Mexico Real Estate Flash

Let's not lose sight of the forest...

The first quarter of the year was very complicated for the housing market. The subsidies program began later than planned, which made the work of public housing institutions more difficult. In addition, the financial difficulties being experienced by the companies with the largest output resulted in a negative impact on the pace of residential construction. The government has sent out clear indications of where it will direct its medium-term housing policy but short-term actions will be important in order to soften the impact of transition and its costs.

- ### A complicated first quarter.

Mortgage activity decreased by 15.9% in the number of loans and by 12.8% in the amount lent. The activity of housing institutions slowed as a result of the late start of the subsidies program, which began at the end of the quarter. On the banking side, where activity also dropped, the explanation may lie in calendar effects (fewer workdays in 2012 compared to 2013 due to the Easter holiday) as well as to the change of government: the drop here was far more modest, 1.1% in real terms with respect to the loan total amount (4.1% for the number of credits) and an increase of 2% in real terms if only credits awarded with bank capital are taken into consideration.

Housing construction companies also had a difficult start of the year. According to the General Housing Registry (RUV), the number of homes registered contracted by 20.5% in annual terms during the first quarter, from 401,000 homes in 2012 to 319,000 homes in 2013. The result is mainly explained by the unraveling of the financial situation of companies with the greatest volume of housing construction, some of which are listed on the stock market.

From 2012, with changes in the rules of the subsidies program (to which public companies dedicate more than 80% of their output), the larger building companies experienced difficulties finding a market for their homes and changing the location of planned projects.

- ### The government has given clear signals that it will support the sector.

The new government has given signals that it will support the sector, for instance when it announced that a high percentage (between 80% and 90%) of the territory reserved for housing construction companies could be included in federal government assistance programs. Other measures announced include the guarantees program for housing construction from the Sociedad Hipotecaria Federal (SHF). Furthermore, efforts will be made toward increased access to mortgage financing for workers whose housing needs are not fully met even though they are in the formal sector of the economy. These groups may receive assistance through Infonavit, Fovissste and commercial banking.

Overall, the market has revealed caution over the capacity of housing construction companies listed on the stock exchange to adapt to the new model. Public announcements by the companies themselves on issued bonds interest payment defaults and debt restructuring with creditors only encourage this cautionary approach.

- ### Some short-term measures could be of great help

The problem with public housing construction companies could begin to unravel if the value of its territorial reserves becomes clearer and, in general, when a clear picture is available of how its housing model fits in to the new policy. The government can do a lot to speed up the process toward the clarification of these areas. It would also be helpful to make minor adjustments to the recently announced assistance programs, particularly that concerning credit to construction, in order to ensure that public companies benefit from them. Somewhat increased flexibility regarding the type of projects that can receive help will be key to achieve the above.

The fundamental message is that, observed in context, the housing market continues to display a high potential, with demands rising due to demographic factors, the economic cycle, and markets yet to be developed. Further positive factors include healthy financial institutions, a government that promotes the sector, and a supply that is progressively adjusting to better meet the specific demand. In other words, let's not lose sight of the forest when looking at a single tree.

Table 1:

Mortgage lending: Number and amount of loans, March aggregate

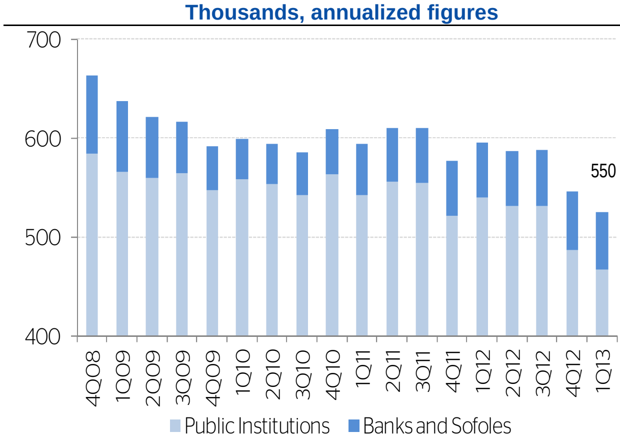
Body	Number of loans (thousands) 2012	2013	% change y/y	Amount of lending (Bn p) 2012	2013	Real % change y/y
Public institutions	116.6	96.2	-17.5	32.9	27.5	-19.2
Infonavit	102.1	83.5	-18.1	25.9	21.3	-20.3
Fovissste	14.5	12.7	-12.6	7.1	6.2	-15.5
Private intermediaries	19.6	18.7	-4.5	18.2	18.6	-1.3
Banks	19.3	18.5	-4.1	18.1	18.5	-1.1
Sofoles	0.3	0.2	-29.4	0.1	0.1	-30.9
Subtotal	136.2	115.0	-15.6	51.1	46.1	-12.8
Co-financing* (-)	6.2	5.6	-9.3	---	---	---
Total	**130.0**	**109.3**	**-15.9**	**51.1**	**46.1**	**-12.8**
Information figures						
Total co-financing (-)	13.0	11.5	-11.5	-	-	-
Other co-financing (-)	6.2	5.6	-9.3	-	-	-
Infonavit total (-)	6.8	5.9	-13.5	-	-	-

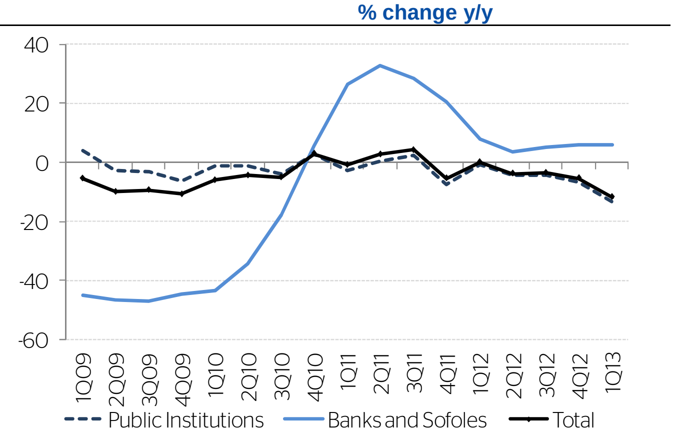
*Total excluding Infonavit

Source: BBVA Research with Infonavit, Fovissste, ABM and CNBV data

Chart 1 and 2

Number of loans by institution

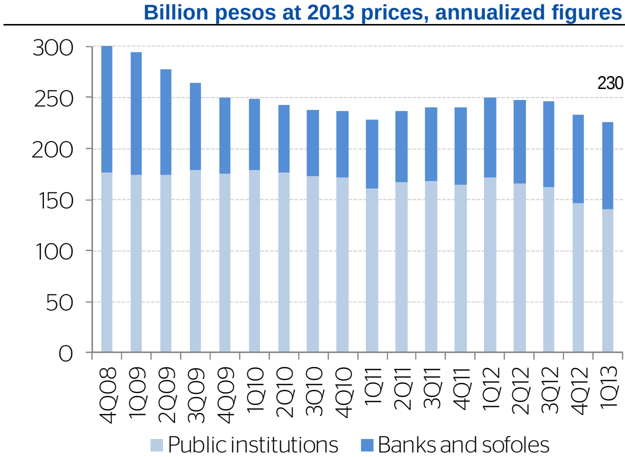


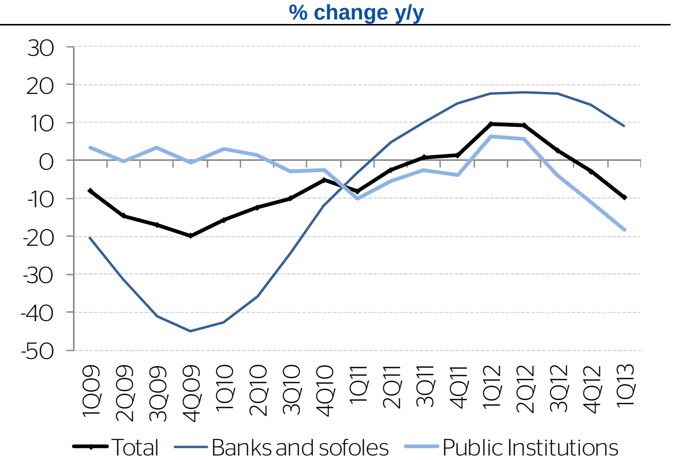


Source: BBVA Research with ABM, Infonavit and Fovissste data

Chart 3 and 4

Amount of lending by institution



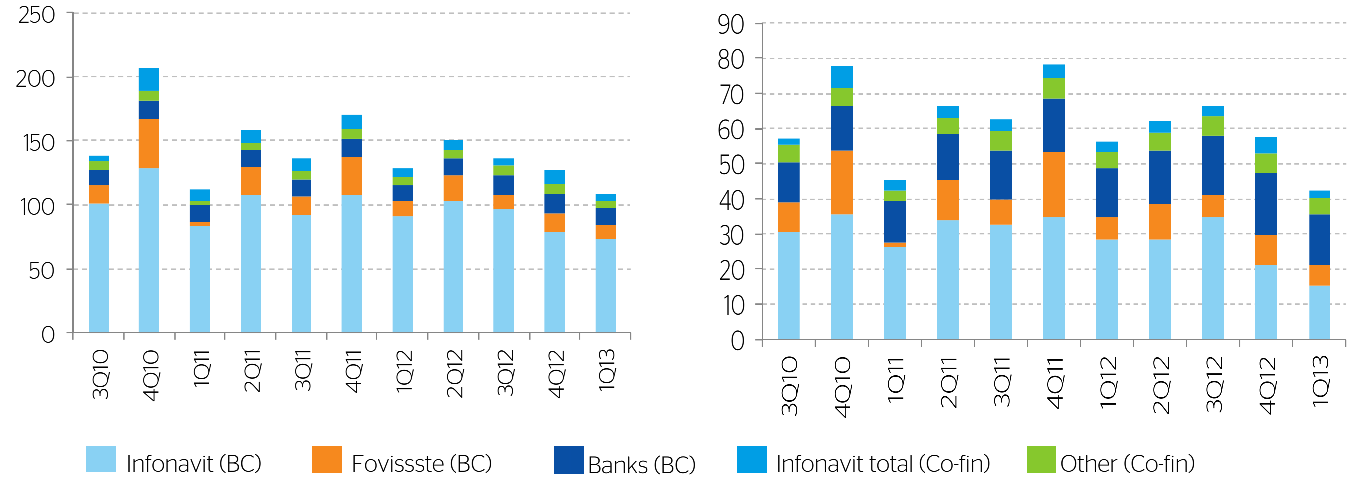


Source: BBVA Research with ABM, Infonavit and Fovissste data

Chart 5 and 6

Mortgage loans by institution

Thousands of loans | Billion pesos, at 2013 prices

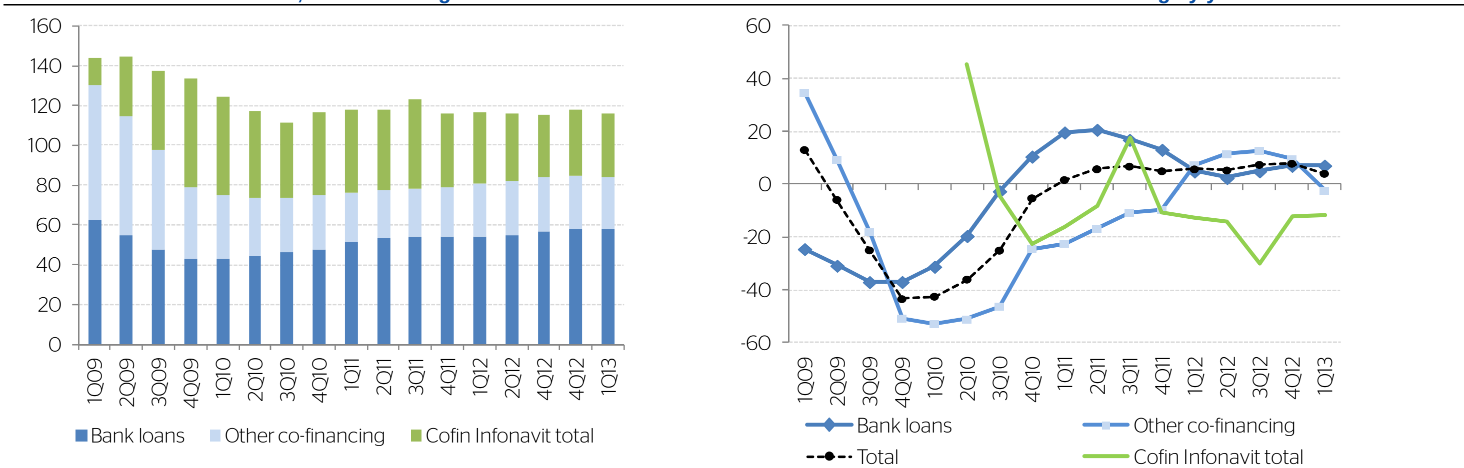


(BC) Bank capital. (Co-fin) Co-financing
Source: BBVA Research with Infonavit, Fovissste and ABM data

Chart 7 and 8

Number of loans granted by commercial banks

Thousands, annualized figures | % change y/y

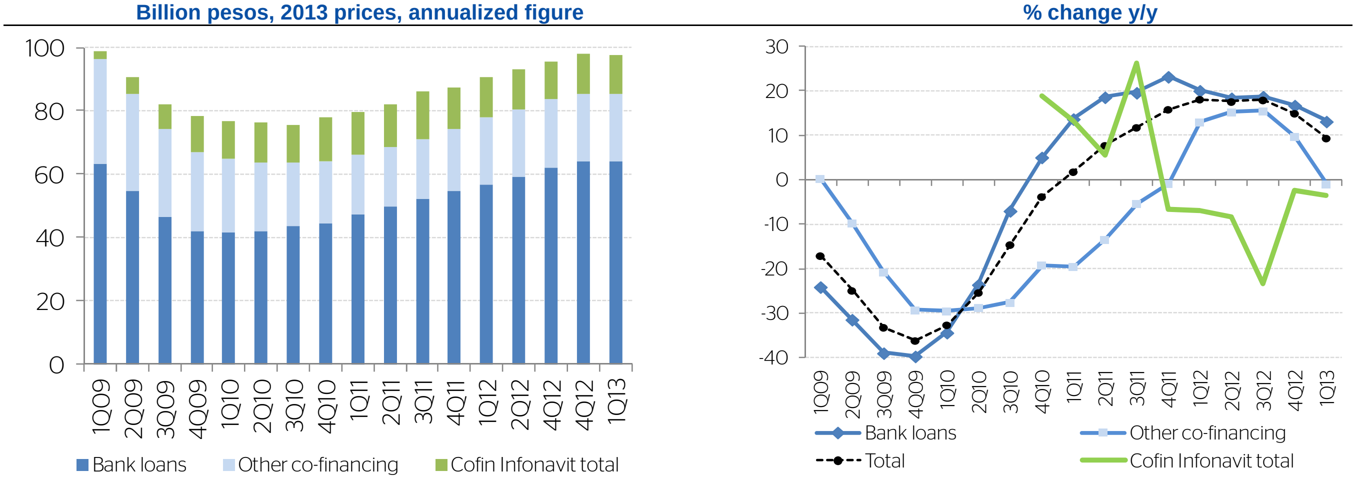


Note: From this issue we include the Infonavit Total product in banking products, therefore the figures do not correspond to previous ones.
Source: BBVA Research with ABM, Infonavit and Fovissste data

Chart 9 and 10

Amount of financing granted by commercial banks

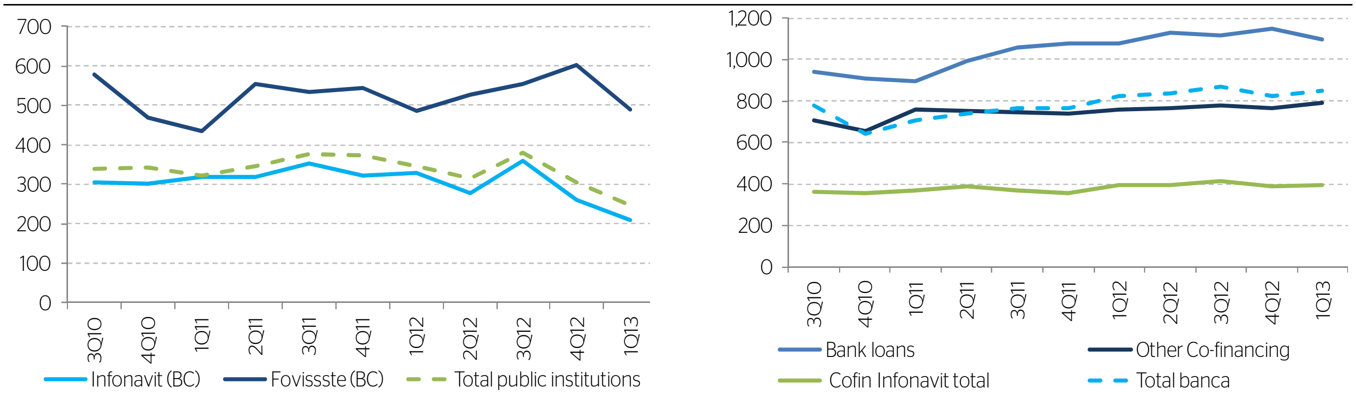
Billion pesos, 2013 prices, annualized figure | % change y/y



Source: BBVA Research with ABM, Infonavit and Fovissste data

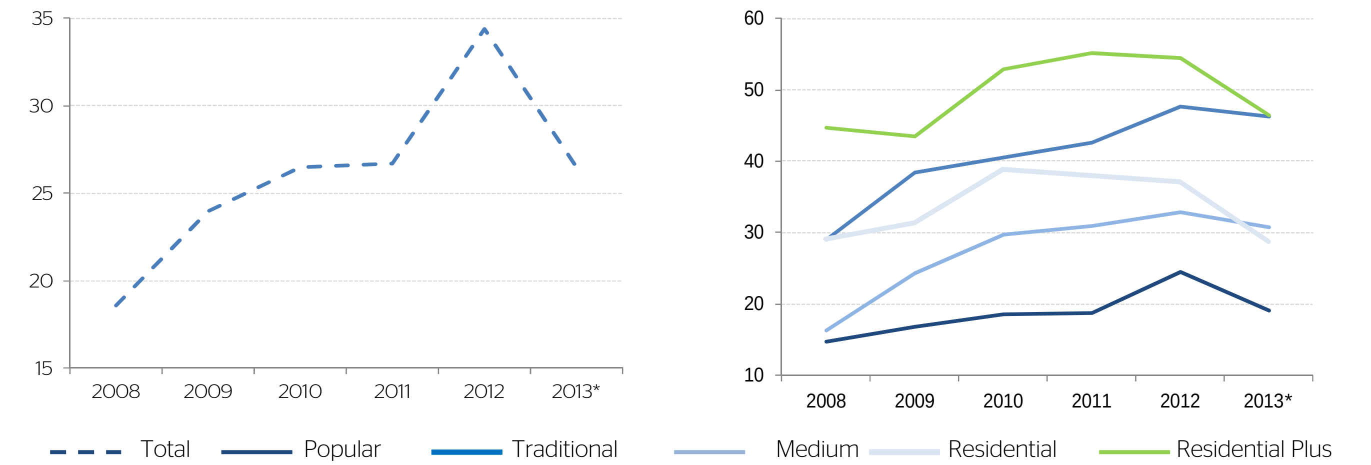
Chart 11 and 12
Average mortgage amount. Thousand pesos, 2013 prices

Public institutions **Banks**



(BC) Bank capital. (Co-fin) Co-financing
Source: BBVA Research with Infonavit, Fovissste and ABM data

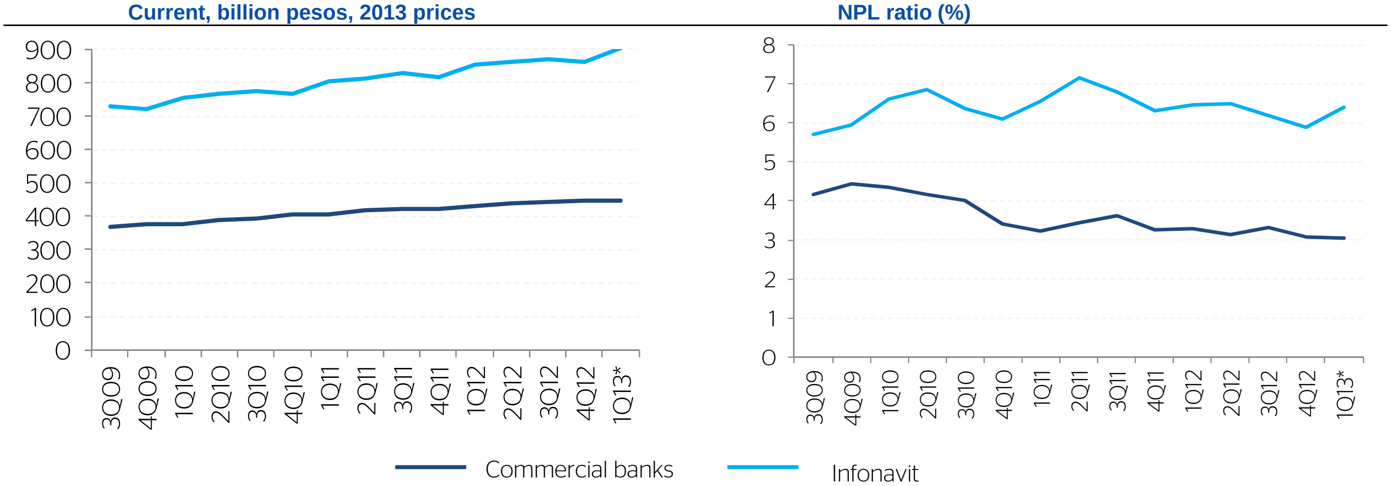
Chart 13 and 14
Existing homes: Market share % in mortgage loans from Infonavit



*As of February
Note: Price ranges expressed in multiples of min. monthly salary (VSMM). Inexpensive to 118 VSMM (232 thousand pesos); Popular to 200 VSMM (394 thousand pesos); Traditional to 350 VSMM (689 thousand pesos); Medium-income to 750 VSMM (1.477 mn) ; Residential to 1,500 VSMM (2.954 mn); Residential Plus over 1,500 VSMM (Over 2.954 mn). Source: BBVA Research with Infonavit data

Chart 15 and 16
Mortgage lending, current portfolio balance

Current, billion pesos, 2013 prices **NPL ratio (%)**

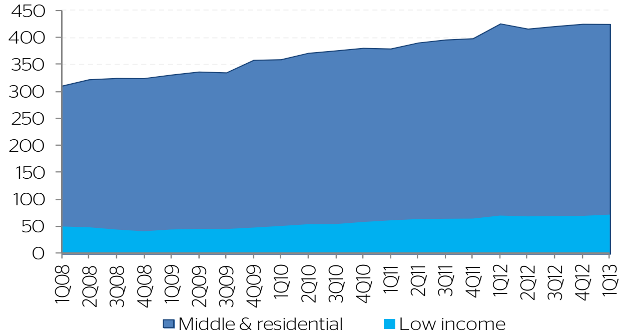


*As of February
Sources: BBVA Research with Banxico data

Chart 17 and 18

Balance of the commercial bank portfolio by segment

Current, billion pesos, 2013 prices



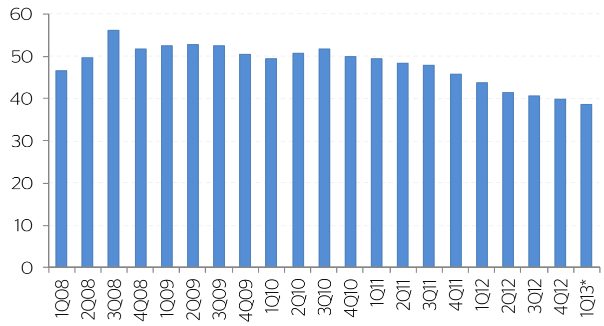
NPL ratio (%)

*As of February
"Low income" includes inexpensive, popular, and traditional housing
Source: BBVA Research with Federal Mortgage Society (CNBV) data

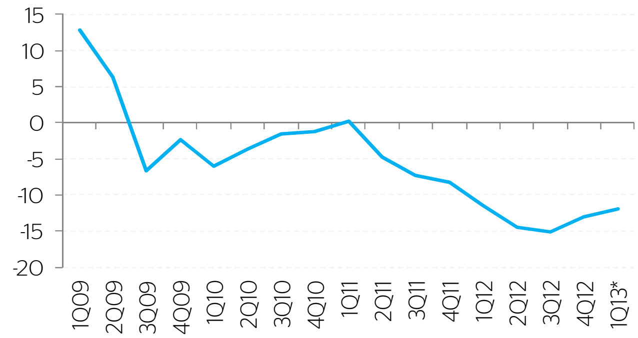
Chart 19 and 20

Bridging credit to developers, total current loans in system

Billion pesos, 2013 prices



real y/y %change

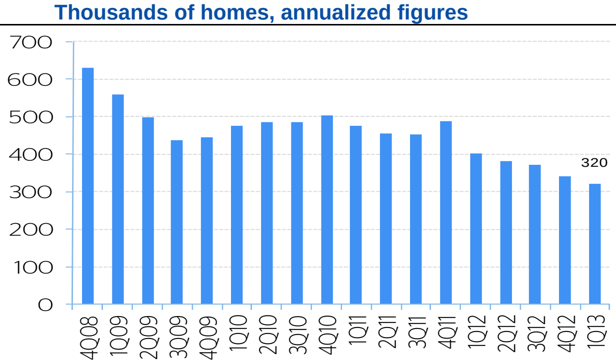


*As of February
Note: The classification criteria for Bank of Mexico bridging credit have been harmonized with those of the National Banking and Securities Commission (CNBV), therefore these figures do not correspond to those published in previous Flash reports.
Sources: BBVA Research with Banxico and CNBV data

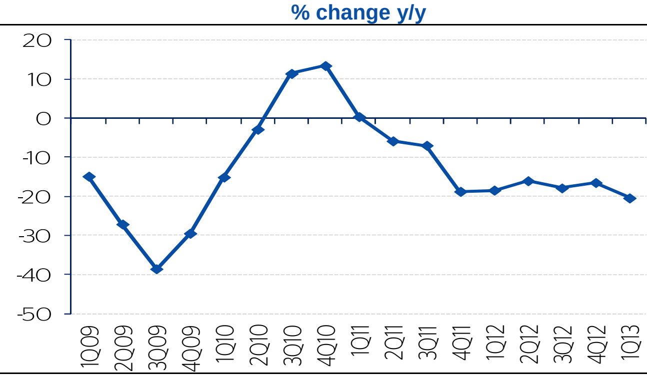
Chart 21 and 22

Housing starts: RUV

Thousands of homes, annualized figures



% change y/y



Note: period from the registration of the home to its sale on the market.
Source: BBVA Research, with RUV data

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