

# CREDIT OPINION

8 November 2023

# **Update**



#### **RATINGS**

#### SpareBank 1 SMN

Domicile	Trondheim, Norway
Long Term CRR	Aa3
Туре	LT Counterparty Risk Rating - Fgn Curr
Outlook	Not Assigned
Long Term Debt	Aa3
Туре	Senior Unsecured - Fgn Curr
Outlook	Stable
Long Term Deposit	Aa3
Туре	LT Bank Deposits - Fgn Curr
Outlook	Stable

Please see the <u>ratings section</u> at the end of this report for more information. The ratings and outlook shown reflect information as of the publication date.

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# SpareBank 1 SMN

Update following rating upgrade, stable outlook

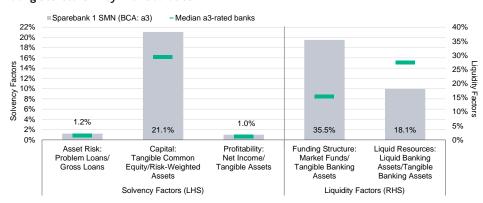
# Summary

SpareBank 1 SMN's (SMN) long-term deposit and senior unsecured debt ratings of Aa3 take into account the bank's Baseline Credit Assessment (BCA) of a3, but also our forward-looking Loss Given Failure (LGF) analysis. For the deposit and senior ratings, this results in a three-notch uplift from its BCA while the junior senior rating does not benefit from any uplift. SMN's ratings do not benefit from any government support.

SMN's BCA of a3 reflects the bank's resilient financial performance, as illustrated by its sound capital base, strong profitability and improved risk profile, while continuing to grow its retail deposit base, resulting in a somewhat lower use of market funds. Our view is supported by the bank's strong retail franchise in central Norway, which delivers robust core earnings, and our expectation that the strong capital position will be maintained.

These strengths are counterbalanced by a still-high reliance on market funding, a characteristic shared by all local savings banks; the bank's relatively narrow geographical focus; and the credit risks stemming from its exposures to more volatile sectors.

Exhibit 1
Rating Scorecard - Key financial ratios



These are our <u>Banks</u> methodology scorecard ratios. Asset risk and profitability reflect the weaker of either the three-year average and latest annual figure. Capital is the latest reported figure. Funding structure and liquid resources reflect the latest fiscal year-end figures.

Source: Moody's Financial Metrics

This report was republished on 4 December 2023 with a corrected assigned score for asset risk and profitability at the scorecard shown on Exhibit 8.

# **Credit strengths**

- » SMN's stand-alone credit profile is supported by its Very Strong- macro profile
- » Solid capital metrics provide a buffer against potential future credit losses
- » Resilient earnings benefit from a strong regional retail franchise
- » Large volume of deposits and junior debt resulting in deposit ratings benefiting from a very low loss given failure rate

# Credit challenges

- » Credit concentration from operating in more limited geographical areas than many international peers
- » Risks from the bank's exposure to cyclical sectors, although problem loans are low
- » Dependence on market funding renders it vulnerable to fluctuations in investor sentiment, but liquidity is adequate

# **Outlook**

The stable outlook on SMN's long-term deposit, issuer and senior unsecured debt ratings reflect our view that the bank will continue to generate strong earnings supporting its capital base, while prudently managing asset risks and strengthening its deposit base. These are counterbalanced by some of the bank's credit concentration in its home region and its high reliance on market funding.

# Factors that could lead to an upgrade

SMN's long-term ratings could be upgraded if it significantly strengthens its capitalisation well above the regulatory minimum requirements; further improves its asset quality while reducing its single-name, sector and regional concentration; strengthens its profitability; and reduces its reliance on market funding with an enlarged retail deposit base.

# Factors that could lead to a downgrade

SMN's ratings could be downgraded if it significantly increases its exposure to more volatile sectors compared with current levels; it experiences a substantial deterioration in asset quality and profitability; its use of market funds increases towards previous levels; and its liquidity weakens.

The ratings could also be downgraded as a result of a reduction in the volume of loss-absorbing liabilities protecting creditors and depositors in case of failure.

This publication does not announce a credit rating action. For any credit ratings referenced in this publication, please see the issuer/deal page on https://ratings.moodys.com for the most updated credit rating action information and rating history.

# **Key indicators**

Exhibit 2
SpareBank 1 SMN (Consolidated Financials) [1]

-	09-23 <sup>2</sup>	12-22 <sup>2</sup>	12-21 <sup>2</sup>	12-20 <sup>2</sup>	12-19 <sup>2</sup>	CAGR/Avg. <sup>3</sup>
Total Assets (NOK Billion)	308.8	281.9	246.9	236.1	208.2	11.14
Tangible Common Equity (NOK Billion)	24.0	21.5	19.9	18.0	17.3	9.1 <sup>4</sup>
Problem Loans / Gross Loans (%)	1.0	1.0	1.7	1.2	1.3	1.2 <sup>5</sup>
Tangible Common Equity / Risk Weighted Assets (%)	21.1	20.5	20.2	19.4	18.8	20.0 <sup>6</sup>
Problem Loans / (Tangible Common Equity + Loan Loss Reserve) (%)	9.1	9.0	15.4	11.5	11.5	11.3 <sup>5</sup>
Net Interest Margin (%)	1.6	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.5	1.5 <sup>5</sup>
PPI / Average RWA (%)	3.2	2.8	2.8	2.7	2.4	2.8 <sup>6</sup>
Net Income / Tangible Assets (%)	1.0	1.0	1.2	0.8	1.2	1.0 <sup>5</sup>
Cost / Income Ratio (%)	44.5	46.5	47.0	53.0	53.7	48.9 <sup>5</sup>
Market Funds / Tangible Banking Assets (%)	32.9	35.5	33.9	37.5	36.7	35.3 <sup>5</sup>
Liquid Banking Assets / Tangible Banking Assets (%)	16.5	18.1	14.9	15.7	13.9	15.8 <sup>5</sup>
Gross Loans / Due to Customers (%)	169.5	173.2	175.6	187.5	195.3	180.2 <sup>5</sup>

[1] All figures and ratios are adjusted using Moody's standard adjustments. [2] Basel III - fully loaded or transitional phase-in; IFRS. [3] May include rounding differences because of the scale of reported amounts. [4] Compound annual growth rate (%) based on the periods for the latest accounting regime. [5] Simple average of periods for the latest accounting regime. [6] Simple average of Basel III periods.

Sources: Moody's Investors Service and company filings

#### **Profile**

SpareBank 1 SMN (SMN) is a leading regional savings bank in central Norway. It provides a range of retail banking, corporate banking and capital markets-related products and services. Furthermore, through its subsidiaries and associated companies, it offers real estate agency, investment, asset management and other financial services. As of the end of June 2023, its consolidated assets (including loans transferred to covered bond companies) totalled NOK314 billion (€26.8 billion).

# **Recent developments**

In September 2023, SMN completed the acquisition of SpareBank 1 Søre Sunnmøre, a local savings bank with a strong market position in Sore Sunmore, following the initial announcement in 2020. Following the consolidation, SMN bank covers large sections of the Sunmore region, which further strengthens its position in Fjordane.

## **Detailed credit considerations**

## Norway's Very Strong- macro profile remains supportive towards the bank's stand-alone credit profile

SMN operates only in Norway and thus its operating environment is reflected by the <u>Very Strong -</u> macro profile we assign to the country. Norwegian banks benefit from operating in a wealthy and developed country with very high economic, institutional and government financial strength, and very low susceptibility to event risk. Norway has a diversified and growing economy, which demonstrated resilience amid the weakening in the oil sector in 2014-15 and again in 2020.

The main risks to the banking system stem from the high level of household debt, high real estate prices and domestic banks' extensive use of market funding. However, these risks are mitigated by the strength of households' ability to service debt, banks' adequate capitalisation and the relatively small size of the banking system compared with the total size of the economy.

Nonetheless, we expect the Norwegian mainland economy (excluding any oil-related activity) to expand by 1.5% in 2023, down from 3.3% in 2022. Unemployment rose to around 10.6% in March 2020, but fell back to 1.9% in August 2023, below the pre-pandemic level.

## Overall strong asset quality but still affected by some sector concentrations

We consider SMN's asset quality to be strong and improving. SMN's stage 3 gross loans as a percentage of total loans, including loans transferred to the jointly owned and non-consolidated SpareBank 1 Boligkreditt and Naeringskreditt, was 1.0% in June 2023, in line with 1.0% as of year-end 2022. This reflects the improved conditions in the oil and offshore sectors, which have been the main source of problem loans in the past years, as well as the bank's proactive approach towards restructuring these exposures.

We expect the bank's asset quality to remain resilient despite uncertainties in the operating environment stemming from higher inflation and higher interest rates, which could result in lower consumption spending and increased defaults in the small and medium-sized enterprise sector.

Exhibit 3
SMN's problem loans as a percentage of gross loans and cost of risk evolution



Gross loans include covered bond loans.
Sources: Bank's disclosures and Moody's Investors Service

The bank's overall asset quality is favourable and comparable to its similarly rated peers both locally and internationally. SMN's well-diversified loan book (including loans transferred to SpareBank 1 Boligkreditt and SpareBank 1 Naeringskreditt), of which around 72% comprises loans to retail customers (mainly in the form of mortgages), and strong risk management practices counterbalance, to some degree, any negative effects from its exposures to volatile sectors. The strong performance of the bank's retail banking business continued in the first half of 2023, with a net recovery on loans to personal customers of NOK4 million and pre-tax record profit of NOK1.991 million.

Althought the bank's corporate book is quite diversified across different industries, it exhibits some concentration to the commercial real estate (9% of gross loans at end June 2023) and fishing and fish farming (8% of gross loans), representative of the bank's significant local market share. The bank has reduced its exposure to the oil and offshore sector, accounting for around 2.56% of lending at end of second quarter 2023, compared to 4.3% at end 2016, reflective of the bank's tighter underwriting criteria on the sector. The recent increase in demand for oil and related services has led to an improvement in several of the bank's problem loans within the sector, which have consequently been transferred to Stage 2. However, there are still long-term risks as a result of the volatile nature of these sectors, and because some of these borrowers fall within the bank's top 20 group loans.

Our assigned Asset Risk score incorporates negative adjustments, taking into account the bank's relatively limited geographical diversification, as well as sector concentrations on the corporate book, namely to CRE and oil and offshore sectors, as stated above. We make similar adjustments in the asset risk scores of other rated regional savings banks in Norway.

#### Solid capital metrics provide a buffer against potential future credit losses

SMN's ratings are supported by its solid capital position, with a Common Equity Tier 1 (CET1) capital ratio of 19.1% as of June 2023 compared with 18.9% as of year-end 2022. The bank's capital level is higher than the regulatory requirement of 17.9%, and includes a 0.7% temporary add-on to the Pillar 2 requirement while the FSA reviews the revised IRB models and the re-instated countercyclical buffer requirement of 2.5%. SMN is targeting a management buffer of 1.25% above the minimum requirement, in line with the Pillar 2 guidance, which the bank already meets adequately (see Exhibit 4).

Exhibit 4
SMN benefits from strong capital buffers, with a CET1 ratio 2% above the 17.2% minimum requirement at end June 2023(SpareBank 1 SMN's CET1 ratio evolution)



The temporary requirement of 0.7%, which is a Pillar 2 add-on, is implemented until the FSA approves the revised IRB models. Source: Bank's disclosures and Moody's Investors Service

The bank's tangible common equity has strengthened in recent years, driven by strong earnings generation. SMN's hybrid debt (NOK1.3 billion) and subordinated debt (NOK2.1 billion) contributed to the strong Tier 1 ratio of 20.4% and overall capital adequacy ratio of 23.5% as of the end of June 2023. These solid capital levels provide a buffer against potential future credit losses, driving the bank's BCA and ratings.

We expect the bank to maintain a payout ratio in line with their target of 50% and retain sufficient profit in order to continue meeting its internal CET1 targets. Our assigned Capital score reflects this strength, as well as the bank's leverage ratio of 7.2% as of the end of June 2023, which, although high by international standards, is marginally lower than the average for similarly rated local peers.

## Resilient earnings benefit from a strong regional retail franchise

SMN benefits from strong profitability, reflected by its (annualized) net income/tangible assets of 1% in H1 2023, supported by strong growth in net interest income (including fees from covered bond companies), which grew by 30% (including the effect of the acquisition in the second quarter of 2023) year over year. The bank's profitability has been resilient, as illustrated by its stable performance through the economic cycle, with a return on tangible assets (including assets transferred to covered bond companies) of 0.82% during the peak of the coronavirus pandemic in 2020. This compares favourably to peers with similar lending activities.

SMN's net interest income comprised 71% of total revenue in H1 2023, a significant increase from the 56% in 2020, a result of both the expansion of interest-earning business volumes and the rise in rates. The higher rates are reflected by the higher net interest margin of 1.55% over H1 2023, compared with 1.38% in 2022. We expect profitability to remain strong. At the same time, Norges Bank has announced its expectation to increase the rate at least one more time before year-end.

SMN's reported net profit of NOK1,637 million in H1 2023, which is an increase from NOK1,363 million in the same period in 2022, also reflecting the consolidation of SB1 Sun Sunmore during the quarter. Although the bank continues to invest in digitalisation improvements and customer experience enhancement, a 14% year-over-year reduction in reported operating costs have also contributed to an improvement in the cost-to-income ratio to 46% in H1 2023, down from 53% in 2020. The bank's reported return on equity was 13.8% in H1 2023 compared with 13.2% a year earlier.

Our Profitability score for the bank takes into account not only our adjusted return on tangible assets (including assets transferred to covered bond companies) of 1.05% in H1 2023 (see Exhibit 5) but also our forward-looking view on the bank's resilient recurring preprovision earnings, which we expect to remain satisfactory over the coming 12-18 months.

Exhibit 5
Profitability evolution
Moody's-adjusted figures



Includes assets transferred to covered bond companies. Sources: Bank's disclosures and Moody's Investors Service

# Deposit franchise is strengthening but reliance on market funding still renders the bank vulnerable to fluctuations in investor sentiment...

SMN's deposit base continued to grow in recent years, following the strong growth witnessed during 2020, accounting for around 48% of total liabilities (including covered bonds issued through the covered bond companies) as of the end of June 2023. Although the bank still remains reliant on market funding, its market funds to tangible banking assets ratio has improved to 34.2% in 2021-2023 compared to an average of 37.8% in 2017-20, as the bank increased its focus on strengthening its deposit franchise.

Deposits grew by 13% year over year as of June 2023, mainly driven by the completion of the acquisition of SB1 Sun Sunmore (organic growth of 5.8%). This comes after the 2020-22 period, during which growth exceeded 10% because of various lockdown measures implemented during the pandemic. We expect growth to normalize closer to 5%-7% in organic growth over the next 12-18 months, and most deposits to originate from the retail side as the bank will continue to strengthen its franchise following its recent acquisition. Retail deposits, which we consider to be more stable, accounted for 47% of total deposits as of June 2023.

SMN relies on covered bonds as an important source of funding. These bonds are issued off balance sheet through specialised companies that it jointly owns with other savings banks of the SpareBank 1 Alliance, namely SpareBank 1 Boligkreditt for residential mortgages and SpareBank 1 Næringskreditt for commercial mortgages. As of June 2023, the bank had transferred loans worth NOK65.3 billion to these vehicles, or around a quarter of its gross loan book including the transferred loans. Although the diversification benefit of covered bond funding is a credit positive, its extensive use increases the amount of pledged assets unavailable for unsecured bondholders, including depositors in liquidation. The relative stability of covered bonds compared with unsecured market funding is reflected by a standard adjustment in our scorecard.

Our Funding Structure score reflects our view that SMN's reliance on market funding, although improved, still represents a source of vulnerability because, in times of market stress, market funding can become more expensive and/or restricted.

#### ...although liquidity is adequate

A mitigating factor to the bank's use of market funding is its sizeable liquidity buffer that can cover its needs for three years without any new external financing. The bank's liquid assets as a percentage of total banking assets (a Moody's scorecard ratio) was high at 18.1% as of the end of June 2023 (not taking into account the liquid assets held by SpareBank 1 Boligkreditt and SpareBank 1 Næringskreditt),¹ and consisted of covered bonds from other Norwegian banks, most of which can be used as collateral for loans from Norges Bank, municipal bonds and balances with central banks. SMN reported a commendable liquidity coverage ratio (LCR) of 188% as of the end of June 2023, compared with the requirement of 100%.

#### **ESG** considerations

SpareBank 1 SMN's ESG credit impact score is CIS-2

Exhibit 6

ESG credit impact score



Source: Moody's Investors Service

SpareBank 1 SMN's **CIS-2** indicates that ESG considerations do not have a material impact on current ratings. This reflects the limited credit impact of environmental and social risk factors on the ratings to date, and the low governance risks.

Exhibit 7
ESG issuer profile scores



Source: Moody's Investors Service

#### **Environmental**

SpareBank 1 SMN faces moderate environmental risks primarily because of its portfolio exposure to carbon transition. These risks are primarily related to its corporate portfolio, however, exposures to the oil, offshore and shipping business are limited. In line with its peers, the bank is facing mounting business risks and stakeholder pressure to meet broader carbon transition goals. In response, the bank is developing its climate risk and portfolio management capabilities.

#### Social

SpareBank 1 SMN faces moderate social risks related to customer relations and associated regulatory and litigation risks, requiring high compliance standards. The exposure to customer relation risks is lower than its international peers, given the bank's untarnished customer conduct track record supported by the social mandate of the Savings Bank's model. SpareBank 1 SMN is a digitally advanced bank in Norway, with a robust IT infrastructure and strong capabilities to mitigate cyber and personal data risks, supported by its participation in the SpareBank 1 Alliance.

#### Governance

Sparebank 1 SMN's governance risks are low., Despite sectoral and geographical concentrations, due to its limited reach, the bank benefits from strong underwriting standards which mitigate some of these concerns. The bank has a track record of sound capital and liquidity management and earnings stability while losses have been low, even at times of market turbulence. Being a regional savings bank, 36% of the bank is owned by the central Norwegian community and 64 % by private investors. The bank's Supervisory Board, comprises EC holders, employees and representatives of the public authorities. Related governance risks are however mitigated by Norway's developed institutional framework.

ESG Issuer Profile Scores and Credit Impact Scores for the rated entity/transaction are available on Moodys.com. In order to view the latest scores, please click here to go to the landing page for the entity/transaction on MDC and view the ESG Scores section.

# **Support and structural considerations**

## Loss Given Failure and additional notching

Norway implemented the EU's Bank Recovery and Resolution Directive (BRRD) on 1 January 2019, and subsequently, BRRD2 was incorporated into Norwegian law on 1 June 2022, which has resulted in lower subordination requirements for non-preferred senior volumes. For our resolution analysis, we assumed residual tangible common equity of 3% and post-failure losses of 8% of tangible banking assets, a 25% run-off in "junior" wholesale deposits and a 5% run-off in preferred deposits, and assign a 25% probability to deposits being preferred to senior unsecured debt. These are in line with our standard assumptions. We apply a standard assumption for the large European banks that 26% of deposits are junior.

For SMN's long-term deposits and senior unsecured debt ratings, we consider the likely impact of loss given failure, reflecting the combination of debt and deposit volumes and the amount of debt subordinated to them. We also take into consideration the total NOK12,2 billion in senior non-preferred issuances completed to date, which qualify as MREL instruments. This has resulted in a Preliminary Rating Assessment (PRA) that is three notches above the BCA for the bank's deposit and senior unsecured ratings, reflecting very low loss given failure. For junior senior securities (senior non-preferred debt) issued by SMN, our LGF analysis indicates a moderate loss level, positioning the rating at the same level as its a3 BCA.

#### **Government support**

SMN has a well-established regional franchise in central Norway, where we estimate it commands market shares of around 22% for lending (including the loans transferred to covered bond companies), although its national market share was limited around 4% as of June 2023. Since the implementation of the BRRD legal framework in Norway on 1 January 2019, which aligns with that of the EU, our assumption of government support for the bank's debt and deposits stands is low, resulting in no additional notches of rating uplift above the PRA.

Similarly, for junior securities, we consider that potential government support is low and, therefore, these ratings do not include any related uplift. Junior securities also include additional downward notching from the BCA, reflecting coupon suspension risk ahead of a potential failure.

#### Counterparty Risk (CR) Assessment

# SMN's CR Assessment is Aa3(cr)/P-1(cr)

SMN's CR Assessment is positioned at Aa3(cr)/P-1(cr), three notches above its Adjusted BCA of a3, based on the substantial cushion against default provided to the senior obligations represented by the CR Assessment by subordinated instruments. The main difference with our Advanced LGF approach used to determine instrument ratings is that the CR Assessment captures the probability of default on certain senior obligations, rather than expected loss. Therefore, we focus purely on subordination and take no account of the volume of the instrument class.

# **Counterparty Risk Ratings (CRRs)**

## SMN's CRRs are Aa3/P-1

The CRRs are positioned three notches above the Adjusted BCA of a3, reflecting the extremely low loss given failure from the high volume of instruments that are subordinated to CRR liabilities.

## Foreign-currency deposit rating

SMN's foreign-currency deposit rating of Aa3 is unconstrained because Norway has no country ceiling.

## Foreign-currency debt rating

SMN's senior unsecured foreign-currency debt rating of Aa3 is unconstrained because Norway has no country ceiling.

# Rating methodology and scorecard factors

## Exhibit 8

SpareBank 1 SMN

Macro Factors		
Weighted Macro Profile	Very	100%
	Strong -	

Factor	Historic Ratio	Initial Score	Expected Trend	Assigned Score	Key driver #1	Key driver #2
Solvency	Rutio	500.0	110110			
Asset Risk						
Problem Loans / Gross Loans	1.2%	aa2	$\leftrightarrow$	baa1		
Capital						
Tangible Common Equity / Risk Weighted Assets (Basel III - transitional phase-in)	21.1%	aa1	$\leftrightarrow$	aa2		
Profitability						
Net Income / Tangible Assets	1.0%	baa1	$\leftrightarrow$	a3		
Combined Solvency Score		aa3		a2		
Liquidity						
Funding Structure						
Market Funds / Tangible Banking Assets	35.5%	ba2	$\leftrightarrow$	ba1		
Liquid Resources						
Liquid Banking Assets / Tangible Banking Assets	18.1%	baa2	$\leftrightarrow$	baa2		
Combined Liquidity Score	ba1 baa3					
Financial Profile				a3		
Qualitative Adjustments				Adjustment		
Business Diversification				0		
Opacity and Complexity				0		
Corporate Behavior	0					
Total Qualitative Adjustments				0		
Sovereign or Affiliate constraint	Aaa					
BCA Scorecard-indicated Outcome - Range				a2 - baa1		
Assigned BCA	a3					
Affiliate Support notching	0					
Adjusted BCA	a3					

Balance Sheet	in-scope	% in-scope	at-failure	% at-failure
	(NOK Million)		(NOK Million)	
Other liabilities	108,299	35.2%	122,398	39.8%
Deposits	138,230	44.9%	124,131	40.3%
Preferred deposits	102,290	33.2%	97,176	31.6%
Junior deposits	35,940	11.7%	26,955	8.8%
Senior unsecured bank debt	35,951	11.7%	35,951	11.7%
Junior senior unsecured bank debt	12,139	3.9%	12,139	3.9%
Dated subordinated bank debt	2,385	0.8%	2,385	0.8%
Preference shares (bank)	1,538	0.5%	1,538	0.5%
Equity	9,233	3.0%	9,233	3.0%
Total Tangible Banking Assets	307,775	100.0%	307,775	100.0%

Debt Class	De Jure v	waterfal	l De Facto	De Facto waterfall N		Notching		Assigned	Additional Preliminary	
	Instrument volume + subordinatio	ordinati	Instrument on volume + o subordinatio	ordination	De Jure	De Facto	Notching Guidance vs. Adjusted BCA		Notching	Rating Assessment
Counterparty Risk Rating	28.7%	28.7%	28.7%	28.7%	3	3	3	3	0	aa3
Counterparty Risk Assessment	28.7%	28.7%	28.7%	28.7%	3	3	3	3	0	aa3 (cr)
Deposits	28.7%	8.2%	28.7%	19.9%	3	3	3	3	0	aa3
Senior unsecured bank debt	28.7%	8.2%	19.9%	8.2%	3	3	3	3	0	aa3
Junior senior unsecured bank debt	8.2%	4.3%	8.2%	4.3%	0	0	0	0	0	a3
Dated subordinated bank debt	4.3%	3.5%	4.3%	3.5%	-1	-1	-1	-1	0	baa1

Instrument Class	Loss Given	Additional Preliminary Rating		Government	Local Currency	Foreign
	Failure notching	notching	Assessment	Support notching	Rating	Currency Rating
Counterparty Risk Rating	3	0	aa3	0	Aa3	Aa3
Counterparty Risk Assessment	3	0	aa3 (cr)	0	Aa3(cr)	
Deposits	3	0	aa3	0	Aa3	Aa3
Senior unsecured bank debt	3	0	aa3	0		Aa3
Junior senior unsecured bank debt	0	0	a3	0	A3	(P)A3
Dated subordinated bank debt	-1	0	baa1	0		(P)Baa1

<sup>[1]</sup> Where dashes are shown for a particular factor (or sub-factor), the score is based on non-public information.

Source: Moody's Investors Service

# **Ratings**

Exhibit 9

Category	Moody's Rating
SPAREBANK 1 SMN	
Outlook	Stable
Counterparty Risk Rating	Aa3/P-1
Bank Deposits	Aa3/P-1
Baseline Credit Assessment	a3
Adjusted Baseline Credit Assessment	a3
Counterparty Risk Assessment	Aa3(cr)/P-1(cr)
Issuer Rating	Aa3
Senior Unsecured	Aa3
Junior Senior Unsecured -Dom Curr	A3
Junior Senior Unsecured MTN	(P)A3
Subordinate MTN	(P)Baa1
Source: Moody's Investors Service	

# **Endnotes**

1 According to their liquidity strategy, both companies shall maintain a liquidity reserve with a minimum size equal to or more than all debt maturities within the next six months.

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