

Press Release

Rajasthan State Road Transport Corporation

August 25, 2020

Rating Downgraded



Total Facilities Rated*	Rs.175.00 Cr.
Long Term Rating	ACUITE BBB (CE^) (Downgraded; Under Watch with Negative Implications)

* Refer Annexure for details

^Credit Enhancement in the form of Guarantee from Government of Rajasthan

Rating Rationale

Acuite has downgraded the long-term rating to '**ACUITE BBB (CE)**' (read as **ACUITE triple B (Credit Enhancement)**) from '**ACUITE A (CE)**' (read as **ACUITE A (Credit Enhancement)**) on the Rs.175.00 Cr. Non-Convertible Debenture (NCD) issue of Rajasthan State Road Transport Corporation (RSRTC). The rating is placed 'Under Watch with Negative Implications'.

Reasons for downward revision in the rating and rating watch

The downward revision in the ratings is primarily driven by the ongoing challenges faced by the corporation in maintaining adequate liquidity buffers commensurate with its near term debt obligations. RSRTC's operations have been severely impacted on account of the ongoing COVID – 19 crisis and such disruption in operations is expected to continue over the near term. This has led to a significant decline in the operational cash flows of the corporation and is mainly dependent on the support from the government to manage its fixed costs and overheads.

The corporation has near term debt obligations, which mainly includes Non-Convertible Debentures (NCD). The corporation is availing a Bond/ NCD of Rs.500.00 crore (not rated by Acuite), for which the part principal repayment (30% of total) of Rs.188.20 was due on 17 July 2020. The corporation has made a request to the investors for deferment of the principal payment by six months before the due date. The corporation has received the consent from some of the investors (~54 % as on 20 August 2020 out of total 1880 investors). The interest for the same is being serviced on time.

Acuite currently is in discussions with the corporation to understand the impact of these developments on its liquidity and debt servicing ability. In the event of the corporation demonstrating the ability to successfully alter its liability profile by deferring its due dates with the concurrence of lenders/investors, Acuite will initiate necessary action to resolve the watch. Acuite will be closely monitoring the developments regarding the ongoing discussions with investors and trustee. The occurrence of any credit events in such a situation could impart a further negative bias towards the rating.

Rajasthan State Road Transport Corporation (RSRTC) was incorporated in 1964 under the Road Transport Act 1950 with the objective of providing economic, adequate, punctual and efficient transportation services to the people in Rajasthan. Currently, as on January 2020, ~3733 own buses and ~959 private buses across 52 depots are plying more than 14 lacs kilometres per day and carrying more than 8.6 lakh passengers per day.

Analytical Approach

To arrive at the rating, Acuite has considered the standalone business and financial risk profiles of RSRTC and notched up the rating by factoring in Credit Enhancement in the form of Guarantee extended by Rajasthan State Government for the rated NCD issue.

Standalone (Unsupported) Rating:

ACUITE BB+/ Stable (Downgraded from ACUITE BBB-/Stable)

Key Rating Drivers

Strengths

• Criticality of RSRTC to the state and demonstrated support from the Government of Rajasthan (GoR)

The public road transport system in the state of Rajasthan is significantly dependent on RSRTC. Its large fleet of over 4600 buses is key towards maintaining intra and inter-state connectivity in Rajasthan. Further, RSRTC is also one of the largest government employers in the state of Rajasthan – employing more than 14,000 permanent employees. RSRTC is wholly owned by the GoR and is a statutory body incorporated under the State Transport Corporation Act of 1950. Any disruption or failure in RSRTC's operations can have a massive political and socio-economic implication for the GoR.

Acuité, therefore believes that RSRTC holds a fairly high strategic importance for GoR. Further, the high moral obligation to support the entity is reflected in the availability of an unconditional and irrevocable guarantee from GoR to the bondholders of RSRTC.

• Presence of the Structured Payment Mechanism

The structured payment mechanism as enshrined in the trust deed, Assuming T is the due date for payment, the following timelines are expected to be followed:

- At T-10 days: The issuer will credit the requisite fund in TRA for the servicing of bondholders on the forthcoming due date 'T' or put them in Fixed Deposit(FD) with a designated bank and ensure the FD are lien in favour of the trustees. There should be a communication mechanism in place to ensure the flow of information related to the presence of funds in TRA to State Government and Trustees. In case, the issuer does not deposit the funds into the TRA, the issuer shall communicate by T-10 days, in writing to the Financial Secretary and/or designated official in state machinery with a copy of the same to the trustee and the credit rating agency. The issuer shall also request the state government to ensure that adequate clear funds are available in the TRA for servicing obligations on the bonds on the due date 'T'.
- At T-7 days: In case of failure of intimation to the State government by the issuer, the trustee shall intimate the State Government at least 7 calendar days prior to the forthcoming due date.
- At T-4 days: The trustee shall ensure the transfer of funds from matured FDs to TRA
- In the event of state government failing to transfer clear funds in the TRA to make up the shortfall by T-4 working days, the trustee will forthwith invoke the guarantee issued by the state government and inform the credit rating agency about the same.
- On invocation of guarantee, the state government, must promptly deposit clear funds, to the extent of shortfall, into the TRA prior to the due date.

The rating factors in an adherence to the above structured payment mechanism, which will continue to be administered by the trustees to the NCD.

Weaknesses

• Continuing losses and weak financial risk profile

The corporation reported revenues of Rs.2138.07 crore for FY2019 as against Rs.2170.45 crore for FY2018. The corporation continued to report PAT losses of Rs. (75.93) crore FY2019 as against Rs.(115.06) crore for FY2018. There was some improvement seen in EBITDA levels in FY2019 on account of reduction in fuel and employee cost.

The financial risk profile continues to be weak, marked by negative tangible net worth of Rs.3537.03 crore as on 31 March 2019. This is mainly on account of revaluation reserves of Rs.7258.28 crore as on 31 March 2019. The total debt of Rs.1357.51 crore as on 31 March 2019 consists mainly of NCDs of Rs.675 crore (Rs.500 crore + Rs.175 crore) and rest loans from banks and state government bodies.

The corporation has requested for deferment from its investors for the part principal payment of the NCD/ Bond of Rs.500 crore before the due date of 17 July 2020. The next repayment tranche of the said NCD will fall due in November 2020. The operations of the corporations have been severely impacted on account of the ongoing COVID – 19 crisis and the corporation is relying mainly on grants and interest-free loans from the GoR to manage its fixed costs and overheads.

Acuité believes that support from the GoR for timely repayment of the debt obligations will be a key monitorable.

Liquidity position: Stretched

RSRTC has a stretched liquidity position on a standalone basis on account of continuous losses. However, its liquidity position is supported by strong operational and financial support from the Government of Rajasthan.

Rating Sensitivities

- Credit profile of Rajasthan Government and timely support to RSRTC
- Improvement in the operational matrices and financial risk profile

Material Covenants

None

Assessment of Adequacy of Credit Enhancement

Not Applicable

About the Rated Entity - Key Financials

	Unit	FY19 (Actual)	FY18 (Actual)
Operating Income	Rs. Cr.	2,138.07	2,170.45
PAT	Rs. Cr.	(75.93)	(115.06)
PAT Margin	(%)	(3.55)	(5.30)
Total Debt/Tangible Net Worth	Times	(0.38)	(0.37)
PBDIT/Interest	Times	0.73	0.36

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

None

Any other information

None

Applicable Criteria

- Default Recognition - <https://www.acuite.in/view-rating-criteria-52.htm>
- Entities in Service Sector - <https://www.acuite.in/view-rating-criteria-50.htm>
- Explicit Credit Enhancements - <https://www.acuite.in/view-rating-criteria-49.htm>
- Criteria For Group And Parent Support - <https://www.acuite.in/view-rating-criteria-47.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)

Date	Name of Instrument / Facilities	Term	Amount (Rs. Cr)	Ratings/Outlook
04-May-20	Non-Convertible Debentures	Long term	175.00	ACUITE A (CE) /Stable (Reaffirmed)
06-May-19	Non-Convertible Debentures	Long term	175.00	ACUITE A (CE) /Stable (Reaffirmed)
04-May-18	Non-Convertible Debentures	Long term	175.00	ACUITE A (CE) /Stable (Upgraded)
18-Oct-16	Non-Convertible Debentures	Long term	175.00	ACUITE BB /Stable (Downgraded)

*Annexure – Details of instruments rated

ISIN	Name of the Facilities	Date of Issuance	Coupon Rate	Maturity Date	Size of the Issue (Rs. Crore)	Ratings/Outlook
INE700N08015	Non-Convertible Debentures	20-Feb-2014	10.25%	20-Feb-2024	175.00	ACUITE BBB (CE) (Downgraded; Under Watch with Negative Implications)

Contacts

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About Acuite Ratings & Research:

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