

Tata Teleservices (Maharashtra) Limited

Instrument	Amount	Rating Action
	In Rs. Crore ¹	November 2016
Term Loans	359 (earlier Rs. 490 crore)	Revised to [ICRA]A- from [ICRA]A; Negative outlook reaffirmed
Fund Based/Non-Fund Based Limits	465	Revised to [ICRA]A- from [ICRA]A; Negative outlook reaffirmed
Unallocated	188 (earlier Rs. 57 crore)	Revised to [ICRA]A- from [ICRA]A; Negative outlook reaffirmed

ICRA has revised the long term rating to [ICRA]A- (pronounced as ICRA A minus) from [ICRA]A (pronounced as ICRA A) for the Rs. 359.0 crore (earlier Rs. 490 crore) term loans, Rs. 465 crore Long-Term Fund Based/Non-Fund Based Limits, and Rs. 188 crore (earlier Rs. 57 crore) unallocated limits of Tata Teleservices (Maharashtra) Limited (TTML)[†]. The outlook on the long-term rating has been reaffirmed at Negative.

The rating action factors in the continuing weak operational and financial performance of the company marked by y-o-y decline in revenues over the last three quarters, consistent pressures on profitability and strained debt coverage indicators. The Q2FY2017 performance is further impacted by higher amortisation expense and finance cost owing to capitalization of spectrum acquired in March 2015 auctions. Against this, the company's debt level has registered a marginal increase in debt (excluding deferred spectrum liabilities) from Rs. 8,803 crore as on March 31, 2016 to Rs. 8,929 crore as on September 30, 2016. Moreover, given the insufficiency of cash flow generation to meet the scheduled repayment obligations, reliance on rollover/refinancing of maturing debt remains high for the company. This apart, the company remains vulnerable to foreign exchange fluctuation risk given that a sizeable proportion of debt is denominated in foreign currency.

TTML's subscriber addition and growth in revenues have been limited, have lagged the industry and the company has reported fluctuating revenue market share (RMS)² in past few quarters. Further the industry faces headwinds in the form of heightened competitive intensity and erosion of pricing power post the launch of services by Reliance Jio Infocomm Limited (RJIL). This is likely to put further pressure on TTML's revenue and profitability. In such a scenario, the debt coverage metrics of the company are unlikely to report significant improvement in the medium term. Further, the ongoing dispute with NTT DoCoMo over the payout by Tata Sons Limited for NTT DoCoMo's stake in TTSL remains to be resolved.

The rating however continues to factor in the support available to TTML from its strong parentage as is evident from the funds infusion of around Rs. 2000 crore in October 2016 to fund the spectrum payout. Renewal of spectrum in the recent auctions has removed the business continuity risks for the company. The rating also factors in TTML's operational linkage with TTSL and cost synergies from synchronization of operations of both the companies. Further the company has eased the repayment burden in the near term by refinancing part of its short term borrowings in H1FY2017 and continues to make efforts to align its debt repayment commitments with its cash flows. The company has also initiated efforts to improve its operational efficiency and is also trying to reduce its loss making subscribers to improve its average ARPU. The company is also redrawing its business plan while looking at various options including launch of 4G services, additional funds infusion, sale of non-core assets, monetisation of excess spectrum and exiting certain circles/business segments etc.

ICRA has taken note of the recent announcement regarding the replacement of the Chairman at Tata Sons, the Holding company of TTML. ICRA is monitoring the ongoing developments and the impact of the same on the company's financial or operational performance.

¹ 1 crore = 100 lakh = 10 million

[†] For complete rating scale and definitions, please refer to ICRA's Website www.icra.in or other ICRA Rating Publications

² RMS is calculated on the basis of Adjusted Gross Revenue



Company Profile

Tata Teleservices (Maharashtra) Limited, earlier known as Hughes Tele.com Limited, was originally promoted by Hughes Electronics Corporation (HEC), the Ispat Group, Alltel Corporation and their associate companies as Hughes Ispat in March 1995. The company commenced its operations in the year 1998.

In December 2002, the Tata group of companies acquired a 50.83% stake in the company (through TTSL) from original promoters and 20% stake through an open offer in the market. In March 2009, NTT DoCoMo acquired a 12.12% stake in the company through an open offer. TTML currently offers fixed line services, mobile services (CDMA and GSM) and broadband services across two major circles namely Mumbai Metro and Rest of Maharashtra (including Goa). TTML also offers 3G services in Rest of Maharashtra (including Goa) circle. TTML has around 10.3 million subscribers (including wireline subscribers) as on June 30, 2016.

Recent Results

For FY2016, company reported revenue of Rs. 3,025 crore and net loss of Rs. 498 crore as against the revenue of Rs. 2,939 crore and net loss of Rs. 615 crore in FY2015.

For H1FY2017, company reported operating income of Rs. 1,448 crore and total comprehensive loss of Rs. 580 crore as against the operating Income of Rs. 1,497 crore and total comprehensive loss of Rs. 260 crore in H1FY2016.

November 2016

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