MP BIRLA GROUP

Vindhya Telelinks Limited
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PAN No. AAACV7757J · CIN No. L31300MP1983PLC002134
GSTIN : 23AAACV7757J1Z0

VTL/CS/23-24/Reg-30 8 SEP 2023

BSE Ltd. Corporate Relationship Department 1st Floor, New Trading Ring, Rotunda Building P.J.Towers, Dalal Street, Fort, **MUMBAI-400 001**	The Manager, Listing Department, The National Stock Exchange of India Ltd, Exchange Plaza, C-1, Block G, Bandra Kurla Complex, Bandra (E), **MUMBAI-400 051**
Company's Scrip Code: 517015	**Company's Scrip Code: VINDHYATEL EQ**

Dear Sir(s),

Sub: Intimation under Regulation 30 of the SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosures Requirements) Regulations, 2015 – Credit Ratings

Pursuant to Regulation 30 of the SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015, we wish to inform you that CARE Ratings Ltd. ("Credit Rating Agency") has reaffirmed the rating at "CARE A+; Stable" in respect of Long-term bank facilities for Rs.1125.52 Crores (Reduced from Rs. 1174.87 Crores) and "CARE A1+" in respect of Short-term bank facilities for Rs.2518.75 Crores.

Copy of Press Release dated 7th September, 2023 issued by the Credit Rating Agency is attached herewith. Kindly take the same on your records.

Thanking you,

Yours faithfully,
For Vindhya Telelinks Limited

(Dinesh Kapoor)
Company Secretary & Compliance Officer

Encl: As above

CareEdge RATINGS

Vindhya Telelinks Limited

Sep 07, 2023

Facilities/Instruments	Amount (₹ crore)	Rating[1]	Rating Action
Long Term Bank Facilities	1,125.52 (Reduced from 1,174.87)	CARE A+; Stable	Reaffirmed
Short Term Bank Facilities	2,518.75	CARE A1+	Reaffirmed

Details of instruments/facilities in Annexure-1

Rationale and Key Rating Drivers

The ratings assigned to the bank facilities of Vindhya Telelinks Limited (VTL continues to derive strength from resourceful and experienced promoter group with demonstrated financial support to the company and its diversified product portfolio catering to the telecom, power distribution, and solar energy sectors with a strong market position in the supply of optical fibre cables (OFCs) to the telecom sector. The ratings also factor in the healthy order book position of the company strengthened by the large State Water Sanitation Mission (SWSM) order from the Uttar Pradesh State Government; VTL's satisfactory, albeit moderating gearing and debt coverage metrics; and its adequate liquidity.

The ratings also take cognisance of the improved operational and financial performance of the company in FY23 (refers to period April 01 to March 31) and in Q1FY24 (UA) on the back of a recovery in demand witnessed in the engineering, procurement and construction (EPC) business after a muted performance in the past couple of years.

These rating strengths are, however, tempered by the company's large working capital requirements being met through both, fund-based and non-fund-based working capital limits, attributable to the inherently working capital-intensive operations due to the elongated collection cycle (which however improved in FY23) and the substantial inventory holdings in the EPC segment, the inherent risk associated with large and tender-based orders, the susceptibility to volatile raw material prices and the prevalent competition in the EPC as well as cables businesses.

Rating Sensitivities: Factors likely to lead to rating actions

Positive Factors

- Significant and sustainable improvement in the operating performance (including the profit before interest, lease rentals, depreciation and taxation [PBILDT] margin) and return on capital employed (ROCE) of more than 15% on a sustained basis.
- Significant and sustainable improvement in the operating cycle to less than 120 day.

Negative Factors

- Adjusted overall gearing (considering corporate guarantee extended to group companies) beyond 1.5x on a sustained basis.
- Deterioration in operating cycle to more than 180 days on sustained basis either by further increase in inventory holding period or collection period.
- Significant and consistent decline in PBILDT margins and moderation in the ROCE to below 9% on a sustained basis.

Analytical approach: Standalone. Additionally, CARE has also considered the corporate guarantee extended by VTL to lenders of its group company, Birla Cable Limited while conducting the credit assessment of the VTL.

Outlook: Stable

The stable outlook reflects that VTL is expected to maintain its operating risk profile with its established presence in the Cable and EPC industry supported by long and established relationship with its customer base. The solvency and liquidity position of the company is also expected to remain stable in the medium term.

[1]Complete definition of the ratings assigned are available at www.careedge.in and other CARE Ratings Ltd.'s publications

Detailed description of the key rating drivers:

Key Strengths

Resourceful investor with substantial financial support: VTL is an M. P. Birla group company, one of the established business houses in India having various business interests like cement, jute, carbide, power cables, optical fibre cables, guar gums, power capacitors, etc. These businesses are operated through various companies such as Birla Corporation Limited (rated: CARE AA; Negative/ CARE A1+), Birla Cable Limited (rated: CARE A+(CE); Stable/ CARE A1+(CE), Hindustan Gums & Chemicals Limited (rated: CARE A+; Stable/ CARE A1+), and Universal Cables Ltd (UCL; rated: CARE A; Stable/ CARE A1).The day to-day operations of the company are managed by a team of experienced and qualified personnel headed by Mr. Y.S. Lodha, Managing Director and CEO, who has over three decades of experience in the cable industry. Moreover, the group has supported the company through the infusion of funds in the form of inter-corporate deposits (ICDs) and unsecured loans (USL), which stood at ₹230 crore as on March 31, 2023. Going forward, CARE Ratings believes that the company will continue to enjoy the group's support and financial flexibility.

Wide product portfolio catering to diverse industries: The company primarily has two operating segments, viz, manufacturing of cables (around 25% of the total operating income [TOI] in FY23) and the EPC division (around 75%). VTL's cable division has a wide range of products, including OFC, copper cables, speciality cables, solar photovoltaic [PV] cables, and also telecom fibre accessories. The company has diversified in railway signalling and quad cables, which are used in the electrification of track routes by the railways. It also has a presence in the EPC and turnkey solutions segments for infrastructure projects. In addition, the company has received a ₹5,498 crore water sanitation order from the State Water Sanitation Mission (SWSM), Uttar Pradesh Government. Furthermore, a major part of the EPC order book comprises orders related to the energy utilities segment, catering to projects which are primarily funded by the Central Government of India and to the telecom segment. In the telecom segment, the company has been actively involved in government projects such as BharatNet. The company has also executed developed a large optical fibre cable network of around 50000 RKM -under the IP-1 model and started providing services to leading telecom operators. Apart from energy and telecom, the company also undertakes EPC activities for sewerage pipeline projects, lift irrigation projects, and all other allied project segments. Going forward, the SWSM project is expected to be the major revenue driver.

Healthy order book position providing medium-term revenue visibility: VTL's outstanding order book position as on June 30, 2023, stood at a healthy level of ₹ 8265 crore (₹6,859 crore, as on September 30, 2021). The order book has been strengthened by a single order valuing ₹4104 crore (yet to be executed, as on June 30, 2023, out of the total order book of ₹5,498 crore) from the SWSM, Government of Uttar Pradesh. The company is required to set up drinking water facilities while connecting all the households in four districts of Uttar Pradesh – Lakhimpur, Kanpur (Nagar), Bijnore, and Ambedkar Nagar. The project is for a total of 6,327 villages and is expected to be executed by March 2025. Post-completion of the project, the company is also required to provide operations and maintenance (O&M) services for a period of 10 years. As the order is expected to be the major revenue driver for the company in the next couple of years, the timely execution (reckoning the large size) and timely realisation of the receivables from the project will remain key monitorable.

Improved operational performance, likely to sustain: The operating income of the company more than doubled to ₹2,902 crore in FY23 driven by significant growth in income from the EPC segment (a y-o-y increase of 174%) along with 26% growth witnessed in the manufacturing segment. The PBILDT and profit-after-tax (PAT) margins moderated to 9.72% and 5.32%, respectively, owing to higher share of income derived from EPC business which has relatively lower profitability margin. Further in Q1FY24 (UA), on the back of improved industry scenario and better execution, the operating income witnessed a healthy growth of more than 171% as compared with the same period last year. The EPC segment witnessed a growth of more than 241% while the cable manufacturing segment was largely stable as compared with the same period last year. The PBILDT margin of the company, however, moderated to 8.34% as compared with the 11.91% achieved in the same period last year. CARE Ratings expects the company to maintain healthy growth of around 20-25% with PBILDT margin of around 8-9% over FY24-FY26 supported by healthy unexecuted orderbook.

Satisfactory leverage and debt coverage indicators: The company reported moderation in overall gearing ratio to 0.72x as on March 31, 2023 (PY: 0.58x). The adjusted gearing (considering the corporate guarantee extended for the bank facilities availed by BCL) also moderated to 0.92x (PY: 0.80). The moderation is on account of increase in debt level and customer advances availed to support the significant growth in scale of operations. The company has availed fresh term loans to modernise the manufacturing facilities.

The debt coverage indicators i.e. PBILDT interest coverage and total debt/ PBILDT ratio however registered improvement to 3.86x and 2.92x in FY23 on the back of improvement in operating profitability supported by improved operating performance. As on March 31, 2023, total debt outstanding of ₹822.75 crore consist of term loans of ₹239.87 crore, ₹ 191.49 crore of working capital borrowings, ₹230 crore is from the group/ related parties, ₹154.74 crore is from advance from customers and lease liabilities of ₹6.64 crore. The company has plans to infuse funds and inter-corporate deposits (ICD's) in future if need arises. CARE Ratings expects overall gearing and total debt to PBILDT ratio to remain below 0.70x and 2.50x over FY24-FY26.

Liquidity: Adequate

The liquidity profile of the company remains adequate, with expected healthy cash accruals vis-à-vis term debt repayment obligations in medium term. The average utilisation of the fund-based working capital limits stood at a comfortable level of around 40% for the period from June 2022 to July 2023. The company also holds shares of the group companies which are listed and the combined aggregate market value of the same stood at over ₹937 crore as on March 31, 2023. Also, the three wholly owned subsidiaries of the company have unencumbered investments (in liquid assets), which can be accessed by VTL in case need arises. Moreover, the business requirements of the company have been supported by the fund infusions by the group entities in the past and the same is expected going forward. The projected capex in FY24 is estimated to be around ₹62.80 crore expected to be funded through through supplier credit/buyer credit of ₹30 crore and rest through internal accruals and government subsidies. With an overall adjusted gearing of 0.92x as on March 31, 2023, VTL has adequate headroom to raise additional debt to meet its capex requirements.

Key weaknesses

Large working capital requirements, albeit lower reliance on working capital borrowings: Although the operating cycle of the company shortened to 141 days in FY23 from 353 days in FY22 on the back of a decline in the inventory holding and collection period, it however continued to remain elongated. The improvement was owing to the realisation of some of the old debtors and timely collection in the incremental orders executed by the company which pertains to SWSM projects. The average credit period for debtors in the cable segment is around 120 days while it is around 150-160 days in the EPC segment. Going forward, the collection period of the company is expected to improve on the back of better realisation terms for the new SWSM project, which is expected to be the major revenue contributor going forward.

Besides, the average utilisation of the fund-based working capital limits stood at a satisfactory level of around 40% for the past 12-month period ended July 2023. The company has high reliance on the non-fund-based working capital limits for the procurement of materials and bank guarantee requirements in the EPC segment and non-fund-based utilization limits stood at around 46% for the past 12-month period ended July 2023.

Susceptibility to volatility in raw material prices: The main raw materials required by the company are copper, aluminium, compounds, and optical fibre. The company procures copper mainly from Hindalco and partially imports it. These purchases are mostly on credit basis or backed by letters of credit (LCs). The other important raw material is optical fibre, which is procured from a group company named Birla Furukawa Fibre Optics Private Limited (rated: CARE A; Stable/ CARE A1). The company is insulated against the volatility in optical fibre prices due to this arrangement. Also, for the EPC orders, the company mostly has price escalation clauses for large and longer tenure orders in most of energy segment orders. However, it may be noted that there is no price variation clause for the SWSM order bagged by the company. Hence, the company remains susceptible to volatility in the prices of other raw materials that are procured from external sources.

Inherent risk associated with the execution of large orders in the EPC segment: VTL derives its major revenue from the execution of orders in the EPC segment (75% in FY23 as compared with 60% in FY22). Even the latest order book (as on June 30, 2023) had the EPC segment contributing around 99% of the total order book position. The company is executing a large water sanitation project in Uttar Pradesh, wherein any procedural delays or weather-related issues can impact the operational performance of the company. Furthermore, around 29% of orders is derived from energy segment where counterparties are majorly central utilities companies, which mitigate the credit risk to an extent. Furthermore, around 6% proportion of the total order book position comprises orders from the telecom segment. Any delay or deferral of operational and capital expenditure of the customers may impact the operational performance of the company. The company also has large EPC orders from state-run company Indian Telephone Industries Limited. Any financial stress in these companies can cause delays in recovery of the payment by VTL.

Prevalent competition in the cable and EPC business: The cable business in recent times is experiencing stiff competition in the domestic market on account of higher installed capacity. Furthermore, the demand in the cable business is mainly dependent on the operational and capital expenditure from the telecom and power distribution companies. Any delay or deferral of such expenditure will impact the revenue visibility of companies catering to this business. Also, the EPC business continues to face competition due to the presence of many players. The order inflow depends on the operating expenses of state discoms, telecom companies, and other government institutions.

Environment, social, and governance (ESG) risks: The company has implemented a zero liquid discharge system at its manufacturing plant located in Rewa. This mechanism ensures that no liquid waste is discharged from the facility. Additionally, the domestic wastewater generated within the facility is treated in a Sewage Treatment Plant (STP), and the resulting treated water is then employed for horticultural purposes within the company's premises. The company has implemented a rooftop solar power plant with a capacity of 2 MW, which has aided in reducing its carbon footprint. The company has implemented robust operational controls to proactively identify and mitigate potential work-related hazards and associated risks. Furthermore, 50% of the members of the board are independent directors.

Applicable criteria

Policy on default recognition

Factoring Linkages Parent Sub JV Group

Financial Ratios – Non financial Sector

Liquidity Analysis of Non-financial sector entities

Rating Outlook and Credit Watch

Manufacturing Companies

Rating Methodology - Services Sector

Short Term Instruments

Policy on Withdrawal of Ratings

About the company and industry

Industry Classification

Macro-Economic Indicator	Sector	Industry	Basic Industry
Industrials	Construction	Construction	Civil Construction

VTL is engaged in the manufacturing of telecom cables as well as EPC services to telecom, power, gas distribution pipelines, and sewage projects. The manufacturing plant of the company is located at Rewa, Madhya Pradesh. The company currently has an optical fibre cable manufacturing capacity of 60 lakh fibre km per annum. The company caters to a reputed client base like Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited, Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Limited, Indian Railways, Defence (Indian Army), NTPC Limited, Steel Authority of India Limited, Bharti Airtel Ltd, Reliance Jio Infocom Ltd, etc. The company has also recently ventured into the EPC of water sanitation projects by bagging a large order under the SWSM, Uttar Pradesh, which entails providing functional household tap connection (FHTC) in all allocated households in the four districts of the state.

Brief Financials (₹ crore)	FY22 (A)	FY23 (A)	Q1FY24 (U/A)
Total operating income	1,325.23	2,901.50	850.81
PBILDT	161.34	282.04	70.97
PAT	84.61	154.30	37.84
Overall gearing (times)	0.58	0.72	
Interest coverage (times)	2.84	3.86	3.60

A: Audited; UA: Unaudited; NA: Not available
Financials are reclassified as per CARE Ratings' standards.

Note: 'The above results are latest financial results available'.

Status of non-cooperation with previous CRA: Not applicable

Any other information: Not applicable

Rating history for the last three years: Please refer Annexure-2

Covenants of the rated instruments/facilities: Detailed explanation of the covenants of the rated instruments/facilities is given in Annexure-3

Complexity level of the various instruments rated: Annexure-4

Lender details: Annexure-5

Annexure-1: Details of instruments/facilities

Name of the Instrument	ISIN	Date of Issuance (DD-MM-YYYY)	Coupon Rate (%)	Maturity Date (DD-MM-YYYY)	Size of the Issue (₹ crore)	Rating Assigned along with Rating Outlook
Fund-based - LT-Cash Credit		-	-	-	910.00	CARE A+; Stable
Fund-based - LT-Term Loan		29-Dec-2017	9.55	December, 2024	215.52	CARE A+; Stable
Non-fund-based - ST-BG/LC		-	-	-	2518.75	CARE A1+

Annexure-2: Rating history for the last three years

Sr. No.	Name of the Instrument/Bank Facilities	Current Ratings			Rating History			
		Type	Amount Outstanding (₹ crore)	Rating	Date(s) and Rating(s) assigned in 2023-2024	Date(s) and Rating(s) assigned in 2022-2023	Date(s) and Rating(s) assigned in 2021-2022	Date(s) and Rating(s) assigned in 2020-2021
1	Non-fund-based - ST-BG/LC	ST	2518.75	CARE A1+	-	1)CARE A1+ (03-Jan-23)	1)CARE A1+ (03-Dec-21)	1)CARE A1+ (11-Feb-21)
2	Fund-based - LT-Cash Credit	LT	910.00	CARE A+; Stable	-	1)CARE A+; Stable (03-Jan-23)	1)CARE A+; Stable (03-Dec-21)	1)CARE A+; Stable (11-Feb-21)
3	Fund-based - LT-Term Loan	LT	215.52	CARE A+; Stable	-	1)CARE A+; Stable (03-Jan-23)	1)CARE A+; Stable (03-Dec-21)	1)CARE A+; Stable (11-Feb-21)
4	Debentures-Non Convertible Debentures	LT	-	-	-	1)Withdrawn (03-Jan-23)	1)CARE A+; Stable (03-Dec-21)	1)CARE A+; Stable (11-Feb-21)

*Long term/short term

Annexure-3: Detailed explanation of the covenants of the rated instruments/facilities: Not applicable

Annexure-4: Complexity level of the various instruments rated

Sr. No.	Name of the Instrument	Complexity Level
1	Fund-based - LT-Cash Credit	Simple
2	Fund-based - LT-Term Loan	Simple
3	Non-fund-based - ST-BG/LC	Simple

Annexure-5: Lender details

To view the lender wise details of bank facilities please click here

Note on the complexity levels of the rated instruments: CARE Ratings has classified instruments rated by it on the basis of complexity. Investors/market intermediaries/regulators or others are welcome to write to care@careedge.in for any clarifications.

Contact us

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About us:

Established in 1993, CARE Ratings is one of the leading credit rating agencies in India. Registered under the Securities and Exchange Board of India, it has been acknowledged as an External Credit Assessment Institution by the RBI. With an equitable position in the Indian capital market, CARE Ratings provides a wide array of credit rating services that help corporates raise capital and enable investors to make informed decisions. With an established track record of rating companies over almost three decades, CARE Ratings follows a robust and transparent rating process that leverages its domain and analytical expertise, backed by the methodologies congruent with the international best practices. CARE Ratings has played a pivotal role in developing bank debt and capital market instruments, including commercial papers, corporate bonds and debentures, and structured credit.

For the detailed Rationale Report and subscription information, please visit www.careedge.in