

Press release

Regulated information

Privileged information

14 April 2020 | Under embargo until 5.40 p.m.

Covid-19

After nearly four weeks of lockdown, Ascencio would like to step back a little to give an initial overview of the impact of this health crisis on its activities.

The real impact of the pandemic will of course depend critically and essentially on how long it lasts and how it evolves.

First of all Ascencio wishes to express its respect for the people working courageously to combat this virus, and its support for bereaved families.

In order to protect the health of its teams, its clients and society at large, Ascencio decided with effect from 13 March to manage its activities digitally and to have all its teams work from home. Activity is holding up well, and its teams are motivated and keen to make a success of this trial.

In all three countries in which Ascencio operates, governments have forced shops to close during the lockdown, with the exception of those selling food and certain other essential goods and services.

With effect from April, in order to ease the strain on the cash flows of its non-food tenants in payment arrears, Ascencio has switched from invoicing quarterly in advance to monthly invoicing of rent and is working to reduce rental charges as much as possible.

Ascencio engages in responsible dialogue with its clients to help them face the challenges posed by this crisis and to establish realistic targets that respond to the respective goals and circumstances of each party.



Ascencio has a solid tenant base, with 40% of its revenues being generated by the food sector, whose outlets remain open during the crisis. 90% of rental revenues comes from multinational or national brands. The occupancy rate stood at 97.1% at 31 March 2020.

As regards new investments and portfolio switches, Ascencio is taking a particularly cautious approach in the present circumstances. This also holds good for capital expenditure (property maintenance and renovation costs) the annual budget for which is €1.8 million and which in the second quarter of the current financial year Ascencio will limit to works that cannot be postponed.

With a debt ratio of 48% following the acquisition of five food supermarkets in France on 6 March 2020, Ascencio faces the current context with the advantage of a solid balance sheet. The Company has confirmed credit lines with banks for €303.5 million, of which only €10 million fall due in the next 22 months. The unused portion of these credit lines covers maturities of commercial paper and financing needs until the end of the current financial year.

At the six-monthly closing date of 31 March 2020, even taking account of the current lockdown, the independent experts reported no significant change in the fair value of Ascencio's assets due to the present crisis.

In accordance with the Valuation Practice Alert of 2 April 2020 published by the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors (RICS), the independent appraisal experts' report will however mention that it has been carried out on the basis of "material evaluation uncertainty" as defined by the RICS standards.

As announced in its financial calendar, Ascencio's interim results, together with an update on the impact of the Covid-19 virus in its activities, will be published on 12 June 2020.

About Ascencio

Ascencio is a Regulated Real Estate Company (public SIR) operating in Belgium, France and Spain, which specialises in investment in commercial premises, located primarily on the outskirts of towns and cities.

It works with around ten business sectors, predominantly in the food industry.

Listed on Euronext Brussels since 2007, Ascencio pursues a coherent policy aimed at optimising its results over time and ensuring stable profits for all its shareholders.

For any additional information:

Stéphanie Vanden Broecke
Secretary General & General Counsel
Tel. +32 (0) 71.91.95.00
stephanie.vandenbroecke@ascencio.be

Michèle Delvaux
Chief Financial Officer
Tel. +32 (0) 71.91.95.00
michele.delvaux@ascencio.be

Vincent H. Querton
Chief Executive Officer
Tel. +32 (0) 71.91.95.00
vincent.querton@ascencio.be