Fitch Rates Helaba's Senior Preferred Debt 'AA-'/'F1+'

Fitch Ratings-Frankfurt-02 April 2019: Fitch Ratings has assigned Landesbank Hessen-Thueringen Girozentrale's (Helaba; A+/Stable) EUR35 billion debt issuance programme long- and short-term senior preferred debt ratings of 'AA-' and 'F1+', respectively. Fitch has also assigned 'AA-' ratings to Helaba's EUR50 million (XS1966264258) senior preferred notes issued under the programme and to EUR10 million (DE000HLB4WE3) senior preferred notes.

KEY RATING DRIVERS
SENIOR PREFERRED DEBT
Helaba is the central institution of S-Finanzgruppe Hessen-Thueringen (SFG-HT), to which we assign group ratings, in line with Fitch's criteria for rating banking structures backed by mutual support schemes. In our view, Helaba's resolution could only occur if SFG-HT's mutual support scheme fails to protect its members' viability.

Helaba's senior preferred notes, including those issued under its debt issuance programme, are rated one notch above the bank's Long-Term Issuer Default Rating (IDR). The one-notch uplift reflects our view that SFG-HT's consolidated buffers of qualifying junior and senior non-preferred debt are sufficient to provide Helaba's senior preferred creditors with additional protection in a resolution.

The rating uplift reflects our expectation that Helaba will maintain a qualifying junior and senior non-preferred debt buffer of at least 8% of SFG-HT's risk-weighted assets. SFG-HT is not a legal entity but a banking network whose cohesion is ensured by a mutual support scheme. Therefore, SFG-HT is not subject to capital requirements at group level. We assume a recapitalisation amount equivalent to 8% of SFG-HT's risk-weighted assets (corresponding to the sum of the individual Pillar 1 requirements of SFG-HT's members) would be sufficient to restore SFG-HT's viability in a resolution.

The senior preferred unsecured debt class was introduced on 21 July 2018 by amendments to the German resolution regime. The new regime implements the reform of the Bank Resolution and Recovery Directive agreed at EU level at end-2017, which aims at harmonising the ranking of senior debt in resolution and insolvency across the EU.

RATING SENSITIVITIES
SENIOR PREFERRED DEBT
The ratings of Helaba's senior preferred notes and issuance programme are primarily sensitive to changes in SFG-HT's IDRs. They are also sensitive to a potential reduction of SFG-HT's buffers of qualifying junior and senior non-preferred debt below 8% of SFG-HT's risk-weighted assets.

Contact:
Primary Analyst
Roger Schneider
Director
+49 69 768 076 242
Fitch Deutschland GmbH
Neue Mainzer Strasse 46-50
60311 Frankfurt am Main

Secondary Analyst
Maria Shishkina
Associate Director
+44 203 530 1379

Committee Chairperson
Artur Szeski
Senior Director
+48 22 338 6292

Media Relations: Louisa Williams, London, Tel: +44 20 3530 2452, Email: louisa.williams@fitchratings.com

Additional information is available on www.fitchratings.com
Applicable Criteria
Bank Rating Criteria (pub. 12 Oct 2018)
Exposure Draft: Short-Term Ratings (pub. 22 Mar 2019)

Additional Disclosures
Dodd-Frank Rating Information Disclosure Form
Solicitation Status
Endorsement Policy

ALL FITCH CREDIT RATINGS ARE SUBJECT TO CERTAIN LIMITATIONS AND DISCLAIMERS. PLEASE READ THESE LIMITATIONS AND DISCLAIMERS BY FOLLOWING THIS LINK: HTTPS://WWW.FITCHRATINGS.COM/UNDERSTANDINGCREDITRATINGS. IN ADDITION, RATING DEFINITIONS AND THE TERMS OF USE OF SUCH RATINGS ARE AVAILABLE ON THE AGENCY'S PUBLIC WEB SITE AT WWW.FITCHRATINGS.COM. PUBLISHED RATINGS, CRITERIA, AND METHODOLOGIES ARE AVAILABLE FROM THIS SITE AT ALL TIMES. FITCH'S CODE OF CONDUCT, CONFIDENTIALITY, CONFLICTS OF INTEREST, AFFILIATE FIREWALL, COMPLIANCE, AND OTHER RELEVANT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES ARE ALSO AVAILABLE FROM THE CODE OF CONDUCT SECTION OF THIS SITE. DIRECTORS AND SHAREHOLDERS RELEVANT INTERESTS ARE AVAILABLE AT HTTPS://WWW.FITCHRATINGS.COM/SITE/REGULATORY. FITCH MAY HAVE PROVIDED ANOTHER PERMISSIBLE SERVICE TO THE RATED ENTITY OR ITS RELATED THIRD PARTIES. DETAILS OF THIS SERVICE FOR RATINGS FOR WHICH THE LEAD ANALYST IS BASED IN AN EU-REGISTERED ENTITY CAN BE FOUND ON THE ENTITY SUMMARY PAGE FOR THIS ISSUER ON THE FITCH WEBSITE.

Copyright © 2019 by Fitch Ratings, Inc., Fitch Ratings Ltd. and its subsidiaries. 33 Whitehall Street, NY, NY 10004. Telephone: 1-800-753-4824, (212) 908-0500. Fax: (212) 480-4435. Reproduction or retransmission in whole or in part is prohibited except by permission. All rights reserved. In issuing and maintaining its ratings and in making other reports (including forecast information), Fitch relies on factual information it receives from issuers and underwriters and from other sources Fitch believes to be credible. Fitch conducts a reasonable investigation of the factual information relied upon by it in accordance with its ratings methodology, and obtains reasonable verification of that information from independent sources, to the extent such sources are available for a given security or in a given jurisdiction. The manner of Fitch's factual investigation and the scope of the third-party verification it obtains will vary depending on the nature of the rated security and its issuer, the requirements and practices in the jurisdiction in which the rated security is offered and sold and/or the issuer is located, the availability and nature of relevant public information, access to the management of the issuer and its advisers, the availability of pre-existing third-party verifications such as audit reports, agreed-upon procedures letters, appraisals, actuarial reports, engineering reports, legal opinions and other reports provided by third parties, the availability of independent and competent third- party verification sources with respect to the particular security or in the particular jurisdiction of the issuer, and a variety of other factors. Users of Fitch's ratings and reports should understand that neither an enhanced factual investigation nor any third-party verification can ensure that all of the information Fitch relies on in connection with a rating or a report will be accurate and complete.

Ultimately, the issuer and its advisers are responsible for the accuracy of the information they provide to Fitch and to the market in offering documents and other reports. In issuing its ratings and its reports, Fitch must rely on the work of experts, including independent auditors with respect to financial statements and attorneys with respect to legal and tax matters. Further, ratings and forecasts of financial and other information are inherently forward-looking and embody assumptions and predictions about future events that by their nature cannot be verified as facts. As a result, despite any verification of current facts, ratings and forecasts can be affected by future events or conditions that were not anticipated at the time a rating or forecast was issued or affirmed.

The information in this report is provided "as is" without any representation or warranty of any kind, and Fitch does not represent or warrant that the report or any of its contents will meet any of the requirements of a recipient of the report. A Fitch rating is an opinion as to the creditworthiness of a security. This opinion and reports made by Fitch are based on established criteria and methodologies that Fitch is continuously evaluating and updating. Therefore, ratings and reports are the collective work product of Fitch and no individual, or group of individuals, is solely responsible for a rating or a report. The rating does not address the risk of loss due to risks other than credit risk, unless such risk is specifically mentioned. Fitch is not engaged in the offer or sale of any security. All Fitch reports have shared authorship. Individuals identified in a Fitch report were involved in, but are not solely responsible for, the opinions stated therein. The individuals are named for contact purposes only. A report providing a Fitch rating is neither a prospectus nor a substitute for the information assembled, verified and presented to investors by the issuer and its agents in connection with the sale of the securities. Ratings may be changed or withdrawn at any time for any reason in the sole discretion of Fitch. Fitch does not provide investment advice of any sort. Ratings are not a recommendation to buy, sell, or hold any security. Ratings do not comment on the adequacy of market price, the suitability of any security for a particular investor, or the tax-exempt nature or taxability of payments made in respect to any security. Fitch receives fees from issuers, insurers, guarantors, other obligors, and underwriters for rating securities. Such fees generally vary from US$1,000 to US$750,000 (or the applicable currency equivalent) per issue. In certain cases, Fitch will rate all or a number of issues issued by a particular issuer, or insured or guaranteed by a particular insurer or guarantor, for a single annual fee. Such fees are expected to vary from US$10,000 to US$1,500,000 (or the applicable currency equivalent). The assignment, publication, or dissemination of a rating by Fitch shall not constitute a consent by Fitch to use its name as an expert in connection with any registration statement filed under the United States securities laws, the Financial Services and Markets Act of 2000 of the United Kingdom, or the securities laws of any particular jurisdiction. Due to the relative efficiency of electronic publishing and distribution, Fitch research may be available to electronic subscribers up to three days earlier than to print subscribers.

For Australia, New Zealand, Taiwan and South Korea only: Fitch Australia Pty Ltd holds an Australian financial services license (AFS license no. 337123) which authorizes it to provide credit ratings to wholesale clients only. Credit ratings information published by Fitch is not intended to be used by persons who are retail clients within the meaning of the Corporations Act 2001

Fitch Ratings, Inc. is registered with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission as a Nationally Recognized Statistical Rating Organization (the "NRSRO"). While certain of the NRSRO's credit rating subsidiaries are listed on Item 3 of Form NRSRO and as such are authorized to issue credit ratings on behalf of the NRSRO (see https://www.fitchratings.com/site/regulatory), other credit rating subsidiaries are not listed on Form NRSRO (the "non-NRSROs") and therefore credit ratings issued by those subsidiaries are not issued on behalf of the NRSRO. However, non-NRSRO personnel may participate in determining credit ratings issued by or on behalf of the NRSRO.

SOLICITATION STATUS

The ratings above were solicited and assigned or maintained at the request of the rated entity/issuer or a related third party. Any exceptions follow below.

Endorsement Policy

Fitch's approach to ratings endorsement so that ratings produced outside the EU may be used by regulated entities within the EU for regulatory purposes, pursuant to the terms of the EU Regulation with respect to credit rating agencies, can be found on the EU Regulatory Disclosures page. The endorsement status of all International ratings is provided within the entity summary page for each rated entity and in the transaction detail pages for all structured finance transactions on the Fitch website. These disclosures are updated on a daily basis.

Fitch Updates Terms of Use & Privacy Policy

We have updated our Terms of Use and Privacy Policies which cover all of Fitch Group's websites. Learn more.