

Press Release

Arman Financial Services Limited

April 11, 2022



Rating Assigned and Reaffirmed

Product	Quantum (Rs. Cr)	Long Term Rating	Short Term Rating
Bank Loan Ratings	70.00	ACUITE A- Stable Reaffirmed	-
Non Convertible Debentures (NCD)	30.00	ACUITE A- Stable Assigned	-
Total Outstanding Quantum (Rs. Cr)	100.00	-	-
Total Withdrawn Quantum (Rs. Cr)	0.00	-	-

Rating Rationale

Acuite has assigned the long-term rating of '**ACUITE A-**' (read as **ACUITE A minus**) on the Rs. 30.00 Cr. proposed non-convertible debentures of Arman Financial Services Limited (AFSL). The outlook is '**Stable**'.

Acuite has reaffirmed the long-term rating of '**ACUITE A-**' (read as **ACUITE A minus**) on the Rs. 70.00 Cr. bank facilities of Arman Financial Services Limited (AFSL). The outlook is '**Stable**'.

The rating takes into account the group's established track record of operations in three product segments i.e Micro Finance, Micro Small and Medium Enterprise (MSME) and two wheeler finance supported by experienced management team. The ratings further factor in the group's healthy resource raising ability, comfortable capital structure and healthy liquidity buffers. The group has well diversified funding profile with a lender base of ~30 banks and financial institutions. At consolidated level, AFSL has comfortable capitalization levels which stood at 24.21 percent with Tier I Capital of 21.91 percent as on June 30, 2021. Acuite also takes note of the increase in the gearing levels of the group which stood at 4.31 times as on December 2021 as against 3.86 times as on March 2021. The rating further factors in growth in the scale of operations with significant rise in AUM from Rs.181.93 Cr. as on 31st March 2017 to Rs.814.40 Cr. as on 31st March 2021. AUM as on December 31, 2021 stood at Rs.1044.65 Cr. Acuite takes cognizance of conscious curtailment in the disbursements during FY21 and Q1FY22. However, with improvement in operating environment, the group saw an uptick in disbursement levels during Q2 and Q3FY22. Further, with a view to achieve deeper penetration, the group has in the past four years expanded into newer regions which has resulted in decline in concentration in the state of Gujarat from 57.20 percent in FY18 to 38.61 percent in FY21.

The rating is however constrained by deterioration in the group's financial profile as a result of rise in gross nonperforming assets (owned portfolio) to 4.70 percent as on March 31, 2021 (P.Y : 1.13 percent) and to further 5.00 percent as on December 31, 21 given stress experienced by vehicle and micro finance sectors. Further, the company continues to have delinquencies in

the softer buckets which exposes it to asset quality risks. While monthly collection efficiency for the consolidated portfolio has been improving since July 2021, sustained improvement in collections and rise in on-time portfolio remains to be seen. Further, the group's Return on Average Assets (ROAA) has declined to 1.17 percent as on March 2021 as against 5.06 percent as on March 2020. Going forward, the ability of the Group to profitably scale-up its operations while maintaining healthy asset quality will be key monitor-able.

About the company

Incorporated in 1992 and promoted by Mr Jayendra Patel, Arman Financial Services Ltd (together with Namra Finance Ltd referred to as "Arman Group") is a Non-Deposit taking Non-Banking Financial Company registered with RBI. Arman commenced its operations with asset backed finance lending in the state of Gujarat. Following the RBI directive for creating a separate category of NBFC for lending to micro finance sector, the company was the first in India to obtain "NBFC-MFI" license for its wholly owned subsidiary -Namra Finance Ltd (Namra) on February 14, 2013. In March 2017, AFSL also commenced MSME Lending Business.

The Company (Arman and Namra together) is mainly engaged into micro-financing and asset backed financing. The company offers two-wheeler and MSME financing and Joint Liability Group (JLG) financing. AFSL, on a consolidated basis, operates in 7 states i.e Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Rajasthan and Haryana spread across 94 districts through a network of 245 branches with Assets Under Management (AUM) at Rs 1044.65 Cr. as on December 2021. AFSL's equity shares were listed on BSE in 1995. The promoter and promoter group hold 27.46 percent of the equity shareholding in AFSL.

About ASFL's wholly owned subsidiary-NFL

Namra Finance Limited (NFL) is a wholly owned subsidiary of AFSL which is a Non-Deposit taking NBFC registered with Reserve Bank of India, promoted by Mr. Jayendra Patel. Prior to May 2013, AFSL was engaged in the business of two-wheeler financing and microfinance lending business through Joint Liability Group (JLG) model. However, NFL got an NBFC – Micro Finance Institution license from RBI on February 14, 2013 and from May 2013, entire new microfinance lending is being carried out by NFL.

Microfinance lending is presently the largest business segment of the group contributing ~80 percent of the total Assets under Management (AUM) as on June 30, 2021.

Analytical Approach

Acuité has consolidated the business and financial risk profiles of AFSL and NFL (Hereinafter referred to as 'Arman Group') for arriving at the rating. The consolidation is in view of common promoters and management, integrated businesses, shared brand name, and significant operational and financial linkages between these entities.

Extent of Consolidation: Full

Key Rating Drivers

Strength

Established track record of operations with experienced promoters and management:

AFSL is engaged in the financing business since 1992 and has demonstrated a long track record of operations through various business cycles. Arman commenced its operations with asset backed finance lending in the state of Gujarat and has built a strong experience of 29 years in the industry. Following the RBI directive for creating a separate category of NBFC for lending to micro finance sector, the company was the first in India to obtain "NBFC-MFI" license for its wholly owned subsidiary -Namra Finance Ltd (Namra) on February 14, 2013.

Accordingly, all the assets related to micro finance were transferred to Namra Finance Limited (NFL). Further in 2017, company began its MSME loan product segment.

The group has geographical presence in the states of Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Uttarakhand, Rajasthan and Haryana with its network of 245 branches spread across 94 districts as on June 30, 2021. The company is promoted by Mr.

Jayendra Patel, Managing Director, who has a 25 years of experience of Senior managerial and board level experience in the finance sector. Mr Patel is the founder member of Gujarat Finance Companies Association. He is supported by Mr. Aalok Patel, who is also on the Board of the company is having more than 15 years of experience in financial sector. Further, Mr. Alok Prasad is the present Chairman on the Board of AFSL, who is also on the Board of the company and is having 35 years of experience in regulatory, banking and financial services. He has been associated with MFIN as Founder Chief Executive Officer. The Board is well represented by 9 Directors having with adequate and relevant experience in the corporate and finance domain.

Acuité believes that established presence of the promoters and management coupled with effective guidance from the directors on the board, will be support to the business risk profile of the company in the near to medium term.

Increased scale of operations.

Over the years, the company's scale of operations has grown significantly with rise in AUM from Rs.181.93 crore as on 31st March 2017 to Rs.814.40 crore as on 31st March 2021. AUM as on December 31, 2021 stood at Rs.1044.65 Cr. Further, with a view to achieve deeper penetration, the group has in the past 4 years has expanded into newer regions. As such, the company's branch size increased from 80 branches as on March 2017 to 239 branches as on March 2021 (245 branches as on June 2021) which has gradually resulted in reduced concentration of AUM in the state of Gujarat. The company added 28 new branches during FY2021 and 45 new branches during FY2020.

The company has three major segments- JLG (Micro-Finance through Namra Finance Limited), MSME and two wheeler loan, whereby JLG contributes ~80 percent of the Total AUM as on June 2021 followed by MSME (15 percent of the total AUM) and Two wheeler loans (~5 percent of the total AUM). Within two wheeler sector, the company is focusing in the rural areas of Gujarat, whereas for MSME financing, AFSL is focusing in the state of Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra. For Microfinance segment, the company operates in all the seven states.

Acuité believes that company has demonstrated the resilience to grow across various business cycles coupled with diversification in three segments.

Comfortable capital structure with Strong resource raising ability.

The group's Assets under Management (AUM) has grown from Rs. 181.93 Cr. as on March 31, 2017 to Rs. 814.38 Cr. as on March 31, 2021 (Rs 1044.65 Cr as on Dec 2021). The group's net worth stood at Rs. 186.76 Cr. as on March 31, 2021 (Rs 202.12 Cr as on Dec 2021) as against Rs. 172.23 Cr. as on March 31, 2020. It has comfortable capitalization level with overall Capital Adequacy Ratio of 39.56 percent (standalone) as on March 31, 2021, mainly by way of Tier I capital of 35.65 percent.

The group has established relationships with ~30 lenders; public and private sector bank and financial institutions. As on March 31, 2021, the funding mix comprised borrowings from banks (27 percent), borrowings from FI's (13 percent), and borrowings from NBFC (24 percent), securitization (7 percent), ECB (6 percent), Non-Convertible debentures (21 percent) and direct assignment funding (2 percent). Additionally, the company maintains adequate liquidity in the form of sufficient cash and bank balance of 52.56 Cr; Unencumbered FD's and Mutual funds of Rs 62.54 Cr, unutilized lines of Rs 108.20 Cr. (including cash credit) as on September 30, 2021 to meets its funding requirements.(24.06 percent of total assets)

Acuité expects the Group to continue to benefit from diversified funding mix and the Group's

ability to raise resources from various banks and financial institutions.

Weakness

Moderate Asset Quality.

The outbreak of the COVID and the intermittent lockdowns have significantly impacted the credit profile of most of the borrowers thereby impacting the asset quality. Given the challenges and stress experienced by vehicle and micro finance sector, company reported a 90+DPD (consolidated) at 5.00 percent as on Dec 31, 2021 as against 4.70 percent as on March 31, 2021 (1.13 percent as on March 31, 2020). While the company's current collection efficiency has been improving since Q2FY2022, sustained improvement in collections and rise in on-time portfolio remains to be seen. The on-time portfolio as on Dec 31, 2021 stood at 88.32 percent vis-à-vis 96.17 percent as on March 31, 2021

Profitability pressure due to higher credit costs.

Significant decline in disbursements, asset quality stress and the resultant rise in credit provisioning have altogether impacted the profitability. The group's credit costs increased from Rs 20.01 Cr for FY2020 to Rs 54.59 Cr for FY2021, this resulted decline in AFSL's PAT (consolidated) to Rs 10.62 Cr for FY2021 as against Rs 41.52 Cr for FY2020. Consequently, this has impacted the Return on Average Assets (ROAA) which stood at 1.17 percent as on March 2021 as against 5.06 percent as on March 2020. With improvement in operating environment, the group saw an uptick in disbursement levels during Q2 and Q3FY22 resulting in PBT of Rs. 23.44 Cr. during 9MFY22.

Acuité believes that, the group's ability to contain asset quality pressures while maintaining its profitability parameters is a key rating monitorable.

ESG Factors Relevant for Rating

Arman Financial Services Limited (AFSL) belongs to the NBFC sector which complements bank lending in India. Some of the material governance issues for the financial services sector are policies and practices with regard to business ethics, board diversity and independence, compensation structure for board and KMPs, role of the audit committee and shareholders' rights. On the social aspect, some of the critical issues for the sector are the contributions to financial inclusion and community development, responsible financing including environmentally friendly projects and policies around data privacy. The industry, by nature has a low exposure to environmental risks.

AFSL focuses towards overcoming the financial inclusion gap through vehicle finance and microfinance in semi-rural and rural areas. The entity has corporate governance policies on whistle-blower programme and vigil mechanism. The NBFC outlines the policies related to diversity, sexual harassment, and ethical business practices in its code of conduct and also has a high transparency in terms of disclosures related to board and management compensation. AFSL's CSR policy focusses on development of marginalized communities and initiatives such as Hygiene Awareness programmes among rural women in Gujarat. As part of the 'green initiative', the company has switched to electronic mode to send annual reports or Notice of AGM to the shareholders and depository participants.

Rating Sensitivity

- Movement in Profitability Metrics.
- Movement in capitalization and liquidity buffers.
- Movement in asset quality and collection efficiency

Material Covenants

AFSL is subject to covenants stipulated by its lenders/investors in respect of various

parameters like capital structure, asset quality, debt to equity ratio among others.

Liquidity Position: Adequate

AFSL has adequately matched asset-liability profile as on June 30, 2021 with a cumulative surplus in all maturity buckets. The company has adequate liquidity buffers by way of unencumbered cash and bank balances of Rs. 52.56 Cr; Unencumbered FD's and Mutual funds of Rs 62.54 Cr, unutilized lines of Rs 108.20 Cr. as on September 30, 2021.

Outlook: Stable

Acuité believes that AFSL will maintain a 'Stable' outlook over the near to medium term owing to its established presence in the key operating segment (i.e. MSME, MFI) and healthy capitalization buffers. The outlook may be revised to 'Positive' in case of significant and sustainable growth in AUM while maintaining asset quality and improved profitability. Conversely, the outlook may be revised to 'Negative' in case of significantly higher than expected asset quality pressures or profitability margins.

Key Financials - Standalone / Originator

Particulars	Unit	FY21 (Actual)	FY20 (Actual)
Total Assets	Rs. Cr.	282.61	296.13
Total Income*	Rs. Cr.	43.15	47.79
PAT	Rs. Cr.	8.00	18.24
Net Worth	Rs. Cr.	127.83	120.73
Return on Average Assets (RoAA)	(%)	2.76	6.51
Return on Average Net Worth (RoNW)	(%)	6.43	16.84
Debt/Equity	Times	1.20	1.41
Gross NPA (Owned Portfolio)	(%)	6.78	1.58
Net NPA (Owned Portfolio)	(%)	1.08	0.77

*Total income equals to Net Interest Income plus other income.

Key Financials - Consolidated

Particulars	Unit	FY21 (Actual)	FY20 (Actual)
Total Assets	Rs. Cr.	926.71	891.38
Total Income*	Rs. Cr.	115.11	126.77
PAT	Rs. Cr.	10.62	41.52
Net Worth	Rs. Cr.	186.76	172.73
Return on Average Assets (RoAA)	(%)	1.17	5.06
Return on Average Net Worth (RoNW)	(%)	5.91	28.11
Debt/Equity	Times	3.86	4.05
Gross NPA (Owned Portfolio)	(%)	4.70	1.13
Net NPA (Owned Portfolio)	(%)	0.77	0.22

*Total income equals to Net Interest Income plus other income.

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

Not Applicable

Any other information

Not Applicable

Applicable Criteria

- Application Of Financial Ratios And Adjustments: <https://www.acuite.in/view-rating-criteria-53.htm>
- Consolidation Of Companies: <https://www.acuite.in/view-rating-criteria-60.htm>
- Default Recognition: <https://www.acuite.in/view-rating-criteria-52.htm>
- Non-Banking Financing Entities: <https://www.acuite.in/view-rating-criteria-44.htm>

Note on complexity levels of the rated instrument

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

Rating History

Date	Name of Instruments/Facilities	Term	Amount (Rs. Cr)	Rating/Outlook
08 Nov 2021	Term Loan	Long Term	6.86	ACUITE A- Stable (Assigned)
	Term Loan	Long Term	11.93	ACUITE A- Stable (Assigned)
	Cash Credit	Long Term	2.00	ACUITE A- Stable (Assigned)
	Term Loan	Long Term	0.56	ACUITE A- Stable (Assigned)
	Term Loan	Long Term	1.42	ACUITE A- Stable (Assigned)
	Cash Credit	Long Term	5.00	ACUITE A- Stable (Assigned)
	Cash Credit	Long Term	27.00	ACUITE A- Stable (Assigned)
	Term Loan	Long Term	3.06	ACUITE A- Stable (Assigned)
	Cash Credit	Long Term	0.50	ACUITE A- Stable (Assigned)
	Term Loan	Long Term	1.67	ACUITE A- Stable (Assigned)
	Cash Credit	Long Term	10.00	ACUITE A- Stable (Assigned)

Annexure - Details of instruments rated

Lender's Name	ISIN	Facilities	Date Of Issuance	Coupon Rate	Maturity Date	Quantum (Rs. Cr.)	Rating
IDBI Bank Ltd.	Not Applicable	Cash Credit	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	2.00	ACUITE A- Stable Reaffirmed
Bank of Baroda	Not Applicable	Cash Credit	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	5.00	ACUITE A- Stable Reaffirmed
A U Small Finance Bank	Not Applicable	Cash Credit	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	10.00	ACUITE A- Stable Reaffirmed
IDFC First Bank Limited	Not Applicable	Cash Credit	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	0.50	ACUITE A- Stable Reaffirmed
State Bank of India	Not Applicable	Cash Credit	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	27.00	ACUITE A- Stable Reaffirmed
Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Proposed Long Term Bank Facility	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	11.93	ACUITE A- Stable Reaffirmed
Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Proposed Secured Non-Convertible Debentures	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	30.00	ACUITE A- Stable Assigned
IDFC First Bank Limited	Not Applicable	Term Loan	Not available	Not available	Not available	6.86	ACUITE A- Stable Reaffirmed
Nabsamruddhi Finance Limited	Not Applicable	Term Loan	Not available	Not available	Not available	1.67	ACUITE A- Stable Reaffirmed
A U Small Finance Bank	Not Applicable	Term Loan	Not available	Not available	Not available	0.56	ACUITE A- Stable Reaffirmed
A U Small Finance Bank	Not Applicable	Term Loan	Not available	Not available	Not available	3.06	ACUITE A- Stable Reaffirmed
IDFC First Bank Limited	Not Applicable	Term Loan	Not available	Not available	Not available	1.42	ACUITE A- Stable Reaffirmed

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About Acuité Ratings & Research

Acuité Ratings & Research Limited is a full-service Credit Rating Agency registered with the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI). The company received RBI Accreditation as an External Credit Assessment Institution (ECAI), for Bank Loan Ratings under BASEL-II norms in the year 2012. Since then, it has assigned more than 8,850 credit ratings to various securities, debt instruments and bank facilities of entities spread across the country and across a wide cross section of industries. It has its Registered and Head Office in Kanjurmarg, Mumbai.

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