



PRESS RELEASE

Oaktree announces the sale of Banca Progetto to Centerbridge

Milan, 04 September 2024

BPL HoldCo, a company owned by funds managed by Oaktree Capital Management, L.P. ("Oaktree"), has signed a binding agreement to sell its controlling stake (99.82%) in Banca Progetto S.p.A. ("Banca Progetto" or the "Company") to funds managed by Centerbridge Partners, L.P. ("Centerbridge") (the "Transaction").

The signing of the Transaction is another step of Banca Progetto's successful journey as a leading Italian bank focused on the small and medium enterprises ("SMEs"), offering a specialised set of products to Italian SMEs (i.e. guaranteed lending, factoring, tax credit) and European private customers (i.e. current accounts, time deposits and savings accounts), leveraging a best-in-class digital platform and a well-established network of agents throughout Italy.

In 2023, Banca Progetto has delivered another year of growth and profitability, while maintaining a robust balance sheet: €2.8 billion of new guaranteed lending to SMEs (with total guaranteed lending stock amounting to €6.9 billion), €72 million net profit, €290 million shareholders' equity, 28% return on equity ("RoE") and 17.4% CET1 ratio.

Paolo Fiorentino, CEO of Banca Progetto, said: *"We would like to thank Oaktree for their steadfast support, precious collaboration and solid partnership that proved to be crucial in this first fundamental phase of Banca Progetto's history. We look forward to partnering and continuing to create value with Centerbridge, and to writing the next chapter of our corporate story, continuing to consolidate our position as the go-to bank for the Italian SMEs. We believe we have created a unique platform combining digital capabilities with the knowledge and experience of our employees and agents."*

Mario Adario, Managing Director at Oaktree and Vice Chairman of Banca Progetto, stated: *"We are proud of our partnership with the exceptional management team of Banca Progetto that has transformed the company from a small local bank at the time of our acquisition to the leading Italian bank specialised in SMEs. The lending book grew from ~€50 million in 2015 to ~€7.6 billion in 2023, the profitability from loss-making to one of the highest RoE in Europe; all while supporting thousands of Italian SMEs, which are the backbone of the Italian economy."*

Ben Langworthy, Senior Managing Director and Co-Head of Europe at Centerbridge Partners said: *"We are thrilled to announce the Transaction, and we greatly look forward to working with the outstanding team at Banca Progetto, their agents and partners. We believe Banca Progetto's track record and achievements in Italy offer a unique and compelling proposition. SMEs are key contributors to the Italian economy, and Banca Progetto is well-positioned as a partner to provide financing solutions to support their growth. We are excited to help build on the success achieved to date."*

The completion of the Transaction is subject to customary conditions, regulatory and antitrust approvals.

Morgan Stanley acted as sole financial advisor and White & Case as legal advisor to Oaktree.

Kitra Advisory and J.P. Morgan acted as financial advisors to Centerbridge. Greenberg Traurig Santa Maria and Linklaters acted as legal advisors to Centerbridge.



About Banca Progetto

Banca Progetto, led by Paolo Fiorentino, was born in an historical context of deep transformation of the Italian banking sector with the aim to become rapidly one of the most relevant financial institutions providing credit to small and medium enterprises.

Banca Progetto is headquartered in Milan and it has a commercial network spread across Italy. It is specialised in products and services for small and medium enterprises and households. Its product offering includes medium-term financing to Italian small and medium enterprises, factoring and tax credit, alongside current accounts, savings accounts and time deposits to private customers in Europe.