

RatingsDirect®

Standard & Poor's Ratings Definitions

Table Of Contents

I. GENERAL-PURPOSE CREDIT RATINGS

A. Issue Credit Ratings

B. Issuer Credit Ratings

II. CREDITWATCH, RATING OUTLOOK , LOCAL CURRENCY AND FOREIGN CURRENCY RATINGS

A. CreditWatch

B. Rating Outlooks

C. Local Currency and Foreign Currency Ratings

III. SPECIAL-PURPOSE RATINGS

A. Dual Ratings

B. Fund Credit Quality Ratings

C. Fund Volatility Ratings

D. Insurance Financial Enhancement Ratings

E. Insurer Financial Strength Ratings

F. Municipal Short-Term Note Ratings

G. Principal Stability Fund Ratings

H. Recovery Ratings

Table Of Contents (cont.)

I. SPUR (Standard & Poor's Underlying Rating)

J. Swap Risk Ratings

IV. QUALIFIERS

A. Active Qualifiers

B. Inactive Qualifiers

V. NATIONAL AND REGIONAL SCALE RATINGS

A. National And Regional Scale Ratings

B. General National And Regional Scale Ratings

C. Canada National Scale Ratings

D. Nordic Regional Scale Short-Term Ratings

E. Standard & Poor's Maalot (Israel) National Scale Ratings

F. Taiwan Ratings National Scale Ratings

G. Japan SME National Scale Ratings

H. Argentine Stock Ratings

VI. OTHER CREDIT RELATED OPINIONS

A. Credit Estimates

B. Credit Assessments

VII. OTHER IDENTIFIERS

A. Active Identifiers

B. Inactive Identifiers

VIII. RELATED RESEARCH

XI. CONTACT INFORMATION

Standard & Poor's Ratings Definitions

(Editor's Note: We've republished the Standard & Poor's ratings definitions to include revised definitions for lower rating categories ('CC', 'C', 'SD' and 'D') in order to conform our rating definitions to related credit rating methodology.)

Standard & Poor's Disclaimers

The analyses, including ratings, of Standard & Poor's and its affiliates (together, Standard & Poor's) are statements of opinion as of the date they are expressed and not statements of fact or recommendations to purchase, hold, or sell any securities or make any investment decisions. Standard & Poor's assumes no obligation to update any information following publication. Users of ratings or other analyses should not rely on them in making any investment decision. Standard & Poor's opinions and analyses do not address the suitability of any security. Standard & Poor's does not act as a fiduciary or an investment advisor except where registered as such. While Standard & Poor's has obtained information from sources it believes to be reliable, Standard & Poor's does not perform an audit and undertakes no duty of due diligence or independent verification of any information it receives. Ratings and other opinions may be changed, suspended, or withdrawn at any time.

1. This document contains Standard & Poor's rating definitions. The definitions are classified into two types; general-purpose credit ratings and special-purpose ratings. Standard & Poor's ratings scales use letters, numbers and/or words to summarize the opinion. The rating definition provides the meaning of the letters, numbers and/or words. Additionally, some ratings are expressed with qualifiers, suffixes and/or identifiers attached. Definitions of this supplementary information are included.
2. Section I describes the general-purpose credit rating, both issue and issuer credit ratings, and the long-term and short-term credit ratings. Section II provides information on CreditWatch, rating outlooks and local currency and foreign currency ratings. Special-purpose ratings are detailed in section III. Qualifiers are covered in section IV. Section V details national and regional scale ratings. Other credit related opinions are described in section VI. Section VII details seven identifiers. Section VIII includes a list of contacts for further information.
3. Standard & Poor's provides other services not covered in this ratings definitions document. Information about other products and services is located on Standard & Poor's Web site at <http://www.standardandpoors.com>.

I. GENERAL-PURPOSE CREDIT RATINGS

4. The following sets of rating definitions are for long-term and short-term credit ratings for both issuer and issue ratings. These types of credit ratings cover the broadest set of credit risk factors and are not limited in scope. Some refer to these as the "traditional" credit ratings.

A. Issue Credit Ratings

5. A Standard & Poor's issue credit rating is a forward-looking opinion about the creditworthiness of an obligor with

respect to a specific financial obligation, a specific class of financial obligations, or a specific financial program (including ratings on medium-term note programs and commercial paper programs). It takes into consideration the creditworthiness of guarantors, insurers, or other forms of credit enhancement on the obligation and takes into account the currency in which the obligation is denominated. The opinion reflects Standard & Poor's view of the obligor's capacity and willingness to meet its financial commitments as they come due, and may assess terms, such as collateral security and subordination, which could affect ultimate payment in the event of default.

6. Issue credit ratings can be either long-term or short-term. Short-term ratings are generally assigned to those obligations considered short-term in the relevant market. In the U.S., for example, that means obligations with an original maturity of no more than 365 days—including commercial paper. Short-term ratings are also used to indicate the creditworthiness of an obligor with respect to put features on long-term obligations. Medium-term notes are assigned long-term ratings.

1. Long-Term Issue Credit Ratings

7. Issue credit ratings are based, in varying degrees, on Standard & Poor's analysis of the following considerations:

- Likelihood of payment—capacity and willingness of the obligor to meet its financial commitment on an obligation in accordance with the terms of the obligation;
- Nature of and provisions of the obligation;, and the promise we impute.
- Protection afforded by, and relative position of, the obligation in the event of bankruptcy, reorganization, or other arrangement under the laws of bankruptcy and other laws affecting creditors' rights.

8. Issue ratings are an assessment of default risk, but may incorporate an assessment of relative seniority or ultimate recovery in the event of default. Junior obligations are typically rated lower than senior obligations, to reflect the lower priority in bankruptcy, as noted above. (Such differentiation may apply when an entity has both senior and subordinated obligations, secured and unsecured obligations, or operating company and holding company obligations.)

Table 1

Long-Term Issue Credit Ratings*	
Category	Definition
AAA	An obligation rated 'AAA' has the highest rating assigned by Standard & Poor's. The obligor's capacity to meet its financial commitment on the obligation is extremely strong.
AA	An obligation rated 'AA' differs from the highest-rated obligations only to a small degree. The obligor's capacity to meet its financial commitment on the obligation is very strong.
A	An obligation rated 'A' is somewhat more susceptible to the adverse effects of changes in circumstances and economic conditions than obligations in higher-rated categories. However, the obligor's capacity to meet its financial commitment on the obligation is still strong.
BBB	An obligation rated 'BBB' exhibits adequate protection parameters. However, adverse economic conditions or changing circumstances are more likely to lead to a weakened capacity of the obligor to meet its financial commitment on the obligation.
BB; B; CCC; CC; and C	Obligations rated 'BB', 'B', 'CCC', 'CC', and 'C' are regarded as having significant speculative characteristics. 'BB' indicates the least degree of speculation and 'C' the highest. While such obligations will likely have some quality and protective characteristics, these may be outweighed by large uncertainties or major exposures to adverse conditions.
BB	An obligation rated 'BB' is less vulnerable to nonpayment than other speculative issues. However, it faces major ongoing uncertainties or exposure to adverse business, financial, or economic conditions which could lead to the obligor's inadequate capacity to meet its financial commitment on the obligation.
B	An obligation rated 'B' is more vulnerable to nonpayment than obligations rated 'BB', but the obligor currently has the capacity to meet its financial commitment on the obligation. Adverse business, financial, or economic conditions will likely impair the obligor's capacity or willingness to meet its financial commitment on the obligation.
CCC	An obligation rated 'CCC' is currently vulnerable to nonpayment, and is dependent upon favorable business, financial, and economic conditions for the obligor to meet its financial commitment on the obligation. In the event of adverse business, financial, or economic conditions, the obligor is not likely to have the capacity to meet its financial commitment on the obligation.
CC	An obligation rated 'CC' is currently highly vulnerable to nonpayment. The 'CC' rating is used when a default has not yet occurred, but Standard & Poor's expects default to be a virtual certainty, regardless of the anticipated time to default.
C	An obligation rated 'C' is currently highly vulnerable to nonpayment, and the obligation is expected to have lower relative seniority or lower ultimate recovery compared to obligations that are rated higher.
D	An obligation rated 'D' is in default or in breach of an imputed promise. For non-hybrid capital instruments, the 'D' rating category is used when payments on an obligation are not made on the date due, unless Standard & Poor's believes that such payments will be made within five business days in the absence of a stated grace period or within the earlier of the stated grace period or 30 calendar days. The 'D' rating also will be used upon the filing of a bankruptcy petition or the taking of similar action and where default on an obligation is a virtual certainty, for example due to automatic stay provisions. An obligation's rating is lowered to 'D' if it is subject to a distressed exchange offer.
NR	This indicates that no rating has been requested, or that there is insufficient information on which to base a rating, or that Standard & Poor's does not rate a particular obligation as a matter of policy.

*The ratings from 'AA' to 'CCC' may be modified by the addition of a plus (+) or minus (-) sign to show relative standing within the major rating categories.

2. Short-Term Issue Credit Ratings

Table 2

Short-Term Issue Credit Ratings	
Category	Definition
A-1	A short-term obligation rated 'A-1' is rated in the highest category by Standard & Poor's. The obligor's capacity to meet its financial commitment on the obligation is strong. Within this category, certain obligations are designated with a plus sign (+). This indicates that the obligor's capacity to meet its financial commitment on these obligations is extremely strong.
A-2	A short-term obligation rated 'A-2' is somewhat more susceptible to the adverse effects of changes in circumstances and economic conditions than obligations in higher rating categories. However, the obligor's capacity to meet its financial commitment on the obligation is satisfactory.
A-3	A short-term obligation rated 'A-3' exhibits adequate protection parameters. However, adverse economic conditions or changing circumstances are more likely to lead to a weakened capacity of the obligor to meet its financial commitment on the obligation.
B	A short-term obligation rated 'B' is regarded as vulnerable and has significant speculative characteristics. The obligor currently has the capacity to meet its financial commitments; however, it faces major ongoing uncertainties which could lead to the obligor's inadequate capacity to meet its financial commitments.
C	A short-term obligation rated 'C' is currently vulnerable to nonpayment and is dependent upon favorable business, financial, and economic conditions for the obligor to meet its financial commitment on the obligation.
D	A short-term obligation rated 'D' is in default or in breach of an imputed promise. For non-hybrid capital instruments, the 'D' rating category is used when payments on an obligation are not made on the date due, unless Standard & Poor's believes that such payments will be made within any stated grace period. However, any stated grace period longer than five business days will be treated as five business days. The 'D' rating also will be used upon the filing of a bankruptcy petition or the taking of a similar action and where default on an obligation is a virtual certainty, for example due to automatic stay provisions. An obligation's rating is lowered to 'D' if it is subject to a distressed exchange offer.

B. Issuer Credit Ratings

9. A Standard & Poor's issuer credit rating is a forward-looking opinion about an obligor's overall creditworthiness. This opinion focuses on the obligor's capacity and willingness to meet its financial commitments as they come due. It does not apply to any specific financial obligation, as it does not take into account the nature of and provisions of the obligation, its standing in bankruptcy or liquidation, statutory preferences, or the legality and enforceability of the obligation.

10. Counterparty credit ratings, corporate credit ratings and sovereign credit ratings are all forms of issuer credit ratings.

11. Issuer credit ratings can be either long-term or short-term.

1. Long-Term Issuer Credit Ratings

Table 3

Long-Term Issuer Credit Ratings*	
Category	Definition
AAA	An obligor rated 'AAA' has extremely strong capacity to meet its financial commitments. 'AAA' is the highest issuer credit rating assigned by Standard & Poor's.
AA	An obligor rated 'AA' has very strong capacity to meet its financial commitments. It differs from the highest-rated obligors only to a small degree.
A	An obligor rated 'A' has strong capacity to meet its financial commitments but is somewhat more susceptible to the adverse effects of changes in circumstances and economic conditions than obligors in higher-rated categories.
BBB	An obligor rated 'BBB' has adequate capacity to meet its financial commitments. However, adverse economic conditions or changing circumstances are more likely to lead to a weakened capacity of the obligor to meet its financial commitments.
BB; B; CCC; and CC	Obligors rated 'BB', 'B', 'CCC', and 'CC' are regarded as having significant speculative characteristics. 'BB' indicates the least degree of speculation and 'CC' the highest. While such obligors will likely have some quality and protective characteristics, these may be outweighed by large uncertainties or major exposures to adverse conditions.
BB	An obligor rated 'BB' is less vulnerable in the near term than other lower-rated obligors. However, it faces major ongoing uncertainties and exposure to adverse business, financial, or economic conditions which could lead to the obligor's inadequate capacity to meet its financial commitments.
B	An obligor rated 'B' is more vulnerable than the obligors rated 'BB', but the obligor currently has the capacity to meet its financial commitments. Adverse business, financial, or economic conditions will likely impair the obligor's capacity or willingness to meet its financial commitments.
CCC	An obligor rated 'CCC' is currently vulnerable, and is dependent upon favorable business, financial, and economic conditions to meet its financial commitments.
CC	An obligor rated 'CC' is currently highly vulnerable. The 'CC' rating is used when a default has not yet occurred, but Standard & Poor's expects default to be a virtual certainty, regardless of the anticipated time to default.
R	An obligor rated 'R' is under regulatory supervision owing to its financial condition. During the pendency of the regulatory supervision the regulators may have the power to favor one class of obligations over others or pay some obligations and not others.
SD and D	An obligor rated 'SD' (selective default) or 'D' is in default on one or more of its financial obligations including rated and unrated financial obligations but excluding hybrid instruments classified as regulatory capital or in non-payment according to terms. An obligor is considered in default unless Standard & Poor's believes that such payments will be made within five business days of the due date in the absence of a stated grace period, or within the earlier of the stated grace period or 30 calendar days. A 'D' rating is assigned when Standard & Poor's believes that the default will be a general default and that the obligor will fail to pay all or substantially all of its obligations as they come due. An 'SD' rating is assigned when Standard & Poor's believes that the obligor has selectively defaulted on a specific issue or class of obligations but it will continue to meet its payment obligations on other issues or classes of obligations in a timely manner. An obligor's rating is lowered to 'D' or 'SD' if it is conducting a distressed exchange offer.
NR	An issuer designated 'NR' is not rated.

*The ratings from 'AA' to 'CCC' may be modified by the addition of a plus (+) or minus (-) sign to show relative standing within the major rating categories.

2. Short-Term Issuer Credit Ratings

Table 4

Short-Term Issuer Credit Ratings	
Category	Definition
A-1	An obligor rated 'A-1' has strong capacity to meet its financial commitments. It is rated in the highest category by Standard & Poor's. Within this category, certain obligors are designated with a plus sign (+). This indicates that the obligor's capacity to meet its financial commitments is extremely strong.
A-2	An obligor rated 'A-2' has satisfactory capacity to meet its financial commitments. However, it is somewhat more susceptible to the adverse effects of changes in circumstances and economic conditions than obligors in the highest rating category.
A-3	An obligor rated 'A-3' has adequate capacity to meet its financial obligations. However, adverse economic conditions or changing circumstances are more likely to lead to a weakened capacity of the obligor to meet its financial commitments.
B	An obligor rated 'B' is regarded as vulnerable and has significant speculative characteristics. The obligor currently has the capacity to meet its financial commitments; however, it faces major ongoing uncertainties which could lead to the obligor's inadequate capacity to meet its financial commitments.
C	An obligor rated 'C' is currently vulnerable to nonpayment that would result in a 'SD' or 'D' issuer rating, and is dependent upon favorable business, financial, and economic conditions for it to meet its financial commitments.
R	An obligor rated 'R' is under regulatory supervision owing to its financial condition. During the pendency of the regulatory supervision the regulators may have the power to favor one class of obligations over others or pay some obligations and not others.
SD and D	An obligor rated 'SD' (selective default) or 'D' has failed to pay one or more of its financial obligations (rated or unrated), excluding hybrid instruments classified as regulatory capital or in nonpayment according to terms, when it came due. An obligor is considered in default unless Standard & Poor's believes that such payments will be made within any stated grace period. However, any stated grace period longer than five business days will be treated as five business days. A 'D' rating is assigned when Standard & Poor's believes that the default will be a general default and that the obligor will fail to pay all or substantially all of its obligations as they come due. An 'SD' rating is assigned when Standard & Poor's believes that the obligor has selectively defaulted on a specific issue or class of obligations, excluding hybrid instruments classified as regulatory capital, but it will continue to meet its payment obligations on other issues or classes of obligations in a timely manner. An obligor's rating is lowered to 'D' or 'SD' if it is conducting a distressed exchange offer.
NR	An issuer designated 'NR' is not rated.

II. CREDITWATCH, RATING OUTLOOK , LOCAL CURRENCY AND FOREIGN CURRENCY RATINGS

12. The following section explains CreditWatch and rating outlooks and how they are used. Additionally, this section explains local currency and foreign currency ratings.

A. CreditWatch

13. CreditWatch highlights our opinion regarding the potential direction of a short-term or long-term rating. It focuses on identifiable events and short-term trends that cause ratings to be placed under special surveillance by Standard & Poor's analytical staff. Ratings may be placed on CreditWatch under the following circumstances:

- When an event has occurred or, in our view, a deviation from an expected trend has occurred or is expected and when additional information is necessary to evaluate the current rating. Events and short-term trends may include mergers, recapitalizations, voter referendums, regulatory actions, performance deterioration of securitized assets, or anticipated operating developments.
- When we believe there has been a material change in performance of an issue or issuer, but the magnitude of the rating impact has not been fully determined, and we believe that a rating change is likely in the short-term.
- A change in criteria has been adopted that necessitates a review of an entire sector or multiple transactions and we believe that a rating change is likely in the short-term.

14. A CreditWatch listing, however, does not mean a rating change is inevitable, and when appropriate, a range of potential alternative ratings will be shown. CreditWatch is not intended to include all ratings under review, and rating changes may occur without the ratings having first appeared on CreditWatch. The "positive" designation means that a rating may be raised; "negative" means a rating may be lowered; and "developing" means that a rating may be raised, lowered, or affirmed.

B. Rating Outlooks

15. A Standard & Poor's rating outlook assesses the potential direction of a long-term credit rating over the intermediate term (typically six months to two years). In determining a rating outlook, consideration is given to any changes in the economic and/or fundamental business conditions. An outlook is not necessarily a precursor of a rating change or future CreditWatch action.

- Positive means that a rating may be raised.
- Negative means that a rating may be lowered.
- Stable means that a rating is not likely to change.
- Developing means a rating may be raised or lowered.
- N.M. means not meaningful.

C. Local Currency and Foreign Currency Ratings

16. Standard & Poor's issuer credit ratings make a distinction between foreign currency ratings and local currency ratings. An issuer's foreign currency rating will differ from its local currency rating when the obligor has a different capacity to meet its obligations denominated in its local currency, vs. obligations denominated in a foreign currency.

III. SPECIAL-PURPOSE RATINGS

17. Section III includes a description of different types of special-purpose ratings. Special-purpose ratings can be for capital market transactions or entities. Such a rating type can cover a specific group of the entities (i.e., insurance companies). Another type of special-purpose rating is a recovery rating which is very different than a traditional issuer credit rating. Some ratings are limited by the type of credit such as funds or municipal short-term note ratings. Other special-purpose ratings are for the specific types of transaction structures, such as those with embedded put options.

A. Dual Ratings

18. Dual ratings may be assigned to debt issues that have a put option or demand feature. The first component of the rating addresses the likelihood of repayment of principal and interest as due, and the second component of the rating addresses only the demand feature. The first component of the rating can relate to either a short-term or long-term transaction and accordingly use either short-term or long-term rating symbols. The second component of the rating relates to the put option and is assigned a short-term rating symbol (for example, 'AAA/A-1+' or 'A-1+/A-1'). With

U.S. municipal short-term demand debt, the U.S. municipal short-term note rating symbols are used for the first component of the rating (for example, 'SP-1+/A-1+').

B. Fund Credit Quality Ratings

19. Fund credit quality ratings, identified by the 'f' suffix, are assigned to fixed-income funds and other actively managed funds that exhibit variable net asset values. These ratings are forward-looking opinions about the overall credit quality of a fund's portfolio. The ratings reflect the level of protection against losses from credit defaults and are based on an analysis of the credit quality of the portfolio investments and the likelihood of counterparty defaults.

Table 5

Fund Credit Quality Ratings*	
Category	Definition
AAAf	The fund's portfolio holdings provide extremely strong protection against losses from credit defaults.
AAf	The fund's portfolio holdings provide very strong protection against losses from credit defaults.
Af	The fund's portfolio holdings provide strong protection against losses from credit defaults.
BBBf	The fund's portfolio holdings provide adequate protection against losses from credit defaults.
BBf	The fund's portfolio holdings provide uncertain protection against losses from credit defaults.
Bf	The fund's portfolio holdings exhibit vulnerability to losses from credit defaults.
CCCf	The fund's portfolio holdings make it extremely vulnerable to losses from credit defaults.

*The ratings from 'AAf' to 'CCCf' may be modified by the addition of a plus (+) or minus (-) sign to show relative standing within the major rating categories.

C. Fund Volatility Ratings

20. A fund volatility rating is a forward-looking opinion about a fixed-income investment fund's sensitivity to changing market conditions relative to the risk of a portfolio composed of government securities and denominated in the base currency of the fund. (Government securities (for S1 through S4 categories) are intended to signify the most liquid, highest quality securities issued by a sovereign government.) Volatility ratings reflect Standard & Poor's view of the fund's sensitivity to interest rate movements, credit risk, investment diversification or concentration, liquidity, leverage, and other factors. Different symbology is used to distinguish the fund volatility ratings from Standard & Poor's traditional issue or issuer credit ratings.

Table 6

Fund Volatility Ratings	
Category	Definition
S1	Funds that possess low sensitivity to changing market conditions are rated S1. These funds possess an aggregate level of risk that is less than or equal to that of a portfolio comprised of government securities maturing within one to three years and denominated in the base currency of the fund. Within this category, certain funds are designated with a plus sign (+). This indicates the fund's extremely low sensitivity to changing market conditions. These funds possess an aggregate level of risk that is less than or equal to that of a portfolio comprising the highest quality fixed-income instruments with an average maturity of 12 months or less.
S2	Funds that possess low to moderate sensitivity to changing market conditions are rated S2. These funds possess an aggregate level of risk that is less than or equal to that of a portfolio comprising government securities maturing within three to seven years and denominated in the base currency of the fund.
S3	Funds that possess moderate sensitivity to changing market conditions are rated S3. These funds possess an aggregate level of risk that is less than or equal to that of a portfolio comprising government securities maturing within seven to 10 years and denominated in the base currency of the fund.
S4	Funds that possess moderate to high sensitivity to changing market conditions are rated S4. These funds possess an aggregate level of risk that is less than or equal to that of a portfolio comprising government securities maturing beyond 10 years and denominated in the base currency of the fund.
S5	Funds that possess high sensitivity to changing market conditions are rated S5. These funds may be exposed to a variety of significant risks including high concentration risks, high leverage, and investments in complex structured and/or illiquid securities.
S6	Funds that possess the highest sensitivity to changing market conditions are rated S6. These funds include those with highly speculative investment strategies with multiple forms of significant risks, with little or no diversification benefits.

D. Insurance Financial Enhancement Ratings

21. A Standard & Poor's insurer financial enhancement rating is a forward-looking opinion about the creditworthiness of an insurer with respect to insurance policies or other financial obligations that are predominantly used as credit enhancement and/or financial guarantees. When assigning an insurer financial enhancement rating, Standard & Poor's analysis focuses on capital, liquidity, and company commitment necessary to support a credit enhancement or financial guaranty business.

22. Insurer financial enhancement ratings are based, in varying degrees, on Standard & Poor's analysis of the following considerations:

- Likelihood of payment--capacity and willingness of the insurer to meet its financial commitment on an obligation in accordance with the terms of the obligation;
- Nature of and provisions of the obligations; and
- Protection afforded by, and relative position of, the obligation in the event of bankruptcy, reorganization, or other arrangement under the laws of bankruptcy and other laws affecting creditors' rights.

Table 7

Insurer Financial Enhancement Ratings*	
Category	Definition
AAA	An insurer rated 'AAA' has extremely strong capacity to meet its financial commitments. 'AAA' is the highest insurer financial enhancement rating assigned by Standard & Poor's.
AA	An insurer rated 'AA' has very strong capacity to meet its financial commitments. It differs from the highest-rated insurers only to a small degree.
A	An insurer rated 'A' has strong capacity to meet its financial commitments but is somewhat more susceptible to the adverse effects of changes in circumstances and economic conditions than insurers in higher-rated categories.
BBB	An insurer rated 'BBB' has adequate capacity to meet its financial commitments. However, adverse economic conditions or changing circumstances are more likely to lead to a weakened capacity of the insurer to meet its financial commitments.
BB; B; CCC; and CC	Insurers rated 'BB', 'B', 'CCC', and 'CC' are regarded as having significant speculative characteristics. 'BB' indicates the least degree of speculation and 'CC' the highest. While such insurers will likely have some quality and protective characteristics, these may be outweighed by large uncertainties or major exposures to adverse conditions.
BB	An insurer rated 'BB' is less vulnerable in the near term than other lower-rated insurers. However, it faces major ongoing uncertainties and exposure to adverse business, financial, or economic conditions which could lead to the insurer's inadequate capacity to meet its financial commitments.
B	An insurer rated 'B' is more vulnerable than the insurers rated 'BB', but the insurer currently has the capacity to meet its financial commitments. Adverse business, financial, or economic conditions will likely impair the insurer's capacity or willingness to meet its financial commitments.
CCC	An insurer rated 'CCC' is currently vulnerable, and is dependent upon favorable business, financial, and economic conditions to meet its financial commitments.
CC	An insurer rated 'CC' is currently highly vulnerable.
R	An insurer rated 'R' is under regulatory supervision owing to its financial condition. During the pendency of the regulatory supervision the regulators may have the power to favor one class of obligations over others or pay some obligations and not others.
SD	An insurer rated 'SD' has failed to pay one or more of its financial obligations when it came due. An 'SD' rating is assigned when Standard & Poor's believes that the obligor has selectively defaulted on a specific issue or class of obligations but it will continue to meet its payment obligations on other issues or classes of obligations. A selective default includes the completion of a distressed exchange offer.
NR	An issuer designated 'NR' is not rated.

*Ratings from 'AA' to 'CCC' may be modified by the addition of a plus (+) or minus (-) sign to show relative standing within the major rating categories.

E. Insurer Financial Strength Ratings

23. A Standard & Poor's insurer financial strength rating is a forward-looking opinion about the financial security characteristics of an insurance organization with respect to its ability to pay under its insurance policies and contracts in accordance with their terms. Insurer financial strength ratings are also assigned to health maintenance organizations and similar health plans with respect to their ability to pay under their policies and contracts in accordance with their terms.

24. This opinion is not specific to any particular policy or contract, nor does it address the suitability of a particular policy or contract for a specific purpose or purchaser. Furthermore, the opinion does not take into account deductibles, surrender or cancellation penalties, timeliness of payment, nor the likelihood of the use of a defense such as fraud to deny claims restrictions to prevent financial obligations from being met.

25. Insurer financial strength ratings do not refer to an organization's ability to meet nonpolicy (i.e., debt) obligations. Assignment of ratings to debt issued by insurers or to debt issues that are fully or partially supported by insurance

policies, contracts, or guarantees is a separate process from the determination of insurer financial strength ratings, and follows procedures consistent with those used to assign an issue credit rating. An insurer financial strength rating is not a recommendation to purchase or discontinue any policy or contract issued by an insurer.

1. Long-Term Insurer Financial Strength Ratings

Table 8

Long-Term Insurer Financial Strength Ratings*	
Category	Definition
AAA	An insurer rated 'AAA' has extremely strong financial security characteristics. 'AAA' is the highest insurer financial strength rating assigned by Standard & Poor's.
AA	An insurer rated 'AA' has very strong financial security characteristics, differing only slightly from those rated higher.
A	An insurer rated 'A' has strong financial security characteristics, but is somewhat more likely to be affected by adverse business conditions than are insurers with higher ratings.
BBB	An insurer rated 'BBB' has good financial security characteristics, but is more likely to be affected by adverse business conditions than are higher-rated insurers.
BB; CCC; and CC	An insurer rated 'BB' or lower is regarded as having vulnerable characteristics that may outweigh its strengths. 'BB' indicates the least degree of vulnerability within the range; 'CC' the highest.
BB	An insurer rated 'BB' has marginal financial security characteristics. Positive attributes exist, but adverse business conditions could lead to insufficient ability to meet financial commitments.
B	An insurer rated 'B' has weak financial security characteristics. Adverse business conditions will likely impair its ability to meet financial commitments.
CCC	An insurer rated 'CCC' has very weak financial security characteristics, and is dependent on favorable business conditions to meet financial commitments.
CC	An insurer rated 'CC' has extremely weak financial security characteristics and is likely not to meet some of its financial commitments.
SD or D	An insurer rated 'SD' (selective default) or 'D' is in default on one or more of its insurance policy obligations but is not under regulatory supervision that would involve a rating of 'R'. The 'D' rating also will be used upon the filing of a bankruptcy petition or the taking of similar action if payments on a policy obligation are at risk. A 'D' rating is assigned when Standard & Poor's believes that the default will be a general default and that the obligor will fail to pay substantially all of its obligations in full in accordance with the policy terms. An 'SD' rating is assigned when Standard & Poor's believes that the insurer has selectively defaulted on a specific class of policies but it will continue to meet its payment obligations on other classes of obligations. A selective default includes the completion of a distressed exchange offer. Claim denials due to lack of coverage or other legally permitted defenses are not considered defaults.
R	An insurer rated 'R' is under regulatory supervision owing to its financial condition. During the pendency of the regulatory supervision, the regulators may have the power to favor one class of obligations over others or pay some obligations and not others. The rating does not apply to insurers subject only to nonfinancial actions such as market conduct violations.
NR	An insurer designated 'NR' is not rated, which implies no opinion about the insurer's financial security.

*Ratings from 'AA' to 'CCC' may be modified by the addition of a plus (+) or minus (-) sign to show relative standing within the major rating categories.

F. Municipal Short-Term Note Ratings

26. A Standard & Poor's U.S. municipal note rating reflects Standard & Poor's opinion about the liquidity factors and market access risks unique to the notes. Notes due in three years or less will likely receive a note rating. Notes with an original maturity of more than three years will most likely receive a long-term debt rating. In determining which type of rating, if any, to assign, Standard & Poor's analysis will review the following considerations:

- Amortization schedule—the larger the final maturity relative to other maturities, the more likely it will be treated as a note; and

- Source of payment—the more dependent the issue is on the market for its refinancing, the more likely it will be treated as a note.

Table 9

Municipal Short-Term Note Ratings	
Category	Definition
SP-1	Strong capacity to pay principal and interest. An issue determined to possess a very strong capacity to pay debt service is given a plus (+) designation.
SP-2	Satisfactory capacity to pay principal and interest, with some vulnerability to adverse financial and economic changes over the term of the notes.
SP-3	Speculative capacity to pay principal and interest.

G. Principal Stability Fund Ratings

27. A Standard & Poor's principal stability fund rating, also known as a "money market fund rating," is a forward-looking opinion about a fixed income fund's capacity to maintain stable principal (net asset value). When assigning a principal stability rating to a fund, Standard & Poor's analysis focuses primarily on the creditworthiness of the fund's investments and counterparties, and also its investments' maturity structure and management's ability and policies to maintain the fund's stable net asset value. Principal stability fund ratings are assigned to funds that seek to maintain a stable or an accumulating net asset value.

28. Generally, when faced with an unanticipated level of redemption requests during periods of high market stress, the manager of any fund may suspend redemptions for up to five business days or meet redemption requests with payments in-kind in lieu of cash.

29. Principal stability fund ratings, or money market fund ratings, are identified by the 'm' suffix (e.g., 'AAAm') to distinguish the principal stability rating from a Standard & Poor's traditional issue or issuer credit rating. Principal stability fund ratings are not commentaries on yield levels.

Table 10

Principal Stability Fund Ratings*	
Category	Definition
AAAm	A fund rated 'AAAm' demonstrates extremely strong capacity to maintain principal stability and to limit exposure to principal losses due to credit risk. 'AAAm' is the highest principal stability fund rating assigned by Standard & Poor's.
AAm	A fund rated 'AAm' demonstrates very strong capacity to maintain principal stability and to limit exposure to principal losses due to credit risk. It differs from the highest-rated funds only to a small degree.
Am	A fund rated 'Am' demonstrates strong capacity to maintain principal stability and to limit exposure to principal losses due to credit risk, but is somewhat more susceptible to the adverse effects of changes in circumstances and economic conditions than funds in higher-rated categories.
BBBm	A fund rated 'BBBm' demonstrates adequate capacity to maintain principal stability and to limit exposure to principal losses due to credit risk. However, adverse economic conditions or changing circumstances are more likely to lead to a reduced capacity to maintain principal stability.
BBm	A fund rated 'BBm' demonstrates speculative characteristics and uncertain capacity to maintain principal stability. It is vulnerable to principal losses due to credit risk. While such funds will likely have some quality and protective characteristics, these may be outweighed by large uncertainties or major exposures to adverse conditions.
Dm	A fund rated 'Dm' has failed to maintain principal stability resulting in a realized or unrealized loss of principal.

*The ratings from 'AA' to 'BB' may be modified by the addition of a plus (+) or minus (-) sign to show relative standing within the rating categories.

H. Recovery Ratings

30. Recovery ratings focus solely on expected recovery in the event of a payment default of a specific issue, and utilize a numerical scale that runs from 1+ to 6. The recovery rating is not linked to, or limited by, the Issuer Credit Rating or any other rating, and provides a specific opinion about the expected recovery.

Table 11

Recovery Ratings	
Category	Definition
1+	A recovery rating of '1+' denotes the highest expectation of full recovery in the event of default.
1	A recovery rating of '1' denotes an expectation of very high (i.e., 90%-100%) recovery in the event of default.
2	A recovery rating of '2' denotes an expectation of substantial (i.e., 70%-90%) recovery in the event of default.
3	A recovery rating of '3' denotes an expectation of meaningful (i.e., 50%-70%) recovery in the event of default.
4	A recovery rating of '4' denotes an expectation of average (i.e., 30%-50%) recovery in the event of default.
5	A recovery rating of '5' denotes an expectation of modest (i.e., 10%-30%) recovery in the event of default.
6	A recovery rating of '6' denotes an expectation of negligible (i.e., 0-10%) recovery in the event of default.

I. SPUR (Standard & Poor's Underlying Rating)

31. A SPUR rating is an opinion about the stand-alone capacity of an obligor to pay debt service on a credit-enhanced debt issue, without giving effect to the enhancement that applies to it. These ratings are published only at the request of the debt issuer/obligor with the designation SPUR to distinguish them from the credit-enhanced rating that applies to the debt issue. Standard & Poor's maintains surveillance of an issue with a published SPUR.

J. Swap Risk Ratings

32. A Standard & Poor's Swap Risk Rating is a forward-looking opinion about the likelihood of loss associated with a specific swap transaction (the "Swap Transaction") entered into by two counterparties.

33. A swap risk rating takes into consideration Standard & Poor's view on the terms of the Swap Transaction including, without limitation, the creditworthiness of one or more reference or underlying obligations or obligors (the "Portfolio") above a certain specified threshold percentage/amount, termination events, and potential recovery percentage or amount on the Portfolio. All swap risk ratings take into consideration the creditworthiness of the Portfolio.

34. A swap risk rating may be modified by the designation "Portfolio," "Single Counterparty--Protection Buyer" and "Single Counterparty--Protection Seller." A Swap Risk Rating (Portfolio) takes into consideration only Standard & Poor's view on the creditworthiness of the credit default swap Portfolio. A Swap Risk Rating (Single Counterparty--Protection Buyer) takes into consideration Standard & Poor's view on the creditworthiness of the Portfolio and the buyer of protection under the Swap Transaction. A Swap Risk Rating (Single

Counterparty--Protection Seller) takes into consideration Standard & Poor's view on the creditworthiness of the Portfolio and the seller of protection under the Swap Transaction. Because the terms of each Swap Transaction are highly customized, a swap risk rating may address different risks; therefore the swap risk ratings should not be viewed as benchmarks related to swap risk across different swap transactions.

35. Swap risk ratings will be modified by a suffix that identifies the type of swap risk rating assigned. The letter ratings will be followed by the designations 'srp,' 'srb,' and 'srs' to correspond with related designations:

- Portfolio ('srp') ratings only take into consideration the creditworthiness of the reference portfolio of the credit default swap;
- Single counterparty--Protection Buyer ('srb') ratings take into consideration the creditworthiness of the reference portfolio and the buyer of protection under the swap transaction; and
- Single counterparty--Protection Seller ('srs') ratings take into consideration the creditworthiness of the reference portfolio and the seller of protection under the swap transaction.

36. A Swap Risk Rating (Portfolio) does not address either counterparty risk (including risk of periodic payments). Each of Swap Risk Ratings (Single Counterparty--Protection Buyer) or (Single Counterparty--Protection Seller) addresses the counterparty risk of one of the Counterparties to the Swap Transaction, respectively. None of the swap risk ratings address the specific amount of termination payments that would be payable under the Swap Transaction. The specific risks addressed by each swap risk rating are stated in the rating letter and the terms and conditions issued for each rated Swap Transaction.

Table 12

Swap Risk Ratings* (see paragraph 35 for suffix)	
Category	Definition
AAA	A Swap Transaction with a swap risk rating of 'AAA' has the highest rating assigned by Standard & Poor's. The likelihood of loss under the Swap Transaction is extremely low.
AA	A Swap Transaction with a swap risk rating of 'AA' differs from the highest-rated Swap Transaction only to a small degree. The likelihood of loss under the Swap Transaction is very low.
A	A Swap Transaction with a swap risk rating of 'A' is somewhat more susceptible to the adverse effects or changes in circumstances and economic conditions than Swap Transactions in higher-rated categories. However, the likelihood of loss under the Swap Transaction is still low.
BBB	A Swap Transaction with a swap risk rating of 'BBB' exhibits adequate protection parameters. However, adverse economic conditions or changing circumstances are more likely to lead to an increased likelihood of loss under the Swap Transaction.
BB; B; CCC; and CC	A Swap Transaction with a swap risk rating of 'BB', 'B', 'CCC', and 'CC' is regarded as having significant speculative characteristics.
BB	A Swap Transaction with a swap risk rating of 'BB' indicates less vulnerability to a risk of loss than other speculative issues. However, major ongoing uncertainties or exposure to adverse business, financial or economic conditions could lead to a substantial increase in the likelihood of loss under the Swap Transaction.
B	A Swap Transaction with a swap risk rating of 'B' is more vulnerable to a risk of loss than a Swap Transaction with a swap risk rating of 'BB'. However, major ongoing uncertainties or exposure to adverse business, financial or economic conditions will likely lead to a substantial increase in the likelihood of loss under the Swap Transaction.
CCC	A Swap Transaction with a swap risk rating of 'CCC' is currently vulnerable to a risk of loss. In the event of adverse business, financial or economic conditions, the Swap Transaction is likely to incur loss.
CC	A Swap Transaction with a swap risk rating of 'CC' is currently highly vulnerable to loss.
D	A Swap Transaction with a swap risk rating of 'D' has incurred or experienced loss.
NR	A Swap Transaction designated 'NR' is not rated, which implies no opinion about its swap risk rating, including without limitation, that a swap risk rating has not been requested or that a swap risk rating has been withdrawn.

*A swap risk rating from 'AA' to 'CCC' may be modified by the addition of a plus (+) or minus (-) sign to show relative standing within the major swap risk rating categories.

IV. QUALIFIERS

37. Standard & Poor's assigns qualifiers to ratings when appropriate. This section details active and inactive qualifiers.

A. Active Qualifiers

38. Standard & Poor's uses six qualifiers that limit the scope of a rating. The structure of the transaction can require the use of a qualifier such as a 'p' qualifier, which indicates the rating addressed the principal portion of the obligation only. Likewise, the qualifier can indicate a limitation on the type of information used, such as "pi" for public information. A qualifier appears as a suffix and is part of the rating.

Federal deposit insurance limit: 'L' qualifier

39. Ratings qualified with 'L' apply only to amounts invested up to federal deposit insurance limits.

Principal: 'p' qualifier

40. This suffix is used for issues in which the credit factors, the terms, or both, that determine the likelihood of receipt of payment of principal are different from the credit factors, terms or both that determine the likelihood of receipt of interest on the obligation. The 'p' suffix indicates that the rating addresses the principal portion of the obligation only

and that the interest is not rated.

Public Information Ratings: 'pi' qualifier

41. Ratings with a 'pi' suffix are based on an analysis of an issuer's published financial information, as well as additional information in the public domain. They do not, however, reflect in-depth meetings with an issuer's management and therefore may be based on less comprehensive information than ratings without a 'pi' suffix. Ratings with a 'pi' suffix are reviewed annually based on a new year's financial statements, but may be reviewed on an interim basis if a major event occurs that may affect the issuer's credit quality.

Preliminary Ratings: 'prelim' qualifier

42. Preliminary ratings, with the 'prelim' suffix, may be assigned to obligors or obligations, including financial programs, in the circumstances described below. Assignment of a final rating is conditional on the receipt by Standard & Poor's of appropriate documentation. Standard & Poor's reserves the right not to issue a final rating. Moreover, if a final rating is issued, it may differ from the preliminary rating.

- Preliminary ratings may be assigned to obligations, most commonly structured and project finance issues, pending receipt of final documentation and legal opinions.
- Preliminary ratings are assigned to Rule 415 Shelf Registrations. As specific issues, with defined terms, are offered from the master registration, a final rating may be assigned to them in accordance with Standard & Poor's policies.
- Preliminary ratings may be assigned to obligations that will likely be issued upon the obligor's emergence from bankruptcy or similar reorganization, based on late-stage reorganization plans, documentation and discussions with the obligor. Preliminary ratings may also be assigned to the obligors. These ratings consider the anticipated general credit quality of the reorganized or post-bankruptcy issuer as well as attributes of the anticipated obligation(s).
- Preliminary ratings may be assigned to entities that are being formed or that are in the process of being independently established when, in Standard & Poor's opinion, documentation is close to final. Preliminary ratings may also be assigned to the obligations of these entities.
- Preliminary ratings may be assigned when a previously unrated entity is undergoing a well-formulated restructuring, recapitalization, significant financing or other transformative event, generally at the point that investor or lender commitments are invited. The preliminary rating may be assigned to the entity and to its proposed obligation(s). These preliminary ratings consider the anticipated general credit quality of the obligor, as well as attributes of the anticipated obligation(s), assuming successful completion of the transformative event. Should the transformative event not occur, Standard & Poor's would likely withdraw these preliminary ratings.
- A preliminary recovery rating may be assigned to an obligation that has a preliminary issue credit rating.

Termination Structures: 't' qualifier

43. This symbol indicates termination structures that are designed to honor their contracts to full maturity or, should certain events occur, to terminate and cash settle all their contracts before their final maturity date.

B. Inactive Qualifiers

44. Inactive qualifiers are no longer applied or outstanding.

Contingent upon final documentation: '*' inactive qualifier

45. This symbol that indicated that the rating was contingent upon Standard & Poor's receipt of an executed copy of the escrow agreement or closing documentation confirming investments and cash flows. Discontinued use in August

1998.

Termination of obligation to tender: 'c' inactive qualifier

46. This qualifier was used to provide additional information to investors that the bank may terminate its obligation to purchase tendered bonds if the long-term credit rating of the issuer was lowered to below an investment-grade level and/or the issuer's bonds were deemed taxable. Discontinued use in January 2001.

U.S. direct government securities: 'G' inactive qualifier

47. The letter 'G' followed the rating symbol when a fund's portfolio consisted primarily of direct U.S. government securities.

Provisional Ratings: 'pr' inactive qualifier

48. The letters 'pr' indicate that the rating was provisional. A provisional rating assumed the successful completion of a project financed by the debt being rated and indicates that payment of debt service requirements was largely or entirely dependent upon the successful, timely completion of the project. This rating, however, while addressing credit quality subsequent to completion of the project, made no comment on the likelihood of or the risk of default upon failure of such completion.

Quantitative Analysis of public information: 'q' inactive qualifier

49. A 'q' subscript indicates that the rating is based solely on quantitative analysis of publicly available information. Discontinued use in April 2001.

Extraordinary risks: 'r' inactive qualifier

50. The 'r' modifier was assigned to securities containing extraordinary risks, particularly market risks, which are not covered in the credit rating. The absence of an 'r' modifier should not be taken as an indication that an obligation would not exhibit extraordinary non-credit related risks. Standard & Poor's discontinued the use of the 'r' modifier for most obligations in June 2000 and for the balance of obligations (mainly structured finance transactions) in November 2002.

V. NATIONAL AND REGIONAL SCALE RATINGS

51. National and regional scale ratings are special-purpose ratings that only apply to issues/issuers in a specific country or region.

A. National And Regional Scale Ratings

52. Standard & Poor's national scale credit ratings are an opinion of an obligor's creditworthiness (issuer, corporate, or counterparty credit rating) or overall capacity to meet specific financial obligations (issue credit rating), relative to other issuers and issues in a given country. National scale credit ratings provide a rank ordering of credit risk within the country. National scale credit ratings exclude direct sovereign risks of a general or systemic nature. Given the focus on credit quality within a single country, national scale credit ratings are not comparable between countries. Standard & Poor's also assigns regional scale credit ratings for certain groups of countries. Regional scale credit ratings have the

same attributes as national scale credit ratings in that they are not comparable to other regional or national scales, and are a relative rank order within the region and exclude direct sovereign risks of a general or systemic nature. The national and regional scale credit ratings use Standard & Poor's global rating symbols with the addition of a two-letter prefix to denote the country or region. The regional scale rating definitions are the same as the national scale rating definitions but with the word "national" replaced with the word "regional".

53. Table 13 lists the national or regional scales, the country or regional prefixes and the associated countries or regions.

Table 13

National/Regional Scale Credit Rating Prefix		
Scale Name	Prefix	Countries
Argentina National Scale	ra	Argentina
ASEAN Regional Scale	ax	Association of South-East Asian Nations
Brazil National Scale	br	Brazil
Canada National Scale	no prefix	Canada
CaVal (Mexico) National Scale	mx	Mexico
Greater China Regional Scale	cn	China, Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan
Gulf Cooperation Council Regional Scale	gc	Gulf Cooperative Council countries
Japan SME National Scale	no prefix	Japan
Kazakhstan National Scale	kz	Kazakhstan
Maalot (Israel) National Scale	il	Israel
Nigeria National Scale	ng	Nigeria
Nordic Regional Scale	no prefix	Denmark, Finland, Sweden
Russia National Scale	ru	Russia
South Africa National Scale	za	South Africa
Taiwan Ratings National Scale	tw	Taiwan
Turkey National Scale	tr	Turkey
Ukraine National Scale	ua	Ukraine
Uruguay National Scale	uy	Uruguay

54. Fourteen national and regional scales use an identical set of rating definitions. Tables 14-17 detail the set of definitions applied to the 14 regional or national scales. Canada, Israel and Japan use different national scales. The Nordic regional short-term scale is also a different scale. In addition the Taiwan Ratings Taiwan fund ratings and the Argentine stock ratings use separate scales. These unique six scales appear after the general national scale ratings.

55. The national scale credit rating definitions include a country prefix denoted as 'xx'. See table 13 for a list of country prefixes, the scale name and the associated countries. For example, 'brBBB' is a Brazil national scale 'BBB' rating for entities/obligations in Brazil.

B. General National And Regional Scale Ratings

1. National Scale Issue Credit Ratings

56. A Standard & Poor's national scale issue credit rating is a forward-looking opinion about the creditworthiness of an obligor with respect to a specific debt, bond, lease, commercial paper program, certificate of deposit, or other financial instrument ("obligation") relative to the creditworthiness of other national obligors with respect to their own financial obligations. National obligors include all active borrowers, guarantors, insurers, and other providers of credit enhancement residing in the country, as well as any foreign obligor active in country's financial markets.

57. Standard & Poor's national scale issue credit ratings are based, in varying degrees, on the analysis of the following considerations:

- The relative likelihood of payment—the rating assesses the obligor's capacity and willingness to meet its financial commitments in accordance with the terms of the obligation, compared with other national obligors;
- The obligation's nature and provisions; and
- Protection afforded to, and the relative position of, the obligation in the event of bankruptcy, reorganization, or other arrangement under bankruptcy laws and other laws affecting creditors' rights.

2. National Scale Long-Term Issue Credit Ratings

Table 14

National Scale Long-Term Issue Credit Ratings*	
Category	Definition
xxAAA	An obligation rated 'xxAAA' has the highest credit rating assigned on Standard & Poor's national scale. The obligor's capacity to meet its financial commitments on the obligation, relative to other national obligors, is extremely strong.
xxAA	An obligation rated 'xxAA' differs from the highest-rated debt only to a small degree. The obligor's capacity to meet its financial commitments on the obligation, relative to other national obligors, is very strong.
xxA	An obligation rated 'xxA' is somewhat more susceptible to adverse effects of changes in circumstances and economic conditions than higher-rated debt. Still, the obligor's capacity to meet its financial commitments on the obligation, relative to other national obligors, is strong.
xxBBB	An obligation rated 'xxBBB' exhibits adequate protection parameters relative to other national obligations. However, adverse economic conditions or changing circumstances are more likely to lead to a weakened capacity on the part of the obligor to meet its financial commitments on the obligation.
xxBB; xxB; xxCCC; xxCC; and xxC	Obligations rated 'xxBB', 'xxB', 'xxCCC', 'xxCC', and 'xC' on the Standard & Poor's national credit rating scale are regarded as having high risk relative to other national obligations. While such obligations will likely have some quality and protective characteristics, these may be outweighed by large uncertainties or major exposure to adverse conditions relative to other national obligations.
xxBB	An obligation rated 'xxBB' denotes somewhat weak protection parameters relative to other national obligations. The obligor's capacity to meet its financial commitments on the obligation is somewhat weak because of major ongoing uncertainties or exposure to adverse business, financial, or economic conditions.
xxB	An obligation rated 'xxB' is more vulnerable than obligations rated 'xxBB' relative to other national obligations. The obligor currently has a weak capacity to meet its financial obligations. Adverse business, financial, or economic conditions, however, would likely impair capacity or willingness of the obligor to meet its financial commitments on the obligation.
xxCCC	An obligation rated 'xxCCC' is currently vulnerable to nonpayment, relative to other national obligations, and is dependent upon favorable business and financial conditions for the obligor to meet its financial commitments on the obligation. In the event of adverse business, financial, or economic conditions, the obligor is not likely to have the capacity to meet its financial commitment on the obligation.
xxCC	An obligation rated 'xxCC' is currently highly vulnerable to nonpayment relative to other national obligations. The 'xxCC' rating is used when a default has not yet occurred, but Standard & Poor's expects default to be a virtual certainty, regardless of the anticipated time to default.
xxC	An obligation rated 'xxC' is currently highly vulnerable to nonpayment, and the obligation is expected to have lower relative seniority or lower ultimate recovery compared to obligations that are rated higher.
D	An obligation rated 'D' is in default or in breach of an imputed promise. For non-hybrid capital instruments, the 'D' rating category is used when payments on an obligation are not made on the date due, unless Standard & Poor's believes that such payments will be made within five business days in the absence of a stated grace period or within the earlier of the stated grace period or 30 calendar days. The 'D' rating also will be used upon the filing of a bankruptcy petition or the taking of similar action and where default on an obligation is a virtual certainty, for example due to automatic stay provisions. An obligation's rating is lowered to 'D' if it is subject to a distressed exchange offer.

*The credit ratings from 'xxAA' to 'xxCCC' may be modified by the addition of a plus (+) or minus (-) to show relative strength with the rating category.

3. National Scale Short-Term Issue Credit Ratings

Table 15

National Scale Short-Term Issue Credit Ratings*	
Category	Definition
xxA-1	A short-term obligation rated 'xxA-1' is rated in the highest category on Standard & Poor's national scale. The obligor's capacity to meet its commitments on the obligation, relative to other national obligors, is strong. Within this category, certain obligations are designated with a plus sign (+). This indicates that the obligor's capacity to meet its financial commitment on these obligations, relative to other national obligors, is extremely strong.
xxA-2	A short-term obligation rated 'xxA-2' is slightly more susceptible to adverse changes in circumstances and economic conditions than obligations rated 'xxA-1'. The obligor's capacity to meet its financial commitments on the obligation, relative to other national obligors, is satisfactory.
xxA-3	A short-term obligation rated 'xxA-3' denotes adequate protection parameters relative to other short-term national obligations. It is, however, more vulnerable to adverse effects of changes in circumstances than obligations carrying the higher designations.
xxB	A short-term obligation rated 'xxB' denotes weak protection parameters relative to other short-term national obligations. It is vulnerable to adverse business, financial, or economic conditions.
xxC	A short-term obligation rated 'xxC' denotes doubtful capacity for payment.
D	A short-term obligation rated 'D' is in default or in breach of an imputed promise. For non-hybrid capital instruments, the 'D' rating category is used when payments on an obligation are not made on the date due, unless Standard & Poor's believes that such payments will be made within any stated grace period. However, any stated grace period longer than five business days will be treated as five business days. The 'D' rating also will be used upon the filing of a bankruptcy petition or the taking of a similar action and where default on an obligation is a virtual certainty, for example due to automatic stay provisions. An obligation's rating is lowered to 'D' if it is subject to a distressed exchange offer.

*Apply to obligations with an original maturity of less than one year.

4. National Scale Issuer Credit Ratings

58. A Standard & Poor's national scale issuer credit rating is a forward-looking opinion about the overall creditworthiness of a debt issuer, guarantor, insurer, or other provider of credit enhancement ("obligor") to meet its financial obligations as they come due, relative to other national obligors. Such national obligors include all active borrowers, guarantors, insurers, and other providers of credit enhancement residing in the country, as well as foreign obligors active in national financial markets.

59. Issuer credit ratings do not apply to specific obligations, as they do not take into account the nature and provisions of the obligation, its standing in bankruptcy or liquidation, statutory preferences, or the legality and enforceability of the obligation. In addition, they do not take into account the creditworthiness of the guarantors, insurers, or other forms of credit enhancement on the obligation.

5. National Scale Long-Term Issuer Credit Ratings

Table 16

National Scale Long-Term Issuer Credit Ratings*	
Category	Definition
xxAAA	An obligor rated 'xxAAA' has an extremely strong capacity to meet its financial commitments relative to that of other national obligors. 'xxAAA' is the highest issuer credit rating assigned according to the Standard & Poor's national scale.
xxAA	An obligor rated 'xxAA' differs from the highest-rated obligors only to a small degree, and has a very strong capacity to meet its financial commitments relative to that of other national obligors.
xxA	An obligor rated 'xxA' is somewhat more susceptible to the adverse effects of changes in circumstances and economic conditions than higher-rated obligors. Still, the obligor has a strong capacity to meet its financial commitments relative to that of other national obligors.
xxBBB	An obligor rated 'xxBBB' has an adequate capacity to meet its financial commitments relative to that of other national obligors. However, adverse economic conditions or changing circumstances are more likely to lead to a weakened capacity of the obligor to meet its financial commitments.
xxBB;, xxB; xxCCC; and xxCC	Obligors rated 'xxBB', 'xxB', 'xxCCC', and 'xxCC' on the Standard & Poor's national credit rating scale are regarded as having high risk relative to other national obligors. While such obligors will likely have some quality and protective characteristics, these may be outweighed by large uncertainties or major exposure to adverse conditions relative to other national obligors.
xxBB	An obligor rated 'xxBB' denotes somewhat weak capacity to meet its financial commitments, although it is less vulnerable than other lower-rated national obligors. However, it faces ongoing uncertainties or exposure to adverse business, financial, or economic conditions, which could result in an inadequate capacity on the part of the obligor to meet its financial commitments.
xxB	An obligor rated 'xxB' is more vulnerable than obligors rated 'xxBB'. The obligor currently has a weak capacity to meet its financial commitments relative to other national obligors. Adverse business, financial, or economic conditions would likely impair the obligor's capacity or willingness to meet its financial commitments.
xxCCC	An obligor rated 'xxCCC' is currently vulnerable relative to other national obligors and is dependent upon favorable business and financial conditions to meet its financial commitments.
xxCC	An obligor rated 'xxCC' is currently highly vulnerable to defaulting on its financial commitments relative to other national obligors. The 'xxCC' rating is used when a default has not yet occurred, but Standard & Poor's expects default to be a virtual certainty, regardless of the anticipated time to default.
xxR	An obligor rated 'xxR' is under regulatory supervision owing to its financial condition. During the pendency of the regulatory supervision, the regulators may have the power to favor one class of obligations over others or pay some obligations and not others.
SD and D	An obligor rated 'SD' (selective default) or 'D' is in default on one or more of its financial obligations including rated and unrated financial obligations but excluding hybrid instruments classified as regulatory capital or in non-payment according to terms. An obligor is considered in default unless Standard & Poor's believes that such payments will be made within five business days of the due date in the absence of a stated grace period, or within the earlier of the stated grace period or 30 calendar days. A 'D' or 'SD' rating is assigned when Standard & Poor's believes that the default will be a general default and that the obligor will fail to pay all or substantially all of its obligations as they come due. An 'SD' rating is assigned when Standard & Poor's believes that the obligor has selectively defaulted on a specific issue or class of obligations but it will continue to meet its payment obligations on other issues or classes of obligations in a timely manner. An obligor's rating is lowered to 'D' or 'SD' if it is conducting a distressed exchange offer.

*The credit ratings from 'xxAA' to 'xxCCC' may be modified by the addition of a plus (+) or minus (-) to show relative strength with the rating category.

6. National Scale Short-Term Issuer Credit Ratings

Table 17

National Scale Short-Term Issuer Credit Ratings*	
Category	Definition
xxA-1	An obligor with a 'xxA-1' short-term credit rating has a strong capacity to meet financial commitments relative to that of other national obligors. Within this category, certain obligations are designated with a plus sign (+). This indicates that the obligor's capacity to meet its financial commitment on these obligations, relative to that of other obligors in the national market, is extremely strong.
xxA-2	An obligor with a 'xxA-2' short-term credit rating has a satisfactory capacity to meet financial obligations relative to that of other national obligors.
xxA-3	An obligor with a 'xxA-3' short-term credit rating has an adequate capacity to meet financial commitments relative to that of other national obligors. However, the obligor is more vulnerable to adverse changes in business circumstances or economic conditions than higher-rated obligors.
xxB	An obligor with a 'xxB' short-term credit rating has a weak capacity to meet financial commitments, relative to that of other national obligors, and is vulnerable to adverse business, financial, or economic conditions.
xxC	An obligor with a 'xxC' short-term credit rating has a doubtful capacity to meet financial commitments.
SD and D	An obligor rated 'SD' (selective default) or 'D' has failed to pay one or more of its financial obligations (rated or unrated), excluding hybrid instruments classified as regulatory capital or in nonpayment according to terms, when it came due. An obligor is considered in default unless Standard & Poor's believes that such payments will be made within any stated grace period. However, any stated grace period longer than five business days will be treated as five business days. A 'D' rating is assigned when Standard & Poor's believes that the default will be a general default and that the obligor will fail to pay all or substantially all of its obligations as they come due. An 'SD' rating is assigned when Standard & Poor's believes that the obligor has selectively defaulted on a specific issue or class of obligations, excluding hybrid instruments classified as regulatory capital, but it will continue to meet its payment obligations on other issues or classes of obligations in a timely manner. An obligor's rating is lowered to 'D' or 'SD' if it is conducting a distressed exchange offer.

*Apply to an obligor's capacity to meet financial commitments over a time horizon of less than one year.

C. Canada National Scale Ratings

60. Canadian national scale ratings use a unique set of rating definitions detailed in paragraphs 61-66 and tables 18-20.

1. Canadian Commercial Paper Ratings

61. A Canadian commercial paper rating is a forward-looking opinion about the capacity of an obligor to meet the financial commitments associated with a specific commercial paper program or other short-term financial instrument ("obligation") relative to the debt servicing and repayment capacity of other obligors active in the Canadian domestic financial markets ("obligors") with respect to their own financial obligations.

Table 18

Canada National Scale Commercial Paper Ratings	
Category	Definition
A-1(High)	A short-term obligation rated 'A-1(High)' is rated in the highest category by Standard & Poor's. The obligor's capacity to meet its financial commitment on the obligation is extremely strong. Obligations rated 'A-1(High)' on the Canadian commercial paper rating scale would qualify for a rating of 'A-1+' on Standard & Poor's global short-term rating scale.
A-1(Mid)	Short-term obligations rated 'A-1(Mid)' reflect a strong capacity for the obligor to meet its financial commitment on the obligation. Obligations rated 'A-1(Mid)' on the Canadian commercial paper rating scale would qualify for a rating of 'A-1' on Standard & Poor's global short-term rating scale.
A-1(Low)	A short-term obligation rated 'A-1(Low)' is slightly more susceptible to the adverse effects of changes in circumstances and economic conditions than obligations in higher rating categories. However, the obligor's capacity to meet its financial commitment on the obligation is satisfactory. Obligations rated 'A-1(Low)' on the Canadian commercial paper rating scale would qualify for a rating of 'A-2' on Standard & Poor's global short-term rating scale.
A-2	Obligations rated 'A-2' reflect a satisfactory capacity of the obligor to fulfill its financial commitment on the obligation, while exhibiting higher susceptibility to changing circumstances or economic conditions than obligations rated 'A-1(Low)'. Obligations rated 'A-2' on the Canadian commercial paper rating scale would qualify for a rating of 'A-2' on Standard & Poor's global short-term rating scale.
A-3	A short-term obligation rated 'A-3' exhibits adequate protection parameters. However, adverse economic conditions or changing circumstances are more likely to lead to a weakened capacity of the obligor to meet its financial commitment on the obligation. Obligations rated 'A-3' on the Canadian commercial paper rating scale would qualify for a rating of 'A-3' on Standard & Poor's global short-term rating scale.
B	A short-term obligation rated 'B' is regarded as having significant speculative characteristics. The obligor currently has the capacity to meet its financial commitment on the obligation; however, it faces major ongoing uncertainties that could lead to the obligor's inadequate capacity to meet its financial commitment on the obligation.
C	A short-term obligation rated 'C' is currently vulnerable to nonpayment and is dependent upon favorable business, financial, and economic conditions for the obligor to meet its financial commitment on the obligation.
D	A short-term obligation rated 'D' is in payment default or in breach of an imputed promise. For non-hybrid capital instruments, the 'D' rating category is used when payments on an obligation are not made on the date due, unless Standard & Poor's believes that such payments will be made within any stated grace period. However, any stated grace period longer than five business days will be treated as five business days. The 'D' rating also will be used upon the filing of a bankruptcy petition or the taking of a similar action and where default on an obligation is a virtual certainty, for example due to automatic stay provisions. An obligation's rating is lowered to 'D' if it is subject to a distressed exchange offer.

2. Canadian Fund Sensitivity Ratings

62 A fund sensitivity rating is a forward-looking opinion about a fund's inherent share price and return sensitivity to changing market conditions, as measured by the variability of its share price and return. The rating is based on a fund's Value at Risk (VaR; see paragraph 63) relative to a 1-year risk free benchmark. For each sensitivity rating category, risk limits are established that are based on a multiple of VaR compared to the 1-year market benchmark.

Table 19

Canada National Scale Fund Sensitivity Ratings (see paragraph 66)	
Category	Definition
Low Sensitivity	Funds that possess low share price and return variability compared to a 1-year risk free benchmark are rated 'Low Sensitivity.' Within the category, certain funds are rated 'Extremely Low Sensitivity', indicating extremely low sensitivity to changing market conditions.
Low to Moderate Sensitivity	Funds that possess low to moderate share price and return variability compared to a 1-year risk free benchmark are rated 'Low to Moderate Sensitivity.'
Moderate Sensitivity	Funds that possess moderate share price and return variability compared to a 1-year risk free benchmark are rated 'Moderate Sensitivity.'
Moderate to High Sensitivity	Funds that possess moderate to high share price and return variability compared to a 1-year risk free benchmark are rated 'Moderate to High Sensitivity.'
High Sensitivity	Funds that possess high share price and return variability compared to a 1-year risk free benchmark are rated 'High Sensitivity.'
Extremely High Sensitivity	Funds that possess extremely high share price and return variability compared to a 1-year risk free benchmark are rated 'Extremely High Sensitivity.'

63. Value at Risk (VaR) is a probability-based metric for quantifying the market risk of assets and portfolios. VaR is often used as an approximation of the "maximum reasonable loss" over a chosen time horizon. To quantify a fund's sensitivity rating profile, Standard & Poor's utilizes the 250-day historical 99% VaR of the fund's return versus the same VaR of the benchmark.

64. Risk free benchmark for the country of domicile for each rated fund. Where no risk free benchmark is available, Standard & Poor's utilizes the most appropriate benchmark for that market.

Below is a list of the benchmarks used in the analysis:

- United States: 1-Year T-Bill Index
- Canada: Scotia 1-Year Canadian T-Bill Index

3. Canadian Preferred Share Scale Ratings

65. The Standard & Poor's Canadian preferred share rating scale serves issuers, investors, and intermediaries in the Canadian financial markets by expressing preferred share ratings (determined in accordance with global rating criteria) in terms of rating symbols that have been actively used in the Canadian market over a number of years. A Standard & Poor's preferred share rating on the Canadian scale is a forward-looking opinion about the creditworthiness of an obligor with respect to a specific preferred share obligation issued in the Canadian market, relative to preferred shares issued by other issuers in the Canadian market. There is a direct correspondence between the specific ratings assigned on the Canadian preferred share scale and the various rating levels on the global debt rating scale of Standard & Poor's. The Canadian scale rating is fully determined by the applicable global scale rating, and there are no additional analytical criteria associated with the determination of ratings on the Canadian scale. It is the practice of Standard & Poor's to present an issuer's preferred share ratings on both the global rating scale and on the Canadian national scale when listing the ratings for a particular issuer.

66. The following table shows the national scale preferred share ratings and the corresponding global scale preferred share ratings:

Table 20

Canada National Scale Preferred Share Scale			
National Scale Preferred Share Rating	Global Scale Preferred Share Rating	National Scale Preferred Share Rating	Global Scale Preferred Share Rating
P-1(High)	AA	P-3(Low)	BB-
P-1	AA-	P-4(High)	B+
P-1	A+	P-4	B
P-1(Low)	A	P-4(Low)	B-
P-1(Low)	A-	P-5(High)	CCC+
P-2(High)	BBB+	P-5	CCC
P-2	BBB	P-5(Low)	CCC-
P-2 Low	BBB-	CC	CC
P-3(High)	BB+	C	C
P-3	BB	D	D

D. Nordic Regional Scale Short-Term Ratings

67. Nordic regional scale ratings use a unique set of rating definitions detailed in paragraph 68 and table 21.

68. The following is the Nordic Regional Scale that applies to short-term obligations.

Table 21

Nordic Short-Term Regional Scale	
Category	Definition
K-1	Highest creditworthiness. An issuer of commercial paper assigned to this category is regarded as having a very good capacity for timely payment of rated debt. Cash flow and liquidity are more than satisfactory to meet predictable demands in the foreseeable future.
K-2	High creditworthiness. An issuer of commercial paper assigned to this category is regarded as having a good capacity for timely repayment of rated debt. Cash flow and liquidity are satisfactory to meet predictable financial demands in the foreseeable future.
K-3	Adequate creditworthiness. An issuer of commercial paper assigned to this category is regarded as having an adequate capacity for timely repayment of rated debt. Cash flow and access to liquidity are sufficient to meet predictable financial demands in the future.
K-4	Speculative capacity. An issuer of commercial paper assigned to this category is regarded as having doubtful capacity for timely repayment of rated debt. It is doubtful that cash flow and access to liquidity are sufficient to meet predictable financial demands within the near future.
K-5	Deficient capacity. An issuer of commercial paper assigned to this category is, or is expected to become, unable to meet predictable financial demands.
BK	Default. An issuer of commercial paper is rated 'D' if it is in payment default or in breach of an imputed promise. For non-hybrid capital instruments, the 'D' rating category is used when payments on an obligation are not made on the date due, unless Standard & Poor's believes that such payments will be made within any stated grace period. However, any stated grace period longer than five business days will be treated as five business days. The 'D' rating also will be used upon the filing of a bankruptcy petition or the taking of a similar action and where default on an obligation is a virtual certainty, for example due to automatic stay provisions. An obligation's rating is lowered to 'D' if it is subject to a distressed exchange offer.

E. Standard & Poor's Maalot (Israel) National Scale Ratings

69. Standard & Poor's Maalot (Israel) national scale use a unique set of rating definitions detailed in paragraphs 70-77 and tables 22-25.

70. The Standard & Poor's Maalot (Israel) national scale serves issuers, insurers, counterparties, intermediaries, and investors in the financial markets of the State of Israel by providing both debt credit ratings, which apply to a specific debt instrument, and issuer credit ratings, which apply to an obligor (i.e., borrower, guarantor, bank, insurer, or other provider of credit enhancement). The Standard & Poor's Maalot national scale uses Standard & Poor's global rating symbols with the addition of an 'il' prefix to denote "Israel" and the scale's focus on Israeli financial markets. For the most part, the criteria employed for determining ratings on the Standard & Poor's Maalot national scale are similar to those employed on the Standard & Poor's global scale. However, certain direct sovereign risk considerations weigh less heavily on the Standard & Poor's Maalot national scale than on the global scale. For example, some types of sovereign risk considerations that could adversely affect all issuers equally would have a more muted effect on the Standard & Poor's Maalot national scale than on the global scale. Indeed, sovereign risk is examined only in a local context relative to the credit risk of other Israeli obligors. As a result, the Standard & Poor's Maalot national scale is not directly comparable to Standard & Poor's global scale or to any other national rating scale.

1. Debt Credit Ratings

71. A Standard & Poor's Maalot national scale debt credit rating is a forward-looking opinion about the creditworthiness of an obligor with respect to a specific debt, bond, lease, commercial paper program, certificate of deposit, or other financial instrument ("obligation") relative to the creditworthiness of other Israeli obligors with respect to their own financial obligations. Israeli obligors include all active borrowers, guarantors, banks, insurers, and other providers of credit enhancement residing in Israel, as well as any foreign obligor active in Israeli financial markets.

2. Long-Term Debt Credit Ratings

72. Standard & Poor's Maalot national scale debt credit ratings are based, in varying degrees, on the analysis of the following considerations:

- The relative likelihood of payment--the rating assesses the obligor's capacity and willingness to meet its financial commitments in accordance with the terms of the obligation, compared with other Israeli obligors;
- The obligation's nature and provisions; and
- Protection afforded to, and the relative position of, the obligation in the event of bankruptcy, reorganization, or other arrangement under bankruptcy laws and other laws affecting creditors' rights.

73. Obligation ratings are an assessment of default risk, but may incorporate an assessment of relative seniority or ultimate recovery in the event of default. Junior obligations are typically rated lower than senior obligations, to reflect the lower priority in bankruptcy, as noted above. (Such differentiation may apply when an entity has both senior and subordinated obligations, secured and unsecured obligations, or operating company and holding company obligations.)

Table 22

Standard & Poor's Maalot (Israel) National Scale Long-Term Issue Ratings*	
Category	Definition
iIAAA	An obligation rated 'iIAAA' has the highest rating assigned on Standard & Poor's Maalot national scale. The obligor's capacity to meet its financial commitments on the obligation, relative to other Israeli obligors, is very strong.
iIAA	An obligation rated 'iIAA' differs from the highest-rated debt only to a small degree. The obligor's capacity to meet its financial commitments on the obligation, relative to other Israeli obligors, is strong.
iIA	An obligation rated 'iIA' is somewhat more susceptible to the adverse effects of changes in circumstances and economic conditions than higher –rated obligors. Still, the obligor has a moderately strong capacity to meet its financial commitments on the obligation, relative to other Israeli obligors.
iIBBB	An obligation rated 'iIBBB' exhibits reasonably adequate protection parameters relative to other Israeli obligations. However, adverse economic conditions or changing circumstances are more likely to lead to a weakened capacity on the part of the obligor to meet its financial commitments on the obligation.
iIBB; iIB; iICCC; iICC; and iIC	Obligations rated 'iIBB', 'iIB', 'iICCC', 'iICC', and 'iIC' on the Standard & Poor's Maalot national rating scale are regarded as having high risk relative to other Israeli obligations. While such obligations will likely have some quality and protective characteristics, these may be outweighed by large uncertainties or major exposure to adverse conditions relative to other Israeli obligations.
iIBB	An obligation rated 'iIBB' denotes somewhat weak protection parameters relative to other Israeli obligations. The obligor's capacity to meet its financial commitments on the obligation is somewhat weak because of major ongoing uncertainties or exposure to adverse business, financial, or economic conditions.
iIB	An obligation rated 'iIB' is more vulnerable than obligations rated 'iIBB' relative to other Israeli obligations. The obligor currently has a weak capacity to meet its financial obligations. Adverse business, financial, or economic conditions, however, would likely impair capacity or willingness of the obligor to meet its financial commitments on the obligation.
iICCC	An obligation rated 'iICCC' is currently vulnerable to nonpayment, relative to other Israeli obligations, and is dependent upon favorable business and financial conditions for the obligor to meet its financial commitments on the obligation. In the event of adverse business, financial, or economic conditions, the obligor is unlikely to have the capacity to meet its financial commitment on the obligation.
iICC	An obligation rated 'iICC' is currently highly vulnerable to nonpayment relative to other Israeli obligations. The 'iICC' rating is used when a default has not yet occurred, but Standard & Poor's Maalot expects default to be a virtual certainty, regardless of the anticipated time to default.
iIC	An obligation rated 'iIC' is currently highly vulnerable to nonpayment, and the obligation is expected to have lower relative seniority or lower ultimate recovery compared to obligations that are rated higher.
D	An obligation rated 'D' is in default or in breach of an imputed promise. For non-hybrid capital instruments, the 'D' rating category is used when payments on an obligation are not made on the date due, unless Standard & Poor's Maalot believes that such payments will be made within five business days in the absence of a stated grace period or within the earlier of the stated grace period or 30 calendar days. The 'D' rating also will be used upon the filing of a bankruptcy petition or the taking of similar action and where default on an obligation is a virtual certainty, for example due to automatic stay provisions. An obligation's rating is lowered to 'D' if it is subject to a distressed exchange offer.

*The ratings from 'iIAA' to 'iICCC' may be modified by the addition of a plus (+) or minus (-) sign to show relative strength within the rating category.

3. Short-Term Ratings

74. Apply to obligations with an original maturity of less than one year.

Table 23

Standard & Poor's Maalot (Israel) National Scale Short-Term Issue Ratings	
Category	Definition
iIA-1	A short-term obligation rated 'iIA-1' is rated in the highest category on Standard & Poor's Maalot Israeli national scale. The obligor's capacity to meet its commitments on the obligation, relative to other Israeli obligors, is strong. Within this category, certain obligations are designated with a plus sign (+). This indicates that the obligor's capacity to meet its financial commitment on these obligations, relative to that of other obligors in the Israeli market, is very strong.
iIA-2	A short-term obligation rated 'iIA-2' is slightly more susceptible to adverse changes in circumstances and economic conditions than obligations rated 'iIA-1'. The obligor's capacity to meet its financial commitments on the obligation, relative to other Israeli obligors, is satisfactory.
iIA-3	A short-term obligation rated 'iIA-3' denotes adequate protection parameters relative to other short-term Israeli obligations. It is, however, more vulnerable to adverse effects of changes in circumstances than obligations carrying the higher designations.
iIB	A short-term obligation rated 'iIB' denotes weak protection parameters relative to other short-term Israeli obligations. It is vulnerable to adverse business, financial, or economic conditions.
iIC	A short-term obligation rated 'iIC' denotes doubtful capacity for payment.
D	A short-term obligation rated 'D' is in default or in breach of an imputed promise. For non-hybrid capital instruments, the 'D' rating category is used when payments on an obligation are not made on the date due, unless Standard & Poor's Maalot believes that such payments will be made within any stated grace period. However, any stated grace period longer than five business days will be treated as five business days. The 'D' rating also will be used upon the filing of a bankruptcy petition or the taking of a similar action and where default on an obligation is a virtual certainty, for example due to automatic stay provisions. An obligation's rating is lowered to 'D' if it is subject to a distressed exchange offer.

4. Issuer Credit Ratings

75. A Standard & Poor's Maalot national scale issuer credit rating is a forward-looking opinion about the overall creditworthiness of a debt issuer, guarantor, bank, insurer, or other provider of credit enhancement ("obligor") to meet its financial obligations as they come due, relative to other Israeli obligors. Such Israeli obligors include all active borrowers, guarantors, banks, insurers, and other providers of credit enhancement residing in Israel, as well as foreign obligors active on Israeli financial markets. A counterparty credit rating is a form of issuer credit rating.

76. Issuer credit ratings do not apply to specific obligations, as they do not take into account the nature and provisions of the obligation, its standing in bankruptcy or liquidation, statutory preferences, or the legality and enforceability of the obligation. In addition, they do not take into account the creditworthiness of the guarantors, insurers, or other forms of credit enhancement on the obligation.

5. Long-Term Issuer Credit Ratings

Table 24

Standard & Poor's Maalot (Israel) National Scale Long-Term Issuer Ratings*	
Category	Definition
iIAAA	An obligor rated 'iIAAA' has a very strong capacity to meet its financial commitments relative to that of other Israeli obligors. 'iIAAA' is the highest issuer credit rating assigned according to the Standard & Poor's Maalot national scale.
iIAA	An obligor rated 'iIAA' differs from the highest-rated obligors only to a small degree, and has a strong capacity to meet its financial commitments relative to that of other Israeli obligors.
iIA	An obligor rated 'iIA' is somewhat more susceptible to the adverse effects of changes in circumstances and economic conditions than higher-rated obligors. Still, the obligor has a moderately strong capacity to meet its financial commitments relative to that of other Israeli obligors.
iIBBB	An obligor rated 'iIBBB' has a reasonably adequate capacity to meet its financial commitments relative to that of other Israeli obligors. However, adverse economic conditions or changing circumstances are more likely to lead to a weakened capacity of the obligor to meet its financial commitments.
iIBB; iIB; iICCC; and iICC	Obligors rated 'iIBB', 'iIB', 'iICCC', and 'iICC' on the Standard & Poor's Maalot national rating scale are regarded as having high risk relative to other Israeli obligors. While such obligors will likely have some quality and protective characteristics, these may be outweighed by large uncertainties or major exposure to adverse conditions relative to other Israeli obligors.
iIBB	An obligor rated 'iIBB' denotes somewhat weak capacity to meet its financial commitments, although it is less vulnerable than other lower-rated Israeli obligors. However, it faces ongoing uncertainties or exposure to adverse business, financial, or economic conditions, which could result in an inadequate capacity on the part of the obligor to meet its financial commitments.
iIB	An obligor rated 'iIB' is more vulnerable than obligors rated 'iIBB'. The obligor currently has a weak capacity to meet its financial commitments relative to other Israeli obligors. Adverse business, financial, or economic conditions would likely impair the obligor's capacity or willingness to meet its financial commitments.
iICCC	An obligor rated 'iICCC' is currently vulnerable relative to other Israeli obligors and is dependent upon favorable business and financial conditions to meet its financial commitments.
iICC	An obligor rated 'iICC' is currently highly vulnerable to defaulting on its financial commitments relative to other Israeli obligors. The 'iICC' rating is used when a default has not yet occurred, but Standard & Poor's Maalot expects default to be a virtual certainty, regardless of the anticipated time to default.
iIR	An obligor rated 'iIR' is under regulatory supervision owing to its financial condition. During the pendency of the regulatory supervision, the regulators may have the power to favor one class of obligations over others or pay some obligations and not others.
SD and D	An obligor rated 'SD' (selective default) or 'D' is in default on one or more of its financial obligations including rated and unrated financial obligations but excluding hybrid instruments classified as regulatory capital or in non-payment according to terms. An obligor is considered in default unless Standard & Poor's Maalot believes that such payments will be made within five business days of the due date in the absence of a stated grace period, or within the earlier of the stated grace period or 30 calendar days. A 'D' rating is assigned when Standard & Poor's Maalot believes that the default will be a general default and that the obligor will fail to pay all or substantially all of its obligations as they come due. An 'SD' rating is assigned when Standard & Poor's Maalot believes that the obligor has selectively defaulted on a specific issue or class of obligations but it will continue to meet its payment obligations on other issues or classes of obligations in a timely manner. An obligor's rating is lowered to 'D' or 'SD' if it is conducting a distressed exchange offer.

*The ratings from 'iIAA' to 'iICCC' may be modified by the addition of a plus (+) or minus (-) sign to show relative strength within the rating category.

6. Short-Term Issuer Credit Ratings

77. Apply to obligors' capacity to meet financial commitments over a time horizon of less than one year.

Table 25

Standard & Poor's Maalot (Israel) National Scale Short-Term Issuer Ratings	
Category	Definition
iIA-1	An obligor with an 'iIA-1' short-term rating has a strong capacity to meet financial commitments relative to that of other Israeli obligors. Within this category, certain obligations are designated with a plus sign (+). This indicates that the obligor's capacity to meet its financial commitment on these obligations, relative to that of other obligors in the Israeli market, is very strong.
iIA-2	An obligor with an 'iIA-2' short-term rating has a satisfactory capacity to meet financial obligations relative to that of other Israeli obligors.
iIA-3	An obligor with an 'iIA-3' short-term rating has an adequate capacity to meet financial commitments relative to that of other Israeli obligors. However, the obligor is more vulnerable to adverse changes in business circumstances or economic conditions than higher-rated obligors.
iIB	An obligor with an 'iIB' short-term rating has a weak capacity to meet financial commitments, relative to that of other Israeli obligors, and is vulnerable to adverse business, financial, or economic conditions.
iIC	An obligor with an 'iIC' short-term rating has a doubtful capacity to meet financial commitments.
iIR	An obligor rated 'R' is under regulatory supervision owing to its financial condition. During the pendency of the regulatory supervision the regulators may have the power to favor one class of obligations over others or pay some obligations and not others.
SD and D	An obligor rated 'SD' (selective default) or 'D' has failed to pay one or more of its financial obligations (rated or unrated), excluding hybrid instruments classified as regulatory capital or in nonpayment according to terms, when it came due. An obligor is considered in default unless Standard & Poor's Maalot believes that such payments will be made within any stated grace period. However, any stated grace period longer than five business days will be treated as five business days. A 'D' rating is assigned when Standard & Poor's Maalot believes that the default will be a general default and that the obligor will fail to pay all or substantially all of its obligations as they come due. An 'SD' rating is assigned when Standard & Poor's Maalot believes that the obligor has selectively defaulted on a specific issue or class of obligations, excluding hybrid instruments classified as regulatory capital, but it will continue to meet its payment obligations on other issues or classes of obligations in a timely manner. An obligor's rating is lowered to 'D' or 'SD' if it is conducting a distressed exchange offer.

F. Taiwan Ratings National Scale Ratings

78. Taiwan Ratings Corporation (Taiwan Ratings) is a majority owned subsidiary of Standard & Poor's operating as Taiwan Ratings Corporation (Taiwan Ratings). Taiwan Ratings national scale serves issuers, insurers, counterparties, intermediaries, and investors in Taiwan's financial markets providing:

- issue credit ratings, which apply to a specific obligation,
- issuer credit ratings, which apply to an obligor (i.e. borrower, guarantor, bank, insurer, or other provider of credit enhancement),
- insurer financial strength ratings, which apply to an insurer's ability to pay under its insurance policies and contracts in accordance with their terms, and
- fixed-income fund credit quality ratings identified with an 'f' suffix to denote funds that exhibit variable net asset values.

79. Taiwan Ratings national scale uses Standard & Poor's global rating symbols with the addition of a 'tw' prefix to denote "Taiwan" and the scale's focus on the Taiwanese financial markets. The criteria employed for determining ratings on Taiwan Ratings national scale are comparable to those employed on the Standard & Poor's global scale, and the mapping of Taiwan Ratings national scale ratings to Standard & Poor's global scale ratings is publicly available and can be found at www.taiwanratings.com.

80. Taiwan Ratings' long-term and short-term issue and issuer rating definitions outlined in tables 26, 27, 28, and 29

are the same as those in tables 14, 15, 16, and 17 except they apply to Taiwan Ratings rather than Standard & Poor's. Taiwan Ratings insurer financial strength ratings definitions are set out in table 30 and fixed-income fund credit quality ratings definitions are described in table 31.

Taiwan Ratings Issue Credit Ratings

81. A Taiwan Ratings issue credit rating is a forward-looking opinion about the creditworthiness of an obligor with respect to a specific debt, bond, lease, commercial paper program, certificate of deposit, or other financial instrument ("obligation") relative to the creditworthiness of other Taiwanese obligors with respect to their own financial obligations. Taiwanese obligors include all active borrowers, guarantors, insurers, and other providers of credit enhancement residing in Taiwan, as well as any foreign obligor active in Taiwan's financial markets.

82. Taiwan Ratings issue credit ratings are based, in varying degrees, on the analysis of the following considerations:

- The relative likelihood of payment—the rating assesses the obligor's capacity and willingness to meet its financial commitments in accordance with the terms of the obligation, compared with other Taiwanese obligors;
- The obligation's nature and provisions; and
- Protection afforded to, and the relative position of, the obligation in the event of bankruptcy, reorganization, or other arrangement under bankruptcy laws and other laws affecting creditors' rights

Taiwan Ratings Long-Term Issue Credit Ratings

Table 26

Taiwan Ratings Long-Term Issue Credit Ratings*	
Category	Definition
twAAA	An obligation rated 'twAAA' has the highest credit rating assigned on Taiwan Ratings national scale. The obligor's capacity to meet its financial commitments on the obligation, relative to other Taiwanese obligors, is extremely strong.
twAA	An obligation rated 'twAA' differs from the highest-rated debt only to a small degree. The obligor's capacity to meet its financial commitments on the obligation, relative to other Taiwanese obligors, is very strong.
twA	An obligation rated 'twA' is somewhat more susceptible to adverse effects of changes in circumstances and economic conditions than higher-rated debt. Still, the obligor's capacity to meet its financial commitments on the obligation, relative to other Taiwanese obligors, is strong.
twBBB	An obligation rated 'twBBB' exhibits adequate protection parameters relative to other Taiwanese obligations. However, adverse economic conditions or changing circumstances are more likely to lead to a weakened capacity on the part of the obligor to meet its financial commitments on the obligation.
twBB; twB; twCCC; twCC; and twC	Obligations rated 'twBB', 'twB', 'twCCC', 'twCC', and 'twC' on the Taiwan Ratings national credit rating scale are regarded as having high risk relative to other national obligations. While such obligations will likely have some quality and protective characteristics, these may be outweighed by large uncertainties or major exposure to adverse conditions relative to other Taiwanese obligations.
twBB	An obligation rated 'twBB' denotes somewhat weak protection parameters relative to other Taiwanese obligations. The obligor's capacity to meet its financial commitments on the obligation is somewhat weak because of major ongoing uncertainties or exposure to adverse business, financial, or economic conditions.
twB	An obligation rated 'twB' is more vulnerable than obligations rated 'twBB' relative to other Taiwanese obligations. The obligor currently has a weak capacity to meet its financial obligations. Adverse business, financial, or economic conditions, however, would likely impair capacity or willingness of the obligor to meet its financial commitments on the obligation.
twCCC	An obligation rated 'twCCC' is currently vulnerable to nonpayment, relative to other Taiwanese obligations, and is dependent upon favorable business and financial conditions for the obligor to meet its financial commitments on the obligation. In the event of adverse business, financial, or economic conditions, the obligor is not likely to have the capacity to meet its financial commitment on the obligation.
twCC	An obligation rated 'twCC' is currently highly vulnerable to nonpayment relative to other Taiwanese obligations. The 'twCC' rating is used when a default has not yet occurred, but Taiwan Ratings expects default to be a virtual certainty, regardless of the anticipated time to default.
twC	An obligation rated 'twC' is currently highly vulnerable to nonpayment, and the obligation is expected to have lower relative seniority or lower ultimate recovery compared to obligations that are rated higher.
D	An obligation rated 'D' is in default or in breach of an imputed promise. For non-hybrid instruments, the 'D' rating category is used when payments on an obligation are not made on the date due, unless Taiwan Ratings believes that such payments will be made within five business days, in the absence of a stated grace period or within the earlier of the stated grace period or 30 calendar days. The 'D' rating also will be used upon the filing of a bankruptcy petition or the taking of similar action and where default on an obligation is a virtual certainty, for example due to automatic stay provisions. An obligation's rating is lowered to 'D' upon completion of a distressed exchange offer.

*The credit ratings from 'twAA' to 'twCCC' may be modified by the addition of a plus (+) or minus (-) to show relative strength with the rating category.

Taiwan Ratings Short-Term Issue Credit Ratings

Table 27

Taiwan Ratings Short-Term Issue Credit Ratings*	
Category	Definition
twA-1	A short-term obligation rated 'twA-1' is rated in the highest category on Taiwan Ratings national scale. The obligor's capacity to meet its commitments on the obligation, relative to other Taiwanese obligors, is strong. Within this category, certain obligations are designated with a plus sign (+). This indicates that the obligor's capacity to meet its financial commitment on these obligations, relative to other Taiwanese obligors, is extremely strong.
twA-2	A short-term obligation rated 'twA-2' is slightly more susceptible to adverse changes in circumstances and economic conditions than obligations rated 'twA-1'. The obligor's capacity to meet its financial commitments on the obligation, relative to other Taiwanese obligors, is satisfactory.
twA-3	A short-term obligation rated 'twA-3' denotes adequate protection parameters relative to other short-term Taiwanese obligations. It is, however, more vulnerable to adverse effects of changes in circumstances than obligations carrying the higher designations.
twB	A short-term obligation rated 'twB' denotes weak protection parameters relative to other short-term Taiwanese obligations. It is vulnerable to adverse business, financial, or economic conditions.
twC	A short-term obligation rated 'twC' denotes doubtful capacity for payment.
D	A short-term obligation rated 'D' is in default or in breach of an imputed promise. For non-hybrid instruments, the 'D' rating category is used when payments on an obligation are not made on the date due, unless Taiwan Ratings believes that such payments will be made within any stated grace period. However, any stated grace period longer than five business days will be treated as five business days. The 'D' rating also will be used upon the filing of a bankruptcy petition or the taking of a similar action and where default on an obligation is a virtual certainty, for example due to automatic stay provisions. An obligation's rating is lowered to 'D' if it is subject to a distressed exchange offer.

*Apply to obligations with an original maturity of less than one year.

Taiwan Ratings Issuer Credit Ratings

83. A Taiwan Ratings issuer credit rating is a forward-looking opinion about the overall creditworthiness of a debt issuer, guarantor, insurer, or other provider of credit enhancement ("obligor") to meet its financial obligations as they come due, relative to other Taiwanese obligors. Such Taiwanese obligors include all active borrowers, guarantors, insurers, and other providers of credit enhancement residing in Taiwan, as well as foreign obligors active in Taiwan's financial markets.

84. Issuer credit ratings do not apply to specific obligations, as they do not take into account the nature and provisions of the obligation, its standing in bankruptcy or liquidation, statutory preferences, or the legality and enforceability of the obligation. In addition, they do not take into account the creditworthiness of the guarantors, insurers, or other forms of credit enhancement on the obligation.

85. Counterparty credit ratings and corporate credit ratings are all forms of issuer credit ratings.

Taiwan Ratings Long-Term Issuer Credit Ratings

Table 28

Taiwan Ratings Long-Term Issuer Credit Ratings*	
Category	Definition
twAAA	An obligor rated 'twAAA' has an extremely strong capacity to meet its financial commitments relative to that of other Taiwanese obligors. 'twAAA' is the highest issuer credit rating assigned according to Taiwan Ratings national scale.
twAA	An obligor rated 'twAA' differs from the highest-rated obligors only to a small degree, and has a very strong capacity to meet its financial commitments relative to that of other Taiwanese obligors.
twA	An obligor rated 'twA' is somewhat more susceptible to the adverse effects of changes in circumstances and economic conditions than higher-rated obligors. Still, the obligor has a strong capacity to meet its financial commitments relative to that of other Taiwanese obligors.
twBBB	An obligor rated 'twBBB' has an adequate capacity to meet its financial commitments relative to that of other Taiwanese obligors. However, adverse economic conditions or changing circumstances are more likely to lead to a weakened capacity of the obligor to meet its financial commitments.
twBB; twB; twCCC; and twCC	Obligors rated 'twBB', 'twB', 'twCCC', and 'twCC' on the Taiwan Ratings credit rating scale are regarded as having high risk relative to other Taiwanese obligors. While such obligors will likely have some quality and protective characteristics, these may be outweighed by large uncertainties or major exposure to adverse conditions relative to other Taiwanese obligors.
twBB	An obligor rated 'twBB' denotes somewhat weak capacity to meet its financial commitments, although it is less vulnerable than other lower-rated Taiwanese obligors. However, it faces ongoing uncertainties or exposure to adverse business, financial, or economic conditions, which could result in an inadequate capacity on the part of the obligor to meet its financial commitments.
twB	An obligor rated 'twB' is more vulnerable than obligors rated 'twBB'. The obligor currently has a weak capacity to meet its financial commitments relative to other Taiwanese obligors. Adverse business, financial, or economic conditions would likely impair the obligor's capacity or willingness to meet its financial commitments.
twCCC	An obligor rated 'twCCC' is currently vulnerable relative to other Taiwanese obligors and is dependent upon favorable business and financial conditions to meet its financial commitments.
twCC	An obligor rated 'twCC' is currently highly vulnerable to defaulting on its financial commitments relative to other Taiwanese obligors. The 'twCC' rating is used when a default has not yet occurred, but Taiwan Ratings expects default to be a virtual certainty, regardless of the anticipated time to default.
twR	An obligor rated 'twR' is under regulatory supervision owing to its financial condition. During the pendency of the regulatory supervision, the regulators may have the power to favor one class of obligations over others or pay some obligations and not others.
SD and D	An obligor rated 'SD' (selective default) or 'D' is in default on one or more of its financial obligations including rated and unrated financial obligations but excluding hybrid instruments classified as regulatory capital or in non-payment according to terms. An obligor is considered in default unless Taiwan Ratings believes that such payments will be made within five business days, or within the earlier of the stated grace period or 30 calendar days. A 'D' rating is assigned when Taiwan Ratings believes that the default will be a general default and that the obligor will fail to pay all or substantially all of its obligations as they come due. A 'SD' rating is assigned when Taiwan Ratings believes that the obligor has selectively defaulted on a specific issue or class of obligations but it will continue to meet its payment obligations on other issues or classes of obligations in a timely manner. An obligor's rating is lowered to 'D' or 'SD' if it is conducting a distressed exchange offer.
NR	An issuer designated 'NR' is not rated.

*The credit ratings from 'twAA' to 'twCCC' may be modified by the addition of a plus (+) or minus (-) to show relative strength with the rating category.

Taiwan Ratings Short-Term Issuer Credit Ratings

Table 29

Taiwan Ratings Short-Term Issuer Credit Ratings*	
Category	Definition
twA-1	An obligor with a 'twA-1' short-term credit rating has a strong capacity to meet financial commitments relative to that of other Taiwanese obligors. Within this category, certain obligations are designated with a plus sign (+). This indicates that the obligor's capacity to meet its financial commitment on these obligations, relative to that of other obligors in the Taiwanese market, is extremely strong.
twA-2	An obligor with a 'twA-2' short-term credit rating has a satisfactory capacity to meet financial obligations relative to that of other Taiwanese obligors.
twA-3	An obligor with a 'twA-3' short-term credit rating has an adequate capacity to meet financial commitments relative to that of other Taiwanese obligors. However, the obligor is more vulnerable to adverse changes in business circumstances or economic conditions than higher-rated obligors.
twB	An obligor with a 'twB' short-term credit rating has a weak capacity to meet financial commitments, relative to that of other Taiwanese obligors, and is vulnerable to adverse business, financial, or economic conditions.
twC	An obligor with a 'twC' short-term credit rating has a doubtful capacity to meet financial commitments.
SD and D	An obligor rated 'SD' (selective default) or 'D' has failed to pay one or more of its financial obligations (rated or unrated), excluding hybrid instruments classified as regulatory capital or in nonpayment according to terms, when it came due. An obligor is considered in default unless Taiwan Ratings believes that such payments will be made within any stated grace period. However, any stated grace period longer than five business days will be treated as five business days. A 'D' credit rating is assigned when Taiwan Ratings believes that the default will be a general default and that the obligor will fail to pay all or substantially all of its obligations as they come due. A 'SD' credit rating is assigned when Taiwan Ratings believes that the obligor has selectively defaulted on a specific issue or class of obligations, excluding hybrid instruments classified as regulatory capital, but it will continue to meet its payment obligations on other issues or classes of obligations in a timely manner. An obligor's rating is lowered to 'D' or 'SD' if it is conducting a distressed exchange offer.
NR	An issuer designated 'NR' is not rated.

*Apply to an obligor's capacity to meet financial commitments over a time horizon of less than one year.

Taiwan Ratings Insurer Financial Strength Ratings

86. A Taiwan Ratings' insurer financial strength rating is a forward-looking opinion about the financial security characteristics of an insurance organization with respect to its ability to pay under its insurance policies and contracts in accordance with their terms, relative to other insurers in the Taiwan market.

87. This opinion is not specific to any particular policy or contract, nor does it address the suitability of a particular policy or contract for a specific purpose or purchaser. Furthermore, the opinion does not take into account deductibles, surrender or cancellation penalties, timeliness of payment, nor the likelihood of the use of a defense such as fraud to deny claims.

88. Insurer financial strength ratings do not refer to an organization's ability to meet nonpolicy (i.e., debt) obligations. Assignment of ratings to debt issued by insurers or to debt issues that are fully or partially supported by insurance policies, contracts, or guarantees is a separate process from the determination of insurer financial strength ratings, and follows procedures consistent with those used to assign an issue credit rating.

Table 30

Taiwan Ratings Insurer Financial Strength Ratings*	
Category	Definition
twAAA	An insurer rated 'twAAA' has extremely strong financial security characteristics, relative to other insurers in the Taiwan market. 'twAAA' is the highest insurer financial strength rating assigned by Taiwan Ratings.
twAA	An insurer rated 'twAA' has very strong financial security characteristics, relative to other insurers in the Taiwan market, differing only slightly from those rated higher.
twA	An insurer rated 'twA' has strong financial security characteristics, relative to other insurers in the Taiwan market but is somewhat more likely to be affected by adverse business conditions than are insurers with higher ratings.
twBBB	An insurer rated 'twBBB' has good financial security characteristics, relative to other insurers in the Taiwan market but is more likely to be affected by adverse business conditions than are higher-rated insurers.
twBB, twCCC, and twCC	An insurer rated 'twBB' or lower is regarded as having vulnerable, relative to other insurers in the Taiwan market characteristics that may outweigh its strengths. 'twBB' indicates the least degree of vulnerability within the range; 'twCC' the highest.
twBB	An insurer rated 'twBB' has marginal financial security characteristics, relative to other insurers in the Taiwan market. Positive attributes exist, but adverse business conditions could lead to insufficient ability to meet financial commitments.
twB	An insurer rated 'twB' has weak financial security characteristics, relative to other insurers in the Taiwan market. Adverse business conditions will likely impair its ability to meet financial commitments.
twCCC	An insurer rated 'twCCC' has very weak financial security characteristics, relative to other insurers in the Taiwan market, and is dependent on favorable business conditions to meet financial commitments.
twCC	An insurer rated 'twCC' has extremely weak financial security characteristics, relative to other insurers in the Taiwan market and is likely not to meet some of its financial commitments.
twR	An insurer rated 'twR' is under regulatory supervision owing to its financial condition. During the pendency of the regulatory supervision, the regulators may have the power to favor one class of obligations over others or pay some obligations and not others. The rating does not apply to insurers subject only to nonfinancial actions such as market conduct violations.
SD and D	An insurer rated 'SD' (selective default) or 'D' is in default on one or more of its insurance policy obligations but is not under regulatory supervision that would involve a rating of 'twR'. The 'D' rating also will be used upon the filing of a bankruptcy petition or the taking of similar action if payments on a policy obligation are at risk. A 'D' rating is assigned when Taiwan Ratings believes that the default will be a general default and that the obligor will fail to pay substantially all of its obligations in full in accordance with the policy terms. An 'SD' rating is assigned when Taiwan Ratings believes that the insurer has selectively defaulted on a specific class of policies, but it will continue to meet its payment obligations on other classes of obligations. A selective default includes the completion of a distressed exchange offer. Claim denials due to lack of coverage or other legally permitted defenses are not considered defaults.
NR	An insurer designated 'NR' is not rated, which implies no opinion about the insurer's financial security.

*Ratings from 'twAA' to 'twCCC' may be modified by the addition of a plus (+) or minus (-) sign to show relative standing within the major rating categories.

Taiwan Ratings Fund Credit Quality Ratings

89. Taiwan Ratings Fund Credit Quality Ratings, identified by the 'f' suffix, are assigned to fixed-income funds and other actively managed funds that exhibit variable net asset values. The 'tw' prefix indicates that the funds are rated using the Taiwan Ratings rating scale. A fund credit quality rating is not directly comparable to a debt rating because of differences in rating criteria.

90. These ratings are forward-looking opinions about the overall credit quality of a fund's portfolio. The ratings reflect the level of protection against losses from credit defaults.

Table 31

Taiwan Fixed-Income Fund National Scale Credit Quality Ratings*	
Category	Definition
twAAAf	The fund's portfolio holdings provide extremely strong protection against losses from credit defaults on the Taiwan Ratings' ratings scale.
twAAf	The fund's portfolio holdings provide very strong protection against losses from credit defaults on the Taiwan Ratings' ratings scale.
twAf	The fund's portfolio holdings provide strong protection against losses from credit defaults on the Taiwan Ratings' ratings scale.
twBBBf	The fund's portfolio holdings provide adequate protection against losses from credit defaults on the Taiwan Ratings' ratings scale.
twBBf	The fund's portfolio holdings provide uncertain protection against losses from credit defaults on the Taiwan Ratings' ratings scale.
twBf	The fund's portfolio holdings exhibit vulnerability to losses from credit defaults on the Taiwan Ratings' ratings scale.
twCCCF	The fund's portfolio holdings make it extremely vulnerable to losses from credit defaults on the Taiwan Ratings' ratings scale.

*The ratings from 'twAAf' to 'twCCCF' can be modified by the addition of a plus (+) or minus (-) sign to show relative standing within the major rating categories.

G. Japan SME National Scale Ratings

91. The Standard & Poor's Japan Small and Medium-Sized Enterprise (SME) national scale serves Japanese SMEs, lenders, suppliers, and other parties that have an interest in SME creditworthiness by providing enterprise credit ratings. A Standard & Poor's Japan SME rating reflects Standard & Poor's opinion of the overall financial capacity of a Japanese SME to meet its financial obligations as they come due, relative to other Japanese SME obligors. A Standard & Poor's Japan SME rating is a quantitatively derived indicator of creditworthiness. Calculations differ significantly from Standard & Poor's rating criteria and do not include subjective assessments or judgments of individual SMEs by analysts. Japan SME ratings are expressed using Standard & Poor's traditional credit rating symbols, but in lower case (e.g., 'bbb') to highlight that they are quantitatively derived.

92. Standard & Poor's Japan SME national scale is not directly comparable to Standard & Poor's global scale, to any other national rating scale or to scales for any quantitatively derived rating estimates. Japan SME ratings are assigned to small and medium-sized enterprises in Japan. For every rating category, firms with a Japan SME rating are typically smaller than firms with an "equivalent" Standard & Poor's credit rating on the global scale. Standard & Poor's rating analysts do not determine Japan SME ratings and, if Standard & Poor's ratings criteria were applied, it is unlikely that analysts would rate companies as indicated by the Japan SME ratings.

93. A Japan SME rating does not apply to any specific obligation, as it does not take into account the nature and provisions of the obligation, its standing in bankruptcy or liquidation, statutory preferences, or the legality and enforceability of the obligation. In addition, it does not take into account the creditworthiness of the guarantors, insurers, or other forms of credit enhancement on the obligation.

Table 32

Japan SME National Scale Ratings	
Category	Definition
aaa	An obligor rated 'aaa' has a very strong capacity to meet its financial commitments relative to that of other Japanese SMEs. 'aaa' is the highest credit rating assigned on the Standard & Poor's Japan SME rating scale.
aa	An obligor rated 'aa' differs from the highest-rated obligors only to a small degree, and has a strong capacity to meet its financial commitments relative to that of other Japanese SMEs.
a	An obligor rated 'a' is somewhat more susceptible to the adverse effects of changes in circumstances and economic conditions than higher-rated obligors. Still, the obligor has a moderately strong capacity to meet its financial commitments relative to that of other Japanese SMEs.
bbb	An obligor rated 'bbb' has a reasonably adequate capacity to meet its financial commitments relative to that of other Japanese SMEs. However, adverse economic conditions or changing circumstances could impair the obligor's capacity to meet its financial commitments.
bb	An obligor rated 'bb' has somewhat weak capacity to meet its financial commitments relative to that of other Japanese SMEs. However, it faces ongoing uncertainties or exposure to adverse business, financial, or economic conditions, which could result in an inadequate capacity to meet its financial commitments.
b	An obligor rated 'b' has a weak capacity to meet its financial commitments relative to that of other Japanese SMEs. Adverse business, financial, or economic conditions will likely impair the obligor's capacity to meet its financial commitments.
ccc	An obligor rated 'ccc' is currently vulnerable to nonpayment relative to other Japanese SMEs, and is dependent upon favorable business and financial conditions to meet its financial commitments. In the event of adverse business, financial or economic conditions, the obligor is not likely to have the capacity to meet its financial commitments.

H. Argentine Stock Ratings

94. A stock rating on Standard & Poor's Argentine national rating scale is a current opinion on the capacity of an entity to generate value for shareholders. This is not a traditional credit rating. This value may be observed in the future, through

- a) an increase in profitability and equity value of the company or financial institution,
- b) its capacity to distribute dividends, or
- c) the investor's ability to sell the stock when required. Consequently, the analysis addresses the entity's capacity to generate earnings.

Table 33

Argentine National Scale Stock Ratings				
Capacity to generate earnings				
	Very Good: The capacity to generate earnings may be insignificantly affected, even in case of relatively significant changes in the general economic environment, in the entity's specific sector and/or in the financial markets.	Good: The capacity to generate earnings may be slightly affected, in case of relatively significant changes in the entity's specific sector and/or in the financial markets.	Weak: The capacity to generate earnings may be fairly affected, even absent of significant changes in the general economic environment, or could be significantly affected, in case of changes to very specific factors.	Low: In order to improve, the capacity to generate earnings requires significant changes in general factors or very significant changes in very specific factors.
Liquidity				
High: Includes stocks that fall into the first third of higher traded stocks on a daily basis in the relevant market/s.	1	1	2	3

Table 33

Argentine National Scale Stock Ratings (cont.)				
Medium: Includes stocks that fall into the second third of higher traded stocks on a daily basis in the relevant market/s.	1	2	3	4
Low: Includes stocks that fall into the last third of higher traded stocks on a daily basis in the relevant market/s.	2	3	4	4
Definition of '5' rating: stocks regarding which the issuers do not provide valid or representative information.				

VI. OTHER CREDIT RELATED OPINIONS

A. Credit Estimates

95. A credit estimate is an indication, provided to a third party, of the likely Standard & Poor's issue or issuer credit rating on an unrated obligation or obligor. The estimate is based on input from a variety of sources including quantitative models, where applicable, and draws on analytical experience and sector knowledge of Standard & Poor's analysts. These estimates do not involve direct contact with the obligor's management or in-depth insight into operating, financial, or strategic issues that such contact may allow. Standard & Poor's does not maintain ongoing surveillance on credit estimates, but periodic updates may be provided. A credit estimate is generally confidential. Credit estimates are expressed using Standard & Poor's traditional credit rating symbols, but in lower case (e.g., 'bbb').

B. Credit Assessments

96. A credit assessment is an indicator of Standard & Poor's opinion of creditworthiness that may be expressed in descriptive terms, a broad rating category or with the addition of a plus (+) or minus (-) sign to indicate relative strength within the category. It reflects our view of the general credit strengths and weaknesses of an issuer, obligor, a proposed financing structure, or elements of such structures. It may also pertain to limited credit matters or carve out certain elements of a credit that would ordinarily be taken into account in a credit rating. A credit assessment usually represents a point-in-time evaluation and Standard & Poor's generally does not maintain ongoing surveillance of credit assessments. A credit assessment is generally confidential. Credit assessments are expressed using Standard & Poor's traditional credit rating symbols, but in lower case (e.g., 'bbb').

VII. OTHER IDENTIFIERS

A. Active Identifiers

97. Standard & Poor's currently uses seven other identifiers. These words or symbols provide additional information but do not change the definition of a rating or our opinion about the issue's or issuer's creditworthiness. The identifiers are often required by regulation.

Unsolicited: 'unsolicited' and 'u' identifier

98. The 'u' identifier and 'unsolicited' designation are unsolicited credit ratings assigned at the initiative of Standard & Poor's and not at the request of the issuer or its agents.

Structured finance: 'sf' identifier

99. The 'sf' suffix is assigned to certain issues and issuers to distinguish instruments or obligors considered by regulation to be structured finance instruments or obligors from any other instrument or obligor. . The addition of this suffix to a credit rating does not change the definition of that rating or our opinion about the issue's or issuer's creditworthiness.

Japan: 'jr' identifier

100. The 'JR' identifier is assigned to all issues and issuers ratings assigned by either Standard & Poor's Ratings Japan K.K. or Nippon Standard & Poor's K.K., each of which is a registered credit rating agency in Japan, as ratings registered under the Japanese regulation. The addition of the identifier does not change the definition of that rating or our opinion about the issue's or issuer's creditworthiness.

European Union: 'EU' identifier

101. Standard & Poor's assigns the 'EU' identifier to global scale ratings assigned by Standard & Poor's rating entities (or branches thereof) regulated in the European Union. The addition of the 'EU' identifier to a rating does not change that rating's definition or our opinion about the issue's or issuer's creditworthiness.

European Endorsed: 'EE' identifier

102. Standard & Poor's assigns the 'EE' identifier to global scale ratings assigned by Standard & Poor's rating entities established outside the European Union which are endorsed by a Standard & Poor's rating entity regulated in the European Union. The addition of the 'EE' identifier to a rating does not change that rating's definition or our opinion about the issue's or issuer's creditworthiness.

Nippon KK: 'XN' identifier

103. Nippon Standard & Poor's K.K. (Nippon KK) assigns the 'XN' identifier to credit ratings assigned by Nippon KK. Nippon KK is not a Nationally Recognized Statistical Rating Organization. The addition of the 'XN' identifier to a rating does not change that rating's definition or our opinion about the issue's or issuer's creditworthiness.

Under criteria observation 'UCO' identifier

104. The 'UCO' identifier may (or shall, if an EU regulatory requirement) be assigned to credit ratings under review as a result of a criteria revision. The addition of the 'uco' identifier to a rating does not change that rating's definition or our

opinion about the issue's or issuer's creditworthiness.

B. Inactive Identifiers

105. Inactive identifiers are no longer applied or outstanding.

1. European Endorsement : 'EX' identifier

106. Standard & Poor's provisionally assigned the 'EX' identifier during a transitional period ending on April 30, 2012, to global scale ratings assigned by Standard & Poor's rating entities established in jurisdictions outside the European Union (EU) that were not recognized by EU regulators as endorsable, but which nevertheless were recognized for certain EU regulatory purposes. Before the transitional period ended, Standard & Poor's replaced the 'EX' identifier on certain ratings with 'EE' identifiers following determinations by EU regulators that such ratings were endorsable. However, following the end of the transitional period, any ratings still bearing the 'EX' identifiers are no longer recognized for certain EU regulatory purposes. With certain exceptions, Standard & Poor's no longer assigns the 'EX' identifier and may remove the 'EX' identifier from existing ratings. The addition, or lack, of the 'EX' identifier to a rating does not change the definition of that rating. Discontinued use in June 2012.

VIII. RELATED RESEARCH

- Understanding Standard & Poor's Ratings Definitions, June 3, 2009
- Principles Of Credit Ratings, Feb. 16, 2011
- Methodology: Credit Stability Criteria, May 3, 2010
- The Time Dimension of Standard & Poor's Ratings, Sept. 22, 2010

XI. CONTACT INFORMATION

Table 34

Criteria Group Contacts				
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