



The Pakistan Credit Rating Agency Limited

Rating Report

Azhar Corporation (Pvt.) Limited

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Rating History

Dissemination Date	Long Term Rating	Short Term Rating	Outlook	Action	Rating Watch
29-Dec-2023	BBB	A2	Stable	Maintain	-
30-Dec-2022	BBB	A2	Stable	Maintain	-
30-Dec-2021	BBB	A2	Stable	Initial	-

Rating Rationale and Key Rating Drivers

Pakistan's home and laundry care market has experience an annual growth rate of 2.02% (CAGR 2023-2028). The largest segment in this market is Laundry Care, with a market volume of US\$1.30bn in 2023. Sales of home and laundry care products in Pakistan have witnessed a significant surge, driven by increasing consumer awareness and the growing middle-class population. Pakistani soap imports are expected to drop to 4,801,700 kilograms in 2026, a decrease of 0.4% year-on-year. The market of detergents is projected to experience an annual growth rate of 19.34% (CAGR 2023-2028).

The ratings reflect Azhar Corporation's diversified revenue stream and strong presence in the laundry soap segment with their established brand 'Gai Soap'. Being a key player in this market segment, the Company derives the majority of its revenue from sales within the local market. Aligned wit prevailing industry trends, the Company maintains a presence in the detergent market (Powder detergent - Gai Powerwash and Xtra Neat). The Company has presence in branded Vegetable Ghee/Edible Oil segment, with- Gai Banaspati and Gai Cooking Oil. The product line of Oil/Ghee of the Company is currently undergoing a challenging phase, exhibiting a fluctuating trend that is influencing the overall performance. The Company experienced a growth in revenues, reaching PKR 6,526 million in FY23 compared to PKR 6,025 million in FY22. Additionally, for the first quarter of FY24, revenues amounted to PKR 1,828 million. Gross profit margins (FY23: 12.5%, FY22: 13.1%) remain stable owing to effective cost management. Whereas, net profit margins of the Company decreased and stood at 1.2% in FY23 (FY22: 2.3%) due to increase in finance cost (FY23: PKR 368mln, FY22: PKR 192mln), owing to increase in markup rates. Financial profile of the Company remains stable owing to moderately leveraged capital structure; major portion of which consists of short-term debt (FY23: PKR 1,872mln, FY22: PKR 1,945mln), obtained to finance the working capital requirements. Over the years, the consistent backing from sponsors positively influences the ratings. Growing number of local suppliers, the working capital management of the Company remains stretched. The forthcoming projects within the Company's pipeline, specifically in the domain of makeup products, are expected to contribute value to the company's performance in the near future.

The ratings are dependent on the management's ability to prudently manage its market share, while maintaining business margins. Pressure on business volume and margins owing to the high input cost and a perfect competitive market may negatively impact the ratings.

Disclosure

Name of Rated Entity	Azhar Corporation (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-23)
Related Research	Sector Study Edible Oil(Feb-23)
Rating Analysts	Muhammad Zain Ayaz zain.ayaz@pacra.com +92-42-35869504

Profile

Legal Structure Azhar Corporation (Pvt.) Limited (Azhar Corporation) is a private limited company, incorporated in 1979.

Background Azhar Corporation (Pvt.) Limited started commercial production of Laundry Soap in 1979 under the brand name of Gai Soap. In 1999, the Company diversified its product base and introduced Toilet Soap, named Hoor in the market. In Jan-14, the Company backwardly integrated and set up a Vegetable Ghee and Cooking Oil refining unit. In FY18, two new products (Xtra Neat and Gai Powerwash) were introduced in the market.

Operations Azhar Corporation is primarily involved in manufacturing and sale of Personal and Homecare products, with an installed capacity of 126,000 MT/annum. These include laundry soap, toilet soap, detergent bar and detergent powder. The Company is also involved in manufacturing of Vegetable Ghee and Cooking Oil and has an installed capacity of 45,000 MT/annum. For this, the Company imports palm oil and palm olein. Azhar Corporation (Pvt.) Limited's manufacturing units and Head Office are located in Faisalabad.

Ownership

Ownership Structure Ownership stake is held equally by the families of Mr. Azhar Iqbal and Mr. Hassan Munawwar. Mr. Hassan Munawwar, CEO of the Company holds 43.23%, while his wife Ms. Saba Hassan (6.77%). Mr. Azhar holds 28.3% stake, while his wife Ms. Samina Kausar and daughters hold 8.1% and 13.54% respectively.

Stability Previously, the shareholding was held by Mr. Hassan and Mr. Azhar solely. During FY21, family members of both sponsors were also included.

Business Acumen For five decades, the Sponsoring family has been in the business arena of Personal and Homecare products, indicating their relevant experience and expertise. Moreover, the third generation has also been inducted during FY21.

Financial Strength Azhar Corporation is a stable business entity. The Sponsors have adequate financial strength to support the Company.

Governance

Board Structure Azhar Corporation has four-member Board. All members are from sponsoring family and are independent directors.

Members' Profile Mr. Hassan Munawwar, the CEO of the Company, is attached to this business for more than 18 years. Mr. Azhar Iqbal is a director and is leading the operational front and has the overall experience of 30 years.

Board Effectiveness Board meeting minutes are prepared formally. Meeting minutes are fairly captured in details, with the resolutions being signed by both directors after every meeting. Keeping in view the status of the Company, absence of sub-committees may not impact Board's effectiveness. During FY23, 12 Board meetings, with majority attendance, were held to discuss pertinent matters.

Financial Transparency The Company's external auditors, Parker Russell-A.J.S. Chartered Accountants, have expressed an unqualified opinion on the financial statements of FY23. The firm has been QCR rated by ICAP and is in the 'B' category of SBP's auditor's panel.

Management

Organizational Structure Azhar Corporation has an evolving organizational structure, which is divided into six key functions, namely; (i) Production, (ii) Marketing & Sales, (iii) Human Resource & Admin, (iv) Accounts, (v) Finance, and (vi) Procurement. All departmental heads are managing and supervising the work of their relevant departments and reporting all the necessary information to both CEO and Director.

Management Team The CEO, Mr. Hassan Munawwar, has experience of more than 18 years, and is a graduate of B. Com. He has been associated with the Company since 2004 after completing his education. Mr. Azhar Iqbal is B.A graduate and on his name the Company was established by his father.

Effectiveness Keeping in view the size and operations of the Company, management lacks effectiveness as there are no management committees in place. Thus, indicating a room for improvement.

MIS Reports pertaining to following information are generated frequently of each business unit: 1) Borrowings detail, 2) Cash flows which oversee by CEO on daily basis. All business units generate MIS reports for the respective heads. Senior management make informed decisions on the basis of these reports.

Control Environment The Company has an internal audit function headed by Hammad Zia. Regular reviews are undertaken internally to overlook the Company's operational control. However the company lacks independent representation in the audit committee.

Business Risk

Industry Dynamics Pakistan's home and laundry care market has experience an annual growth rate of 2.02% (CAGR 2023-2028). The largest segment in this market is Laundry Care, with a market volume of US\$1.30bn in 2023. Sales of home and laundry care products in Pakistan have witnessed a significant surge, driven by increasing consumer awareness and the growing middle-class population. Pakistani soap imports are expected to drop to 4,801,700 kilograms in 2026, a decrease of 0.4% year-on-year. The market of detergents is projected to experience an annual growth rate of 19.34% (CAGR 2023-2028).

Relative Position Azhar Corporation (Pvt.) Limited has an estimated share of ~14%, followed by Sufi Soap (8%) in the laundry soap market.

Revenues The Company generates revenue from two divisions: Soap (laundry soap, beauty soap, detergent bars and detergent powder) ~ 77% and Edible Oil (Vegetable Ghee and Cooking Oil) ~ 23%. Topline portrayed an increasing trend over the years, during FY23, topline increased and stood at PKR 6.6bn (FY22: PKR 6.0bn). Also sales of 1QFY24 stood at PKR 1.8bn while depending 82% revenue on soap and 18% revenue on edible oil.

Margins During FY23, the gross margins posted a slight decrease of 12.5% (FY22: 13.1%), on the back of high pricing. Operating margins followed a similar trend (FY23: 7.5%, FY22: 7.6%). During 1QFY24 the gross and operating margin margins stood at 12.9% and 7.4% respectively. Total Finance cost increased and stood at PKR 368m in FY23 (FY22: PKR 192m), due to high interest rates. Net profit margin decreased to 1.2% in FY23 (FY22: 2.3%). Whereas, profit for 1QFY24 stood at 1.6%.

Sustainability The Company is striving to diversify by entering the cosmetics market through the brand name of Hoor. New products include beauty creams, shampoos, toothpastes and facewash.

Financial Risk

Working Capital The Company's working capital requirements are a function of high inventory and receivable days. Average inventory days increased and stood at 170 days during FY23 (FY22: 151 days). On the other hand inventory days for 1QFY24 stood at 169 days. Trade receivables decreased and stood at 77 days in FY23 (FY22: 80 days). Whereas, trade receivables for 1QFY24 showed 49 days. The Company meets working capital requirements through internal cashflow as well as the short-term borrowing. Short term trade and total leverage of the company increased and stood at 42% and 36% respectively in FY23. Whereas, during 1QFY24 the short term trade and total leverages stood at 44% and 38% respectively.

Coverages The interest coverage ratio decreased and stood at 1.6x in FY23 (FY22: 2.2) despite an increase in the free cash flows (FY23 : PKR 587m, FY22: PKR 417m). The interest coverage ratio decreased due to increase in the finance cost. The interest coverage ratio for 1QFY24 was experienced at 1.9x. Debt payback ratio remain stable during FY 23 and stood at 0.3x (FY22: 0.3x). 1QFY24 shows debt 0.2x debt payback ratio.

Capitalization The company's leverage slightly improved and stood at 34% in FY23 (FY22: 35%). The leverage of company stood at 31% during 1QFY24. Total borrowings of the company slightly decreased and stood at PKR 1.9bn during FY23 (FY22: PKR 2.0bn), mainly due to decrease in short term borrowings (FY23: PKR 1.8bn, FY22: PKR 1.9bn). Total borrowings of 1QFY24 decreased and stood at PKR 1.7bn. Going forward, the Company's short-term borrowings are expected to remain high due to nature of its business – import of raw material.



The Pakistan Credit Rating Agency Limited

Financial Summary

	Sep-23	Jun-23	Mar-23	Dec-22	Jun-22	Mar-22	Dec-21	Jun-21
	3M	12M	9M	6M	12M	9M	6M	12M
A BALANCE SHEET								
1 Non-Current Assets	2,707	2,676	2,747	2,742	2,837	571	582	565
2 Investments	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
3 Related Party Exposure	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
4 Current Assets	4,398	4,669	4,587	4,637	4,512	4,386	3,995	3,513
a Inventories	3,468	3,314	3,249	2,929	2,773	2,530	2,339	2,225
b Trade Receivables	736	1,215	1,167	1,303	1,536	1,519	1,294	1,104
5 Total Assets	7,105	7,345	7,334	7,379	7,349	4,957	4,577	4,077
6 Current Liabilities	1,056	1,115	957	1,060	1,091	1,029	849	711
a Trade Payables	711	767	574	697	786	702	584	451
7 Borrowings	1,732	1,943	2,060	1,983	2,022	1,928	1,778	1,440
8 Related Party Exposure	-	-	-	-	-	18	18	80
9 Non-Current Liabilities	458	458	493	502	496	80	82	78
10 Net Assets	3,859	3,829	3,824	3,834	3,740	1,902	1,851	1,768
11 Shareholders' Equity	3,859	3,829	3,824	3,834	3,747	1,902	1,851	1,768
B INCOME STATEMENT								
1 Sales	1,828	6,526	4,999	3,443	6,025	4,067	2,634	5,050
a Cost of Good Sold	(1,592)	(5,710)	(4,337)	(2,963)	(5,237)	(3,523)	(2,284)	(4,381)
2 Gross Profit	236	817	661	480	788	545	350	669
a Operating Expenses	(102)	(328)	(257)	(182)	(330)	(201)	(135)	(274)
3 Operating Profit	134	488	404	299	458	344	216	395
a Non Operating Income or (Expense)	0	2	(12)	(9)	(43)	(12)	(6)	(37)
4 Profit or (Loss) before Interest and Tax	135	490	392	290	415	332	209	358
a Total Finance Cost	(82)	(368)	(253)	(154)	(192)	(147)	(94)	(110)
b Taxation	(23)	(47)	(62)	(48)	(86)	(51)	(33)	(71)
6 Net Income Or (Loss)	30	75	76	87	137	134	83	177
C CASH FLOW STATEMENT								
a Free Cash Flows from Operations (FCFO)	155	587	476	348	417	325	207	410
b Net Cash from Operating Activities before Working Capital	43	260	246	207	252	179	114	300
c Changes in Working Capital	246	(175)	(245)	(175)	(688)	(573)	(361)	(827)
1 Net Cash provided by Operating Activities	290	85	0	32	(436)	(395)	(247)	(527)
2 Net Cash (Used in) or Available From Investing Activities	(80)	32	(53)	2	(75)	(44)	(42)	(3)
3 Net Cash (Used in) or Available From Financing Activities	(211)	(130)	34	(44)	501	425	275	549
4 Net Cash generated or (Used) during the period	(1)	(14)	(19)	(10)	(9)	(13)	(13)	20
D RATIO ANALYSIS								
1 Performance								
a Sales Growth (for the period)	12.0%	8.3%	10.6%	14.3%	19.3%	7.4%	4.3%	25.7%
b Gross Profit Margin	12.9%	12.5%	13.2%	14.0%	13.1%	13.4%	13.3%	13.2%
c Net Profit Margin	1.6%	1.2%	1.5%	2.5%	2.3%	3.3%	3.1%	3.5%
d Cash Conversion Efficiency (FCFO adjusted for Working Capital / Net Profit Margin * Asset Turnover * (Total Assets / Net Profit Margin))	22.0%	6.3%	4.6%	5.0%	-4.5%	-6.1%	-5.8%	-8.2%
e Return on Equity [Net Profit Margin * Asset Turnover * (Total Assets / Net Profit Margin)]	3.1%	2.0%	2.7%	4.6%	5.0%	9.7%	9.1%	10.7%
2 Working Capital Management								
a Gross Working Capital (Average Days)	218	247	239	226	231	248	241	209
b Net Working Capital (Average Days)	181	204	202	187	194	209	205	179
c Current Ratio (Current Assets / Current Liabilities)	4.2	4.2	4.8	4.4	4.1	4.3	4.7	4.9
3 Coverages								
a EBITDA / Finance Cost	2.2	1.9	2.2	2.6	2.7	2.7	2.7	4.0
b FCFO / Finance Cost + CMLTB + Excess STB	1.8	1.6	1.8	2.2	1.9	2.1	2.0	2.7
c Debt Payback (Total Borrowings + Excess STB) / (FCFO - Finance Cost)	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.1	0.3	0.2	0.3	0.5
4 Capital Structure								
a Total Borrowings / (Total Borrowings + Shareholders' Equity)	31.0%	33.7%	35.0%	34.1%	35.0%	50.6%	49.2%	46.2%
b Interest or Markup Payable (Days)	70.8	93.6	82.5	78.8	103.3	116.5	97.5	87.9
c Entity Average Borrowing Rate	17.0%	18.2%	16.8%	15.9%	10.3%	11.0%	10.9%	7.7%

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.

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+	
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-	
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	
CC	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.
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):

- 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

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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

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- 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 | 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)
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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)
- (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)

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- (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)

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