

INFRASTRUCTURE DEBT: A COMPLEMENT TO CORPORATE CREDIT



Featuring: Becca Edil, Director of Investments

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I'm Becca Edil and I am Director of Investments here at Versus. I joined in August this year.

Prior to Versus I worked at J.P. Morgan Asset Management in the infrastructure debt group where I was responsible for origination, due diligence and evaluation of infrastructure, debt opportunities in the US and Europe.

Prior to that, I worked at IFM Investors, where I was also investing in infrastructure debt and was a portfolio manager. I'm very excited to be part of the Versus team. And we think it's a great time to be investing in infrastructure debt.

We like the infrastructure asset class because it provides general characteristics of infrastructure.

First is essential assets with high barriers to entry. Two is typically long-term stable cash flows from sticky demand bases and contracts with strong off takers.

And third: it has low correlations to economic cycles compared to corporates.

The added benefit of infrastructure debt is that it's senior in the capital structure, which means that infrastructure investors get priority in payment and liquidation over equity holders.

Lastly, we like that infrastructure debt provides potential for high returns which are comparable to core equity returns in the current high-rate environment. Due to these

factors, infrastructure debt volumes have grown tremendously over the last ten years, from under 20 billion in 2013 to over 180 billion issued in 2022 alone.

We're seeing a number of attractive opportunities in infrastructure debt. The first one is that decarbonization targets are bringing opportunities in the renewable and energy transition sectors. These are opportunities like solar and wind farms and standalone battery storage projects. While in energy transition, we're seeing projects like renewable natural gas, renewable fuel, electric, EV charging stations. We also expect that hydrogen and carbon capture and storage will play a bigger role over the coming years. The second theme is digital infrastructure. We've seen a tremendous growth in digital infrastructure space with the onset of COVID 19 pandemic, which we expect to accelerate further with the rapid development of AI, which will necessitate the buildout of data, datacenters, and fiber networks.

And lastly is upcoming refinancing's. Over 385 billion of debt for U.S. infrastructure projects and companies is expected to mature over the next ten years, which we think will create a vast deployment opportunity.

We believe infrastructure debt can provide a number of benefits to investors. First is a potential for attractive yields in the current base rate environment. We are seeing yields in the high single digit to low double-digit range.

Two is a diversification in infrastructure is generally resilience or economic cycles and has shown historically low correlations to other asset classes.

Lastly, historic low default rates. The resilient nature of infrastructure assets, generally tighter structures and covenant packages, and collateral backed by hard assets has resulted in historically low default rates and higher recoveries for infrastructure debt.

Moody's Investors' 38-year default study shows that infrastructure debt had a ten-year default rate of 1.2% versus over 14% for corporate debt.

Due to these factors, we believe infrastructure debt can play a complementary role in fixed income portfolios of investors.

----- END OF TRANSCRIPT -----



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