

July 02, 2020

Hindustan Aeronautics Limited: Rating assigned for enhanced bank limits

Summary of rating action

Instrument*	Previous Rated Amount (Rs. crore)	Current Rated Amount (Rs. crore)	Rating Action
Commercial Paper	2,500.00	2,500.00	[ICRA]A1+; outstanding
Fund Based – Working Capital Limits	5,250.00	10,000.00	[ICRA]AA(Stable); assigned / outstanding
Non-fund Based – Working Capital Limits	2,050.00	2,050.00	[ICRA]A1+; outstanding
Total	9,800.00	14,550.00	

*Instrument details are provided in Annexure-1

Rationale

The ratings draw comfort from the majority ownership held by the Government of India (GOI) in Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL, the company) as well as HAL's strategic position as a dominant supplier of aircrafts, helicopters, engines, avionics and accessories as well as main provider of maintenance, repair and overhaul services to the Indian defence forces. The assigned rating also considers the strong order pipeline as reflected by the unexecuted order book of Rs 52,965 crore as on March 31, 2020. The company faces limited competition from the private sector due to the high capital intensity and long gestation periods for developing manufacturing capabilities in the sector. While competition from the private sector is likely to intensify in the long-term, HAL's long-standing relationship with the Indian defence forces and the DRDO, established manufacturing facilities, and manpower base will continue to be strong mitigating factors. The GoI's increased focus on indigenisation with the Make in India policy and the establishment of defence corridors and mandatory offset policy for defence procurement by GoI, augur well for the company's future growth. HAL's financial profile is supported by its diversified revenue mix covering sale of products, spares and services for multiple aircraft programmes, as well as the healthy profitability arising from the cost-plus nature of majority of contracts. Due to its large scale and consistently improving operating profitability, the debt coverage metrics remain strong, notwithstanding the high level of short term borrowings.

The ratings are, however, constrained by HAL's high dependence on contracts received from Ministry of Defence (MoD), which contributes to more than 90% of the revenues. The company faced reduced release of funds in contracts derived from MoD during FY2019, leading to build-up of receivables in FY2019. While collections from customers remained above Rs 18,000 crore in FY2020, the receivables continue to remain high as on March 31, 2020. Significant quantum of buy-back of shares and distribution of dividends in the past have also contributed to the reduction in cash and bank balances of the company. As a result, the company's reliance on working capital borrowings has increased to Rs 5,506 crore as on March 31, 2020. Nonetheless, ICRA notes that with the recent enhancement in the sanctioned fund based working capital limits to Rs 10,000 crore, the company has healthy cushion in its borrowing limits.

ICRA notes that the timely realization of receivables and improvement in liquidity will be a key rating sensitivity. Due to the high dependence on contracts derived from MoD, any reduction in availability of funds or change in prioritisation in the defence budget can have an adverse impact on the growth potential, sales momentum and liquidity of the company. The company also has significant contingent liabilities, primarily relating to sales tax demands from various states,

aggregating to Rs 10,572 crore as on March 2019; nonetheless, it is expected that any outflows pertaining to the sales tax demands would be reimbursed by HAL's customers thereby negating any impact on HAL's profitability.

Key rating drivers and their description

Credit strengths

Majority ownership held by GoI; strategically important to the Indian defence forces – The GoI is HAL's majority shareholder, holding a 89.97% stake at present. It is a defence PSU which was conferred Navaratna status in 2007. The company is of strategic importance to the Indian defence forces comprising of the Indian Army, Indian Airforce, Indian Navy and Indian Coast Guard, on account of it being the sole domestic supplier of aircrafts, helicopters, engines, avionics and other accessories. It occupies a leadership position in the Indian aerospace and defence industry. The company is also engaged in providing maintenance, repair and overhaul (MRO) services for aircrafts and helicopters for its products as well as those which are directly purchased by the MoD from foreign OEMs.

Long track record and significant entry barriers - Over the years, HAL has showcased its research, design and development capabilities with the successful development of military aircraft and helicopters such as the Ajeet, Marut, HPT-32, Kiran and Advanced Light Helicopter. The company also manufactures aircrafts under license such as the MiG-21, MiG-27, Avro, Jaguar, Dornier 228, Su-30 MKI and Hawk Mk 132 and helicopters such as the Cheetah and Chetak. In addition, the company also provides MRO services for these indigenous and license manufactured aircraft and helicopters, as well as for aircraft and helicopters procured directly by the Indian defence services. The company faces limited competition from the private sector due to the high capital intensity and long gestation periods for developing manufacturing capabilities in the sector. While competition from the private sector is likely to intensify in the long-term, HAL's long-standing relationship with the Indian defence forces and the DRDO, established manufacturing facilities, and manpower base will continue to be strong mitigating factors.

Strong order book and healthy profitability – The company has a strong order pipeline as reflected by the unexecuted order book of Rs 52,965 crore as on March 31, 2020. The company faces limited competition from the private sector due to the high capital intensity and long gestation periods for developing manufacturing capabilities in the sector. HAL's financial profile is supported by its diversified revenue mix covering sale of products, spares and services for multiple aircraft programmes, as well as the healthy profitability arising from the cost-plus nature of majority of contracts. Due to its large scale and consistently improving operating profitability, the debt coverage metrics remain strong, notwithstanding the high level of short term borrowings.

Credit challenges

High dependence on contracts from MoD – More than 90% of the revenue of the company is derived from sales to the Indian defence forces. These contracts depend on the budgetary support extended to MoD, which in turn allocates the amounts to the various Indian defence Forces. Any reduction in availability of funds or change in prioritisation of the defence budget can have an adverse impact on the growth potential, sales momentum and liquidity of the company. Over the past years, the amount of defence allocation towards modernisation of aircrafts and aero-engines has not seen much growth.

Elevated receivables leading to increase in leverage levels– The company faced reduced release of funds in contracts derived from MoD during FY2019, leading to build-up of receivables in FY2019. While collections from customers remained above Rs 18,000 crore in FY2020, the receivables continue to remain high as on March 31, 2020. Significant quantum of buy-back of shares and distribution of dividends in the past have also contributed to the reduction in cash

and bank balances of the company. As a result, the company's reliance on working capital borrowings has increased to Rs 5,506 crore as on March 31, 2020. Nonetheless, ICRA notes that with the recent enhancement in the sanctioned fund based working capital limits to Rs 10,000 crore, the company has healthy cushion in its borrowing limits. The timely realization of receivables and improvement in liquidity will be a key rating sensitivity.

Liquidity position: Adequate

The company's liquidity position is adequate, backed by availability of sanctioned fund based working capital limits which have been enhanced recently to Rs 10,000 crore as against a utilization of Rs 5,506 crore as on March 31, 2020. The company has been facing delays in receipt of payments from MoD due to which the short-term borrowings have remained elevated. Nonetheless with the enhancement in the limits, the company has healthy cushion in its borrowing limits. Timely release of pending payments will be critical for the company's liquidity profile.

Rating sensitivities

Positive triggers – Healthy revenue growth and sustained growth in order book accompanied by reduction in receivables leading to sustained improvement in leverage to less than Total Debt/ OPBITDA to 0.5 times.

Negative triggers – Further delays in receiving payments from customers leading to increase in leverage levels (Debt / OPBITDA higher than 1.5 times on sustained basis) or significant weakening of profitability or accruals due to reduction in order inflows and execution.

Analytical approach

Analytical Approach	Comments
Applicable Rating Methodologies	Corporate Credit Rating Methodology
Parent/Group Support	Parent/Group Company: Government of India (GoI) The assigned rating factors in the strategic importance that HAL holds for the GoI, which we expect should induce it to extend timely financial support to the rated entity, should there be a need.
Consolidation/Standalone	The ratings are based on the consolidated financial statements of the issuer.

About the company

HAL, a defence public sector undertaking (DPSU), was established on October 1, 1964 when Hindustan Aircraft Limited and Aeronautics India Limited were amalgamated. The principal business of HAL is to undertake design, development, manufacturing, maintenance, repair and overhaul of aircrafts, helicopters, engines and other related systems like avionics, instruments and accessories. It also engages with the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) to contribute to the space programmes of the country. The GoI remains HAL's largest shareholder current shareholding of 89.97%. HAL was conferred with the Navratna PSU status in June 2007. HAL's primary consumers are the Indian Defence Forces comprising of the Indian Air Force, Indian Army, Indian Navy along with the Indian Coast Guard. The company has four production complexes- Bangalore complex, MiG complex (located in Nasik and Koraput), Helicopter complex (located in Bangalore and Barrackpore) and Accessories Complex (located in Kanpur, Lucknow, Hyderabad, Kasargod and Korwa); along with a Design complex (R&D centres jointly located with the related manufacturing divisions).

Key financial indicators (audited)

	FY2019	FY2020
Operating Income (Rs. crore)	19,761	21,522
PAT (Rs. crore)	2,329	2,898
OPBDIT/OI (%)	23.3%	23.6%
PAT/OI (%)	11.8%	13.5%
Total Outside Liabilities/Tangible Net Worth (times)	3.6	3.0
Total Debt/OPBDIT (times)	1.0	1.1
Interest Coverage (times)	25.9	14.6

Status of non-cooperation with previous CRA: None

Any other information: None

Rating history for past three years

	Instrument	Current Rating (FY2021)				Rating History for the Past 3 Years			
		Type	Amount Rated	Amount Outstanding*	Current 02-Jul-20	FY2020		FY2019	FY2018
						13-Mar-20	09-Jan-20	-	-
1	Cash Credit	Long Term	10,000	4,006	[ICRA]AA (Stable)	[ICRA]AA (Stable)	[ICRA]AA (Stable)	-	-
2	Non-fund Based Limits	Short Term	2,050	n.a.	[ICRA]A1+	[ICRA]A1+	[ICRA]A1+	-	-
3	Commercial Paper	Short Term	2,500	1,500	[ICRA]A1+	[ICRA]A1+	[ICRA]A1+	-	-

Amount in Rs. crore

* as on March 31, 2020

Complexity level of the rated instrument

ICRA has classified various instruments based on their complexity as "Simple", "Complex" and "Highly Complex". The classification of instruments according to their complexity levels is available on the website www.icra.in

Annexure-1: Instrument details

ISIN	Instrument Name	Date of Issuance / Sanction	Coupon Rate	Maturity Date	Amount Rated (Rs. crore)	Current Rating and Outlook
NA	Cash Credit	NA	NA	NA	10,000.00	[ICRA]AA (Stable)
NA	Non-fund Based Limits	NA	NA	-	2,050.00	[ICRA]A1+
NA	Commercial Paper Programme	NA	NA	7-365 days	2,500.00	[ICRA]A1+

Source: Hindustan Aeronautics Limited

Annexure-2: List of entities considered for consolidated analysis

Company Name	Ownership	Consolidation Approach
Naini Aerospace Limited	100.00%	Full Consolidation
Indo Russian Helicopters Limited	50.5%	Proportionate Consolidation
BAeHAL Software Ltd.	49.0%	Equity Method
Indo Russian Aviation Ltd.	48.0%	Equity Method
Safran HAL Aircraft Engines Pvt. Ltd.	50.0%	Equity Method
Samtel HAL Display System Ltd.	40.0%	Equity Method
HAL-Edgewood Technologies Pvt. Ltd.	50.0%	Equity Method
HALBIT Avionics Pvt. Ltd.	50.0%	Equity Method
Infotech HAL Ltd.	50.0%	Equity Method
HATSOFF Helicopter Training Pvt. Ltd.	50.0%	Equity Method
TATA-HAL Technologies Ltd	50.0%	Equity Method
International Aerospace Manufacturing Pvt. Ltd.	50.0%	Equity Method
Multi-Role Transport Aircraft Ltd.	50.0%	Equity Method
Aerospace & Aviation Sector Skill Council (AASSC)	50.0%	Equity Method
Helicopter Engines MRO Private Ltd.	50.0%	Equity Method
Defence Innovation Organisation*	50.0%	Equity Method

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