

CCXAP assigns A_g- to Qingdao West Coast New Area Ronghe Holding Group Co., Ltd.'s proposed CNY bonds

Hong Kong, 15 April 2024 – China Chengxin (Asia Pacific) Credit Ratings Company Limited (“CCXAP”) has assigned a senior unsecured debt rating of A_g- to the proposed CNY bonds to be issued by Qingdao West Coast New Area Ronghe Holding Group Co., Ltd. (“Ronghe Holding” or the “Company”) (A_g-/stable).

The bonds constitute direct, unsubordinated, unconditional, and unsecured obligations of Ronghe Holding, which shall at all times rank pari passu with all the Company’s other present and future unsecured and unsubordinated obligations. The Company intends to use the proceeds for project construction and supplemental working capital.

Corporate Profile

Founded in November 2018, Ronghe Holding is one of the two major local infrastructure investment and financing companies (“LIIFCs”) in the Qingdao West Coast New Area (“QDWC New Area”). It was directly and wholly owned by the Qingdao West Coast New Area State-owned Assets Administration Commission (“QDWC New Area SAAC”) as of 30 September 2023. Ronghe Holding has undertaken major infrastructure construction, resettlement housing, and educational projects in the QDWC New Area. It is also involved in commercial activities including trading, property development, manufacturing, and financial services businesses such as guarantees, small-sum loans, pawning, and leasing.

Rating Rationale

The rating of the senior unsecured bonds is equal to Ronghe Holding’s long-term credit rating. We believe that government support will flow through the Company given its strategic role in undertaking public policy projects in the QDWC New Area, thereby mitigating any differences in an expected loss that could result from structural subordination.

The A_g- long-term credit rating of Ronghe Holding reflects QDWC New Area Government’s very strong capacity and very high willingness to provide support based on our assessment of the Company’s characteristics. Our assessment of the local government’s capacity to provide support reflects the status of QDWC New Area as the ninth National New Area and the local government’s strong economic strength, good fiscal metrics, and debt profile.

The rating also reflects the local government’s willingness to provide support, which is based on the Company’s (1) full and direct ownership by the QDWC New Area Government; (2) strong strategic role in undertaking public policy projects in the development of the QDWC New Area; (3) good track record of receiving government payments; and (4) diversified and stable funding sources from major banks and bond markets. However, the rating is constrained by the Company’s (1) high exposure to commercial activities; and (2) accelerated debt growth driven by expansion; and (3) risk exposure to regional private-owned enterprises during market downturn.

Rating Outlook

The stable outlook on Ronghe Holding's rating reflects our expectation that the QDWC New Area Government's capacity to provide support will be stable, and that the Company will maintain its strategic role in undertaking public policy projects in the QDWC New Area over the next 12 to 18 months.

What could upgrade the rating?

The rating could be upgraded if (1) QDWC New Area Government's capacity to provide support strengthens; or (2) the Company's characteristics change in a way that strengthens the local government's willingness to provide support, such as consistently increases government payments, materially lowers the exposure to risky commercial activities and improves in debt management and asset quality.

What could downgrade the rating?

The rating could be downgraded if (1) QDWC New Area Government's capacity to provide support weakens; or (2) the Company's characteristics change in a way that weakens the local government's willingness to provide support, such as reduced strategic significance, decreased government payments, or weakened funding capabilities.

Rating Methodology

The methodology used in this rating is the Rating Methodology for [China's Local Infrastructure Investment and Financing Companies \(July 2022\)](#).

Regulatory Disclosures

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