The Pakistan Credit Rating Agency Limited

Rating Report

LOTTE Kolson (Pvt.) Limited

Report Contents

Rating History

Dissemination Date	Long Term Rating	Short Term Rating	Outlook	Action	Rating Watch
30-May-2024	A-	A2	Stable	Maintain	Yes
08-Jun-2023	A-	A2	Stable	Maintain	-
09-Jun-2022	A-	A2	Stable	Maintain	-
09-Jun-2021	A-	A2	Stable	Maintain	-
26-Jun-2020	A-	A2	Stable	Maintain	Yes
27-Dec-2019	A-	A2	Stable	Maintain	-
27-Jun-2019	A-	A2	Stable	Maintain	-
31-Dec-2018	A-	A2	Stable	Initial	-

Rating Rationale and Key Rating Drivers

The ratings reflect LOTTE Kolson (Pvt.) Limited’s ('LOTTE Kolson' or 'the Company') association with LOTTE Corporation, one of the biggest conglomerates in South Korea. The company's owners have vast international experience and a proven history of successful business ventures. Our company boasts a robust governance structure, with stringent controls in place and a seasoned management team at the helm. The internal audit department operates under the direct oversight of directors. The confectionery and biscuits market in Pakistan is largely dominated by domestically produced products. The industry is highly competitive and products are price-elastic. A major shift has been observed with the opening of a growing number of large retail chains especially in the major cities where a higher concentration of middle and upper-income class exists. However, demand has declined due to inflation outpacing growth in consumer disposable income. Rising inflation has also driven up production costs and raw material expenses, leading to shrinking profit margins across the industry. The reduced demand has led to a decline in actual plant production. As a result, the utilization capacity of the plant dropped to ~32% in CY23, from ~50% in CY22 (CY21: ~58%). On the financial profile side, the Company's revenue emanates from four product segments which include snacks, biscuits, pasta, and gum, with Slanty contributing over ~47.07% of the total revenue. During CY23, due to a volumetric decline in sales, the company experienced a ~4.4% decrease in its topline, clocked in at ~PKR 12.65bln as compared with ~PKR 13.23bln during CY22. This decline was also accompanied by a significant ~45.5% reduction in gross profit, mainly due to challenges stemming from higher raw material costs driven by inflation, both locally and through imports. Operating expenses were notably high, primarily due to increased spending on sales and marketing activities aimed at enhancing product awareness and maintaining competitiveness in the market. Consequently, the company incurred an operating loss. Additionally, elevated finance costs further impacted the bottom line, resulting in an increase of net loss by ~33%. As result, the Company has incurred a net loss of ~PKR 875mln in CY23 (CY22: net loss of ~656mln). To address this situation, the company must focus on increasing sales volume and boosting revenue to offset these losses. The Company is exposed to a high level of financial risk as its financial risk profile is characterized by leveraged capital structure and a huge decline in coverages. Long-term debt is related to expansion activities, whereas short-term debt is related to working capital. The ratings draw comfort from the Sponsor's financial strength, guidance on managing interest rate fluctuation, and demonstrated ability to provide support if needed.

The ratings are dependent on the Company’s ability to improve sales, margins, and profitability. However, any further deterioration in margins and/or coverages will adversely impact the ratings. Continued support from Lotte WELLFOOD Co. Ltd., technical and financial, remains imperative to sustain the ratings.

Disclosure

Name of Rated Entity	LOTTE Kolson (Pvt.) Limited
Type of Relationship	Solicited
Purpose of the Rating	Entity Rating
Applicable Criteria	Methodology | Corporate Rating(Jul-23),Methodology | Correlation Between Long-term & Short-term Rating Scales(Jul-23),Methodology | Rating Modifiers(Apr-24)
Related Research	Sector Study | Food Products(Dec-23)
Rating Analysts	Hina Harram | hina.harram@pacra.com | +92-42-35869504

Profile

Legal Structure Lotte Kolson (Private) Limited (Lotte Kolson or 'the Company') was incorporated in 1975 as a private limited company.

Background The Company was formerly known as KS Sulemanji Esmailiji & Sons (Private) Limited. It was renamed to Lotte Kolson (Private) Limited after it was acquired by Lotte Corporation, a multinational conglomerate headquartered in South Korea, in 2014.

Operations The Company manufactures and sells five product categories, namely, i) Snacks, ii) Biscuits, iii) Pasta, iv) Cakes, and v) Gum. Lotte Kolson's overall capacity utilization reduced to 30%. Gum segment, namely Spout, had the highest utilization level at ~49.6%, and the Biscuit segment had low utilization level at ~3.7% due to a halt in its production owing to high costs. Production facilities are located in Karachi, Islamabad and Lahore, whereas, the head office is in Karachi.

Ownership

Ownership Structure Major shareholding of the Company lies with Lotte Wellfood (96.5%). Remaining stake is held by Mr. Dong Bin Shin (3.5%), son of the founder, Mr. Shin Kyuk-Ho, whereas, Mr. Choi Myeong Rim (Chairman), Mr. Abdul Latif (non-executive director) & Mr. Yong Sung Shin (executive director) owns one share each.

Stability The Company ownership remains stable in the period with majority (96.5%) of the shares owned by Lotte Wellfood (previously known as Lotte Confectionary).

Business Acumen Lotte Corporation, is a Korean multinational conglomerate, which has business ventures spread across the globe, in addition to having a strong footprint in South Korea and Japan. The Corporation has business interests in food, retail, chemicals, infrastructure and finance, among other areas. Moreover, the Group has established a strong presence in Pakistan and operates in the confectionery, chemical, beverages and construction industries.

Financial Strength The Company is considered to have strong financial strength owing to support from Lotte Wellfood and Lotte Corporation. Additionally, Lotte Corporation is the fifth largest conglomerate in South Korea and had a turnover of ~KRW 2500bln (USD 1.88bln).

Governance

Board Structure Board of Directors comprises four members that include the Chairman, two executive directors and a non-executive director. The Company lacks representation of independent members on its Board.

Members' Profile Board represents qualified individuals who specialize in retail and production, in addition to confectionery. Mr. Choi Myeong Rim, Chairman of the Board, has over 28 years of experience in the industry.

Board Effectiveness The Company has no Board committees in place. The Board meets twice a year to discuss matters pertaining to current performance and future strategy, with minutes of meetings being captured in a formal manner.

Financial Transparency Yousuf Adil., Chartered Accountants are the external auditors of the Company. The auditor has expressed an unqualified opinion on the financial statements for the year ending 31st December 2023.

Management

Organizational Structure The organizational structure of the Company is split between twelve departments. Some of the major departments are sales, supply chain, production, quality and finance. Each department head reports to the CEO, who in turn, reports to the Chairman. The CFO has additional reporting to Chairman in Korea as CFO is a Korean national and this is required for communication purpose.

Management Team The management team comprises experienced individuals in the retail industry with diversified skills. Mr. Khayyam Rajpoot, the Chief Executive Officer, holds an MBA and specializes in sales, marketing and general management. He joined the Company in 2018 and has previously worked for multi-nationals. The Company also receives support from Lotte regional platform in terms of strategy and best practices.

Effectiveness In order to ensure efficient operations, the Company has in place a management committee, which meets twice a month. Meetings are chaired by the CEO and are attended by all functional heads. Purpose of the Committee is to improve coordination in operations while ensuring compliance.

MIS The Company has deployed Oracle 12-C as its Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system and operates five modules.

Control Environment The Company has a strong control environment represented by strict quality control measures, with an increased emphasis on hygiene, and an efficient internal audit department. Findings are reported to the CEO, in addition to headquarters in South Korea.

Business Risk

Industry Dynamics This industry is fiercely competitive and the products are price sensitive. The market operates with unbranded segment as a sizeable player. The food industry in Pakistan is growing at a rapid pace (CAGR of 6.6% during 2020-2025) due to increasing population, urbanization, and changing lifestyles. Going forward, cashflow and liquidity is expected to remain stable. Notably, Pakistan's CPI increased by ~26.89% in Oct-23 YoY basis which may affect the demand for convenience food products in the retail market due to the lower purchasing power of consumers.

Relative Position The Company has robust brand recognition in the snacks industry with its flagship product 'Slanty'. However, it's competitors such as 'Lays' remains clear market leader in the segment and continue to gain market share due to extensive marketing campaigns.

Revenues The Company's topline consists of six products: Slanty, Lotte Choco Pie, Snackers, Jam Hearts, Bravo, and Vermicelli. During CY23, due to a volumetric decline in sales resulting from inflation, the company experienced a ~4.4% decrease in its topline, clocked in at ~PKR 12.65bln as compared with ~PKR 13.23bln during CY22.

Margins During CY22, the Company's gross margin significantly decreased by~45.5% and stood at 12.1% during CY23 (CY22: ~21.2%) mainly due to challenges stemming from higher raw material costs driven by inflation, both locally and through imports. Operating expenses were notably high, primarily due to increased spending on sales and marketing activities aimed at enhancing product awareness and maintaining competitiveness in the market. Consequently, the company incurred an operating loss posting a operating margin of ~ -1.3%. Additionally, elevated finance costs further impacted the bottom line, resulting in an increase of net loss by ~33%. As result, the Company has incurred a net margin of ~ -6.9% CY23 (CY22: -5%).

Sustainability Going forward, given the economic situation the Company does not have any further expansion plans. The Company is looking to reduce its borrowings and improve its margins to be able to survive the current economic downturn.

Financial Risk

Working Capital During CY23, the receivables days consistent to 5 days (CY22: 5 days) due to a better recovery. Moreover, the Company observed an increase in inventory days, as they stood at 41 days (CY22: 36 days). Resultantly, gross working capital days stood at 46 days in CY23 (CY22: 41 days). The Company delayed payments to creditors, and hence, the payable days rose significantly to 42 days (CY22: 28 days). As a result, the net working capital days declined and amounted to 4 days as at CY23 (CY22: 13 days).

Coverages The Company's free cash flows increased to PKR 666mln during CY23 (CY22: PKR 631mln). Finance cost increased to ~PKR 584mln during CY23 (CY22: ~PKR 400mln) on the back of higher interest rates. As a result, the interest coverage ratio of the Company decreased to 1.2x (CY22: 1.6x). Core and total coverage remained same (CY23: 0.4x, CY22: 0.4x).

Capitalization The Company has leveraged capital structure, with a leveraging ratio of ~23.3% as at CY23 (CY22: ~30.6%). Total borrowings of the Company stood at ~PKR 3,130mln during CY23 (CY22: ~PKR 3,648mln) including long-term debt which is to finance the Choco Pie plant and expansion projects, whereas short-term debt is related to working capital. Whereas, the Company's equity clocked at PKR 10.3bln including PKR 5.4bln of revaluation against fixed assets.

PKR mln

LOTTE Kolson (Pvt.) Limited		Mar-24	Dec-23	Dec-22	Dec-21
Food Products		3M	12M	12M	12M
A BALANCE SHEET					
1	Non-Current Assets	13,426	13,797	10,841	11,464
2	Investments	-	-	159	135
3	Related Party Exposure	-	-	-	-
4	Current Assets	4,048	3,328	3,024	2,945
	a Inventories	*1,771*	*1,377*	*1,446*	*1,168*
	b Trade Receivables	*178*	*187*	*146*	*239*
5	**Total Assets**	17,474	17,126	14,024	14,544
6	Current Liabilities	2,931	2,530	2,007	1,554
	a Trade Payables	*2,077*	*1,731*	*1,150*	*895*
7	Borrowings	3,301	3,130	3,648	3,858
8	Related Party Exposure	-	-	-	-
9	Non-Current Liabilities	895	1,133	110	206
10	**Net Assets**	10,347	10,332	8,258	8,926
11	**Shareholders' Equity**	10,347	10,332	8,258	8,926
B INCOME STATEMENT					
1	**Sales**	3,602	12,648	13,225	12,161
	a Cost of Good Sold	*(3,132)*	*(11,118)*	*(10,421)*	*(10,274)*
2	**Gross Profit**	470	1,529	2,804	1,887
	a Operating Expenses	(494)	(1,692)	(3,070)	(2,139)
3	**Operating Profit**	(24)	(163)	(266)	(252)
	a Non Operating Income or (Expense)	*24*	*(11)*	*(52)*	*81*
4	**Profit or (Loss) before Interest and Tax**	0	(173)	(318)	(170)
	a Total Finance Cost	*(151)*	*(584)*	*(400)*	*(364)*
	b Taxation	*182*	*(118)*	*62*	*184*
6	**Net Income Or (Loss)**	32	(875)	(656)	(350)
C CASH FLOW STATEMENT					
	a Free Cash Flows from Operations (FCFO)	*313*	*666*	*631*	*704*
	b Net Cash from Operating Activities before Working Capital Chan	*149*	*121*	*271*	*356*
	c Changes in Working Capital	*7*	*476*	*164*	*50*
1	**Net Cash provided by Operating Activities**	157	597	434	406
2	**Net Cash (Used in) or Available From Investing Activities**	(20)	(24)	351	(96)
3	**Net Cash (Used in) or Available From Financing Activities**	171	(624)	(679)	(556)
4	**Net Cash generated or (Used) during the period**	308	(50)	106	(247)
D RATIO ANALYSIS					
1	**Performance**				
	a Sales Growth (for the period)	13.9%	-4.4%	8.7%	2.3%
	b Gross Profit Margin	13.1%	12.1%	21.2%	15.5%
	c Net Profit Margin	0.9%	-6.9%	-5.0%	-2.9%
	d Cash Conversion Efficiency (FCFO adjusted for Working Capital	8.9%	9.0%	6.0%	6.2%
	*e Return on Equity [Net Profit Margin * Asset Turnover * (Total A*	1.2%	-9.4%	-7.6%	-3.9%
2	**Working Capital Management**				
	a Gross Working Capital (Average Days)	45	46	41	40
	b Net Working Capital (Average Days)	-4	4	13	18
	c Current Ratio (Current Assets / Current Liabilities)	1.4	1.3	1.5	1.9
3	**Coverages**				
	a EBITDA / Finance Cost	2.7	1.6	2.3	2.5
	b FCFO / Finance Cost+CMLTB+Excess STB	0.7	0.4	0.4	0.5
	c Debt Payback (Total Borrowings+Excess STB) / (FCFO-Finance	3.3	24.5	11.2	9.0
4	**Capital Structure**				
	a Total Borrowings / (Total Borrowings+Shareholders' Equity)	24.2%	23.3%	30.6%	30.2%
	b Interest or Markup Payable (Days)	43.8	53.6	42.3	5.6
	c Entity Average Borrowing Rate	17.3%	16.4%	10.7%	8.7%

Credit Rating

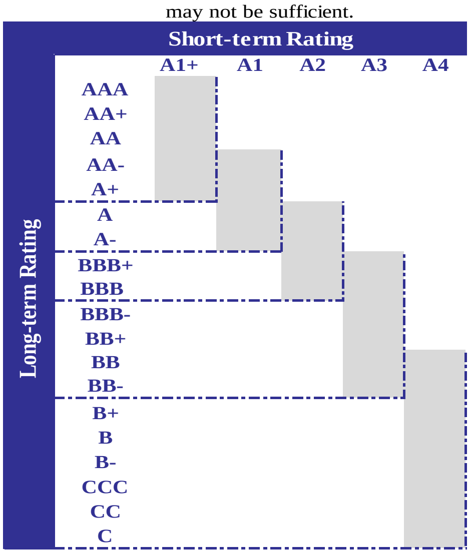
Credit rating reflects forward-looking opinion on credit worthiness of underlying entity or instrument; more specifically it covers relative ability to honor financial obligations. The primary factor being captured on the rating scale is relative likelihood of default.

Long-term Rating

Scale	Definition
AAA	**Highest credit quality.** Lowest expectation of credit risk. Indicate exceptionally strong capacity for timely payment of financial commitments
AA+ 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.
A+ 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.
BBB+ 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.
BB+ BB 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.
B+ 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.
CCC CC C	**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.
D	Obligations are currently in default.

Short-term Rating

Scale	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
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 surveill 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):

a) Broker Entity Rating
b) Corporate Rating
c) Debt Instrument Rating
d) Financial Institution Rating
e) Holding Company Rating
f) Independent Power Producer Rating
g) Microfinance Institution Rating
h) Non-Banking Finance Companies Rating

Regulatory and Supplementary Disclosure
(Credit Rating Companies Regulations,2016)

Rating Team Statements
(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

Restrictions
(3) No director, officer or employee of PACRA communicates the information, acquired by him for use for rating purposes, to any other person except where required under law to do so. | Chapter III; 10-(5)
(4) PACRA does not disclose or discuss with outside parties or make improper use of the non-public information which has come to its knowledge during business relationship with the customer | Chapter III; 10-7-(d)
(5) PACRA does not make proposals or recommendations regarding the activities of rated entities that could impact a credit rating of entity subject to rating | Chapter III; 10-7-(k)

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 | Clause 11-(A)(p).
(8) PACRA prohibits its employees and analysts from soliciting money, gifts or favors from anyone with whom PACRA conducts business | Chapter III; 11-A-(q)
(9) PACRA ensures before commencement of the rating process that an analyst or employee has not had a recent employment or other significant business or personal relationship with the rated entity that may cause or may be perceived as causing a conflict of interest; | Chapter III; 11-A-(r)
(10) PACRA maintains principal of integrity in seeking rating business | Chapter III; 11-A-(u)
(11) PACRA promptly investigates, in the event of a misconduct or a breach of the policies, procedures and controls, and takes appropriate steps to rectify any weaknesses to prevent any recurrence along with suitable punitive action against the responsible employee(s) | Chapter III; 11-B-(m)

Independence & Conflict of interest
(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)
(14) PACRA discloses that no shareholder directly or indirectly holding 10% or more of the share capital of PACRA also holds directly or indirectly 10% or more of the share capital of the entity which is subject to rating or the entity which issued the instrument subject to rating by PACRA; | Reference Chapter III; 12-2-(f)
(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 | 17-(a)
(19) PACRA reviews all the outstanding ratings periodically, on annual basis; Provided that public dissemination of annual review and, in an instance of change in rating will be made; | Chapter III | 17-(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 | 17-(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 | 17-(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 | 14-3(f)(vii)
Proprietary Information