

Rating Action: Moody's Ratings upgrades Colonial to Baa1, stable outlook

16 Sep 2024

Frankfurt am Main, September 16, 2024 -- Moody's Ratings (Moody's) today upgraded Inmobiliaria Colonial SOCIMI, S.A.'s ("Colonial" or "the company") long term issuer rating to Baa1 from Baa2 and changed the outlook to stable from positive.

RATINGS RATIONALE

The upgrade reflects expected improvements to credit metrics with a sustainably lower leverage driven by a conservative financial policy with the benefits of recent capital increase and continuing strong operating performance. The operating performance is characterized by low vacancy rate and robust rental growth, reflecting the good asset quality of Colonial's prime office property portfolio.

We project Moody's-adjusted Debt/Gross Assets to reduce sustainably below 40% by 2025 from current 45%. The company has highlighted reduced sustainable leverage appetite post capital raise executed in July 2024, which we consider a governance factor in our rating. We assume a repayment of debt from an existing higher cash balance while additional assets contributed as part of the capital raise mitigate the expected effect from disposals on earnings. Continued asset recycling will be available next to existing cash to fund capital spending that we estimate between €150-250 million annually to 2026. Despite remaining a relative weak point of Colonial's credit metrics, Moody's-adjusted fixed charge cover will stay at or above 3x in the next 18 months given like-for-like rental growth and paydown of debt alongside partial pre-hedging offsets higher cost of refinancing.

Colonial's credit strengths also include a persistent strong operating performance despite sector wide concerns around structural changes in the office market; good liquidity management, supported by good access to capital markets, and a substantial amount of unencumbered assets.

Despite being well prepared with a strong asset base, secular changes from a widely accepted hybrid work model remain a challenge for future performance. A very low property yield results in lower cash and earnings-based credit metrics, alongside

pressure from higher interest rates. Capital recycling remains more difficult with low volumes of transactions in the market.

The stable outlook reflects the stabilising business environment for landlords and limited impact of secular headwinds on Colonial's operating performance.

LIQUIDITY

Colonial's solid liquidity is based on €425 million of cash and cash equivalent and €2.6 billion of RCF as of June 2024. The company also received €350 million of cash from its capital raise with Criteria and some disposal proceeds post balance sheet date.

Colonial faces around €1.6 billion in debt maturities until end of 2025. We also expect the company to spend €350 to 400 million mainly on capital expenditures related to its project pipeline, renovations and other property improvements during this period. Given its SOCIMI status we also included around €200 million of dividends until December 2025 in our assessment. The company has highlighted further potential for asset recycling that we expect to improve liquidity over time. The company's large unencumbered asset base provides financial flexibility if need be.

FACTORS THAT COULD LEAD TO AN UPGRADE OR DOWNGRADE OF THE RATINGS

Factors that could lead to an upgrade

- Continued substantial outperformance of the office market resulting in strong rental growth

- Changes to the company's financial policy that will keep Moody's-adjusted debt/gross assets well below 35%

- Moody's-adjusted fixed charge cover sustainably towards 4x

- The rating of the government of Spain (Baa1 positive) may pose a constraint to the rating of Colonial

Factors that could lead to a downgrade

- Moody's-adjusted fixed charge cover sustained sustained below 3x
- Moody's-adjusted gross debt/total assets above 40%
- Failure to maintain a positive operating track record
- Unfavourable changes to the business environment for property owners

PRINCIPAL METHODOLOGY

The principal methodology used in this rating was REITS and Other Commercial Real Estate Firms published in February 2024 and available at https://ratings.moodys.com/rmc-documents/414558. Alternatively, please see the Rating Methodologies page on https://ratings.moodys.com for a copy of this methodology.

COMPANY PROFILE

Colonial ranks among Europe's largest listed office owners. As of 30 June 2024, the GAV of Colonial's portfolio amounted to €11.3 billion. Colonial's portfolio is primarily located in the CBDs of Paris, Madrid and Barcelona, while a minority of assets is in semi-central areas of Madrid and Barcelona.

REGULATORY DISCLOSURES

For further specification of Moody's key rating assumptions and sensitivity analysis, see the sections Methodology Assumptions and Sensitivity to Assumptions in the disclosure form. Moody's Rating Symbols and Definitions can be found on https://ratings.moodys.com/rating-definitions.

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At least one ESG consideration was material to the credit rating action(s) announced and described above.

Moody's general principles for assessing environmental, social and governance (ESG) risks in our credit analysis can be found at <u>https://ratings.moodys.com/documents/PBC 1355824</u>.

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Oliver Schmitt VP - Senior Credit Officer Corporate Finance Group Moody's Deutschland GmbH An der Welle 5 Frankfurt am Main, 60322 Germany JOURNALISTS: 44 20 7772 5456 Client Service: 44 20 7772 5454

Christian Hendker, CFA Associate Managing Director Corporate Finance Group JOURNALISTS: 44 20 7772 5456 Client Service: 44 20 7772 5454

Releasing Office: Moody's Deutschland GmbH An der Welle 5 Frankfurt am Main, 60322 Germany JOURNALISTS: 44 20 7772 5456 Client Service: 44 20 7772 5454 © 2024 Moody's Corporation, Moody's Investors Service, Inc., Moody's Analytics, Inc. and/or their licensors and affiliates (collectively, "MOODY'S"). All rights reserved.

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