



Fitch Upgrades Rural Hipotecario XIV, XV and XVI's Class B Notes

Fitch Ratings-Frankfurt/London-30 January 2018: Fitch Ratings has upgraded Rural Hipotecario XIV, XV and XVI's class B notes and affirmed the class A notes as well as Rural Hipotecario XVII's Bond A. The notes have been removed from Rating Watch Evolving (RWE) and the Outlook on all tranches is Stable.

Rural Hipotecario XIV, FTA

Class A (ES0374268003); affirmed at 'A+sf'; off RWE; Outlook Stable

Class B (ES0374268011); upgraded to 'A-sf' from 'BBsf'; off RWE; Outlook Stable

Rural Hipotecario XV, FTA

Class A (ES0323977001); affirmed at 'A+sf'; off RWE; Outlook Stable

Class B (ES0323977019); upgraded to 'Asf' from 'BBsf'; off RWE; Outlook Stable

Rural Hipotecario XVI, FTA

Class A (ES0323978009); affirmed at 'A+sf'; off RWE; Outlook Stable

Class B (ES0323978017); upgraded to 'Asf' from 'BBsf'; off RWE; Outlook Stable

Rural Hipotecario XVII, FTA

Bond A (ES0305033005); affirmed at 'A+sf'; off RWE; Outlook Stable

The rating actions follow the application of the European RMBS Rating Criteria published on 27 October 2017.

The transactions comprise residential mortgage loans originated and serviced by multiple rural saving banks in Spain, that form part of the Rural Hipotecario RMBS series.

KEY RATING DRIVERS

European RMBS Rating Criteria

The application of the European RMBS Rating Criteria has generally led to smaller expected losses, leading to the upgrade of class B notes.

Rating Cap due to Counterparty Arrangement

For all transactions the notes' ratings are capped at 'A+sf' as the account bank replacement trigger is set at 'BBB+/'F2'. In line with Fitch's counterparty criteria, direct support counterparties rated 'BBB+/'F2' are eligible to support note ratings up to the 'Asf' category.

Increasing Credit Enhancement (CE)

The class A notes on all transactions are protected with significant levels of CE ranging between 21.2% and 36.8% as per the last payment date. As the transactions are amortising sequentially and due to the availability of non-amortising reserve funds, CE for all rated notes is expected to increase further.

Class B notes' credit enhancement consists solely of the amounts from a non-amortising cash reserve. As this exposure is present for more than 12 months, in line with Fitch's counterparty criteria, class B notes' ratings are not viewed as sufficiently isolated to achieve ratings higher than the account bank's (Citibank Europe Plc) rating of 'A'.

Stable Asset Performance

Due to seasoning, the weighted average current loan-to-value (LTV) ratios have dropped for all transactions below 60%, compared with the weighted average original LTV of around 70%.

The transactions continue to show sound asset performance as excess spread has so far been sufficient to cover defaulted amounts.

There are indications of the originators actively repurchasing outstanding defaulted amounts. We thus do not view the reported default data as sufficiently reliable to give credit to past performance. In line with Fitch's European RMBS Rating Criteria, we addressed this by a capped Performance Adjustment Factor floor of 100% in the asset model.

Geographical Concentration; High-risk Borrowers

All four transaction portfolios are exposed to substantial geographical concentration with the top three regions accounting for at least 80% of the collateral balance. Fitch applies higher foreclosure frequency rating multiples, where it deems that a regional concentration exists.

Additionally, all transactions have a significant exposure to self-employed borrowers, ranging between 14.9% for Rural Hipotecario XVII and 22.4% for XVI, which are viewed high-risk borrowers and are subject to an increased foreclosure frequency assumption of 70%.

RATING SENSITIVITIES

A worsening of the Spanish macroeconomic environment, especially employment conditions or an abrupt shift of interest rates could jeopardise the underlying borrowers' affordability. This could have negative rating implications, especially for junior tranches that are less protected by structural CE.

The class B notes' ratings are sensitive to changes in the account bank's rating. Therefore, a change in the account bank's rating might lead to a review of class B notes' ratings.

USE OF THIRD-PARTY DUE DILIGENCE PURSUANT TO RULE 17G-10

Form ABS Due Diligence-15E was not provided to, or reviewed by, Fitch in relation to this rating action.

DATA ADEQUACY

Fitch has checked the consistency and plausibility of the information it has received about the performance of the asset pools and the transactions. There were no findings that affected the rating analysis. Fitch has not reviewed the results of any third-party assessment of the asset portfolio information or conducted a review of origination files as part of its ongoing monitoring.

Fitch did not undertake a review of the information provided about the underlying asset pools ahead of the transactions' initial closing. The subsequent performance of the transactions over the years is consistent with the agency's expectations given the operating environment and Fitch is therefore satisfied that the asset pool information relied upon for its initial rating analysis was adequately reliable.

Overall, Fitch's assessment of the information relied upon for the agency's rating analysis according to its applicable rating methodologies indicates that it is adequately reliable.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

The information below was used in the analysis.

-Servicer reports provided by Europea de Titulizacion - Sociedad Gestora de Fondos de Titulizacion since closing of the deals until November 2017 for Rural Hipotecario XIV and XV and January 2018 for Rural Hipotecario XVI and XVII.

-Loan level data dated November 2017 for Rural Hipotecario XIV and XV and January 2018 for Rural Hipotecario XVI and XVII were used to run the asset model and the relevant data sources were the European Datawarehouse.

-Discussions/updates from servicer dated April 2017.

MODELS

The models below were used in the analysis. Click on the link for a description of the model.

ResiEMEA. (<https://www.fitchratings.com/site/structuredfinance/rmbs/resiemea>)

EMEA Cash Flow Model. (<https://www.fitchratings.com/site/structuredfinance/emeacfm>)

Contacts:

Lead Surveillance Analyst

Michael Ecke

Analyst

+49 69 768076 139

Fitch Deutschland GmbH

Neue Mainzer Strasse 46-50

60311 Frankfurt am Main

Committee Chairperson

Robbie Sargent

Senior Director

+44 20 3530 1404

Media Relations: Athos Larkou, London, Tel: +44 203 530 1549, Email: athos.larkou@fitchratings.com

Additional information is available on www.fitchratings.com

Applicable Criteria

European RMBS Rating Criteria (pub. 27 Oct 2017) (<https://www.fitchratings.com/site/re/905365>)

Fitch's Interest Rate Stress Assumptions for Structured Finance and Covered Bonds - Excel File (pub. 17 Feb 2017) (<https://www.fitchratings.com/site/re/894478>)

Global Structured Finance Rating Criteria (pub. 03 May 2017) (<https://www.fitchratings.com/site/re/897411>)

Structured Finance and Covered Bonds Counterparty Rating Criteria (pub. 23 May 2017)

(<https://www.fitchratings.com/site/re/898537>)

Structured Finance and Covered Bonds Country Risk Rating Criteria (pub. 18 Sep 2017)

(<https://www.fitchratings.com/site/re/903496>)

Structured Finance and Covered Bonds Interest Rate Stresses Rating Criteria (pub. 17 Feb 2017)

(<https://www.fitchratings.com/site/re/893890>)

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