

Press Release

APAC Financial Services Private Limited

July 29, 2021

Rating Assigned



Total Bank Facilities Rated	Rs.50.00 Cr.
Long Term Rating	ACUITE A-/ Stable (Assigned)

Rating Rationale

Acuité has assigned the long term rating of **'ACUITE A-' (read as ACUITE A minus)** on the Rs.50 Cr. bank facilities of APAC Financial Services Private Limited (AFSPL). The outlook is **'Stable'**.

The rating takes into account experienced management team supported by presence of seasoned investors/funds. The rating continues to factor in comfortable gearing levels of APAC Group at 0.13 times as on March 31, 2021 (Nil as on March 31, 2020). The rating further factors in the Group's comfortable liquidity profile and management focus on building granular and secured retail/ MSME portfolio through a planned expansion of APAC branches within the chosen geographies.

The rating, however, continues to be constrained by limited track record in building and managing a retail portfolio, concentration risk as reflected in top 20 exposures comprising about 32% of its overall book as on March 31, 2021, considerable improvement from about 47% as on March 31, 2020. Given the nascent stage of the Group's operations, the portfolio is unseasoned. The rating is also constrained by subdued profitability at consolidated level with Profit After Tax (PAT) of Rs.4.4 Cr during FY2021 (PAT of Rs.6.7 Cr. during FY2020). Acuité believes that the ability of the Group to deploy the funds across various asset classes while maintaining an optimal risk return trade-off will remain key monitorable.

About the Group

Mumbai based APAC Group comprises of two companies, AFSPL and its wholly owned subsidiary, APAC Housing Finance Private Limited (AHFPL). AFSPL was incorporated in May 2017, it is a non-deposit taking Non-Banking Finance Company (NBFC) registered with RBI. The company is engaged in extending credit to Micro Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs). AHFPL is engaged in extending affordable home financing loans. The Group has a branch network of 42 branches spread across 7 states and reported AUM of Rs.355.4 Cr. as on March 31, 2021.

Analytical Approach

Acuité has adopted a consolidated approach of the business and financial risk profiles of APAC Financial Services Limited along (AFSPL) with its wholly owned subsidiary, APAC Housing Finance Private Limited (AHFPL) together referred to as the 'APAC Group'. The consolidation is in view of the common promoter, common management, shared brand name and financial synergies between the companies.

Extent of Consolidation: Full

Key Rating Drivers

Strengths

Seasoned Management Team supported by reputed investors:

APAC Group commenced its operation in FY2018. As on March 31, 2021 Mr. Gunit Chadha, the founder promoter of the Group, held 43.84% of the stake in AFSPL. Multiples Private Equity Fund & Plenty Private Equity Fund collectively hold 47.23% in AFSPL and the balance equity is with the Group's leadership team and other investors.

AFSPL currently has a five-member board of directors headed by Mr. Gunit Chadha. During his banking career, he occupied top positions such as CEO of Deutsche Bank (Asia Pacific region) and CEO of IDBI Bank. He has infused about Rs.113.7 Cr. as his equity contribution and has an option of infusing an additional Rs.45 Cr. (towards partly paid-up share).

The other members of the board include Mr. Shankar Dey, a seasoned banking and finance professional with over four decades experience in BFSI sector and Ms. Nithya Easwaran, who has over two decades experience in financial services and is also the Managing Director of Multiples Alternate Asset Management Company Limited (Multiples).

Besides the board members, the Group also relies on expertise of seasoned professionals such as Ms. Varsha Purandare who is the independent member of the credit committee. She has over three decades experience in banking and has occupied senior positions including ex-Chief Credit & Risk Officer, SBI group in her career.

Comfortable Capitalization Profile:

APAC Group's consolidated gearing levels are low at 0.13 times as on March 31, 2021 (Nil times as on March 31, 2020) since the operations are largely funded by equity. The networth stood at Rs.400.6 Cr. as on March 31, 2021 (Rs.393.8 Cr. as on March 31, 2020), while the debt stood at Rs.50.1 Cr. as on March 31, 2021 (Nil as on March 31, 2020).

On standalone basis, networth stood at Rs.407.8 Cr. as on March 31, 2021 (Rs.401.5 Cr. as on March 31, 2020) and gearing remained at comfortable levels at 0.12 times as on March 31, 2021 (nil as on March 31, 2020).

Acuite believes that APAC Group will continue to benefit from its experienced management and continued support from its investors.

Shift towards granular portfolio:

AFSPL focuses on business loan segment which extends credit to MSMEs whereas AHFPL towards affordable housing segment. In the initial stage of its growth, the Group built a book with large ticket exposures to SMEs, with strong promoter and/or private equity backing. The exposures during this period had ticket size greater than Rs.5 Cr. Following the challenges in overall economic conditions in FY2020, the Group shifted its focus towards building a relatively granular book. Consequently, the Group is focusing on micro and small enterprises with granular loan ticket sizes and brought down its average ticket size to about Rs.14 lakh in Q4FY2020 to about Rs.11 lakh per borrower Q4FY2021. The APAC Group's AUM stood at Rs.355.4 Cr. as on March 31, 2021 (Rs.254.3 Cr. as on March 31, 2020).

Weaknesses

Limited track record in building and managing a retail portfolio:

APAC Group, (including NBFC and HFC business) received its NBFC license in February 2018 and its HFC license in May 2018. Given the nascent stage of operations, the Group's portfolio is

unseasoned and its ability to deploy the funds across various asset classes while maintaining an optimal risk return trade-off will continue to be a key monitorable.

On consolidated basis, the asset quality is healthy as reflected in GNPA (90dpd+) at 0.51% as on March 31, 2021 (2.20% as on March 31, 2020). As on March 31, 2021, top 20 exposures comprised of about 32% of its overall book (about 47% as on March 31, 2020).

Acuité believes that, the Group's ability to scale up its operations while mitigating asset quality pressures in a challenging operating environment will be a key determinant of its future credit profile.

Subdued Profitability Indicators:

APAC Group reported Profit After Tax (PAT) of Rs.4.4 Cr. during FY2021 (PAT of Rs.6.7 Cr. during FY2020). The earnings' profile continued to remain subdued with Net Interest Margin (NIM) at 13.2% as on March 31, 2021 (13.5% as on March 31, 2020), mainly on account of high operating costs as result of expansion of branch network and credit expenses. Opex to earning assets stood at 9.2% as on March 31, 2021 (9.9% as on March 31, 2020). The Group has already put in place the physical and human infrastructure considering the growth plans over the near to medium term. The high level of operating costs will warrant generation of adequate business volumes to maintain healthy profitability levels. Further, the Group increased provisioning to Rs.8.1 Cr. (ECL Model) during FY2021 (Rs.4.8 Cr. during FY2020) resulting in modest profitability. Return on Average Assets (RoAA) stood at 1.0% as on March 31, 2021 (1.7% as on March 31, 2020). Acuité takes note of the Group's strategy to re-invest its underlying profitability into building its physical distribution, digital platform and data analytics which is expected to improve profitability in medium term. Furthermore, the Group has invested significantly in growth of distribution from 26 branches as of March 2020 to 42 branches as of March 2021.

Rating Sensitivity

- Scale up in business operations
- Maintaining granularity in the portfolio
- Asset quality
- Maintenance of adequate Liquidity

Material Covenants

The Group is subject to covenants stipulated by its lenders/investors in respect of various parameters like capital structure, asset quality, among others. As per confirmation from the Group, "The Group is adhering to all terms and conditions stipulated as covenants by all its lenders/investors."

Liquidity Position: Adequate

AFSPL's liquidity position remains adequate as on March 31, 2021. At Group level, unencumbered cash and liquid investments stood at Rs.74.4 Cr. and undrawn lines against FD of Rs.41.6 Cr. as on March 31, 2021 whereas debt obligations for next six months ended September 2021 stood at Rs.5.9 Cr.

Outlook: Stable

Acuité believes APAC Group will maintain a 'Stable' outlook given its experienced management team and investor support. The outlook may be revised to 'Positive' if there is significant scale up of the operations, while maintaining profitability and healthy asset quality. Conversely, the outlook may be revised to 'Negative' in case of growth challenges or if the Group faces asset quality or profitability related challenges.

About the Rated Entity- Key Financials (Consolidated)

Particulars	Unit	FY21 (Actual)	FY20 (Actual)
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Total Assets	Rs. Cr.	474.50	406.34
Total Income*	Rs. Cr.	57.42	49.82
PAT	Rs. Cr.	4.37	6.69
Networth	Rs. Cr.	400.62	393.81
Return on Average Assets (RoAA)	(%)	0.99	1.74
Return on Average Net Worth (RoNW)	(%)	1.10	1.79
Total Debt/Tangible Net Worth (Gearing)	Times	0.13	-
Gross NPA	(%)	0.51	2.20
Net NPA	(%)	0.26	1.22

* Total income equals to Net interest income plus other income

About the Rated Entity- Key Financials-AFSPL (Standalone)

Particulars	Unit	FY21 (Actual)	FY20 (Actual)
Total Assets	Rs. Cr.	478.78	410.31
Total Income*	Rs. Cr.	51.48	46.22
PAT	Rs. Cr.	3.87	11.29
Networth	Rs. Cr.	407.79	401.49
Return on Average Assets (RoAA)	(%)	0.87	2.99
Return on Average Net Worth (RoNW)	(%)	0.96	3.03
Total Debt/Tangible Net Worth (Gearing)	Times	0.12	0.00
Gross NPA	(%)	0.53	2.18
Net NPA	(%)	0.25	1.22

* Total income equals to Net interest income plus other income

Status of non-cooperation with previous CRA (if applicable)

None

Any other information

Not Applicable

Applicable Criteria

- Default Recognition - <https://www.acuite.in/view-rating-criteria-52.htm>
- Rating of Non-Banking Financing Entities:- <https://www.acuite.in/view-rating-criteria-44.htm>
- Financial Ratios and Adjustments - <https://www.acuite.in/view-rating-criteria-53.htm>

Note on complexity levels of the rated instrument

<https://www.acuite.in/view-rating-criteria-55.htm>

Rating History (Upto last three years)

Not Applicable

Annexure- Details of Instruments rated

ISIN	Name of Facilities	Date of Issuance	Coupon Rate	Maturity Date	Size of Issue (Rs. Cr.)	Ratings/Outlook
-	Proposed Bank Facility	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	50.00	ACUITE A- /Stable (Assigned)

Contacts

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About Acuité Ratings & Research:

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