



The Pakistan Credit Rating Agency Limited

Rating Report

Sapphire Electric Company Limited

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Rating History

Dissemination Date	Long Term Rating	Short Term Rating	Outlook	Action	Rating Watch
25-Feb-2022	AA-	A1+	Stable	Maintain	-
26-Feb-2021	AA-	A1+	Stable	Maintain	-
28-Feb-2020	AA-	A1+	Stable	Maintain	-
30-Aug-2019	AA-	A1+	Stable	Maintain	-
20-Mar-2019	AA-	A1+	Stable	Maintain	-
06-Nov-2018	AA-	A1+	Stable	Maintain	-
29-Mar-2018	AA-	A1+	Stable	Initial	-

Rating Rationale and Key Rating Drivers

The ratings reflect the strong business profile of Sapphire Electric Company Limited (“Sapphire Electric” or “The Company”) emanating from the demand risk coverage under the Power Purchase Agreement signed between CPPA-G (Central Power Purchasing Agency) and the Company. Meanwhile, the Implementation Agreement provides a sovereign guarantee for cashflows, given adherence to agreed performance benchmarks. Nevertheless, delayed payments from the power purchaser remained a challenge. The ratings incorporate low operational risk, a result of the performance of General Electric - the O&M operator. The primary fuel of the plant is Regasified Liquefied Natural Gas (RLNG) which is supplied by Sui Northern Gas Pipeline Limited (SNGPL). Thus fuel supply risk is considered adequate, pertaining to the meaningful addition of RLNG in Pakistan’s fuel mix. During the period, 6MFY22 & FY21, Sapphire Electric provided ~437GWh, & ~568GWh of electricity to the national grid and recorded sales revenue of PKR ~10,279mln & PKR ~12,184mln along with a Net Profit of PKR ~1,138mln & PKR ~2,528mln respectively. Delayed payments from the power purchaser pose pressure on the Company’s working capital requirements, because of the mounting receivables, in order to carter the issue the Company has arranged amicable working capital lines out of which 63% had been utilized as of FY21. The Company has received its first installment on Jan 21 (40% of outstanding receivables in form of 1/3rd cash, 1/3rd PIB and 1/3rd Sukuk’s) under the agreement signed with CPPA-G, this will improve the liquidity, rest 60% will be received after 6 months of the first installment. Pursuant to this agreement the Company has revised its ROE in respect of local equity (80%) to 17% from 15% with no dollar indexation, and for foreign equity (20%) to 12% from 15% with dollar indexation. Sapphire Electric project-related debt has been completely paid off in Sep’20. The Company has also made an investment (100%) in Sapphire Hydro Limited, a Hydro Power project of 150MW in Sharmai Khyber Pakhtunkhawa.

Upholding operational performance in line with agreed performance levels would remain a key rating driver. The Company's association with Sapphire Group provides comfort to the ratings. Sustained good financial discipline and upholding strong operational performance in line with agreed performance levels remain important

Disclosure

Name of Rated Entity	Sapphire Electric Company Limited
Type of Relationship	Solicited
Purpose of the Rating	Entity Rating
Applicable Criteria	Methodology Independent Power Producer Rating(Jun-21),Criteria Correlation Between Long-term & Short-term Rating Scales(Jun-21),Criteria Rating Modifiers(Jun-21)
Related Research	Sector Study Power(Jan-22)
Rating Analysts	Muhammad Mubashir Nazir mubashir.nazir@pacra.com +92-42-35869504

Profile

Plant Sapphire Electric Company Limited (Sapphire Electric) is operating a Combined Cycle thermal power plant on a build-own-operate (BOO) basis, with gross capacity of 225 MW.

Tariff Sapphire Electric's key source of earnings is the generation tariff from the power purchaser, Central Power Purchasing Agency (CPPA-G). The reference generation tariff comprises a capacity charge component and an energy charge component. The Levelized Tariff energy component as per NEPRA determination is 19.6652 PKR/Kwh on HSD fuel on May 2021.

Return On Project Sapphire Electric has revised its ROE in respect of local equity (80%) to 17% from 15% with no dollar indexation, and for foreign equity (20%) to 12% from 15% with dollar indexation.

Ownership

Ownership Structure Sapphire Electric's is majority owned by Sapphire Group with 70% holding, while Xenel Saudi Arabia (20%), Meezan Bank (5%), and high net worth individuals (5%) are other shareholders respectively.

Stability Stability in the IPPs is drawn from the agreements signed between the company and power purchaser. However, sponsors affiliation with Sapphire group will continue to provide comfort.

Business Acumen Sapphire Group is engaged in the business of manufacturing and selling of yarn & fabric and home textile products.

Financial Strength The financial strength of the sponsors is considered strong as the sponsors have well diversified profitable businesses.

Governance

Board Structure The seven-member Board of Directors (BOD) is majorly composed of representatives from Sapphire Group, including the CEO, while Xenel is represented by one member. Due to dominance of the Sapphire Group on the board, the board has limited diversification. All the board members are seasoned professionals having interests in various sectors of the industry.

Members' Profile Board members are qualified and have relevant experience in their portfolio reflecting strong management profile.

Board Effectiveness The experiences of board will help guiding the management in developing effective operational and financial policies. The board has formulated two committees, i) Audit, & ii) HR and Remuneration Committee, to ensure smooth and effective monitoring of operations. Participation of all board members during board meetings remained satisfactory.

Financial Transparency M/s A.F Ferguson is the external auditor of the company. They have expressed an unqualified opinion on the company's financial statements at end-Jun21 while drawing attention to the matter of recoverability of certain trade debts.

Management

Organizational Structure Sapphire Electric's has a lean management structure. The CEO is supported by a team of qualified and experienced professionals.

Management Team The management control of the company vests with Sapphire Fibres Limited being largest shareholder. Mr. Shahid Abdullah, the CEO, has been spearheading the company as he carries with him over three decades of experience in various fields of industry.

Effectiveness The management of Sapphire Electric is mostly engaged in the finance related activities. The operations and maintenance of the plant have been outsourced to GE by way of the O&M contract. In this regard, Company has built up a team of senior technicians at the plant site, whom are conducting bi-weekly and monthly meetings with GE personnel to further enhance and fortify their knowledge of operating the power plant.

Control Environment Sapphire Electric take advantage of advanced I.T. solutions delivered comparatively better on many fronts. Moreover, quality of the I.T infrastructure and the breadth and depth of activities performed has remained well satisfactory.

Operational Risk

Power Purchase Agreement Sapphire Electric's key source of earnings is the revenue generated through the sale of electricity to the power purchaser, CPPA-G. The Company will receive the capacity payments if it is at the benchmark availability and is ready to provide electricity, even if no purchase order is placed by the Power Purchaser. The Company has agreed on the revision in PPA as per the agreement with CPPA-G and received its first installments against 40% of outstanding receivables. As per the agreement, the IRR will be changed to 17% from 14% with no \$ indexation.

Operation And Maintenance Sapphire Electric has negotiated an O&M contract with GE for a period of 18 years, which commenced from the COD in October 2010.

Resource Risk Sapphire Electric's power plant is fueled by Pipeline Quality Gas supplied by Sui Northern Pipelines Limited (SNGPL). SECL has signed an interim agreement in 2018 with SNGPL for supplying RLNG due to acute shortages of gas in the country. In case of non-availability of RLNG, company runs its plant on HSD.

Insurance Cover Sapphire Electric has significant insurance coverage for property damage and business interruption. The insured values for damages include a property damage cover (upto PKR 23.31bln) & business interruption cover (up to PKR 6.026bln). Local insurance is covered by Adamjee Insurance Co and foreign insurance is covered by Lockton (MENA) Limited.

Performance Risk

Industry Dynamics Owing to newly installed plants, Pakistan's energy mix is shifting towards Solar/Gas/and coal from Furnace Oil and other expensive sources. As on June-21, installed capacity of electricity reached 39,772 MW, which was 38,719 MW at end June-20, increased to 2.7% (1,053 MW) in FY21. It is expected that 9,703MW hydel power will increase in 2029. Further power will increase of 5,853MW new power projects of coal and thermal sources which is expected in 2026. Although electricity generation varies due to availability of inputs and other constraints. The use of furnace oil would be reduced to 2% only from the current usage of 19%. Similarly, the use of RLNG and imported coal would be decreased to 13% and 9% from their current usage of 17% and 12%, respectively.

Generation Electricity produced during 2021 is 568GWh (2020: 265GWh) owing to increasing power demand by CPPA-G.

Performance Benchmark The required availability for Sapphire Electric Company under the PPA is 88%. During FY21, average plant availability has been maintained according to agreed parameters. Sapphire Electric's net income reduced to PKR 2,528mln during FY21 in comparison to the corresponding period last year (FY20: PKR 3,595mln; FY19: PKR 3,182mln) on account of reduction in tariff as debt component eliminated, being project-related debt paid off.

Financial Risk

Financing Structure Analysis Sapphire Electric's project capital structure comprises 25% equity (US\$ 61mln) and 75% debt (US\$ 183mln). During FY21, the Company has completely paid off its project debt on time.

Liquidity Profile As at end Dec-21, total receivables of the company stood at PKR 13,018mln (FY21: PKR 12,730mln; FY20: PKR 10,534mln; FY19: PKR 10,635mln). As circular debt continues to be an issue for companies operating in power sector, consequently IPPs have to manage their liquidity requirements from short-term borrowings.

Working Capital Financing During Dec 2021, Sapphire Electric Company's working capital requirements, represented by net cash cycle (net working capital days) – a function of receivables and payables – decreased to 233days (end-Jun-21: 354days) due to receipt of receivables from CPPA-G. against energy invoices. The company meets working capital requirements through a mix of internal cash flows and STBs.

Cash Flow Analysis Sapphire Electric coverage has shown improvement in debt coverage ratio [EBITDA / Finance Cost] to FY21: 8.3x (FY20: 5.4x), mainly owing to stable internal free cash flow generation and reduction in finance cost.

Capitalization Sapphire Electric's leveraging for 6MFY22 remained moderate at ~22% (FY21: 24.6%). Short term borrowing comprised 100% of total debt financing.



Sapphire Electric Limited Power	Dec-21 6M	Jun-21 12M	Jun-20 12M	Jun-19 12M
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A BALANCE SHEET

1 Non-Current Assets	11,141	11,437	11,990	12,581
2 Investments	-	-	-	-
3 Related Party Exposure	176	170	158	127
4 Current Assets	14,752	14,553	12,128	12,143
<i>a Inventories</i>	242	276	118	162
<i>b Trade Receivables</i>	13,019	12,730	10,534	10,635
5 Total Assets	26,069	26,160	24,277	24,851
6 Current Liabilities	1,794	1,719	1,918	1,610
<i>a Trade Payables</i>	1,748	1,079	1,402	1,225
7 Borrowings	5,349	6,016	5,826	9,031
8 Related Party Exposure	-	-	-	-
9 Non-Current Liabilities	-	-	-	-
10 Net Assets	18,926	18,424	16,533	14,210
11 Shareholders' Equity	18,926	18,424	16,534	14,210

B INCOME STATEMENT

1 Sales	10,279	12,184	10,225	14,873
<i>a Cost of Good Sold</i>	(8,901)	(8,952)	(5,542)	(10,629)
2 Gross Profit	1,378	3,232	4,684	4,244
<i>a Operating Expenses</i>	2	(103)	(94)	(70)
3 Operating Profit	1,380	3,129	4,590	4,174
<i>a Non Operating Income or (Expense)</i>	1	(141)	(31)	20
4 Profit or (Loss) before Interest and Tax	1,381	2,988	4,559	4,194
<i>a Total Finance Cost</i>	(244)	(460)	(964)	(1,011)
<i>b Taxation</i>	-	(0)	(0)	(1)
6 Net Income Or (Loss)	1,138	2,528	3,595	3,182

C CASH FLOW STATEMENT

<i>a Free Cash Flows from Operations (FCFO)</i>	1,747	3,720	5,170	4,756
<i>b Net Cash from Operating Activities before Working Capital</i>	1,508	3,205	4,103	3,895
<i>c Changes in Working Capital</i>	(143)	(3,019)	142	(2,947)
1 Net Cash provided by Operating Activities	1,365	186	4,245	948
2 Net Cash (Used in) or Available From Investing Activities	(7)	(54)	(31)	(60)
3 Net Cash (Used in) or Available From Financing Activities	(636)	(1,224)	(3,896)	(1,350)
4 Net Cash generated or (Used) during the period	722	(1,091)	319	(462)

D RATIO ANALYSIS

1 Performance				
<i>a Sales Growth (for the period)</i>	68.7%	19.2%	-31.2%	12.7%
<i>b Gross Profit Margin</i>	13.4%	26.5%	45.8%	28.5%
<i>c Net Profit Margin</i>	11.1%	20.7%	35.2%	21.4%
<i>d Cash Conversion Efficiency (FCFO adjusted for Working C</i>	15.6%	5.8%	51.9%	12.2%
<i>e Return on Equity [Net Profit Margin * Asset Turnover * (T</i>	12.0%	14.2%	21.5%	23.8%
2 Working Capital Management				
<i>a Gross Working Capital (Average Days)</i>	233	354	383	230
<i>b Net Working Capital (Average Days)</i>	208	317	336	199
<i>c Current Ratio (Current Assets / Current Liabilities)</i>	8.2	8.5	6.3	7.5
3 Coverages				
<i>a EBITDA / Finance Cost</i>	6.9	8.3	5.4	4.8
<i>b FCFO / Finance Cost+CMLTB+Excess STB</i>	7.2	8.3	3.4	1.3
<i>c Debt Payback (Total Borrowings+Excess STB) / (FCFO-Fin</i>	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.9
4 Capital Structure				
<i>a Total Borrowings / (Total Borrowings+Shareholders' Equit</i>	22.0%	24.6%	26.1%	38.9%
<i>b Interest or Markup Payable (Days)</i>	33.9	32.4	36.1	72.0
<i>c Entity Average Borrowing Rate</i>	7.9%	7.1%	13.5%	11.1%

Credit Rating

Credit rating reflects forward-looking opinion on credit worthiness of underlying entity or instrument; more specifically it covers relative ability to honor financial obligations. The primary factor being captured on the rating scale is relative likelihood of default.

Scale	Long-term Rating Definition
AAA	Highest credit quality. Lowest expectation of credit risk. Indicate exceptionally strong capacity for timely payment of financial commitments
AA+	
AA	Very high credit quality. Very low expectation of credit risk. Indicate very strong capacity for timely payment of financial commitments. This capacity is not significantly vulnerable to foreseeable events.
AA-	
A+	
A	High credit quality. Low expectation of credit risk. The capacity for timely payment of financial commitments is considered strong. This capacity may, nevertheless, be vulnerable to changes in circumstances or in economic conditions.
A-	
BBB+	
BBB	Good credit quality. Currently a low expectation of credit risk. The capacity for timely payment of financial commitments is considered adequate, but adverse changes in circumstances and in economic conditions are more likely to impair this capacity.
BBB-	
BB+	Moderate risk. Possibility of credit risk developing. There is a possibility of credit risk developing, particularly as a result of adverse economic or business changes over time; however, business or financial alternatives may be available to allow financial commitments to be met.
BB	
BB-	
B+	
B	High credit risk. A limited margin of safety remains against credit risk. Financial commitments are currently being met; however, capacity for continued payment is contingent upon a sustained, favorable business and economic environment.
B-	
CCC	Very high credit risk. Substantial credit risk “CCC” Default is a real possibility. Capacity for meeting financial commitments is solely reliant upon sustained, favorable business or economic developments. “CC” Rating indicates that default of some kind appears probable. “C” Ratings signal imminent default.
CC	
C	
D	Obligations are currently in default.

Scale	Short-term Rating Definition
A1+	The highest capacity for timely repayment.
A1	A strong capacity for timely repayment.
A2	A satisfactory capacity for timely repayment. This may be susceptible to adverse changes in business, economic, or financial conditions.
A3	An adequate capacity for timely repayment. Such capacity is susceptible to adverse changes in business, economic, or financial conditions.
A4	The capacity for timely repayment is more susceptible to adverse changes in business, economic, or financial conditions. Liquidity may not be sufficient.



*The correlation shown is indicative and, in certain cases, may not hold.

Outlook (Stable, Positive, Negative, Developing) Indicates the potential and direction of a rating over the intermediate term in response to trends in economic and/or fundamental business/financial conditions. It is not necessarily a precursor to a rating change. ‘Stable’ outlook means a rating is not likely to change. ‘Positive’ means it may be raised. ‘Negative’ means it may be lowered. Where the trends have conflicting elements, the outlook may be described as ‘Developing’.

Rating Watch Alerts to the possibility of a rating change subsequent to, or, in anticipation of some material identifiable event with indeterminable rating implications. But it does not mean that a rating change is inevitable. A watch should be resolved within foreseeable future, but may continue if underlying circumstances are not settled. Rating watch may accompany rating outlook of the respective opinion.

Suspension It is not possible to update an opinion due to lack of requisite information. Opinion should be resumed in foreseeable future. However, if this does not happen within six (6) months, the rating should be considered withdrawn.

Withdrawn A rating is withdrawn on a) termination of rating mandate, b) the debt instrument is redeemed, c) the rating remains suspended for six months, d) the entity/issuer defaults., or/and e) PACRA finds it impractical to surveil the opinion due to lack of requisite information.

Harmonization A change in rating due to revision in applicable methodology or underlying scale.

Surveillance. Surveillance on a publicly disseminated rating opinion is carried out on an ongoing basis till it is formally suspended or withdrawn. A comprehensive surveillance of rating opinion is carried out at least once every six months. However, a rating opinion may be reviewed in the intervening period if it is necessitated by any material happening.

Note. This scale is applicable to the following methodology(s):

<p>Entities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Broker Entity Rating b) Corporate Rating c) Financial Institution Rating d) Holding Company Rating e) Independent Power Producer Rating f) Microfinance Institution Rating g) Non-Banking Finance Companies (NBFCs) Rating 	<p>Instruments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Basel III Compliant Debt Instrument Rating b) Debt Instrument Rating c) Sukuk Rating
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(1) Rating is just an opinion about the creditworthiness of the entity and does not constitute recommendation to buy, hold or sell any security of the entity rated or to buy, hold or sell the security rated, as the case may be | Chapter III; 14-3-(x)

2) Conflict of Interest

- i. The Rating Team or any of their family members have no interest in this rating | Chapter III; 12-2-(j)
- ii. PACRA, the analysts involved in the rating process and members of its rating committee, and their family members, do not have any conflict of interest relating to the rating done by them | Chapter III; 12-2-(e) & (k)
- iii. The analyst is not a substantial shareholder of the customer being rated by PACRA [Annexure F; d-(ii)] Explanation: for the purpose of above clause, the term "family members" shall include only those family members who are dependent on the analyst and members of the rating committee

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Conduct of Business

- (6) PACRA fulfills its obligations in a fair, efficient, transparent and ethical manner and renders high standards of services in performing its functions and obligations; | Chapter III; 11-A-(a)
- (7) PACRA uses due care in preparation of this Rating Report. Our information has been obtained from sources we consider to be reliable but its accuracy or completeness is not guaranteed. PACRA does not, in every instance, independently verifies or validates information received in the rating process or in preparing this Rating Report.
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- (12) PACRA receives compensation from the entity being rated or any third party for the rating services it offers. The receipt of this compensation has no influence on PACRA's opinions or other analytical processes. In all instances, PACRA is committed to preserving the objectivity, integrity and independence of its ratings. Our relationship is governed by two distinct mandates i) rating mandate - signed with the entity being rated or issuer of the debt instrument, and fee mandate - signed with the payer, which can be different from the entity
- (13) PACRA does not provide consultancy/advisory services or other services to any of its customers or to any of its customers' associated companies and associated undertakings that is being rated or has been rated by it during the preceding three years unless it has adequate mechanism in place ensuring that provision of such services does not lead to a conflict of interest situation with its rating activities; | Chapter III; 12-2-(d)
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- (15) PACRA ensures that the rating assigned to an entity or instrument is not be affected by the existence of a business relationship between PACRA and the entity or any other party, or the non-existence of such a relationship | Chapter III; 12-2-(i)
- (16) PACRA ensures that the analysts or any of their family members shall not buy or sell or engage in any transaction in any security which falls in the analyst's area of primary analytical responsibility. This clause shall, however, not be applicable on investment in securities through collective investment schemes. | Chapter III; 12-2-(l)
- (17) PACRA has established policies and procedure governing investments and trading in securities by its employees and for monitoring the same to prevent insider trading, market manipulation or any other market abuse | Chapter III; 11-B-(g)

Monitoring and review

- (18) PACRA monitors all the outstanding ratings continuously and any potential change therein due to any event associated with the issuer, the security arrangement, the industry etc., is disseminated to the market, immediately and in effective manner, after appropriate consultation with the entity/issuer; | Chapter III | 18-(a)
- (19) PACRA reviews all the outstanding ratings on semi-annual basis or as and when required by any creditor or upon the occurrence of such an event which requires to do so; | Chapter III | 18-(b)
- (20) PACRA initiates immediate review of the outstanding rating upon becoming aware of any information that may reasonably be expected to result in downgrading of the rating; | Chapter III | 18-(c)
- (21) PACRA engages with the issuer and the debt securities trustee, to remain updated on all information pertaining to the rating of the entity/instrument; | Chapter III | 18-(d)

Probability of Default

(22) PACRA's Rating Scale reflects the expectation of credit risk. The highest rating has the lowest relative likelihood of default (i.e, probability). PACRA's transition studies capture the historical performance behavior of a specific rating notch. Transition behavior of the assigned rating can be obtained from PACRA's Transition Study available at our website. (www.pacra.com). However, actual transition of rating may not follow the pattern observed in the past | Chapter III | 14-(F-VII)

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