

## **BNP Paribas Asset Management announces successful launch of SME Alternative Financing platform and completion of first loan**

BNP Paribas Asset Management ('BNPP AM') announces that its SME (Small & Medium-sized Enterprise) Alternative Financing platform has completed its first transaction, a six year senior unsecured amortising loan. The loan will enable a specialist recruitment services company based in the West of England to support its business growth.

The SME Alternative Financing platform was established in 2017 within BNPP AM in London. The team is led by Stéphane Blanchoz, who has worked at BNP Paribas since 1997 and has 14 years of experience in asset management, including significant expertise within direct lending. BNPP AM has added around a dozen members to the team, from various backgrounds linked to SME lending including banking and asset management, as well as digital and quantitative expertise. Last year, the platform entered into a strategic alliance with Caple, an alternative credit specialist that works with local partner networks of accountants and advisors to facilitate financing for SMEs. The first loan granted by SME Alternative Financing was originated through Caple.

SME Alternative Financing offers BNPP AM's client base differentiated and unique access to SME lending as an asset class. It is able to build on the competitive advantage that the scalability of its origination platform offers, as well as the advanced proprietary credit scoring techniques that are part of a fully industrialised lending process. It also leverages a proprietary warehousing capacity that enables it to immediately start granting loans, with the typical loan size being between £500,000 and £5 million.

The platform is currently operational in the UK, where the first loan was granted, and where the new investment strategy will be offered to investors soon, and the same business model will subsequently be deployed in Continental Europe.

The SME Alternative Financing platform is part of the Private Debt & Real Assets investment group, led by David Bouchoucha, one BNPP AM's four main investment areas. The platform consists of 50 direct lending specialists and offers distinctive access to direct lending - for corporates, infrastructure and real estate debt - due to extensive asset sourcing, a disciplined investment process and the ability to offer customised solutions for investors.

**Stéphane Blanchoz, Head of SME Alternative Financing at BNP Paribas Asset Management comments:** "The closing of the first loan is a key milestone in the development of BNP Paribas Asset Management's SME Alternative Financing platform. It is the culmination of many months of effort by a wide range of teams, both within BNPP AM and externally. BNPP AM has strong ambitions to develop its SME lending capability, including expanding in Continental Europe, in order to provide investors with an attractive and genuinely differentiated investment offering."

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#### **About BNP Paribas Asset Management**

BNP Paribas Asset Management is the investment management arm of BNP Paribas, one of the world's major financial institutions. Managing and advising on assets of EUR 568 billion (as at 31 March 2018), BNP Paribas Asset Management offers a comprehensive range of active, passive and quantitative investment solutions covering a broad spectrum of asset classes and regions. With more than 500 investment professionals and around 400 client servicing specialists, BNP Paribas Asset Management serves individual, corporate and institutional investors in 72 countries around the world. Since 2002, BNP Paribas Asset Management has been a major player in sustainable and responsible investing. For more information, please visit [bnpparibas-am.com](http://bnpparibas-am.com), or follow us on:



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