23-I-0038
August 25, 2023

Japan Credit Rating Agency, Ltd. (JCR) announces the following credit rating.

The Bank of East Asia, Limited (security code: -)

<Assignment>

Foreign Currency Long-term Issuer Rating:	A+
Outlook:	Stable
EMTN Program:	
Senior (Preferred) Notes:	A+
Non-Preferred Loss Absorbing Notes :	A

Rationale

(1) The Bank of East Asia, Limited (BEA) is a major Hong Kong bank established in 1918. It is the largest independent bank in Hong Kong. BEA has its business base in mainland China as well as in Hong Kong and has deposits totaling more than HKD 700 billion. It has a business alliance involving equity investments with Japan's Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corporation and Spain's CAIXA, and also has partnerships with several other Japanese banks. In addition to its personal banking and wholesale banking businesses, mainly in Hong Kong and mainland China, it also engages in wealth management, treasury markets and other businesses. The rating reflects the Bank's strong business platform in Hong Kong and mainland China, stable profitability supported by its customer base, good liquidity and high capital levels. On the other hand, the rating is constrained by uncertainties associated with loans for real estate sector. BEA is promoting digitalization while expanding overseas business. JCR will closely monitor how the Bank will improve its profitability through digitalization and enhance geographic diversification of its earnings through globalization.

(2) BEA's consolidated assets stood at HKD 883 billion at the end of 2022, making it the fifth largest among Hong Kong financial groups and the largest among local independent banks. BEA is not designated as a D-SIB under the regulations of the Hong Kong Monetary Authority, but as a core bank in Hong Kong, it is considered to be required to have a capital level conforming to those of D-SIBs. The Bank has 48 branches in Hong Kong, 42 of which have SupremeGold Centers aimed to serve wealthy customers. In mainland China, it has 30 branches and 34 sub-branches in Beijing, Shanghai, Shenzhen and other key cities, lending HKD 170 billion in total. It has been reviewing its branch setup through digitalization, cutting the number of branches by about 20 in recent years. It also has been focusing on wealth management by increasing the number of salespersons such as relationship managers and investment consultants for wealthy class, expanding customer support at SupremeGold Centers. By providing services in line with client needs, the Bank has succeeded in attracting a stable customer base and establishing a solid business foundation in Hong Kong and mainland China.

(3) Interest income from personal and wholesale banking operations is a major source of the Bank's profitability. In lending, it focuses on industrial and real estate loans, and is also involved in aircraft finance, lease and supply chain finance together with the SMBC Group. In addition to wealth management, the Bank is also involved in mortgage loans, credit cards and insurance sales in the retail business. As a result, its net interest margin of 1.65% keeps its profit high among Hong Kong banks, with fee income also making a good contribution. The growth of expenses has been contained, with its low OHR also contributing to profitability. The Bank's revenue has made some progress in geographic diversification, with about 19% of its operating income before provisions coming from the U.S., U.K., and other Asia Countries and Regions. However, its profitability has been low in recent years due to disposal of nonperforming loans in mainland China. Enhancement of the quality of loan assets in China is a challenge facing the Bank. In 2022, while its operating income before provisions increased on better net interest income brought by higher interest rates and the resultant improvement in net interest margin, its net income declined 17.6% year on year to HKD 4.3 billion due to higher credit costs in mainland China and the wholesale segment. The interest rate environment keeps improving and JCR believes that even if the Bank's credit costs remain high, they can be absorbed by earnings and that its performance will be relatively strong in 2023.

(4) The Bank's total assets at the end of 2022 consisted of 61% of customer loans, 17% of investment securities, 13% of cash and deposits, and 9% of others. Loans outstanding to customers were

Copyright © Japan Credit Rating Agency, Ltd. All Rights Reserved.

geographically diversified, with Hong Kong accounting for 48%, mainland China for 32% and other regions for 19%. By industry, the percentage of loans to real estate developers and real estate investment companies was high in Hong Kong, staying in the 30% range. Its asset quality has deteriorated as some of its real estate-related loans turned nonperforming. In line with the overall trend in Hong Kong's banking sector, BEA's NPL ratio at the end of 2022 worsened by 1.3 percentage points from the previous year to 2.39%. BEA is reducing its exposure as well as restricting new loans to commercial real estate, and JCR will pay attention to the situation. The fair value reserve for securities accounted for 0.6% of Tier 1 at the end of 2022, showing the Bank made valuation gains even after the rise of interest rates but the amount decreased from that in the past. Its interest rate risk in the banking book (IRRBB) is under control.

(5) The Bank is well-capitalised relative to the size of its risks. Despite a decrease in its capital adequacy resulting from the repurchase of its shares from a shareholder at a consideration of HKD 2.9 billion in 2022, its common equity tier 1 (CET1) ratio remained high at 15.8% at the end of the year. Thanks to increased deposits, its loan-to-deposit ratio stands reasonably high at around 80%. Though funding from the market is restrained, the Bank's liquidity remains abundant.

(6) The EMTN Program, subject to the rating, was established on March 7, 2023. The Non-Preferred Loss Absorbing Notes to be issued under this program are bonds issued by the Bank itself, which will be subject to loss absorption in the event that a bail-in is triggered by the resolution authority. Based on its "Rating Methodology for Financial Institutions' Capital and TLAC Instruments" published on April 27, 2017, JCR has assigned a rating one notch below the Issuer Rating to the non-preferred loss absorbing notes, given the fact that they have a structure that subordinates their collectability to that of unsecured general obligations other than such notes. JCR believes there is little need of a further notch down in view of the distance to loss occurrence. This is based on JCR's assumption that no principal reduction or other actions are required of the Non-Preferred Loss Absorbing Notes except when the bail-in is triggered by the resolution authority.

Atsushi Masuda, Shinya Iwasaki

Rating

Issuer: The Bank of East Asia, Limited

<Assignment>

Foreign Currency Long-term Issuer Rating: A+ Outlook: Stable

Program Name:	U.S.$6,000,000,000 Medium Term Note Programme
Maximum Issuable Amount:	Equivalent of USD 6 billion
Date of Program Established:	March 7, 2023
Status:	(Senior (Preferred) notes) Unsecured and unsubordinated debts ranking pari passu with other unsecured and unsubordinated debts (Non-Preferred Loss Absorbing notes) Unsecured and unsubordinated debts ranking subsequent in right of payment to, and of, all claims of all unsubordinated creditors of the Issuer (including its depositors) only
Credit Enhancement:	NA
Covenants:	(Senior (Preferred) notes) Negative Pledge and Cross Default Clauses
Rating:	A+ for Senior (Preferred) notes; A for Non-Preferred Loss Absorbing notes

Rating Assignment Date: August 24, 2023

The assumptions for the credit ratings and the definitions of the rating symbols are published as "Types of Credit Ratings and Definitions of Rating Symbols" (January 6, 2014) in Information about JCR Ratings on JCR's website (https://www.jcr.co.jp/en/).

Outline of the rating methodology is shown as "JCR's Rating Methodology" (November 7, 2014), "Banks" (October 1, 2021) "Rating Methodology for Financial Groups' Holding Companies and Group Companies" (September 1, 2022) and "Rating Methodology for Financial Institutions' Capital and TLAC Instruments" (April 27, 2017) in Information about JCR Ratings on JCR's website (https://www.jcr.co.jp/en/).

The rating stakeholder participated in the rating process of the aforementioned credit ratings.

A program rating is assigned to evaluate the creditworthiness of a program. The credit standing of an individual note issued under the program may be regarded as the same as that of the rated program. However, JCR does not consider the credit standing of the individual note as the same as that of the program, in the cases where the principal and interest payments of the individual note rely on the credit standing of a third party rather than the issuer of the program and notes (e.g. credit linked notes and exchangeable notes). JCR usually does not assign a rating to the individual note issued under the program, unless the issuer solicits a rating.

Copyright © Japan Credit Rating Agency, Ltd. All Rights Reserved.

Jiji Press Building, 5-15-8 Ginza, Chuo-ku, Tokyo 104-0061, Japan
Tel. +81 3 3544 7013, Fax. +81 3 3544 7026

Information herein has been obtained by JCR from the issuers and other sources believed to be accurate and reliable. However, because of the possibility of human or mechanical error as well as other factors, JCR makes no representation or warranty, express or implied, as to accuracy, results, adequacy, timeliness, completeness or merchantability, or fitness for any particular purpose, with respect to any such information, and is not responsible for any errors or omissions, or for results obtained from the use of such information. Under no circumstances will JCR be liable for any special, indirect, incidental or consequential damages of any kind caused by the use of any such information, including but not limited to, lost opportunity or lost money, whether in contract, tort, strict liability or otherwise, and whether such damages are foreseeable or unforeseeable. JCR's ratings and credit assessments are statements of JCR's current and comprehensive opinion regarding redemption possibility, etc. of financial obligations assumed by the issuers or financial products, and not statements of opinion regarding any risk other than credit risk, such as market liquidity risk or price fluctuation risk. JCR's ratings and credit assessments are statements of opinion, and not statements of fact as to credit risk decisions or recommendations regarding decisions to purchase, sell or hold any securities such as individual bonds or commercial paper. The ratings and credit assessments may be changed, suspended or withdrawn as a result of changes in or unavailability of information as well as other factors. JCR receives a rating fee paid by issuers for conducting rating services in principle. JCR retains all rights pertaining to this document, including JCR's rating data. Any reproduction, adaptation, alteration, etc. of this document, including such rating data, is prohibited, whether or not wholly or partly, without prior consent of JCR.

JCR is registered as a "Nationally Recognized Statistical Rating Organization" with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission with respect to the following four classes. (1) Financial institutions, brokers and dealers, (2) Insurance Companies, (3) Corporate Issuers, (4) Issuers of government securities, municipal securities and foreign government securities.

JCR publishes its press releases regarding the rating actions both in Japanese and in English on the same day. In case that it takes time to translate rating rationale, JCR may publicize the summary version, which will be replaced by the full translated version within three business days. (Regarding Structured Finance products, JCR only publicize the summary version in English.)

Copyright © Japan Credit Rating Agency, Ltd. All Rights Reserved.

INFORMATION DISCLOSURE FORM

Japan Credit Rating Agency, Ltd.

Disclosure Required by Paragraph (a)(1)(ii) of Rule 17g-7

Issuer:	The Bank of East Asia, Limited
Rating Publication Date:	August 25, 2023

1 The Symbol, Number, or Score in the Rating Scale used to Denote Credit Rating Categories and Notches and, the Identity of the Obligor or the Identity and a Description of the Security or Money Market Instrument as Required by Paragraph (a)(1)(ii)(A) of Rule 17g-7

- Please see the news release. If the credit rating is a private rating, please see the report for private rating.

2 The version of the procedure or methodology used to determine the credit rating; as Required by Paragraph (a)(1)(ii)(B) of Rule 17g-7

- Please see the news release. If the credit rating is a private rating, please see the report for private rating.

3 The Main Assumptions and Principles used in Constructing the Procedures and Methodologies used to Determine the Credit Rating as Required by Paragraph (a)(1)(ii)(C) of Rule 17g-7

- The credit rating methodology assumes, in principle, to be applied to assess the likelihood of a given debt payment in light of its issuer’s condition and business environment, etc. in the relevant future. There is certain limitation, however, in the time horizon that the rating foresees.
- The credit rating methodology assumes, in principle, that the factors posted in the below are particularly important for such likelihood to be determined, and that the rating determination is made by evaluating each of them not only quantitatively but also employing qualitative analyses.

A) Business Bases

The likelihood of a given debt payment is highly conditional to its issuer’s business bases - how they can be maintained/ expanded into the future and thereby secure earnings and cash flows in adequacy and in a sustainable way.

B) Financial Grounds and Asset Quality

The likelihood of debt payment is highly dependent on the degree of the issuer’s indebtedness and loss absorption capacity in terms of equity capital. Also notable is that a financial institution might see a significant loss of financial grounds as a result of changes in value of the assets under its possession.

C) Liquidity Positions

The likelihood of debt payment is highly dependent on the adequacy of the issuer’s cash and other sources of repayment (liquidity positions).

D) Related Parties' Status and Stance of Support/ Assistance for the Issuer

The likelihood of debt payment is affected one way or the other by the issuer's related parties such as parent company, subsidiary, guarantor, and the government of the issuer's business domicile, etc. - by their own conditions and/ or position of support/ assistance for the issuer.

E) Order of Seniority in Debt Payment

The likelihood of debt payment can be different between given debts of the same issuer. The likelihood of debt payment for an individual debt is dependent on the issuer's discretion, and/ or its rank relative to other debts of the same issuer in the order of seniority in principal/ interest payment which is determined by design as financial product or by laws, etc.

4 The Potential Limitations of the Credit Rating as Required by Paragraph (a)(1)(ii)(D) of Rule 17g-7

- The credit rating herewith presented by JCR is its summary opinion with regard to the likelihood of given debt payment and hence not necessarily a perfect representation of such likelihood. The credit rating is not intended to estimate the probability of default or the loss on given default, either.
- The objective of the credit rating herewith presented does not include any concerns other than the likelihood of debt payment, such as risks of price changes, market liquidity, etc.
- The credit rating herewith presented is necessary to be reviewed along with possible changes of the issuer of rated objects in its business performance and/ or circumstances which include regulatory environment, and hence subject to possible alteration.

5 Information on the Uncertainty of the Credit Rating as Required by Paragraph (a)(1)(ii)(E) of Rule 17g-7

- The information used for the determination of credit rating as herewith presented is obtained by JCR from the issuer of rated objects and other sources that JCR trusts in terms of accuracy and reliability but possibly contains errors due to human, non-human or other causes. Consequently, the credit rating determined on the grounds of such information does not constitute, explicitly or implicitly, any representation or warrant of JCR on the information itself or any consequences of its use in terms of accuracy, relevance, timeliness, wholeness, market value, or usefulness for any specific purposes.

6 Use of Due Diligence Services of a Third Party in Taking the Rating Action as Required by Paragraph (a)(1)(ii)(F) of Rule 17g-7

- There is no use of any third-party due diligence service in the determination of the credit rating herewith presented.

7 Use of Servicer or Remittance Reports to Conduct Surveillance of the Credit Rating Required by Paragraph (a)(1)(ii)(G) of Rule 17g-7

- There is no use of any servicer or remittance report to conduct surveillance of the credit rating herewith presented.

8 The Types of Data Relied Upon for the Purpose of Determining the Credit Rating as Required by Paragraph (a)(1)(ii)(H) of Rule17g-7

- The information posted in the below, which includes data, is used for the determination of the credit rating herewith presented.

  A) Audited financial statements presented by the rating stakeholders

  B) Explanations of business performance, management plans, etc. presented by the rating stakeholders

  C) Documentation of the rated financial product presented by the rating stakeholders

9 Overall assessment of the Quality of Information Available and Considered in Determining the Credit Rating as Required by Paragraph (a)(1)(ii)(I) of Rule 17g-7

- JCR holds its basic policies for securing the quality of information as a base of due diligence for the determination of credit ratings. The information used as a base for the determination of credit rating herewith presented satisfies such policies, which include the audit by an independent auditor, the warranty made by the issuer, the publication by the issuer, some independent media or, otherwise, JCR analyst's scrutiny, etc.
- JCR sees no particular weakness in the quality of information used for the determination of the credit rating herewith presented as compared to the information used in other cases of the credit rating for comparable issuers or ratable objects.
- If the credit rating is an Indication, please see the report for Indication.

10 Information Relating to Conflicts of Interest as Required by Paragraph (a)(1)(ii)(J) of Rule 17g-7

- JCR receives payment of compensation for the determination of the credit rating herewith presented from either one of those parties who are issuer, underwriter, depositor or sponsor.
- JCR did not receive in the last fiscal year in the past payment of compensation from the same party for any kind of JCR's service other than the determination of public or private credit rating, such as one in the ancillary business.

11 Explanation or Measure of the Potential Volatility of the Credit Rating as Required by Paragraph (a)(1)(ii)(K) of Rule 17g-7

A) Business Bases

The credit rating is subject to alteration if there is improvement or deterioration of the issuer's business bases, since its revenue, etc. may improve or deteriorate by the change in its business management policies, clients' preferences, competitive situation, or a technological innovation. The resultant alteration of the credit rating is usually by a notch, with possibility of a few notches if and when the change in the business bases is large.

B) Financial Grounds and Asset Quality

The credit rating is subject to alteration if the issuer increases/ decreases its debt/ capital or vice versa and thereby makes its individual debt payment liability less or more bearable and its loss absorption capacity into the future decreased or increased. Also, the changes in the quality of asset under the issuer's holding may affect the credit rating, since such changes could raise or lower the likelihood of future loss of the issuer's financial grounds. The resultant alteration of the credit rating is usually by a notch, with possibility of a few notches if and when the change in the financial grounds and/ or asset quality is large.

C) Liquidity Positions

The credit rating is subject to alteration if there is a change in the issuer's financial management policy or in the relations with fund procurement sources and the change thereby makes its liquidity positions improve or deteriorate. The resultant alteration of the credit rating is usually by a notch, with possibility of a few notches if and when the change is large.

D) Related Parties' Status and Stance of Support/ Assistance for the Issuer
The credit rating is subject to alteration if there is a change in the issuer's parent company or subsidiary, guarantor or other provider of credit enhancement, or the government of the issuer's business domicile, or other related parties' own conditions and/ or position of support/ assistance for the issuer, and the change thereby makes its business bases, financial grounds and/ or liquidity positions improve or deteriorate, and/ or making the effectiveness of guarantee and other credit enhancement improve or deteriorate. The resultant alteration of the credit rating is usually a notch, with possibility of a few notches if and when the change is large.

E) Order of Seniority in Debt Payment and Non-Payment Forgiven by Contract
The credit rating is subject to alteration if there is a change in the rated debt's status in the order of seniority relative to other debts caused by the improvement/ deterioration of the issuer's financial condition. The resultant alteration of the credit rating is usually a notch, with possibility of a few notches if and when the change is large. Also, in case of the financial products for which non-payment of interest/ principal is contractually permissible, the credit rating is subject to alteration if and when the likelihood of such non-payment is projected to increase or decrease. The resultant alteration of the credit rating could be by a notch but often as much as a few notches.

F) Rise and Fall in General Economy and Markets
The credit rating is subject to alteration if there is a rise/ fall in the general economy and/ or the markets inducing the issuer's revenues/ expenses to increase/ decrease and vice versa, etc. The resultant alteration of the credit rating is usually by a notch, with possibility of a few notches if and when the change is exceptionally large.

G) Various Events
The credit rating is subject to alteration on occurrence of various events, such as change in the issuer's major shareholders, M&A and other organizational change, accident, violation of the law, litigation, legal/ regulatory change, natural disaster, etc., which are unforeseeable at the time when the credit rating is determined, causing a significant change on the issuer's business bases, financial grounds, etc. The resultant alteration of the credit rating could be by a notch but more often than not as much as a few notches.

12 Information on the Content of the Credit Rating, Including the Historical Performance of the Credit Rating and the Expected Probability of Default and the Expected Loss in the Event of Default as Required by Paragraph (a)(1)(ii)(L) of Rule 17g-7

- The credit rating herewith presented by JCR is its summary opinion with regard to the likelihood of given debt payment and hence not necessarily a perfect representation of such likelihood. The credit rating is not intended to estimate the probability of default or the loss on given default, either.
- Facts of the probability of default are posted as Form NRSRO Exhibit 1 on the JCR website under the URL:
  https://www.jcr.co.jp/en/service/company/regu/nrsro/

13 Information on the Sensitivity of the Credit Rating to Assumptions Made as Required by Paragraph (a)(1)(ii)(M) of Rule 17g-7

A) Business Bases
The credit rating herewith presented could be changed if and when the assumptions made at the time of its determination turn out to be inaccurate with regard to the issuer's business bases and powers of earning or cash flow generation, etc. The resultant change of the credit rating is most likely by a notch, as JCR speculates, but possibly as much as a few notches if the development is rapid in improvement or deterioration of the issuer's business bases on some drastic change in the operational environments, etc.

B) Financial Grounds and Asset Quality
The credit rating herewith presented could be changed if and when the assumptions made at the time of its determination turn out to be inaccurate with regard to the issuer's financial grounds and asset

quality. The resultant change of the credit rating is most likely by a notch, as JCR speculates, but possibly as much as a few notches if the development is rapid in improvement or deterioration of the issuer's financial grounds and/ or asset quality on some drastic change in its business bases.

C) Liquidity Risks
The credit rating herewith presented could be changed if and when the assumptions made at the time of its determination turn out to be inaccurate with regard to the issuer's liquidity positions. The resultant change of the credit rating is most likely by a notch, as JCR speculates, but possibly as much as a few notches if the development is rapid in improvement or deterioration of the issuer's liquidity positions on some drastic change in its financial management policy or relations with fund procurement sources, etc.

D) Related Parties' Status and Stance of Support/ Assistance for the Issuer
The credit rating herewith presented could be changed if and when the assumptions made at the time of its determination turn out to be inaccurate with regard to the issuer's parent company or subsidiaries, guarantor or other providers of credit enhancement, the government of the issuer's business domicile or other related parties' status and stance of support/ assistance for the issuer. The resultant change of the credit rating is most likely by a notch, as JCR speculates, but possibly as much as a few notches if there is a major change on the part of related parties, such as replacement, disappearance, some drastic improvement/ deterioration of financial grounds/ balances, etc.

E) Rise and Fall in General Economy and Markets
The credit rating herewith presented could be changed if and when the assumptions made at the time of its determination turn out to be inaccurate with regard to the prospects of general economy and markets. JCR expects the change should be most likely by a notch but could be as much as a few notches, should the economy or the markets change so greatly.

14 Information on the Representations, Warranties, and Enforcement Mechanisms of an Asset-backed Security as Required by Paragraph (a)(1)(ii)(N) of rule 17g-7

・ The credit rating herewith presented is not for an ABS product, and hence no relevant issue.

Japan Credit Rating Agency, Ltd.
Jiji Press Building, 5-15-8 Ginza, Chuo-ku, Tokyo 104-0061, Japan
Tel. +81 3 3544 7013, Fax. +81 3 3544 7026

Attestation Required by Paragraph (a)(1)(iii) of Rule 17g-7

I, Kiichi Sugiura, have responsibility to this Rating Action and to the best of my knowledge:

A) No part of the credit rating was influenced by any other business activities.

B) The credit rating was based solely upon the merits of the obligor, security, or money market instrument being rated.

C) The credit rating was an independent evaluation of the credit risk of the obligor, security, or money market instrument.

杉浦輝一

Kiichi Sugiura
General Manager of International Rating Department

Japan Credit Rating Agency, Ltd.
Jiji Press Building, 5-15-8 Ginza, Chuo-ku, Tokyo 104-0061, Japan
Tel. +81 3 3544 7013, Fax. +81 3 3544 7026