

## Securitized Group Of The Year: Mayer Brown

By Elise Hansen

*Law360 (February 14, 2020, 3:11 PM EST)* -- Mayer Brown LLP was at the forefront of securitization trends in 2019, from its work with solar partnership interests to mortgage-backed securities, earning a spot in Law360's 2019 Securitized Groups of the Year.

Mayer Brown puts considerable emphasis on its structured finance group, with roughly 100 attorneys who do such work, although many lawyers work in additional practice areas as well, said Julie Gillespie, co-head of the structured finance practice.

"It's one of the top three practice groups within the firm, so it is a significant practice area," Gillespie said. "One of the biggest things that differentiates our practice from other law firms is that we have probably one of the largest geographic reaches for a structured finance practice."

Mayer Brown has structured finance attorneys in offices across the Americas, Asia and Europe, including Hong Kong and Mexico, partner Paul Jorissen said. When the firm opens a new office, attorneys in that specialty are often among the first boots on the ground, Jorissen said. He leads Mayer Brown's banking and finance practice.

"Because structured finance has been such an important flagship practice ... one of the things that we've done almost every time we've opened up a new office in a new country [is] we've typically made it a priority to get a structured finance lawyer in that office," Jorissen said.

The group has been on the cutting edge of securitization transactions, including a \$300 million securitization involving solar tax equity structures. Mayer Brown represented investment manager Nuveen and a group of co-investors in a complex transaction that allowed solar power company Sunnova Energy Corp. to securitize its partnership interests in solar tax equity partnerships, yielding additional financing.

While currently a rare transaction structure, such deals may become more common, said Stuart Litwin, who co-heads the structured finance group.

"I think we will see more; it's hard to predict exactly how much more," Litwin said. "These solar partnerships are definitely out there and will still continue to be out there for a long period of time,"



especially since solar panel leases are often 10 or 20 years, he said. “The biggest question is what happens in the market.”

Mayer Brown is also one of the firms leading the charge on securitizing non-qualifying mortgage loans.

The loans fall outside the parameters of a “qualifying” loan as defined by the post-crisis Dodd-Frank Act, and banks have been wary of plunging in because of some of the strings attached, such as the borrowers’ right to fight foreclosure, Jorissen said.

“These are not subprime loans,” he said. “They’re generally credit-worthy loans. But they’re made to folks who basically don’t fit in this qualified mortgage box.”

Mayer Brown has worked with asset managers who either originate the loans or buy them and ultimately securitize them. “We’ve worked with about six different large programs that we’ve started from soup to nuts,” Jorissen said, from forming the program to acquiring the loans to launching a securitization program.

“Each of these different programs has done quite a few deals. Some of them have done a dozen or more deals,” he said. “It’s become a very active market, and it’s growing.”

The team also advised the Goldman Sachs Group Inc. in extending a \$100 million credit facility to Mexican fintech company Konfío and helped the U.S.’s foreign development arm, the Overseas Private Investment Corp., invest in a microfinance program aimed at providing credit to women entrepreneurs.

“Our goal is always to be a full-service structured finance practice, and to be in every significant asset class,” Gillespie said. “So we’re always looking at new areas as they develop.”

--Editing by Peter Rozovsky.