guarantor) is established which holds the cover pool assets acquired by a true sale from the issuer. The Covered Bond Guarantor is in the form of a trust. It provides a guarantee over the issuer's obligations in respect of issued covered bonds, which guarantee is secured by the granting of a security interest over the cover pool assets in favour of a security trustee.

The guarantee will be called upon if an event of default in respect of the issuer were to occur. At such time, the Covered Bond Guarantor will be required to pay interest and principal on the covered bonds in accordance with the original payment schedule and payments under the covered bonds will not be accelerated. In addition, at such time, the bond trustee (on behalf of the covered bondholders) will make a claim, as an unsecured creditor, against the insolvency estate of the issuer bank. Any amount recovered against the insolvency estate of the issuer bank will be paid to the Covered Bond Guarantor to be held as additional collateral in the cover pool and to be used to make payments under the guarantee.

If an event of default were to occur in respect of the Covered Bond Guarantor, payments under the covered bonds would then be accelerated and become immediately due and payable.

Under the Banking Act, an issuer bank must not issue covered bonds if the value of the assets in the cover pool exceeds 8% of the issuer bank's assets in Australia. Further, if the issuer bank exceeds the 8% cap on issuance in breach of the Banking Act, it will also attract a deduction from its regulatory capital base equal to the value that exceeds 8%.

> Figure 1: Structure



Source: Australian Securitisation Forum

III. COVER ASSETS

Section 31[1] of the Banking Act sets out the assets that can be included in the cover pool. These are:

a. an at call deposit held with an ADI and convertible into cash within 2 business days;

b. a bank accepted bill or certificate of deposit that:

   1. matures within 100 days; and
   2. is eligible for repurchase transactions with the Reserve Bank; and
   3. was not issued by the ADI that issued the covered bonds secured by the assets in the cover pool;

c. a bond, note, debenture or other instrument issued or guaranteed by the Commonwealth, a State or a Territory;

d. a loan secured by a mortgage, charge or other security interest over residential property in Australia;

e. a loan secured by a mortgage, charge or other security interest over commercial property in Australia;

f. a mortgage insurance policy or other asset related to a loan covered by paragraph (d) or (e);

g. a contractual right relating to the holding or management of another asset in the cover pool;

h. a derivative held for one or more of the following purposes:

   1. to protect the value of another asset in the cover pool; and
   2. to hedge risks in relation to another asset in the cover pool;
   3. to hedge risks in relation to liabilities secured by the assets in the cover pool.

The value of assets in the cover pool which are bank accepted bills or certificates of deposit as referred to in paragraph (b) above must not exceed 15% of the face value of the issued covered bonds.

At the time of publication, all Australian covered bond issuers have limited their programmes to residential mortgage collateral for their cover pools and no such programmes include commercial mortgages.

1 http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/cth/consol_act/ba195972/s31.html.

IV. VALUATION AND LTV CRITERIA

Contractually, cover pool assets are subject to revaluation every month by way of indexation, which varies between programmes. Please refer to each issuer's individual website for details of the index used and the methodology applied.

LTV criteria – in addition to indexation, for the purposes of calculating the minimum overcollateralisation requirements contained in Section 31A[2] of the Banking Act as well as the monthly asset coverage testing, the following LTV requirements apply:

- Residential mortgages – if the mortgage loan exceeds 80% of the value of the mortgaged property securing that loan then the value of the loan is reduced by the amount of the excess; and
- Commercial mortgages – if the mortgage loan exceeds 60% of the value of the mortgaged property securing that loan then the value of the loan is reduced by the amount of the excess.

V. ASSET – LIABILITY MANAGEMENT

This is principally a matter for the credit rating agencies in relation to timely payment and their opinions on the value of the pool in liquidation scenarios. The issuers have regard to ECAI's methodologies and criteria to seek to ensure maintenance of AAA ratings.

VI. TRANSPARENCY

As of April 2025, eight of the nine Australian covered bonds issuers (Australia and New Zealand Banking Group Limited, Bank of Queensland Limited, Bendigo and Adelaide Bank Limited, Commonwealth Bank of Australia, ING Bank (Australia) Limited, Macquarie Bank Limited, National Australia Bank, Westpac Banking Corporation) have adopted the Covered Bond Label.[3]

Since September 2024, the Covered Bond Label Foundation has announced the formal adoption of the Harmonised Transparency Template which is mandatory for all Covered Bond Label issuers. The Harmonised Transparency Template is in line with the Covered Bond Directive, and covers the following areas of each issuer's programme:

- Maturity
- Ratings
- Parties
- Prepayments
- Pool Summary
- Mortgage Pool
- Compliance Tests
- Bond Issuance
- Asset Coverage Tests

VII. COVER POOL MONITOR AND BANKING SUPERVISION

The Banking Act requires that a cover pool monitor be appointed in respect of a cover pool. The cover pool monitor must either be a registered auditor or hold an Australian financial services licence that covers the provision of financial services as the cover pool monitor. The cover pool monitor is appointed by the bank issuer but must be independent and must provide reports in respect of the cover pool to, amongst others, APRA on request. The Banking Act requires the cover pool monitor to undertake specific functions, and report on such functions, biannually. Those functions involve assessing and reporting on the following:

- compliance with the 103% statutory minimum overcollateralisation requirement;
- compliance of the assets in the cover pool with the eligibility requirements under the Banking Act; and
- accuracy of cover pool asset register.

2 http://www6.austlii.edu.au/cgi-bin/viewdoc/au/legis/cth/consol_act/ba195972/s31a.html.

3 https://compare.coveredbondlabel.com/issuers/national/50-au.

In addition, the cover pool monitor is also required contractually to check the arithmetic accuracy of the asset coverage tests on an annual basis.

As the regulator of banks in Australia, APRA has some general powers under the Banking Act with respect to bank issuers but not the Covered Bond Guarantor. For example, under section 11CA(2) of the Banking Act APRA may give a direction to a bank issuer not to transfer any amount or asset to a cover pool. However, APRA may only give such directions in specific and limited circumstances including when APRA has reason to believe that the bank issuer is unable to meet its liabilities, there has been a material deterioration in the bank issuer's financial condition, the bank issuer is conducting its affairs in an improper or financially unsound way, the failure to issue a direction would materially prejudice the interests of the bank issuer's depositors, or the bank issuer is conducting its affairs in a way that may cause or promote instability of the Australian financial system.

VIII. SEGREGATION OF COVER ASSETS AND BANKRUPTCY REMOTENESS OF COVERED BONDS

Cover pool assets are sold by the bank issuer to the Covered Bond Guarantor, which is a special purpose trust. The sale is a true sale and will be enforceable against the issuer in the event of its insolvency. In addition, the Covered Bond Guarantor will grant a security interest over the cover pool assets in favour of a security trustee which will be recognised at law and will not be enforceable against the Covered Bond Guarantor in the event of its insolvency.

IX. RISK-WEIGHTING & COMPLIANCE WITH EUROPEAN LEGISLATION

Not in compliance with UCITS because Australian issuers are not domiciled in member states of the EEA.

Risk weighting varies depending upon the jurisdiction concerned, pending standardised risk-weights from the EBA and the outcome of the current Basel consultation.

Covered bonds issued by Australian issuers are currently not eligible assets for repurchase agreements with the ECB or NCBs, or the BoE. There is, however, a view that some Australian covered bonds may be eligible for inclusion in the calculation of LCR in some regulatory jurisdictions.

Covered bonds issued by Australian issuers and denominated in Australian dollars are repo eligible with the Reserve Bank of Australia subject to satisfying an assessment by the Reserve Bank of Australia and the issuer meeting disclosure requirements on an ongoing basis. Furthermore, covered bonds may qualify as Level 2 High Quality Liquid Assets (HQLA2A) for liquidity purposes under APRA's implementation of Basel III LCR guidelines.

There are no special Australian federal or state investment regulations regarding Australian covered bonds.

X. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The development of the Australian covered bond market largely came about due to the financial crisis and the effective seizure of non-sovereign global capital markets through this period. After the events of 2008 and 2009, the Australian Federal government recognised the need for increasing funding diversity within the Australian banking system. The Australian Federal government subsequently passed changes to the Banking Act, enabling banks to issue covered bonds in the form prescribed by the Banking Act. The first covered bond issuances from Australian banks occurred in late 2011. Issuance volumes subsequently increased dramatically through 2012 as issuers properly established their programmes in global bond markets.

In principle, Australian ADIs have three primary term funding options for their balance sheets: senior unsecured bonds, residential mortgage backed securitisation and covered bonds. In practice, the larger institutions have effective access to all three options while smaller institutions principally issue senior unsecured bonds and residential mortgage backed securities for term funding.

It is expected that Australian covered bond issuers will continue to use their issuance capacity sparingly; balancing maintaining a global market presence against the higher all-in funding costs associated with covered

bonds and program management costs (in comparison to funding through senior unsecured bonds or residential mortgage backed securities), and the need to be able to respond quickly to deterioration in funding conditions. Feedback from a range of market participants suggests that this funding strategy may drive a scarcity premium in terms of the relative valuation of Australian covered bonds against other forms of Australian bank secured financing and other global covered bond markets.

Issuers: There are nine issuers of Australian covered bonds. These are Westpac Banking Corporation, National Australia Bank Limited, Australia and New Zealand Banking Group Limited, Commonwealth Bank of Australia, Suncorp Bank Limited, Macquarie Bank Limited, Bank of Queensland Limited, ING Bank Australia Limited and Bendigo and Adelaide Bank Limited. These nine Australian based banks have primarily issued soft bullet covered bonds other than Bank of Queensland which has issued conditional pass-through covered bonds (CPTCB) and is the first and only Australian ADI to issue a covered bond in that format.

COVERED BOND LABEL **:** Australia and New Zealand Banking Group Limited (1 pool); Bank of Queensland Limited (1 pool); Bank of Queensland Limited (1 pool); Bendigo and Adelaide Bank Limited (1 pool); Commonwealth Bank of Australia (1 pool); ING Bank (Australia) Limited (1 pool); Macquarie Bank Limited (1 pool); National Australia Bank (1 pool); Westpac Banking Corporation (1 pool).

For the most up-to-date information, please consult the new ECBC Covered Bond Comparative Database webpage on the Covered Bond Label website www.coveredbondlabel.com or via the following QR code:

3.3 AUSTRIA

By Jochen Deiss, Raiffeisen-Landesbank Steiermark AG, and Heiko Langer, Erste Group Bank AG

I. FRAMEWORK

The legal basis for the issuance of covered bonds in Austria is the Mortgage Bond Act "Pfandbriefgesetz – PfandBG[1]", which came into effect on July 8th, 2022. This law replaced the previous frameworks of:

1. Hypothekenbankgesetz: Mortgage Banking Act (Law of 7/13/1899) – HypBG "Pfandbriefe"
2. Gesetz betreffend fundierte Bankschuldverschreibungen:
   Law on Secured Bank Bonds (Law of 12/27/1905) – FBSchVG „Fundierte Bankschuldverschreibungen"
3. Pfandbriefgesetz: Mortgage Bond Act (Law of 12/21/1927) – PfandbriefG "Pfandbriefe"

Replacing the three frameworks with a single Mortgage Bond Act brought increased transparency and reduced complexity. Further improvements included features, such as the introduced risk management system, improved supervision by national authorities or a standardised reporting that is geared to the ECBC Harmonised Transparency Template.

II. STRUCTURE OF THE ISSUER

Only duly authorised credit institutions, with a special license to such effect, have the right to issue covered bonds. Credit institutions that already issued covered bonds under the legacy framework kept their concession for issuing under the Mortgage Bond Act, but had to ask officially for supervision authority's approval of their Cover Pool Programmes founded on the new Mortgage Bond Act to issue new Pfandbriefe if so. The issuer either holds the cover assets on its balance sheet or uses another bank's eligible claims as cover assets, which is permitted under joint funding rules. The assets are not transferred to a separate legal entity anyway. The following principles are the corner stones of the investor protection offered to holders of Austrian covered bonds:

1. Dual recourse, meaning that covered bond investors have both a claim against the issuer and, in case of insolvency or resolution of the issuer, a priority claim against the principal and any accrued and future interest on covered bonds,
2. Bankruptcy remoteness, meaning that covered bonds are not subject to automatic acceleration upon insolvency or resolution of the issuer, and
3. Special administrator, meaning a person or entity appointed to administrate a covered bond programme in the event of the insolvency of the issuer.

III. COVER ASSETS

The Mortgage Bond Act defines two different qualities of eligible cover pool assets:

1) Assets subject to CRR[2] Art 129 (1) that conform to CRR Art 129 (1a) – (3), e.g. risk positions vis-à-vis or guaranteed by public sector entities (central governments, central banks, regional governments or local authorities), loans secured by residential or commercial property and loans secured by ship liens or
2) high-quality cover assets that constitute a claim for payment which is secured by physical collateral assets recorded in a public register.

Only Covered Bonds covered by assets of the first quality category (CRR Art 129 compliant) qualify themselves to be labelled as "European Covered Bond (Premium)" and can hereby be seen as the legitimate successor of all legacy Austrian Covered Bonds. However, both quality types may only be used in separated cover pools.

1 Austrian Federal Law Gazette 2021/I/199

3 Directive (EU) 575/2013 as amended by December 2019 and legally effective as of July 8th, 2022

The Mortgage Bond Act also defines three distinct types of covered bonds, depending on the cover assets used as collateral. Covered bonds backed by mortgage loans are referred to as "Hypothekenpfandbriefe", while covered bonds backed by public sector or public sector guaranteed assets are referred to as "Öffentliche Pfandbriefe". Covered bonds backed by loans secured by ship liens are referred to as "Schiffspfandbriefe". For each of these types, the issuer has to form at least one separate cover pool. However, an issuer has the possibility to form more than one cover pool within a certain covered bond type and hereby create distinct pools for sub-categories (e.g. just retail mortgage loans).

The quoted primary cover assets for each type (i.e. public sector debt, mortgage loans or ship liens) have to represent at least 85% of the collateral required to secure the outstanding covered bonds. The remaining 15% can consist of substitute cover assets that meet the requirements of Art. 129 par. 1 of the CRR.

The geographical scope of eligible mortgage assets is restricted to EU / EEA countries, Switzerland and the United Kingdom.

Derivative contracts are allowed in the cover pool if they are entered to hedge interest rate, currency and credit default risks. Derivatives are only allowed for hedging and there is no limit in place on the volume of derivatives in the cover pool. However, the volume of derivatives in the cover pool has to be adjusted or eliminated if the underlying risk decreases or ceases to exist.

IV. VALUATION AND LTV CRITERIA

The Mortgage Bond Act stipulates conditions for physical property valuation that are modelled on CRR Art 229. It determines that the valuation must be carried out by an appraiser with necessary qualifications who is independent from the lending process. He may not take into account speculative elements in the assessment of the mortgage lending value and has to document that value in a transparent and clear manner. At the time of inclusion of the cover assets in the cover pool, the (reviewed) property value may not be older than one year, in compliance with CRR Art 129 (3).

LTV (loan to value) limits are not explicitly addressed by the Mortgage Bond Act, but deduced from CRR Art 129 (1) lit d, f and g. For residential mortgages, an 80% LTV limit applies. The LTV limit for commercial mortgage loans is set at 60%. The same 60% limit applies to ship liens.

Issuing banks may legally commit themselves to lower LTV limits for their covered bond programmes by recoring in the statutes of the issuing institution.

V. ASSET – LIABILITY MANAGEMENT

Austrian covered bonds are subject to a matching principle whereby the total volume of assets in the cover pool must at least cover the total nominal amount of outstanding covered bonds as well as net interest liabilities from the covered bonds, net liabilities from derivatives and expected costs related to maintenance and administration for the winding-down of the covered bond programme. In addition, nominal overcollateralization of 2% of the outstanding amount of covered bonds must be maintained. The excess cover can be provided by primary cover, substitute cover, liquid funds eligible for the liquidity buffer or derivative claims. Issuers can voluntarily commit themselves to net present value cover calculations by statute. This also includes a minimum overcollateralization of 2%. The requirements of the nominal cover calculation and overcollateralization must also be met in this case.

The Mortgage Bond Act contains an obligation for issuers to maintain a liquidity buffer. The liquidity buffer is intended to cover the net liquidity outflows of the programme (related to cover pool and outstanding covered bonds) for the next 180 days. Assets that meet the requirements of Level 1, 2a or 2b of the EU Liquidity Coverage Requirement (LCR) Regulation can be used to fill the buffer. Unsecured exposures to credit institutions that also meet the criteria for substitute cover are also permitted. However, these may account only for a maximum

of 15% of the liquidity buffer. To prevent a double burden for issuing banks caused by overlapping liquidity buffer requirements (Covered Bond Directive vs. LCR-DelReg[3]), the EU Commission amended the LCR-DelReg (legally effective as of July 8th, 2022) such that the required liquidity buffer assets held in the cover pool shall be deemed to be unencumbered during the 30 calendar day LCR stress period.

Issuers can opt to issue covered bonds that provide for a potential 12-months maturity extension in the event of an insolvency of the issuer (soft bullet). The postponement may not be at the discretion of the issuer. In the event of insolvency, the special administrator may trigger the postponement if he is convinced that the liabilities can be serviced in full at the extended maturity date.

If an institution issues covered bonds with a possible maturity extension, the following information must be provided in the bond terms and conditions:

> Trigger event of the maturity extension;

> Maximum period of maturity extension of the covered bond;

> Possible effects of the insolvency of the issuer;

> Role of the supervisory authority and the special administrator.

VI. TRANSPARENCY

Issuers are legally required to publish information about their programmes on their websites on a quarterly basis. The following information must be published according to the Mortgage Bond Act:

> Amount of cover pool and outstanding bonds;

> Listing of ISIN numbers of all issues made;

> Geographic distribution and type of cover assets, size of loans, and valuation method;

> Information on market risk, including interest rate risk and currency risk, as well as credit and liquidity risks;

> Maturity structure of cover assets and outstanding bonds; overview of maturity extension triggers, if applicable;

> Amount of required and available coverage, including amount of statutory, contractual and voluntary overcollateralization;

> Share of loans defaulted in accordance with CRR Art 178 and in any case share of non-performing loans in the cover pool.

Quarterly cover pool reports published by the Austrian issuers organized in the Austrian Covered Bond Forum can be found at the forum's website: https://www.wko.at/oe/pfandbriefforum/start.

VII. COVER POOL MONITOR AND BANKING SUPERVISION

The cover pool is monitored by a trustee ("Treuhänder"), who is appointed by the credit institution and is notified to the Austrian Finance Market Authority. The trustee is liable according to the Austrian Civil Code. The trustee has to ensure that the prescribed cover for the covered bonds exists at all times and that the cover assets are recorded correctly in the cover register. Without his or her approval, no assets may be removed from the cover pool. Before the issuance of a covered bond, the trustee has to certify that both sufficient coverage and correct recording in the cover register exist. Any disputes between the issuer and the trustee would be settled by the regulator.

3 Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2015/61

In case of insolvency proceedings, the Bankruptcy Court must appoint a joint special representative of the covered bond creditors ("Kurator") according to the Austrian insolvency regime.

VIII. SEGREGATION OF COVER ASSETS AND BANKRUPTCY REMOTENESS OF COVERED BONDS

The Cover Register ("Deckungsregister") in which all cover assets are entered permits the identification of the cover assets. All mortgages, public-sector loans, substitute cover assets and derivative contracts which form part of the cover must be registered in the cover register.

The issuers must not include a loan (or derivative contract) in the cover pool before the debtor (or the counterparties of derivative contracts) has agreed with this. The issuer must also notify the debtor of his intention to include a loan in the cover pool before doing so and that it is not allowed to discharge his debt through any set-off. An exemption from the general prohibition of set-off applies to derivative contracts, when the set-off (or netting) occurs in respect of receivables arising under one and the same Master Agreement (i.e. pertaining to the cover assets).

The legal effect of registration is that, in the case of insolvency of the issuer, the assets which form part of the separate legal estate (the so-called "Sondermasse") can be identified: All values contained in the register would be qualified as part of the separate legal estate.

While the bank carries out the daily administration of the cover register, it is the cover pool monitor who supervises the required cover und registration in the cover register.

Asset segregation

Cover assets may only be enforced by the covered bond creditors (or counterparties of derivative contracts which form part of the cover pool).

If the issuer becomes insolvent, the cover assets are segregated from the remainder of its assets. The cover assets form what is known as "Sondermasse" (pool of special assets) and are earmarked for the claims of the covered bond holders. Any voluntary overcollateralization is also bankruptcy-remote. Only cover assets that are evidently not needed to satisfy the claims of the covered bond holders are passed back to the issuer's general insolvency estate.

The cover assets are managed by a special administrator ("besonderer Verwalter"), who is appointed by the bankruptcy court after consultation with the Austrian regulator (the FMA). The special administrator has the right to manage and dispose of the recorded assets.

Impact of insolvency proceedings on covered bonds and derivatives

Covered bonds are not automatically accelerated in case of insolvency of the issuer, but will be repaid at the time of their contractual maturity. The cover assets are administered in favour of the bond holders and any claims of the covered bond holders in respect of interest or principal repayments are to be paid (primarily) from the cover assets. Equally, in respect of derivatives which belong to the pool, there is no (immediate) legal consequence of insolvency and the counterparty claims as derivative transactions rank pari passu with the claims of the covered bond holders.

Preferential treatment of covered bond holders

Covered bond holders enjoy preferential treatment, as the law stipulates the separation of the cover assets on the one hand and the insolvency estate on the other hand. To the extent that they are not satisfied from the cover assets, the covered bond holders may also participate in the issuer's general insolvency proceedings. Only if the cover assets do not suffice to satisfy the covered bond creditors are the covered bonds accelerated.

Access to liquidity in case of insolvency

Once appointed, the special administrator for the cover pool has the duty to manage the cover pool in order to satisfy the claims of the covered bond holders. The administrator may, for example, sell assets in the cover pool or enter into a bridge loan in order to create liquidity to service the bonds in issue.

The administrator also has access to any voluntary overcollateralization, which is considered bankruptcy-remote. Any surplus collateral may only be transferred back to the insolvency estate to the extent that it is evident that it will not be needed to cover the claims of the covered bond holders.

Sale and transfer of mortgage assets to other issuers

By virtue of his or her appointment, the special administrator has the right to manage and dispose of the cover assets. In particular, the special administrator must collect the cover assets according to their contractual maturity.

The special administrator is also entitled to sell the assets collectively to a separate credit institution. This institution must then take over all liabilities with regard to the covered bonds. In fact, one of the tasks of the special administrator is to find a suitable credit institution that will buy the assets collectively. If a sale is not feasible, the cover pool administrator has to continue the servicing of the cover pool and the outstanding covered bonds.

IX. RISK-WEIGHTING & COMPLIANCE WITH EUROPEAN LEGISLATION

The legislation, when taken together with the practices, processes and procedures across the industry falls within the criteria of Article 129 of the CRR. Austrian covered bonds fulfil the criteria of Article 52(4) of the UCITS Directive as well as those of Article 129 of the CRR. This results in a 10% risk-weighting in Austria and other European jurisdictions where a 10% risk-weighting is allowed.

Austrian covered bonds are eligible in repo transactions with the National Central Bank.

Issuers: BAWAG P.S.K. Bank für Arbeit und Wirtschaft und Österreichische Postsparkasse AG, Erste Group Bank AG, Allgemeine Sparkasse Oberösterreich Bank AG, Bausparkasse der österreichischen Sparkassen AG, Volksbank Wien AG, Kommunalkredit Austria AG, Raiffeisen Bank International AG, Raiffeisenlandesbank Oberösterreich AG, Raiffeisenlandesbank Niederösterreich-Wien AG, Raiffeisen-Landesbank Steiermark AG, Raiffeisen-Landesbank Tirol AG, Raiffeisenverband Salzburg, Raiffeisenlandesbank Vorarlberg, UniCredit Bank Austria AG, HYPO NOE Landesbank AG, HYPO Tirol Bank AG, Hypo Vorarlberg Bank AG, HYPO Bank Burgenland AG, Austrian Anadi Bank AG, Hypo Oberösterreich, BKS Bank AG, Oberbank AG, BTV-Bank für Tirol und Vorarlberg AG, Bausparkasse Wüstenrot.

COVERED BOND LABEL **:** UniCredit Bank Austria AG (2 pools), Erste Group Bank AG (2 pools).

For the most up-to-date information, please consult the new ECBC Covered Bond Comparative Database webpage on the Covered Bond Label website www.coveredbondlabel.com or via the following QR code:

3.4 BELGIUM

By Dries Janssens, Belfius Bank

I. FRAMEWORK

The legal basis for Belgian covered bonds is incorporated into the banking law, meaning the law of 25 April 2014 on the status and the supervision of credit institutions (the "Banking Law"). The legislation with respect to Belgian covered bonds has been supplemented by two Royal Decrees and several regulations.

The following gives an overview of the legislative framework for Belgian covered bonds:

- The Law of 25 April 2014 on the status and supervision of credit institutions (*Wet van 25 april 2014 op het statuut van en het toezicht op kredietinstellingen/Loi du 25 avril 2014 relative au statut et au contrôle des établissements de crédit*), as amended by the Law of 26 November 2021 (the "**Banking Law**");
- The Law of 3 August 2012 on various measures to facilitate the mobilization of claims in the financial sector (the "**Mobilisation Law**");
- The Royal Decree of 11 October 2012 on the issuance of Belgian covered bonds by Belgian credit institutions"), as amended by the Royal Decree of 15 February 2022 (the "**Covered Bond Royal Decree**");
- The Royal Decree of 11 October 2012 on the cover pool administrator in the context of the issuance of Belgian covered bonds by a Belgian credit institution, as amended by the Royal Decree of 15 February 2022 (the "**Cover Pool Administrator Royal Decree**");
- The Regulation of the National Bank of Belgium ("NBB") concerning the practical modalities for the application of the Law of 25 April 2014 as amended by the law of 26 November 2021 in view of transposing Directive (EU) 2019/2162 (the "**NBB Covered Bonds Regulation**"); and
- The Regulation of the NBB addressed to the cover pool monitors of Belgian credit institutions that issue of Belgian covered bonds (the "**NBB Cover Pool Monitor Regulation**").

II. STRUCTURE OF THE ISSUER

Belgian covered bonds can be issued by credit institutions established in Belgium. However, such institutions first need to be licensed by the NBB as covered bond issuer (general authorization as issuer) and also the covered bond program itself needs to get approval from the NBB (specific program license).

An extensive issuer license file detailing aspect like its strategy, solvency, risk management, asset encumbrance, IT systems, internal audit, etc. needs to be submitted. At program level the issuer has to detail the impact of the covered bond issuance on its overall liquidity, the quality of the cover assets and maturity matching of assets/liabilities in the program. The statutory auditor of the issuer has to report to the NBB on the organizational capacity of the credit institution to issue and follow up the covered bonds.

The license is conditional upon respecting the program limits that the NBB has approved. If licensed, the issuer and the program(s) are added to specific lists that are available for consultation on NBB's website.

The NBB can impose an issuance limit on covered bonds to protect the other creditors of the issuer.

At program level a distinction is made between Article 129 CRR-compliant European covered bonds (premium), i.e. "Belgian pandbrieven/lettres de gage", and non-Article 129 CRR-compliant European covered bonds, i.e. "Belgian covered bonds". The denomination of both terms is protected by law. However, the way that the Banking Law and the Royal Decree are stipulated, makes that in practice the Belgian credit institutions are only able to issue Article 129 CRR-compliant European covered bonds (premium). Therefore, in what follows we will only concentrate on the Belgian pandbrieven.

Consultation of the NBB's website will hence give an overview of:

- Belgian credit institutions licensed to issue covered bonds
- Belgian pandbrieven programs and their specific issuances, confirming as well their status as European covered bonds (premium)

When a credit institution issues Belgian pandbrieven, its assets consist by operation of law of its general estate on the one hand and (one or more) separate, ringfenced "special estate(s)" on the other hand. Assets become part of the cover pool upon registration in a register held by the issuer for such purpose. As of that moment these assets form part of the special estate and are excluded from general bankruptcy claw back risk.

The Belgian pandbrieven investors have a direct recourse to (i) the general estate of the issuing credit institution (i.e. repayment of the Belgian pandbrieven is an obligation of the issuing bank as a whole) and (ii) the special estate, that comprises the cover pool that is exclusively reserved for the Belgian pandbrieven investors under the specific program to which the special estate is attached and for the claims of other parties that are or can be identified in the issue conditions.

When insolvency proceedings or resolution proceedings are opened with regard to the issuing credit institution, by operation of law, Belgian pandbrieven investors fall back on the cover pool assets (= the special estate) for the timely payment of their bonds but at the same time they continue to have a claim against the insolvent general estate. Creditors that are not related to the special estate do not have any recourse to these cover pool assets.

III. COVER ASSETS

All assets and instruments that are legally segregated for the benefit of the Belgian pandbrieven investors in a segregated estate constitute the cover pool. The cover pool can be composed of assets that are part of any of the following categories:

- category 1: residential mortgage loans
- category 2: commercial mortgage loans
- category 3: exposure to the public sector
- category 4: exposure on financial institutions, in the form of short-term notes (max 3 months), short-term deposits (maximum initial term 100 days) or derivatives

These four general categories are subject to further eligibility criteria:

- geographical scope: OECD, except for category 1 and 2 that are further restricted to EEA;
- for the mortgage loans mentioned in category 1 and 2: the loans need to be guaranteed by first line (and subsequent lower ranking) mortgages on residential respectively commercial properties located in the EEA. Mortgage loans with properties under construction/in development can only be added to the cover pool if they do not represent more than 15% of all the mortgage loans taken up in the cover pool. Residential real estate is defined as real estate property that is destined for housing or for leasing as housing by the owner. Commercial real estate is real estate property that is primarily used for industrial or commercial purposes or for other professional activities such as offices or other premises intended for the exercise of a commercial or services activity;
- for category 3: exposure to the public sector can only be (i) exposure to or guaranteed by central governments, central banks, public sector entities, regional governments and local authorities or (ii) exposure to or guaranteed by multilateral development banks or international organizations that qualify as a minimum for a 0% risk weighting as set out in article 117 and 118 CRR;

- for category 4: only exposures to counterparties with credit quality step 1 or step 2 as set out in Article 136 CRR. Maximum 10% exposure to credit quality step 2. Total exposure to category 4 maximum 15%. For derivatives, (i) they cannot be terminated upon insolvency/resolution of the issuing credit institution; (ii) they must be under a separate credit support annex (CSA); (iii) group related entities are not eligible; (iv) only LCR level 1 assets are eligible for collateral posting; and (v) they can only be used to cover interest rate risk or currency risk.

The cover pool can be composed of assets out of each of the four categories. But for each program (and accordingly for each segregated estate), assets out of one of the first three categories (so either residential mortgage loans, commercial mortgage loans or exposure to public sector) need to represent a value of at least 85% of the nominal amount of Belgian pandbrieven outstanding under such program. In practice this comes down to three types of Belgian pandbrieven programs that can be set up: residential mortgage covered bond program, commercial mortgage covered bond program or public covered bond program. How such value is determined, is explained in the following chapter.

IV. VALUATION AND LTV CRITERIA

The valuation rules of the cover assets determine the maximum amount of Belgian pandbrieven that can be issued. The value of the cover assets of each of the categories as mentioned in the section above will be determined as follows:

- category 1: minimum of [the outstanding loan amount, 80% of the value of the mortgaged property, the mortgage inscription amount (which can include Belgian mortgage mandates but upon the condition that there is a first lien mortgage inscription of at least 60% related to one and the same property].
- category 2: minimum of [the outstanding loan amount, 60% of the value of the mortgaged property, the mortgage inscription amount].
- category 3: value is equal to the book value (nominal amount outstanding).
- category 4: for derivative exposure, the value is based on the close-out amount. For short-term deposits and short-term notes the value is based on the book value.

Additional valuation rule applicable to any category: in case of delinquencies above 30 days, the value as determined per category is reduced by 50%. In case of default, no value can be given anymore.

When it comes to property valuation (applicable to cat 1 and cat 2), the royal decree stipulates that this should be done at or below market value. The value of the real estate has to be controlled at least annually.

V. ASSET-LIABILITY MANAGEMENT

Each issuer is required to perform several asset cover tests. The first one has been already mentioned in section III and requires that the value of either category 1, 2 or 3 is at least 85% of the nominal amount of Belgian pandbrieven (the "**85% asset coverage test**"). Secondly the value of the cover assets has to exceed the nominal amount of Belgian pandbrieven by 5% at all times (5% overcollateralisation) (the "**overcollateralisation test**"). Finally, the sum of the interest, principal and other revenues has to be sufficiently high to cover for the sum of interests, principal and other costs due under/with regard to the Belgian pandbrieven, as well as any other obligation of the Belgian pandbrieven program (the "amortization test").

Next to the asset cover tests, a liquidity test has to be performed whereby the issuer calculates its maximum net liquidity outflow within the next 180 days (the "**liquidity test**"). This amount has to be covered by (sufficiently) liquid cover assets. Liquid assets are assets that (i) meet the cover asset eligibility criteria and (ii) qualify as Level 1 LCR assets or category 4 short-term notes or category 4 short-term paper.

If an issuing credit institution fails to meet the requirements of the liquidity test, it has 14 days to take the necessary redress measures. As long as an issuing credit institution has not taken the necessary redress measures, it is not allowed to issue new Belgian covered bonds.

The issuer is also required to manage and limit its interest and currency risk related to the program and will be able to sustain severe & adverse interest/exchange rate movements.

Finally, it is important to highlight that the tests have to be met on a daily basis. It is the task of the cover pool monitor to verify at least once a month whether the issuer is compliant with all the tests.

An issuer will have the possibility to create retained Belgian pandbrieven for liquidity purposes.

VI. TRANSPARENCY

The royal decree imposes monthly investor reporting. It sets minimum disclosure criteria.

VII. COVER POOL MONITOR AND BANKING SUPERVISION

A Belgian credit institution licensed to issue Belgian pandbrieven is subject to special supervision by the NBB as well as the permanent control by a cover pool monitor.

The cover pool monitor:

- is chosen by the issuer from those persons appearing on the official list of certified/statutory auditors established by the NBB;
- shall be appointed subject to prior approval from the NBB;
- cannot be the certified/statutory auditor of the issuer.

The main tasks of a cover pool monitor consist of ensuring compliance with legal and regulatory requirements, e.g. are the cover assets duly recorded in the register, do the cover assets fulfil the eligibility criteria, is the value correctly registered, etc. The cover pool monitor is required to perform these tasks not only on an ongoing basis, but also prior to the first issuance of Belgian pandbrieven by the credit institution. The ongoing verifications must be done at least once a month.

Next to that the cover pool monitor has a reporting obligation towards the NBB on several aspects such as level of overcollateralisation and results of the different tests that have to be performed. The issuer is obliged to provide full cooperation to the cover pool monitor and shall give the cover pool monitor the right to review the register, loan documents, accounting book, or any other document. The NBB at its discretion can ask the cover pool monitor to perform other tasks and verifications.

If the NBB considers that a category of Belgian pandbrieven no longer fulfills the criteria or the issuer no longer fulfills its obligations, it can withdraw the license of the issuer and consequently withdraw the issuer from the list of Belgian covered bond issuers. Such a deletion from the list will be reported to the European Commission but does not have consequences for existing Belgian pandbrieven holders.

VIII. SEGREGATION OF COVER ASSETS AND BANKRUPTCY REMOTENESS OF COVERED BONDS

Assets need to be registered before they form part of the segregated estate. The law protects these registered assets (including all collateral and guarantees related to such assets) from a claim of the creditors of the insolvent general estate and therefore they are not affected by the start of insolvency proceedings against the issuer. Also, any assets that would be posted via a CSA that is in place would be protected from insolvency proceedings as it is required to register these types of assets as well, although as explained before one cannot consider those as pure cover assets.

The cover assets once registered are exclusively and by operation of law reserved for the benefit of the Belgian pandbrieven investors and other creditors that might be linked to the program (e.g. a swap counterparty of which the derivative is included in the cover pool). These creditors also have a claim on the general estate. Only when all obligations at program level have been satisfied, will any remainder of assets of the segregated estate return to the general estate of the issuer. Before such time, the bankruptcy receiver of the credit institution, in consultation with the NBB, could ask the restitution of cover assets if and when there is certainty that not all assets will be necessary to satisfy the obligations under the Belgian pandbrieven program.

Commingling risk has been addressed in the Belgian framework both pre- and post-insolvency. Collections received from cover assets as of the date of bankruptcy will by law be excluded from the insolvent general estate. Registered collections received from the cover assets before the date of bankruptcy are part of the segregated estate and legally protected via the right of 'revindication'. Pursuant to this mechanism, if collections from the cover assets cannot be identified in the general estate, unencumbered assets in the general estate will be selected by taking into account criteria specified in the issue conditions. Set-off and claw back risk have been addressed by the Mobilisation Law.

Upon the initiation of bankruptcy proceedings or the instruction of an exceptional recovery measure by the competent supervisor with regard to the credit institution, or even before whenever the NBB considers it to be necessary (e.g. at the moment the license is withdrawn), a cover pool administrator ("gestionnaire de portefeuille") will be appointed that will take over the management of the Belgian pandbrieven program from the credit institution. The cover pool administrator (appointed by the NBB) is legally entrusted with all powers that are necessary for the management of the segregated estate, and can take all such actions (some in consultation with/upon approval of both the NBB and the representative of the noteholders) required to fulfill in a timely manner the obligations under the Belgian pandbrieven. Such actions could consist in a (partial) sale of the underlying cover assets, taking out a loan, issuance of new bonds to use for ECB purposes or any other action that might be needed to fulfill the obligations. Acceleration of the Belgian pandbrieven is not possible, unless after the appointment of a cover pool administrator:

- noteholders would decide otherwise;
- (after consultation with the noteholders' representative and with the consent of the NBB) it is clear that further deterioration of the cover assets would lead to a situation whereby it is impossible to satisfy the obligations under the Belgian pandbrieven (i.e. in a situation of insolvency of the cover pool).

The bankruptcy receiver has a legal obligation to cooperate with the NBB and the cover pool administrator in order to enable them to manage the special estate in accordance with the law.

The Cover Pool Administrator Royal Decree specifies the tasks of the cover pool administrator. These include, amongst other things, to procure the payment of interest and principal on the Belgian covered bonds, collection of moneys from the cover assets (including any enforcement), entering into relevant hedging and liquidity transactions and carrying out of certain administrative tasks. The cover pool administrator will also have to test compliance with the cover tests and inform the NBB and the noteholders' representative thereof.

IX. RISK-WEIGHTING & COMPLIANCE WITH EUROPEAN LEGISLATION

The legislation when taken together with the practices, processes and procedures across the industry should fall within the criteria of Article 129 CRR.[1] Belgian pandbrieven comply with the requirements of Article 129 CRR if and to the extent they are listed by the NBB as such.

Issuers: Argenta Spaarbank, Belfius, BNP Paribas Fortis, KBC and ING Belgium.

COVERED BOND LABEL **:** Argenta Spaarbank NV/SA (1 pool), Belfius Bank (2 pools) and BNP Paribas Fortis NV/SA (1 pool).

For the most up-to-date information, please consult the new ECBC Covered Bond Comparative Database webpage on the Covered Bond Label website www.coveredbondlabel.com or via the following QR code:

1 Please click on the following link for further information on the UCITS Directive and the Capital Requirements Regulation (CRR): https://hypo.org/ecbc/covered-bonds/.

3.5 BRAZIL

By ABECIP – The Brazilian Association of Real Estate Loans

I. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

On 19 January 2015, the Letra Imobiliária Garantida ("LIG") – Brazilian Covered Bonds – was created by Law 13.097 (Articles 63 to 94), which defined their main characteristics and structure, with due regard for CBs best international practices. The LIG is a transferrable, freely tradable security issued directly and exclusively by financial institutions approved by the BCB and registered with a central depositary, also approved by the BCB.

This law delegated to the National Monetary Council ("CMN"), and the Central Bank of Brazil ("BCB"), the secondary regulations for LIGs. The CMN, in turn, edited in 2017, among others, Resolution 4.598, detailing the regulations for issuers and fiduciary agents of LIGs. Resolutions CMN 5.001 (March 2022) and BCB 225 (April 2022) consolidated the previous rules, with no material change. As secondary regulations, the BCB edited Circulars 3.866 and 3.872, in 2017, 3.891, 3.895 and 3.896, in 2018.

This law also attributed to the Brazilian Securities and Exchange Commission ("CVM") the regulation for public offerings of LIGs in the local Market, which was implemented through CVM resolution nº 8 of 2020.

Brazilian financial institutions are regulated by the National Monetary Council in its capacity as the collegiate regulator of the National Financial System, and by the BCB which also supervises them.

II. STRUCTURE OF THE ISSUER

In addition to the issuing institution's direct responsibility for their redemption, LIGs are collateralised by financial assets owned by the financial institution, and which must be identified and segregated from its regular assets, thereby comprising segregated assets referred to as the Cover Pool, protected by a trust scheme for legal purposes called "Regime Fiduciário" (Fiduciary Regime). Although these remain under the management of the issuing institution, they must have their own controls and bookkeeping. The composition of the Cover Pool must comply with the specifications and limits stipulated in the law and regulations already mentioned, and their management by the issuing institution is subject to monitoring by a Fiduciary Agent approved by the monetary authority for that purpose, in addition to supervision by the Central Bank of Brazil of the issuing institution's role as the trustee.

III. COVER POOL

The Cover Pool can only be composed of:

(i) Mortgage loans,

(ii) National Treasury securities,

(iii) derivatives instruments (for hedging purposes only) and

(iv) cash and cash flows arising from the assets that are part of the Cover Pool.

i.1) Mortgage loans mean loans resulting from the following transactions:

a) financing for the acquisition of residential or non-residential property,

b) financing for the construction of residential or non-residential property,

c) financing for legal entities to produce residential or non-residential property, and

d) personal loans guaranteed by a mortgage or fiduciary lien on residential properties and insurance cover ("home equity").

i.2) However, mortgage loans can only be included in the Cover Pool if the following criteria are met:

a) performing credits only,

b) free of any type of encumbrance,

c) guaranteed by a first-degree mortgage or by a secured fiduciary lien on the property,

d) financing for construction, only if the property development is subject to a special regime which segregates a specific construction financing from all other liabilities of the developer, and

e) the credit risk rating of the transaction is not less than "B" (in a scale that goes from AA to H).

It should be emphasized that the Cover Pool should have an over-collateral of no less than 5% of the LIGs issued, while the mortgage loans should represent at least 80% of the total amount of the Cover Pool.

IV. VALUATION AND LTV CRITERIA

The LIG issuer may incorporate into the contract the revaluation and the LTV limits criteria.

The LTV criteria for the property given as collateral for the credits linked to the real estate assets of the LIG shall abide by the following maximum percentages:

> Residential financing – 80% of the value of the property evaluation;

> Commercial financing – 60% of the value of the property evaluation;

> Home equity – 60% of the value of the property evaluation; and

> Financing for construction – 80% of the ratio between the restated nominal amount of the financing, and the property's production cost.

The value of the guarantees in order to check the LTV will be verified, as mentioned above, by the issuer at the most every three years.

V. ASSET AND LIABILITY MANAGEMENT

The issuing institution must undertake stress testing capable of measuring the impact of the main risk factors to which the Cover Pool is exposed in relation to the sufficiency requirement.

To comply with this rule, at least the interest rate risk and, when applicable, the currency risk must be factored in. The frequency of the stress testing and the holding period must be at least quarterly.

These stress tests must be carried out by the issuing institution using its own methodology based on consistent, documented and verifiable criteria, assumptions and procedures, especially bearing in mind:

> rates, indices, terms and other material information involving the nature and complexity of the Cover Pool and the LIGs guaranteed by it;

> individual effects of the risk factors, as well as the interaction between these factors;

> historical elements represented by historical series of the values of each risk factor, covering at least the five years preceding the date when the test is carried out;

> hypothetical elements that consider new information and the possibility of emerging risks not incorporated by the historical elements;

> effects arising from scenarios that simulate extreme market conditions on each risk factor, incorporating the correlation effects;

> forward interest rate structure as a risk factor, using at least the same vertexes defined when calculating the present values;

> asymmetries, non-linearities, correlation breakages and other assumptions; and

> counterparty risk involving derivative instruments, when applicable.

Regarding the liquidity requirement, the assets portfolio shall contain liquid assets in an amount equivalent to the LIG-related commitments secured by the Portfolio and falling due in the next 180 days.

VI. TRANSPARENCY

The Brazilian legislation requires a series of reports and records that must be kept up to date and monitored by the issuer, the LIG trustee and by the BCB, among which we would draw attention to:

(i) The Issuer, in managing the Cover Pool, must:

- > make available on the internet documentation about the methodologies adopted for complying with the requisites of the Cover Pool;
- > disclose on a quarterly basis, in the notes to the financial statements, information showing the status of the Cover Pool, as well as the percentage ratio of the sum of the assets comprising the Cover Pool, to the institution's total assets;
- > send to the trustee, on the fifth business day of each month, the information referring to verification of compliance with the requisites of the Cover Pool;

(ii) The local rules also contain requirements which it are mandatory in the instruments of issuance such as:

- > issuer name and holder name;
- > sequential number, place and date of issuance;
- > face value; maturity date; and fixed or floating interest rate;
- > exchange rate variance adjustment clause, as the case may be;
- > manner, frequency and place of payment;
- > identification of the Cover Pool;
- > identification and amount of the mortgage loans and other assets comprising the Cover Pool;
- > identification of the trustee, indicating their obligations, responsibilities and remuneration, in addition to the situations, conditions and way in which they can be removed from office or substituted, and the other conditions of their position;
- > amortisation regime;
- > Cover Pool management transition plan;
- > rules for the general meetings of investors holding the LIG.

BCB's Circular No. 3.872 (of 12/2017) specifies more transparency requirements for LIG issuance such as: issuing institution must publish the Asset Portfolio Statement (DCA) on its website;

(i) the distribution of assets included in the asset portfolio by maturity bands, detailing the type of assets, updated nominal value and percentage participation in the total value of the asset portfolio;

(ii) the notional value of derivative instruments;

(iii) the distribution of residential and non-residential mortgage loans, with updated nominal value and percentage participation in the total value of the mortgage loans;

(iv) Detailed report on the relevant acts or facts that have occurred or may represent a significant change in the situation of the asset portfolio and the LIGs guaranteed by it.

VII. COVER POOL MONITOR AND BANKING SUPERVISION

The Cover Pool, along with the LIGs themselves, are registered with an entity approved by the Central Bank of Brazil under the fiduciary regime to which they were submitted, representing segregated assets linked to the LIGs they must guarantee. Its management, for which the issuing institution is responsible, and compliance with the legal requisites of eligibility and sufficiency of the underlying assets are monitored by the Fiduciary

Agent which is specifically authorized by the Central Bank to engage in this role. In turn, the Fiduciary Agent's performance is supervised by the monetary authority, which accumulates the overall power for supervising the financial institutions.

The Brazilian Central Bank carries out assessment of the issuers as part of banking supervision activity, supervises the Fiduciary Agent's performance and has legal power to take appropriate measures.

VIII. SEGREGATION OF THE COVER POOL AND THE REMOTE CHANCE OF BANKRUPTCY OF THE COVERED BONDS

Under Brazilian legislation (Law 6.024 dated 13 March 1974) in the event of default or even financial imbalance, financial institutions face administrative intervention proceedings or extrajudicial liquidation. In the first case, the Central Bank appoints an administrator to run the institution which, if recovered, will see management returned to its owners. In the second case, where insolvency is detected, and recovery is considered unviable, the monetary authority appoints a liquidator to realize the assets and liabilities. The liquidator may file for the bankruptcy of the entity when its assets are insufficient to cover at least half of the amount of unsecured credits or, additionally, when there is hard evidence of bankruptcy fraud.

In the case of intervention, liquidation or even bankruptcy of the Issuer, management of the asset portfolio is immediately transferred to the Fiduciary Agent, who will have full and wide-ranging powers to manage it, in addition to undertaking the redemption of the LIGs with the respective investors who will also become involved in this process through a general meeting specifically convened by the Fiduciary Agent.

The main legal effect of the fiduciary agent regime and the asset segregation that characterises it is the absolute ring-fencing in relation to the regular assets of the issuing financial institution. So, in the event of one of the situations described above, the trustee takes over management of the Cover Pool in order to redeem the LIGs, thereby ensuring that those assets will not be affected by the administrative intervention procedures or extrajudicial liquidation by the monetary authority, nor by the bankruptcy court proceedings, and are therefore exempted from competing with the issuing institution's other creditors, whether of an unsecured, fiscal or labour law nature.

IX. RISK-WEIGHTING & COMPLIANCE WITH EUROPEAN LEGISLATION

The LIGs issued directly by financial institutions with registered offices in Brazil are neither CRR nor UCITS-compliant as both frameworks require the issuer to be based in the EU. Thus, LIGs do not benefit from the lower risk weighting for bank treasuries in the EU.

The LIGs are issued under specific Brazilian legislation which has not yet established specific prudential regulations for the purchase of LIGs by other financial institutions. However, the banking authority ("BCB") has indicated that it will abide by the international standards on this subject matter, as it has done with other risk issues.

Issuers: Banco Santander Brazil, Banco Inter, Itaú Unibanco and Banco Bradesco.

For the most up-to-date information, please consult the new ECBC Covered Bond Comparative Database webpage on the Covered Bond Label website www.coveredbondlabel.com or via the following QR code:

3.6 BULGARIA

By Michael Teig, UniCredit, Petar Ivanov, Nikolay Bebov, Damyan Leshev, Eversheds Sutherland (Bulgaria)

I. FRAMEWORK

The legal basis for the issue of covered bonds in Bulgaria is the Covered Bonds Act (CBA), which entered into force on 8 July 2022. The CBA transposed the EU Covered Bond Directive (CBD) in Bulgarian law and repealed the previous Mortgage-Backed Bonds Law adopted in 2000. Under delegation of the CBA, the Bulgarian National Bank (BNB) issued Ordinance No 42 dated 21 June 2022 on the Procedures and Conditions for the Issue of Covered Bonds (Ordinance No. 42). The CBA designates the BNB as the national competent authority for public supervision of covered bonds.

Pursuant to the CBA, covered bonds are debt securities that are issued in accordance with the CBA or in accordance with the national law of another Member State transposing the CBD that are secured by assets which serve to satisfy covered bond investors as preferred creditors.

II. STRUCTURE OF THE ISSUER

The CBA follows the on-balance-sheet approach of issuing covered bonds. This means that covered bonds may be issued directly by a bank that has been granted a banking license under the Bulgarian Credit Institutions Act and has received prior permission by the BNB. The procedure and the necessary documents for obtaining permission to issue covered bonds, either as part of a programme or on a standalone basis, are set out in the CBA and are based on the minimum requirements of the CBA.

III. COVER ASSETS

The covered bonds' cover pool may consist of the following eligible assets of the issuing bank:

- **Primary assets** under Art.129, (1), letters (a), (b), (d) to (g) of the EU Capital Requirement Regulation (CRR).
- **Substitution assets** under Art. 129, (1), letter (c) of CRR;

Primary assets shall form at least 85% of the outstanding covered bond principal, and shall generally be of the same type, whereas the assets referred to in each of letters (a) to (g) of Art.129, (1) of CRR shall constitute **a separate asset type**.

Upon approval by the BNB the issuing bank may also issue mixed asset covered bonds, which include another type of Art. 129 CRR primary assets which have similar features, maturity structure and risk profile with the other type of primary assets to be included in the cover pool.

To fulfil the coverage requirement of the Covered Bonds Act the issuing bank may include in the cover pool substitution assets, as well as any other type of primary assets, up to an amount not exceeding 15% of the outstanding covered bond principal.

The cover assets shall meet the requirements of Art. 129, (1a) – (3) of CRR.

The tangible assets securing the primary assets (e.g. residential property) shall have received permission for use and any other applicable authorizations for proper operation. In addition, there should be generally accepted valuation methods for estimating the tangible assets' value and the acts or documents for transfer of ownership over such assets should be entered in the Property Registry (for immovable property), the Unified Ships Register (for ships), or the respective public register of the country (Member State or certain third countries) where the respective asset is situated or registered.

Banks may also issue covered bonds using **intragroup pooled covered bond structures**, whereby the covered bonds issued by a bank from a particular group ("**internally issued covered bonds**") are included

in the cover pool of covered bonds issued by another bank that belongs to the same group ("**externally issued covered bonds**") subject to certain requirements under Section III of Chapter II of CBA, such as:

> the bank issuing externally issued covered bonds has acquired the internally issued covered bonds and has recorded them on its balance sheet prior to or simultaneously with their inclusion in the cover pool of the externally issued covered bonds

> the cover pool of the externally issued covered bonds includes only internally issued covered bonds of one bank from within the group

> the externally issued covered bonds are designated for placing to external investors not part of the issuer's group

> the externally and internally issued covered bonds shall meet, at the time of issuance, the requirements for CRR credit quality step 1, or in case of subsequent change in the credit quality – CRR credit quality step 2, provided the BNB grants permission on the basis of a determination that such quality change is not the result from a breach of the requirements of CBA for issue of covered bonds.

Intragroup pooled covered bond structures can also be used in a cross-border context, whether the Bulgarian bank acts as issuer of the internally or the externally issued covered bonds.

Derivative contracts can be included in the cover pool where the following conditions are cumulatively met:

1. the derivative contracts are concluded under a derivatives master agreement, which is separate from any other master agreements of the issuing bank
2. the derivative contracts cannot be terminated upon the insolvency or resolution of the issuing bank and are not included in a netting set together with derivative contracts concluded outside their master agreement
3. the derivative contracts are entered into exclusively for the purposes of hedging interest rate or currency risks associated with the cover assets and contain provisions ensuring that in the case of a reduction in the hedged risk the exposures under the contracts are adjusted, as well as that the hedge is closed out when the hedged risk cases to exist, and
4. the derivative contracts are enforceable in accordance with their terms.

The eligible counterparties to cover pool derivatives contracts include EU/OECD central banks and certain multilateral development banks, as well as credit institutions which qualify for credit quality step 1 or 2 under the CRR. With the BNB's prior approval, an issuer may transact with a credit institution of lesser credit quality or another type of counterparty.

Requirements for coverage, overcollateralization and liquidity

All present and future covered bond liabilities must be covered by claims for payment attached to eligible cover assets. Said **liabilities** comprise of obligations for:

> payment of the principal amount of the covered bonds;

> payment of interest and other monetary liabilities attached to the covered bonds

> payment attached to derivative contracts included in the cover pool, and

> costs related to the maintenance and administration of the covered bonds and cover assets in the event the covered bonds are placed under separate administration pursuant to Chapter Eight of CBA.

The **eligible cover assets to cover these liabilities** are:

> primary assets;

> substitution assets;

- assets included in the liquidity buffer; and
- receivables of the issuer under derivative contracts included in the cover pool.

The cover assets may not include any assets in respect of which a default is considered to have occurred within the meaning given by Art. 178 of the CRR.

The issuing bank shall ensure that the aggregate principal amount of all cover assets recorded in the cover register is at all times at least equal to the aggregate principal amount of outstanding covered bonds ("nominal principle") and shall furthermore maintain at all times a minimum level of 5% of statutory over-collateralisation calculated under the nominal principle. The BNB may set a higher minimum level of mandatory overcollateralisation. The covered bonds terms and conditions may provide for a level of voluntary overcollateralisation that is higher than the mandatory minimum requirements.

IV. VALUATION AND LTV CRITERIA

Valuation

The valuation of the cover assets shall be carried out in accordance with the applicable accounting standards.

The value of primary assets included in the cover pool shall follow their outstanding principal amount, but shall not exceed the values determined in Art. 129, (1) of CRR for the different asset types. For valuation of the tangible assets securing primary assets, the issuing bank shall use an up-to-date valuation performed by an independent appraiser, who is independent from the credit decision process, and shall not exceed the tangible asset's market value or mortgage lending value, as the case may be. The valuation of real estate shall follow the comparison approach, income approach or cost approach, together with the generally accepted methods related to these approaches. The monitoring of the value and revaluation of real estate shall be done in accordance with applicable banking regulations, in particular Art. 129, (3) and Art. 208, (3) of CRR.

LTV criteria

The LTV criteria for the cover assets shall be as generally defined in the banks' own lending policies depending on their risk appetite and their internal rules. No specific legal requirements are imposed by local banking law.

Primary assets can contribute towards the fulfilment of the coverage requirement of the CBA only up to the amounts specified in Art. 129, (1) of CRR, which – most notably – provide for an LTV ratio of 80% for primary assets that are residential mortgage loans, 60% for loans secured by commercial real estate, or 60% for loans secured by maritime mortgages on ships.

V. ASSET – LIABILITY MANAGEMENT

The covered bond issuer shall adopt separate rules and procedures for management of the risk associated with the issue of covered bonds, including for the performance of periodic stress tests of the cover pool and liquidity management. The stress tests of the cover pool shall be performed at least once every quarter in order to assess whether the value of the cover pool will continue to meet the requirements for coverage and applicable level of overcollateralisation in the event of a sharp deterioration of market conditions, as well as ad hoc stress tests depending on the prevailing market conditions. If during a stress test the value of the cover pool falls below the required coverage amount, the cover pool shall be replenished within one month with cover assets in an amount at least equalling the shortage identified during the stress test.

The issuing bank shall record all cover assets that form part of the cover pool in a cover register maintained for the covered bonds. An asset shall be deemed included in the cover pool and thus separately booked and recorded on banks' balance sheet from the time of recording of the said asset in the cover register.

The removal of an asset from the cover register, including the replacement of an asset with another asset, shall be effected according to a procedure approved by the BNB or the cover pool monitor, where such is appointed. Any deregistration effected in conflict with such procedures shall be ineffective.

Covered bond liabilities shall be collateralised by a first-ranking registered pledge over the pool of assets recorded in the cover register. The pledge must be recorded in Bulgaria's Central Register of Special Pledges (CRSP), except in the cases of a pledge on dematerialised internally issued covered bonds which shall be recorded in the Central Register of Securities kept by the Bulgarian Central Depository AD, or in another relevant central securities depository where the internally issued covered bonds are registered. The pledges shall name as pledgee the security agent designated in the covered bonds' terms and conditions.

The pledge shall be perfected in respect of every cover asset upon the initial registration of the pledge in the CRSP or upon a subsequent inclusion of an asset in the cover register maintained for the bonds. The issuing bank shall record the original cover pool in the cover register on the day of issue of the covered bonds and on the same day shall provide the BNB and the cover pool monitor, where such has been appointed, with the necessary data regarding the cover pool and proof that the recording has been effected. No subsequent registrations in the CRSP are required to reflect changes in the cover assets taking place during the life of covered bonds – such changes should be recorded only in the cover register.

VI. TRANSPARENCY

The issuing bank shall publish, within 30 days of the end of each calendar quarter, detailed information on each covered bond programme or standalone covered bond issue.

In the case of externally issued covered bonds, the issuing bank shall also provide investors with information on the internally issued covered bonds included in the cover pool at least on an aggregated basis or via a link to a website, where such information is available.

The issuing bank shall publish the information in a separate section on its website and keep it for a period of at least five years after all obligations attached to the covered bonds are settled.

VII. COVER POOL MONITOR AND BANKING SUPERVISION

Under the CBA, issuers may but are not required to appoint a cover pool monitor. A cover pool monitor may be a bank authorised in the Republic of Bulgaria or in another Member State, including where such bank was appointed as security agent, or an audit firm according to the Independent Financial Audit Act. An audit firm that has audited the issuing bank may not be cover pool monitor before the lapse of two years after completion of the audit engagement under Art. 76 of the Credit Institutions Act. The choice of a cover pool monitor shall be coordinated with the BNB in the covered bonds permission procedure.

VIII. SEGREGATION OF COVER ASSETS AND BANKRUPTCY REMOTENESS OF COVERED BONDS

The issuing bank shall account for the assets recorded in a cover register separately on its balance sheet, in a manner that makes them identifiable at all times. The cover assets shall not be affected by the opening or continuation of winding-up proceedings or reorganisation measures with regard to the issuing bank and shall not fall within the scope of any such proceedings or measures. In case bankruptcy proceedings are opened against the issuing bank, assets recorded in the cover register as at the date of the decision to initiate bankruptcy proceedings as well as the proceeds from any payments on or in connection with such assets effected after the date of the decision to initiate bankruptcy proceedings shall not form part of the bankruptcy estate.

Any obligations for payment attached to the covered bonds shall not be subject to automatic acceleration and shall not be otherwise affected by the opening or continuing of winding-up proceedings or reorganisation measures with regard to the issuing bank, shall not fall within the scope of any such proceedings or measures, and shall continue to originate, to be serviced and enforced in accordance with their terms and conditions.

Any actions connected with the issuing of covered bonds, the recording and removing of assets in and from the cover register, as well as the discharging of covered bond liabilities, taken before or on the date of commencement of winding-up proceedings or the imposition of a reorganisation measure, shall not be null and void, unenforceable or voidable and may not be reversed by a competent authority or party in the winding-up proceedings or the reorganisation measure concerning the issuing bank.

The BNB shall place covered bonds under separate administration from the rest of the estate of the issuing bank and appoint a special administrator of the covered bonds upon withdrawal of the banking license of the issuer or after the issuer has obtained permission for voluntary liquidation in accordance with the Credit Institutions Act.

When the BNB determines that this is necessary in order to ensure the due discharge of the covered bond liabilities, the BNB has the right, but not the obligation, to place covered bonds under separate administration and appoint a special administrator in the following cases:

> a decision has been taken determining that the deposits in the issuing bank are unavailable;

> early intervention measures or resolution actions have been taken in respect of the issuing bank in accordance with the Recovery and Resolution of Credit Institutions and Investment Firms Act;

> the issuing bank has defaulted on a due obligation for payment of interest or principal under the covered bonds or on a due payment under a cover pool derivative contract; or

> there are other circumstances that give rise to well-founded concerns about the continuous and sound administration of the covered bonds by the issuing bank.

As special administrator may serve one or two natural persons who meet the requirements for a bankruptcy trustee under the Bulgarian Bank Bankruptcy Act. Upon appointment of the special administrator, all powers of the management and supervisory bodies of the issuing bank related to the administration of the covered bonds and the cover pool shall be suspended and shall be exercised by the special administrator, unless the decision on the appointment thereof provides for any restrictions.

In the event of separate administration, claims attached to cover bonds shall be satisfied as preferred claims from the proceeds from cover assets, including from the proceeds upon the realisation of the collateral. Cover assets and the funds left, if any, after the claims attached to cover bonds have been satisfied in full shall be restored to the estate of the issuing bank. Any covered bond liabilities that are not satisfied in full shall take part in the winding-up proceedings in respect of the issuing bank as common unsecured (senior preferred) claims.

IX. RISK-WEIGHTING & COMPLIANCE WITH EUROPEAN LEGISLATION

The CBA transposes the Covered Bond Directive into Bulgarian law. The legislation when taken together with the practices, processes and procedures across the industry will fall within the criteria for preferable capital treatment of Art. 129 of CRR.

X. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The BNB, as the authority exercising covered bond public supervision, shall cooperate, inter alia by exchanging information, with the Bulgarian Financial Supervision Commission (FSC), with the respective competent authorities of the other Member States performing covered bond public supervision, with the European Banking Authority and the European Securities and Markets Authority.

The provisions of the Public Offering of Securities Act (POSA), the statutory instruments for the application thereof, the EU Prospectus Regulation and the other applicable acts of EU shall apply when covered bonds are offered to the public, as well as where covered bonds are admitted to trading on a regulated market.

Where the **publishing of a prospectus is required** under applicable law, a bank shall apply for permission to issue covered bonds with the BNB in good time, but not later than 60 days before the submission of an

application for approval of the covered bonds prospectus by the FSC. In such cases, the issuer shall provide the drawn-up prospectus to the BNB simultaneously with the submission of the application for approval of the prospectus by the FSC.

Where covered bonds are **offered without a requirement to publish a prospectus**, an offering circular shall be drawn up for subscription for covered bonds according to the procedure established by the Commercial Act or, respectively, an offer document according to the procedure established by Art. 89 (c) or 89 (d) of the POSA.

The prospectus or, respectively, the offering circular for subscription of covered bonds, shall also contain the following **additional information**:

1. Information on the rules and measures taken by the issuing bank for recording and keeping information in the cover register and for access to the cover register
2. Information on the cover pool, including:

(a) data on the value of the cover pool;

(b) the geographical distribution and type of cover assets;

(c) the maturity structure of cover assets;

(d) the minimum level of required coverage and the minimum level of required overcollateralisation;

(e) information on the outstanding principal amount of each cover asset at the time of origination of the said asset and by the end of the last full calendar quarter;

(f) total valuation of the assets securing cover assets and ratio of the outstanding principal amount and the valuation at the time of origination of the cover assets and by the end of the last full calendar quarter, as well as the valuation method used to carry out the valuation;

(g) characteristics of cover assets, including applicable interest rates, fees and commissions;

(h) the risks associated with cover assets by the end of each calendar year, from the time of the origination of the said assets and by the end of the last full calendar quarter.

Bulgarian covered bond market information

Since 2000 until 2014, 29 mortgage bonds of 11 issuing banks were issued in Bulgaria. The total principal amount of the bonds issued was about EUR 275 million. As of May 2025, no Bulgarian mortgage or other covered bonds had been outstanding.

For the most up-to-date information, please consult the new ECBC Covered Bond Comparative Database webpage on the Covered Bond Label website www.coveredbondlabel.com or via the following QR code:

3.7 CANADA

By Lily Shum, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC)

I. FRAMEWORK

Canada has dedicated covered bond legislation under Part I.1 of the National Housing Act (Canada) (NHA),[1] which together with the Canadian Registered Covered Bond Program Guide (as modified by advisories from Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), the CMHC Guide),[2] forms the legal framework for Canadian registered covered bonds.[3] The CMHC Guide is published by CMHC as the administrator of Canada's legal framework for covered bonds. The CMHC Guide prescribes detailed requirements for Canadian registered issuers and their registered covered bond programmes. The legal framework provides for registration of the issuer and its covered bond programme, statutory protection for covered bond investors that invest in such covered bonds, prescribes eligible issuers, programmes and cover pool collateral for registered programmes, and establishes a high standard of disclosure.

In order for a Canadian issuer to issue covered bonds under a registered programme, the issuer must submit applications to CMHC to obtain registered issuer and registered programme status. Issuers and programmes that meet the minimum requirements for registration and are approved by CMHC are added to the Canadian Covered Bonds Registry maintained by CMHC. CMHC has the power to suspend a registered issuer's right to issue further registered covered bonds.

All of the current Canadian covered bond issuers, except for one issuer regulated by the Quebec Autorité des marchés financiers (AMF), are regulated by the Office of the Superintendent of Financial Institutions (OSFI) that regulates Canadian federally incorporated financial institutions. Under OSFI and AMF regulatory requirements, total assets pledged for covered bonds must not, at any time, represent more than 5.5% of a deposit-taking institution's total on-balance sheet assets.

II. STRUCTURE OF THE ISSUER

Only banks[4], trust and loan companies, cooperative credit associations and insurance companies in Canada are eligible to register as issuers under the Canadian covered bonds legislative framework. The framework requires that at least one rating agency provide current ratings at all times for at least one series or tranche of covered bonds outstanding.

Canadian registered covered bonds are direct obligations of the issuer. In addition, in the event of issuer insolvency or default, investors have a claim over the pool of cover assets. The cover assets are held in a bankruptcy-remote special-purpose guarantor entity, which provides an irrevocable guarantee in respect of interest and principal payments due and payable under the covered bonds that would otherwise be at risk from an insolvency or default by the respective issuer. Currently, all registered programmes use a limited partnership (LP) as the guarantor entity. A bond trustee (which has to be arm's length and bankruptcy remote from the issuer) must be designated by the issuer for its registered covered bond programme to represent the views and interests (and enforce the rights) of the covered bond holders.

Cover assets are segregated from the issuer through a contractual true sale of such assets to the guarantor entity. However, registered legal title to mortgage collateral forming part of the cover assets typically remains with the issuer or seller from which they are purchased by the guarantor until the earliest of material breach

1 See Part I.1 of National Housing Act R.S.C., 1985, c. N-11.

2 See CMHC's Canadian Registered Covered Bond Programs Guide and Advice to Registered Issuers (www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca).

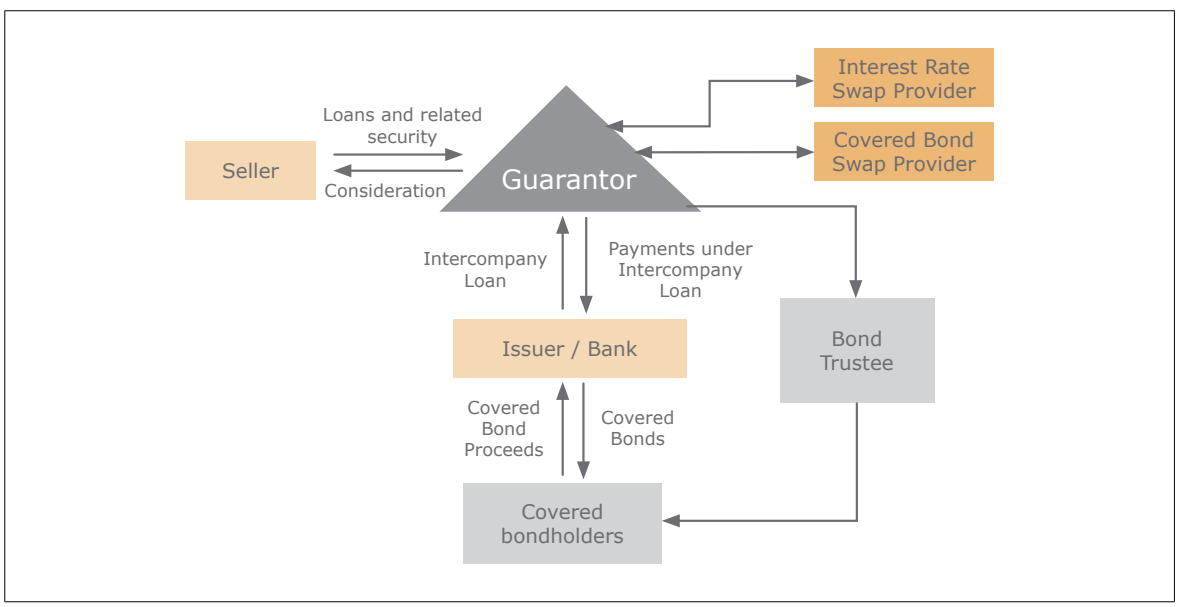
3 Issuance of covered bonds by Canadian issuers between 2007 (when they were first issued by Canadian issuers) and June 2012, was pursuant to a contractual framework, outside of the legal framework which was implemented in 2012.

4 Canadian domestic banks and subsidiaries of foreign banks that are Schedule I or Schedule II banks under the Bank Act (Canada).

or default by the issuer or servicer, impending or actual insolvency of the issuer or other events prescribed in the issuer's covered bond programme transaction documents, unless the prudential regulator or supervisory authority of the registered issuer receives satisfactory assurances that such transfer can be delayed until such assets are sold to a third party or dealt with in respect of enforcement of security or otherwise required to be dealt with. Each registered issuer must engage an arm's length bankruptcy-remote custodian with appropriate systems and knowledge of handling mortgages. The issuer must provide the custodian with the details of eligible and substitute assets forming part of the cover assets, and quarterly updates thereof.

An intercompany loan is provided by the issuer to the guarantor to acquire all rights, title, interests in and certain records related to a specific pool of mortgage loans originated by the seller (generally the issuer or an affiliate) which form part of the cover assets. The intercompany loan, denominated in Canadian dollars, is comprised of a guarantee loan and demand loan. The guarantee loan amount must be equal to the sum of the Canadian dollar amount of all covered bonds outstanding and the overcollateralisation required for the Asset Coverage Test to be met at any relevant time. The demand loan is a revolving credit facility equal to the difference between the intercompany loan and the guarantee loan. The Guarantor enters into swaps or collateral hedges to minimize interest rate and FX mismatches (see section V – Asset-Liability Management).

> Figure 1: General Covered Bond Structure



Source: CMHC

III. COVER ASSETS

Eligible assets for Canadian registered covered bonds are:

> Eligible loans, comprised of Canadian residential loans on properties with 1-4 units that:

- are not insured against borrower default;
- are first ranking mortgages;
- have a maximum 80% loan-to-value (LTV);
- are not in arrears at the time of transfer to the Guarantor and have had at least one payment made (of principal or interest) in accordance with the terms of the loan;
- are not the subject of any dispute, proceeding, set-off, counterclaim or defence;

- include an express waiver of set-off on the part of the borrower[5]
- are originated by the issuer or otherwise comply with the issuer's (or, if applicable, its affiliated lender's) underwriting policies.

> Substitute assets up to the prescribed limit (10%) of total value of cover pool assets. They must be Canadian government bonds or other prescribed assets.

> Cash in an amount not exceeding the amount necessary to satisfy the guarantor entity's payment obligations for the next six months.

Where the mortgage securing an eligible loan also secures other indebtedness, such other indebtedness must (i) be owned by the same lender, (ii) be the subject of a release of security and (iii) have the benefit of a cross default provision with the eligible loan that is enforceable against the borrower (or a covenant to call such loan in such circumstances where the related indebtedness is payable on demand). Only eligible loans may be transferred to the guarantor entity. Any loan that did not meet the eligibility requirements at the time of transfer must be repurchased by the issuer.

IV. VALUATION AND LTV CRITERIA

As noted above, the maximum LTV at the time of transfer of a loan to the guarantor is 80%. In Canada, prudential regulators require property values to be assessed during the underwriting process prior to making a mortgage loan. Property valuation is either performed by an accredited third-party property appraiser or an independently maintained valuation/risking model is used to assess the stated property value based on similar properties recently sold in the same area. Property values of cover assets in a registered covered bond programme must be indexed at least on a quarterly basis for the purposes of valuing the covered bond collateral. The indexation methodology for a covered bond programme is disclosed to investors in the covered bond programme prospectus and must be in line with any regulatory requirement.

V. ASSET – LIABILITY MANAGEMENT

Overcollateralisation and Coverage Tests

The covered bond framework requires issuers to establish a contractual minimum and maximum level of overcollateralisation by adopting a minimum and maximum value for the Asset Percentage (AP) used to discount mortgage loans in the cover pool as part of the Asset Coverage Test (described below). The CMHC Guide also stipulates that cover pool collateral assets shall be at least 103% of the outstanding Canadian dollar equivalent nominal amount of covered bonds secured at all times. As with market practice in other jurisdictions, issuers tend to maintain an OC level higher than the regulatory minimum OC level required.

Typical of SPV structures, Canadian issuers must meet the following tests:

> Asset Coverage Test (ACT): Conducted on a monthly basis, the ACT ensures that sufficient assets are available to cover the outstanding amount of covered bonds plus a level of OC. An asset monitor also tests the arithmetical accuracy of the ACT calculation yearly, or more frequently under specific circumstances.

> Valuation Calculation (VC): Conducted on a monthly basis, the VC ensures a covered bond programme's exposure to market risk (namely, volatility in interest rates and currency exchange rate) is monitored. The VC measures the present value to the covered bond collateral relative to the Canadian dollar equivalent of the market value of the outstanding covered bonds guaranteed by it.

> Pre-Maturity Test (PMT): In respect to hard-bullet covered bonds, at programme specific ratings' triggers, the PMT ensures that the covered bond collateral includes sufficient cash to meet in full all principal pay-

5 Mortgage loans originated prior to July 2014 were not required to include an express waiver of set-off on the part the borrower (but could not afford include an express right of set-off in favour of the borrower).

ments due under the maturing hard-bullet series covered bonds (together with all other payment obligations ranking in priority) for a period prescribed in the transaction documents of the specific programme.

> Amortisation Test (AT): Following an issuer event of default, the AT ensures that the notional value of cover assets is at least equal to the outstanding Canadian Dollar equivalent covered bonds principal.

Covered Bond Collateral Hedges and Ratings Triggers

Furthermore, the issuer is required to have in place covered bond collateral hedges for the guarantor at the time of each transfer of covered bond collateral and covered bond issue in order to minimise interest rate or FX mismatches which may include contingent covered bond collateral hedges, which become effective, e.g., in case of an event of default of the registered issuer or the ratings of the hedge counterparty falling below certain prescribed ratings. The guarantor carries out monthly valuations to assess market risks (see above). Hedging counterparties must meet the counterparty requirements set out in the CMHC Guide, including minimum standards established by rating agencies. Where registered issuers meet these minimum requirements, they will serve as the hedge counterparty. Issuers of registered covered bond programmes that do not meet the minimum hedging counterparty ratings requirements will use third party hedging counterparties that meet those requirements. The terms of each transaction document must explicitly state that the guarantor may (and must do so if the guarantor entity is not independently controlled and governed (as prescribed by the CMHC Guide)) replace a specific counterparty upon rating triggers or in case of an event of default of the registered issuer. CMHC must be informed of counterparty replacement, termination or resignation. Swap counterparties rank pari passu with covered bondholders prior to issuer default.

The framework requires a rating trigger for the establishment of a cash reserve for the benefit of the guarantor sufficient to meet in full all interest payments due on outstanding covered bonds for a period of time specified by the issuer in its transaction documents together with all payment obligations of the guarantor entity ranking prior to such interest payments. It is retained in a bank account and, following an issuer event of default, the balance of the cash reserve forms part of available revenue receipts to be used by the guarantor to meet its obligations under the covered bond guarantee.

VI. TRANSPARENCY

The Canadian covered bond legal framework is prescriptive and comprehensive in terms of information disclosure and reporting frequency. All material information and transaction documents related to a registered issuer and covered bond programme must be accessible on an ongoing basis, mainly through a dedicated website set up by the issuer. A monthly report must be prepared within 15 business days following the end of each month and include detailed information on the covered bond programme.

As of April 2025, there are nine registered Canadian covered bond issuers, eight of which had joined ECBC Covered Bond Label and published its Harmonised Transparency Template (HTT).

VII. COVER POOL MONITOR AND BANKING SUPERVISION

In Canada, federal financial institutions are prudentially regulated by OSFI. Provincially regulated financial institutions are subject to prudential regulation by the applicable provincial entity, including, in the case of provincially regulated issuers in Quebec, the AMF.

As administrator, CMHC takes the lead role in assessing and monitoring compliance with the Canadian legal covered bond framework requirements. A registered issuer is required to deliver a certificate to CMHC signed by the issuer's executive officer attesting that the Issuer has complied with the requirements of the Canadian covered bonds legal framework on an annual basis. Notification to CMHC of material change to an issuer's registered covered bond programme or terms of covered bonds is required. Registered issuers must also provide immediate notice to the CMHC in case of: (1) a failed ACT and/or AT; (2) awareness of a rating downgrade/withdrawal/trig-

ger; (3) a breach or default under the terms of the covered bond programme; and (4) breach or default under the covered bonds legal framework.

Issuers are required to appoint an independent third-party cover pool monitor (CPM) with adequate qualifications. The responsibilities of the CPM consist of ensuring the accuracy of the records regarding the cover pool and arithmetical accuracy of the required tests particularly the Asset Coverage Test. Issuers are required to make available all information needed by the CPM. Following issuer insolvency, the CPM remains in place for the benefit of the guarantor.

VIII. SEGREGATION OF COVER ASSETS AND BANKRUPTCY REMOTENESS OF COVERED BONDS

The guarantor is structured as a bankruptcy-remote, special-purpose entity and, as such, following insolvency of the issuer, all the assets of the guarantor are segregated from those of the bankrupt estate of the issuer. Covered bond holders retain a claim against the issuer for any deficiency in the repayment of all principal, interest and other amounts owing thereunder, and such covered bond holders rank pari passu with the ordinary depositors of the issuer.

> Upon an issuer event of default, the guarantor is required to meet the covered bond obligations using the cash flows generated from the cover assets. In case of insufficient cash, the guarantor is permitted to sell the cover assets, find alternative funding or enter repos. The entire pool of cover assets is available as security for all the outstanding covered bonds issued under the programme, so there is no direct link between particular assets and a specific series of covered bonds.

> Upon a guarantor event of default, covered bonds accelerate. Preferential rights are limited to the guarantor's assets. Payments are made in accordance with the applicable order of priority.

An issuer or guarantor event of default include at a minimum (other events maybe prescribed in the documentation) the following: (1) impending or actual insolvency; (2) failure to pay principal, interest or any other amount due under the covered bond programme when due; (3) failure to comply with the remedial action following a rating trigger; and (4) failure to meet the AT by a guarantor on a calculation date. An issuer's transaction documents can provide a remedy period of up to 10 business days for a failure to pay principal, and up to 30 days for failure to pay interest or other payment under the covered bonds.

Covered bonds are specifically excluded from a bail-in conversion under the Bank Recapitalisation (Bail-in) Conversion Regulations, SOR/2018-57, under the Bank Act and CDIC Act (Bail-in Regulations), which specify the prescribed shares and liabilities that are eligible for bail-in conversion. Similarly, the AMF has excluded covered bonds from the prescribed debts eligible for conversion as part of the recapitalization of a Quebec-regulated domestic systemically important financial institution in its Regulation Respecting the Classes Of Negotiable And Transferable Unsecured Debts And The Issuance Of Such Debts And Of Shares pursuant to section 40.50 of the Quebec Deposit Institutions and Deposit Protection Act (chapter A-26).

IX. RISK-WEIGHTING & COMPLIANCE WITH EUROPEAN LEGISLATION

Canadian regulated covered bonds may be eligible to be used as liquid assets (Level 2A) under the European Union's implementation of the Basel liquidity coverage ratio requirements provided for in Regulation (EU) No 575/2013 (Capital Requirements Regulation – CRR), as supplemented by Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2015/61 (LCR Delegated Regulation), provided that they are assigned a credit assessment by an external credit assessment institution (ECAI) which is at least credit quality step 1 or have otherwise been assigned a 10% risk weight under Article 129 of the CRR and provided that they also comply with the other requirements set out in the LCR Delegated Regulation. As of 1 September 2023, those other requirements include that covered bonds issued by credit institutions in third countries comply with the transparency requirements laid down in Article 14 of Directive (EU) 2019/2162. In the case of Canadian registered covered bonds programmes, compliance with the disclosure requirements in the Canadian legal framework will result in the requirements in Article 14 of

Directive (EU) 2019/2162 being met, provided issuers voluntarily provide additional disclosure, at least quarterly, of loans where a default is considered to have occurred based on the indications in Article 178(3)(a) of Regulation (EU) No 575/2013. Canadian regulated covered bonds may be eligible for the same risk-weighting as unsecured bank debt for purposes of calculating regulatory capital ratios under Article 120 or 121 of the CRR.

If denominated in euro and admitted to trading on certain markets, Canadian covered bonds may be eligible as collateral for Eurosystem credit operations as a haircut category III asset pursuant to Guidelines 2015/510 and 2016/65 of the European Central Bank (ECB) on the implementation of the Eurosystem monetary policy framework. Valuation haircuts are generally based on credit quality, residual maturity and coupon structure of the covered bond.

Canadian covered bonds are subject to the same spread risk factors and concentration thresholds as unsecured bonds or loans pursuant to Articles 176 and 185 of Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2015/35 that supplements Directive 2009/138/EC on the taking-up and pursuit of the business of Insurance and Reinsurance (Solvency II). Canadian covered bonds are not covered by Article 52 (4) of Directive 2009/65/EC on undertakings for collective investment in transferable securities (UCITS) because Canadian issuers do not have their registered head office in an EU member state and Canadian covered bonds are not issued in accordance with the provisions of a national law implementing Directive (EU) 2019/2162 (Covered Bonds Directive – CBD). Therefore, they do not benefit from the more preferential risk weighting under Article 129 (4) and (5) of the CRR, and are not eligible for the preferential risk factors and concentration thresholds in Articles 180 (1) and 187 (1) of Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2015/35. Third country covered bonds, including Canadian covered bonds, do not benefit from the preferential risk weighting under the CBD.

X. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

X.1. Regulatory Treatment in Canada: Liquidity, capital and Bank of Canada programs

Liquidity and Capital Guidelines

For purposes of the OSFI Guidelines described below, reference to covered bonds is to covered bonds that are issued by bank or mortgage institution, are subject to a dedicated covered bond legislation, or more specifically subject by law to special public supervision designed to protect bond holders. Proceeds deriving from the issue of such covered bonds must be invested in conformity with the law in assets which, during the whole period of the validity of such covered bonds, are capable of covering claims attached to such covered bonds and which, in the event of the failure of the issuer of such covered bonds, would be used on a priority basis for the reimbursement of the principal and payment of the accrued interest.

Under OSFI's Liquidity Adequacy Requirements (LAR) Guidelines (Chapter 2 – Liquidity Coverage Ratio), covered bonds may be included as Level 2A assets for the Liquidity Coverage Ratio (LCR), pursuant to provided they satisfy the following conditions:

- Not issued by the institution itself or any of its affiliated entities;
- Either (i) have a long-term credit rating from a recognised external credit assessment institution (ECAI) of at least AA- or in the absence of a long-term rating, a short-term rating equivalent in quality to the long-term rating; or (ii) do not have a credit assessment by a recognised ECAI but are internally rated as having a probability of default (PD) corresponding to a credit rating of at least AA- (and, in the event of split ratings, the applicable rating should be determined according to the method used in Basel II's Standardised Approach for credit risk. Local rating scales (rather than international ratings) of a supervisor-approved ECAI that meet the eligibility criteria outlined in paragraph 21.2 of the Basel Consolidated Framework [CRE 21.2] can be recognised if covered bonds are held by an institution for local currency liquidity needs arising from its operations in that local jurisdiction);
- Traded in large, deep and active repo or cash markets characterised by a low level of concentration; and

> Have a proven record as a reliable source of liquidity in the markets (repo or sale) even during stressed market conditions: i.e. maximum decline of price or increase in haircut over a 30-day period during a relevant period of significant liquidity stress not exceeding 10%.

As part of the implementation of Basel III reforms, in October 2023 OSFI introduced standalone dedicated risk-weights for covered bonds as part of its Capital Adequacy Requirements (CAR) Guidelines (2024), (Chapter 4 – Credit Risk – Standardized Approach) (the CAR Guidelines). Under the CAR Guidelines, covered bonds that meet the asset and disclosure requirements specified in the CAR Guidelines and have an issue-specific rating of AAA to AA-, are eligible for a 20% risk weight. Unrated covered bonds are eligible for a risk weight inferred from the external credit risk assessment approach or standardized credit risk assessment approach risk weight provided in the CAR Guidelines. Asset eligibility and disclosure requirements under the CAR Guidelines are consistent with those in the Basel Framework except that the minimum overcollateralization is 5% instead of the 10% minimum overcollateralization requirement under the Basel Framework.

Bank of Canada Programs

Eligible covered bonds may be used as collateral under the Bank of Canada's (BoC) Standing Liquidity Facility, Standing Term Liquidity Facility and Emergency Lending Assistance, subject to concentration limits. Eligible covered bonds are Canadian and U.S. dollar denominated covered bonds that are compliant with the federal legislative framework for covered bonds, and of sufficiently high quality as determined by BoC (which is considered to be broadly equivalent to a rating of AAA). The concentration limits applicable to covered bonds for such programs include restrictions on any participant having over 5% of its pledged collateral (including covered bonds) from a single issuer or related party and on any Lynx participant having more than 5% of its pledged collateral consist of covered bonds, asset-backed commercial paper, term asset-backed securities and secured general collateral (SGC) notes originated or sponsored by a single issuer. In addition, depending on whether a participant pledges its non-mortgage loan portfolio (NMLP), aggregate limits of 20% when NMLP is pledged and 40% where NMLP is not pledged, apply for pledged collateral consisting of covered bonds and other private sector and municipal securities.

X.2. Market Overview

Canadian banks remain key participants in international covered bond markets, issuing in the CAD, EUR, USD, GBP, CHF, NOK and AUD markets upon favourable basis swaps and strong market technicals.

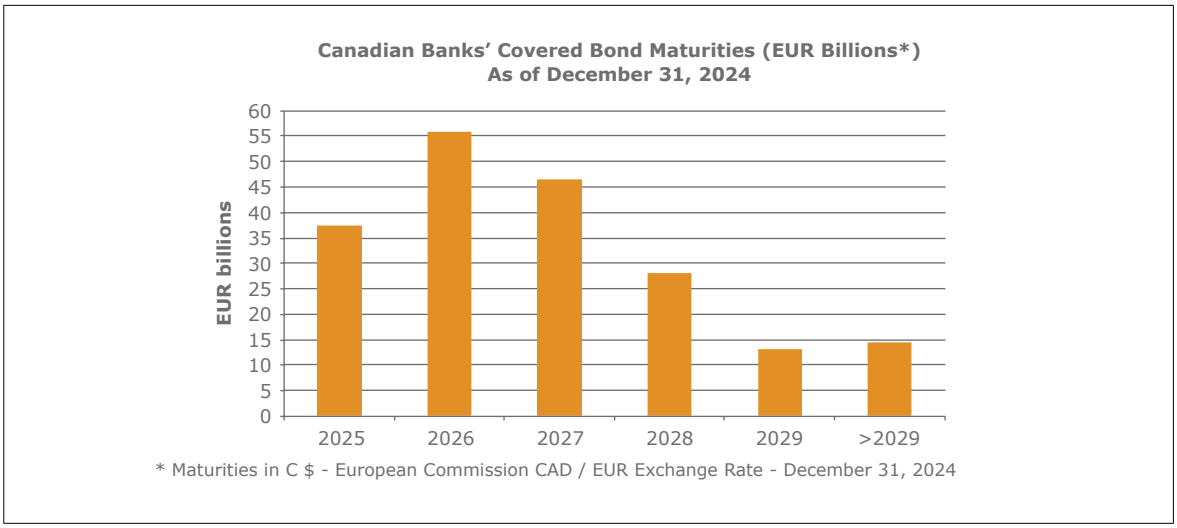
Figure 2: Canadian Banks' Covered Bond Issuance

At 31 December 2024 (C$ bn)	BMO	BNS	EQB	FCDQ	CIBC	LBC	NBC	RBC	TD	Total
OSFI 5.5% covered bond encumbrance limit	77.5	77.7	2.9	25.6	57.3	2.6	25.4	119.4	113.3	501.7
Outstanding covered bonds	25.5	53.5	1.98	14.8	38.1	0.5	10.6	70.8	76.8	292.5
OSFI Covered Bond Ratio Limit	5.5%	5.5%	5.5%	5.5%	5.5%	5.5%	5.5%	5.5%	5.5%	
**Covered Bond Ratio (%)	1.9%	4.0%	4.0%	3.3%	3.9%	1.2%	2.5%	3.5%	3.9%	
Remaining encumbrance capacity	**3.6%**	**1.5%**	**1.5%**	**2.2%**	**1.6%**	**4.3%**	**3.0%**	**2.0%**	**1.6%**	

Source: CMHC

** Covered Bond Ratio refers to total assets pledged for covered bonds relative to total on-balance sheet assets.

> Figure 3: Canadian Issuers' Covered Bond Redemptions (as of 31 December 2024, EUR bn)



Source: CMHC

Issuers: Royal Bank of Canada (RBC), Bank of Montreal (BMO), Bank of Nova Scotia (BNS), Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce (CIBC), Fédération des Caisses Desjardins du Québec(FCDQ), National Bank of Canada (NBC), Toronto Dominion Bank (TD), Laurentian Bank (LBC), Equitable Bank (EQB).

Covered Bond Label: Bank of Montreal (1 pool), Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce (1 pool), Equitable Bank (1 pool), Fédération des caisses Desjardins du Québec (1 pool), National Bank of Canada (1 pool), Royal Bank of Canada (1 pool), The Bank of Nova Scotia (1pool), The Toronto-Dominion Bank (1 pool).

For the most up-to-date information, please consult the new ECBC Covered Bond Comparative Database webpage on the Covered Bond Label website www.coveredbondlabel.com or via the following QR code:

3.8 CHILE

By Patricia Perez, Antonio Procopio and Fernanda Vasquez, Banco Santander Chile

I. FRAMEWORK

The legal framework for Chilean covered bonds (*Bonos Hipotecarios*, also mortgage bonds) is determined by:

- The General Banking Law (Ley General de Bancos, LGB): Article 69, n°2, Mortgage bond issuances; and Articles 125, 126 and 134, special treatment of banking entities under bankruptcy.
- The Chilean Central Bank: Financial Regulation Compendium (*Compendio de Normas Financieras*, CNF), Chapter II.A.2, Chilean Central Bank complementary rules.
- Financial Markets Commission (*Comisión para el Mercado Financiero*, CMF): *Recopilación Actualizada de Normas* (RAN), Chapter 9-2, Complementary rules of the Chilean banking regulatory agency.

In 2010, Law 20.448 – also called MKIII, the third reform to the Capital Markets Law – introduced a series of changes in terms of liquidity, innovation and integration of the capital markets. Among them was the amendment of Article 69, n°2 of the LGB which enabled banks to issue bonds with specific guarantees, called mortgage bonds. These securities are specifically aimed to raise funds for the origination of mortgage loans (mutuos hipotecarios) used to finance the acquisition, construction, reparation or extension of residential properties. Only residential mortgages for these purposes are accepted as collateral, excluding commercial, public or other types of loans. Additionally, only new origination of mortgages can be used as collateral, with a maximum limit of 18 months for the total amount to be completed. In case of insufficient origination, mortgage bonds also have an anticipated rescue clause for a proportional prepayment of the bond that was not collateralized. The issuer then has an additional one-month period at the end of this 18-month period and at the end of each month along the life of the bond to incorporate new mortgage loans of the same nature and quality to comply with the covered asset limit and balance principle.

Under an eventual credit event/default of an issuer, Articles 125, 126 and 134 of the LGB give mortgage bonds the same treatment and current legal status as that of outstanding Letras Hipotecarias (LH), a type of mortgage bond frequently used by Chilean banks in the past to finance their mortgage business. These articles regulate the procedures in such case and the mechanisms for the tender process and subsequent transference of eligible loans/assets and liabilities from the defaulted issuer to a new entity.

In September 2012, a new regulation was published in a joint statement by the Chilean Central Bank and the SBIF (now known as the CMF), describing mortgage bonds as a new source of long-term funding for banking entities, thus allowing better conditions for clients as well as a new investment alternative for institutional investors. At the same time, it explicitly incorporated a prudential regulation associated with financial stability objectives. In particular, it stated the obligation of periodic reporting of both bonds and loans, the definition of certain credit indicator limits, specific policies to grant loans and other transparency objectives for the benefit of both clients and investors.

In January 2019 a new Banking Law was published and included a new restriction regarding mortgage eligibility. This new law established that loans granted by the issuer twelve months prior to the issuance of the mortgage bond would be accepted as eligible collateral.

Chapter II.A.2 of the CNF from the Central Bank regulates issues related with eligible loans, as well as investments in fixed income securities as substitute collateral since the date of issuance during the period of loan origination, specifying limits for compliance during the whole life of the bond.

The CMF's RAN mainly regulates the issuance of mortgage bonds, the relationship between bonds and loans, and the establishment of a special Register for further control which includes detailed up-to-date information to comply with transparency and monthly reporting objectives.

II. STRUCTURE OF THE ISSUER

Under current legislation only banking entities are allowed to issue mortgage bonds. Covered assets are held within the balance sheet with the proper internal controls to monitor the covered pool with its related ratios and limits over time.

Banco Santander Chile issued the first ever local covered mortgage bond. The first covered bond programme was for a total amount of UF 3 million (approx. USD 116 million), and the first issuance out of the programme was on 1 August 2013 for a total amount of UF 1.5 million (approx. USD 58 million), with a second issuance on 20 November 2013. Both issuances generated a great appetite from local investors and the result was a spread of 15 bps lower than the senior unsecured debt outstanding. In 2014 Banco Santander Chile successfully registered a second covered bond programme for a total amount of UF 5 million and issued an amount of UF 1.5 million in September 2014.

As of 31 December 2023, Santander Chile is still the only active issuer of covered bonds in the Chilean market.

III. COVER ASSETS

Regulation states that issuers can consider eligible mortgages already granted twelve months prior to the bond's date of issuance to allocate to the mortgage bond. After that period, at the end of each month during the life of the mortgage bond, the outstanding balance of mortgages, excluding amounts in arrears, should not be lower than 90% of the outstanding balance of the respective bonds. Any difference between the outstanding amounts of the mortgages and the bonds must be covered by high credit quality fixed income instruments.

Figure 1: Fixed income substitute collateral: minimum 80% in sovereign bonds (Categories: I. and II.)

I.	Sovereign bonds	Fixed income instruments issued by Chilean Central Bank.
II.	Sovereign bonds	Fixed income instruments issued by Chilean Treasury.
III.	Corporate bonds	Local Corporate bonds rated AA+ or higher (by at least two rating agencies). Sublimit of up to 10% of the total of funds by each mortgage bond issuance.
IV.	Mortgage bonds	Mortgage bonds issued by other banking entities.
V.	Term deposits	Time deposits originated by high rated banks established in Chile, excluding those of the issuer of the covered bonds.
VI.	LCH	Housing LH: Letras De Crédito Hipotecario issued for housing purposes by other banking entities.
VII.	Unsecured bank bonds	Unsecured bank bonds rated AA+ or higher (by at least two rating agencies), excluding those of own issuance.

Source: Chilean Central Bank, Banco Santander Chile

IV. VALUATION AND LTV CRITERIA

Eligible loans are only accepted as collateral for the corresponding issued bond once the accredited third-party property appraiser has finished the valuation process and after it has been registered at the corresponding CBR (*Conservador de Bienes Raíces*) – the local entities that certify legal dominion of properties.

The minimum loan-to-value (LTV) defined by law is 80%. Conditions for valuation are also subject to performing or non-performing status of loans. The maximum accepted number of arrears of any single loan in the pool is 10. Above that, the loan must be replaced with a new one of the same nature. As explained before for the cover-to-bond outstanding balance ratio, all amounts in arrears are excluded.

LTV alone is not enough for eligibility of mortgage loans. In addition, a maximum debt-to-income ratio of 25% is demanded.

V. ASSET – LIABILITY MANAGEMENT

Current legislation does not prescribe overcollateralisation for the issuance of covered bonds.

Under a balance principle the nominal amount of covered assets must always be at least equal to the outstanding amount of related *Bonos Hipotecarios* and loans in arrears or prepaid should be replaced always under the restriction that only new mortgages are potentially eligible as collateral for mortgage bonds.

Banks are free to structure the covered bonds according to their own needs and criteria. Banco Santander's first programme bond was a 15-year amortising structure reflecting the expected amortisation schedule of the underlying loan portfolio adjusted by the empirical loan prepayment rate. The second registered bond programme was an 18-year amortising structure reflecting the expected amortisation schedule and the empirical prepayment rate of the new loan portfolio.

VI. TRANSPARENCY

Current regulation includes a prudential approach associated with financial stability objectives: mandatory monthly reports of assets and liabilities in the Register and compliance of required ratios; a specific Credit Policy for mortgage eligibility which must be approved by the Board of Directors and published on the issuer's webpage; and client's LTV and debt-to-income ratios reported on a monthly basis.

VII. COVER POOL MONITOR AND BANKING SUPERVISION

Article 69, n°2 of the LGB mandates banks to maintain a special mortgage register (*Registro de Mutuos Hipotecarios*) for the identification and control of the relation between mortgages and their respective mortgage bond issuances.

CMF's RAN 9.2, n°5, sets conditions for the inscription of mortgages on the Register and the required information including: identification of bond issuance and loans; dates of inscriptions; original and substitute loans; identification of fixed income assets held as substitute collateral; and elimination from the register by number of arrears or property value deterioration.

Central Bank's CNF Chapter II.A.2, n°18, within its explicit transparency and information objectives, details monthly reporting data including: up-to-date average debt-to-income ratios of clients with eligible loans for each series of mortgage bond issuances; average value of properties linked to the mortgage bonds at the date the credit was granted; LTV of the pool updated by loan replacements; loan characteristics (maturity, interest rates, fixed, floating or mixed type, currency denomination, inflation link mechanism and loan prepayment conditions); outstanding balances of loan portfolios and associated mortgage loan issuances and, finally, the total amount of fixed income assets and its general characteristics.

VIII. SEGREGATION OF COVER ASSETS AND BANKRUPTCY REMOTENESS OF COVERED BONDS

There are two main issues related with bankruptcy in the mortgage bond legislation:

1) Since only new loans are accepted as collateral, this avoids the possibility of structuring mortgage bonds with a selection of the best quality assets which could be against the interests of other creditors such as depositors in case of bankruptcy.
2) In the case of bankruptcy, a special procedure in the way of a separated auction or tender process is triggered for those assets and liabilities clearly identified and associated with mortgage bonds in the Register. Eligible bidders are other public or private financial institutions, and the final buyer must take care of mortgage bond payments. This process is thoroughly covered in the LGB, same as for Letras de Crédito Hipotecarias (LH).

IX. RISK-WEIGHTING & COMPLIANCE WITH EUROPEAN LEGISLATION

Chile is not a member of the European Union. Therefore, Chilean mortgage bonds are issued under the existence of a specific country legislation – which is a requirement for these matters – no special treatment or benefit is granted in terms of preferred risk-weighting for regulatory capital purposes.

X. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

In a clear intent to provide these bonds with more liquidity, the Chilean Central Bank announced on 28 March 2013 a special Repo programme ("Repo mortgage bonds") which accepts exclusively mortgage bonds as collateral. The Repo mortgage bonds is offered for up to 14 days at a floating rate equivalent to the current monetary policy rate (MPR) of each day plus 25 basis points. Eligible mortgage bonds will be subject to the credit rating of the mortgage bond issuer banking entity which must be in AAA, AA or A.

On top of this, in July 2015 the SBIF (now CMF) announced a change in the regulation for Liquidity Management. This amendment introduces the compulsory measurement and reporting of the Liquidity Coverage Ratio (LCR) and the Net Stable Funding Ratio (NSFR). This local LCR ratio recognises mortgage bonds as high-quality liquid assets, which could promote the appetite of financial institutions for this asset class.

In an additional attempt to promote the issuance of this type of instruments, the CMF announced on 31 January 2017 an amendment on Chapter 9-2, n°5.1 of the RAN, allowing mortgage loans issued before the bond's date of issuance to be eligible for the covered pool as long as they were granted after the beginning of the interest accrual period stated in the amortisation schedule of such bond and after the registration certificate of such bond is published by the issuer on its website. The main objective of this amendment is to make the covered pool easier to build in the 18-month time limit after the date of issuance of the mortgage bond.

Additionally, on 12 January 2019 a new Banking Law was published to start the process of transitioning into Basel III. In 2020, a new regulation about capital requirements entered in vigor affecting the mortgage bonds, among various other topics. In the calculation of the risk weighted assets there was a decrease in the weighting of mortgages to 10% from 20% for AAA issuers. At the same time, this weighting is lower for mortgage bonds than a senior corporate bond.

Despite these incentives, there have not been mortgage bond issuances in the Chilean market other than the ones issued by Santander Chile. This lack of activity can be explained by the fact that the more relevant Chilean issuers already have the maximum credit risk rating (AAA), and therefore the double recourse guarantee provided by the mortgage bonds is currently not as valuable for the potential investors, specifically for banks.

For the most up-to-date information, please consult the new ECBC Covered Bond Comparative Database webpage on the Covered Bond Label website www.coveredbondlabel.com or via the following QR code:

3.9 CROATIA

By Edin Karakaš and Sven Plašćar, Žurić i partneri Kinstellar

I. FRAMEWORK

On 14 May 2022, the new Croatian covered bond law came into force – Issuance of Covered Bonds and Public Supervision of Covered Bonds Act (Zakon o izdavanju pokrivenih obveznica i javnom nadzoru pokrivenih obveznica – Official Gazette 53/2022, the "Covered Bonds Act"). The Covered Bonds Act is a first piece of legislation that regulates issuance of covered bonds in Croatia. In addition, generally applicable legislation should be taken into account regarding certain aspects of covered bonds – such as Capital Markets Act, Credit Institutions Act, Resolution of Credit Institutions and Investment Companies Act or Compulsory Liquidation of Credit Institutions Act.

In Q3 2025, the Croatian Government is expected to consider the first amendment to the Covered Bonds Act. The proposed legislative changes are aimed at transposing Directive (EU) 2023/2864 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 December 2023, which introduces targeted amendments to several directives, including Directive (EU) 2019/2162 on the issuance of covered bonds and public supervision of covered bonds.

As Directive 2019/2162 has already been implemented in Croatian law through the existing Covered Bonds Act, the forthcoming amendments will primarily align the national framework with the updated EU provisions. These changes are being made in the context of the establishment of the European Single Access Point (ESAP), which, although broader in scope, directly affects certain regulatory elements of the covered bonds regime.

Croatian Agency for Supervision of Financial Services ("HANFA") is supervisory authority charged with supervision of Credit Institutions Act. Apart from HANFA; Croatian National Bank ("CNB") as banking supervisor has certain duties under the Covered Bonds Act. The act envisages their cooperation in discharging their duties and competences set out by Covered Bonds Act.

HANFA is yet to adopt subordinate legislation under the Covered Bonds Act, while CNB adopted Ordinance on obligations of credit institutions when issuing covered bonds (OG 81/2023 – CNB Ordinance).

The Covered Bonds Act represents a modern and suitable general legal framework for the issuance of covered bonds in Croatia implementing the European Covered Bonds Directive. However, there have been no covered bond issuances on the Croatian market yet. In order to enable issuance of covered bonds, the Covered Bonds Act requires adoption of its implementing subordinate legislation. Hence, issuance of covered bonds can be reasonably expected once such subordinate legislation is adopted, strengthening, and completing the regulatory and supervisory framework for the issuance and supervision of covered bonds.

II. STRUCTURE OF THE ISSUER

Covered bonds under the Covered Bonds Act can be issued by credit institutions with seat in the Republic of Croatia. A credit institution which intends to issue covered bonds must:

- Obtain from CNB a preliminary opinion on business plan that governs issuance of covered bonds and, upon obtaining such opinion;
- Obtain from HANFA approval for issuance of covered bonds program.

In order to obtain a special license for the issuance of covered bonds, issuing credit institution must prove that:

- the covered bond issuance program contains an appropriate business plan that governs the issuance of covered bonds, including a risk analysis, from which it is clearly visible that the issuance of covered bonds will not jeopardize the long-term viability of the credit institution's operations or its ability to meet regulatory requirements;

- the covered bond issuance program contains appropriate policies, procedures and methodologies related to the issuance of approvals, the procedure for changing conditions, extending the repayment period and refinancing loans included in the cover pool, and serves to protect investors;
- the management and staff in charge of the covered bond program must have appropriate qualifications and knowledge about the issuance of covered bonds and the management of the covered bond program, and a sufficient number of employees with the professional qualifications necessary to conduct business with covered bonds;
- the chosen cover pool monitor meets the conditions prescribed by the Covered Bonds Act;
- the covered bonds issuance program fulfills the requirements prescribed by Covered Bonds Act regarding the structure of the cover pool;
- has an established risk management system for risks arising out of covered bonds.

III. COVER ASSETS

Cover pool can consist of assets that are eligible pursuant to Article 129(1) of Regulation (EU) No 575/2013, provided that the credit institution issuing the covered bonds meets the requirements of paragraphs 1a to 3 of Article 129 of that Regulation. Money and monetary income from these cover pool assets is also included in the cover pool.

Liquid assets can be included in the cover pool as liquidity buffer. Liquidity buffer must cover net liquidity outflow of the covered bonds program over the next 6 months. The liquid assets covering the liquidity buffer must comprise of the following:

- assets qualifying as level 1, level 2A or level 2B assets pursuant to the applicable delegated regulation adopted pursuant to Article 460 of Regulation (EU) No 575/2013, that are valued in accordance with that delegated regulation, and are not issued by the credit institution issuing the covered bonds itself, its parent undertaking, other than a public sector entity that is not a credit institution, its subsidiary or another subsidiary of its parent undertaking or by a securitisation special purpose entity with which the credit institution has close links;
- short-term exposures to credit institutions that qualify for credit quality step 1 or 2, or short-term deposits to credit institutions that qualify for credit quality step 1, 2 or 3, in accordance with point (c) of Article 129(1) of Regulation (EU) No 575/2013.

Derivatives, subject to the conditions set out by the Covered Bonds Act, including that they are included for risk hedging purposes, their volume is adjusted in the case of a reduction in the hedged risk and they are removed when the hedged risk ceases to exist. Other eligibility criteria for derivatives are aligned with Article 11 of the Covered Bonds Directive.

IV. VALUATION AND LTV CRITERIA

All obligations arising from covered bonds issued under the same program must be covered by claims arising from assets included in the cover pool, which includes:

1. outstanding principal amount arising from covered bonds

2. outstanding interest amounts arising from covered bonds

3. payment obligations related to derivative contracts that meet the requirements of Article 10 of this Act

4. expected costs related to the maintenance and management of the covered bond program in the event of liquidation, which include the foreseeable costs of the cover pool monitor and the special administrator until the longest possible duration of the covered bond program – which could be set as a lump sum.

The total nominal amount of the principal of all assets included in the cover pool must be at least 5% higher than the total nominal amount of the principal of outstanding obligations arising from the covered bonds (nominal amount principle).

When evaluating physical collateral, the issuer must abide by the following rules:

a) for each physical collateral asset, that a current valuation at or at less than market value or mortgage lending value exists at the moment of inclusion of the cover asset in the cover pool;

b) that the valuation is carried out by a valuer who possesses the necessary qualifications, ability and experience; and

c) that the valuer is independent from the credit decision process, does not take into account speculative elements in the assessment of the value of the physical collateral asset, and documents the value of the physical collateral asset in a transparent and clear manner.

Real estate valuation, in principle, must be done in accordance with the real estate valuation legislation.

V. ASSET – LIABILITY MANAGEMENT

Article 23 of the Covered Bonds Act states that the issuer must have an appropriate risk management system for dealing with covered bonds.

The risk management system must be established to ensure the identification, assessment, control and monitoring of all risks associated with operations with covered bonds, particularly counterparty risk, interest rate risk, currency risk, market risk, operational risk and liquidity risk.

Furthermore, the issuer must ensure the protection of investors in such a way that the cover pool at all times includes a protective layer of liquidity consisting of liquid assets available to cover net liquidity outflows within the covered bond program.

The liquidity buffer of the cover pool must at all times cover the largest cumulative net liquidity outflow for the next six months. It is important to note that in the event of an extension of the maturity date of the covered bonds, to calculate the principal for the liquidity outflow, the final maturity date is taken into account.

Covered bonds may be issued with a fixed maturity date or as covered bonds with extendable maturity date. The extension of the maturity date of covered bonds is only possible if bonds are issued as bonds with an "extension of the maturity date". The Cover Bond Act specifically provides that the triggers for extension may be either the initiation of the mandatory winding up procedure or the rehabilitation procedure over the issuer.

The maturity of extendable covered bonds may be extended only in if the following conditions are met:

a) such an extension of the maturity date is provided for in the contractual conditions of the covered bond;

b) HANFA, the CNB, and the Croatian Deposit Insurance Agency was informed about the extension and the reasons behind it;

c) the information on the structure regarding maturity dates provided to investors is sufficient to enable them to determine the risk of the covered bond and contains a detailed description of the events triggering the extension of the maturity date and the consequences of mandatory winding up or rehabilitation of the issuer on the extension of the maturity date, as well as the role of the special manager with regard to the extension of the maturity date;

d) the final maturity date of the covered bond is determinable at all times;

e) in case of insolvency, mandatory winding up or rehabilitation of the issuer, the extension of the maturity date does not affect the order of payment of investors in covered bonds, nor does it reverse the order of the original schedule of the maturity program of covered bonds;

The Covered Bonds Act does not include explicit guidelines concerning the decision-making process for determining whether the conditions for extending the maturity period have been met, hence it is up to the program of the covered bonds issuance and terms of the issue to adopt relevant mechanisms to reviewed by regulators on approval of the program.

VI. TRANSPARENCY

According to Article 13(8) of the Covered Bonds Act, issuers are obliged to provide on their websites detailed information every three months to investors. The information about the covered bond program must be sufficiently detailed to enable investors to assess the profile and risks of that program and conduct due diligence on the program.

The covered bond program is very extensive in this regard and should include various details about the value of the cover pool and outstanding obligations from covered bonds, the list of international securities identification numbers (ISINs) for all issued covered bonds in the program, and geographic distribution and asset types for coverage, along with credit, market, and liquidity risks, among other aspects. Additionally, it covers the structure of assets and covered bonds regarding maturity dates, required and available coverage levels, and the percentage of loans in default for over three months, as well as the bondholders' assembly details.

Moreover, issuers must regularly provide to HANFA and the Croatian National Bank information about covered bonds program, including details on asset eligibility, allocation, coverage requirements, liquidity protection, and any conditions for maturity extensions. Issuers are under obligation to provide reports and information essential for investors' protection and supervision over the issuer when requested by HANFA.

The cover pool monitor is charged with a duty to continuously monitor whether the issuer and the cover pool meet the conditions prescribed by the Covered Bonds Act, as well as the contractual conditions of the covered bonds regarding the sufficiency of information for investors.

VII. COVER POOL MONITOR AND BANKING SUPERVISION

Cover pool register

Each issuing credit institution must keep a cover pool register (Article 12 (2) of the Covered Bond Act) for each cover bond program issued, in which all the cover assets are registered. Assets in the cover pool register are legally separated from the issuer's assets, protected from claims, and excluded from liquidation until investors' claims are settled.

The issuer compiles the cover pool register and registers all the assets that are included in the cover pool before issuing the covered bonds. The cover pool register must contain information on the assets so that they can be identified at any time, as well as their value and the collateral by which they are secured.

Before requesting approval for the covered bond program, the issuer must appoint a cover pool monitor, who confirms in writing that there is a sufficient cover pool when issuing the covered bonds and that it is entered in the cover pool register.

Cover pool monitor

A cover pool monitor ensures that the cover pool register is maintained in accordance with the provisions of the Covered Bond Act and its subordinate legislation. Only a person who is a certified auditor and has been registered with the register of the Croatian Audit Chamber, can be appointed as a cover pool monitor. Moreover, the cover pool monitor cannot be issuer or the issuer's auditor but a separate person, as well as independent of the issuer and its auditor. The cover pool monitor must have relevant experience in auditing credit institutions, financial institutions, capital market infrastructures, investment fund management companies, pension companies or pension insurance companies, or have relevant experience in performing comparable tasks in financial sector entities. (Article 13 of the Covered Bonds Act).

The duties and obligations of a cover pool monitor are, among others, as follows:

- to monitor the compliance of the issuer and the cover pool with the prescribed conditions of the covered bond legislation, until the covered bonds are repaid in full in order to ensure that the issuer maintains the value of the cover pool;
- to ensure and verify coverage and liquidity calculations;
- to confirm the accuracy of the asset valuation in the cover pool;
- to perform random audits of assets in the cover pool;
- to approve the Issuer's disposal of assets included in the cover pool;
- to submit a report to the Croatian National Bank and the HANFA every six months confirming that the cover pool complies with legal and regulatory requirements.

The issuer may not dispose of assets included in the cover pool without the approval of the cover pool monitor. The cover pool monitor must also approve the deletion, replacement and addition of assets to the cover pool register.

Supervision

HANFA is the competent authority and is responsible for supervising the issuer with regard to the issuance, management and repayment of the covered bonds. HANFA and CNB cooperate when discharging their duties under the Covered Bonds Act.

While HANFA approves the covered bond program, the issuer must first obtain a positive preliminary opinion from the CNB on the business plan for the issuance of the covered bonds. The CNB ordinance prescribes:

- required content of the request for the issuance of a preliminary opinion
- criteria for evaluation of the issuer's business plan
- criteria for assessing whether change to the issuer's business plan is significant.

VIII. SEGREGATION OF COVER ASSETS AND BANKRUPTCY REMOTENESS OF COVERED BONDS

Segregation of cover assets

The Covered Bonds Act introduces important layers of investor protection, that are essential to ensure investor interest in the investment program. Even in the event of economic difficulties and the opening of insolvency proceedings against the credit institution in whose covered bonds they have invested, the repayment should be considered reasonably secure, which is rarely the case with most of the traditional instruments. The investors are protected by so called double recourse mechanism: they have a preferred claim over the assets in the cover pool, while maintaining the general creditor status.

The assets in the cover pool are typically high-quality assets in themselves as they must meet the quality requirements of Article 129 (1) of the Regulation 575/2013/EU. The Covered Bonds Act sets out rules for the establishment of a pool of these assets that are legally separate from the issuers' other assets and are specifically intended to secure repayment to investors.

By registering assets in the cover pool register, the cover assets are legally segregated from all other assets of the issuer, and by this separation, the cover assets are protected from all claims except those of the investors that arise from covered bonds. These assets cannot be subject to enforcement, nor are they considered to be part of the issuer's liquidation assets, at least not until all the investors' receivables under the covered bonds program have been settled.

The assets constituting the cover pool may not be used for any purpose other than to meet obligations to investors in covered bonds, other counterparties to derivative contracts and obligations arising out of the cover pool itself until all claims under the covered bonds have been fully satisfied.

As mentioned, the investors in covered bonds are general creditors of the issuer: they have a claim against the issuer in the amount of the principal amount of the issued covered bond and the associated interest, in addition to preferential rights to repayment of the principal and all accrued and future interest from the cover assets in the event of rehabilitation or mandatory winding up.

Bankruptcy remoteness of covered bonds

According to Article 6 of the Covered Bonds Act, payment obligations in respect of covered bonds are not subject to automatic acceleration in the event of the insolvency, mandatory winding up or rehabilitation of the issuer, nor can they be subject to automatic acceleration by way of a declaration of will by investors in covered bonds solely by reason of insolvency, opening of the mandatory winding up or rehabilitation of the issuer.

This is due to bankruptcy remoteness of the cover pool, which should be able to continue making payments to the investors regardless of the issuer's status. The claims of investors from covered bonds and other counterparties to derivative contracts are paid out of the cover pool in accordance with the Covered Bonds Act, and the cover pool isn't part of the liquidation mass of the issuer.

In the event of a mandatory winding up of the issuer, HANFA will propose to the court one or more special cover pool administrators. Upon the appointment of a special administrator, the special administrator assumes the duties and powers of the cover pool monitor, which consequently terminates the function of the cover pool monitor. The special administrator collects due claims from the cover pool and pays covered bonds holders due claims in accordance with the terms of their issue, as well as performs all legal acts necessary to collect money from the assets in the cover pool or to sell or refinance them if that is in the best interest of the covered bonds holders.

The special administrator ensures that all assets included in the cover pool are separated from the issuer's other assets, and for this purpose, he is authorized to open special accounts and undertake all legal actions necessary for the complete segregation of the cover pool assets from the liquidation mass.

On the other hand, the liquidator has no authority over the cover pool or the covered bonds and is not authorized to dispose of them in any way. It is expected of the liquidator and the special administrator to exchange the information necessary for the performance of their duties.

It should also be noted that the subordinate legislation is yet to be adopted, which will further regulate the rights and duties of the special administrator during the liquidation process, as well as the regular reports of the special manager.

IX. RISK-WEIGHTING & COMPLIANCE WITH EUROPEAN LEGISLATION

The new Cover the European Covered Bond Directive into national law and is in force since 14 May 2022. The risk-weighting of is regulated directly by Capital Requirements Regulation (CRR). The label "European covered bond" can only be used for covered bonds that meet the requirements of the Covered Bond Act. The label "European covered bond (premium)" is used only for covered bonds that meet the requirements of the Covered Bond Act and the requirements of Article 129 of Regulation 575/2013/EU, as amended.

For the most up-to-date information, please consult the new ECBC Covered Bond Comparative Database webpage on the Covered Bond Label website www.coveredbondlabel.com or via the following QR code:

3.10 CYPRUS

By Christina Kypri-Georgiadou, Bank of Cyprus

I. FRAMEWORK

Cyprus first introduced the covered bond legislation in December 2010, with the Covered Bond Law of 2010, (130 (I)/2010), which came into force on December 23, 2010 (the "Law"). On the same day, the CBC issued a Directive (526/2010) under the provisions of the Law, which constitutes the regulatory framework for the issue of covered bonds (the "Directive").

The Law and the Directive (the "Cypriot Legal Framework") are further supplemented by other laws (e.g. the Bankruptcy Law, the Banking Business Law, the Companies Law etc.) as referenced by the Law.

The Cypriot Legal Framework has been finalized in consultation with and following the positive opinion of the ECB, dated 14 October 2010 and 23 March 2011 related links are:
http://www.ecb.int/ecb/legal/pdf/
en_con_2011_27_f_sign.pdf and
http://www.ecb.int/ecb/legal/pdf/
en_con_2010_73__f_sign.pdf).

In November 2019, EU Directive 2019/2162 on the issue of covered bonds and covered bond public supervision and amending Directives 2009/65/EC and 2014/59/EU was published.

For the purposes of harmonisation with the EU Directive, the Law on the Issue of Covered Bonds and Covered Bond Public Supervision and Related Matters of 2021 (166(I)/2021) and the CBC Directive on the Issue and Supervision of Covered Bonds of 2021 (RAA 456/2021) were issued. The Law and the Directive apply from July 8, 2022, at which time the 2010 Law and Directive was repealed.

II. STRUCTURE OF THE ISSUER

Under the Cypriot Legal Framework, Credit Institutions which have been approved by the Competent Authority (i.e. the CBC), are only allowed to issue covered bonds using the direct issuance route.

Approved Institutions are those Cypriot Credit Institutions which have been registered in the Register of Approved Institutions, (publicly available at the following link:
https://www.centralbank.cy/en/licensing-supervision/banks/register-of-credit-institutions-operating-in-cyprus) following a relevant application to the Competent Authority.

Approval of such application is granted only after the Credit Institution has successfully demonstrated its ability to carry out the legal obligations of an Approved Institution, and that it fulfils the criteria and conditions determined by the Competent Authority.

With respect to individual covered bond issuance, Approved Institutions must subsequently apply to the Competent Authority for registration of such new issue in the Covered Bonds Register (publicly available at the following link: http://www.centralbank.gov.cy/nqcontent.cfm?a_id=11439&tt=article&lang=en).

III. COVER ASSETS

As per the provisions of the new legislation that came into force July 8, 2022, the covered bonds must be at all times secured by:

(a) assets that are eligible pursuant to Article 129, paragraph 1, of Regulation (EU) No 575/2013, provided that the credit institution issuing the covered bonds meets the requirements of paragraphs 1a to 3 of Article 129 of that Regulation;

(b) high-quality cover assets that ensure that the credit institution issuing the covered bonds has a claim for payment and are secured by collateral assets, subject to certain conditions as described in the legislation; or

(c) assets in the form of loans to or guaranteed by public undertakings, subject to certain conditions as described in the legislation.

Primary assets may include:

- Public claims;
- residential loans;
- commercial loans;
- maritime loans; or
- other asset that the competent authority may determine as primary asset.

Hedging contracts may also be included in the cover pool, only to the extent that they are used exclusively for the purpose of hedging any type of risk that may adversely affect the value of the cover assets.

Finally, apart for the Primary Assets, Substitution Assets may also be included in the cover pool, as prescribed in the legislation with certain limitations such as the total value of substitution assets included in the cover pool and counted in the measurement of the Basic Collateralisation, not to exceed 15% of the total value of covered bonds.

IV. VALUATION AND LTV CRITERIA

The Approved ACI follows the methodology and procedures for valuing the value of the tangible assets securing the cover assets as set out in the Central Bank's Directive issued to Credit Institutions on Credit Granting and Review Processes.

Additionally, and pursuant to the legislation, the Covered Bond Monitor ("CBM") has a duty to examine the valuation process in relation to the valuation of the cover assets.

V. ASSETS – LIABILITY MANAGEMENT

Nominal Value and Present Value Tests

As per the provisions of the new legislation that came into force July 8, 2022, a credit institution shall include in the cover pool primary assets, substitution assets and derivatives contracts of which:

(a) the total value covers the value of the outstanding amount of the covered bonds by 105%; and

(b) the total present value covers the total present value of the payments to cover pool investors and other cover pool creditors by 105%.

The value of a cover asset counted for the purposes of point (a) is equal to:

a) for a cover asset that is a residential, commercial or maritime loan secured by a mortgage or other equivalent collateral, in accordance with the Central Bank's Directive issued to Credit Institutions on Credit Granting and Review Processes, and

(i) in case where it is not subject to set-off, the lower of (a) the loan balance corresponding to the LTV determined by Article 129 of Regulation (EU) No 575/2013; and (b) the loan balance

(ii) in case where it is subject to set-off, the lower of (a) the loan balance corresponding to the LTV determined by Article 129 of Regulation (EU) No 575/2013; and (b) the net loan balance, where the net loan balance equals to the balance net of the set-off amount.

b) for a cover asset that is a claim against a public or credit institution or other entity referred to in Article 129(1)(b) of Regulation (EU) No 575/2013:

(i) in case where it is not subject to set-off, the value of the public claim;

(ii) in case where it is subject to set-off, the value of the public claim net of the set-off amount.

The effect of any hedging contract included in the cover pool is taken into account.

The present value of a cover asset counted for the purposes of point (b) is estimated:

(i) in case where the cover asset is not subject to set-off, on basis of the nominal value;

(ii) in case where the cover asset is subject to set-off, on the basis of the nominal value net of the set-off amount.

The above 105% condition must also be met in the following scenarios:

(a) Parallel interest rate shift of +200 and -200 basis points;

(b) Interest rate shifts determined by a 99% 6-month confidence interval using daily changes for the last 365 days;

(c) Exchange rate changes:

> Euro and member-state currencies: 10%;

> Currencies of the United States, Canada, Japan, Switzerland, Australia: 15%; and

> Other currencies: 25%.

(d) Exchange rate shifts determined by a 99% 6-month confidence interval using daily changes for the last 365 days.

Weighted Average Life Test

The weighted average life of cover assets counted in the measurement of basic collateralisation and the supervisory overcollateralization must be longer than the weighted average life of the covered bonds.

Liquidity Buffer

The cover pool includes at all times a liquidity buffer composed of liquid assets available to cover the net liquidity outflow of the covered bond programme. The cover pool liquidity reserve shall cover the maximum cumulative net liquidity outflow over the next 180 days. The types of assets that can be used to cover the cover pool liquidity reserve are described in detail in the legislation.

Additionally to the above statutory tests, and with a view to protect the depositors and all other unsecured creditors in case of insolvency proceedings, and to potentially provide for a reserve of assets that may be used in the future to sustain further stresses, the Directive provides that an Approved Institution is not permitted to issue covered bonds, if such an issue would result in:

> the total value of the primary assets which are required to be included in the institution's cover pools for each cover bond category, to exceed 90% of total value of the institution's eligible primary assets for that cover bond category, or

> the total value of the cover assets included in all cover pools and counted in the cover pool adequacy, to exceed 25% of the total value of the institution's assets.

VI. TRANSPARENCY

Transparency is ensured through a series of reporting and registers that need to be maintained, updated and monitored by the covered bond issuers as well as by the Competent Authority.

Covered bond Issuers are required to maintain a cover pool register for each covered bond issue or programme outstanding. Specific conditions for maintaining such Cover Pool Register (e.g. form, content, entry recording etc.) are outlined in the Directive. The Cover Pool Register is to be updated whenever an asset is included or excluded from the cover pool (and at least on a monthly basis) and shared with the Competent Authority and the CBM.

Specifically, the Directive set further transparency obligations to the covered bond issuers, requiring them to disclose, on a quarterly basis and in a publicly accessible area (e.g. their websites), specific statistical information relating to their outstanding covered bonds, in the form determined therein.

With respect to the covered bond issuers and the covered bonds issued and outstanding in Cyprus, transparency is ensured through the maintenance of a Register of Approved Institutions as a well as a Covered Bonds Register by the Competent Authority. Both registers are kept in an electronic form and are publicly accessible in the website of the Competent Authority.

VII. COVER POOL MONITOR AND BANKING SUPERVISION

The Cypriot Legal Framework is structured in a manner which ensures very vigilant regulatory supervision of covered bond issuers. In accordance with the Law, each institution applying for registration in the Register of Approved Institutions, is required to appoint a qualified entity (e.g. an audit fi not associated with the covered bond issuer) as a Covered Bond Monitor (the "CBM"), such appointment being subject to the approval of the Competent Authority. The CBM must possess the necessary knowledge, experience and ability for the effective discharge of its functions and have the necessary qualifications outlined in the Directive. To the extent that, for any reason, the covered bond issuer has not managed to appoint a CBM, the Competent Authority is entitled to appoint one.

The duties of the CBM include a broad range of responsibilities, ranging from verifying to the Competent Authority, ahead of the application for the registration of bonds in the Covered Bonds Register, that the institution fulfils the conditions for registration as an approved institution, to submitting information and regular reports to the Competent Authority.

VIII. SEGREGATION OF COVER ASSETS AND BANKRUPTCY REMOTENESS OF COVERED BONDS

Investors in cover bonds and counterparties of derivative contracts are entitled to the following claims:

(a) a claim against the credit institution issuing the covered bonds;

(b) in the case of the insolvency or resolution of the credit institution issuing the covered bonds, a priority claim against the principal and any accrued and future interest on cover assets;

(c) in the case of the insolvency of the credit institution issuing the covered bonds and in the event that the priority claim as referred to in subparagraph (b) cannot be fully satisfied, a claim against the insolvency estate of that credit institution, which ranks pari passu with the claims of the credit institution's ordinary unsecured creditors determined in accordance with The Companies Law and The Business of Credit Institutions Law.

The claims referred to above shall be limited to the full payment obligations attached to the covered bonds.

The payment obligations attached to covered bonds are not subject to automatic acceleration upon the insolvency or resolution of the ACI issuing the covered bonds.

The fact that an ACI with covered bond obligations is subject to dissolution proceedings does not affect

(a) the claims and rights of covered bond investors, and other cover pool creditors;

(b) the claims and rights that a counterparty has under any derivative contract entered into by the credit institution as long as these contracts are included in the cover pool.

The obligations of a credit institution with covered bond obligations towards covered bond investors, and other cover pool creditors, continue to be in effect and are enforceable irrespective of the fact that the credit institution is subject to a dissolution proceedings.

Where an ACI with covered bond obligations is subject to dissolution proceedings, the powers of the Central Bank, as a competent authority to appoint a special administrator and cover pool and covered bond monitor continue to be in force until the claims of all covered bond investors and other cover pool creditors are satisfied.

Until all legal claims of covered bond investors, and other cover pool creditors have been fully satisfied, the cover assets shall not be part of the assets available to meet the claims of all other creditors, members and contributories of the credit institution with covered bond obligations that are subject to dissolution.

The cover assets are not liable to attachment, sequestration or other form of seizure by any person other than the special administrator, as long as the legal claims of covered bond investors and other cover pool creditors remain unsatisfied.

In case where the cover assets or cover pool are sold or otherwise disposed of, the cover pool creditors, covered bond investors, and other cover pool creditors may, satisfy their claims and rights, in accordance with the terms of the issue, contract, or appointment, from the proceeds of the sale or other form of disposal in priority of all other creditors, members, and contributories of the credit institution with covered bond obliga tions subject to dissolution proceedings.

Provided that, this section applies irrespective of whether the claims of creditors other than covered bond investors, and cover pool creditors are preferred under any other law and irrespective of whether those claims are secured or unsecured.

In case where the claims of covered bond investors and other cover pool creditors are not satisfied in full from the proceeds of the sale or other form of disposal of the cover pool, those creditors are, with respect to the unsatisfied part of their claims, unsecured creditors, pari passu with the other unsecured creditors of the credit institution with covered bond obligations subject to dissolution proceedings.

Notwithstanding the provisions of any other law in force in the Republic, where the collateral assets held by credit institution with covered bond obligations or by a special administrator in connection with a cover asset counted in the cover pool adequacy criteria, as provided for in the legislation, is also held by a credit institution in connection with an asset not included in the cover pool, any amount resulting from the security, guarantee, indemnity or insurance, as the case may be, shall be applied in priority to discharge the cover asset.

In addition, where a covered bond Issuer is subject to dissolution proceedings, a Covered Bond Business Administrator (the "CBBA") is appointed by the Competent Authority (as per Article 59(1) of the Law), who takes all necessary measures to assume the control and the management of the cover pool and carries out the covered bond business. Any Cover assets not counted for the purposes of fulfilling the Statutory Tests shall be removed from the cover pool and the Cover Pool Register only by the CBBA.

The treatment of the cover pool following the commencement of dissolution proceedings is summarized below:

- Upon the initiation of dissolution proceedings, the CBBA assumes control of the cover pool (*according to the provisions of Article 40 of the Law*) and also of any liquid assets maintained outside the Register for the purposes of meeting the Prematurity Test, and is responsible to review the adequacy of the cover pool in accordance with Article 19 and Article 23 of the Directive;
- Cover pool adequacy assessment is being performed by the CBBA as per Article 18(6) of the Law, using solely those cover assets which are counted for the purposes of such assessment;
- To the extent that the above assessment has been successfully met, any assets which are not required to meet such assessment, including relevant requirements under a contractual OC, are being released

and become available to satisfy the claims of all other creditors, members and investors of the credit institution;

> To the extent that the above assessment has not been successfully met, the CBBA (*according to the provisions of Article 29(2) of the Directive*) is entitled to use any assets included in the cover pool register that do not meet the criteria, terms and conditions for counting a cover asset in the cover pool adequacy. (*To the extent that such assessment is not met, the CBBA has the right to accelerate or transfer the CB business to another approved institution, in accordance with Article 62 (1) of the Law*).

With respect to an automatic acceleration of the covered bonds, this is something that is not provided for by the Law, where a covered bond Issuer is subject to dissolution proceedings.

In accordance with Article 40(1) of the Law, all outstanding covered bonds will remain in force (subject to the terms and conditions under which they were issued), and the obligations of the covered bond Issuer under the covered bonds continue to be enforceable.

IX. RISK WEIGHTING & COMPLIANCE WITH EUROPEAN LEGISLATION

The legislation when taken together with the practices, processes and procedures across the industry should fall within the criteria of Article 129 CRR. Cypriot covered bonds meet the criteria of UCITS 52(4)[1]. Covered bonds issued under the Cypriot Legal Framework form acceptable collateral for refinancing purposes with the ECB, following the typical ECB eligibility assessment and their inclusion on the ECB Eligible Assets Database (EADB).

X. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Set-off

Covered bond issuers are required to maintain, throughout the life of the covered bonds, a set-off reserve in connection with cover assets that are subject to set-off.

The Directive provides for the maintenance of such a set-off reserve, in the form of additional assets which are included in the cover pool

The set-off reserve is quantified by the Issuer and such calculation is subject to the monitoring of the CBM. The set-off reserve is segregated from the Issuer's other assets, forming part of the cover pool where Cover Pool Creditors have a priority claim over amounts in such reserve.

Extendable maturity structures

The Central Bank, as a competent authority, may allow for the issue of covered bonds with extendable maturity structures where investor protection is ensured by at least the following:

(a) the maturity can only be extended subject to objective triggers specified by the Central Bank, as a competent authority, with its Directive, and not at the discretion of the credit institution issuing the covered bonds;

(b) the maturity extension triggers are specified in the contractual terms and conditions of the covered bond;

(c) the information provided to covered bond investors about the maturity structure is sufficient to enable them to determine the risk of the covered bond, and includes a detailed description of (i) the maturity extension triggers; (ii) the consequences for a maturity extension of the insolvency or resolution of the ACI issuing the covered bonds; (iii) the role of the Central Bank, as a competent authority, and, where relevant, of the special administrator with regard to the maturity extension;

(d) the final maturity date of the covered bond is at all times determinable;

1 Please click on the following link for further information on the UCITS Directive and the Capital Requirements Regulation (CRR): https://hypo.org/ecbc/covered-bonds/.

(e) in the event of the insolvency or resolution of the credit institution issuing the covered bonds, maturity extensions do not affect the ranking of covered bond investors or invert the sequencing of the covered bond programme's original maturity schedule;

(f) the maturity extension does not change the structural features of the covered bonds regarding dual recourse, and protection against insolvency.

In September 2015, the only Cypriot covered bond outstanding, issued by Bank of Cyprus Public Company Ltd, was converted to a conditional pass-through note further to the amendment of the programme documents. The amended structure mitigates the risk of refinancing by introducing features such as maturity extension and a pass-through mechanism.

As such, upon the occurrence of a failure by the issuer to pay the final redemption amount on the final maturity date, the cover bond will convert into pass-through and the maturity of the bond will be extended. Once the covered bond converts into pass-through, an appointed portfolio manager may try to sell portfolio loans and any such proceeds from the sale of cover assets would be used for the repayment of the covered bond.

For the most up-to-date information, please consult the new ECBC Covered Bond Comparative Database webpage on the Covered Bond Label website www.coveredbondlabel.com or via the following QR code:

3.11 CZECHIA

By Petr Vybíral, Allen Overy Shearman Sterling (Czech Republic) LLP, organizační složka

I. REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

The Czech legal and regulatory framework of covered bonds (the **Czech Covered Bonds Rules**) is laid down under Czech Act No. 190/2004 Coll., on Bonds, as amended (the **Czech Act on Bonds**), Czech Act No. 182/2006 Coll., on Insolvency and Methods of its Resolution (Insolvency Act), as amended (the **Czech Insolvency Act**) and certain other provisions of the applicable laws.

In May 2022, an amendment to the Czech Covered Bonds Rules (the **CBD Amendment**) entered into force. The CBD Amendment introduced some of the mandatory features of the Covered Bond Directive not yet present in the Czech Covered Bonds Rules as well as some of the optional features of it. Furthermore, the CBD Amendment introduced further changes (not relating to the CBD) aiming mainly to fill gaps in the Czech Covered Bonds Rules.

II. COVERED BONDS AND THEIR TYPES

The Czech Covered Bonds Rules recognise three types of covered bonds (*kryté dluhopisy*): (i) mortgage covered bonds (*hypoteční zástavní listy*); (ii) public covered bonds (*veřejnoprávní zástavní listy*); and (iii) mixed covered bonds (*smíšené zástavní listy*).

The distinction between these three types of covered bonds depends on what cover assets must prevail in the cover pool that serves as a cover in respect of those covered bonds and by virtue of which cover assets the applicable Statutory 85% Limit (as described below) must be complied with.

III. STRUCTURE OF THE ISSUER

Under the Czech Covered Bonds Rules, covered bonds may only be issued by a bank (a credit institution) that holds a Czech banking licence and that has its seat in Czechia.

The CBD Amendment has introduced a requirement for permission for a covered block (see below). Apart from that, the Czech Covered Bonds Rules do not lay down any further requirements for a special authorisation or any requirements for an issuer to be set up as a specialised credit institution (with a restricted scope of permitted activities, for instance).

The Czech Covered Bonds Rules operate on the dual-recourse concept (with holders of covered bonds having a direct, unconditional and senior unsecured claim vis-à-vis the issuer, and a preferential claim on the cover pool). This means that the assets in the cover pool(s) are reserved for the preferential satisfaction of claims of holders of covered bonds and the repayment of certain other debts so designated in the Czech Act on Bonds, and the terms and conditions or the prospectus of covered bonds or in an agreement related to covered bonds (the relevant parts of which must be disclosed to the investors in the same manner as the terms and conditions or the prospectus of covered bonds). Consequently, the covered bond holders have a dual recourse against (i) the relevant cover pool; and (ii) the insolvency estate of the issuer.

IV. COVER ASSETS, COVER ASSETS REGISTER AND COVERED BLOCK RECORDS

The eligible assets comprise the following asset classes:

(i) mortgage loan receivables;

(ii) receivables against, or receivables guaranteed by, a person controlled by a state, regional self-governing unit or an individual or legal person performing tasks in the area of public administration so long as certain conditions stipulated under the Czech Act on Bonds are met (**Public Undertaking Receivables**);

(iii) other assets or exposures under Article 129(1) and (2) of the Credit Requirements Regulation so long as the issuer meets the requirements laid down in paragraphs 1a to 3 of Article 129 of the CRR;

(iv) the issuer's cash on an account kept by a bank or another person set out in Czech Act No. 240/2013 Coll., on Investment Companies and Investment Funds, as amended (the **Issuer's Cash**) and other Liquid Assets (as defined below); and

(v) rights arising under a derivative in accordance with Article (2)(5) of Regulation (EU) No. 648/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council, on OTC derivatives, central counterparties and trade repositories (EMIR) (the **Derivative**).

A Derivative is considered an eligible asset only if the following cumulative conditions are met:

(i) the purpose of the Derivative is to hedge against the risks related to cover assets or covered bonds;

(ii) the Derivative was clearly concluded in relation to covered bonds;

(iii) the terms of the Derivative provide that the insolvency of an issuer, crisis resolution or similar measure in respect of an issuer cannot constitute an event of default or similar event which could lead to early termination of the Derivative;

(iv) the issuer's counterparty to the Derivative has granted its prior consent to the registration of the Derivative in the cover assets register (while the same applies also to its removal from the cover assets register);

(v) the issuer's counterparty to the Derivative is a financial counterparty within the meaning of Article 2(8) of Regulation (EU) No. 648/2012 and is assigned at least a credit quality step 3; and

(vi) the derivative contract is sufficiently documented.

Upon registration of an eligible asset in the cover assets register, it becomes a cover asset, which is protected by the Czech Act on Bonds and cannot be transferred, pledged or otherwise used as a security (until deregistered from the cover asset register).

Depending on the type of covered bonds involved, particular eligible assets will have to constitute such cover that the aggregate value of certain cover assets in the cover pool must be equal to at least 85% of the aggregate value of all debts for whose cover the cover pool serves (the **Statutory 85% Limit**), unless a higher limit is stipulated by the terms and conditions of a series of covered bonds. In meeting this limit, the following cover assets are always disregarded: (i) the Issuer's Cash and other Liquid Assets; (ii) rights arising under a Derivative; and (iii) assets under Article 129(1)(c) and 129(2) of the CRR.

Besides the cover assets, the cover pool also includes, without the need of their registration in the cover assets register, the following assets (each designated as an accessory asset):

(i) rights from a security provided in relation to the cover asset included in the cover pool, in particular rights from mortgages of real property in relation to the mortgage loans;

(ii) rights from agreements entered into in relation to the cover assets included in the cover pool (especially rights from any insurance agreements or policies);

(iii) an asset provided as a collateral or other security in respect of a Derivative, unless the terms and conditions of a series of covered bonds provide otherwise;

(iv) rights from agreements concluded in relation to the administration of the covered block whose part is the cover pool; and

(v) upon appointment of an involuntary administrator of covered blocks, funds accepted as payment for the repayment of a debt corresponding to a receivable arising under another (cover) asset that is included

in the cover pool or in direct connection with such an asset or funds obtained as a proceeds from cover assets liquidation.

The cover assets register forms the core part of the covered block records that an issuer of covered bonds (or involuntary administrator of the covered blocks, once appointed) is obliged to keep. The cover assets register, and the covered block records must be kept separately in respect of each cover pool and each covered block. The covered block records must provide complete information for assessing whether and how the issuer fulfils its duties under the Czech Act on Bonds. Further details on how the covered blocks records should be kept are laid down under delegated regulation to the Czech Covered Bonds Rules.

V. COVER POOL(S) AND COVERED BLOCK(S)

The cover pool is created upon registration of at least one eligible asset in the cover assets register. The issuer may, at its sole discretion, create only one cover pool or multiple cover pools, which may serve to cover its obligations from individual or multiple series of outstanding covered bonds or all series of covered bonds issued under one covered bond programme.

The cover pool is a fully segregated and ring-fenced pool of assets registered in the cover assets register, identified and designated by the issuer to constitute cover in respect of certain covered bonds that it has issued (and which are outstanding) and certain other debts of that issuer, as well as other assets (the accessory assets) which belong to that cover pool by operation of law. Any assets included in the cover pool must be held by the issuer and those assets will remain at all times on the issuer's balance sheet.

The issuer is obliged to monitor the eligibility of the assets in the cover pool continuously. The issuer must remove from the cover assets register those assets that no longer satisfy the eligibility criteria from the cover pool and substitute them with other eligible assets. However, the involuntary administrator of covered blocks, if and once appointed, has no such duty. The priority right of holders of covered bonds to the cover pool(s) extends also to any overcollateralisation.

With the creation of one or more cover pools, an issuer also creates a covered block, which is a fully segregated and ring-fenced block of assets and liabilities (debts) of that issuer. A covered block consists of the cover pool and the debts that it covers.

The CBD Amendment introduced a requirement for covered block permission. Consequently, each issuer of covered bonds must, no later than on the issue date of the relevant covered bonds, obtain permission for a covered block granted by the CNB. The Czech Act on Bonds stipulates conditions for both the granting and removal of that permission.

VI. COVER POOL LIQUIDITY BUFFER

The CBD Amendment has introduced a requirement that a cover pool must at all times include a cover pool liquidity buffer composed of the following liquid assets (each a **Liquid Asset**):

(i) assets qualifying as level 1, level 2A or level 2B assets under Commission Delegated Regulation 2015/61, that are valued in accordance with that delegated regulation, and are not issued by the credit institution issuing the covered bonds itself, its parent undertaking, other than a public sector entity that is not a credit institution, its subsidiary or another subsidiary of its parent undertaking, or by a securitisation special purpose entity with which the credit institution has close links; or

(ii) short-term exposures to credit institutions that qualify for credit quality step 1 or 2, or short-term deposits to credit institutions that qualify for credit quality step 1, 2 or 3, in accordance with point (c) of Article 129(1) of the CRR.

According to the Czech Covered Bonds Rules, claims from exposures considered in default under Article 178 of the CRR cannot contribute to the cover pool liquidity buffer.

The cover pool liquidity buffer will cover the maximum cumulative net liquidity outflow from the covered block over a period of 180 days. Where the issuer of covered bonds is subject to liquidity requirements set out in other EU acts that result in an overlap with the cover pool liquidity buffer, the provisions of the Czech Act on Bonds regulating cover pool liquidity buffer do not apply for the period provided for in those EU acts.

VII. EXTENDED MATURITY (SOFT-BULLET) STRUCTURES

The Czech Covered Bonds Rules allows the issuers to issue covered bonds with a feature of extending their scheduled maturity for a pre-determined period of time if a specific trigger event specified in the terms and conditions of a series of covered bonds occurs. Note that only the events recognised under the Czech Act on Bonds may be used as trigger events for the purposes of an extended maturity structure feature.

A recent amendment to the Czech Act on Bonds that entered into force in January 2024, introduced a very welcomed clarification as to how the cover pool liquidity buffer (see above) should be calculated for a covered bond with an extended maturity structure feature. It is now set in stone that the calculation of the principal to be paid in respect of the series of covered bonds may be determined by referencing to the extended maturity date and not the regular maturity date. This allows the respective issuer to take into consideration the latest possible maturity date (ie the extended maturity date) when calculating maximum cumulative net liquidity outflow.

VIII. ASSET MONITOR AND INVESTOR INFORMATION

The CBD Amendment has not introduced a requirement for the issuers of covered bonds to appoint mandatory asset (or cover pool) monitor within the meaning of Article 13 of the CBD. However, the issuers are free to appoint asset (or cover pool) monitor which, however, does not have to follow the requirements placed on 'obligatory' cover pool monitors under Article 13 of the CBD.

Under the Czech Covered Bonds Rules, the issuers of covered bonds are required to publish information about their covered blocks so that the investors may assess the profile and risks of a particular covered block and carry out their due diligence. The scope of the information that must be published on the issuer's website is laid down under the Czech Act on Bonds (and follows Article 14(2) of the CBD).

IX. STATUTORY MINIMUM OVERCOLLATERALISATION LEVEL AND OTHER TESTS

The Czech Covered Bonds Rules further require the aggregate value of all cover assets included in the cover pool to represent at least 102% of the aggregate value of all debts that are covered by the respective cover pool (whereas the expected costs relating to the maintenance and administration of the covered block in the amount of 1% of the cumulative nominal amount of the covered bonds falling within that covered block will always be added) and thus resulting in a minimum 2% overcollateralisation (the **Statutory Minimum OC Level** and the Statutory 85% Limit and the Statutory Minimum OC Level, jointly also the **Cover Tests**).

Where the issuer of the covered bonds meets the Statutory 85% Limit predominantly using the Public Undertaking Receivables, the Statutory Minimum OC Level is modified. In that case, the aggregate value of all cover assets included in the cover pool must represent at least 110% of the aggregate value of all debts that are covered by the respective cover pool. The terms and conditions of a series of covered bonds may also set a higher overcollateralisation level.

In the case of mortgage covered bonds, the nominal value of any mortgage loan receivable in the cover pool must not exceed 100% of the mortgage lending value of the mortgaged real property (the **Statutory 100% Individual LTV Limit**), unless a lower limit is stipulated by the terms and conditions of a series of covered bonds (which may implement stricter, CRR-conform criteria in their programmes or an individual series of covered bonds). However, this requirement does not operate as a strict eligibility criterion (but is rather set as a soft limit only) since, to the extent the nominal value of an individual mortgage loan exceeds that limit, it will be partially disregarded for the purposes of calculating the Cover Tests.

The issuer regularly (at least each calendar quarter) informs the CNB on whether and how the issuer meets its duties, including, but not limited to, compliance with the Cover Tests and the Statutory 100% Individual LTV Limit.

X. MORTGAGE LOANS – ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Mortgage loans included in the issuer's cover pool(s) are subject to certain conditions, including that:

(i) the mortgaged real property must be located in Czechia or in an EEA country;

(ii) compliance with the Statutory 100% Individual LTV Limit is ensured (which is, however, set as a soft limit rather than as a strict eligibility criterion, whilst, to the extent the nominal value of an individual mortgage loan exceeds that limit (and only to that extent), it will be partially disregarded for the purpose of the Cover Tests);

(iii) there may not be any other mortgage or similar third-party right attached to the mortgaged real property having the same or priority ranking to those mortgage rights securing mortgage loan receivables (or a part of them) used as a cover (if this condition is not met, the nominal value of the relevant mortgage loan is equal to zero for the purposes of the Statutory 85% Limit); and

(iv) the issuer of covered bonds must have in place procedures to monitor that the mortgaged real property is adequately insured against the risk of damage and that insurance claim under relevant insurance contract are included in the respective cover pool.

Additionally, in the case of a default of a borrower under the relevant mortgage loan under Section 178 of the CRR (or if a stricter condition set out in the relevant terms and conditions is met), the nominal value of the relevant mortgage loan receivable in the cover pool will be equal to zero (ie decreased by 100%) for the purpose of calculating the Cover Tests.

XI. ENHANCED PROTECTION AND FULL RING-FENCING IN INSOLVENCY

The Czech Insolvency Act explicitly provides that cover pool(s) do not constitute a part of the issuer's insolvency estate and are fully segregated and ring-fenced from any other (general) assets of the issuer which fall within the issuer's insolvency estate, regardless of whether the aggregate value of these assets is lower or higher than the limits set out in the Czech Act on Bonds. The Czech Insolvency Act further provides that:

(i) the automatic acceleration of debts from covered bonds as a result of the commencement of insolvency proceedings and declaration of bankruptcy in relation to the assets of the issuer will not apply (which on its own represents an extremely credit-positive change compared with the previous regulatory regime);

(ii) neither the commencement of the insolvency proceedings against the issuer, the issuing of a decision on the insolvency of an issuer nor the declaration of bankruptcy in relation to the assets of an issuer will affect the covered block(s) (especially the satisfaction and maturity of debts that are part of that covered block(s)); and

(iii) the insolvency administrator must not intervene in the administration of the covered block (which is entrusted to the involuntary administrator of covered blocks) and must render assistance to the involuntary administrator of covered blocks.

XII. INVOLUNTARY ADMINISTRATOR OF COVERED BLOCKS

Upon (i) commencement of the insolvency proceedings in respect of an issuer of covered bonds, (ii) the issuer of covered bonds enters into liquidation; and (iii) the CNB revokes the banking licence of the issuer of covered bonds, the CNB will, without undue delay, appoint an involuntary administrator of covered blocks to ensure proper management of the covered blocks.

The involuntary administrator of covered blocks may only be a Czech bank or a foreign bank with its registered office in another EEA country that issues securities comparable to covered bonds or that administers assets comparable to cover assets, and it cannot be a person in respect of which there is a risk of a conflict of interests.

The involuntary administrator of covered blocks is entrusted with full administration of all covered blocks of the relevant issuer and may agree an obligation both for the benefit and to the detriment of a covered block to improve liquidity or hedge against risk.

The involuntary administrator of covered blocks must, without undue delay after its appointment, open an account with a bank to accept payments, and inform the persons whom this may concern about an unequivocal identifier of that account. Any other person that receives a payment in favour of the cover pool will, without undue delay, transfer it to that account or to the involuntary administrator of covered blocks in favour of the relevant cover pool.

The involuntary administrator of covered blocks may:

(i) transfer the relevant covered block to another eligible entity and entrust it with its administration (whilst a transfer made without the consent of the CNB will be disregarded);

(ii) conduct a proportional decrease (a *pari passu* haircut) of debts belonging to the covered block;

(iii) liquidate selected cover assets (cover pool(s)); or

(iv) liquidate all the cover assets (cover pool(s)) and consequently proceed with early repayment of the covered bonds).

In all instances, only the CNB's consent is required and the CNB will only grant its consent so long as any of these actions is in the best interest of the holders of covered bonds. The effectiveness of the transfer, the *pari passu* haircut, or the liquidation towards third parties does not require any other (prior or subsequent) public or private consent or notification.

Issuers: Česká spořitelna, a.s., Komerční banka, a.s., Raiffeisenbank a.s., MONETA Money Bank, a.s., UniCredit Bank Czech Republic and Slovakia, a.s., Wüstenrot hypoteční banka a.s (now MONETA Money Bank, a.s.)., Equa Bank a.s. (now Raiffeisenbank a.s.).

COVERED BOND LABEL **:** Komerční banka, a.s. (1 pool), UniCredit Bank Czech Republic and Slovakia, a.s. (1 pool).

For the most up-to-date information, please consult the new ECBC Covered Bond Comparative Database webpage on the Covered Bond Label website www.coveredbondlabel.com or via the following QR code:

3.12 DENMARK

By Mette Saaby Pedersen, Finance Denmark, Svend Bondorf and Birna Arnbjarnardóttir, Nykredit

I. FRAMEWORK

In Denmark the legal basis for covered bond issuance is the Danish Mortgage-Credit Loans and Mortgage-Credit Bonds etc. Act (the "Mortgage Act") (*Lov om realkreditlån og realkreditobligationer mv.*) and the Danish Financial Business Act (*Lov om finansiel virksomhed*). The Mortgage Act is applicable only to Danish mortgage banks. The mortgage banks are specialised banks. The Capital Requirements Regulation (CRR) is directly applicable to the commercial banks and the mortgage banks.

Specific bankruptcy regulations laid down in the Financial Business Act and the Mortgage Act prevail over general bankruptcy regulations (sections 247a-247i of the Financial Business Act and sections 22-33 of the Mortgage Act).

II. STRUCTURE OF THE ISSUER

The Danish Financial Supervisory Authority (FSA) may license mortgage banks, commercial banks and ship financing institutions[1] to issue covered bonds.

Until 1 July 2007, only mortgage banks were allowed to issue mortgage covered bonds. Since this date, also commercial banks can obtain a license to issue covered bonds.

The Danish legal basis for covered bonds was amended in 2021 to transpose the Covered Bonds Directive (CBD) and the changes were applied as of 8 July 2022.

There is three types of Danish covered bonds:

> Særligt Dækkede Obligationer (SDOs) issued by either commercial or mortgage banks. SDOs are both CBD and CRR compliant (Article 129). This is a "European Covered Bond (premium)".

> Særligt Dækkede Realkreditobligationer (SDROs) issued exclusively by mortgage banks. SDROs are both CBD and CRR compliant (Article 129). This is a "European Covered Bond (premium)".

> Realkreditobligationer (ROs) issued exclusively by mortgage banks. ROs are CBD compliant. This is a "European Covered Bond".

All SDOs and SDROs issued before 8 July 2022 have also maintained their covered bonds status being both CBD and CRR (Article 129) compliant and ROs issued after 1 January 2008 and before 8 July 2022 are CBD compliant.

Danish mortgage banks operate subject to a specialist banking principle in accordance with Danish legislation, which confines the activities of issuers to the granting of mortgage loans funded by the issuance of covered bonds. The cover pool may include unsecured loans to public authorities and guarantees issued by public authorities, but this is rarely used. Mortgage banks may also carry on other business related to mortgage banking.

The specialist banking principle implies that mortgage banks are confined to granting loans that meet the requirements for cover assets imposed by legislation. Similarly, the funding sources are limited to ROs, SDOs and SDROs. This is due to the fact that Danish mortgage banks are not allowed to accept deposits, etc. as a source of funding, cf section 8 of the Financial Business Act.

The issuer (mortgage bank or commercial bank) holds the cover assets on its balance sheet as well as all rights under the cover assets. Bonds and cover assets are assigned to individual capital centers in mortgage banks and to registers in commercial banks. The individual bonds, however, are not linked to individual mortgage loans.

1 Ship financing institutions are regulated by the Act on a Ship Financial Institute (Consolidating Act no 1780 – 12 December 2018 and amended rules in 2021)

III. COVER ASSETS

Assets eligible as the basis for mortgage covered bond issuance:

SDO	SDRO	RO
> Loans secured by real property > Exposures to public authorities > Exposures to credit institutions (up to a maximum of 15% (CQS 1)/10% (CQS 2) and total exposures not exceed 15%) and indirect exposures to credit institutions without an external rating that guarantee mortgage loans until their registration[2] > Collateral in ships (not an option for mortgage banks)	> Loans secured by real property > Exposures to public authorities	> Loans secured by real property > Exposures to public authorities

To serve as cover assets, mortgages must be entered in the Danish land register, which is kept by the Danish district courts. Land and loan registration has been digital since 2009 with faster and more efficient handling of customers' loans as a result.

The mortgage loans are originated in a mortgage bank or a credit institution in the same group (use of intra-group pooled covered bond structures in CBD), or transferred to a mortgage bank according to a structure in which the mortgage bank has knowledge of and is responsible for correct valuation of the mortgaged property and verification of the debtor's creditworthiness and ability to pay (joint funding in CBD).

The difference between funding and lending may be hedged through derivatives, which are included in the cover pool assets. Counterparties in derivative contracts in the cover pool shall fulfil credit quality step 1 or 2.

In a capital centre in a mortgage bank the cover pool is dynamic as a result of the current addition and disposal of loans in connection with the granting and repayment of loans. In most capital centers assets may exclusively be transferred to or from the cover pool upon new lending and (p)repayment. On (p)repayment, the corresponding amount of issued bonds will be redeemed from the capital center. Each mortgage loan (cover asset) refers to specific ISIN codes and both cover assets and ISIN codes are assigned to specific capital centers. It is therefore not possible for the issuer to (i) change the cover pool unless in connection with new lending and (p)repayment nor (ii) transfer cover assets between different cover pools. Cover assets must be identifiable, and the FSA supervises cover asset identification.

IV. VALUATION AND LTV CRITERIA

The financial legislation contains provisions on property valuation. Valuations are based on the market value of a property.

LTV limits – an overview

Loan Type / Property category	SDO	SDRO	RO
Residential property	80% or 75%[1)]	80% or 75%[1)]	80%
Holiday property	75%[2)]	75%[2)]	75%[2)]
Agricultural property	60%[3)]	60%[3)]	70%
Commercial property	60%[3)]	60%[3)]	60%

2 According to conditions in CRR (2064/1623), Art. 129, first subparagraph.

Note: 1) 80% for loans issued with up to 30 years maturity and 10 years interest-only period and 75% for loans with an unlimited maturity and interest-only period.
2) 75% for holiday property for private use. The LTV limit is 60% for holiday property for commercial use.
3) The LTV can be raised to 70% if the bank adds additional collateral.

In connection to the issuance of SDOs and SDROs, mortgage banks and commercial banks must ensure continuous LTV compliance – i.e. not just at disbursement of the loan as is the case for ROs. Where an LTV ratio exceeds the statutory limits, the bank must add supplementary collateral to the capital center/register. Otherwise, the issues may lose their status as SDOs or SDROs.

Mortgaged property is valued (on-site inspection) as part of the processing of loan applications. When a loan is granted, the LTV thereof is assessed on a case-by-case basis. A basic principle of the valuation regulations is that valuations must be performed by a valuation officer of an issuer. Provided that a number of conditions are met, valuations may be outsourced. AVMs may also be used if approved by the Danish FSA and most Danish mortgage banks have got an approval to use own models. The detailed conditions for valuation are set out in the financial legislation.

V. ASSET – LIABILITY MANAGEMENT

The financial legislation and the Executive Order on bond issuance, balance principle and risk management require mortgage banks and commercial banks to observe a balance principle and a set of rules on risk management in connection with the issuance of RO, SDRO and SDO. The mortgage banks and commercial banks should also observe a nominal coverage requirement and that all payment obligations of covered bonds are covered by claims for payment attached to the cover assets.

The Executive Order provides limits to the scope of differences allowed on one hand the payments from borrowers and on the other hand the payments to the holders of the issued ROs, SDROs and SDOs. The limits are adjusted by loss limits to the interest rate, foreign exchange, option and liquidity risks that follow from cash flow differences in the balance sheet. The Executive Order also contains a number of other provisions limiting financial risk.

For commercial banks, the balance principle is applicable at register level. For mortgage banks, the balance principle is applicable at the level of the individual capital centers and the banks in general.

Despite the risk limits of the balance principle, Danish mortgage banks have in practice structured their mortgage lending business in such a way that they do not assume significant financial risks with respect to mortgage lending and funding. Thus, the mortgage banks have nearly eliminated interest rate risk, foreign exchange risk and prepayment risk.

Since mortgage bond issuance is the only eligible funding source for Danish mortgage banks, issuance takes place on a daily basis. The mortgage bank commonly achieves this through tap issuance. Each loan is closely matched to the future cash flow of one or several specific ISIN codes currently open for issuance. On any given banking day, the mortgage bank calculates the bond amounts to be tapped in the relevant ISINs corresponding to the loans disbursed that day. These bond amounts are then issued and sold to investors. These simple principles ensure that the balance principle is maintained day by day and minimises the subsequent need for active asset-liability management.

A typical mortgage ISIN is open for tap issuance for several years after opening. Issuance trades are executed alongside with other trades in a unified, highly liquid and tightly priced market. Thus, there is no strict distinction between primary and secondary markets in the Danish system.

The Danish commercial banks too, are subject to the strict ALM rules. In practice the commercial banks operate under a general asset and liability management and do not offer pass-through products.

Both mortgage banks and commercial banks are required to maintain a liquidity buffer requirement for the next 180 days. It is with the exception that the requirement does not apply to covered bonds subject to match funding and the calculation of the principal for extendable maturity structures can be based on the final maturity date.

Refinancing risk in a situation where a mortgage bank is unable to complete the refinancing of matured bonds on market terms is addressed in the legislation. The regulation applies to covered bonds where the loan term is longer than the maturity of the bond used to fund it and contains a soft bullet mechanism controlled by two triggers: a refinancing failure trigger and an interest rate trigger. The refinancing trigger automatically extends the maturity of the covered bonds by 12 months at a time in case the issuer is unable to refinance maturing covered bonds by new issuance. The mechanism is not exercisable at discretion of the issuer, but it is conditional on the specific market event of "no refinancing". The interest rate trigger, which applies solely to bond maturities of 2 years or less, comes into effect in case of a 5% point bond yield increase over the last year before ordinary maturity. This trigger may extend the bond maturity by 1 year. For the Danish commercial banks issuing covered bonds there are also rules governing extendable maturity structures.

According to the legislation, there is a requirement of minimum 2% overcollateralization (OC) for Danish mortgage banks and commercial banks issuing SDOs and SDROs.

Furthermore, according to the legislation, the capital base without any buffers must represent at least 8% of risk-exposure amount (REA). Mortgage banks must observe the capital adequacy requirement both at individual capital center level and at the level of the institution.

VI. TRANSPARENCY

A high level of transparency is an important characteristic of the Danish covered bond market. The Danish covered bond issuers publish information via many different platforms, such as prospectuses, investor reports, trading venues, standardised transparency templates and issuers' investor relations websites. Information is thus easily accessible.

As part of the ECBC Label Initiative, the Danish issuers report information in the standardised format in the Harmonised Transparency Template (HTT). In addition, the Danish market participants have gathered available information and consolidated it in an intuitive and user-friendly structure in a national transparency template (NTT).

VII. COVER POOL MONITOR AND BANKING SUPERVISION

Specialised supervision of covered bond issuers is carried out by the Danish FSA (Denmark has not joined the single supervisory mechanism – SSM). The FSA supervises compliance with the legislative framework for carrying on mortgage banking activities and thereby the issuance of covered bonds.

The issuer monitors the cover pool continuously. Data from every single loan offer from the Danish mortgage banks and thus all property valuations for new lending purposes are reported to the FSA on a quarterly basis. The FSA performs random checks of mortgage banks' valuations by way of on-site inspections and by checks of the internal valuation reports and which other property has been used as reference to the basis for the valuation. In the Danish mortgage model where loans are originated, serviced and redeemed directly in the cover pool, there is no need for monitoring other than as provided by the FSA.

The commercial banks report on a quarterly basis to the FSA on the assets in the register. The statement of the registered assets must be verified by the external auditor of the bank.

Issuers are also required to prepare comprehensive reports on asset-liability management for the FSA on a quarterly basis. The FSA must be informed of any balance principle breaches or if the capital requirement is not observed without delay.

VIII. SEGREGATION OF COVER ASSETS AND BANKRUPTCY REMOTENESS OF COVERED BONDS

Capital centres of mortgage banks (regardless of whether the issuer has issued ROs, SDROs or SDOs)

The rules for resolving a mortgage bank are detailed and well considered. The main considerations are to ensure (i) that bond investors receive timely payments and (ii) that the rights of borrowers are not prejudiced materially.

Balance sheets of Danish mortgage banks are structured with a number of separate capital centres (cover pools) out of which covered bonds are issued. A capital centre consists of a group of series in which covered bonds backed by an equivalent amount of mortgage loans (match funding) are issued and a joint series reserve fund (equity). In addition, supplementary capital (senior secured debt/Section 15 bonds) may be issued out of the capital centre for overcollateralisation purposes.

If a mortgage bank is declared bankrupt, a trustee in bankruptcy is appointed. The Danish FSA may declare a mortgage bank bankrupt.

The trustee must seek the most efficient administration of the estate, having regard to the fact that the position of covered bond investors and borrowers must remain essentially as if the capital centre had still been a going concern. If a mortgage bank is declared bankrupt, no acceleration therefore takes place in respect of covered bond investors or borrowers. This is the key principle. It is only possible because the mortgage system is structured around capital centres that offer very high statutory collateral for bonds based on ring-fenced, bankruptcy-remote capital centres and match-funded lending.

Winding-up is not fast, but orderly, with a minimum of changes for both bond investors and borrowers. No public funds are used for such winding-up, as borrowers' ongoing payments are passed through to bondholders. Holders of hybrid core capital and subordinate loan capital cannot use the bankruptcy of a mortgage bank as grounds for a claim of default. Similar rules apply to counterparties to financial instruments used to hedge risk in a capital centre.

If a mortgage lender is declared bankrupt, the assets, after deduction of estate administration costs, will be segregated to satisfy bond holders, etc., in accordance with their legal position as secured creditors. Covered bond holders have a primary secured claim against all assets in the cover pool. Counterparties to financial instruments used to hedge risk in a capital centre rank pari passu with covered bond holders in the relevant capital centre.

Proceeds from loans raised for the purpose of overcollateralisation (senior secured bonds/Section 15 bonds) will serve to satisfy the claims of covered bond holders in case of bankruptcy.

The EU Bank Recovery and Resolution Directive (BRRD) has been implemented in Danish regulation and came into force on 1 June 2015. The bail-in tool does not apply to covered bonds (SDO, SDRO and RO) and senior secured debt/Section 15 bonds. While exempt from bail-in, the Danish mortgage banks is subject to a debt buffer of unweighted loans. The minimum level of the buffer is 2%. For systemic mortgage banks and mortgage banks being part of a systemic financial group, a higher buffer requirement may be set. The total amount of the capital requirement and debt buffer (and MREL requirement) should always be at least 8% of total liabilities (at consolidated level).

In case of resolution the debt buffer can be used by the resolution authority (in Denmark the resolution authority is Finansiel Stabilitet) to capitalise the mortgage banks when using BRRD resolution tools other than the bail-in tool. These tools can only be used according to the principle of "no-investor-worse-off". Otherwise the winding-up will be handled according to the abovementioned principle.

Commercial bank registers

A commercial bank sets up a register segregating assets, which exclusively serve as SDO cover assets.

As is the case with mortgage banks, derivative counterparties have a primary preferential right in line with the SDOs provided that the derivatives contract stipulates that the suspension of payments or bankruptcy of a

commercial bank does not constitute an event of default. Bonds issued to secure assets as compensation for LTV excess or overcollateral in general (also referred to as Section 15 bonds or senior secured bonds) have a secondary preferential right to all assets of the register.

The register is kept by the commercial bank and must at all times contain all assets, guarantees received and derivatives contracts, clearly individualised. The commercial bank must submit statements of the assets to the FSA. The external auditor must perform continuous regular control of the register and at least twice a year make unannounced register audits.

Where the FSA suspends the license of a commercial bank to carry on banking business, the FSA or the bank files a bankruptcy petition, or the bank is adjudicated bankrupt following the petition of a third party, the FSA will decide whether the register is to become subject to administration by an administrator as an estate in administration. The administrator (and not the ordinary trustee) will be in charge of the assets of the register.

Any unsatisfied residual claims by SDO holders and derivative counterparties against the register may be proved against the assets available for distribution of the commercial bank as ordinary claims. Residual claims from Section 15, bonds or senior secured bonds may also be proved as ordinary claims against the assets available for distribution.

IX. RISK-WEIGHTING AND COMPLIANCE WITH EUROPEAN LEGISLATION

SDOs, SDROs and ROs fulfil the CBD. SDOs and SDROs also fulfil the requirements of Article 129 CRR. ROs, SDOs and SDROs are eligible for repo transactions and may be used as collateral for loans with the Danish central bank (Danmarks Nationalbank). Under the LCR the largest RO, SDO and SDRO series qualify as assets of the highest quality (Level 1 covered bonds).

When investing in ROs, SDOs and SDROs, the Danish investment legislation allows UCITS, to exceed the usual limits on exposures to a single issuer(cf. the Act on Investment Associations and Special-Purpose Associations as well as other Collective Investment Schemes etc.).

Issuers: Covered bonds backed by real estate collateral are primarily issued by the specialised mortgage banks: Jyske Realkredit a/s, DLR Kredit A/S, Nordea Kredit Realkreditaktieselskab, Nykredit Realkredit A/S (incl. Totalkredit A/S), Realkredit Danmark A/S. At the end of 2024 the mortgage banks' outstanding volume of covered bonds was around EUR 443 bn. Danske Bank A/S is the only commercial bank issuing covered bonds. Danske Bank has issued non-pass-through (euro-style) covered bonds of a value of around EUR 11.3 bn. Danish Ship Finance is the only Danish issuer of covered bonds backed by ship loans. The outstanding volume of covered bonds backed by ships as collateral was around EUR 5.4 bn by year end 2024.

COVERED BOND LABEL **:** Jyske Realkredit A/S (1 pool), Danske Bank A/S (3 pools), DLR Kredit A/S (1 pool), Realkredit Danmark A/S (2 pools), Danish Ship Finance A/S (2 pools), Nordea Kredit Realkreditaktieselskab (2 pools), Nykredit Realkredit A/S (2 pools).

For the most up-to-date information, please consult the new ECBC Covered Bond Comparative Database webpage on the Covered Bond Label website www.coveredbondlabel.com or via the following QR code:

3.13 ESTONIA

By Jane Eespõld, Oliver Ämarik, Merylin Tihomirova, Law Firm

I. FRAMEWORK

On 13 February 2019, the Estonian Parliament adopted a legislation on covered bonds in Estonia. The law entered into force on 1 March 2019. This is the first legislation that provides the possibility to issue covered bonds in Estonia. In late 2021 amendments to the law – covering (i) implementation of Directive (EU) 2019/2162 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 November 2019 (hereinafter Covered Bond Directive or CBD); and (ii) alignment of the covered bond regulation in three Baltic states (Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania) – were adopted.

At the beginning of 2020, the first issue of covered bonds was carried out by an Estonian issuer (Luminor Bank) which also constituted as a first covered bond from the Baltic region.

II. STRUCTURE OF THE ISSUER

A credit institution wishing to issue covered bonds must obtain additional authorisation from the Estonian Financial Supervision and Resolution Authority (hereinafter the EFSA) to issue covered bonds. For obtaining the additional authorisation, the credit institution must submit information on the planned covered bond programme (additions to the business plan) and must have in place the technology and other technological tools and systems, security systems, control mechanisms and systems necessary for the issuance of covered bonds and the administration of covered bond portfolios. Moreover, it must have a risk management system that enables the issuer to adequately identify, measure and manage the risks associated with the administration of the covered bond portfolio.

If an issuer wants – after the grant of an additional authorisation – to issue covered bonds on the basis of a covered bond programme other than that provided for in the initial business plan, the credit institution must submit to the EFSA an application for approval of the new covered bonds programme.

The pool of cover assets will be kept by the issuer itself and it will not be held by a special purpose vehicle (SPV). This means that the issuer has to maintain a separate cover register about the cover pool for both mortgage covered bonds and the mixed asset covered bonds. The purpose of the cover register is to collect, systematise and store data about the cover pool required for mortgage covered bonds and mixed asset covered bonds. The register is kept in accordance with the internal rules that state the procedure for entering and deleting assets in the register. The entry of the register must state information which is necessary to detect the contract or security that is the basis of the claim. Under the general principle, the issuer does not have an obligation to inform the debtor about the entry of the claim in the cover register, however such notification becomes mandatory once the issuer estimates that it is objectively likely that the separation of a covered bond portfolio will take place.

Lastly, the issuer has to appoint an independent cover pool monitor, who monitors the performance of the duties of the issuer.

III. COVER ASSETS

Primary cover assets

At least 85% of the main collateral of the relevant covered bond portfolio has to comprise of primary cover assets. The law constitutes different primary cover assets for mortgage covered bonds and mixed covered bonds.

First, the primary cover assets of mortgage covered bonds can only be the issuer's claims that arise from a credit granted to a natural person against a mortgage that is established on a residential property situated in the territory of a European Economic Area (hereinafter EAA) country.

The credit that has fallen into default after it has been entered in the cover register, can be taken into account upon calculation of the value of the cover pool in the following proportions:

1) 100 per cent of the value of the credit if it has been in default for less than 90 days;
2) 70 per cent of the value of the credit if it has been in default for at least 90 days and the ratio of the credit to the value of the property securing the mortgage credit is less than 50 per cent;
3) 40 per cent of the value of the credit if it has been in default for at least 90 days and the ratio of the credit to the value of the property securing the mortgage credit is more than 50 per cent;
4) 0 per cent of the value of the credit if it has been in delay for at least 180 days.

Second, the primary cover assets of mixed covered bonds can only be the issuer's claims that arise from the following:

1) a mortgage credit;
2) a housing construction credit – a credit granted to a natural person against a mortgaged residential building plot situated in the territory of an EEA country;
3) a commercial mortgage credit – a credit granted to a legal person against a mortgaged residential property, mortgaged residential building plot or mortgaged commercial immovable property situated in the territory of an EEA country;
4) a credit granted to, or debt securities issued by, an EEA country;
5) a credit granted to, or debt securities issued by, a regional government or local authority of an EEA country;
6) a credit granted to, or debt securities issued by, an EEA country's legal person governed by public law;
7) a credit granted to or guaranteed by a company in which an EEA country has a holding;
8) a credit or debt securities guaranteed by an EEA country or a regional government or local authority of an EEA county.

Substitute collateral

In addition to primary cover assets, the cover pool may consist of substitute collateral. Substitute collateral may be:

1) claims on or guaranteed by central banks within the European System of Central Banks, and central governments, public sector entities, regional governments or local authorities of the Member States of the European Union (hereinafter EU);
2) claims on or guaranteed by third-country central governments and central banks, multilateral development banks and international organisations that qualify for the credit quality step 1[1];
3) claims on or guaranteed by third-country public sector entities, regional governments and local authorities, for which a risk weight has been assigned the same way as for claims on credit institutions and investment firms or central governments and central banks and which qualify for the credit quality step 1 according to the risk weight so assigned;

1 A CQS is a simplified and standardized scale of credit quality, mapped to the credit ratings of the largest credit rating agencies. Steps are defined in the Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2016/1800 of 11 October 2016 laying down implementing technical standards with regard to the allocation of credit assessments of external credit assessment institutions to an objective scale of credit quality steps in accordance with Directive 2009/138/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council. Moreover, the assessment has to be in accordance with Regulation (EU) No 575/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 June 2013 on prudential requirements for credit institutions and investment firms and amending Regulation (EU) No 648/2012.

4) claims specified in clauses 2) and 3) above, which qualify as a minimum for the credit quality step 2, provided that they do not exceed 20% of the nominal value of the outstanding covered bonds in the covered bond portfolio that they cover;

5) claims on credit institutions and investment firms, which qualify for the credit quality step 1, provided that they do not exceed 15% of the nominal value of the outstanding covered bonds in the covered bond portfolio that they cover;

6) claims on credit institutions and investment firms, which qualify for credit quality step 2, provided that they do not exceed 10% of the nominal value of the outstanding covered bonds in the covered bond portfolio that they cover;

7) claims on credit institutions and investment firms in the European Union with a term to maturity not exceeding 100 days, which qualify as a minimum for credit quality step, provided that they do not exceed 8% of the nominal value of the outstanding covered bonds in the covered bond portfolio that they cover and provided that an issuer has obtained corresponding authorisation from the EFSA for inclusion of such substitute collateral in a cover pool;

8) net claims arising from derivative instruments that meet the conditions provided by law, which cannot be treated as the claims specified in clauses 5) or 6) above, provided that they do not exceed 15% of the nominal value of the outstanding covered bonds in the covered bond portfolio that they cover;

9) claims specified in clause 8) above, which qualify as a minimum for credit quality step 3, provided that they do not exceed 8% of the nominal value of the outstanding covered bonds in the covered bond portfolio that they cover and provided that an issuer has obtained corresponding authorisation from the EFSA for inclusion of such substitute collateral in a cover pool.

IV. VALUATION AND LTV CRITERIA

Valuation and revaluation

The law states that the valuator of the property standing as security for mortgage credit has to comply with the following requirements:

> has sufficient knowledge, experience and skills;

> be sufficiently independent from the process of deciding on the granting of credit as to provide an objective and impartial assessment of the value of the immovable property.

The requirements for the appraisal of immovable property standing as security are the following:

> the immovable will be valuated according to the good practice of property valuation that is based on uniform and well-established market practice;

> the valuator detects and collects all the data necessary for the valuation and analyses all factors affecting the value of the property that is being evaluated;

> the valuation is based on up-to-date and reliable data and based on an in-depth review.

The value of a property standing as security for a mortgage credit entered in the cover register must be regularly reviewed at least once a year and revaluated, if necessary. The purpose of the revaluation of the property is not to obligate the issuer to change the value of the property each time, but to review the property in the portfolio in general and to update it, based on the information available to the issuer, in case there has been a change in the value of the assets.

The value of a property standing as security for a mortgage credit, entered in the cover register, must extraordinarily be reviewed and revaluated, in the event of a significant change in market conditions, and in the event

that the information available to the issuer indicates that a significant decline has occurred or is occurring on the national or local real estate market, including if it concerns only one specific property type, residential building type or other narrower category of properties.

Loan-to-Value

The claims of an issuer arising from a mortgage credit may be used as a cover asset of mortgage covered bonds in an amount of up to 70% of the value of the property securing the mortgage credit. Nevertheless, all the issuer's claims arising from the mortgage credit entered in the cover register are included in the cover pool in their entirety.

For the property securing the mortgage credit to be registered in the cover register, a mortgage amounting for at least 110% of the issued credit amount must be established. The sum of the mortgage may exceed the value of the property securing the credit.

V. ASSET – LIABILITY MANAGEMENT

An issuer must, at least once every 3 months, perform a stress test on the covered bond portfolio to assess the risks set out in the stress testing methodology according to the internal rules. The managers of the issuer are responsible for ensuring the performance of stress tests. More detailed requirements for the procedure, methodology and purpose of stress testing of covered bond portfolios are established by the regulation of the Minister of Finance adopted on 27 January 2023, which entered into force on 13 February 2023.

If the value of the cover pool, as calculated during the stress test, no longer meets the requirements, the cover assets in the cover register must be increased by the maximum deficiency determined as a result of the stress test. An issuer has a right to hedge the risks deriving from the covered bonds by way of using derivative instruments. Estonian law foresees specific requirements for the derivative instruments that are allowed to be used to hedge risks arising from covered bonds.

VI. TRANSPARENCY

Covered bonds issued by a credit institution registered in Estonia, which has received additional authorisation from the EFSA, are registered in the Estonian register of securities. The EFSA publishes a decision to grant, amend or revoke an additional authorisation on its website no later than on the business day following the day of making such decision.

In addition to the disclosure obligation arising from other legislation, an issuer must disclose information about covered bond portfolios once a quarter. Information about the first 3 quarters of a year must be disclosed within 20 days of the end of the respective quarter. Information about the fourth quarter must be disclosed within 2 months of the end of the quarter. The disclosed information must be available on the issuer's website about at least the last 5 years.

The following information must be disclosed based on the types of covered bond portfolios:

1) the nominal value of outstanding covered bonds and of the cover pool;
2) a list of all covered bonds under that covered bond programme with the International Securities Identification Numbers (ISINs), if any;
3) the maturity structure of the covered bonds and the cover pool;
4) the geographical distribution of the value of cover assets;
5) the type of property included in the cover pool, the total size and valuation method of the loans included in the cover pool;
6) the distribution of substitute collaterals, in terms of their value, between the types of substitute collateral;

7) the level of the liquidity buffer and information about the ratio between the total liquidity buffer and the payment obligations of the next 180 days;

8) the percentage of the amount of substitute collaterals, which have been in default for over 90 days or which the issuer estimates to be doubtful, in the cover pool;

9) details in relation to market risk, including interest rate risk and currency risk, and credit and liquidity risks;

10) a list of the conditions suspending the maturity of a payment obligation;

11) the amount of the main collateral, mandatory overcollateral and voluntary overcollateral;

12) information about counterparties of derivative contracts;

13) the methodology for calculating the ratio between credit and the value of the property standing as security for the credit.

In addition, the percentage of the amount of mortgage credit in the cover pool, which have been in default for over 90 days or which the issuer estimates to be doubtful, must be disclosed in relation to the primary cover assets of mortgage covered bonds.

The following information must be disclosed on the primary cover assets of mixed asset covered bonds:

1) the distribution of debt obligations, in terms of their value, between the types of primary cover assets of mixed asset covered bonds;

2) the percentage of the amount of debt obligations, which have been in default for over 90 days or which the issuer estimates to be doubtful, in the cover pool.

VII. COVER POOL MONITOR AND BANKING SUPERVISION

The issuer's general meeting has the authority to appoint an independent cover pool monitor. A monitor is appointed for a term that must not be less than 1 year. The monitor inspects whether the issuer is fulfilling its obligations. The monitor is free to choose when the inspections will be carried out. A trustworthy sworn auditor with an impeccable business reputation and sufficient knowledge and experience may be appointed as a monitor. An audit firm that provides or has provided within the year preceding the appointment as the cover pool monitor the audit service to the issuer cannot be appointed as the monitor.

The duties of a monitor are to verify:

1) the compliance of stress testing of a covered bond portfolio and the changes introduced to the covered bond portfolio as a result of stress testing with requirements;

2) the existence of a sufficient cover pool and its compliance with requirements;

3) the compliance of the maintenance of the cover register with requirements;

4) the compliance of the valuation of immovable properties encumbered with a mortgage securing credit and included in the cover pool with requirements;

5) the compliance of the issuer's risk management and reporting with requirements;

6) the compliance of the terms and conditions of covered bonds with requirements;

7) the existence of an updated plan for separation of the covered bond portfolio and its compliance with the requirements of Estonian legislation.

The monitor notifies the issuer of any deficiencies detected during verification in a format that can be reproduced in writing and sets a reasonable deadline for the elimination of the deficiencies. In case the deficiencies are not fully eliminated by that deadline, the monitor must notify the EFSA. The monitor must immediately

inform the EFSA in writing of any discovered circumstances or decisions that could lead to a significant legal violations, breaches of additional authorization conditions, or the issuer's inability to fulfill obligations related to covered bonds and derivatives.

VIII. ASSIGNMENT OF CLAIMS, SEGREGATION OF COVER ASSETS AND BANKRUPTCY REMOTENESS OF COVERED BONDS

Estonian legislation foresees regulation for assignment of claims to a credit institution of an EEA country or to a special purpose entity located in an EEA country that has been established for the formation of the cover pool of covered bonds in relation of formation of the cover pool. The regulation also establishes rules for segregation of cover assets which have been assigned as well as protection of such assets against recovery in case of insolvency proceedings of assignor of such claims as well as mitigates the risk of set-off related to the claims related to the cover pool.

In case the issuer is declared bankrupt, a covered bond portfolio shall be considered to be separated from the other assets of the issuer. A cover pool shall not be part of the issuer's bankruptcy estate and a moratorium shall not extend to a covered bond portfolio.

The separation of a covered bond does not affect the rights and obligations arising from covered bonds and the payment obligations attached to covered bonds are not subject to automatic acceleration upon the separation of the covered bond portfolio.

After the separation of a covered bond portfolio, an independent pool of designated assets is formed in which the cover pool and the proceeds received therefrom can only be used to satisfy the claims of the holders of the respective type of covered bonds and of the counterparty to the derivative instrument entered in the corresponding cover register and to cover the expenses related to the management of the covered bond portfolio.

If an issuer is declared bankrupt or the compulsory dissolution of an issuer is decided, a court appoints, on the proposal of the EFSA, a cover pool administrator for covered bond portfolios. The appointment is necessary to secure the continuance of the operation of the cover bond portfolio, detect the solvency of the portfolio and secure the rights of the owners of cover bonds and derivative counterparties.

Upon the appointment of a cover pool administrator, the right to manage and dispose of covered bond portfolios is transferred to the cover pool administrator. The cover pool administrator shall manage covered bond portfolios with the necessary diligence arising from their nature, and in a manner ensuring that the liabilities arising from covered bonds and from the derivative instruments entered in the cover register are met in the best possible way. To this end, the cover pool administrator has the right to transfer and encumber the cover pool, enter into derivative instruments on the account of the cover pool, and perform other necessary operations.

The cover pool administrator has the right to use the cover pool and the proceeds to be received therefrom to cover the expenses necessary for the management of a covered bond portfolio.

IX. RISK-WEIGHTING & COMPLIANCE WITH EUROPEAN LEGISLATION

The Estonian legislation is in compliance with the CBD and other relevant legislation and documents related to the CBD.

Prior to issuing covered bonds, an issuer must adapt its risk management system to enable it to adequately identify, measure and manage the risks associated with the administration of the covered bond portfolio.

Issuers: Luminor Bank AS, AS LHV Pank, Coop Pank AS.

COVERED BOND LABEL **:** Luminor Bank AS (1 pool), AS LHV Pank (1 pool), Coop Pank AS (1 pool).

For the most up-to-date information, please consult the new ECBC Covered Bond Comparative Database webpage on the Covered Bond Label website www.coveredbondlabel.com or via the following QR code:

3.14 FINLAND

By Timo Ruotsalainen, Aktia Bank plc

I. FRAMEWORK

In Finland, the legal basis for covered bond issuance is the Act on Mortgage Credit Banks and Covered Bonds (151/2022). The law entered into force on 8th July 2022. The legislative framework is adopting the necessary changes of the harmonized EU legal framework (EU directive 2019/2162 and EU Regulation 2019/2160).

The former Act on Mortgage Credit Bank Operations (688/2010) is still governing the issuance issued before July 2022 unless the issuer has obtained a consent from investors in bonds issued while Law 688/2010 was in force, in which case the new law will also apply to these issues.

II. STRUCTURE OF THE ISSUER

The issuer of Finnish covered bonds can be a universal bank or a specialist mortgage bank. Generally, entities that can issue covered bonds are credit institutions authorised to engage in mortgage credit bank operations. Starting from 2022 onwards the application for the authorization process is based on the EU harmonized legal framework. Currently the issuer of Finnish Covered Bonds can be a specialised mortgage bank, but also deposit banks or credit entities are entitled to apply for a license to engage in mortgage credit bank operations (i.e., issue covered bonds).

There are currently ten potential and authorized issuers of Finnish covered bonds. Details of each issuer and permission to operate as Mortgage Credit Bank in Finland can be monitored on the following FFSA website: Supervised entities – Registers – www.finanssivalvonta.fi

The Finnish Covered Bond Law stipulates certain requirements to receive a covered bond issuance license. The covered bond issuer should provide a business plan, show stability, expertise in mortgage credit operations, risk management and practices concerning valuation of collateral. Interestingly, the requirements to receive a Finnish Covered Bond License seem very similar to the requirements to receive a German Pfandbrief License. All Finnish issuers had to reapply for the license in connection with the change of the legislation.

The issuer holds the cover assets on the balance sheet. A subsequent transfer of the cover assets to another legal entity is not taking place. A direct legal link between single cover asset and the covered bonds issued does not exist. All obligations from Finnish Covered Bonds are direct and unconditional obligations of the issuing bank as a whole (dual recourse). In the case of insolvency, the cover pool is segregated by law from the general insolvency estate and is reserved only for the claims of the holders of Finnish Covered Bonds.

Issuers may have several active cover pools. Most of the issuers have separate cover pools for the operations taking place under the new legislation (the Act on Mortgage Credit Banks and Covered Bonds (151/2022)) and the former pool remains as actively managed run off pool.

III. COVER ASSETS

Finnish covered bonds have a cover pool register that includes all cover pool assets, covered bonds, intermediary credits and derivatives. Eligible assets for Finnish covered bonds are residential mortgage loans (including shares in Finnish housing companies), commercial mortgage loans, public sector loans in accordance with Article 129(1) CRR and substitution assets. At least 90% of the cover pool loans must consist of residential mortgage loan or public sector loans. In the current legislation (151/2022) the amount of substitution assets is limited to 20% of the cover pool. Assets securing the liquidity requirement (180 days outflow coverage) are excluded of this restriction. The geographical scope of cover assets is restricted to the European Economic Area.

Enforcement of non-Finnish cover pool assets would usually be determined by the laws of the jurisdiction in which the assets are located. Due to European Union law, inside the EU, enforcement is safeguarded in all

Member States anyway. However, majority of Finnish issuers have only Finnish assets in the covered bond pools. The assets eligible as cover pool assets need to fulfil the EU Regulation 575/2013 article 129 requirements.

Act on Mortgage Credit Banks and Covered Bonds (151/2022) enables that a mortgage credit bank may grant a credit institution a credit against which the credit institution as the debtor shall place mortgage-backed credits or public-sector credits as collateral for the covered bonds issued by the mortgage credit bank as laid down in this Act (intermediary credit). An intermediary credit may only be granted to a credit institution belonging to the same consolidation group or amalgamation of deposit banks as the issuer.

Up to 20% of the mortgage cover pool is allowed to consist of substitute cover assets. As collateral securing a covered bond, the following types of substitution assets meeting the requirements laid down in Article 129 of the EU Capital Requirements Regulation may be used on a temporary basis:

1) assets qualifying as level 1, level 2A or level 2B assets eligible to meet the liquidity buffer requirements of a credit institution pursuant to the applicable delegated regulation adopted pursuant to Article 460 of the EU Capital Requirements Regulation;

2) short-term exposures to credit institutions or short-term deposits to credit institutions referred to in Article 129(1)(c) of the EU Capital Requirements Regulation.

Instruments, the counterparty of which shall be deemed to be insolvent within the meaning of Article 178 of the EU Capital Requirements Regulation, or which are financial instruments issued by the issuer itself or by an entity affiliated to it, shall not be used as substitution assets.

ABS or MBS tranches are not eligible for the cover pool.

Derivatives are eligible for the cover pools only if they are used for hedging purposes. The nature of the cover pool is dynamic. Currency risk is perfectly matched, as the law requires cover assets to be in the same currency as the covered bonds or the currency risk must be hedged against by a derivatives contract.

IV. VALUATION AND LTV CRITERIA

The property valuation within the legal framework for covered bonds in Finland is based on market values, valuations are based on "current value", market value determined in accordance with FFSA regulations. Based on the regulation, the issuer needs to monitor the valuation of the property also based on statistical methods (indexed value) quarterly and set limits for the acceptable changes of the values. Should the value exceed or drop below the limits the property valuation needs to be updated accordingly.

There are different LTV levels for residential and commercial mortgage loans: 80% of the value of the residential property 60% of the value of the commercial property accepted and the principal of other receivables. This LTV is a relative limit, i.e. when a loan exceeds the 60%/80% limit, the part of the loan up to 60%/80% LTV remains eligible to the cover pool. A loan placed as collateral for a covered bond may not exceed the current value of the property standing as collateral.

V. ASSET – LIABILITY MANAGEMENT

The net present value of the total amount of collateral of covered bonds shall continuously exceed by at least 2 (two) per cent the total net present value of the payment liabilities resulting from the covered bonds. The net present value test helps mitigate interest-rate, currency and liquidity risk. If the requirements laid down in Article 129(3)(a)(3) of the EU Capital Requirements Regulation are not met, the overcollateralization value shall be at minimum 5 (five) per cent. In addition to the part laid down in this subsection, the overcollateralization shall also cover the estimated winding-down costs related to covered bonds.

In calculations based on the nominal value, the cover assets in the cover pool and the impact of currency derivatives contracts shall be considered when determining the obligations incurred from covered bonds.

In calculations based on the present value, the value of derivatives contracts shall be determined based on pre-sent value at the time of valuation.

In calculations based on both the current and the nominal value, any increased credit loss risk of the secured receivable shall be appropriately accounted for, at least in cases where the receivable shall, pursuant to Article 178 of the EU Capital Requirements Regulation, be considered non-performing.

The issuer shall also ensure that the cover pool continuously contains an amount of funds that meets the quality requirements laid down in the legislation and covers the maximum cumulative net liquidity outflow relating to covered bonds over the next 180 days (liquidity buffer requirement).

To determine the net outflow rate referred to above, the issuer may use as the maturity date of a covered bond the final maturity date (soft bullet).

VI. TRANSPARENCY

Obligation to regularly disclose information on covered bonds. The issuer shall publish the following information on covered bonds on their website at least quarterly:

1) the total value of the cover assets and issued covered bonds;
2) the international securities identification numbers (ISINs) of the covered bonds;
3) distribution of cover assets by type; for residential loans, however, this information shall be itemised into loans to natural persons, loans to housing companies and loans to other housing associations;
4) geographical distribution of collateral for loan receivables, description of the assessment methods, and information on the credit amounts of loan receivables;
5) information on the market risks associated with the covered bonds, including interest rate risk and currency risk, as well as credit risks and liquidity risks;
6) information on the maturity of covered bonds, including any requirements for extending the maturity of a bond as well as the legal and any other effects of extending maturity;
7) the available collateral and minimum collateral level, including the minimum level laid down in legislation for overcollateralization, overcollateralization required under the terms and conditions of a bond or bond programme as well as the total value of the cover pool in excess of these; and
8) the share in the cover pool of loan receivables that either meet the requirements laid down in Article 178 of the EU Capital Requirements Regulation or the matured principal or interest of which has otherwise remained unpaid for at minimum 90 days.

Finnish covered bond issuers have adopted the ECBC Label initiative for Covered Bonds and publish also the Harmonised Transparency Template (HTT) on their websites. The ECBC Label Transparency Guidelines included in the Covered Bond Label Convention for 2014 are fully aligned and compliant with Art. 129 (7) CRR.

On top of the regulatory requirements all issuers provide additional information about the cover pools, ratings and other relevant topics on their websites. Please find the information about the website below (section X).

VII. COVER POOL MONITOR AND BANKING SUPERVISION

The issuer carries out the monitoring of the cover pool. The issuer reports to the FSA on quarterly basis. The FSA is responsible for overall supervision, covered bond licensing, issuing regulations and compliance with the law. The Financial Supervisory Authority recommends that the board of directors of a supervised mortgage bank should adopt a business plan for mortgage banking activities including e.g. issuance plans at least annually.

The FFSA has the legal power to take appropriate measures. It is allowed to conduct inspections at the bank in question or to require documents. Also, the FSA could issue a public warning or admonition. Ultimately, it is up to the FFSA to revoke the banking license of the bank in question.

VIII. SEGREGATION OF COVER ASSETS AND BANKRUPTCY REMOTENESS OF COVERED BONDS

A cover register allows identifying the cover assets. The legal effect of a registration of assets into the cover register is to create the priority claim of covered bond holders to these cover assets in case of an insolvency of the issuer. The cover register is managed by the corresponding bank, which in turn is supervised by the FSA.

The cover register contains information about the principle amount of covered bonds issued, the mortgages and substitute assets covering these bonds as well as derivative transactions hedging these bonds or funds placed as their collateral. The Covered Bond act (151/2022) specifically excludes set-off against cover pool assets.

Asset segregation

When the issuer or the debtor of an intermediary credit has entered into liquidation or been declared bankrupt, the Financial Supervisory Authority (the FSA) shall without delay appoint an administrator to supervise the appropriate administration of covered bonds and liquidation of the cover assets.

The cover pool is a part of the general estate of the bank as long as the issuer is solvent. If the insolvency proceedings are opened, by operation of law, the assets recorded in the cover registers are excluded from the general insolvency's estate. Within the insolvency procedure, the derivative counterparties rank pari passu to covered bond holders. The cover assets do form a separate legal estate, which is ring-fenced by law from other assets of the issuer.

Impact of insolvency proceedings on covered bonds and derivatives

Covered bonds do not automatically accelerate when the issuing institution becomes insolvent. The legal consequences for the derivatives in case of an insolvency of the issuing bank depend on the relevant contracts. The cover pool administrator can only accelerate the covered bonds if the cover tests can no longer be fulfilled. This would trigger the sale of the cover pool assets.

The cover pool administrator will supervise cover pool cash flows and payments to covered bondholders. The general administrator also has powers to act in the interests of the covered bondholders under the direction of the cover pool supervisor. This includes the ability to assign the liability for a covered bond as well as the related cover pool assets to another licensed covered bond issuer.

The administrator shall work together with the FSA and, where applicable, the Resolution Authority. The administrator has the right to obtain the information necessary for performing their duties from the Financial Supervisory Authority and the Resolution Authority. Similarly, the Financial Supervisory Authority and the Resolution Authority have the right to obtain the information necessary for performing their duties from the administrator.

Preferential treatment of covered bond holders

Covered bond holders enjoy a preferential treatment as the law stipulates the separation of the cover assets on the one hand and the insolvency's estate on the other.

Covered bond holders are allowed claims on both on the issuer and cover pool assets (dual recourse) meaning that creditors also participate in the insolvency proceedings in respect of the remaining assets of the bank.

A moratorium on the insolvency's estate cannot delay the cash flows from the cover assets and, therefore, endanger the timely payment of covered bond holders.

Access to liquidity in case of insolvency

With the appointment of the cover pool administrator, this person acts on behalf of the covered bond holders. The pool administrator has access to the cover assets. Cover assets may only be disposed with the consent of the FSA. Additionally, the pool administrator has also the first access on cash flows generated by the cover assets. The law foresees a possibility for the pool administrator together with the bankruptcy trustee to take up a loan on behalf of the cover pool to create more liquidity.

Up to 20% of the cover pool may consist of liquid substitute cover assets. Substitute assets are described earlier on section "Cover Assets". With the consent of the FSA, this limit may even be higher. As all cover assets entered into the cover register are ring-fenced in case of an insolvency of the issuer, this results also in the insolvency remoteness of voluntary overcollateralisation.

Some Finnish covered bonds mitigate liquidity risk via contractual twelve-month maturity extensions ("Soft Bullet"). The extension provides additional time for principal amounts to be refinanced. Maturity extensions improve the chance that principal and interest payments can be met without refinancing the covered bonds for the first twelve months after issuer default.

The maturity extension, subject to permission granted by the Financial Supervisory Authority, extend the maturity of the covered bond. The prerequisites for extension of maturity are that:

1) the issuer is unable to obtain funding from commonly used sources of long-term funding;
2) the issuer is unable to repay the principal and interests of the maturing covered bond without falling short of the liquidity buffer requirement applicable to the issuer or the amalgamation of deposit banks; and
3) the extension does not affect the order of maturity based on the original maturity dates of covered bonds secured by the same cover pool.

The issuer shall apply to the Financial Supervisory Authority for permission to extend maturity as referred to in this section at the latest five banking days before the maturity date of the covered bond.

IX. RISK-WEIGHTING & COMPLIANCE WITH EUROPEAN LEGISLATION

The Finnish Act on Mortgage Credit Banks and Covered Bonds 151/2022 ("the Covered Bond Act") comply with the requirements of the Directive (EU) 2019/2162 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 November 2019 on the issue of covered bonds and covered bond public supervision and amending Directives 2009/65/EC and 2014/59/EU (the Covered Bond Directive) and Regulation (EU) 2019/2160 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 November 2019 amending Regulation (EU) No 575/2013 as regards exposures in the form of covered bonds (the Covered Bond Regulation). The Covered Bond Regulation amended Article 129 of the Capital Requirements Regulation (and certain related provisions) and further strengthened the criteria for covered bonds that benefit from preferential capital treatment under the Capital Requirements Regulation regime.

Finnish covered bonds are 10% risk weighted in Finland. Following the common practice in Europe, they accordingly enjoy a 10% risk weighting in most European countries and fulfill the requirement to be considered European Covered Bonds (Premium) quality.

Finnish Covered Bonds are also eligible in repo transaction with national central bank, i.e. within the Euro-zone.

As far as the domestic issuers are aware, there are no further specific investment regulations regarding Finnish Covered Bonds.

The previous Finnish Covered Bond legislation (the Finnish Covered Bond Act 688/2010, "The MBA") included already most of the topics described in the EU Harmonization package (Article and Directive). The MBA continues to apply to covered bonds issued thereunder unless the terms and conditions of such covered bonds provide that the Covered Bond Act applies to them.

X. REGULATIVE LIMITS IN MORTGAGE LENDING

Financial service providers have a statutory obligation to identify and know their customers.

The loan cap limiting the maximum LTV level is currently 90%. For a first home purchase the cap is at 95%. Borrower's ability to pay the loan and handle the regular living costs is stress tested with 6% interest rate.

Issuers: Aktia Bank Plc, Danske Bank, OP Mortgage Bank, Nordea Mortgage Bank, Ålandsbanken AB, The Mortgage Society of Finland, SP-Mortgage Bank Plc, Oma Savings Bank, S-Bank Plc and Bonum Bank Plc.

COVERED BOND LABEL **:** Nordea Mortgage Bank (2), Op Mortgage Bank (3), Danske Bank (1), SP-Mortgage Bank (2), S-Bank Plc (1 pool).

For the most up-to-date information, please consult the new ECBC Covered Bond Comparative Database webpage on the Covered Bond Label website www.coveredbondlabel.com or via the following QR code:

3.15 FRANCE

By Cristina Costa, Barclays; Jennifer Levy, Natixis; Marc Nocart, Caisse de Refinancement de l'Habitat and Gregory Rousseau, Crédit Foncier

Three main covered bond issuing structures exist in France today:

- *Sociétés de Crédit Foncier (SCF);*
- *Sociétés de Financement de l'Habitat (SFH);*
- *Caisse de Refinancement de l'Habitat (CRH).*

While several countries allow ordinary credit institutions to issue covered bonds subject to the segregation of the cover pool in their balance sheet, France requires the set-up of an ad hoc company which is a duly licensed specialised credit institution (licensed by the *Autorité de Contrôle Prudentiel et de Résolution (ACPR)*, the French Banking Authority). The ad-hoc companies are known as société de financement de l'habitat (SFH) and *société de crédit foncier (SCF)*; these are totally distinct from the other entities of the group to which they belong and are exclusively dedicated to the issuance of covered bonds named respectively *obligations de financement de l'habitat (OHs)* and *obligations foncières (OFs)* and the management of the assets backing those issues (the "cover pool").

Caisse de Refinancement de l'Habitat (CRH) is the sole entity in its category. It is also a duly licensed specialised credit institution which acts independently and is distinct from the banking groups which are being financed.

Regulation of *Société de Crédit Foncier and Sociétés de Financement de l'Habitat* was substantially strengthened in 2014 by Decree n° 2014-526 dated 23 May 2014 and Arrêté dated 26 May 2014. Law n° 2016-1691 dated 9 December 2016 relating to "transparency, fight against corruption and modernisation of economy" (known as the "Sapin II Law") has amended the legal eligibility criteria of SCF's assets to allow SCF to grant secured loans benefiting from a financial guarantee constituted of real estate's loans receivables as it is already the case for the SFH. It constitutes a new step towards the legal convergence of the various French regimes.

The French covered bond legislation was amended to be in line with the EU Covered Bond Directive. France's previous covered bond law was already in line with most of the minimum standards prescribed by the new EU rules, so did not require major changes to comply with EU requirements. Ordonnance n° 2021-858 of 30 June 2021 on the transposition of the EU CB Directive 2019/2162 was published on 1 July 2021 in the Journal Officiel n 0151 (see link[1]). The ordonnance proposes the adoption of a number of legal measures necessary for the transposition of EU CB Directive into French law. The legal decree n° 2021-898 on the transposition was published on 7 July 2021 in the Journal Officiel n 0156 (see link[2]). In addition, ACPR instructions were published on 9 March 2022 (see link[3]). The new French law entered into force on 8 July 2022.

I. FRAMEWORK

SFH and SCF

The *SCF/SFH* are governed by Articles L.513-2 et seq. and R.515-2 et seq. of the French Monetary and Financial Code (the "Code"). This stringent legal framework is specifically designed to protect the holders of the *OFs and OHs*. As a credit institution, the *SCF/SFH* are also governed by French general banking regulations.

In accordance with the EU Covered Bond Directive, the segregation of the cover assets may be achieved via a true sale mechanism (SCF) or parallel mechanisms (SCF/SFH) described in the EU Collateral Directive 2002/47/EC.

1 https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/download/pdf?id=9qUzwGqxzfFMHF0jy9iWjxD-20XFtDEHKJ4-bzXY1sc

2 https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/download/pdf?id=Ty1PDkndiYQsaqqqASRkP5SuLPD8fbUscXQ6jPafkIM

3 https://acpr.banque-france.fr/en/page-tableau-filtre/instructions-2

The SCF/SFH structure can indeed make use of the implementation of the EU Collateral Directive, as amended, under French law (implemented into the Code under articles L. 211-36 and seq.), which allows for a segregation through either a remittance (*remise*), a pledge (*nantissement*) or the transfer by way of security of the full title (*cession en pleine propriété à titre de garantie*) of the home loans' receivables without an actual transfer (true sale) of these receivables to the issuer. Pursuant to article L.211-38 of the Code, the transfer by pledge or by way of security shall be enforceable even when the relevant collateral provider is subject to an insolvency proceeding.

The sponsor bank remits, pledges or transfers collateral to a dedicated subsidiary, which is a regulated French specialised credit institution with limited purpose licensed as a SFH/SCF (e.g. issuing covered bonds for the purpose of providing financing to the sponsor bank). The covered bond proceeds are used to fund advances to the respective sponsor bank(s). The covered bonds are secured by the legal privilege over the assets of the issuer (advances to the sponsor bank(s)), which are in turn secured by a pledge over cover assets (i.e. residential home loans for SCF/SFH or public and commercial assets for SCF), which remain on the sponsor bank's balance sheet (and/or on the balance sheets of the respective subsidiaries, affiliates or group member banks). Upon a borrower enforcement notice (for example in case of default of the sponsor bank), the respective cover assets, including underlying securities, will be transferred without any formalities to the covered bond issuer.

CRH

Caisse de Refinancement de l'Habitat ("CRH") is governed by Article 13 of Law 85-695 of 11 July 1985 as amended and supplemented by the Ordonnance 2021-858 of 30 June 2021, and benefits from a restricted agreement to operate (i.e to issue mortgage-backed covered bonds for the purpose of providing financing to its shareholders from the Minister for the Economy, Finance and Budget.

The sponsors/shareholders banks pledge collateral to CRH, which is a regulated French specialised credit institution with limited purpose license to operate (e.g. issuing mortgage-backed covered bonds for the purpose of providing financing to the sponsor/shareholder banks).

According to Article 13 of Law 85-695 of 11 July 1985, this pledge is enforceable when the collateral provider is subject to a French or foreign insolvency proceeding.

The covered bond proceeds are used to fund mortgage promissory notes (billets à ordre) to the respective sponsor (shareholder) banks.

The covered bonds are secured by the legal privilege over the mortgage promissory notes, which are in turn secured by a pledge over cover assets (i.e. domestic residential home loans), which remain on each sponsor's/shareholder's balance sheet (and/or on their balance sheets of their respective subsidiaries, affiliates or group member banks). Upon a borrower enforcement notice (for example in case of default of the sponsor/shareholder's bank), the respective cover assets, including underlying securities, will be transferred without any formalities to CRH.

II. STRUCTURE OF THE ISSUER

SCF/SFH

The SCF/SFH is a credit institution licensed by the *Autorité de Contrôle Prudentiel et de Résolution (ACPR)*, the French Banking Authority, with a single purpose: to grant or acquire eligible cover assets, as defined by Law, and to finance them by issuing respectively *OFs and OHs*, which benefit from a special legal privilege (the "Privilege"). It may also issue or contract other debts benefiting or not from the Privilege. The *SCF/SFH* operates under the close control of the ACPR, which requires it to comply with strict management rules in order to ensure the company's financial security.

CRH

The *Caisse de Refinancement de l'Habitat ("CRH")* is a non-for-profit, specialized credit institution, of general interest, created in 1985 by French Government as a central agency, to develop the housing market in France and comfort long term liquidity for banks

CRH is the sole agency-type structure existing in Europe, and one of the earliest French covered bond issuer, which explains it is operating under its dedicated legal framework, although it is now very close to the SCF and SFH regime, thanks to the harmonisation effect of the CB Directive.

Although entirely privately held (currently by French banks representing ca. 78% of the French residential real estate market), this market platform is under the French Government ongoing supervision, with the attendance of a Government Commissioner to all CRHs board and committees meetings.

As of 31 December, 2024, its equity belongs to:

- Crédit Agricole SA – Crédit Lyonnais 36.1%
- Crédit Mutuel – CIC 25.6%
- Société Générale – CDN 9.4%
- BPCE 27.6%
- BNP Paribas 1.2%

Every borrower is a shareholder of CRH, whose equity stake in CRH is proportional to its weight in CRH's capital.

Furthermore:

- every borrower is committed to contribute to the liquidity support to CRH
- CRH benefits from cross commitments of shareholders to supply capital contributions.

CRH is not borrowing for itself but for the account of its shareholders; nevertheless, as any fully independent credit institution, it can decline funding a shareholder.

III. COVER ASSETS

There are slight differences in nature between the SCF, SFH and CRH cover assets. SCF may refinance residential home loans, "public exposures" and commercial real estate loans, whereas SFH and CRH are dedicated to residential home loans. The new legislation removes the 35% balance sheet outstanding limit on guaranteed home loans from the SCF and the CRH frameworks, but also specifies that the guarantor must be rated at least 'A-' (previously loans with a guarantor in the 'BBB" category were eligible). In this way, the SCF, SFH and CRH regimes are further aligned.

SCF/SFH/CRH

The eligible assets of French CB issuers comprise, inter-alia:

- Secured loans which, in accordance with Article L.513-3 of the Code include loans which are secured by a first-ranking mortgage over an eligible real estate, or by other real estate security interests that are equivalent to a first-ranking mortgage, or loans that are guaranteed by a credit institution, financing company (*société de financement*) or an insurance company with a shareholder's equity of at least EUR 12 million and which does not belong to the same group as the relevant *SCF* according to Article L.233-16 of the French Commercial Code. The property must be located in France or in any other Member State of the EU, EE or in a State benefiting from the highest level of credit assessment given by an external rating agency recognized by the ACPR;

- Mortgage promissory notes (billets à ordre) issued by credit institutions guaranteed by the pledge (nantissement) of receivables pursuant to and in accordance with the provisions of Articles L.313-42 to L.313-49 of the Code, compliant with the eligibility criteria set out in Article L.513-3 of the Code; according to Article L. 513-6 of the Code, these Mortgage Promissory Notes are assimilated to the Secured loans described above;
- Grant to any credit institution loans guaranteed by the remittance (*remise*), the transfer (*cession*) or the pledge (*nantissement*) of receivables pursuant to and in accordance with the provisions of Articles L.211-36 to L.211-40 or Articles L.313-23 to L.313-35 of the Code, regardless of the nature of such receivables, professional or otherwise, provided that they satisfy the eligibility criteria set out in Article L.513-3 of the Code;
- Loans guaranteed by the *Fonds de Garantie à l'Accession Sociale à la Propriété* (Guarantee Fund for Social Access to Home Ownership);
- Substitution assets, under certain liquidity and maturity conditions and provided that their aggregate value is up to a maximum amount of 15% of the outstanding covered bonds. The new law introduces sub-limits – in line with the amended limits on corporate exposures in CRR Art 129 – of:
  - Maximum 15% for credit quality step 1 exposures;
  - Maximum 10% for credit quality step 2 exposures;
  - Maximum 8% for credit quality step 3.
- Within the limit of the liquidity buffer, in addition to substitution assets, debt securities (titres de créances) issued or guaranteed by a central administration of a Member state of the European Union and cash invested on accounts opened within the books of a central bank of a Member State of the European Union which comply with the criteria listed in 1(a) of Article 416 of the Capital Requirements Regulation n°575/2013 dated 26 June 2013.
- ***Only SCFs:*** exposures to public entities which, in accordance with Article L.513-4 of the Code include;
- inter alia, exposures to public entities located within the EEA, in a member State of the EU or if not located in EU / EEA, such public entities must comply with specific limits and level of credit assessment given by an external rating agency recognized by the ACPR (minimum credit quality step 2).
- ***Only CRH:*** CRH has more stringent eligibility criteria regarding the collateral: property is entirely of residential nature, and located solely in France, and the max. size of the loans = EUR 1,000,000 with a max. remaining maturity of 25 years).

IV. VALUATION AND LTV CRITERIA

The rules for property valuations are the same for SCF, SFH and CRH. Real estate loans in the cover pool may be financed by OFs, OHs, CRH's debts or other privileged debt up to the lesser of: i/ the remaining principal balance of the loan; and ii/a limited regulatory percentage of the value of the pledged properties for real estate exposures.

This limited regulatory percentage is equal to:

- 80% of the value of the residential pledged properties.
- 60% of the value of the commercial pledged properties.
- In the case of loans guaranteed by the *Fonds de garantie à l'accession sociale* (FGAS – Guarantee Fund for Social Home Accession) 80% of the value of the residential property plus the portion guaranteed by the FGAS over this 80% limit.

The real estate financed by the loans is valued according to the French mortgage market accepted practice and defined by law (regulation n°99-10). **Real estate valuations must be based on their long-term char-**

acteristics. Under banking regulation (Arrêté of the 3rd of November 2014), real estate values are considered as part of the risks of *covered bonds*. The valuations are made by independent experts in compliance with banking regulation.

Regarding valuation methods, different options are available (full valuation, use of statistic methods) that depend on the property use (residential or professional (commercial)), the loan size and the property value. For statistical methods, the real estate values are based on the index provided by INSEE (*Institut National de la Statistique et des Études Économiques*) or on the index provided by Notaries (PERVAL). The real estates are revaluated on an annual basis.

Among his duties, the Specific Controller controls the eligibility, composition and valuation of the assets. The valuation and revaluation methods as well as their results are annually validated by the Specific Controller and published in the annual reports.

V. ASSET/LIABILITIY AND RISK MANAGEMENT

The *SCF*, *SFH* and *CRH* must comply with asset/liability management rules as required by banking regulations and, in particular, must monitor the interest rate and liquidity gaps between their assets and liabilities.

Market risks

The *SCF*, *SFH* and *CRH* must manage and hedge market risks on their assets, liabilities and off-balance sheet items: interest rate risks, currency risks, liquidity and maturity mismatches between liabilities and assets. The surveillance of these points is part of the duties of the Specific Controller.

Coverage ratio

Anytime, the outstanding of the weighted eligible assets of the *SCF*, *SFH* and *CRH* must be at least equal to 105% of the outstanding liabilities benefiting from the Privilege.

From a regulatory standpoint, the coverage ratio is calculated on the basis of the SCF, SFH and CRH accounting data by applying a specific weight to each class of assets:

> Loans secured by a first-ranking mortgage or by an equivalent guarantee are weighted 100% of their eligible portion to collateralize the privileged liabilities;

> Residential home loans guaranteed by a credit institution or an insurance company are weighted according to the following table:

Rating of the guarantor (M/S/F)	Home loan guarantor not part of the same consolidation group as the SFH / SCF /CRH	Home loan guarantor is part of the same consolidation scope as the SFH
≥A3/A-/A-	100%	80%
<A3/A-/A-	0%	0%

> Public exposures and liquid assets are weighted 100%.

Maturity mismatch

The remaining weighted average life of the eligible assets used to reach the minimum legal overcollateralisation requirement of 105% should not exceed that of the privileged liabilities by more than 18 months. In addition, new issuers and structures in run off might be exempted of this requirement.

Specifities to SFH

The SFH programmes also include a dynamic Asset Coverage Test (ACT) that requires the balance of the mortgages in the collateral pool to significantly exceed the balance of the outstanding covered bonds. The minimum

level of OC will depend on the credit quality of the mortgages in the cover pool as assessed by the rating agencies. For all the existing programmes the maximum asset percentage applied in the ACT is 92.5%, which translates into a minimum overcollateralisation of at least 8%. However, that being said, all SFH programmes currently exceed the minimum amount due to adjustments to the most recent rating agency methodologies.

When calculating the appropriate loan balance within the Asset Coverage Test (ACT), higher LTV loans are included in the pool, but loan amounts exceeding the respective cap do not get any value in the ACT. For all programmes, the LTV ratio of the mortgage loans cannot be more than 100%. In addition, the ACT gives no value to the loans in arrears or defaults.

Liquidity risk

The French CB issuers are required to ensure that the net outflows over the coming 180 days are covered by cash and liquid assets. The scope of this obligation will extend to forecasted principal and interest flows involving the *SCF/SFH/CRH's* assets, as well as to flows related to its derivative instruments. Net outflows may be covered, if necessary, by replacement securities, liquid assets eligible to the Eurosystem liquidity facilities, and repurchase agreements with credit institutions verifying the highest short-term credit ratings or whose creditworthiness is guaranteed by other credit institutions that have the highest short-term credit ratings.

Liquidity needs may be covered by liquid assets (level 1, 2A or 2B as defined in Article 10, 11, 12 of EU Regulation 2015/61). These liquid assets cannot be issued by the SCF/SFH/CRH nor the sponsor bank.

As per the French Decree no. 2021-898 of 6 July, the new French law defines two objective triggers for covered bond maturity extensions, that should avoid the risk of premature extensions:

> If an issuer or sponsor bank falls into insolvency or resolution according to L. 613-49; or

> On decision of France's prudential regulation authority (Autorité de Controle Prudentiel et de Resolution, ACPR) if the issuer breaches the 180-day liquidity coverage requirement for covered bonds.

The *French CB* issuers are authorized to subscribe to their own *covered bonds issues* up to 10% of the outstanding of the existing privileged liabilities. These issues provided may only be used then as collateral with the central bank or canceled within 8 days.

Exposure on the group to which the SCF/SFH belongs

Decree N° 2014-526 and Arrêté dated 26 May 2014 limits the ability of the *SCF/SFH* to hold assets in the form of exposures on entities of the group to which it belongs. When these assets exceed 25% of the non-privileged assets of the *SCF/SFH*, the difference between the exposure on these entities and the sum of 25% of the non-privileged assets together with the assets received in guarantee, pledged or full property, is deducted from the numerator of the coverage ratio. CRH does not belong to any group.

VI. TRANSPARENCY

As credit institution and listed company, the French CB issuers must publish periodic financial information. The issuer must send a detailed annual report on risk management to the ACPR. Moreover, they are also required to publish:

> A quarterly report relating to the nature and the quality of their assets.

> An annual report describing:

(i) the nature and the quality of their assets, the characteristics and breakdown of loans and guarantees, the amount of defaults, the breakdown of receivables by amount and by type of debtors, the proportion of early redemptions, the volume and breakdown of replacement securities they hold, and

(ii) the extent and sensitivity of their interest-rate exposure.

> A quarterly report, on 31 March, 30 June, 30 September and 31 December of each year relating to:

  (i) the amount of its coverage ratio and the compliance with the limits they are requested to respect i.e. the 10% limit of mortgage promissory notes etc.;

  (ii) the data of the calculation of the coverage of its liquidity needs;

  (iii) the gap of the average duration between those of its eligible assets and its privileged liabilities;

  (iv) the valuation of the coverage of the privileged debts until their maturity by the available eligible assets and the estimation of the future new production of these eligible assets on the basis of prudent assumptions.

Furthermore, on a quarterly basis, as the French CB issuers must provide the ACPR with detailed information on covered bonds issued and the cover pool, as well a report on the procedures undertaken by the Specific controller which would allow the labelling of French covered bonds as European covered bonds (premium) or European covered bonds.

In addition, the French CB issuers generally publish the European Covered Bond Label Reports on a quarterly basis (under the Harmonised Transparency Template format), recently enriched by the additional regulatory requirements in connection with the eligibility of the collateral to ECB open market operations.

Covered bond label

Covered bonds that comply with both the EU Directive and Article 129 of CRR may use the 'European Covered Bond (Premium)' label (*"Obligation garantie européenne de qualité supérieure"*). Covered bonds that comply with the EU Directive, but not all the requirements of article 129 CRR, may use the 'European Covered Bond' label (*"Obligation garantie européenne"*). In France, the label is granted by the ACPR, the French national regulator. The ACPR publishes on its website[4] the list of French covered bonds benefiting from the label "European Covered Bond (Premium) or "European Covered Bond".

VII. COVER POOL MONITOR AND BANKING SUPERVISION

The "Specific Controller" is appointed by the *SCF*, *SFH* and *CRH* with the agreement of the ACPR. To ensure his independence, the Specific Controller cannot be an employee of either of the *SCF*, *SFH* and *CRH's* statutory auditors, of any company that controls the *SCF*, *SFH* and *CRH*, or of any company directly or indirectly controlled by a company that controls the *SCF*, *SFH* and *CRH*.

The mission of the Specific Controller includes the following verifications:

> that all assets granted or acquired by the *SCF*, *SFH*, and *CRH* are eligible to the cover pool, and in the case of mortgage assets, that they are properly valued;

> that the coverage ratio is, at any moment, at least, at 105%;

> that the *SCF/SFH/CRH* comply with all the limits required by the regulation (i.e. the limit of the loans guaranteed by a credit institution or an insurance company, the limit of the mortgage promissory notes and the limit of the replacement assets);

> that the "congruence", i.e. the adequacy of maturities and interest rates of assets and liabilities, is at a satisfactory level. The Specific Controller checks the different quarterly indicators before sending them to the ACPR, and

> that issuers fulfill criteria to obtain Covered Bond labels;

> that, in general, the *SCF/SFH/CRH* complies with the law and regulations.

4 https://acpr.banque-france.fr/en/covered-bonds

The Specific Controller certifies that the *SCF/SFH/CRH* complies with the coverage ratio rules on the basis of a quarterly issuance program, and for any issue of privileged debt of an amount equal or above EUR 500 m. These coverage ratio affidavits are required to be stipulated in issuance contracts where the debt benefits from the Privilege.

The Specific Controller reports to the ACPR, attends shareholders' meetings, and may attend Board meetings. The *SCF/SFH & CRH* operate under the constant supervision of the ACPR. Its management, its Specific Controller and its Statutory Auditors should be agreed by the ACPR. All the above-mentioned reports should be sent to the ACPR together with the annual report of the Specific Controller and the annual reports of the Statutory Auditors.

The Specific Controller issues to the ACPR an audit report on any French CB issuer CB label request

VIII. SEGREGATION OF COVER ASSETS AND BANKRUPTCY REMOTENESS OF COVERED BONDS

Cover assets are segregated in the issuing specialised credit institution, or in the case of CRH, within CRH.

SCF/SFH

Pursuant to Article L.513-11 of the Code, holders of *OFs/OHs* and other privileged debts have preferred creditor status and the right to be paid prior to all other creditors who have no rights to the assets of the *SCF/SFH* up until the claims of the preferred creditors have been fully satisfied.

CRH

Pursuant to paragraph IV and V of Article 13 of Law 85-695, holders of CRH covered bonds and other privileged debts have preferred creditor status and the right to be paid prior to all other creditors who have no rights to the assets of CRH until the claims of preferred creditors have been fully satisfied.

All French CB issuers

Under the French legislation, the holders of covered bonds issued by the *SCF*, *SFH* and *CRH*, benefit from the legal privilege over the *SCF/SFH/CRH's* eligible assets. If the issuer becomes insolvent, the covered bonds and other privileged debts holders are paid in accordance with their payment schedule, and have priority over any of the programme's other non-privileged debts or creditors in relation to the programme's assets. All privileged debts rank *pari passu*. Until fully repayment of such privileged liabilities, no other creditors may take any action against the French CB issuers nor their cover assets.

The issuer may be subject to insolvency, but the *French legal framework* provides for a regime which derogates in many ways from the French insolvency provisions:

- **Legal Privilege / No acceleration of covered bonds as a result of insolvency of SCF, SFH and CRH**: in the event of an insolvency proceeding of the *SCF*, *SFH* and *CRH* (safeguard procedure, judicial reorganization, liquidation, or resolution), all claims benefiting from the Privilège (including interest) must be paid on their due dates and in preference to all other claims. Until fully repayment of all such preferred claims, no other creditors may take any action against the privileged assets of the *SCF*, *SFH* and *CRH*;
- **No nullity during the hardening period**: the provisions allowing an administrator to render certain transactions entered into during the hardening period (*période suspecte*) null and void are not applicable for the transfer of assets entered into by a *SCF*, *SFH* and *CRH* (provided that such transactions are made in accordance with their exclusive legal purpose and without fraud);
- **Option to terminate ongoing contracts with insolvent counterparties**: in case of the opening of any insolvency procedure against the credit institution, which is acting as manager and servicer of the *SCF/SFH/CRH*, any contract may be immediately terminated by the *SCF/SFH/CRH* notwithstanding any legal provisions to the contrary;

- **No impact of the hardening period**: the common provisions of French bankruptcy law affecting certain transactions, which entered into force during the months prior the insolvency proceedings during the hardening period, are not applicable to *SCF/SFH/CRH*.
- **No extension of bankruptcy proceedings**: as an exception to the general French bankruptcy Law, bankruptcy proceedings or liquidation of a company holding share capital in a *SCF/SFH/CRH* cannot be extended to the *SCF* or the *SFH* or *CRH*. As a result, the *SCF/SFH/CRH* enjoys full protection from the risks of default by their parent company or the group to which it belongs.

IX. RISK-WEIGHTING AND COMPLIANCE WITH EUROPEAN LEGISLATION

The French covered bonds' legislation and regulation comply with the requirements of the EU Covered Bond Directive. All covered bonds are CRR compliant (fulfilling criteria provided in article 129(1)). *French Covered Bonds issued by SCF/SFH/CRH* which are Article 129- CRR compliant ("European Covered Bond Premium") have a 10% risk-weighting according to the Standardised Approach in the CRR if benefiting from a rating classified as Step 1.

Other Covered bonds that comply with the EU Covered Bond Directive, but not with Article 129 of CRR, can use the 'European Covered Bond' label ("Obligation garantie européenne") and would qualify for a 20% risk-weighting according to the Standardised Approach in the CRR if benefiting from a rating classified as Step 1.

Grand fathering clause: covered bonds issued before the entry into force of the Directive on 8 July 2022 would keep their initial risk-weight.

OFs/OHs and CRH covered bonds can be eligible as Level 1 assets under LCR regulation provided they respect specific criteria.

Issuers: Arkéa Public Sector (SCF); Arkéa Home Loans (SFH); AXA Home Loan SFH, BNP Paribas Public Sector (SCF); BNP Paribas Home Loan (SFH); BPCE (SFH);); Caisse de Refinancement de l'Habitat (CRH);Caisse Française de Financement Local (CAFFIL); CCF (SFH); CIF Euromortgage; Compagnie de Financement Foncier (CFF); Crédit Agricole Financement de l'Habitat (SFH), Crédit Agricole Public Sector (SCF); Crédit Agricole Home Loan (SFH); Crédit Mutuel – CIC Home Loan (SFH); Crelan Home Loan SCF, La Banque Postale Home Loan (SFH), MMB SCF, Société Générale (SCF); Société Générale (SFH).

COVERED BOND · LABEL · **:** Arkéa (2 pools) AXA Home Loan SFH (1 pool), BNP Paribas (1 pool), BPCE SFH (1 pool), Caisse de Refinancement de l'Habitat (1 pool), Caisse Française de Financement Local (1 pool), CCF SFH (1 pool), CIF Euromortgage (1 pool), Compagnie de Financement Foncier (1 pool), Credit Agricole (3 pools), Crédit Mutuel – CIC Home Loan SFH (1 pool), Crelan Home Loan SCF (1 pool), La Banque Postale Home Loan SFH (1 pool), MMB SCF (1 pool), Société Générale (2 pools).

For the most up-to-date information, please consult the new ECBC Covered Bond Comparative Database webpage on the Covered Bond Label website www.coveredbondlabel.com or via the following QR code:

3.16 GEORGIA

By Rada Tomova, Head of Regional Policy Partnerships, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and David Abesadze, Head of Securities Market Supervision Department, National bank of Georgia

I. FRAMEWORK

The legal basis for the issuance of covered bonds on Georgian capital markets is the *Law of Georgia On Mortgage-covered Bonds* (the "Law") adopted by the Parliament of Georgia on 29 November 2022 and published in the Legislative Harald – Georgia's Official Gazette – on 16 December 2022[1]. The Law, which regulates the issuance of mortgage-covered bonds (the "mortgage bonds"), the supervision of issuers and their activities, entered into force 90 days after publication on 16 March 2023. It was developed by Georgia's financial markets regulator – the National Bank of Georgia ("NBG") – with inputs from the Ministry of Economy and market participants, and with technical assistance from the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development[2]. The stated purpose of the Law is to increase the access to diversified sources of financing for commercial banks' operations and to support the development of a covered bond market in Georgia. The legal framework has been supplemented by an NBG regulation – the *Regulation on Mortgage-covered Bonds* – which regulates (i) the process for authorisation and permission for issuing mortgage-covered bonds; (ii) the requirements for the provision of information to the NBG and investors in mortgage-covered bonds; (iii) the rules applicable to eligible cover assets and the coverage calculation; (iv) liquidity requirements; and (v) the rules on valuation of immovable property securing claims arising from mortgage loans included in the cover pool.

II. STRUCTURE OF THE ISSUER AND AUTHORISATION REQUIREMENTS

Pursuant to the *Law of Georgia On Mortgage-covered Bonds*, the issuer of covered bonds must be a commercial bank (including a refinancing bank) established in Georgia and licensed by the National Bank of Georgia. Any issuer planning to launch a covered bond programme is required to obtain approval from the regulator (NBG) and must demonstrate adherence to the following standards:

- An adequate operational framework and programme to issue covered bonds;
- Operations based on the process of and principles aimed at investor protection;
- Possession of relevant knowledge and market experience of the management and staff tasked with the implementation of the programme; and
- Sufficient resources to create, manage and supervise the asset cover pool.

Before the launch of a covered bonds programme, the issuer bank is required to submit all of the relevant information regarding a new programme to NBG. The required information includes the name of the mortgage covered bond programme; the board decision authorising its launch; a senior management confirmation letter; an outline of the structure of the mortgage covered bond programme[3]; the criteria for including loans in the cover pool; the decision-making process with regard to transferring assets into/from the cover pool (indicating triggers, e.g. arrears level); the process for transferring assets in and out of the cover pool; the process for ensuring compliance with the liquidity requirements; where applicable, the tests (e.g. asset coverage test, interest rate shortfall test, exchange rate, liquidity test, stress tests) that will be performed on the cover pool under the mortgage bond programme documentation; information about the cover pool monitor and its main

1 For references to the official version in Georgian and the English translation published by the NBG, please consult https://matsne.gov.ge/en/document/view/5599692?publication=0 and law-of-georgia-on-mortgage-covered-bonds-310123.pdf (nbg.gov.ge)

2 Project delivered in partnership with Richard Kemmish Consulting

3 This should include (i) the maximum asset percentage which the issuer proposes to run the programme with at any given time during the tenor of the programme; (ii) the type, currency(ies) and variety of cover assets; and (iii) information about the proposed issuance, including the maximum size of issuance(s) over the tenor of the programme in total, currency(ies), tenor, fixed/floating-rate, pricing method (e. g., whether fixed or floating; if floating including the reference index), whether the bonds would be pass-through, soft or hard-bullet maturity.

obligations; a summary of processes in the event of issuer default or when resolution has been triggered; and the events that will result in an issuer event of default.

Pursuant to Article 1 of the *Law on Mortgage-covered Bonds*, Georgian covered bonds may be placed either under a private or public offering of securities. In addition, own-use or self-issued covered bonds are also permitted under the Georgian regulatory framework and are eligible for repo with NBG.

III. COVER ASSETS

The assets that are eligible for inclusion in a covered-bond asset pool of a commercial bank in Georgia are:

1. Claims arising from mortgage loans[4] (80%);
2. Substitute assets, including deposits, debt securities issued or guaranteed by governments[5], IFIs and other entities recognised by NBG, or other exposures to such entities (up to 20%);
3. Claims arising from derivatives.

Mortgage loans eligible for inclusion in cover pools shall fulfil at least the following general conditions[6]:

(a) The loan agreement shall establish a valid and enforceable obligation of cash payment that has a value that can be determined at any time;

(b) The mortgage shall satisfy all the requirements of validity and enforceability prescribed by the legislation of Georgia;

(c) The commercial bank as a creditor shall be able to recover the value of the claim via realisation of the mortgage collateral without undue delay;

(d) The mortgage shall be of the first rank.

Pursuant to Article 3 of the Law, issuers are prohibited from including in the cover pool assets that are subject to an encumbrance measure and/or those which are in default.

The issuer of covered bonds can manage/hedge the market risks arising from a covered bonds programme with derivative instruments, provided that those instruments are also included in the cover pool. In this case, the derivative counterparty should be a financial institution that has consented in advance and in written form to the inclusion into the cover pool of the relevant derivative transaction(s).

The issuer is required to segregate cover assets from other assets in a way that the cover pool assets are easily identifiable by and only accessible to the creditors of the covered bond programme of the bank. Pursuant to the Law, compared to other creditors of the issuer, covered bond programme creditors enjoy preferential rights over the cover pool assets which can be used to satisfy their claims without the need for any contract between the issuer and programme creditors determining right to pledge or any other preferential right.

The assets eligible to be part of cover pool for the purposes of issuing covered bonds by a refinancing bank[7] are:

1. Claims arising from refinancing instruments;
2. Substitute assets such as deposits, debt securities issued or guaranteed by governments, IFIs and other entities recognized by NBG, or other receivables of such entities.

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4 Pursuant to the Law, a mortgage loan is defined as "a loan issued for any purpose, including both the principal and interests (if applicable) receivable therefrom, secured by a mortgage on immovable property in accordance with the Civil Code of Georgia".

5 The Law specifically references bonds issued by the Government of Georgia. Bonds issued by foreign governments could be eligible only if they are recognised as eligible substitute assets under the NBG regulation.

6 Additional requirements on the quality of cover pool assets are laid down in the NBG Regulation on Mortgage-covered Bonds.

7 A refinancing bank is a commercial bank that issues mortgage-covered bonds secured by claims arising from one or several refinancing instruments in accordance with the Law.

3. Receivables arising from derivatives.

The aggregate outstanding principal amounts of mortgage loans in the cover pool of a commercial bank, or of refinancing instruments included in the cover pool of a refinancing bank, shall not be less than 80% of the aggregate outstanding principal amounts of mortgage-covered bonds[8].

IV. VALUATION AND LTV CRITERIA

Article 4 of the Law provides that the valuation of immovable property securing the mortgage loans included in the cover pool shall be conducted by a valuer who is independent from the credit decision process, and who possesses appropriate knowledge and professional experience. In addition, the Law requires that (i) the calculation of the market value of immovable property shall be conducted according to internationally recognised valuation standards and (ii) be reviewed at least once a year[9]. Additional guidelines for the valuation of underlying real estate collateral is provided in the NBG Regulation on "*Approving the Guideline for Real Estate Valuation by Commercial Banks*" adopted by the NBG in May 2018.

As of the date of registration of a mortgage loan in the cover asset register, the ratio between the outstanding principal amount, or part thereof, of such loan contributing to the coverage of mortgage-backed bonds and the market value of the immovable property securing the same shall not exceed 60% for commercial property or 80% for residential property. For the purposes of maintaining financial stability, NBG may lower the LTV criteria for foreign currency denominated mortgage loans.

If, after the registration of a mortgage loan in the cover assets register, the ratio between the outstanding principal amount, or part thereof, of such loan and the market value of the immovable property securing the same exceeds the prescribed threshold, the principal amount of the loan contributing to coverage of mortgage-backed bonds shall be deemed reduced proportionally. The issuer is then required to post additional cover assets in the cover pool, if this is necessary to ensure continued compliance with the Law or related regulations.

V. ASSET – LIABILITY MANAGEMENT

Pursuant to the Law, covered bonds issued under each covered bond programme are secured by one cover pool. Within the same programme, the issuer may increase the amount of mortgage bonds under the same terms, and it may also issue mortgage bonds of different classes.

The total remaining nominal value of assets included in the cover pool should exceed the nominal value of the covered bonds principal by at least 5 % (minimum overcollateralization). Pooling of collateral assets must include additional assets that meet the liquidity requirements established by the relevant NBG regulations. The cover pool must cover the programme's liquidity needs (i.e. the total net cash outflow) over next 180 days.

VI. TRANSPARENCY

The issuing bank is responsible for informing covered bondholders about the status and relevant developments of its covered bond programme. The provided information should encompass the necessary details to enable bondholders to properly evaluate the programme profile and related risks. The provided information should include:

> Nominal values of an outstanding mortgage bond and cover pool assets;

> Identification numbers assigned to each covered bond (if available);

> Distribution of cover assets according to their type;

8 In circumstances assessed by NBG as threatening the stability of the financial sector and/or substantial interests of programme creditors, the NBG may prescribe a lower threshold, but not less than 60% of the aggregate outstanding principal amounts of mortgage bonds.

9 The market value of the immovable property shall be reviewed more frequently, if one of the following conditions is present: (i) there is a significant adverse change in market conditions; (ii) a significant decline in real estate prices has occurred or is expected to occur, including when such decline concerns only one specific class or type of real estate.

- Update about market, credit and liquidity risks;
- Maturity structure of underlying assets and covered bonds;
- Level of coverage required in accordance with the law as well as the available coverage and the level of overcollateralization;
- For a registered derivative, information about the counterparty and key terms of the contract;
- Percentage of mortgage loans with respect to which a default has occurred.

VII. COVER POOL MONITOR AND BANKING SUPERVISION

According to the Law, each bank should have an assigned cover pool monitor tasked with supervising and monitoring the pool of underlying cover assets.

The monitor should be a legal entity with the authority and permission (pursuant to Georgian legislation) to conduct the audit of entities of public interest. Additional qualification requirements of a cover pool monitor may be determined by the National Bank of Georgia. An issuer is entitled to appoint a cover pool monitor for a predetermined time period, and its appointment or removal is coordinated with NBG and requires its prior consent. The monitor shall be able to provide the programme administrator with all data and information relevant to admin of the cover pool and underlying assets. The entity monitoring the cover pool is liable for damages to programme creditors or to issuers during the performance of its duties and if necessary, NBG is permitted to request its removal.

The cover pool monitor is responsible for:

- Verifying that liabilities arising from the mortgage bond programme are always secured by sufficient cover assets;
- Verifying that the cover assets are identifiable and segregated from the other assets of the issuer;
- Verifying that the value of the immovable property securing the mortgage loans included in a cover pool is established in accordance with the relevant law;
- In case of identifying cases of infringement of the Law or relevant regulations adopted thereunder, notifying the issuer and NBG immediately.

Before issuance of covered bonds, the cover pool monitor is required to certify in writing the existence of a sufficient amount of cover assets and their inclusion in the covered asset register. The monitor is also entitled to inspect and request the records and information of the issuer related to covered bonds and underlying assets.

To facilitate ongoing supervision of covered bonds, the issuer is required to provide to NBG (as well as to bondholders) an annual confirmation letter confirming compliance of the programme with applicable legislation, combined with the cover pool monitor's annual report on due diligence procedures and checks performed by the monitor throughout the preceding 12 months. The cover pool monitor is also required to report to the NBG without undue delay if it appears that the issuer has failed to comply with the requirements set out in legislation, or has not provided all relevant information or explanations.

The owner of a covered bond programme is subject to special supervision by NBG, which has the authority to exercise the following rights and powers:

- Request and receive documents/information (including confidential) from any person;
- Request the cessation of certain actions if said actions contravene the legislation of Georgia;
- Appoint the covered bond programme administrator and liquidator;

10 For a description of the definition of a refinancing bank pursuant to the Law, see footnote 7.

- Conduct on-site and off-site inspection(s) of an issuer/debtor[10];
- Impose measures and sanctions on the commercial bank, administrator of the commercial bank or a controlling person;
- Establish a higher level of over-collateralization;
- Grant or revoke authorisation of the covered bond programme.

VIII. SEGREGATION OF COVER ASSETS AND BANKRUPTCY REMOTENESS OF COVERED BONDS

To protect the interests of bondholders and ensure covered bonds' bankruptcy-remoteness, the Law provides for cover-pool asset segregation from the outset, and requires that they be separated from the issuing bank's assets in certain circumstances. A covered bond programme is considered to be separated if the issuer's banking license has been revoked or if NBG decides to separate a programme, taking into account the best interests of the programme creditors, in the following cases:

- the authorisation to issue covered bonds has been revoked and the separation of the programme is necessary for the complete and timely fulfilment of the liabilities arising from covered bonds;
- there is a danger to the fulfilment of the commercial bank's obligations towards its creditors; or
- there is a reasonable suspicion that effective supervision of the commercial bank is not possible.

After the separation of a mortgage bond programme, only the claims of the relevant programme creditors and the expenses related to administration of the mortgage bond programme may be satisfied through the cover assets. The claims of the programme creditors (including holders of mortgage bonds of different classes issued within the framework of the programme) over the cover assets rank pari passu. The mortgage bond programme administration expenses rank senior to the claims of programme creditors. Assets remaining in the cover pool after covering the administration expenses and the full satisfaction of the claims of the covered bond creditors will be returned from the cover pool.

- If the program administrator has pledged cover assets under a financial collateral arrangement, the collateral taker shall have priority claim over the pledged assets compared to any other person.
- After the moment of separation of the covered bond programme, the cash (including principal and interest payments made by borrowers on mortgage loans) received on the cover assets shall be placed in the cover pool and ring-fenced from the other cash of the issuer and for this purpose shall be placed on a segregated cash account/accounts with a third-party commercial bank/banks.
- Assets from the cover pool of one covered bond programme may not be used for reimbursement of claims of another programme's creditors.

IX. REPO-ELIGIBILITY OF MORTGAGE-COVERED BONDS

In April 2024, the NBG board approved a new rule on financial collateral management. The new rule, among other things, sets out general criteria for accepting mortgage-covered bonds as eligible collateral for conducting monetary operations. Further details regarding eligibility will be provided in the Governor's decree to be approved under the rule. According to the rule, the following conditions must be generally met for mortgage-covered bonds to be accepted by NBG as collateral.

- The bond must have been issued pursuant to the Law and NBG Regulation on Mortgage-covered Bonds and the bond must be denominated in Georgian Lari;
- Either the issuer or the bond must have the minimum credit rating that will be prescribed by NBG;
- The loans placed into the cover pool must be either residential mortgages or SME loans secured by immovable property;

- > The loans in the cover pool of the eligible Mortgage-covered bonds must be sufficiently homogeneous, in particular residential mortgages and SME loans secured by immovable property shall not be mixed in the same cover pool;
- > The cover pool monitor must at least annually check compliance of the cover pool with the Law, NBG Regulation on Mortgage-covered Bonds and collateral framework and submit the inspection report to NBG;
- > Other conditions prescribed by NBG.

X. RISK-WEIGHTING & COMPLIANCE WITH EUROPEAN LEGISLATION

Under the risk-based approach in Basel III and the EU's Capital Requirements Regulation, and assuming a credit rating in Step 3 (BBB- to BBB+) for Georgian covered bonds, the applicable risk weight for such exposures will be 20%.

As a non-EU jurisdiction, Georgia is not required to comply with EU law, but its legal and regulatory framework for covered bonds is well aligned with the EU's Covered Bonds framework. The Law confirms the dual recourse nature of the instrument and restricts eligible cover pool assets to first-ranking commercial and residential mortgages. There are provisions to preserve cover pool quality including LTV ratio limits for the asset coverage test which are set at 80% of the value of residential and 60% for commercial property securing mortgages in the cover pool. This is consistent with preferential bank capital and liquidity treatment for covered bonds in the EU. The 5% minimum overcollateralization (OC) is also in line with the EU framework qualifying for preferential risk and liquidity treatment and the Law also provides for the possibility of additional voluntary OC. The automatic acceleration of covered bonds is prevented through provisions mandating the separation of covered bond programmes from the issuer's insolvency estate, while 180-day liquidity buffer requirement reduces Georgian covered bonds' refinancing risk.

The Law also includes robust regulatory oversight and supervision requirements that are similar to the covered bond frameworks in the EU. NBG is granted extensive supervisory powers, including the approval of the cover pool monitor and special administrator. The supervisor is also entitled to carry out inspections and conduct regular programme reviews, and it has the power to impose sanctions for breaches of the terms of the law. Furthermore, the law gives NBG a key role in approving any transfer of the covered bond programme after issuer default and any restructuring or liquidation proposals by the cover pool administrator.

For the most up-to-date information, please consult the new ECBC Covered Bond Comparative Database webpage on the Covered Bond Label website www.coveredbondlabel.com or via the following QR code:

3.17 GERMANY

By Tim Lassen and Steffen Stachna, Association of German Pfandbrief Banks

I. FRAMEWORK

In Germany, the legal basis for covered bond issuance is the German Pfandbrief Act (PfandBG – Pfandbriefgesetz) dated 22 May 2005 replacing the Mortgage Bank Act from 1900 and other German Pfandbrief laws.

On 15 April 2021 the Deutsche Bundestag and on 7 May 2021 the Bundesrat approved the amendments to the Pfandbrief Act, thereby implementing the CBD into German Pfandbrief law and adapting it to the changes of Art. 129 CRR. These amendments came into force on 1 July 2021 and on 8 July 2022, respectively. The latest amendments to the PfandBG with technical changes were added end of December 2023.

Furthermore, the statutory orders embedded in the Pfandbrief Act were adapted in 2022 as well and an additional one on Pfandbrief reporting requirements towards the German federal financial supervisory authority BaFin was added. BaFin publishes Pfandbrief-related documenbts on its website.[1]

II. STRUCTURE OF THE ISSUER

Since 2005, issuer of Pfandbriefe are no longer required to be a specialised bank. Instead, Pfandbrief issuers are allowed to carry out all activities of a credit institution, although a special licence for Pfandbrief issuance is required.

Since the EBA outsourcing guidelines do not allow for the outsourcing of important and decision-making sections of the credit institution, the issuer is required to have its own employees. In addition, the PfandBG requires Pfandbrief banks to manage their own risk and take their credit decisions on their own.

The issuer holds the cover assets on its balance sheet. A subsequent transfer of the cover assets to another legal entity does not take place. Given that a direct legal link between specific cover assets and Pfandbriefe does not exist, all obligations relating to Pfandbriefe are obligations of the issuing bank as such. In the case of insolvency, the cover pool is segregated by law from the general insolvency estate and is reserved for the claims of the Pfandbrief holders (so called Pfandbrief Bank with limited business activity, § 30 (1)(1, 3)). Even then, if the cover pool is not sufficient, Pfandbrief holders still have a claim against the general insolvency estate (dual/triple recourse, § 30 (6)(4) Pfandbrief Act).

III. COVER ASSETS

Cover assets are generated by mortgage lending, public sector lending, ship and aircraft financing activities. ABS/MBS are not eligible. A specific class of Pfandbriefe corresponds to each of these cover asset classes: Hypothekenpfandbriefe, Öffentliche Pfandbriefe, Schiffspfandbriefe and Flugzeugpfandbriefe. Any Pfandbrief must be fully covered by its specific class of cover asset (§ 4 PfandBG).

In addition to these *ordinary cover assets* the PfandBG allows up to 20 % of the nominal volume of Pfandbriefe outstanding to be covered by *further cover assets*, which may consist of e.g. money claims against the European Central Bank, member states of the European Union or bonds issued by domestic, regional or local authorities. Further cover assets may also include suitable credit institutions, which fulfil the requirements of credit quality step 1 (15% of cover assets) or 2 (10% of cover assets) according to CRR provisions, have an external rating and do not belong to the same banking group.

The geographical scope of eligible mortgage assets is restricted to EU/EEA countries, to Switzerland, USA, Canada, Japan, the UK (since Brexit). Public sector loans to these countries are eligible for the cover of Öffentliche Pfandbriefe (§ 20 PfandBG). For the mortgage Pfandbrief assets from Australia, New-Zealand and

1 https://www.bafin.de/DE/Aufsicht/BankenFinanzdienstleister/Pfandbriefbanken/pfandbriefbanken_artikel.html

Singapore are also eligible. The total volume of loans granted in non-EU countries where it is not warranted that the preferential right of the Pfandbrief creditors extends to the cover assets, may not exceed 10% of the total volume of the cover loans (§§ 13 I 2, 20 III PfandBG) and 20% for ship and aircraft mortgages (§§ 22 V 2, 26b IV 2PfandBG). Derivatives are eligible for cover pools under certain conditions (§§ 4b, 19 I PfandBG).

IV. VALUATION AND LTV CRITERIA

Property valuation is regulated in § 16 PfandBG. This provision refers to the mortgage lending value (Beleihungswert) which is, in contrast to the market value, based on sustainable aspects of the property. Details about the valuation process and the qualifications of values are regulated in a specific statutory order on the mortgage lending value (Beleihungswertermittlungsverordnung, BelWertV), § 16 IV PfandBG.

According to § 26 BelWertV both, commercial and residential real estate, have to be monitored at least annually. In addition, § 27 BelWertV requires a review of the underlying assumptions when the market has declined substantially; a review of property values is also necessary when the loan has defaulted.

The BelWertV requires personal and organisational independence of the valuer (internal or external valuer).

For both, commercial and residential property, the LTV limit is 60% of the mortgage lending value of the property. This LTV is a relative limit, i.e. when the loan exceeds the 60% limit, the part of the loan up to 60% LTV remains eligible for the cover pool.

V. ASSET – LIABILITY MANAGEMENT

§ 4 PfandBG stipulates that the total volume of Pfandbriefe outstanding must be covered at all times by assets of at least the same amount. Thus, the nominal value of the cover assets must permanently be higher than the respective total value of the Pfandbriefe: 2% for Hypothekenpfandbriefe and Öffentliche Pfandbriefe, 5% for Schiffspfandbriefe and Flugzeugpfandbriefe (nominal value statutory OC).

In addition, the Pfandbrief Act requires that Pfandbriefe are covered on a net present value basis even in the event of severe interest rate changes or currency fluctuations. The issuer has to provide an "npv-statutory overcollateralization" of at least 2% after stress tests to be carried out weekly. This "overcollateralization" is to be regarded as the lump sum for the potential winding-down costs after an issuer's insolvency (Art. 15 CBD). Therefore, cover assets that are being used for the "npv-statutory overcollateralization" are not to be taken into account for the calculation of the nominal overcollateralisation. Both the maturity of outstanding Pfandbriefe and the fixed-interest periods of cover assets are disclosed on a quarterly basis. Details about the calculation are regulated in a special statutory order on Net Present Value (Barwertverordnung).

Furthermore, each day Pfandbrief banks have to calculate the maximum liquidity gap within the next 180 days. This amount has to be covered by liquid assets (§ 4 Ia PfandBG), which are Level 1, 2A or 2B assets according to the LCR-Regulation as well as short-term exposures to credit institutions.

Every quarter, the stress-tested NPV of outstanding Pfandbriefe, the cover pool and the overcollateralisation have to be published (§ 28 I PfandBG). The stress tests do not apply to interest rate risks only, but also to foreign exchange risks.

VI. TRANSPARENCY

According to § 28 of the Pfandbrief Act (Pfandbriefgesetz, PfandBG), all Pfandbrief banks are obliged to publish detailed information about their Pfandbriefe outstanding and the pertaining cover pool assets on a quarterly basis.

Besides these legal requirements, vdp member banks started the vdp Transparency Initiative in 2010. Within the scope of this initiative, transparency reports of vdp member institutions are published in a uniform format, that can be processed electronically, using a uniform understanding of the legal requirements and one central website (www.pfandbrief.de).

Each report is available as a read-only version in pdf format and, suitable for further direct processing, in xls (Excel), csv and xml-formats as well. Automatic links to investor databases are possible. The website offers search options both by reporting date and bank name. All reports are published in English and German versions. There is a data history available that goes back to 2009.

VII. COVER POOL MONITOR AND BANKING SUPERVISION

The German federal financial supervisory authority (BaFin) is charged with the special supervision of Pfandbrief banks through a dedicated division. The "Pfandbrief-Kompetenzcenter" is responsible for all fundamental issues regarding the PfandBG and conducts cover pool audits on its own or through external auditors.

In 2022, BaFin adapted the statutory orders accompanying the PfandBG and added one on Pfandbrief reporting requirements ("Pfandbrief-Meldeverordnung", "PfandMeldeV"). Starting 30 June 2024, Pfandbrief banks have to submit predefined and completed reporting templates to the BaFin on a quarterly basis. In-depth information regarding both, Pfandbriefe and cover assets, are collected and processed by BaFin in order to assess the cover value and potentially demand higher standards to be fulfilled by Pfandbrief banks in question.

Cover audits

The cover pools are subject to a special audit conducted usually every three years by the supervisory authority (§ 3 PfandBG). Cover pool audits are performed either by the BaFin specialists or by suitable auditors, mandated via contract by public tender.

A cover audit is conducted in respect of individual cover pool assets, the observance of matching cover requirements in terms of nominal and net present value calculation, the proper keeping of cover registers, and the systems and processes in place with regard to the cover pools.

Audits of individual cover assets seek to ensure that the respective assets were included in cover in accordance with the relevant rules and regulations or that their continued inclusion is in line with requirements. A system audit entails examining all the Pfandbrief bank's main processes and systems that are directly or indirectly linked to the cover assets and the Pfandbriefe issued. In particular, process documentation, system descriptions and the proper implementation of the relevant methods are scrutinized.

Furthermore, a cover pool monitor (Treuhänder) supervises the cover pool. He is appointed by the BaFin and must possess the expertise and experience necessary to fulfil all duties. A qualification as a certified auditor suggests that the necessary expertise is provided. The monitor has to ensure that the prescribed cover for the Pfandbriefe exists at all times and that the cover assets are recorded correctly in the cover register, §§ 7, 8 PfandBG. Without his approval, no assets may be removed from the cover pool or new Pfandbriefe be issued. The BaFin has published a specific statutory order on details of the form and the contents of this cover register (Deckungsregisterverordnung – DeckRegV), § 5 III PfandBG.

VIII. SEGREGATION OF COVER ASSETS AND BANKRUPTCY REMOTENESS OF COVERED BONDS

The cover register (Deckungsregister) permits the identification of the cover assets, § 5 PfandBG. The register records the cover assets used to cover the Pfandbriefe as well as claims under derivatives (§ 5 I 1 PfandBG).

The legal effect of registration is that in the case of insolvency of the issuer all assets which form part of the cover pool can be identified; all assets recorded in the register will be exempt from the insolvency estate. In § 30 I 1 PfandBG they are denominated as "insolvency-free assets" of the "Pfandbrief Bank with limited business activity[2]" (§ 30 (1)(4).

2 Pfandbriefbank mit beschränkter Geschäftstätigkeit.

While the bank carries out the daily administration of the cover register, it is the cover pool monitor who supervises the sufficiency of cover and registration in the cover register, § 8 I, II PfandBG. Copies of the cover register shall be transmitted to the supervisory authority on a regular basis.

Asset segregation

The cover pool is part of the general estate of the bank as long as the issuer is solvent. If insolvency proceedings are launched, by operation of law, the assets recorded in the cover registers are excluded from the insolvency estate (§ 30 I 1 PfandBG). Those assets will not be affected by the launching of the insolvency proceedings (§ 30 I 2 PfandBG).

After the launching of the insolvency proceedings, a special cover pool administrator (Sachwalter) carries out the administration of the cover assets (§ 30 II 1 PfandBG). Through the appointment of the cover pool administrator by the court, on proposal of the BaFin (or by BaFin in case of urgency), the right to manage and dispose of the recorded assets will be transferred to him automatically by law (§ 30 II 2 PfandBG). Regarding cover assets and timely payment of Pfandbriefe, the cover pool administrator represents the Pfandbriefbank (§ 30 II 5 PfandBG). He is allowed to use premises and staff of the Pfandbriefbank (§31 VIII PfandBG).

Impact of insolvency proceedings on covered bonds and derivatives

Covered bonds do not accelerate automatically when the issuing institution is insolvent, but will be repaid at the time of their contractual maturity. The same applies to derivatives recorded in the cover register and forming part of the cover pool. Accordingly, the German master agreements for cover derivatives stipulate that the bankruptcy of the Pfandbrief issuer does not stipulate a termination event. Article 13 no 6 DeckregV stipulates that the collateral provided by the derivative counterpart or the Pfandbrief bank has to be registered in the cover register. The consequence of such registration is that the collateral belongs to the insolvency-free assets.

The amendments 2021 to the Pfandbrief Act introduced a maturity extension as legal option only for the cover pool administrator; the issuer itself has no discretion to use it. This applies to both, Pfandbriefe outstanding at the time of the introduction into law (1 July 2021) and newly issued Pfandbriefe. The extension triggers must be described in the terms and conditions for new Pfandbriefe, outstanding Pfandbriefe are covered by Art. 30 CBD and therefore keep the privileged treatment according to Art. 129 CRR.

The cover pool administrator would be allowed to extend maturities of interest and principal within the first month after his appointment to the end of the period of one month without further requirements; § 30 (2a)(4).

Additionally, he might extend maturities of principal by a maximum of 12 months, if (1) necessary, (2) not overindebted and (3) subsequent solvency of the Pfandbriefbank with limited business activities can be assumed; he might do that fully or partially (pro rata) with equal treatment of Pfandbrief holders. However, the cover pool administrator might (prematurely) redeem the Pfandbriefe within the extension period. (§ 30 (2a)(2, 3) and (2b))

Sequencing will not be inverted, original maturity schedule of Pfandbriefe must be kept. However, this is limited to Pfandbriefe outstanding and not extended to new debt, that the cover pool administrator generates taking the shape of liquidity loans or bonds; neither does it apply to derivatives in the cover pool.

During the extension period interest on Pfandbriefe must be paid according to the previous terms, if not regulated otherwise in terms and conditions.

Preferential treatment of covered bond holders

Covered bond holders enjoy preferential treatment as the law stipulates the separation of the cover assets on the one hand and the insolvency estate on the other, § 30 I PfandBG.

The claims of the Pfandbrief creditors are not limited to the cover assets only. To the contrary, these creditors also participate in the insolvency proceedings with respect to the Pfandbrief bank's remaining assets.

Only in the case of over-indebtedness or illiquidity of the cover pool, the BaFin may apply for a special insolvency procedure relating to the cover pool and covered bonds (§ 30 VI 2 PfandBG). Insolvency of the cover pool is the only reason, which might trigger acceleration of Pfandbriefe.

The 2021 amendments to the Pfandbrief Act introduce a new provision in § 30 VI 5 and 6 strenghtening the dual recourse of Pfandbriefe: The insolvency administrator will have to make reserves for the dual recourse claims of Pfandbrief holders during the insolvency procedure. Furthermore, the final distribution of the insolvency estate to creditors will not be allowed to take place before the amount of potential dual recourse claims of Pfandbrief holders is clarified.

Access to liquidity in case of insolvency

By appointment, the right to manage and dispose of the recorded assets is transferred to the cover pool administrator by law (§ 30 II 2 PfandBG). Thus, the cover pool administrator has first access to the cover assets and collects the cash flows according to their contractual maturity (§ 30 III 2 PfandBG).

No explicit regulation exists with respect to the insolvency remoteness of voluntary overcollateralisation (OC). However, the insolvency administrator may only demand that the overcollateralisation be surrendered to the insolvency estate, if those amounts will obviously not be needed as cover for the respective Pfandbrief category (§ 30 IV 1 PfandBG). The burden of proof that OC will never be necessary for the timely payment of the Pfandbriefe, lays with the insolvency administrator.

The cover pool administrator is entitled to contract loans in order to obtain liquidity. According to § 30 II 5 PfandBG, the cover pool administrator may carry out legal transactions with regard to the cover pools in so far as this is necessary for an orderly settlement of the cover pools in the interest of the full and timely payments to the Pfandbrief creditors.

Pfandbriefbank with limited business activities

The 2010 amendments of the PfandBG were focused on the legal nature of the cover pools in the event of a Pfandbrief bank's insolvency and on the cover pool administrator's access to liquid funds during times of turbulence. A cover pool would get automatically the status of a non-insolvent part of the insolvent Pfandbrief bank. § 30 I 3 PfandBG uses the term 'Pfandbrief bank with limited business activities'.

Sale and transfer of mortgage assets to other issuers

According to § 32 I PfandBG, the cover pool administrator may transfer all or a part of the assets recorded in the cover register as well as liabilities from Pfandbriefe as a whole to another Pfandbrief bank. This transfer requires the written approval of the supervisory authority.

IX. RISK-WEIGHTING & COMPLIANCE WITH EUROPEAN LEGISLATION

The PfandBG fully complies with Art. 129 CRR, Article 52(4) of the UCITS Directive and the CBD. Aircraft Pfandbriefe only comply with Article 52(4) of the UCITS Directive and the CBD, because Aircraft loans are not eligible cover assets according to Art. 129 CRR.

Pfandbriefe issued after 8 July 2022 may bear the designations "European Covered Bond" and "European Covered Bond (Premium)" (§ 41a PfandBG) and BaFin publishes a list of covered bonds that are entitled to use these designations on a regular basis on its homepage.[3]

Notwithstanding, previously issued Mortgage Pfandbriefe, Public Pfandbriefe and Ship Pfandbriefe continue to meet the requirements of Art. 129 CRR and therefore continue to benefit from privileged regulatory treatment.

3 https://www.bafin.de/EN/PublikationenDaten/Datenbanken/Pfandbriefbanken/pfandbriefbanken_node_en.html

Issuers: There are 83 Pfandbrief banks in Germany as per 31 December 2024, including banks from all three pillars of the German banking industry (private banks, public banks and co-operative banks).

COVERED BOND LABEL : Bausparkasse Schwaebisch Hall AG (1 pool), Berlin Hyp AG (1 pool), Commerzbank AG (2 pools), Deutsche Pfandbriefbank AG (2pools), DZ HYP AG (2 pools), HCOB (2 pools), Landesbank Baden-Württemberg (2 pools), Münchener Hypothekenbank (1 pool), NATIXIS (1 pool), NORD/LB (2 pools), UniCredit Bank GmbH (2 pools).

For the most up-to-date information, please consult the new ECBC Covered Bond Comparative Database webpage on the Covered Bond Label website www.coveredbondlabel.com or via the following QR code:

3.18 GREECE

By Alexander Metallinos, Potamitis Vekris Law Firm

I. FRAMEWORK

In Greece, the institution of covered bonds was originally regulated by Article 91 of the now repealed Law 3601/2007, later replaced by Article 152 of Law 4261/2014, that was identical to it. These provisions were supplemented by Acts of the Governor of the Bank of Greece.

On 12 March 2018, the European Commission adopted a proposal for an enabling EU framework on covered bonds. The legislative proposal consisted of (a) the adoption of a directive providing inter alia a common definition of covered bonds, defining the structural features of the instrument and identifying those high-quality assets that can be considered eligible in the pool backing the debt obligations, establishing a sound special public supervision for covered bonds and setting out the rules which will allow the use of the "European Covered Bonds" label; and (b) the adoption of a regulation amending the Regulation (EU) 575/2013 (the "Capital Requirements Regulation" or "CRR") with the aim of strengthening the conditions for granting preferential capital treatment to covered bonds by adding further requirements. Following this proposal, Directive (EU) 2019/2162 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 November 2019 on the issue of covered bonds and covered bond public supervision and amending Directives 2009/65/EC and 2014/59/EU was enacted (the "Covered Bonds Directive"). EU Member States were obliged to adopt and publish, by 8 July 2021, the laws, regulations and administrative provisions necessary to comply with the Covered Bond Directive and to apply those measures at the latest from 8 July 2022.

Law 4920/2022 (the "Covered Bond Law") transposed the Covered Bond Directive into Greek law. The Covered Bond Law entered into force on 8 July 2022. Covered bonds issued prior to such date continue in principle to be governed by article 152 law 4261/2014. The Covered Bond Law supersedes general provisions of law contained in the Civil Code, the Code of Civil Procedure and the Insolvency Code. The legislative framework in Greece is supplemented by Law 3156/2003 "On Bond Loans, Securitization of Claims and of Claims from Real Estate and Other Provisions" (the "Bond Loan and Securitization Law") and Law 4548/2018 "Reform of law on sociétés anonymes" (the "Company Law"), to the extent that the Covered Bond Law cross-refers to these laws. Finally, the Covered Bond Law authorizes the Bank of Greece to issue rules supplementing the provisions of the Covered Bond Law. Pursuant to this authorization, the Executive Committee of the Bank of Greece issued Decision 215/03.02.2023 "Framework of Issuance and Supervision of Covered Bonds" (the "Secondary Legislation").

II. STRUCTURE OF THE ISSUER

Contrary to article 152 law 4261/2014, which permitted the issuance of covered bonds in two ways, either directly by a credit institution, or indirectly by a subsidiary of a credit institution, the Covered Bond Law only allows the direct issuance of covered bonds by credit institutions. The segregation of the cover pool is achieved through a statutory pledge over the cover pool assets.

III. COVER ASSETS

The type of assets that may form part of the cover pool is regulated by article 8 of the Covered Bond Law (transposing article 6 of the Covered Bond Directive). Specifically, the Covered Bond Law provides for two categories of cover pool assets, (i) assets that are eligible pursuant to article 129(1) of the CRR and (ii) other high-quality cover assets that meet the conditions of the Covered Bond Law and in addition belong to categories of assets that are specified as eligible in a decision of the Bank of Greece. It is worth noting that article 8 of the Covered Bond Law has not transposed subparagraph (c) of article 6(1) of the Covered Bond Directive and consequently cover assets do not include assets in the form of loans to or guaranteed by public undertakings. Furthermore, the Bank of Greece has not used the authorization to specify as eligible other high-quality cover assets. Consequently, the only cover assets that are currently permitted in Greece are cover assets considered eligible according to article 129(1) of the CRR.

Cover assets considered eligible according to article 129(1) of the CRR are primarily residential mortgage loans, loans secured by a mortgage on commercial properties, loans secured by a mortgage on ships and exposures to or guaranteed by state entities. The loans may be secured by mortgage prenotations instead of full mortgages (as is the practice for cost reasons in Greece). According to the Secondary Legislation (Chapter III, A (4)), loans secured by residential and commercial real estate may only be included in the cover pool, if they are located in the territory of Greece, a provision that is problematic, as it contravenes EU law. Exposures to credit institutions may be included in the cover pool up to an aggregate limit of 15% of the nominal value of the outstanding covered bonds. According to article 13 of the Covered Bond Law, derivatives may also be included in the cover pool, subject to certain conditions, including the requirements that the derivative contracts are included in the cover pool exclusively for risk hedging purposes and that the derivative contracts cannot be terminated upon the insolvency or reorganisation of the issuer.

IV. VALUATION AND LTV CRITERIA

Loans secured by residential mortgages are required to have a loan-to-value (LTV) ratio of 80%, whereas loans secured by mortgages over commercial properties and ships are required to have an LTV ratio of 60%. Loans with a higher LTV ratio may be included in the cover pool, but they are taken into account for the calculation of the statutory tests described below only up to the amount indicated by the LTV ratio. Thus e.g. a loan of 900,000 Euros secured through a residential mortgage over a property valued at 1,000,000 Euros may be included in the cover pool but will be deemed for the purposes of the calculation of the statutory tests to be equal to 800,000 Euros. However, loans secured by commercial immovable property are eligible, subject to further conditions, where the loan□to□value ratio of 60% is exceeded up to a maximum level of 70%.

The evaluation of properties must be performed by an independent valuer at or below the market value and must be monitored on a frequent basis, at least once every year in relation to commercial properties and once every three years in relation to residential properties (Article 208 of the CRR). Moreover, the property valuation must be reviewed when available information indicates that the value of the property may have declined materially relative to general market prices.

V. ASSET-LIABILITY MANAGEMENT

Article 17 of the Covered Bond Law provides coverage requirements that must be met for the full duration of the covered bonds. More particularly, the Covered Bond Law provides for the following coverage requirements:

(a) All liabilities of the covered bonds shall be covered by claims for payment attached to the cover assets.

(b) The nominal value of the cover assets must exceed by at least 5% the nominal value of the outstanding covered bonds.

The Covered Bond Law authorizes the Bank of Greece to issue decisions specifying and potentially rendering stricter the coverage requirements. Based on this authorization, the Secondary Legislation provides that:

(a) The net present value of the obligations to investors in covered bonds and other creditors secured by the cover pool must not exceed at any time the net present value of the cover assets, including the derivative contracts used to hedge risks related to the cover assets. This requirement must also apply in the hypothesis of a parallel movement of the yield curve by 200 basis points.

(b) The amount payable as interest to covered bondholders must not exceed the amount of interest expected to be received from the cover assets (including derivatives used for hedging) for a period of 12 months.

For the purposes of the tests under (a) and (b) above, claims in relation to which a default has occurred according to article 178 of the CRR and in any case claims that are in arrears for more than 90 days shall not be deemed to be part of the cover assets.

Article 18 of the Covered Bond Law provides that the cover pool shall include at all times a liquidity buffer composed of liquid assets available to cover the net liquidity outflow of the covered bond programme. Such cover pool liquidity buffer shall cover the maximum cumulative net liquidity outflow over the next 180 days.

VI. TRANSPARENCY

Currently, the issuer's reporting obligations (as described in detail under paragraph on reporting duties of section VII) and the disclosure of the cover pool as conducted via the summary registered with the competent pledge registry for the establishment of a statutory pledge (for more details on this issue we cross-refer to paragraph on the cover pool monitor of section VII) are the basic transparency tools provided under applicable covered bonds legislation. The label 'European Covered Bond' may be used only for covered bonds which meet the requirements of the Covered Bond Law. Furthermore, the label 'European Covered Bond (Premium)' may be used only for covered bonds which also meet the requirements of Article 129 of the CRR. So far in Greece no market or regulatory initiatives have been undertaken on the creation of a national transparency template, in line with the guidelines of the ECBC Label Initiative.

VII. COVER POOL MONITOR AND BANKING SUPERVISION

Cover pool monitor

The compliance of cover pool assets with the requirements of the Covered Bond Law and of the secondary legislation to be issued by the Bank of Greece is monitored by a cover pool monitor, that is an auditor independent from the issuer of the covered bonds and from the issuer's auditor. In case the cover pool monitor finds that the cover pool assets do not comply with the requirements of the Covered Bond Law and of the Secondary Legislation, it shall immediately notify that issuer who must take action to remedy the default without delay. The Secondary Legislation specifies further the obligations of the cover pool monitor, including the requirement to compile a report, which is submitted to the Bank of Greece.

Prerequisites for the issuance of covered bonds

According to the Covered Bond Law, covered bonds may be issued by credit institutions that meet the following requirements:

- an adequate programme of operations setting out the issue of covered bonds; adequate and documented policies, processes and methodologies for the approval, amendment, renewal and refinancing of loans included in the cover pool;
- management and staff dedicated to the covered bond programme which have adequate qualifications and knowledge regarding the issue of covered bonds and the administration of the covered bond programme;
- sufficient organization and IT infrastructure for the management and monitoring of the cover pool assets, so as to meet the requirements of the Covered Bond Law and any secondary legislation issued pursuant to the Covered Bond law;
- a risk mitigation policy and appropriate mechanisms to monitor and manage risks arising from the issuance of covered bonds; and
- a detailed description of the competence of the service units and the committees involved in the issuance of covered bonds.

The prior approval of the Bank of Greece is required for the issuance of a covered bond programme.

Reporting duties of the issuer to the supervisor concerning covered bonds and cover pool

Credit institutions that issue covered bonds shall provide reports to the Bank of Greece containing information on the eligibility of assets and cover pool requirements, the segregation of cover assets, the functioning

of the cover pool monitor, the coverage requirements, the cover pool liquidity buffer and the conditions for extendable maturity structures.

Banking supervision in crisis

As described in detail under section VIII of this article, article 21 of the Covered Bond Law provides that in case of insolvency or reorganization of the issuer, the Bank of Greece may appoint a special administrator to preserve the rights and interests of the covered bond investors, if the bondholders' agent does not do so.

VIII. SEGREGATION OF COVER ASSETS AND BANKRUPTCY REMOTENESS OF COVERED BONDS

Segregation of cover assets

The cover assets are segregated from the remaining estate of the credit institution through a pledge constituted by operation of law (statutory pledge). In case of assets governed by a foreign law (which will typically include *inter alia* claims from derivative contracts), a security interest must be created in accordance with such foreign law. The statutory pledge and the foreign law security interest secure claims of the holders of covered bonds and may also secure (in accordance with the terms of the covered bonds) other claims connected with the issuance of the covered bonds, such as derivative contracts used for hedging purposes. The statutory pledge and any foreign law security interest are held by a bondholders' agent for the account of the secured parties.

The claims constituting cover assets are identified by being listed in a document signed by the issuer and the bondholders' agent. A summary of such document is registered in the pledge registry of the seat of the issuer. Such summary document includes within its content a description of the assets that constitute the cover pool. Claims may be substituted and additional ones may be added to the cover pool through the same procedure.

Article 14 of the Covered Bonds Law creates an absolute priority of holders of covered bonds and other secured parties over the cover pool. Upon registration of the summary of the document listing the claims included in the cover pool, the issuance of the covered bonds, the establishment of the statutory pledge and the foreign law security interest and the entering into of all contracts connected with the issuance of the covered bonds are not affected by the commencement of any insolvency proceedings against the issuer.

It is worth noting that, according to the Covered Bond Law, the cover assets may not be attached. This has the indirect result that the Greek law claims constituting cover assets are no longer subject to set-off, because, according to Article 451 of the Civil Code, claims which are not subject to attachment are not subject to set-off. This is important because under generally applicable law borrowers the loans to whom become cover assets would have had a right to set-off, which would reduce the value of the cover pool, for all counterclaims (including notably deposits) predating the creation of the pledge.

No specific provisions exist in relation to voluntary overcollateralisation. As a result, the segregation applies to all assets of the cover pool, even if their value exceeds the minimum required by law. The remaining creditors of the credit institution will only have access to any remaining assets of the cover pool after the holders of the covered bonds and other creditors secured by the cover pool have been satisfied in full.

Bankruptcy remoteness of and impact of insolvency proceedings on covered bonds

According to article 7 of the Covered Bond Law, covered bonds do not automatically accelerate upon insolvency of the issuer.

Pursuant to article 21 of the Covered Bond Law, in case of insolvency or reorganisation of the issuer, a special administrator shall be appointed by the bondholders' agent, subject to a positive opinion of the Bank of Greece. The Bank of Greece shall appoint the special administrator, if the bondholders' agent does not do so.

Access to liquidity in case of insolvency

Article 21 of the Covered Bond Law provides that the special administrator may sell and transfer the cover assets and use the net proceeds of such sale in order to discharge the obligations under the covered bonds and the other obligations which are secured by the legal pledge, according to the terms of the covered bond programme.

Exercise of the claims of covered bondholders against the remaining assets of the credit institution

According to article 4 of the Covered Bond Law, holders of covered bonds have dual recourse both to the cover pool as secured creditors and to the remaining assets of the credit institution ranking as unsecured and unsubordinated creditors.

Protection of depositors

The purpose of protecting depositors from an excessive encumbrance of assets is provided indirectly by Article 45 of Directive 2014/59/EU (the "Banking Recovery and Resolution Directive" or "BRRD")[1], which provides for a minimum requirement of own funds and eligible liabilities, as covered bonds and other secured liabilities are not eligible according to this provision. In addition to this EU law provision, the Secondary Legislation (Chapter IV) aims to protect depositors by providing that cover assets must not in principle exceed 20% of available assets of the credit institution issuing covered bonds. Available assets are defined as all assets of the credit institution on an unconsolidated basis, excluding claims assigned to securitization vehicles, assets subject to reverse repo transactions and assets pledged to third parties.

IX. RISK-WEIGHTING & COMPLIANCE WITH EUROPEAN LEGISLATION

The risk-weighting of covered bonds (both Greek and foreign) is regulated by Article 129 of the CRR. According to this, covered bonds as defined in point (1) of Article 3 of the Covered Bond Directive are eligible for the preferential treatment provided they are collateralised by assets deemed eligible pursuant to that article and meet certain requirements set out in that Article. Since the Covered Bond Law faithfully transposes the Covered Bond Directive, covered bonds issued pursuant to it shall have the preferential treatment of article 129 CRR provided they also meet the remaining conditions set by that article.

Issuers: There are four issuers in Greece: Alpha Bank; National Bank of Greece; Eurobank and Piraeus Bank.

COVERED BOND LABEL : Alpha Bank S.A. (1 pool).

For the most up-to-date information, please consult the new ECBC Covered Bond Comparative Database webpage on the Covered Bond Label website www.coveredbondlabel.com or via the following QR code:

1 Greece transposed the BRRD through law 4335/2015, as amended.

3.19 HUNGARY

By Rita Bozzai, MBH Mortgage Bank and Ádám Polt – OTP Mortgage Bank

I. FRAMEWORK

Act No. XXX of 1997 on Mortgage Loan Companies and Mortgage Bonds (hereinafter referred as the Mortgage Bank Act) contains the specific rules applicable to mortgage loans companies and mortgage bonds. Act No. CCXXXVII of 2013 on Credit Institutions and Financial Enterprises is applicable generally to the establishment, operation, supervision and liquidation of mortgage loan companies, unless otherwise provided by the Mortgage Bank Act. The Mortgage Bank Act provides full compliance with the Directive (EU) 2019/2162 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the Issue of Covered Bonds and Covered Bond Public Supervision and Amending Directives 2009/65/EC and 2014/59/EU (hereinafter referred as the Directive).

II. STRUCTURE OF THE ISSUER

Mortgage loan companies are specialized credit institutions in Hungary whose business activity is limited to mortgage lending, mortgage refinancing, providing appraisal services to determine the market value and the mortgage lending value of real properties, and auxiliary financial services. Mortgage loan companies shall grant financial loans secured by mortgages on real estate property located on the territory of Hungary and other European Economic Area (EEA) countries. Funds are raised by way of issuing mortgage bonds ("jelzáloglevél"). In the Hungarian banking sector only mortgage loan companies are entitled to issue mortgage bonds (Section 11 (1) of Mortgage Bank Act). Cover assets are held on the balance sheet of the mortgage loan company. All the outstanding mortgage bonds are covered by an unified cover pool. The cover pool is segregated by operational of law in case of insolvency and is reserved for the claims of the mortgage bond holders.

III. COVER ASSETS

The Mortgage Bank Act and the Directive provide that mortgage loan companies shall at all times have sufficient cover assets to ensure that all liabilities of the mortgage bonds are covered. The liabilities referred shall include the

i) obligation for payment of the principal amount of outstanding mortgage bonds,

ii) the obligation for payment of any interest on outstanding covered bonds,

iii) the obligation attached to derivative contracts (in line with the requirements set out in the Act) and

iv) the expected costs related to maintenance and administration for the winding-down of the mortgage bond program (calculated as a lump sum at a rate of 1‰ of the outstanding mortgage bond volume).

Mortgage loan companies shall adopt a policy of keeping a register of cover assets ("fedezetnyilvántartás"), which requires the approval of the Magyar Nemzeti Bank (MNB, Hungarian Central Bank) in its capacity as the financial supervisory authority, and the approval of the cover pool monitor ("vagyonellenőr").

The Mortgage Bank Act defines (Part III. Section 14 (1b) four different qualities of eligible cover pool assets:

a) ordinary assets; b) supplementary assets; c) liquid assets held in accordance with Section 14/B; and d) claims for payment attached to derivative contracts held in accordance with the requirements set out in the Mortgage Bank Act.

Pursuant to Section 14 (3) of the Mortgage Bank Act, the types of assets that can serve as ordinary assets for a mortgage bank, include outstanding principal from mortgage loans and from refinancing mortgage loans, as well as interest and service charges due under the contract. For these assets to be considered as ordinary assets, the mortgage must be legitimately registered in the land register to the benefit of the mortgage loan company, and in the case of refinancing mortgage loan, the independent lien that secure the refinanced mortgage

loan (and registered in the land register to the benefit of the refinanced credit institution) must be ultimately transferred to the mortgage loan company, and the mortgage loan company must be given an unconditional right to request registration of the liens in the land register under its name. In addition to the aforementioned traditional refinancing model based on the sale of independent liens, Section 8 (5b) and (5c) of Mortgage Bank Act covers the so-called "portfolio" refinancing model. Under this model, a condition for disbursing and including a "portfolio" refinancing mortgage loan as an ordinary asset in the cover pool is the valid establishment of a mortgage in favour of the mortgage loan company on the claims arising from the original mortgage loans granted by the refinanced credit institution, serving as security for the refinancing mortgage loan. The model allows to the credit institution to be refinanced in the long term by a mortgage loan company with a single time disbursement of a refinancing mortgage loan.

The ratio of ordinary coverage (assets) shall at all times reach the 80% of the outstanding mortgage bonds with remaining maturity of more than 180 days.

Supplementary coverage may exclusively consist of eligible liquid assets with an upper limitation listed and defined in the Mortgage Bank Act Section 14 (11) and (12). Pursuant to the Mortgage Bank Act, cover assets must be entered into the register of cover.

The availability and quality of cover assets are permanently monitored by the cover pool monitor, reports on availability and quality of cover assets are disclosed on a daily basis. The composition of the cover pool can only be modified with the prior permission of the cover pool monitor, acting in the interest of mortgage bond holders. (Read more below in part VII.)

According to Section 14 (5) of the Mortgage Bank Act, in the case when mortgage bonds and their coverage are not denominated in the same currency, the mortgage loan company is obligated to hedge the currency exchange risk by entering into derivative transactions. Section 3 (10) of the Mortgage Bank Act provides that mortgage loan companies are entitled to conclude such transactions exclusively for hedging purposes, i.e. risk management and liquidity. The Mortgage Bank Act entitles mortgage loan companies to include claims arising from derivatives concluded with the aforementioned objectives as a cover asset as well, while the NPV based balance of these liabilities cannot exceed 12% of the NPV of liabilities deriving from outstanding mortgage bonds.

IV. VALUATION AND LTV CRITERIA

Pursuant to the Section 14 (7) of the Mortgage Bank Act, if the amount of the principal outstanding from a mortgage loan or refinancing mortgage loan, or the repurchase price exceeds 60 per cent of the of mortgage lending value ("hitelbiztosítéki érték") of the mortgaged real estate property, the principal outstanding or the repurchase price may be taken into account as ordinary asset up to not more than 60 per cent thereof. If the mortgaged real estate is a residential property the abovementioned limit increases up to 70 per cent. Accordingly, part of the mortgage loan or refinancing mortgage loan, up to 60% or 70% LTV, will remain eligible for inclusion in the cover pool.

The provisions of calculation of the mortgage lending value are included in the Decree of the Minister of Finance No. 25/1997 on the Calculation Methods of the Mortgage Lending Value of Real Estate not Qualifying as Agricultural Land and in the Decree of the Minister of Agriculture No. 54/1997 on the Calculation Methods of the Mortgage Lending Value of Real Estate Qualifying as Agricultural Land.

Mortgage lending value calculation provisions refer to the sustainable aspects of the property. The mortgage loan company's internal regulation for determining mortgage lending value is based on methodological principles defined in the above decrees. Such internal regulations are also subject to the former approval of the MNB.

The AVM (Automated Valuation Method) practice for properties is applicable and increasingly widely used in Hungary, according to which it is possible to disburse mortgage loans and to reassess the mortgage lending value of properties, on the basis of statistical valuation for certain types of properties and geographical locations. The

former LTV criteria was amended in 2024, and now the applicability of the AVM is determined by the market value of properties rather than the LTV, making the method more broadly applicable.

V. ASSET – LIABILITY MANAGEMENT

As indicated before, the Mortgage Bank Act provides that mortgage loan companies shall always provide coverage that surpasses, at least by 2 % (overcollaterization), the principal of outstanding mortgage bonds and the accrued interest thereon. Mortgage loan companies shall comply with the above requirements as follows:

- The aggregate amount of the outstanding principal claims considered as coverage, reduced by the amount of any value adjustments, shall exceed 100% of the amount of the nominal value of the outstanding mortgage bonds; and
- The aggregate amount of interest accrued on the outstanding principal claims considered as coverage, reduced by the amount of any value adjustments, shall exceed 100% of the amount of interest accrued on the nominal value of the outstanding mortgage bonds.

Under Section 14 (4) of the Mortgage Bank Act the amount of coverage for mortgage bonds shall always be calculated and published at both their nominal and present value.

In the case of currency mismatch between mortgage bond and its collateral assets, mortgage loan companies are obliged to enter into derivative transaction to reduce currency risk with restrictions defined in the Mortgage Bank Act and as mentioned before.

In order to cover the net liquidity outflow, mortgage banks are required to maintain a cover pool liquidity buffer composed of segregated liquid assets which are in compliance with the Mortgage Bank Act and the Directive. The cover pool liquidity buffer shall cover the maximum cumulative net liquidity outflow over the next 180 days under Section 14/B (1) and (2).

VI. TRANSPARENCY

Mortgage loan companies shall publish all the information defined in Section 18 (2) of the Mortgage Bank Act. The information shall be sufficiently detailed to allow investors to assess and evaluate the profile and risks of the issuer and its issuances. Mortgage loan companies are obliged to ensure that they provide information to mortgage bond investors at least on a quarterly basis and submit to the MNB the minimum portfolio information defined in the Mortgage Bank Act.

Based on the amendment of MNB's Business Conditions of forint and foreign exchange transactions, domestic mortgage bond issuers are required to publish on their own websites the transparency report defined by the MNB at the end of each quarters with the reporting date of the end of the previous quarter, as a condition for ensuring the repo-eligibility of issued mortgage bonds at MNB. Since the MNB announced its green programmes including the Green Covered Bond Purchasing Programme, the required transparency report mentioned above is supplemented with data of green coverage and green covered bond issued.

The European Covered Bond Label and its Premium version may be applied for securities issued in Hungary that adhere to the requirements set forth in the Mortgage Bank Act, and in the case of Premium Label the securities must comply with all the provisions of Article 129 of Regulation 575/2013/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council (CRR) as well. The Issuers must obtain authorization from the MNB to utilize these Labels.

VII. COVER POOL MONITOR AND BANKING SUPERVISION

The cover pool monitor shall be appointed by the mortgage loan company and approved by MNB and must not be identical with the auditor of the mortgage loan company.

According to section 16 (7) of the Mortgage Bank Act, a cover monitor may be appointed for a fixed period of time, not exceeding five years, however, he may be re-appointed following the termination of the period of his engagement. The engagement contract may not be lawfully terminated without the approval of the MNB.

The cover pool monitor is responsible for monitoring and verifying the assets in the cover pool on a permanent basis. The main responsibilities of the cover pool monitor include to continually monitor that:

> whether the cover assets of mortgage bonds are available and meet the eligibility criteria and are in compliance with the Mortgage Bank Act at all times and,

> the registration of the eligible assets and their required data in the coverage register. In accordance with Section 11 (3) n) of the Mortgage Bank Act, a certificate from the cover pool monitor shall be attached to each mortgage bond regarding the availability and registration of the cover assets.

Within the scope of his coverage supervision activities, the cover pool monitor may not be instructed by the mortgage loan company. The cover monitor shall immediately report to the MNB if the cover assets of the mortgage bonds do not comply with the requirements of the Mortgage Bond Act's criteria.

In the field of banking supervision, the MNB is responsible for verifying the compliance of the credit institutions, including mortgage loan companies, with the Credit Institutions Act, the Mortgage Banks Act, and other applicable banking regulations. If required, the MNB is entitled to impose various sanctions on credit institutions, including warnings of non-compliance, withdrawing licenses and imposing fines on credit institutions and their management. Sections 22 and 23 of the Mortgage Bank Act provides that the MNB shall exercise special supervision over mortgage loan companies in addition to the provisions of the Credit Institutions Act and the provisions of the Capital Markets Act. Within the framework of such special supervision, MNB is entitled, for example to conduct offsite and onsite audits of mortgage loan companies according to its examination plan, or to examine and approve the policies, processes and methodologies aimed at investor protection applied by the mortgage loan companies.

VIII. SEGREGATION OF COVER ASSETS AND BANKRUPTCY REMOTENESS OF COVERED BONDS

Covered bonds do not automatically accelerate when the mortgage loan company becomes insolvent but will be repaid at the time of their contractual maturity. This rule applies to derivatives as well. Pursuant to the Mortgage Bank Act, a cover pool administrator (bond trustee) is delegated to the insolvent mortgage loan company to safeguard the interests of bondholders and derivative partners. The cover pool administrator cannot be identical with the insolvency administrator of the mortgage loan company. The cover pool administrator should provide for the timely satisfaction of principal and interest claims of bondholders and derivative partners in case of a possible insolvency situation. The transfer of the portfolio or parts of it to another mortgage loan company may grant for liquidity, however, the transfer of the portfolio or parts of it requires the prior written consent of the MNB.

As a general rule, Section 20/A (4) of the Mortgage Bank Act declares that the cover pool administrator is obliged to maintain the liquidity of the cover pool on a constant basis. Within two years after the commencement of the liquidation procedure, both the cover pool administrator and the bondholders may request the court to supplement the cover from the general insolvency estate (Section 20/A (7)). The cover pool administrator shall be entitled to receive remuneration for his work and refund of appropriate expenses. Although holders of the mortgage bonds, derivative partners or the cover monitor may inform MNB or the competent court on issuer default, after proving all relevant circumstances, it is only the MNB who is entitled to initiate an insolvency proceeding against the mortgage loan company.

Hungarian legal provisions also provide for a wide-range of measurements, including extraordinary measurements, to be taken by the MNB prior to any insolvency situation.

For example, the MNB is entitled to delegate a supervisory commissioner to the mortgage loan company. This extraordinary measurement may be taken by the MNB prior to the commencement of any insolvency procedure – in accordance with Section 157 (1) of the Credit Institution Act. In this case both the rights of the owners of the

mortgage loan company and the rights of the management of the mortgage loan company will be restricted in order to guarantee the satisfaction of the claims of the mortgage loan company's creditors, e. g. bondholders' and derivative partners' claims. Pursuant to the Section 21 (1) of the Mortgage Bank Act, in the course of execution proceedings against a mortgage loan company, Act no. LIII of 1994 on Execution by Court shall be applied with the deviations set forth in subsections (2)-(3).

Moreover, pursuant to the Section 58 (1) c) of the Act XXXVII of 2014 on the Further Development of the Institutional Framework to Strengthen the Safety of Certain Actors in the Financial Intermediation System, the scope of the bail-in does not extend to mortgage bonds.

IX. RISK-WEIGHTING & COMPLIANCE WITH EUROPEAN LEGISLATION

The legislation when taken together with the practices, processes and procedures across the industry should fall within the criteria of Article 129 of the CRR. Hungarian mortgage bonds comply with the requirements of Article 52(4) UCITS as well as with those of Article 129 (1) CRR.[1]

Hungarian covered bonds issued in euro zone countries qualify as European Central Bank (ECB) eligible.

X. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The MNB introduced the Mortgage funding adequacy ratio (MFAR) from 1 April 2017. MFAR = liabilities backed by mortgage loans / net stock of mortgage loans with a residual maturity longer than 1 year. Foreign currency liabilities can also be taken into account in MFAR with certain conditions. The original minimum required level of the ratio was set at 15%, while it was raised to 20% from 1 October 2018. The ratio was increased further to 25% from 1 October 2019, and it has been kept unchanged since then (22/2022. (VI.11.) MNB Decree).

MNB's Green Covered Bond Programme had been temporary suspended in April 2022 and it was still inactive in Q1 2025. However, the MNB's Mortgage Bond Rollover Facility has been still accessible for domestic mortgage bond issuers. Within the framework the central bank places bid for the 50% of the indicative amount to be sold at the public auction (but not more than the rollover limit) if the twofold – in terms of the eligible instrument for the rollover and the newly issued 'target' covered bonds - requirements are met.

The Government introduced a cap on the interest rate of mortgage loans in several steps until June 30, 2025 (as of Q1 2025). Based on the referring Government Decrees, interest rates of the defined mortgage loan types (floating rate mortgage loans, mortgage loans with a fixed, but maximum 5-year interest rate periods) are capped at levels based on reference rates valid as of October 27, 2021.

Issuers: OTP Jelzálogbank Zrt. (OTP Mortgage Bank Ltd.), MBH (ex Takarék) Jelzálogbank Nyrt. (MBH ex Takarék) Mortgage Bank Ltd.), UniCredit Jelzálogbank Zrt. (UniCredit Mortgage Bank Ltd), Erste Jelzálogbank Zrt. (Erste Mortgage Bank Ltd.), and K&H Jelzálogbank Zrt. (K&H Mortgage Bank Ltd.).

For the most up-to-date information, please consult the new ECBC Covered Bond Comparative Database webpage on the Covered Bond Label website www.coveredbondlabel.com or via the following QR code:

1 Please click on the following link for further information on the UCITS Directive and the Capital Requirements Regulation (CRR): https://hypo.org/ecbc/covered-bonds/.

3.20 ICELAND

By Eiríkur Dór Jónsson and Kristín Erla Jónsdóttir, Arion Bank

I. FRAMEWORK

In Iceland, the issuance of covered bonds is governed by the Icelandic Covered Bond Act, which came into force on 20 March 2008 (Lög nr. 11/2008 um sértryggð skuldabréf, hereinafter the "**ICBA**") and which has been updated four times since, most recently in March 2023 to fully transpose EU directive no. 2019/2162 (the Harmonization Directive) into Icelandic law.

The primary purpose of the ICBA is to set out the general legal framework surrounding the issuance and legal status of covered bonds issued by Icelandic issuers. It is complemented by a regulation issued by the Financial Supervisory Authority of the Central Bank of Iceland (hereinafter the "**FME**") as rules no. 190/2023 (Reglur um sértryggð skuldabréf nr. 190/2023, hereinafter the "**ICBR**"). The ICBR defines in more detail the criteria for obtaining a covered bond issuance license, the universe of eligible cover pool assets, valuation procedures for eligible cover pool assets, asset and liability management, the form and maintenance of the cover pool register, the status of derivative agreements pertaining to the cover pool and the role of the cover pool inspector (the Independent Inspector, see below).

The ICBA, the ICBR, together with the provisions of the Act on Financial Undertakings no. 161/2002 and the Resolution of Credit Institutions and Securities Firms Act, no. 70/2020, provide the principal legal framework for covered bond issuance by Icelandic issuers, and supersede general Icelandic bankruptcy rules thereby creating the requisite bankruptcy remoteness for such issuances.

II. COVERED BOND LICENCE – EUROPEAN COVERED BONDS PREMIUM LABEL

Under the ICBA, the FME grants licenses for the issuance of covered bonds. Such licenses may only be granted to licensed commercial banks, savings banks and credit undertakings. The conditions and other criteria for obtaining such a licence are set out in the ICBA and the ICBR. These include the submission by the prospective issuer of an operating plan, verified by a state authorised public accountant, which demonstrates the issuer's financial stability and a written statement by the issuer that the issuance is otherwise compliant with the requirements of the ICBA. For a further description of the conditions and criteria please refer to Table 1, below.

Icelandic Covered Bonds issued on the basis of an FME licence and otherwise in accordance with the terms of ICBA and the ICBR meet the requirements to be labelled as "European Covered Bond" or "European Covered Bond (Premium)" under the Harmonization Regulation.

The FME has the right to revoke an already issued licence in cases where the issuer has failed to issue covered bonds within one year of receiving the license, the issuer has declared that he will not use his authorisation to issue covered bonds, the issuer has obtained the licence on the basis of incorrect information, the issuer has infringed its obligations under the ICBA, or where the FME believes that the issuer no longer meets the conditions for possessing the licence.

> Table 1: Licence needed to issue covered bonds - conditions

Conditions and criteria for the issuance of a covered bond license by the FME under ICBR:

The issuer must supply the FME with the following:

- a board resolution that the board approves the application for a covered bond license;
- a description of the framework of the proposed bond issuance, e.g. the size of the proposed programme, bond types, currency of bonds to be issued, derivatives, assets to comprise the cover pool, replacement assets, loan to value ratios, valuation methodologies for the cover pool assets etc.;
- information about the covered bond registry, e.g. how the issuer will maintain the registry as well as how the registry will be supervised and how segregation of cover pool assets from other issuer assets is achieved;
- information on whether the issuer intends to convert previously issued bonds used to finance assets, that are eligible as cover pool assets under ICBA, into covered bonds.
- a three-year business plan, confirmed by a public accountant, demonstrating the issuer's financial stability for that period.
- information on IT systems to be used in connection with the covered bond issuance.
- any other information that the FME believes is pertinent to the proposed bond issuance.
- a written statement by the issuer that it and the issuances will fulfil the requirements made by the ICBA and the ICBR.

III. COVER ASSETS

The ICBA defines those assets classes that are eligible for the Cover Pool. These are:

- Mortgages secured by residential real estate in member states;
- Mortgages secured by industrial, office or commercial real estate in member states;
- Mortgages secured by farms and other real estate used for agricultural purposes in member states; and
- Public sector assets defined as bonds issued by the Icelandic state or other member state, a municipality in Iceland or in another member state, or guaranteed by such public authority.

For a mortgage to be included in the cover pool, all real property (and associated chattels) underlying such mortgages must be fully insured against fire.

The ICBA does not require separate cover pools for mortgage and public sector cover pool assets, and both asset classes can therefore be contained within a single cover pool. Hitherto, Icelandic covered bond issuers have only issued covered bonds where the underlying cover pool comprises exclusively residential mortgages.

Under the ICBA, cover pool assets represent a claim of the covered bond issuer against the relevant borrowers, and these assets remain on the issuer's balance sheet. No subsequent transfer of cover pool assets to another legal entity is required to achieve segregation of the cover pool assets from the issuer's other assets.

Covered bonds issued by Icelandic issuers constitute direct, unconditional obligations against the issuer. Outstanding covered bonds are backed in their entirety by the cover pool. Accordingly, there is no direct legal link between a single cover pool asset and a particular covered bond series. In the event of issuer insolvency, the cover pool is bankruptcy remote from the general insolvent estate of the issuer and exclusively available to meet outstanding claims under the issue of the covered bond investors. Any claim of the bankrupt estate against the cover pool assets is therefore subordinated against claims of the covered bondholders. Should the

value of the cover pool assets prove to be insufficient to satisfy claims of investors under the covered bonds, such investors enjoy recourse to the insolvency estate of the issuer, where their claims will rank *pari passu* with senior unsecured investors. For a further discussion, see chapter X below.

Substitute assets

The ICBA allows for the inclusion of the following assets as Substitute Collateral (Article 6):

> Demand deposits with a regulated financial undertaking;

> Deposits with or claims against an member state or a central bank in a member state;

> Claims against other legal entities which, the FME views as not involving greater risk than the aforementioned options.

Furthermore, FME may approve the following as substitute collateral:

> Claims against municipalities in member states;

> Claims against a regulated financial firm other than demand deposits with a regulated financial undertaking (as referred to above), provided the final maturity of such claim is within one year of issuance;

> Claims against non-Icelandic development banks listed in rules adopted by the FME;

> Claims against other legal entities which do not involve greater risk than the substitute collateral referred to in other items of this paragraph.

It should be noted that substitute collateral may not comprise more than 20% of the value of the cover pool. The FME may however authorise an increase in the proportion of substitute collateral in the cover pool to as much as 30% of its value.

Additionally, article 6(b) of the ICBA states, that in other respects, the assets comprising the cover pool must also meet the criteria set forth by article 129 of regulation (EU) no. 575/2013 which inter alia imposes additional requirements as to the credit quality of the underlying assets.

Derivative contracts

The ICBA authorises the use of derivatives for hedging interest, duration, currency risk and other risk factors as needed. The provisions of the ICBR demand that derivatives must be structured such that premature termination is not triggered by an issuer default/reorganisation/bankruptcy of the issuer or by a demand by the counterparty. The ICBA though dictates that the scale of derivatives included in the cover pool may not exceed that what is necessary to maintain adequate balance between assets and liabilities and that derivative agreements shall be cancelled when no longer needed for that purpose.

Furthermore, under the ICBR derivative counterparties must, unless otherwise permitted by the FME, possess a credit rating from a registered credit rating agency which demonstrates its credit quality in either credit quality step 1 or 2 pursuant to regulations (EC) no. 1060/2009 and 2016/1799.

Should the credit rating of such fall below the specified minimum level, the issuer of covered bonds must, under the terms of the derivative contract, be able to:

> Demand additional collateral;

> Terminate the derivative contract and establish a new derivative contract with a counterparty that meets the minimum rating requirement, or;

> Request that the counterparty provides a guarantee from a third party that meets the minimum rating requirement.

IV. VALUATION AND LTV CRITERIA

The ICBA defines valuation principles for the properties that are used as cover pool assets (ICBA: Chapter III, Article 7). An assessment of the market value of real estate shall be based on the selling price in recent transactions with comparable properties. By recent transaction it is meant that the transaction used for benchmarking took place within three months of the valuation. If the market value of real estate is not available, it shall be determined by a specific valuation. The valuation shall be based on generally accepted principles for market valuation of real estate. Among the data that can be used as a basis is data on real estate price developments from the Land Registry of Iceland, together with other generally accepted systematic collection of real estate price data.

If an issuer assesses the market value of real estate, the Independent Inspector (as defined below) must verify that the appraisal is based on a generally accepted methodology. The Independent Inspector may re-assess the market price of one or more properties if he/she regards the valuation as incorrect.

An appraisal of the market value of real estate must be in writing and must specify the methodology used, who carried out the appraisal and when it was made.

For the various mortgage types eligible as cover pool assets, the maximum LTV ratios apply (ICBA: Chapter III, Article 7):

- 80% of the value for real estate.
- 70% of the value for real estate intended for agricultural use (some restrictions apply).
- 60% of the value for real estate, where the property is intended for office or commercial use.

V. ASSET AND LIABILITY MANAGEMENT

The ICBA requires that the nominal value of the cover pool assets at all times exceed 105% of the aggregate nominal value of claims arising from outstanding covered bonds against the issuer, taking into account currency fluctuations and the mark-to-market positions of those derivative contracts comprising the cover pool (ICBA: Chapter V, Article 11 and ICBR Chapter IV, Article 5). Article 3 of the ICBR further states, that the value of credit assets, included in the cover pool, but which have been in arrears for more than 90 days may not be counted as a part of the cover pool value when calculating this ratio. Icelandic covered bond issuers have generally undertaken to maintain a level of overcollateralization which is significantly higher than the minimum ratio discussed here.

In addition to the required minimum overcollateralization, ICBR (Chapter IV, Article 6) stipulates that on a net present value (NPV) basis, the cover pool assets, including derivatives, must always exceed the corresponding value of the interest and principal of outstanding covered bonds, taking into account the effects of stress-test scenarios on interest and currency risk set by the ICBR. The ICBR defines the stress test for interest-rate risk as a sudden and sustained parallel shift in the reference curve by 100 bps up and down. The reference curve is based on Icelandic government bonds for covered bonds in Icelandic krona but swap rate curves for other currencies. Likewise, it defines currency risk as a 10% sudden and sustained change in the relevant foreign exchange rate between the currency of covered bonds and the currency of cover pool assets (ICBR: Chapter IV, Article 8).

VI. LIQUIDITY MANAGEMENT

The ICBA (ICBA: Chapter V, Article 12(2)) requires an issuer to ensure that the balance between repayments and other cash flows pertaining to the assets of the cover pool and repayments of the covered bonds are such that payment obligations under the covered bonds and applicable derivative agreements may be met, in addition to the expected cost of winding up its covered bond programme. To ensure compliance with this requirement, the issuer shall maintain all cash flows from the cover pool assets separate from its other funds and assets.

Additionally, the ICBA (ICBA: Chapter II, Article 6(a)) dictates that a cover pool shall always contain sufficient readily available funds to ensure that it is able to meet net maximum cash outflows pertaining to the covered bonds secured by the cover pool and applicable derivatives for the next 180 days. When determining the maximum outflows for these purposes, the issuer may take into account the last possible maturity date of a covered bond which permits maturity date deferral in accordance with the provisions of ICBA, Article 13(b).

ICBR, Article 10, defines the types of assets which shall count as readily available funds for these purposes.

VII. DEFERRAL OF MATURITY DATES

The ICBA (Chapter VI A., Article 13(b)) prescribes that either the issuer or an administrator of the issuer's bankrupt estate may, with FME permission, postpone a maturity date of a covered bond, provided that this is necessary to either prevent a default causing the sale of assets at significant discounts, to facilitate the positive outcome of timely interventions by the FME or to maximize the recovery for covered bondholders and counterparties to derivative contracts during the resolution process of the issuer.

The deferral needs additionally to be based on a clear authority in the terms of the covered bonds, which i.a. states the latest possible maturity date and may not upset the sequence of maturity dates of covered bonds that are secured by the same cover pool.

VIII. TRANSPARENCY

The ICBA, (ICBA, Chapter VI., Article 13(a)) requires issuers to publish information on their covered bond programme which shall be sufficient to enable investors to assess the scope and risks associated with the programme. Furthermore, issuers shall quarterly provide information on the value of the cover pool assets and other information needed to assess the risks associated with the cover pool assets, including information on the delinquency rate of the cover pool assets.

IX. COVER POOL MONITOR AND BANKING SUPERVISION

Issuers of covered bonds fall under the supervision of the FME, which monitors the issuers' compliance with the ICBA and other related regulatory provisions (e.g. ICBR). If a covered bond issuer is in a material breach of its obligation under the legal framework, the FME can give the issuer a formal warning or revoke the issue license altogether and in doing so transferring the entire cover pool to a new custodian. The FME may also revoke a license if the institution has declared that it has no intention to use the license to issue covered bonds or if the institution has not made use of the license within a year from the date of receiving the license. The revocation may be combined with an injunction against continuing the operations and with the imposition of a conditional fine. In any case, the FME must determine how the operations should be wound up (ICBA: Chapter IX, Articles 24–30(a)).

Each issuer must appoint an independent and suitably qualified cover pool inspector (the "**Independent Inspector**" and such appointment must be validated by the FME. The duties of the Independent Inspector are to monitor the register and verify that the covered bonds, the derivatives agreements and the cover pool assets are correctly recorded and meet the criteria of the ICBA and the ICBR. The Independent Inspector also ensures compliance with liquidity and risk management. The issuer is obliged to provide the Independent Inspector with any information requested by the Inspector relating to its covered bond operations. The Independent Inspector must submit a report of the inspection to the FME on an annual basis and must notify the FME as soon as he/she learns about an event deemed to be significant to the supervisory authority (ICBA: Chapter VII, Articles 21–23 and ICBR, Articles 16-18).

X. SEGREGATION OF COVER POOL ASSETS AND BANKRUPTCY REMOTENESS OF COVER POOL ASSETS AND LIABILITIES

Cover Pool Registry

The issuer must keep a detailed registry of the cover pool assets and underlying derivative contracts as well as outstanding covered bonds (ICBA: Chapter VI, Section 13). The law further specifies the form and content of such a registry, which must be easily accessible to the FME and the Independent Inspector.

The registration of the cover pool assets legally secures covered bond holders and derivatives counterparties a priority claim against the assets in the cover pool in the event of issuer insolvency (ICBA: Chapter 7, Article 15).

Prior to an issuer being declared insolvent, cash flows accruing from the pool must be accounted for separately by the issuer. In the event of issuer default, covered bond investors and derivative counterparties have the same equal claim against these funds as they have on the cover pool. Moreover, cash flow accruing from the cover pool assets following issuer insolvency must be registered in the cover pool and segregated from the issuer's other assets (ICBA, Chapter V, article 12).

Issuer insolvency

Issuer insolvency, issuer reorganisation or winding-up does not automatically cause its covered bonds to become due and payable (ICBA, Chapter VII, article 14(1)). The same is true for its derivative contracts which form a part of the cover pool assets.

In the event of issuer insolvency, the cover pool assets and the respective covered bonds are segregated from the insolvency estate of the issuer with covered bond holders and registered derivative counterparties having a priority claim by way of a pledge against the cover pool assets and cash that derives from the cover pool, ensuring timely repayment to original agreed terms. It should be noted, however, that the cover pool does not constitute a stand-alone legal entity, separate to that from the bankrupt estate of the issuer. The executor of the bankrupt estate will thereafter act as the administrator of the covered bonds and the cover pool assets. ICBA requires the administrator to maintain the segregation of cover pool assets and other assets which replace them and cash, separate from other assets of the bankrupt estate.

Cover pool insolvency and preferential treatment

In the event that the cover pool breaches eligibility criteria, covered bonds are accelerated. Covered bond investors and derivative counterparties would have priority claim on the proceeds from the sale of the cover pool assets, ranking pari passu among themselves. Should the proceeds from the realisation of the cover pool assets prove to be insufficient to satisfy the claims of covered bondholders and derivative counterparties, their residual claims will rank as general, unsecured claims in the winding up of the bankrupt estate.

Survival of Overcollateralization in the Cover Pool

Any overcollateralization present in the cover pool assets at the time of issuer insolvency is bankruptcy remote, provided it is identified in the cover pool register as any other assets. Indeed, the ICBA requires full repayment of outstanding claims on covered bonds and registered derivatives before cover pool assets become available to satisfy claims of the issuer's unsecured creditors.

The ICBA does not provide for the appointment of a special cover pool administrator in case of issuer insolvency.

The executor of the issuer's bankrupt estate shall, in its actions, represent the interest of both the covered bond investors and the unsecured investors. The executor has the right to use any overcollateralization to make advancements to other creditors of the bankrupt issuer provided the cover pool demonstrably contains more assets than are necessary to satisfy all claims of covered bondholders and derivative counterparties. Should for whatever reason cover pool assets later prove to be insufficient for such purposes, any funds released by the executor to other creditors can be reclaimed.

XI. RISK-WEIGHTING & COMPLIANCE WITH EUROPEAN LEGISLATION

The legislation when taken together with the practices, processes and procedures across the industry should fall within the criteria of Article 129 of the Capital Requirements Regulation (CRR[1]). Icelandic covered bonds comply with the criteria of Article 52(4) UCITS and with the covered bond criteria defined in Article 129(1) CRR. The ICBA explicitly lists mortgages against property for agricultural purposes and mortgages against the pledging of tenant-owner rights as eligible cover pool assets, while the CRR does not. In addition, issuers can impose self-restrictions to ensure that their covered bond issues comply with the CRR. Icelandic covered bonds are not eligible for repo transactions with the Icelandic Central Bank.

XII. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Legislative covered bonds in Iceland

Arion Bank and Íslandsbanki were both granted a license to issue covered bonds under ICBA in 2011 and both followed up by issuing covered bonds denominated in Icelandic krona to domestic investors. Landsbankinn was granted a license to issue covered bonds in 2013 and issued its first covered bonds in June 2013. All issuers use their covered bond programs to fund their residential mortgage portfolios.

In 2021 Arion Bank was the first Icelandic bank to issue EUR dominated covered bonds. Now both Islandsbanki and Landsbanki have outstanding EUR covered bonds.

Historically most of the mortgages in Iceland were inflation-linked. In recent years there has been a general shift from inflation-linked mortgages to more traditional style fixed rate and floating rate mortgages. The market for mortgages has changed significantly recently with commercial banks being the primary providers of new mortgages replacing the government-owned Housing Financing Fund and domestic pension funds as the primary providers of mortgages.

Issuers: There are currently three issuers of covered bond in Iceland – Arion Bank, Íslandsbanki, and Landsbankinn.

COVERED BOND LABEL **:** Arion Bank (1 pool), Landsbankinn (1 pool).

For the most up-to-date information, please consult the new ECBC Covered Bond Comparative Database webpage on the Covered Bond Label website www.coveredbondlabel.com or via the following QR code:

1 Please click on the following link for further information on the UCITS Directive and the Capital Requirements Regulation (CRR): https://hypo.org/ecbc/covered-bonds/.

3.21 IRELAND

By Group Legal Services team, Bank of Ireland and Nick Pheifer, DEPFA BANK

I. FRAMEWORK

Irish covered bonds benefit from the protection of specific covered bond legislation in the Irish Asset Covered Securities Acts 2001 and 2007 (the "ACS Acts") and the regulations and regulatory notices issued thereunder. The framework provides for the issuance of asset covered securities ("ACS") secured on public credits, mortgage credits (each, as defined below) and commercial mortgage credits (being obligations secured on commercial property assets). There is currently no issuer of ACS secured on commercial mortgage credits in the Irish market and consequently this chapter focuses on the framework applicable to ACS secured on public credits and mortgage credits.

II. STRUCTURE OF THE ISSUER

An issuer of ACS (an "ACS Issuer") must be an authorised credit institution and also be registered under the ACS Acts as a 'designated' credit institution. Such designated status is granted by the Central Bank of Ireland ("CBI") and an ACS Issuer will be registered as a designated public credit institution (a "DPCI") (authorised to issue public credit covered securities) and/or as a designated mortgage credit institution (a "DMCI") (authorised to issue mortgage credit covered securities).

The ACS Issuer holds the assets backing the ACS on its balance sheet. The collection of either mortgage credit assets or public credit assets (the "cover assets") backing the issue of ACS (the "cover pool") is dynamic in the sense that the ACS Issuer may move cover assets in and out of the cover pool provided that it does so in accordance with the provisions of the ACS Acts. The ACS Issuer must maintain a register (a "cover register") of all ACS issued, all cover assets hedge contracts and the cover assets (including any substitution assets and any cover assets constituting overcollateralisation) and any amendment to the cover register can only be effected with the approval of a cover-assets monitor (the "CAM") which is an independent professional third party, or the CBI (see further section VII below).

Statutory preference

The claims of ACS holders are protected by a statutory preference under the ACS Acts. As preferred creditors, upon an ACS Issuer insolvency, ACS holders are entitled to have recourse to the cover assets included in the cover pool ahead of all other creditors of the ACS Issuer other than the super-preferred creditors (the CAM and NTMA – see further section VIII below) and pari passu with other preferred creditors (such as the pool hedge counterparties – see further section V below). In this way the ACS holders have protection against the general Irish insolvency laws.

Restriction on business activities

The ACS Acts provide that an ACS Issuer may not carry on a business activity other than a permitted business activity as set out in the ACS Acts. Permitted business activities comprise dealing in and holding public credit assets or mortgage credit assets (depending on the ACS Issuer's designation) and limited classes of other assets, engaging in activities connected with the financing and refinancing of such assets, entering into certain hedging contracts, holding collateral under cover assets hedge contracts (referred to in the ACS Acts as "pool hedge collateral") and engaging in other activities which are incidental or ancillary to these activities. The ACS Acts limit the scope of non-core ACS business that an ACS Issuer can undertake by restricting its dealing in or holding of financial assets that are not otherwise eligible for inclusion in the cover pool to 10% of the total of all the ACS Issuer's assets.

III. COVER ASSETS

The classes of assets which are eligible for inclusion in a cover pool are determined by the designation of the ACS Issuer.

DPCIs

The classes of asset eligible for inclusion in the cover pool of a DPCI ("public credit assets") are financial obligations (collectively, "public credits"), including obligations given as a guarantor or surety and indirect or contingent obligations, in respect of money borrowed or raised (whether in the form of a security that represents other public credit that is securitised or not) where the obligor is any one of the following:

- Central governments, central banks (each, a "Sovereign"), public sector entities, regional governments or local authorities (each, a "Sub-sovereign") in any EEA country;
- Sovereigns in Australia, Canada, Japan, New Zealand, the Swiss Confederation or the USA (each, an "Eligible Non-EEA Country");
- Sub-sovereigns in any Eligible Non-EEA Country; and
- Multilateral development banks or international organisations, in each case which qualify as such for the purposes of the Capital Requirements Regulation ("CRR").

Risk-weighting and credit worthiness tests apply to the categories of cover assets outside the EEA countries to comply with the CRR covered bond eligibility requirements. Sovereign obligations from an Eligible Non-EEA Country must have an independent credit rating of at least step 1. Sub-sovereign obligations from an Eligible Non-EEA Country must have an independent credit rating of at least step 1 and a risk-weighting at least equal to that of an institution, central government or central bank. Sovereign and Sub-sovereign obligations from an Eligible Non-EEA Country with credit ratings below step 1 but at least step 2 may also be included in the cover pool provided that in total they do not exceed 20% of the nominal amount of outstanding ACS.

DMCIs

Those assets eligible for inclusion in the cover pool of a DMCI ("mortgage credit assets") are financial obligations (collectively, "mortgage credits"), including obligations given as a guarantor or surety and indirect or contingent obligations, in respect of money borrowed or raised (whether in the form of a security that represents other mortgage credit that is securitised or not) that are secured by a mortgage, charge, or other security on residential or commercial property that is located in any EEA country or any eligible Non-EEA country. This is subject to a concentration limit, for mortgage credit assets secured on commercial property, of 10% of the total prudent market value of all mortgage credit assets and substitution assets in the cover pool. Non-performing mortgage credit assets may not be added to a cover pool. Furthermore, a mortgage credit asset may not be counted as part of a cover pool if a building related to that mortgage credit asset is being or is to be constructed until the building is ready for occupation as a commercial or residential property. A mortgage credit institution may also include securitised mortgage credits in its cover pool subject to certain credit quality and other criteria and a concentration limit of 10% of the aggregate value of the related outstanding ACS.

Substitution assets

Substitution assets can be included in cover pools provided that they comply with applicable CRR requirements and certain other restrictions. These are deposits having a minimum credit rating of step 2 and a maximum maturity of 100 days with eligible financial institutions.

IV. VALUATION AND LTV CRITERIA

DPCI

Public credit assets maintained in the cover pool of a DPCI are ascribed a prudent market value equal to 100% of the amount of the related public credit outstanding on the date of valuation.

DMCI

The maximum prudent loan to value ("LTV") levels for mortgage credit assets included in the cover pool of a mortgage credit institution are 75% for mortgage credit assets backed by residential property and 60% for those backed by commercial property. Prudent LTV levels for mortgage credit assets in the cover pool can exceed the 75% threshold, however the balance of the mortgage credit above this threshold is disregarded for valuation purposes.

A DMCI is first required to determine the market value of a property asset at the time of origination. Property valuations are conducted by independent valuers. The DMCI then calculates the prudent market value of such property asset at the time of inclusion of the asset in the cover pool and also at such intervals (at least annually) as may be specified by the CBI. In addition, a DMCI is required to calculate the prudent market value of mortgage credit assets and securitised mortgage credits included in the cover pool on a quarterly basis, or more frequently if so instructed by the CAM, for the purposes of demonstrating compliance with the asset-liability and overcollateralisation requirements of the ACS Acts. In practice, the prudent market value of relevant property assets is calculated on a quarterly basis also as this calculation forms part of the valuation process for mortgage credit assets.

For these subsequent calculations, the DMCI must apply the house price index published by Permanent TSB and/or the house price index published by the Irish Central Statistics Office (depending on the date of origination) to the valuation obtained at origination, with same being verified by the CAM on a monthly basis.

V. ASSET-LIABILITY MANAGEMENT

The ACS Acts include important asset-liability controls to minimise various market risks.

- Duration matching: The weighted average term to maturity of a cover pool cannot be less than that of the related ACS.
- Overcollateralisation: The prudent market value of the cover pool must be at least 3% greater than the total of the principal amount of the related ACS in issue (see also Overcollateralisation below).
- Interest matching: The amount of interest payable on cover assets over a 12-month period must not be less than the amount of interest payable on the related ACS over the same 12-month period.
- Currency matching: Each cover asset must be denominated, after taking into account the effect of any cover assets hedge contract, in the same currency as the related ACS.
- Interest rate risk control: The net present value changes on the balance sheet of an ACS Issuer arising from (i) 100bps upward shift, (ii) 100bps downward shift and (iii) 100bps twist, in the yield curve, must not exceed 10% of the ACS Issuer's total own funds at any time.

Hedge contracts

Hedge contracts are used in the cover pool to minimise risks on interest rates, currency exchange rates, credit or other risks that may adversely affect the ACS Issuer's business activities that relate to an ACS or cover assets. All such hedge contracts are required to be entered on the cover register by the ACS Issuer. Pool hedge counterparties rank as preferred creditors, pari passu with the ACS holders, provided they are not in default of their financial obligations under that hedge contract. Upon the insolvency of an ACS Issuer, a hedge con-

tract will remain in place subject to its terms. Any collateral posted under a hedge contract by a pool hedge counterparty must be recorded on a separate register maintained by the ACS Issuer.

Overcollateralisation

The ACS Acts prescribe a minimum overcollateralisation of ACS for DMCIs and DPCIs of 3% calculated on a present value basis. It has been the market practice for ACS Issuers to contractually commit to higher levels.

The CAM is responsible for monitoring the levels of legislative and contractual overcollateralisation. Upon an ACS Issuer insolvency, ACS holders will benefit from any cover assets which make up the overcollateralisation to the extent of their claims.

VI. TRANSPARENCY

Disclosure in financial statements

All ACS Issuers are required to make specific disclosures in relation to their cover assets in their annual financial statements.

DPCIs

A DPCI is required to disclose as at the date to which its financial statements are made up:

- the geographic location of its public credit assets and the volume and percentage of assets in each such location; and
- details of public credit assets secured on loans to multilateral development banks and international organisations and the volume and percentage of such assets.

DMCIs

A DMCI is required to disclose, in respect of the date to which its financial statements are made up, details of:

- the number of mortgage credit assets, broken down by amount of principal outstanding;
- volume and percentage of assets in each geographic location;
- the number and principal amounts outstanding of non-performing mortgage credit assets;
- whether or not any persons who owed money under mortgage credit assets had, during the immediately preceding financial year (if any), defaulted in making payments in respect of those assets in excess of EUR 1,000 (so as to render them non-performing for the purposes of the ACS Acts), and if so, the number of those assets that were held in the cover pool;
- the number of non-performing mortgage credit assets replaced with other assets;
- the total amount of interest in arrears in respect of mortgage credit assets that has not been written off;
- the total amounts of principal repaid and interest paid in respect of mortgage credit assets; and
- the number and the total amount of principal outstanding on mortgage credits that are secured on commercial property.

VII. COVER POOL MONITOR AND BANKING SUPERVISION

One of the key features of the ACS Acts is the rigorous monitoring role undertaken by the CAM. The CAM is appointed by the ACS Issuer and approved by the CBI.

There are strict eligibility requirements for CAMs. A CAM must be a body corporate or partnership, comprising personnel or partners who are members of a professional representative body. It must demonstrate to the CBI that it is experienced and competent in (i) financial risk management techniques, (ii) regulatory compliance reporting and (iii) capital markets, derivatives, and, as applicable, public credit business and mortgage credit business. The CAM must also demonstrate that it has sufficient resources at its disposal and sufficient academic

or professional qualifications and experience in the financial services industry to satisfy firstly, the designated credit institution and secondly, the CBI, that it is capable of fulfilling this role.

The CAM is responsible for monitoring the cover pool, the ACS Issuer's compliance with specific provisions of the ACS Acts and reporting any breaches to the CBI. The CAM issues regular reports to the ACS Issuer (every 1-4 weeks) and submits a report on a quarterly basis to the CBI.

Some of the CAM's principal obligations include: ensuring that the matching requirements of the ACS Acts with respect to the cover assets and the ACS are met; ensuring that the asset eligibility requirements are met; approving any inclusion in or removal from the cover register, of a cover asset, ACS or hedge contract; checking that the level of substitution assets included in the cover pool does not exceed the prescribed percentage; and ensuring that the legislative and contractual levels of overcollateralisation are maintained.

The CBI is responsible for supervising the ACS Issuers. The CBI may, with the consent of the Minister for Finance, revoke the registration of an ACS Issuer and/or suspend its business if such ACS Issuer breaches any provision of the ACS Acts. In addition, the CBI has wide-ranging powers under the Irish Central Banking legislation to impose significant fines and administrative sanctions on ACS Issuers and/or their senior management for contraventions of the ACS Acts.

VIII. SEGREGATION OF COVER ASSETS AND BANKRUPTCY REMOTENESS OF COVERED BONDS

As noted above under section II, an ACS Issuer holds its cover assets on its balance sheet. However, the cover assets are ring-fenced from the other assets of the ACS Issuer for the benefit of ACS holders by virtue of (i) their being recorded on the cover register, and (ii) a statutory preference created by the ACS Acts.

Segregation: Cover register

Each ACS Issuer must maintain a cover register including the details of its ACS in issue, the cover assets and substitution assets backing its ACS and any cover assets hedge contracts in existence. The cover register is important as a cover asset or a cover assets hedge contract cannot be described as such unless and until it is recorded on the register. Their registration is prima facie evidence of such assets and hedge contracts being included in the cover pool, entitling the ACS holders and pool hedge counterparties to benefit from the insolvency protection specified in the ACS Acts in respect of such assets and hedge contracts. An ACS Issuer may only remove or amend a register entry with the consent of the CAM or the CBI which further safeguards the interests of ACS holders.

Preferential treatment of ACS holders

Once a cover asset has been entered in the cover register, it will remain a cover asset for the benefit of ACS holders and other preferred creditors until the CAM or the CBI has consented to its removal from the cover register and consequently, the cover pool. Cover assets included in a cover pool do not form part of the assets of the ACS Issuer for the purposes of insolvency until such time as the claims of ACS holders and other preferred creditors under the ACS Acts have been satisfied.

If the claims of the ACS holders (and other preferred creditors, including the pool hedge counterparties) are not fully satisfied from the proceeds of the disposal of the cover assets, such parties are, with respect to the unsatisfied part of their claims, to be regarded as unsecured creditors in the insolvency process.

Impact of insolvency proceedings on ACS and hedge contracts

Upon insolvency of an ACS Issuer, all ACS issued remain outstanding and all cover assets hedge contracts will continue to have effect, subject in each case, to the terms and conditions of the documents under which they were created.

The claims of ACS holders on the cover pool are protected by operation of law. Cover assets and hedge contracts that are included in a cover pool are not liable to interference by a bankruptcy custodian or similar person whether by attachment, sequestration or other form of seizure, or to set-off by any persons, that would

otherwise be permitted by law so long as claims secured by the insolvency provisions of the ACS Acts remain unsatisfied. ACS holders have recourse to cover assets ahead of all other non-preferred creditors regardless of whether the claims of such other creditors are preferred under any other enactment or any rule of law and whether those claims are secured or unsecured.

The role of the manager and access to liquidity in case of insolvency

The ACS Acts makes provision for the management of the asset covered securities business of an ACS Issuer upon an ACS Issuer insolvency through the services of the Irish National Treasury Management Agency ("NTMA"). If no suitable manager can be found by the CBI or the NTMA, the NTMA will attempt to locate an appropriate body corporate as a new parent entity for the ACS Issuer. Failing that, the CBI will appoint the NTMA to act as a temporary manager until a suitable manager or new parent entity is found. Upon appointment, a manager will assume control of the cover assets, the asset covered securities business and all related assets of the ACS Issuer. The manager is required to manage the ACS business of the ACS Issuer in the commercial interests of the ACS holders and the pool hedge counterparties. The manager will have such powers as may be designated to it by the CBI under its notice of appointment. It is possible for a manager to obtain a liquidity facility through the use of a hedge contract, such hedge contract if recorded on the cover register would constitute a cover assets hedge contract for the purposes of the ACS Acts and the pool hedge counterparty would rank pari passu with ACS holders and any other pool hedge counterparties.

IX. RISK-WEIGHTING AND COMPLIANCE WITH EUROPEAN LEGISLATION

The ACS meet the requirements of Article 52(4) UCITS. The eligibility of cover assets set out in the ACS Acts also match the criteria for the preferential risk-weighting of covered bonds set out in the CRR[1]. The ACS Acts will require change to comply with the recently published Directive and Regulations on harmonising European Covered bonds (Directive 2019/2162 and Regulation 2019/2160). It is expected that such changes will be completed within the scheduled timelines.

Issuers: There are four ACS Issuers with outstanding covered bonds – Bank of Ireland Mortgage Bank, DEPFA ACS BANK DAC, AIB Mortgage Bank and EBS Mortgage Finance.

ECBC Covered Bond Comparative Database: https://www.ecbc.eu/framework/28/Asset_Covered_Securities_-_ACS

COVERED BOND LABEL **:** AIB Mortgage Bank (1 pool), Bank of Ireland Mortgage Bank (1 pool).

For the most up-to-date information, please consult the new ECBC Covered Bond Comparative Database webpage on the Covered Bond Label website www.coveredbondlabel.com or via the following QR code:

1 For further information on the UCITS Directive and the Capital Requirements Regulation (CRR) please see: https://hypo.org/ecbc/covered-bonds/.

3.22 ITALY

By Marco Marino, Italian Banking Association

I. FRAMEWORK

At the beginning of 2023, Italy has completed the transposing of the European covered bond legislation, which has become effective from the 31 March 2023. The national legislation is regulated by the Title I-bis of the law n. 130/99 – introduced by the legislative decree n. 190/2021 – and by the secondary disposals of the Bank of Italy which amended the Circular n. 285/2013.

The Italian regulation on covered bonds was in large part already compliant to the EU legislation. The main provisions introduced regard, in particular, the following topics:

- an authorisation process for all banks which intend to issue covered bonds under new programmes established after the 31 march of 2023 and a prior notification to the Bank of Italy for the issuance of covered bonds under programmes previously into force;
- the removal of the previous limits for the transferring of eligible assets to the SPV, differentiated in relation to the capital requirements of the issuer, and the introduction of internal operating limits set by the issuer, considering specific elements;
- the introduction of: the hedging derivative contracts as eligible assets in the cover pool; a liquidity buffer requirement; disclosure requirements; the new labels "European covered bonds" and "European covered bonds (premium)"; the overcollateralisation to benefit from the preferential prudential treatment.

The new regulation has confirmed the "Obbligazioni Bancarie Collateralizzate" (OBC), introduced by the art. 13-bis of the decree law n. 18/2016. This is a collateralised bond comparable with the European Secured Notes (ESN) for his structure – double recourse instrument – and for the eligible assets in the cover pool – established, notably, by SME loans. Secondary regulation of the Minister for the Economy and Finance will specify some features such as the definition of eligible assets and the issuance rules.

On 18 December 2024, the Bank of Italy launched a consultation concerning the exercise of the discretion provided for in Article 129(3) of Regulation (EU) 575/2013 (CRR) as amended by Regulation (EU) 2024/1623 (CRR3), for the purpose of valuing immovable property. Notably, if the discretion is not exercised, banks apply the new valuation methods introduced by CRR3 to the real estate pledged as collateral for the covered bonds issuance programmes.

II. STRUCTURE OF COVERED BONDS ISSUANCE

The new framework has confirmed the "dual recourse" structure of the Italian covered bond transaction (Obbligazioni Bancarie Garantite – OBG) previously in force, as follows:

a) Bank issues covered bonds (or another bank) transfers' eligible assets forming a segregated cover pool to a special purpose vehicle (SPV), whose sole corporate purpose is the purchase of such assets and the granting of guarantees for bond issued in favor of the bondholders up to the amount of the segregated assets;

b) The SPV purchases the transferred assets by means of a loan granted or guaranteed to it by a bank (not necessarily the same bank transferring the assets);

c) The eligible assets of the segregated cover pool are applied to satisfy the rights attaching to the covered bonds and the counterparties of derivative for risk hedging purposes, and to pay the costs of the transaction.

The national legislator has exercised the discretion provided by the covered bond European legislation of allowing the issuance of covered bonds with extendible maturity structures.

The maturity extension is subject to specific triggers and, in the event of the insolvency or resolution of the bank issuing the covered bonds, it does not affect the ranking of covered bond investors or invert the sequencing of the covered bond programme's original maturity schedule.

III. AUTHORISATION AND NOTIFICATION PROCESS

Banks intending to launch new covered bonds programmes after the 31 march of 2023 (the date from which the new framework has become effective) must apply for authorisation from the Bank of Italy, which grants or denies it within 90 days from the date of the application; the information relating to the authorisation is included in the register under art. 13 of the Italian Consolidated Banking Law (CBL, legislative decree n. 385/1993). The bank may proceed with the issuance after the mentioned registration, informing the Bank of Italy within 10 days following the same.

After the authorisation, the issuer intending make changes to programmes that impact on compliance with the requirements established by the new framework, must notify it to the Bank of Italy and can apply the amendments after 60 days from the communication.

The issuing bank must also promptly inform to the Bank of Italy when programme is closed, and on the positive refund of the bonds issued.

Banks intending to launch a new covered bonds issuance under programmes established before the 31 march of 2023 must notify – the first time – the Bank of Italy at least 30 days before the issuance certifying that the programmes have been updated in compliance with the new framework. The communication shall be accompanied by the following documents: (i) a statement from the issuer' strategic supervisory body confirming compliance with specific new regulatory provisions; (ii) a report of the Asset Monitor.

Moreover, only at the initial phase, banks have provided to the Bank of Italy (by 30 June 2023) a general information about the status of all existing covered bond programmes.

IV. STRUCTURE OF THE ISSUER AND IMPACT OF INSOLVENCY PROCEEDINGS

All the Italian banks, both "significant" and "less significant", can issue covered bonds under programmes authorized by the Bank of Italy (see paragraph III).

The previous regulatory provisions, which allowed to bank compliant with high level of capitalisation to issue covered bonds without authorisation of the competent Authority, have been removed.

The SPV assignee is a financial intermediary, registered in the "special list" provided for by article 106 of the Banking Law, and therefore subject to the Bank of Italy's supervision.

The guarantee granted by the SPV to the bondholders is irrevocable, first-demand, unconditional and independent with respect to the obligations of the issuer. It is enforced in case of not-payment, resolution or compulsory administrative liquidation of the issuing bank, up to the amount of the segregated assets.

All the amounts obtained by the liquidation procedure will become part of the cover pool and therefore used to satisfy the rights of covered bondholders.

In case of compulsory administrative liquidation of the issuing bank, the bondholders compete to the distribution of bank assets together with unsecured creditors, including derivative counterparties, for the eventual residual amount still due following the guarantee enforcement.

In the event of inadequacy of segregated assets, the bank issuing the covered bonds is responsible, for what is still due, for the SPV obligations towards the derivative counterparties.

The redemption of the subordinated loan granted by the issuer to the SPV is junior to any outstanding claims of covered bondholders, derivative counterparties, and transaction costs.

V. ELIGIBLE ASSETS

Under the new Italian framework, the assets eligible for the cover pool are the following:

(a) those compliant with the article 129(1) of Regulation (EU) No 575/2013 (CRR), if the bank issuing the covered bonds meets the requirements of paragraphs 1a to 3 of the same article;

(b) high-quality liquid assets pursuant to the delegated regulation n. 2015/61 (that are not issued by the credit institution issuing the covered bonds itself, its parent undertaking, other than a public sector entity that is not a credit institution, its subsidiary or another subsidiary of its parent undertaking or by a securitisation special purpose entity with which the credit institution has close links);

(c) short-term exposures (equal or less than 90 days) to credit institutions that qualify for credit quality step 1 or 2, or short-term deposits to credit institutions that qualify for credit quality step 1, 2 or 3.

Notably, with reference to the eligible assets not originated by the issuing bank, this latter shall carry out a creditworthiness assessment of the debtors before the transfer the assets to the cover pool or verifies that the assessment criteria adopted by the originator is compliant with the new provisions.

The derivative contracts are included in the cover pool, in particular, exclusively for risk hedging purposes and only if the credit institutions counterparties qualify, at least, for credit quality step 3. The discretion assigned the competent authorities by the art. 129 of CRR who may, after consulting EBA, allow exposures to credit institutions that qualify for credit quality step 3 in the form of derivative contracts (if specific conditions are met), has been exercised.

Among the other things, the derivative contracts should be sufficiently documented, their volume is adjusted in the case of a reduction in the hedged risk, they are removed when the hedged risk ceases to exist and they cannot be terminated upon the resolution or compulsory administrative liquidation of the bank that issued the covered bonds.

The supplementation of transferred assets subsequent to the initial assignment shall be carried out by way of the transfer of additional eligible assets. Substitution of eligible assets included in the segregated cover pool with other assets of the same kind originated by the issuer bank is permitted provided that this is expressly set out and regulated in the issuance programme and term sheet.

VI. COVERAGE AND LIQUIDITY REQUIREMENTS

In line with the EU covered bond directive, in order to ensure investor protection, the new Italian framework has confirmed specific coverage requirements – by requiring covered bond programmes to comply at all times to them – and has introduced the liquidity buffer which covers the maximum cumulative net liquidity outflow over the next 180 days.

The coverage requirements are calculated taking into account: the nominal value of all cover assets and of outstanding covered bonds; the net present value of cover assets and of outstanding covered bonds; the interests and other revenues created by the cover assets and interests and costs related to outstanding covered bonds.

The liquidity buffer is composed by the following liquid assets:

> high-quality liquid assets pursuant to the Delegated Regulation n. 2015/61 (that are not issued by the credit institution issuing the covered bonds itself, its parent undertaking, other than a public sector entity that is not a credit institution, its subsidiary or another subsidiary of its parent undertaking or by a securitisation special purpose entity with which the credit institution has close links);

> short-term exposures (equal or less than 90 days) to credit institutions that qualify for credit quality step 1 or 2, or short-term deposits to credit institutions that qualify for credit quality step 1, 2 or 3.

In addition, OBG shall be subject, among other things, to a minimum level of 5 % of overcollateralisation to benefit from the preferential prudential treatment under CRR and to use the label "European covered bonds (premium)".

VII. RISKS GOVERNANCE

With regard to the complexity of the contractual aspects and the possible impact on the banks' financial situation deriving participation in issue programmes, the issuer bank shall identify and careful assess and control the risks related with this operational framework.

In particular, such assessments and procedures shall include measures to ensure, on a continuative basis, that the risks assumed are in line with the institution's risk appetite and strategy defined in the overall RAF (Risk Appetite Framework).

In relation to above, under the new framework, the issuer bank shall set internal operating limits to the eligible assets may be transferred, in line with their internal policies, risk management objectives and operative tolerance thresholds of the RAF (including those related to the liquidity risk management, the overall level of encumbered assets and non-performing loans). These limits are updated in relation to changes in the bank's strategy and operations.

The previous transfer limits, graduated on the total capital ratio and Tier 1 ratio at the consolidated level of the issuer, have been removed.

Moreover, the management body shall ensure that the risk management structures of the issuer bank verify at least once every six months and for each transaction, among other things: (i) the quality and integrity of the transferred assets collateralizing the bonds; (ii) the compliance with the internal transfer limits, with maximum ratio between the covered bonds issued and the transferred cover assets and with liquidity buffer requirement; (iii) the effectiveness and adequacy of the risk protection provided by derivative contracts; (iv) the investor information.

VIII. COVER POOL MONITOR

An external asset monitor (AM) appointed by the issuer shall monitor the transaction regularity, the compliance with specific requirements of covered bonds framework, the collateral integrity and the investor information.

The AM must be an auditing firm possessing the professional skills required to perform such duties and must be independent from the bank engaging it (e.g. it cannot be the same firm appointed to audit the accounts of the issuing bank) and of any other person participating in the transaction.

It has to report at least once a year to the control body of the bank and a copy of that report shall be submitted also to the Bank of Italy.

It is involved also in the notification process for covered bonds issuance under programmes established before the 31 march of 2023 (see paragraph III).

IX. TRANSPARENCY REQUIREMENTS

According to the new Italian framework, the banks issuing covered bonds publish on their website, at least on a quarterly basis, information on their covered bond programmes, in order to allow investors to assess the profile and risks of that programme.

The new framework sets minimum information, in line with covered bond EU directive, including, among other things, the following: (i) the nominal value and net present value of the cover pool and outstanding covered bonds; (ii) a list of the International Securities Identification Numbers (ISINs), if attributed; (iii) the composition of cover pool, in relation to the geographical distribution and type of assets; relevant information

regarding the market risk, including interest rate risk and currency risk, and credit and liquidity risks; (iv) the levels of coverage adopted respect the minimum required, in relation to the requirements provided by the law, contractual agreements, or voluntary adopted by the issuer.

It's worth noting that the disclosure obligation is fulfilled through the publication of the templates defined by the European Covered Bond Council (Harmonized Transparency Template – HTT) on the issuer bank's website, if they are compliant at least with the information established by the law.

On this subject, since 2012, some Italian OBG issuers have participated to the mentioned ECBC initiative. The OBG transparency template is available online on the Covered Bond Label website (https://www.covered-bondlabel.com) and each participating OBG issuer has published a completed version on its own website.

X. PRUDENTIAL TREATMENT AND LABELS

The OBG issued by Italian banks in accordance with the new national framework are admitted to the preferential treatment of the art. 129 (4)(5) of CRR. The OBG issued before the 31 March of 2023, which are compliant with the previous national and European framework, continue to be eligible for preferential treatment until their maturity.

The OBG issued by Italian banks in compliance with the requirements of the new national framework, may be traded using the "European covered bond" label. If they satisfy also the requirements under article 129 of the CRR (including, among the other things, the minimum level of overcollateralisation), may be traded using the "European covered bond (premium)" label.

The Italian OBG issued before the new framework continue to be label as covered bonds.

XI. SUPERVISION

The Bank of Italy is the national Authority designed to the supervision on the compliance of covered bonds framework, in order to ensure the sound and prudent management of the issuing banks, the market stability and the protection of bondholders.

In relation to above, the law attributes specific information, regulatory and inspection supervisory powers to the Bank of Italy.

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Issuers joint to the Fact Book survey: Banca Monte dei Paschi di Siena, Banca Nazionale del Lavoro, Banca Popolare dell'Alto Adige (SUDTIROLER VOLKSBANK) (starting 2020), Banca Popolare di Sondrio, Banca Sella, Banco BPM, Banco di Desio e della Brianza, BPER Banca*, Cassa di Risparmio di Bolzano (Sparkasse), Crédit Agricole Italia, Credito Emiliano (CREDEM), Deutsche Bank, Iccrea Banca, Intesa Sanpaolo**, Mediobanca, Unicredit.

* Effective from the 28th November 2022 Banca Carige was merged by absorption into BPER Banca.
** Intesa Sanpaolo acquired control of UBI Banca on August 5, 2020, and merged it by incorporation on April 12, 2021.

COVERED BOND LABEL **:** Banca Monte dei Paschi di Siena (1 pool), Banca Popolare di Sondrio S.p.A. (1 pool), Banca Sella S.p.A. (1 pool), BANCO BPM (1 pool), Banco di Desio e della Brianza SpA (1 pool), Cassa di Risparmio di Bolzano SpA (1 pool), Crédit Agricole Italia S.p.A. (1 pool), Credito Emiliano Spa (1 pool), Iccrea Banca SpA (1 pool), Intesa Sanpaolo S.p.A. (3 pool), Mediobanca - Banca di Credito Finanziario S.p.A. (1 pool), Südtiroler Volksbank Banca Popolare dell'AltoAdige (1 pool), UniCredit S.p.A. (1 pool).

For the most up-to-date information, please consult the new ECBC Covered Bond Comparative Database webpage on the Covered Bond Label website www.coveredbondlabel.com or via the following QR code:

3.23 JAPAN

By Hirokazu Tanaka, SMBC and Elena Bortolotti, Chairwoman of the ECBC Rating Agency Approaches Working Group and Barclays

I. FRAMEWORK

Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corporation ("SMBC") issued the first ever Japanese covered bond back in November 2018 and Sumitomo Mitsui Trust Bank ("SMTB") followed in October 2020. As of today, Japan does not have a covered bond legal framework hence both SMBC and SMTB relied on Japanese and English contractual law provisions to structure their covered bond programmes following the footsteps of the UK, Canada and New Zealand; jurisdictions that issued contractual law covered bonds before a legal framework was introduced and legislative covered bonds were issued.

The Japanese banking industry had tried to establish a covered bond legislation in Japan in the early 2010's but there was no material progress at that time mainly due to two reasons: (1) demand for covered bonds from Issuers was not strong because of ample liquidity in the JPY market, and (2) achieving dual recourse under the Japanese legal framework was difficult.

Since then, Japanese banks have become active in foreign markets and have increased their foreign assets significantly. The expanding need for stable foreign currency ("FX") funding coupled with having identified a viable structure that achieves dual recourse under the existing Japanese legal framework (see VIII. SEGREGATION OF COVER ASSETS AND BANKRUPTCY REMOTENESS OF COVERED BONDS) has allowed Japanese banks to establish covered bonds programmes and successfully issue in the international markets.

On 28 September 2018, the major Japanese banks jointly submitted an initial request to their regulator to establish a covered bond legislation in Japan. The document was called "Establishment of Japanese covered bond legislation in order to strengthen stability of foreign currency funding of Japanese banks". Since then, the Japanese banks have been consistently advocating to the regulatory authorities for the introduction of a dedicated covered bond framework. Meanwhile, the Japanese Financial Services Authority ("FSA") has been closely examining the optimal covered bond structure and how best to implement a covered bond framework.

With the Japanese Basel III finalisation effective from March 2024, covered bonds now receive preferential treatment in terms of RWA in Japan for the first time.

Given the lack of a Japanese covered bond legal framework, the analysis in the following sections is based on SMBC's and SMTB's covered bond programmes.

II. STRUCTURE OF THE ISSUER

In the absence of a covered bond legal framework in Japan, SMBC's and SMTB's covered bond programmes have been established in a way to replicate as closely as possible legislative covered bonds. The Issuer is the Bank acting as the trustee on behalf of a Money Trust (the "Trust Account"), which is established specifically for the issuance of covered bonds and with the scope of holding the cover pool assets. The cover pool assets consist of senior tranches of self-originated Residential Mortgage Backed Securities (RMBS). The Bank acting in its proprietary capacity will be the Total Return Swap ("TRS") counterparty, the Initial Servicer as well as the Initial FX Counterparty (Figure 1).

In the event of a Bank Proprietary Account bankruptcy, pursuant to the Japanese Trust Act, the Trust Account is segregated from the Bank Proprietary Account's general assets and from any other assets of the Trust. The Trust Account bears some similarities to how cover pool assets are ring-fenced on balance sheet in traditional covered bonds, as its assets do not form part of the assets available to the Bank Proprietary Account's general creditors.

The cover pool assets are transferred from the Bank Proprietary Account to the Issuer, through the use of a TRS. The Trust Account pays the cash flows generated by the cover pool assets to the Bank Proprietary Account,

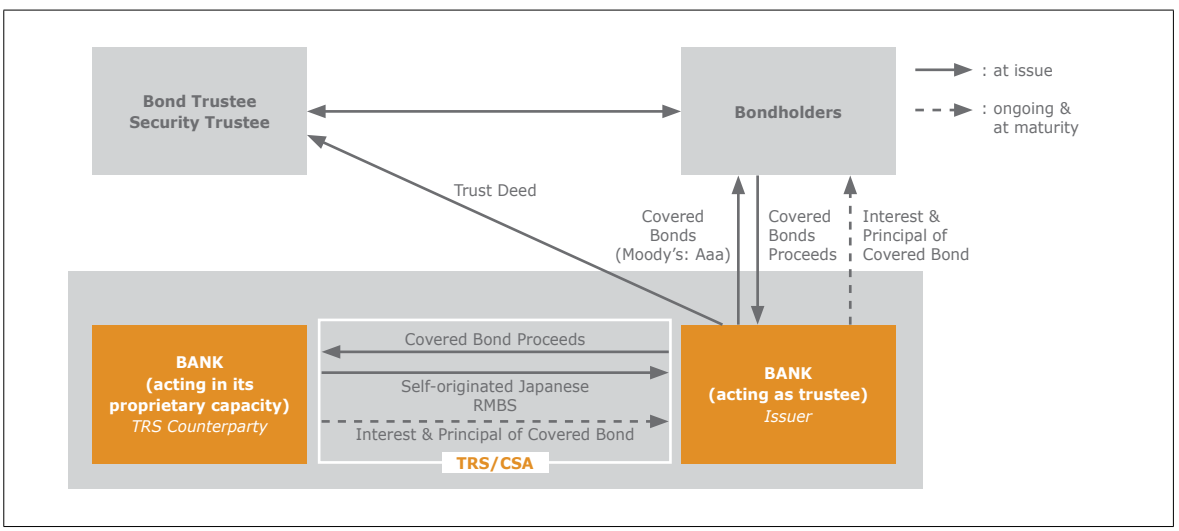
and the Bank Proprietary Account pays to the Trust Account the covered bond interest and principal amounts, which are then passed to the covered bondholders.

One of the key differences between the SMBC and SMTB programmes is how entrustment of the mortgages is perfected. Under the SMBC programme entrustment of the mortgage loans from the originator to the asset trustee is perfected against third parties under the Perfection Law. While under SMTB's programme entrustment of the mortgage loans from the originator to the asset trustee is achieved by Declaration of Trust. Even though the legal construct is different, the end result achieved is akin in both structures.

In the event of a Bank Proprietary Account's bankruptcy, all claims and obligations between the Trust Account and the TRS Counterparty under the TRS are terminated using the close-out netting principle by applying the Japanese Netting Act. Close-out netting reduces the risk that the transfer of cover pool assets is recharacterised as a collateral transaction and assures the segregation and bankruptcy remoteness of the assets held in the Trust Account.

Dual recourse is achieved by allowing covered bondholders to have recourse to the Bank Proprietary Account's assets available to general creditors, in addition to having exclusive recourse to the assets held in the Trust Account.

FIGURE 1



Sources: SMBC and SMTB Programme Documents

III. COVER ASSETS

Eligible cover pool assets are senior self-originated RMBS tranches backed by residential loans originated by the Bank. SMBC's programme also allows for Japanese Government Bonds to be included as substitution assets but with a self-imposed cap of up to 10% of the cover pool. Cash can also be used as CSA collateral under both programmes.

The Banks were not able to transfer residential loans directly to the Trust Account, as they needed to rely on the close-out netting principle to apply the Netting Act under the TRS to guarantee segregation and bankruptcy remoteness of the Trust Account. One of the benefits of using RMBS as cover pool assets is the ability to conduct daily valuations of the cover pool. It is worth highlighting that, if necessary, the selling agent has the option to sell the RMBS or to unwind the relevant RMBS and sell the underlying residential loans.

A TRS Default Event (defined as failure to pay under the TRS, credit support default including breach of the Asset Coverage Test ("ACT"), bankruptcy of the TRS counterparty and merger without assumption) triggers the liquidation of the cover pool assets and the start of the Realisation Period. All series of covered bonds will be simultaneously redeemed on the Realisation Redemption Date or upon an Issuer Event of Default regardless of their scheduled maturities.

IV. VALUATION AND LTV CRITERIA

Pursuant to the Base Prospectuses, the RMBS are subject to haircuts depending on their rating: a further haircut is applied on the value attributed to the cover assets to the extent that the property value underlying the portfolio of RMBS does not meet an 80% Loan to Value ("LTV") test (adjustment by the Adjusted LTV Limit Factor).

The Adjusted LTV Limit Factor is the factor which limits the LTV of the underlying assets in the portfolio of RMBS to a maximum of 80%. As a result, the value of RMBS to be considered for the ACT calculation is also limited accordingly.

V. ASSET – LIABILITY MANAGEMENT

SMBC's and SMTB's covered bond programmes feature an ACT, an Interest & Expenses Reserve and appropriate FX mitigants.

Asset Coverage Test: The Issuer is required to hold eligible assets in respect of all covered bonds sufficient to meet the ACT which is calculated on a daily basis. In the event that the aggregate market related value of the Issuer assets excluding cash in any reserve fund has fallen below the minimum overcollateralization percentage of 25%, the TRS counterparty shall, pursuant to the terms of the CSA, be required to post an amount of CSA collateral with a value at least equal to such shortfall amount. Calculations for the ACT are checked on a quarterly basis by the Asset Monitor. A breach of the ACT will trigger a TRS Default Event.

Interest & Expenses Reserve: The reserve fund which is established for the benefit of the covered bondholders will cover 9 months of interest on all covered bonds outstanding and senior expenses.

FX Mitigants: FX risk is managed through the ACT and daily TRS collateral posting until a TRS Default Event. Following a TRS Default Event any FX risk on principal (and unpaid interest or accrued interest, if any) will be hedged through a Contingent FX Forward transaction with an eligible third-party up to the Realisation Period End Date.

VI. TRANSPARENCY

The Issuers have committed to publishing a quarterly investor report which is available on their websites. The investor reports include selected information on the underlying cover pool as well as confirming compliance with the ACT. Please find below some of the cover pool characteristics which are disclosed in the investor reports:

- Property type information
- Number of mortgage loans comprising RMBS
- Concentration risks (10 largest exposures)
- Breakdown by domestic regions
- Breakdown by interest rate
- Breakdown by repayment type
- Loan seasoning
- Non-Performing Loans ("NPLs")
- Loan size information

> Unindexed LTV information

> Indexed LTV information

VII. COVER POOL MONITOR AND BANKING SUPERVISION

Under each programme, an independent third-party accounting firm has been selected to act as Asset Monitor. The Asset Monitor will check and report to the transaction parties, on a quarterly basis, on the compliance or non-compliance with the ACT and the maintenance of sufficient funds in the Reserve Fund.

SMBC and SMTB are regulated banking entities in Japan supervised by the Japanese FSA.

VIII. SEGREGATION OF COVER ASSETS AND BANKRUPTCY REMOTENESS OF COVERED BONDS

Following a Bank Proprietary Account bankruptcy, the assets held in the Trust Account are not subject to recourse by (1) the Bank Proprietary Account's general creditors nor by (2) creditors of other trusts of the Bank, and hence do not form part of the bankruptcy estate of the Bank Proprietary Account or of other trusts under the Japanese Trust Act. The use of the Japanese Trust Act and the Netting Act (as described above) allows the structure to achieve cover pool asset segregation and bankruptcy remoteness of the cover pool.

Following a TRS Default Event, a TRS Default Event notice will be served, and the Realisation Period will begin. All outstanding covered bonds regardless of their scheduled maturity will have to be repaid shortly after the Realisation Period End Date. During the Realisation Period, interest on the covered bonds will continue to be paid by drawing on the Interest & Expenses Reserve. Furthermore, the Selling Agent will take necessary steps to sell the cover pool; all proceeds from the sale will be used to repay the covered bondholders. Should the proceeds from the sale of the cover pool not be sufficient to repay the covered bondholders in full, the covered bondholders will have recourse to the Bank Proprietary Account's general bankruptcy estate.

IX. RISK-WEIGHTING & COMPLIANCE WITH EUROPEAN LEGISLATION

Japanese covered bonds are neither Covered Bond Directive compliant nor Art. 129 CRR compliant since Japan is not a Member State of the European Union ("EU"). Furthermore, the covered bonds do not benefit from preferential risk-weighting for regulatory capital purposes under EU rules due to the lack of a Japanese covered bond legal framework.

X. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Index Eligibility

Japanese covered bonds are eligible as "covered bonds" for the purposes of the Bloomberg Barclays Covered Bond Index and Markit iBoxx Index.

For the most up-to-date information, please consult the new ECBC Covered Bond Comparative Database webpage on the Covered Bond Label website www.coveredbondlabel.com or via the following QR code:

3.24 LATVIA

By Agneta Rumpa, Hannelora Voiciša, Santa Rubīna, Sorainen, Richard Kemmish, consultant and Jacek Kubas, EBRD

I. FRAMEWORK

A specific regulation for covered bond issuance in Latvia was created only in 2021 when Latvian Parliament adopted the Covered Bonds Law (the Law). The Law entered into force on 23 June 2021. There are also certain regulations on the procedures to obtain the permit for the implementation of a covered bond programme, procedures for selecting a candidate for the office of the special administrator, as well as the reporting on potential and actual violations and financial reporting. The authority responsible for supervising the covered bonds issuance is Latvijas Banka, the Latvian financial sector supervisory authority.

The Covered Bonds Law

The Law was developed by the Latvian Ministry of Finance in cooperation with the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) and the European Commission (EC) in order to improve and modernize the national covered bond regulation. The Law transposes the Covered Bonds Directive No. 2019/2162 (CBD) and is aligned with the amended CRR. The Law implements the so called "SPV model" where the cover assets of the covered bonds are segregated from the other assets of the credit institution issuing the bonds in a special purpose vehicle. The Law also aims to follow the best market practices of cover bonds regulation.

The Law prescribes the cover portfolio management agreement and the terms of its conclusion. The Law covers covered bonds structure; establishment, operation, liquidation and supervision of the covered bond company (the SPV); cover assets' acquisition and protection from third party claims; insolvency procedure aspects of the issuer, the credit institution transferring the claims included in the covered bond portfolio (the transferor) and the covered bond company; protection of investors and creditors of the covered bonds; public supervision of the operation of covered bond programmes; and operation of cross-border programmes.

Given that it is essential for all three Baltic States (Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia) to create a uniform covered bonds market, which requires ensuring the mutual compatibility of their local legislations, then the main elements of the legislation to the extent possible were aligned during the drafting process amongst all three jurisdictions. The Law is a step closer to create a Pan Baltic (a common Latvian-Lithuanian-Estonian covered bond market) in order to ensure cross-border covered bond issuance, and it intends to provide for the possibility to combine bank assets from all three Baltic States in the cover pool in order to ensure more favourable conditions for the issued bonds in the international market.

In the short period of time the Law has been in force, the covered bonds market potentials in Latvia are only being explored. Currently, there is no fast growth of covered bonds issuance in Latvia. Taking a look on the whole Pan Baltic market, the first covered bond issuance took place in Estonia on March 2020 – only two years ago.

II. STRUCTURE OF THE ISSUER

Under the Law, to operate a covered bond programme and to issue covered bonds, any licensed credit institution registered in Latvia or a foreign (non-EU/EEA) credit institutions' branch in Latvia may apply for the license for covered bond programme operation. If the issuer is a foreign (non-EU/EEA) credit institution' branch, the decision on the establishment of a covered bond company must be made by the foreign (non-EU/EEA) credit institution as a legal person. The license is issued by the Central Bank (hereafter Latvijas Banka).The Latvijas Banka issues the license for the operation of covered bond programme to the credit institution if it and the

1 The Financial Capital Market Commission's Regulation No. 76 "On the documents to be submitted and the information to be included for the adoption of a decision regarding the authorization to implement a covered bond programme and for the examination of the notification and regarding the procedure for the examination of documents" (in Latvian - "Par iesniedzamajiem dokumentiem un tajos ietveramo informāciju lēmuma par atļauju īstenot segto obligāciju programmu pieņemšanai un paziņojuma izskatīšanai un par dokumentu izskatīšanas kārtību"). Although the regulations refer to the previous name of the Latvian financial sector supervisory authority, they are considered to refer to the current entity: Latvijas Banka.

proposed covered bond programme fulfils regulatory requirements. For example, the Law expressly lists such criteria as:

(1) the issuer's obligations to investors and creditors of covered bonds must be secured by a guarantee of the covered bond company (the SPV);

(2) appropriate accounting procedures and technical arrangements are used ensure the separation of cover assets;

(3) the issuer has developed and implemented an appropriate, comprehensive, reasonable and effective set of policies, procedures and methodologies for the operation of the covered bond programme, taking into account the type, scope and complexity, including the continuity plan, for the covered bond programme;

(4) the issuer has ensured that the implementation of the covered bond programme is performed by persons with sufficient qualifications;

(5) the issuer has implemented and complies with the provisions which provide that the cover assets – tangible property – are adequately insured against losses;

(6) the results of the stress testing performed by the issuer indicate the observance of the coverage requirements and the required levels of overcollateralisation.

The more detailed procedural aspects on how to apply for the license for covered bond programme operation are laid down by the mentioned regulations, which were adopted for assessing the ability of the issuer to implement the covered bond programme.

The Law also provides for the requirements for establishing and operation of a covered bond company (the SPV). The issuer – a credit institution – may establish the covered bond company. The issuer and the covered bond company must be registered in the same EU member state. The issuer must be a shareholder of a covered bond company. The covered bond company must be established in a form of a limited liability company (in Latvian – *sabiedrība ar ierobežotu atbildību*) or a stock company (in Latvian – *akciju sabiedrība*). The operation of a covered bond company is limited to ensuring its own operation and the fulfilment of the covered bond programme. The covered bond company must be liquidated if the covered bond programme is completed or the covered bond company no longer has cover assets and rights to new cover assets in accordance with the cover pool management agreement. The reorganization, transfer of undertaking or any other action in respect of the covered bond company, if this action would prevent or prejudice the ability of the covered bond company to fulfil its obligations under the provided surety is prohibited, unless it can be shown that such action would not harm the interests of the covered bonds' creditors and investors .

III. COVER ASSETS

The following types of cover assets must be included in the cover pool:

(1) financial assets that the issuer lends to the covered bonds company (SPV) for the acquisition of primary assets and substitution assets;

(2) primary assets and substitution assets;

(3) transaction values of the derivative contracts;

(4) financial assets which have been acquired from the assets referred to in precious points 2 and 3.

At least 85% of the required cover assets value must consist of primary assets. The Law provides that primary assets consist only of the high quality assets from these particular classes:

(1) public sector assets indicated in Article 129(1)(a) and (b) of the CRR;

(2) residential mortgage assets as provided for in Article 129(1)(d) of the CRR;

(3) commercial mortgage assets as provided for in Article 129(1)(f) of the CRR;

(4) loans covered by liens on ships as provided for in Article 129(1)(g) of the CRR;

(5) assets which are loans (credits) to capital companies controlled by a public person or, in cases where the law allows such capital companies to issue loans (credits) or provide guarantees themselves, loans (credits) guaranteed by such capital companies.

Whereas the substitution assets may consist of assets in the form of exposures as per Article 129(1)(c) and (1a)(a),(b),(c) and (d) of the CRR.

In order to ensure the compliance of the cover pool with the requirements specified by law, assets with payments that are overdue for more than 90 days cannot be included in the cover pool. The Law sets out the procedure for determining the value of cover assets related to an outstanding loan in the event of default, i.e. if the debtor delays the repayment of the loan.

IV. VALUATION AND LTV CRITERIA

The issuer must value the underlying assets in accordance with the Latvijas Banka requirements for credit risk management, including the applicable valuation standards, and the requirements for the persons entitled to value the assets. The valuation of cover assets must be adjusted in accordance with the indexation of the assets' market value.

For the primary assets that are residential mortgage assets, the LTV (the loan amount ratio to the coverage value) cannot exceed 70%. For the primary assets that are commercial mortgage assets and loans covered by liens on ships, the said ratio cannot exceed 60%. The ratio must be determined for the cover asset on the day when it is included in the cover pool for the first time.

The valuation must be performed at least once a calendar year, unless the terms of the covered bond programme provide for a more frequent valuation or it is required by the Latvijas Banka, or the cover pool monitor. The methods to be used in the valuation of cover assets and the indexation procedure for the valuation of cover assets must be determined in the terms of the covered bond programme.

V. ASSET – LIABILITY MANAGEMENT

The Law stipulates the conditions for the use of derivative contracts in the cover pool and provides for the obligation to ensure liquidity reserves and stress testing. To ensure that the issuer is able to fulfil its obligations to investors, the issuer is required to replenish the cover pool with new cover assets in the event the stress test result shows that the applicable stress testing scenario does not comply with the required level of overcollateralisation.

The Law stipulates that the issuer performs stress testing at various levels of the financial turmoil at least quarterly to determine whether the underlying assets are sufficient to cover the total outstanding nominal value of the covered bonds. Stress testing must cover all risks that may significantly affect the covered bonds' risk profile.

VI. TRANSPARENCY

The Law obligates the issuer to disclose information to the investors and creditors, and to the Latvijas Banka. Additionally, the Latvijas Banka ensures availability of general information about issuers and cover bond programmes on its webpage.

Under the Law, the issuer must inform the investors on quarterly basis about the results of a covered bond programme, so that investors can assess its profile and risks and evaluate their own investment. The information for investors must be published on the issuer's webpage, and it must be made available for at least five years. The following information must be published: the value of the cover pool and outstanding covered bonds; the list of international securities identification numbers (ISIN) of all the covered bonds; the geographical division

of cover assets; detailed information about market risk; levels of coverage and overcollateralisation; share of loans in case of delayed payments as per Article 178 of CRR, and the amount of liquidity reserves.

Additionally, the covered bond company (the SPV) must publish the annual report together with a sworn auditor's report on its website or indicate another appropriate medium where this information is made public.

The Latvijas Banka in supervising the implementation of the covered bond programme is entitled to request the issuer, the covered bond company (the SPV) and the cover pool monitor to disclose information and other related documents for public.

VII. COVER POOL MONITOR AND BANKING SUPERVISION

The Law provides an obligation for the issuer to appoint a cover pool monitor that ensures constant monitoring of the cover pool. A cover pool monitor may be a sworn auditor or a sworn auditor company. Additionally, the cover pool monitor must be independent from the issuer and issuer's internal auditor. The person who was auditor of the issuer during last two years cannot take a position of cover pool monitor. The cover pool monitor's duties include, but are not limited to:

(1) the examination of the compliance with the regulatory requirements of cover assets management agreement and the cover assets structure at least once a year;

(2) the verification of the accuracy of the entries in the cover asset records; and

(3) the verification on whether the covered bond company (the SPV) and the issuer complies with the legal requirements and duly perform their obligations regarding cover asset management agreement, stress testing, information provision to investors and cooperation with the Latvijas Banka.

The cover pool monitor performs on-going supervision of the cover pool. The Law does not prescribe the regularity of inspections. The frequency of inspections must be determined for each particular situation. By way of example, the explanation to the Law indicates that the accuracy of the underlying asset records plays an important role in protecting the interests of investors and presumably it would not be appropriate to check this aspect only once a year. The Law allows the issuer, the cover pool monitor and the Latvijas Banka to determine the frequency of monitoring of each of the aspects.

The Law obligates the cover pool monitor to provide the Latvijas Banka with an annual report on the compliance of the covered bond programme with the requirements of the Law which have been described above. The cover pool monitor cooperates with the Latvijas Banka. The cover pool monitor must immediately inform the Latvijas Banka, as well as the covered bond company (the SPV) and the trustee (if such is appointed), of any violations identified.

The cover pool monitor is liable to investors for losses incurred by them due to gross negligence or malicious intent of the cover pool monitor. The liability period for the claims of damages is three years.

The Latvijas Banka performs public supervisory functions of the covered bond programmes, including, the emission of covered bonds. The Commission has the duty and the powers to take necessary actions to prevent or remedy issues in the operation of the issuer, the transferor and the covered bonds company (the SPV) which may threaten the stability of the financial system or create significant losses for the economy. Including, the Latvijas Banka may adopt the necessary sanctions in respect of the entities or natural persons responsible for non-compliance, which include fines to up to 10% of the annual revenue of the entity, revocation of the licence for cover bonds programme, temporal prohibition for the natural person liable for the non-compliance to fulfil his duties, etc.

VIII. SEGREGATION OF COVER ASSETS AND BANKRUPTCY REMOTENESS OF COVERED BONDS

The Law contains the principle that the claims of investors and creditors of covered bonds against the issuer and the covered bond company rank *pari pasu*, i.e. the claims of the investors do not have any preference over the claims of the creditors. However, in respect of other creditors, cover assets may not be subject to enforcement in respect of the issuer, the transferor of claims included in the covered bond portfolio, the covered bond

company (the SPV) or the manager of the cover pool. This rule does not restrict the possibility to enforce the claims against the debtor or the security provider of the assets underlying the covered bonds. Enforcement may be taken in respect of such cover assets that remain after the fulfilment of the claims of the investors and creditors of the covered bonds.

According to the Law, in case of the insolvency proceedings of the issuer, the amount of investors' and creditors' claims against the covered bond company is limited by the cover assets owned by the covered bond company. If the cover assets cannot cover the claims of all investors and creditors, these claims are satisfied according to principle of proportionality.

In case insolvency proceedings of an issuer have been declared as set by the Insolvency Law, the Commission appoints a special administrator. The special administrator acts in the interests of all investors and creditors of the covered bonds, with the aim of achieving the proper performance of all covered bond claims from the coverage and the income generated by the covered bonds.

The special administrator upon appointment or at the request of the Latvijas Banka must immediately evaluate the cover assets. The special administrator also approves and submits to the issuer's insolvency administrator a list of investors and creditors of the covered bonds. The issuer's insolvency proceedings cannot be completed until the covered bond company is sold to another issuer, or the covered bond claims are fully satisfied, or the sale of all covered assets is completed.

IX. COMPLIANCE WITH EUROPEAN LEGISLATION

The Law is in compliance with the following European legislation that sets out requirements regarding covered bonds:

(1) the Covered Bonds Directive (CBD) – the Directive No 2019/2162 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 November 2019 on the issue of covered bonds and covered bond public supervision and amending Directives 2009/65/EC and 2014/59/EU;

(2) the CRR[2] – the Regulation (EU) No 575/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 June 2013 on prudential requirements for credit institutions and investment firms and amending Regulation (EU) No 648/2012.

For the most up-to-date information, please consult the new ECBC Covered Bond Comparative Database webpage on the Covered Bond Label website www.coveredbondlabel.com or via the following QR code:

2 Please click on the following link for further information on the UCITS Directive and the Capital Requirements Regulation (CRR): https://hypo.org/ecbc/covered-bonds/.

3.25 LITHUANIA

By Tomas Kontautas, Lina Aleknaitė-van der Molen and Andrius Pilitauskas, Sorainen

I. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

Since 2017 Lithuania was working on its regulation of covered bonds and securitisation. As a result, the Introduction of a Covered Bond and Securitisation Legal and Regulatory Framework in Lithuania was published in 2017, followed by the drafting of the Law on Securitisation and Covered Bonds (the **Draft Law**) presented for public discussion on 18 July 2018.

After preparing the Draft Law, on 22 July 2022 Lithuania has finally adopted Law on Securitisation and Covered Bonds.

II. STRUCTURE OF THE ISSUER

In Lithuania, covered bonds can be issued by an authorized credit institution. However, before issuing covered bonds the credit institution has to obtain an additional authorisation from the Bank of Lithuania which is the Lithuanian financial supervisory authority (the **Lithuanian FSA**). A prospective issuer who is applying for the authorization has to prove that it will comply with the requirements imposed upon the issuer by the Law on Securitisation and Covered Bonds. For example, a prospective issuer is required to have technology and systems, control mechanisms and a risk management system necessary for the administration of the cover pool. Moreover, it has to have a contingency plan.

Lithuania has chosen and adopted the SPV model for covered bonds. As a result, the assets included in the cover pool are transferred to an SPV under the *true sale* principle and the investors are granted the *dual recourse* right. Therefore, the credit institution, as the issuer, has a direct responsibility for redemption, but the cover pool is *ring-fenced* in the SPV and the issuer's creditors do not have any claim rights against it.

The day-to-day supervision of covered bond programs shall be undertaken by a cover pool monitor. In specific, the cover pool monitor will inspect the compliance of the issuer with the requirements of the Law on Securitisation and Covered Bonds, in particular whether the asset pool is, during the whole period of validity of the regulated covered bond, capable of covering claims attaching to the bond and sums required for the maintenance, administration and winding up of the asset pool (operational expenses) and for the transfer of the asset pool to a third-party servicer; whether the cover pool is of sufficient quality to give investors the confidence that in the event of the failure of the issuer there will be a low risk of default in the timely payment by the covered bond entity of claims attaching to the bond; whether the eligible property in the cover pool of a single asset class bond consists only of eligible property of the same class as the eligible property included in the asset pool of the regulated covered bond when registered and/or liquid assets and/or derivatives, etc.

III. COVER POOL

Cover assets shall mean an "asset pool" comprised of the following:

(1) primary cover assets:

a. public sector assets indicated in Article 129(1)(a) and (b) of the Capital Requirements Regulation (the **CRR**), except for exposures that are eligible for credit quality category 2 as referred to in part (b) thereof;

b. residential mortgage assets – loans covered by non-commercial real estate as provided for in Article 129(1)(d) and (e) of the CRR;

c. commercial mortgage assets – loans covered by commercial real estate as provided for in Article 129(1)(f) of the CRR;

d. loans covered by liens on ships as provided for in Article 129(1)(g) of the CRR;

e. other high-quality assets classified as eligible assets by the Lithuanian FSA in accordance with Article 129 of the CRR.

(2) cash from the assets that are part of the asset pool;

(3) eligible derivatives (for hedging purposes only);

(4) liquid debt securities issued by an EEA country, regional government or local authority of an EEA country.

Nevertheless, only the performing credits could be included in the cover pool as primary cover assets. The primary cover assets shall constitute no less than 80 % (eighty per cent) of collateral assets under relevant bonds issue. The substitution assets shall not exceed 20 % (twenty per cent) while the assets as provided for in Article 129 (1)(c) shall not exceed 15 % (fifteen per cent) of collateral assets under relevant bonds issue. The statutory over-collateralization level should be no less than 5% (five per cent) of the total principal amounts outstanding in relation to the bonds which the asset pool relates to.

IV. VALUATION AND LTV CRITERIA

Law on Securitisation and Covered Bonds provides that the LTV criteria for the property given as collateral for the credits linked to the real estate assets of the issuer must abide by the following maximum percentages: residential mortgages – 70% (seventy per cent) of the value of property valuation and commercial mortgages – 60% (sixty per cent) of the value of property valuation.

Market value indexation should be performed at least once a year, i.e. the loan-to-asset value ratio should be adjusted on an annual basis, unless higher indexation is provided in the covered bond programme or more frequent indexation is required by the cover pool monitor or the Lithuanian FSA.

Law on Securitisation and Covered Bonds entitles the Lithuanian FSA to elaborate on the criteria for assessing the eligibility of loans to be included in the cover pool and for the valuation of the underlying assets.

V. ASSET AND LIABILITY MANAGEMENT

The issuer has an obligation to perform a stress test on the covered bond portfolio and assess the impact of the main risk factors to which the asset portfolio is exposed in relation to the sufficiency requirement. The stress test should cover at least the interest rate, currency, credit, liquidity, set-off, commingling risks and other risks as indicated by the Lithuanian FSA. When carrying out the stress tests, the relevant risk-mitigating factors such as derivative contracts and other agreements entered into for the purpose of risk mitigation must be taken into account. Stress testing must be done at least once a quarter.

Such stress tests must be carried out by the issuer according to its own approved methodology based on consistent, documented and verifiable criteria, assumptions and procedures. The managers of the issuer are responsible for ensuring the performance of stress tests.

Law on Securitisation and Covered Bonds grants the Lithuanian FSA the right to establish more detailed requirements for the procedure and methodology of stress testing of covered bond portfolios.

Regarding the liquidity requirement, the cover pool must contain liquid assets in an amount equivalent to the issuer's related commitments secured by the cover pool and falling due in the next 180 days.

VI. TRANSPARENCY

In addition to the disclosure obligation arising from other legislation, an issuer must disclose information about covered bond portfolios on a quarterly basis. The following information is required to be disclosed to the holders of regulated covered bonds:

(1) information on the credit, market, currency, interest and liquidity risks associated with the cover assets and the covered bonds;

(2) the total nominal value of the outstanding covered bonds;

(3) the total value and composition of the cover assets and the geographical distribution of the cover assets;

(4) the ratio between the total value of the cover assets and the total nominal value of the outstanding covered bonds, over-collateralization, including voluntary over-collateralization;

(5) information about a liquidity buffer;

(6) information on the structure of the covered bonds, including the maturity profile of both the cover assets and the outstanding covered bonds;

(7) the methodology used to calculate LTVs for mortgage assets;

(8) the percentage of the cover assets with payments past due by more than ninety days;

(9) information on the counterparties and the SPV;

(10) information on stress testing scenarios and its results;

(11) other relevant information for the investor, as established by the Lithuanian FSA.

The information stated in the first paragraph is to be provided in sufficient detail to enable the regulated covered bond-holders to carry out an adequate risk analysis.

The Lithuanian FSA may establish more specific disclosure requirements, including approval of their standardized formats.

VII. COVER POOL MONITOR AND BANKING SUPERVISION

The cover assets owned by the SPV must be supervised by a cover pool monitor. The issuer of the covered bond must appoint and dismiss the cover pool monitor. The cover pool monitor may not be a person who was an external auditor of the issuer within the previous three years; also Lithuanian FSA has a right request to substitute cover pool monitor.

The cover pool monitor must perform the following functions:

(1) inspect the compliance of the asset pool with the requirements set out in the Law on Securitisation and Covered Bonds (for example, the existence of a sufficient cover pool and its compliance with the requirements, as well as the accuracy of the records kept in relation to each asset in the asset pool);

(2) inspect the compliance of the issuer with the requirements related to derivatives, stress testing, liquidity buffers and transparency;

(3) prepare a report in accordance with the guidance issued by the Lithuanian FSA on the quality of the assets in the cover pool;

(4) perform other instructions of the Lithuanian FSA.

The cover pool monitor must submit the report to the SPV, the issuer, and the Lithuanian FSA. In addition, the cover pool monitor must immediately inform the management of the SPV, the issuer, the Lithuanian FSA and, as the case may be, the representative of the investors about any irregularities and inaccuracies discovered during the performance of the cover pool monitor's duties.

VIII. SEGREGATION OF THE COVER POOL AND BANKRUPTCY REMOTENESS OF COVERED BONDS

As pointed out above, Lithuania has chosen and adopted the SPV model for covered bonds. As a result, the assets included in the cover pool are transferred to an SPV under the *true sale* principle and the cover pool is *ring fenced* in the SPV, and therefore the issuer's creditors do not have any claim rights against the cover pool. Moreover, the Law on Securitisation and Covered Bonds imposes the obligation to ensure that the SPV is independent from the issuer and is not consolidated with the issuer upon its insolvency.

In the event that the issuer is declared insolvent, the cover pool will be considered to be separated from the other assets of the issuer under the Law on Securitisation and Covered Bonds and will not be part of the issuer's insolvency estate. Upon the issuer's insolvency, court appoints a special administrator who is recommended by the Lithuanian FSA to take over the management of the cover pool and covered bond program. The special administrator must manage covered bond portfolios with the necessary diligence and in a manner ensuring that the liabilities arising from the covered bonds and from the derivative instruments are met in the best possible way.

Covered bond holders enjoy preferential treatment as the Law on Securitisation and Covered Bonds stipulates the *ring fencing* of the cover assets in the case of the issuer's insolvency. Bond holders have the first access rights to the cash flows generated by the assets included in the cover pool, and it is forbidden to challenge the asset transfer to the cover pool.

IX. COMPLIANCE WITH EUROPEAN LEGISLATION

The Law on Securitisation and Covered Bonds is in compliance with the following European legislation that sets out requirements regarding covered bonds:

(1) Directive 2009/65/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 July 2009 on the coordination of laws, regulations and administrative provisions relating to undertakings for collective investment in transferable securities (UCITS);

(2) Regulation (EU) No 575/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 June 2013 on prudential requirements for credit institutions and investment firms and amending Regulation (EU) No 648/2012;

(3) Directive 2014/59/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 May 2014 establishing a framework for the recovery and resolution of credit institutions and investment firms and amending Council Directive 82/891/EEC, and Directives 2001/24/EC, 2002/47/EC, 2004/25/EC, 2005/56/EC, 2007/36/EC, 2011/35/EU, 2012/30/EU and 2013/36/EU, and Regulations (EU) No 1093/2010 and (EU) No 648/2012, of the European Parliament and of the Council Text with EEA relevance;

(4) Directive (EU) 2019/2162 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 November 2019 on the issue of covered bonds and covered bond public supervision and amending Directives 2009/65/EC and 2014/59/EU.

For the most up-to-date information, please consult the new ECBC Covered Bond Comparative Database webpage on the Covered Bond Label website www.coveredbondlabel.com or via the following QR code:

3.26 LUXEMBOURG

By Frederik Kunze, NORD/LB, Frank Will, HSBC & Chairman of the ECBC EU Legislation Working Group and Dries Janssens, Belfius

I. FRAMEWORK

The legal framework for covered bonds under Luxembourg has significantly changed recently. The amendments implementing the Directive (EU) 2019/2162 of 27 November 2019 as well as the amendments of Regulation (EU) 575/2013, Regulation (EU) 2019/2160 also from 27 November 2019, entered into force on 8 July 2022. This new covered bond law is applicable for covered bonds issued from 8 July 2022.

The following gives an overview of the legislative framework for Luxembourg covered bonds:

- The Law of 8 December 2021 on the issuance of Covered Bonds, as amended on 24 December 2024;
- The Circular Regulations of the Commission de Surveillance du Secteur Financier (CSSF)[1];
- The Lettres de Gage Publiques issued under the old framework are grandfathered and are regulated by Articles 12-1 to 12-12 of the Financial Sector Act of 5 April 1993 (the Financial Sector Act). These articles were introduced by the Act of 21 November 1997 for banks issuing mortgage bonds and amended by the Act of 22 June 2000, by the Act of 24 October 2008, by the Act of 27 June 2013 and by the Act of 21 June 2018. The old Lettres de Gage regulations are supplemented by the Commission de Surveillance du Secteur Financier (CSSF) Circular 01/42 which lays down the rules for the appraisal of real estate and Circulars 18/705-707.

Under the new legal framework, the six categories of covered bonds may be issued. The new law introduces Obligations Garanties Européennes (European Covered Bonds) as well as Obligations Garanties Européennes Lettres de Gage de Qualité Supérieure (High-quality European Covered Bonds) which may be issued in addition to Lettres de Gage Hypothécaires, Lettres de Gage Publiques, Lettres de Gage Énergies Renouvelables and Lettres de Gage Mobilières.

In December 2018, the CSSF published Circulars supplementing the Financial Sector Act, which apply to the grandfathered Lettres de Gage Publiques. Circular 18/706 lays down the transparency requirements based on Article 12-6(2) and Circular 18/707 defines the minimum requirements for the maintenance and control of the cover register and the liquidity requirements for the cover pool.

In addition to credit institutions approved by the CSSF as covered bonds bank (banques d'émission de lettres de gage) starting from 8 July 2022 all credit institutions incorporated in Luxembourg as well as covered bonds banks may be allowed to issue covered bonds. The relevant changes to Article 2 of the new law also specify a limit for the cover pools. These credit institutions cover pools are limited to 20% of the total liabilities (own-funds included) excluding eligible deposits.

Furthermore, the new law introduces the two types of covered bonds specified by the EU Directive: "European covered bonds" (Obligations Garanties Européennes) as well as "(high-quality) European covered bonds" (Obligations Garanties Européennes (de Qualité Supérieure)), whereas the latter meet the requirements of Article 129 of the capital requirements regulation (CRR).

II. STRUCTURE OF THE ISSUER

The covered bond issuers are not restricted anymore to credit institutions with a specialist bank license. Credit institutions that are incorporated in Luxembourg may also issue covered bonds based on the fulfillment of certain criteria (i.e. the above-mentioned 20% cover asset limit). The business activities of covered bonds

1 At the time of writing at the end of June 2025, these Circular Regulations were not yet published.

banks are restricted. These issuers may only engage in other banking and financial activities if these activities are accessory and auxiliary to their main business.

Under the new legal framework, the asset classes and corresponding cover pools differ across the covered bond types Lettres de Gage Hypothécaires, Lettres de Gage Publiques, Lettres de Gage Mobilières and Lettres de Gage Energies Renouvelables as well as European covered bonds and (high-quality) European covered bonds. The covered bond issuer holds the cover assets on its balance sheet in separate registers. Each class of covered bonds has its own register. They are not transferred to another legal entity (special purpose vehicle) like in a securitisation. All obligations arising from Luxembourg covered bonds are direct, unconditional obligations of the issuer. In the case of issuer insolvency, the cover pools are segregated by law from the general insolvency estate and are reserved for the claims of the bond holders. There is no direct legal link between a single asset in the cover pool and an outstanding bond. Interest and principal payments of the various types of bonds (including any derivatives benefitting from the preferential treatment) are backed by the assets in the respective cover pools.

The issuers have to be banks and according to the Financial Sector Act they need to have sound administrative and accounting procedures, control and safeguard arrangements for electronic data processing and adequate internal control mechanisms, which restrict the extent of outsourcing legally possible. In addition, the way of permitted outsourcing is described in detail in different CSSF Circulars.

III. COVER ASSETS

There are four asset classes: (i) mortgage assets, (ii) public sector exposures, (iii) movable assets, i.e. mortgage loans on ships, aircrafts, trains or other classes of movable assets and (iv) lending for renewable energy asset/projects. Generally, the cover assets including substitution assets have to be assets from EU, EEA or OECD countries. However, the cover pools of Lettres de Gage Publiques can contain up to 50% assets from outside the EU, the EEA and the OECD, if a rating agency registered on the ESMA list has assigned sovereign ratings of credit quality step 1 to the respective countries, and up to 10%, if the sovereign ratings are credit quality step 2. In addition, Art 13 of the new covered bond law foresees for structures regrouping assets backed by intragroup guarantees.

The ordinary assets in each of the various cover pools may be replaced by up to 20% of the nominal value of the outstanding Lettres de Gage by substitution assets, such as cash, assets with central banks or with credit institutions or certain public-sector assets.

- The **Lettres de Gage Hypothécaires** are backed by mortgage loans or assimilated.
- The **Lettres de Gage Publiques** are backed by credit exposures on public sector entities or guaranteed by public sector entities.
- The **Lettres de Gage Mobilières** are backed by movable assets, i.e. mortgage loans on ships, aircrafts, trains or other classes of movable assets. In order to be cover pool eligible, the movable assets and the charges on the property of those assets need to be registered in a public register.
- The **Lettres de Gage Énergies Renouvelables** are backed by lending to projects generating renewable energy. This includes all necessary equipment for the generation, storage, and transmission of such energy, including electricity storage facilities, transformers, and power lines, whether under construction or finalised. To be cover pool eligible, production equipment must be used exclusively to produce renewable energy, while storage and transmission equipment needs to be used more than 50% in connection with renewable energy.

In addition, securitised assets are cover pool eligible for Lettres de Gage Énergies Renouvelables if they comply with certain eligibility criteria. If the securitisation vehicle contains at least 50% renewable energy assets, the securitisation tranche would be eligible. The percentage of securitisation assets shall not exceed 20% of the

total collateral pool. Moreover, the securitisation tranches should have a rating of the credit quality step 2 by a rating agency that is registered on the list by ESMA.

Art 7 of the covered bond law sets out the criteria for derivatives that are employed as hedging instruments. The cover pools are dynamic, but prior approval of the cover pool monitor (réviseur d'entreprises agréé special) is required for removing cover assets from the pool.

As regards European covered bonds a public register recording the ownership of and claims to such assets, or an alternative form of certification is required for physical assets. In the case of assets in the form of risk positions, the safety and soundness of the relevant counterparty for public entities is derived either from tax collection powers or from ongoing public oversight of the operational soundness and solvency of the counterparty. European covered bonds may also be covered by assets in the form of loans granted to public companies where the public enterprises provide essential public services on the basis of a license, concession contract or other form of entrustment by a public authority. Additionally, public undertakings are subject to public oversight and the public undertakings have powers that enable the generation of sufficient revenues.

IV. VALUATION AND LTV CRITERIA

Article 8 of the new law defines that the LTV limit for European covered bonds and (high-quality) European covered bonds is 70%. The physical assets pledged as collateral referred to in Article 4(2)(1) that secure assets referred to in Article 4(1)(2) do not have to comply with the 70% limit or the limits set out in Article 129(1) of Regulation (EU) No 575/2013.

Beyond these bonds defined the LTV limit for residential property is 80% of the property value for European covered bonds (premium). The LTV ratio is 60% for all other immovable and movable properties including commercial real estate loans. The actual loan, however, can exceed the 60% limit (or 80% limit in case of residential mortgages). In those cases, only the 60% (80%, respectively) of the mortgage lending value is eligible for the cover pool. The LTV ratio for 'renewable energy' loans is limited by law to 50%. The limit might, however, be increased to up to 80% if certain conditions (such as a regulated fixed remuneration regime or free of charge renewable energy sources) are met.

V. ASSET – LIABILITY MANAGEMENT

Under the old law, there is a minimum overcollateralisation level of 2% on a nominal basis as well as on a net present value basis. Mismatches in terms of currency or interest rate risk can be hedged and the respective hedge instruments have to be included in the collateral pool. The cover assets of the relevant cover pool must provide total interest revenue at least equal to the amount of interest of the covered bonds of the same category in circulation. The amendments of the Lettres de Gage law in June 2018 also included the introduction of a liquidity buffer of 180 days. The liquid buffer assets can consist of ECB eligible assets as well as assets qualifying as Level 1 or Level 2A assets under the European LCR rules (excluding own-use covered bonds).

The new covered bond law of Luxembourg specifies the requirements regarding the liquidity buffer in Article 9. Maturity extension up to 12 months are possible if certain requirements are met. First, the competent court shall have nominated an administrator for the special estate if the special estate find itself in a menacing liquidity situation or if the economic situation of the special estate compromises the ability of the special administrator to fulfill his mission. Second, the administrator of the special estate may then decide to extend the initial due dates of principal and interest by maximum one month, if the initial due date falls within one month following the nomination of the administrator by the court.

The administrator can also extend the maturity date of the principal payment by up to 12 months if (i) this extension allows to avoid an insolvency of the special estate; and (ii) there are objective reasons to prove that the extension will allow to respect the new maturity date. Such extension must in any case be authorized by the court.

Article 6 of the new law specifies the coverage requirements for covered bonds issued under Luxembourg law. The issuer has to ensure that the present value of the cover assets is at all times equal to or higher than the present value of the liabilities arising from the outstanding bonds. In addition to that, nominal coverage is required. For Lettres de Gage Hypothécaires, Lettres de Gage Mobilières and Lettres de Gage Énergies Renouvelables as well as European covered bonds minimum OC is given by minimum of 5%. The CSSF may, in accordance with the covered bond directive, lower the OC requirement in accordance with Article 129 CRR. For Lettres de Gage Publiques and European Covered Bonds backed by public sector assets, Article 6 defines a minimum OC of 10%.

The liquidity test – under the new law – foresees that cumulative net treasury outflows over a period of maximum 180 days are covered. Principal maturity dates must be covered with respect to their initial maturity date. Eligible liquidity assets are Level 1, 2A or 2B assets under the European LCR rules and short-term exposure to credit institutions (with CQS 1 or 2) or short term deposits at credit institutions (with CQS 1, 2 or 3).

The cover pool monitor has to ensure that there is always sufficient collateral in the pool. This has to be certified by the special auditor when Lettres de Gage are issued. Cover assets may only be removed from the cover pool when the prior written consent of the cover pool monitor has been received and provided that the remaining cover assets are sufficient to guarantee the legally protected cover.

VI. TRANSPARENCY

In the old law, an explicit transparency requirement was laid down in Article 12-6(2) and supplemented by CSSF Circular 18/706. The issuers have to publish information on the composition of the cover pool, the Lettres de Gage and the issuer. This is in line with the ECBC Covered Bond Label Initiative.

Based on the new law, issuers' duties regarding the provision of information for investors include at least quarterly reports. The required details described in Article 18 of the law, include, amongst others, the amount of outstanding bonds and the corresponding amount of cover assets, a list of ISINs, geographical distribution and types of cover assets, amount of loans and the valuation methods.

VII. COVER POOL MONITOR AND BANKING SUPERVISION

The supervisory authority of covered bond issuers is the CSSF, as already mentioned above. The CSSF has a specialised department which is responsible for supervising the covered bond issuers. It is entitled to demand relevant reports and intercede if liquidity problems have been identified at a bank.

The CSSF is also responsible for the approval of the various types of covered bonds. Based on the new law, the CSSF is also required to disclose information regarding covered bond issuers, relevant laws, regulations and CSSF circulars in the context of covered bonds on its website. The information includes a list of institutes with the permission to issue covered bonds, a list of bonds which may be labelled as European covered bonds and a list of (high-quality) European covered bonds as well as a list of all other covered bonds including a classification of covered bond type.

For the independent control, a cover pool monitor which is recommended by the Lettres de Gage issuer has to be approved by the supervisory authority. Only auditing firms which satisfy the conditions set forth in the law of 2009 *regarding réviseurs d'entreprises* (independent auditors) can be appointed as cover pool monitor. The issuer communicates the names of the partners of these auditing firms who will fulfil the function to CSSF. The cover pool monitor must have a suitable qualification and must be able to call upon the experience and technical expertise of a recognised international auditing firm.

The cover pool monitor is continuously responsible for monitoring the collateral pool and the outstanding Lettres de Gage. The cover pool monitor must ensure that there are sufficient assets in the collateral pool to service the obligations resulting from the outstanding Lettres de Gage up to the final maturity of the last outstanding

bond. The cover pool monitor is obliged to inform the supervisory authority immediately, should any of the prudential limits be violated. The Lettres de Gage issuer is also obliged to immediately inform the supervisory authority of the violation of any limits.

Rating agencies do not play any mandatory role in the monitoring process. The issuers comply with the rating agencies' requirements on a voluntary basis.

VIII. SEGREGATION OF COVER ASSETS AND BANKRUPTCY REMOTENESS OF COVERED BONDS

The cover registers for mortgage, public sector, moveable assets and renewable energy assets include all necessary data to identify the assets and the derivatives included. As soon as an asset or derivative product is registered in the official cover register it forms part of the collateral pool.

The cover register is managed by the issuer but regularly monitored by the cover pool monitor. The cover pool monitor is obliged to inform the CSSF of any irregularities and provide an annual report.

Asset segregation

In the case that a procedure of suspension of payments or compulsory liquidation is opened for a Lettres de Gage issuer, the assets and derivatives in the collateral pool are separated from the other assets and liabilities of the bank. The respective collateral pools remain unchanged and continue with their corresponding Lettres de Gage and if applicable their corresponding reserve at the Luxembourgish Central Bank as proprietary compartments of a Lettres de Gage bank with limited activity. The cover pools do not become separate legal entities. The legal entity of the bank remains unchanged. The banking license continues for the bank with limited activity in order to achieve the purpose of administering the cover pool up to the final maturity of the last outstanding Lettre de Gage. The court nominates one or several administrators for the cover pools. This administrator is different from the general bankruptcy administrator. If a procedure of suspension of payments or compulsory liquidation is opened for one cover pool, the other pools are not affected by this decision and continue.

Impact of insolvency proceedings on covered bonds and derivatives

Covered bonds do not automatically become due when a procedure of suspension of payments or compulsory liquidation is opened for the issuing bank. Interest and principal are paid as per their original due dates. The same applies to derivatives registered in the cover register which are part of the cover pool. The net present value of the derivatives after netting ranks pari passu with the claims of the Lettres de Gage holders.

Preferential treatment of covered bond holders

Covered bond holders benefit from a preferential treatment in case of an issuer insolvency. The registration of the cover assets in the cover register provides the covered bond holders with a preferential right, above all other rights, preferences and priorities of any nature whatsoever, including those of the Treasury. But the salary of the administrator and the other fees that are necessary for continuing the bank with limited activity rank first before the claims of the covered bond holders and the derivative counterparties, which rank *pari passu*. The general bankruptcy administrator has no direct access to the assets in the collateral pool.

IX. RISK-WEIGHTING & COMPLIANCE WITH EUROPEAN LEGISLATION

Lettres de Gage are in principle eligible for repo transactions with the European Central Bank (ECB). With regard to the new law, there have not been any changes leading to a different regulatory treatment of the Lettres de Gage. European covered bonds, which have been introduced as a covered bond type in the new legislation, are also not CRR-compliant, whereas covered bonds which fulfill the requirements to be classified as (high-quality) European covered bonds are by definition CRR-compliant.

Issuers: Commerzbank Finance & Covered Bond, NORD/LB Luxembourg Covered Bond Bank.

For the most up-to-date information, please consult the new ECBC Covered Bond Comparative Database webpage on the Covered Bond Label website www.coveredbondlabel.com or via the following QR code:

3.27 THE NETHERLANDS

By Joost Beaumont, Chairman of the ECBC Statistics & Data Working Group and ABN AMRO,
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I. FRAMEWORK

The Dutch regulatory framework for the issuance of covered bonds initially came into force on 1 July 2008. In order to strengthen the supervisory regime with respect to covered bonds, the Financial Supervision Act was amended in 2014, raising the legal framework for covered bonds to the level of law.

The Dutch regulatory framework has since been amended following the national transposition of the Covered Bond Directive in 2022. The applicable legislation is listed in Table 1 below. The transposition included various amendments made to existing regulations but the main provisions have been moved to a separate, self- contained Implementation Decree. The new regulatory regime came into force on 8 July 2022.

> Figure 1: Overview Dutch covered bond legislation

2022
Implementation Act Covered Bonds of 15 December 2021, published on 20 January 2022[1]
Implementation Decree Covered Bonds of 24 May 2022, published on 13 June 2022[2]

II. STRUCTURE OF THE ISSUER

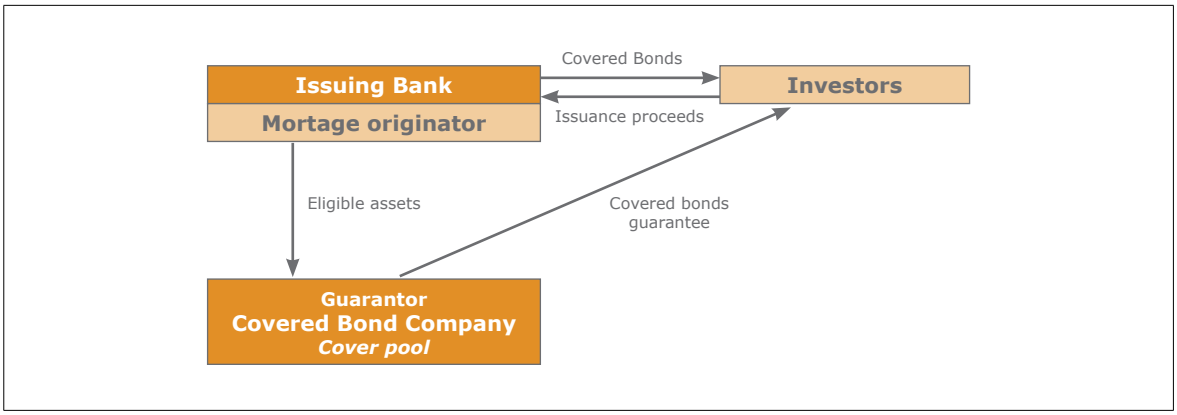
Dutch covered bonds can be issued by licensed banks that are located in the Netherlands, upon permission by the Dutch Central Bank (De Nederlandsche Bank, DNB). To obtain permission, the bank has to prove, among other things, that in the case of a default or resolution of the issuer, covered bondholders and derivative counterparties have a priority claim against the principal and any accrued and future interest on the cover assets securing the liabilities related to the covered bonds. These liabilities encompass the principal and interest payment obligations on the outstanding covered bonds, the payment obligations on derivative contracts in the cover pool, and the expected costs related to the maintenance and administration for the winding-down of the covered bond programme.

The cover assets are secured in favour of the secured creditors via the transfer to a separate legal entity, the Covered Bond Company (CBC). The Covered Bond Company is established exclusively to isolate the cover assets from the other assets of the bank and to perform the necessary activities on behalf of the covered bond programme. The Covered Bond Company can also enter into agreements for the administration and management of the cover assets, as well as for liquidity and risk management purposes. These include derivative contracts, servicer agreements, asset monitor agreements and management agreements.

1 Implementatiewet richtlijn gedekte obligaties, Staatsblad 2022, nr 22.

2 Implementatiebesluit richtlijn gedekte obligaties, Staatsblad 2022, nr 223.

> Figure 2: Structural Overview



III. SEGREGATION OF COVER ASSETS AND BANKRUPTCY REMOTENESS OF COVERED BONDS

The assets are transferred to the Covered Bond Company by means of a guarantee support agreement. Under this agreement, the mortgage originator passes on eligible receivables to the Covered Bond Company via an undisclosed or silent assignment. The legal ownership of the mortgage loans is transferred to the Covered Bond Company via a deed of sale and assignment, without notifying the borrowers. The Covered Bond Company guarantees in return to pay interest and principal on the covered bonds to the investors if the issuer defaults (covered bond guarantee). The obligations of the Covered Bond Company are unsubordinated and unguaranteed obligations backed by eligible receivables.

If the issuer defaults on his obligations, a Security Trustee (not shown in the structural overview) may serve an issuer acceleration notice to the issuer and a notice to pay to the Covered Bond Company in line with the guarantee. As such, the covered bonds do not accelerate against the Covered Bond Company if the issuer defaults, while the bondholders have full recourse to the assets of the Covered Bond Company. If the Covered Bond Company defaults on its payment obligations, the covered bonds may accelerate (hard and soft bullet covered bonds) or may become pass-through, which is conditional on pool sales being unsuccessful and a breach of the amortisation test (conditional pass-through covered bonds).

To ensure bankruptcy remoteness, the bank, or any related group entity, cannot hold shares in the Covered Bond Company and has no policy-determining control, nor any other ownership interests towards this legal entity. Furthermore, the bank should always be able to identify the cover assets, to assure that it can determine at all times which assets have been transferred to the Covered Bond Company, and are available in the event of a bankruptcy of the bank. Moreover, the Dutch covered bond rules assure that neither a bankruptcy nor a resolution of the bank issuing covered bonds would result in a change in the rights of the covered bondholders with respect to a third party in relation to the covered bonds.

IV. REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS AND COVER ASSETS

At the time of registration of a covered bond programme at DNB, the issuing entity has to provide a wealth of information to the supervisor, including on the specific features of the covered bond programme. The required information is extensive and includes, amongst others, the maximum size of the programme, the rights and obligations of the Covered Bond Company, the agreements with various parties, the type and composition of cover assets, the country exposure of the cover assets and the law by which they are regulated, valuation of the cover assets, the extension period and criteria that trigger extension, as well as various risk management and reporting procedures. All information necessary to verify the programme meets the legal requirements needs to be provided to DNB.

The most noteworthy programme features are:

- The specific **nature of the cover pool assets**. At least 80% of the cover pool shall include one of the cover assets set out in CRR Article 129(1)(a)-(g) as primary assets. Up to 20% of the cover pool may include one or more of the other cover assets set out in CRR article 129 (1)(a)-(g) as substitute assets. Currently, all Dutch covered bond programmes solely use Dutch residential mortgages as primary assets.
- The **redemption profile of the covered bonds**, i.e., whether the covered bonds have a hard-bullet, soft bullet, or (conditional) pass-through structure and **the criteria for triggering an extension**.

  Prior to the transposition of the Covered Bond Directive, the Dutch law allowed issuance from a single covered bond programme with a hard-bullet as well as a soft bullet structure with an extension period up to 24 months. Conditional pass-through covered bonds needed to be issued from a separate programme.

  As of 8 July 2022, there is no longer such an explicit separation required in the regulatory framework. However, the different maturity structures mean that in practice programmes have to be separated anyways.

  The covered bond programmes of ABN AMRO Bank and ING Bank contain mainly soft bullet issuances. A few covered bonds from these two issuers that have been privately placed (including some denominated in foreign currencies) still have hard-bullet structures. Rabobank and ASN Bank only have soft bullet covered bonds outstanding. NN Bank, Achmea Bank and Van Lanschot Kempen also only have soft bullet covered bonds outstanding following the conversion of their conditional pass-through covered bonds to the soft bullet format in 2022 and 2023, respectively. Van Lanschot Kempen does still use a separate retained conditional pass-through covered bond programme for liquidity management purposes. Knab (formerly Aegon Bank) and NIBC Bank still have publicly placed conditional pass-through covered bonds and soft bullet covered bonds outstanding after they established soft bullet programmes in the past few years.

Primary cover assets

The cover assets should meet the CRR article 129 requirements, meaning that the following assets are eligible:

- Exposures to or guaranteed by central governments, the European System of Central Banks (ESCB) central banks, public sector entities, regional governments or local authorities in the Union as referred to in CRR Article 129, paragraph 1(a);
- Exposures to or guaranteed by third country central governments, third-country central banks, multilateral development banks, international organisations that qualify for credit quality step 1 and exposures to or guaranteed by third-country public sector entities, third-country regional governments or third-country local authorities that meet certain requirements as referred to in CRR Article 129, paragraph 1(b);
- Exposures to credit institutions that qualify for credit quality step 1 or credit quality step 2, or exposures to credit institutions that qualify for credit quality step 3 where those exposures are in the form of certain short-term deposits and derivative contracts as referred to in CRR Article 129, paragraph 1(c);
- Residential mortgages up to an 80% LTV ratio as referred to in CRR Article 129, paragraph 1(d) and residential loans fully guaranteed by an eligible protection provider as referred to in 1(e);
- Commercial mortgages up to a 60% LTV ratio, though with the possibility for the LTV ratio to rise to 70% as referred to in CRR Article 129, paragraph 1(f);
- Ship loans up to a 60% LTV ratio as referred to in CRR Article 129, paragraph 1(g).

By transposing only point (a) of Article 6(1) of the Directive, it is ensured that Dutch covered bonds meet the CRR Article 129 asset eligibility requirements and can be labelled European Covered Bonds (Premium). Assets other than those listed in CRR Article 129 paragraph 1(a)-(g) are not eligible as cover assets. However, the

Implementation Decree contains the possibility for assets listed in Article 6(1) (b) and (c) of the Directive to be made eligible by way of Ministerial Regulation.

The new Dutch Covered Bond Legislation requires that at least 80% of the cover pool shall consist of one type of the primary cover assets as set out in CRR Article 129, paragraph 1(a)-(g). To avoid confusion, Dutch mortgage loans carrying a guarantee from the government-sponsored Nationale Hypotheek Garantie (NHG) scheme, are treated as normal residential mortgages in all current Dutch covered bond programmes, subject to an 80% LTV cut-off for certain asset coverage requirement purposes.

Substitute cover assets

The Dutch Covered Bond Law also allows for substitution assets to be included as cover assets. However, the inclusion of these type of assets is restricted to a maximum of 20% of the total nominal value of the cover pool assets. Eligible as substitution assets are the cover assets described above, which are those as referred to in CRR Article 129, paragraph 1(a)-(g).

Country exposure of cover asset

The law notes that the debtor of the cover asset as well as the collateral related to the cover assets need to be located in the EU or the European Economic Area. Currently, primary assets backing Dutch covered bond programmes exclusively consist of Dutch residential mortgage loans.

V. VALUATION AND LTV CRITERIA

The Dutch covered bond law requires that loans backed by immovable property, such as residential and commercial mortgages, and ships should meet the (monitoring and valuation) requirements set out in CRR article 208. Article 208 specifically concerns requirements for immovable property and includes, among others, legal enforceability as well as sound underwriting criteria. Moreover, the article requires the monitoring of commercial and ship loan property values every year and of residential mortgage loans every three years. However, CRR Article 129(3) states that monitoring of property values needs to be carried out frequently and at least on an annual basis for all immovable property and ship collateral. The Dutch law does not explicitly reference Article 129(3). However, an explanatory note to the Decree states that the collateral underlying residential mortgages should be valued not every three years but at least annually (which was already the practice under the old Dutch law), making reference to Article 129(3).

Finally, in case of significant changes in market conditions, more frequent monitoring might be required whilst issuers can also use statistical methods to monitor property values in order to comply with the requirements.

The Dutch covered bond law requires assets to be valued at or below the market value or the mortgage lending value. The value can be the initial valuation at the moment of mortgage origination but also any subsequent valuation or revaluation as part of the monitoring requirements. For any appraisal by a valuation agent, the law imposes certain requirements. For instance, the valuation agent needs to possess the necessary qualifications, ability and experience, and must be independent from the credit decision process.

In practice, the value of Dutch property is based on the market value and indexation takes place on a monthly basis by means of the house price average in the Netherlands according to the Land Registry house price index or other recognised methods.

In order to comply with the CRR requirements, residential mortgages with an LTV higher than 80% will only be recognised up to an 80% LTV. In a situation where mortgages with an LTV of higher than 80% are included in the cover pool, this mortgage loan will only count for a maximum of 80% in the asset cover test. The difference between the actual (higher) LTV and the 80% maximum will serve as additional credit enhancement.

No Loan-to-Income (LTI) thresholds are applicable in the Dutch covered bond regulation or programmes, but since 2013, all new Dutch mortgages have been subject to strict statutory LTI maximums at origination.

VI. ASSET – LIABILITY MANAGEMENT

The Dutch covered bond law includes several requirements and options related to asset-liability management. These include requirements related to over-collateralisation (OC), liquidity coverage, derivative contracts and covered bonds with extendable maturities.

Regarding OC, the Dutch Covered Bond Law provides for the following asset coverage requirements:

> The total nominal value of the payment claims arising from the cover assets belonging to the cover pool is at least equal to the total nominal value of the liabilities (which includes payment obligations stemming from principal and interest payments on outstanding covered bonds, payment obligations related to derivative contracts in the cover pool and expected costs related to maintenance and management for the potential run-off of the covered bond programme).

> The total nominal value of the cover assets has to be equal to at least 100% of the total nominal value of the outstanding registered covered bonds (the so-called 'nominal principle'). Furthermore, the total nominal value of the cover assets needs to be at least 5% higher than the total amount of outstanding registered covered bonds. When calculating the second 105% requirement, Article 129 (1) a-g has to be taken into account, which means that the 80% LTV cut-off for residential mortgage loans needs to be applied.

Uncollateralised claims where a default is considered to have occurred (pursuant to Article 178 of Regulation (EU) No 575/2013) do not contribute to the coverage.

Liquidity coverage requirements

Issuers, furthermore, need to ensure that the cover pool always includes a liquidity buffer composed of sufficient liquid assets to cover the net liquidity outflow of the covered bond programme. It should cover the cumulative net liquidity outflows for the next 180 days (i.e., coupon and redemption obligations and payments related to derivate contracts minus all income stemming from assets included in the cover pool). The liquidity buffer requirement with respect to redemption payments is not applicable for covered bonds with extendable maturities (soft bullet or conditional pass-through), for which the extended maturity date will be taken into account.

The liquid assets allowed remain limited to those assets qualifying as level 1, level 2A and level 2B of the LCR Regulation (valued in accordance with that delegated regulation and not issued by the issuer itself, its parent company, its subsidiary, another subsidiary of its parent company, or by a securitisation SPV with close links to the issuing bank) as well as short-term exposures to credit institutions that qualify for credit quality step 1 and 2 (i.e. a minimum credit rating of A-) or short-term deposits to credit institutions that qualify for credit quality steps 1,2, or 3, in accordance with CRR article 129 (1), point c.

Extendable maturity structures

In order to mitigate liquidity risks, banks may issue covered bonds with an extendable maturity if, prior to the first issuance of the covered bond program, the contractual terms of that program provide that extension of the maturity may not be made at the discretion of the bank and shall occur only if:

1. There is a breach of contract or default of payment by the bank or any act to that effect, there is a liquidation, dissolution or restructuring of debts of the bank or an arrangement with creditors, or a resolution measure as referred to in Article 3A:1 of the Implementation Act has been applied to the bank or the bank has been declared bankrupt; and
2. The legal entity to which the cover assets have been transferred has insufficient funds on the maturity date of the covered bonds to repay the principal amount of that covered bond, the legal entity cannot meet any of the coverage requirements referred to in Article 40g(1) and (2) of the Implementation Decree, or the legal entity cannot meet any other contractually agreed requirement with respect to securing the coverage.

The law does not stipulate details about the length of extensions and neither specifies the role of covered bond holders and/or the CBC. Banks can determine this contractually.

A bank that issues a covered bond whose maturity may be extended shall, upon issuance of the covered bond, provide information about 1) the conditions for extending the maturity, 2) the impact of a bankruptcy or resolution of the bank on the extension of the maturity and 3) the role of DNB with respect to the extension of the maturity. DNB checks whether all the conditions of the law, including the requirements related to maturity extensions, have been met when granting permission for a covered bond programme. However, once a covered bond programme has been approved by DNB and a maturity extension is triggered, DNB has no role as supervisor, although it must be informed in a timely manner.

Other conditions are that a bank that issues a covered bond shall ensure that the maturity date of that covered bond can be determined at all times, while a maturity extension shall not affect the order in which covered bond holders may recover their claims and shall not reverse the order of the original maturity schedule of the covered bond programme if the bank has been subject to a resolution measure or has been declared bankrupt. A maturity extension shall also not affect the dual recourse and bankruptcy remoteness principles.

Use of derivative contracts

The Covered Bond Company can only enter into derivative contracts (such as currency swaps, interest rate swaps and total return swaps) if these support the risk management of the programme in favour of the registered covered bondholders. A derivative contract may only be entered into if the contract is sufficiently documented, while the counterparty to these agreements should not have the right to terminate the contract or to suspend its obligations under the contract if the creditworthiness of the issuing bank deteriorates. The contract should be concluded with a financial institution that is subject to supervision. Finally, if the counterparty itself no longer meets the minimum creditworthiness requirements, it should provide for sufficient collateral or replace itself.

Another requirement is that the volume of a derivative contract shall be adjusted if there is a reduction in the risk to which the derivative contract relates. A derivative contract shall be removed from the cover pool if the risk to the holders of covered bonds ceases to exist.

As a result of changes in especially the regulatory landscape, the use of derivative contracts to mitigate (interest rate) risks associated with the registered covered bonds has diminished in importance in recent years. Instead, several issuers decided to introduce interest reserve requirements, minimum mortgage interest rate requirements and/or to pledge additional collateral.

VII. TRANSPARENCY

Before registration of its programme, the covered bond issuer already needs to report a lot of detailed information to the supervisor on the specific features of the covered bond programme (see paragraph III). After registration, the law stipulates that the issuing entity needs to continue to provide information to DNB on a regular basis (see more details in paragraph VIII).

The Dutch law also requires issuers to provide investors with information stipulated in Article 14 of the Directive at least on a quarterly basis, which will also be published on their websites. This includes information about the value of the cover pool and outstanding covered bonds; a list of ISINs for all covered bonds issued; the geographical distribution of and type of cover assets, their size and valuation method; details related to all kinds of risk metrics (market risk, interest rate risk, currency risk, credit and liquidity risk); maturity structure of the cover assets and covered bonds; levels of required and available coverage, and levels of statutory, contractual and voluntary OC, and the percentage of loans in default.

All Dutch registered covered bond issuers currently publish investor reports on a monthly basis. These reports can be found on their websites, while there is also a link on the website of the Dutch Association of Covered

Bond Issuers (www.dacb.nl) to these reports and via the national information pages on the Covered Bond Label website. The Dutch issuers have also implemented the Harmonised Transparency Template (HTT). Finally, DNB keeps a public register of approved Dutch covered bond programmes.

VIII. COVER POOL MONITOR AND BANKING SUPERVISION

Cover pool monitor

The issuer has to appoint an internal or external **cover pool monitor** before the first issuance under a covered bond programme. The cover pool monitor has to check, ahead of issuance and at least annually thereafter, that the regulatory requirements on the structural features of the covered bonds are met (e.g., asset segregation, cover assets, derivative contracts, maturity extension, asset coverage and liquidity coverage). The functions of a cover pool monitor can be assigned to different internal and external parties, but the asset coverage and liquidity coverage requirements have to be checked by an external accountant.

An external cover pool monitor is fully independent and has no links with the bank or the external accountant of the bank. An internal cover pool monitor can have ties with the issuing bank, including the external accountant of the bank, but has to be independent from the credit decision process of the bank. The internal cover pool monitor has direct access to the supervisory board of the bank and cannot be removed from its function as cover pool monitor without prior approval of the supervisory board (or a comparable body). The internal cover pool monitor provisions are in line with the existing Dutch practice before the Dutch law was amended to transpose the EU Covered Bond Directive in 2022. The bank's internal processes and controls ensure that the legal requirements related to the issuance of covered bonds are met, while the external accountant of the bank checks the compliance with the asset coverage and liquidity coverage requirements.

In both cases, the bank that issues covered bonds has to ensure that the checks of the asset coverage and liquidity coverage requirements will continue to take place in the event of a resolution or bankruptcy of the bank. The bank will report annually to the Dutch Central Bank on the outcome of the checks on the asset coverage and liquidity coverage requirements. Besides, the cover pool monitor should be granted access to all information necessary for the performance of its duties.

Special supervision

Dutch covered bond programmes are also subject to **special supervision** of the Dutch Central Bank, which has to grant permission to a bank that wants to issue covered bonds. Permission will only be granted, if all regulatory requirements related to the issuance of covered bonds are met. To obtain permission the bank has to prove that it has:

- An adequate programme of operations setting out the issuance of covered bonds;
- Adequate policies, processes and methodologies for the approval, amendment, renewal and refinancing of assets included in the cover pool;
- Management and staff dedicated to the covered bond programme which have adequate qualifications and knowledge regarding the issuance of covered bonds and the administration of the covered bond programme; and
- An adequate administrative set-up of the cover pool and the monitoring thereof.

To this purpose, the bank must provide the Dutch Central Bank with an independent legal opinion, allowing the supervisor to verify that the asset segregation requirements are met. The agreements of the Covered Bond Company with its manager, and the agreement with the cover pool monitor or accountant also have to be made available. Besides, the issuing bank must deliver a written statement by the manager of the bank that all regulatory requirements are met, needed for permission to issue covered bonds, to secure the payment obligations related to the covered bonds, and on the regular provision of information to the covered

bond investors and supervisory authority. Such a written statement not only has to be delivered to the Dutch Central Bank upon the request for permission, but also on an annual basis thereafter.

A bank permitted to issue covered bonds will immediately notify the Dutch Central Bank of any changes in the agreements related to the established Covered Bond Company or the appointment of the cover pool monitor. Furthermore, the Dutch Central Bank has to be notified upfront if the bank intends to make significant changes to the terms and conditions applicable to the covered bonds.

The issuing bank also has to meet the regular reporting requirements towards the Dutch Central Bank, allowing the central bank to assess that the issuing bank meets the regulatory requirements for the issuance of covered bonds. This includes information related to:

> The coverage requirements, including a) the composition of the cover pool of at least 80% primary assets, and maximum 20% substitution assets, and b) the 100% nominal coverage requirement of all payment obligations and 105% nominal coverage requirement of the outstanding covered bonds;

> The monitoring of property values and property valuation, property insurance and the geographical location of the debtor of the cover assets;

> Derivative contracts included in the cover pool;

> The 180 days liquidity buffer;

> Extendable maturities;

> Other information required by the Dutch Central Bank to assess that the regulatory requirements for the issuance of covered bonds are met.

The data regarding the asset coverage requirements and liquidity coverage requirements have to be provided at the start of the covered bond programme and quarterly thereafter. The data regarding the property valuation, insurance and location, derivative contracts, extendable maturities and other required information have to be provided at the start of the programme, and only thereafter if the information has changed or upon request of the Dutch Central Bank.

Penalties

The Dutch Central Bank is allowed to (partially) revoke, change or attach further requirements to the permission to issue covered bonds if the bank a) would make an application thereto, b) has provided incorrect or incomplete information upon the request for permission, or c) concealed circumstances that would have led to a denial of such permission, or d) would no longer comply with the regulatory conditions for permission to issue covered bonds.

In the event of a breach of the regulatory provisions for covered bond issuance, the Dutch Central Bank can also issue a public warning, if necessary, stating the considerations that led to such a warning. Besides, the supervisor can oblige the issuer, by means of an order, to take a certain course of action regarding the points indicated in the order, within a reasonable time.

The supervisory authority is also allowed to impose an administrative fine in the event of a breach of the covered bond rules. Financial fines can for instance be imposed if a credit institution issues covered bonds without obtaining permission from the Dutch Central Bank, or if the covered bond issuer fails to comply with the regulatory requirements on asset coverage, transparency, asset segregation, cover pool composition, asset eligibility, derivative contracts in the cover pool, cover pool liquidity buffer, documentation, extendable maturity structures, cover pool monitor or labelling.

When determining an administrative fine, the supervisor will take certain circumstances into account, such as the gravity and duration of the breach, the advantages gained by the breach, the losses caused to third

parties, the consequences to the financial system, the degree to which the issuer is responsible for the breach and any previous breaches, the cooperation of the issuer with the supervisor and the measures taken after a breach to prevent it from happening again.

Post issuer insolvency or resolution

The Dutch covered bond legislation does not provide for the appointment of a special administrator in the event of issuer insolvency or resolution. However, the Dutch law requires co-operation and exchange of data and intelligence between the Dutch supervisor with European authorities, if necessary for the performance of their duties. This would also apply in the situation of a resolution of a credit institution issuing covered bonds.

Disclosures by the supervisor

The Dutch Central Bank has to publish on its website:

> The text of the Dutch national laws, regulations, administrative rules and general guidance adopted in relation to the issue of covered bonds;

> An up-to-date list of credit institutions permitted by the Dutch Central Bank to issue covered bonds in relation to a covered bond programme;

> An up-to-date list of covered bonds entitled to use the label European Covered Bond, and an up-to-date list of covered bonds entitled to use the label European Covered Bond (Premium). In practice, solely the label European Covered Bond (Premium) can be used by covered bonds meeting the amended Dutch legal requirements effective per 8 July 2022.

IX. RISK-WEIGHTING & COMPLIANCE WITH EUROPEAN LEGISLATION

The Dutch covered bond law only allows covered bonds that comply with the CBD as well as with CRR Article 129. As such (and as stated above), solely the label European Covered Bond (Premium) can be used by covered bond programmes that are aligned with the Dutch covered bond law effective per 8 July 2022. This also implies that covered bonds issued under these programmes are eligible for a 10% preferential risk weight treatment under the Standardized Approach. These bonds are also Solvency II and ECBC Label compliant. Furthermore, they fall within the Level 1 category of the LCR.

Dutch covered bonds issued until 7 July 2022 under programmes that are not aligned with the new Dutch covered bond law, can benefit from the transitional measures that have been implemented. These include that Articles 3:33a(1) to (3) and 3:33b(1) and (2) of the Financial Supervision Act will not apply to them. Instead, they need to comply with the Article 3:33a that applied prior to the entry into force of the new Act, while they also need to comply with the reporting requirements outlined in Article 14 of the Directive. The fact that these outstanding covered bonds are grandfathered implies that they still benefit from a similar preferential treatment as before.

X. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

More information on Dutch covered bonds can be found on the website of the Dutch Association of Covered Bond Issuers (www.dacb.nl), which was established in 2011 and has the following objectives:

> To represent the interests of the Dutch issuers in discussions with legislative and regulatory authorities;

> To provide investors with information about the Dutch covered bond market;

> To participate on behalf of the Dutch issuers in international covered bond organisations like the ECBC;

> To continuously improve the quality of the Dutch covered bond product offering.

Issuers: ABN AMRO Bank, Achmea Bank, Knab (formerly Aegon Bank), Van Lanschot Kempen, ING Bank, NIBC Bank, NN Bank, Rabobank, de Volksbank.

COVERED BOND LABEL **:** ING Bank N.V. (3 pools), ABN AMRO Bank N.V. (2 pools), ASN Bank (1 pool), NIBC Bank N.V. (2 pools), Van Lanschot Kempen N.V. (2 pools), Knab N.V. (2 pools), Coöperatieve Rabobank U.A. (2 pools), Nationale-Nederlanden Bank N.V. (1 pool), Achmea Bank N.V. (2 pools).

For the most up-to-date information, please consult the new ECBC Covered Bond Comparative Database webpage on the Covered Bond Label website www.coveredbondlabel.com or via the following QR code:

3.28 NEW ZEALAND

By Deemple Budhia, Australian Securitisation Forum (New Zealand representative)

SUMMARY

The first covered bond was issued out of New Zealand in June 2010. At that time, New Zealand did not have a legislative covered bond framework and domestic issuers used the well-tested general law-based covered bond approach taken in the UK, France, and Canada. In December 2013, the Reserve Bank of New Zealand (Covered Bonds) Amendment Act 2013 (Amendment Act) amended the Banking (Prudential Supervision) Act 1989 (Act). As a result of the Amendment Act, registered banks are now only permitted to issue covered bonds under programmes registered with the Reserve Bank of New Zealand (RBNZ). The five large New Zealand banks all now operate covered bond programmes.

I. FRAMEWORK

No covered bond regulation was in place in June 2010 when New Zealand covered bonds were first issued and issuance of covered bonds was neither prohibited nor limited by any prudential requirements or other regulation.

Following public consultation, the Amendment Act was passed in December 2013. After the Amendment Act came into force in December 2013, existing covered bond issuers had nine months to register their covered bond programme with the RBNZ in order to be able to continue issuing covered bonds under their programmes. All New Zealand registered banks with covered bond programmes have registered their programmes with the RBNZ, which means that all outstanding New Zealand covered bonds receive the benefit of legislative certainty provided by the Act in relation to liquidation and statutory management.

II. STRUCTURE OF THE ISSUER

As of April 2025, issuers from five New Zealand banking groups have issued covered bonds, being ANZ Bank New Zealand Limited (ANZ), ASB Bank Limited (ASB), Bank of New Zealand (BNZ), Westpac New Zealand Limited (Westpac) and Kiwibank Limited (Kiwibank) (Existing Issuers). With the exception of Kiwibank, all issuers are ultimately owned by Australian parent banks. However, the Australian parent companies do not guarantee the covered bonds. Historically, NZD or AUD denominated bonds have been issued directly by the New Zealand banks, while non-NZD denominated bonds have mostly been issued through the London branches of their respective subsidiaries and are guaranteed by the New Zealand bank. The exceptions to this are Kiwibank who issues via a New Zealand based company and now also ASB and BNZ.

The covered bonds are backed by a dynamic cover pool of assets, and the covered bonds rank pari passu to each other. The covered bonds are irrevocably guaranteed by the covered bond guarantor (CB Guarantor) under the covered bond guarantee. The CB Guarantor will only make payments under the bonds when (a) an issuer event of default has occurred, and a notice to pay is served on the CB Guarantor, or (b) a CB Guarantor event of default has occurred and a covered bond guarantee acceleration notice is served on the CB Guarantor and the issuer.

III. COVER ASSETS

The RBNZ, as the prudential supervisor of banks in New Zealand, does not prescribe the type of assets that can be included in the cover pool. The RBNZ consider it sufficient that banks specify asset eligibility criteria in their programme documentation.

The covered bond programmes of the Existing Issuers (Existing Programmes) are backed by a dynamic cover pool of residential housing loans originated in New Zealand. The common eligibility criteria for these housing loans across the programmes are listed below:

- > Denominated and repayable only in New Zealand Dollars (NZD);
- > Secured by first ranking residential mortgages in New Zealand;
- > Housing loans with a term not exceeding 30 years;
- > Outstanding principal balance of no more than NZD 1.5mn (Westpac)/NZD 2.0mn (ANZ, Kiwibank)/ NZD 2.5mn (ASB, BNZ); and
- > Not in default/have not been in arrears for more than 30 days (ANZ, ASB, Kiwibank, Westpac)/3 months (BNZ).

Some of the issuers have additional features beyond these requirements. Moreover, issuers are also allowed to hold liquid substitution assets. These assets are subject to an overall limit of 10%-15% of the cover pool depending on the issuer (Westpac and BNZ 15%, ANZ, ASB and Kiwibank 10%), with the exception of cash that has no limit.

IV. VALUATION AND LTV CRITERIA

In New Zealand, every property is typically valued during the underwriting process. All five existing covered bond programmes do not restrict the LTV limit for housing loans in the cover pool. However, the Act requires registered covered bond programmes to test whether the value of the cover pool assets is at least equal to the principal amount of outstanding covered bonds. In the case of ASB and Westpac, the Asset Coverage Test (ACT) caps the valuation of the property at 75%. In case of ANZ, BNZ and Kiwibank this cap is set at 80%. In effect, this means the maximum amount of a loan that can count in the ACT test is 75% or 80% of the property value respectively.

V. ASSET-LIABILITY MANAGEMENT

Issuance limit: Through the conditions of registration of each of the Existing Issuers, the RBNZ limits the value of assets that may be encumbered for the benefit of covered bond holders to 10% of the total assets of the issuing bank.

Currency and interest hedging: The housing loans in the cover pool are denominated in NZD. However, covered bonds can be issued in other currencies. This introduces currency risk as the interest payable on the covered bonds will not exactly match the interest received on the housing loans in the cover pool. The interest rate and currency risk is hedged under the existing covered bond programmes.

Soft vs hard bullet structures: The Existing Issuers can issue hard bullet covered bonds or covered bonds with extendable maturity ("soft bullet" bonds). Hard bullet covered bonds will be subject to a 12-month pre-maturity test giving the CB Guarantor 12 months to raise liquidity by selling assets of the pool.

Overcollateralisation (OC): The issuers have committed to various OC levels with the credit rating agencies. In summary, each covered bond programme provides for overcollateralisation to be the greater of the contractually specified amount and such other amount required by the relevant rating agency to maintain the current ratings of the covered bonds. The Act requires Existing Issuers to test at least every 12 months whether the value of the cover pool assets is at least equal to the principal amount of outstanding covered bonds and to notify the RBNZ if this test is not satisfied. In practice this ACT is performed more regularly, at quarterly or monthly intervals, or upon any new covered bond issuance.

VI. COVER POOL MONITOR AND BANKING SUPERVISON

The ACT requires registered covered bond issuers to maintain an asset register and to appoint a cover pool monitor. The cover pool monitor must either be a licensed auditor, an auditing firm (where the functions of the cover pool monitor are performed or supervised by a licensed auditor), or a person/firm that has been approved by the RBNZ. In this context, independent means independent from both the issuer and any associated person of the issuer. A person's appointment as auditor does not affect his, her, or its independence. The cover pool monitor must assess and report annually to the issuer regarding the accuracy of the ACT and maintenance of the asset register for the covered bonds.

The Existing Issuers provide investor reports on a monthly or quarterly basis. In addition, monthly or quarterly information is prepared for the credit rating agencies. The credit rating agencies re-calculate the required asset percentage used in the ACT on a regular basis and prior to each issuance under the respective covered bond programme.

If the credit rating of the calculation manager (usually, the issuer) is downgraded below a certain trigger level, the cover pool monitor will check the arithmetic accuracy of the calculations performed by the calculation manager on a monthly basis. Moreover, (1) if the cover pool monitor identifies any errors in the calculations performed by the calculation manager which result in a failure of the ACT, or (2) if the adjusted aggregate housing loan amount or the amortisation test aggregate housing loan amount is misstated by the calculation manager by an amount exceeding 1%, or (3) if the asset register has not been maintained as required, then the cover pool monitor will be required to carry out the applicable check on a monthly basis until the cover pool monitor is satisfied that no further inaccuracies exist.

VII. SEGREGATION OF COVER ASSETS AND BANKRUPTCY REMOTENESS OF COVERED BONDS

The covered bonds are direct, unsecured, unsubordinated and unconditional obligations of the relevant issuer. In addition, the CB Guarantor guarantees the payments of interest and principal of the covered bonds. The issuer provides a subordinated loan to the CB Guarantor which allows the CB Guarantor to acquire a housing loan portfolio. The portfolio includes housing loans and the related security sold by the seller in accordance with the terms of the mortgage sale agreement.

Holders of registered covered bonds benefit from greater certainty that the security over cover pool assets remains enforceable if the issuing bank were to experience insolvency or be placed into statutory management. The RBNZ must keep a public register of registered covered bond programmes and issuances under each programme. Moreover, the Act requires that the cover pool assets are held by a Special Purpose Vehicle, which is a separate legal entity from the issuer.

Under the Existing Programmes, the sale of the loans and their underlying security by the seller to the CB Guarantor is in the form of assignment of the seller's rights, title, interest and benefit in and to the loans, their related security and the other assets which are being sold. The assignment requires neither a notice to the borrowers nor a registration in the land registry. The "perfection of title" to the CB Guarantor will be triggered by certain trigger events including the notice to pay on the CB Guarantor, downgrade of the issuer to sub-investment grade or insolvency of the issuer. These trigger events will result in the underlying borrowers being notified of the assignment and registration of transfer of the mortgage security with the land registry.

VIII. RISK-WEIGHTING AND COMPLIANCE WITH EUROPEAN LEGISLATION

The RBNZ accepts NZD denominated AAA rated covered bonds for its Domestic Markets Operations. For maturities of less than three years the haircut is 5%. Covered bonds with a maturity of three years or longer are subject to a higher haircut of 8%. This includes covered bonds issued by New Zealand banks.

The covered bonds issued directly by financial institutions with registered offices in New Zealand are neither CRR nor UCITS compliant as both frameworks require the issuer to be based in the EU. These covered bonds, therefore, do not benefit from the lower risk weighting for bank treasuries in the EU.

Issuers: ANZ Bank New Zealand Limited (1 pool), ASB Bank Ltd (1 pool), Bank of New Zealand (1 pool), Westpac New Zealand Limited (1 pool).

For the most up-to-date information, please consult the new ECBC Covered Bond Comparative Database webpage on the Covered Bond Label website www.coveredbondlabel.com or via the following QR code:

3.29 NORWAY

By Kjartan Bremnes and Michael H. Cook, Finance Norway

I. FRAMEWORK

Issuance of Norwegian covered bonds started with an issuance denominated in euro in the second half of 2007. The covered bonds market in Norway was barely untested before the global financial crisis hit the following year. Norwegian banks did not experience any substantial increase in losses during the crisis, but the liquidity shortage triggered by the turmoil in international financial markets also spread to Norwegian markets.

The new EU-framework on covered bonds entered into force on the 8 July 2022. Given the relative modern legislation in Norway, the final outcome was more or less similar to the previous legislation. However, the new legislation imposed for instance the introduction of a 180-day liquidity buffer and an increase in the overcollateralisation requirement as described in this chapter.

II. STRUCTURE OF THE ISSUER

According to Norwegian legislation, covered bonds may only be issued by specialised credit institutions. Today there are 22 such institutions in Norway. A majority are subsidiaries of individual parent banks, while a few issuers are owned by groups of banks. The institutions are subject to the same type of regulations as other Norwegian financial institutions, such as capital adequacy requirements, liquidity management requirements etc. The issuers are subject to a supervisory regime that involves both a cover pool monitor and a public supervisor, the Financial Supervisory Authority of Norway ("Finanstilsynet" or "the FSA"). The smallest issuers only issue bonds in local currency (NOK) in the domestic market, while the largest issuers are present on a regular basis in international capital markets.

Cover pools are dominated by residential mortgages, and majority of issuers are specialised residential mortgage institutions (cf. the name "Boligkreditt"). Only a small number of issuers are specialised in commercial real estate or in public sector loans. Covered bonds from such issuers constitute about 1.3% of the total outstanding volume.

A licensed credit institution may raise loans by issuing covered bonds where the object of the institution, as laid down in the articles of association, is to grant or acquire residential or commercial mortgages, public sector loans and loans secured by other registered assets. In addition, the company should finance its lending business primarily by issuing covered bonds. The articles of association of the institution shall state which types of loans that shall be granted or acquired by the institution. The scope of the business will therefore be restricted, and institutions will have a very narrow mandate, which ensures transparency.

III. COVER ASSETS

The new legislation has led to two types of Norwegian covered bonds. One is "OMF Premium" which corresponds to European Covered Bond Premium in the EU framework. The other is "OMF Standard" which corresponds to European Covered Bond. Covered bonds issued under the previous legislation ("OMF") will keep its name and regulatory treatment until maturity of the bond.

The cover pool related to OMF Premium can only comprise of eligible assets defined in CRR art. 129. For OMF Standard the cover pool may only consist of the following assets:

- Residential mortgages;
- Commercial mortgages;
- Loans secured by other registered assets;
- Public sector loans;
- Assets in form of derivative agreements;
- Substitute assets.

The legislation explicitly allows for a covered bond issuer to use the same cover pool for OMF Premium and OMF issued before 8 July 2022 under the previous legislation. However, investors in OMF should not be worse off with a joint cover pool than what would have been the case if there had been two separate cover pools.

IV. VALUATION AND LTV CRITERIA

LTV

The maximum loan-to-value ratio (LTV) was previously at 75% for residential mortgages but has been changed to 80% in line with CRR art. 129. This applies to the entire cover pool. The LTV limit is 60% for commercial mortgages and mortgages concerning holiday/leisure properties. The mortgage credit institution shall monitor the development of the LTV of the individual asset as well as the market of the underlying assets.

Valuation

Upon inclusion of loans in the cover pool, a prudent market value shall be set. The valuation shall be documented. The valuation of residential properties may be based on general price levels if justifiable by market development.

The credit institution shall establish systems for monitoring subsequent price developments. Should the property prices decline, the part of a mortgage that exceeds the relevant LTV limit is still part of the cover pool and protects the holders of preferential claims. However, the part exceeding the limit will not be taken into account when calculating the overcollateralisation in the cover pool. The same principle applies to loans that are in default.

There are four main sources of market values: sales prices, real estate agent appraisals, surveyor values and Automated Valuation Model (AVM).

In Norway, most real property is sold through authorized real estate agents. They have undergone special training to operate as an estate agent and are subject to strict authorisation rules and control routines on part of the authorities.

Almost all residential properties are put up for sale on open, web-based marketplaces. This makes it easy for the sellers to advertise properties for sale, and for the buyers to have information on the specific property and other residential properties in the market. Properties sold through various marketplaces in Norway are usually sold as an open auction.

Valuation is part of the real estate agent education in Norway. Most market value appraisals applicable to mortgages are compiled in a system called Etakst. Etakst is a digitalised system developed by the Norwegian mortgage industry and contains two parts:

1. Valuation software for the real estate agent;
2. Documentation of market values for the banks.

Etakst provides a standardised approach for real estate agents to compute market values. The agents will always provide data on key features (pictures, market value based on similar dwellings in the same area etc.) for the mortgage bank.

The bank is granted access to the data when the applicant or the real estate agent provides a unique reference number to the mortgage bank. Etakst is compliant with international valuation standards such as European Valuation Standards (EVS) and International Valuation Standards (IVS).

Most Norwegian banks make extensive use of Eiendomsverdi as an AVM (automated valuation model) provider, for estimating market values of residential real estate and updating the values in accordance with subsequent development in the residential real estate market. The market value estimates are based on a complex valu-

ation model and are performed on a property-by-property basis. The model is used both at origination, as a benchmark for physical valuations, and for updating market values on the issuers mortgage portfolios.

Most Norwegian covered bond issuers update the valuations on the properties in the portfolio on a quarterly basis. These updates are based on Eiendomsverdi's AVM. For each property, market value estimates are calculated using information on the specific property, comparable sales, and other attributes relevant for the housing market. Due to the richness and granularity in Eiendomsverdi's database (all residential property sales in Norway are recorded daily into the database), the estimates from Eiendomsverdi's AVM are perceived as robust, and will adapt to changes in market conditions on a daily basis. Eiendomsverdi is a member of the European AVM Alliance (EAA) and comply with the "European Standards for Statistical Valuation Methods".

V. ASSET – LIABILITY MANAGEMENT

Following the new EU-legislation, the required level of overcollateralization has increased from 2% to 5% based on a nominal calculation. If a covered bond issuer, according to its articles of association, may only grant loans to, or guaranteed by, public sector companies, the requirement is 2%. For OMF Standard with public sector exposures the overcollateralization requirement is 10%.

The legislation caps the maximum exposure to one single borrower at 5% of the cover pool when calculating the overcollateralisation.

The credit institution shall ensure that the payment flows from the cover pool enable the institution to honour its payment obligations towards holders of covered bonds and derivative counterparties at all times. The payment flows should also cover the expected costs related to maintenance and administration for the winding-down of the specific covered bond-programme, which may be calculated as a lump sum.

The issuer shall establish a liquidity reserve to be included in the cover pool as substitute assets in addition to carrying out periodically stress tests to ensure satisfactory liquidity management. The liquidity buffer can comprise of LCR-assets (level 1, level 2A or level 2B) or short-term exposures to credit institutions that qualify for credit quality step 1 or 2, or short-term deposits to credit institutions that qualify for credit quality step 1, 2 or 3.

The liquidity buffer should at least correspond to the net liquidity outflow over 180 days. However, the calculation of the principal of outstanding bonds may be based on the (extended) final maturity date under certain conditions. This implies that the trigger for extension of the relevant soft bullet bonds must follow the legal requirements which states that an extension for 12 months can only be done if the issuer is:

a. Likely to fail in the near future and there is no reasonable prospect that any alternative measures can prevent the issuer from failing, or

b. The Ministry of Finance has announced that the issuer has failed.

The extension is subject to approval by the FSA and cannot alter the ranking of the covered bond investors.

A covered bond issuer shall not assume greater risk than what is prudent at all times. It is obliged to establish a limit on the interest rate risk in relation to its own funds and potential losses. This shall be based on a parallel shift of 1 percentage point in all interest rate curves as well as non-parallel shifts in the same curves. Furthermore, a covered bond issuer shall not be exposed to any substantial foreign exchange risk and is thus obliged to establish limits on such risks. For the largest issuers, the issuance is often denominated in EUR with a fixed rate, whereas the mortgages are typically in NOK and with a floating rate. Consequently, Norwegian issuers are dependent on using derivatives to remove FX- and interest rate risk and to fulfil regulatory requirements.

If a derivative agreement has a positive mark to market value, the amount will be a part of the cover pool. If the value is negative, the counterparties in the derivative agreement will have a preferential claim in the pool, ranking pari passu with the holders of covered bonds. As a corollary to this, the counterparties in the derivative agreements will be subject to the same restrictions with respect to the declaration of default as the bondholders.

VI. TRANSPARENCY

Finance Norway and the Norwegian Covered Bond Council have recommended that all Norwegian issuers use the Harmonised Transparency Template (HTT) to increase transparency and comparability. In this relation, a "Norwegian version" of the HTT has been developed based on some common standards from the previously developed national template.

The HTT[1] is only mandatory for issuers with a label from the Covered Bond Label Foundation. Norwegian issuers with such labels are DNB Boligkreditt, Eika Boligkreditt, Nordea Eiendomskreditt, SpareBank1 Boligkreditt, Møre Boligkreditt, Sparebanken Sør Boligkreditt, Sparebanken Vest Boligkreditt and SR-Boligkreditt.

VII. COVER POOL MONITOR AND BANKING SUPERVISION

Norwegian issuers are subject to a supervisory regime involving both a cover pool monitor and the public supervisor, the FSA.

Under new legislation, the issuer must get the approval from the FSA before establishing a new "program", i.e. OMF Premium or OMF Standard. The institution shall notify the FSA no later than 30 days prior to the initial issuance of covered bonds under a new program.

The FSA is obliged to publish a list over the issuers who has the permit to issue covered bonds ("OMF") under the new framework. The list is available at the FSA's homepage and currently reflects that issuers only have applied for OMF Premium programs[2].

No further approvals from the authorities are needed when issuing covered bonds with an exception should the financial strength of the institution give rise to concern.

The mortgage institution shall maintain a register of issued covered bonds, and of the cover assets assigned thereto, including derivative agreements. To ensure that the register is correctly maintained, a cover pool monitor shall be appointed by the issuer and notified to the FSA. The cover pool monitor must have a state authorization and cannot be the company's auditor or internal auditor.

The cover pool monitor shall at least every 3 months review compliance with legislative requirements. It shall report annually to the FSA unless information indicates a breach of requirements, in which the FSA should be notified as soon as possible.

VIII. SEGREGATION OF COVER ASSETS AND BANKRUPTCY REMOTENESS OF COVERED BONDS

The term "covered bonds", (in Norwegian "obligasjoner med fortrinnsrett" or "OMF") is protected by law and may only be applied under the rules of covered bonds. The same applies for the new European covered bonds or OMF standard and European covered bonds premium or OMF premium.

Covered bond issuers cannot be declared bankrupt but have to be placed under public administration if facing solvency or liquidity problems. This gives the authorities more flexibility to deal with covered bond companies, while maintaining the rights of covered bond holders. The administration board shall ensure proper management of the cover pool and ensure that holders of covered bonds and derivative counterparties receive agreed and timely payments. Public administration or insolvency does not in itself give holders of covered bonds and derivative counterparties the right to accelerate their claims. Should it not be possible to make contractual payments when claims fall due, and an imminent change is unlikely, the administration board shall introduce a halt to payments.

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1 The HTT for Norwegian issuers can be found on Finance Norway's webpage: https://www.finansnorge.no/tema/statistikk-og-analyse/bank/omf/#part3

2 https://www.finanstilsynet.no/en/finanstilsynets-registry/covered-bond-issuing-institutions-permitted-to-issue-european-covered-bonds-premium/

The covered bond owners and derivative counterparties have an exclusive, equal and proportionate preferential claim over the cover pool, and the administration board is bound to assure timely payment, provided the pool gives full coverage to the said claims.

The preferential claim also applies to payments that accrue to the institution from the cover pool. As long as they receive timely payments, the creditors do not have the right to declare that the issuer must be placed under public administration. Details about this issue may be reflected in the individual agreements between the issuer and (the trustee of) the bondholders. These provisions will also apply to any netting agreements between the institution and its counterparties in derivative transactions.

IX. RISK-WEIGHTING & COMPLIANCE WITH EUROPEAN LEGISLATION

The legislation fulfils and is in compliance with the relevant EU legislation such as the Capital Requirements Regulation (CRR) and the new EU-framework on covered bonds. OMF issued before 8 July 2022 must comply with legislation that were in force at the time of issuance.

Hence, Norwegian covered bonds are eligible for reduced (10%) risk-weighting under the standard method for capital adequacy requirement. They are also eligible as collateral in the ECB and qualify as liquid assets under the Liquidity Coverage Ratio (LCR) given fulfilment of the specific criteria defined in the Delegated Regulation on for instance issuance size.

The issuers are licensed credit institutions under supervision of the Norwegian FSA, and as such they are bound to comply with all relevant single market directives and regulations applicable to European credit institutions.

X. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Mortgage regulation

Due to the authorities' concern regarding housing prices and its correlation with household debt, the Ministry of Finance introduced a regulation on requirements for new residential mortgage loans in 2015. The goal of the regulation is to ensure a sustainable development in household debt. The regulation have been assessed on several occasions since its introduction. In December 2020 the MoF announced that the mortgage regulation will be merged with similar requirements on unsecured debt, and later an extension to also other types of collateral besides property. In December 2024 the MoF decided to make some adjustments as well as making the regulation permanent (but with regularly assessments). For mortgages the following apply:

- Loan-to-value (LTV) requirement of maximum 90%
- Stress test: Households must be able to service their debt in the event of a 3 percentage points increase in rates on their total level of debt. The minimum stress test level is a 7% interest rate
- Maximum debt-to-income (DTI) ratio requirement of five times gross annual income
- Interest-only periods on mortgages and home equity lines of credit may only be granted when LTV is below 60%
- Flexibility quota: Up to 10% of the value of new loans can deviate from one or more of the requirements in each quarter (the limit is 8 % for Oslo).

Register on unsecured debt

In 2019 the Debt Information Act entered into force. The Act requires that banks and other financing companies report information on consumer loans and credit card debt to central debt registers. Banks can now access these registers and receive updated information on a borrowers' consumer debt and hence receive a better picture of a borrowers' debt situation. There is an ongoing discussion to also include secured debt in the register which will give a complete and frequently updated register for banks and other financial institutions.

Market overview and additional information

According to Finance Norway's covered bond figures, more than EUR 31 bn. of covered bonds was issued in 2024. The total level of outstanding bonds is approximately EUR 147.6 bn. 59.3% of the outstanding bonds are denominated in NOK, 37.3% in EUR, and the remaining 3.4% in other foreign currencies.

Since the first issuance in the beginning of 2018 a total of 17 Norwegian issuers have issued green covered bonds based on residential mortgages. Issuances have been made in NOK, SEK and EUR. Currently 16 issuers have green bonds outstanding, with a total volume of just over EUR 18 bn. at year-end 2024.

More information and additional data are available on Finance Norway's webpage on covered bonds[3].

Issuers: Bustadkreditt Sogn og Fjordane AS, DNB Boligkreditt AS, Eiendomskreditt AS, Eika Boligkreditt AS, Fana Sparebank Boligkreditt AS, Helgeland Boligkreditt AS, KLP Boligkreditt AS, KLP Kommunekreditt AS, Landkreditt Boligkreditt AS, Møre Boligkreditt AS, Nordea Eiendomskreditt AS, OBOS Boligkreditt AS, Rogaland Sparebank Boligkreditt AS, SpareBank 1 Boligkreditt AS, SpareBank 1 Næringskreditt AS, Sparebanken Sør Boligkreditt AS, Sparebanken Vest Boligkreditt AS, Sparebanken Øst Boligkreditt AS, SR-Boligkreditt AS, Storebrand Boligkreditt AS, Toten Sparebank Boligkreditt AS, Verd Boligkreditt AS.

COVERED BOND LABEL **:** DNB Boligkreditt AS (1 pool), Nordea Eiendomskreditt AS (1 pool), SpareBank 1 Boligkreditt (1 pool), Eika Boligkreditt AS (1 pool), SR-Boligkreditt (1 pool), Møre Boligkreditt AS (1 pool), Sparebanken Sør Boligkreditt AS (1 pool), Sparebanken Vest Boligkreditt (1 pool).

For the most up-to-date information, please consult the new ECBC Covered Bond Comparative Database webpage on the Covered Bond Label website www.coveredbondlabel.com or via the following QR code:

3 https://www.finansnorge.no/tema/statistikk-og-analyse/bank/omf/

3.30 PANAMA

By Frank Will, Chairman of the EU Legislation Working Group, HSBC

I. FRAMEWORK

In September 2012, Global Bank became the first issuer of covered bonds out of Panama. It was also Latin America's inaugural covered bond. The USD 200mn deal was issued under Global Bank's USD 500mn Residential Mortgage Loans Covered Bond Programme and was later increased by USD 100mn. Following a partial buyback in September 2016, the bond matured in October 2017.

The second Panamanian covered bond issuer is Banco La Hipotecaria which issued its first USD 11mn covered bond in December 2018. Two more covered bonds with a total size of USD 41mn were issued in 2019.

Panama currently does not have a specific legal framework for covered bonds. Thus, Panamanian covered bonds are based on contractual agreements and the programme characteristics are self-imposed. Similar to the structures used in other markets without a specific covered bond law, many programme features are derived from securitisation techniques. Please note that our country analysis is based on the only available covered bond programmes in Panama to date, i.e. the ones from Global Bank and Banco La Hipotecaria.

II. STRUCTURE OF THE ISSUER

In the absence of a specific covered bond law in Panama, the Panamanian issuers used certain securitisation techniques and contractual law to replicate the key features of specific law based covered bonds and to ensure that the cover pool is isolated in the event of issuer insolvency. The covered bonds represent direct unconditional and unsubordinated obligations of the issuer and rank pari passu among themselves. The covered bond programmes foresee a separate cover pool of Panamanian residential mortgage assets that is transferred to a guaranty trust. The covered bond holders have a priority claim on these assets.

III. COVER ASSETS

Given the lack of a Panamanian covered bond law, we focus below on the asset requirements of the covered bond programmes of the two banks which bear a strong resemblance but differ in the detail.

Under Global Bank's covered bond programme, the covered bonds are backed by a dynamic pool of first-ranking residential mortgage loans originated in Panama, subject to the following eligibility criteria:

- The loans must be denominated in USD;
- The mortgage borrowers must be individuals resident in Panama;
- Each loan is secured by a valid and enforceable mortgage or by a guaranty trust, in accordance with Panamanian Law over a fully completed residential property located in Panama;
- With respect to any loan, there are no other loans secured by mortgages or by a guaranty trust ranking pari passu or senior with the mortgage or guaranty trust securing such loan (if there are other loans secured by mortgages or by a guaranty trust and ranking pari passu or senior with the mortgage or guaranty trust securing such loan, such loans have also been originated by the issuer and are included in the portfolio);
- No loan has a current principal balance of more than USD 500,000;
- Each loan has a remaining term of no longer than 30 years; and,
- No loan that has been transferred to the guarantee trust has been more than 90 days in arrears during the calendar year preceding the transfer date.

The aggregate principal amount of substitution assets (and/or authorised investments) may not at any time exceed 20% of the aggregate principal balance of the Guaranty Trust Assets.

The cover pool assets of the Banco La Hipotecaria are subject to the following eligibility criteria:

- The mortgage loans must be for purchases of owner occupied homes, with debtors being residents of Panama;
- Mortgage payments of the debtor have to be less than 35% of the gross family income and the complete debt service less than 55% of the income;
- The principal balance is more than USD 2,000 and less than USD 150,000;
- The property has to be insured against fire or other damages, with the insurance covering at least 80% of the property value; and,
- The debtor has to have a life insurance covering the principal balance.

The issuer has the right to replace the mortgage loans in the cover pool as long as the cover asset requirements are met.

IV. VALUATION AND LTV CRITERIA

In Global Bank's covered bond programme, the maximum permitted LTV is 100%. For non-preferential first lien mortgages the LTV caps are lower (95% for employed borrowers, 85% for self-employed and 70% for foreign borrowers). The Asset Coverage Test does not give any credit to mortgage loans more than 90 days past due. The maximum asset percentage is set at 84.4%.

For Banco La Hipotecaria, the maximum permitted LTV is 98% of the original purchase price for a new acquisition and 85% for the refinancing of existing mortgage loans. Mortgage loans issued by Banco La Hipotecaria itself may have an LTV up to 99%, but only under certain restrictive conditions.

V. ASSET – LIABILITY MANAGEMENT

Global Bank's covered bond features several tests including an Asset Coverage Test, an Interest Shortfall Test, a Yield Shortfall Test and an Amortisation Test.

- **Asset Coverage Test:** The Asset Coverage Test is breached if, on any calculation date prior to the occurrence of an issuer event of default and the service of a notice to pay on the guaranty trustee, the adjusted aggregate loan amount is less than the aggregate principal amount outstanding of the covered bonds.
- **Interest Shortfall Test:** The Interest Shortfall Test is breached when, on any calculation date prior to the occurrence of an issuer event of default and service of a notice to pay on the guaranty trustee, the income received with respect to the guaranty trust assets (including interest received or amounts received on hedging instruments) during the calculation period plus other available amounts (representing interest) is less than the interest amounts expected to accrue under the covered bonds during the next succeeding guaranty trust payment period.
- **Yield Shortfall Test:** The Yield Shortfall Test is breached when, on any calculation date following an issuer event of default and service of a notice to pay on the guaranty trustee, interest amounts under the loans and other amounts (representing interest) received by the guaranty trustee in respect of the guaranty trust assets during the calculation period cease to give a yield on the loans at least equal to the weighted average interest rate on the outstanding series of covered bonds.
- **Amortisation Test:** The Amortisation Test is breached if, for so long as any covered bonds remain outstanding upon the occurrence of an issuer event of default and on any calculation date following the occurrence of an issuer event of default and the service of a notice to pay on the guaranty trustee (but prior to the service of a guaranty trust acceleration notice), the amortisation test aggregate loan amount is less than the aggregate principal amount outstanding of the covered bonds as at the determination date.

The issuer can issue covered bonds in hard-bullet or soft-bullet format. In case of soft-bullet bonds, the outstanding covered bonds' maturity will automatically be extended by up to 12 months if the issuer fails to fully redeem a series.

The programme of Banco La Hipotecaria has the following key requirements:

- The Coverage Ratio is greater than or equal to 125%;
- The Liquidation Coverage Ratio is greater than or equal to 100%;
- The Gross Weighted Average Interest Rate Ratio is greater than or equal to the sum of (i) the Outstanding Covered Bonds Weighted Average Interest Rate and (ii) 0.5%;
- The Net Weighted Average Interest Rate Ratio is greater than or equal to the greater of (i) the Outstanding Covered Bonds Weighted Average Interest Rate minus 3.5% and (ii) 1.0%;
- The Percentage of Preferential Interest Rate Mortgages Ratio is less than or equal to 80%;
- The Weighted Average Loan to Value Ratio is less than or equal to 88%;
- The Weighted Average Maturity Ratio is less than 342 months;
- The Weighted Average Seasoning Ratio is greater than or equal to 18 months; and,
- No mortgage loan is in default more than 90 days.

VI. TRANSPARENCY

Global Bank's prospectus requires the bank to prepare a monthly investor report listing selected statistical information in relation to the underlying portfolio and the characteristics of the portfolio as well as confirming compliance with the Asset Coverage Test. The issuer provides comprehensive information on the borrowers (income brackets, employment type, life insurance), delinquency rates, fire & earthquake insurance of the properties, loan-to-value ratios by brackets and charged interest rates. The Banco La Hipotecaria publishes monthly servicer and pool data reports covering the same information, which are validated by the asset monitor with respect to all pool ratio requirements.

VII. COVER POOL MONITOR AND BANKING SUPERVISION

In the absence of a legal framework defining the monitoring requirements for the cover assets, both covered bond issuers defined their own monitoring frameworks. Both issuers appoint an "asset monitor" that monitors the loans in the cover pool and validates the information and periodic reports published by the issuer with regards to the tests and criteria that are described above, as well as arithmetic accuracy. Failure to pass the tests or to satisfy the requirements leads to the issuer being obligated to immediately transfer substitute assets or other remedial means until compliance is established again. Failure to do so would lead to a prohibition of the issuing of further covered bonds or even an issuer event of default.

VIII. RISK-WEIGHTING & COMPLIANCE WITH EUROPEAN LEGISLATION

The covered bonds are neither Article 52(4) UCITS-compliant nor Article 129 CRR-compliant as Panama is not a Member State of the European Union (EU). In addition, Panama does not have national covered bond legislation. Therefore, the covered bonds do not benefit from a preferred risk-weighting for regulatory capital purposes under EU rules. Under the Standardised Approach, they are treated similarly to senior unsecured bank debt.

As Panama is neither a European Economic Area (EEA) country nor a G10 country, Panamanian covered bonds are not eligible for the ECB repo operations regardless of their currency and their rating.

Issuers: Global Bank Corp (Panama)

For the most up-to-date information, please consult the new ECBC Covered Bond Comparative Database webpage on the Covered Bond Label website www.coveredbondlabel.com or via the following QR code:

3.31 POLAND

By Konrad Szymczyk, mBank Hipoteczny and Dariusz Popiołek, PKO Bank Hipoteczny

I. FRAMEWORK

The legal framework for covered bonds is mainly determined by:

- The Act on Covered Bonds and Mortgage Banks (*Ustawa o listach zastawnych i bankach hipotecznych*) of August 29, **1997**; ("The Covered Bonds Act"),
- The Bankruptcy Law (*Prawo upadłościowe*) of February 28, **2003**, Chapter II – Bankruptcy proceedings for mortgage banks, Article 442–450a,
- Act on Trading in Financial Instruments (Ustawa o obrocie instrumentami finansowymi) of July 29, **2005**,
- The Bonds Act (Ustawa o obligacjach) of January 15, **2015**.

Applicable key soft law regulations for mortgage banks issued by the Polish Financial Supervision Authority (Komisja Nadzoru Finansowego, the KNF):

- Recommendation F (introduced in 2014) – the standards for determining mortgage-lending value were eased.
- Recommendation K (introduced in 2016) – the rules on keeping and managing cover registers were updated.

In 2015 the Covered Bonds Act has been thoroughly updated in order to increase the safety of the covered bonds and their availability to investors with new provisions coming into force as of 1 January 2016. Among the key modifications were: introduction of statutory overcollateralisation and liquidity buffer and increase of funding limit for residential loans as well as implementation of soft bullet and conditional pass-through structure upon insolvency as well as regular coverage and liquidity testing.

In 2022 the Covered Bonds Act has been amended due to necessity of implementation to the Polish legislation the provisions of the Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council (EU) 2019/2162 of 27 November 2019 on the issue of covered bonds and covered bond public supervision amending Directives 2009/65/EC and 2014/59/EU (the Covered Bond Directive). Key modifications of Covered Bonds Act were:

- extension of catalogue of eligible assets for the issue of a public covered bond,
- inclusion the double recourse mechanism into the definition of a covered bond,
- confirmation under the Covered Bonds Act that maturity extension option of the covered bond is limited only to the bank's event of bankruptcy,
- equal (pari passu) status of cover swap counterparties and covered bond holders in bankruptcy,
- quality requirements on derivatives to be a part of cover pool,
- reduction of cover pool mandatory overcollateralization from 110% to 105%,
- introduction of the concept of "European covered bonds" and "European premium covered bonds",
- extension of bank's reporting obligations,
- detailed regulation on FSA supervision on covered bond issuers

Due to 2022 amendment of the Covered Bonds Act, new Regulation of the Minister of Finance of 21 June 2022 on conducting the collateralisation review and coverage and liquidity tests was issued.

II. STRUCTURE OF THE ISSUER

The issuer is a specialised credit institution (mortgage bank) with the supervision of the Polish Financial Supervision Authority. It is required by law that the mortgage bank is a joint stock company with a legal personality (not a branch) with two licenses: a banking license and consent to start operating activity, both granted by the KNF. The two licenses constitute consent to maintain an active covered bond issue program.

The additional covered bond issuer is Poland's only state-owned bank, Bank Gospodarstwa Krajowego (BGK), which may issue covered bonds to finance in particular government programmes. However, there have been no issues of BGK so far.

According to the Covered Bonds Act, a mortgage bank is limited in its range of business activities, i.e. it may only engage in activities specified in a closed catalogue. The operations of a mortgage bank can be divided into two groups: core and non-core, and may be also executed in foreign currencies.

The core operations which may be performed by mortgage banks include:

- Granting loans secured with mortgages;
- Granting loans where the borrower, guarantor or underwriter of a loan repayment is the National Bank of Poland, European Central Bank (ECB), governments or central banks of the European Union (EU) member states, Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD member states), or where a guarantee or security is granted by the State Treasury;
- Acquisition of other banks' receivables on account of loans granted by them;
- Acquisition of securities issued by the State Treasury, local government units or BGK (only if securities are guaranteed by the State Treasury);
- Issuing mortgage covered bonds;
- Issuing public sector covered bonds.

Apart from core operations, mortgage bank's approved activities comprise: taking credits and loans, issuing bonds, securities safekeeping, acquiring or taking up shares in other entities, whose legal form ensures that the bank's liability is limited to the value of invested funds, provided that such investment supports the bank's business activities, providing consulting and advice with respect to the property market, managing receivables of a mortgage bank and other banks arising from mortgage-backed loans, as well as granting such loans on behalf of other banks on the basis of relevant cooperation agreements.

The mortgage bank may perform foreign exchange trading activities and activities to mitigate foreign exchange and interest rate risk, including derivatives transactions. The purpose should be to facilitate the aforementioned core operations and approved activities of mortgage bank.

A mortgage bank is not authorised to perform any other activities apart from the operations listed above. Particularly, it cannot accept deposits. Such limitations facilitate maintaining a more simplified and clearer activity structure and the specialisation of the loan division as well as the improvement of credit risk assessment methods in the field of real estate financing. Furthermore, funds obtained from covered bond issues shall be used mainly for funding the lending activity of a mortgage bank. Moreover, in accordance with polish Banking Law, if the bank fails to perform the activity specified in the articles of association within 12 months from the date of issuance of the licence, or if the bank ceases to perform the activity specified in the articles of association for a continuous period of 12 months, the bank shall immediately apply to KNF for permission to make an amendment to the articles of association consisting in the deletion of the unperformed activity. The provision referred to in the previous sentence is common to both universal and mortgage banks.

III. COVER ASSETS

Mortgage banks in Poland focus on mortgage or public sector lending. The loans are held on the balance sheet of the issuer and registered in two separate cover registers, which form two separate cover pools.

There are two specific classes of covered bonds which correspond to each of the cover assets:

- mortgage covered bonds (hipoteczne listy zastawne) and
- public sector covered bonds (publiczne listy zastawne).

Both mortgage and public sector covered bonds are direct and unconditional obligations of the issuer and must be fully secured by cover assets of the respective class. Upon the issuer's default, covered bondholders have a dual recourse to a segregated cover pool of assets and, if the cover pool proves to be not sufficient, an unsecured claim against the issuer. Furthermore, the covered bondholders benefit from a statutory priority claim over all the assets in the cover pool equally with counterparties of derivatives entered into cover pool. There is no time subordination: all covered bonds are ranked pari passu.

Pursuant to the Covered Bonds Act, the substitution assets can be included in the cover pool i.e. they may consist of the bank's funds:

- invested in securities issued or guaranteed by the National Bank of Poland, the European Central Bank, the governments and central banks of the Member States of the European Union, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, excluding countries that are restructuring or have restructured their foreign debt in the past 5 years, unless they are basic assets;
- deposited with the National Bank of Poland;
- deposited with domestic banks or a credit institution referred to in Article 18(3)(3) of the Covered Bonds Act.

However, the total nominal amounts of the mortgage bank's claims secured with a mortgage or based on the public sector claims, constituting a basis for the issue of mortgage covered bonds, may not be less than 85% of the total amount of nominal value of outstanding covered bonds.

Hedging derivatives, that meet the requirements set out in Article 18a the Covered Bonds Act, are eligible for the cover pool. Settlement amounts due under such contracts and included into the cover pool rank pari passu with claims of covered bondholders.

In addition, receivables secured by mortgages established on buildings, which are in the construction process, may not in total exceed 10% of the overall value of mortgage-secured receivables in the cover pool. Within this limit, the receivables secured by mortgages on construction lots in compliance with the land-use plan may not exceed 10%.

IV. VALUATION AND LTV CRITERIA

The property valuation in a mortgage bank is conducted under the rules stipulated in the Covered Bonds Act. According to the Polish covered bond legislation, establishing the mortgage lending value of the property shall be performed with due care and diligence on the basis of an expert's opinion. It shall be prepared by the mortgage bank or other entities with appropriate real estate appraisal qualifications commissioned by the mortgage bank. The mortgage lending value cannot be higher than the market value of the property.

Apart from the assumptions laid down in the Covered Bonds Act concerning property valuation in a mortgage bank, there are special banking supervisory regulations (Recommendation F), which stipulate in detail the establishment of the mortgage lending value and impose a duty on a bank to have a database for real estate prices.

The funding limit – related to a single loan – is established at the level of 60% of the mortgage lending value of the commercial property and of 80% in the case of residential property (Article 14 the Covered Bonds Act).

Apart from funding limit, there is also lending limit, according to Article 13(2) the Covered Bonds Act, stipulating that single loans granted or purchased by a mortgage bank cannot exceed the mortgage lending value of the property.

V. ASSET-LIABILITY MANAGEMENT

According to the Covered Bonds Act (Article 18), the total nominal value of all outstanding covered bonds (which should be calculated separately for each class) shall not exceed the sum of nominal amounts of (either mortgage or public sector) covered assets, which form the basis for the covered bond issue. Since July 2022, the ongoing cover principle including 5% mandatory overcollateralisation. That would apply to both public and mortgage covered bonds.

The overcollateralisation is calculated on nominal basis regarding the capital amount of outstanding covered bonds. Additionally, part of the cover pool would be compulsory composed of liquid assets (e.g. central bank eligible bonds), in order to ensure preparation of liquidity buffer, not being a base for the covered bond issue. It is assumed that the value of these liquid assets (liquidity buffer) must be maintained at an amount not lower than the maximum cumulative outflows of net liquidity over the following 180 days. Calculation recognizes final term of covered bonds resulting from soft-bullet structure.

Thus, the nominal value of respective covered assets shall permanently be higher than the total nominal value of the respective covered bonds. In addition, the mortgage bank's income from interest on its respective cover assets may not be lower than the amount of bank's payable interest on its respective outstanding covered bonds.

VI. TRANSPARENCY

Cover pool transparency reports for individual banks are available at their respective websites (see below). Four out of five Polish mortgage banks are holding the Covered Bond Label and publish their reports following the Harmonized Transparency Template.

The majority of Polish covered bonds (public sector and mortgage covered bonds, the latter denominated in PLN as well as in EUR) are listed on the Catalyst, a local bond market operated by the Warsaw Stock Exchange and BondSpot. Both markets are supervised by the Polish Financial Services Authority and are approved as regulated markets by the European Securities and Markets Authority (https://registers.esma.europa.eu/publication/searchRegister?core=esma_registers_upreg#).

Additionally some of Polish covered bonds denominated in both currencies (PLN and EUR) are also listed on the Luxembourg Stock Exchange.

Issuers, whose securities are listed on the regulated market, are legally bound to provide investors with up to date information about their company's economic situation and events which may have an effect on investment risk. Consequently, mortgage banks are obliged to submit disclosures in the form of current and periodic reports, including information on subscription, assigned rating or interest payment dates of covered bonds.

Issuance documents such as Base Prospectus and Supplements for individual series comprising detailed information on the covered bonds as well as the issuer can be found on the issuers' websites:

> mBank Hipoteczny: https://www.mhipoteczny.pl/en/investor-relations/issue-programmes/

> Pekao Bank Hipoteczny: https://www.pekaobh.pl/emisje-listow-zastawnych/programy-emisji.html

> PKO BP Bank Hipoteczny: https://www.pkobh.pl/en/covered-bond/

> ING Bank Hipoteczny: https://en.inghipoteczny.pl/inghipoteczny-en/investor-relations

> Millennium Bank Hipoteczny: https://www.millenniumbh.pl/relacje-inwestorskie#program-emisji

VII. COVER POOL MONITOR AND BANKING SUPERVISION

One of the key features of Polish covered bond legislation (Article 31 the Covered Bonds Act) is the monitoring role undertaken by the covered pool monitor (powiernik) who is appointed by KNF at the request of the mortgage bank's supervisory board. The cover pool monitor is independent and shall not be bound by instructions of the appointing body.

The cover pool monitor is responsible for an ongoing control of the appropriateness of the cover pool management. Its main tasks comprise monitoring of the cover pool (i.e. confirming the accuracy of the inclusion in or removal from the cover register of the cover assets, ensuring that the asset eligibility requirements are met, verifying the correctness of the value registered in the cover pool, etc.) as well as the issuer's compliance with specific provisions of the Covered Bonds Act and reporting any breaches of them to the KNF.

The cover pool monitor is required to perform above mentioned tasks not only on an ongoing basis, but also prior to every issuance of a mortgage bank in order to ensure that a mortgage bank provides an appropriate cover for the planned issue. The issuer is obliged to provide full cooperation to the cover pool monitor and shall give the cover pool monitor the right to review the register, loan documents, accounting books or other bank's documents at its request.

Apart from cover pool's management monitoring performed by the cover pool monitor, mortgage banks fall under the oversight of the KNF which carries out general assessment of Polish banks, including mortgage banks as a part of general banking supervision.

The KNF may commission an independent expert at the expense of the inspected mortgage bank to inspection of the appropriateness of the mortgage bank's entries to the mortgage cover register. This would also include establishing the mortgage lending value of the property was in compliance with the rules referred to in Article 22(5) the Covered Bonds Act.

VIII. SEGREGATION OF COVER ASSETS AND BANKRUPTCY REMOTENESS OF COVERED BONDS

Pursuant to the Covered Bonds Act and the Bankruptcy Law, in case of bankruptcy of a mortgage bank the receivables, claims and means entered in the cover register shall constitute a separate bankruptcy estate, which may be used exclusively to satisfy claims of covered bondholders and claims under derivative contracts. It includes assets registered as security for covered bonds, ensuring that these creditors are prioritized. Moreover, initiation of the insolvency proceedings does not affect covered bonds (*listy zastawne*), i.e. they do not automatically accelerate, when the issuer becomes insolvent.

After declaring a bankruptcy of the mortgage bank, the court prior the appointment of the trustee (*kurator*) consults it with the Financial Supervision Authority (KNF), ensuring the trustee is well-qualified and aligned with regulatory standards. The trustee represents the rights of covered bondholders in the bankruptcy proceedings and notifies the total nominal value of outstanding covered bonds together with accrued interest to the bankruptcy estate. In order to perform these duties, the trustee has the right to review the accounting books and other documents of the mortgage bank as well as to obtain all the necessary information from the receiver (*syndyk*), court supervisor (*nadzorca sądowy*) and administrator (*zarządca*). The trustee consults his actions with The Financial Supervision Authority (KNF).

The trustee participates in the liquidation of a separate bankruptcy estate performed by the receiver.

If possible, the items of such estate may be sold to another mortgage bank. While maturities of covered bond principal are postponed automatically by 1 year further, during this period all interest payments are executed pursuant to the terms and conditions of the covered bonds. The aim of that solution is to support the timely payment of covered bonds, if a mortgage bank goes insolvent. Additional the law on bankruptcy includes the introduction of the asset coverage test, which verifies whether the separate insolvency estate is sufficient to fully satisfy the claims of the bondholders, as well as the liquidity test, which verifies whether the separate

insolvency estate is sufficient to fully satisfy the claims of the covered bondholders on the extended redemption dates. These tests are conducted also during regular activity of the mortgage bank.

With a separate bankruptcy estate, the following categories should be satisfied successively:

> Liquidation costs of the separate bankruptcy estate, which also include the remuneration of the trustee, as well as interest and other covered bonds receivables;

> Covered bonds as per their nominal value.

The Polish model, introduced in January 2016, stipulates a statutory soft-bullet structure in case of a mortgage bank insolvency, conditional pass-through payments, as well as detailed regulated scenario for insolvency procedure with clear competences and precise legal tools for action including over-indebtedness and liquidity tests. Transition into both soft bullet and conditional pass-through structures can only be triggered by legally specified events (insolvency and failed coverage tests) with limited decision rights in this respect granted to covered bond holders (possible resolution of covered bondholders with 2/3 majority to sell the separate bankruptcy asset pool to another bank).

After satisfying the covered bondholders the surplus of the cover assets deriving from the separate estate shall be allocated to the general bankruptcy estate. In case that the separate bankruptcy estate does not fully satisfy the cover bondholders, the remaining amount shall be satisfied from the whole bankruptcy estate funds. In that case, the remaining amount shall be transferred from the bankruptcy estate funds to the separate bankruptcy estate funds. It indicates that the covered bondholders are given priority over other creditors.

IX. RISK-WEIGHTING & COMPLIANCE WITH EUROPEAN LEGISLATION

In order to apply a preferential risk-weighting for covered bonds, the instrument needs to meet the criteria laid down in the UCITS Directive and the CRR.

Polish covered bonds already meet the criteria of Article 52(4) UCITS: in December 2008 Polish covered bond was notified by the European Commission (EC) as a European "eligible bond" (covered bond), i.e. the instrument with a qualified collateral and can be found on the EC's website at present https://commission.europa.eu/index_en).

Polish covered bonds also fall under the criteria of Article 129(1) of the CRR[1]:

> Substitution assets, including liquidity buffer, comply with Article 129(1)(a-b) CRR;

> Derivatives included in the cover pool may comply with Article 129(1)(c) CRR;

> Residential real estate loans comply with Article 129(1)(d) CRR, LTV limit of 80%;

> Commercial real estate loans comply with Article 129(1)(f) CRR, LTV limit of 60%;

> Portfolio information is publicly available at least on semi-annual basis.

Following recent amendment of the Covered Bonds Act, foreign investors (both private and corporate) are exempt from withholding tax both in relation to coupons and principal amount.

PLN denominated covered bonds are approved by the National Bank of Poland as the instruments eligible for intraday and lombard credit as well as repo transactions. As of March 2025, the haircut levels:

> for repo using covered bonds as collateral are 25% (up to 3 years) – 56% (above 15 years)

> for intraday and lombard credit are 25% (up to 3 years) – 56% (above 15 years)

based on notional value and time remaining to maturity. Haircuts are the same as for corporate and municipal debt.

1 For further information on the UCITS Directive and the Capital Requirements Regulation (CRR) please see: https://hypo.org/ecbc/covered-bonds/.

EUR denominated covered bonds issued under international covered bond programmes, which are eligible for Eurosystem credit operations, but are not eligible for the CBPP.

Polish investment regulations pertaining to investment limits for covered bonds are as follows:

> Banks and insurance companies – no statutory limits, internal concentration limits apply, high-quality liquid asset status depending on outstanding issue amount and rating;

> Open ended investment funds – 25% of assets under management (AuM) limit for covered bonds per issuer, 35% of AuM limit for total exposure per mortgage bank (including unsecured debt and OTC derivatives), 80% of AuM limit for all covered bonds in portfolio;

> Closed ended funds – 25% of assets under management (AuM) limit for covered bonds per issuer;

> Pension funds up to 40% of AuM, 5% per one issuer or issuer's group.

Issuers: mBank Hipoteczny S.A., Pekao Bank Hipoteczny S.A., PKO Bank Hipoteczny S.A., ING Bank Hipoteczny S.A and Millennium Bank Hipoteczny S.A.

COVERED BOND LABEL **:** PKO Bank Hipoteczny Spółka Akcyjna (1 cover pool), mBank Hipoteczny S.A. (1 cover pool), Pekao Bank Hipoteczny SA (2 cover pools), ING Bank Hipoteczny S.A. (1 cover pool).

For the most up-to-date information, please consult the new ECBC Covered Bond Comparative Database webpage on the Covered Bond Label website www.coveredbondlabel.com or via the following QR code:

3.32 PORTUGAL

By Cláudio Domingues, Millennium bcp

I. FRAMEWORK

Portuguese covered bonds are locally designated as "*obrigações cobertas*". The Portuguese covered bonds legislation[1] transposing the Covered Bonds Directive[2] (the "*Regime Jurídico das Obrigações Cobertas*" or "RJOC") came into effect on the 1st of July 2022. The former Portuguese covered bonds legislation[3] ceased to apply to mortgages and public sector covered bonds issued until the 8th of July 2022, formerly known as "*obrigações hipotecárias*" and "*obrigações sobre o sector público*", respectively, after all covered bonds programmes established under the previous legal regime have been adjusted and approved in accordance with the RJOC.

The establishment of a covered bonds programme under RJOC is subject to the previous authorisation of the Portuguese securities market regulatory authority ("*Comissão do Mercado de Valores Mobiliários*" or "CMVM"). In accordance with RJOC, CMVM may specifically regulate certain aspects of the covered bonds. On 29 June 2023, CMVM published its first and only (to date) covered bonds regulation, the "*Regulamento CMVM Nr.º 2/2023*" ("CMVM Regulation"), which has revoked, in accordance with the RJOC, all regulations of the Bank of Portugal which were published under the previous covered bonds legal framework. CMVM keeps publicly available an updated list of the covered bonds that are labelled as either "European Covered Bonds" or "European Covered Bonds (Premium)"[4].

II. STRUCTURE OF THE ISSUER

Portuguese covered bonds can only be issued by Portuguese credit institutions.

The RJOC allows for, and sets the terms of, the use of intragroup pooled covered bond structures, under which covered bonds issued by a credit institution ("internally issued covered bonds") are used as cover assets for the issue of covered bonds by another credit institution of the same group ("externally issued covered bonds").

III. COVER ASSETS

Eligible cover assets are primarily those listed in Article 129[5] of Regulation (EU) 575/2013 of 26 June 2013, in the terms set out therein. By reference to Article 129, the RJOC limits the use of the label "*Obrigação Coberta Europeia (Premium)*" ("OCE Premium") to covered bonds backed by primary assets listed thereunder, in particular:

- exposures to certain public sector entities and authorities, central banks, subject to certain minimum ratings in the case of either of them being located outside the EU;
- loans secured by residential or commercial mortgages, with a maximum loan-to-value ratio ("LTV") of 80% and 60%[6], respectively; or
- loans secured by maritime liens on ships, subject to a maximum LTV of 60%.

1 Decree-law n.º 31/2022 of 6th May 2022

2 Directive (EU) 2019/2162

3 Decree-law n.º 59/2006 and regulation of the Bank of Portugal (in particular, Aviso n.º 5/2006, Aviso n.º 6/2006, Aviso n.º 8/2006 and Instrução n.º 13/2006)

4 CMVM website (English version): Home > The CMVM > Information for Professionals > Issuers > Covered Bonds

5 As amended by Regulation 2019/2160, which together with Directive 2019/2162 forms the new European covered bond regulatory framework

6 Commercial mortgages with 70% LTV are allowed in certain circumstances

Credit institutions with programmes issuing bonds labelled "*Obrigação Coberta Europeia*" ("OCE") are not bound by Article 129 and the following primary assets that are outside of the scope of Article 129 can be included in the respective cover pools:

i) high-quality cover assets in the form a first mortgage, charge, or lien over EEA-based physical assets for which there are generally accepted valuation standards and a public register of ownership and claims over such physical assets; such physical assets cover outstanding OCEs up to the lesser of the principal amount of the liens (combined with any prior liens) and 70% of the value of physical assets[7]; or

ii) assets in the form of credits to, or guaranteed by, public enterprises, provided the respective cov-ered bonds are subject to a minimum overcollateralisation of 10%, as well as that such public enter-prises are subject to public supervision and have sufficient revenue generating powers that ensure their financial soundness and solvability.

Junior claims are allowed in the cover pool (other than junior claims in respect of the assets listed in limb ii) above) provided all associated senior claims over the same assets are included in the same cover pool.

Regarding composition and homogeneity cover pools can only have one single class of primary assets, with residential and commercial mortgages jointly considered as one, in which case their relative ratio within the cover pool should not vary significantly over time.

Substitution assets, meaning eligible assets other than primary assets contributing to coverage requirements, can include: i) deposits with the Bank of Portugal of either cash or securities eligible for Eurosystem credit operations, ii) deposits in EEA-based credit institutions not part of the issuer's group or companies, and iii) other EEA-based, low-risk and high-quality assets. In the case of OCE Premium bonds, exposures to credit institutions are subject to Article 129 and therefore to certain minimum counterparty ratings.

The RJOC allows derivative contracts to be part of the cover pool, subject to certain structural requirements (see "V" below), and exclusively for risk hedging purposes.

The cover pool is proactively managed. If homogeneity, coverage, or liquidity buffer requirements are breached, the issuer must remedy such breaches by removing, or allocating new, primary or substitution assets, repur-chasing outstanding covered bonds, or allocating new liquid assets to the liquidity buffer. Not-withstanding, credits that become delinquent after being assigned to the cover pool may remain part of it provided that the delinquency period does not exceed 90 days, otherwise they must be substituted.

Without prejudice to asset eligibility criteria and segregation principles, Portuguese covered bonds can be backed by credits lawfully acquired from another credit institution, subject to the conditions established under the RJOC for credit transfer between credit institutions.

IV. VALUATION AND LTV CRITERIA

The RJOC determines that the methodology and process of valuation of physical assets securing cover pool assets must follow certain guiding principles. Upon assignment of cover assets to the cover pool, the underly-ing physical assets must have a current valuation amount no greater than the physical asset's market value or mortgage lending value. Valuation shall be conducted by qualified and experienced valuers, who are independ-ent of the credit decision-making process, who ignore speculative elements in their appraisal, and document the valuation in a transparent and clear manner.

CMVM has opted not to regulate matters provided for and already covered by supervening national and European banking legislation and regulation, such as (i) methodologies and periodicity of the valuation of the

7 Physical assets need to be adequately insured against risk of losses and damages

properties backing mortgages forming part of the cover pools, the risk management of such assets, as well as the recording and archiving of all this information, (ii) the rotation of valuers of said properties, and (iii) the valuation reports of the of assets eligible to form part of the cover pool, under the RJOC.

Other national legislation requires valuation to be presented through a written report. Such report, apart from providing clear identification of the property and its final valuation amount for the context of mortgage lending, must include elements such as available rental values, property market prices, recent transaction values, construction and maintenance costs, and other market indicators to support the valuation expert's choice of established valuation methodologies in determining the valuation amount. Portuguese covered bond issuers are also subject to article 208 of Regulation (EU) 575/2013 ("CRR"), which requires banks to monitor the value of commercial properties at least once every year and the value of residential properties once every three years, in order to be eligible to back mortgage loans. In any event, banks should carry out more frequent monitoring when market conditions change significantly. The property valuation should be reviewed when information available to institutions indicates the value of the property may have declined materially relative to general market prices. For loans exceeding EUR 3 million or 5 % of the own funds of a credit institution, the property valuation shall be reviewed by such valuer at least every three years. Notwithstanding, CRR's Article 129, with which bonds carrying the "European Covered Bond (Premium)" label must comply, requires the monitoring of property values to be carried out at least annually for all properties collateralizing cover pools. Credit institutions may use statistical methods to monitor the value of mortgaged properties and to identify those needing revaluation.

Valuation experts are deemed independent if they are not susceptible to be affected in their otherwise unbiased assessment. Namely, they must have no specific interest in the property in question or any relationship, commercial or personal, with the borrower. Further, valuation will not be regarded as independent if compensation payable to the valuation expert is somehow linked to the properties' valuation amounts. Valuation experts may however belong to the issuer's organisation, provided their action is fully independent from the credit underwriting process.

Lastly, credit institutions should ensure proper diversification and rotation of property valuers. They must keep an updated list of selected valuers, together with the criteria justifying such selection, as well as the properties valued by such valuers. This list must be reported annually to the regulator until the end of January each year, with reference to 31st December, indicating any changes from the last report.

V. ASSET – LIABILITY MANAGEMENT

RJOC deals with risks associated with asset-liability mismatch by imposing coverage requirements. Payment shortfall and refinancing risks are covered by the obligation of maintaining a liquidity buffer, whereas interest rate risk or foreign exchange risk can be addressed using derivative contracts.

Coverage Requirements and Overcollateralisation

All covered bond programme liabilities must be covered by claims over eligible cover assets. Liabilities include payment obligations on covered bonds and derivative contracts, as well as programme wind down, maintenance and administration costs, which can be estimated as a lump sum. Cover assets comprise primary assets, substitution assets, liquid assets held under the liquidity buffer requirement (see below) and amounts receivable under derivative contracts. Unsecured credits where a default is deemed to have occurred[8] do not count towards this coverage.

The aggregate principal amount of all cover assets shall be equal to, or exceed, the aggregate principal amount of outstanding covered bonds ("nominal principle"). Coverage can be calculated on a net present value basis

8 As per Article 178 of the CRR

(including stress scenarios) or by applying a prudent market value approach provided that does not result in a higher coverage ratio. Assets and liabilities must be valued using the same methodology.

Notwithstanding the nominal principle, issuers are legally bound by minimum overcollateralisation ("OC") requirements. Specifically, any programme issuing OCE Premium bonds needs to maintain a minimum OC of 5%, for as long as any such bonds are outstanding; programmes issuing OCE Premium bonds backed by commercial mortgages with LTVs above 70% need to maintain a minimum OC of 10%; programmes issuing OCE bonds backed by credits to, or guaranteed by, public enterprises as primary assets and in the terms of the RJOC, need to maintain a minimum OC of 10%.

Liquidity Buffer

The risk of payment shortfall is addressed by the requirement of a liquidity buffer composed of liquid assets available to cover the programme's maximum cumulative net liquidity outflow over the following 180 days. Such assets are part of the cover pool and thus subject to segregation.

The liquidity buffer can comprise: i) assets qualifying as level 1, level 2A or level 2B assets[9], not issued by the covered bond issuer, by its parent company (unless such parent company is a public sector entity that is not a credit institution), by a subsidiary of the same group of companies, or by a securitisation special purpose entity with which the covered bond issuer has close links; or ii) short-term exposures to credit institutions with credit rating "A-" or better, or short-term exposures (including deposits) to credit institutions with credit rating "BBB-" or better, in accordance with point (c) of Article 129 (1) of the CRR.

Unsecured credits where a default is deemed to have occurred[10] cannot contribute to the cover pool liquidity buffer. For covered bonds with extendable maturity, calculation of the programme's maximum cumulative net liquidity outflow considers the final (extended) maturity date for principal outflow, as set by the applicable contractual terms and conditions.

Derivative Contracts

Issuers can use eligible derivative contracts for risk hedging purposes only. Their volume needs to be adjusted in the event of a reduction in the risk covered, and any such contracts included in the cover pool shall terminate once the hedged risk ceases to exist, be sufficiently documented, be subject to the segregation principle described in "VIII" below, and not be terminated upon issuer insolvency or resolution. Furthermore, the cover pool can only include derivatives which comply with the criteria set out in the RJOC in respect of the eligibility of hedging counterparties (including, without limitation, derivate instruments traded in a regulated market or multilateral trading facility of an EU Member State, or contracts entered into with certain eligible counterparts in the EEA).

Extendable Maturity Structures

The RJOC allows extendable maturity structures. Covered bond maturities can be extended upon withdrawal of the issuer's banking license or, either a foreseeable or actual failure to pay principal or interest due on the original maturity date, which cannot be remedied within 10 business days or less if the issue or the programme so establishes. The issuing credit institution shall notify the CMVM of the extension of the maturity date of the covered bonds and of its respective grounds at least 10 days before the maturity extension's effective date, or as soon as possible, whenever the occurrence of the event, or the time when it is found out, prevents the communication within such deadline. The CMVM can oppose to such extension within a 10-day period. These non-discretionary triggers must be specified in the issue's terms and conditions, the final maturity date having

9 Pursuant to the applicable delegated regulation adopted pursuant to Article 460 of Regulation (EU) No 575/2013, valued in accordance with that delegated regulation

10 As per Article 178 of the CRR

to be determinable at all times. Also, upon an insolvency event, such maturity date extension must not affect investors' ranking or invert the programme's original maturity schedule. Lastly, information provided to investors has to be sufficient to determine the covered bond's risks, including the impact of insolvency or resolution of the issuer on a maturity extension, as well as the role of the CMVM in the maturity extension procedure.

Additional Regulatory Requirements

Covered bond issuers are obliged to regularly report evidence of compliance with applicable regulatory requirements concerning foreign exchange risk, liquidity risk, interest rate risk and asset coverage. CMVM Regulation requires covered bond issuers to deliver two programme-specific reports, with reference to the last day of each calendar semester, which shall be sent to the CMVM by the end of the following month. One containing the composition of the cover pool, including primary assets, substitution assets and liquid assets, each on an aggregate basis; the other projecting the programme's future liquidity mismatches across differ-ent time intervals.

VI. TRANSPARENCY

Portuguese covered bonds issuers ensure data consistency and transparency by adopting the European Covered Bond Label Harmonised Transparency Template ("HTT"), which has been continuously adapted to market needs as well as regulatory and legal requirements implement over recent years. This year's adaptation focused mainly on the compliance with Article 14 of the Covered Bond Directive, which has been transposed into the RJOC. With the HTT, issuers should be providing sufficiently detailed information, at least on a quarterly basis, to allow investors to assess the risk profile of the covered bonds programme, including at least a) the value of the cover pool and outstanding covered bonds; b) the list of ISINs of all covered bonds issued; c) a geographical distribution and type of cover assets, their loan size and valuation method; d) details in relation to market risk, including interest rate risk and currency risk, and credit and liquidity risks; e) the maturity structure of cover assets and covered bonds, including an overview of the maturity extension triggers if applicable; f) the levels of required and available coverage, and the levels of statutory, contractual and voluntary overcollateralisation; and g) the percentage of loans where a default is considered to have occurred or that are more than 90 days past due. The HTT's are typically published on a quarterly basis both on the issuer's institutional website and on the Covered Bond Label website[11].

VII. COVER POOL MONITOR AND BANKING SUPERVISION

Covered bonds issuers must appoint an independent auditor – the "cover pool monitor" – who acts in the best interests of the holders of covered bonds, both until and after an issuer insolvency event, and continuously verifies the quality of the cover pool and its compliance with applicable legislation, including asset eligibility criteria, derivatives, segregation, composition and homogeneity of the cover pool, as well as any intragroup and joint funding structure, hedging and liquidity requirements, and the information provided to investors.

The cover pool monitor is deemed independent if it (i) has not been the issuer's auditor during the two years preceding its designation as cover pool monitor, nor related with such entity or its network or any natural person in a position to influence the outcome of the audit of the cover pool, and (ii) is not closely associated with the issuing entity or in a position which could hinder the independence of its analysis or decision, in particular by having, or acting on behalf of holders of a qualified holding equal to or exceeding 5% of the share capital of the issuing credit institution, and (iii) has not acted as the cover pool monitor of the relevant covered bonds issue or covered bonds programme for ten consecutive years.

The RJOC allows the role of cover pool monitor to be carried on by an internal department of the issuer ("internal cover pool monitor") provided the internal covered pool monitor i) has no role and is independent from the credit decision-making process, ii) can only be removed by the management body in its supervisory function, and iii) has direct access to the management body in its supervisory function.

11 https://www.coveredbondlabel.com/issuers/national-information-detail/19/

The cover pool monitor shall prepare a report, both prior to the establishment of a covered bond programme, and annually with reference to 31st December, on the compliance with the legal and regulatory requirements referred above. The annual report is to be delivered to the CMVM by 31st March of each year.

Any irregularity detected by the cover pool monitor should be immediately and simultaneously reported to the CMVM and to the issuer, who must implement remedies. The cover pool monitor can only be dismissed for good cause (*justa causa*), and its dismissal must be properly justified and communicated to the CMVM within 10 days of its occurrence.

VIII. SEGREGATION OF COVER ASSETS AND BANKRUPTCY REMOTENESS OF COVERED BONDS

All cover assets (including any substitution assets and derivative contracts) shall be held by the issuer in separated accounts (the "cover register") and identified under a codified form. The legal effect of the cover register is the segregation of those assets from the insolvent estate of the issuer, forming a separate legal estate (the "cover pool") administered in favour of the holders of covered bonds and any other special claimant.

In addition to a common claim over the issuer, the holders of covered bonds benefit from a special preferential claim (*privilégio creditório*) over the cover pool for the redemption of principal and payment of interest. This preferential claim has precedence over that of any of the issuer's creditors, while mortgages that guarantee these credits prevail over any other real estate preferential claims. Portuguese covered bond legislation thus supersedes the national general bankruptcy regulation. This preferential claim is shared with the derivative counterparties whose contracts are part of the cover pool on a *pari passu* basis with bondholders. Consequently, their contracts are not expected to be called in case of insolvency of the originator.

In case of insolvency, dissolution or wind-up of the issuer ("insolvency event")[12], the RJOC establishes that the cover pool shall be segregated from the insolvency estate of the issuer and will not form part of it until full payment of any amounts due to the holders of covered bonds and derivative counterparties. Also, all amounts corresponding to payments under any assets in the cover pool will not form part of the insolvency estate of the issuer.

An insolvency event does not trigger an automatic acceleration of the covered bonds. However, the holders of covered bonds are entitled to pass a resolution approving the immediate acceleration of the covered bonds by a majority of at least two thirds of the votes of the holders of covered bonds then outstanding.

The CMVM shall work together with the Bank of Portugal to ensure protection of the best interest of the holders of covered bonds, including the management of the cover pool.

Upon an insolvency event, the CMVM appoints a cover pool special administrator who shall (i) autonomously manage the cover pool, including if necessary, the transfer of the cover pool, together with associated covered bond payment obligations, to another covered bond issuer and (ii) ensure payments of any amounts due to the holders of covered bonds.

The cover pool special administrator shall provide for the liquidation of the cover pool for the benefit of the holders of covered bonds and derivative contract counterparties, who will rank *pari passu* among themselves. If the liquidation proceeds of the cover assets prove to be insufficient to make up for all due and payable amounts, the holders of covered bonds and derivative counterparties will rank *pari passu* with issuer's senior creditors in relation to all other assets of the Issuer for the remaining due amounts. Remuneration of the cover pool special administrator is set by the CMVM and is paid out of cover pool funds or liquidation proceeds.

12 Under any applicable laws and regulations, including under Decree-Law No. 199/2006, Decree-Law No. 298/92, and/or (if applicable) under the Code for the Insolvency and Recovery of Companies introduced by Decree-Law No. 53/2004

IX. RISK-WEIGHTING & COMPLIANCE WITH EUROPEAN LEGISLATION

The legal requirements, when taken together with the practices, processes and procedures across the industry should comply with criteria of Article 129 CRR. Credit institutions investing in Portuguese covered bonds qualifying under Article 129 can apply the risk weighting resulting from the application of paragraphs (4) and (5). The risk-weighting of derivatives included in the cover pool will be 20%. In accordance with the Decree-law no. 27/2023 of 28 April, which approves the asset management regime, investment funds can invest their own funds up to a maximum of 25% in a single issuer's covered bonds.

X. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The Portuguese covered bond market is predominantly backed by residential mortgages, with the sole exception being BPI's EUR 600 million public-sector loan-backed programme. At the time of writing, all programmes have 12-month soft bullet maturities, after Banco Montepio became the latest issuer to revert their conditional pass-through ("CPT") covered bond programme back to a 12-month soft bullet maturity, in May 2025, following a similar move by Novo Banco, back in 2023.

Despite the national banking sector's generally comfortable liquidity position – largely due to the still relatively accommodative ECB monetary policy, compounded by the ongoing requirement to maintain MREL-eligible instrument levels – 2024 began strongly and continued the steady market comeback of Portuguese covered bond issuers from the previous year. The year started with public deals, the first being Banco Santander Totta's seven-year EUR 1 billion issuance in February. This was followed shortly after by Banco BPI's six-year EUR 500 million deal and Novo Banco's EUR 500 million three-year deal, which closed on March 1st.

In addition to its public deal, Banco BPI privately placed EUR 300 million and EUR 1.8 billion in June and December, respectively, fully offsetting the maturities of three covered bonds in February, March, and December. Banco Santander's public deal prefunded their EUR 1 billion maturity in April. During the first half of the year, they also completed private placements of EUR 11.9 million, EUR 49.6 million, and EUR 1 billion. Banco Montepio had EUR 1.05 billion worth of covered bonds maturing over the course of the year, with no new issuances.

Altogether, this accounted for a EUR 512 million net increase in covered bonds outstanding to EUR 40.1 billion.

Issuers: NOVO BANCO, S.A., Banco BPI, S.A., Banco Comercial Português, S.A., Banco Santander Totta, S.A., Caixa Económica Montepio Geral, Caixa Geral Depósitos, S.A.

ECBC Covered Bond Comparative Database:
https://www.ecbc.eu/framework/39/Mortgage_CB_%28Obriga%C3%A7%C3%B5es_Hipotec%C3%A1rias%29
https://www.ecbc.eu/framework/38/Public_Sector_CB_%28Obriga%C3%A7%C3%B5es_sobre_o_Sector_P%C3%BAblico%29

COVERED BOND LABEL : NOVO BANCO, S.A. (1 pool), Banco BPI, S.A. (1 pool), Banco Comercial Português, S.A. (1 pool), Banco Santander Totta, S.A. (1 pool), Caixa Económica Montepio Geral (1 pool).

For the most up-to-date information, please consult the new ECBC Covered Bond Comparative Database webpage on the Covered Bond Label website www.coveredbondlabel.com or via the following QR code:

3.33 ROMANIA

By Nicoleta Ruxandescu, Alpha Bank Romania

I. FRAMEWORK

The Romanian Covered Bond Legislation has been updated during 2022 in line with the EU Covered Bond Directive. The former Law 304/2015 was repealed and replaced by Law 233/2022 ("CB Law") accompanied by a new covered bond regulation issued by the National Bank of Romania ("NBR"), i.e. Regulation 10/2022 ("CB Regulation").

Alpha Bank opened the covered bond market in Romania in April 2019 when it established its EUR 1bn Global Covered Bond Programme. The first issuance of EUR 200mn took place on May 16th, 2019 and the bonds were listed on the Luxembourg Stock Exchange and the Bucharest Stock Exchange.

II. STRUCTURE OF THE ISSUER

The issuer can only be a credit institution, as defined by the Regulation (EU) No 575/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 June 2013 on prudential requirements for credit institutions and investment firms ("CRR"), which falls under one of the following categories provided for in the Government Emergency Ordinance no. 99/2006 on Credit Institutions and Capital Adequacy, approved with amendments and supplements by Law. No. 227/2007, as amended and supplemented:

- banks,
- credit co-operative organisations, except for credit co-operatives, and
- mortgage banks.

The issuer must obtain approval from the National Bank of Romania on the covered bond programme.

The issuer holds the assets on its balance sheet. A direct legal link between single cover assets and covered bonds does not exist. All obligations from bonds are obligations of the issuing bank as a whole. In the event of insolvency, the cover pool is segregated by law from the general insolvency estate and is reserved for the claims of bondholders.

The covered bonds are direct and unconditional obligations of the issuer. The claims of the holders of covered bonds are secured by a first rank security over the cover assets, which are segregated from the rest of the issuing bank's patrimony, in case of bankruptcy. Eligible cover assets liquid assets and financial derivatives are structured by the issuer in cover pools depending on the cover bond labels used for classification (see section III below).

The law imposes asset encumbrance limits: the total value of the cover pool cannot exceed certain thresholds of the issuer's total assets, i.e. 10%, 15% or 20%, depending on the metrics defined by the National Bank of Romania, such as capital, liquidity, asset quality, LTD.

III. COVER ASSETS

As per the new CB Law, covered bonds can be issued under two labels: European Covered Bonds or European Covered Bonds (Premium).

The The cover pool can include the following asset categories: residential mortgage loans, commercial mortgage loans, exposures to or guaranteed by the public sector, exposures to EU credit institutions, either compliant with art. 129 (1) a), c), d) and f) of CRR or considered to be of high quality as per the conditions set out in the CB legal framework and the CB Directive.

The primary cover assets must account for at least 70% of the accounting value of the cover pool and composition and some of the eligibility criteria differ between the two labels.

The geographical scope of cover assets is restricted to the European Union and the European Economic Area.

The issuer can include in the cover pool, apart from the categories described above, financial derivatives, subject to certain conditions set out in the CB Law. Derivatives can be included in the cover pool only for the purpose of hedging interest rate risk and foreign currency risk. Financial derivatives may be included in the cover pool only if the agreements related thereto do not contain a clause according to which the bankruptcy or the resolution of the issuer is deemed to be a termination event.

The CB legislation stipulates that the cover pool is dynamic. The replacement/supplementation of the mortgage loans included in the cover pool is compulsory when certain mortgage loans no longer comply with the eligibility criteria, the weighted average maturity of the mortgage loans included in the cover pool decreases below the weighted average maturity of the corresponding covered bonds, or the value of the cover pool declines below the thresholds provided by the CB legislation.

The value of the residential mortgage loans included in the cover pool cannot exceed 80% of the value of the issuer's total residential mortgage loans that are eligible for the cover pool. For commercial loans this ratio is 60%.

The CB Law permits Intragroup pooled covered bond structures whereby internally issued covered bonds by a credit institution can be used as cover assets for the external issue of covered bonds by another credit institution that belongs to the same group, if certain conditions are met.

IV. VALUATION AND LTV CRITERIA

Property valuation is regulated and is required to be undertaken by an authorised real estate appraiser. Details about the valuation process and the qualifications of evaluators are regulated by the Romanian Association of Evaluators (ANEVAR).

Re-evaluation of immovable properties securing mortgage loans included in the cover pool is made in accordance with art. 208 par. (3) of the Regulation (EU) no. 575/2013 and, for assets collateralizing European Covered Bonds (Premium), with art 129 of CRR as amended by Regulation (EU) 2019/2160.

In order to be eligible for inclusion in the cover pool, the mortgage loans collateralizing the Premium label bonds must have an LTV in line with art 129 of CRR (up to 80%/60% residential/commercial), while for European covered bonds the LTV at origination of the loan must be max. 85%/70% residential/commercial.

V. ASSET – LIABILITY MANAGEMENT

The CB legislation stipulates an asset coverage test, an overcollateralisation test, and a liquidity coverage test. Under the asset coverage test, the value of the cover pool must at all times exceed the value of all liabilities of the covered bonds, i.e. principal and interest of the bonds, payment obligations attached to derivatives and winding down costs of the covered bond programme. In calculating the value of the cover pool, the value of mortgage loans will be the lower of: the accounting value of that loan; the value of the principal of that mortgage together with any previous mortgage rights; and the value of the mortgaged property weighted with 80%/60% residential/commercial.

Under the overcollateralisation test, the net present value of the outstanding assets must exceed at all times 105% of the net present value of all bond-related liabilities. The overcollateralisation test is calculated under certain stress scenarios as well, where the net present value of assets must be at least 100% of the net present value of liabilities. The stress tests include: yield curve shifts (+/-) by 350 basis points, shocking the EUR-RON exchange rate (+/-) by 35.5%, stressing the level of payment patterns based on historical pre-payment rates

for cover assets, taking into account a decrease in real estate prices and the loss given default in real estate enforcements.

Under the liquidity coverage test the issuer must calculate on a daily basis the liquidity deficit over the following 180 days and cover it with liquid assets eligible for liquidity operations with NBR, which constitute a liquidity buffer.

In terms of extendable maturity, the CB Law does not allow the issuance of covered bonds with such structures.

VI. TRANSPARENCY

Issuers shall prepare and publish on their own websites quarterly reports as regards inter alia the risks related to the cover pool, the total volume of the issued covered bonds, the structure of the cover pool and compliance with coverage requirements.

In addition, the issuer shall make available on its website updated information from the cover pool registry, for each asset included in the cover pool, and update it regularly.

VII. COVER POOL MONITOR AND BANKING SUPERVISION

Under the CB legislation, the activity of a covered bond issuer is supervised by the NBR.

It is a mandatory pre-requisite for a Romanian issuer to appoint an external cover pool monitor (in Romanian it is called "agent"). The cover pool monitor must be an auditor, independent of the issuer and authorised by the National Bank of Romania. There are extensive rules set out in the legislation in respect to the qualifications of the cover pool monitor.

The agent's main role is to monitor the cover pool, to certify the issuer's reports to NBR and investors and to report its findings on the observance of the legal requirements and prospectus to the national bank. Its monitoring obligations shall be performed regularly, based on the documentation provided by the issuer.

VIII. SEGREGATION OF COVER ASSETS AND BANKRUPTCY REMOTENESS OF COVERED BONDS

The issuer has the obligation to keep an internal cover pool register, which allows for the identification of the cover assets. Registration in the cover register reflects the structure and dynamic of the portfolio at any time throughout the life of the issue. For each label, the cover register shall have separate sections for each category of assets included in the cover pool, i.e. primary assets, substitution assets, liquid assets, and derivatives. For each loan in the cover pool, the registry shall include at least the identification number and the value of the amount borrowed plus the interest to be received throughout the life of the loan, calculated at the origination date. The cover register is kept by the issuer and is subject to regular verifications by the agent.

Pursuant to the CB legislation, the issuer is required to create a movable mortgage over the cover pool assets. The movable mortgage will be registered with the National Register in the name of the asset monitor, but on behalf of the covered bondholders, prior to the offering of the covered bonds for subscription, by means of a global registration form. The movable mortgage will be transferred in the name of the covered bondholders' representative should it be appointed.

Asset segregation

By registration of the movable mortgage over the cover assets and the entry into the internal cover register of the assets included in the cover pool, such assets are segregated from the other assets of the issuer.

In order to fulfil all the obligations of the issuer towards bondholders under the CB legislation the cover pool securing the covered bonds represents a distinct estate, separate from the estate of the issuer including in case of bankruptcy or resolution of the issuer.

According to the CB legislation, no other creditor of the issuer may initiate enforcement procedures in relation to the cover pool or any part thereof before the covered bondholders, while in case of bankruptcy or resolution of the issuer, the cover pool shall not be part of the general estate of the Issuer until bondholders' claims are fully satisfied.

Acceleration

In case of an event of default under the cover bonds programme, bondholders have the right, upon approval by bondholders' meeting, to request to the issuer the acceleration of covered bond payments and, in this respect, the assignment of cover pool receivables to another credit institution or legal entity authorized in accordance with the law to perform lending activities.

The distribution of the amounts resulted from the assignment of receivables shall be made in the following order of preference:

> receivables resulting from the holding of mortgage bonds, pro rata, irrespective of the seniority and maturity of the covered bonds issue and receivables held by counterparties under the agreements underlying the financial derivatives included in the cover pool;

> receivables under financing arrangements granted to the issuer with the view to covering the temporary liquidity deficit;

> receivables of the issuer's creditors not paid in full upon the temporary closing of the bankruptcy proceedings.

Resolution and bankruptcy

The initiation of resolution of the issuer does not automatically trigger acceleration.

In case of bankruptcy, the cover pool is not affected by the liquidation procedure of bank's assets and any sale-purchase agreements concluded in breach of these legal provisions are null and void by law. Bondholders will continue to receive the amounts they are entitled to (principal and interest) within the deadlines provided by the prospectus/offering document.

The cover pool will continue to be managed by the liquidator (in Romanian "*lichidator judiciar*") for the purpose of reimbursing the amounts owed to the covered bondholders.

Dual recourse

Pursuant to the movable mortgage, the covered bondholders and the counterparties of the derivatives contracts included in the cover pool are entitled to a) a claim against the cover pool; (b) in the case of the insolvency or resolution of the credit institution issuing the covered bonds, a priority claim against the principal and any accrued and future interest on cover assets; (c) in the case of the insolvency of the credit institution issuing the covered bonds and in the event that the priority claim as referred to in point (b) cannot be fully satisfied, a claim against the insolvency estate of that credit institution, which ranks pari passu with the claims of the credit institution's ordinary unsecured creditors determined in accordance with art 234 of Romanian Insolvency Law.

IX. RISK-WEIGHTING & COMPLIANCE WITH EUROPEAN LEGISLATION

The legislation creates the framework for covered bonds to be eligible for preferential treatment in compliance with art. 129 of the CRR.[1] and art 52 (4) of UCITS Directive.

Issuers: Alpha Bank Romania.

1 Please click on the following link for further information on the UCITS Directive and the Capital Requirements Regulation (CRR): https://hypo.org/ecbc/covered-bonds/.

For the most up-to-date information, please consult the new ECBC Covered Bond Comparative Database webpage on the Covered Bond Label website www.coveredbondlabel.com or via the following QR code:

3.34 RUSSIA

By Tim Lassen, vdp, Berlin

I. FRAMEWORK

This article will give an overview over the current Russian legal framework for mortgage obligations. Legal basis is the Law on Mortgage Securities[1]. This law is supported by rules in the Mortgage Law, the Bankruptcy Law, and the Securities Market Law.[2]

In addition the Central Bank of the Russian Federation (CBRF) issued the instruction "On mandatory standarts and additives"[3] and the regulation "On securities issuance standarts"[4]. The former Federal Financial Markets Service (FSFR) released:

- The Mortgage Cover Determination Order[5],
- A joint order containing (i) the Special Depositor Decree and (ii) the Register Maintenance Rules[6] and
- The Mortgage Cover Administrator[7].

Further rules are in general regulations of the CBRF in its role as regulator of the financial market[8].

Rules of the Civil code of the Russian Federation regarding security for execution of claims shall apply only with regard to the rules of the Law on Mortgage Securities (Art. 11, sec. 1, para. 2).

II. STRUCTURE OF THE ISSUER OF COVERED BONDS

The Russian Law on Mortgage Securities foresees two types of "mortgage obligations"[9] (Art. 7, sec. 1[10]): obligations[11] issued (i) by a credit organisation (covered bonds) or (ii) by a SPV ("mortgage agent") (MBS)[12].

Obviously the mortgage obligations issued by credit organisations, are oriented on the European covered bond model, those mortgage obligations issued by SPVs on the MBS model.[13]

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1 Federal law dated 11 November 2003 No 152-FZ "On Mortgage Securities", latest amendments: Federal law dated 20 October 2022 No. 409-FZ (SZ RF, 24.10.2022, no. 43, item 7272).

2 The legal environment, in comparison to other countries and to the MBS model is described in Lassen, Tim: Banking mortgage securities (Covered Bonds) in Russia and abroad (Bankovskiye ipotechnye tsennye bumagi (Covered Bonds) v Rossii i za rubezhom); Statut Publishers, Moscow 2019. Pledge backed securites have a long history in Russia, going back to the early modern ages: Rybalov, A. O.: Oborot zakladnych kabal v russkom prave XVI v. (Turnover of Pledge Prescriptions in Russian law in the 16th Century); Herald (Vestnik) of Civil Law, no. 3 2008 volume 8; p. 90 – 106. See also: Encyclopedia of Russian Securitization 2024; 11th ed. 2024.

3 Dated 29 November 2019 No. 199-I "On mandatory standarts and additives to the standarts of capital accuracy of banks with a universal license"; registered with the Ministry of Justice 27.12.2019 no. 57008, published: Herald (Vestnik) of the Bank of Russia, No. 11 - 12, 30.01.2020, in force since 01 April 2011; latest amendment 06 June 2023 by Order 6436-U (Instruction CBRF No. 199-I).

4 Dated 19 December 2019 No. 706-P, registered with the Ministry of Justice 21 April 2020 No. 58158; published: Herald (Vestnik) of the Bank of Russia, No. 37-38, 26.05.2020; latest amendment 04 March 2024 by Order 6686-U (Regulation CBRF No. 706-P).

5 Order dated on 1 November 2005 No 05-59/pz-n "On confirmation of the Decree on the method of determination of the mortgage cover".

6 Order dated 01 November 2005 No 05-60/pz-n "On confirmation of the Decree on the activity of the special depositar for the mortgage cover and the Rules of the maintenance of the register of the mortgage cover".

7 Order dated 15 December 2009 No 09-57/pz-n "On confirmation of the Decree on data reporting of the administrator of the mortgage cover and the Decree on data reporting of the specialised depositor of the mortgage cover".

8 See ECBC Fact Book 2017, p. 437, footnote 6.

9 Language of the Law: "Obligations with mortgage cover".

10 Law citations without link are citations of the Law on Mortgage Securities.

11 "Housing mortgage obligations" are a special type of mortgage obligations (in Russian *zhilishchnaya obligatsiya s ipotechnym pokrytiem*): Their cover pool consists only of claims, secured by mortgages over housing premises (Art. 3 sec. 5). "Mortgage obligations secured by a pledge of rights of claim of a participant in shared construction" (*obligatsiya s ipotechnym pokrytiem, obespechennoy zalogom prav trebovaniya uchastnika dolevogo stroitel'stva*) are secured by a pledge over a contract for participation in shared construction that meets the requirements of Federal Law of 30 December 2004 no. 214-FZ (art. 3 sec 3.1).

12 Another mortgage security under the Law is the "mortgage participation certificate" (Art. 17 – 31), an instrument similar to investment fund certificates. Due to their different structure in this article we will not look after them. By Law No. 418 (see footnote 1) the possibility to issue new "mortgage participation certificates" has been abolished.

13 Cover rules for Covered Bonds and MBS are nearly the same. The issuing SPVs ("mortgage agents", art. 8) are described in detail in the ECBC Fact Book 2011, p. 413 and 2015, p. 393. Mortgage agents and commercial organisations, acting as their administrative organs, under the rules of anti-monopoly legialstion are not regarded as members of one group (Art. 8, sec. 3 para. 8). A mirroring rule had been introduced into Art. 15.2, no. 13 of the Securities Market Law.

For new issues (new series of issues) new cover pools need to be set up. The cover pool for every issue can be modified in cases, stipulated by the law, to ensure that there is always enough cover for the outstanding mortgage securities.

Credit organisations (Art. 7, sec. 2)

A credit organisation has to comply with the Banking Law and the rules, set up by the Central Bank for credit organisations. If the credit organisation does not fulfil the statutory requirements, the licence can be revoked (Art. 20, sent. 1, no 10 of the Banking Law).

The CBRF has set up a regulation[14] for the minimal ratio between the volume of the cover pool and the volume of the issued mortgage obligations (N18): 100 % (pt. 10.1 of the Instruction CBRF No. 199-I).

For credit organisations the excess amount (overcollateralization) of the cover pool shall not be more than 20% (Art. 13, para. 3, sec. 2).[15]

Protection of terms

Due to Art. 6, the words "obligation with mortgage cover" (in Russian obligatsiya s ipotechnym pokrytiem), mortgage participation certificate (*ipotechnyj sertifikat uchastiya*), mortgage cover (ipotechnoe pokrytie), mortgage agent (ipotechnyj agent) and "mortgage specialized organisation" (*ipotechnaya spezializirovannaya organisatsiya*)[16] may be used only for the purposes of the Law on Mortgage Securities.

III. COVER ASSETS

Eligible assets under the Russian Law on Mortgage Securities are mortgage secured claims under a loan or credit agreement, including interest (art. 3 sec. 1) or pledged claim rights of a participant in shared construction[17] (art. 3 sec 3.1 and 7)[18].

Eligible are also money in Russian and foreign currency, state bonds and real estate[19] (art. 3 sec. 1). Law 409-FZ dated 20.10.2022 introduced money claimes to monies on pleged accounts as cover asset.[20]

Requirements for eligible mortgage secured claims are:

- The mortgage shall content a prohibition on sale of the mortgaged property by the mortgagor without consent of the mortgagee (art. 3 sec. 2 pt. 2).
- The property has to be insured to the benefit of the mortgagee for the whole term of the loan to an amount not less than the mortgage secured claim (art. 3 sec. 2 pt. 3).
- The share of mortgage secured construction claims is limited to 10% of the cover pool (art. 3 sec. 3 para. 3). For housing mortgage obligations, mortgage secured construction claims are not eligible (art. 3 sec. 3 para. 1 sent. 2).
- Claims, secured by a second ranking mortgage are eligible, as far as they do not exceed the LTV limit of 70% (art. 3 sec. 3 para. 2).

14 On the bases of Art. 7, sec. 2.

15 For different banking licences, see: ECBC Fact Book 2023, p. 422, fn. 15.

16 "Mortgage specialized organization" is another allowed name for "mortgage agent" (Art. 8, sec. 1, para. 5).

17 Arising from a contract for participation in shared construction that meets the requirements of Federal Law of 30 December 2004 no. 214-FZ "On participation in shared construction of apartment buildings and other real estate and on amendments to some legislative acts of the Russian Federation". Introduced into the Law on Mortgage Securities by Art. 1 of the Federal law dated 02 August 2019 No. 261-FZ.

18 For details to "pledged claim rights" see: ECBC Fact Book 2023, p. 422, fn. 18.

19 Claimes from contracts of participation and real estate are only eligible for cover, if they have been obtained in mortgage or pledge foreclosure (Art. 13, sec. 1, para. 3).

20 Forn details please refer to ECBC Fact Book 2023, p. 423, fn. 20.

> In the moment of distribution (razmeshcheniye) or delivery (vydacha) of the mortgage obligations the cover cannot sustain of mortgage secured claims, pledged to secure other obligations (art. 3 sec. 3 para. 1).

One asset may only be used for one cover pool (art. 3 sec. 5).

Regarding detailed rules for "mortgage holiday" and "change of mortgage object during renovation", please refer to: ECBC Fact Book 2023, p. 423.

IV. VALUATION AND LTV CRITERIA

Due to art. 3 sec. 2 para. 2, the LTV limit is 80% of the market value of the property. If a second ranking mortgage is used for cover, the LTV limit is 70%[21] of the market value (art. 3 sec. 3 para. 2). In both cases, the valuation has to be made by an independent valuer[22].

The Law does not contain special regulations on valuation for the purpose of mortgage securities.

V. ASSET-LIABILITY MANAGEMENT

Art. 3, sec. 4 stipulates that the amount of the cover is defined by summing up the mortgage secured claims, amount of money in the cover and value of other assets. Details are set up by the FSFR in the Mortgage Cover Determination Order.

The following claims shall not be encountered by summing up the mortgage cover:

> No payment made on the claim for more than six month;

> Loss of the mortgage object, including if the mortgage was declared void by a court;

> Secured obligation declared void by a court;

> Bankruptcy of the debtor; and,

> No insurance of the mortgage object for more than 6 month.

> The cover asset does not fit to the general rules for eligible claims; cover assets can be replaced by other assets (art. 14 sec. 1; art. 3 sec. 2 and 4).

For proper performance of the obligations under the covered bonds[23] the amount of the cover pool for the whole maturity of the bonds shall not be lower than the aggregate outstanding nominal value of the bonds (art. 13 sec. 2 para. 2 sent. 1).

One cover pool can secure two or more tranches of mortgage obligations (art. 11 sec. 2 para. 1; art. 13 sec. 2). In this case the rules on calculation of the necessary cover for one tranche apply similarly (art. 11 sec. 2 para. 1). For details please refer to ECBC Fact Book 2023, p. 424.

Money received from the repayment of the mortgage secured claims has to be included into the cover pool as far as this is necessary to fulfil the legal stipulations on the volume of the cover pool (Art. 13, sec. 4). Only at the moment of formation of the cover pool, it has to sustain for 100% of mortgage loans. After issuing the bonds, due to amortisation of the cover pool, this share will reduce. To avoid the consequence of necessary prepayment of the issue, and the risk that potential new cover mortgage loans will not fit to the parameters, the money from regular repayments of the mortgages has to be included into the cover pool.[24]

The mortgage securities' holders have the right to claim for prepayment of the mortgage securities some cases (art. 16 sec. 1), e. g.: Breach of the rules regarding:

21 Including the first ranking mortgage.
22 The valuers' profession and independence of the valuer is regulated in the Valuation law.
23 In Russian "nadlezhashchoe ispolnenie obyazatel'stv po obligatsiyam s ipotechnym pokrytiem".
24 See pt. 5 Explanatory Memorandum of the authors of the draft dated 19 August 2011.

- > Volume of the cover pool;
- > Proper fulfilment of obligations under the mortgage securities;

For further details please refer to ECBC Fact Book 2023, p. 424, 425.

VI. TRANSPARENCY

The Law on Mortgage Securities stipulates a wide range of publishing information on the mortgage obligations by the issuer (Art. 37 – 41). In addition to the main rules according to the Securities Market Law (Art. 37, para. 1; Art. 40, sec. 1), important information is an accounting report on performance of the cover assets (Art. 40, sec. 4, para. 2). Credit organisations issuing mortgage obligations have special reporting duties to the Central Bank (Art. 7, sec. 1, para. 3; pt. 3.1 – 3.5 of the Mortgage Cover Mandatory Requirements Instruction).

Main points for publishing information are:

- > If the mortgage obligations are rated by a rating agency, this rating has to be published (Art. 37, para. 2).[25]
- > Interested persons have the right to get knowledge of the cover register (Art. 39, para. 1).
- > The regulator set up further special rules for mortgage obligation issuers in the general regulations on disclosure of information[26].

VII. COVER POOL MONITOR, COVER REGISTER AND BANKING SUPERVISION

Cover pool monitor

The cover pool is controlled by a cover pool monitor (the "specialized depositor of the mortgage cover"[27]), Art. 33, sec. 1. The cover pool monitor has to be a commercial organisation[28], licensed for (i) activity as special depositor for investment funds, share investment funds and non-state pension funds as well as for (ii) performance of depositary activities on the securities' market (Art. 32, para. 2). The FSFR has published the Special Depositor Decree.[29]

The duties and tasks of the cover pool monitor are described in the ECBC Fact Book 2012, pp. 418 – 419.

Cover register

Cover assets have to be registered in a "register of mortgage cover"[30] (Art. 5). The FSFR has adopted Register Maintenance Rules[31].

Details are described in the ECBC Fact Book 2012, pp. 419 – 420.

Supervision

Since 2013 the whole financial and banking system is supervised by the Central Bank of the Russian Federation.

Concerning mortgage securities the state regulation of issuing mortgage securities (Art. 42 – 46) as well as the supervision of banks, issuing mortgage securities, is done by the Central Bank (Art. 7, sec. 2).

Issuing of mortgage obligations

For details of this process see ECBC Fact Book 2012, pp. 420 – 421.

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25 Regarding ratings see: Decision of the Council of Directors of the Central Bank dated 23.12.2021.

26 Statute on Dislcosure of Information by the Issuers of Issuing Securities (Bank of Russia, 27.03.2020, No. 714-P) (registered by the Ministry of Justice, 24.04.2020, No. 58203; published: Herald (Vestnik) of the Central Bank, No. 39-40, 27.05.2020). Special rules for mortgage securities are foreseen in chapter 36, Section IX (chapter 66 – 68), Annex 2 pt. 7.4.3.4 and 9.6, Annex 3 pt. 4.3.1.

27 In Russian "spetsializirovannyj depozitariy ipotechnogo pokrytiya".

28 Not affiliated with the issuer (Art. 33, sec. 3, para. 2).

29 In the letter „On procedure of work of the specialized depositor" dated 30.08.2017 no. 54-2-3-5/1943 the CBRF gave some explanations regarding the duties of the cover pool monitors.

30 In Russian "reestr ipotechnogo pokrytiya".

31 The cover register contains information on the mortgage claims on the loan-level basis (Art. 5).

For issuing securities, Russian law foresees a five step process[32]: (i) Taking the decision on issue, (ii) approval of the decision, (iii) state registration of issue, (iv) placement of securities and (v) state registration of the report or notification on results of the issue. For these general steps, the CBRF has set up special requirements for the issue of mortgage securities.[33]

If in the decision on issue of mortgage securities an issuing program is foreseen, the law stipulates several rules regarding content of this program (Art. 12 para 3.2). For more details please refer to ECBC Fact Book 2023, p. 426.

Covered bonds can be issued only as uncertificated securities (Art. 16 sec. 2 Securities Market Law).

VIII. SEGREGATION OF COVER ASSETS AND BANKRUPTCY REMOTENESS OF MORTGAGE OBLIGATIONS

The claims of the mortgage securities' holders are secured by a pledge over the cover pool (Art. 11, sec. 1, para. 1).

Asset segregation

In case of bankruptcy the cover pool is excluded from the bankruptcy estate of the issuer (Art. 16.1, para. 1 of the Law on Mortgage Securities; Art. 131, sec. 2, para. 3; Art 189.91, sec. 2 para 1, sec 4 of the Bankruptcy Law).

The insolvency administrator is obliged to open two special bank accounts for the cover pool to collect[34] the money paid on the mortgage secured claims or received during the bankruptcy procedure or from realisation of these claims and to make payments to the mortgage obligations' holders (art. 133 sec. 4 of the Bankruptcy Law).

A special administrator of the cover pool, different from the insolvency administrator of the general bankruptcy estate is not foreseen.[35]

Impact of insolvency proceedings on mortgage obligations

The Law on Mortgage Securities stipulates two possibilities of realisation of the cover pool in case of bankruptcy of the issuer (art 16.1, para. 2):

- Change of the issuer ("zamena ėmitenta obligaciy s ipotechnym pokrytiem"): The cover pool will be sold with the obligation for the buyer to fulfil all conditions of the decision on issuing the mortgage obligations. Details have to be stipulated by a federal law. This federal law has not been enacted yet.
- Selling of the cover pool ("prodazha ipotechnogo pokrytiya"): The cover pool assets will be sold and the money received will be distributed among the mortgage obligations' holders. The mortgage obligations accelerate.[36]

For rules for the change of the issuer see: ECBC Fact Book 2023, p. 427.

Preferential treatment of mortgage obligations' holders

Mortgage obligations' holders enjoy preferential treatment as the Russian law stipulates the separation of the cover pool from the general insolvency estate of the issuer (Art. 16.1, para. 1).

32 Art. 19 Securities' Market Law. Pt. 1.2 of CBRF Regulation "On standarts of issuing securities" (dated 19.12.2019, no. 706-P; Bulletin of the CBRF No. 37-38, dated 26 May 2020; reg. Ministry of Justice 21 April 2020, no. 58158).

33 Special rules for mortgage securities are foreseen in pt. 21.9; 52.2 sec. 2; sub-sec. V.9 of Regulation CBRF No. 706-P.

34 If the bankrutcy debtor is a mortgage agent, the "pledge account" shall be used a special accout to collect the money payments on the cover assets (Art. 133, sec. 4, last para Bankruptcy law).

35 Due to art. 16.2, sec. 3, para. 3 and 4 in case if one (or severeal) bond holders' representatives are appointed for the covered bonds secured by one cover pool (for several tranches secured by one cover pool) the bankrupcy receiver will transfer the money to a special account of the representative. The representative will distribute the money among the the bond holders. Regarding the bond holders' representative, see ECBC Fact Book 2014, p. 395, footnote 28. Some details regarding beginning of office of the representative have been clearified by the CBRF in the Information letter dated 10.10.2018 no. IN-06-28/65 (published Herald (Vestnik) of the Central Bank, no. 78, 17.10.2018).

36 Moody's assigned a timely payment indicator (TPI) of "Very Improbable", as covered bonds under Russian law accelerate, if the issuer becomes insolvent. Due to Moody's the Law on Mortgage Securities offers limited support for timely payment to the covered bond holders, after issuer default (Moody's Investors Service: Pre-Sale Report: DeltaCredit Bank Mortgage Covered Bonds, 20 November 2012 and 19 July 2013, in both reports p. 2).

In case they are not satisfied in the realisation of the cover pool, the mortgage obligations' holders may ask for satisfaction from the general bankruptcy estate of the issuer (Art. 16.1, sec. 1 para. 3).

They are also enjoying a preferential treatment against deposit holders, as the cover pool – securing mortgage obligations – is excluded from the general bankruptcy estate, which in turn secures depositors on preferential bases[37].

For details to access to liquidity in case of insolvency and sale and transfer of mortgage assets to other issuers, see ECBC Fact Book 2012, p. 423.

Enforcement into the cover pool

Russian Covered Bond Law allows for enforcement of the covered bond holders into the cover pool (Art. 15). The general realisation rules of the Mortgage Law will apply. In case of different issues with different ranking, the ranking has to be kept in distribution of the receipts (Art. 15, sec. 3).

For details please refer to ECBC Fact Book 2023, p. 427.

IX. RISK-WEIGHTING & COMPLIANCE WITH EUROPEAN LEGISLATION; ECBC LABEL CONVENTION

For details please refer to ECBC Fact Book 2023, p. 428.

X. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Investment regulations

The EU investment regulations for mortgage obligations are not transferred into Russian law. Nevertheless, different investment rules and privileges for mortgage securities do exist. E. g. in 2017 the Central Bank has set up new rules for investing pension deposits of non-state pension funds in different asset classes.[38]

For the most up-to-date information, please consult the new ECBC Covered Bond Comparative Database webpage on the Covered Bond Label website www.coveredbondlabel.com or via the following QR code:

37 See the Explanatory Memorandum of the authors dated 01 February 2011, the Official Opinion of the Government of the Russian Federation dated 6 July 2011 and the Conclusions of the Financial Markets' Committee of the State Duma as of 20 September 2011 and 24 January 2012 to draft law no 495103-5 (enacted as Federal law dated 25 June 2012 No 83-FZ).

38 Pt. 1.1.2 of Statute approved by the Central Bank on 01.03.2017 No. 580-P (published: Herald (Vestnik) of the Central Bank, No. 56, 10.07.2017, here fol- lowing: Statute CBRF No. 580-P). See pt. 1.1.2. of Statute CBRF No. 580-P

> Figure 1: Overview over the issues of bank mortgage obligations (covered bonds)[39]

	Date of issue	Issuer	Tranches	Volume[40]		Interest rate	Maturity
				RUB	EUR		
1	21.09.2011	VTB 24		5,000.0	116.5		26.11.2043
			A	3,333.3	77.7	9.00%	
			B	1,666.7	38.8	3.00%	
2	14.09.2012	VTB 24		6,000.0	147.9		
			A	4,000.0	98.6	9.00%	15.09.2044
			B	2,000.0	49.3	3.00%	15.09.2044
3	23.05.2013	VTB 24		6,000.0	148.7		01.09.2044
			A	4,000.0	99.2	9.00%	
			B	2,000.0	49.6	3.00%	
4	18.12.2013	VTB 24		12,300.0	271.7		18.09.2046
			A	8,200.0	181.2	9.00%	
			B	4,100.0	90.6	3.00%	
5	25.06.2014	VTB 24		6,000.0	129.8		14.08.2043
			A	4,000.0	86.5	9.00%	
			B	2,000.0	43.3	3.00%	
6	10.12.2014	Gazprombank		7,000.0	104.7		27.04.2048
			A	4,666.7	69.8	9.00%	
			B	2,333.3	34.9	3.00%	
7	10.12.2014	VTB 24		5,800.0	86.7		06.12.2044
			A	3,800.0	56.8	9.00%	
			B	2,000.0	29.9	3.00%	
Total outstanding				**48,100.0**	**1,6.1**		
							Date of redemption
1	16.12.2009	VTB 24		15,000.0	341.3	9.70%	10.12.2014
2	11.10.2007	MIA		2,000.0	56.7	12.50%	01.10.2015
3	12.02.2015	Investtorgbank		2,500.0	33.4	15.35%	12.02.2020
4	14.09.2011	Unicreditbank		5,000.0	121.3	8.20%	07.09.2016
5	02.04.2013	DeltaCredit		5,000.0	125.6	8.50%	02.04.2016
6	09.11.2011	DeltaCredit		5,000.0	119.2	8.33%	02.11.2016
7	11.12.2012	DeltaCredit		5,000.0	125.5	9.15%	05.12.2017
8	04.02.2015	DeltaCredit		5,000.0	65.1	8.50%	04.02.2018
9	10.07.2013	DeltaCredit		5,000.0	117.3	8.65%	04.07.2018
10	05.09.2013	DeltaCredit		5,000.0	113.4	8.45%	30.08.2018
11	30.03.2016	DeltaCredit		5,000.0	65.1	10.57%	30.03.2019
12	23.09.2015	Unicredit		4,000,0	54.1	12,25%	16.09.2020
13	26.02.2016	Gazprombank		15,000,0	178.1	10,90%	19.02.2021
14	24.11.2016	DeltaCredit		7,000,0	102.9	10,29%	24.11.2021
15	28.12.2017	DeltaCredit		7,000,0	100.7	7,82%	28.12.2022
16	27.03.2014	DeltaCredit[41]		5,000.0	102.1	12.00%	27.03.2024
17	01.10.2014	DeltaCredit		7,000,0	140.1	11.1%	01.10.2024
18	10.10.2014	DeltaCredit		5,000.0	98.1	11.92%	10.10.2024
Total redeemed				**109,500.0**	**2,060,0**		
Total issued				**157,600.0**	**3,066.1**		

39 Details of the issues can be found on www.cbonds.info and Encyclopedia of Russian Securitization, 11th ed. 2024, pp. 133.

40 CBRF exchange rate as of date of issue.

41 Since 1 June 2019 AO CB Delta Credit has been reorganized by incorporation into PAO Rosbank (as mortgage center Rosbank-Dom).

3.35 SINGAPORE

By Chris Ngooi, DBS Bank

I. FRAMEWORK

On 31 December 2013, the Monetary Authority of Singapore ("MAS") published its regulations regarding the issuance of covered bonds by banks incorporated in Singapore (MAS Notice 648)[1]. The regulations became effective 31 December 2013 and were amended in June 2015, October 2020, September 2021, June 2022 and May 2024. The requirements set out in the notice are mandatory for Singapore's banks as MAS Notice 648 is part of The Banking Act in Singapore. The regulation outlines MAS' rules relating to the issuance of covered bonds by banks incorporated in Singapore and it will enable Singapore's banks to gain access to longer term, stable funding options as well as to facilitate the diversification of funding sources for the banking and financial markets in Singapore.

DBS Bank Ltd. (DBS) was the first to establish its USD 10 bn Covered Bond Programme under these new regulations on 16 June 2015 and on 30 July 2015, issued the inaugural Singapore covered bond, pricing USD 1 bn, fixed rated covered bonds due 2018. Following then, United Overseas Bank Ltd. (UOB) also launched its USD 8 bn Covered Bond Programme on 23 November 2015. The first series of EUR 500 mn fixed rate covered bonds was subsequently issued on 3 March 2016. The third issuer was Oversea-Chinese Banking Corporation, which issued a EUR 500 mn fixed rate covered bonds due 2022 on 15 March 2017, as part of its USD 10 bn Covered Bond Programme. The fourth issuer, Maybank Singapore Limited, launched its USD 10 bn Covered Bond Programme on 19 March 2024 which subsequently issued its inaugural EUR 500 mn fixed rate covered bonds due 7 June 2027 on 7 June 2024. The fifth issuer, Standard Chartered (Singapore) Limited launched its USD 5 bn Covered Bond Programme on 12 April 2024 and issued its first series of EUR 500 mn fixed rate covered bonds on 28 May 2024. Both DBS and UOB upsized their respective programmes to USD 20bn and USD 15bn respectively in subsequent years since their initial establishment.

Singapore's covered bonds are based on contractual agreements and governed by the law of contracts under common law, which applies to all elements of the covered bond structure. This, together with the implemented specific covered bond regulations, creates a framework comparable with that of other European, UK, Canadian and Australian jurisdictions, via a more prescriptive regulatory framework.

Singapore's legal system is similar to the legal system in the UK in that the covered bond structure is fundamentally based on statutes or acts, which have been formally enacted by the legislative authority of the Republic of Singapore. It is considered a primary authority and source of law and determines the applicable legislation. The MAS guidelines arising from the MAS Notice 648 and its amendments provide clarity on the characteristics of a Singapore covered bond.

Singapore covered bonds are direct and unconditional obligations of the issuer and in the event of a default or insolvency of the issuer, the covered bond investors will have dual recourse: an exclusive senior secured claim on the pool of cover assets and also a senior unsecured claim on the issuer. The cover pool assets will be held in a special purpose entity, which, in turn, will provide a guarantee in respect of the principal and interest payments under the covered bonds' outstanding. A bond/security trustee is appointed to hold the security over the cover pool for the benefit of the covered bond investors.

II. STRUCTURE OF THE ISSUER

In the MAS Notice 648 covered bonds are defined as "bonds, notes or other debentures issued by a bank or an SPV (Special Purpose Vehicle) where the payments of the liabilities to the holders of such covered bonds and any liabilities arising from the enforcement of the rights of the holders of the covered bonds are: (a) secured by a cover pool; and (b) recoverable from the bank regardless of whether the cover pool is sufficient to pay off

1 MAS Notices can be found on MAS website at www.mas.gov.sg.

such liabilities." This implies the dual recourse nature of covered bonds with a claim of covered bond holders against the cover pool as well as the issuing bank. The cover pool, in this context, comprises the eligible assets owned by the bank or an SPV for the purpose of securing the liabilities to the holders of the covered bonds only. MAS Notice 648 is applicable to all banks incorporated in Singapore. In order to issue covered bonds, the bank has to notify MAS at least one month prior to the issuance of covered bonds. In addition, issuers will have to submit to the MAS a Memorandum of Compliance, confirming that the guidelines with respect to the programme and issuances for covered bonds have been adhered to and complied with.

III. COVER ASSETS

According to Paragraph 6(a) of MAS Notice 648, the cover pool must comprise mortgage loans secured by residential property ("residential mortgage loans"), whether in Singapore or elsewhere, and may also comprise one of more of the following assets:

- Any other loans secured by the same residential property as the residential mortgage loans;
- Assets, including intangible properties, that form part of all the security provided for the residential mortgage loans, such as guarantees and indemnities;
- Any interest held by the bank as trustee or a replacement trustee for the SPV in relation to the residential mortgage loans or the assets referred to in paragraphs 6(a)(i) to (ii);
- Derivatives held for the purpose of hedging risks arising from the particular issuance of covered bonds;
- Cash (including foreign currency);
- Singapore Government Securities, and
- MAS Bills.

The aggregate value of substitute collateral (cash, Singapore Government Securities and MAS Bills) is limited to 15% of the cover pool. The 15% limit can be temporarily exceeded in order to allow the issuer to build up the necessary liquidity to meet payments in the upcoming 12 months or to account for operational timing differences.

MAS imposed to limit the amount of collateral in the cover pool at 10% of total assets of an issuer. This limit has been increased in October 2020 from previously 4%. Total assets of the bank include assets of the branches but does not include assets of the subsidiaries of the bank. For the purpose of determining the total assets of a bank, the bank must exclude assets it uses to meet regulatory requirements under sections 38, 39 and 40, read with section 65, of the Banking Act, section 8 of the Deposit Insurance and Policy Owners' Protection Schemes Act 2011 and other regulatory requirements as may be prescribed or specified by MAS. Commercial mortgage loans or public sector loans are not eligible.

IV. VALUATION AND LTV CRITERIA

The legal framework sets an 80% loan-to-value (LTV) limit for the eligibility of residential mortgage loans. The LTV limit is a soft limit, meaning that in case a mortgage loan exceeds 80%, the loan can still be included in the cover pool, but only the value up to 80% is given credit to when determining the value of the cover pool. The value of the underlying collateral is determined by the current market valuation of the residential property that is used to secure the residential mortgage loan. A valuation of residential properties used to secure the loans must be conducted on an annual basis at the minimum.

V. ASSET – LIABILITY MANAGEMENT

MAS Notice 648 Paragraph 6(h) stipulates a mandatory minimum overcollateralisation (OC) of 3% on a nominal basis as "... the value of assets in a cover pool must be at least 103% of the outstanding nominal amount of the covered bonds secured by the assets at all times." Covered Bond issuers must in accordance with MAS Notice 648 Paragraph 8(a) perform regular asset coverage tests (ACTs) to ensure collateral quality and the proper level of overcollateralisation. In addition, regular stress tests on risks related to default, prepayment,

currency, interest rate, counterparty and liquidity have to be performed. Details regarding these tests will be addressed in the respective covered bond programmes of Singapore issuers.

VI. TRANSPARENCY

Covered bond issuers must disclose to the covered bond holders the results of asset coverage tests (ACTs) performed and cover pool characteristics on a regular basis and in any event, at least every quarter, according to MAS Notice 648 Paragraph 8(e).

VII. COVER POOL MONITOR AND BANKING SUPERVISION

According to Paragraph 8(b), a cover pool monitor must be appointed. The cover pool monitor, who has to be an external third party qualified to be an auditor under the Companies Act 1967, has to verify the compliance of the covered bond issuer with MAS Notice 648 regulations and report these to MAS. A certified report has to be submitted to MAS annually in the first quarter following the end of the bank's financial year. The duties of the cover pool monitor explicitly include to:

- Verify annually that the bank complies with covered bond-specific regulations (asset cap, eligible assets, LTV limits, overcollateralisation, et al. as defined in Paragraph 6(a) to (i), 6A, 6B, 6C and 6D);
- Verify annually that the bank or SPV, as the case may be, keeps an accurate register of the assets in the cover pool;
- Assess the adequacy of the bank's or SPV's, as the case may be, risk management process and internal controls relating to the covered bond program annually, including an independent review of ACTs performed by the bank of SPV, as the case may be;
- Submit a certified report to MAS annually on compliance with covered bond regulations no later than the last day of the third month immediately following the end of the bank's financial year; and
- Report to MAS immediately if it becomes aware that the bank or SPV has breached any of the conditions imposed.

Singapore's covered bond regulations stipulate that the issuing bank must ensure adequate risk management processes and that internal controls are in place to manage the risks arising from the issuance of covered bonds, including appropriate governance arrangements and regular stress tests on risks arising from issuing covered bonds such as default, prepayment, currency, interest rate, counterparty and liquidity risks. This also includes having governance processes in place with respect to the authority to approve any issuance of the covered bond. Finally, regulations state that the board and senior management of the issuer are responsible for conducting due diligence in assessing the risks associated with issuing covered bonds and ensuring that risk management processes that are put in place for covered bonds are adhered to.

VIII. SEGREGATION OF COVER ASSETS AND BANKRUPTCY REMOTENESS OF COVERED BONDS

Given that Singapore's legal system is based on Commonwealth Common Law, a similar structure applies as used for the issuance of covered bonds in the UK, Canada, Australia, or New Zealand. Thus, covered bonds will be issued by a bank, with the cover pool collateral sold by way of an equitable assignment or by declaring a trust over the collateral to a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV). The covered bond will benefit from dual recourse on the issuer and the cover pool. This structure ensures the segregation of the cover assets from the insolvency estate of the issuer in the case of an issuer default. The contractual agreements for the issuance of covered bonds are structured within the general legislation in Singapore.

IX. RISK-WEIGHTING & COMPLIANCE WITH EUROPEAN LEGISLATION

Singapore covered bonds are not UCITS 52(4) or CRR Article 129 compliant given that Singapore is not a Member State of the European Union. As such, it is unlikely that Singapore covered bonds will benefit from

preferential risk weighting for regulatory capital purposes. However, given the revised release of the Basel III framework containing preferential risk weights explicitly for covered bonds and the definition of minimum standards, the framework could have a positive impact for covered bonds outside the European Union when it comes into force on 1 January 2023. Covered bonds are LCR eligible in Singapore if they have a long-term credit rating of at least AA- from a recognised external rating agency, and have a proven record as a reliable source of liquidity in the markets even during stressed market conditions. MAS also introduced the Emergency Liquidity Facility, which will allow for eligible covered bonds to be repo-ed with the MAS.

Issuers: DBS Bank Limited, United Overseas Bank Limited, Oversea-Chinese Banking Corporation, Maybank Singapore Limited, Standard Chartered (Singapore) Limited

COVERED BOND LABEL **:** DBS Bank Ltd (1 pool), United Overseas Bank Limited (1 pool), Oversea-Chinese Banking Corporation Limited (1 pool), Maybank Singapore Limited (1 pool) Standard Chartered (Singapore) Limited (1 pool).

For the most up-to-date information, please consult the new ECBC Covered Bond Comparative Database webpage on the Covered Bond Label website www.coveredbondlabel.com or via the following QR code:

3.36 SLOVAKIA

By Slavomíra Páleníková, Andrej Zeher, Všeobecná úverová banka, Slovak Republic

I. FRAMEWORK

Covered bonds are regulated by the Act on Bonds (Act No. 530/1990 Coll., Part Four, Article 20b); by the Act on Banks (No. 483/2001 Coll., Part 12); by the Insolvency Act (Act No. 7/2005 Coll., Part 6); by five Decrees of the National Bank of Slovakia (the "NBS") for covered bonds programme, for example: stipulating the details of an application for prior approval of the NBS and the Decree of the NBS stipulating Covered Bond Register, reporting and disclosure. The entire legal framework has been updated by the Act No. 454/2021 implementing the EU Directive 2019/2162 on the issue of covered bonds and covered bonds public supervision (the "CBD Act") with effective date July 8, 2022.

According to the Act on Banks, a covered bond is a secured bond under a special regulation (Act on Bonds) the nominal value and aliquot interest income of which are fully covered by assets or asset values included in the relevant cover pool (the "Cover Assets") and correspond to the value of assets which, for the whole period of validity of the covered bond, are preferentially intended to satisfy claims arising from this covered bond. In the case of the resolution of the bank issuing the covered bonds or if it is not able to properly and timely pay its liabilities, the Cover Assets (including any collateral securing those assets) will be preferentially used to meet the issuing bank's Covered Bond Liabilities (see Section III. "Cover Assets" below).

Cover pool consists of primary assets, substitution assets, hedging derivatives and buffer of liquid assets.

The Bank can manage a single covered bonds programme individually for each of the following types of primary assets:

(1) assets eligible pursuant to Article 129(1), let. (a) of Regulation (EU) No 575/2013 (the "CRR") i.e. exposures to or guaranteed by central or regional governments, ESCB central banks and public sector entities or local authorities in EU;

(2) assets eligible pursuant to Article 129(1), let. (d) and (f) of CRR i.e. residential (or commercial) mortgage loans with a maximum loan-to-value (LTV) of 80% (or 60-70%) of the value of the mortgaged real estate (the assets referred to in points (1) and (2) commonly as the "CRR Assets");

(3) other high-quality cover assets consisting of residential (or commercial) mortgage loans with a maximum LTV of 70% of the value of the mortgaged real estate or LTV of 100% in the case of real estate according to CRR (the "HQ Assets");

(4) loans to or guaranteed by public undertakings majority owned by the state or regional authorities which provide essential public services and are subject to public supervision (the "PU Loans").

The bank shall include the words "covered bond" ("krytý dlhopis") in the title of the security which may also be labelled "European Covered Bond Premium" ("európsky krytý dlhopis (prémiový)") if secured by CRR Assets and meeting all conditions under article 129 of CRR or "European Covered Bond" ("európsky krytý dlhopis") if secured by HQ Assets or PU Loans.

The coverage ratio calculates the total of the values of Cover Assets towards the total of the values of Covered Bond Liabilities. The bank must maintain the minimum level of 5 % of overcollateralization for each relevant covered bonds programme that includes CRR Assets in the cover pool and 10 % for each that includes HQ Assets or PU Loans. In individual terms and conditions of the issuance of the covered bonds, the bank can determine a higher coverage ratio than 105 % resp. 110 % and from this moment the bank is obligated to maintain such a higher coverage ratio until the full repayment of the covered bond issuance for the entire relevant covered bonds programme. If the bank determines several higher coverage ratios for different issuances, it is obligated to maintain the highest coverage ratio for the entire relevant covered bonds programme

until the full repayment of the covered bonds issuance with such highest coverage ratio, while the bank is also obligated to immediately replenish and continuously replenish the cover pool to the extent corresponding to such highest coverage ratio.

The bank is obligated to calculate the coverage ratio as of the last day of the relevant month.

Covered bond holders and counterparties of derivative contracts have recourse to the issuer as well as a preferential claim on the cover pool. The Cover Assets are recorded in a special register of covered bonds (the "CB Register") and monitored by a cover pool administrator. The special public supervision is performed by the banking supervision of the NBS.

The claims attached to the Cover Assets, or any part thereof, in relation to which the debtor is considered defaulted (under Article 178 (1) of CRR) shall not be accounted for in calculating the coverage ratio and must be deleted from the CB Register.

II. STRUCTURE OF THE ISSUER

The covered bond in Slovakia can be issued only by a bank with granted prior approval from the NBS to perform activities related to covered bonds programme.

The issuer of covered bonds keeps the Cover Assets on its balance sheet separately from the other banking assets.

III. COVER ASSETS

Cover pool consists of the following Cover Assets:

a) primary assets that include CRR Assets, HQ Assets and PU Loans. Certain special conditions apply to CRR Assets and HQ Assets that consist of the receivables of the issuing bank from mortgage loans. Mortgage loan according to Act on Banks is a loan secured by a lien or other security right to real estate, including building under construction, apartment, including apartment under construction or non-residential premises, including non-residential premises under construction (hereinafter the "real estate"), a part of real estate or future real estate and granted by a bank, foreign bank or a branch of a foreign bank. The mortgage loan must be secured by liens to residential or commercial real estate located in Slovakia and registered by the bank in the CB Register at its discretion. All primary assets include, in addition to the receivables, also the liens to real estate or other forms of collateral used to cover these receivables. The CRR assets must account for at least 90% and HQ Assets or PU Loans for at least 80% of the total nominal value of the covered bonds to which such relevant primary assets form coverage under the relevant covered bonds programme. For the purpose of coverage ratio, the value of the primary assets is calculated on the basis of a residual nominal value of individual receivables. For other purposes, the calculation of the value shall include also aliquot interest income. The CBD Act allows the bank to use as primary assets the assets originated by its own subsidiaries or by other banks, which it acquired by purchase or as a result of the transfer by way of financial collateral arrangement. The bank is then obliged to assess the credit-granting standards of the subsidiary or perform itself a thorough assessment of the borrower's creditworthiness.

b) substitution assets that may include assets meeting conditions under CRR. The substitution assets can account for not more than 10% of the total nominal value of the covered bonds to which such assets form coverage in the cover pool including CRR Assets and not more than 20% of the value of the total nominal value of the covered bonds in the cover pool including HQ Assets or PU Loans. For the purpose of coverage ratio, the value of the substitution assets is determined on the basis of the lower of their real value (including an aliquot interest income) and nominal value. For other purposes the real value of securities and nominal value of other substitution assets is considered together with the aliquot interest income.

c) hedging derivatives the purpose of which is to manage and mitigate currency risk or interest rate risk connected with issued covered bonds and which shall form part of the cover pool until such risks cease to exist. The hedging derivatives are included into the calculation of the value of the cover pool as follows:

   i) the hedging derivatives used to mitigate the currency risk are measured at fair value,

   ii) the hedging derivatives used to manage and mitigate the interest rate risk of the substitution assets are measured at fair value,

   iii) the hedging derivatives used to mitigate the interest rate risk of the primary assets and the covered bonds are not included into the calculation of the value of the cover pool.

d) liquid assets consisting of assets of level 1 assets, level 2A assets or level 2B assets (under Articles 9 to 13 of Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2015/61 of 10 October 2014 supplementing CRR) except own assets issued by the bank issuing the covered bonds or its affiliates and exposures toward institutions (Article 129 (1)(c) of CRR.

   In every moment the bank must cover net liquidity outflow (i.e. all payment outflows of the covered bonds programme falling due on one day) from a buffer of liquid assets at least in the value of the maximum cumulative net liquidity outflow over the next 180 days. The value of the buffer of liquid assets is a part of the coverage ratio and, for that purpose only, the value of securities entering the buffer of liquid assets shall be determined on the basis of the lower of their nominal value and real value (including an aliquot interest income). Otherwise, the real value of securities (including an aliquot interest income) and nominal value of other assets are considered when entering the buffer of liquid assets.

Assets and other asset values become a part of the cover pool and are considered Cover Assets when registered in the CB Register. They are a part of the cover pool until they are deleted from the CB Register.

The cover pool can be used to cover only:

a) the liabilities of the issuing bank in order to pay the nominal value and aliquot interest income from all covered bonds issued by this bank until they are fully repaid,

b) the estimated liabilities or costs of the issuing bank (operational cost of covered bonds programme) which arise and are immediately connected with the management and termination thereof and settlement toward persons that conduct activities under the Act, or arising from issuance conditions especially toward the administrator of the covered bonds programme, payment service agents, administrators, representatives of the owners of the covered bonds and other persons performing similar activities,

c) the liabilities of the issuing bank which arise from the hedging derivatives included in cover pool (all liabilities in preceding let. a) to c) together the "Covered Bond Liabilities").

Cover Assets are used by the bank preferentially to cover the Covered Bond Liabilities and the bank must not dispose of them or use them to secure other liabilities until they are deleted from the CB register.

IV. VALUATION AND LTV CRITERIA

The CBD Act sets a 70% LTV limit for the eligibility of HQ Assets consisting of mortgage loans. The LTV limit is a soft one, meaning that in case a mortgage loan exceeds 70%, the loan is included into the primary assets only up to the lower of (i) the amount that does not exceed 70% of the value of the pledged property or (ii) the value of the actual and earlier registered pledge rights. If the value of the pledged property drops in any case below the amount of the outstanding principal of the mortgage loan, such mortgage loan must be immediately deleted from the CB Register. The same approach applies to the 80% LTV limit for the eligibility of CRR Assets consisting of mortgage loans.

The value of the property will be determined by the bank based on an overall assessment of the property and the bank is bound solely by own assessment of the property. The bank is obligated to continuously monitor and regularly reappraise the value of the pledged property according to Decree of NBS No.10/2016 at least once in three years.

The mortgage on the real estate securing the mortgage loan is established by its recording in the Land Register (Act No. 162/1995 Coll.; Cadastre Law) on the basis of a proposal of the bank and owner of the real estate.

V. ASSET – LIABILITY MANAGEMENT

If the bank makes transactions in order to mitigate the currency or the interest rate risk arising from a net open currency position or an interest rate position between the issued covered bonds and the assets making up the cover pool, it is obligated to include these hedging derivatives and financial flows from them, together with their security, into the cover pool. The hedging derivatives must meet qualification criteria of an effective hedging relation.

The bank shall carry out yearly stress tests as part of its covered bonds programme. The stress test shall be set in line with the stress test performed to evaluate the appropriateness of the internal capital and include test for credit risk, interest rate risk, currency risk, liquidity risk, counterparty risk, operational risk and immovable property prices decline risk. The bank is required to prove in the stress test that it is able to keep the coverage ratio also during the stress test period.

VI. TRANSPARENCY

The bank issuing covered bonds shall publish, among others:

a) the structure of covered bonds, maturity thereof, the number and volume of the covered bond issuances, the currency and the interest rates thereof,

b) the value of the cover pool, value, type, proportion, maturity structure and asset evaluation method in the cover pool and important changes in it,

c) the volume according to the currency of the monetary nominal value, weighted average residual maturity, weighted average interest rate and weighted average value of primary assets security indicator in the cover pool,

d) the possibility of maturity extensions, the level of required and available coverage, the statutory or contractual level of overcollateralization, the percentage of the loans where it is presumed that the borrower is defaulted and of the loans overdue for more than 90 days;

e) other documents and information related to the covered bonds programme.

Until 30 April of a current calendar year, the administrator shall submit to the NBS a report on the covered bonds programme covering the preceding year and containing, among others, the following information:

a) number, volume, revenues and maturity dates of the issued covered bond issues,

b) volume of Cover Assets and covered bonds issued in euros or foreign currency,

c) structure of the cover pool,

d) coverage indicator,

e) average value, maturity of the primary assets, as well as the fixation period and weighted interest rate,

f) volume of failed and eliminated mortgage loans from the cover pool,

g) structure of immovable property securing the primary assets, broken down by family houses, flats, building land and unfinished structures,

h) method for calculation and amount of the estimated liabilities or costs incurred by the bank,

i) other factors related to the activities of the bank.

The bank shall publish this report on its website.

VII. COVER POOL MONITOR AND BANKING SUPERVISION

The NBS appoints the covered bonds programme administrator and his deputy on its own initiative or on the proposal of the bank issuing covered bonds, whereas in the latter case NBS makes also its own suitability assessment of the bank's nominee. The administrator shall monitor the conditions related to the covered bonds programme set out in the Act on Banks and other generally binding legal regulations.

The administrator shall perform his activities individually, independently and impartially. Prior to any issue of covered bonds, the administrator is required to prepare a written certificate evidencing that coverage of those covered bonds is secured in line with the legislation. The administrator shall immediately inform NBS in writing if he finds any deficiencies or breaches in relation to the covered bond programme. Based on such findings NBS shall take appropriate remedial measures.

The administrator's duties include, among others, to check and verify whether:

a) the aggregate nominal value of the issued covered bonds, and the corresponding interest revenues, is covered by the Cover Assets at least at the coverage indicator value,

b) the bank complies with the requirements for structure of the cover pool,

c) the Cover Assets registered in the CB Register comply with the Act on Banks,

d) the agreement dealing with the hedging derivatives comprising the cover pool contains provisions pursuant to Section 73(5),

e) the immovable property securing the primary assets meet the legal requirements.

The bank must allow the administrator to perform his activities; in particular to allow him to inspect accounting records, documents relating to the cover pool and covered bonds programme. Activities of the administrator and his deputy are subject to supervision by the NBS.

VIII. SEGREGATION OF COVER ASSETS AND BANKRUPTCY REMOTENESS OF COVERED BONDS

In the event the bank issuing covered bonds is declared bankrupt (such declaration being made in form of a resolution of a bankruptcy court and made known to all creditors via publication in the Official Journal), the Cover Assets are fully segregated from the general insolvency estate of the bankrupt bank. The trustee of the bankrupt bank is obliged to manage those Cover Assets as a special separate bankruptcy estate for the benefit of the covered bondholders and the counterparties of hedging derivatives having, by operation of law, a preferential claim and first priority perfected security interest in the cover pool. A segregated estate represented by a relevant cover pool is created separately for each individual covered bonds programme.

Only the Cover Assets included in the CB Register may serve as collateral and be used for satisfying the claims against the bankrupt issuing bank and its estate.

The bankruptcy trustee must observe special procedures regarding the administration and management of the overall covered bonds programme upon declaration of the issuer's bankruptcy. In particular, it is the responsibility of the bankruptcy trustee to asses, with a due and professional care, whether further administration of the covered bonds programme is feasible and does not result in reduction of the covered bond holders' claims.

Once the trustee ascertain that a possible reduction may threaten, he shall cooperate with the special covered bonds programme administrator in the process of notification to the NBS regarding the intention to transfer the covered bonds programme (or its part) to one or more solvent banks. The performance of the transfer of the

covered bonds programme is subject to the prior approval by the NBS and must be completed within one year following the date of its notification. The NBS may grant extension to the original period by not more than one year within one month before such period expires in case it can be reasonably presumed that the later transfer will result in higher degree of satisfaction of the covered bond holders' claims. During both original as well as additional period for the transfer, the issuer is obliged to make postponement of payments of principals and is allowed to make only yield payments pertaining to the covered bonds within their original maturities. Thus, in relation to each individual issuance of covered bonds where its original maturity expires during the period for the transfer of the covered bonds programme, the owners of covered bonds take advantage of additional income that is generated from the payment of interest income for the whole period by which the original maturity of such issuance is extended. This mechanism seeks partial compensation for the postponement of payments of principals resulting from such extension.

The payments of principals are allowed only in respect of the issuances with original maturities falling due within the first month of the original period for the transfer of the covered bonds programme. For the issuances which mature later but still anytime during the original or additional period for the transfer of the covered bonds programme, the maturity extensions for another 12 months apply, and payments of principals are postponed until the expiry date of the relevant extended period. In any case, the extension cannot result in the change of the original order of maturity of the outstanding issues of the covered bonds. There is also no acceleration of repayment of the issuer' liabilities relating to the covered bonds during these periods. The transfer procedure features identical mechanics as the sale of the company's enterprise or its part on a solvent basis ("predaj podniku"). It includes the transfer and assumption of the whole portfolio of claims and liabilities pertaining to the covered bonds and to the Cover Assets from the bankrupt issuer to one or more transferee banks. If the trustee has failed to successfully transfer the entire portfolio within the relevant transfer period, then the acceleration of repayment of the issuer's liabilities relating to the covered bonds is triggered immediately after the trustee has terminated the operation of the covered bond issuer's business.

IX. RISK-WEIGHTING & COMPLIANCE WITH EUROPEAN LEGISLATION

Slovak "Krytý dlhopis" comply with the requirements of Article 52(4) UCITS as well as of Article 129 of CRR.[1] The listed covered bonds are eligible for repo transactions with the central bank.

X. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Issuers: Československá obchodná banka, Prima banka Slovensko, Slovenská sporiteľňa, Tatra banka, VÚB – Všeobecná úverová banka, 365.bank.

COVERED BOND LABEL **:** Prima banka Slovensko (1 pool), Všeobecná úverová banka (1 pool).

For the most up-to-date information, please consult the new ECBC Covered Bond Comparative Database webpage on the Covered Bond Label website www.coveredbondlabel.com or via the following QR code:

1 Please click on the following link for further information on the UCITS Directive and the Capital Requirements Regulation (CRR): https://hypo.org/ecbc/covered-bonds/.

3.37 SLOVENIA

By Dr Michael Teig, UniCredit Bank AG

I. FRAMEWORK

On 8 July 2022, the new Slovenian covered-bond law came into force implementing the European Covered Bond Directive into national law. Covered bonds in Slovenia are governed primarily by the Mortgage Bond and Municipal Bond Act (Zakon o Hiotekarni in Komunalni Obveznici – ZHKO-2; "the Covered Bond Act"). In addition, general rules of the Financial Instruments Market Act, the Banking Act, the Resolution and Compulsory Dissolution of Credit Institutions Act and the Consumer Credit Act are to be applied (Article 5 of the Covered Bond Act).

The Bank of Slovenia (BoS) issued further relevant by-laws in the *Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia No. 11/22*, namely the Regulation on the Conditions for Obtaining an Authorisation for Issuing Mortgage and Municipal Bonds, the Regulation on the Conditions for Inclusion of Derivative Financial Instruments in the Cover Pool of Mortgage and Municipal Bonds, the Regulation on Matching the Cover Pool with the Outstanding Mortgage and Municipal Bonds, and the Regulation on the Documentation for Proving the Fulfilment of Conditions for the Cover Register Administrator Appointment. In addition, the Governing Board of the BoS adopted Recommendations for Managing the Records of the Cover Register as of 28 February 2012.

So far, there has been no covered-bond issuance from the Slovenian market.

II. STRUCTURE OF THE ISSUER

Covered bonds can be issued by banks holding a valid banking license and which are authorised by the BoS to issue mortgage covered bonds or public-sector covered bonds.

To obtain a special license for the issuance of covered bonds, an issuing bank must prove that it fulfils the following conditions, set out in Article 7 of the Covered Bond Act[1]:

- Suitable risk-management procedures and instruments associated with the issuance of covered bonds and with cover-pool assets
- Adequate number of qualified staff and ability to be organisationally and technically qualified to issue mortgage covered bonds or municipal bonds
- Separation of services related to the issuance of covered bonds and to the covered assets from the bank's other operations
- Rules for maintaining the cover register and appointment of a cover-pool administrator
- Confirmation of adequate cover by the cover-pool monitor to the BoS
- Rules for property valuation and at least one independent valuer

III. COVER ASSETS

Only receivables from mortgage loans and loans that are secured by an eligible state or a local authority, and that are in accordance with Article 129(1)(d) and (f) of the EU Capital Requirements Regulation No. 575/2013 (CRR) and meet the requirements of Article 129 CRR and the provisions of the Covered Bond Act, can be considered as the cover assets for covered bonds.

The cover assets of mortgage covered bonds can consist of receivables arising from loans secured by a mortgage on residential property or commercial property that is located in a member state of the European Union or the European Economic Area (EEA).

1 A separate license must be obtained for each issuance (release program).

The cover assets of public-sector covered bonds can consist of receivables arising from **1.** loans granted to or debt securities issued by an eligible state or an eligible local authority; **2.** loans granted to or debt securities issued by another legal entity provided that the obligations in respect to such loans or securities are irrevocably, unconditionally and unlimitedly guaranteed by an eligible state or local authority.

Up to a maximum of 20% of the cover pool can be provided by substitute cover assets. According to Article 129 of Regulation 575/2013/EU, eligible assets are **1.** balances on accounts with the BoS; **2.** investments in marketable debt securities issued or guaranteed by an EEA member state or their central banks or the ECB; **3.** investments in other debt securities issued by EIB, EBRD or any other another multilateral development bank (provided that they correspond to credit quality step 1), or **4.** investments in other debt securities of credit institutions that correspond to credit quality step 1 or 2 (Article 20 of the Covered Bond Act).

Additionally, an issuer can also include derivative financial instruments in the cover pool to reduce/hedge market risks on its assets, in particular risks associated with interest-rate and currency mismatch.

Finally, an issuer must also take into account the following limitations according to Article 21:

> Up to 5% of the cover assets can consist of mortgage loans secured by a mortgage on residential property under construction.

> Up to 10% of the cover assets can consist of mortgage loans secured by a mortgage where the registration is still pending.

> Up to 20% of the cover assets can consist of loans where the mortgage is on commercial property.

> Up to 20% of the cover assets can consist of mortgage loans granted to an individual or to legal entities that are considered a group of related parties and may not exceed the maximum admissible exposure set out in Regulation 575/2013/EU.

IV. VALUATION AND LOAN-TO-VALUE CRITERIA

The level of receivables from mortgage loans that can be taken into consideration for the cover assets must not exceed **1.** 80% of the mortgage lending value or the market value for loans secured by mortgage on residential properties; **2.** 60% of the mortgage lending value or the market value of mortgaged property for loans secured by mortgage on commercial properties. When the level of receivables from mortgage loans exceeds the above-mentioned restrictions, only the proportionate portion of the loan can be considered as eligible cover assets (Article 16 of the Covered Bond Act).

Generally, the valuation of residential and commercial property is based on the current value that is equal to or less than the market value or the mortgage lending value at the time of inclusion in the cover pool. However, if the latter is not established, the market value is used instead. It is important to note that a valuation must be performed by a licensed property valuer who is independent of the credit decision-making process and in compliance with the international property-valuation standards.

The value of a property is determined individually for each real property. During the term of the mortgage loan, an issuer must regularly monitor the value of mortgaged property and assess the value at least once a year for commercial as well as for residential property. The issuer can also use statistical methods to monitor the value and determine the properties that need to be revalued. In addition, the value of the mortgaged real estate must be checked at least once every three years by the appraiser. A need for a new valuation of the property also arises when a value of real property and/or general market prices of real properties in the area where the real property is located drop substantially (by more than 20% since the last valuation), or when a borrower is late meeting his obligations under the mortgage loans by more than 90 days (Article 18 of the Covered Bond Act).

V. ASSET – LIABILITY MANAGEMENT

Article 28 of the Covered Bond Act states that the minimum level of overcollateralization for mortgage covered bonds and public-sector covered bonds generally amounts to 5% on a nominal as well as on a net-present-value basis. In case valuation is based on the mortgage lending value, the minimum overcollateralization is 2% on a nominal as well as on a net-present-value basis. Furthermore, cover assets need to be matched with liabilities stemming from issued covered bonds and derivative financial instruments also in terms of maturity, interest rate, currency exposure and estimated operational cost. Compliance with the above-mentioned conditions must be verified at least once a month.

An issuer must compare the amount of maturing receivables from the cover assets entered in the cover register with the amount of maturing liabilities stemming from the issued covered bonds and from the derivative financial instruments entered in the cover register over the next 180-day period on a daily basis. Subsequently, coverage must be provided in the form of a liquidity reserve covering the highest cumulative net liquidity outflows for the next 180 days and consisting of liquid assets (Article 29 of the Covered Bond Act). The calculation of the principal of outstanding obligations with an extendible maturity structure is based on the final maturity date in accordance with the contractual terms of the bonds.

The planned maturity of covered bonds can be extended in accordance with Articles 46 and 48 of the Covered Bond Act. The appointed special manager of the cover assets may extend the due date of payments of obligations from covered bonds by extending the due date of payment of principal and interest by four weeks without further requests. After the four-week period, the special manager may additionally extend the planned maturity of the covered bonds by extending the maturity of the principal payment by a maximum of 12 months in total (two times six months) if he or she believes this is needed to fulfil resurrection measures and that the issuer will be able to repay the obligations after the extension. The maturity of the covered bonds can only be extended by the special manager and may not be based on the discretion of the issuer. The maturity extension may not affect the structural characteristics of the covered bonds and payment sequence.

VI. TRANSPARENCY

According to the Covered Bond Act (Article 37), issuers are obliged to provide detailed information on a quarterly basis to investors on their websites. This includes at least the value of the collateral assets and the value of outstanding liabilities, an ISIN list of all issued covered bonds, information on assets regarding geographic distribution, types, amounts, valuation methods, information on market risks, maturity structures, levels of overcollateralization and non-performing collateral.

Article 40 stipulates that issuers have to provide detailed reporting to the BoS on a quarterly basis. This includes, among others, an extract from the cover register with details on the eligibility of cover assets, the separation of funds, the operation of the trustee, coverage requirements and maturity structures.

VII. COVER-POOL MONITOR AND BANKING SUPERVISION

Cover register

Each issuing bank needs to keep a cover register (Article 30 [1] of the Covered Bond Act). In cases involving the issuance of both mortgage covered bonds and municipal bonds or when a bank has multiple issuance programs, separate cover registers must be kept.

The cover register contains all the receivables and investments that represent cover assets for the issued mortgage covered bonds and municipal bonds (public-sector covered bonds) as well as a record of all mortgage covered bonds and municipal bonds issued.

Cover-register administrator

A cover-register administrator ensures that the cover register is maintained in accordance with the provisions of the Covered Bond Act and its related Regulations. Only a certified auditor or an otherwise qualified expert granted a licence from the BoS to perform the tasks of a cover-register administrator can be appointed as a cover-register administrator. Moreover, such a person must also be independent of the issuer[2] (Articles 32 and 33).

The duties and obligations of a cover-register administrator are, among others, as follows (Articles 34):

- To ensure that the cover assets provide sufficient coverage for the total value of the covered bonds in circulation and liabilities stemming from derivative financial instruments
- To ensure that the requirements regarding the liquidity reserve of the cover assets are met
- To ensure that the assets are recorded in the cover register in accordance with the Covered Bond Act
- Prior to the issuance of covered bonds, to confirm that the cover assets provide sufficient and adequate coverage for covered bonds
- To ensure that transparency requirements are in accordance with Article 37 of the Covered Bond Act
- To notify the BoS of its findings every three months pursuant to the Covered Bond Act

Mortgages for loans entered into a cover pool can be deleted from the land registry only with the prior consent of the cover-register administrator. Assets can be entered into or deleted from cover register only with the consent of the cover-register administrator.

Role of the BoS

The BoS is the competent authority and is responsible for supervising the issuer regarding the issuance, management and repayment of mortgage covered bonds and municipal bonds (Article 39). In addition, it grants and withdraws licences given to banks and to cover-register administrators prior to the issuance of covered bonds.

An issuer is required to send to the BoS an extract from the cover register, which has been signed by the cover-register administrator, every three months (Article 40) and on request.

VII. SEGREGATION OF COVER ASSETS AND BANKRUPTCY REMOTENESS OF COVERED BONDS

Segregation of cover assets

The issuer must ensure that all assets that make up the cover assets are segregated in a legally binding and enforceable manner (Article 27). According to Article 30, no other creditor of the bank, except bond holders, and only for obligations of the bank in relation to issued covered bonds, can start judicial enforcement against the assets entered into cover register. Separation of cover assets also applies in the event of the rescue or forced termination of the issuer. Investors in mortgage covered bonds and municipal bonds have a dual claim. This also applies to counterparties of derivatives. Investors have claims against the issuer as well as preferential rights to repayment of the principal and all accrued and future interest from the cover assets in the event of liquidation, rescue or forced termination of the issuer (Article 11).

Bankruptcy remoteness of covered bonds

According to Article 12, in the case of resolution and forced termination of the issuer, payment obligations related to mortgage covered bonds and municipal bonds shall not be subject to automatic acceleration.

In the event of the rescue and forced termination of an issuer, the BoS appoints a special manager of collateral assets (Article 45). The special cover-asset manager deals with the management and disposal of the cover assets to the extent that is necessary for the continuous timely payment of obligations under covered bonds

2 Under certain conditions, administrators can also be employees of a bank.

and derivative financial instruments. After being appointed, the special manager may extend the due date of payments of obligations from mortgage covered bonds and municipal bonds in accordance with the conditions set out in Article 48 of the Covered Bond Act by extending the due date of payment of principal and interest by four weeks without further requests. After the four-week period, the special manager may additionally extend the planned maturity of the covered bonds by extending the maturity of the principal payment by a maximum of 12 months in total (two times six months), if this maturity extension is necessary to ensure the fulfilment of the payment obligations and if there reason to assume that, after the resolution and forced termination measures are implemented, the issuer will be able to settle overdue obligations after the longest possible period of maturity extension (Article 46).

It should be added that the special manager of the cover assets can transfer the entire cover pool and all obligations arising out of the issued covered bonds to another issuer by a way of contract. A full transfer must be authorised by the BoS (Article 47).

VIII. RISK-WEIGHTING & COMPLIANCE WITH EUROPEAN LEGISLATION

The new legal framework for Covered Bonds transcribed the European Covered Bond Directive into national law and is applicable since 8 July 2022. The risk-weighting of covered bonds in Slovenia is regulated directly by the Capital Requirements Regulation (CRR). The provisions of the Covered Bond Act fall within the criteria of Article 129 (1) of the CRR as well as within the criteria of Article 52 (4) of the UCITS Directive.[3] The label "European covered bond" is used only for mortgage covered-bond programs and municipal bond programs that meet the requirements of the Covered Bond Act. The label "European covered bond (premium)" is used only for mortgage covered-bond programs and municipal bond programs that meet the requirements of the Covered Bond Act and the requirements of Article 129 of Regulation 575/2013/EU.

For the most up-to-date information, please consult the new ECBC Covered Bond Comparative Database webpage on the Covered Bond Label website www.coveredbondlabel.com or via the following QR code:

3 Please click on the following link for further information on the UCITS Directive and the Capital Requirements Regulation (CRR): https://hypo.org/ecbc/covered-bonds/.

3.38 SOUTH KOREA

By Hoin Lee, Jackie Yang, Kim & Chang and Frank Will, Chairman of the EU Legislation Working Group, HSBC

I. FRAMEWORK

Efforts to create a covered bond market in Korea

The Covered Bond Act of Korea (the "Covered Bond Act") was passed by the National Assembly on 19 December 2013 and came into effect on 15 April 2014. Prior to the enactment of the Covered Bond Act, domestic banks in Korea had been looking at covered bonds as a potential alternative source of funding and the Korea Federation of Banks, a major association of banks in Korea, set up a task force team in 2008 to pursue the introduction of covered bonds in Korea, including by way of a dedicated covered bond statute. Even prior to the Korea Federation of Banks task force team, market participants were looking into alternative structured covered bond structures utilising Korea's Act on Asset-Backed Securitisation (the "ABS Act").

Such efforts eventually led to Kookmin Bank's offshore covered bond issuance in May 2009 (the "KB Structured Covered Bonds"). Kookmin Bank developed a structure on the basis of the securitisation techniques under the ABS Act and the Trust Act that enabled the relevant asset pool to be "ringfenced" and effectively granted dual-recourse to its investors through contractual arrangements. The KB Structured Covered Bonds were the first covered bonds issued out of Korea and the Asia-Pacific region.

Separately, in July 2010, the Korea Housing Finance Corporation ("KHFC") issued the second covered bond out of Korea and the first statutory covered bond transaction out of Asia. KHFC utilised the "mortgaged-backed bonds" (the "KHFC Covered Bonds") under the Korea Housing Corporation Act (the "KHFC Act") in issuing the covered bonds. Mortgaged-backed bonds are economically similar to covered bonds because the bond holders have a statutory priority right over a pool of assets segregated from the other assets of KHFC.

The successful issuance of the KHFC Covered Bonds in 2010 stimulated new interest for covered bonds in Korea, with KHFC Covered Bonds being considered as a potential alternative to traditional residential mortgage backed securities (RMBS) transactions as a funding source for Korean mortgage lenders. Several follow-on transactions have been completed that utilise KHFC as the issuer and the dual recourse feature of mortgage-backed bonds under the KHFC Act. KHFC issued (i) EUR 500 mn of euro denominated social covered bonds in October 2018, (ii) EUR 500 mn of ECBC Covered Bond-labeled social covered bonds with a AAA rating in June 2019, (iii) EUR 1 bn of ECBC Covered Bond-labeled social covered bonds with a AAA rating in February 2020, (iv) EUR 500 mn of ECBC Covered Bond-labeled social covered bonds with a AAA rating in July 2020, (v) EUR 1 bn of ECBC Covered Bond-labeled social covered bonds with a AAA rating in June 2021, (vi) EUR 550 mn of ECBC Covered Bond-labeled social covered bonds with a AAA rating in October 2021 and (vii) EUR 600 mn of ECBC Covered Bond-labeled social covered bonds with a AAA rating in March 2022, a total issuance size of EUR 4,650 mn. KHFC's June 2019 social covered bond offering was the first Euro denominated social bond issued by a Korean issuer. In light of such successful stand-alone issuances, KHFC set up its global covered bond programme in June 2022 pursuant to KHFC Act with ratings of Aaa/AAA from Moody's and S&P, under which it made 17 issuances of ECBC Covered Bond-labeled covered bonds with the highest credit ratings to date, in the aggregate issuance amount of 5,862,218,702 in EUR equivalent, as shown in the table below.

Issue Date	Issuance amounts	Currency	Ratings
2022.07.	500,000,000	EUR	AAA/Aaa
2022.10.	300,000,000	CHF	AAA/Aaa
2022.12.	200,000,000	USD	Aaa
2023.02.	265,000,000	CHF	AAA/Aaa
2023.04	320,000,000	AUD	AAA/Aaa
2023.04.	500,000,000	EUR	AAA/Aaa
2023.06.	100,000,000	USD	Aaa
2023.07.	150,000,000	EUR	AAA/Aaa
2023.07	100,000,000	USD	Aaa
2023.08.	210,000,000	USD	Aaa
2023.09.	1,000,000,000	EUR	AAA/Aaa
2023.12.	100,000,000	EUR	AAA/Aaa
2023.02.	350,000,000	CHF	AAA/Aaa
2024.03.	500,000,000	EUR	AAA/Aaa
2024.10	650,000,000	EUR	AAA/Aaa
2024.11.	1,500,000,000	HKD	AAA
2025.03.	600,000,000	EUR	AAA/Aaa

Following the enactment of the Covered Bond Act, on 12 June 2015, Kookmin Bank became the first bank in Korea to set up a global covered bond programme pursuant to the Covered Bond Act, which it listed on the Luxembourg Stock Exchange. The KB Covered Bond Programme was the first covered bond programme by an Asian financial institution to be listed and obtained ratings of AAA and Aaa from Fitch and Moody's, respectively. These ratings were higher than Kookmin Bank's ratings (A1 at that time) and even Korea's sovereign ratings (AA, Aa2). This enabled Kookmin Bank to procure funds from the offshore market at reduced costs in subsequent issuances. In October 2015, Kookmin Bank issued the first covered bonds under the KB Covered Bond Programme followed by a second transaction in February 2016 and a third transaction in December 2018. Kookmin Bank established a new global covered bond programme in April 2020, which it listed on the Singapore Stock Exchange and for which it obtained ratings of AAA from each of Fitch and S&P. Kookmin Bank issued (i) EUR 500 mn of ECBC Covered Bond-labeled social covered bonds with AAA ratings in July 2020, (ii) EUR 500 mn of ECBC Covered Bond-labeled green covered bonds with AAA ratings in October 2021, (iii) EUR 500 mn of ECBC Covered Bond-labeled sustainability covered bonds with AAA ratings in June 2022, (iv) EUR 500 mn of ECBC Covered Bond-labeled covered bonds with AAA ratings in October 2023 and (v) EUR 500 mn of ECBC Covered Bond-labeled sustainability covered bonds with AAA ratings in October 2024 under this programme. In light of the successful issuances by Kookmin Bank, other commercial banks began showing increased interest in covered bonds as an alternative, long-term funding source. Hana Bank set up a global covered bond programme in December 2020 pursuant to the Covered Bond Act with ratings of AAA from Fitch and S&P, under which it issued (i) EUR 500 mn of ECBC Covered Bond-labeled social covered bonds with AAA ratings in January 2021, (ii) EUR 600 mn of ECBC Covered Bond-labeled SME empowerment social covered bonds with AAA ratings in May 2023 and (iii) EUR 500 mn of ECBC Covered Bond-labeled sustainability covered bonds with AAA ratings in January 2025. Shinhan Bank set up a global covered bond programme as well in October 2023 pursuant to the Covered Bond Act with ratings of AAA/Aaa from Fitch and Moody's, under which it issued (i) EUR 500 mn of ECBC Covered Bond-labeled green mortgage covered bonds with AAA/Aaa ratings in January 2024 and (ii) USD 400 mn of ECBC Covered Bond-labeled green mortgage covered bonds with AAA/Aaa ratings in October 2024.

In April 2024, the Financial Service Commission ("FSC") designated a plan to expand fixed-rate mortgage loans as an innovative financial service, allowing KHFC to provide payment guarantees for covered bonds issued by Korean banks. With this policy support, banks can lower their funding costs, enabling investors to invest in longer-term investments that are safer and require less capital costs. Following the issuance of covered bonds by Kookmin Bank and Shinhan Bank in August 2024, Hana Bank also issued covered bonds guaranteed by KHFC in December 2024to secure housing finance resources at lower interest rates, yielding successful results. Currently, other commercial banks and local banks are preparing to establish their own covered bond programmes. To date, Kookmin Bank has issued a total amount of KWR 1 trillion in covered bonds on four occasions, Shinhan Bank has issued KRW 500 billion on two occasions, and Hana Bank has issued KRW 180 billion once, all under the KHFC guarantee covered bonds programmme, with more issuances planned for this year.

II. STRUCTURE OF THE ISSUER

1. KHFC Act

Eligible issuer

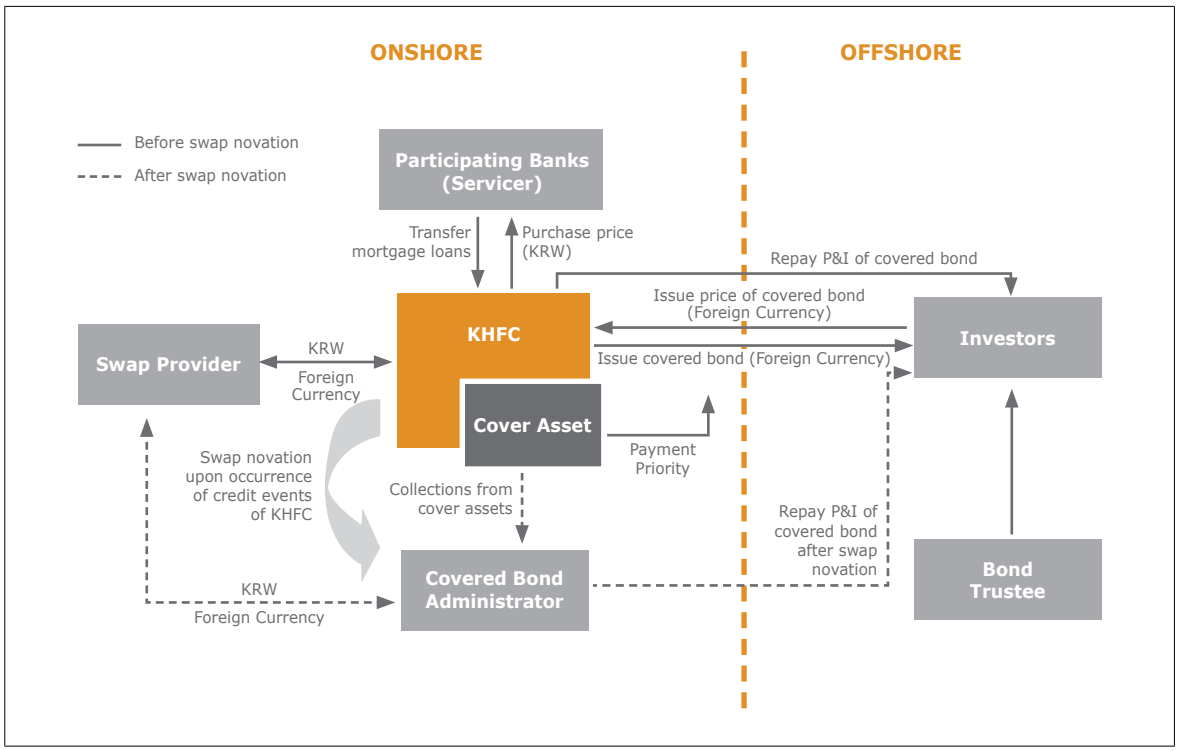
KHFC, which is wholly owned by the Korean government and the Bank of Korea, is the only eligible issuer of KHFC Covered Bonds. Pursuant to Article 31 of the KHFC Act, the holders of KHFC Covered Bonds have a statutory priority right of payment from a separately managed pool of mortgage loans designated as the underlying collateral for KHFC Covered Bonds (the "KHFC Cover Pool"). In addition, if principal and interest on a KHFC Covered Bond are not fully paid out of the KHFC Cover Pool, it can be paid from the general assets of KHFC. KHFC issues these bonds without transferring the cover assets to a separate legal entity and the bankruptcy remote cover assets are left on KHFC's balance sheet. The investors have dual recourse in respect of the KHFC Covered Bonds: (a) a senior unsecured claim to KHFC prior to the occurrence of an issuer event of default or at maturity; and (b) a statutory priority right of payment over the KHFC Cover Pool upon the occurrence of an issuer event of default.

In the case of KHFC Covered Bonds issued offshore, KHFC enters into a cross currency swap agreement and an interest rate swap agreement with the swap providers, pursuant to which KHFC will deliver KRW interest periodically and principal at maturity to the swap providers in exchange for foreign currency payments. The swap providers pay foreign currency denominated interest periodically and principal at maturity. The swap agreement is subject to an automatic swap novation mechanism (the "Swap Novation") in which the swap providers, KHFC, and the swap delegate entered into a tripartite automatic novation agreement at the closing date, which states that the swap agreement will be automatically terminated with KHFC and novated to the swap delegate upon the occurrence of certain events of default regarding KHFC, and that the mark-to-market valuation of the swap agreement as of the novation date will not be exchanged between KHFC and the swap providers or between KHFC and the swap delegate.

Subsequent to such events of default, the swap delegate will pay KRW generated from the KHFC Cover Pool to the swap providers in exchange for the foreign currency denominated payments, and the swap providers will pay the foreign currency denominated interest periodically and principal at maturity.

The following diagram illustrates the structure of the KHFC Covered Bonds transaction.

Figure 1: KHFC Covered Bonds Transaction Structure



Source: Kim & Chang

Issuance limit

KHFC may issue KHFC Covered Bonds up to 50 times of its paid-in equity capital.

2. Covered Bond Act

Eligible issuer

Eligible issuers of covered bonds under the Covered Bond Act (the "Covered Bonds") include (i) banks licensed and established under the Bank Act of Korea, (ii) the Korea Development Bank, (iii) the Export-Import Bank of Korea, (iv) the Industrial Bank of Korea, (v) Nonghyup Bank, (vi) Suhyup Bank, or (vii) KHFC. Eligible issuers of Covered Bonds, however, must have equity capital of not less than KRW 100 bn, BIS ratio of not less than 10%, and appropriate funding and operation structures and risk management procedures, etc.

Issuance limit

The Covered Bond Act prescribes that eligible issuers may issue Covered Bonds up to the ceiling set by the Presidential Decree of the Covered Bond Act (the "Presidential Decree") which shall not exceed 8% of its total assets as of the end of the fiscal year immediately preceding the scheduled date of issuance and the Presidential Decree limits this to 4% of its total assets as of the end of the fiscal year immediately preceding the scheduled date of issuance. The FSC, as the Korean financial regulator, reserves the right to restrict this further to 2% of its total assets taking into consideration various factors, such as collateralisation ratio and financial condition including liquidity position.

III. COVER ASSETS

1. KHFC Act

The mortgage loans in the KHFC Cover Pool are acquired from certain Korean financial institutions that function as the originating banks. The individual mortgage loans included in the KHFC Cover Pool may change from time to time as a result of substitutions by KHFC, and KHFC is responsible for ensuring that the mortgage loans are properly serviced and delegates its servicing responsibility to the originating banks, with each originating bank servicing those mortgage loans originated and sold by it to KHFC.

2. Covered Bond Act

The cover pool (the "Cover Pool") shall comprise of (1) the Underlying Assets, (2) the Liquid Assets and (3) Other Assets. The "Underlying Assets" shall include (i) residential mortgage loans with 70% or lower loan-to-value (LTV) ratio and first priority mortgage, obligors of which are not subject to insolvency proceedings, (ii) loan receivables against the government, a local government or a corporation incorporated under the special laws, Korean Treasury bonds, municipal bonds or bonds issued by a corporation incorporated under the special laws, (iii) mortgage loans secured by ships or aircraft with 70% or lower LTV ratio and is insured for an amount in excess of 110% of the sum of (a) the aggregate outstanding balance of the relevant loan and (b) any other outstanding debt of the issuer that are at least *pari passu* with such loan and (iv) asset backed securities issued under the ABS Act and KHFC Covered Bonds and residential mortgage backed securities issued pursuant to the KHFC Act. The following limitations are applicable to the residential mortgage loans comprising the Underlying Assets: (x) at least 20% must have a debt-to-income (DTI) ratio of 70% or less, (y) at least 30% must be fixed rate loans, and (z) if there are residential mortgage loans of which 50% or more of their outstanding principal balance may be set off against the relevant issuer, such residential mortgage loans should comprise 10% or less of all residential mortgage loans. The "Liquid Assets" shall comprise of cash, certificates of deposit with a maturity of no more than 100 days issued by financial companies other than the issuer of the Covered Bonds, bonds issued by any government as prescribed by the FSC, financial instruments issued by foreign financial companies as prescribed by the FSC similar to the certificates of deposit referred to above and deposits and term deposits at either domestic or foreign financial companies with maturity of 3 months or less. Finally, "Other Assets" shall comprise of collections and other property rights acquired from the Underlying Assets and the Liquid Assets and the claims acquired from derivatives transactions executed in order to hedge foreign exchange rate or interest rate risks and other risks associated with the cover pool pursuant to the Covered Bond issuance plan.

IV. VALUATION AND LTV CRITERIA

1. KHFC Act

There is no statutory standard for valuation of residential mortgage loans that are included in KHFC Cover Pool. Instead, the valuation methods are set forth in individual transaction documents for the KHFC Covered Bonds which value residential mortgage loans between 100% and 0%, depending on the length of delinquency.

2. Covered Bond Act

LTVs for residential mortgage loans as well as loans secured by ships or aircrafts in the Cover Pool shall be 70% or lower. Valuation shall be carried out by reference to the closing market price of the relevant day on the securities exchange. In cases where no reliable market prices are available on the relevant day, book value, par value, purchase price, transaction price and price provided by an entity which satisfies statutory requirements shall be taken into account, alongside the prevailing exchange rate at the time of valuation. Where derivative transactions have been entered into for the purpose of hedging exposure to movements in foreign currency exchange rates, the exchange rates as specified in such derivative transactions themselves shall be used, and non-eligible assets and derivative transactions shall be valued at "0".

V. HEDGING AND ASSET – LIABILITY MANAGEMENT

1. KHFC Act

In the case of KHFC Covered Bonds issued offshore, the underlying residential mortgage loans are denominated in KRW but the KHFC Covered Bonds are issued in foreign currency and KHFC entered into swap agreements to hedge the resulting currency risk. This swap agreement is subject to the Swap Novation described above. There are no statutory regulations on overcollateralisation or excess yield of collateralised assets. However, the transaction documents in previous KHFC Covered Bonds have required the KHFC Cover Pool to satisfy an asset coverage test and the failure for the KHFC Cover Pool to satisfy the foregoing test for a certain period of time becomes an issuer event of default which in turn triggers the management of the KHFC Cover Pool to be transferred to a separately appointed swap delegate, in addition to the above-mentioned Swap Novation.

2. Covered Bond Act

The total value of the Cover Pool shall be equal to or more than 105% (the "Required Overcollateralisation Ratio") of the total value of the covered bonds and the liquid assets shall not exceed 10% of the total outstanding amount of the Cover Pool. The details of the valuation standard and method, etc. for each type of assets comprising the cover pool are prescribed by the Presidential Decree. The issuer shall prepare and maintain separate books for the management of the Cover Pool. If the total value of the Cover Pool is likely to fall below the Required Overcollateralisation Ratio or cover assets fail to satisfy the Cover Pool eligibility criteria set forth in the Covered Bond Act (the "Cover Asset Eligibility"), the issuer shall add or substitute the Underlying Assets and Liquid Assets without delay in order to comply with the Required Overcollateralisation Ratio and the Cover Asset Eligibility. Unlike the KHFC Act, the claims acquired from derivatives transactions executed in order to hedge foreign exchange rate or interest rate risks and other risks associated with the Cover Pool pursuant to the Covered Bond issuance plan are included in the Cover Pool as described above and the swap provider also has a priority right of payment from the Cover Pool under the Covered Bond Act. As such, we do not expect there to be a particular need to novate the relevant swap agreement to a third party.

VI. TRANSPARENCY

1. KHFC

To issue KHFC Covered Bonds, KHFC must register a securitisation plan with the FSC and this securitisation plan is available to the public on the FSS website. Amendments to the securitisation plan after the terms and conditions of the KHFC Covered Bonds are confirmed must also be registered with the FSC.

2. Covered Bond Act

Any eligible issuer that intends to issue Covered Bonds must register the Covered Bond issuance plan and details of the Cover Pool with the FSC. The issuer must also register amendments to the issuance plan or the matters concerning the Cover Pool, while minor changes shall be reported to the FSC within seven days from the date of such change.

The issuer is required to establish and monitor at least on a quarterly basis separate risk management standards and procedures relating to the issuance and redemption of the Covered Bonds. The issuer is also obligated to disclose on its website on a quarterly basis the result of risk management monitoring, the report prepared by the Cover Pool monitor and other information necessary. The FSC may request data concerning business or properties of the issuer and its administrator and the Cover Pool monitor, or investigate such business and properties if necessary, for protecting the Covered Bond investors.

VII. COVER POOL MONITOR AND BANKING SUPERVISION

1. KHFC Act

There are no explicit provisions in the KHFC Act on the KHFC Cover Pool monitor but independent third parties are appointed to supervise and monitor KHFC's management of the KHFC Cover Pool. For example, an accounting firm has been appointed as the cover pool monitor in previous KHFC Covered Bond issuances to be responsible for confirming whether the KHFC Cover Pool minimum maintenance requirements have been satisfied. In addition, the KHFC Covered Bond administrator is appointed in advance for the management of the Cover Pool in order to protect the KHFC Covered Bond holders upon occurrence of any issuer event of default including a bankruptcy event of KHFC.

2. Covered Bond Act

The issuer shall appoint with the approval from the FSC a Cover Pool monitor to monitor the eligibility of the Cover Pool independently. The Cover Pool monitor shall be (i) a person who qualifies as a bond administrator under the Korean Commercial Code, (ii) KHFC (excluding the case where the issuer is KHFC) or (iii) a corporation with equity capital of KRW 1 bn or more that has five or more administration personnel necessary for the performance of duties as a Cover Pool monitor including two or more experts such as lawyers, certified public accountants or certified public appraisers and one or more persons with experience in business related to Covered Bonds.

The Cover Pool monitor is authorised to take any actions in court or otherwise necessary for the management, maintenance and disposition of the Cover Pool. The Cover Pool monitor is obligated to submit on a quarterly basis a report to the FSC within 30 days of the end of each quarter on the performance of its duty as a Cover Pool monitor and provide it to the issuer and, upon request, the Covered Bond investors and other parties, as described below, who have a priority right of payment from the registered Cover Pool.

VIII. SEGREGATION OF COVER ASSETS AND BANKRUPTCY REMOTENESS OF COVERED BONDS

1. KHFC Act

Articles 30 and 31 of the KHFC Act state that (i) KHFC may issue the KHFC Covered Bonds with a statutory priority right of payment over the mortgage loans separately managed in accordance with the applicable KHFC Act securitisation plan, and (ii) if mortgage loans in the KHFC Cover Pool are separately managed according to the applicable KHFC Act securitisation plan, the investors will have a priority right of payment against such mortgage loans unless otherwise prescribed in other laws. Considering the legislative intent and history of these provisions, the statutory priority right of payment over the mortgage loans owned by KHFC was considered as having been granted to the investors through the registration with the FSC of the applicable KHFC Act securitisation plan without taking any other actions necessary for the establishment or perfection of the statutory priority right.

KHFC is required to separately manage the mortgage loans included in the Cover Pool from its other assets on the basis of the applicable KHFC Act securitisation plan.

2. Covered Bond Act

Article 13 of the Covered Bond Act states that (i) holders of Covered Bonds, (ii) swap providers, (iii) claim-holders relating to the redemption/maintenance and management of the Covered Bonds and management/disposal and execution of the Cover Pool, and (iv) the Cover Pool monitor have a priority right of payment on the registered Cover Pool over third parties. Article 12 of the Covered Bond Act states that, in case of an issuer's insolvency, the Cover Pool shall not be subject to the issuer's insolvency proceedings, including compulsory execution, preservative measures and stay orders. If the principal of the Covered Bonds is not fully repaid, Covered Bond holders have the right to payment from other assets of the issuer in addition to the Cover Pool.

With the consent of the holders of at least 75% of the aggregate outstanding principal amount of the Covered Bonds, FSC may issue an order to transfer relevant contracts to another eligible issuer.

The issuer is required to separately manage the mortgage loans included in a Cover Pool from its other assets on the basis of the applicable issuance plan. The books for the Cover Pool must also be separately maintained and any violation may be subject to criminal sanctions.

IX. RISK-WEIGHTING AND COMPLIANCE WITH EUROPEAN REGULATION

The Covered Bonds under the Covered Bond Act and the KHFC Covered Bonds under the KHFC Act are not compliant with Article 52(4) UCIT and do not benefit from the higher investment limits because neither KHFC nor any of the potential South Korean issuers of the covered bonds is a credit institution with its registered office in a EU member state. These covered bonds cannot be CRD compliant without meeting the requirements of Article 52(4) UCITS.[1] Thus, the covered bonds cannot benefit from special treatment in terms of risk weighting.

Issuers: KEB Hana Bank, Kookmin Bank, Korea Housing Finance Corporation, Shinhan Bank.

ECBC Covered Bond Comparative Database: https://www.ecbc.eu/framework/107/South_Korean_Covered_Bonds

COVERED BOND LABEL **:** KEB Hana Bank (1 pool), Kookmin Bank (1 pool), Korea Housing Finance Corporation (1 pool), Shinhan Bank (1 pool).

For the most up-to-date information, please consult the new ECBC Covered Bond Comparative Database webpage on the Covered Bond Label website www.coveredbondlabel.com or via the following QR code:

1 Please click on the following link for further information on the UCITS Directive and the Capital Requirements Regulation (CRR): https://hypo.org/ecbc/covered-bonds/.

3.39 SPAIN

By Gregorio Arranz, Spanish Mortgage Association External Legal Advisor

I. FRAMEWORK

The legal framework for Spanish covered bonds – "bonos garantizados" (BG) – is determined by the Royal Decree Law 24/2021 of 2 November 2021 (RDL).

RDL 24/2021 served to transpose not only the Covered Bonds Directive (Directive 2019/2162 of 27 November 2019, CBD) but also a wide range of different directives on many fields. Subsequently some technical improvements were introduced by Royal Decree-Law 5/2023 of 28 June 2023.

RDL 24/2021 regulates Spanish covered bonds (CB) whatever their collateral contrasting with previous legal solution of having different pieces of legislation for mortgage bonds, public sector loans and *internationalization* bonds, although legislation of the two latter was built on the mortgage bonds one.

Although secondary legislation is contemplated as a possibility, mainly referred to the appraisal process of the underlying assets and the approval procedure and supervision by the Bank of Spain (BE), such legislation is contemplated as a mean to improve the RDL but not at all as a condition for its complete and immediate application. As a matter of fact, it only has been approved by the BE the Circular 1/2023, developing in detail the issuers' reporting obligations in line with art. 21.2 of the CBD. Not any other changes are foreseen in the next future.

As regards transitional measures, when the RDL came into force – on 8 July 2022 – their provisions were fully applicable to the CB issued before that date, discarding any grandfathering-like solution and so going beyond article 30 of the Directive. This legal option reflects the firm position of the issuers' community in favour to what it was termed as the *big bang* solution, on the basis that keeping two types of CB fragments the market and is very difficult to manage. It is worth to mention that the RDL specifically bans any right of the bondholders affected by the change to claim for the early repayment of the bonds. Consequently, on July 4th 2022, once the issuers had already implemented all the requirements that the RDL envisaged, the BE approved the programs of all the outstanding issuances classifying them as *premium*.

II. STRUCTURE OF THE ISSUER

Issuers of the BG must be credit institutions according to art. 3.1 of the CBD. In Spain universal credit institutions have traditionally been the ones issuing CB. There is not a need of a special license for issuing BG but issuers must have at any moment sufficient capacity and means.

The issuer of the BG directly owns the cover assets forming the pool on its balance sheet and they are not transferred to a different legal entity.

On a different note, in Spain the issuer is normally the originator of the cover assets although nothing in the law prevents their acquisition from another credit institution and moreover joint funding (art.9 CBD) is specifically envisaged.

III. COVER ASSETS

Spanish legislation – although common for all the BG – envisages four types of BG, each one having cover assets (*primary assets*) of different nature as collateral.

Furthermore, for each type of primary assets there are two alternatives in order to outline the bonds: *cédulas* – open-ended pools and *bonos* – closed–ended pools. This solution preserves the Spanish traditional legal binary option although as a matter-of-fact issuers have only issued cédulas and apparently it was kept for flexibility reasons. Most RDL provisions are equally applicable to both figures.

The four types of BG are:

a) Mortgage CB (*cédulas y bonos hipotecarios*).

b) Public sector CB (*cédulas y bonos territoriales*).

c) *Internationalization* CB (*cédulas y bonos de internacionalización*).

d) *Other* CB.

The three first types of CB are specifically regulated by the RDL being all them CRR (*EU* Regulation 575/2013 on prudential requirements for credit institutions and investment firms amended by Regulation 2019 /2160 as regards exposures in the form of covered bonds) compliant since their respective regimes meet all the requirements contemplated in said Regulation.

Internationalization CB are a sub-type of public sector CB distinguished by their purpose of financing initiatives related to the internationalization of entrepreneurs.

With the fourth category – *Other CB* – Spanish legislator intends to open a door to future issuances of BG backed by assets of different nature to the primary assets, provided art. 6 of the CBD (*Eligible covered assets*) requirements and limits are met.

Assets are normally located in Spain although according to the Directive Spanish law allows assets located in the European Union and even outside (art.7 of the CBD) to be incorporated to the pools.

Mortgage CB (*cédulas hipotecarias*) is the type with the most complete regulation as they have notably been the most important in Spain.

All mortgage loans incorporated to the pool must comply with the following requirements:

- The mortgage that guarantees the loan must be a first-ranked mortgage.
- The recording of the mortgage on the public register must be valid.
- Singular LTV limits are to be respected. We shall expose them in the next chapter.
- The mortgaged properties must have been valued previously by the so-called "Sociedades de Tasación".
- Mortgaged assets must be insured against damages claims.
- Residential loans cannot exceed 30 years.

Additionally – and for all the three types of specifically regulated CB – RDL permits the incorporation of substitution assets consisting in public debt issued by entities contemplated in art 129.1 a) and b) of the CRR or in short-term deposits to credit institutions contemplated in art 129.1 c). Substitution assets cannot exceed 10% of the total assets and if said limit is supervened exceeded the issuers should either buy back CB or replace the substitution assets by additional primary assets.

Finally, RDL allows joint pools and intragroup structures being their regulation just a literal reproduction of the terms of the CBD (arts. 8 and 9).

IV. VALUATION AND LTV CRITERIA

The RDL develops the general principles laid down in art.6.5 of the CBD as follows.

An updated valuation must exist for all the physical assets when the loans are included in the pool. The valuation should be revised at least yearly.

In the case of mortgage loans, a genuine new appraisal is only necessary when there are signals of a depreciation of the assets pursuant to the solutions envisaged in art.208 of the CRR and incorporated to the Circular 4/2017 of the BE. Additionally, when loans are initially included in the pool and also for subsequent yearly

valuations, the value of the assets to consider can never exceed that resulting from the valuation when the loan was granted. Moreover, appreciations if any cannot be considered.

The valuation can be carried out by specialized companies, the "Sociedades de Tasación" (widely regulated in the RDL) supervised by the BE or by independent professionals. This rule is compatible with the use of internal and statistical models/methods where a genuine appraisal is not necessary.

In any case, the valuer must be independent from the credit decision process and in the valuations speculative element should not be considered.

Detailed regulation on the valuation of assets has been issued by the BE (Circular 4/2017).

The valuers must document their assessments having their internal records at the disposal of the CPM and the BE.

In the case of mortgage loans, the basis for the property valuation is the mortgage lending value.

Regarding LTV constrains, the RDL only contemplates them in relation to mortgage CB. Spain was one of the very few countries opting for a system of hard limits when incorporating art. 129 1 of CRR but did it with some peculiarities. The chosen solution maintains what was the traditional rule in Spain:

> When loans are incorporated to the pool, they may not exceed 60% of the mortgage lending value of the mortgaged assets, except for residential loans, in which case they may reach up to a maximum of 80% of such value. The loans exceeding the latter percentages are considered not *eligible* **in their totality** (*hard limits*).

> Notwithstanding above, mortgage loans that initially exceed these percentages can be used as cover assets for the issuance of CB when due to the repayment of their principals the values do not exceed said LTVs.

Additionally, and differently to the traditional rule in Spain, in case that due to the decrease of the market value of the mortgaged properties after the loans are incorporated to the pool (supervened depreciation of collaterals) LTV exceed said percentages, mortgages loans could be considered *eligible* but only up to the 60% or 80 % of their amount (*soft limit*-like solution). Notwithstanding this, these loans – although only partially *eligible* for the denominator of the OC level – are incorporated to the pool in their entirety (*i.e.*, the so named top tranche is incorporated to the pool).

V. ASSET – LIABILITY MANAGEMENT

Assets and OC

The RDL makes a rather literal transposition of art. 15 – *Coverage requirements* – of the CBD incorporating the *nominal principal*: aggregate principal amount of all cover assets of the pool must be equal or exceeds the aggregate principal amount of outstanding covered bonds.

The text also incorporates all the Directive's national discretions permitted *i.e.*, consideration of future interests (as an option for the issuer) or calculation of a lump sum for calculating expected costs related to maintenance and administration for the winding-down of the CB program.

Regarding OC, the RDL- in line with the CBD – distinguishes between legal, contractual and voluntary overcollateralization.

Legal OC is only specifically contemplated for the three types of CB subject to specific regulation (CRR compliant CB): mortgage bonds, public sector bonds and *internationalization* bonds, introducing the 5% percentage on a nominal basis pursuant to the new art 129 3 a) of the CRR. Only for the fourth category of CB – *Other* CB – a mandatory OC is not specifically envisaged.

The RDL does not introduce any cap to the contractual/voluntary OC.

Liability management

> The RDL has introduced for first time in Spain a rather complete regulation of the liability management fully aligned with the provisions of the Directive. In the previous period there was some sort of tacit consensus that the huge amount of overcollateralization (the entire portfolio of loans) made not strictly necessary a regulation of the liability management. The only liquidity mitigants contemplated were the substitution assets (liquid ones) but they were rarely employed.

  Traditionally the primary method used by Spanish issuers to mitigate market and interest risk has been the natural matching. This has now rightly been reinforced by the different tools the RDL implements (all taken from the CBD).

> Firstly, RDL regulates a cover pool liquidity buffer – following closely art 16 of the CBD provisions – as main tool to deal with liquidity risk.

  The liquidity buffer is to cover the maximum cumulative net liquidity outflow over the next 180 days, the RDL not extending this term.

  With respect to the type of liquid assets admitted into the buffer, RDL does not restrict the list envisaged in art 16.3 of the CBD.

  In case that extendable maturity structures are used the RDL determines that the final maturity date is to be considered for the calculation of the principal, incorporating so the Directive's possibility and conceding more flexibility to the issuers.

> RDL also regulates the use by issuers of derivatives contracts for mitigating risks, mainly interest risk. Here also the regulation reproduces faithfully the Directive requirements (art 11).

  The hedging counterparties must be credit institutions with the specific credit quality mentioned in art 129 1 c) CRR.

  RDL adequately regulates that hedging counterparties' claims have the same preference as covered bond holders in case of bankruptcy or resolution of the issuer and that when any of the latter circumstances occur derivative contracts cannot be early terminated.

> RDL also introduces extendable maturity structures that were completely unknown in Spain.

  The regulation reproduces the requirements contemplated in art 17.1 of the CBD. Their effective use is a free option for the issuers always within the legal framework.

  These structures will normally adopt the form of soft bullets.

With respect to the objective triggers entitling issuers for maturity extensions the RDL mentions:

> Serious liquidity problems.

> Insolvency or resolution situations.

> No viability of the credit institution according to the Recovery and Resolution Directive.

> Serious market disturbances.

Moreover, RDL requires a specific BE approval to activate the requested extension.

> RDL also obliges issuers to implement internal tests to mitigate interest rate, foreign exchange and maturity mismatch risks.

VI. TRANSPARENCY

The transparency regime that RDL lies down is a reproduction of art. 14 (*investor information*) of the CBD. The information is to be disclosed quarterly and not more frequently.

On top of that, main Spanish issuers of BG, coordinated by the Spanish Mortgage Association, and since the end of 2011, have been utilizing the ECBC Label Foundation HTT (Harmonized Transparency Template). As it is well known, the Label Foundation completed in 2022 the process to fully adapt HTT to art. 14 provisions.

VII. COVER POOL MONITOR AND BANKING SUPERVISION

Cover pool monitor

In contrast with other European legislations the institution of the CPM (*órgano de control del conjunto de cobertura*) was completely unknown in Spain being its introduction a novelty of the RDL.

Although the Directive does not make the introduction of this figure into the national legislation compulsory, Spanish legislator rightly introduced it assuming was a feature of most European legislations.

Its mission – according to the art 13.1 of the CBD – is to perform ongoing monitoring of the fulfilment by the CB issuers of all the legal requirements and limits and the RDL specifies its concrete duties.

The RDL incorporates the two alternatives permitted by the Directive for the issuers implementing this figure.

a) Appointing an external entity.

b) Configuring it as an internal CPM.

> External CPM.

The external CPM must be a commercial society with sufficient human and material resources and sound internal procedures. Qualified stakeholders (10% of the capital), directors and general managers must all be good repute.

RDL explicitly prevents from being CPM auditors having acted as such for the issuer (or a company of its group) in the three previous years to their appointment or corporations belonging to the issuer's group.

External CPM must be appointed for a minimum period of 3 years, which could be extended up to a maximum of ten years (although it could be re-appointed once 3 years have elapsed since the end of its mandate). Notwithstanding the issuer can decide to dismiss the CPM when appreciating is not fulfilling their duties correctly, notifying it to the BE and proposing a new candidate to be approved by it.

> Internal CPM.

The RDL requires that this kind of CPM has sufficient independence, *authority*, and resources within the issuer. Its appointment corresponds to the Board of Directors of the issuer to whom direct access should be permitted.

When the issuers apply for the approval of the CB program by the BE they must indicate who is the proposed (external or internal) CPM and prove that all the relevant requirements are met, corresponding in any case the final decision to the BE. The BE has a very wide margin of discretion to determine who can be effectively appointed. CPM are recorded in a special register hold by the BE. As a matter of fact, the BE has only accepted external CPM.

The RDL invests the CPM with a very wide range of powers and faculties and envisages different levels of reporting firstly to the issuer itself and subsequently to the BE to check that issuers always act correctly and prevent breaches of the legislation. Additionally CPM must previously authorize every entries and exits of assets in the pool what has been considered too rigid by the industry.

Banking Supervision

RDL confers CB public supervision to the BE giving it wide supervisory powers in line with the provisions of art.18 of the Directive.

BG issuers require a special permission from the BE for each CB program. Needed requirements to obtain the permission are basically the same as those laid down in art 19.2 of the CBD, but additionally requiring the issuers to file an impact assessment of the program on its financial situation (solvency, liquidity...) and also provide information on the risk management of the pool.

The reporting to the BE is designed with a quarterly frequency and referred to all the necessary elements to justify the correct functioning of the programs in line with art 21.2 of the CBD. The details of said reporting were established by the BE in the Circular 1/2023.

On top of this the BE can request at any moment more information through the CPM.

The RDL finally dedicates several articles to the disciplinary regime following closely arts. 23 and 24 of the CBD provisions, comprising:

> Infractions.

> Penalties and their publication.

> The disciplinary procedure applicable is the one contemplated in the credit institutions general legislation.

A "special" supervision is also carried out by the Spanish Securities Markets regulator (Comisión Nacional del Mercado de Valores) who supervises compliance with bonds' marketing and public offers rules and as well the functioning of CB secondary markets.

VIII. SEGREGATION OF COVER ASSETS AND BANKRUPTCY REMOTENESS OF COVERED BONDS

Asset segregation from the insolvency estate

As we already said above, before the RDL was approved Spanish legislation did not recognize the figure of pools of assets as such. In case of insolvency the entire mortgage (or other eligible assets) portfolio worked as collateral having bond holders a preferential right against **all** the loans whatever their characteristics were. This was the main singularity of the Spanish model of *cédulas*.

The new regulation radically changes said solution introducing for first time the idea of pool (defined set of assets) making Spanish legislation convergent with the solution adopted by all the other jurisdictions and subsequently adopted by the Directive itself.

All covered bond programs are linked to a specific pool of assets (*conjunto de cobertura*) securing the payments obligations attached to the covered bonds, being said assets duly segregated from other assets held by the credit institution.

All the assets integrating the *conjunto de cobertura* are recorded in an internal register (cover register) continuously updated.

Credit institutions must configure the register permitting the individual identification of each asset and to check its compliance with the *eligibility* requirements the RDL lies down. The RDL specifies the concrete information to be shown over each registered asset.

Effective segregation initially operates through the inclusion of the assets in the register.

Upon the insolvency of the issuer, segregation is reinforced by incorporating all the assets included in the *conjunto de cobertura* to a separate estate (*patrimonio separado*). This estate remains on the issuer's balance sheet (it is not a special purpose vehicle or similar) and is completely independent respect to the issuer (general) bankruptcy estate.

RDL supersedes general bankruptcy law and also develops general provisions contained in the resolution legislation.

One of the most positive elements of the RDL is that contains a wide and detailed procedural regulation on how insolvency or resolution of the issuer affect to the *conjunto de cobertura*.

Using the option contained in art 20.2 of the CBD the RDL has introduced the figure of the special administrator both for insolvency and resolution procedures. Their appointment corresponds to the competent (bankruptcy) judge or to the FROB (resolution authority), but the BE must be always consulted.

The special administrator is granted with a very ample range of powers on behalf of the covered bonds investors, including the faculty to assign or pledge the assets.

While insolvency or resolution procedures are open the issuer bank retains its condition of credit institution, so outstanding covered bonds keep their specific nature.

Also, according to the Directive, the Spanish regulation ensures coordination among the special administrator, the BE and the FROB.

In the case of insolvency, if at the end there is need to wind up the *patrimonio separado* since assets are clearly and definitively insufficient to pay the bond holders (default of the pool), the bonds payment shall be done on a pro rata basis, regardless of their issuance dates.

Finally, if after realizing the cover assets, bondholders' credits are not completely satisfied, they also have a right against the bankruptcy estate (recourse) but ranking *pari passu* with unsecured creditors.

On the contrary, once bondholders' claims were fully satisfied if hypothetically there were remaining assets in the *patrimonio separado*, ordinary creditors also have a right against them.

Bankruptcy remoteness

Regarding bankruptcy remoteness, the RDL clearly determines that the opening of bankruptcy or resolution procedures in no case implies the automatic acceleration of payments, explicitly excluding any entitlement to the bondholders to claim for the early payment of the debts.

IX. RISK-WEIGHTING & COMPLIANCE WITH EUROPEAN LEGISLATION

As we said in the first chapter – Framework – the RDL has carried out a complete and respectful transposition of the Covered Bond Directive as well as a correct integration of the revised CRR (art 129) provisions.

The RDL mainly regulates CRR compliant CB (mortgage bonds, public sector bonds and *internationalization* bonds) but also contemplates a fourth category "*Other covered bonds*", where bonds only must comply with art 6 of the CBD (*eligible* cover assets) requirements and which could include assets not contemplated in art.129.1 of the CRR, with no specific determination of the assets to be fit (open category).

Issuers: ABANCA Corporación Bancaria, S.A., Banco de Sabadell, S.A., Banco Santander S.A., Bankinter, S.A., BBVA, CaixaBank SA, Caja Rural de Navarra, Credit Cooperative, Eurocaja Rural, Grupo Cooperativo Cajamar, Ibercaja Banco S.A., Kutxabank S.A., Unicaja Banco SA.

COVERED BOND LABEL : Banco de Sabadell, S.A. (1 pool), CaixaBank SA (2 pools), Banco Santander S.A. (2 pools), Kutxabank S.A. (1 pool), Unicaja Banco SA (1 pool), BBVA (2 pools), Bankinter, S.A. (1 pool), Ibercaja Banco S.A. (1 pool), Eurocaja Rural (1 pool), Caja Rural de Navarra, Credit Cooperative (1 pool), ABANCA Corporación Bancaria, S.A. (1 pool), Grupo Cooperativo Cajamar (2 pools).

For the most up-to-date information, please consult the new ECBC Covered Bond Comparative Database webpage on the Covered Bond Label website www.coveredbondlabel.com or via the following QR code:

3.40 SWEDEN

By Jonny Sylvén, Association of Swedish Covered Bond Issuers (ASCB)

I. FRAMEWORK

In Sweden, the issuance of covered bonds is governed by the Swedish Covered Bonds Issuance Act ('CBIA'), which came into force on 1 July 2004[1] and has been revised a couple of times, lastly 2022 with the regulation required by the Covered Bond Directive (CBD). The CBIA prevails over the general bankruptcy regulation and grants covered bond investors a priority claim on the eligible cover assets. A regulation and guidelines from Finansinspektionen, the Swedish Financial Supervisory Authority ('SFSA'), complement the legislation[2]. In the SFSA regulation and guidelines, some detailed criteria are specified regarding authorisation to issue covered bonds, cover pool requirements, coverage requirements and the cover register. The regulation has been revised to implement some parts of the CBD.

II. STRUCTURE OF THE ISSUER

The CBIA allows for all banks and credit institutions to issue covered bonds, provided that they have obtained a special authorisation from the SFSA. The issuer has to meet certain criteria to qualify for the authorisation. These criteria include the submission of a financial plan showing the issuer's financial stability for the coming three years, the conversion of any outstanding mortgage bonds into covered bonds and the conduct of business in compliance with the CBIA. The SFSA has the right to withdraw the authorisation should the institution be in material breach of the CBIA or have failed to issue covered bonds within one year of receiving the authorisation (Figure 1). If the SFSA withdraws an authorisation, the SFSA may lay down a plan to wind down the operation.

> Figure 1: Authorisation required to issue covered bonds

Requirements for authorisation to issue covered bonds:

- The institution's articles of association, by laws or regulations must comply with the CBIA.
- The issuer must conduct the covered bonds business according to the CBIA and related regulatory provisions.
- Any outstanding mortgage bonds must be converted into covered bonds or administered in an equivalent manner with respect to the creditors.
- A financial plan for the next three fiscal years, confirmed by auditors, showing that the issuer is sufficiently stable and that the interest of other creditors is not jeopardised when it issues covered bonds.
- The issuers have to submit an operational plan that shows sound management and supervision of the covered bond business (including information on the IT operations).

The SFSA may withdraw an authorisation if:

- The institution is in material breach of its obligations pursuant to the CBIA; and/or
- The institution has failed to issue any covered bonds within one year of receiving the authorisation.

Source: Lag 2003:1223, FFFS 2013:01

The cover assets correspond to the covered bond investors claims on the issuer and remain on the balance sheet, i.e. there is no transfer of the cover assets to a separate legal entity. The covered bonds are direct, unconditional obligations on the part of the issuer. The cover pool is dynamic, and the outstanding covered bonds are secured by the whole cover pool; the individual cover bonds are not linked to any specific cover assets.

1 Lag (2003:1223) om utgivning av säkerställda obligationer (the Covered Bonds Issuance Act).
2 FFFS 2013:01The SFSA's Regulations and Guidelines regarding covered bonds.

In the event of insolvency of the issuer, the cover pool is bankruptcy-remote and not included in the general insolvency estate of the issuer but is exclusively available to meet outstanding claims of covered bond holders. Moreover, covered bond investors enjoy ultimate recourse to the insolvency estate of the issuer, ranking *pari passu* with senior unsecured investors.

III. COVER ASSETS

Eligible cover assets are mortgage loans, loans to the public sector and exposures to credit institutions. There is no requirement for separate cover pools for mortgage and public sector cover assets; both types of assets can be mixed in a single cover pool. However, most of the cover assets are mortgages (more than 99% of the assets in the cover pools).

For mortgages to be eligible as cover assets they should be secured by:

- real property intended for residential or commercial use;
- site-leasehold rights intended for residential or commercial use;
- a pledge against tenant-owner rights; or
- similar foreign collateral (EEA).

Mortgages to commercial property are limited to 10% of the total value of the cover pool. If the purpose of the commercial property is agriculture this limitation is not valid. The collateral for the mortgage loans has to be located in Sweden or the European Economic Area (EEA). Neither asset-backed nor mortgage-backed securities are eligible as cover assets. The mortgage loans have to meet valuation criteria and certain loan-to-value ratios specified in the CBIA and the SFSA regulation (see section IV).

Eligible public sector assets are securities and other claims according to Capital Requirement Regulation (CRR) article 129(1) point (a) and (b).

Cover assets can also be exposures to credit institutions according to CRR article 129(1) point (c) that fulfil credit quality step 1 or 2. If the asset just fulfil credit quality step 3 an approval from the SFSA is needed. Assets that fulfil the requirement for the liquidity buffer are also allowed.

Non-performing loans due over 60 days cannot be included for the purpose of meeting the matching requirements set forth in the CBIA.

Derivative contracts

The CBIA provides for the use of derivatives for hedging of interest and currency risk. The derivatives must be structured so that an early termination is not triggered by an issuer default or on the counterparty's demand. The law stipulates asymmetrical collateralisation. Collateral, a guarantee or replacement language is required from the counterparty in the event of the rating falling below the minimum rating level. There are no reciprocal requirements on the covered bond issuer, but the derivative counterparty has a priority claim on the cover pool. The derivative contracts are included in the net present value coverage calculation, the purpose of which is to ascertain a good balance between the value of the assets and the liabilities in the covered bond programme.

IV. VALUATION AND LTV CRITERIA

The principles for the valuation of collateral for the mortgages in the cover pool are specified in the CBIA. The valuation relating to residential properties may be based on general price levels. The value of any other eligible property class must be based on the market price and determined on an individual basis by qualified professionals. The market value should reflect the price achievable through a commercial sale, without time pressure and excluding any speculative or temporary elements. Issuers are required to monitor the market value of the property in line with CRR article 129(3), and in the case of a significant decline review the valua-

tion and ensure that the loan to value (LTV) of the related mortgage loan remains within the limits. The valuer can be an employee of the issuer or external.

For the various mortgage types eligible as cover, the following maximum LTV ratios apply:

> 80% of the value for real estate, site-leasehold rights and tenant-owner rights where the property is intended for residential use;

> 60% of the value for real estate, site-leasehold rights and tenant-owner rights where the property is intended for commercial use, which may be exceeded up to a maximum level of 70% if all conditions prescribed in CRR article 129(1) point (f) are met.

The LTV limits are relative, not absolute. A loan with a higher LTV ratio can be included in the cover pool up to the legal threshold.

The issuer is required to test and analyse how changes in property values may affect LTV ratios and the value of the cover pool at least once a year. The tests should be based on conservative assumptions.

V. ASSET – LIABILITY MANAGEMENT

The CBIA always requires the nominal value of the cover assets to be at least 102 percent of the aggregate nominal value of claims arising from outstanding covered bonds. The cover assets, including derivatives, should, on a net present value basis, always be at least 102 percent of the corresponding net present value of claims arising from outstanding covered bonds, taking into account the effects of stress-test scenarios on interest and currency risks set by the SFSA. The stressed scenario that should be tested regarding interest-rate risk is a sudden and sustained parallel shift in the reference swap curve by 100 bps in an unfavourable direction, and a twist in the swap curve. The currency risk should be tested for a 10% sudden and sustained change in the relevant foreign exchange rate for the currency of the covered bonds and the currency of cover assets. Both the statutory OC and any additional OC for structural enhancement purposes are bankruptcy-remote and protected in the event of issuer insolvency.

The issuer shall ensure that the cash flow with respect to the assets in the cover pool, any derivative agreements and the covered bonds are such that the issuer is always able to meet its payment obligations towards the bondholders and derivative counterparties.

VI. LIQUIDITY RISK

In addition to the above-mentioned cash flow matching the issuer must cover at any time the cumulative maximum net cash outflow for the next 180 days with a liquidity buffer. HQLA asset in line with CBD are eligible for the liquidity buffer.

The issuer can use covered bonds with extendable maturity structures. The bonds can be extended after an approval by the SFSA, and such approval can only be achieved if it is likely that an extension may prevent the issuing institution from becoming insolvent. If the issuer uses extendable bonds, it is the latest of the maturities that is used to calculate the liquidity buffer.

VII. TRANSPARENCY

The issuers are required to disclose information regarding their cover pool and outstanding covered bonds every quarter in line with the requirement in CBD article 14. This is being done publishing the harmonized transparency template (HTT) and a national transparency template (NTT) on each issuer's website.

In addition to the publicly disclosed information, the issuers are required to give their respective cover pool inspector (see section VIII) additional information, specified in the SFSA regulation, and do quarterly reporting to the SFSA.

VIII. COVER POOL MONITORING AND BANKING SUPERVISION

The covered bond issuers are subject to special supervision by the SFSA. The SFSA supervises the issuers' compliance with the CBIA and related regulatory provisions. If an issuer is in material breach of its obligations under the legal framework, the SFSA can issue a warning or revoke the authorisation to issue covered bonds altogether. The SFSA may also revoke an authorisation if the issuer waives the license or if the institution has failed to issue covered bonds within a year from the date of the authorisation.

For each issuer, the SFSA appoints an independent and suitably qualified cover pool inspector (independent inspector), who is remunerated by the covered bond issuer. The duties of the independent inspector are to monitor the register and verify that the covered bonds, the derivative agreements, and the cover assets are correctly recorded. The inspector also ensures compliance with calculation of coverage and market risk limits in accordance with the framework. The inspector is also required to monitor the revaluations of underlying collateral that has been conducted during the year. The inspector submits a report of his or her assessment to the SFSA on an annual basis and is required to notify the SFSA as soon as he or she learns about an event deemed to be significant.

IX. SEGREGATION OF COVER ASSETS AND BANKRUPTCY REMOTENESS OF COVERED BONDS

Cover register

The issuer is required to keep a register of the eligible assets in cover pool, derivative contracts, and outstanding covered bonds. The law specifies the form and content of the register, which shall be easily accessible for the SFSA and the cover pool inspector. The register ensures that the covered bondholders and derivative counterparties have a legally enforceable priority claim on the cover pool in the event of issuer insolvency. Prior to an issuer being declared insolvent, cash flows accruing from the cover assets must be accounted for in the register by the issuer.

Issuer insolvency

In the event of issuer insolvency, the registered cover assets, registered derivatives and the covered bonds are segregated from the general insolvency estate. Covered bonds are not accelerated as long as the cover pool fulfils the requirements set out in the CBIA, which also allows for "temporary, minor deviations"[3]. An issuer default does not trigger early termination of any registered derivative contracts. Covered bond holders and registered derivative counterparties have a priority claim on the cover pool and cash that derives from the pool, ensuring timely repayment to original agreed terms, as long as the cover pool is compliant with the CBIA. The cover pool does however not constitute a separate legal estate. According to a legal opinion, the bankruptcy of the issuer should not lead to a debt moratorium on the covered bonds.[4]

Under the Swedish Bankruptcy Code, the insolvency of a parent company does not automatically trigger the insolvency of its subsidiary.

Cover pool default and preferential treatment

In the event of the cover pool being incompliant with the eligibility criteria, the covered bonds would be accelerated. Covered bond investors and derivative counterparties would have a priority claim on the proceeds from the sale of the cover assets, ranking pari passu among themselves but prior to any other creditors. If the proceeds are insufficient to repay all liabilities on the outstanding covered bonds, covered bond investors and derivative counterparties would have an ultimate recourse to the insolvency estate of the issuer, ranking pari passu with senior unsecured investors.

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3 According to the legislative history of the Act, this would be, for example, "temporary liquidity constraints".

4 There are no means in the Act that could disrupt or delay payment to covered bondholders. However, the Act does not explicitly derogate from the general provision of the Code of Procedures 1948 or the Bankruptcy Act 1987, of which neither explicitly ensures the integrity of payments on covered bonds.

Survival of OC

Any OC present in the cover pool at the time of the issuer's insolvency is bankruptcy-remote provided that it is recorded in the cover pool register. Full repayment of outstanding claims related to the covered bonds and registered derivatives is required before the cover assets would be available to satisfy any claims from unsecured creditors.

The law does not provide for the appointment of a special cover pool administrator. The receiver-in-bankruptcy represents the interests of both the covered bond investors and the unsecured investors.

Access to liquidity in case of insolvency

In the cases of the issuer's insolvency, the law does not enable the receiver-in-bankruptcy to refinance maturing covered bonds by issuing new covered bonds. The receiver cannot substitute ordinary cover assets for other assets. However, the receiver can utilise available liquid assets included in the cover pool and is allowed to sell assets from the cover pool to create the necessary liquidity.

The receiver-in-bankruptcy also has a mandate to, on behalf of the bankruptcy estate enter into loan agreements and other contracts for the purpose of maintaining sufficient coverage and liquidity and managing the currency and interest rate risks. The receiver should only enter into agreements if, on the date of execution of the agreement, the agreement is deemed to be in the bondholders' and derivative counterparties' interest and if the assets in the cover pool are deemed to fulfil the legal requirements. When the receiver enters into an agreement, the counterparty has a claim on the bankruptcy estate that ranks ahead of the secured creditors and creditors with rights of priority.

X. RISK-WEIGHTING & COMPLIANCE WITH EUROPEAN LEGISLATION

The Swedish covered bonds are compliant with CRR article 129 and CBD. Since the bonds are compliant with CRR article 129, the applicable risk-weight for the Swedish covered bonds will be ten percent for those banks that use the standard method. Because the CBIA require compliance with CRR article 129, the bonds can be labelled "European Covered Bond (Premium)" and "svensk säkerställd obligation".

The Swedish UCITS Act (Lag (2004:46) om värdepappersfonder) allows for Swedish UCITS to invest up to 25% of their assets in Swedish covered bonds from one issuer, instead of the 5% generally applicable to other asset classes.

XI. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Issuing and trading of Swedish domestic covered bonds

Normally the Swedish covered bonds are registered at Nasdaq Stockholm (a Nasdaq Inc. subsidiary), although no actual bond trading takes place there. The base prospectuses used follow the standard of and are compliant with the Prospectus Regulation and are approved by the SFSA. The normally used technique for issues is "on tap".

To ensure a good market liquidity, the large issuers issue their bonds as benchmarks which in the Swedish market mean large issues (SEK 3 bn and more) and that a number of dealers show both bid and offer prices. Only benchmarks are deliverable in the future contracts. When a new benchmark bond is issued, the issuer makes sure that the amount issued meets the requirements for a benchmark sized deal. After the initial day of issuance, the issuer can, without further notice, issue "on tap". At the peak of the life of the bond it typically has a volume of SEK 50 to 70 bn. After that the volume decreases due to active repurchase operations by the issuer. With one year to go to maturity a bond is no longer of benchmark status. This paves the way for a controlled redemption of the remaining part of the bond.

The bonds are sold into the primary market through banks acting as agents for the issuer. These banks also act as market makers in the secondary market. Currently, there are five banks that act as market makers in covered bonds: Danske Bank, Nordea, SEB, Svenska Handelsbanken and Swedbank. The market for government and domestic covered bonds, as well as treasury bills, is a telephone and screen-based over-the-counter market. Market makers display indicative two-way prices on an electronic information system which is instantaneously relayed by Reuters. Fixed prices are quoted on request and most deals are concluded via telephone. Trading in the secondary market takes place on all business days between 09.00 and 16.15 (local time). The number of bonds to be quoted is regulated in an agreement between the issuer and the market-maker.

Bonds are quoted on a yield basis with bid and ask spreads of (under normal market conditions) 2 bp for the liquid benchmark bonds. The settlement day for bonds is three business days after the trading date The normal trading lot in government securities and liquid covered bonds is SEK 200-500 m.

Sweden has a liquid repo market with almost all banks and broker firms involved in the trading. The repo transactions are viewed as 'sell-buy back' or 'buy-sell back' deals and the ownership of the security must be transferred. There are no standard conditions for a repo transaction and the counterparties agree on maturity, settlement day and delivery for each deal. Mostly, repos are settled two banking days after the trading day. Repo rates are quoted as a spread vs the Riksbankpolicy rate.

Almost all publicly listed securities in Sweden are in book-entry form, registered and settled via Euroclear Sweden's system. Domestic settlement requires a securities account or a custody account with one of the Swedish banks or investment firms. Foreign investors can either have a custodian service with a Swedish bank or investment firm or settle via Euroclear or Clearstream.

Accrued interest is calculated from the previous coupon date to the settlement date. The interest rate is calculated by using ISMA's 30E/360-day count – "End-of-month" convention.

Swedish government bonds and covered bonds have five ex-coupon days, hence there is a negative yield when settlement occurs within five business days before the coupon date. Swedish krona bonds redeem at par upon maturity and most of them pay coupon annually. All domestic banks act as paying agents.

Issuers: Stadshypotek, Swedbank Mortgage, Nordea Hypotek, Swedish Covered Bond Corporation (SCBC), SEB, Skandiabanken, Länsförsäkringar Hypotek, Landshypotek, Danske Hypotek, Bluestep Bank, Borgo and Sparbanken Skåne. The market is dominated by the first five of them.

COVERED BOND LABEL **:** Länsförsäkringar Hypotek AB (1 pool), Skandinaviska Enskilda Banken AB (SEB) (1 pool), Stadshypotek AB (publ) (2 pools), Swedbank Mortgage AB (1 pool), The Swedish Covered Bond Corporation (1 pool), Nordea Hypotek (1 pool).

For the most up-to-date information, please consult the new ECBC Covered Bond Comparative Database webpage on the Covered Bond Label website www.coveredbondlabel.com or via the following QR code:

3.41.1 SWITZERLAND – SWISS PFANDBRIEFE®

By Robert Horat and Markus Müller, Pfandbriefbank schweizerischer Hypothekarinstitute AG

I. FRAMEWORK

The legal framework for the Swiss Pfandbrief system is the Pfandbrief Act ("Pfandbriefgesetz", "PfG"). It is complemented by the Pfandbrief Ordinance ("Pfandbriefverordnung", "PfV"), the articles of association of the Pfandbrief institutes and the valuation regulations ("Schätzungsreglement"). The latter two must be authorised by the Swiss Federal Council.

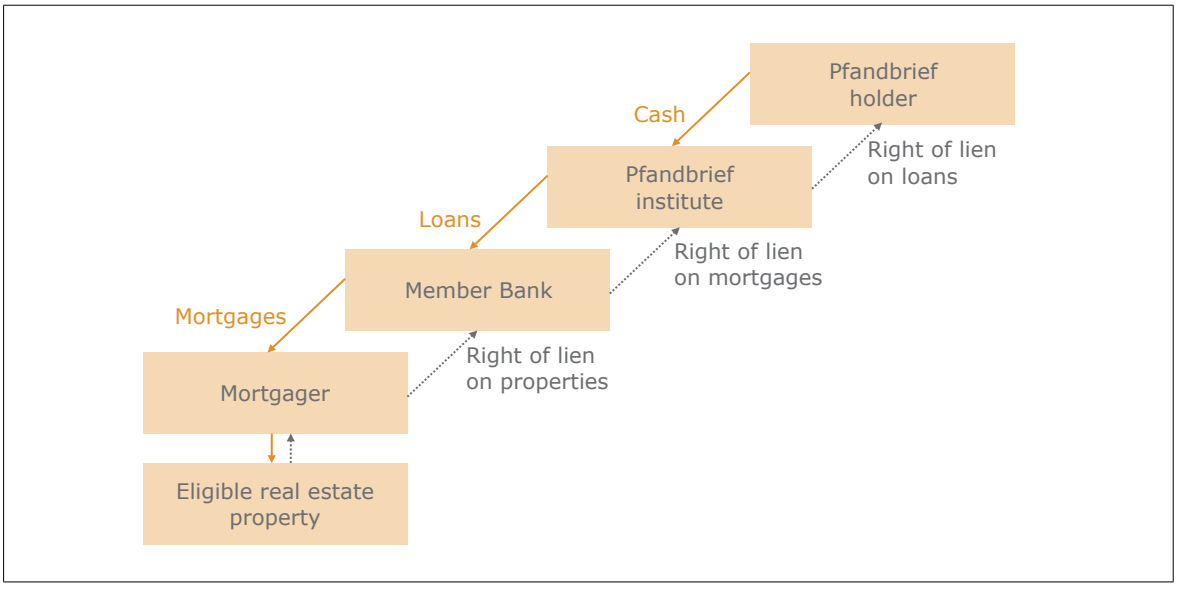
According to the PfG, the issuance of Swiss Pfandbriefe is reserved to two specialised Pfandbrief institutes, namely the "Pfandbriefzentrale der schweizerischen Kantonalbanken AG" (PZ) and the "Pfandbriefbank schweizerischer Hypothekarinstitute AG" (PB). They issue Swiss Pfandbriefe to refinance their member banks' Swiss mortgage business. As of article 1 of the PfG the purpose of the Pfandbrief institutes is to enable mortgages for real estate owners at interest rates which are as constant and favourable as possible. "The Swiss Pfandbrief®" is a registered trademark. The reputation of this brand shall underpin its uniqueness within the world of covered bonds.

The Swiss Pfandbrief system is an indirect one: The Pfandbrief institutes raise money by issuing Swiss Pfandbriefe in order to grant Pfandbrief loans to their member banks. Sourced volume, currency and terms must be equal within each series of issuance. To get a loan, each member bank has to pledge first class Swiss mortgages to the Pfandbrief institute as a cover in advance. The Pfandbrief investors have a lien on the granted loans. The investors' lien on the loans as well as the issuers lien on the mortgages in the member banks' cover pool are determined by the Pfandbrief Act.

PfG came into effect in 1930. Its 52 articles are well balanced and the PfG had to be modified only marginally in the meantime. The fact that the Swiss Pfandbrief has a special legal basis, provides legal certainty as well as stability and predictability.

The Pfandbrief institutes have a strictly limited scope.

> Figure 1: The Swiss Pfandbrief® Framework

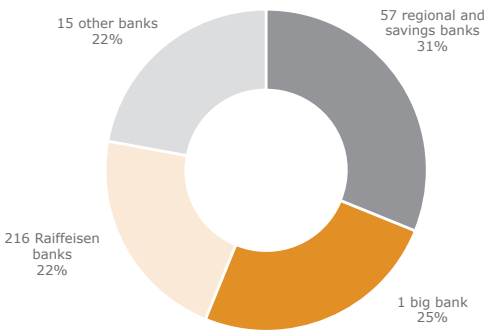


Source: Credit Suisse AG, Zurich/Switzerland

II. STRUCTURE OF THE ISSUERS

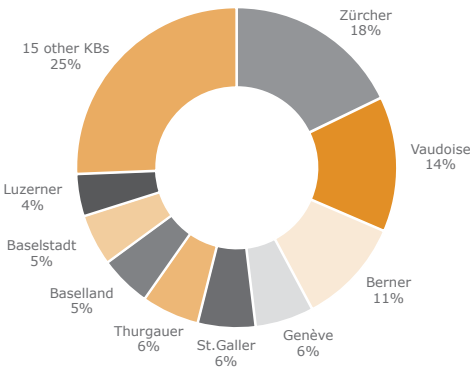
PZ operates as the Pfandbrief issuing vehicle of the Swiss cantonal banks and PB of all other Swiss banks. Both are special institutions with their business scope strictly limited to the issuance of Swiss Pfandbriefe, to granting Pfandbrief loans to their member banks and to investing their share capital and reserves. Both Pfandbrief institutes are supervised by the Swiss financial market authority (FINMA). They are owned by their member banks. The chart below shows the structure of the shareholders:

> Figure 2: Shareholders of PB



Source: PB as of 31.12.2024

> Figure 3: Shareholders of PZ



Source: PZ as of 31.12.2024

PB was founded in 1931 and counts 284 banks with loans. Any Swiss bank has the right to become a member of PB, if it is headquartered in Switzerland and that Swiss mortgages account for at least 60% of the bank's balance sheet (Article 4 PfG). As of 31 December 2024, the total outstanding Swiss Pfandbriefe of PB amount to CHF 95.3 billion (EUR 101.3 billion).

PZ was also founded in 1931 and has 24 member banks. Only cantonal banks have the right to become members of the PZ (Article 3 PfG). PZ does not have its own staff but has fully outsourced its operations to Zürcher Kantonalbank. As of 31 December 2024, the total outstanding Swiss Pfandbriefe of PZ amount to CHF 83.3 billion (EUR 88.5 billion).

The total volume of all outstanding Swiss Pfandbriefe as of 31 December 2024 amounts to CHF 178.6 billion (EUR 189.8 billion). For years the two Swiss Pfandbrief institutes have been the major bond issuers in Switzerland, even larger than the government. In 2024 they issued Swiss Pfandbriefe amounting to CHF 20.6 billion (EUR 21.9 billion).

Swiss Pfandbriefe are standardised to a great extent. They are a commodity, denominated only in Swiss francs, with an original time to maturity of up to 30 years. The size of an issuance depends either on the demand of the member banks for loans or on the demand of the investors for Swiss Pfandbriefe, whichever is smaller. Existing bonds are often reopened.

Generally, Swiss Pfandbriefe are issued as public bonds through a banking syndicate at fixed term fees (the last private placement has been placed in 2011). All these public issuances are listed on the SIX Swiss Exchange AG. In the domestic Swiss Francs bond segment Pfandbriefe amount to 36%, followed by public sector (Swiss government, cantons, cities, regions) with 25%, the banking and insurance sector with 19% and other industries with 20%.

In total about 15% of all Swiss mortgages are refinanced through Swiss Pfandbriefe (11/2024).

III./IV. COVER ASSETS, VALUATION AND LOAN TO VALUE (LTV) CRITERIA

As a principle, Pfandbrief loans are only granted against a pledge of eligible first-class mortgages on Swiss properties.

PB has got an electronic cover pool system. Mortgages are pledged to PB by the member banks through entry of a complete "cover proposal" into the electronic pool register, which all member banks are linked to. The system immediately evaluates the member bank's proposal, which is then either automatically checked with electronic rules (by a hedonic model) or manually in a four-eye system. PB valuates the mortgages independently from the member bank. Substantial cover proposals are additionally reviewed by a special cover pool committee.

The PfG defines a general maximum cover value LTV of two thirds of the property value (Article 34 PfG). However, the cover value is at most as high as the mortgage, but mostly lower. Member banks are obliged to replace impaired, non-performing and other ineligible mortgages in their cover pool. Furthermore, contractual repayments of the mortgage can also reduce the cover value of the asset pool. Therefore, the member banks and PB have to supervise overcollateralization daily. If total cover value is below the overcollateralization limit, latest by close of business new eligible mortgages have to be pledged by the member bank.

The "Pfandbriefbank pool" consists of approx. 224'000 mortgages all over Switzerland, which provides a good diversification. 100% are residential properties.

In case of a material change in macroeconomic conditions, FINMA may request a new valuation of the real estate properties (Article 32 PfG).

V. ASSET – LIABILITY MANAGEMENT

Cover principles

The PfG stipulates that the principal amount as well as the interest payments of outstanding Swiss Pfandbriefe be anytime covered by an equivalent amount of Pfandbrief loans to the member banks (Article 14 PfG). The loans granted by Pfandbrief institutes to their member banks must be fully collateralized by mortgages and 100 % covered by real estate liens on a Swiss real estate property (Article 19 PfG). If the interest proceeds of the pledged mortgages of a member bank are lower than its total Pfandbrief loan interest, the asset cover pool must be increased (Article 20 PfG).

Overcollateralization

Each member bank must comply with each of the following over-collateralization requirements with its cover pool: 1) Cover value OC: The total cover value of the cover assets must be at least 108 % of the nominal value of the received Pfandbrief loans anytime. The cover value of a mortgage claim corresponds to the nominal value of the mortgage loan covered by real estate liens up to a maximum LTV of 2/3 in the case of housing. FINMA may set a higher cover value ratio. 2) Nominal value OC: In accordance with the harmonized minimum standard under Basel III final, the nominal value of the cover assets must be at least 110 % of the nominal value of the received Pfandbrief loans anytime (Article 14b PfV, effective from 1 January 2025). 3) Interest OC: The total interest received on the cover assets must amount to at least 108% of the interest payable on the received Pfandbrief loans (Article 20 PfG).

Additional Limits

Swiss Pfandbriefe are issued in individual series which must match the repayment profile of the Pfandbrief loans to member banks, eliminating interest rate and funding risks. Currency risk does not exist as both the loans to member banks and the Pfandbriefe are issued in Swiss Francs. Therefore, there is no need for derivatives to hedge market risks. Liquidity concentration risk is limited by individual limits for each member bank. The investment policy for free assets limits credit and market risks on counterparty and portfolio level.

Growth of the Pfandbrief institutes is limited as the required capital must exceed 2% of the total Pfandbrief issuance volume of the respective institute (Article 10 PfG).

VI. TRANSPARENCY

Reporting and disclosure will be further developed with the new requirements for covered bonds and Basel capital adequacy (for Pfandbriefe and mortgages) came into force on 1 January 2025, with the focus being on equivalence between the Covered Bond Directive and the Pfandbrief Act/Ordinance (PfG/PfV) as well as between the Capital Requirements Regulation and the Swiss Capital Adequacy Ordinance (chapter IX. below).

VII. COVER POOL MONITOR AND BANKING SUPERVISION

PB valuates and monitors the cover pool independently of the member bank (which grants the mortgage to the house owner) and monitors eligibility and overcollateralization of the cover pool daily. The mortgages are subject to backtesting, e.g. using a hedonic valuation model. Additionally, a special cover pool committee reviews substantial mortgages and visits major properties.

The Swiss Federal Council approves the articles of association and valuation regulations and nominates one member of the board of directors.

Swiss Pfandbrief institutes as well as their member banks are supervised by FINMA and audited by external audit firms.

In addition, Moody's rates all Swiss Pfandbriefe with Triple A, investors analyse the annual reports of the Pfandbrief institutes, various analysts publish research reports and/or ratings and last but not least the capital market values Swiss Pfandbriefe.

VIII. SEGREGATION OF COVER ASSETS AND BANKRUPTCY REMOTENESS

As of 1st January 2023, several amendments to the Swiss Banking Act ("Bankgengesetz", BankG) and Banking Ordinance ("Bankenverordnung", BankV) regarding bank insolvency came into force. This essentially anchors the insolvency provisions for Swiss banks at the federal bank law level, strengthens Swiss deposit insurance, ensures full segregation of intermediated securities ("Bucheffekten") in the custody chain, and enables the resolvability for global systemically important banks.

Should there be justified concern that a bank is overindebted, has serious liquidity problems or that the bank no longer fulfils the capital adequacy provisions (Article 25 Banking Act, BankG), FINMA can order:

a) protective measures pursuant to Article 26 BankG. The protective measures may be ordered independently or in connection with a restructuring or bankruptcy liquidation. Among other protective measures, FINMA can order deferment of payments or payment extension, **except for secured claims of the Pfandbrief institutes (Article 26 (1 h) BankG)**.

b) restructuring procedures pursuant to Article 28 – 32 BankG: If it appears likely that the member bank can continue to provide individual banking services (regardless of the continued existence of the bank concerned) or can recover, FINMA can make the necessary provisions and restructuring orders (Article 28 BankG et seq.):

> the recovery plan may contain the reduction of the existing bank equity, the creation of new equity, the conversion of debt into equity or the reduction in debt claims (Article 30b (1) BankG et seq.);

> **explicitly excluded from a debt-to-equity conversion or reduction in debt claims are in particular** a) defined privileged claims, **b) secured debt claims [including pfandbrief loans]**, c) offsettable claims (Article 30b (3) BankG);

> the conditional conversion of debt into bank equity and the conditional reduction in claims shall be made in the following order: a) subordinated claims, b) claims based on debt instruments for loss absorption

in the event of insolvency measures (e.g. bail-in bonds), c) other claims (except for customer deposits) and d) customer deposits (Article 30b (7)-(9) BankG).

c) the bank's liquidation due to bankruptcy pursuant to Article 33 – 37 g BankG: Should there be no prospect of restructuring or if a restructuring were to fail, FINMA will have to revoke the bank's licence, order its liquidation and make this public (Article 33 BankG et seq.).

At the same time as the amendments to the Swiss Banking Act, the Pfandbrief Act (PfG) was further refined:

Article 40 PfG: Audit and Management of the Cover Pool Assets

(1) If a Pfandbrief institute or a member bank that is in debt to a Pfandbrief institute violates statutory provisions, in particular capital adequacy requirements, or if confidence in it is materially affected, FINMA may appoint an investigating official and may order the transfer of the cover pool assets.

(2) FINMA may mandate the investigating official with the audit and management of the cover pool assets at the expense of the Pfandbrief institute or the member bank.

If a member bank gets into difficulties, FINMA may, based on this article, reinstall the control over the correctness of the collateral management on a situational and risk-adequate basis. In particular, FINMA must assure that the legal and regulative requirements for the cover pool assets are met anytime.

Article 40a PfG: Separation of Pfandbrief Loans and Cover Pool Assets

(1) If bankruptcy proceedings are opened against a member bank, FINMA orders the separation of the Pfandbrief loans and the cover pool assets, including the incoming interest and repayments. The Pfandbrief loans shall explicitly not become due because of the opening of bankruptcy proceedings.

(2) FINMA appoints an administrator to manage the Pfandbrief loans and the corresponding cover pool. The administrator takes all necessary measures to ensure the full and timely execution of the contractual obligations arising from the Pfandbrief loans, including interests and repayments.

(3) FINMA may approve the full or partial transfer of Pfandbrief loans and Cover Pool Assets.

(4) After repayment or transfer of the Pfandbrief loans, the representative shall account to which extent the cover pool assets have been exercised.

This new article deals with Pfandbrief-related aspects in the liquidation of a failed member bank. To ensure the equilibrium principle and the cover principle at the Pfandbrief institute, the explicit non-maturity of the Pfandbrief loans upon the opening of bankruptcy proceedings is crucial.

IX. RISK-WEIGHTING & COMPLIANCE WITH BASEL INTERNATIONAL REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

The Bank for International Settlements regularly assesses the consistency of implementation of Basel standards. Within the jurisdictional "Regulatory Consistency Assessment Programme" (RCAP) the "Basel Committee on Banking Supervision" (BCBS) rated Switzerland with an overall a) "compliant" grade for the risk-based capital standards (June 2013), for G-/D-SIB standards (June 2016) and for the LCR standards (October 2017); b) "largely compliant" grade for the large exposure and the NSFR standards (both in December 2023).

Basel III – capital standards

Switzerland implements Basel III capital requirements by means of the "Banking Act" and the "Swiss Capital Adequacy Ordinance" (CAO) into national law. The CAO has two approaches to measure credit risks in banking books: The BIS standard approach and the internal ratings-based approach. According to the BIS standard approach, Swiss Pfandbriefe and foreign covered bonds that are in line with Basel III requirements for priviledged treatment have a 10% risk weighting (Article 71a in connex with Annex 3 position 2 respective Article 71b in connex with Annex 2 position 8 of CAO).

In January 2022, the Swiss Federal Council reactivated the sectoral "the countercyclical capital buffer" (CCyB) at the proposal of the SNB and set it at 2.5% of risk-weighted exposures secured by residential property mortgages in Switzerland (www.snb.ch, Glossary, CCyB, 18 February 2022).

Basel III – liquidity standards

Switzerland implements Basel III liquidity requirements by means of the "Banking Act" and the "Liquidity Ordinance" (LiqO) into national law. Swiss Pfandbriefe fulfil the Liquidity Coverage Ratio criteria for high quality liquid assets (Article 15b of LiqO for LCR HQLA 2a). As a second minimum liquidity requirement for Swiss banks, the "Net Stable Funding Ratio" (NSFR) has been put into effect on 1 July 2021 to ensure long term stable funding.

Beyond the Basel risk framework, Article 9 of the National Bank Act also lists the open market operations and standing facilities that the Swiss National Bank (SNB) may contract. The preconditions for entering a standing intraday or liquidity facility are the granting of a limit by the SNB and the provision of eligible collateral. Only securities included in the latest SNB GC basket may be pledged as collateral for repo transactions (www.snb.ch, financial markets, monetary policy operations, collateral eligible for SNB repos). Swiss Pfandbriefe are part of the SNB GC list and are therefore eligible.

X. INVESTORS BENEFITS

An investor in Swiss Pfandbriefe benefits from

- the special institute principle with strictly limited scope.
- Swiss legislation applicable for all contracts within the Swiss Pfandbrief collateral chain.
- the cover pool, which only includes eligible Swiss franc mortgages on Swiss real estate properties.
- the fourfold security which is 1) the creditworthiness of the Pfandbrief institute, 2) the creditworthiness of the member bank, 3) the creditworthiness of the mortgager and 4) the market value of the real estate property itself.
- in the case of PB: The value of the real estate property is independently determined by PB and not by the member bank.
- in the case of PZ: Explicit state guarantee for most of its member banks[1].
- the fact that since the establishment of the PfG in 1930 neither an investor nor a Pfandbrief institute have ever suffered a loss.

Issuers: Pfandbriefbank schweizerischer Hypothekarinstitute AG (PB) and Pfandbriefzentrale der schweizerischen Kantonalbanken AG (PZ).

For the most up-to-date information, please consult the new ECBC Covered Bond Comparative Database webpage on the Covered Bond Label website www.coveredbondlabel.com or via the following QR code:

1 Three of PZ's member banks do not benefit from a cantonal guarantee, namely Banque Cantonale Vaudoise AG (VD), Berner Kantonalbank AG (BE) and Banque Cantonale de Genève AG (GE).

3.41.2 SWITZERLAND – CONTRACTUAL LAW BASED COVERED BONDS

By Paul Oates, UBS, and Marco Brück, Valiant Bank

I. FRAMEWORK

In 2009 and 2010 respectively, UBS AG (UBS) and Credit Suisse AG (Credit Suisse) established contractual covered bond programmes in order to access covered bond funding in the EUR and USD markets. The UBS and Credit Suisse programmes use Swiss and English law contractual provisions to implement structural features that are standard in the covered bond market. However, in response to evolving regulatory environment and to comply with the Swiss "too big to fail" requirements, Credit Suisse and UBS have since implemented changes to their legal entity structures. Among the required changes were the establishment of new Swiss banking subsidiaries intended to hold (among other businesses) their retail mortgage businesses. These changes necessitated structural changes to the covered bond programmes which UBS and Credit Suisse implemented in June 2015 and November 2016, respectively. Following these changes, Credit Suisse and UBS no longer issue covered bonds out of these programmes.

Starting in 2017, new contractual covered bond programmes were established by Valiant Bank AG (Valiant), Credit Suisse (Schweiz) AG (CS Schweiz), Crédit Agricole next bank (Suisse) SA (CAnb) and Cornèr Bank SA (Cornèr Bank) in order to diversify their funding sources. In addition, in 2021, AMAG Leasing AG launched a conditional pass-through covered bond backed by auto lease receivables. In 2023 UBS Swizterland AG (UBSS) also issued a new contractual programme. As with UBS and Credit Suisse legacy covered bond programmes, these are structured programmes that are not subject to the Swiss Pfandbriefe legislation. However, in contrast to UBS and Credit Suisse's legacy programmes, all of these programmes exclusively use Swiss law provisions and had so far only issued CHF-denominated series until 2022 when CS Schweiz issued its first EUR-denominated Swiss contractual law covered bond in the form of its EUR 750m 3-year covered bond in October 2022. The new UBSS programme has also started to issue in EUR in 2024 and will continue to do so.

The new UBSS programme is envisaged to be the UBS group's primary programme for covered bond issuance. UBSS launched with CHF dual-tranche bonds in 2023. UBSS has subsequently issued in both CHF and EUR during 2024 and will continue to do so. UBS Group does not envisage issuing new bonds out of the programmes it acquired from Credit Suisse. In the summer of 2024 UBS Group completed the mergers of UBS AG with Credit Suisse AG, and UBS Switzerland AG with Credit Suisse Schweiz AG.

II. STRUCTURE OF THE ISSUER

In line with the guarantor Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) model used in the United Kingdom and the Netherlands (among other jurisdictions), the issuers have established Swiss based special purpose companies to guarantee their payment obligations for the benefit of the covered bondholders. All programmes feature direct recourse to the issuer, which remains primarily responsible for payments on the bonds. These guarantor entities hold security over the programmes' respective cover pools and may use the cover pool assets to make payments on the covered bonds should the issuer fail to do so. In case of Valiant, in addition to mortgage claims, the covered bondholders benefit from accessory preferential claims pledged by the mortgagor for the benefit of the issuer and transferred to the guarantor by way of security. The guarantee comes into operation following an issuer event of default, subject to certain conditions. All covered bonds issued under the respective programmes rank *pari passu* with each other and benefit equally from the guarantee. The guarantors are ringfenced, bankruptcy-remote entities designed to be unaffected by the insolvency of the group to which they are consolidated (guarantors are majority-owned by their respective issuer). All issuers are financial institutions regulated by the Swiss banking regulator, the Swiss Financial Market Supervisory Authority (FINMA).

As part of their legal entity restructurings, UBS and Credit Suisse transferred their residential mortgage businesses to UBS Switzerland AG and CS Schweiz AG, their newly established domestic subsidiaries. Concurrently, joint and

several liability arrangements were put in place under which these subsidiaries assumed joint and several liability for all contractual obligations of the issuers under the programme, including the covered bonds themselves.

III. COVER ASSETS

The collateral of Swiss contractual law based covered bonds consists of Swiss residential mortgage loans to private individuals and the related mortgage certificates securing such mortgage loans. In case of Valiant, in addition to mortgage claims, the covered bondholders benefit from accessory preferential claims pledged by the mortgagor for the benefit of the issuer and transferred to the guarantor by way of security. The accessory preferential claims are second and third pillar pension fund assets and are not taken into account in the cover pool and in the calculation of the asset coverage test. The AMAG bonds are collateralized with auto lease receivables for private and commercial customers originated in Switzerland. Substitution assets can also be used as collateral of the covered bonds as long as their aggregate value does not exceed 15% of the cover pool. They comprise deposits in CHF (foreign currencies eligible only for hedging purpose) and authorised investments. The latter need to comply with stringent ratings to be cover pool eligible.

IV. VALUATION AND LTV CRITERIA

The eligibility criteria for initial inclusion in the Credit Suisse, CS Schweiz, CAnb and Cornèr Bank cover pool limit mortgages to those with a loan-to-value (LTV) of less than or equal to 100%, while the UBSS and Valiant programmes limit eligible mortgages to those with LTV of less than or equal to 80%. Certain provisions within the programmes' asset coverage test (ACT) implement LTV limits by capping the value of each mortgage loan at a specified current LTV. This limit is 70% LTV in the Credit Suisse programme and 80% in the CS Schweiz, UBSS, Valiant, CAnb and Cornèr Bank programmes (for mortgage loans on eligible residential properties) and a limit of 60% for mortgage loans on eligible commercial properties under the Cornèr Bank programme.

Mortgage LTVs are regularly calculated using current market values. In case of both Credit Suisse and Valiant programmes, appraisals are undertaken for each mortgage loan application by a valuation model (the IAZI). This comparative approach is one of the main methods used for the appraisal of real estate properties in Switzerland. The property is compared with thousands of other objects previously sold on the market. The price of the object is statistically estimated by comparing the price of properties with similar attributes in comparable locations. The credit risk management department, responsible for the continuous monitoring of the bank's mortgage portfolio, has the discretionary power to trigger a revaluation based on its analysis outcomes. UBSS and CAnb conduct similar estimations of the collateral value for residential mortgages based on the Wüest & Partner valuation model, which is also a hedonic regression model. Other valuation methods may be used at the discretion of the lenders in specific circumstances and taken into consideration.

V. ASSET – LIABILITY MANAGEMEMT

The ACT determines whether the value of the cover pool assets is sufficient for the timely payment of capital and interest owed under the covered bonds and confirms that the minimum overcollateralization (OC) requirements are met. The test is carried out monthly and the results are disclosed in the investor reporting. In addition to the LTV limitations described above, a second part of the ACT haircuts the full balance of the mortgages using an asset percentage (AP). The AP is derived from periodic rating agency feedback and sized to maintain a triple-A rating. The value given to the mortgage assets under the ACT is the lower of (i) the result when applying the LTV limits described above or (ii) the value of the mortgage assets multiplied by the AP. In addition, credit is given to cash and substitute assets while further deductions are made for loans in arrears, borrower set-off risk and potential negative carry. The resulting value must be equal to or exceed the value of the covered bonds outstanding for the test to be passed.

The APs in UBSS, Credit Suisse, CS Schweiz, CAnb and Cornèr Bank programmes may fluctuate over time, but are constrained by a maximum value. Valiant uses an alternative ACT ("Aktivendeckungstest"), including a

minimum OC. The adjusted value of the Valiant cover pool always has to be equal to at least the nominal value of the outstanding covered bonds including a minimum OC, corresponding to the OC required to maintain the actual ratings up to a maximum committed level capped by contractual provisions at 50%.

The Swiss contractual law covered bond programmes benefit from additional safeguards:

> Exposure to interest rate and currency risks are mitigated by use of derivatives in the UBSS programme (currency only, interest rate hedging is available but not yet required), legacy Credit Suisse and CS Schweiz programme. In case of Valiant and CAnb, the option to implement derivative instruments is available but has not been to date.

> Liquidity risk is mitigated by the requirements to establish reserve funds, pass an interest coverage test (ICT), maintain pre-maturity liquidity (for hard bullet covered bonds) and the inclusion of 12-months extension periods (for soft bullet covered bonds). In case of Valiant, the soft bullet structure may not only be applied to a covered bond series after an issuer event of default but may also applied to all outstanding covered bond series after a guarantor event of default (to reduce fire sale risk).

> Minimum rating requirements are in place for the third parties that support the transaction, including the account bank, corporate services provider, servicer and cash manager.

> Commingling risk is mitigated by the requirement of all collections arising from the cover pool assets to be transferred into guarantor cover pool bank account after a specific rating downgrade of the issuer.

> Independent audits of the calculations undertaken on a regular basis by an asset monitor.

Upon an issuer event of default following the service of a notice to pay, the Amortisation Test (AT) is run on each calculation date instead of the ACT, and the ICT is no longer run. The AT is similar to the ACT and is designed to mitigate time subordination between the covered bond series therefore ensuring that the cover pool will be sufficient to make payments as required under the guarantee. Upon failure of the test, all covered bonds accelerate against the guarantor.

VI. TRANSPARENCY

The issuers have committed to publishing monthly investor reports on a timely basis. These reports provide information relevant to investors including:

> The monthly calculations of the ACT and the ICT.

> Details of outstanding covered bonds and list of parties involved in the transaction.

> The current balance of programme accounts.

> A mortgage portfolio summary disclosing total balances, average loan balance, number of properties, WA remaining terms and WA LTVs.

> Tables showing number properties and mortgages by remaining term, current LTV, total balance, interest rate type, property region, property type, and arrears.

VII. COVER POOL MONITOR AND BANKING SUPERVISION

The issuers are regulated Swiss financial institutions, which are subject to regulation and supervision by FINMA. The cover pool tests comprising the ACT and the ICT as well as AT in case of an issuer's event of default, are checked and verified on a regular basis by an independent asset monitor. The results of his review are summarised in asset monitor reports for the attention of the guarantor, the issuer and the administrator. The administrator, independent from the issuer, has the duty to advise the bondholder representative (trustee) inter alia upon the breach of a cover pool test. The administrator is responsible for an ongoing monitoring of the cover pool. His main task comprises confirming the accuracy of the inclusion in or the removal from the

cover pool, inter alia ensuring that the eligibility criteria are met and verifying that the registered amount in the cover pool is correct. In order to constitute a valid security interest the issuer will no longer be able to dispose over the mortgage certificates by its sole acts. The mortgage certificates can only be accessed with the presence and approbation of the administrator. In addition, rating agencies regularly monitor the programme.

VIII. SEGREGATION OF COVER ASSETS AND BANKRUPTCY REMOTENESS OF COVERED BONDS

Upon the insolvency of the issuer, the mortgage receivables and the related mortgage certificates and substitute assets would not form part of the issuer's estate. Accordingly, the asset cover pool may be managed and enforced by the guarantors independently from the corporate insolvency proceedings of the issuers. There are a number of trigger events for default, the first being an issuer event of default. This can occur in a number of situations including the following:

- Failure to pay any interest or principal amount when due.
- Bankruptcy proceedings being ordered by a court or authority against the issuer.
- Failure to rectify any breach of the ACT or ICT.

An issuer event of default would not accelerate payments to covered bondholders, but would allow the trustee to activate the guarantee by serving a notice to pay on the guarantor. Upon the guarantee activation, the cover pool is frozen losing its dynamic nature and no further covered bonds may be issued. The guarantor is required to meet the covered bond obligations using the cash flows generated from the cover pool.

With the exception of one outstanding series issued under the legacy Credit Suisse programme, the covered bonds have a non-discretionary soft-bullet structure, a maximal 12-months extension of the principal repayment, in order to allow the realisation of the cover pool. The repayment extension is only granted if the bondholder representative (trustee) has served a notice to pay and neither the issuer nor the guarantor have sufficient liquidity for the repayment of the covered bond series concerned. In case of Valiant Bank, the soft bullet structure may not only applied to a covered bond series after an issuer event of default but may also applied to all outstanding covered bond series after a guarantor event of default in order to reduce fire sale risk.

The second event of default is the guarantor event of default. This would arise after an issuer event of default if the guarantor failed to make any payments when due, failure of the amortisation test or bankruptcy of the guarantor. A guarantor event of default would cause the acceleration of payments to covered bondholders and their early redemption at the amount relevant to that particular covered bonds series.

IX. RISK-WEIGHTING & COMPLIANCE WITH EUROPEAN LEGISLATION

Swiss contractual-law based covered bonds have a 20% risk weighting under the standardised approach in accordance with the EU Capital Requirement Regulation (CRR) because they have not been issued by an EU credit institution. As of 1 January 2021, Swiss contractual-law based covered bonds cannot qualify for ECB repo eligibility because they are not subject to a legislative framework. Lack of legislation also means that Swiss contractual law based covered bonds are not eligible as level 1 or 2 assets under the European Commission LCR Delegated Act.

Issuers: Credit Suisse AG, Valiant Bank AG, Credit Suisse (Schweiz) AG, Crédit Agricole next bank (Suisse) SA, Cornèr Bank SA and UBS Switzerland AG.

For the most up-to-date information, please consult the new ECBC Covered Bond Comparative Database webpage on the Covered Bond Label website www.coveredbondlabel.com or via the following QR code:

3.42 TURKEY

By James Taylor, Mayer Brown International LLP and Güneş Yalçın, Özmen Yalçın

I. FRAMEWORK

Turkish mortgage-covered bonds are branded as "*İpotek Teminatlı Menkul Kıymet ("İTMK")*" and "Mortgage Covered Bond ("MCB")" in Turkish and English respectively and are trademarked by legislation.

The primary legislation with respect to the İTMKs is the Capital Markets Law No. 6362 ("CML") and the secondary legislation is the Communiqué on Covered Bonds No. III-59.1 ("Communiqué") which was published by the Capital Markets Board ("CMB") on 21 January 2014 (as amended from time to time). The Communiqué regulates the MCBs as well as other asset-backed covered bonds; however, this chapter will focus exclusively on MCBs.

Together with its predecessors, the Communiqué is part of a series of legislation following the enactment of "The Housing Finance Law (No: 5582)" on 6 March 2007, which aims to establish a healthy and functioning housing finance system in Türkiye.

II. STRUCTURE OF THE ISSUER

İTMKs are capital market instruments qualifying as debt instruments, issued within the scope of the issuer's general liabilities and collateralized by cover assets.

İTMKs may be issued by housing finance institutions (HFIs) and mortgage finance institutions (MFIs). While MFIs are joint stock companies defined in Article 60 of the CML (which entities are joint stock companies, established for the purpose of acquiring and transferring assets with qualifications designated by the CMB, managing such assets or taking such assets as collateral and conducting other activities approved by the CMB), HFIs are banks, financial leasing companies and finance companies authorized by the Banking Regulatory and Supervision Agency ("BRSA") to perform housing finance activities.

İTMKs can be issued by public offering, sold to qualified investors, sold by private placement or issued outside of Türkiye.

The issuers are required to obtain CMB approval for the issuance certificate which provides an annual blanket limit and, before each issuance, the CMB's trance issuance approval. For public offerings in Türkiye, the prospectus has to be CMB approved as well.

III. COVER ASSETS

An issuer of MCBs is required by the Communiqué to maintain a cover pool for the benefit of such MCBs, which must be in compliance with, *inter alia*, quantitative statutory tests and the eligibility criteria of the Communiqué.

Pursuant to the Communiqué, a cover pool may be created with, amongst other items, the following assets:

- receivables of banks and finance companies, resulting from house financing as defined in Article 57 of the CML, which have been secured by establishing a mortgage at the relevant registry;
- receivables arising from financial lease agreements executed in accordance with Law no. 6361 (the Financial Leasing, Factoring and Financing Companies Law) resulting from house financing as defined in Article 57 of the CML;
- commercial loans and receivables of the banks and financial leasing companies and finance companies, which have been secured by establishing mortgages at the relevant registry;
- substitute assets, which include cash (including cash generated from cover assets), Turkish government bonds issued for domestic and foreign investors, securities issued or secured by the central government or the central banks of OECD member states, among some others; and

> derivative instruments fulfilling the conditions of the Communiqué.

The Communiqué caps the ratio of the net present value of commercial loans/receivables (excluding loans and receivables related to sea and air vehicles, which have been collateralized by establishing mortgages at the relevant registry) and the substitute assets, in each case, at 15% of the total net present value of the cover assets.

In Türkiye, almost all mortgage loans are fixed rate loans and, as a result of a change of law in 2009 requiring loans to Turkish citizens to be denominated in Turkish Lira, are denominated in Turkish Lira, other than a very small number of mortgage loans made to foreign citizens with residences in Türkiye.

Payments on mortgages are almost always monthly and generally are effected by having the lending bank withdraw funds from a bank account held by the borrower with the lending bank.

The maximum maturity for residential mortgage loans in Türkiye is typically 240 months (with only one institution providing loans up to 360 months, while some major banks have a maximum maturity of 120 months).

Finally, as a matter of Turkish law, borrowers of mortgage loans are required to maintain earthquake insurance for the related real property, subject to a maximum claim threshold for all building types.

In terms of İTMK issuances to be made outside of Türkiye in foreign currency, the biggest challenge has been the hedging costs, given, as mentioned above, almost all mortgage loans are denominated in Turkish Lira.

The Communiqué sets out the specific requirements that a derivative instrument needs to satisfy in order for such derivative instrument to be recognized as part of the cover pool. In general:

> the derivative instrument must be traded on exchanges or the derivative counterparty needs to be a bank or financial institution (multi-lateral development agencies also qualify);

> the derivative counterparty needs to have an investment grade long-term international rating (which is tested at the time of entry into of the derivative instrument);

> the derivative counterparty must approve the registration of the derivative instrument in the cover register;

> the netting off between the issuer and the counterparty shall be made separately for the derivative instrument registered in the cover pool and for all other transactions between the issuer and the counterparty;

> the derivative instrument cannot be unilaterally terminated by the derivative counterparty even in the event of the bankruptcy of the issuer; provided that a provision that the parties may unilaterally terminate the agreements regarding the derivative instrument in case of the events provided below may be included in such agreements:

  - the issuer fails to satisfy fully or partially its total liabilities and the cover assets including derivative instruments are not sufficient to meet the total liabilities,
  - the occurrence of impossibility, illegality under the applicable legislation or material change of legislation with respect to terms of the agreement,
  - the early redemption of the MCBs, or
  - the non-registration in, or removal from, the cover register of the agreements regarding the derivative instrument contrary to the provisions thereof.

  In addition, in order to include the provisions that the parties may unilaterally terminate the agreement in the above-mentioned events (and in other events that the CMB deems similar to these events), the approval of the CMB must be obtained; and

> the derivative instrument must be entered into on an arms' length basis and contain fair price terms and reliable and verifiable valuation methods.

IV. VALUATION AND LTV CRITERIA

The immovable properties securing the mortgage loans must be located in Türkiye and the market price of the immovable property is required to have been determined by the BRSA or an independent appraisal company that is listed by the CMB, at the time of utilization of the mortgage loan.

Typically, the appraisers (a) visit the relevant Land Registry Office, municipality and, for on-site measurements, the real property to be mortgaged and (b) conduct research regarding reference values.

With respect to loan to value requirements, the portions of the residential mortgage loans and commercial mortgage loans exceeding 80% and 50%, respectively, of the value of the relevant real estate securing them shall not be taken into consideration in the calculation of the cover matching principles, which are discussed in detail in the following section.

The Communiqué requires issuers to monitor the general changes in the property prices securing their mortgage loans and determine the ratio of such change, at least annually at the end of each calendar year, based upon a generally accepted index, if available.

The best established index in Türkiye is the Property Price Index (Konut Fiyat Endeksi) (the "KFE") released by the Central Bank of the Republic of Türkiye on a monthly basis. The calculation of the KFE is based upon the price data of all the properties sold in Türkiye irrespective of the construction year of the properties. The price data is obtained from valuation reports prepared for the purpose of evaluating mortgage loan applications made to 10 Turkish banks.

If the issuers identify a decline in the property prices within a specific geographical region or in Türkiye in general, then they must decrease the value of the relevant property by applying the property price change ratio and re-calculate whether the cover pool assets comply with the requirements of the Communiqué.

If a significant decline is observed in the value of a specific property compared to the general average, the issuer is required to have a new appraisal conducted for that property.

V. ASSET – LIABILITY MANAGEMENT

The cover pool must also comply with certain cover matching principles, which shall be monitored by the issuer at every change relating to the cover assets and, in any case, at least once a month. The matching principles involve:

- **Nominal value matching:** The nominal value of the cover assets may not be less than the nominal value of the MCB. While calculating the nominal value for the purposes of this test, the balance of the principal amounts of the mortgage loans, the issuance price of the discounted debt instruments and the nominal value of the premium-debt instruments shall be taken into consideration. The contractual value of derivative instruments shall not be taken into consideration for the calculation of nominal value matching.
- **Cash flow matching:** The sum of interest, revenues and similar income that are expected to be generated from cover assets within 1 year following the calculation date may not be less than the similar payment obligations expected to arise from total liabilities under the MCBs and derivative instruments if any, during the same period.
- **Net present value matching:** The net present value of the cover assets must at all times be at least 2% more than the net present value of total liabilities under the MCBs and derivative instruments (if any). This mandatory excess cover of 2% must be constituted of substitute assets.
- **Stress tests:** The responsiveness of the net present value matching to the potential changes in interest rates and currency exchange rates shall be measured with monthly stress tests. In order to measure the effect of the changes in interest rates, the yield curves obtained from swap rates shall be slid downward and upward in parallel. Parallel sliding shall be made by increasing or decreasing the TL interest rate applicable for each maturity by 300 basis points and the foreign currency interest rate applicable for each maturity

by 150 basis points. In order to measure the effect of changes to the currency exchange rates on the cash flows in foreign currency, the foreign exchange buying rate shall be increased and decreased by 30% based on the indicative foreign exchange buying rate announced by the Central Bank of the Republic of Türkiye.

VI. TRANSPARENCY

According to Article 15 of the CML, information, events and developments which may affect the value and price of capital market instruments or the investment decision of investors shall be disclosed to the public by issuers or related parties.

The Public Disclosure Platform (PDP) is an electronic system through which electronically signed notifications required by the capital markets and Borsa Istanbul regulations are publicly disclosed. In addition to Borsa Istanbul companies and ETFs, investment firms, mutual funds, pension funds and foreign funds may submit notifications to PDP. Independent audit companies, on the other hand, send electronically signed financial statements (for which independent audit is required) to the relevant company electronically in order to be announced to the public. However, some information on PDP may be published only in Turkish.

Please see https:// www.kap.org.tr/en/menu-content/About-PDP/General-Information for further information.

In order to ensure that covered bond holders are informed:

- compliance reports on the cover matching principles and notifications made by the cover monitor (a third party who monitors the cover pool) are required to be announced on the website of the issuer and on the PDP on the day on which the cover monitor delivers its report or notification to the issuer;
- an investor report (including information relating to collections made from the assets comprising the cover pool and payments made to holders of the MCBs) is required to be announced on the website of the issuer and on the PDP within six business days following the end of the quarterly accounting period; and
- the fact that the issuer has not satisfied its payment liabilities under the MCBs partially or fully is required to be announced on the website of the issuer and on the PDP on the date when such fact becomes known to the issuer.

If MCBs are issued without any public offering, the above-noted announcements are required to be delivered to the MCB investors online, through the Central Registry Agency, and shall be published on the website of the issuer for access by the MCB investors.

The issuer can freely determine the method of such announcements if MCBs are issued abroad.

VII. COVER POOL MONITOR AND BANKING SUPERVISION

Pursuant to the Communiqué, an issuer is required to appoint a cover monitor who will be responsible for monitoring the cover pool and will report to the CMB and the issuer with regard to the cover pool.

The cover monitor is appointed by the issuer and must possess the expertise and experience necessary to fulfil all of its statutory duties. The company that conducts the independent audit on the financial statements of an issuer may not be designated as a cover monitor.

The cover monitor is to be appointed through a cover monitor agreement, a copy of which is to be sent to the CMB within three business days of its execution. The cover monitor can only be removed from its duties by the issuer, based upon reasonable grounds to be submitted to the CMB in writing and by obtaining the consent of the CMB.

A cover monitor should, amongst other items:

- monitor formation of the cover pool with eligible assets;

- monitor the cover pool's compliance with the cover matching principles and accuracy of the stress test measurements;
- in case the cover register is kept in electronic form, inspect the adequacy of such system and submit a report that includes the results of this inspection to the issuer, together with a copy to the CMB;
- examine the accuracy of the entries made regarding the addition, removal or replacement of cover assets by reviewing the underlying loan documentation and other information and documents, as it may deem necessary;
- in the event of a cover matching principle violation or a default by the issuer, inspect whether measures in connection therewith set forth under the Communiqué are followed; and
- prepare a report, at least semi-annually (at least quarterly in case of issuances offered to the public in Türkiye), indicating its findings regarding compliance with the cover matching principles and entries made regarding removal or replacement of cover assets and, if applicable, measures taken following violation of the cover matching principles or default.

The cover monitor is required to report any inconsistencies in the cover register or failures in the matching principles to the issuer.

The cover monitor is also authorised to conduct a discretionary review of the cover assets, including substitute assets and derivative instruments in place.

VIII. SEGREGATION OF COVER ASSETS AND BANKRUPTCY REMOTENESS OF COVERED BONDS

A cover register held by the issuer permits the identification and segregation of the cover assets.

The collateral backing the MCBs must be registered in book and/or in electronic form.

Until the MCBs are completely redeemed, even if the management or the supervision of the issuer is transferred to public institutions, cover assets cannot be disposed of for any purpose (other than securing MCBs), pledged or designated as collateral or attached by third parties (including for the collection of taxes or other public receivables) and cannot be subject to injunctive decisions of courts or included in the bankruptcy estate of the issuer.

In the event that: (a) the management or supervision of an issuer is transferred to public institutions, (b) the operating license of an issuer is cancelled or (c) an issuer becomes bankrupt, the CMB may appoint another bank or a mortgage finance institution (in both case, satisfying the requirements for issuers of covered bonds), the cover monitor and another independent audit company or an expert third party institution approved by the CMB to act as an administrator. This administrator would not be assuming the liabilities arising from the cover pool but would manage the cover pool and seek to satisfy the liabilities arising from the cover pool from the income generated from the cover pool.

The administrator may actively manage the cover pool to seek to ensure that the payments under the MCBs and derivative instruments arising from the cover pool are made in a timely manner and, if necessary, may sell assets, purchase new assets, utilise loans or conduct repo transactions.

In addition, the administrator may (after obtaining the approval of the CMB) transfer the cover pool and the liabilities arising from the cover pool partially or fully to another bank or to a mortgage finance institution satisfying the qualifications required for issuers. In such case, the transferee bank or MFI shall become the owner of the cover assets upon such transfer and shall become responsible for the payments arising from total liabilities. The administrator may also suggest to the CMB that the MCBs be redeemed early.

Pursuant to the Communiqué, the covered bondholders and hedging counterparties do not need to wait until the completion of the liquidation of the assets in the cover pool for recourse to the other assets of the issuer, with respect to which they will rank *pari-passu* with unsecured creditors of the issuer.

IX. COMPLIANCE WITH EUROPEAN LEGISLATION

As Türkiye is not currently a member of the EU, MCBs are not compliant with the EU Covered Bond Directive and the EU's Capital Requirements Regulation (CRR) and do not qualify for beneficial treatment under the CRR, including preferential treatment under Art. 129 CRR or eligibility to be used as liquid assets under the liquidity coverage ratio requirements provided for in the CRR, as supplemented by the LCR Delegated Regulation.

Issuers: VakifBank.

For the most up-to-date information, please consult the new ECBC Covered Bond Comparative Database webpage on the Covered Bond Label website www.coveredbondlabel.com or via the following QR code:

3.43 UNITED KINGDOM

By Ian Stewart, UK RCBC and Moderator of the ECBC ESG Bonds Task Force

The UK covered bond market has been established since 2003 and was initially based on general English law structured finance principles before the introduction by HM Treasury in March 2008 of a dedicated covered bond regulatory framework (the Regulated Covered Bonds Regulations 2008 (the "Regulations")). The Regulations overlaid the existing general law and contractual structures, providing the necessary underpinning for compliance under Article 52(4) of Directive 2009/65/EC (the "UCITS Directive") providing the UK structure with benefits including higher investment limits and higher investment thresholds for insurance companies. All UK regulated covered bonds also comply with the definition of covered bonds set out in Regulation (EU) 575/2013 (Capital Requirements Regulation, or "CRR") thereby qualifying for lower risk-weightings. The Regulations were further amended in November 2011 and November 2012 to further promote the "transparency of UK covered bonds and creating a more prescriptive regulatory framework"[1]. The amendments became effective for regulated programmes from 1 January 2013. Following the UK's departure from the EU in January 2021 the Covered Bond Directive will not be implemented in the UK until Third Country recognition is achieved. UK covered bond regulations are closely aligned to the Directive.

Regulated covered bonds are subject to special public supervision by the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) as Special Public Supervisor, whose stated aims are to ensure a robust regulated covered bond market in the UK, and to ensure that quality is maintained to preserve investor confidence in the UK regulated covered bond market's reputation. The FCA has a wide range of enforcement powers under the Regulations, including the power to issue directions, de-register issuers or fine persons for any breaches of the requirements under the Regulations.

I. FRAMEWORK

Under the Regulations, in order to attain "regulated" status there are two general sets of requirements the issuers need to comply with: those relating to issuers and those relating to the covered bond programmes. Issuers are permitted (but are not required) to submit their covered bond programmes to the FCA for recognition. Those issuers and covered bonds that meet all of the criteria set out in the Regulations and are approved by the FCA are added to the register of regulated covered bonds maintained by the FCA[2]. The Regulations only apply to those covered bonds which have been admitted to the register. In practice, all programmes which are used for new primary public issuance are regulated under the RCB Regulations.

Most elements of the regulated covered bond structure are governed by contract, with the Regulations providing an overarching legislative and supervisory framework without prescribing the complete design and contractual arrangements for the product. Structures are, by and large, relatively homogenous among themselves as a consequence of a deliberate intention from relevant market stakeholders to ensure comparability between programmes. The Regulations do, however, prescribe certain key structural principles and requirements, including a minimum statutory overcollateralisation amount of 108%, the requirement that assets must always remain capable of covering claims attaching to covered bonds at all times, and priority of claims against the cover pool in a winding up scenario. The FCA also has a veto over material amendments to the contracts, broad powers to enforce its provisions and conducts its own rigorous ongoing review of regulated programmes.

1 All UK regulated covered bond key documents are available at the following link: https://www.fca.org.uk/firms/regulated-covered-bonds/key-documents.

2 The register may be found at https://www.fca.org.uk/firms/regulated-covered-bonds/register.

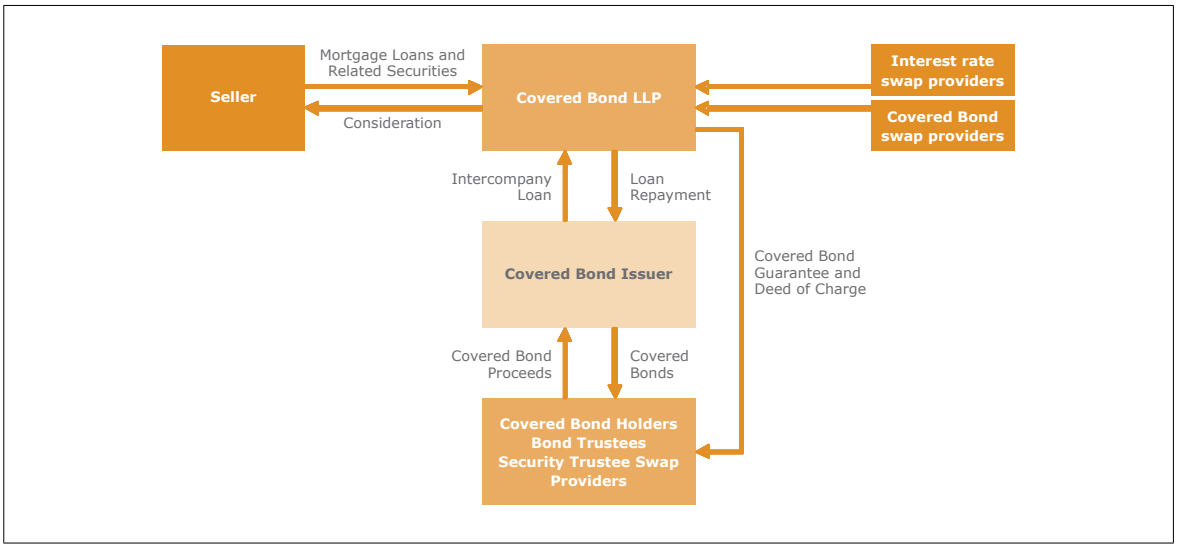
II. STRUCTURE OF THE ISSUER

The Regulations require the issuer to be a credit institution authorised in the UK to carry out regulated activities, such as deposit-taking. It must also have a registered office in the UK and meet certain additional criteria set out by the FCA.

Regulated covered bonds are direct, unconditional obligations of the issuer; however, investors also have a priority claim over a pool of cover assets in the event of the insolvency of or default by the issuer. The Regulations require all cover assets (including any substitution assets) to be segregated from the insolvency estate of the issuer by being sold to a special purpose entity (referred to in the Regulations as the "owner"), which guarantees the issuer's obligations under the bonds and provides security over the cover assets to a security trustee on behalf of the investors. All transactions to date have used a limited liability partnership (LLP) for this purpose, with the transfer effected via equitable assignment. The purchase price paid by the LLP for the cover assets is either cash (funded by an inter-company loan from the issuer) or a partnership interest in the LLP (a "capital contribution in kind").

If the guarantee is activated, the LLP will use the cash flows from the cover pool to service the covered bonds. If these cash flows are insufficient, or within a certain timeframe of the legal final maturity of the bonds, the LLP is permitted to sell cover assets, within certain defined parameters and subject to meeting certain tests to ensure equality of treatment of bondholders.

> Figure 1: Generic UK covered bond programme structure



Source: Programme Prospectuses

III. COVER ASSETS

The Regulations broadly allow the following asset types:

- Assets which are listed in Article 129 of the CRR, subject to the following restrictions:
  - Exposures to credit institutions with ratings below Credit Quality Step 1 (AA-) as set out in the CRR are not permitted; and
  - Securitisations are not permitted.

- Certain assets which are not permitted under the CRR – namely loans to registered social landlords and loans to public-private partnerships (and loans to providers of finance to such companies, and subject in each case to certain restrictions).
- Liquid or "substitution" assets up to the prescribed limit (10% in most cases to date).

Issuers are required to designate programmes as either "single asset type" or "mixed asset type". Mixed asset type programmes are allowed to include any of the assets set out above, whereas single asset type programmes would be required to select either residential mortgages, commercial mortgages, or public sector loans (including social housing and PPP loans, which are not CRR-eligible), in each case as defined in the CRR.

The Regulations include a narrow definition of liquid or "substitution" assets, which are defined as UK government bonds (or other government bonds which comply with the requirements set out in Article 129(1)(a) or (b) of the CRR or deposits in GBP or another specified currency held with the issuer or with a credit institution which comply with the requirements set out in Article 129(1)(c) of the CRR.

Cover assets must be situated in the UK, EEA states, Switzerland, the US, Japan, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, the Channel Islands or the Isle of Man. If an issuer includes non-UK assets in its cover pool, it must get confirmation that the laws of the relevant jurisdiction would not adversely affect the rights of the LLP or the security trustee.

The Regulations require cover assets to be of high quality, and the FCA is permitted to reject any application for regulated status if it believes that the quality of the proposed assets will be detrimental to the interests of investors in regulated covered bonds or the good reputation of the regulated covered bonds sector in the United Kingdom.

In all of the programmes that have been registered to date, the cover pools consist of assets with narrower eligibility criteria than those allowed under the Regulations, and comprise only UK residential mortgages and the substitution assets described above.

IV. VALUATION AND LTV CRITERIA

The properties securing the mortgage loans are valued using UK mortgage market accepted practice. A surveyor is often used, although other methods (such as automated valuation models) are also accepted. Residential property values are indexed to either the ONS, Halifax or Nationwide real estate price indices, each of which reports quarterly on a region-by-region basis. Price decreases are fully reflected in the revaluation, while in the case of price increases a 15% haircut is generally applied.

The LTV limit for mortgages varies across the different programmes (see Figure 2), but in all existing programmes it is below the 80% level for residential mortgages required under the CRR and the Regulations. Loans with LTV above this limit may be included in the pool, but the amount of the loan which exceeds the limit is excluded from the Asset Coverage Test (ACT). Loans which are in arrears are either repurchased by the issuer or subject to additional haircuts (see Figure 2).

V. ASSET – LIABILITY MANAGEMENT

For UK regulated programmes, overcollateralisation (OC) levels are determined by the higher of:

(i) the regulatory minimum of 108% specified in the Regulations calculated on a nominal basis,

(ii) contractual minimum amounts specified in the legal agreements,

(iii) requirements imposed by the FCA, and

(iv) amounts required to pass the programme's ACT (in particular as required to support the given rating level from the relevant rating agencies).

However, the OC required by the rating agencies and/or FCA are typically higher.

A key principle of the Regulations is that they require the cover pool to be capable of covering all claims attaching to the bonds at all times. In addition to the amounts required either under the regulatory minimum or under the contractual requirements, the OC level for any programme is also considered by the FCA on a case-by-case basis, taking into account the quality of the cover assets, risk-mitigation measures (such as swaps and downgrade triggers) and asset-liability mismatches. The FCA has the power to require the issuer to add further assets to its cover pool.

The principal contractual requirement under UK structures is the presence of a dynamic ACT which is carried out on a monthly basis to ensure that minimum OC requirements are satisfied. The ACT requires the discounted value of the cover pool (after applying the haircuts listed below) to be equal to or exceed the principal amount outstanding of covered bonds. The following haircuts are applied:

> The adjusted value of the mortgage pool is calculated by taking the lower of: (i) balance of mortgages up to the indexed LTV limit specified in the programme documents, and (ii) the asset percentage multiplied by the balance of mortgages.[3] Performing mortgages get credit 60-75% while for non-performing mortgages (i.e. >3m in arrears) this is 0-40%, depending on the programme.

> Any cash or substitution assets are also included.

> Additional haircuts are applied to mitigate set-off risk, redraw risk on flexible mortgages (if appropriate), and potential negative carry.

The asset percentage is determined on an on-going basis by the rating agencies and is subject to a maximum as set out in the programme documents (which corresponds to the minimum contractual requirement, Figure 2).

The issuer is required to rectify any breach of the ACT within a specified timeframe by transferring additional cover assets to the LLP. If the breach is not rectified within the allowed remedy period, the trustee will serve a notice to pay on the LLP (see Section VIII below). The issuer may also become liable to enforcement action by the FCA.

An amortisation test is run on each calculation date after the delivery of a notice to pay (see Section VIII below), which is designed to ensure that the cover pool will be sufficient to make payments under the covered bonds as required under the guarantee. The amortisation test is similar to the ACT, but more simply tests whether the principal balance of mortgages is sufficient to make payments in full on covered bonds, taking into account negative carry. If the test is failed, the covered bonds will accelerate against the LLP.

Most UK covered bond transactions currently in the market have been issued with a soft-bullet maturity. Following the service of a notice to pay, the legal final maturity may be extended, typically by 12 months, in order to allow the realisation of the cover assets. It is important to note that the issuer does not have the option to extend the bond's maturity; failure by the issuer to repay the bond in full on the scheduled maturity date would result in an event of default.

Certain programmes include a hard bullet option, whereby a "pre-maturity test" is designed to ensure that the LLP has sufficient cash available to repay the bonds, in full, on the original maturity date in the event of the issuer's insolvency. If, in a specified period before a maturity date (6-12 months, depending on the issuer and the rating agency), the issuer's ratings fall below certain specified triggers (typically A-1 / P-1 / F1), the pre-maturity test requires the LLP to cash-collateralise (either via cash contributions from the issuer or by selling cover pool assets) its potential obligations under the guarantee. Following the implementation of the

3 For example: Let us assume a cover pool which contains two loans. Each loan has a principal balance of GBP 80 and is secured by a property worth GBP 100. If the ACT applies an LTV cap of 75% and an asset percentage of 90%, the issuer will get credit for GBP 144 of loans: applying the LTV cap would allow GBP 150 (maximum 75% LTV for each loan); but the asset percentage allows a lower amount (GBP 160 x 90% = GBP 144) and therefore takes precedence.

LCR Delegated Act and the consequent liquidity impact of a hard bullet option, most issuers only use the soft bullet (extendible) maturity option going forward and indeed certain programmes have converted legacy hard bullet issuances to soft bullets via investor consent solicitation processes.

All regulated covered bond programmes include a number of other safeguards. In particular, there are minimum rating requirements for the various third parties that support the transaction, including the swap counterparties and bank account providers, and an independent asset monitor is required to undertake an audit of the cash manager's calculations on a regular basis. Furthermore, if the issuer's short-term ratings are below certain trigger thresholds (typically A-1+/P-1/F1+), the LLP is required to establish and maintain (from the asset cash flows), a reserve fund which is the higher of (i) the next three months' interest payments on a rolling basis, and (ii) the next following interest payment, together with the relevant amount of senior costs including a buffer. This amount is retained in the LLP's bank account.

VI. TRANSPARENCY

UK regulated covered bond programmes benefit from extremely detailed investor reporting conventions. The market has conformed to a relatively high standard of reporting since inception, but in addition the FCA requires detailed reporting to be provided by regulated issuers in its capacity as special public supervisor.

Similarly, transparency is to a large extent driven by the eligibility criteria in the Bank of England (BoE) Sterling market operations, under which (among other things) issuers must publish transaction documentation, provide homogenised transaction summaries and investor reports, and publish loan level data.

FCA reporting requirements are closely aligned with the BoE criteria but also include certain additional items not included in the BoE criteria. Since the introduction of the updated amendments, all regulated issuers comply with both sets of rules.[4]

VII. COVER POOL MONITOR AND BANKING SUPERVISION

An applicant under the Regulations must be a credit institution authorised in the UK to carry out regulated activities, such as deposit-taking. Issuers must satisfy the FCA that their programmes comply with the criteria set out in the Regulations and provide, among other things:

- Details on the quality of cover assets and the ability of the assets on the issuer's balance sheet to satisfy substitution requirements;
- Details concerning the programme structure, such as the cover pool eligibility criteria, the formulae used to calculate compliance with minimum OC requirements, ability to meet payments on a timely basis and ratings triggers;
- Details concerning asset and liability management, audit and controls, risk management and governance framework;
- Details on the proficiency of cash management and servicing functions;
- Detailed analysis on the ability of the assets and the mitigants within the programme structure to address inherent interest rate, currency, asset and liability mismatch and market value risks;
- Arrangements for the replacement of key counterparties; and
- Independent legal and audit opinions on the compliance of the issuer and programme with the Regulations.

4 In addition, ten of the thirteen UK regulated covered bond issuers (Barclays Bank UK, Clydesdale Bank, Coventry Building Society, Leeds Building Society, Lloyds Bank, Nationwide Building Society, National Westminster Bank plc, Santander UK, TSB Bank and Yorkshire Building Society) have adopted the ECBC covered bond label initiative and report in the UK National Transparency Template: https://www.coveredbondlabel.com/issuers/national-information-detail/27/.

The issuer is responsible for monthly cover pool monitoring. The FCA must be notified by the issuer of any breaches of the ACT, and may also require the issuer to provide such additional information about the cover pool as it considers fit. All existing programmes have at least one internationally recognised rating agency who will also undertake detailed reviews both on a condition precedent to each issuance, and thereafter on at least a quarterly basis as part of ongoing transaction surveillance. The rating agencies may revise the asset percentage as part of these review processes, either due to variations in asset quality or embedded transaction risk factors, or due to periodic rating criteria change.

All programmes since inception have included an independent third party asset monitor within the existing contractual arrangements who are required to perform various functions within the transaction including an annual review of the ACT calculation, and periodic audit procedures to be undertaken with respect to the asset pool.

In November 2011, the Regulations were updated to formally codify the role of an independent "Asset Pool Monitor" which (i) must be eligible to act as an independent auditor (ii) is conveyed with certain powers to inspect books and records associated with the relevant programme, (iii) must conduct a biannual inspection of the issuer's compliance with its duties as set out in the Regulations, and (iv) must report to the FCA on an annual basis (or sooner if the issuer is found to be failing to comply with its duties). These additional requirements became effective on 1 January 2013 and regulated programmes have generally been updated to reflect the amendments.

VIII. SEGREGATION OF COVER ASSETS AND BANKRUPTCY REMOTENESS OF COVERED BONDS

The Regulations require all cover assets (including any substitution assets) to be segregated from the insolvency estate of the issuer by being transferred to a special purpose entity (referred to as the "owner" in the Regulations), which guarantees the issuer's obligations under the bonds. All transactions to date have used an LLP for this purpose.

The Regulations require that the cover assets be recorded on a register maintained by or on behalf of the issuer and the LLP. The register must be available for inspection by the FCA. The issuer is responsible for ensuring that all cover assets meet the relevant eligibility criteria set out in the Regulations and, if applicable, any additional criteria set out in the programme documents.

The LLP becomes obliged to pay the covered bondholders under the guarantee upon delivery by the bond trustee of a notice to pay following the occurrence of an issuer event of default or other trigger event. The events which can trigger a notice to pay typically include:

- Failure by the issuer or any group guarantors to pay any interest or principal on the covered bonds when due;
- Bankruptcy or similar proceedings involving the issuer or any group guarantors;
- Failure to rectify any breach of the asset coverage test (in most cases); and
- Failure to rectify any breach of the pre-maturity test (if applicable).

To the extent that an issuer event of default has occurred, the bond trustee may commence proceedings against the issuer and any group guarantors on an unsecured basis on behalf of the covered bondholders. The delivery of a notice to pay does not however accelerate payments to noteholders, and the LLP will continue to make payments of interest and principal on the covered bonds on their originally scheduled payment dates (provided that an LLP acceleration event (as described below) has not occurred).

LLP acceleration events typically include:

- The LLP fails to pay any interest or principal when due under the guarantee;
- Bankruptcy or similar proceedings are commenced involving the LLP; and
- After delivery of a notice to pay, the LLP breaches the "amortisation test".

The occurrence of an LLP acceleration event causes the acceleration of payments by the LLP to covered bondholders and the redemption of the bonds at the relevant early redemption amount.

The LLP is reliant on the proceeds derived from the cover assets to make payments under the guarantee. Under the Regulations, in a winding up scenario, no claims against the cover assets can rank ahead of the claims of the regulated covered bondholders. If the proceeds from the cover pool are insufficient to meet the obligations to bondholders in full, investors will continue to have an unsecured claim against the issuer (and any group guarantors) for the shortfall.

IX. RISK-WEIGHTING & COMPLIANCE WITH EUROPEAN LEGISLATION

The list of eligible assets under the Regulations is in some respects narrower than that set out in the CRR (particularly for single asset type programmes as described above). To date, all existing regulated covered bonds are contractually restricted to containing only residential mortgage assets (as well as substitution assets up to the prescribed limit), meaning they are CRR-compliant. However, certain assets which are excluded from the CRR – such as loans to UK housing associations – are technically permitted in the cover pool under the Regulations, and so it is possible that in future regulated programmes could be structured which would not qualify. The UK departure from the EU has resulted in some regulatory changes for investors in the EU and the details have yet to be clarified at the time of writing, subject to the review by the European Banking Authority on the case for third country equivalence in covered bonds.

> Figure 2: Overview – Regulated UK covered bond programmes

	BACR	HSBC	CLYDES	COOP	COVBS	LEEDS	LLOYDS	NWIDE	NATWEST	SANUK	SKIPTON	TSB	YBS
Programme volume (bn)	EUR 35	EUR 25	EUR 10	GBP 4	EUR 7	EUR 7	EUR 60	EUR 45	EUR 25	EUR 35	EUR 7.5	GBP 10.0	EUR 12.5
Rating (M/F/S)	Aaa / AAA / AAA	Aaa / AAA / nr	Aaa / AAA / nr	Aaa / nr / nr	Aaa / AAA / nr	Aaa / AAA / nr	Aaa / AAA / nr	Aaa / AAA / AAA	Aaa / AAA / nr	Aaa / AAA / AAA	Aaa / AAA / nr	Aaa / nr / nr	Aaa / AAA / nr
LTV cap	75%	75%	75%	75%	75%	75%	75%	75%	75%	75%	75%	75%	75%
House price index	Halifax	Halifax	Halifax	Halifax	Nation-wide	ONS	Halifax	Nation-wide	Halifax	Halifax	Halifax	Halifax	Avg. of Halifax & Nation-wide
Maximum asset percentage	87.5%	92.5%	92.5%	93.0%	90.0%	93.5%	92.0%	93.0%	90.0%	89.3%	92.5%	89.0%	90.5%
Minimum OC*	14.3%	8.1%	8.1%	8.0%	11.1%	8.0%	8.7%	8.0%	11.1%	12.0%	8.1%	12.3%	10.5%
Current asset percentage	87.5%	92.5%	92.5%	89.0%	89.0%	83.0%	92.0%	93.0%	90.0%	89.3%	90.0%	89.0%	90.5%
Current OC	41.0%	346.9%	97.2%	146.1 %	66.7%	27.7%	37.2%	72.7%	95.1%	35.2%	51.1%	38.2%	34.2%
Credit for loans in arrears (>3 months)	LTV<75: 40% LTV>75: 25%	LTV<75: 40% LTV>75: 25%	LTV<75: 40% LTV>75: 25%	LTV<75: 40% LTV>75: 25%	LTV<75: 40% LTV>75: 25%	LTV<75: 40% LTV>75: 25%	LTV<75: 40% LTV>75: 25%	LTV<75: 40% LTV>75: 25%	<3M: 75%, >3M: 25%	LTV<75: 40% LTV>75: 25%	LTV<75: 40% LTV>75: 25%	LTV<75: 40% LTV>75: 25%	LTV<75: 40% LTV>75: 25%
Can issue hard bullets? **	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
Asset monitor	PWC	Deloitte	KPMG	PWC	Deloitte	Deloitte	PWC	PWC	Deloitte	Deloitte	Deloitte	PWC	Deloitte

Source: Investor reports, FCA Register.

* OC = Overcollateralisation; minimum OC calculated as 1/maximum asset percentage, subject to regulatory minimum of 8%
** Hard-bullets possible only if pre-maturity test is in place and passed / soft-bullets issued with 12-months extension.

X. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

There are currently 13 regulated covered bond issuers in the United Kingdom: Barclays Bank Plc (BACR); Clydesdale Bank Plc (CLYDES); Co-operative Bank plc (COOP); Coventry Building Society (COVBS); HSBC UK Bank plc (HSBC); Leeds Building Society (LEED); Lloyds Banking Group (LLOYDS), Nationwide Building Society (NWIDE); National Westminster Bank plc (RBS); Santander UK (SANUK); Skipton Building Society (SKIPTN); TSB (TSBLN) and Yorkshire Building Society (YBS).[5]

All are members of the UK Regulated Covered Bond Council (UK RCBC) and further details can be found at www.UKRCBC.org. All 13 programmes had bonds outstanding at the end of 2024 and the details of those programmes are set out in figure 2. Coventry BS also had an unregulated programme at the end of 2024.

The outstanding volume of regulated covered bonds at the end of 2024 amounted to EUR 95.9bn equivalent, with a further EUR 4.8bn of unregulated covered bonds, giving a total value of outstanding bonds of EUR 100.8 bn (see Figure 3). This was virtually unchanged from the figure of EUR 100.6bn at the previous year end.

New issuance of regulated bonds in 2024 amounted to EUR 14.2bn, which were all publically issued (see Figure 4.) There was a small increase in public funding from EUR13.3bn in 2023 but no repeat of the privately placed or retained issuance of EUR10.5bn in 2023. This evidences the ongoing use of covered bond funding by UK issuers with 10 of the programmes being active during 2024. This was the same as in 2023 and 2022.

Redemptions during 2024 totaled EUR 16bn slightly higher than the EUR 15 bn in 2023. This resulted in slightly negative net new issuance but FX movements, with a stronger pound, meant that outstandings were static as noted above.

As at 2024 year end, 29% of all UK covered bonds were denominated in EUR, with GBP making up the majority of the balance at 65% and other currencies representing only 6% of market share. The amount of the market represented by GBP issuance has been steadily growing over recent years as an increasingly deep and efficient wholesale funding source for most issuers. GBP transactions issued since 2014 are almost exclusively 3-5 year floating rate bonds. Since 2018 this has been based on a compounded daily SONIA rate. In 2024 49% of new issuance by UK issuers was denominated in sterling, with 42% denominated in EUR and 9% in other currencies, namely USD and CHF. This marked an increase in the proportion of EUR issuance compared to recent years. The issuances in EUR tend to be fixed rate, with the vast majority in the 5-10 year tenor.

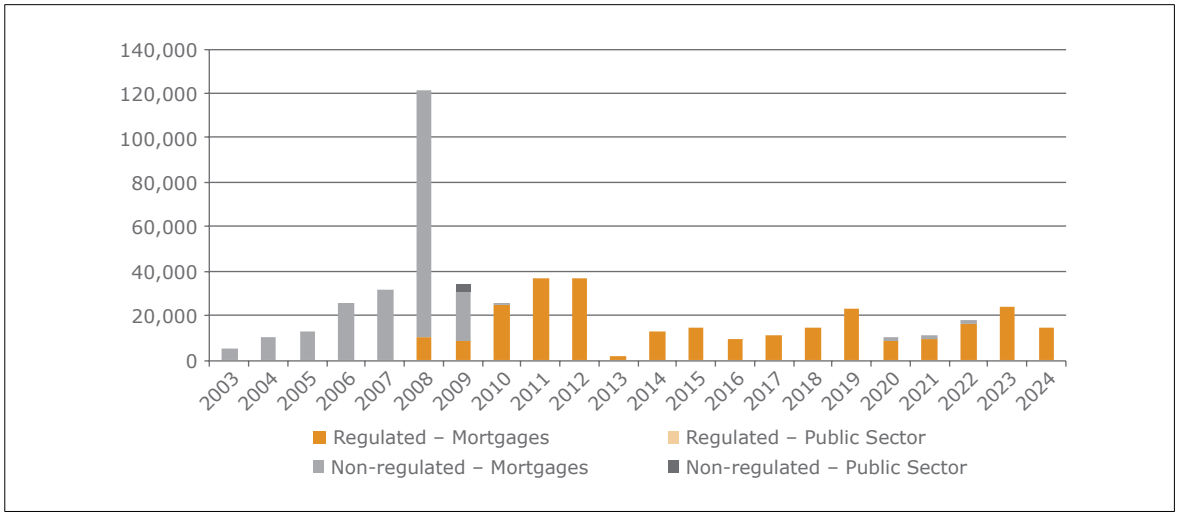
All new issuance for a number of years has been soft bullet maturities with only 2% of outstanding bonds having hard bullet maturities by the end of 2024.

5 http://www.fca.org.uk/firms/regulated-covered-bonds/register.

> Figure 3: Covered Bonds Outstanding, 2003-2024, EUR m

Source: EMF-ECBC. Please note that this data includes private placements, floating rate covered bonds and self-retained issuances that may have been used to access central bank liquidity.

> Figure 4: Covered Bonds Issuance, 2003-2024, EUR m



Source: EMF-ECBC. Please note that this data includes private placements, floating rate covered bonds and self-retained issuances that may have been used to access central bank liquidity.

Issuers: There are 13 regulated issuers each with one regulated mortgage programme (some regulated issuers also have unregulated programmes). For more details, please refer to the FCA's website: http://www.fca.org.uk/firms/systems-reporting/register/use/other-registers/rcb-register.

COVERED BOND LABEL : Barclays Bank UK Plc (1 pool), Clydesdale Bank PLC (trading as Virgin Money) (1pool), Coventry Building Society (1 pool), HSBC UK (1 pool), Leeds Building Society (1 pool), Lloyds Bank plc (1 pool), National Westminster Bank Plc (1 pool), Nationwide Building Society (1 pool), Paragon Bank PLC (1 pool), Santander UK plc (1 pool), Skipton Building Society (1 pool), TSB Bank plc (1 pool), Yorkshire Building Society (1 pool).[6]

For the most up-to-date information, please consult the new ECBC Covered Bond Comparative Database webpage on the Covered Bond Label website www.coveredbondlabel.com or via the following QR code:

6 https://coveredbondlabel.com/issuers/issuers-directory/.

3.44 UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

By Steffen Dahmer, Moderator of the ECBC Liquidity Task Force & Chairman of the ECBC Market Related Issues Working Group, J.P. Morgan

To date, no covered bond legislation has been passed in the US despite several attempts in the post-crisis period. Moreover, the previously issued structured covered bonds by Bank of America and Washington Mutual (acquired by J.P. Morgan) have matured and there are currently no outstanding US covered bonds. The Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) published a Covered Bond Policy Statement back in 2008, which was supplemented by the US Treasury's Best Practices for Residential Covered Bonds. However, the covered bond market never took off on that basis, notably due to possible repudiation by the FDIC.

The last two legislation attempts, the United States Covered Bond Act in 2011 and the Protecting American Taxpayers and Homeowners (PATH) Act in 2013, aimed to address this concern together with other details but no proposal ultimately made it through the full legislative process. Within PATH, covered bonds were discussed as a consequence of Government Sponsored Enterprises (GSEs) reform, but as a secondary priority.

In the following years, covered bonds were again mentioned twice by legislators, alluding to the possibility of US covered bond legislation in the future. First, a speech on 26 June 2014 by Jack Lew, then the US Treasury secretary, suggested possible new avenues where covered bonds could have a role to play alongside the GSEs. Second, the oversight plan of the Committee on Financial Services for the 114th Congress, which commenced in January 2015, mentioned explicitly the examination of covered bonds. Since that time, however, little progress related to the development of a US covered bond market has materialized.

The topic of large scale GSE reform did re-emerge on the political agenda under the previous Trump administration, when US Senator Mike Crapo published a Housing Reform Outline in February 2019, which was the subject of a two-part hearing by the United States Senate Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs the following month. Additionally, the White House issued a Presidential *Memorandum on Federal Housing Finance Reform* at the end of March 2019 that instructed the Secretary of the Treasury to develop a Treasury Housing Reform Plan that would, among other objectives, end the GSEs conservatorships and "[increase] competition and participation of the private sector in the mortgage market."

Published in September 2019, Treasury's Housing Reform Plan set out multiple administrative and legislative proposed reforms to help accomplish these goals, including recapitalizing the GSEs with "significant first-loss private capital". Covered bonds were even briefly mentioned in the Plan as one potential alternative "mechanism" to achieve separation of interest rate and credit risk for 30-year fixed-rate mortgage loans – the most prevalent US mortgage product – in a privatized world, citing the integral role that the Danish covered bond market plays in that jurisdiction's mortgage finance system.

Consequently, in late 2020, then-FHFA Director Mark Calabria issued the *Enterprise Regulatory Capital Framework Final Rule* ('Final GSE Capital Rule'), following a proposal issued in May 2020. The Final GSE Capital Rule stipulated that the GSEs must increase their Adjusted Total Capital holdings collectively to ~$283bn (or 4.27% as at 30th June 2020), paving the way for an eventual exit from conservatorship, though that level of capital was generally viewed as excessively high. While the Enterprise Regulatory Capital Framework became effective in mid-February 2021, it was subsequently amended by Sandra Thompson (who served as FHFA Director since around mid-2022 under the Biden administration) to address the perceived issue of excessively high capital requirement of the GSEs. However, besides overseeing the ongoing capital building process of the GSEs, which actually started under the previous Trump administration, the subsequent Biden administration and FHFA Director Sandra Thompson did not really pursue any meaningful steps with the intention to expedite the privatisation process of the entities.

Thus, even though steps have been taken over several years to pave the way for the GSEs to eventually exit conservatorship, we believe that there is still significant uncertainty around the ultimate outcome. As such, privatisation of the GSEs was not a priority under the most recent Biden administration, while the current Trump administration is heavily focused on trade policy as of early 2025. However, it's still early days in the current administration and there could be a renewed focus to make further progress on the idea of reforming the GSEs and potentially raising the importance of covered bonds.

I. WHAT IS CURRENTLY IN FORCE

The FDIC's Covered Bond Policy Statement

The FDIC Covered Bond Policy Statement, effective from 28 July 2008, aimed to clarify the treatment of covered bonds in a conservatorship or receivership. Under the Federal Deposit Insurance Act (FDIA), any liquidation of collateral of an Insured Depositary Institution (IDI) placed into conservatorship or receivership requires the consent of the FDIC during the initial 45 days or 90 days after its appointment, respectively. Under such conditions, covered bond issuers would need to hold extra liquidity to prevent any default during that time if the FDIC as a conservator or receiver were to fail to make payment or provide access to the pledged collateral. Conscious that this would impair the efficiency of covered bonds, the FDIC decided to grant consent for expedited access to pledged covered bond collateral for covered bonds meeting specific criteria.

Eligible covered bonds must be authorized by the IDI's primary federal regulator and cannot exceed 4% of total liabilities. They consist of non-deposit, recourse debt obligations of an IDI with maturity between one year and 30 years secured by eligible mortgages or AAA-rated mortgage-backed securities secured by eligible mortgages, if no more than 10% of the cover assets. Substitute assets may be included (namely US Treasury and agency bonds) as need be for prudent management of the cover pool. Eligible mortgages are defined as first-lien mortgages on one-to-four family residential properties underwritten at the fully indexed rate, relying on documented income and complying with the existing supervisory origination guidance. Issuers should also disclose LTVs for transparency purposes.

The FDIC consents include the following events: (1) if at any time after appointment the conservator or receiver is in default and remains so after actual delivery of a written request to the FDIC for 10 business days, the covered bond holders can exercise their contractual rights including the liquidation of the cover assets; (2) if the FDIC as a conservator or receiver of an IDI provides a written notice of repudiation of a contract to covered bond holders and the FDIC does not pay the damages due by reason of such repudiation within 10 business days after the effective date of the notice, covered bond holders can exercise their contractual rights including the liquidation of cover assets. The liability of a conservator or receiver in such circumstances shall be limited to the par value of the covered bond issued plus interest accrued following its appointment. The statement also highlights that these consents do not waive, limit or affect the rights or powers of the FDIC.

The US Treasury's Best Practices

The Treasury Best Practices issued in July 2008 supplement the FDIC's covered bond policy statement. Their purpose was to support the growth of a transparent and homogeneous covered bond market in the absence of dedicated US legislation. While targeting high-quality residential mortgages to safeguard market liquidity and stability, the US Treasury did not exclude at the time expansion of the covered bond market to other asset classes. As emphasized by the US Treasury, these best practices do not provide or imply any government guarantee but serve only as a template with the following key features:

> **Issuer:** can be (1) an IDI and/or a wholly owned subsidiary of this IDI (the so-called "direct issuance structure") or (2) a newly created bankruptcy SPV ("SPV structure"). Issuance authorization must be provided by the IDI's primary federal regulator. Only well-capitalized IDIs may issue covered bonds.

- **Cover assets:** are owned by the IDI and remain on balance sheet, but must be clearly identified and provide a first priority claim to covered bond holders. The issuer must enter into a Specified Investment contract with one or more financially sound counterparties which, in case of issuer default or FDIC repudiation, will continue to pay interest and/or principal accordingly as long as proceeds from cover assets at least equal the par value of covered bonds.
- **Covered bond terms:** must be between one and 30 years; issuance may be in any currency as long as currency risks are hedged; bonds can be fixed or floating. Interest rate swaps may be entered for hedging purposes with financially sound counterparties, which must be disclosed to investors. SEC registration is possible but not a requirement.
- **Eligible assets:** must be performing first-lien residential mortgages on one-to-four family residential properties with 80% maximum LTVs. Underwriting must be at the fully indexed rate, with documented income and in line with the existing supervisory origination guidance. Any loan that has been non-performing for more than 60 days should be replaced. A single Metro Statistical Area must be a maximum 20% of the cover pool.
- **Overcollateralization (OC):** must be at least 5% of outstanding covered bonds at all times. When calculating the cover pool value, loans with a LTV exceeding 80% are still eligible but up to the 80% LTV limit only. LTVs must be indexed on a quarterly basis using a nationally recognized, regional housing price index or other comparable measurement.
- **Issuance limit:** is capped at 4% of the IDI's liabilities after issuance.
- **Asset Coverage Test (ACT):** must be performed on a monthly basis by an independent Asset Monitor to safeguard the quality and adequacy of the cover pool. Results must be made public. The asset monitor must also periodically check the accuracy of the ACT. Any ACT breach must be remedied within one month. If not after one month, the Trustee may terminate the program and return principal and accrued interest to covered bond investors. During an ACT breach, no covered bond can be issued.
- **Disclosure:** must be monthly. If substitute assets account for more than 10% of the cover pool within any month (or 20% within any quarter), the issuer must provide updated information on cover assets to investors. Any material information on the IDI's or SPV's financial profile or on any other relevant area must also be made public.
- **Independent trustee:** must be designated by the issuer to represent the interests of covered bond investors and enforce their rights over the cover pool in case of issuer insolvency. All covered bond holders backed by a common cover pool rank *pari-passu*.
- **Insolvency procedures:** the FDIC has three options at its disposal: (1) covered bonds are repaid according to initial terms; (2) covered bonds are paid off in cash, up to the value of the pledged collateral; (3) liquidation of the pledged collateral is permitted to pay off the covered bonds. Options (2) and (3) occur in case of default or FDIC repudiation as mentioned above. In such cases, covered bond holders will recover up to the value of the collateral. Any collateral excess must be returned to the FDIC, while covered bond holders rank pari-passu with unsecured debt holders for the amount due in the event of a shortfall.

II. TWO KEY, PAST LEGISLATION ATTEMPTS

United States Covered Bond Act

The 112th Congress saw an active push for the establishment of covered bond legislation in the US during 2011. The United States Covered Bond Act of 2011 was the most concerted attempt yet in that respect, although it never completed the full legislative process. For legislation to become law, identical text needs to be approved

by both the House of Representatives (HR) and the Senate, and the final legislative text then signed by the President. This was not the case as the Bill approved at the HR ("H.R. 940") contained some differences from that introduced at the Senate ("S. 1835") despite their similarities. These were as follows: an expansion of the definition of eligible issuers; for issuers that are not subject to the jurisdiction of a federal banking agency, the covered bond regulator would be the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System rather than the Secretary of the Treasury; a right afforded to the respective covered bond regulator and a majority of covered bond holders to replace the independent asset monitor; the omission of tax provisions. Furthermore, the start of the 113th Congress on 3 January 2013 meant that it needed to be re-introduced.

The US Covered Bond Act, whether in its "H.R. 940" or "S. 1835" format, contained major differences from the FDIC and US Treasury's foundations, especially with respect to the following points:

- **Covered bond regulators:** must be the Federal banking agency where appropriate, otherwise the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System ("S.1835") or the Secretary of the Treasury ("H.R. 940").
- **Eligible assets:** consist of any first-lien residential mortgage loan secured by a one-to-four family residential property but also (1) any residential mortgage loan insured or guaranteed e.g., under the National Housing Act; (2) commercial mortgage loans (including multi-family); (3) public sector assets – namely any bond or loan from or insured/guaranteed by a State, municipality or other governmental authority; (4) any auto loan or lease; (5) any student loan (guaranteed or unguaranteed); (6) any extension of credit to a person under an open-end credit plan; (7) any loan made or guaranteed by a small business administration; (8) any asset designated by the Secretary, by rule and in consultation with covered bond regulators.
- **Eligible issuers:** include any FDIC depository institution (or subsidiary), bank or savings and loan holding companies (or subsidiary) but also registered nonbank financial companies such as any intermediate holding company. "S.1835" widens eligible issuers to brokers or dealers and supervised insurers as well.
- **Substitute assets:** are limited to 20% of cover assets and may be cash, direct obligations of the US State or GSE of the highest credit quality.
- **Issuance limit:** must be established upon the soundness of the underlying issuer while the maximum amount of covered bond to be issued must be defined as a percentage of the issuer's total assets (with a possible review of this cap, whether up or down, on a quarterly basis).
- **Overcollateralization:** must meet the minimum defined by the Secretary for each asset class but no specific amount is mentioned. Cover pool must be single asset only.
- **Insolvency procedures:** gives specific powers to the FDIC which, if appointed as a conservator or receiver prior to a default event, shall have an exclusive right during the one-year period beginning on the date of the appointment to transfer any cover pool owned by the issuer in its entirety, together with all covered bonds and related obligations. During that year, the FDIC shall ensure the full and timely payment of covered bond holders. In case of default prior to conservatorship or receivership, a separate estate shall be created for each affected covered bond program which comprises all related cover as-sets and covered bonds. This estate is fully liable for covered and other secured obligations only. In case of collateral insufficiency, covered bond holders retain a residential claim against the issuer.

The PATH Act

In 2013, political interest in covered bond legislation emerged again as part of broader reform initiatives addressed in the Protecting American Taxpayers and Homeowners (PATH) Act. PATH aimed notably to reform the GSEs in order to prevent any future liability to taxpayers and increase mortgage competition, enhance transparency and maximize consumer choices. Details related to covered bonds in the PATH Act were similar to the US Covered Bond Act of 2011, with the Treasury being proposed as a regulator instead of the Fed. How-

ever, this bill, a Republican initiative, lacked bipartisan support unlike the previous one, notably as it foresaw the wind-down of the GSEs, and was ultimately unsuccessful.

III. WHERE DO WE STAND?

As discussed above, covered bonds have been mentioned at least a couple of times by legislators since both the Covered Bond Act of 2011 and PATH. First, a speech made in the summer 2014 by then US Treasury secretary, Jack Lew, revived hopes of US covered bond legislation as the US government was looking for private solutions to support mortgage lending. In a survey published by the US Treasury for market feedback, the emphasis was on residential mortgage-backed private label securities (PLS) and thus not directly targeted at covered bonds. However, they were seen as complementary with a new attempt at covered bond legislation possibly emerging from the political debate.

Second, the oversight plan of the Committee on Financial Services for the 114th Congress, which was released in January 2015, mentioned covered bonds. As stated in the document, "*The Committee will examine the potential for covered bonds to increase mortgage and broader asset class financing, improve underwriting standards, and strengthen U.S. financial institutions*." However, since this time, limited progress has been made regarding any further attempts to institute a covered bond framework in the US.

Though the complex topic of GSE reform re-emerged as a political priority under the former Trump administration – following the release of a Presidential *Memorandum on Federal Housing Finance Reform* by the White House in late March 2019, subsequent Housing Reform Plan from the US Department of the Treasury in September 2019 (which briefly mentioned covered bonds), and the Final GSE Capital Rule in late 2020 – substantive reform to US housing finance has not happened yet, particularly as GSE reform did not constitute an area of priority under the most recent Biden administration. Thus, while GSE reform and potential discussion in relation to covered bonds could still eventually be taken up once again given that a Trump administration is currently in place, the administration's focus is heavily centered on trade policy as of early 2025.

IV. RISK-WEIGHTING & COMPLIANCE WITH EUROPEAN LEGISLATION

Legacy US covered bonds were neither UCITS 52(4)-compliant nor CRR-compliant given the absence of EU membership.[1] Therefore, they did not benefit from preferred risk-weighting for regulatory capital purposes. Under the Standardized Approach, they were treated similarly to senior unsecured bank debt. That said, if denominated in €, US covered bonds would be eligible for European Central Bank repo operations, conditional on an investment grade rating. Specific haircuts are applied depending on the rating and characteristics of the covered bond. However, since there are no outstanding US covered bonds, this is not currently applicable.

Issuers: JP Morgan, Bank of America Corporation.

ECBC Covered Bond Comparative Database: https://www.ecbc.eu/framework/57/US_Covered_Bonds

For the most up-to-date information, please consult the new ECBC Covered Bond Comparative Database webpage on the Covered Bond Label website www.coveredbondlabel.com or via the following QR code:

1 Please click on the following link for further information on the UCITS Directive and the Capital Requirements Regulation (CRR): https://hypo.org/ecbc/covered-bonds/.

CHAPTER 4 - RATING AGENCIES & METHODOLOGY

4.1 CREDIT RATING AGENCY APPROACHES: INTRODUCTION

By Elena Bortolotti, Barclays, Chairwoman of the ECBC Rating Agency Approaches Working Group

Despite the growing concerns surrounding geopolitical risks and global uncertainties, the past 12 months, from the perspective of the Rating Agency Approaches (RAA) Working Group, have turned out to be yet again uneventful. I am pleased to report that, at the time of writing Fitch Ratings, Moody's Ratings, Morningstar DBRS, Scope Ratings and S&P Global Ratings (the "Rating Agencies") have not made significant changes to their methodologies, nor to sovereign, bank or covered bond ratings.

The RAA Working Group has continued to be engaged in various discussions with regards to how we can amend the Harmonised Transparency Template (HTT) so that it can be used by the Rating Agencies as a source of information for their quarterly reporting to the ECB. We have also had interesting debates on how the HTT can be improved to cater for new requirements introduced by the Covered Bond Directive, such as extendable maturity features, liquidity buffer amounts and liquid assets.

With regards to covered bond rating methodologies, since the last edition of the ECBC Covered Bond Fact Book 2024, some of the Rating Agencies have introduced minor changes/clarifications to their rating methodologies/assumptions. These changes have mainly led to rating upgrades and have all been well received by covered bond issuers.

Below is a summary of some of the changes introduced:

> Fitch Ratings (Fitch) introduced a few changes to their Covered Bonds Rating Criteria since the last edition of the Fact Book. Fitch amended Appendix 13 of its Covered Bonds Rating Criteria which refers to how they will rate covered bond swap obligations. Furthermore, they now model, for active covered bond programmes, future issuances when stress-testing the programme cash flows. This gives a forward-looking perspective of the programme's maturity mismatches. Fitch have also revised some of their refinancing spread levels (RSL); notably, they increased the French sovereign RSL, which feeds through to the cash flow analysis of public sector programmes. Finally, it is worth mentioning Fitch's amendments to their European RMBS Rating Criteria, which they apply to the asset analysis of cover pools. These changes have led to a few rating upgrades as well as having a positive impact on the ratings of multi-issuers of cédulas hipotecarias.

> Moody's Ratings (Moody's) have not made any significant changes to their covered bond methodology. They have, however, introduced ESG scores for covered bonds to provide more transparency on ESG credit risks, but these do not reflect any change in methodology.

> S&P Global Ratings (S&P) Covered Bond Methodology, at the time of writing, is under review (see "Request for Comment: Methodology for Rating Covered Bonds" published on April 3, 2025). As a result of this review, S&P may amend its criteria. Until then, S&P will continue to rate and surveil covered bonds using the existing criteria, which are summarised in the table below and following sections. For completeness, please find below a summary of the changes they are proposing to introduce:

  - When rating a covered bond programme on the sole merit of jurisdictional support, they will rate the covered bonds based on the provisions of the local covered bond legislation, without considering any additional overcollateralization (OC) beyond the applicable regulatory OC levels.
  - For covered bonds issued in countries that are members of a monetary union, uplift based on jurisdictional support may include up to one notch above the rating on the sovereign.
  - They will allow up to two notches of collateral-based uplift based on only credit risk coverage, without coverage of refinancing costs.
  - Adjusting downwards the assumed target asset spread levels used when modelling refinancing costs, moving away from the historical peaks observed in certain countries for the asset type in the cover pool.

- Applying these target asset spreads to model refinancing costs for covered bonds maturing over the first three years in S&P's cash flow simulation. For covered bonds maturing later, they assume base-case spreads, which are based on historical observations during periods of lesser stress and S&P's forward-looking outlook.
- Expanding the forward-looking analysis of the covered bond programme's management to include S&P's expectation of the issuer's near to medium term covered bond issuance plans, as well as expected variations in the target credit enhancement levels.
- Updating the analysis of counterparty risk in cases where S&P's rating assessment is linked to the issuer.

S&P has indicated that, should the proposed amendments be adopted, they expect at least one programme upgrade and on average a 5% reduction in OC levels across the 100 programmes they currently rate.

Furthermore, the Rating Agencies also focus on how ESG factors should be incorporated into their covered bond rating methodologies. A summary of the Rating Agencies' ESG assessment approaches is provided below:

> Fitch assigns ESG Relevance Scores (ESG.RS) to debt instruments including covered bonds. They indicate whether an ESG factor is relevant to the credit rating. Individual E, S and G relevance scores range from '5' to '1', while a score of '5' indicates factors that have a direct impact on the rating on a standalone basis, and a score of '1' indicates factors which have no credit impact or are irrelevant to the sector and the programme from a credit perspective.

> Moody's ESG methodology includes two frameworks which were applied when analysing ESG exposures and credit impacts respectively: 1. The Issuer Profile Score (IPS) serves as an input to the ratings and assesses the ESG exposures of an issuer or transaction on a numeric scale from E-1/S-1/G-1 (Positive) to E-5/S-5/G-5 (Very Highly Negative). The E and S IPS and related category scores incorporate asset level mitigants (e.g. insurance and asset diversification), while the G IPS and related category scores incorporate both asset and transaction level mitigants. 2. The Credit Impact Score (CIS) explains the impact of ESG considerations on the rating of a given issuer or transaction and is expressed on a scale of 1 to 5, indicating materiality. The CIS is based on the impact of ESG considerations in the context of the other credit drivers that are material to the rating and indicates the extent to which, if any, the rating of the issuer or transaction would likely be different if exposure to ESG risks did not exist.

> Morningstar DBRS' ESG assessment framework encompasses up to 17 ESG factors which are considered in their rating analysis. Out of the 17 ESG factors, 8 are taken into consideration in their covered bond rating analysis. ESG considerations typically arise from either the collateral backing the covered bonds, from the transaction's counterparties or from the covered bond structure.

> Scope Ratings' (Scope) ESG factors are a vital and core element of their bank rating methodology. The ESG-D factors assess a bank's long-term sustainability and digital transition preparedness, which can either notch-up or down the initial anchor rating. Furthermore, when rating a covered bond, governance factors (qualitative) as well as social and environmental factors (quantitative) become a relevant component of Scope's rating process.

> S&P incorporates ESG factors into its covered bonds rating analysis. These factors are an integral part of their methodology and may influence, along with financial and non-financial factors, the uplift assigned from the ICR to obtain the covered bond rating.

In the pages that follow this introduction, you will find the Rating Agencies' covered bond methodologies (a high-level summary of which can be found in Figure 1 below) as well as the ESG assessment factors applied to covered bonds.

In conclusion, I would like to thank all members of the ECBC RAA Working Group and the Rating Agencies for their constructive input and participation. I would also like to thank Luca Bertalot and the ECBC team for coor-

dinating, organising and keeping us abreast with all topics related to covered bonds. Finally, a special thank you to Sascha Kullig who diligently reads and reviews all the articles of the Fact Book and to all the authors that make this valuable publication possible.

> Figure 1: A Summary of the Rating Agencies' Covered Bond Ratings Building Blocks

Building Block Towards Rating	Fitch	Moody's	S&P	Morningstar DBRS	Scope
Minimum Rating (Starting Point):	IDR (Issuer Default Rating)	Counterparty Risk (CR) Assessment	ICR (Issuer Credit Rating)	CB AP (Covered Bond Attachment Point) = Critical Obligations Rating (COR); or Senior Unsecured Rating (SUR) + uplift	Issuer Rating (IR)
Additional Notches via: CB Law	–	–	–	–	Taken into account in Legal Framework analysis
EU's BRRD or equivalent	uplift 0-2 notches (resolution uplift) = Resolution Reference Point	uplift 1 notch	uplift 0-2 notches = RRL (Rating Reference Level)	Considered to determine the CBAP	Taken into account in Recovery Regime analysis
Segregation/ Bankruptcy Remote Systemic Importance/ Jurisdictional Support	Payment Continuity Uplift (PCU) (max + 8 notches) Recovery Uplift (up to 2 notches; 3 NIG)	TPI (Timely Payment Indicator) (max +9 notches if also achievable by expected loss model)	RRL + max 3 notches (systemic importance; legal framework; sovereign credit capacity)	LSF (Legal and Structuring Framework) (max +10 notches)	Governance Support (max 6 notches) Legal Framework (+2 notches) Resolution Regime (+4 notches)
Cover Pool/ Asset Quality	Assessed as part of OC stress testing	Assessed by expected loss model; determines uplift over CR assessment +1	uplift of 1 0-4 notches (unlimited for CPT) +2 for credit risk +2 for refinancing costs	CPCA (Cover Pool Credit Assessment) +up to 2 notches for recovery prospects	Cover Pool Analysis +0-3 notches
Maximal Rating Possible above Starting point: *(achievable with CPT Delinkage or appropriate liquidity mitigants)*	2+8+2 (12 notches possible for CPT)	Capped at country ceiling	2+3+4 notches (unlimited for CPT)	10+2 notches	6+3 notches (CPT assessed case by case)
Capped by Country Ceiling	✓	✓	✓	NO (considers country, redenomination and capital control risks in accordance with Global Sovereign rating methodology)	NO (Macroeconomic factors & credit quality main factors)
OC Commitment/ Counterparty risk/ Hedging	Level of OC relied upon (legal, contractual, used in ACT, lowest OC in last 12 months for issuers rated at least 'BBB-' or 'F3') is compared with the breakeven OC for a given rating. Counterparty risk mitigation considered	Full credit given for committed OC above legislative minimum. Full credit given for uncommitted OC for highly rated issuer, limited credit for lower-rated issuer; both subject to additional criteria. Counterparty and interest rate/FX risk considered in analysis	*uncommitted OC:* max achievable rating -1 notch *counterparty or country risk* might limit max rating if adequately mitigated/hedged	gives credit for contractually *committed OC* above min level required by legislation and to uncommitted OC deemed sustainable	*IR ≥BBB:* Available OC; *<BBB: publicly communicated OC; ≤BB: contractual OC commitment*

Source: DBRS, Fitch, Moody's, Scope and S&P

4.2 MORNINGSTAR DBRS COVERED BOND RATING METHODOLOGY

By Ketan Thaker and Christian Aufsatz, Morningstar DBRS

INTRODUCTION

Morningstar DBRS "Rating and Monitoring Covered Bonds" global methodology involves the analysis of four building blocks:

1. Covered Bonds Attachment Point (CBAP);
2. Legal and Structuring Framework (LSF) Assessment;
3. Cover Pool Credit Assessment (CPCA); and
4. Credit for high recovery prospects provided by the cover pool (CP).

The assignment of ratings to covered bonds (CB) transactions involves determining the LSF-implied Likelihood (LSF-L) for the programme based on the CBAP, LSF assessment and CPCA. Once the LSF-L is determined, ratings are assigned by incorporating credit for the CP's ability to provide support following an assumed default of the CBs.

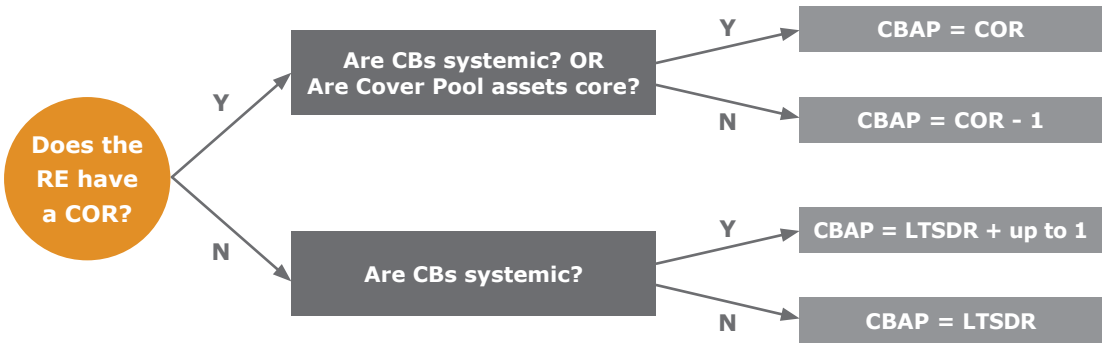
THE FOUR BUILDING BLOCKS

1. Covered Bonds Attachment Point

CBs have dual recourse. The payment obligation initially falls on the debtor of first recourse, called the Reference Entity (RE); failing that, the obligation falls on the CP.

The CBAP designates the RE's credit strength (i.e., the probability that the RE—not the CP—will fulfil the payment obligation). The CBAP comprises a reference rating and, when applicable, a notching uplift schedule. The Critical Obligations Rating (COR) or the Long-Term Senior Debt Rating (LTSDR)[1] of the RE is the basis for the CBAP. There are four scenarios under which Morningstar DBRS determines the CBAP:

A. For all European CB programmes where the RE is subject to the Bank Recovery and Resolution Directive (BRRD), Morningstar DBRS determines the CBAP as follows:



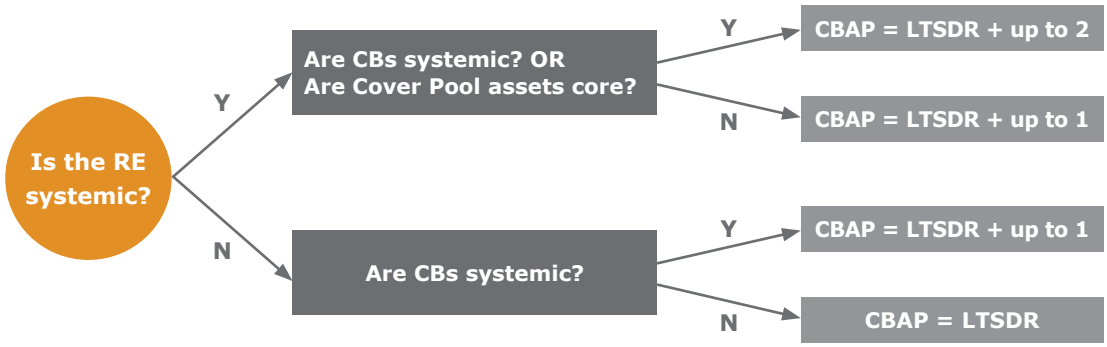
The COR addresses the default risk of particular obligations/exposures at banks that are more likely to be excluded from bail-in and remain in a bank in the event of the resolution of a troubled bank than other senior unsecured obligations. In cases where the bail-in tool is applied and the CB programme in its entirety remains with the going concern part of the RE in resolution, Morningstar DBRS expects that the COR will continue to be the base for the CBAP.

When the RE does not have a COR, and in cases where the bail-in tool is applied and the CB programme in its entirety remains with the going concern part of the RE in resolution, Morningstar DBRS expects that

1 Or the Long-Term Issuer rating if Morningstar DBRS does not assign a Long-Term Senior Debt rating to the RE.

the CBAP would decouple from the LTSDR. At that point, the CBAP is set at a level that Morningstar DBRS considers consistent with the ability of the new RE to continue to be the source of payments for the CBs.

B. For all European CB programmes where the RE is subject to a resolution regime that Morningstar DBRS deems equivalent to the BRRD, Morningstar DBRS determines the CBAP as follows:



C. For Canadian CB programmes, Morningstar DBRS sets the CBAP at the level of the LTSDR of the RE (for the REs that are subject to the Canadian Bank Recapitalization Regime, the LTSDR tracks the non-bailinable senior debt).

D. For CB programmes where the RE is not subject to the BRRD nor to a regime that Morningstar DBRS deems equivalent, Morningstar DBRS equalises the CBAP with the LTSDR.

2. Legal and Structuring Framework Assessment

The LSF assessment is programme-specific. It limits the number of notches a CB default risk assessment can achieve above the CBAP.

Morningstar DBRS's LSF assessment captures the likelihood that payment obligations under the CB will be efficiently transferred from a troubled bank to a performing bank or the CP, administered by a third party. This assessment takes three areas into consideration:

> Robustness of the CP segregation for the benefit of the CB holders;

> Accessibility of CP cash flows on a preferential and timely basis, the need and ability to liquidate the CP, including likelihood of systemic support;

> Contingency plans, including the involvement and responsibility of the regulator or the relevant Central Bank to facilitate the transfer, and regulator's support to the CB market, if applicable.

Cover Pool Segregation

Morningstar DBRS recognises that CB legislation is written to supersede the bankruptcy and insolvency laws within a jurisdiction. Legislations generally give CB holders privilege over the CP assets, taking preference over claims of any other creditor in the case of issuer insolvency. In the event of an insolvency, legislation typically allows the CP to be segregated from the bankruptcy estate.

Morningstar DBRS expects contractual CB programmes to largely address the issue of segregation. As such, Morningstar DBRS does not expect CP segregation to be a major constraining factor for its ratings. If there were serious doubts about effectiveness of segregation, the dual-recourse principle might be undermined, preventing the application of this methodology. However, Morningstar DBRS expects the issue to be addressed, either by law or the transaction's structural features. Nevertheless, instances where legal frameworks and structures have minor weaknesses in segregation mechanisms that are not effectively mitigated can have a limited impact on Morningstar DBRS's assessment.

Timely Access to Cover Pool Cash Flows

A reasonable expectation that the cover assets will be available to satisfy the claim of the CB holders following a default of the RE is a first step toward gaining comfort that the CB holders will be paid according to the terms of their investment. Morningstar DBRS performs qualitative analyses of the legal framework, structural features, specific characteristics of each CB programme and expectations of systemic support, in order to achieve this comfort.

In general, cover assets amortise over a time horizon beyond the scheduled amortisation of the liabilities. While the RE is able to meet payments on the CBs, the resulting mismatches in the maturity profile are unimportant, as the RE will use its own funding sources to meet maturing liabilities. Upon the failure of the RE, the source of payment switches to the CP. Morningstar DBRS consequently analyses the effective mismatches, as the conditions of the CB may provide for these to be modified conditionally to a default of the RE, and the manner in which they might be bridged.

The qualitative analysis aims at assessing the extent to which the CP composition, the programme's structural features and the legal framework interact to facilitate the CB investors' receipt of timely payments from the CP in a scenario where the RE is assumed to halt payments. This depends on the interaction of the constraints imposed by the programme structure and legal framework on how quickly the payments would need to be redirected to CB holders and how quickly financing sources become available to fund such needs. Other considerations in this analysis include the type of assets that may need to be liquidated and the time it takes to liquidate them; the presence of maturity extensions, prematurity tests or other features that give more time to explore alternative solutions; and how the programme structure foresees the CP detaching from the RE's influence in this timeframe.

Contingency Plans and Supervision

Morningstar DBRS views positively the regulator's involvement and the existence of contingency plans for the smooth transition from the RE to the CP as a source of payments to CB holders. Factors reviewed include but are not limited to the existence of a specific supervisor in charge of the CB programme in the normal course of operations, and the quality and content of the contingency plans in case of an issuer's default.

After reviewing these main factors under the LSF assessment, Morningstar DBRS assigns the CB one of five LSF assessments: Very Strong, Strong, Adequate, Average or Modest.

3. Cover Pool Credit Assessment and Overcollateralisation

Once a CBAP and an LSF assessment are assigned to a CB programme, Morningstar DBRS assesses the CP quality to determine the LSF-L of the programme. This assessment represents the likelihood that the CBs will be repaid according to their terms, provided there is sufficient overcollateralisation (OC) to which Morningstar DBRS could give credit.

Morningstar DBRS analyses the wind-down of the CP and the repayment of the liabilities according to their conditions. The aim is to determine whether the interest and principal can be paid on time solely from the CP (including any structural enhancement) for a given rating scenario.

The CPCA analysis is similar to the analysis performed for RMBS and SME CLOs transactions. It begins with an estimate of the probability of default (PD) and loss given default for each rating category based on the methodology applicable to the underlying assets, followed by an analysis of the stressed asset cash flows (including interest rates and exchange rates) from the underlying assets and an analysis of the way cash flows are allocated to liabilities based on the transaction documents.

Additionally, the CPCA accounts for the timing of RE discontinuing its payments. This warrants an analysis of the periodic defaults on the underlying collateral versus a lifetime default expectation; assumptions regarding

principal amortisation and reinvestment; future interest levels, exchange rates[2] and senior costs; assumptions about collections in case of the RE's default under its obligations; and an estimate of the liquidation value of the underlying collateral in the event of the RE's default or inability to pay. In order to estimate liquidation values, Morningstar DBRS performs a net present value calculation based on projected cash flows generated by the CP and assumed interest rates stresses and market value spreads.

The CPCA is the rating stress scenario that the structure can withstand given the OC to which Morningstar DBRS gives credit.

Due to the very nature of the product, the OC level changes, for instance, as a result of the amount of CBs issued or amortised under the programme, and assets added to or removed from the CP. Generally, the only legal obligation of the issuer or RE is to maintain a level of assets such that the regulatory tests are satisfied, and the minimum level of OC legally or contractually required is maintained.

Therefore, Morningstar DBRS typically gives full credit to the level of OC required by the national legislation or the secondary regulation and regulators' guidelines, as well as to the level of OC included in the contractual undertaking of the issuer or RE, provided that non-compliance with such undertakings would cause the RE to be in breach of contract under the program documentation. This point seems to be supported by the BRRD. However, Morningstar DBRS's conclusion might be affected by the BRRD's implementation in the local legislative framework. For levels above those, or where there is no public announcement, Morningstar DBRS determines a sustainable OC level by reference to the minimum-observed OC level during the past 12 months, adjusted by any increase that Morningstar DBRS judges to be persistent. This figure is then reduced by the following scaling factors, which vary by rating:

CBs rating	Scaling factors (x) to observed OC
AA (low) and above	0.85x
A (low) to A (high)	0.90x
BBB (low) to BBB (high)	0.93x
Below investment grade	0.95x

Source: Morningstar DBRS

Issuers may publish an announcement for a target OC level (e.g., in the form of a press release, a statement in the investors' report or on the RE website). However, these announcements are not viewed as favourably as an issuer's legal or contractual obligation. Therefore, the analysis will typically apply the above-detailed scaling factors to the publicly announced OC level. However, when Morningstar DBRS holds the view that the announced OC level can be considered persistent based on historically observed levels, the analysis may give full credit to it.

4. Credit for High Recovery Prospects Provided by the Cover Pool

In consideration of the essentially senior secured position of CB holders, Morningstar DBRS may give up to two notches of uplift from the LSF-L if the CP analysis shows that it would provide substantial support following a default of the CBs.

Morningstar DBRS runs a wind-down cash flow simulation aimed at covering the funding cost under a stress scenario in line with the rating. Then, Morningstar DBRS determines the percentage of principal payments received under the CBs versus their nominal amount, and assign a rating with an uplift from the LSF-L according to the following scale:

2 The stresses to account for risk of unhedged currency risk are determined in line with the methodology – Currency Stresses for Global Structured Finance Transaction.

% of principal recovered	Notches uplift
>= 80%	+2
>= 60% but < 80%	+1
< 60%	0

Source: Morningstar DBRS

COVERED BONDS WITH PUBLIC SECTOR EXPOSURES

CBs with public-sector exposures (PSE) deserve, in certain circumstances, a different type of analysis because of the high correlation between public-sector assets and the domicile sovereign. When the CP of PSE is concentrated in a single domicile sovereign, this materially increases the tail-event risk such that the impact of an assumed default of that sovereign on the credit quality of the PSE pool cannot be sufficiently diversified.

Morningstar DBRS addresses this risk in its CPCA using its PSE tool. The *Modelling Assumptions for Portfolios of Public Sector Exposures* methodology provides further detail on this tool.

For CBs where 20% or more of the CP is composed of public-sector assets in the same sovereign where the RE is located (host sovereign), Morningstar DBRS considers the additional risks separately. The PSE in the host sovereign can increase the likelihood that the creditworthiness of both the debtor of fi recourse (the RE) and the CP will deteriorate concurrently, exposing the CB holders to higher risk. Morningstar DBRS considers that, when the host sovereign concentration is material, it can very rarely (if at all) be expected that the CB be rated over three notches above the host sovereign rating. However, it is possible that a higher rating could be achieved by disregarding the as-sets concentrated in the host sovereign. Furthermore, when the RE is an entity whose primary business focuses solely on the region where the assets are located, Morningstar DBRS reflects any additional risks and constraints to the rating.

SOVEREIGN STRESS

A sovereign downgrade may impact factors considered in a CB rating, resulting in ratings changes to the CBs:

1. CBAP: The LTSDR and the COR (where applicable) consider the operating environment of a banking organisation (including regulatory and supervisory regime). Accordingly, a sovereign downgrade may impact the CBAP by creating a more challenging operational environment. This can lead to downgrades of CB ratings. Moreover, the notching approach of the COR contemplates that the COR can surpass the sovereign rating by a maximum of two notches in certain cases, provided there is no systemic banking crisis, as that would likely put downward pressure on the CBAP.

2. LSF Assessment: The LSF assessment expresses the likelihood of a smooth transition from the issuer or RE to the CP as a source of payments on the CB. A downgrade of the domicile sovereign may affect the LSF assessment associated with a given programme and therefore cause its downgrade. In the case of a CP composed of sovereign exposures, a downgrade of the domicile sovereign may affect the LSF assessment as Morningstar DBRS assesses less favourably exposures to lower-rated sovereigns. In certain circumstances, a downgrade of the host sovereign may also affect the LSF assessment.

3. CP Credit Assessment: A downgrade of the domicile sovereign may cause a deterioration of the CP assets. It can also trigger greater volatility in the financial markets and result in Morningstar DBRS factoring in higher levels of market value spreads into its cash flow analysis. This would in turn increase the pass-OC level for a given rating scenario. Morningstar DBRS may then downgrade the CB even if the level of OC to which Morningstar DBRS can give credit is unchanged, but it is now lower than the new pass-OC level.

4. CP Support: A downgrade of the domicile sovereign may affect the notching granted above the LSF-L.

5. Sovereign Rating: For Public Sector CBs, when 20% or more of the CP consists of PSE concentrated in the host sovereign, a downgrade of the host sovereign may cause the CBs' rating to be downgraded.

MORNINGSTAR DBRS LSF MATRICES

Morningstar DBRS considers the PD of a CB to derive from the joint probability that both the RE and CP become unable to fulfil the transaction's payment obligations, assuming that there is usually a correlation between the two instances. Separately, Morningstar DBRS assumes a non-zero probability that the CB will not receive the full benefit of the cash flows from the CP rapidly enough to avert a CB default. Five LSF categories are assigned so that the probability of not receiving the CP's full benefit increases as the LSF weakens.

Accordingly, Morningstar DBRS has generated five LSF matrices for each of the LSF grades with a fixed assumption of a CB with a five-year weighted-average life (WAL). The output of the Morningstar DBRS matrixes (or the LSF-L) points to the rating level for each one of the CBAP and CP credit assessment levels for a given LSF assessment. The LSF-L does not reflect the prospect for high recoveries for the CP following a potential default of the CB, which may provide up to an additional two notches uplift to the LSF-L.

COUNTERPARTY RISK

Morningstar DBRS generally applies the same counterparty criteria to European CBs as stated under *Legal and Derivative Criteria for European Structured Finance Transactions*. Noticeable differences that reflect the nature of the product are detailed in this methodology.

COVERED BONDS SURVEILLANCE

Once Morningstar DBRS assigns a CB rating, the surveillance process begins and is continued for as long as the rating is maintained, via a periodic review and more frequent monitoring.

In cases where ongoing information is no longer deemed reliable or of sufficient quality, and Morningstar DBRS is unable to properly monitor the transaction, Morningstar DBRS may discontinue the existing rating(s).

ESG FACTORS

Morningstar DBRS has developed an ESG assessment framework that encompasses up to 17 ESG risk factors that Morningstar DBRS currently considers in its rating analysis. These factors are grouped into three categories—Environmental, Social, and Governance—representing the key considerations that Morningstar DBRS commonly analyses within its ESG assessment framework. All ESG risk factors are generally consistent with those that global ESG stakeholders use to assess ESG factors for sustainable investing and financial risks. Morningstar DBRS considers how ESG risks affect the issuer and transaction-specific ratings during the life of the transaction/rating. As with all of Morningstar DBRS's credit analysis, evaluation of the factors' impact is forward looking.

In general, Morningstar DBRS considers eight of the 17 factors in the structured finance and covered bonds' rating analysis. In addition to the eight risk factors that typically apply to covered bond transactions, investors may be exposed to other ESG risk factors based on whether the reference obligor or guarantor or counterparty is a government, corporate, or financial institutions entity.

ESG considerations typically arise from either the collateral backing the covered bonds, from transactions' counterparties, or from the covered bond structure.

ENVIRONMENTAL	SOCIAL	GOVERNANCE
Emissions, Effluents, and Waste (G/F/C/S)	Social Impact of Products and Services (F/C/S)	Bribery, Corruption, and Political Risks (G/F/C)
Carbon and Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Costs (G/F/C/S)*	Human Capital and Human Rights (G/F/C/S)	Business Ethics (F/C)
Resource and Energy Management (G/C)	Product Governance (F/C/S)	Corporate/Transaction Governance (F/C/S)
Land Impact and Biodiversity (G/C)	Data Privacy and Security (F/C/S)	Institutional Strength, Governance, and Transparency (G)**
Climate and Weather Risks (G/F/C/S)	Occupational Health and Safety (C)	Peace and Security (G)**
	Community Relations (F/C)	
	Access to Basic Services (G/F/C)	

*Denotes applicability to rating groups:
G = Governments, F = Financial Institutions, C = Corporate Finance, S = Structured Finance
**Exclusively Government risk factors.

RELATED RESEARCH

> Global Methodology for Rating and Monitoring Covered Bonds", March 2025.
https://www.dbrsmorningstar.com/research/450542

> "DBRS Morningstar's Assessment of European Jurisdictions for Which Covered Bonds are Considered Systemically Important", February 2023.
https://www.dbrsmorningstar.com/research/410156

> "Morningstar DBRS Criteria: Approach to Environmental, Social, and Governance Factors in Credit Ratings", August 2024.
https://www.dbrsmorningstar.com/research/437781

> "Legal and Derivative Criteria for European Structured Finance Transactions", November 2024.
https://www.dbrsmorningstar.com/research/443196

> "Legal and Derivatives Criteria for Canadian Structured Finance", August 2024.
https://www.dbrsmorningstar.com/research/437761

> "Currency Stresses for Global Structured Finance Transactions", November 2024.
https://www.dbrsmorningstar.com/research/443202

> "Modelling Assumptions for Portfolios of Public Sector Exposures", July 2023.
https://www.dbrsmorningstar.com/research/435921

> Commentary: "Covered Bonds Markets at a Glance: France", March 2025.
https://www.dbrsmorningstar.com/research/450002

> Commentary: "Covered Bonds Markets at a Glance: Estonia", October 2024.
https://www.dbrsmorningstar.com/research/441484

> Commentary: "Covered Bonds Markets at a Glance: Sweden", September 2024.
https://www.dbrsmorningstar.com/research/438983

- Commentary: "Portuguese Covered Bonds: Legal and Structuring Framework Review", June 2024.
  https://www.dbrsmorningstar.com/research/434969
- Commentary: "Spanish Mortgage Covered Bonds: Cover Pools Stability Amid an Uptick in Issuance", November 2023.
  https://www.dbrsmorningstar.com/research/424293
- Commentary: "Italian Covered Bonds: Implementation of the New EU Legislation", April 2023.
  https://www.dbrsmorningstar.com/research/412979
- Commentary: "Greek Covered Bonds Heading for a Change", March 2023.
  https://www.dbrsmorningstar.com/research/412028
- Commentary: "Spanish Covered Bonds: Legal and Structuring Framework Review", July 2022.
  https://www.dbrsmorningstar.com/research/399644

> Figure 1: Adequate LSF

COVERED BOND ATTACHMENT POINT	COVER POOL CREDIT ASSESSMENT											
	AAA	**AA (high)**	**AA**	**AA (low)**	**A (high)**	**A**	**A (low)**	**BBB (high)**	**BBB**	**BBB (low)**	**BB (high)**	**BB**
AAA	AAA	AAA	AAA	AAA	AAA	AAA	AAA	AAA	AAA	AAA	AAA	AAA
AA (high)	AAA	AAA	AAA	AAA	AAA	AAA	AAA	AA (high)	AA (high)	AA (high)	AA (high)	AA (high)
AA	AAA	AAA	AAA	AAA	AAA	AAA	AA (high)	AA	AA	AA	AA	AA
AA (low)	AAA	AAA	AAA	AAA	AA (high)	AA (high)	AA	AA	AA (low)	AA (low)	AA (low)	AA (low)
A (high)	AAA	AA (high)	AA (high)	AA (high)	AA	AA	AA	AA (low)	AA (low)	A (high)	A (high)	A (high)
A	AA (high)	AA (high)	AA (high)	AA	AA	AA	AA (low)	AA (low)	AA (low)	A (high)	A	A
A (low)	AA	AA	AA	AA (low)	AA (low)	AA (low)	A (high)	A (high)	A (high)	A	A (low)	A (low)
BBB (high)	AA (low)	AA (low)	A (high)	A (high)	A (high)	A (high)	A	A	A (low)	A (low)	A (low)	BBB (high)
BBB	AA (low)	A (high)	A (high)	A (high)	A	A	A	A (low)	A (low)	A (low)	BBB (high)	BBB (high)
BBB (low)	A (high)	A (high)	A	A	A	A	A (low)	A (low	A (low)	A (low)	BBB (high)	BBB (high)
BB (high)	A (low)	A (low)	A (low)	A (low)	A (low)	BBB (high)	BBB (high)	BBB (high)	BBB	BBB	BBB (low)	BBB (low)
BB	A (low)	A (low)	A (low)	BBB (high)	BBB (high)	BBB (high)	BBB (high)	BBB	BBB	BBB (low)	BBB (low)	BBB (low)
BB (low)	BBB (high)	BBB (high)	BBB (high)	BBB (high)	BBB (high)	BBB	BBB	BBB (low)	BBB (low)	BBB (low)	BBB (low)	BB (high)
B (high)	BBB	BBB	BBB	BBB	BBB (low)	BBB (low)	BBB (low)	BBB (low)	BBB (low)	BBB (low)	BB (high)	BB (high)
B	BBB (low)	BBB (low)	BBB (low)	BBB (low)	BBB (low)	BBB (low)	BBB (low)	BBB (low)	BB (high)	BB (high)	BB (high)	BB (high)
B (low)	BBB (low)	BBB (low)	BBB (low)	BBB (low)	BBB (low)	BBB (low)	BB (high)	BB (high)	BB (high)	BB (high)	BB	BB
CCC (high)	BB (high)	BB (high)	BB (high)	BB (high)	BB (high)	BB (high)	BB (high)	BB (high)	BB	BB	BB (low)	BB (low)
CCC	BB (high)	BB (high)	BB (high)	BB (high)	BB (high)	BB (high)	BB (high)	BB	BB	BB	BB (low)	BB (low)
CCC (low)	BB	BB	BB	BB	BB	BB (low)	BB (low)	BB (low)	BB (low)	BB (low)	B (high)	B (high)

Source: Morningstar DBRS

4.3 FITCH RATINGS COVERED BOND RATING METHODOLOGY

By Hélène Heberlein and Cosme de Montpellier, Fitch Ratings

INTRODUCTION

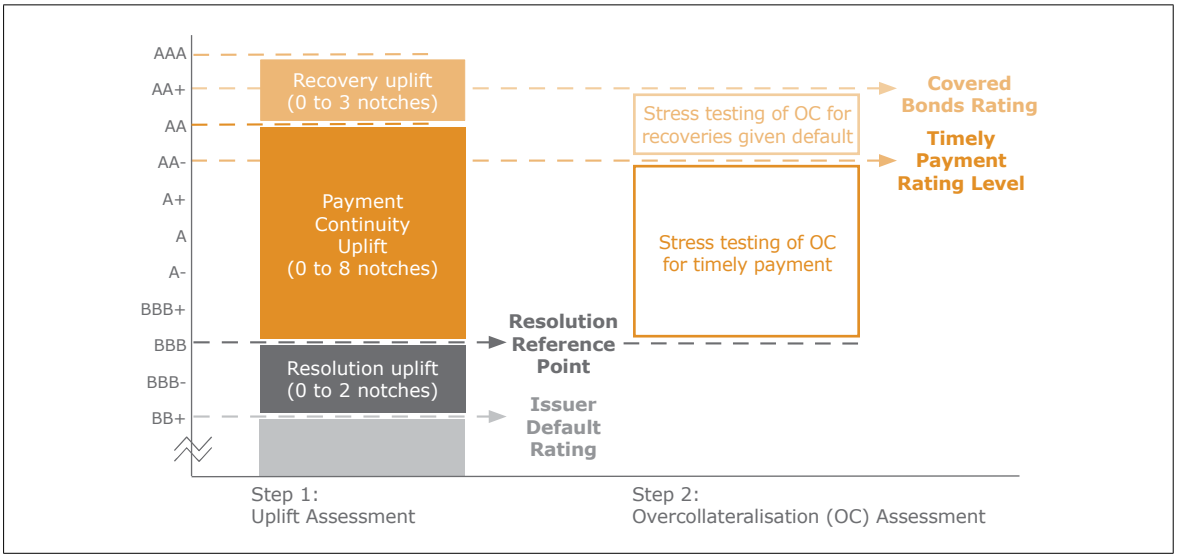
Fitch's Covered Bonds Rating Criteria focuses on the dual recourse nature of covered bonds: to a financial institution and to a pool of assets that can change over time. Our covered bond ratings address the bonds' probability of default, and following their hypothetical default, recoveries from the cover pool.

The key rating drivers for covered bond programmes are the rating of the issuer (Long Term Issuer Default Rating, or IDR), the uplift granted above the IDR, and the overcollateralisation (OC) protection.

The IDR measures the default risk on senior financial obligations to third-party creditors. Covered bonds can be rated above an issuing entity's IDR due to their privileged position over an issuer's senior debt in a resolution scenario (resolution uplift) and their collateralised nature which, in the event of an issuer default, may allow for ongoing covered bond payments (payment continuity uplift) as well as for recoveries on covered bonds assumed to be in default (recovery uplift). These form the basis of our uplift assessment above the IDR. The OC assessment consists of determining the break-even OC for a given rating and comparing it to the level of OC that can be relied upon for the programme. While the uplifts are granted irrespective of the level of OC, their use is subject to OC relied upon being sufficient to withstand the stress scenario associated with a given rating.

This is illustrated in the next graph. Often, not all notches of uplift are used. It could be because not all notches are needed to reach 'AAA', the highest rating on the Fitch scale, or due to a rating cap, such as a Country Ceiling. This creates a buffer against an issuer downgrade. In addition, the actual covered bond rating may be lower than the maximum achievable if the OC level that Fitch gives credit to in its analysis does not withstand higher stress scenarios.

> Figure 1: Fitch Covered Bond Rating Steps



Source: Fitch Ratings

STEP 1: UPLIFT ASSESSMENT

The IDR is the starting point of the analysis as covered bonds are a full recourse instrument against their issuer, so should be rated at least as high as their issuer. It also reflects that Fitch does not completely delink the covered bonds rating from that of their issuer, as these typically retain significant flexibility in their programmes, notably in terms of cover pool replenishment, further issuances and OC levels.

Generally, Fitch only rates covered bonds if it maintains an IDR on the issuer or where a reference IDR can be determined based on expected support or guarantees. The IDR may be assigned privately, in which case Fitch will not disclose the uplift assessment when assigning the covered bonds rating.

Resolution Uplift

The resolution uplift reflects the lower vulnerability to default of covered bonds compared to senior liabilities in jurisdictions with a resolution regime that includes a bail-in tool from which covered bonds are exempt. It applies where Fitch believes payments will continue being made without recourse to the cover pool even if the issuer has defaulted on its senior debt. If covered bond exemption from bail-in is restricted to the value of the cover pool, a positive resolution uplift is subject to a sufficiently low risk of undercollateralisation.

The resolution uplift can be up to two notches. It is one notch for programmes of institutions with a support-driven IDR, and 0 notches for programmes of specialised lenders not operationally integrated with their parent, or institutions without debt buffer requirements (see figure 2 below). The IDR increased by the notches of resolution uplift gives the "resolution reference point".

> Figure 2: Level of Resolution Uplift

Resolution uplift	Type of Issuers
Two notches	> Institutions with an IDR not driven by institutional or state support and their subsidiaries whose IDR is equalised with the parent's. > Institutions with an IDR based on their participation/integration in a mutual support scheme and equalised with group IDR.
One notch	> Institutions with an IDR driven by support, and their subsidiaries.
None	> Specialised mortgage or public sector lenders that form part of a broader banking group and are not operationally integrated with the parent. > Institutions without debt buffer requirements such as Minimum Requirement for Own Funds and Eligible Liabilities and for which Fitch does not expect resolution to be applied in case of a failure or default.

Source: Fitch Ratings, Fitch Solutions

Payment Continuity Uplift (PCU)

The payment continuity uplift (PCU) expresses the degree of protection against payment interruption risk on the covered bonds if the issuer fails to meet its obligations. The PCU depends primarily on the length of the liquidity protection available in an enforcement scenario. It can be up to eight notches for programmes without refinancing risk, such as pass-through programmes. It is limited to six notches for programmes with maturity mismatches, and for which the liquidity protection for principal payments is at least for 12 months (see figure 3 below).

The most common protections are the inclusion of liquid assets in the cover pool or maturity extension provisions on the covered bonds. The type of liquid assets that Fitch gives credit to can be found in the appendix of Fitch's covered bonds rating criteria. It includes cash held with eligible banks and highly rated securities, notably all High-Quality Liquid Assets (HQLA) level 1 and level 2A defined under the Basel framework's liquidity coverage ratio.

> Figure 3: Standard Payment Continuity Uplift

Programme types	Effective liquidity protection for principal payments	Maximum PCU in notches
Pass-through programmes	Maturity date extends beyond the longest maturing asset in the cover pool[a]	Eight
Mortgage and public sector programmes[b]	At least 12 months	Six
Public sector programmes[b]	At least six months	Five
Mortgage programmes[b]	At least nine months	Four
Mortgage programmes[b]	At least six months	Three
Programmes with maturity mismatches	No protection	Zero

(a) Or if an immaterial part of the cover pool matures after the last covered bonds
(b) If predominantly exposed to developed banking markets. For the purpose of the PCU, developed banking markets are defined as countries where banking plays a fundamental role in channelling funds to the domestic economy and where several non-foreign-owned lenders are active, facilitating potential portfolio transfers/sales

Source: Fitch Ratings, Fitch Solutions

In addition to principal payment protection, Fitch expects some protection for timely interest payment to grant a PCU above zero notches. We only grant a PCU above three notches if a programme has at least three months' protection for senior expenses and interest payments.

The PCU may be lowered if there are concerns about the efficiency of the interest liquidity protection. For example, if the protection consists in a liquidity buffer covering the maximum negative net outflows over a six months period, giving full credit to expected cover pool cash-flows but excluding covered bonds' principal payments that can be extended beyond six months, the buffer could be very small in practice. In such cases the maximum PCU would be four notches for a soft-bullet programme.

Payment continuity can be negatively influenced by asset segregation (for instance due to claw-back or commingling risks) and systemic or cover pool-specific alternative management (e.g. provisions for replacement and timing of the appointment of a substitute manager, scope of their responsibilities, transferability of relevant data and IT systems etc.) If Fitch considers that these risks could undermine a smooth transition from the issuer to the cover pool as a source of bond payments, the agency could grant a lower PCU than indicated above, depending on the materiality of the deficiency.

The IDR increased by the resolution uplift and PCU notches gives the maximum timely payment rating level that can be tested in Fitch's cash-flows model. Fitch discloses the rating scenario corresponding to the expectation of timely payment on covered bonds as the "timely payment rating level".

Recovery Uplift

The recovery uplift reflects the recovery prospects on defaulted covered bonds. It can be up to two notches (three notches when applied to a non-investment grade timely payment rating level). It is limited to one notch where Fitch identifies material downside risks to recovery expectations, for instance when bonds are issued in a different currency than the assets and FX hedging agreements terminate upon a covered bonds default. Fitch only considers recoveries from the cover pool, not to potential unsecured recoveries.

> Figure 4: Recovery Uplift

	If rating level corresponding to expectation of timely payment is:	
Recovery prospects	**Investment grade**	**Non-investment grade**
Outstanding	Two	Three
Superior	One	Two
Good	One	One
Average	Zero	Zero

Source: Fitch Ratings, Fitch Solutions

STEP 2: OC ASSESSMENT

Fitch tests the timely payment of covered bonds up to the maximum level allowed by the IDR, resolution uplift and PCU, and tests for recovery given default up to the granted recovery uplift.

OC Supporting Timely Payment

The use of the programme's resolution uplift is usually subject to an OC of at least 0%.

Fitch uses its Covered Bonds Cash-flows Model when testing timely payment on the covered bonds in rating scenarios above the resolution reference point (the floor for the timely payment rating level). It compares stressed incoming cash flows with payments due on covered bonds. The analysis assumes that the cover pool becomes static under the supervision of a third-party manager at a simulated date, following the hypothetical transition from the issuer to the cover pool as the source of payments on the covered bonds. Cash flows are considered post-swaps, provided that these are privileged obligations and contracted with eligible counterparties. We also model any contractual features included in programme documentation, notably the Asset Coverage Test found in some programmes.

Fitch will only stress open currency exposure if it represents a residual risk, using stresses published in "Fitch's Foreign-Currency Stress Assumptions for Residual Foreign-Exchange Exposures in Covered Bonds and Structured Finance – Supplementary Data File". If the risk is material, no credit is given to the exposure.

The OC supporting timely payment is the sum of two components:

- **The Credit Loss** is the stressed loss rate on the cover pool, expressed in terms of OC (i.e. as a percentage of the bonds). Fitch uses its asset models to calculate stressed loss rates on the cover assets, derived from lifetime default rates and recoveries given default assumptions stressed at different rating levels. For each asset type and country, the same model is used across structured finance and covered bonds.
- **The ALM Loss** corresponds to risks arising from asset and liability mismatches in a programme: prepayments, interest/FX mismatches and maturity mismatches between the cover assets and the covered bonds. Cash proceeds (after factoring in stressed defaults and recoveries) are compared to privileged payments due at each period. Excess cash is modelled to be reinvested at a stressed rate, while cash shortfalls are assumed to be bridged via asset sales. The cost of sales is calculated via the application of Fitch's Refinancing Spread Levels (RSL) on top of Fitch's stressed interest rate to discount cash flows of the cover assets. RSL are meant to cover mainly the liquidity cost and profit margin of the buyer. They can be found in "Fitch's Covered Bonds Refinancing Spread Levels".

OC Supporting Recoveries Given Default

Fitch expects a good level of recoveries, commensurate with the use of a one-notch recovery uplift, in all rating scenarios for programmes fully secured by standard assets such as mortgage loans, i.e. with an OC of at least 0%.

If a programme has an OC which matches the cover pool's Credit Loss stressed in a given rating scenario, we expect the recoveries to be outstanding in the relevant rating scenario, leading to a recovery uplift of two (or three) notches.

Fitch does not stress test cash flows to assess the level of OC which sustains a given recovery uplift, because recoveries from the cover pool are not tied to any time horizon upon a covered bond default.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN OC AND RATING

Fitch's break-even OC for the rating is the lowest protection that supports timely payment of covered bonds in a stress scenario associated with the timely payment rating level and meets the threshold for the applied recovery uplift. It is compared with the level of OC that Fitch relies upon in order to assign the covered bonds rating.

Fitch gives credit to one of the following levels of OC:

- Legal and contractual commitments legally binding and enforceable against the issuer;
- Non-contractual public statements and/or covenants;
- The lowest level of OC recorded during the preceding 12 months, provided that the issuer's IDR is at least 'BBB-' or 'F3' and the programme is not in wind-down (i.e. when the issuer no longer focuses on eligible cover assets as part of its normal business activity).

Fitch assesses the reliability and sustainability of the OC. Furthermore, we may use another OC benchmark where OC levels over the past 12 months are not considered to be consistent with their current levels or not indicative of expected OC levels.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS: COUNTRY RISK AND COUNTERPARTY RISK

Covered bond ratings are capped at zero to six notches above the sovereign Local Currency IDR, depending on the country. In addition, the timely payment rating level of covered bonds denominated in a foreign currency is generally capped at the Country Ceiling of the country of the assets or the issuer, unless transfer and convertibility risk is mitigated (in which case the ratings cannot be higher than four notches above the Country Ceiling). If it is not mitigated, Fitch may still grant a one-notch recovery uplift above the Country Ceiling in certain circumstances (see Structured Finance and Covered Bonds Country Risk Rating Criteria).

The timely payment rating level of covered bonds can also be limited by counterparty risk considerations if the counterparties in the programme do not include minimum rating and replacement language in line with Fitch's Structured Finance and Covered Bonds Counterparty Rating Criteria. In that case, the timely payment rating level will be capped at the higher of the counterparty's rating and the resolution reference point.

PROGRAMMES WITH LIMITED RATING UPLIFT

Fitch will rate covered bonds at or near the IDR if material limitations exist in analysing the cover pool. This will also apply when an issuer has a limited record in originating and servicing the cover assets or if there is limited visibility on its business model, raising concerns regarding asset generation to maintain OC.

In these cases, Fitch would focus its analysis on the legal or contractual framework, analysing whether assets are sufficiently ring-fenced from the rest of the issuer's balance sheet. The break-even OC for the rating would be the minimum legal or contractual OC. The recovery uplift will be limited to one notch.

COVERED BONDS SURVEILLANCE

Fitch publishes individual surveillance workbooks for covered bond programmes and multi-issuer of cédulas hipotecarias (MICH) transactions on a quarterly basis. They include the list of information specified by the European Central Bank (ECB) in its guidelines on the implementation of the Eurosystem monetary policy framework (ECB/2016/31).

Each surveillance file for a given covered bond programme or MICH transaction can be accessed from the issuing entity's page on pro.fitchratings.com, under the Covered Bonds tab.

ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAL AND GOVERNANCE (ESG) RISKS FOR COVERED BOND RATINGS

ESG RELEVANCE SCORES

ESG Relevance Scores (ESG.RS) indicate whether an ESG factor is relevant to the credit rating. Individual E, S and G relevance scores range from '5' to '1'. A score of '5' indicates factors that have a direct impact on the rating on a standalone basis. A score of '1' indicates factors that have no credit impact or are irrelevant to the sector and the programme from a credit perspective.

Governance Main Risk for Covered Bonds

For covered bonds, the assessment of asset segregation and payment continuity is of particular relevance. High scores are generally driven by structural issues such as lack of liquidity protection or payment continuity risks.

Social Factors Secondary Driver

High social ESG.RS for covered bonds relate to positive influences on ratings from government-sponsored social lending schemes due to demonstrated lower loss rates, resulting in lower credit losses.

Low Environmental Risk

Environmental aspects have not, to date, heavily influenced covered bond ratings. Financial incentives favouring sustainable or "green" assets over less sustainable assets are growing but remain limited.

More information is available at www.fitchratings.com in Fitch's ESG section.

ESG RATINGS

ESG Ratings are assigned by Sustainable Fitch to assess an entity's or debt instrument's ESG performance and commitment. ESG Ratings are independent from credit ratings.

The ESG Ratings suite is composed of three major pillars:

ESG Entity Ratings (ER1-5): Evaluates the entity's activities from an environmental and social perspective, as well as the quality of overall environmental, social and governance policies, procedures and outcomes.

ESG Instrument Ratings (IR1-5): Evaluates the ESG characteristics of a debt instrument in the context of the ESG rating for the entity that has issued the debt. This enables an absolute comparison of the ESG characteristics of all instruments (labelled or conventional).

ESG Framework Ratings (FR1-5): For debt instruments labelled as green, social or sustainability bonds, we evaluate the quality of the use of proceeds defined in the framework, as well as the strength of the framework.

For covered bonds, the Instrument Rating is calculated based on the ESG Entity Rating adjusted for the ESG Framework Rating and asset assessment of the cover pool.

The ratings are on a scale from one to five, where one is the best outcome. They are derived from a more granular score from zero to 100, which is available as a dataset to investors wanting to take a more quantitative based approach.

More information is available at www.sustainablefitch.com.

Fitch Ratings' Main Criteria Applicable to Covered Bonds

- Covered Bonds Rating Criteria (11 April 2025)
- Originator-Specific Residential Mortgage Analysis Rating Criteria (8 November 2024)
- European RMBS Rating Criteria (11 April 2025)
- APAC Residential Mortgage Rating Criteria (7 May 2024)
- Latin America RMBS Rating Criteria (13 February 2025)
- Canada Residential Mortgage Rating Criteria (20 February 2025)
- Covered Bonds and CDOs Public Entities' Asset Analysis Rating Criteria (16 October 2023)
- Structured Finance and Covered Bonds Country Risk Rating Criteria (20 June 2024)
- Structured Finance and Covered Bonds Counterparty Rating Criteria (28 November 2023)
- Structured Finance and Covered Bonds Counterparty Rating Criteria: Derivative Addendum (28 November 2023)
- Structured Finance and Covered Bonds Interest Rate Stresses Rating Criteria (24 October 2024)

4.4 MOODY'S COVERED BOND RATING METHODOLOGY

By Jane Soldera, Nicholas Lindstrom and Juan Pablo Soriano, Moody's Ratings

This chapter is a high-level summary of certain aspects of Moody's covered bond methodology and environmental, social and governance risk (ESG) methodology.[1] For a full explanation of the methodologies, please refer to "Rating Methodology: Covered Bonds", 28 February 2025, and "Rating Methodology: General Principles for Assessing Environmental, Social and Governance Risks", 21 January 2025, both available at www.moodys.com.

OVERVIEW

Moody's covered bond rating methodology involves a two-step analysis:

> Moody's Expected Loss Covered Bond Model (*EL model*): Our EL model provides an initial quantitative rating output based on a calculation of expected loss, taking into account (1) the probability that the covered bond issuer will cease making payments on the covered bonds (a *CB anchor event*), expressed as a point on our alpha-numeric rating scale (the *CB anchor*), and (2) the estimated losses (if any) to covered bondholders should a CB anchor event occur.

  Note that a CB anchor event does not necessarily mean a failure to pay under the covered bonds; the cover pool will typically be managed with a view to continuing payments due on the bonds.

> Timely Payment Indicator (*TPI*) Framework: The TPI framework takes the rating output from the EL model and adjusts it for certain risks that arise when a CB anchor event occurs. In particular, we adjust for refinancing risk that occurs due to covered bond asset/liability mismatches. The TPI framework limits how many notches above the CB anchor we can assign and maintain a covered bond rating.

Ratings are assigned by a rating committee. The final covered bond rating is typically the lower of: (1) the rating output of the EL model and (2) the maximum rating possible under the TPI framework.

In some cases the rating committee may assign a lower rating due to other credit-relevant features. For example, ratings are subject to sovereign risk considerations, so would not typically exceed the sovereign ceiling.[2]

Below we elaborate further on the two steps above and their analytical sub-components.

MOODY'S EL MODEL

The EL model operates on the basis that covered bondholders have recourse to both the issuer and the cover pool. The model calculates the expected loss on the covered bonds based on the probability of a CB anchor event (also commonly referred to as issuer default) and any subsequent losses on the cover pool.

Moody's EL model calculates expected loss on a month-by-month basis from the issue of a covered bond through to its final maturity. For each monthly period, the model calculates (1) the probability of a CB anchor event, taking into account the credit strength of the issuer and (2) the value of the cover pool, assuming the issuer has ceased making payments on the covered bonds. The results are then summed and discounted back to reach a net present value of the overall expected loss on the covered bond. We discuss each of (1) and (2) further below.

MOODY'S EL MODEL – (1) CREDIT STRENGTH OF THE ISSUER

The issuer's credit strength is the key credit driver prior to issuer default. Before issuer default, the issuer's credit strength will be the most important influence on the covered bond programme's performance. As long as the issuer is performing its obligations under the covered bonds we expect no loss to covered bondholders.

1 Information in this chapter is up to date as of 1 April 2025.

2 See "Assessing the impact of Sovereign Credit Quality on Other Ratings," 20 June 2019, available at Moodys.com.

The CB anchor measures the risk that the issuer will cease performing its covered bond obligations. Moody's starting point to determine the CB anchor is typically the issuer's counterparty risk (CR) assessment.[3] The CR assessment addresses the probability of default on key obligations of a failed or failing bank, taking into account the effect of bank resolution and tools available under resolution procedures. In the case of European Economic Area (EEA) banks under resolution[4] payments on covered bonds are among key obligations likely to be honored even where losses are imposed on unsecured debt or uninsured deposits.

CB anchor is CR assessment plus one notch, with some exceptions. Moody's typically positions the CB anchor at the CR assessment plus one notch. Exceptions where we may not add any uplift to the CR assessment include some programmes outside the EEA and programmes where the covered bond is not subject to a covered bond law. Furthermore, for programmes where the bank is likely to have bail-in-able debt available to support covered bonds but this debt is not fully accounted for in the CR assessment, we may add more than one notch of uplift to the CR assessment.

Other issuer benefits for covered bonds. Our EL model also takes into account various issuer and issuer group-related benefits in addition to the issuer's CB anchor. For instance:

1. Following a CB anchor event covered bondholders may have a senior unsecured claim on the issuer that may improve recoveries.
2. The issuer will normally actively manage the cover pool for the benefit of the covered bondholders, for example by replacing defaulted assets, or replacing high-loan-to-value (LTV) mortgage loans with lower-LTV loans, which may be required by law. By doing this the issuer provides more support for the programme than if the issuer was simply a guarantor.

MOODY'S EL MODEL – (2) VALUE OF THE COVER POOL AFTER A CB ANCHOR EVENT

To avoid losses on covered bonds following a CB anchor event, the realisable value of the cover pool, including any overcollateralisation, will need to be sufficient to cover the principal and interest payable (when due) on all outstanding covered bonds and any other equal- or senior-ranking obligations. In Moody's analysis, there are three key factors affecting the value of the cover pool: (1) the credit quality of the collateral; (2) the cost of refinancing the cover pool; and (3) interest rate and currency mismatches. We describe the combined risk of refinancing the cover pool and interest rate and currency mismatches as *market risk*. In addition, we assess other risks such as legal risks whereby cover pool funds could be commingled with the issuer's funds at or after issuer default, or cover pool assets could be clawed back from the cover pool into the issuer's insolvency estate.

Credit quality of the collateral

The credit quality of the cover pool is an estimate of underlying borrower loan losses that will occur in a highly stressed environment after a CB anchor event. The *collateral score* measures the actual level of loss, with a lower collateral score indicating better credit quality for the cover pool (see Figure 1).

Factors that affect the collateral score vary. For residential mortgage loans – the most common collateral type – key determinants of the collateral score include the distribution of LTVs for mortgage loans across various loan and property characteristics, as well as minimum stressed loss assumptions. The credit quality of a cover pool may vary over time, as issuers typically have discretion to add and remove assets, but we monitor this by re-calculating the collateral score for most programmes on a quarterly basis.

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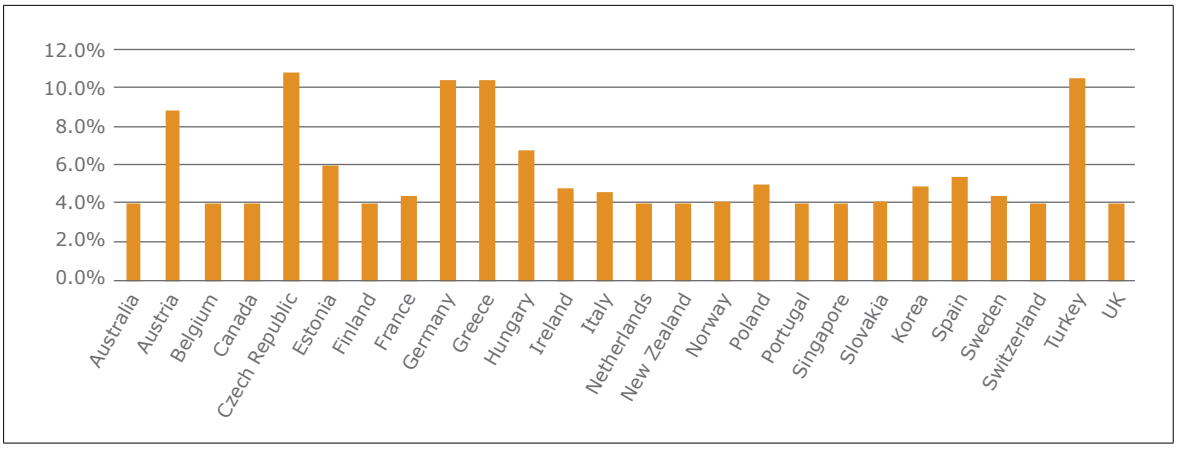
3 The CR assessment is typically positioned at the issuer's adjusted baseline credit assessment (BCA) plus zero to three notches. For more details see the "Banks" methodology referenced at the end of this article. If the issuer has no CR assessment, we may use the CR assessment of another entity in the issuer's group with a sufficiently robust obligation to provide financial support to the issuer, or we may use an alternative rating such as the issuer's senior unsecured or deposit rating.

4 EU Bank Resolution and Recovery Directive, adopted 15 April 2014, and its equivalent in Norway and other non-EU members of the EEA.

> Figure 1: Weighted average collateral score of mortgage-backed covered bonds, selected countries



Note: Programmes where commercial and/or residential mortgage loans are the majority of assets in the cover pool. Averages weighted by outstanding volumes. Data taken from published performance overview reports referenced in Q1 2025 Sector Update.

Source: Moody's Ratings

The cost of refinancing the cover pool

The assets in the cover pool will generally have an amortisation profile that exceeds the remaining life of the covered bonds. For example, a residential mortgage loan may amortise over 20-30 years compared to 5-10 years for a covered bond (although covered bond tenors vary widely and may fall outside this range). This mismatch means that, following a CB anchor event, funds may need to be raised against the cover pool to enable timely payment of principal on the covered bonds. Moody's EL model then assumes that funds raised to refinance the cover pool will be at a discount to the notional value of the cover pool. The refinancing environment for the assets at this time is likely to be stressed and we take this into account in the level of discount we build into our loss assumptions.

Our calculation of the expected losses to the cover pool from refinancing risk is based on three factors:

(1) The refinancing margin, which is the annualised discount rate necessary to sell or refinance the cover pool assets;

(2) The portion of the cover pool exposed to refinancing risk, which we typically assume is at least 50%; and

(3) The average life of the refinancing risk, i.e., the average amount of time a purchaser would have to hold the cover pool assets before they either repay or re-price. We typically assume this is at least five years.

We set refinancing margins by reference to country and then adjust for individual programmes. Factors that influence the refinancing margins in our analysis vary, but key factors include (1) on a country level, sovereign credit strength; (2) on a programme and/or country level, covered bond market support, alternative liquidity such as maturity extensions and historical performance of financial assets; and (3) on a programme level, the collateral quality.

Interest-rate and currency mismatches

Following a CB anchor event, investors in covered bonds may be exposed to interest rate and currency mismatches. These mismatches result from differences between (1) interest rates on cover pool assets and covered bonds, (2) durations of those rates, and (3) currency denomination of cover pools and covered bonds. Moody's considers the risk of initial mismatches around the time of issuer default and subsequent mismatches at the time of refinancing.

Under Moody's EL model, the potential mismatches are estimated by taking into account:

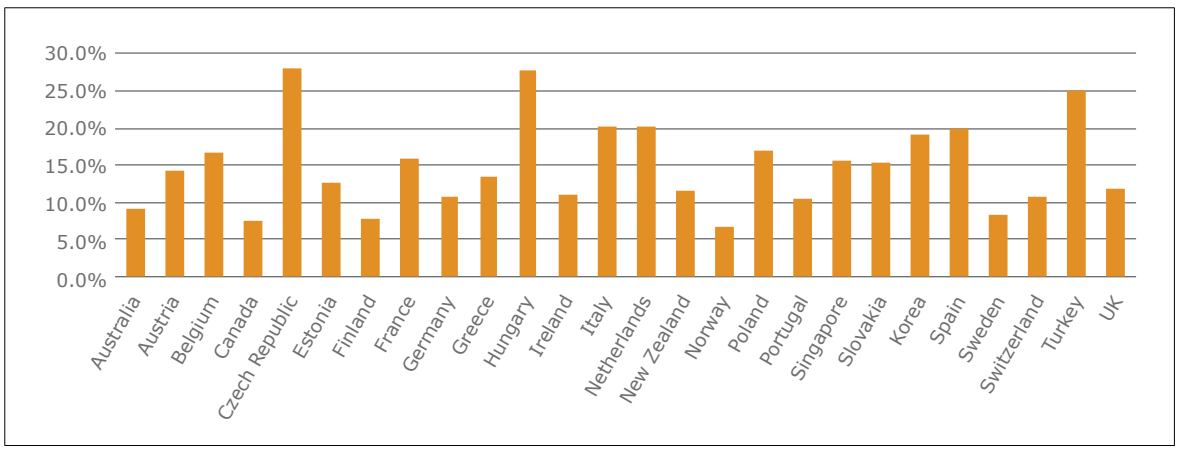
(1) The size of the possible interest rate or currency movement over the relevant period from increasing and decreasing rates/exchange rates and covering the path that leads to the greatest expected loss on the covered bonds;

(2) The portion of the assets with interest-rate or currency mismatches; and

(3) In the case of interest-rate risk, the average duration of the mismatch based on how quickly the rates or margins on the assets in the cover pool may be adjusted.

Our EL model takes into account whether derivatives hedging is in place at the time of a CB anchor event, however we also consider the probability of the covered bonds subsequently becoming unhedged and so do not assume derivatives completely remove interest rate and currency mismatch risk. After a CB anchor event, the transaction may become un-hedged following a default of either the swap counterparty or the issuer. We assess the risk of counterparty default by applying the principles outlined in our cross-sector methodology for assessing swap counterparties in structured finance.[5] We assess the risk of issuer default under a swap by assuming that if the issuer is unable to make payments on covered bonds it will similarly be unable to pay the swap, which usually ranks equal. The risk of non-payment can therefore be estimated by the TPI (see next section).

> Figure 2: Weighted average market risk of mortgage-backed covered bonds, selected countries



Note: Programmes where mortgage loans are the majority of assets in the cover pool. Averages weighted by outstanding volumes. Data taken from published performance overview reports referenced in Q1 2025 Sector Update.

Source: Moody's Ratings

MOODY'S TIMELY PAYMENT INDICATORS (TPIs): LINKAGE AND DE-LINKAGE

TPIs link the issuer, via the CB anchor, to the covered bond rating

TPIs measure payment continuity risk. A timely payment indicator (TPI) is Moody's assessment of the likelihood of timely payment of interest and principal to covered bondholders following a CB anchor event. Following a CB anchor event, we assume the issuer can no longer make payments on the covered bonds. Instead, we assume that the entity responsible for servicing the cover pool (which, from an operational viewpoint, may continue to be the issuer) will attempt to make payments due to bondholders using funds deriving from, or proceeds raised against, the cover pool. As an alternative, timely payments might also be facilitated by third-party support for the covered bonds.

5 "Moody's Approach to Assessing Counterparty Risks in Structured Finance," 20 October 2023, available at Moodys.com.

Higher TPIs mean reduced linkage to issuer. We express the likelihood of timely payment as a TPI level denoted as: Very High, High, Probable-High, Probable, Improbable and Very Improbable. The higher the TPI, the higher the potential uplift of the covered bond rating over the issuer CR assessment. We publish TPI tables setting out the expected maximum covered bond ratings for different combinations of CB anchor and TPI level (see our covered bond rating methodology report referred to at the end of this chapter).

TPI level is based on qualitative assessment. We determine TPI levels by considering a range of qualitative factors that support or threaten timely payment. In this analysis the most important consideration – and the biggest risk to timely payment for most covered bonds – is the existence of refinancing risk. Refinancing risk is highly volatile, hence the TPI framework ensures that our highest ratings are only maintained for covered bonds subject to material refinancing risk if the bonds are also backed by a highly-rated issuer.

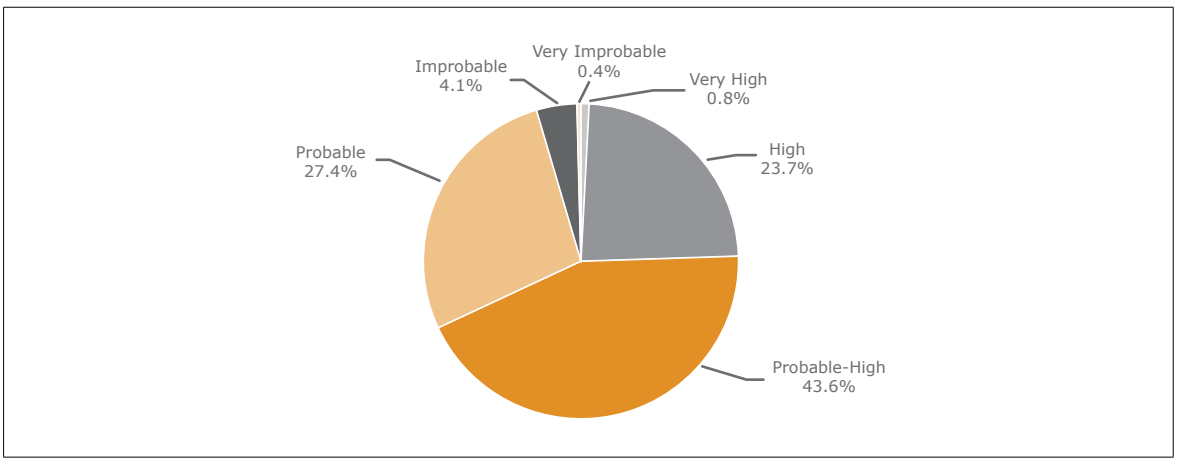
TPIs consider jurisdiction and programme-level factors. We determine a benchmark TPI for the issuer's jurisdiction and the type of cover pool assets, also taking into account the issuer's ability to alter programme assets and structural features.

On the jurisdiction level, if the issuer fails, a key consideration for refinancing risk is whether other market participants or the relevant authorities might arrange for covered bonds to be transferred to a replacement issuer to enable the programme to continue with minimal disruption. Alternatively, market participants or authorities may provide or facilitate some form of funding liquidity. Important considerations here are the strength of the covered bond market and regulatory framework.

On the programme level, we may then adjust TPIs to reflect particular aspects of a specific programme. Factors that we consider relevant to TPI levels at the programme level include (1) cover pool collateral quality (2) arrangements for continuity of servicing and cash management; (3) the risk that any relevant swaps might be terminated; (4) the risk of acceleration of the covered bonds; (5) over-collateralisation levels; and (6) the possibility of extending bond maturities.

We will normally determine a rating ceiling based on the TPI table but we may make further adjustments, particularly if the issuer's CR assessment is low- or below-investment grade. For CR assessments below investment grade, the TPI table provides a range of potential outcomes, with the final rating depending on case by case analysis.

> Figure 3: TPI distribution across covered bond programmes



Source: Moody's Ratings, data as referenced in Q1 2024 Sector Update

TPI Delinkage

Covered bonds can be TPI "de-linked". TPI de-linkage implies a reduced level of credit linkage between the issuer and the covered bonds that is broadly analogous to the credit linkage between a securitisation originator and senior securitisation notes. For Moody's to consider a covered bond as TPI de-linked, we would consider whether refinancing risk and the risks around the role of the issuer have been reduced to a level consistent with a securitization of comparable assets.

INTEGRATION OF ESG RISKS

Moody's seeks to incorporate all material credit considerations into our covered bond ratings and this includes ESG risks. A number of ESG considerations[6] could impact covered bonds. Environmental risks that may be relevant include carbon transition risks such as energy efficiency regulations and the insurance costs of physical climate risks affecting commercial property. Social risks could include borrower-friendly measures such as eviction bans, foreclosure limitations, and payment moratoriums that could impair residential mortgage loan repayments. Governance risks for covered bonds may reflect risks at the issuer level, but are typically mitigated by covered bond laws.

Moody's ESG methodology describes two frameworks for analyzing ESG credit impact that we have implemented for covered bonds:

(1) *Issuer profile scores* (IPS) indicate the respective E, S or G exposures of a covered bond programme. IPS are expressed on a numeric scale from E-1/S-1/G-1 (Positive) to E-5/S-5/G-5 (Very Highly Negative).

(2) *Credit impact scores* (CIS) indicate the impact of ESG considerations on a given covered bond rating and are expressed on a scale of 1 to 5. For example, a score of CIS-2 would indicate that ESG attributes have an overall neutral-to-low (i.e. nonmaterial) impact on the current rating.

References (all available at www.moodys.com):

- Rating Methodology – Covered Bonds; 28 February 2025
- Rating Methodology – General Principles for Assessing Environmental, Social and Governance Risks; 21 January 2025
- Rating Methodology – Banks Methodology; 15 November 2024
- Covered bonds – Sector update, published quarterly
- Country Ceilings Methodology; 7 December 2020
- European Covered Bond Legal Frameworks: Moody's Legal Checklist; 9 December 2005

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6 For details on ESG categories see our ESG rating methodology report referred to at the end of this chapter.

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4.5 S&P GLOBAL RATINGS METHODOLOGY FOR RATING COVERED BONDS

By Barbara Florian and Antonio Farina, S&P Global Ratings

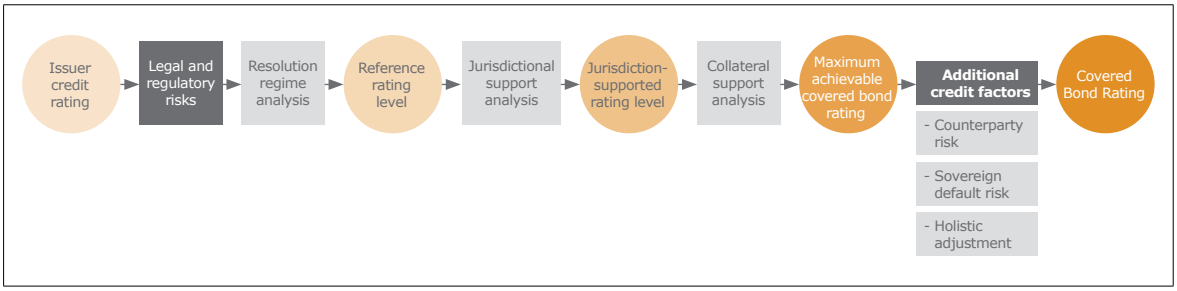
S&P Global Ratings' covered bonds rating approach is explained in our "Methodology For Rating Covered Bonds," published on 25 July 2025 and available on the S&P Capital IQ platform and at www.spglobal.com/ratings. While this paper summarises certain covered bond criteria and rating methodologies, this article remains S&P Global Ratings' definitive treatment of the subject.

S&P Global Ratings' framework for analyzing and rating covered bonds follows five main steps (see Figure 1):

1. We start with our issuer credit rating (ICR) on the issuer and consider legal and regulatory risks to determine whether the covered bonds may be rated higher than the issuer.
2. We then assess the relevant resolution regime to determine the reference rating level (RRL).
3. We assess the likelihood and potential amount of support provided by external sources – such as governments or central banks – that could enhance the program's creditworthiness determines the jurisdiction-supported rating level (JRL).
4. Next, we analyze the collateral support, focusing on cover pool-specific factors – such as the asset credit quality, payment structure and cash flow mechanics, and operational and administrative risks – to determine the maximum achievable covered bond rating.
5. We combine the results of the above and incorporate any additional factors, specifically counterparty risk and sovereign default risk as well as any holistic adjustment, to assign the final covered bond rating.

The outcome of our rating analysis is a rating on the covered bond programme and the bonds issued under the programme. Our quarterly "Global Covered Bond Insights" report summarises the key rating factors, including credit and cash-flow indicators of the programmes that we rate (see www.spglobal.com/ratings).

> Figure 1: The main steps in analysing covered bonds



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Source: S&P Global Ratings

COVERED BOND ISSUER – SPECIFIC FACTORS

We conduct our initial analysis of covered bond ratings with the primary aim of determining whether the covered bond rating may exceed the ICR. Due to the dual-recourse nature of covered bonds, the covered bond rating is typically no lower than the relevant rating on the covered bond issuer. A bank's resolution counterparty rating (RCR), where we have assigned one, reflects its creditworthiness in reference to the timely fulfillment of the terms of certain financial obligations that may be protected from default within an applicable bail-in resolution process. For that reason, if we assess that covered bonds would be protected in such a process, the covered bond rating can also not be lower than the RCR on the issuing bank (if we have assigned one).

Legal and regulatory risks

The assessment of legal and regulatory risks focuses primarily on the degree to which a covered bond programme isolates the cover pool assets from the bankruptcy or insolvency risk of the issuer. If the asset isolation analysis concludes that covered bonds are not likely to be affected by the bankruptcy or insolvency of the issuer, then we may assign a rating to the covered bonds that is higher than the rating on the issuer.

We typically review the following legal aspects when assigning a rating to a covered bond programme:

> The nature of the segregation of the assets and cash flows if the issuer becomes insolvent;

> Whether there is any acceleration of payments to noteholders if the issuer becomes insolvent – whether payments of interest and principal will continue in accordance with the original terms of the covered bonds;

> Whether there is any payment moratorium or forced restructuring of the programme or the covered bonds if the issuer becomes insolvent; Whether there are any limits to overcollateralisation levels, i.e., if a programme may overcollateralise its covered bonds above the minimum limit defined under the legislation or the programme documents, and whether this additional overcollateralisation is available to the covered bondholders, notwithstanding any issuer insolvency;

> The treatment of any hedging agreements if the issuer becomes insolvent;

> Whether the programme can access funding if the issuer becomes insolvent; and

> The management of the cover pool both before and after the issuer becomes insolvent.

Operational and administrative risks

Our operational and administrative risks analysis focuses on individual transaction parties to assess whether they can manage a covered bond programme while bonds remain outstanding.

The primary transaction party in a covered bond programme is the issuer which it is why we perform a risk analysis on its origination, underwriting, and servicing operations.

While the issuer is the manager, we apply a forward-looking assessment of the issuer's maintenance of credit support and the management of a program's asset-liability mismatch. This means, for example, that in our collateral support analysis, we consider collateralization levels that we believe are likely to be maintained by the issuer. If we believe that current collateralization levels might not be maintained, we may assume a lower level of available credit enhancement in our rating analysis.

In our cash flow analysis, we may also take a forward-looking view about the way the liability structure (including up to two-year issuance plans, if there is enough visibility), the timing of covered bond maturities, and the resulting asset-liability maturity mismatch are likely to affect the program's refinancing risk and the level of credit enhancement needed to redeem the covered bonds.

RESOLUTION REGIME ANALYSIS

Our criteria recognise that effective resolution regimes that exempt covered bonds from bail-in like the EU's Bank Recovery and Resolution Directive (BRRD) can increase the likelihood that an issuer can continue to service its covered bonds despite its own insolvency and defaulting on its senior unsecured obligations. Should an issuer become insolvent and thereupon be subject to a resolution regime that excludes covered bonds from the issuer's insolvency proceedings, our assessment of the likelihood that the issuer would still service the programme's covered bonds without receiving support from the jurisdiction or reverting to a sale of programme assets determines the RRL.

In countries subject to effective resolution regimes, depending on our assessment of the systemic importance of the covered bond programmes in that country, the RRL may be up to two notches above the ICR. This RRL

reflects our view of the increased likelihood that the issuer will service its covered bonds even if insolvent. For countries without an effective resolution regime that exempts covered bonds from bail-in, our criteria specify that we set the RRL at a level equal to our ICR on the issuer.

JURISDICTIONAL SUPPORT ANALYSIS

If the issuer becomes insolvent, fails to return to being a going concern following resolution proceedings, and is unable or unwilling to service the programme, the programme administrator would turn to sources other than the issuer to meet payments due and mitigate the refinancing risk. In our opinion, jurisdictional support would likely be forthcoming in countries with a robust covered bond statutory and regulatory framework and where covered bonds play a systemically important role in government policy.

The criteria reference the support of a "jurisdiction" rather than a "government." This is because we believe support may come through direct government intervention such as from a central bank; indirect intervention such as a government's use of private-sector mechanisms to provide support; or through trustees, administrators, or other parties acting to protect covered bonds according to specific laws or other requirements.

Under our criteria, we consider the likelihood for the provision of government support when the cost of a failed covered bond programme to an economy and financial system would be considered greater than the cost of providing support. The criteria establish a four-point classification of jurisdictional support of "very strong," "strong," "moderate," and "weak". Depending on our assessment, the criteria provide for a potential rating uplift of up to three notches above the covered bond's RRL. This rating uplift reflects the strength of jurisdictional support that we believe might be forthcoming.

This JRL is our assessment of the creditworthiness of a covered bond programme once we have considered jurisdictional support for the programme, but before giving benefit to the programme administrator's ability to access other refinancing sources.

COLLATERAL SUPPORT ANALYSIS

We then consider to what extent overcollateralisation enhances the creditworthiness of a covered bond issuance by allowing the programme cover pool to raise funds from a broader range of investors and so address its refinancing needs. This overcollateralisation may cover the credit risk only, that is the expected losses incurred by the cover pool in a stressed scenario such as where defaults on underlying assets in the cover pool exceed assumed amounts, or such credit risk plus the refinancing costs, that is, the additional collateral required to raise funds against its assets to repay maturing covered bonds (due to the mismatch between assets and liabilities). We refer to this as "collateral-based uplift".

Our analysis starts with the calculation under our criteria of the credit enhancement for each notch of collateral-based uplift to meet a specific rating level for the programme. This is a function of the maximum number of notches of rating uplift for collateral, i.e., the maximum collateral-based uplift, and the "target credit enhancement" (TCE), which is the level of overcollateralisation that is commensurate with this maximum collateral-based uplift (see Figure 2).

We then compare the required credit enhancement with the available credit enhancement to calculate the "potential collateral-based uplift". We adjust this uplift for liquidity risk and uncommitted overcollateralisation to arrive at the maximum achievable covered bond rating.

The "maximum collateral-based uplift" for a given covered bond programme depends on our view about the presence of active secondary markets for the cover pool assets. In particular, we may allow up to four notches of collateral-based uplift above the JRL for overcollateralisation covering credit risk and refinancing costs where we believe active secondary markets exist to enable the program to raise funds against its assets. Alternatively, we may allow up to two notches of collateral-based uplift above the covered bond programme's JRL for overcollateralisation to cover credit risk only, in jurisdictions that we do not believe have a sufficiently active secondary market to enable the covered bond programme to raise funds against its assets.

Figure 2 below shows the credit enhancement necessary to achieve each additional notch of uplift above the RRL, before adjusting for liquidity risk and uncommitted overcollateralisation.

> Figure 2: Determining the potential collateral-based uplift

Uplift above the JRL	Commensurate credit enhancement
One notch	Credit risk at a level of stress equal to JRL + one rating category
Two notches	Credit risk at a level of stress equal to JRL + two rating categories
Three notches	Credit risk at a 'AAA' level of stress + 50% of the refinancing costs*
Four notches	Credit risk at a 'AAA' level of stress + 100% of the refinancing costs*

* For the purpose of these calculations, we floor refinancing costs at zero.

Note: This applies to programms with no adjustments for liquidity or uncommitted overcollateralisation and assuming that a secondary market for the cover pool assests exists to cover refinancing costs. N/A—Not applicable.
Source: S&P Global Ratings

Credit risk analysis

We analyze the underlying cover pools to form a view on the expected stressed asset performance using jurisdiction- and asset-specific assumptions. These cover pool assets typically contain residential mortgage loans, public sector bonds and loans, or some other form of high credit-quality collateral. The credit analysis also incorporates issuer-specific aspects, such as the impact of its underwriting policies or its collateral management.

Refinancing risk analysis

We model refinancing risk by applying an additional asset dependent "spread shock" when calculating a stressed net-present value of the cash flows of the assets to be sold. In our calculation of the TCE, we also incorporate asset default stresses (including any amounts for counterparty risks that are not structurally mitigated) and any interest and currency stresses that are not appropriately hedged.

After comparing the required credit enhancement with the available credit enhancement to calculate the "potential collateral-based uplift", we adjust this uplift for liquidity risk and uncommitted overcollateralisation to arrive at the maximum achievable covered bond rating.

We reduce the collateral-based uplift by one notch if the programme does not benefit from at least six months of liquidity. This adjustment reflects our view that accessing the market to raise funds against the assets may take time, during which the bonds may be exposed to payment disruption.

We consider the issuer's overcollateralisation commitment, reducing the potential collateral-based uplift when we believe there is a risk that the overcollateralisation level, on which we base our analysis, may decrease over time.

ADDITIONAL CREDIT FACTORS

Finally, in addition to the analysis of the risks outlined above, we review any counterparty or sovereign default risks. These risks might constrain the achievable covered bond rating even if sufficient overcollateralisation to cover other risks exists. Therefore, we analyse whether these risks would limit the maximum achievable covered bond rating as determined, based on the previous steps of the analysis. We may also consider additional credit factors that affect the covered bonds' creditworthiness through a final holistic adjustment.

Counterparty risks

We consider exposures to counterparties that either hold assets or make financial payments that support the covered bonds' creditworthiness. These can be non-derivative exposures (such as those to bank account providers) or commingling exposure to the issuer or servicer of the cover assets or derivative exposures (for example, interest rate or currency swaps). In certain cases, counterparty risk arising from these exposures may limit the rating we assign a covered bond program unless we believe there exist mitigating factors.

We also consider that counterparty risk may be mitigated by the counterparty's commitments to take remedy actions upon a downgrade below a certain rating threshold and the issuer's incentive to support or initiate a downgraded counterparty's replacement. Based on our assessment of these remedies, we determine the degree to which the covered bonds may be rated higher than the counterparty.

The counterparty exposure may be fully mitigated – structurally or through available collateral, for example – such that the rated bonds are not exposed to any loss or liquidity risk in the case of a counterparty default. In this case, the counterparty risk doesn't limit the covered bond rating.

In other cases, we determine that the materiality of the exposure to the counterparty is too great to be mitigated by remedies implemented upon a downgrade. If so, the maximum supported rating is no higher than the rating on the counterparty. To assess whether this is the case, we consider the exposure's nature, size and duration.

Sovereign default risk

We also analyse the underlying assets' and programme's sensitivity to country and sovereign default risk and the asset portfolio's diversification by jurisdiction. For covered bonds exposed to refinancing risk, we assign up to five notches of uplift above the sovereign rating.

We determine the maximum rating differential between sovereign and covered bond ratings based on the sovereign rating level and the covered bond programme's country-risk exposure. This assessment caps any potential further rating uplift typically available under our covered bonds criteria.

Holistic Adjustment

We may apply an adjustment of one notch in either direction to arrive at the final rating on a covered bond, capturing a more holistic view of its creditworthiness. We assess the potential for such an adjustment based on an analysis of the creditworthiness of a given covered bond program compared to peers.

This adjustment can be made to address credit factors that aren't accounted for in these criteria, or that the criteria don't fully capture, when these credit factors have a bearing on the covered bond's credit quality. An example is when several of the individual assessments we've made in applying these criteria are close to the next higher assessment level, without material offsetting negative factors, the cumulative effect of which is representative of a higher rating on the covered bonds.

DELINKING COVERED BOND RATINGS

A covered bond rating is delinked from the RRL of the issuing bank when the programme structurally has no mismatch between assets and liabilities and the covered bond's overcollateralisation is legally or contractually committed. In this case, we determine the rating according to whether the available credit enhancement is sufficient to pass our stress scenarios. In other words, we do not cap it as a function of the issuer's RRL or a predetermined level of rating uplift.

The assignment of outlooks

Our covered bonds criteria assign outlooks to all covered bond ratings that are linked to the issuer's creditworthiness. These outlooks provide a view about potential for a rating change and its direction over the intermediate term. The covered bond outlooks are closely aligned to the outlooks on the issuers, the level of ratings uplift achieved, as well as potential rating changes due to the performance of the collateral.

ESG CREDIT FACTORS

In our environmental, social, and governance (ESG) credit ratings criteria (see "Environmental, Social, And Governance Principles In Credit Ratings," published on Oct. 10, 2021), we articulate the principles that we apply to incorporate ESG credit factors into our credit rating analysis. In those criteria, we define ESG credit factors as those factors that can materially influence the creditworthiness of a rated entity or issue and for which we have

sufficient visibility and certainty to include in our credit rating analysis. We note that when sufficiently material to affect our view of creditworthiness, ESG credit factors can influence credit ratings.

We assess ESG factors through our applicable criteria, including our covered bonds criteria. Under these criteria, we uplift the covered bond rating from the ICR on the issuing entity, which may be affected by financial and nonfinancial factors, including ESG considerations. We then determine the maximum achievable covered bond rating from an analysis of jurisdictional and cover pool-specific factors. Therefore, the issuer's ESG factors constitute the starting point for our assessment of the ESG factors affecting rated covered bond programmes.

Although ESG credit factors can influence our assessment of any analytical component in our ratings analysis, they are most likely to influence (when material) our collateral support analysis and the ICR on the issuing entity. ESG factors can influence ratings, outlooks, the credit enhancement required for the assigned rating, and the number of unused notches--the number of notches the issuer rating can be lowered without resulting in a downgrade of the covered bonds. Environmental and social factors typically affect the quality of the assets in the cover pool and the results of our collateral analysis. Therefore, we would typically not identify any positive or negative environmental or social factors in our covered bond analysis if we are not assigning any collateral-based uplift, as our analysis would be based on other factors such as the issuing entity's credit quality and the analysis of the resolution regime or jurisdictional support. Governance factors, on the other hand, usually affect the rating uplift that we assign to a covered bond program above the ICR on the issuing entity.

S&P Global Ratings' Criteria

- Methodology For Rating Covered Bonds, July 10, 2025
- S&P Global Ratings Definitions, Dec. 2, 2024
- Incorporating Sovereign Risk In Rating Structured Finance Securities: Methodology And Assumptions, Jan. 30, 2019
- Global Methodology and Assumptions: Assessing Pools of Residential Loans, Jan. 25, 2019
- Methodology and Assumptions: Analyzing European Commercial Real Estate Collateral In European Covered Bonds, March 31, 2015
- Methodology and Assumptions for Assessing Portfolios of International Public Sector And Other Debt Obligations Backing Covered Bonds And Structured Finance Securities, Dec. 9, 2014

4.6 SCOPE RATINGS COVERED BOND RATING METHODOLOGY

By Karlo Fuchs and Mathias Pleißner, Scope Ratings

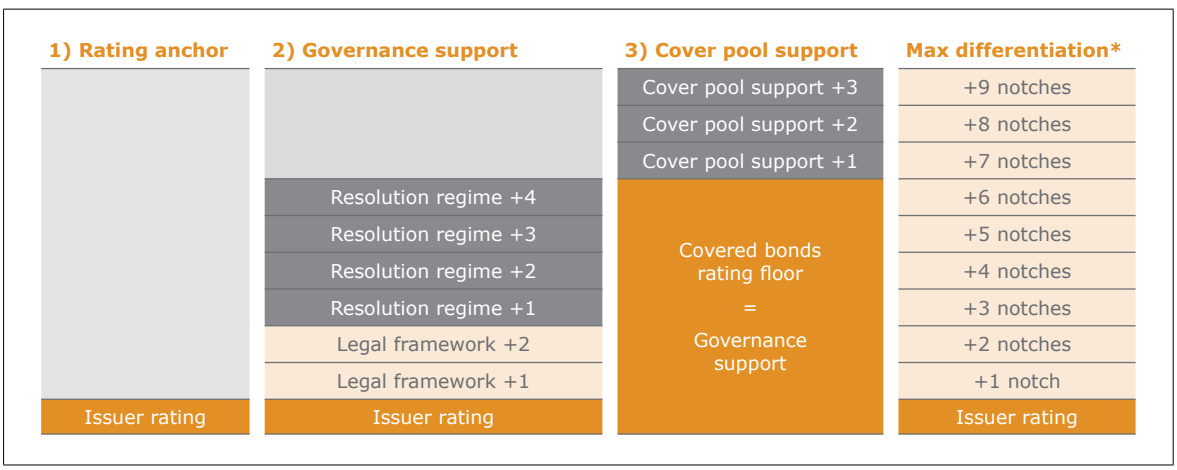
SUMMARY

Our covered bond rating methodology[1] reflects the strong prudential metrics and enhanced regulatory and supervisory framework for issuers of debt obligations that benefit from dual recourse. Such debt obligations include 'European covered bonds' as defined under Directive (EU) 2019/2162, as well as other dual recourse instruments (combined called "covered bonds" from herein).

Our expected loss-based ratings reflect:

1) The importance of the issuer rating as the anchor for the covered bond analysis.
2) Governance support provided by the applicable legal and bank resolution frameworks, which can further elevate the covered bond rating. The strength of governance factors provides a minimum credit uplift and establishes the anchor for the additional support provided by the cover pool.
3) Cover pool credit support reflecting the availability of a second recourse if the issuer becomes insolvent (after resolution). The maximum uplift also reflects the interplay between complexity and transparency.

> Figure 1: Building blocks of Scope's covered bond methodology



*exception may apply for conditional pass-through programmes
Source: Scope Ratings

The anchor point for our covered bond rating, the issuer rating, represents our opinion on an issuer's ability to meet its contractual financial commitments. It constitutes the anchor point for additional credit uplift for covered bonds and provides our view to what extend the second recourse is needed.

Governance support analysis comprises two areas: i) the legal and structural framework; and ii) the resolution regime and systemic importance analysis. When governance factors are strong, the covered bonds' credit quality, particularly regarding recovery prospects, can far exceeds that of the issuer. For highly rated issuers, governance support can be the primary rating driver. Governance support can elevate a covered bond rating by up to six notches above the issuer rating.

1 More details can be found in 'Rating Methodology: Covered Bonds', available at www.scoperatings.com.

Cover pool support can further improve credit quality by up to three additional notches above that suggested by governance support.

In general, our covered bond ratings are linked to the issuer's rating, except when features similar to that of a structured finance transaction override the issuer's influence on a covered bond's risk and refinancing structure. For example, the cover pool benefit for covered bonds that become pass-through (CPT) is not likely to be capped at three notches above our covered bonds rating floor if the issuer's influence on a covered bond's risk structure is mitigated with features similar to those of a structured finance transaction.

GOVERNANCE SUPPORT ANALYSIS

The (i) legal framework and (ii) resolution regime analysis in our methodology covers relevant aspects before and after an issuer becomes insolvent and can provide a credit uplift of up to two and four notches, respectively, to the issuer rating (i.e. a total of six notches for governance aspects).

The legal framework analysis provides a credit differentiation based on the clarity of provisions behind the ongoing maintenance of a high-credit-quality cover pool. It also analyses the provisions that ensure a smooth transition from the first to the second recourse.

The resolution regime analysis addresses how well statutory provisions avoid negative repercussions on the covered bond in a resolution scenario. Systemic importance might mobilise regulators, supervisors or the private sector to support and proactively avoid uncertainty among covered bond investors during resolution. The resolution regime assessment also identifies the importance of relevant covered bond types in each country to understand incentives for market-led solutions. We also reflect whether a proactive and cohesive stakeholder community is actively working together to preserve the credit quality of covered bonds.

For highly rated issuers, covered bond ratings can primarily be driven by governance support. Benefits from the cover pool only become relevant for such covered bond ratings when the issuer's credit quality and ratings start to shift downward.

Legal framework analysis

A supportive legal framework or its mirroring by way of legal contracts can provide a covered bond rating with up to two notches of credit uplift from the issuer rating. Our assessment identifies how reliably the covered bond structure can transition away from the first to the second recourse. The transition should avoid acceleration and allow the cover pool to be maintained. Preserving the cover pool upon the restructuring or insolvency of the issuer helps to ensure that full and timely payments on outstanding covered bonds continue. Programme enhancements, in particular overcollateralisation, should remain available, valid and enforceable to creditors, and neither a regulatory action nor an issuer event of default should impact the ability to manage the covered bond structure in the best interests of investors.

The framework should also advise on how to contain credit, market and liquidity risks before insolvency. Proactive liquidity management before and after insolvency, which helps with timely payment to covered bond holders, should also be possible. Furthermore, we seek to understand how well potential conflicts of interest between covered bond holders and other debtors in the case of regulatory action or insolvency are resolved. Lastly, we identify whether a supervisor or special trustee monitors the programme's structure independently and regularly (asset composition/structural risk) and whether this function can effectively act as a gatekeeper against any adverse cover pool management by the issuer.

If the above elements only apply partially, credit differentiation will be limited. For instance, if covered bonds were to accelerate upon the issuer's insolvency or do not benefit from oversight, it will likely prevent the highest credit differentiation. We will not give any credit to the legal framework assessment where the cover assets' segregation or enforceability may not be legally valid and available in priority.

Resolution regime analysis

We assign up to four notches of uplift for a supportive resolution framework to reflect a high likelihood that an issuer can maintain its covered bonds as a going-concern funding instrument. The uplift reflects the extreme unlikelihood that an investor would need to rely solely on the second recourse if its issuer operates in a framework similar to the Bank Recovery and Resolution Directive (BRRD). We analyse the following factors that would prevent an issuer's regulatory intervention from affecting the covered bond's credit quality:

- whether the covered bonds are defined in line with statutory provisions in resolution regimes and thus are not immediately impacted by the intervention of a regulator or an insolvency receiver
- whether statutory provisions in insolvency or resolution regimes are strong. e.g. are transparently defined and explicitly address the fact that covered bonds will generally not be impacted upon a regulatory intervention in the issuer (no bail-in);
- whether the issuer's business model and balance sheet structure suggest that regulators will very likely use available resolution tools to restructure the issuer to maintain the covered bond programme as a going concern;
- whether covered bonds are a systemically important funding tool used by most issuers in the country, the covered bond type is used to refinance cover pool assets that are important for the economy, and the covered bond issuer is actively and visibly using the product; and
- whether an active domestic stakeholder community (regulators, issuers and investors) proactively monitors market developments, maintains confidence in the product and encourages improvements to relevant regulations. We further assess the clarity and predictability of relevant statutory provisions, their interpretation as well as the track record of relevant authorities.

COVER POOL ANALYSIS

In the cover pool support analysis, we evaluate the expected loss of the covered bonds. We first determine the maximum additional rating uplift by assessing the interplay between the complexity of a covered bond programme and the transparency provided by the issuer. This translates into the cover pool complexity (CPC) category. Our credit risk analysis identifies relevant asset risks arising from the cover pool. As part of our cash flow risk analysis, we test the resilience of the covered bond's cash flow structure to credit, market and refinancing risks. The quantitative analysis is complemented with auxiliary risk considerations.

CPC category

Where issuers provide full transparency on current and expected asset credit risk, market risk and where management is highly predictable, additional support from the cover pool can provide up to three notches of uplift – provided that identified risks are sufficiently mitigated e.g. by overcollateralisation. Programmes for which the issuer only provides industry best practice transparency reports, or exhibit high concentration or noticeable foreign currency risk, are only eligible for lower uplift.

Assuming the highest level of transparency, the maximum credit differentiation between the issuer and the covered bonds can be as high as nine notches. This means investment-grade issuers (at least BBB-), located in covered-bond-supportive countries can in principle support covered bonds rated at the highest level.

Asset credit risk analysis

We use market-standard approaches to establish cover pool default distributions. Concentrated cover pools, typical for public sector or commercial real estate-backed covered bonds, are analysed with Monte Carlo simulation tools. For homogenous, granular cover pools, typical for residential-mortgage loan portfolios, we use a portfolio approximation approach, typically derived based on issuer-specific performance data, but which can also be conservatively established with country- and asset-specific assumptions.

Cash flow risk analysis

Based on scheduled cash flows of the cover pool assets, outstanding covered bonds and related derivatives we identify the maximum level of credit differentiation a cover pool can support. We complement our static cash flow analysis with forward-looking scenarios on the potential evolution of risk factors.

Auxiliary credit considerations

Availability of overcollateralisation: The assessment of an issuer's ability and willingness to provide protection to its covered bons is essential for the rating analysis. In the absence of contractual commitments, we assume that the lower the issuer rating falls, the more likely an issuer's management no longer provides adequate overcollateralisation.

If the issuer has a rating of at least BBB, our analysis considers available overcollateralisation. If the rating is below BBB, the level of overcollateralisation taken into account reflects our view on the reliability of an issuer's capital markets communication related to the evolution of risks and mitigants. We make downward adjustments if expectations are not met. We only consider the legal minimum level of overcollateralisation for issuers rated BB and below, unless strongly protected.

Counterparty risk: The guiding principles when assessing whether key external counterparties could impact and ultimately constrain the performance and creditworthiness of a covered bond is their materiality. Effective replacement frameworks or other structural risk-mitigating mechanisms for key agents can prevent a negative impact on the covered bond rating. We give credit to the strong alignment of interests between the issuer and the covered bond holders, in particular for banks that are deemed to be resolvable in accordance with our resolution assessment.

Sovereign risk: We do not mechanistically limit the maximum rating achievable by a covered bond to the credit rating of the country in which the issuer is based or where cover pool assets are originated in.

Macroeconomic and country specific risk factors are important and included in the asset and cash flow stresses that support covered bond ratings. The weight given to these factors may differ between the covered bond and the issuer's rating analysis. They also may vary between issuers in the same country, even between different covered bond types from the same issuer.

ESG risk factors: ESG factors, in particular governance play a major role for a covered bond's credit quality.

Issuer-specific ESG assessments can already result in positive or negative adjustments to the bank rating (for further details see the ESG-D analysis in our bank rating methodology).

When assessing a programmes' 'Governance support' uplift we consider factors such as strength of supervision as well as the prudent management of a covered bond programme's risk and protection structure. We also analyse the stringency of internal and external monitoring of the programme and the governance impact of regulatory oversight and an active stakeholder community.

Transparency provided to investors in relation to the complexity and risks in a covered bond program, is reflected in our CPC factor. This governance assessment determines the maximum cover pool support uplift.

ESG and climate risk factors can also impact our cover pool support analysis from a qualitative and quantitative angle. We can include energy efficiency and climate risk considerations and their potential impact on the default probability of the borrowers and recovery values of the collateral. Similarly, the beneficial increase in liquidity and demand for ESG compliant assets or covered bonds could positively impact secondary market prices of the supporting collateral and ultimately impact levels of supporting overcollateralisation.

Related criteria:

- Covered Bond Rating Methodology, July 2024
- Financial Institutions Rating Methodology, January 2025
- General Structured Finance Rating Methodology, February 2025
- Counterparty Risk Methodology, July 2024

Related research:

- Covered Bond Outlook, Scope's Covered Bond Quarterlies, quarterly performance updates as well as thematic commentaries

The above are all available at www.scoperatings.com.

CHAPTER 5 - SYSTEM PROVIDERS

5.1 ENHANCING TRANSPARENCY AND CREATING SYNERGIES IN THE COVERED BOND MARKET: BLOOMBERG'S CONTRIBUTION

By Sven Gerhardt and Rene Foertsch, Bloomberg

The covered bond market is renowned for its resilience and the confidence it instills in investors and regulators, notably highlighted by the historical absence of defaults. Underpinning this trust is the industry's commitment to meeting ever-increasing demands for data transparency concerning issuance, cover pools, and trading-related information. As one of the leading providers of financial data and analytics, Bloomberg plays an important role in supporting the covered bond community by adapting its offerings to capture the nuances of the covered bond market. In this article, we delve into how Bloomberg's comprehensive offerings for covered bonds and cover pools contribute to enhanced market transparency, drive synergies across the industry, and support regulatory compliance.

COMPREHENSIVE DATA COVERAGE

At the heart of Bloomberg's offering for covered bonds is its comprehensive dataset for each individual bond and the associated cover pool. By integrating data from multiple sources, including issuer disclosures, regulatory filings, and market transactions, Bloomberg enables a holistic view of the market. Datasets are reviewed by specialists to ensure data accuracy.

The granularity of datasets empowers market participants to assess issuer health, analyse the composition and quality of cover pools, and monitor changes over time. As of April 2025, Bloomberg's dataset in the covered bonds asset class consists of approximately 7,250 active covered bonds linked to 438 cover pools, of which 374 pools provide regular quarterly disclosures across 33 countries and 16 currencies—representing nearly €3 trillion in outstanding amounts.

DATA TRANSPARENCY

Transparency is a cornerstone of trust in financial markets. Bloomberg's commitment to transparency is demonstrated through its rigorous data aggregation and validation processes. By sourcing information from multiple channels, data gaps and errors are minimized, resulting in a robust, multidimensional dataset that stakeholders can rely on. Analytical solutions, such as Bloomberg Valuations (BVAL), utilize these datasets and provide transparency by disclosing methodologies through documentation and Terminal interfaces.

A user-friendly interface, including customizable dashboards, interactive charts, and intuitive search functionalities, ensures even complex datasets are easily accessible. Additionally, datasets are available off-Terminal, supporting internal client databases and reporting through Bloomberg's licensing framework.

FROM PRIMARY TO SECONDARY

Bloomberg's coverage of the global covered bond market is comprehensive throughout the bonds' lifecycle, with data remaining accessible even beyond their maturity dates. In addition to the mentioned 7,250 active covered bonds in the database, there are nearly 30,000 matured instruments available for historical analysis. Bloomberg's consistent market coverage dates back to the 90s but also includes earlier instruments - for example, bonds issued by Rheinische Hypothekenbank in 1926.

New issuances are captured as soon as they are announced to the market, including preliminary details such as issue size and indicative spreads. Bloomberg's First Word (FIRS) news wires and PREL pages offer comprehensive primary market data alongside dedicated worksheets and real-time data feeds.

Once priced, covered bonds enter Bloomberg's live market environment, featuring active quotes and other statistics such as spread tightening, new issue concessions (premium), and book cover ratios. The Bloomberg New Issue Analysis (NIA) tool enables relative valuation by plotting the new issue against the issuer's curve.

In secondary markets, Bloomberg's platform supports trading, market-making, and detailed bond analyses, aiding stakeholders in market tracking and investment decision-making.

INNOVATION TO SUPPORT THE COVERED BONDS COMMUNITY

Bloomberg's contribution to the covered bond market is characterized by continuous innovation driven by emerging needs and customer feedback. As markets evolve, Bloomberg evolves accordingly.

Bloomberg actively invests in emerging technologies and methodologies, including artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML), to further enhance its analytical capabilities. In 2023, Bloomberg launched the new IBVAL pricing tool using ML techniques aimed at minimizing next-trade valuation errors by comparing IBVAL prices with actual market trade levels. As of April 2025, IBVAL covers USD, GBP, and EUR-denominated covered bonds starting from sub-benchmark sizes, with coverage planned for other currencies.

Tools like the Fixed Income Worksheet (FIW) enable real-time relative value analyses, assessing bonds against issuer curves or peer securities. Market liquidity remains a key consideration, and Bloomberg supports this analysis by providing pricing and axe information regarding secondary market activity. To evaluate liquidity from a trade cost perspective, Bloomberg's TCA and Liquidity Assessment (LQA) solutions deliver valuable, actionable insights. LQA also provides empirical trade reporting data, which can be accessed via dedicated Terminal pages such as MOSB for most actively traded bonds and TAGG for aggregated trades.

SUPPORTING REGULATORY AND ACCOUNTING EFFORTS – EXAMPLE HQLA

Bloomberg offers accounting- and regulation-ready datasets, produced according to jurisdiction-specific regulatory reporting and accounting standards, overseen by regulatory specialists who regularly engage with supervisors and the market. Examples include High-Quality Liquid Asset (HQLA) classifications, GAAP (ASC 820)/IASB (IFRS 13) Fair Value Leveling outputs, and FRTB risk weight classifications.

For example, HQLA plays a critical role in monitoring bank liquidity requirements under Basel III. The Liquidity Coverage Ratio (LCR) mandates that banks hold an adequate amount of unencumbered HQLA that can be easily converted into cash during stressed market conditions. Under Basel III, banks must demonstrate daily that their LCR—calculated by dividing HQLA by total net cash outflows over a 30-day stress period—is consistently greater than 100%.

Bloomberg's HQLA solution assesses individual bond characteristics and relevant datasets to provide jurisdiction-specific level outputs (1, 2A, 2B, N). This solution, built upon Bloomberg's comprehensive reference data, is continuously updated in alignment with evolving regulatory standards. Its coverage is divided into three key datasets:

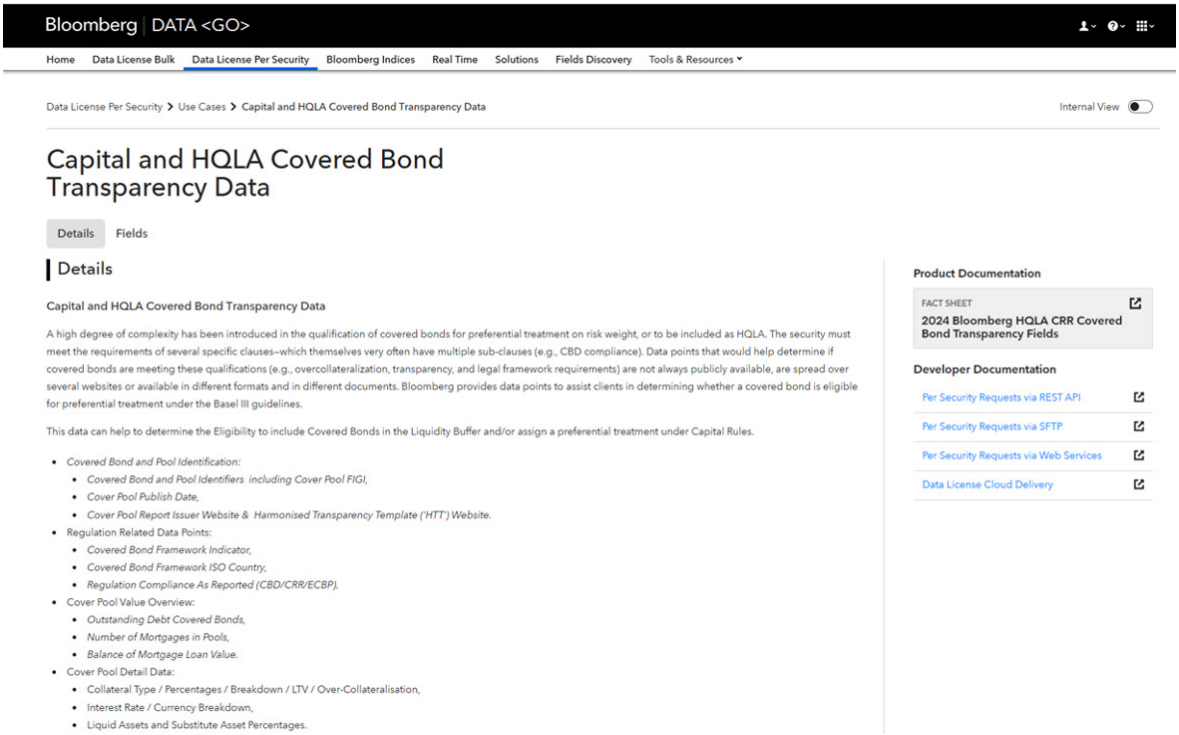
- **HQLA Classification**:
  Over twenty data points determine the appropriate HQLA level for various jurisdictions, including eligibility, 30-day stress price metrics, OECD classifications, and risk weightings. This facilitates rapid evaluation according to jurisdiction-specific differences, incorporating factors such as LTV and collateral compositions.
- **Liquid & Readily Marketable**:
  Containing nineteen data points, this dataset helps clients assess whether fixed-income securities are sufficiently liquid and readily marketable—a crucial factor for HQLA inclusion.
- **Central Bank Eligibility**:
  Featuring three data points, this dataset provides critical information on securities accepted as eligible collateral by 14 major global central banks, including corresponding haircut values, essential given varying central bank standards

This robust approach streamlines client efforts and eases data availability for regulatory due diligence and liquidity management, supporting LCR compliance and other reporting requirements such as FR 2052a in the U.S. and COREP in the EU & UK.

ENHANCING DATA LINKAGE WITH FIGI IDENTIFIERS FOR COVER POOLS

A significant innovation enhancing covered bond datasets' clarity and connectivity is the use of FIGI (Financial Instrument Global Identifier) identifiers for cover pools. FIGI provides a standardized, unique 12-character alphanumeric identifier, promoting uniformity and precision in identifying cover pools in a fragmented market. FIGI, managed by the Object Management Group, offers open data without restrictions or costs via www.openFIGI.com.

> Figure 1: Details on Bloomberg's HQLA data offering on DATA <GO> (from the Bloomberg terminal) or on the internet at data.bloomberg.com



By assigning unique FIGIs to cover pools, Bloomberg ensures underlying datasets are easily referenced and correctly linked to issuers, eliminating ambiguities from duplicative naming or language differences. This innovation simplifies data integration and analysis industry-wide across platforms, reducing risks associated with linking errors. FIGI identifiers facilitate seamless mapping between cover pools and covered bonds, significantly enhancing data accuracy and providing a globally recognized common reference point, thereby improving efficiency and consistency in reporting and regulatory compliance.

BLOOMBERG LEAG TABLES

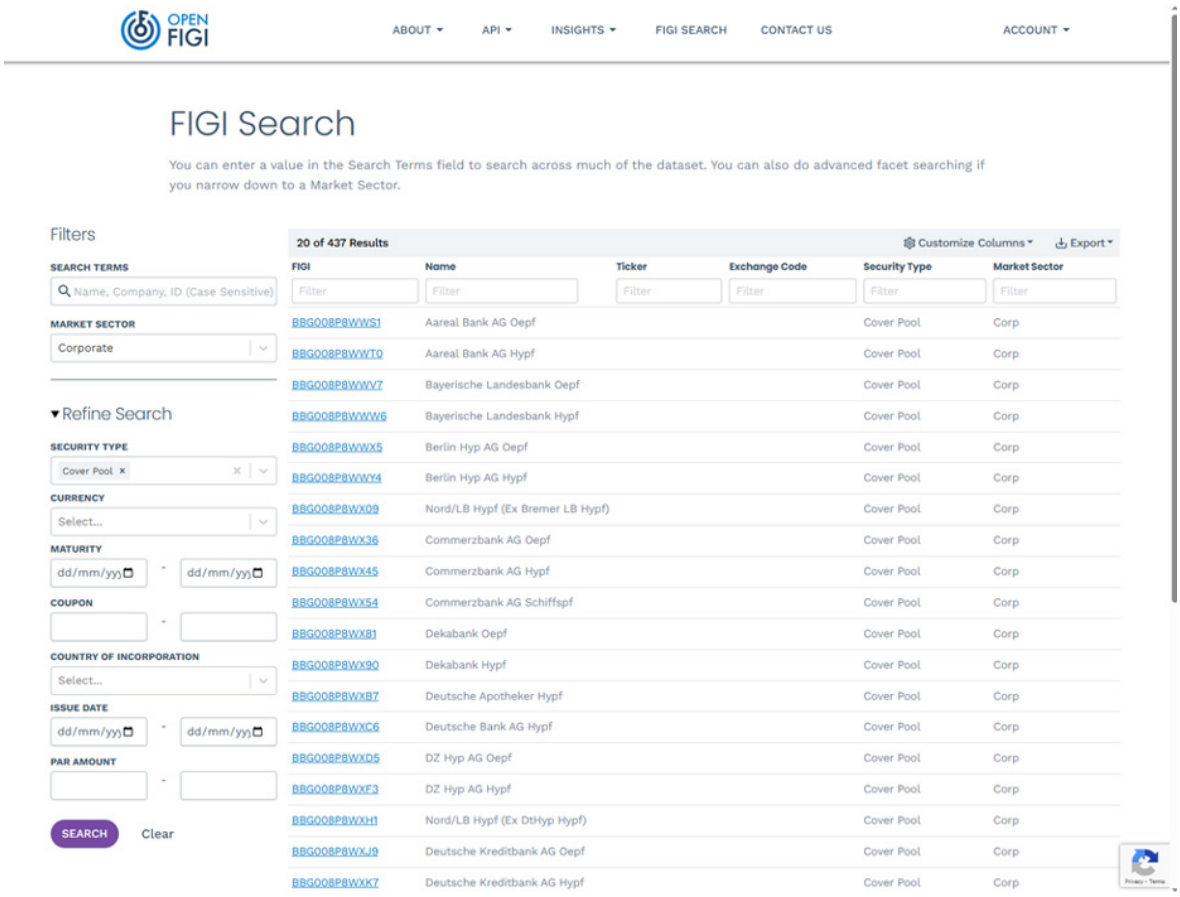
LEAG<GO> offers official league tables across products and asset classes. LEAG aggregates and ranks also the activity in the covered bond new issue market, to provide users with market benchmarks and competitive analysis. The tool is based on specific criteria, such as excluding retained deals or deals below a certain size and offers historical data. This integration allows users to track market trends and assess competitor performance with a concise, standardized view.

While it is possible for users to create custom LEAG tables using own criteria for specific analyses, Bloomberg publishes representative, official tables whose criteria are controlled and regularly reviewed by Bloomberg in dialogue with market participants. An EMEA "Covered Bonds including Pfandbriefe" table is available (shortcut LEAG @COVEREDBONDS).

CONCLUSION

Covered bonds remain integral to global financial stability. Bloomberg significantly contributes through detailed data coverage, advanced analytics, continual innovation, and regulatory support, empowering market stakeholders to navigate an increasingly complex environment.

> Figure 2: Search for Cover Pool FIGIs on the internet at www.openFIGI.com



5.2 EVITEC SOLUTIONS FOSTERING TRANSPARENCY AND SYNERGY IN COVERED BOND MANAGEMENT

By Nikke Ruokolainen, Evitec Solutions

INTRODUCTION

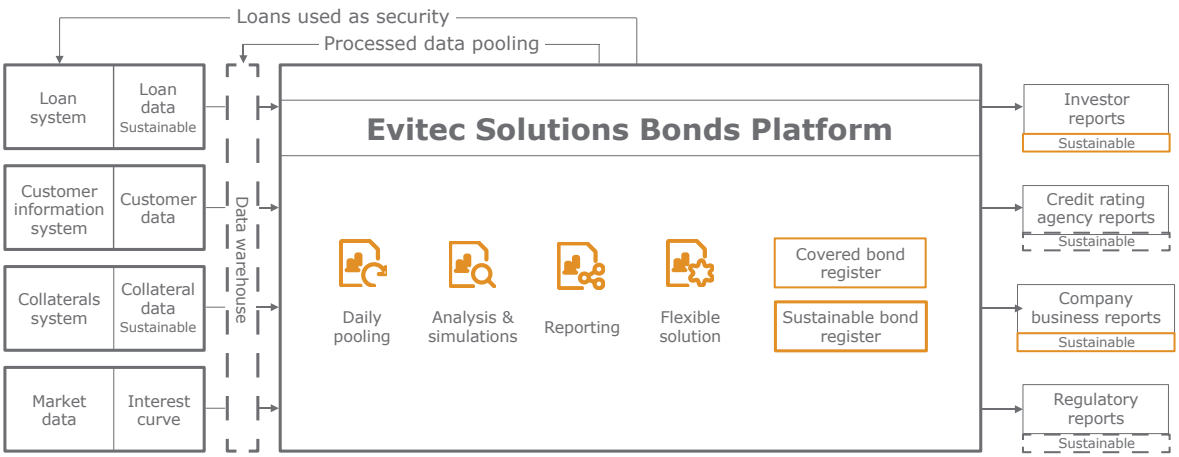
For institutions operating within the highly sophisticated covered bond market, maintaining high standards of transparency and achieving seamless operational synergies is fundamental to programme success and investor confidence. The inherent complexities of collateral management, regulatory compliance, and stakeholder reporting demand specialized tools that go beyond generic banking systems. Evitec Solutions, leveraging over 30 years of dedicated experience within the Nordic financial technology landscape, has cultivated a deep understanding of these specific demands.

This understanding is embodied in the Evitec Solutions Bonds (ES Bonds) platform, a system purpose-built to address the intricacies of covered bond pool management. This article offers expert readers specific insights into Evitec Solutions' contribution to the covered bond ecosystem. We will focus on how, through the design and application of the ES Bonds platform, Evitec actively enhances transparency for all market participants and fosters crucial operational synergies for issuers, ultimately contributing to a more robust and efficient market.

THE CONTEXT: NEED FOR SPECIALIZED SOLUTIONS

Issuers face a persistent need to navigate intricate requirements stemming from the EU Covered Bond Directive, national laws, rating agency methodologies, and increasingly, ESG-related frameworks like the EU Taxonomy and Green Bond Standard, even within traditional pools. Simultaneously, managing vast amounts of loan data, ensuring eligibility, calculating overcollateralization, performing stress tests, and generating numerous, detailed reports for diverse stakeholders creates significant operational friction. These well-understood pressures underscore the necessity for specialized, automated solutions capable of handling this complexity with precision and efficiency. It is within this context that Evitec Solutions focuses its contribution.

> Figure 1: Evitec Solutions Bonds Platform



Source: Evitec Solutions

EVITEC SOLUTIONS' CONTRIBUTION VIA THE ES BONDS PLATFORM

Evitec Solutions' contribution stems from a philosophy of building targeted, robust systems that translate complex requirements into automated, reliable processes. The ES Bonds platform is the practical application of this philosophy, designed explicitly to enhance transparency and foster synergies in covered bond operations.

Enhancing Transparency through ES Bonds:

Transparency in this market requires accuracy, timeliness, consistency, and auditability. ES Bonds is engineered to deliver on these through specific capabilities:

1. **Embedded Rule Engines for Compliance**: ES Bonds incorporates configurable rule engines that directly embed the complex logic of regulatory requirements (EU directives, national specifics, emerging ESG criteria like EU Taxonomy alignment) and rating agency tests. Asset eligibility, pool composition limits, LTV constraints, and other critical parameters are automatically assessed against these rules on a continuous basis. This provides direct, verifiable transparency regarding the pool's compliance status for internal oversight, auditors, and regulators. Data points and compliance results are clearly presented, removing ambiguity.
2. **Automated & Standardized Reporting**: The platform automates the generation of key reports required by regulators, rating agencies, and investors, including standardized formats like the ECBC Harmonised Transparency Template (HTT) and specific agency templates. By pulling validated data directly from the centralized system and applying consistent calculation logic, ES Bonds ensures reports are accurate, timely, and comparable. This directly enhances market transparency by providing stakeholders with reliable, easily digestible information for their analysis and decision-making.
3. **Centralized Data Management & Validation**: ES Bonds acts as a central hub for relevant pool asset data, integrating feeds from various source systems. Rigorous data validation routines are applied upon import and throughout the process to ensure data integrity. This creation of a trusted 'single source of truth' for the cover pool is foundational to transparency, ensuring all calculations and reports are based on accurate, consistent data.
4. **Sophisticated Analysis and Simulation**: The platform includes tools for advanced cash flow modelling, scenario analysis (e.g., interest rate shocks, prepayment variations, asset loss scenarios), and stress testing according to various methodologies. Running and documenting these analyses within the system provides deeper insights into the pool's resilience, offering enhanced transparency regarding potential risks to internal management and, where appropriate, external stakeholders like rating agencies.
5. **Comprehensive Audit Trails**: Every significant action, calculation, data import, eligibility check, and report generation within ES Bonds is logged, creating a detailed and immutable audit trail. This inherent system traceability provides complete transparency for internal control, external auditors, and regulatory reviews, allowing for clear verification of processes and data lineage.

Fostering Synergies through ES Bonds:

Operational synergy involves breaking down silos, streamlining processes, and enabling different parts of the organization and value chain to work together efficiently. ES Bonds promotes synergy through:

1. Integrated Data Flows & Cross-Functional Visibility: By connecting disparate data sources and centralizing pool management, ES Bonds breaks down traditional information silos between departments like lending, treasury, risk management, and compliance. This provides a holistic view of the cover pool and its performance, enabling better-informed, synergistic decision-making across functions. For example, treasury can get accurate, near real-time data on pool capacity for funding decisions, while risk management can monitor key metrics seamlessly.
2. End-to-End Workflow Automation: The platform automates the entire workflow from data aggre-

gation and validation, through eligibility testing, pool optimization, calculation routines (e.g., OC, interest cover tests), to final reporting and analytics. This automation eliminates manual handoffs, reduces processing times, minimizes operational errors, and frees up skilled personnel, creating significant synergy by making the entire operational chain more efficient and less resource intensive.

3. **Unified Management of Diverse Asset**: ES Bonds is designed with the flexibility to handle diverse asset types and associated criteria within a single pool, including traditional mortgages alongside assets meeting specific green or sustainable criteria. This capability provides operational synergy by allowing issuers to manage increasingly complex or blended pools efficiently within one consistent framework, rather than requiring separate systems or processes.
4. **Proactive Monitoring and Management**: The system provides dashboards, key performance indicators (KPIs), and automated alerts for potential issues, such as upcoming covenant breaches, data quality problems, or eligibility shortfalls. This facilitates proactive, rather than reactive, pool management, enabling smoother collaboration and synergy between monitoring functions and those responsible for taking corrective actions.
5. **Facilitating Stakeholder Interaction**: While internal synergy is key, the standardized, accurate, and timely output from ES Bonds also fosters synergy with external stakeholders. Providing consistent, high-quality data packages simplifies interactions with rating agencies, regulators, and investors, making reviews and due diligence processes more efficient for all parties involved.

THE IMPACT: STRENGTHENING THE ECOSYSTEM

Evitec Solutions' contribution, realized through the ES Bonds platform, translates these transparency and synergy enhancements into tangible benefits for issuers and the wider market ecosystem. By ensuring robust compliance and data integrity, operational risk is significantly mitigated. The enhanced transparency and data quality support issuer reputation and potentially contribute to achieving favourable credit ratings. Automation drives efficiency, lowering operational costs and allowing skilled teams to focus on strategic value-add activities. The ability to manage complex pools and adapt quickly to new regulations (like those related to ESG) provides issuers with strategic agility.

Collectively, these impacts contribute to a more stable, efficient, and trustworthy covered bond market. Evitec's role is that of an enabler, providing the specialized technological tools necessary for issuers to meet and exceed the high standards expected in this market.

FUTURE PERSPECTIVE

Evitec Solutions continues to evolve the ES Bonds platform to meet future market needs. This includes enhancing capabilities for handling ever-increasing data volumes and granularity demands, deepening ESG integration as standards solidify, and offering flexible deployment models, including Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) for scalability and reduced infrastructure overhead. Our ongoing development is informed by close collaboration with market participants, ensuring our contribution remains relevant and impactful.

CONCLUSION

In the demanding world of covered bonds, achieving operational excellence through transparency and synergy is critical. Evitec Solutions actively contributes to this goal by providing the specialized ES Bonds platform. Designed from decades of focused experience, the system directly enhances transparency through automated compliance, rigorous data management, clear reporting, and auditability. It fosters synergy by integrating data flows, automating workflows, unifying management of diverse assets, and enabling proactive oversight. By equipping issuers with these capabilities, Evitec Solutions plays a vital role in strengthening the operational integrity, efficiency, and trustworthiness of the covered bond market, supporting its continued stability and importance as a key funding source.

5.3 HYPOPORT BV: THE ROLE OF TECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATION IN COVERED BONDS

By Daniel Goudsmit, Hypoport BV

INTRODUCTION

In the year 1769: James Watt patented a "steam engine" in Scotland and Frederick the Great created covered bonds in Prussia. One of these inventions is a cornerstone of European economic development to this day according to the European commission[1]. The invention of covered bonds was an innovation in financial as well as legal technology and clearly a sustained success for centuries. However, is it ripe for innovation, or dare we say it, disruption??!

Hypoport BV is a company headquartered in Amsterdam with offices in South Africa, Hamburg, and Singapore. Since 2002 we build information technology (IT), specifically reporting and management technology for covered bonds and other asset backed transactions. We are on a mission to improve borrowing conditions for all, and look for efficiencies to be able to lower borrowing costs for financial institutions and most importantly, through those institutions, people and companies transacting in the real economy.

COVERED BOND MECHANICS

As an IT company, we tend to look at things from a mechanical perspective. So, when examining a covered bond, one quickly has to answer the questions: what is the function? What is it made of? What makes it successful? After this short analysis we look at opportunities for innovation, before answering the question posed in the introduction.

What is the function of covered bonds? Covered bonds are a cornerstone of long-term finance for many EU Member States as a key instrument to channel funds to the property market and public sector entities.[2] With over EUR 2.9 trillion[3] outstanding at the end of 2020, covered bonds play an important role in European capital markets.

What is it made of? Covered bonds are secured senior debt issued by banks, collateralised by a pool of assets that remain on the banks' balance sheet. This pool is ring-fenced, or encumbered, and therefore bankruptcy-remote. The cover pool is dynamically replenished – non-performing asset are replaced with performing ones of equivalent value and quality to maintain the requisite collateralisation. Finally, covered bond holders are also protected by dual recourse: (i) they have preferential claims to the cover pool assets, and (ii) if the value of the cover pool is insufficient, covered bond holders may claim the shortfall from the unencumbered assets, where they are of equal seniority to unsecured creditors[4].

What makes it successful? Covered bonds are safe instruments for investors and a stable and cheap source of bank funding. Generally, there is a high degree of secondary market liquidity[5]. Over the past two centuries, covered bonds have experienced no defaults and delayed payments to investors have been rare (cf. Mastroeni, 2001[6] and Wandschneider, 2014[7].

GLOBAL SYNERGIES, STANDARDISATION, TRANSPARENCY

After implementing covered bond reporting solutions in Europe and Asia for 20 years there are three observations to share around synergies, standardisation, and transparency. The high-level characteristics of Covered Bonds are fairly similar across the globe as is clear when studying the ECBC Factbook.

The first observation is around local (national) processing requirements. In addition to the generally accepted secure legal basis of covered bonds, there are detailed local laws and procedures to be followed by issuers around asset quality, monitoring, and reporting. In recent years the EU covered bond directive is an example of standardisation that we together with the ECBC and many issuers embraced. Even still, many processes in the covered bond market rely on traditional practices, such as manual documentation and conventional risk assessment methods, which means they may not fully leverage the efficiencies of modern IT.

Secondly, many financial markets have embraced digitalisation quickly, leading to improved transaction speeds, enhanced data accessibility, and better cost management. International alignment that the ECBC promotes on topics such as the use of technology, personal data protection, transparency and

loanlevel reporting standards (could) greatly benefit global capital markets.

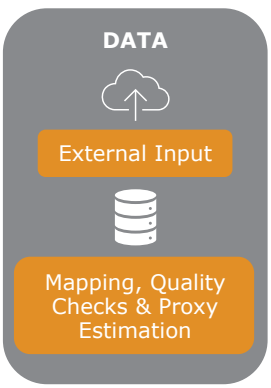
The third observation is that digital innovation in complementary areas has been happening for years. While advancements have been made in complementary areas these innovations are not always directly impacting the core processes of covered bond issuance, servicing, and reporting. IT has rapidly evolved with the advent of personal computing, the internet, data analytics, and artificial intelligence (AI). The rise of AI has been going on for years and has become mainstream, with the introduction of publicly available LLM's such as via OpenAI's ChatGPT. AI is something to monitor for all banks as both an opportunity and threat. In the next section we will look into how AI technology could potentially benefit the covered bond industry.

UNLOCKING THE POWER OF AI FOR COVERED BONDS

Advances in AI have the potential to fundamentally transform the covered bond management and reporting processes, but the sector has yet to fully capitalise on these opportunities. The recurring workload for managing a covered bond depends on local legislation[8] and can generally be classified into three areas: loading data, processing, and reporting, with governance as an important fourth element. For each of these areas, in the following section we provide a specific example of local regulation on covered bonds and reporting requirements to show how several parts of a tremendously successful legal invention could be improved by technological innovation.

> **Data**

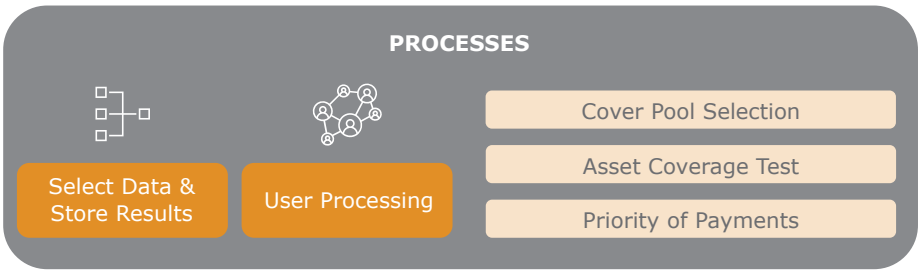
Example: German Pfandbrief Act (PfandBG)
Section 3: Special Provisions concerning the Cover Assets
Subsection 1: Mortgage Pfandbriefe
§ 16 Assessing the mortgage lending value
(2) The mortgage lending value must not exceed the value resulting from a prudent assessment of the future marketability…



> AI can interpret large volumes of unstructured documents, reducing manual review time and errors by automatically extracting crucial details.
> AI-driven processes can perform automated data quality checks, ensuring data is validated and reliable before use for calculations or reporting.
> Automated data gap analysis helps identify missing or incomplete data points, providing a comprehensive view for informed decision-making in bond management.

> Processes

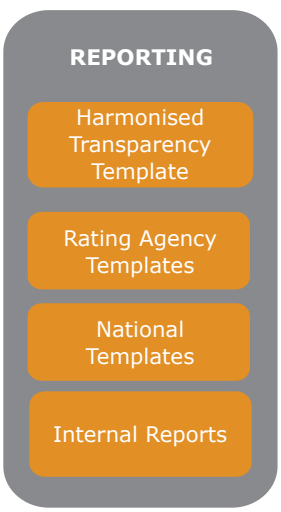
Example: German Pfandbrief Act (PfandBG)
Section 2: General Provisions concerning Pfandbrief Issuance
§ 8 Duties of the cover pool monitor
(3) Prior to issue, the cover pool monitor shall issue for the Pfandbriefe a certificate confirming that the prescribed cover exists and has been recorded in the relevant cover register.



> AI systems can continuously monitor and verify data within the cover pool against the cover register. This includes real-time checks for discrepancies in asset qualifications, valuations, and eligibility.
> The Asset Coverage Test (ACT) ensures the bond cover pool's ability to support repayment and interest obligations, using AI-based stress tests and providing input for auditors, monetary authorities, and rating agencies.

> Reporting

Example: German covered bond reporting requirement regulation (Pfandbrief-Meldeverordnung - PfandMeldeV) Anlage 4
Meldung: Hypothekenpfandbriefe – Deckung (HypDck)



> AI can improve standardised reporting by automatically formatting data into standard templates, reducing manual errors and meeting the expectations of investors, regulators, and rating agencies.
> The Harmonised Transparency Template (HTT) is a globally recognised framework for disclosing covered bond information, aided by AI to identify gaps, enhancing compliance speed and accuracy.
> AI-powered automated dashboards provide real-time analysis of cover pool performance for internal stakeholders and credit rating agencies, providing up-to-date insights for regulatory reporting.

Example: Statutory Order on the form of the funding register pursuant to the German Banking Act (KWG) and on the type and manner of recording

PART 2: ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS CONCERNING REGISTERS KEPT IN ELECTRONIC FORM
§ 9 Technical and organisational measures to ensure data protection and data security
4. an audit-proof recording of all accesses (input, read, copy, modify, delete, block) takes place (audit capability)

> AI can help detect security vulnerabilities and continuously monitor data to detect anomalies or potential breaches.
> AI-driven code review enhances robust, functional code by detecting vulnerabilities and deviations from coding standards in real-time, enabling timely resolution of issues before production impacts.

CONCLUSION AND WHAT'S NEXT?

Is the covered bond ripe for disruption? No. The covered bond is successful and its success is a product of consistency, predictability, and reliability. Looking at the processes underlying the covered bond there is room for innovation, as shown in the previous paragraphs. Many of the processes underlying the covered bond are sound and tested and contribute to the success of the product. From our point of view innovation is a must, but disruption is not a useful paradigm.

Some other interesting developments to follow are:

> AI can drive sustainability insights in finance, for instance the use of AI to assess and verify a building's energy efficiency. Which fits in nicely with the trend toward sustainable and green covered bonds. Examples for implementing AI in these areas are projects like Singapore's NovA![11] and SLEB Smart Hub[12].

> These (and many other) initiatives show the broader potential for AI in covered bonds and serve as a blueprint for future innovation. As AI is integrated into more businesses worldwide including financial services, the pace of innovation can be expected to increase.

1 https://finance.ec.europa.eu/banking/banking-regulation/covered-bonds_en
2 https://hypo.org/ecbc/covered-bonds/#introducing-covered-bonds
3 https://www.bundesbank.de/resource/blob/765164/170dac4fcfe903ac3d03915cd46fb4fa/ml/2016-06-research-brief-data.pdf
4 https://www.ecb.europa.eu/pub/pdf/other/coverbondsintheeufinancialsystem200812en_en.pdf
5 Maestroni 2001 (https://www.bis.org/publ/bppdf/bispap05b.pdf)
6 Wandschneider, 2014 https://www.nber.org/papers/w19159)
7 https://www.pfandbrief.de/pfandbg/
8 https://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/pfandmeldev/index.html
9 https://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/kredwg/index.html
10 https://www.mas.gov.sg/-/media/project-nova-whitepaper.pdf
11 https://www.sleb.sg/

5.4 TXS GMBH – MARKET LEADER FOR DIGITAL PFANDBRIEF AND REFINANCING SOLUTIONS FROM GERMANY

By Tim Geissler, TXS GmbH

THE TXS COMPANY

TXS GmbH, based in Hamburg, Germany, is the leading provider of future-proof software solutions for the refinancing of credit institutions in Germany, Austria and Luxembourg. Having almost 30 years of experience and a specialized team of more than 100 experts, TXS as a reliable system partner supports banks and financial institutions in automating and optimizing their refinance processes and in efficiently implementing regulatory provisions.

TXS employees cover the entire professional and technological chain. TXS employs bank professionals, computer science graduates, mathematicians, economists and project managers.

TXS is the part of FINNOFLEET specialized in refinancing solutions, which is an amalgamation of 7 IT companies to serve finance providers from the D-A-CH region. The entire FINNOFLEET with its 450 employees provides services to some 500 clients covering the complete value chain from the credit process to refinancing. The annually processed credit volume amounts to more than 600 billion EUR.

TRUSTED PARTNERSHIP WITH LEADING FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS IN GERMANY AND AUSTRIA

Reputable banks, focused on sustainable and future-proof refinancing, are among the clients of TXS GmbH, including to a large extend Pfandbrief banks. This is reflected in a market share of roughly 90 % in Germany and about 50 % in Austria. The range of clients extends from small specialised institutions to internationally acting major banks and significant key players in the Pfandbrief market. Among the clients you will find credit institutions from the private residential and commercial property sector as well as providers of specialized financing. All Pfandbrief types are represented here, mortgage collateralized Pfandbrief as well as public Pfandbrief and ship Pfandbrief. A dominant role in the client range belongs to the Sparkassen sector in Germany. All German Landesbanks and currently 41 of 46 Pfandbrief Sparkassen are TXS's clients. We have a similar picture in Austria with the complete Raiffeisen sector and the mortgage banks all being included.

INTERACTING WITH CAPITAL MARKET PLAYERS

Being a member of the Association of German Pfandbrief Banks (Verband deutscher Pfandbriefbanken, vdp) and the European Covered Bond Council (ECBC), and due to the regular exchange with the organisations' experts, we are able to make sure that the software development in TXS is always state of the art with regard to the current regulatory provisions. To adapt the technical functions of the products to the market conditions, TXS is focusing on the explicit dialogue with clients and associations. This includes first of all work groups targeting specialist topics like reporting, law or technology, and regular exchange in the framework of application work groups. User meetings of market sections "Sparkassen", "Germany" and "Austria" convene on an annual basis, every other year the "TXS Pfandbrief Forum" takes place. This is complemented by intensive specialist exchange by means of online events such as "Inside TXS" and Design Thinking Workshops.

Another component is the common subsidiary established together with the Association of German Pfandbrief Banks, the vdpConsulting AG, which has major relevance for the strategic and professional consulting of Pfandbrief banks and any potential issuer in Germany. This consulting company provides support and advice on the field of stable and viable compliance with supervisory requirements, for instance, in the context of Capital Requirements Regulation (CRR), the Minimum Requirements for Risk Management (MaRisk) and the Pfandbrief Act (PfandBG).

To complement its range meaningfully, TXS is focusing on such partnerships as the one with Finanz Informatik for Sparkassen or Drees & Sommer in the sustainability sector.

TXS'S PRODUCT AND SERVICE PORTFOLIO: FFICIENT SOLUTIONS FOR PFANDBRIEF MANAGEMENT, REFINANCING REGISTER AND COLLATERAL MANAGEMENT

The TXS service portfolio includes state-of-the-art standard software for the managing of Pfandbrief cover pools and keeping the refinancing registers as well as for the management of relevant collaterals. These are modular-type solutions that allow a tailor-made integration into existing IT landscapes of the financial institutions and in keeping with the regulatory guidelines.

With *TXS Pfandbrief* the company provides a certified and well-tried software solution for managing cover pools of various Pfandbrief types. This offers efficient control mechanisms and ensures full compliance with all relevant regulatory and statutory requirements. In addition, *TXS Refinanzierungsregister* provides a specific solution for the transparent and safe keeping of refinancing register. It supports in particular the insolvency-proof transfer of claims and is applied in syndicated financings, Pfandbrief pooling and true sale securitisations.

Another key component in the software portfolio is *TXS CAM (Collateral Allocation Management)*, a highly powerful tool to monitor and manage collateral holdings. It provides comprehensive analysis options and contributes significantly to the optimisation of collateral management in financial institutions. The solution offers far-reaching approaches to optimise every-day processes and recurring tasks serving all relevant stakeholders. Any special legal and supervisory requirements are supported in an audit-proof and cost-efficient manner.

A major component of *TXS CAM* is the add-on module *TXS MACCs*. In recent years the MACCs procedure (Mobilisation and Administration of Credit Claims) has become an additional form of refinancing and established itself in combination with and in addition to the mid-term and long-term Pfandbrief issuance.

The system supports banks by employing automated potential detection for relevant loans, the portfolio and single-case related demonstration of data enhancement tasks and the fully automated submission via the file transfer procedure. This audit-proof exchange with the Deutsche Bundesbank and the automated detection, monitoring and reporting of any changes in the submitted loan enables the credit institutions to any time use the entire loan portfolio available and, in doing so, to also employ large retail amounts in a highly efficient manner.

The exchange on a regular basis with and between the users and the direct communication with the central bank result in a continued evolution of the product making sure that any new requirements will be implemented promptly.

In the overall TXS solution architecture, rating agencies such as Moody's, Fitch or Standard & Poor's, associations and other institutions of the capital market receive appropriately any desired and required information by way of automated standard reports. Using the TXS IT infrastructure you can exploit the full range of economic and strategic benefits of covered refinancing in a cost-efficient and volume-optimised manner.

Descriptive and complex reporting, calculations at nominal and net present value and support of simple, complex and individual loan-to-value metrics provide a high level of transparency for Pfandbrief issuance and other forms of covered refinancing.

The optimised slicing, i.e. the best way of using a financing for a covered bond or any other form of covered refinancing, lead to an efficient use of assets individually available and help reduce the volume of expensive non-covered refinancing for the bank in total.

By continuously developing the solution we facilitate the possibilities and trends of the capital market at very early stages. Especially in such a rapidly growing and complex segment as "sustainability", application user work groups focused on specialised topics such as "green covered bond issuance" help to regularly consolidate any desires for further improvement. Thus TXS and users can timely and jointly agree on what the interpretation and the implementation of new requirements of various stakeholders should be. This provides support to issuers in their endeavour to meet the requirements of the capital market and investors.

GRADUAL INTEGRATION TO CREATE A MODULAR REFINANCING PLATFORM

For each application the implementation and integration of solution components is effected according to the needs and available resources. Compatible modules can be implemented successively starting with the solution that at a given moment is providing the greatest benefit. Depending on the business model of the credit institution, solutions can vary in their significance so that the depth of integration and implementation cycles always require individual planning.

Whatever module might be regarded preferential, any individual development will always follow a similar pattern. By agreeing on supported use cases, the radius of required information is being set.

In doing so, all processes are taken into account, including all reports that need to be maintained for various stakeholders. Any relevant existing loan, security and expert system of a bank is checked for stock-keeping availability of required data. These stock-keeping data are transported via an interface to the solution components from the stock-keeping systems to safeguard consistency and to avoid error-prone double work. In its content the interface is identical for all solution components and modules. Technically traditional and state-of-the-art formats are both possible. Data that do not exist but are essentially required for management or reporting processes can be derived in the system and/or kept in stock.

TECHNOLOGY AND OPERATION

Being an IT solution provider for the major part of Pfandbrief institutions in Germany and Austria we provide services to a variety of operation and integration needs. We make available our products for the on-premises operation at clients' facilities, for the operation in data centres or for cloud-based operation by the clients and in the full Software as a Service (SaaS) model through TXS. We support the integration of required data flows employing standardised interfaces and flexible adapters for the connectivity of stock-keeping systems.

CHAPTER 6 - COVERED BOND STATISTICS

6.1 INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

By Joost Beaumont, Chairman of the ECBC Statistics & Data Working Group and ABN AMRO

The ECBC Statistics and Data Working Group has been collecting statistics on the outstanding volume and annual gross supply of covered bonds since 2003. The aim is to provide a complete and consistent set of numbers that can serve as a reliable source of data for interested parties, ranging from issuers to investors and regulators.

The collection of statistics is a significant undertaking each year, which is only possible thanks to the cooperation of the Working Group members, in close cooperation with covered bond issuers and banking associations. One representative per country (the list of country representatives can be found in the list of author section at the beginning of the Fact Book) undertakes the initial data collection by approaching each issuer separately in most countries. These figures are then cross checked on the basis of publicly available data by a small number of Working Group members. The 2024 numbers were cross checked by Florian Eichert and Lewis Elliott from Crédit Agricole, Karsten Rühlmann from LBBW, Guglielmo Castiglioni, Charlie Harvey, Etienne Maille and Anastasia Ivanciuc from ABN AMRO, as well as myself. A special thanks also goes to the ECBC team (Eva Dervaux in particular) for all their support during the exercise.

GENERAL REMARKS ON THE 2024 STATISTICS

The aim of the ECBC statistics is to provide the most reliable data on the size and issuance of covered bonds globally. As such, it paints as realistic a picture of developments and trends in the covered bond market. In 2016, a breakdown by maturity structures was added to the statistics, while in 2019, we started to collect statistics on sustainable covered bonds. Sustainable covered bonds include a formal commitment by the issuer to use the bonds' proceeds to (re)finance loans in clearly defined environmental, social, governance (ESG) or a combination of these (sustainable) or similar criteria. The data is based on self-certification by issuers.

As always, we continue to try to improve the quality of the data even for previous years. It is always possible that we miss a bond or still include a bond that has been repaid early (just think of retained covered bonds). Wherever we realize that there was a mistake in last year's data we amend the numbers. As a result of this, there could be some slight differences between this year's numbers and those published in previous years.

Before going into the actual statistics, please find below some general remarks about the figures, which should help to interpret them correctly:

- Covered bonds are divided into those denominated in euro, those in domestic currency (if not the euro), and those in a currency other than the euro and the domestic currency. The tables are all in euro, with the end-of-year exchange rates published by the European Central Bank used to convert all non-euro denominated figures into euro for the respective year. This adds an exchange rate component to the volumes of non-euro covered bond markets. However, the aim is to show volumes that allow a potential investor to get a feel for the relative size of the various countries rather than the funding volumes obtained by issuers, which typically are swapped back into their domestic currency at issuance.
- Another breakdown is the public placement of covered bonds, which splits the bonds by their size (EUR1bn and above, EUR500m - below 1bn, below EUR 500m). This is to provide a feeling for how large liquid benchmark markets are relative to the overall market size. For non-euro issuance we have introduced waivers, as for example USD500m is a benchmark size in USD markets but when converting it to EUR would fall into the EUR<500m bucket. The amounts relevant for the three buckets are as follows:

AUD: AUD1bn, AUD500m, AUD<500m
USD: USD1bn, USD500m, USD<500m
GBP: GBP500m, GBP250m, GBP<250m

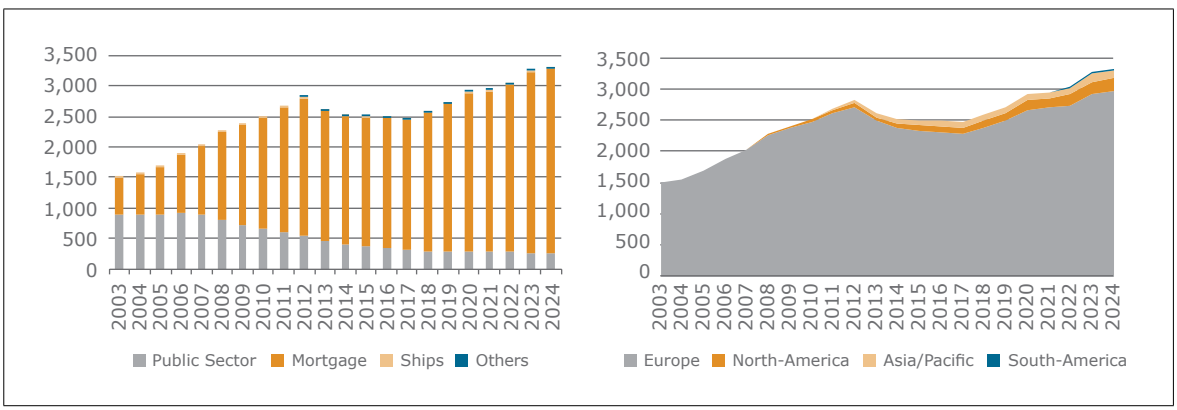
> For the purpose of counting the number of issuers and of new issuers the following applies: 1) Issuers are entities with at least one outstanding covered bond at year-end. 2) Issuers with multiple programmes still only count as one. The only exception to this rule is French covered bonds. In case of France, the actual issuer is a specialised bank rather than the mother company. As a result, one mother company with two covered bond programmes also counts as two issuers as the issuance actually comes from two separate legal entities. 3) New issuers are entities with at least one outstanding covered bond at year-end, but with no outstanding covered bond at the prior year-end.

FACT BOOK VERSUS LABEL STATISTICS

We also like to highlight the relation between the Fact Book statistics and those published by the ECBC Covered Bond Label. The Label has become a widely used tool with 130 issuers disclosing information on 170 cover pools across 24 countries by mid August 2025 and covers roughly EUR 2.1tn of covered bonds, i.e. around 70% of the total outstanding market. When comparing the Covered Bonds listed in the Label statistics to those presented in the Fact Book there might be some discrepancies, especially regarding public-private classification in Denmark and Sweden.

The reason for these discrepancies is the different market structure those two countries have where bonds are frequently tapped, repurchased and then tapped again. The Label as well, as the ECBC statistics definitions requires a bond to be listed and syndicated to be classified as public. Although Danish and Swedish covered bonds are listed, the way they are issued does not comply with the syndication requirement. In the ECBC statistics presented below, we try to capture the ”liquid” part of the market with our classifications and in justified cases can be more flexible than the Covered Bond Label database. We have therefore tried to eliminate the differences between both data sets wherever possible. But we have granted Denmark and Sweden an exception and consider bonds that for the ECBC label database are classified as private as public as long as we are talking about liquid benchmarks by these two countries’ standards.

> Figures 1-2: Total outstanding covered bonds per type (left) as well as region (right), EUR bn



Source: ECBC, ABN AMRO

OUTSTANDING AMOUNT OF COVERED BONDS INCREASED FOR SEVENTH CONSECUTIVE YEAR

The outstanding amount of covered bonds reached another record in 2024, reflecting the large volume of new supply more than compensating for covered bonds that matured in 2024. The volume of outstanding covered bonds increased by EUR 53bn, reaching EUR 3.31trn by the end of 2024 (compared to EUR 3.26trn at the end of 2023). This marked the seventh consecutive year of growth, although the growth rate slowed to 1.6%, down from 7.6% in 2023, which had been the fastest growth rate since 2008. Moreover, it was the third year

in a row that the outstanding amount of covered bonds rose further above the EUR 3trn mark. A breakdown by covered bond type showed that the increase in 2024 was largely due to a rise in outstanding amounts of mortgage covered bonds, as outstanding volumes of public sector and ship covered bonds declined slightly in 2024.

Indeed, the nominal amount of mortgage covered bonds rose by EUR 56bn to EUR 3trn (+1.9%), which was the first time since the start of the series that the amount breached the EUR 3trn mark. In contrast, the volume of outstanding public sector covered bonds dropped by EUR 4bn to EUR 254bn (-1.6%), while that of ship covered bonds dropped by EUR 0.7bn to EUR 7bn. Finally, the outstanding amount of the 'other' category, which largely includes export finance covered bonds in Spain, increased by EUR 1.6bn to EUR 12bn. At the end of 2024, the share of mortgage covered bonds in the total amount of outstanding covered bonds was 91.8%, only slightly higher than the share in 2023, but up from 90% in 2020 and even 83% ten years ago. The latter reflects the ever increasing importance of covered bonds as a financing instrument for housing. Meanwhile, the share of public sector covered bonds slowed down to 7.7%, while the share of covered bonds backed by ships/other assets remained at around 0.6%. Finally, the share of sustainable covered bonds continued to rise to almost 4%, up from 3.3% last year and 1.8% in 2021.

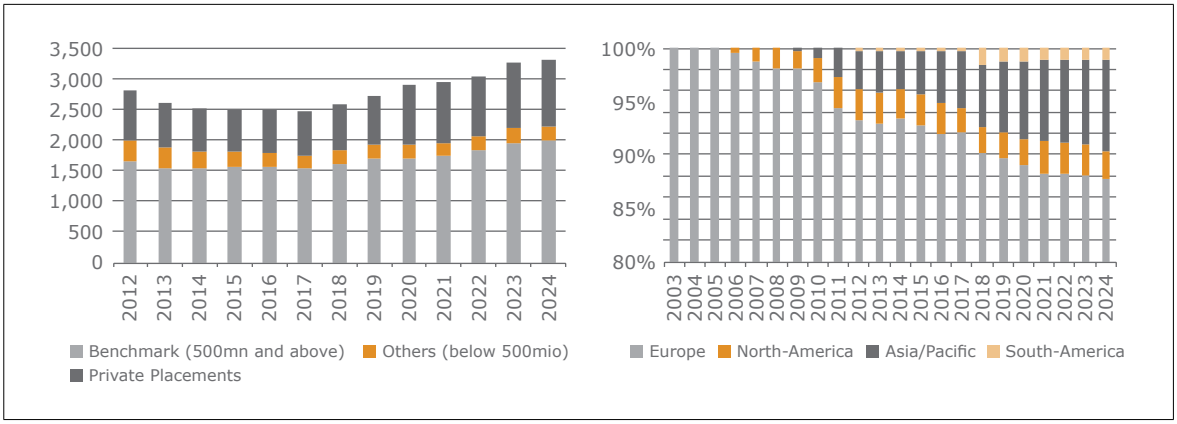
INCREASE IN PUBLICLY PLACED COVERED BOND POSITIVE SIGN FOR LIQUIDITY

The breakdown between privately placed covered bonds (which includes retained covered bonds) and publicly placed covered bonds showed that the volume of outstanding covered bonds with a benchmark size (i.e., publicly sold to investors and having a minimum size of EUR 500mn) increased by EUR 55bn to EUR 2trn, with the largest increase in covered bonds with a size between EUR 500mn and EUR 1bn (+ 41bn). Meanwhile, the volume of covered bonds with a sub-benchmark size declined by EUR 22bn to EUR 229bn, while privately placed covered bonds increased by EUR 19bn to EUR 1.1trn. These covered bonds are mainly used by banks as collateral in liquidity operations with central banks. The increase in publicly placed benchmark covered bonds is a positive sign for liquidity in the covered bond market, particularly since these bonds have been predominantly acquired by end-investors rather than the Eurosystem, which concluded its purchase program in 2023. Still, covered bonds also continue to play a key role in banks' liquidity management.

COVERED BONDS CONTINUED BROADENING GLOBAL FOOTPRINT

Another observation (see also below) is that covered bonds continued to broaden their global footprint, as the share of outstanding covered bonds outside Europe increased further in 2024. Their share rose to almost 11%, up from 6% ten years ago. This underlines the growing importance of covered bonds as bank funding tool, not only in Europe but across the globe. At the end of 2024, 333 covered bond issuers were active around the globe, of which 82 also issue sustainable covered bonds. The number of issuers dropped slightly last year, which is the balance between issuers leaving the market (mainly due to mergers and take-overs) and new issuers joining the market. Last year, four new issuers entered the covered bond market, while the number of sustainable covered bond issuers increased by eight. Meanwhile, the total number of countries with outstanding covered bonds stood at 31 at the end of 2024, slightly lower than in previous years, but more than double the number of 20 years ago. The regional breakdown shows that the majority (87.7%) of all issuers are located in Europe, but that this share is gradually declining. Indeed, the share of issuers from Asia/Pacific rose to 8.4% last year, while that of North America remained at around 3% in 2023, with those from South America remaining at 1.2%. Finally, there were 436 covered bond programmes at the end of the year, as some issuers have public sector as well as mortgage covered bond programmes while some are using multiple mortgage backed ones.

> Figures 3-4: Breakdown between public and privately placed covered bonds (left) and Share of covered bond issuers by region (right)



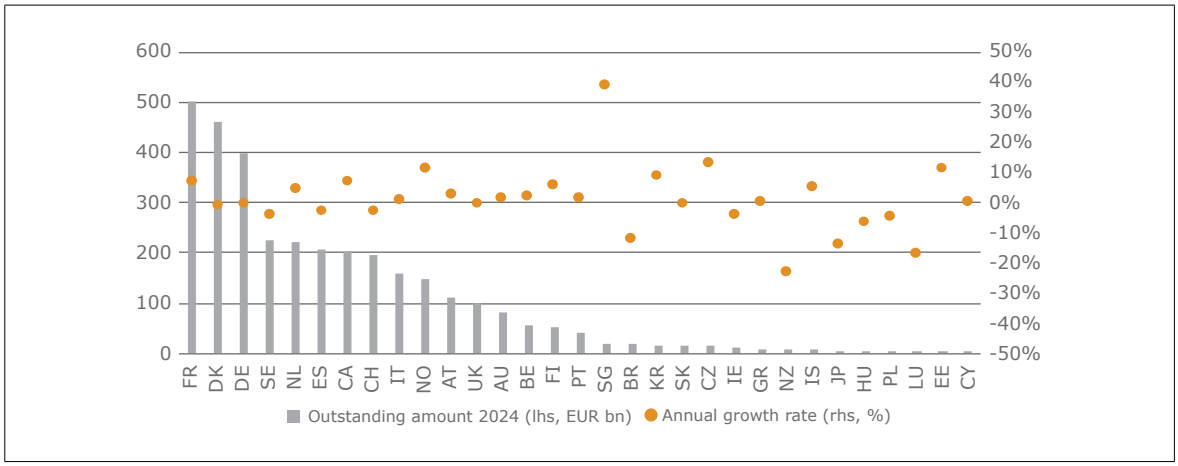
Source: ECBC, ABN AMRO

FRANCE KEEPS THE LEAD

Last year, France took over the league tables from Denmark and at the end of 2024, it continued to lead as country with the largest volume of outstanding covered bonds. The EUR 502bn of outstanding covered bonds, a solid 7% increase compared to 2023, was also the highest volume outstanding it ever had. It is followed by Denmark at the second place (EUR 460bn) and Germany completes the top three (EUR 399bn). After the three largest covered bond jurisdictions, Sweden comes at fourth place with EUR 225bn outstanding at the end of 2024. The high rankings for Denmark and Sweden reflects their large domestic covered bond markets.

Within the top ten, the Netherlands moved up one spot to rank 5, swapping places with Spain. Once one of the largest covered bond markets, Spain has experienced a decline of over 50% since 2012. Meanwhile, Canada (nr. 7) swapped places with Switzerland. Interesting to note is that the rankings from positions 9 to 16 remained unchanged last year. Singapore, however, made a significant leap, securing 17th place and marking the largest upward movement in the rankings.

> Figure 5: Total amount of outstanding covered bonds by country and annual change

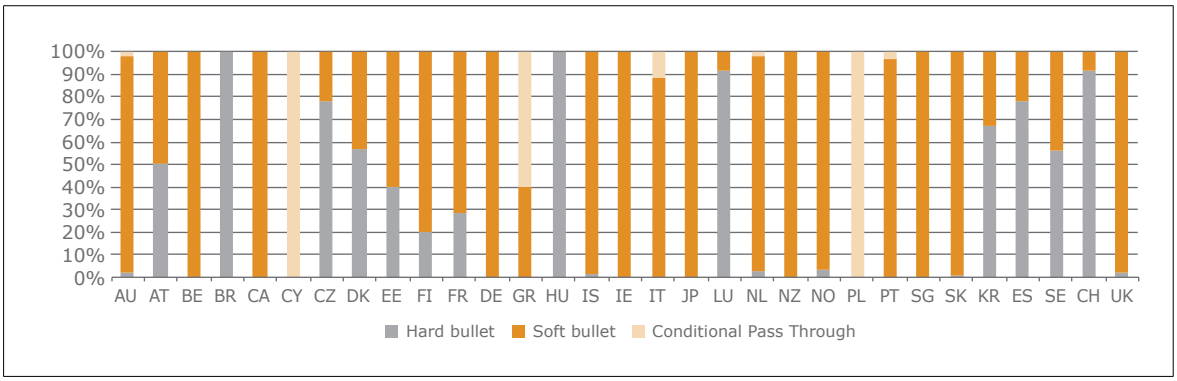


Source: ECBC, ABN AMRO

SOFT BULLET SHARE RISES TO 75%

One of the biggest changes in the statistics in the past few years was the increasing dominance of soft bullet covered bonds, a trend that was further supported by the implementation of the Covered Bond Directive, which has resulted in more and more countries allowing (and issuers using) the structure. In terms of amounts outstanding, soft bullet covered bonds recorded an increase by EUR 130bn in 2024, while hard bullet covered bonds and conditional pass-through covered bonds posted declines of EUR 71bn and EUR 7bn, respectively. Consequently, the share of soft bullets rose to 75% of all outstanding covered bonds (up from 71% in 2023). The share of hard bullet covered bonds dropped to 33% (was 36% in 2023 and even 54% in 2020) and that of conditional pass-through covered bonds to 1.2% (which is half the share in 2020, largely reflecting issuers shifting to soft bullet covered bonds). The graph below shows that in four countries, hard bullet structures are still at least 90% of the outstanding amount of covered bonds, while this is in 14 countries the case for soft bullet covered bonds. As in many countries, maturing hard bullet covered bonds are being replaced with soft bullet covered bonds, its share is likely to rise further in the coming years.

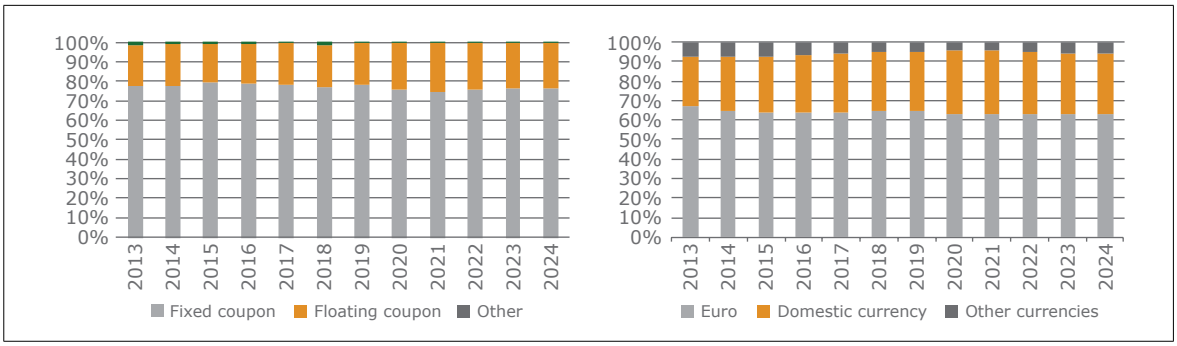
> Figure 6: Outstanding covered bonds by maturity and country (%)



Source: ECBC, ABN AMRO

The breakdown of outstanding covered bonds by coupon type as well as by currency type remained fairly stable in 2024, although the euro gained market share at the expense of the volume of outstanding covered bond in domestic currencies. Overall, euro denominated covered bonds account 63% in the total, followed by domestic currencies (31%), which leaves 6% for outstanding covered bonds denominated in other currencies (so not in euro or in an issuer's domestic currency if not the euro). The latter category rose strongly in previous years but seems now stabilising. Still, it means that issuers use covered bonds to fund themselves in currencies other than euro's nor their domestic currency, implying that the covered bond market has increasingly become a more global market. Meanwhile, fixed rate covered bonds remain dominant (having a share of 76% in the total amount outstanding), which is largely related to the fact that most covered bonds are publicly placed (mostly paying a fixed coupon).

> Figures 7-8: Outstanding covered bonds by coupon type (left) and currency (right), EUR bn



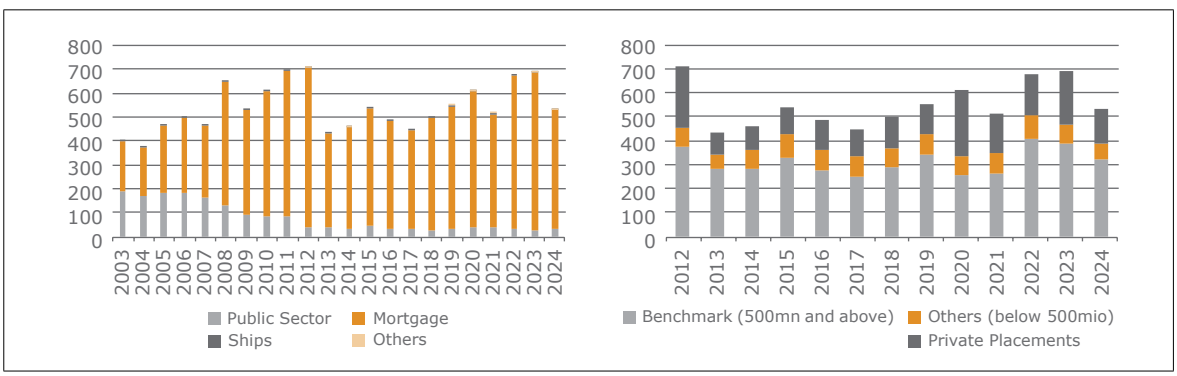
Source: ECBC, ABN AMRO

ISSUANCE STILL ROBUST DESPITE SLOW DOWN

New issuance of covered bonds slowed down in 2024, following two years of very large volumes of new supply. Although issuance dropped by EUR 156bn, it still amounted to EUR 533bn in 2024, which remained relatively large, following a jump in new issuance in 2022. The decline in the volume of new issuance was probably related to the fact that most banks repaid already large amounts of loans that they borrowed at central banks during the pandemic. Furthermore, additional funding needs were likely relatively subdued given only modest growth in mortgage lending, if any, in most covered bond jurisdictions. Still, new supply was more than sufficient to compensate for maturing covered bonds, as the market continued to grow in 2024. Conditions in the covered bond market also remained relatively good last year, despite ongoing geopolitical tensions and pressure stemming from some government bond markets.

A breakdown by types of covered bonds shows that issuance of mortgage covered bonds dropped the most compared to 2023. The EUR 497bn of new issuance in 2024 was EUR 158bn lower than issuance in the prior year, while issuance of public sector covered bonds actually rose slightly, by EUR 3bn to EUR 32bn. Despite this, the share of mortgage covered bonds was still 93% of total issuance, while that of public sector covered bonds was 5%. The share of ship covered bonds and 'other' covered bonds stood at almost 1%.

> Figures 9-10: New issuance of covered bonds by type (left) and size (right), EUR bn



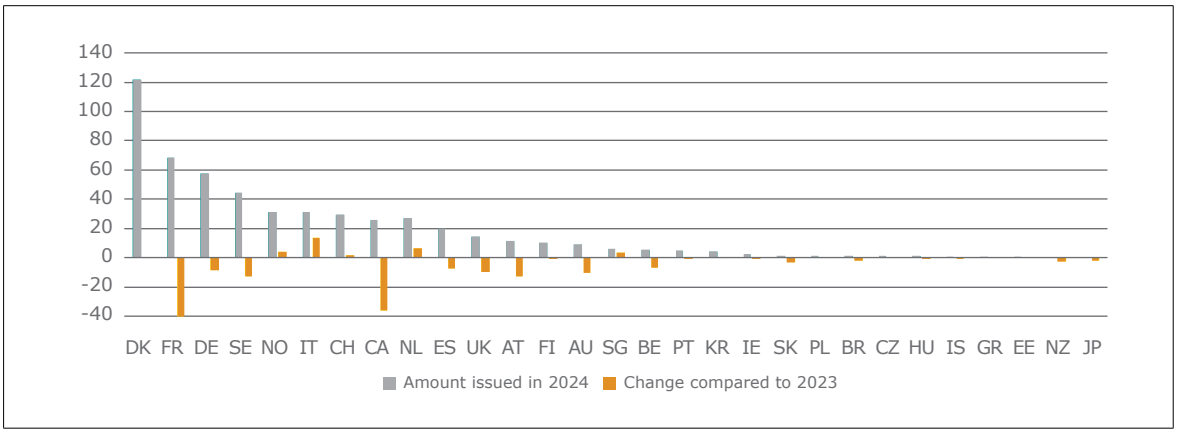
Source: ECBC, ABN AMRO

A breakdown of issuance by public and private placements showed that the large majority of covered bonds is placed with investors in benchmark size. Issuance of publicly placed covered bonds with a minimum size of EUR 500mn was EUR 322bn in 2024, followed by EUR 140bn of privately placed covered bonds. The latter was almost

EUR 80bn below the figure in 2023, which is mainly related to a large amount of retained covered bond issuance in 2023 by a French bank, which was much less active in the retained market in 2024.

A breakdown by country shows that Danish banks led covered bond issuance in 2024, contributing EUR 122 billion in new supply, which represented 22% of the total. It took over again from France, which ranked second with EUR 68 billion, followed closely by Germany at EUR 57 billion. Combined, these three countries accounted for approximately half of the total issuance, highlighting their dominant role in the covered bond market. The Netherlands (EUR 27bn) and Italy(EUR 31bn) (re)entered the top ten, with the latter even climbing seven places. In contrast, Canada dropped some 5 places, as it issued EUR 36bn less in 2024 than in 2023 when Canadian banks were very active in the covered bond market.

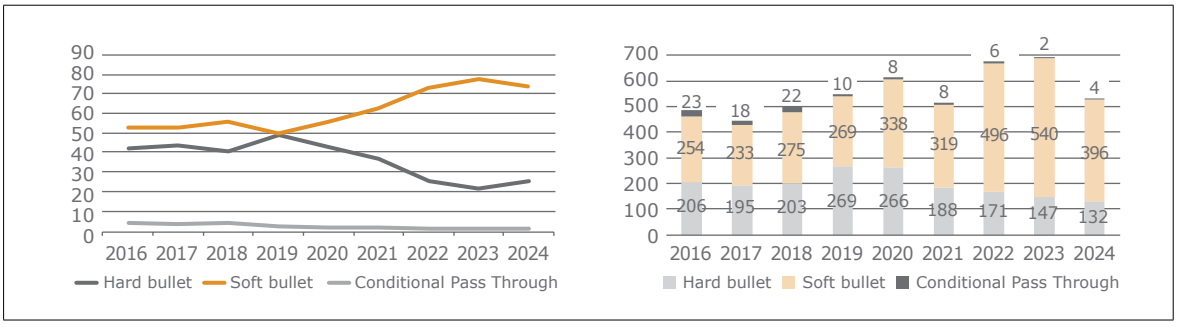
> Figure 11: Covered bond new issuance by country as well as change versus 2023 EUR bn



Source: ECBC, ABN AMRO

New issuance data also confirm the dominance of soft bullet covered bond issuance. They had a share of 74% in total new issuance, which was slightly below the 78% share in 2023 but still well above the 55% in 2020. Meanwhile, the share of hard bullet covered bonds and conditional pass-through covered bonds in total issuance rose slightly in 2024, reaching 25% and 0.8%, respectively. However, given that their share is well below that of soft bullet covered bonds, the dominance of the soft bullet structure is set to continue to increase. Nevertheless, issuance of hard bullet covered bonds in particular will also remain solid given that some large covered bond issuers stick to the structure. Finally, CPT covered bonds are likely to remain , given that issuance has dropped below 1% for some years now.

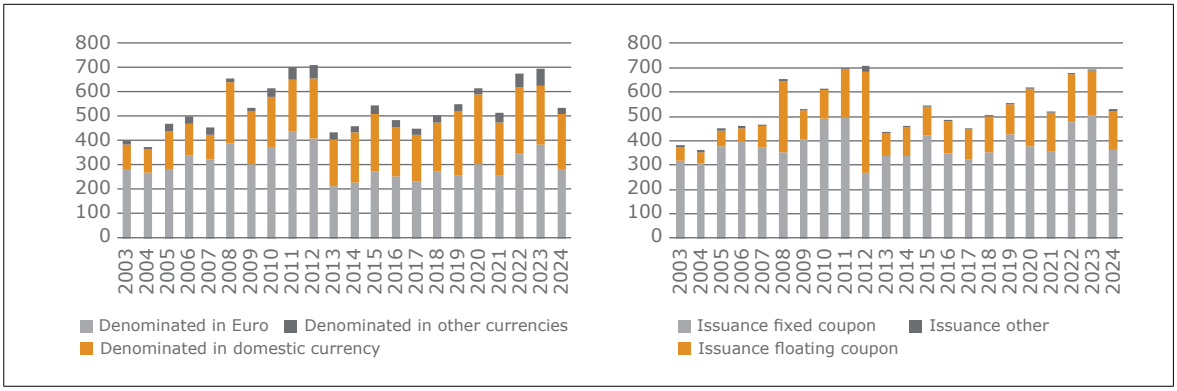
> Figures 12-13: Share of covered bonds issuance by maturity type (left, % in total; right, EUR bn)



Source: ECBC, ABN AMRO

Unsurprisingly, the majority of new issuance in denominated in euro's (54%), followed by the domestic currency (42%) and other currencies not being euro's or the domestic currency (5%). In terms of annual growth, issuance in euro's dropped by 26%, while issuance in domestic currency declined by 7%. Finally, issuance in currencies not being the euro nor the domestic currency dropped by 61%, which mainly reflects the relatively low nominal figures, as its share in total outstanding amount remained roughly stable. Meanwhile, the share of issuance of floating rate covered bonds rose slightly to 29% in 2024, up from 27% in 2023. Still, most covered bonds are issued with a fixed coupon payment, having a 68% share in 2024, which was down from 73% in 2023.

> Figures 14-15: Issuance of covered bonds by currency (left) and coupon type (right), EUR bn



Source: ECBC, ABN AMRO

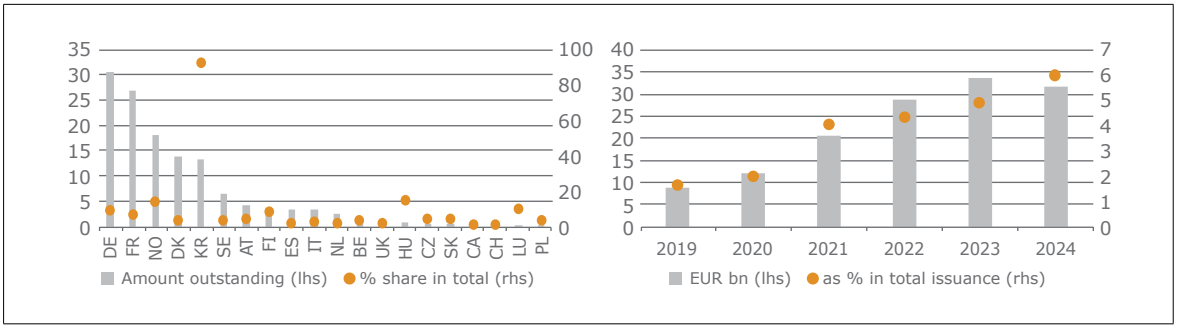
SUSTAINABLE COVERED BONDS INCREASED THEIR FOOTPRINT

The market for sustainable covered bonds, i.e. covered bonds that have a green or social angle, has been steadily growing since the first sustainable covered bond was issued in 2014. As a result of their increasing relevance and the role that they can play in financing part of the energy transition, we decided to start collecting data about sustainable covered bonds in 2019. The volume of outstanding sustainable covered bonds was at the end of 2024 almost seven times larger than in 2019. Indeed, the total amount of sustainable covered bonds increased by EUR 23bn to EUR 131bn in 2024. This translates into an annual growth rate of 22%, which is below the growth rates in previous years, which to a large part is due to an ongoing rise in the denominator. Still, the share of sustainable covered bond in the total volume of outstanding covered bonds is now almost 4%, double that in 2021. Although still relatively small, the market is growing solidly.

In 2024, more issuers started to issue sustainable covered bonds, as the number of new sustainable issuers grew by eight to 82. Overall, issuers from 20 countries were active in the sustainable covered bond market by the end of 2024. In terms of amounts outstanding, Germany, France, and Norway remained the countries with the largest volumes of sustainable covered bonds, while Korea had the highest share of sustainable covered bonds versus the total market size.

Issuance of sustainable covered bonds remained roughly stable in 2024, which can be seen as positive given that total issuance declined. EUR 32bn of sustainable covered bonds were issued in 2024 compared to EUR 34bn in 2023 and EUR 9bn in 2019. The share of sustainable covered bond in total issuance grew to 5.9% last year, up from 4.9% in 2023 and 1.6% in 2019. The trend seems promising and looking forward, we expect this market to continue to grow, as financial markets will likely play an increasingly important role in financing the energy transition.

> Figures 16-17: Breakdown of sustainable covered bonds outstanding (left) and new issuance (right) (EUR bn and % market share)



Source: ECBC, ABN AMRO

DEVELOPMENTS IN 2025: ISSUANCE HELD UP WELL SO FAR

Activity in the covered bond market picked up during Q2 of 2025, following a slow start to the year in terms of new issuance. But favourable new issue conditions and uncertainty about whether this will remain the case supported issuers to come to the market. In the first half of 2025, the covered bond market continued to grew wit issuance exceeding redemptions. However, it remains to be seen what the second half will bring in terms of net supply, although it seems fair to assume that the market will continue to grow modestly. This could result in another record in next year's exercise although it will become increasingly challenging to beat the numbers every year. But more importantly, developments in the covered bond market continue to underline the importance of covered bonds as bank funding tool across the globe.

6.2 STATISTICS

6.2.1 TOTAL

Outstanding (in EUR million)	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Total CB Outstanding										
Public Sector	371,530	335,525	312,458	294,007	282,709	285,328	285,990	276,547	257,695	253,693
Mortgage	2,116,116	2,146,478	2,140,271	2,275,873	2,414,816	2,607,960	2,636,571	2,736,958	2,982,803	3,038,514
Ships	10,379	8,295	7,367	6,524	8,814	7,892	8,198	7,707	7,708	6,970
Others	1,006	1,006	505	505	1,500	7,697	8,822	7,605	10,309	11,886
Total Outstanding	2,499,031	2,491,304	2,460,601	2,576,909	2,707,839	2,908,877	2,939,580	3,028,817	3,258,516	3,311,062
Of which, total Sustainable CB	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	19,674	31,797	54,150	78,383	107,914	131,228
Public Placements										
Benchmark (1bn and above)	1,203,034	1,174,136	1,139,513	1,163,672	1,207,812	1,197,522	1,181,025	1,206,780	1,257,257	1,306,322
Benchmark (500mio to below 1bn)	356,990	385,000	395,844	446,008	491,996	507,218	565,565	616,662	673,986	685,935
Others (below 500Mio)	244,317	231,165	219,442	223,951	216,187	216,347	205,568	228,186	252,210	229,476
Private Placements	694,688	701,003	705,802	743,279	791,844	987,792	987,424	977,189	1,076,464	1,089,329
Total	2,499,030	2,491,304	2,460,601	2,576,911	2,707,839	2,908,879	2,939,580	3,028,817	3,258,518	3,311,061
Denominated in EURO	1,592,989	1,580,921	1,578,519	1,673,721	1,740,274	1,841,579	1,856,110	1,906,038	2,049,804	2,093,311
Denominated in domestic currency	719,529	740,994	744,982	776,216	833,668	941,393	953,435	973,965	1,013,085	1,017,707
Denominated in other currencies	186,513	169,388	137,099	126,973	133,897	125,906	130,035	148,814	195,628	200,051
Total	2,499,031	2,491,304	2,460,600	2,576,911	2,707,839	2,908,878	2,939,580	3,028,816	3,258,517	3,311,060
Hard Bullet	n.a.	1,563,697	1,470,119	1,446,146	1,477,159	1,557,164	1,173,325	1,086,297	1,078,872	1,007,850
Soft Bullet	n.a.	875,176	929,033	1,052,425	1,149,151	1,271,938	1,688,659	1,889,864	2,135,872	2,266,304
Conditional Pass Through	n.a.	52,431	61,448	78,339	81,530	79,776	77,596	52,656	43,772	36,906
Total	2,499,030	2,491,304	2,460,600	2,576,911	2,707,840	2,908,878	2,939,580	3,028,817	3,258,517	3,311,061
Outstanding fixed coupon	1,985,153	1,967,187	1,926,775	1,984,668	2,116,694	2,200,314	2,192,370	2,286,229	2,483,308	2,524,344
Outstanding floating coupon	493,133	496,811	515,098	547,978	572,918	696,787	734,097	725,805	760,312	774,358
Outstanding other	20,745	27,306	18,728	44,266	18,228	11,776	13,113	16,783	14,897	12,377
Total	2,499,031	2,491,304	2,460,601	2,576,913	2,707,840	2,908,877	2,939,580	3,028,816	3,258,517	3,311,079
Number of Programmes	436	427	427	440	447	446	453	447	439	436
Number of Issuers	317	311	318	325	329	329	334	341	335	333
Of which, Sustainable Issuers	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	1	23	30	50	66	77	82

Issuance (in EUR million)	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Total CB Issuance										
Public Sector	43,486	33,554	30,510	23,841	32,179	42,418	37,789	31,335	28,244	31,558
Mortgage	493,214	449,384	412,580	475,057	510,880	562,341	474,118	640,340	655,392	497,125
Ships	3,163	883	2,524	1,193	3,473	1,492	1,794	1,751	2,416	1,848
Others	-	-	-	-	1,500	6,197	880	-	3,380	2,322
Total Issuance	539,863	483,821	445,614	500,092	548,032	612,448	514,580	673,426	689,432	532,853
Of which, Sustainable CB Issuance	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	500	8,754	12,028	20,692	28,784	33,659	31,545
Public Placements										
Benchmark (1bn and above)	217,361	173,759	153,174	171,719	223,217	168,756	162,246	287,010	251,726	206,470
Benchmark (500mio to below 1bn)	110,252	101,371	93,021	114,846	118,650	83,953	103,319	121,396	133,688	115,529
Others (below 500Mio)	96,787	84,188	91,636	79,838	86,251	84,214	84,059	98,182	83,316	67,417
Private Placements	115,465	124,505	107,783	133,689	119,913	275,524	164,955	166,838	220,701	140,185
Total	539,864	483,822	445,614	500,092	547,832	612,448	514,580	673,425	686,432	532,852
Denominated in EURO	275,003	252,062	235,355	271,813	257,712	303,679	255,958	346,018	384,346	285,046
Denominated in domestic currency	232,050	202,150	186,637	201,570	259,621	281,684	218,725	270,176	237,112	221,185
Denominated in other currencies	32,811	29,609	23,622	26,707	30,700	27,084	39,897	57,232	67,973	26,424
Total	539,864	483,821	445,614	500,091	547,832	612,448	514,579	673,426	689,432	532,653
Hard Bullet	174,045	206,369	194,598	202,903	269,200	265,833	187,536	171,086	147,398	132,117
Soft Bullet	59,810	254,023	233,403	275,420	268,613	338,406	319,340	496,262	539,593	396,405
Conditional Pass Through	6,201	23,429	17,613	21,688	10,219	8,209	7,704	6,077	2,440	4,131
Total	539,864	483,821	445,614	500,012	547,832	612,448	514,580	673,425	689,431	532,653
Issuance fixed coupon	421,494	349,268	323,802	353,880	426,544	379,799	359,195	481,877	503,033	364,142
Issuance floating coupon	117,198	133,323	120,841	144,230	121,065	232,338	155,190	187,950	183,773	156,394
Issuance other	1,171	1,231	971	1,980	422	311	194	3,599	2,665	7,032
Total	539,863	483,822	445,614	500,091	547,832	612,448	514,580	673,426	689,472	532,653
Number of New Issuers	14	8	14	16	14	12	10	10	6	4
Number of New Sustainable Issuers	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	1	9	7	21	14	11	8

Note: Please note that a few changes were undertaken in 2013 to the way data is grouped and shown. These changes impact the figures from 2012 onwards. A number of them, especially the size and placement type category changes, are substantial to how data is displayed. Backdating data to fit the new categories and maintaining consistent data history for previous years is a major challenge. Therefore, there is a full dataset going back to 2003 for some countries while there is only data from 2012 going forward for others. Consequently, on the aggregate covered bond market level, only data for the new categorisation for 2012 and 2013 is shown. The old categories together with the historic data can be found on the 2012 edition of the ECBC Fact Book. For further information on these changes, please see the Statistics introduction of the Fact Book.

Please note that the statistics contain "n.a." when data is not available, "-" when the value is zero and "*" indicates that the figure in question does not correspond to the sum of the above sub-components due to the unavailability in some countries of these breakdowns. In addition, please note that totals are calculated using available data only, and that any fluctuations of values in this table over time may be partly due to one or more countries' data becoming available or unavailable from one year to the next. In order to be sure about what causes changes in the totals, please see the individual country statistics. Finally, please also note that any small difference between Totals in the same year is due to rounding.

Source: EMF-ECBC

6.2.2 TOTAL 2024 STATISTICS BY TYPE OF ASSETS

COVERED BONDS OUTSTANDING 2024 in EUR million						
	Public Sector	Mortgage	Ships	Others	Mixed Assets	TOTAL
Australia	-	81,026	-	-	-	81,026
Austria	17,530	95,516	-	-	-	113,046
Belgium	1,711	55,727	-	-	-	57,438
Brazil	590	18,282	-	-	-	18,872
Canada	-	205,219	-	-	-	205,219
Cyprus	-	650	-	-	-	650
Czechia	-	14,953	-	-	-	14,953
Denmark	18,505	435,825	5,401	-	-	459,731
Estonia	-	2,500	-	-	-	2,500
Finland	-	51,353	-	-	-	51,353
France	74,540	376,098	-	-	50,970	501,609
Germany	101,070	296,841	1,569	-	-	399,481
Greece	-	9,840	-	-	-	9,840
Hungary	-	5,125	-	-	-	5,125
Iceland	-	6,697	-	-	-	6,697
Ireland	-	12,652	-	-	-	12,652
Italy	-	160,775	-	-	-	160,775
Japan	-	5,600	-	-	-	5,600
Latvia	-	-	-	-	-	-
Luxembourg	3,294	-	-	300	-	3,594
The Netherlands	-	222,045	-	-	-	222,045
New Zealand	-	8,448	-	-	-	8,448
Norway	1,946	145,619	-	-	-	147,565
Panama	-	-	-	-	-	-
Poland	131	3,991	-	-	-	4,122
Portugal	600	39,531	-	-	-	40,131
Romania	-	-	-	-	-	-
Singapore	-	19,011	-	-	-	19,011
Slovakia	-	14,955	-	-	-	14,955
South Korea	-	15,826	-	-	-	15,826
Spain	8,290	188,626	-	11,586	-	208,502
Sweden	-	224,876	-	-	-	224,876
Switzerland	-	195,400	-	-	-	195,400
Turkey	-	-	-	-	-	-
United Kingdom	-	100,020	-	-	-	100,020
United States	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	**228,207**	**3,013,029**	**6,970**	**11,886**	**50,970**	**3,311,063**

COVERED BONDS ISSUANCE 2024 in EUR million						
	Public Sector	Mortgage	Ships	Others	Mixed Assets	TOTAL
Australia	-	9,153	-	-	-	9,153
Austria	2,913	8,713	-	-	-	11,626
Belgium	-	5,520	-	-	-	5,520
Brazil	1	1,367	-	-	-	1,368
Canada	-	25,699	-	-	-	25,699
Cyprus	-	-	-	-	-	-
Czechia	-	1,250	-	-	-	1,250
Denmark	1,268	119,544	823	-	-	121,635
Estonia	-	250	-	-	-	250
Finland	-	10,350	-	-	-	10,350
France	9,072	53,531	-	-	5,830	68,432
Germany	14,807	41,426	1,025	-	-	57,258
Greece	-	500	-	-	-	500
Hungary	-	1,064	-	-	-	1,064
Iceland	-	997	-	-	-	997
Ireland	-	2,250	-	-	-	2,250
Italy	-	30,977	-	-	-	30,977
Japan	-	-	-	-	-	-
Latvia	-	-	-	-	-	-
Luxembourg	-	-	-	-	-	-
The Netherlands	-	26,840	-	-	-	26,840
New Zealand	-	-	-	-	-	-
Norway	530	30,937	-	-	-	31,467
Panama	-	-	-	-	-	-
Poland	52	1,329	-	-	-	1,381
Portugal	-	5,162	-	-	-	5,162
Romania	-	-	-	-	-	-
Singapore	-	6,361	-	-	-	6,361
Slovakia	-	1,500	-	-	-	1,500
South Korea	-	4,189	-	-	-	4,189
Spain	-	17,500	-	2,322	-	19,822
Sweden	-	44,278	-	-	-	44,278
Switzerland	-	29,299	-	-	-	29,299
Turkey	-	-	-	-	-	-
United Kingdom	-	14,226	-	-	-	14,226
United States	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	**28,643**	**494,211**	**1,848**	**2,322**	**5,830**	**532,853**

Source: EMF-ECBC

6.2.3 SUSTAINABLE COVERED BONDS

SUSTAINABLE COVERED BONDS in 2024 in EUR million		
	Outstanding	Issuance
Australia	-	-
Austria	4,050	750
Belgium	1,500	1,500
Brazil	-	-
Canada	500	500
Cyprus	-	-
Czechia	500	-
Denmark	13,874	5,889
Estonia	-	-
Finland	3,750	-
France	26,770	4,500
Germany	30,487	7,131
Greece	-	-
Hungary	663	132
Iceland	-	-
Ireland	-	-
Italy	3,250	1,750
Japan	-	-
Latvia	-	-
Luxembourg	300	-
The Netherlands	2,500	-
New Zealand	-	-
Norway	18,073	3,467
Panama	-	-
Poland	117	-
Portugal	-	-
Romania	-	-
Singapore	-	-
Slovakia	500	-
South Korea	13,167	3,289
Spain	3,300	-
Sweden	6,368	2,531
Switzerland	457	106
Turkey	-	-
United Kingdom	1,103	-
United States	-	-
Total	**131,228**	**31,545**

Source: EMF-ECBC

6.2.4 AUSTRALIA

Outstanding (in EUR million)	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Total Covered Bonds Outstanding										
Public Sector	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Mortgage	69,312	70,796	64,001	65,855	64,630	62,592	57,864	70,180	79,777	81,026
Ships	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Others	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Outstanding	69,312	70,796	64,001	65,855	64,630	62,592	57,864	70,180	79,777	81,026
Of which, total Sustainable CB	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	-	-	-	-	-
Public Placement										
Benchmark (1bn and above)	27,005	46,350	38,911	41,307	35,795	36,841	32,995	42,771	48,304	52,219
Benchmark (500mio - below 1bn)	11,151	6,887	8,587	7,341	12,023	9,082	9,155	10,315	10,700	13,600
Others (below 500Mio)	3,756	303	-	599	2,229	370	590	1,335	2,982	4,605
Private Placement	27,400	17,256	16,504	16,609	14,584	16,299	15,124	15,760	17,790	10,602
Total	69,312	70,796	64,001	65,855	64,630	62,592	57,864	70,180	79,777	81,026
Denominated in EURO	26,119	28,814	31,199	35,935	37,710	35,711	34,110	38,151	41,143	45,754
Denominated in domestic currency	10,728	10,146	6,344	7,712	7,650	8,750	7,639	9,988	8,565	8,094
Denominated in other currencies	32,465	31,836	26,459	22,208	19,270	18,131	16,115	22,042	30,069	27,177
Total	69,312	70,796	64,001	65,855	64,630	62,592	57,864	70,180	79,777	81,025
Hard Bullet	30,849	17,544	13,032	7,678	3,139	4,334	7,622	1,308	1,289	1,595
Soft Bullet	38,464	53,252	50,469	57,678	60,491	56,786	48,770	67,173	76,251	77,847
Conditional Pass Through	-	-	500	500	1,000	1,472	1,472	1,699	2,237	1,584
Total	69,312	70,796	64,001	65,855	64,630	62,592	57,864	70,180	79,777	81,026
Outstanding fixed coupon	61,902	63,995	58,777	60,836	59,142	53,915	50,250	59,652	65,854	63,704
Outstanding floating coupon	7,410	6,801	5,224	5,019	5,488	8,678	7,615	10,529	13,922	17,322
Outstanding other	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	69,312	70,796	64,001	65,855	64,630	62,592	57,864	70,181	79,777	81,026
Number of Programmes	5	6	7	8	8	8	8	9	9	10
Number of Issuers	5	6	7	8	8	8	8	9	9	9
Of which, Sustainable Issuers	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.

Issuance (in EUR million)	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Total Covered Bonds Issuance										
Public Sector	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Mortgage	10,004	11,382	7,351	11,075	9,511	4,594	6,825	24,509	19,442	9,153
Ships	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Others	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Issuance	10,004	11,382	7,351	11,075	9,511	4,594	6,825	24,509	19,442	9,153
Of which, Sustainable CB Issuance	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	-
Public Placement										
Benchmark (1bn and above)	3,250	5,392	2,814	7,155	6,431	3,650	4,045	16,950	15,116	6,964
Benchmark (500mio - below 1bn)	2,790	3,026	2,144	500	1,554	472	1,826	2,827	500	1,315
Others (below 500Mio)	1,090	-	-	-	154	-	184	330	324	328
Private Placement	2,873	2,965	2,393	3,420	1,372	472	770	4,401	3,501	546
Total	10,004	11,382	7,351	11,075	9,511	4,594	6,825	24,508	19,442	9,152
Denominated in EURO	4,705	4,445	4,885	5,736	4,955	-	3,980	11,585	6,786	5,311
Denominated in domestic currency	34	2,227	1,473	2,004	524	944	640	3,696	1,629	1,043
Denominated in other currencies	5,265	4,710	993	3,335	4,032	3,650	2,205	9,228	11,026	2,799
Total	10,004	11,382	7,351	11,075	9,511	4,594	6,825	24,509	19,442	9,153
Hard Bullet	2,250	100	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Soft Bullet	7,754	11,282	6,851	10,995	9,011	4,122	6,825	23,781	18,888	9,153
Conditional Pass Through	-	-	500	-	500	472	-	727	553	-
Total	10,004	11,382	7,351	10,995	9,511	4,594	6,825	24,508	19,442	9,153
Issuance fixed coupon	9,245	9,453	6,255	9,466	8,518	1,426	5,789	19,702	14,699	5,724
Issuance floating coupon	759	1,929	1,096	1,609	993	3,168	1,036	4,806	4,743	3,429
Issuance other	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	10,004	11,382	7,351	11,075	9,511	4,594	6,825	24,509	19,442	9,153
Number of New Issuers	-	1	1	1	-	-	-	1	-	-
Number of New Sustainable Issuers	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.

Source: Westpac Institutional Bank, ECBC

6.2.5 AUSTRIA

Outstanding (EUR million)	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Total Covered Bonds Outstanding										
Public Sector	17,620	17,155	17,590	16,926	16,574	18,348	18,725	26,772	15,616	17,530
Mortgage	27,345	30,894	31,915	42,001	49,124	59,601	71,142	74,522	94,274	95,516
Ships	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Others	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	-	-
Total Outstanding	44,965	48,049	49,505	58,928	65,699	77,949	89,866	101,299	109,891	113,045
Of which, total Sustainable CB	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	300	300	1,500	2,000	3,300	4,050
Public Placement										
Benchmark (1bn and above)	4,087	3,000	3,000	4,000	4,000	4,000	3,000	2,250	6,250	8,250
Benchmark (500mio - below 1bn)	14,550	16,800	20,050	23,100	27,192	29,500	30,500	41,250	49,100	51,600
Others (below 500Mio)	600	600	1,003	1,761	2,695	2,280	3,547	6,280	10,203	11,111
Private Placement	25,728	27,649	25,452	30,067	31,812	42,169	52,819	51,518	44,337	42,086
Total	44,965	48,049	49,505	58,928	65,699	77,950	89,866	101,299	109,891	113,045
Denominated in EURO	43,065	46,119	48,444	57,742	64,766	77,255	89,139	100,601	108,512	111,714
Denominated in domestic currency	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Denominated in other currencies	1,900	1,930	1,061	1,185	932	695	726	698	1,379	1,332
Total	44,965	48,049	49,505	58,928	65,699	77,950	89,866	101,299	109,891	113,045
Hard Bullet	44,715	47,769	49,315	55,848	59,074	63,991	64,420	64,315	60,475	57,296
Soft Bullet	-	-	-	2,800	6,161	13,654	25,150	36,984	49,416	55,749
Conditional Pass Through	250	280	190	280	463	305	295	-	-	-
Total	44,965	48,049	49,505	58,928	65,699	77,949	89,866	101,299	109,891	113,045
Outstanding fixed coupon	31,611	47,769	33,794	40,256	48,777	50,348	51,993	62,991	76,289	82,896
Outstanding floating coupon	12,720	-	15,200	17,169	16,708	27,437	37,644	36,351	33,420	29,968
Outstanding other	634	280	511	1,503	214	164	229	1,957	181	181
Total	44,965	48,049	49,505	58,928	65,699	77,949	89,866	101,299	109,891	113,045
Number of Programmes	48	48	48	49	46	46	43	39	37	37
Number of Issuers	27	26	26	27	27	26	26	23	22	26
Of which, Sustainable Issuers	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	1	1	3	5	6	5

Issuance (EUR million)	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Total Covered Bonds Issuance										
Public Sector	3,177	2,355	3,115	2,040	1,833	6,515	2,371	1,517	2,347	2,913
Mortgage	5,457	7,181	3,165	11,007	11,228	20,587	15,553	21,646	21,675	8,713
Ships	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Others	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Issuance	8,634	9,536	6,280	13,047	13,061	27,102	17,924	23,163	24,022	11,626
Of which, Sustainable CB Issuance	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	1,250	500	1,300	750
Public Placement										
Benchmark (1bn and above)	-	-	-	1,000	-	-	-	1,250	3,000	2,000
Benchmark (500mio - below 1bn)	4,000	2,750	2,750	5,000	7,000	5,000	4,000	12,750	10,600	4,500
Others (below 500Mio)	327	390	550	605	315	280	1,386	2,802	3,050	1,781
Private Placement	4,308	6,396	2,980	6,441	5,746	21,822	12,538	6,361	7,372	3,345
Total	8,635	9,536	6,280	13,047	13,061	27,102	17,924	23,163	24,022	11,626
Denominated in EURO	8,635	9,536	6,280	12,935	13,061	27,102	17,924	23,011	23,278	11,626
Denominated in domestic currency	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	118	-
Denominated in other currencies	-	-	-	112	-	-	-	152	627	-
Total	8,635	9,536	6,280	13,047	13,061	27,102	17,924	23,163	24,022	11,626
Hard Bullet	8,385	9,506	6,280	10,207	9,911	17,796	13,590	7,396	2,912	2,053
Soft Bullet	-	-	-	2,800	3,110	9,141	4,334	15,768	21,111	9,573
Conditional Pass Through	250	30	-	40	40	165	-	-	-	-
Total	8,635	9,536	6,280	13,047	13,061	27,102	17,924	23,163	24,022	11,626
Issuance fixed coupon	5,317	9,506	4,164	8,481	8,279	11,834	6,984	16,922	13,707	9,182
Issuance floating coupon	3,304	-	2,083	4,264	4,782	15,268	10,940	3,976	8,295	2,444
Issuance other	13	30	34	301	-	-	-	2,266	2,020	-
Total	8,634	9,536	6,280	13,047	13,061	27,102	17,924	23,163	24,022	11,626
Number of New Issuers	1	-	-	1	1	-	3	-	-	-
Number of New Sustainable Issuers	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	1	3	1	1	-

6.2.6 BELGIUM

Outstanding (in EUR million)	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Total Covered Bonds Outstanding										
Public Sector	1,800	2,300	2,300	2,461	2,461	2,461	1,211	1,211	1,711	1,711
Mortgage	15,105	16,700	15,250	20,092	23,637	41,062	41,462	46,162	54,707	55,727
Ships	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Others	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Outstanding	16,905	19,000	17,550	22,553	26,098	43,523	42,673	47,373	56,418	57,438
Of which, total Sustainable CB	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	1,500
Public Placement										
Benchmark (1bn and above)	9,750	11,000	8,500	9,750	9,750	11,000	7,750	6,500	11,750	12,750
Benchmark (500mio - below 1bn)	5,175	5,925	6,925	10,175	8,825	8,500	9,500	10,500	9,750	10,950
Others (below 500Mio)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Private Placement	1,980	2,075	2,125	2,628	7,523	24,023	25,423	30,373	34,918	33,738
Total	16,905	19,000	17,550	22,553	26,098	43,523	42,673	47,373	56,418	57,438
Denominated in EURO	16,905	19,000	17,550	22,553	26,098	43,523	42,673	47,373	56,418	57,438
Denominated in domestic currency	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Denominated in other currencies	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	16,905	19,000	17,550	22,553	26,098	43,523	42,673	47,373	56,418	57,438
Hard Bullet	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Soft Bullet	16,905	19,000	17,550	22,553	26,098	43,523	42,673	47,373	56,418	57,438
Conditional Pass Through	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	16,905	19,000	17,550	22,553	26,098	43,523	42,673	47,373	56,418	57,438
Outstanding fixed coupon	16,765	18,860	17,410	22,413	25,998	43,423	42,673	47,373	56,418	57,456
Outstanding floating coupon	140	140	140	140	100	100	-	-	-	-
Outstanding other	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	16,905	19,000	17,550	22,553	26,098	43,523	42,673	47,373	56,418	57,456
Number of Programmes	4	5	5	5	6	6	7	7	7	7
Number of Issuers	3	4	4	4	4	4	5	5	5	5
Of which, Sustainable Issuers	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	-

Issuance (in EUR million)	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Total Covered Bonds Issuance										
Public Sector	50	500	-	161	500	-	-	-	500	-
Mortgage	4,530	2,345	1,050	5,842	5,000	19,250	2,500	7,700	11,295	5,520
Ships	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Others	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Issuance	4,580	2,845	1,050	6,003	5,500	19,250	2,500	7,700	11,795	5,520
Of which, Sustainable CB Issuance	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	1,500
Public Placement										
Benchmark (1bn and above)	4,000	1,250	-	2,250	-	2,250	-	1,000	5,250	1,000
Benchmark (500mio - below 1bn)	-	1,500	1,000	3,250	500	500	1,000	1,500	1,750	2,200
Others (below 500Mio)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Private Placement	580	95	50	503	5,000	16,500	1,500	5,200	4,795	2,320
Total	4,580	2,845	1,050	6,003	5,500	19,250	2,500	7,700	11,795	5,520
Denominated in EURO	4,580	2,845	1,050	6,003	5,500	19,250	2,500	7,700	11,795	5,520
Denominated in domestic currency	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Denominated in other currencies	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	4,580	2,845	1,050	6,003	5,500	19,250	2,500	7,700	11,795	5,520
Hard Bullet	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Soft Bullet	4,580	2,845	1,050	6,003	5,500	19,250	2,500	7,700	11,795	5,520
Conditional Pass Through	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	4,580	2,845	1,050	6,003	5,500	19,250	2,500	7,700	11,795	5,520
Issuance fixed coupon	4,580	2,845	1,050	6,003	5,500	19,250	2,500	7,700	11,795	5,520
Issuance floating coupon	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Issuance other	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	4,580	2,845	1,050	6,003	5,500	19,250	2,500	7,700	11,795	5,520
Number of New Issuers	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
Number of New Sustainable Issuers	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	-

6.2.7 BRAZIL

Outstanding (in EUR million)	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Total Covered Bonds Outstanding										
Public Sector	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	-	-	-	-	-	630	590
Mortgage	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	454	2,487	3,199	7,609	16,133	20,787	18,282
Ships	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Others	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Outstanding	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	454	2,487	3,199	7,609	16,133	21,417	18,872
Of which, total Sustainable CB	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	-	n.a.
Public Placement										
Benchmark (1bn and above)	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Benchmark (500mio - below 1bn)	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Others (below 500Mio)	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	-	-	-	-	-	-	72
Private Placement	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	454	2,487	3,199	7,609	16,133	21,417	18,800
Total	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	454	2,487	3,199	7,609	16,133	21,417	18,872
Denominated in EURO	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Denominated in domestic currency	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	454	2,487	3,199	7,609	16,133	21,417	18,872
Denominated in other currencies	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	454	2,487	3,199	7,609	16,133	21,417	18,872
Hard Bullet	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	454	2,487	3,199	7,609	16,133	21,417	18,872
Soft Bullet	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Conditional Pass Through	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	454	2,487	3,199	7,609	16,133	21,417	18,872
Outstanding fixed coupon	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	-	-	-	-	3,877	4,211	2,954
Outstanding floating coupon	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	454	2,487	3,199	7,609	9,902	14,419	13,710
Outstanding other	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	-	-	-	-	2,354	2,786	2,208
Total	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	454	2,487	3,199	7,609	16,133	21,417	18,872
Number of Programmes	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	4	7	7	7	6	6	7
Number of Issuers	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	4	3	3	3	3	3	4
Of which, Sustainable Issuers	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.

Issuance (in EUR million)	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Total Covered Bonds Issuance										
Public Sector	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	-	-	-	-	-	630	0.3
Mortgage	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	454	2,040	2,473	4,366	8,309	2,514	1,367
Ships	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Others	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Issuance	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	454	2,040	2,473	4,366	8,309	3,144	1,368
Of which, Sustainable CB Issuance	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Public Placement										-
Benchmark (1bn and above)	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Benchmark (500mio - below 1bn)	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Others (below 500Mio)	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Private Placement	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	454	2,040	2,473	4,366	8,309	3,144	1,368
Total	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	454	2,040	2,473	4,366	8,309	3,144	1,368
Denominated in EURO	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Denominated in domestic currency	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	454	2,040	2,473	4,366	8,309	3,144	1,368
Denominated in other currencies	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	454	2,040	2,473	4,366	8,309	3,144	1,368
Hard Bullet	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	454	2,040	2,473	4,366	8,309	3,144	1,368
Soft Bullet	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Conditional Pass Through	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	454	2,040	2,473	4,366	8,309	3,144	1,368
Issuance fixed coupon	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	-	-	-	-	1,277	128	351
Issuance floating coupon	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	454	2,040	2,473	4,366	5,798	2,920	860
Issuance other	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	-	-	-	-	1,234	95	157
Total	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	454	2,040	2,473	4,366	8,309	3,144	1,368
Number of New Issuers	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	4	-	-	-	-	-	-
Number of New Sustainable Issuers	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.

6.2.8 CANADA

Outstanding (in EUR million)	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Total Covered Bonds Outstanding										
Public Sector	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Mortgage	85,759	100,830	93,095	107,496	113,016	168,195	138,436	168,393	192,353	205,903
Ships	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Others	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Total Outstanding	85,759	100,830	93,095	107,496	113,016	168,195	138,436	168,393	192,353	205,903
Of which, total Sustainable CB	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a.	n.a.	500
Public Placement										
Benchmark (1bn and above)	76,749	84,273	77,075	88,943	93,697	86,559	93,899	123,968	135,846	141,091
Benchmark (500mio - below 1bn)	7,538	6,328	6,478	6,307	7,182	8,179	10,595	13,490	17,053	9,212
Others (below 500Mio)	571	1,728	1,183	1,899	553	625	931	1,931	6,493	3,624
Private Placement	901	8,500	8,360	10,347	11,584	72,832	33,011	29,004	32,960	51,977
Total	85,759	100,830	93,095	107,496	113,016	168,195	138,436	168,393	192,353	205,903
Denominated in EURO	34,401	47,262	50,012	56,662	57,662	57,282	62,518	86,636	89,705	89,930
Denominated in domestic currency	2,183	5,498	5,187	6,376	6,302	63,487	25,881	11,468	4,412	6,569
Denominated in other currencies	49,175	48,070	37,897	44,458	49,051	47,425	50,038	70,289	98,236	109,404
Total	85,759	100,830	93,095	107,496	113,016	168,195	138,436	168,393	192,353	205,903
Hard Bullet	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Soft Bullet	85,759	100,830	93,095	107,496	113,016	168,195	138,436	168,393	192,353	205,903
Conditional Pass Through	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	85,759	100,830	93,095	107,496	113,016	168,195	138,436	168,393	192,353	205,903
Outstanding fixed coupon	76,427	89,939	82,362	93,478	96,936	96,125	89,064	125,412	134,068	137,594
Outstanding floating coupon	9,332	10,891	10,734	14,019	16,080	72,069	49,372	42,981	58,285	68,308
Outstanding other	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	85,759	100,830	93,095	107,497	113,016	168,195	138,436	168,393	192,353	205,903
Number of Programmes	13	12	8	8	8	8	10	10	10	9
Number of Issuers	7	7	7	8	8	8	10	10	10	9
Of which, Sustainable Issuers	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a.	n.a.	1

Issuance (in EUR million)	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Total Covered Bonds Issuance										
Public Sector	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Mortgage	29,287	28,148	12,441	24,384	23,647	79,834	31,820	70,170	61,479	28,449
Ships	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Others	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Issuance	29,287	28,148	12,441	24,384	23,647	79,834	31,820	70,170	61,479	28,449
Of which, Sustainable CB Issuance	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a.	n.a.	500
Public Placement										
Benchmark (1bn and above)	18,246	20,569	11,167	18,390	19,560	14,389	26,739	53,289	33,283	19,783
Benchmark (500mio - below 1bn)	2,051	2,850	648	3,352	2,000	1,845	3,162	2,696	5,282	2,465
Others (below 500Mio)	2,515	701	-	222	-	-	350	971	1,945	500
Private Placement	6,475	4,028	625	2,420	2,088	63,600	1,569	13,213	20,970	5,701
Total	29,287	28,148	12,441	24,384	23,647	79,834	31,820	70,170	61,479	28,449
Denominated in EURO	15,151	12,861	4,000	12,750	11,750	10,370	12,785	32,118	19,769	16,825
Denominated in domestic currency	1,455	3,172	-	1,762	856	59,010	174	1,427	2,834	2,275
Denominated in other currencies	12,681	12,115	8,441	9,871	11,041	10,454	18,861	36,625	38,876	9,350
Total	29,287	28,148	12,441	24,383	23,647	79,834	31,820	70,170	61,479	28,449
Hard Bullet	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Soft Bullet	29,287	28,148	12,441	24,384	23,647	79,834	31,820	70,170	61,479	28,449
Conditional Pass Through	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	29,287	28,148	12,441	24,384	23,647	79,834	31,820	70,170	61,479	28,449
Issuance fixed coupon	24,739	25,596	9,815	18,808	19,227	20,105	20,684	55,839	31,172	17,848
Issuance floating coupon	4,548	2,552	2,626	5,575	4,420	59,729	11,136	14,331	30,307	10,601
Issuance other	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	29,287	28,148	12,441	24,383	23,647	79,834	31,820	70,170	61,479	28,449
Number of New Issuers	-	-	-	1	-	-	2	-	-	-
Number of New Sustainable Issuers	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	1

Note: Outstanding and issuance amounts include registered (legislative) and non-registered covered bonds.

6.2.9 CYPRUS

Outstanding (in EUR million)	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Total Covered Bonds Outstanding										
Public Sector	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Mortgage	650	650	650	650	650	650	650	650	650	650
Ships	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Others	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Outstanding	650	650	650	650	650	650	650	650	650	650
Of which, total Sustainable CB	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Public Placement										
Benchmark (1bn and above)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Benchmark (500mio - below 1bn)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Others (below 500Mio)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Private Placement	650	650	650	650	650	650	650	650	650	650
Total	650	650	650	650	650	650	650	650	650	650
Denominated in EURO	650	650	650	650	650	650	650	650	650	650
Denominated in domestic currency	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Denominated in other currencies	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	650	650	650	650	650	650	650	650	650	650
Hard Bullet	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Soft Bullet	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Conditional Pass Through	650	650	650	650	650	650	650	650	650	650
Total	650	650	650	650	650	650	650	650	650	650
Outstanding fixed coupon	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Outstanding floating coupon	650	650	650	650	650	650	650	650	650	650
Outstanding other	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	650	650	650	650	650	650	650	650	650	650
Number of Programmes	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Number of Issuers	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Of which, Sustainable Issuers	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.

Issuance (in EUR million)	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Total Covered Bonds Issuance										
Public Sector	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Mortgage	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Ships	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Others	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Issuance	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Of which, Sustainable CB Issuance	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	-	-
Public Placement										
Benchmark (1bn and above)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Benchmark (500mio - below 1bn)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Others (below 500Mio)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Private Placement	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Denominated in EURO	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Denominated in domestic currency	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Denominated in other currencies	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Hard Bullet	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Soft Bullet	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Conditional Pass Through	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Issuance fixed coupon	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Issuance floating coupon	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Issuance other	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Number of New Issuers	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Number of New Sustainable Issuers	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	-	-

6.2.10 CZECHIA

Outstanding (in EUR million)	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Total Covered Bonds Outstanding										
Public Sector	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Mortgage	11,656	13,060	15,522	13,757	14,168	18,185	22,548	17,908	13,213	14,953
Ships	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Others	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Outstanding	11,656	13,060	15,522	13,757	14,168	18,185	22,548	17,908	13,213	14,953
Of which, total Sustainable CB	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	500	500
Public Placement										
Benchmark (1bn and above)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Benchmark (500mio - below 1bn)	-	700	-	-	-	-	-	1,004	2,000	2,500
Others (below 500Mio)	6,156	5,856	3,107	4,861	2,912	-	-	1,325	-	-
Private Placement	5,500	6,504	12,415	8,896	11,255	18,185	22,548	15,579	11,213	12,453
Total	11,656	13,060	15,522	13,757	14,168	18,185	22,548	17,908	13,213	14,953
Denominated in EURO	1,187	1,702	3,688	1,346	1,299	5,497	814	1,298	8,328	8,273
Denominated in domestic currency	10,469	11,358	11,834	12,411	12,868	12,688	21,734	16,610	4,885	6,680
Denominated in other currencies	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	11,656	13,060	15,522	13,757	14,168	18,185	22,548	17,908	13,213	14,953
Hard Bullet	11,656	13,060	15,522	13,757	14,168	18,185	22,548	17,408	11,213	11,703
Soft Bullet	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	500	2,000	3,250
Conditional Pass Through	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	11,656	13,060	15,522	13,757	14,168	18,185	22,548	17,908	13,213	14,953
Outstanding fixed coupon	6,101	7,386	10,591	9,334	9,938	10,413	10,763	11,766	5,360	5,860
Outstanding floating coupon	5,462	5,571	4,838	4,407	4,230	7,772	11,785	6,142	7,853	9,093
Outstanding other	93	103	93	16	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	11,656	13,060	15,522	13,758	14,168	18,185	22,548	17,908	13,213	14,953
Number of Programmes	8	7	8	8	8	7	7	7	6	6
Number of Issuers	8	7	8	8	8	7	7	6	5	5
Of which, Sustainable Issuers	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1

Issuance (in EUR million)	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Total Covered Bonds Issuance										
Public Sector	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Mortgage	2,729	1,693	4,074	2,573	1,516	6,412	10,415	4,435	1,000	1,250
Ships	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Others	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Issuance	2,729	1,693	4,074	2,573	1,516	6,412	10,415	4,435	1,000	1,250
Of which, Sustainable CB Issuance	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	500	-
Public Placement										
Benchmark (1bn and above)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Benchmark (500mio - below 1bn)	-	-	-	-	-	-	500	500	1,000	500
Others (below 500Mio)	1,138	387	376	187	-	-	-	-	-	-
Private Placement	1,591	1,306	3,698	2,386	1,516	6,412	9,915	3,935	-	750
Total	2,729	1,693	4,074	2,573	1,516	6,412	10,415	4,435	1,000	1,250
Denominated in EURO	623	200	2,318	500	7	4,501	500	500	1,000	1,250
Denominated in domestic currency	2,106	1,493	1,756	2,073	1,509	1,911	9,915	3,935	-	-
Denominated in other currencies	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	2,729	1,693	4,074	2,573	1,516	6,412	10,415	4,435	1,000	1,250
Hard Bullet	2,729	1,693	4,074	2,573	1,516	6,412	10,415	3,935	-	-
Soft Bullet	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	500	1,000	1,250
Conditional Pass Through	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	2,729	1,693	4,074	2,573	1,516	6,412	10,415	4,435	1,000	1,250
Issuance fixed coupon	2,090	1,551	4,035	2,442	1,478	2,354	8,546	1,709	1,000	500
Issuance floating coupon	639	142	39	131	38	4,058	1,869	2,726	-	750
Issuance other	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	2,729	1,693	4,074	2,573	1,516	6,412	10,415	4,435	1,000	1,250
Number of New Issuers	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Number of New Sustainable Issuers	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	n.a.

6.2.11 DENMARK

Outstanding (in EUR million)	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Total Covered Bonds Outstanding										
Public Sector	-	-	-	4,375	10,864	12,872	14,778	17,104	18,075	18,505
Mortgage	377,903	389,200	393,447	396,246	402,432	419,031	433,812	440,428	441,008	435,825
Ships	5,221	4,744	4,947	5,370	6,090	5,680	6,110	5,775	6,259	5,401
Others	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Outstanding	383,124	393,944	398,394	405,991	419,386	437,583	454,700	463,307	465,342	459,731
Of which, total Sustainable CB	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	1,117	3,062	7,157	9,926	13,102	13,874
Public Placement										
Benchmark (1bn and above)	216,822	241,463	270,245	282,575	307,847	311,130	326,368	315,278	317,564	320,347
Benchmark (500mio - below 1bn)	76,880	78,434	57,504	54,836	45,686	50,142	61,211	73,752	69,430	65,933
Others (below 500Mio)	77,125	69,261	66,636	64,449	63,109	69,029	65,479	72,635	77,026	72,203
Private Placement	12,297	4,786	4,009	4,131	2,743	7,282	1,642	1,642	1,323	1,248
Total	383,124	393,944	398,394	405,991	419,386	437,583	454,700	463,307	465,342	459,731
Denominated in EURO	36,934	38,481	30,805	27,290	24,439	29,009	26,589	26,118	23,790	18,094
Denominated in domestic currency	337,631	346,368	357,977	369,111	384,498	397,571	414,787	423,181	424,908	430,694
Denominated in other currencies	8,559	9,095	9,612	9,590	10,449	11,004	13,324	14,008	16,644	10,943
Total	383,124	393,944	398,394	405,991	419,386	437,583	454,700	463,307	465,342	459,731
Hard Bullet	n.a.	211,224	183,166	176,393	195,024	231,069	232,266	211,311	253,671	261,605
Soft Bullet	n.a.	182,720	215,228	229,598	224,362	206,515	222,434	251,996	211,671	198,126
Conditional Pass Through	n.a.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	383,124	393,944	398,394	405,991	419,386	437,583	454,700	463,307	465,342	459,731
Outstanding fixed coupon	285,004	287,779	293,255	298,456	314,483	333,477	349,488	333,147	326,296	326,615
Outstanding floating coupon	98,120	105,165	105,139	107,535	104,903	104,107	105,211	130,159	139,045	133,116
Outstanding other	-	1,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	383,124	393,944	398,394	405,991	419,386	437,583	454,700	463,307	465,342	459,731
Number of Programmes	23	23	23	27	28	28	29	21	20	20
Number of Issuers	9	9	9	9	9	7	7	7	7	7
Of which, Sustainable Issuers	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	2	3	4	5	5	5

Issuance (in EUR million)	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Total Covered Bonds Issuance										
Public Sector	-	-	-	4,382	6,377	2,469	2,428	2,992	1,588	1,268
Mortgage	163,050	130,329	123,205	113,441	165,208	124,013	121,724	149,201	117,638	119,544
Ships	955	883	2,524	1,183	1,713	1,042	1,194	1,001	2,016	823
Others	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Issuance	164,005	131,212	125,729	119,006	173,298	127,524	125,346	153,194	121,242	121,635
Of which, Sustainable CB Issuance	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	2,334	4,116	5,876	4,340	5,889
Public Placement										
Benchmark (1bn and above)	74,213	48,361	48,179	42,693	86,317	46,280	44,237	62,170	52,787	62,035
Benchmark (500mio - below 1bn)	33,205	34,322	28,429	30,205	39,856	31,946	32,466	34,495	26,100	20,569
Others (below 500Mio)	54,531	48,110	49,121	45,497	46,125	43,798	48,643	56,529	42,355	39,031
Private Placement	2,056	419	-	611	1,000	5,500	-	-	-	-
Total	164,005	131,212	125,729	119,006	173,298	127,524	125,346	153,194	121,242	121,635
Denominated in EURO	11,390	8,865	8,594	7,821	5,466	7,803	3,406	3,230	5,530	3,623
Denominated in domestic currency	147,944	118,030	114,873	109,434	164,053	116,635	116,404	145,490	110,820	114,717
Denominated in other currencies	4,671	4,317	2,262	1,751	3,779	3,086	5,536	4,474	4,892	3,295
Total	164,005	131,212	125,729	119,006	173,298	127,524	125,346	153,194	121,242	121,635
Hard Bullet	n.a	29,630	28,786	36,362	98,706	62,104	56,213	54,679	84,658	78,187
Soft Bullet	n.a	101,582	96,943	82,644	74,592	65,419	69,133	98,515	36,584	43,448
Conditional Pass Through	n.a	-	-		-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	164,005	131,212	125,729	119,006	173,298	127,524	125,346	153,194	121,242	121,635
Issuance fixed coupon	129,815	90,328	89,319	89,194	140,692	100,598	92,943	94,015	70,616	76,187
Issuance floating coupon	34,190	40,884	36,410	29,812	32,606	26,926	32,403	59,179	50,627	45,448
Issuance other	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	164,005	131,212	125,729	119,006	173,298	127,524	125,346	153,194	121,242	121,635
Number of New Issuers	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Number of New Sustainable Issuers	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	1	1	1	-	-

Note: Since a large share of Danish mortgage covered bonds are tap-issued over a period of typically 3 years, Benchmark (1bn and above) issues and outstanding are defined as covered bond with more than EUR 1 bn in the year, the bond reach EUR 1 bn. The same way, Benchmark (500Mio - below 1bn) issues and outstanding are defined as covered bond with 500Mio - below 1bn euro in the year, the bond reach EUR 500 Mio, and at the same time does not exceed EUR 1 bn. The definition includes both covered bonds denominated in DKK and in EUR. Danish covered bonds denominated in euro and issued in a jurisdiction outside Denmark are included in the Danish data.

6.2.12 ESTONIA

Outstanding (in EUR million)	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Total Covered Bonds Outstanding										
Public Sector	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	-	-	-	-	-
Mortgage	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	850	850	2,100	2,250	2,500
Ships	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	-	-	-	-	-
Others	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	-	-	-	-	-
Total Outstanding	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	850	850	2,100	2,250	2,500
Of which, total Sustainable CB	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Public Placement										
Benchmark (1bn and above)	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	-	-	-	-	-
Benchmark (500mio - below 1bn)	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	500	500	1,000	1,000	1,000
Others (below 500Mio)	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	250	250	250	250	500
Private Placement	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	100	100	850	1,000	1,000
Total	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	850	850	2,100	2,250	2,500
Denominated in EURO	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	850	850	2,100	2,250	2,500
Denominated in domestic currency	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	-	-	-	-	-
Denominated in other currencies	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	-	-	-	-	-
Total	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	850	850	2,100	2,250	2,500
Hard Bullet	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	-	-	750	750	1,000
Soft Bullet	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	850	850	1,350	1,500	1,500
Conditional Pass Through	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	-	-	-	-	-
Total	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	850	850	2,100	2,250	2,500
Outstanding fixed coupon	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	850	850	1,350	1,250	1,500
Outstanding floating coupon	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	-	-	750	1,000	1,000
Outstanding other	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	-	-	-	-	-
Total	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	850	850	2,100	2,250	2,500
Number of Programmes	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	2	2	2	2	2
Number of Issuers	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	2	2	2	2	2
Of which, Sustainable Issuers	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.

Issuance (in EUR million)	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Total Covered Bonds Issuance										
Public Sector	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	-	-	-	-	-
Mortgage	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	850	-	1,250	250	250
Ships	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	-	-	-	-	-
Others	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	-	-	-	-	-
Total Issuance	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	850	-	1,250	250	250
Of which, Sustainable CB Issuance	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Public Placement									-	-
Benchmark (1bn and above)	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	-	-	-	-	-
Benchmark (500mio - below 1bn)	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	500	-	500	-	-
Others (below 500Mio)	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	250	-		-	-
Private Placement	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	100	-	750	250	250
Total	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	850	-	1,250	250	250
Denominated in EURO	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	850	-	1,250	250	250
Denominated in domestic currency	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	-	-	-	-	-
Denominated in other currencies	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	-	-	-	-	-
Total	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	850	-	1,250	250	250
Hard Bullet	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	-	-	750	-	-
Soft Bullet	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	850	-	500	250	250
Conditional Pass Through	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	-	-	-	-	-
Total	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	850	-	1,250	250	250
Issuance fixed coupon	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	850	-	500	-	-
Issuance floating coupon	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	-	-	750	250	250
Issuance other	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	-	-	-	-	-
Total	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	850	-	1,250	250	250
Number of New Issuers	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	2	-	-	-	-
Number of New Sustainable Issuers	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.

6.2.13 FINLAND

Outstanding (in EUR million)	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Total Covered Bonds Outstanding										
Public Sector	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Mortgage	33,974	33,822	34,625	37,257	37,774	43,855	47,119	51,817	48,551	51,353
Ships	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Others	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Outstanding	33,974	33,822	34,625	37,257	37,774	43,855	47,119	51,817	48,551	51,353
Of which, total Sustainable CB	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	750	2,750	3,750	3,750
Public Placement										
Benchmark (1bn and above)	27,250	26,000	28,000	27,750	27,500	26,250	26,250	30,500	29,000	30,000
Benchmark (500mio - below 1bn)	2,070	2,000	2,500	4,000	4,500	4,500	7,087	6,000	8,000	10,850
Others (below 500Mio)	500	1,207	2,777	2,067	2,650	3,149	3,050	4,800	4,070	3,250
Private Placement	4,154	4,615	1,348	3,440	3,124	9,956	10,733	10,517	7,481	7,253
Total	33,974	33,822	34,625	37,257	37,774	43,855	47,119	51,817	48,551	51,353
Denominated in EURO	33,663	33,665	34,458	36,842	37,398	43,269	46,388	51,817	48,551	51,353
Denominated in domestic currency	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Denominated in other currencies	311	157	167	414	376	587	732	-	-	-
Total	33,974	33,822	34,625	37,257	37,774	43,855	47,119	51,817	48,551	51,353
Hard Bullet	n.a.	17,202	16,305	17,643	16,166	19,657	20,888	19,497	14,531	10,383
Soft Bullet	n.a.	16,620	18,320	19,614	21,608	24,198	26,232	32,320	34,020	40,970
Conditional Pass Through	n.a.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	33,974	33,822	34,625	37,257	37,774	43,855	47,119	51,817	48,551	51,353
Outstanding fixed coupon	30,476	30,996	32,995	35,584	36,342	35,428	33,789	38,244	41,728	43,983
Outstanding floating coupon	3,498	2,826	1,630	1,673	1,432	8,427	13,331	13,573	6,823	7,370
Outstanding other	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	33,974	33,822	34,625	37,257	37,774	43,855	47,119	51,817	48,551	51,353
Number of Programmes	9	8	9	9	9	9	11	12	14	14
Number of Issuers	6	8	9	8	8	8	8	9	10	10
Of which, Sustainable Issuers	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	1	2	2	2

Issuance (in EUR million)	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Total Covered Bonds Issuance										
Public Sector	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Mortgage	7,425	4,679	5,550	5,650	6,650	11,199	8,587	11,420	10,400	10,350
Ships	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Others	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Issuance	7,425	4,679	5,550	5,650	6,650	11,199	8,587	11,420	10,400	10,350
Of which, Sustainable CB Issuance	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	750	2,000	1,000	-
Public Placement				-						
Benchmark (1bn and above)	6,500	2,250	4,500	3,250	4,750	3,250	3,000	8,000	7,000	4,000
Benchmark (500mio - below 1bn)	500	500	500	2,000	1,000	-	2,287	1,250	2,250	2,250
Others (below 500Mio)	250	550	550	400	900	500	450	1,700	1,150	850
Private Placement	175	1,379	-	-	-	7,449	2,850	470	-	3,250
Total	7,425	4,679	5,550	5,650	6,650	11,199	8,587	11,420	10,400	10,350
Denominated in EURO	7,425	4,679	5,550	5,650	6,650	11,000	8,050	11,420	10,400	10,350
Denominated in domestic currency	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Denominated in other currencies	-	-	-	-	-	199	537	-	-	-
Total	7,425	4,679	5,550	5,650	6,650	11,199	8,587	11,420	10,400	10,350
Hard Bullet	n.a.	1,279	1,500	3,000	2,500	6,000	-	1,500	-	-
Soft Bullet	n.a.	3,400	4,050	2,650	4,150	5,199	8,587	9,920	10,400	10,350
Conditional Pass Through	n.a.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	7,425	4,679	5,550	5,650	6,650	11,199	8,587	11,420	10,400	10,350
Issuance fixed coupon	7,410	3,679	5,550	5,650	6,650	4,200	2,350	9,900	10,400	6,350
Issuance floating coupon	15	1,000	-	-	-	6,999	6,237	1,520	-	4,000
Issuance other	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	7,425	4,679	5,550	5,650	6,650	11,199	8,587	11,420	10,400	10,350
Number of New Issuers	-	2	1	-	-	-	-	1	1	-
Number of New Sustainable Issuers	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	-	1	1	-	-

6.2.14 FRANCE

Outstanding (in EUR million)	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Total Covered Bonds Outstanding										
Public Sector	66,717	64,228	64,115	64,482	65,079	68,123	70,103	72,432	70,192	74,540
Mortgage	188,669	177,813	185,820	194,227	209,294	221,821	226,893	244,263	347,122	376,098
Mixed Assets	67,685	66,587	62,289	62,602	59,870	55,824	53,144	50,863	51,153	50,970
Others	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Outstanding	323,072	308,627	312,224	321,311	334,243	345,767	350,141	367,558	468,467	501,609
Of which, total Sustainable CB	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	4,000	7,250	12,000	15,010	21,437	26,770
Public Placement										
Benchmark (1bn and above)	201,947	188,508	181,069	180,484	173,151	169,393	169,904	174,815	182,350	203,491
Benchmark (500mio - below 1bn)	17,128	18,858	25,765	32,431	42,756	46,626	48,350	52,338	57,988	61,712
Others (below 500Mio)	10,121	5,427	4,806	4,804	13,257	10,190	2,135	4,529	6,794	2,736
Private Placement	93,876	95,836	100,584	103,593	105,079	119,558	129,751	135,876	221,335	233,669
Total	323,072	308,627	312,224	321,311	334,243	345,767	350,141	367,558	468,467	501,608
Denominated in EURO	303,710	292,233	302,504	314,880	327,567	339,805	345,213	362,749	462,853	496,305
Denominated in domestic currency	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Denominated in other currencies	19,362	16,395	9,720	6,431	6,676	5,962	4,928	4,809	5,614	5,304
Total	323,072	308,627	312,224	321,311	334,243	345,767	350,141	367,558	468,467	501,609
Hard Bullet	n.a.	246,233	225,423	216,228	199,215	177,940	163,599	153,488	136,522	144,440
Soft Bullet	n.a.	62,394	86,801	105,083	135,028	167,827	186,542	214,070	331,945	357,169
Conditional Pass Through	n.a.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	323,072	308,627	312,224	321,311	334,243	345,767	350,141	367,558	468,467	501,608
Outstanding fixed coupon	295,639	284,807	289,169	275,856	315,135	327,217	327,548	344,519	444,825	480,542
Outstanding floating coupon	16,640	12,690	14,493	8,536	10,699	12,593	16,787	18,921	18,586	17,896
Outstanding other	10,792	11,131	8,562	36,920	8,410	5,958	5,805	4,119	5,055	3,171
Total	323,072	308,627	312,224	321,311	334,243	345,767	350,141	367,558	468,467	501,609
Number of Programmes	19	19	19	18	19	17	18	18	19	19
Number of Issuers	19	16	19	18	19	17	18	18	19	19
Of which, Sustainable Issuers	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	3	4	4	5	7	7

Issuance (in EUR million)	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Total Covered Bonds Issuance										
Public Sector	6,785	6,441	8,681	5,483	8,800	9,047	9,350	7,430	5,624	9,072
Mortgage	29,705	19,482	28,347	27,108	37,050	39,770	29,865	46,390	134,899	53,531
Mixed Assets	8,395	5,366	6,455	5,218	3,000	3,025	4,800	4,613	4,546	5,830
Others	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Issuance	44,885	31,289	43,483	37,809	48,850	51,842	44,015	58,433	145,069	68,432
Of which, Sustainable CB Issuance	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	4,000	3,250	4,750	3,010	6,000	4,500
Public Placement										
Benchmark (1bn and above)	14,500	17,050	18,745	15,800	19,710	21,250	15,000	34,450	36,950	36,500
Benchmark (500mio - below 1bn)	5,650	4,250	7,800	9,950	7,460	7,100	8,800	8,000	6,750	2,400
Others (below 500Mio)	2,431	-	421	-	230	150	-	793	565	500
Private Placement	22,304	9,989	16,517	12,059	21,450	23,342	20,215	15,190	100,804	29,032
Total	44,885	31,289	43,483	37,809	48,850	51,842	44,015	58,433	145,069	68,432
Denominated in EURO	44,562	31,102	43,312	37,809	48,620	51,842	44,015	58,170	144,039	68,128
Denominated in domestic currency	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Denominated in other currencies	323	187	171	-	230	-	-	263	1,030	305
Total	44,885	31,289	43,483	37,809	48,850	51,842	44,015	58,433	145,069	68,432
Hard Bullet	n.a.	11,272	12,966	10,791	10,035	11,982	13,160	13,303	12,585	12,952
Soft Bullet	n.a.	20,017	30,517	27,018	38,815	39,860	30,855	45,130	132,484	55,480
Conditional Pass Through	n.a.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	44,885	31,289	43,483	37,809	48,850	51,842	44,015	58,433	145,069	68,432
Issuance fixed coupon	43,642	30,395	40,208	35,821	47,280	46,745	40,477	54,933	143,956	60,847
Issuance floating coupon	1,243	840	3,275	1,000	1,570	5,000	3,500	3,500	1,060	2,500
Issuance other	-	54	-	988	-	97	38	-	93	-
Total	44,885	31,289	43,483	37,809	48,850	51,842	44,015	58,433	145,109	68,432
Number of New Issuers	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	-
Number of New Sustainable Issuers	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	3	1	-	1	2	-

Note: The "Mixed assets" category refers to covered bonds that are backed by a mix of public sector assets, mortgage loans. The bonds (outstanding and issuance) have been allocated equally between mortgage and public sector categories in the total (5.2.1 section of the Fact Book)

6.2.15 GERMANY

Outstanding (in EUR million)	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Total Covered Bonds Outstanding										
Public Sector	180,524	161,871	148,081	134,717	121,849	123,425	125,263	110,144	103,991	101,070
Mortgage	197,726	207,338	215,199	233,372	239,570	246,311	264,016	281,505	294,810	296,841
Ships	5,158	3,551	2,420	1,154	2,724	2,212	2,088	1,932	1,449	1,569
Others	1,006	1,006	505	505	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Outstanding	384,414	373,766	366,205	369,747	364,143	371,947	391,366	393,581	400,250	399,481
Of which, total Sustainable CB	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	5,675	6,618	9,471	17,743	24,137	30,487
Public Placement										
Benchmark (1bn and above)	48,462	34,635	32,235	37,110	40,625	46,625	52,366	62,100	68,375	70,825
Benchmark (500mio - below 1bn)	69,883	85,807	90,494	102,175	116,688	112,963	116,226	124,807	135,332	143,478
Others (below 500Mio)	43,828	41,913	40,133	51,073	29,655	24,586	31,341	28,474	33,520	28,250
Private Placement	222,241	211,411	203,343	179,390	177,175	187,773	191,433	178,200	163,023	156,928
Total	384,414	373,766	366,205	369,747	364,143	371,947	391,366	393,581	400,250	399,481
Denominated in EURO	370,419	357,884	350,976	357,184	349,229	361,460	379,016	382,446	385,528	387,740
Denominated in domestic currency	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Denominated in other currencies	13,995	15,882	15,229	12,563	14,914	10,487	12,350	11,135	14,722	11,741
Total	384,414	373,766	366,205	369,747	364,143	371,947	391,366	393,581	400,250	399,481
Hard Bullet	384,414	373,766	366,205	369,747	364,143	371,947	-	-	-	-
Soft Bullet	-	-	-	-	-	-	391,366	393,581	400,250	399,481
Conditional Pass Through	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	384,414	373,766	366,205	369,747	364,143	371,947	391,366	393,581	400,250	399,481
Outstanding fixed coupon	334,264	328,143	326,595	342,427	336,220	330,063	325,523	342,674	356,413	360,104
Outstanding floating coupon	44,359	34,657	33,844	24,557	20,721	38,753	62,081	45,188	39,906	36,349
Outstanding other	5,791	10,966	5,766	2,764	7,201	3,131	3,761	5,719	3,931	3,027
Total	384,414	373,766	366,205	369,747	364,143	371,947	391,366	393,581	400,250	399,481
Number of Programmes	121	120	117	120	120	120	118	120	122	119
Number of Issuers	79	78	78	78	78	80	81	83	84	83
Of which, Sustainable Issuers	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	5	5	8	12	13	14

Issuance (in EUR million)	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Total Covered Bonds Issuance										
Public Sector	15,544	10,364	11,935	7,230	11,236	19,080	18,314	14,240	13,795	14,807
Mortgage	40,369	35,070	36,841	43,142	41,973	40,248	45,812	67,317	51,509	41,426
Ships	2,208	-	-	10	1,760	450	600	750	400	1,025
Others	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Issuance	58,121	45,434	48,776	50,382	54,969	59,778	64,726	82,307	65,704	57,258
Of which, Sustainable CB Issuance	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	1,675	1,000	2,800	9,436	8,421	7,131
Public Placement										
Benchmark (1bn and above)	5,500	5,250	4,250	9,000	10,000	11,250	6,690	21,850	10,175	6,650
Benchmark (500mio - below 1bn)	22,201	20,469	15,882	22,441	20,422	11,546	15,154	22,981	29,463	26,005
Others (below 500Mio)	11,263	6,492	11,758	6,850	8,575	6,474	9,429	8,198	6,971	2,587
Private Placement	19,157	13,223	16,886	12,091	15,972	30,508	33,452	29,278	19,095	22,016
Total	58,121	45,434	48,776	50,382	54,969	59,778	64,726	82,307	65,704	57,258
Denominated in EURO	55,470	40,754	42,750	45,610	48,970	58,704	59,371	79,487	63,644	54,567
Denominated in domestic currency	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Denominated in other currencies	2,651	4,680	6,026	4,772	5,998	1,074	5,355	2,820	2,060	2,691
Total	58,121	45,434	48,776	50,382	54,969	59,778	64,726	82,307	65,704	57,258
Hard Bullet	58,121	45,434	48,776	50,382	54,969	59,778	-	-	-	-
Soft Bullet	-	-	-	-	-	-	64,726	82,307	65,704	57,258
Conditional Pass Through	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	58,121	45,434	48,776	50,382	54,969	59,778	64,726	82,307	65,704	57,258
Issuance fixed coupon	50,618	43,888	41,490	45,116	49,340	33,489	37,516	71,123	57,617	46,475
Issuance floating coupon	6,743	1,303	7,100	5,241	5,617	26,259	27,110	11,150	8,039	10,773
Issuance other	760	243	186	25	12	30	99	34	48	11
Total	58,121	45,434	48,776	50,382	54,969	59,778	64,726	82,307	65,704	57,258
Number of New Issuers	2	-	2	2	3	4	1	2	2	1
Number of New Sustainable Issuers	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	-	-	3	4	1	1

6.2.16 GREECE

Outstanding (in EUR million)	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Total Covered Bonds Outstanding										
Public Sector	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Mortgage	4,961	4,485	10,100	13,840	13,190	10,890	10,840	10,140	9,840	9,840
Ships	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Others	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Outstanding	4,961	4,485	10,100	13,840	13,190	10,890	10,840	10,140	9,840	9,840
Of which, total Sustainable CB	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Public Placement										
Benchmark (1bn and above)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Benchmark (500mio - below 1bn)	846	-	1,250	1,750	1,750	500	500	500	-	-
Others (below 500Mio)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Private Placement	4,115	4,485	8,850	12,090	11,440	10,390	10,340	9,640	9,840	9,840
Total	4,961	4,485	10,100	13,840	13,190	10,890	10,840	10,140	9,840	9,840
Denominated in EURO	4,961	4,485	10,100	13,840	13,190	10,890	10,840	10,140	9,840	9,840
Denominated in domestic currency	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Denominated in other currencies	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	4,961	4,485	10,100	13,840	13,190	10,890	10,840	10,140	9,840	9,840
Hard Bullet	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Soft Bullet	896	3,725	6,350	3,990	1,840	1,840	2,440	2,440	1,940	3,940
Conditional Pass Through	4,065	760	3,750	9,850	11,350	9,050	8,400	7,700	7,900	5,900
Total	4,961	4,485	10,100	13,840	13,190	10,890	10,840	10,140	9,840	9,840
Outstanding fixed coupon	846	-	1,250	2,550	2,350	700	700	700	-	-
Outstanding floating coupon	4,115	4,485	8,850	11,290	10,840	10,190	10,140	9,440	9,840	9,840
Outstanding other	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	4,961	4,485	10,100	13,840	13,190	10,890	10,840	10,140	9,840	9,840
Number of Programmes	6	6	7	8	8	7	7	7	5	5
Number of Issuers	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Of which, Sustainable Issuers	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.

Issuance (in EUR million)	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Total Covered Bonds Issuance										
Public Sector	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Mortgage	-	3,675	7,375	6,650	200	-	600	-	400	500
Ships	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Others	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Issuance	-	3,675	7,375	6,650	200	-	600	-	400	500
Of which, Sustainable CB Issuance	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Public Placement										
Benchmark (1bn and above)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Benchmark (500mio - below 1bn)	-	-	1,250	500	-	-	-	-	-	-
Others (below 500Mio)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Private Placement	-	3,675	6,125	6,150	200	-	600	-	400	500
Total	-	3,675	7,375	6,650	200	-	600	-	400	500
Denominated in EURO	-	3,675	7,375	6,650	200	-	600	-	400	500
Denominated in domestic currency	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Denominated in other currencies	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	-	3,675	7,375	6,650	200	-	600	-	400	500
Hard Bullet	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Soft Bullet	-	3,675	2,625	2,050	-	-	600	-	-	500
Conditional Pass Through	-	-	4,750	4,600	200	-	-	-	400	-
Total	-	3,675	7,375	6,650	200	-	600	-	400	500
Issuance fixed coupon	-	-	1,250	1,300	-	-	-	-	-	-
Issuance floating coupon	-	3,675	6,125	5,350	200	-	600	-	400	500
Issuance other	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	-	3,675	7,375	6,650	200	-	600	-	400	500
Number of New Issuers	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Number of New Sustainable Issuers	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.

6.2.17 HUNGARY

Outstanding (in EUR million)	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Total Covered Bonds Outstanding										
Public Sector	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Mortgage	3,022	2,189	2,641	3,762	3,868	4,526	4,483	4,840	5,473	5,125
Ships	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Others	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Outstanding	3,022	2,189	2,641	3,762	3,868	4,526	4,483	4,840	5,473	5,125
Of which, total Sustainable CB	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	103	405	621	663
Public Placement										
Benchmark (1bn and above)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Benchmark (500mio - below 1bn)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	500	500
Others (below 500Mio)	-	612	71	543	1,675	1,356	1,776	1,681	1,807	453
Private Placement	3,003	1,577	2,569	3,219	2,193	3,171	2,708	3,159	3,167	4,172
Total	3,022	2,189	2,641	3,762	3,868	4,526	4,483	4,840	5,474	5,125
Denominated in EURO	1,036	537	35	25	17	16	16	-	500	500
Denominated in domestic currency	1,986	1,652	2,605	3,737	3,850	4,510	4,468	4,840	4,973	4,626
Denominated in other currencies		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	3,022	2,189	2,641	3,762	3,868	4,526	4,483	4,840	5,473	5,126
Hard Bullet	3,022	2,189	2,641	3,762	3,868	4,526	4,483	4,840	5,473	5,125
Soft Bullet	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Conditional Pass Through	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	3,022	2,189	2,641	3,762	3,868	4,526	4,483	4,840	5,473	5,125
Outstanding fixed coupon	1,699	1,387	1,814	3,275	3,210	3,972	3,759	3,617	4,050	3,716
Outstanding floating coupon	1,323	802	827	449	658	555	724	1,223	1,423	1,409
Outstanding other	-	-	-	38	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	3,022	2,189	2,641	3,762	3,868	4,526	4,483	4,840	5,473	5,125
Number of Programmes	4	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Number of Issuers	3	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Of which, Sustainable Issuers	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	3	5	5	5

Issuance (in EUR million)	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Total Covered Bonds Issuance										
Public Sector	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Mortgage	888	625	1,166	2,004	487	1,555	541	911	1,185	1,064
Ships	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Others	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Issuance	888	625	1,166	2,004	487	1,555	541	911	1,185	1,064
Of which, Sustainable CB Issuance	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	103	50	197	132
Public Placement										
Benchmark (1bn and above)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	145
Benchmark (500mio - below 1bn)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	500	-
Others (below 500Mio)	-	293	16	505	453	697	478	219	443	97
Private Placement	888	333	1,150	1,499	33	858	63	691	242	822
Total	888	626	1,166	2,004	487	1,555	541	911	1,185	1,064
Denominated in EURO	500	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	500	-
Denominated in domestic currency	388	620	1,166	2,004	487	1,555	541	911	685	1,064
Denominated in other currencies	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	888	625	1,166	2,004	487	1,555	541	911	1,185	1,064
Hard Bullet	888	625	1,166	2,004	487	1,555	541	911	1,185	1,064
Soft Bullet	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Conditional Pass Through	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	888	625	1,166	2,004	487	1,555	541	911	1,185	1,064
Issuance fixed coupon	121	402	552	1,599	265	1,242	468	248	978	481
Issuance floating coupon	767	224	614	405	222	314	73	663	207	583
Issuance other	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	888	626	1,166	2,004	487	1,555	541	911	1,185	1,064
Number of New Issuers	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Number of New Sustainable Issuers	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	3	1	-	-

6.2.18 ICELAND

Outstanding (in EUR million)	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Total Covered Bonds Outstanding										
Public Sector	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Mortgage	1,205	1,902	2,506	3,123	3,071	3,330	4,270	5,725	6,358	6,697
Ships	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Others	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Outstanding	1,205	1,902	2,506	3,123	3,071	3,330	4,270	5,725	6,358	6,697
Of which, total Sustainable CB	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Public Placement										
Benchmark (1bn and above)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Benchmark (500mio - below 1bn)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	500	500	500
Others (below 500Mio)	1,205	1,902	2,506	3,123	3,071	3,330	4,270	5,225	5,858	6,197
Private Placement	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	1,205	1,902	2,506	3,123	3,071	3,330	4,270	5,725	6,358	6,697
Denominated in EURO	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,600	1,900	1,900
Denominated in domestic currency	1,205	1,902	2,506	3,123	3,071	3,330	3,970	4,125	4,458	4,797
Denominated in other currencies	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	1,205	1,902	2,506	3,123	3,071	3,330	4,270	5,725	6,358	6,697
Hard Bullet	421	489	354	338	78	69	78	82	78	78
Soft Bullet	784	1,413	2,152	2,786	2,993	3,261	4,192	5,643	6,280	6,618
Conditional Pass Through	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	1,205	1,902	2,506	3,123	3,071	3,330	4,270	5,725	6,358	6,697
Outstanding fixed coupon	254	490	541	612	866	904	1,615	2,971	3,285	3,193
Outstanding floating coupon	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	800	800	800
Outstanding other	951	1,412	1,965	2,512	2,205	2,426	2,655	1,954	2,273	2,704
Total	1,205	1,902	2,506	3,123	3,071	3,330	4,270	5,725	6,358	6,697
Number of Programmes	4	4	4	4	3	3	3	3	3	3
Number of Issuers	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Of which, Sustainable Issuers	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.

Issuance (in EUR million)	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Total Covered Bonds Issuance										
Public Sector	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Mortgage	414	560	850	755	788	646	988	1,832	1,414	997
Ships	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Others	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Issuance	414	560	850	755	788	646	988	1,832	1,414	997
Of which, Sustainable CB Issuance	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Public Placement										
Benchmark (1bn and above)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Benchmark (500mio - below 1bn)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	200	-	-
Others (below 500Mio)	414	560	850	755	788	646	988	1,632	1,414	997
Private Placement	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	414	560	850	755	788	646	988	1,832	1,414	997
Denominated in EURO	-	-	-	-	-	-	300	1,300	300	-
Denominated in domestic currency	414	560	850	755	788	646	688	532	1,114	997
Denominated in other currencies	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	414	560	850	755	788	646	988	1,832	1,414	997
Hard Bullet	-	-	-	83	-	-	-	-	-	-
Soft Bullet	414	560	850	672	788	646	988	1,832	1,414	997
Conditional Pass Through	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	414	560	850	755	788	646	988	1,832	1,414	997
Issuance fixed coupon	158	255	99	89	378	462	931	967	1,005	369
Issuance floating coupon	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	800	-	-
Issuance other	256	305	751	667	410	184	57	65	409	629
Total	414	560	850	755	788	646	988	1,832	1,414	998
Number of New Issuers	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Number of New Sustainable Issuers	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.

6.2.19 IRELAND

Outstanding (in EUR million)	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Total Covered Bonds Outstanding										
Public Sector	15,389	6,757	3,114	2,531	708	178	-	-	-	-
Mortgage	16,916	17,062	16,416	20,788	19,337	16,816	14,433	12,229	13,220	12,652
Ships	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Others	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Outstanding	32,305	23,819	19,530	23,319	20,044	16,995	14,433	12,229	13,220	12,652
Of which, total Sustainable CB	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	-
Public Placement										
Benchmark (1bn and above)	8,010	1,675	2,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	-	-
Benchmark (500mio - below 1bn)	7,134	8,668	5,750	7,355	5,679	3,679	10,205	8,000	750	-
Others (below 500Mio)	232	476	472	-	25	-	25	25	-	-
Private Placement	16,930	13,000	11,308	14,964	13,341	12,316	3,203	3,204	12,470	12,652
Total	32,305	23,819	19,530	23,319	20,044	16,995	14,433	12,229	13,220	12,652
Denominated in EURO	27,108	22,263	18,974	23,103	19,973	16,964	14,433	12,229	13,220	12,652
Denominated in domestic currency	-	-	-	216	72	-	-	-	-	-
Denominated in other currencies	5,198	1,556	556	-	-	31	-	-	-	-
Total	32,305	23,819	19,530	23,319	20,044	16,995	14,433	12,229	13,220	12,652
Hard Bullet	n.a.	6,853	3,210	2,541	718	178	-	-	-	-
Soft Bullet	n.a.	16,966	16,320	20,778	19,327	16,816	14,433	12,229	13,220	12,652
Conditional Pass Through	n.a.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	32,305	23,819	19,530	23,319	20,044	16,995	14,433	12,229	13,220	12,652
Outstanding fixed coupon	23,003	15,622	11,244	10,190	7,840	5,347	3,983	2,279	1,270	1,202
Outstanding floating coupon	7,045	6,267	8,230	13,058	12,204	11,634	10,450	9,950	11,950	11,450
Outstanding other	2,258	1,930	56	70	-	14	-	-	-	-
Total	32,305	23,819	19,530	23,319	20,044	16,995	14,433	12,229	13,220	12,652
Number of Programmes	5	5	5	5	5	3	2	1	2	2
Number of Issuers	5	5	5	5	5	3	2	2	2	2
Of which, Sustainable Issuers	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	-

Issuance (in EUR million)	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Total Covered Bonds Issuance										
Public Sector	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Mortgage	5,225	3,542	3,250	5,575	-	2,000	-	-	3,000	2,250
Ships	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Others	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Issuance	5,225	3,542	3,250	5,575	-	2,000	-	-	3,000	2,250
Of which, Sustainable CB Issuance	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	-	-
Public Placement										
Benchmark (1bn and above)	1,000	1,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Benchmark (500mio - below 1bn)	3,000	-	-	750	-	-	-	-	-	-
Others (below 500Mio)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Private Placement	1,225	2,542	3,250	4,825	-	2,000	-	-	3,000	2,250
Total	5,225	3,542	3,250	5,575	-	2,000	-	-	-	2,250
Denominated in EURO	5,225	3,542	3,250	5,575	-	2,000	-	-	3,000	2,250
Denominated in domestic currency	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Denominated in other currencies	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	5,225	3,542	3,250	5,575	-	2,000	-	-	3,000	2,250
Hard Bullet	n.a.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Soft Bullet	n.a.	3,542	3,250	5,575	-	2,000	-	-	3,000	2,250
Conditional Pass Through	n.a.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	5,225	3,542	3,250	5,575	-	2,000	-	-	3,000	2,250
Issuance fixed coupon	4,225	1,042	-	875	-	-	-	-	-	-
Issuance floating coupon	1,000	2,500	3,250	4,700	-	2,000	-	-	3,000	2,250
Issuance other	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	5,225	3,542	3,250	5,575	-	2,000	-	-	3,000	2,250
Number of New Issuers	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Number of New Sustainable Issuers	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	-

6.2.20 ITALY

Outstanding (in EUR million)	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Total Covered Bonds Outstanding										
Public Sector	8,400	7,575	6,725	5,625	4,925	4,075	3,575	3,100	1,650	-
Mortgage	122,135	138,977	139,937	163,311	172,728	171,102	168,099	162,848	157,793	160,775
Ships		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Others		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Outstanding	130,535	146,552	146,662	168,936	177,653	175,177	171,674	165,948	159,443	160,775
Of which, total Sustainable CB	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	500	1,250	1,500	3,250
Public Placement										
Benchmark (1bn and above)	46,503	42,423	42,073	38,103	38,603	35,103	28,886	23,816	24,325	21,000
Benchmark (500mio - below 1bn)	12,628	12,500	16,575	18,750	20,100	19,600	21,300	22,600	24,489	30,850
Others (below 500Mio)	500	375	-	-	200	542	995	600	2,273	1,477
Private Placement	70,904	91,254	88,014	112,083	118,750	119,932	120,494	118,933	108,356	107,448
Total	130,535	146,552	146,662	168,936	177,653	175,177	171,674	165,948	159,443	160,775
Denominated in EURO	130,535	146,552	146,662	168,936	177,653	175,177	171,374	165,948	159,443	160,775
Denominated in domestic currency	-	-	-	-	-	-	300	-	-	-
Denominated in other currencies	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	130,535	146,552	146,662	168,936	177,653	175,177	171,674	165,948	159,443	160,775
Hard Bullet	n.a.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Soft Bullet	n.a.	112,212	110,857	124,951	134,213	131,407	129,639	143,948	138,593	142,375
Conditional Pass Through	n.a.	34,340	35,805	43,985	43,440	43,770	42,035	22,000	20,850	18,400
Total	130,535	146,552	146,662	168,936	177,653	175,177	171,674	165,948	159,443	160,775
Outstanding fixed coupon	68,111	63,603	64,115	64,070	66,420	63,861	60,508	61,288	64,058	65,740
Outstanding floating coupon	62,424	82,950	82,497	104,816	111,183	111,266	111,116	104,610	95,335	94,985
Outstanding other	-	-	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50
Total	130,535	146,552	146,662	168,936	177,653	175,177	171,674	165,948	159,443	160,775
Number of Programmes	24	24	25	23	21	23	22	23	24	24
Number of Issuers	14	14	14	13	12	14	13	14	15	16
Of which, Sustainable Issuers	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	1	2	3	5

Issuance (in EUR million)	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Total Covered Bonds Issuance										
Public Sector	1,700	2,375	1,650	-	-	-	1,000	-	-	-
Mortgage	27,650	41,780	19,180	45,200	27,000	26,100	22,500	20,760	17,300	30,977
Ships	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Others	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Issuance	29,350	44,155	20,830	45,200	27,000	26,100	23,500	20,760	17,300	30,977
Of which, Sustainable CB Issuance	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	500	750	250	
Public Placement										
Benchmark (1bn and above)	7,250	3,250	2,250	1,000	3,000	-	-	1,000	5,250	1,000
Benchmark (500mio - below 1bn)	5,500	2,750	3,575	4,250	3,350	1,250	2,750	3,000	4,000	8,650
Others (below 500Mio)	-	-	-	-	-	300	500	-	650	777
Private Placement	16,600	38,155	15,005	39,950	20,650	24,550	20,250	16,760	7,400	20,550
Total	29,350	44,155	20,830	45,200	27,000	26,100	23,500	20,760	17,300	30,977
Denominated in EURO	29,350	44,155	20,830	45,200	27,000	25,800	23,500	20,760	17,300	30,977
Denominated in domestic currency	-	-	-	-	-	300	-	-	-	-
Denominated in other currencies	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	29,350	44,155	20,830	45,200	27,000	26,100	23,500	20,760	17,300	30,977
Hard Bullet	n.a.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Soft Bullet	n.a.	25,105	14,015	31,475	23,500	19,550	17,250	16,810	16,700	28,227
Conditional Pass Through	n.a.	19,050	6,815	13,725	3,500	6,550	6,250	3,950	600	2,750
Total	29,350	44,155	20,830	45,200	27,000	26,100	23,500	20,760	17,300	30,977
Issuance fixed coupon	12,250	8,000	7,825	6,000	7,350	3,250	4,750	9,900	10,800	14,277
Issuance floating coupon	17,100	36,155	13,005	39,200	19,650	22,850	18,750	10,860	6,500	16,700
Issuance other		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	29,350	44,155	20,830	45,200	27,000	26,100	23,500	20,760	17,300	30,977
Number of New Issuers	1	-	1	-	-	2	-	1	1	1
Number of New Sustainable Issuers	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	1	1	1	2

6.2.21 JAPAN

Outstanding (in EUR million)	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Total Covered Bonds Outstanding										
Public Sector	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Mortgage	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	1,000	3,585	5,322	6,174	5,788	6,505	5,600
Ships	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Others	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Outstanding	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	1,000	3,585	5,322	6,174	5,788	6,505	5,600
Of which, total Sustainable CB	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	-
Public Placement										
Benchmark (1bn and above)	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	1,000	1,890	2,815	2,883	2,938	1,905	1,000
Benchmark (500mio - below 1bn)	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	-	1,695	2,507	3,291	2,850	4,600	4,600
Others (below 500Mio)	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Private Placement	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	1,000	3,585	5,322	6,174	5,788	6,505	5,600
Denominated in EURO	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	1,000	2,250	4,100	4,850	4,850	5,600	5,600
Denominated in domestic currency	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Denominated in other currencies	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	-	1,335	1,222	1,324	938	905	-
Total	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	1,000	3,585	5,322	6,174	5,788	6,505	5,600
Hard Bullet	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Soft Bullet	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	1,000	3,585	5,322	6,174	5,788	6,505	5,600
Conditional Pass Through	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	1,000	3,585	5,322	6,174	5,788	6,505	5,600
Outstanding fixed coupon	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	1,000	3,585	5,322	6,174	5,788	6,505	5,600
Outstanding floating coupon	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Outstanding other	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	1,000	3,585	5,322	6,174	5,788	6,505	5,600
Number of Programmes	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	1	1	2	2	2	2	2
Number of Issuers	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	1	1	2	2	2	2	2
Of which, Sustainable Issuers	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	-

Issuance (in EUR million)	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Total Covered Bonds Issuance										
Public Sector	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Mortgage	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	1,000	2,585	1,850	750	-	1,750	-
Ships	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Others	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Issuance	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	1,000	2,585	1,850	750	-	1,750	-
Of which, Sustainable CB Issuance	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	-	-	-	-
Public Placement										
Benchmark (1bn and above)	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	1,000	890	1,000	-	-	-	-
Benchmark (500mio - below 1bn)	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	-	1,695	850	750	-	1,750	-
Others (below 500Mio)	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Private Placement	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	1,000	2,585	1,850	750	-	1,750	-
Denominated in EURO	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	1,000	1,250	1,850	750	-	1,750	-
Denominated in domestic currency	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Denominated in other currencies	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	-	1,335	-	-	-	-	-
Total	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	1,000	2,585	1,850	750	-	1,750	-
Hard Bullet	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Soft Bullet	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	1,000	2,585	1,850	750	-	1,750	-
Conditional Pass Through	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	1,000	2,585	1,850	750	-	1,750	-
Issuance fixed coupon	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	1,000	2,585	1,850	750	-	1,750	-
Issuance floating coupon	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Issuance other	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	1,000	2,585	1,850	750	-	1,750	-
Number of New Issuers	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	1	-	1	-	-	-	-
Number of New Sustainable Issuers	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	-

6.2.22 LUXEMBOURG

Outstanding (in EUR million)	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Total Covered Bonds Outstanding										
Public Sector	10,166	7,864	6,905	6,103	6,290	5,767	5,022	4,595	4,020	3,294
Mortgage	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Ships	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Others	-	-	-	-	-	300	300	300	300	300
Total Outstanding	10,166	7,864	6,905	6,103	6,290	6,067	5,322	4,895	4,320	3,594
Of which, total Sustainable CB	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	300	300	300	300	300
Public Placement										
Benchmark (1bn and above)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Benchmark (500mio - below 1bn)	2,781	2,310	2,810	2,068	2,579	2,530	1,500	1,500	1,000	500
Others (below 500Mio)	1,150	810	440	375	438	583	525	518	509	695
Private Placement	6,235	4,744	3,655	3,660	3,273	2,954	3,297	2,877	2,812	2,399
Total	10,166	7,864	6,905	6,103	6,290	6,067	5,322	4,895	4,320	3,594
Denominated in EURO	5,578	5,360	4,267	4,057	4,350	4,533	3,988	3,945	3,401	2,643
Denominated in domestic currency	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Denominated in other currencies	4,589	2,504	2,638	2,046	1,940	1,534	1,334	950	920	951
Total	10,166	7,864	6,905	6,103	6,290	6,066	5,322	4,895	4,320	3,594
Hard Bullet	10,166	7,864	6,905	6,103	6,290	5,767	5,022	4,595	4,020	3,294
Soft Bullet	-	-	-	-	-	300	300	300	300	300
Conditional Pass Through	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	10,166	7,864	6,905	6,103	6,290	6,067	5,322	4,895	4,320	3,594
Outstanding fixed coupon	8,250	6,589	6,509	5,973	6,044	5,831	4,598	4,146	3,586	2,834
Outstanding floating coupon	1,710	816	142	116	118	222	131	138	134	141
Outstanding other	206	460	254	14	128	14	593	611	601	619
Total	10,166	7,864	6,905	6,103	6,290	6,067	5,322	4,895	4,320	3,594
Number of Programmes	3	3	3	3	2	3	3	3	3	3
Number of Issuers	3	3	3	3	2	2	2	2	2	2
Of which, Sustainable Issuers	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	1	1	1	1	1

Issuance (in EUR million)	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Total Covered Bonds Issuance										
Public Sector	1,220	655	744	726	525	512	375	-	-	-
Mortgage	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Ships	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Others	-	-	-	-	-	300	-	-	-	-
Total Issuance	1,220	655	744	726	525	812	375	-	-	-
Of which, Sustainable CB Issuance	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	300	-	-	-	-
Public Placement										
Benchmark (1bn and above)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Benchmark (500mio - below 1bn)	1,000	500	500	568	500	500	-	-	-	-
Others (below 500Mio)	-	-	-	-	-	300	-	-	-	-
Private Placement	220	155	244	158	25	12	375	-	-	-
Total	1,220	655	744	726	525	812	375	-	-	-
Denominated in EURO	1,220	655	640	158	525	812	-	-	-	-
Denominated in domestic currency	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Denominated in other currencies	-	-	104	568	-	-	375	-	-	-
Total	1,220	655	744	726	525	812	375	-	-	-
Hard Bullet	1,220	655	744	726	525	512	375	-	-	-
Soft Bullet	-	-	-	-	-	300	-	-	-	-
Conditional Pass Through	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	1,220	655	744	726	525	812	375	-	-	-
Issuance fixed coupon	1,205	655	744	726	525	812	375	-	-	-
Issuance floating coupon	15	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Issuance other	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	1,220	655	744	726	525	812	375	-	-	-
Number of New Issuers	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Number of New Sustainable Issuers	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	1	-	-	-	-

6.2.23 THE NETHERLANDS

Outstanding (in EUR million)	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Total Covered Bonds Outstanding										
Public Sector	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Mortgage	61,101	67,604	72,880	94,797	118,969	154,505	172,181	197,002	212,057	222,045
Ships	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Others	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Outstanding	61,101	67,604	72,880	94,797	118,969	154,505	172,181	197,002	212,057	222,045
Of which, total Sustainable CB	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	500	2,500	3,500
Public Placement							-			
Benchmark (1bn and above)	37,228	38,773	40,001	42,330	46,730	44,617	45,944	48,995	53,245	37,250
Benchmark (500mio - below 1bn)	2,750	4,750	7,750	10,500	13,875	15,625	18,825	19,850	23,700	17,950
Others (below 500Mio)	1,523	1,211	812	399	415	417	339	355	378	372
Private Placement	19,600	22,870	24,317	41,568	57,949	93,846	107,073	127,802	134,734	91,320
Total	61,101	67,604	72,880	94,797	118,969	154,505	172,181	197,002	212,057	146,892
Denominated in EURO	55,897	63,694	69,722	91,990	116,103	152,002	169,913	196,147	211,401	214,063
Denominated in domestic currency	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Denominated in other currencies	5,204	3,910	3,158	2,807	2,866	2,503	2,268	855	656	638
Total	61,101	67,604	72,880	94,797	118,969	154,505	172,181	197,002	212,057	214,701
Hard Bullet	17,557	16,151	15,038	12,762	12,400	11,170	9,892	8,007	7,112	6,261
Soft Bullet	40,793	47,203	51,092	73,786	95,924	132,439	150,394	180,695	199,445	203,439
Conditional Pass Through	2,751	4,250	6,750	8,250	10,645	10,895	11,895	8,300	5,500	5,000
Total	61,101	67,604	72,880	94,797	118,969	154,505	172,181	197,002	212,057	214,700
Outstanding fixed coupon	59,152	62,191	67,868	87,285	112,032	147,677	165,546	194,402	209,457	212,180
Outstanding floating coupon	1,928	5,392	4,992	7,492	6,917	6,807	6,615	2,580	2,580	2,500
Outstanding other	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20
Total	61,101	67,604	72,880	94,797	118,969	154,504	172,181	197,002	212,057	214,700
Number of Programmes	8	8	10	11	13	14	17	18	16	15
Number of Issuers	7	7	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	8
Of which, Sustainable Issuers	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	1	2	1

Issuance (in EUR million)	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Total Covered Bonds Issuance										
Public Sector	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7,940
Mortgage	7,908	9,908	11,925	28,714	28,388	44,013	36,705	37,956	20,125	18,900
Ships	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Others	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Issuance	7,908	9,908	11,925	28,714	28,388	44,013	36,705	37,956	20,125	26,840
Of which, Sustainable CB Issuance	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	-	500	2,000	-
Public Placement									-	
Benchmark (1bn and above)	1,750	3,500	6,750	7,770	6,375	4,250	4,975	7,800	7,000	5,000
Benchmark (500mio - below 1bn)	1,750	2,000	3,000	3,250	4,625	2,500	3,200	2,850	4,850	2,150
Others (below 500Mio)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Private Placement	4,408	4,408	2,175	17,694	17,388	37,263	28,530	27,306	8,275	11,750
Total	7,908	9,908	11,925	28,714	28,388	44,013	36,705	37,956	20,125	18,900
Denominated in EURO	7,908	9,908	11,925	28,714	28,388	44,013	36,705	37,956	20,125	26,840
Denominated in domestic currency	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Denominated in other currencies	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	7,908	9,908	11,925	28,714	28,388	44,013	36,705	37,956	20,125	26,840
Hard Bullet	-	-	-	-	30	-	-	-	-	7,940
Soft Bullet	6,157	8,408	9,425	26,714	25,463	43,013	35,705	37,956	19,925	18,900
Conditional Pass Through	1,751	1,500	2,500	2,000	2,895	1,000	1,000	-	200	-
Total	7,908	9,908	11,925	28,714	28,388	44,013	36,705	37,956	20,125	26,840
Issuance fixed coupon	6,908	6,333	11,925	28,714	28,388	44,013	36,705	37,956	20,125	25,340
Issuance floating coupon	1,000	3,575	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,500
Issuance other	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	7,908	9,908	11,925	28,714	28,388	44,013	36,705	37,956	20,125	26,840
Number of New Issuers	2	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Number of New Sustainable Issuers	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	-	1	1	-

6.2.24 NEW ZEALAND

Outstanding (in EUR million)	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Total Covered Bonds Outstanding										
Public Sector	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Mortgage	9,149	10,677	10,188	9,803	10,018	9,692	10,151	10,648	10,957	8,448
Ships	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Others	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Outstanding	9,149	10,677	10,188	9,803	10,018	9,692	10,151	10,648	10,957	8,448
Of which, total Sustainable CB	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	-	n.a.
Public Placement										
Benchmark (1bn and above)	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	1,000	-	-
Benchmark (500mio - below 1bn)	5,470	6,750	6,750	7,000	7,500	7,000	7,450	9,150	10,757	8,248
Others (below 500Mio)	788	605	555	134	138	315	320	319	-	-
Private Placement	891	1,322	883	669	380	377	381	179	200	200
Total	9,149	10,677	10,188	9,803	10,018	9,692	10,151	10,648	10,957	8,448
Denominated in EURO	7,200	8,950	8,950	9,200	9,700	9,200	9,650	10,150	10,650	8,150
Denominated in domestic currency	879	1,122	683	469	180	177	181	179	-	298
Denominated in other currencies	1,070	605	555	134	138	315	320	319	307	-
Total	9,149	10,677	10,188	9,803	10,018	9,692	10,151	10,648	10,957	8,448
Hard Bullet	5,061	2,889	932	293	-	-	-	-	-	-
Soft Bullet	4,088	7,788	9,256	9,510	10,018	9,692	10,151	10,648	10,957	8,448
Conditional Pass Through	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	9,149	10,677	10,188	9,803	10,018	9,692	10,151	10,648	10,957	8,448
Outstanding fixed coupon	8,961	10,479	10,010	9,627	10,018	9,377	9,831	10,329	10,650	8,150
Outstanding floating coupon	188	198	178	176	-	315	320	319	307	298
Outstanding other	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	9,149	10,677	10,188	9,803	10,018	9,692	10,151	10,648	10,957	8,448
Number of Programmes	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Number of Issuers	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Of which, Sustainable Issuers	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	-	n.a.

Issuance (in EUR million)	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Total Covered Bonds Issuance										
Public Sector	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Mortgage	1,450	3,698	2,250	1,250	1,250	315	2,450	2,250	2,000	-
Ships	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Others	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Issuance	1,450	3,698	2,250	1,250	1,250	315	2,450	2,250	2,000	-
Of which, Sustainable CB Issuance	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	-	n.a.
Public Placement						-				
Benchmark (1bn and above)	-	1,000	1,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Benchmark (500mio - below 1bn)	1,250	2,500	1,250	1,250	1,250	-	2,450	2,250	2,000	-
Others (below 500Mio)	-	-	-	-	-	315	-	-	-	-
Private Placement	200	198	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	1,450	3,698	2,250	1,250	1,250	315	2,450	2,250	2,000	-
Denominated in EURO	1,450	3,500	2,250	1,250	1,250	-	2,450	2,250	2,000	-
Denominated in domestic currency	-	198	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Denominated in other currencies	-	-	-	-	-	315	-	-	-	-
Total	1,450	3,698	2,250	1,250	1,250	315	2,450	2,250	2,000	-
Hard Bullet	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Soft Bullet	1,450	3,698	2,250	1,250	1,250	315	2,450	2,250	2,000	-
Conditional Pass Through	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	1,450	3,698	2,250	1,250	1,250	315	2,450	2,250	2,000	-
Issuance fixed coupon	1,450	3,698	2,250	1,250	1,250	-	2,450	2,250	2,000	-
Issuance floating coupon	-	-	-	-	-	315	-	-	-	-
Issuance other	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	1,450	3,698	2,250	1,250	1,250	315	2,450	2,250	2,000	-
Number of New Issuers	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Number of New Sustainable Issuers	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	-	n.a.

6.2.25 NORWAY

Outstanding (in EUR million)	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Total Covered Bonds Outstanding										
Public Sector	1,672	2,199	1,824	1,784	1,886	2,580	1,953	1,969	1,931	1,946
Mortgage	107,694	113,051	113,359	119,398	123,023	131,713	130,030	133,012	130,621	145,619
Ships	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Others	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Outstanding	109,366	115,251	115,183	121,182	124,909	134,294	131,983	134,981	132,552	147,565
Of which, total Sustainable CB	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	4,009	7,302	11,545	13,007	15,975	18,073
Public Placement										
Benchmark (1bn and above)	46,834	52,192	49,390	53,375	53,088	56,930	54,201	61,183	59,654	70,937
Benchmark (500mio - below 1bn)	18,953	21,430	30,183	29,086	34,650	38,590	42,000	38,206	36,069	43,138
Others (below 500Mio)	32,463	32,681	26,212	29,305	25,651	27,318	26,444	25,038	28,133	21,716
Private Placement	11,116	8,947	9,397	9,416	11,520	11,456	9,338	10,553	8,696	11,773
Total	109,366	115,251	115,183	121,182	124,909	134,294	131,983	134,981	132,552	147,565
Denominated in EURO	51,537	55,256	56,257	60,396	63,004	62,929	62,172	61,181	53,352	55,639
Denominated in domestic currency	44,081	50,159	49,490	52,640	54,385	64,171	62,447	68,951	75,475	86,862
Denominated in other currencies	13,748	9,837	9,435	8,145	7,520	7,195	7,363	4,849	3,725	5,072
Total	109,366	115,251	115,183	121,182	124,909	134,294	131,983	134,981	132,552	147,564
Hard Bullet	n.a.	8,232	8,484	7,646	7,286	8,724	6,713	6,393	6,304	5,003
Soft Bullet	n.a.	107,019	106,699	113,535	117,623	125,570	125,270	128,587	126,248	142,562
Conditional Pass Through	n.a.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	109,366	115,251	115,183	121,182	124,909	134,294	131,983	134,981	132,552	147,565
Outstanding fixed coupon	70,368	68,106	68,908	71,896	75,935	74,174	73,405	70,063	62,704	64,672
Outstanding floating coupon	38,998	47,146	45,246	49,285	48,974	60,120	58,578	64,917	69,848	82,746
Outstanding other	-	-	1,029	-	-	-	-	-	-	146
Total	109,366	115,251	115,183	121,182	124,909	134,294	131,983	134,981	132,552	147,565
Number of Programmes	27	28	29	28	27	26	26	26	24	24
Number of Issuers	24	25	25	24	24	24	24	23	22	22
Of which, Sustainable Issuers	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	5	8	13	14	17	16

Issuance (in EUR million)	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Total Covered Bonds Issuance										
Public Sector	312	781	457	332	608	382	551	399	534	530
Mortgage	17,750	23,058	21,256	24,331	20,766	29,686	20,466	34,217	26,872	30,937
Ships	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Others	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Issuance	18,063	23,839	21,713	24,663	21,374	30,068	21,017	34,616	27,405	31,467
Of which, Sustainable CB Issuance	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	1,509	2,795	2,528	1,862	2,944	3,467
Public Placement										
Benchmark (1bn and above)	4,937	9,143	7,699	10,595	7,584	9,847	7,730	22,878	11,951	10,944
Benchmark (500mio - below 1bn)	4,346	6,400	6,767	6,049	8,548	11,368	8,395	6,390	11,882	9,063
Others (below 500Mio)	8,574	7,115	6,295	7,304	4,633	4,596	4,338	4,801	2,885	6,761
Private Placement	206	1,181	951	716	608	4,257	554	547	688	1,448
Total	18,063	23,839	21,713	24,663	21,374	30,068	21,017	34,616	27,405	31,467
Denominated in EURO	6,773	10,342	9,688	11,618	8,150	5,918	8,498	8,555	4,033	6,605
Denominated in domestic currency	9,206	12,807	9,675	11,465	12,295	23,115	11,625	25,848	22,937	22,533
Denominated in other currencies	2,084	690	2,350	1,580	929	1,036	894	213	435	2,330
Total	18,063	23,839	21,713	24,663	21,374	30,068	21,017	34,616	27,405	31,467
Hard Bullet	n.a.	196	633	1,167	30	747	-	130	22	-
Soft Bullet	n.a.	23,643	21,080	23,496	21,344	29,321	21,017	34,486	27,383	31,467
Conditional Pass Through	n.a.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	18,063	23,839	21,713	24,663	21,374	30,068	21,017	34,616	27,405	31,467
Issuance fixed coupon	9,173	10,719	11,896	13,992	10,375	5,898	9,068	10,218	5,828	8,254
Issuance floating coupon	8,748	12,525	9,817	10,671	10,999	24,170	11,949	24,398	21,577	17,228
Issuance other	142	594	-	-		-	-	-	-	5,986
Total	18,063	23,839	21,713	24,663	21,374	30,068	21,017	34,616	27,405	31,467
Number of New Issuers	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Number of New Sustainable Issuers	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	3	2	5	1	3	-

Note: The breakdown for public/private issuance may be based on different definitions with the ECBC guidelines.

6.2.26 PANAMA

Outstanding (in EUR million)	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Total Covered Bonds Outstanding										
Public Sector	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Mortgage	276	80	-	10	46	42	46	21	10	-
Ships	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Others	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Outstanding	276	80	-	10	46	42	46	21	10	-
Of which, total Sustainable CB	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	-
Public Placement										
Benchmark (1bn and above)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Benchmark (500mio - below 1bn)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Others (below 500Mio)	276	80	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Private Placement	-	-	-	10	46	42	46	21	10	-
Total	276	80	-	10	46	42	46	21	10	-
Denominated in EURO	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Denominated in domestic currency	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Denominated in other currencies	276	80	-	10	46	42	46	21	10	-
Total	276	80	-	10	46	42	46	21	10	-
Hard Bullet	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Soft Bullet	276	80	-	10	46	42	46	21	10	-
Conditional Pass Through	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	276	80	-	10	46	42	46	21	10	-
Outstanding fixed coupon	276	80	-	10	46	42	46	21	10	-
Outstanding floating coupon	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Outstanding other	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	276	80	-	10	46	42	46	21	10	-
Number of Programmes	1	1	-	1	1	1	1	1	1	-
Number of Issuers	1	1	-	1	1	1	1	1	1	-
Of which, Sustainable Issuers	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.

Issuance (in EUR million)	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Total Covered Bonds Issuance										
Public Sector	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Mortgage			-	10	36	-	-	-	-	-
Ships	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Others	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Issuance	-	-	-	10	36	-	-	-	-	-
Of which, Sustainable CB Issuance	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Public Placement										
Benchmark (1bn and above)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Benchmark (500mio - below 1bn)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Others (below 500Mio)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Private Placement	-	-	-	10	36	-	-	-	-	-
Total	-	-	-	10	36	-	-	-	-	-
Denominated in EURO	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Denominated in domestic currency	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Denominated in other currencies	-	-	-	10	36	-	-	-	-	-
Total	-	-	-	10	36	-	-	-	-	-
Hard Bullet	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Soft Bullet	-	-	-	10	36	-	-	-	-	-
Conditional Pass Through	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	-	-	-	10	36	-	-	-	-	-
Issuance fixed coupon	-	-	-	10	36	-	-	-	-	-
Issuance floating coupon	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Issuance other	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	-	-	-	10	36	-	-	-	-	-
Number of New Issuers	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-
Number of New Sustainable Issuers	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.

6.2.27 POLAND

Outstanding (in EUR million)	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Total Covered Bonds Outstanding										
Public Sector	35	-	-	79	71	58	49	40	87	201
Mortgage	1,230	2,216	3,959	4,925	6,111	5,776	5,000	4,467	4,248	3,804
Ships	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Others	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Outstanding	1,266	2,216	3,959	5,004	6,181	5,834	5,049	4,507	4,335	4,193
Of which, total Sustainable CB	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	211	197	196	692	707	117
Public Placement										
Benchmark (1bn and above)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Benchmark (500mio - below 1bn)	-	500	1,500	2,000	2,700	2,700	2,100	2,000	1,500	500
Others (below 500Mio)	1,266	1,556	2,284	2,846	3,332	2,997	2,691	2,165	2,280	2,757
Private Placement	-	-	175	158	150	137	258	343	555	936
Total	1,266	2,216	3,959	5,004	6,181	5,834	5,049	4,507	4,335	4,193
Denominated in EURO	378	1,046	2,170	2,882	3,841	3,806	3,076	2,802	2,302	1,202
Denominated in domestic currency	888	1,170	1,789	2,122	2,340	2,028	1,973	1,705	2,034	2,991
Denominated in other currencies	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	1,266	2,216	3,959	5,004	6,181	5,834	5,049	4,507	4,335	4,193
Hard Bullet	1,266	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Soft Bullet	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Conditional Pass Through	-	2,216	3,959	5,004	6,181	5,834	5,049	4,507	4,335	4,193
Total	1,266	2,216	3,959	5,004	6,181	5,834	5,049	4,507	4,335	4,193
Outstanding fixed coupon	139	721	1,990	2,781	3,782	3,756	3,039	2,765	2,266	1,216
Outstanding floating coupon	1,127	1,495	1,969	2,223	2,399	2,077	2,010	1,742	2,070	2,977
Outstanding other			-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	1,266	2,216	3,959	5,004	6,181	5,834	5,049	4,507	4,335	4,193
Number of Programmes	4	3	3	3	5	5	5	5	5	6
Number of Issuers	3	3	3	3	4	4	4	4	4	5
Of which, Sustainable Issuers	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	2	2	2	2	2	1

Issuance (in EUR million)	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Total Covered Bonds Issuance										
Public Sector	-	-	-	79	-	-	-	-	53	65
Mortgage	416	1,099	2,048	1,244	1,284	22	454	650	634	1,329
Ships	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Others	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Issuance	416	1,099	2,048	1,323	1,284	22	454	650	687	1,394
Of which, Sustainable CB Issuance	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	211	-	-	500	-	
Public Placement										
Benchmark (1bn and above)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Benchmark (500mio - below 1bn)	-	500	1,000	500	700	-	-	500	-	-
Others (below 500Mio)	416	439	801	744	534	22	323	-	687	996
Private Placement	-	160	247	79	50	-	131	150	-	398
Total	416	1,099	2,048	1,323	1,284	22	454	650	687	1,394
Denominated in EURO	127	668	1,204	800	1,050	-	-	500	-	-
Denominated in domestic currency	290	431	844	523	234	22	454	150	687	1,394
Denominated in other currencies	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	416	1,099	2,048	1,323	1,284	22	454	650	687	1,394
Hard Bullet	416	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Soft Bullet	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Conditional Pass Through	-	1,099	2,048	1,323	1,284	22	454	650	687	1,394
Total	416	1,099	2,048	1,323	1,284	22	454	650	687	1,394
Issuance fixed coupon	31	582	1,267	814	1,000	-	-	500	-	-
Issuance floating coupon	385	517	781	509	284	22	454	150	687	1,394
Issuance other	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	416	1,099	2,048	1,323	1,284	22	454	650	687	1,394
Number of New Issuers	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
Number of New Sustainable Issuers	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	2	-	-	-	-	-

For the Polish issuer community a placement is considered public when there is one external lead involved and not at least two as per the underlying definition of the Fact Book. This is the reason why there is a discrepancy between the Fact Book and Covered Bond Label statistics for Poland.

6.2.28 PORTUGAL

Outstanding (in EUR million)	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Total Covered Bonds Outstanding										
Public Sector	500	500	600	600	600	600	600	600	600	600
Mortgage	34,461	32,970	35,530	35,795	36,600	38,350	38,150	35,900	39,020	39,531
Ships	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Others	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Outstanding	34,961	33,470	36,130	36,395	37,200	38,950	38,750	36,500	39,620	40,131
Of which, total Sustainable CB	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	-	n.a.
Public Placement										
Benchmark (1bn and above)	6,906	4,500	5,000	5,000	5,000	4,000	4,000	2,000	2,000	2,000
Benchmark (500mio - below 1bn)	3,000	3,000	3,750	3,000	2,500	1,750	1,750	1,000	3,350	3,350
Others (below 500Mio)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Private Placement	25,055	25,970	27,380	28,395	29,700	33,200	33,000	33,500	34,270	34,781
Total	34,961	33,470	36,130	36,395	37,200	38,950	38,750	36,500	39,620	40,131
Denominated in EURO	34,961	33,470	36,130	36,395	37,200	38,950	38,750	36,500	39,620	40,131
Denominated in domestic currency	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Denominated in other currencies	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	34,961	33,470	36,130	36,395	37,200	38,950	38,750	36,500	39,620	40,131
Hard Bullet	300	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Soft Bullet	30,961	27,020	29,630	29,895	29,400	31,150	30,950	28,700	37,320	38,881
Conditional Pass Through	-	6,450	6,500	6,500	7,800	7,800	7,800	7,800	2,300	1,250
Total	34,961	33,470	36,130	36,395	37,200	38,950	38,750	36,500	39,620	40,131
Outstanding fixed coupon	11,466	10,260	12,970	12,200	12,800	12,550	12,350	9,600	11,520	12,881
Outstanding floating coupon	23,495	23,210	23,160	24,195	24,400	26,400	26,400	26,900	28,100	27,250
Outstanding other	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	34,961	33,470	36,130	36,395	37,200	38,950	38,750	36,500	39,620	40,131
Number of Programmes	11	10	9	7	7	7	7	7	7	7
Number of Issuers	9	8	8	7	6	6	6	6	6	6
Of which, Sustainable Issuers	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.

Issuance (in EUR million)	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Total Covered Bonds Issuance										
Public Sector	100	150	350	-	-	-	-	450	150	-
Mortgage	8,675	5,950	8,200	2,350	4,800	1,500	-	3,550	5,420	5,162
Ships	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Others	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Issuance	8,775	6,100	8,550	2,350	4,800	1,500	-	4,000	5,570	5,162
Of which, Sustainable CB Issuance	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	-	n.a.
Public Placement										
Benchmark (1bn and above)	1,000	-	3,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,000
Benchmark (500mio - below 1bn)	750	-	750	-	1,000	-	-	-	2,350	1,000
Others (below 500Mio)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Private Placement	7,025	6,100	4,800	2,350	3,800	1,500	-	4,000	3,220	3,162
Total	8,775	6,100	8,550	2,350	4,800	1,500	-	4,000	5,570	5,162
Denominated in EURO	8,775	6,100	8,550	2,350	4,800	1,500	-	4,000	5,570	5,162
Denominated in domestic currency	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Denominated in other currencies	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	8,775	6,100	8,550	2,350	4,800	1,500	-	4,000	5,570	5,162
Hard Bullet	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Soft Bullet	4,575	4,350	7,550	2,350	3,000	1,500	-	3,250	5,570	5,162
Conditional Pass Through	4,200	1,750	1,000	-	1,800	-	-	750	-	-
Total	8,775	6,100	8,550	2,350	4,800	1,500	-	4,000	5,570	5,162
Issuance fixed coupon	2,500	3,700	5,500	-	2,100	1,500	-	750	3,420	3,362
Issuance floating coupon	6,275	2,400	3,050	2,350	2,700	-	-	3,250	2,150	1,800
Issuance other	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	8,775	6,100	8,550	2,350	4,800	1,500	-	4,000	5,570	5,162
Number of New Issuers	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Number of New Sustainable Issuers	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.

6.2.29 ROMANIA

Outstanding (in EUR million)	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Total Covered Bonds Outstanding										
Public Sector	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	-	-	-	-	-	-
Mortgage	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	200	200	200	200	200	-
Ships	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	-	-	-	-	-	-
Others	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Outstanding	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	200	200	200	200	200	-
Of which, total Sustainable CB	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	-	-	-	-	-	-
Public Placement										
Benchmark (1bn and above)	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	-	-	-	-	-	-
Benchmark (500mio - below 1bn)	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	-	-	-	-	-	-
Others (below 500Mio)	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	-	-	-	-	-	-
Private Placement	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	200	200	200	200	200	-
Total	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	200	200	200	200	200	-
Denominated in EURO	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	200	200	200	200	200	-
Denominated in domestic currency	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	-	-	-	-	-	-
Denominated in other currencies	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	200	200	200	200	200	-
Hard Bullet	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	200	200	200	200	200	-
Soft Bullet	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	-	-	-	-	-	-
Conditional Pass Through	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	200	200	200	200	200	-
Outstanding fixed coupon	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	-	-	-	-	-	-
Outstanding floating coupon	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	200	200	200	200	200	-
Outstanding other	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	200	200	200	200	200	-
Number of Programmes	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	1	1	1	1	1	-
Number of Issuers	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	1	1	1	1	1	-
Of which, Sustainable Issuers	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	-

Issuance (in EUR million)	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Total Covered Bonds Issuance										
Public Sector	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	-	-	-	-	-	-
Mortgage	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	200	-	-	-	-	-
Ships	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	-	-	-	-	-	-
Others	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Issuance	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	200	-	-	-	-	-
Of which, Sustainable CB Issuance	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Public Placement										
Benchmark (1bn and above)	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	-	-	-	-	-	-
Benchmark (500mio - below 1bn)	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	-	-	-	-	-	-
Others (below 500Mio)	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	-	-	-	-	-	-
Private Placement	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	200		-	-	-	-
Total	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	-	-	-	-	-	-
Denominated in EURO	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	200	-	-	-	-	-
Denominated in domestic currency	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	-	-	-	-	-	-
Denominated in other currencies	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	-	-	-	-	-	-
Hard Bullet	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	200	-	-	-	-	-
Soft Bullet	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	-	-	-	-	-	-
Conditional Pass Through	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	-	-	-	-	-	-
Issuance fixed coupon	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	-	-	-	-	-	-
Issuance floating coupon	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	200	-	-	-	-	-
Issuance other	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	-	-	-	-	-	-
Number of New Issuers	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	1	-	-	-	-	-
Number of New Sustainable Issuers	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.

6.2.30 SINGAPORE

Outstanding (in EUR million)	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Total Covered Bonds Outstanding										
Public Sector	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Mortgage	919	1,963	5,576	8,466	8,990	8,815	11,087	12,423	13,683	19,011
Ships	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Others	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Outstanding	919	1,963	5,576	8,466	8,990	8,815	11,087	12,423	13,683	19,011
Of which, total Sustainable CB	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Public Placement										
Benchmark (1bn and above)	919	949	834	1,092	1,113	2,019	3,202	5,992	8,099	12,629
Benchmark (500mio - below 1bn)	-	1,014	4,644	7,282	7,783	6,797	7,886	6,176	4,500	5,250
Others (below 500Mio)	-	-	98	92	94	-	-	254	270	266
Private Placement	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	814	866
Total	919	1,963	5,576	8,466	8,990	8,815	11,087	12,423	13,683	19,011
Denominated in EURO	-	500	3,250	5,250	5,250	6,250	7,250	8,000	7,000	10,000
Denominated in domestic currency	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Denominated in other currencies	919	1,463	2,326	3,216	3,740	2,565	3,837	4,423	6,683	9,011
Total	919	1,963	5,576	8,466	8,990	8,815	11,087	12,423	13,683	19,011
Hard Bullet	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Soft Bullet	919	1,963	5,576	8,466	8,990	8,816	11,087	12,423	13,683	19,011
Conditional Pass Through	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	919	1,963	5,576	8,466	8,990	8,816	11,087	12,423	13,683	19,011
Outstanding fixed coupon	919	1,449	4,598	6,871	7,347	7,676	7,691	9,660	8,627	11,709
Outstanding floating coupon	-	514	977	1,596	1,643	1,139	3,396	2,762	5,056	7,302
Outstanding other	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	919	1,963	5,576	8,466	8,990	8,815	11,087	12,423	13,683	19,011
Number of Programmes	1	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	5
Number of Issuers	1	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	5
Of which, Sustainable Issuers	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.

Issuance (in EUR million)	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Total Covered Bonds Issuance										
Public Sector	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Mortgage	919	1,014	3,753	3,762	914	1,000	3,702	3,910	2,927	6,361
Ships	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Others	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Issuance	919	1,014	3,753	3,762	914	1,000	3,702	3,910	2,927	6,361
Of which, Sustainable CB Issuance	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	-	n.a.	n.a.
Public Placement										
Benchmark (1bn and above)	919	-	-	1,092	-	1,000	2,202	2,906	2,113	4,361
Benchmark (500mio - below 1bn)	-	1,014	3,656	2,671	914	-	1,500	750	-	2,000
Others (below 500Mio)	-	-	98	-	-	-	-	254	-	-
Private Placement	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	814	-
Total	919	1,014	3,753	3,762	914	1,000	3,702	3,910	2,927	6,361
Denominated in EURO	-	500	2,750	2,000	-	1,000	1,500	2,250	-	4,250
Denominated in domestic currency	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Denominated in other currencies	919	514	1,003	1,762	914	-	2,202	1,660	2,927	2,111
Total	919	1,014	3,753	3,762	914	1,000	3,702	3,910	2,927	6,361
Hard Bullet	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Soft Bullet	919	1,014	3,753	3,762	914	1,000	3,702	3,910	2,927	6,361
Conditional Pass Through	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	919	1,014	3,753	3,762	914	1,000	3,702	3,910	2,927	6,361
Issuance fixed coupon	919	500	3,265	3,092	445	1,000	1,500	3,910	-	4,250
Issuance floating coupon	-	514	489	671	469	-	2,202	-	2,927	2,111
Issuance other	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	919	1,014	3,753	3,762	914	1,000	3,702	3,910	2,927	6,361
Number of New Issuers	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
Number of New Sustainable Issuers	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.

6.2.31 SLOVAKIA

Outstanding (in EUR million)	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Total Covered Bonds Outstanding										
Public Sector	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Mortgage	4,198	4,197	5,118	4,858	6,658	7,337	8,851	11,382	15,027	14,955
Ships	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Others	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Outstanding	4,198	4,197	5,118	4,858	6,658	7,337	8,851	11,382	15,027	14,955
Of which, total Sustainable CB	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	500	500	500
Public Placement										
Benchmark (1bn and above)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Benchmark (500mio - below 1bn)	-	-	-	-	2,000	2,500	3,500	5,000	8,000	9,000
Others (below 500Mio)	927	-	-	-	1,050	1,050	1,050	1,050	1,050	800
Private Placement	3,271	4,197	5,118	4,858	3,608	3,787	4,301	5,332	5,977	5,155
Total	4,198	4,197	5,118	4,858	6,658	7,337	8,851	11,382	15,027	14,955
Denominated in EURO	4,094	4,076	5,036	4,810	6,658	7,337	8,851	11,382	15,027	14,955
Denominated in domestic currency	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Denominated in other currencies	104	121	82	48	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	4,198	4,197	5,118	4,858	6,658	7,337	8,851	11,382	15,027	14,955
Hard Bullet	4,198	4,197	5,118	4,058	3,608	2,787	2,301	263	203	170
Soft Bullet	-	-	-	800	3,050	4,550	6,550	11,119	14,824	14,785
Conditional Pass Through	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	4,198	4,197	5,118	4,858	6,658	7,337	8,851	11,382	15,027	14,955
Outstanding fixed coupon	3,262	3,197	4,235	4,372	6,358	7,337	8,851	10,132	13,527	13,455
Outstanding floating coupon	936	995	883	486	300	-	-	1,250	1,500	1,500
Outstanding other	-	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	4,198	4,197	5,118	4,858	6,658	7,337	8,851	11,382	15,027	14,955
Number of Programmes	8	8	6	6	6	6	6	7	7	7
Number of Issuers	8	8	6	6	6	6	6	7	7	7
Of which, Sustainable Issuers	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	1	1	1

Issuance (in EUR million)	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Total Covered Bonds Issuance										
Public Sector	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Mortgage	1,159	751	1,316	800	2,250	1,500	2,000	3,250	4,125	1,500
Ships	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Others	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Issuance	1,159	751	1,316	800	2,250	1,500	2,000	3,250	4,125	1,500
Of which, Sustainable CB Issuance	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	500	-	-
Public Placement					-					
Benchmark (1bn and above)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Benchmark (500mio - below 1bn)	-	-	-	-	2,000	500	1,000	1,500	3,000	1,500
Others (below 500Mio)	-	-	-	-	250	-	-	-	-	-
Private Placement	1,159	751	1,316	800	-	1,000	1,000	1,750	1,125	-
Total	1,159	751	1,316	800	2,250	1,500	2,000	3,250	4,125	1,500
Denominated in EURO	1,159	685	1,316	800	2,250	1,500	2,000	3,250	4,125	1,500
Denominated in domestic currency	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Denominated in other currencies	-	66	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	1,159	751	1,316	800	2,250	1,500	2,000	3,250	4,125	1,500
Hard Bullet	1,159	751	1,316	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Soft Bullet	-	-	-	800	2,250	1,500	2,000	3,250	4,125	1,500
Conditional Pass Through	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	1,159	751	1,316	800	2,250	1,500	2,000	3,250	4,125	1,500
Issuance fixed coupon	940	690	1,316	800	2,250	1,500	2,000	2,000	3,625	1,500
Issuance floating coupon	219	56	-	-	-	-	-	1,250	500	-
Issuance other		5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	1,159	751	1,316	800	2,250	1,500	2,000	3,250	4,125	1,500
Number of New Issuers	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
Number of New Sustainable Issuers	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	1	-	-

6.2.32 SOUTH KOREA

Outstanding (in EUR million)	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Total Covered Bonds Outstanding										
Public Sector	-	-	-	-		-	-	-	-	-
Mortgage	1,954	2,490	2,619	2,771	6,241	7,928	9,966	11,622	14,591	15,826
Ships	-	-	-	-		-	-	-	-	-
Others	-	-	-	-		-	-	-	-	-
Total Outstanding	1,954	2,490	2,619	2,771	6,241	7,928	9,966	11,622	14,591	15,826
Of which, total Sustainable CB	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	500	1,000	3,000	5,550	7,642	10,359	13,167
Public Placement										
Benchmark (1bn and above)	-	-	-	-	-	1,000	2,000	2,000	3,100	3,100
Benchmark (500mio - below 1bn)	1,837	2,372	2,501	2,684	3,284	3,222	3,992	5,150	6,400	8,050
Others (below 500Mio)	-	118	117	-	-	-	-	-	287	672
Private Placement	117	-	-	87	2,957	3,706	3,974	4,472	4,804	4,004
Total	1,954	2,490	2,619	2,771	6,241	7,928	9,966	11,622	14,591	15,826
Denominated in EURO	-	-	-	500	1,000	3,000	5,550	7,150	9,500	11,150
Denominated in domestic currency	117	118	117	-	2,869	3,706	3,974	3,980	3,732	2,355
Denominated in other currencies	1,837	2,372	2,501	2,271	2,372	1,222	442	492	1,359	2,321
Total	1,954	2,490	2,618	2,771	6,241	7,928	9,966	11,622	14,591	15,826
Hard Bullet	1,495	1,541	1,785	1,810	5,220	7,021	8,466	9,622	11,491	10,576
Soft Bullet	459	949	833	961	1,021	907	1,500	2,000	3,100	5,250
Conditional Pass Through	-	-	-	-		-	-	-	-	-
Total	1,954	2,490	2,618	2,771	6,241	7,928	9,966	11,622	14,591	15,826
Outstanding fixed coupon	1,954	2,490	2,619	2,771	6,241	7,928	9,966	11,622	14,427	15,087
Outstanding floating coupon	-	-	-	-		-	-	-	164	739
Outstanding other	-	-	-	-		-	-	-	-	-
Total	1,954	2,490	2,619	2,771	6,241	7,928	9,966	11,622	14,591	15,826
Number of Programmes	2	2	2	2	5	6	7	7	7	7
Number of Issuers	2	2	2	2	5	6	7	7	7	7
Of which, Sustainable Issuers	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	1	1	2	3	3	3	4

Issuance (in EUR million)	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Total Covered Bonds Issuance										
Public Sector	-	-	-	-		-	-	-	-	-
Mortgage	919	949	417	587	3,369	2,921	2,847	2,092	3,704	4,189
Ships	-	-	-	-		-	-	-	-	-
Others	-	-	-	-		-	-	-	-	-
Total Issuance	919	949	417	587	3,369	2,921	2,847	2,092	3,704	4,189
Of which, Sustainable CB Issuance	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	500	500	2,000	2,550	2,092	3,204	3,289
Public Placement										
Benchmark (1bn and above)	-	-	-	-	-	1,000	1,000	-	1,100	-
Benchmark (500mio - below 1bn)	919	949	417	500	500	1,000	1,550	1,600	1,750	2,150
Others (below 500Mio)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	287	385
Private Placement	-	-	-	87	2,869	921	297	492	567	1,654
Total	919	949	417	587	3,369	2,921	2,847	2,092	3,704	4,189
Denominated in EURO	-	-	-	500	500	2,000	2,550	1,600	2,850	2,150
Denominated in domestic currency	-	-	-	-	2,869	921	297	-	-	1,096
Denominated in other currencies	919	949	417	87		-	-	492	854	943
Total	919	949	417	587	3,369	2,921	2,847	2,092	3,704	4,189
Hard Bullet	459	474	417	500	3,369	2,421	1,847	1,592	2,604	2,039
Soft Bullet	459	474	-	87	-	500	1,000	500	1,100	2,150
Conditional Pass Through	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	919	949	417	587	3,369	2,921	2,847	2,092	3,704	4,189
Issuance fixed coupon	919	949	417	587	3,369	2,921	2,847	2,092	3,540	3,618
Issuance floating coupon	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	164	571
Issuance other	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	919	949	417	587	3,369	2,921	2,847	2,092	3,704	4,189
Number of New Issuers	1	-	-	-	3	1	1	-	-	-
Number of New Sustainable Issuers	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	1	-	1	1	-	-	1

6.2.33 SPAIN

Outstanding (in EUR million)	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Total Covered Bonds Outstanding										
Public Sector	28,505	26,887	25,362	18,362	20,763	18,262	17,544	12,585	13,040	8,290
Mortgage	252,383	232,456	216,498	213,253	220,689	231,143	216,808	188,958	191,825	188,626
Ships	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Others	-	-	-	-	1,500	7,397	8,522	7,300	10,009	11,586
Total Outstanding	280,888	259,344	241,860	231,615	242,952	256,802	242,874	208,843	214,875	208,502
Of which, total Sustainable CB	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	2,000	2,100	2,800	3,300	3,300	3,300
Public Placement										
Benchmark (1bn and above)	156,845	129,777	107,096	96,706	89,506	83,910	72,246	63,346	62,196	57,446
Benchmark (500mio - below 1bn)	11,690	12,190	10,190	9,850	4,410	3,510	3,460	2,800	2,850	8,400
Others (below 500Mio)	-	-	-	-	5,000	6,282	4,000	4,000	3,500	85
Private Placement	112,352	117,376	124,574	125,059	144,036	163,100	163,169	138,697	146,329	142,572
Total	280,888	259,344	241,860	231,615	242,952	256,802	242,874	208,843	214,875	208,502
Denominated in EURO	279,969	258,395	241,860	231,615	242,319	252,946	237,833	203,469	208,356	200,819
Denominated in domestic currency	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Denominated in other currencies	919	949	-	-	633	3,856	5,041	5,374	6,518	7,683
Total	280,888	259,344	241,860	231,615	242,952	256,802	242,874	208,843	214,875	208,502
Hard Bullet	280,888	259,344	241,860	231,615	242,952	256,802	242,874	199,993	183,195	162,441
Soft Bullet	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	8,850	31,680	46,061
Conditional Pass Through	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	280,888	259,344	241,860	231,615	242,952	256,802	242,874	208,843	214,875	208,502
Outstanding fixed coupon	181,033	160,646	138,141	126,806	127,707	135,264	116,481	94,122	95,610	92,266
Outstanding floating coupon	99,855	98,698	103,299	104,450	115,245	121,538	126,394	114,721	119,265	116,236
Outstanding other	-	-	421	359	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	280,888	259,344	241,860	231,615	242,952	256,802	242,874	208,843	214,875	208,502
Number of Programmes	40	35	33	31	29	26	26	27	n.a.	29
Number of Issuers	31	28	26	24	23	21	19	21	20	20
Of which, Sustainable Issuers	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	2	2	3	3	3	3

Issuance (in EUR million)	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Total Covered Bonds Issuance										
Public Sector	10,400	7,250	350	800	800	2,900	1,000	2,000	750	-
Mortgage	31,375	31,393	30,000	19,935	19,435	14,560	12,720	22,350	22,550	17,500
Ships	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Others	-	-	-	-	1,500	5,897	880	-	3,380	2,322
Total Issuance	41,775	38,643	30,350	20,735	21,735	23,357	14,600	24,350	26,680	19,822
Of which, Sustainable CB Issuance	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	-	100	700	500	500	-
Public Placement										
Benchmark (1bn and above)	15,000	11,536	2,600	3,625	5,750	3,500	-	4,500	6,000	1,000
Benchmark (500mio - below 1bn)	4,750	2,000	-	1,500	750	-	700	750	750	1,850
Others (below 500Mio)	-	-	-	-	500	-	-	500	1,500	-
Private Placement	22,025	25,107	27,750	15,610	14,735	19,857	13,900	18,600	18,430	16,972
Total	41,775	38,643	30,350	20,735	21,735	23,357	14,600	24,350	26,680	19,822
Denominated in EURO	41,775	38,643	30,350	20,735	21,735	20,260	13,720	24,350	25,300	19,100
Denominated in domestic currency	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Denominated in other currencies	-	-	-	-	-	3,097	880	-	1,380	722
Total	41,775	38,643	30,350	20,735	21,735	23,357	14,600	24,350	26,680	19,822
Hard Bullet	41,775	38,643	30,350	20,735	21,735	23,357	14,600	17,100	850	7,250
Soft Bullet	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7,250	25,830	12,572
Conditional Pass Through	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	41,775	38,643	30,350	20,735	21,735	23,357	14,600	24,350	26,680	19,822
Issuance fixed coupon	23,837	25,043	10,198	5,821	7,760	9,060	12,970	6,750	10,850	4,450
Issuance floating coupon	17,938	13,600	20,152	14,914	13,975	14,297	1,630	17,600	15,830	15,372
Issuance other	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	41,775	38,643	30,350	20,735	21,735	23,357	14,600	24,350	26,680	19,822
Number of New Issuers	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Number of New Sustainable Issuers	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	-	-	1	-	-	-

Source: AIAF, Bloomberg, Reuters, Moody's, Fitch, S&P, ECBC
Note: Please note that the breakdown public vs private placements is an estimation made by the ECBC.
Please also note that the methodology used for counting the number of issuers has changed. Until 2011, the number of "new issuers" included the new financial institutions established as part of the restructuring of the Spanish banking sector whose inaugural issue occurred during the year of reporting. The number of issuers also included all the former financial institutions with outstanding covered bonds at the end of each year - even if, as a consequence of the aforementioned restructuring, they were integrated into a new one - along with the new institutions. From 2012 onwards, however, only the new entities are reported as active issuers.

6.2.34 SWEDEN

Outstanding (in EUR million)	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Total Covered Bonds Outstanding										
Public Sector	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Mortgage	221,990	222,444	219,212	217,979	235,111	247,713	242,018	225,212	235,228	224,876
Ships	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Others	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Outstanding	221,990	222,444	219,212	217,979	235,111	247,713	242,018	225,212	235,228	224,876
Of which, total Sustainable CB	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	1,362	1,668	1,633	2,045	4,472	6,368
Public Placement										
Benchmark (1bn and above)	172,823	177,385	173,105	171,336	185,661	196,370	191,639	179,609	186,035	177,768
Benchmark (500mio - below 1bn)	14,836	13,623	16,212	18,046	20,876	17,916	19,504	17,492	22,697	20,983
Others (below 500Mio)	24,859	22,918	23,432	18,117	18,312	21,227	19,731	20,514	19,331	21,042
Private Placement	9,472	8,518	6,463	10,481	10,262	12,200	11,145	7,597	7,164	5,083
Total	221,990	222,444	219,212	217,979	235,111	247,713	242,018	225,212	235,228	224,876
Denominated in EURO	37,931	38,224	39,094	43,610	47,301	44,962	39,929	37,167	38,407	31,763
Denominated in domestic currency	165,682	167,831	165,874	164,307	178,854	195,770	195,817	184,564	193,813	190,189
Denominated in other currencies	18,377	16,389	14,244	10,062	8,956	6,982	6,272	3,481	3,008	2,924
Total	221,990	222,444	219,212	217,979	235,111	247,713	242,018	225,212	235,228	224,876
Hard Bullet	216,945	214,177	207,424	203,566	217,145	234,715	224,354	200,640	174,589	126,455
Soft Bullet	5,045	8,267	11,788	14,413	17,966	12,998	17,664	24,571	60,639	98,421
Conditional Pass Through	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	221,990	222,444	219,212	217,979	235,111	247,713	242,018	225,212	235,228	224,876
Outstanding fixed coupon	200,034	201,061	199,424	200,840	215,500	219,770	215,532	201,503	212,332	201,266
Outstanding floating coupon	21,956	21,383	19,788	17,139	19,611	27,943	26,487	23,709	22,896	23,610
Outstanding other	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	221,990	222,444	219,212	217,979	235,111	247,713	242,018	225,212	235,228	224,876
Number of Programmes	9	10	10	12	12	12	13	13	13	13
Number of Issuers	8	8	8	10	10	10	11	12	12	12
Of which, Sustainable Issuers	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	2	2	2	3	4	6

Issuance (in EUR million)	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Total Covered Bonds Issuance										
Public Sector	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Mortgage	60,729	52,187	48,525	54,199	53,258	53,222	57,240	48,238	56,677	44,278
Ships	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Others	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Issuance	60,729	52,187	48,525	54,199	53,258	53,222	57,240	48,238	56,677	44,278
Of which, Sustainable CB Issuance	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	859	249	-	539	2,895	2,531
Public Placement										
Benchmark (1bn and above)	47,756	37,508	30,206	34,876	34,618	38,196	44,844	37,465	41,331	29,228
Benchmark (500mio - below 1bn)	5,608	7,360	7,766	10,715	8,140	1,124	3,877	3,474	9,740	8,560
Others (below 500Mio)	6,410	6,895	10,315	6,027	9,241	10,936	4,586	4,449	4,779	6,141
Private Placement	955	424	237	2,582	1,258	2,966	3,934	2,848	826	349
Total	60,729	52,187	48,525	54,199	53,258	53,222	57,240	48,238	56,677	44,278
Denominated in EURO	10,066	7,065	11,689	5,620	7,814	3,855	9,104	6,458	7,085	1,463
Denominated in domestic currency	47,364	43,741	34,981	46,375	44,388	47,027	45,083	41,780	48,633	42,228
Denominated in other currencies	3,299	1,381	1,855	2,204	1,055	2,340	3,053	-	959	587
Total	60,729	52,187	48,525	54,199	53,258	53,222	57,240	48,238	56,677	44,278
Hard Bullet	56,642	50,005	44,881	50,571	49,125	51,646	54,462	40,271	19,053	2,041
Soft Bullet	4,087	2,182	3,643	3,628	4,134	1,576	2,779	7,966	37,625	42,236
Conditional Pass Through	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	60,729	52,187	48,525	54,199	53,258	53,222	57,240	48,238	56,677	44,278
Issuance fixed coupon	54,618	46,046	44,358	47,056	46,947	41,349	45,544	40,354	50,463	36,618
Issuance floating coupon	6,111	6,141	4,166	7,143	6,311	11,873	11,697	7,884	6,214	7,660
Issuance other	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	60,729	52,187	48,525	54,199	53,258	53,222	57,240	48,238	56,677	44,278
Number of New Issuers	-	-	-	2	-	-	1	1	-	-
Number of New Sustainable Issuers	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	1	-	-	1	1	2

Note: In the Swedish domestic market it is common practice to tap issue and to buy back issuances if the bond has a maturity of less than 12-18 months. In order to best represent the liquidity of the market, tapped issuance which per ECBC definition fall under private placement have been considered as public placement according to the benchmark of their yearly cumulative issuance and their size of outstanding volume. This explains the discrepancy between the figures of the Fact Book and the Covered Bond Label.

6.2.35 SWITZERLAND

Outstanding (EUR million)	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Total Covered Bonds Outstanding										
Outstanding CBs - Pfandbriefe	95,940	105,012	101,962	110,556	120,798	131,702	146,014	164,529	184,056	168,800
Outstanding CBs - Structured	15,602	12,553	9,670	8,867	7,450	8,914	6,811	9,928	17,029	26,600
Total Outstanding	111,542	117,564	111,632	119,422	128,248	140,617	152,825	174,458	201,085	195,400
Of which, total Sustainable CB	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	145	249	378	457
Public Placement										
Benchmark (1bn and above)	14,898	11,500	8,750	7,500	4,750	4,750	2,252	2,252	3,220	6,220
Benchmark (500mio - below 1bn)	60,457	64,107	59,627	74,316	83,100	94,691	111,959	124,932	145,003	127,894
Others (below 500Mio)	35,483	41,247	42,549	37,505	39,727	40,403	35,597	43,729	43,851	43,561
Private Placement	704	710	706	101	671	773	3,017	3,544	10,410	17,724
Total	111,542	117,564	111,632	119,422	128,248	140,617	152,825	174,458	201,085	195,400
Denominated in EURO	13,100	12,100	9,350	8,101	5,350	5,350	1,850	1,318	1,318	5,068
Denominated in domestic currency	95,940	105,012	102,176	111,221	122,827	135,200	150,905	173,073	199,767	190,332
Denominated in other currencies	2,502	453	106	100	71	67	70	67	-	-
Total	111,542	117,564	111,632	119,422	128,248	140,617	152,825	174,458	201,085	195,400
Hard Bullet	n.a	105,464	102,068	111,256	121,398	132,302	146,614	165,097	184,056	179,451
Soft Bullet	n.a.	12,100	9,564	8,167	6,850	8,315	6,211	9,360	17,029	15,950
Conditional Pass Through	n.a.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	111,542	117,564	111,632	119,422	128,248	140,617	152,825	174,458	201,085	195,400
Outstanding fixed coupon	111,542	117,564	111,632	119,422	128,248	140,617	152,825	174,458	201,085	194,650
Outstanding floating coupon	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	750
Outstanding other	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	111,542	117,564	111,632	119,422	128,248	140,617	152,825	174,458	201,085	195,400
Number of Programmes	4	4	5	5	6	6	7	8	9	8
Number of Issuers	4	4	5	5	6	6	7	8	9	7
Of which, Sustainable Issuers	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	1	1	1	1

Issuance (EUR million)	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Total Covered Bonds Issuance										
New Issues of CBs - Pfandbriefe	15,840	16,106	12,708	13,282	14,022	19,050	17,952	21,211	20,387	17,475
New Issues of CBs - Structured	-	-	214	444	1,338	1,458	1,345	4,279	6,749	11,824
Total Issuance	15,840	16,106	12,922	13,725	15,360	20,508	19,297	25,490	27,136	29,299
Of which, Sustainable CB Issuance	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	145	104	108	106
Public Placement										
Benchmark (1bn and above)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,007	3,000
Benchmark (500mio - below 1bn)	8,822	3,850	2,437	2,983	2,036	5,453	6,202	7,944	6,922	13,336
Others (below 500Mio)	7,018	12,256	10,485	10,742	13,324	14,949	12,403	14,636	13,894	5,753
Private Placement	-	-	-	-	-	106	692	2,910	5,313	7,210
Total	15,840	16,106	12,922	13,725	15,360	20,508	19,297	25,490	27,136	29,299
Denominated in EURO	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	750	-	3,750
Denominated in domestic currency	15,840	16,106	12,922	13,725	15,360	20,508	19,297	24,740	27,136	25,549
Denominated in other currencies	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	15,840	16,106	12,922	13,725	15,360	20,508	19,297	25,490	27,136	29,299
Hard Bullet	n.a	16,106	12,708	13,282	14,022	19,050	17,952	21,211	20,387	25,163
Soft Bullet	n.a.	-	214	444	1,338	1,458	1,345	4,279	6,749	4,136
Conditional Pass Through	n.a.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	15,840	16,106	12,922	13,725	15,360	20,508	19,297	25,490	27,136	29,299
Issuance fixed coupon	15,840	16,106	12,922	13,725	15,360	20,508	19,297	25,490	27,136	28,549
Issuance floating coupon	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	750
Issuance other	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	15,840	16,106	12,922	13,725	15,360	20,508	19,297	25,490	27,136	29,299
Number of New Issuers	-	-	1	-	1	1	-	2	1	-
Number of New Sustainable Issuers	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	1	-	-	-

Note: from 2008 only Limmat bonds are considered as "Private Placements"

6.2.36 TURKEY

Outstanding (in EUR million)	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Total Covered Bonds Outstanding										
Public Sector	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Mortgage	128	628	1,923	2,334	2,560	1,755	895	280	6	-
Ships	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Others	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Outstanding	128	628	1,923	2,334	2,560	1,755	895	280	6	-
Of which, total Sustainable CB	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	-
Public Placement										
Benchmark (1bn and above)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Benchmark (500mio - below 1bn)	-	500	500	500	500	500	-	-	-	-
Others (below 500Mio)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	280	-	-
Private Placement	128	128	1,423	1,834	2,060	1,255	895	-	6	-
Total	128	628	1,923	2,334	2,560	1,755	895	280	6	-
Denominated in EURO	-	500	500	500	-	500	-	-	-	-
Denominated in domestic currency	128	128	1,423	1,834	2,560	1,255	895	280	6	-
Denominated in other currencies	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	128	628	1,923	2,334	2,560	1,755	895	280	6	-
Hard Bullet	-	-	-	68	-	-	895	-	6	-
Soft Bullet	128	628	1,923	2,266	2,560	1,755	-	280	-	-
Conditional Pass Through	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	128	628	1,923	2,334	2,560	1,755	895	280	6	-
Outstanding fixed coupon	128	628	1,923	2,334	2,560	1,755	895	280	-	-
Outstanding floating coupon	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6	-
Outstanding other	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	128	628	1,923	2,334	2,560	1,755	895	280	6	-
Number of Programmes	1	1	4	6	7	7	8	8	1	-
Number of Issuers	1	1	4	6	7	7	8	8	1	-
Of which, Sustainable Issuers	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	-

Issuance (in EUR million)	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Total Covered Bonds Issuance										
Public Sector	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Mortgage	128	500	1,334	766	227	-	16	-	-	-
Ships	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Others	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Issuance	128	500	1,334	766	227	-	16	-	-	-
Of which, Sustainable CB Issuance	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	-	n.a.	-	-	n.a.
Public Placement										
Benchmark (1bn and above)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Benchmark (500mio - below 1bn)	-	500	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Others (below 500Mio)	-	-	-	-	227	-	-	-	-	-
Private Placement	128	-	1,334	766	-	-	16	-	-	-
Total	128	500	1,334	766	227	-	16	-	-	-
Denominated in EURO	-	500	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Denominated in domestic currency	128	-	1,334	766	227	-	16	-	-	-
Denominated in other currencies	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	128	500	1,334	766	227	-	16	-	-	-
Hard Bullet	-	-	-	68	-	-	16	-	-	-
Soft Bullet	128	500	1,334	698	227	-	-	-	-	-
Conditional Pass Through	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	128	500	1,334	766	227	-	16	-	-	-
Issuance fixed coupon	128	500	1,334	766	227	-	-	-	-	-
Issuance floating coupon	-	-	-	-	-	-	16	-	-	-
Issuance other	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	128	500	1,334	766	227	-	16	-	-	-
Number of New Issuers	1	1	2	2	1	-	1	-	-	-
Number of New Sustainable Issuers	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	-	n.a.	-	-	n.a.

6.2.37 UNITED KINGDOM

Outstanding (in EUR million)	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Total Covered Bonds Outstanding										
Regulated - Mortgages	106,674	97,127	89,509	93,530	108,857	96,012	88,710	85,801	95,376	95,196
Regulated - Public Sector	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Non-regulated - Mortgages	8,236	-	-	-	-	1,112	2,380	4,510	4,603	4,824
Non-regulated - Public Sector	6,358	4,894	4,697	4,662	705	667	595	564	575	
Total Outstanding	121,268	102,021	94,206	98,192	109,562	97,791	91,685	90,875	100,554	100,020
Of which, total Sustainable CB	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	500	1,064	1,075	1,103
Public Placement										
Benchmark (1bn and above)	93,997	75,733	70,229	72,312	86,106	71,210	58,240	54,468	54,039	55,083
Benchmark (500mio - below 1bn)	10,233	9,546	7,548	11,457	12,164	13,609	13,219	14,499	16,967	14,335
Others (below 500Mio)	971	280	248	-	-	50	484	873	1,345	1,652
Private Placement	16,068	16,462	16,181	14,423	11,292	12,923	19,742	21,035	28,203	28,950
Total	121,268	102,021	94,206	98,192	109,562	97,791	91,685	90,875	100,554	100,020
Denominated in EURO	67,651	57,703	55,876	56,426	58,096	48,159	37,325	31,922	31,040	29,366
Denominated in domestic currency	47,613	38,532	36,977	40,482	48,854	45,551	50,856	54,888	64,641	64,420
Denominated in other currencies	6,004	5,786	1,353	1,284	2,612	4,081	3,504	4,065	4,873	6,234
Total	121,268	102,021	94,206	98,192	109,562	97,791	91,685	90,875	100,554	100,020
Hard Bullet	n.a.	7,508	5,331	2,581	2,581	2,581	2,481	2,354	2,278	2,103
Soft Bullet	n.a.	91,028	85,531	92,291	106,981	95,210	89,204	88,521	98,276	97,917
Conditional Pass Through	n.a.	3,485	3,344	3,320	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	121,268	102,021	94,206	98,192	109,562	97,791	91,685	90,875	100,554	100,020
Outstanding fixed coupon	91,567	78,951	72,038	71,144	74,833	65,195	52,633	45,478	45,625	42,971
Outstanding floating coupon	29,701	23,070	22,168	27,048	34,729	32,596	39,052	45,397	54,929	57,049
Outstanding other	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	121,268	102,021	94,206	98,192	109,562	97,791	91,685	90,875	100,554	100,020
Number of Programmes	16	14	14	14	15	16	16	15	14	14
Number of Issuers	15	12	12	13	14	16	16	15	14	14
Of which, Sustainable Issuers	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	1	1	1	1

Issuance (in EUR million)	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Total Covered Bonds Issuance										
Regulated - Mortgages	15,015	9,599	11,563	14,916	22,959	9,089	9,783	15,977	23,799	14,226
Regulated - Public Sector	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Non-regulated - Mortgages	-	-	-	-	-	1,112	1,190	2,255	-	-
Non-regulated - Public Sector	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Issuance	15,015	9,599	11,563	14,916	22,959	10,201	10,973	18,232	23,799	14,226
Of which, Sustainable CB Issuance	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	500	564	-	-
Public Placement										
Benchmark (1bn and above)	11,540	6,701	10,013	12,224	18,232	7,643	1,785	11,502	12,413	10,397
Benchmark (500mio - below 1bn)	2,159	1,381	1,500	2,662	2,850	500	1,750	2,688	500	3,500
Others (below 500Mio)	409	-	-	-	-	-	-	366	416	329
Private Placement	907	1,517	50	30	1,877	2,057	7,438	3,676	10,470	-
Total	15,015	9,599	11,563	14,916	22,959	10,201	10,973	18,232	23,799	14,226
Denominated in EURO	8,135	6,833	4,800	4,030	7,620	1,750	1,750	3,568	3,518	6,000
Denominated in domestic currency	6,880	2,766	6,763	10,231	13,989	6,617	9,223	13,360	17,375	6,934
Denominated in other currencies	-	-	-	655	1,350	1,834	-	1,304	2,906	1,292
Total	15,015	9,599	11,563	14,916	22,959	10,201	10,973	18,232	23,799	14,226
Hard Bullet	n.a.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Soft Bullet	n.a.	9,599	11,563	14,916	22,959	10,201	10,973	18,232	23,799	14,226
Conditional Pass Through	n.a.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	15,015	9,599	11,563	14,916	22,959	10,201	10,973	18,232	23,799	14,226
Issuance fixed coupon	8,816	6,808	4,800	4,685	8,970	3,584	1,750	4,872	6,424	6,292
Issuance floating coupon	6,199	2,791	6,763	10,231	13,989	6,617	9,223	13,360	17,375	7,934
Issuance other	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	15,015	9,599	11,563	14,916	22,959	10,201	10,973	18,232	23,799	14,226
Number of New Issuers	-	-	1	1	1	1	-	1	-	-
Number of New Sustainable Issuers	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	1	-	-	-

Note: There are 14 Regulated issuers each with one Regulated residential mortgage programme (two regulated issuers also have unregulated programmes).
Please refer to the FCA's website for more details of the Regulted issues (http://www.fca.org.uk/firms/systems-reporting/regulated-covered-bonds-register).

6.2.38 UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Outstanding (in EUR million)	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Total Covered Bonds Outstanding										
Public Sector	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Mortgage	4,000	2,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Ships	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Others	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Outstanding	4,000	2,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Of which, total Sustainable CB	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Public Placement										
Benchmark (1bn and above)	4,000	2,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Benchmark (500mio - below 1bn)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Others (below 500Mio)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Private Placement	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	4,000	2,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Denominated in EURO	4,000	2,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Denominated in domestic currency	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Denominated in other currencies	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	4,000	2,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Hard Bullet	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Soft Bullet	4,000	2,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Conditional Pass Through	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	4,000	2,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Outstanding fixed coupon	4,000	2,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Outstanding floating coupon	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Outstanding other	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	4,000	2,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Number of Programmes	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Number of Issuers	2	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Of which, Sustainable Issuers	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Issuance (in EUR million)	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Total Covered Bonds Issuance										
Public Sector	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Mortgage	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Ships	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Others	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Issuance	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Of which, Sustainable CB Issuance	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Public Placement										
Benchmark (1bn and above)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Benchmark (500mio - below 1bn)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Others (below 500Mio)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Private Placement	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Denominated in EURO	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Denominated in domestic currency	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Denominated in other currencies	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Hard Bullet	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Soft Bullet	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Conditional Pass Through	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Issuance fixed coupon	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Issuance floating coupon	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Issuance other	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Number of New Issuers	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Number of New Sustainable Issuers	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

6.2.39 ANNEX: EUROPEAN CENTRAL BANK EXCHANGE RATES WITH THE EURO, YEAR END

	Australian dollar	Brazilian real	Canadian dollar	Swiss franc	Czech koruna	Danish krone	UK pound sterling
2009	1.6008	2.5113	1.5128	1.4836	26.473	7.4418	0.8881
2010	1.3136	2.2177	1.3322	1.2504	25.061	7.4535	0.86075
2011	1.2723	2.4159	1.3215	1.2156	25.787	7.4342	0.8353
2012	1.2712	2.7036	1.3137	1.2072	25.151	7.461	0.8161
2013	1.5423	3.2576	1.4671	1.2276	27.427	7.4593	0.8337
2014	1.4829	3.2207	1.4063	1.2024	27.735	7.4453	0.7789
2015	1.4897	4.3117	1.5116	1.0835	27.023	7.4626	0.73395
2016	1.4596	3.4305	1.4188	1.0739	27.021	7.4344	0.85618
2017	1.5346	3.9729	1.5039	1.1702	25.535	7.4449	0.88723
2018	1.622	4.444	1.5605	1.1269	25.724	7.4673	0.89453
2019	1.5995	4.5157	1.4598	1.0854	25.408	7.4715	0.8508
2020	1.5896	6.3735	1.5633	1.0802	26.242	7.4409	0.89903
2021	1.5615	6.3101	1.4393	1.0331	24.858	7.4364	0.84028
2022	1.5693	5.6386	1.4440	0.9847	24.116	7.4365	0.88693
2023	1.6263	5.3618	1.4642	0.9260	24.724	7.4529	0.86905
2024	**1.6772**	**6.4253**	**1.4948**	**0.9412**	**25.185**	**7.4578**	**0.82918**

	Hong Kong dollar	Hungarian forint	Iceland krona	Japanese yen	Korean won (Republic)	Lithuanian litas	Latvian lats
2009	11.1709	270.42	179.48*	133.16	1666.97	3.4528	0.7093
2010	10.3856	277.95	153.78*	108.65	1499.06	3.4528	0.7094
2011	10.051	314.58	159*	100.2	1498.69	3.4528	0.6995
2012	10.226	292.3	168.91*	113.61	1406.23	3.4528	0.6977
2013	10.6933	297.04	158.29**	144.72	1450.93	3.4528	0.7028
2014	9.417	315.54	154.31**	145.23	1324.8	3.4528	1.000
2015	8.4376	315.98	141.38**	131.07	1280.8	1.000	1.000
2016	8.1751	309.83	119.15**	123.4	1269.36	1.000	1.000
2017	9.372	310.33	124.30**	135.01	1279.61	1.000	1.000
2018	8.9675	320.98	127.89***	125.85	1277.93	1.000	1.000
2019	8.7473	330.53	137.28***	121.94	1296.28	1.000	1.000
2020	9.5142	363.89	154.59***	126.49	1336.00	1.000	1.000
2021	8.8333	369.19	150.15***	130.38	1346.38	1.000	1.000
2022	8.3163	400.87	142.24***	140.66	1344.09	1.000	1.000
2023	8.6314	382.80	149.13***	156.33	1433.66	1.000	1.000
2024	**8.0686**	**411.35**	**143.90*** **	**163.06**	**1532.15**	**1.000**	**1.000**

* Bloomberg "Compound New York" Rates, ** Bloomberg "Bloomberg Generic Pricing (BGN)" Rates (On 10 December 2008, the European Central Bank has stopped publishing foreign exchange reference rates of the Icelandic Króna, but it resumed in February 2018). *** Yearly average figure provided by the European Central Bank.

	Norwegian krone	New Zealand dollar	Polish zloty	Swedish krona	Singapore dollar	Turkish lira	US dollar
2009	8.3	1.9803	4.1045	10.252	2.0194	2.1547	1.4406
2010	7.8	1.72	3.975	8.9655	1.7136	2.0694	1.3362
2011	7.754	1.6737	4.458	8.912	1.6819	2.4432	1.2939
2012	7.3483	1.6045	4.074	8.582	1.6111	2.3551	1.3194
2013	8.363	1.6762	4.1543	8.8591	1.7414	2.9605	1.3791
2014	9.042	1.5525	4.2732	9.393	1.6058	2.832	1.2141
2015	9.603	1.5923	4.2639	9.1895	1.5417	3.1765	1.0887
2016	9.0863	1.5158	4.4103	9.5525	1.5234	3.7072	1.0541
2017	9.8403	1.685	4.177	9.8438	1.6024	4.5464	1.1993
2018	9.9483	1.7056	4.3014	10.2548	1.5591	6.0588	1.145
2019	9.8638	1.6653	4.2568	10.4468	1.5111	6.6843	1.1234
2020	10.4703	1.6984	4.5597	10.0343	1.6218	9.1131	1.2271
2021	9.9888	1.6579	4.5969	10.2503	1.5279	15.2335	1.1326
2022	10.5138	1.6798	4.6808	11.1218	1.4300	19.9649	1.0666
2023	11.2405	1.7504	4.3395	11.0960	1.4591	32.6531	1.105
2024	**11.7950**	**1.8532**	**4.2750**	**11.459**	**1.4164**	**36.7372**	**1.0389**

Source: European Central Bank (ECB), Statistics Data Warehouse.
Note: The Euro is the denominator.
Note: The exchange rate protocol used for ECBC covered bond statistics is to take the ECB bilateral exchange rate on the last business day of the year.

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