

GRUPPO SANPAOLO IMI

PRESS RELEASE

Press release pursuant to art. 2.6.2 paragraph 10 of Market Rules

Turin, 1 September 2004 – SANPAOLO IMI communicates that Fitch Ratings, the international rating agency, has today upgraded Sanpaolo IMI's Individual rating to 'B' from 'B/C'. At the same time, the agency has affirmed the bank's other ratings at Long-term 'AA-' (AA minus), Short-term 'F1+' and Support '2'. The Outlook remains Stable.

Fitch Ratings upgrade reflects prospects of a further improvement in underlying profitability as a result of the bank's reorganisation, which includes the successful integration of Sanpaolo IMI's network banks into the group, the application of a unified distribution model across the group and the integration of IT systems in the branch banking network

The assigned ratings are also based on the bank's good asset quality with net impaired loans amounting to only 2% of total net loans, on the bank's moderate market risk exposure and sophisticated risk management systems, as well as on its sound capital adequacy (Tier 1 ratio of 7.40% at end-2003).

(Enclosed Fitch Rating Press Release)

INVESTOR RELATIONS

investor.relations@sanpaoloimi.com -Telefax +39 011 5552989

www.grupposanpaoloimi.com

Dean Quinn (+39 011 5552593)

Damiano Accattoli (+39 011 5553590)

Alessia Allemani (+39 011 5556147)

Anna Monticelli (+39 011 5552526)

FITCH UPGRADES INDIVIDUAL RATING OF SANPAOLO IMI

Fitch Ratings-London/Milan-01 September 2004: Fitch Ratings, the international rating agency, has today upgraded Sanpaolo IMI's Individual rating to 'B' from 'B/C'. At the same time, the agency has affirmed the bank's other ratings at Long-term 'AA-' (AA minus), Short-term 'F1+' and Support '2'. The Outlook remains Stable.

The upgrade of the Individual rating reflects what Fitch views as prospects of a further improvement in underlying profitability as a result of the bank's reorganisation. This includes the successful integration of Sanpaolo IMI's network banks into the group, the application of a unified distribution model across the group, and the integration of IT systems in the branch banking network. During Q1 2004 Sanpaolo IMI's operating profit before extraordinary items increased by over 10%, which was underpinned by healthy growth in net commission income.

Sanpaolo IMI's Long-term, Short-term and Individual ratings are also based on the bank's good asset quality with net impaired loans amounting to only 2% of total net loans. They also consider the bank's moderate market risk exposure and sophisticated risk management systems, as well as on its sound capital adequacy, expressed in a Tier 1 ratio of 7.40% at end-2003.

With a balance sheet of EUR207 billion at end-March 2004, Sanpaolo IMI is Italy's third largest bank by total assets. The group has a strong franchise across Italy and is - with assets under management of EUR144bn at end-2003, Italy's largest asset manager. In February 2004 the group announced plans to amalgamate its insurance activities under one company, which would make it the second largest insurer in Italy.

Contact: Christian Scarafia, Milan, Tel: +39 02 87 90 87 212; Matthew Taylor, London , +44 20 7417 4345.

Media Relations: Campbell McIlroy, London, Tel: +44 20 7417 4327.