The Pakistan Credit Rating Agency Limited

Rating Report

Nimir Chemicals Pakistan Limited

Report Contents

Rating History

Dissemination Date	Long Term Rating	Short Term Rating	Outlook	Action	Rating Watch
13-Sep-2024	A-	A2	Stable	Maintain	-
14-Sep-2023	A-	A2	Stable	Maintain	-
20-Sep-2022	A-	A2	Stable	Initial	-

Rating Rationale and Key Rating Drivers

Nimir Chemicals Pakistan Limited ('NCPL' or 'the Company') is primarily engaged in the manufacturing & marketing of Phthalic Anhydride (PA), Di-Octyl Phthalate (DOP), followed by Alkyd Resins (AR), and Maleic Anhydride (MA) to feed the demand of downstream sectors. Phthalic Anhydride is a basic component for further downstream industries like DOP, UPR, and Alkyd Resins, thus creating value addition from plasticizers to the manufacturing of artificial leather, plastic moldings, cable compound, flexible PVC, hoses, footwear, paint, textiles, and various other products. The ratings reflect NCPL's long-established history and prominent position in the domestic petrochemicals industry (specifically in PA and DOP). Currently, the country is grappling with many macroeconomic challenges such as soaring inflation, elevated interest rates, high energy costs, etc. These factors eroded consumer purchasing power and increased operational costs, reducing demand and profitability. Additionally, increased local competition from a new market entrant and rising imports in the PA segment impacted the company's market share, especially in PA. However, the company still maintains a dominant position in PA. During 1HCY24, the company could sustain its topline due to price inflation, but margins posted dilution at all levels. To mitigate these challenges, the company is implementing a two-pronged strategic expansion which includes refining the product portfolio by prioritizing the production volumes and sales from PA to DOP and concurrently deploying a diversification strategy into high-margin specialized chemicals like polyurethane (PU) and pigments. This will increase the market reach, revenue streams, and profitability margins. The company has no major CAPEX requirement for the expansion and will rely on internal cash flows only. The financial risk profile of the company is demonstrated by adequate working capital management, strong coverages, and low-leveraged capital structure. The ratings take comfort from the Nisar Family's strong position in the market and now the company's sponsors recognize the need for a well-structured, formally documented family constitution, which is in its final stages of development.

The ratings are dependent on the firm's ability to maintain its market position in the face of challenging industry dynamics along with positive topline growth. With the growth in the firm's volume; prudent financial performance as depicted in projections shall remain imperative. Successful strategic expansions and a clearly outlined family constitution will be crucial for businesses' long-term sustainability.

Disclosure

Name of Rated Entity	Nimir Chemicals Pakistan Limited
Type of Relationship	Solicited
Purpose of the Rating	Entity Rating
Applicable Criteria	Methodology | Rating Modifiers(Apr-24),Methodology | Corporate Rating(Jul-24),Methodology | Correlation Between Long-term & Short-term Rating Scales(Jul-24)
Related Research	Sector Study | Chemicals(Jul-24)
Rating Analysts	Sohail Ahmed Qureshi | sohail.ahmed@pacra.com | +92-42-35869504

Profile

Legal Structure Nimir Chemical Pakistan ('NCPL' or 'the Company') is a public limited company incorporated on November 30th, 1989 by Ravi Group as 'Ravi Chemicals Limited'.

Background The company's inception dates back to 1989 when it was originally established under the name Ravi Chemicals Limited. IN 1994, a significant development occurred when Hoechst AG, Germany, entered into a joint venture with Ravi Chemicals Pakistan, leading to a rebranding of the company as Hoechst Ravi Chemicals Limited. The year 1997 marked another transformation as part of the company's ongoing regional growth strategy. Hoechst AG, Germany, transferred its shareholding to one of its group companies, renaming the entity as Celanese Pakistan Limited. In 1999, Celanese Pakistan Limited underwent a strategic restructuring , divesting its chemical operations and transferred controlling shares to Knightsbridge Chemicals Limited (KCL). This phase also witnessed a remaining of the company as "Nimir Chemicals Pakistan Limited". Subsequently, in 2011, Knightsbridge Chemicals Limited divested its entire shareholding to the current management, resulting in the present state of the company.

Operations NCPL is a leading petrochemicals company in Pakistan. the core business of the company is manufacturing and marketing of Phthalic Anhydride (PA), Di Octyl Phthalate (DOP), Maleic Anhydride (MA), and Alkyd Resins (AR).

Ownership

Ownership Structure The ownership of the company resides with two brothers, Mr. Anjum Nisar (~57.50%) and Mr. Tariq Nisar (~42.50%).

Stability The current ownership structure appears to be secure, with no imminent anticipation of significant changes in shareholding. The sponsoring family maintains full control, holding approximately 100% stake. Strengthening the stability further could be achieved through the establishment of a clearly defined shareholding distribution among family members, with a clear line of succession.

Business Acumen The Nisar Family (Sponsors of the Company) is considered to have strong business acumen. The family has been operating in Pakistan for a number of decades by expanding its presence into different ventures, including NCPL.

Financial Strength The Nisar Family, being the prominent player in Pakistan, maintain strong financial profile with substantial access to diversified markets. This indicates Sponsors' ability to provide support, if need arises.

Governance

Board Structure The board comprises four members, including Mr. Anjum Nisar - Chairman, Mr. Tariq Nisar - CEO, and two executive directors - Mr. Saqib Anjum and Mr. Mohsin Tariq. No independent directors on the board exist. All the directors have been associated with the board for several years.

Members' Profile Members involved in the business are experienced individuals. They carry related industry experience. Mr. Tariq Nisar, the CEO of the company, is the key person behind the success of NCPL leading with his visionary leadership.

Board Effectiveness There is as such no board committee. All the members also hold director positions in group companies which inhibit the room for impartial oversight. Further, BoD meetings are conducted regularly, attendance seems adequate, and minutes are recorded properly, thus boding well for corporate governance.

Financial Transparency M/s. BDO Ebrahim & Co. is the external auditor of the company for CY23. The auditors expressed an unqualified audit opinion on the financial statements for the year ended December 31st, 2023.

Management

Organizational Structure A well-defined organizational structure exists in the company. The functions reporting to CEO are as follows: 1) Finance, 2) Human Resource & Administration, 3) Marketing, and 4) Technical & Operations.

Management Team Mr. Tariq Nisar, the CEO, is associated with the company since its inception. He has the honor of winning "Businessman of the Year Gold Medal" for the year 2005, 2006 and 2011. He is actively and substantially contributing towards the stability of Pakistan in the areas of textile spinning, chemicals, and petrochemical business chemical segments. In NCPL, he is supported by a team of skilled individuals equipped with relevant industry exposure. The other key member in the company is Mr. Saqib Raza (CFO), who is associated with NCPL since 2011.

Effectiveness NCPL's business is thriving, with a growing footprint and a management team that is successfully driving the company toward its strategic goals.

MIS The company is presently using SAP Business One ERP system with version 9.2 PL 08.

Control Environment To ensure operational efficiency and appraisal of internal controls, the Company has formed management committee which implements and monitors the policies and procedures of the Company. It has an effective mechanism for identification, assessment and reporting of all types of risk arising out of the business operations.

Business Risk

Industry Dynamics Pakistan is a net importer of oil, gas, coal, and allied products, the sector faces considerable production cost pressures amidst high international energy prices and PKR devaluation. During CY23, soaring inflation, rising interest rates (~29.7% and ~665bps YoY increase, respectively), and currency fluctuations posed challenges to the industry. These challenges lead to a decrease in demand. Going forward, the demand side from the construction, coating/paint, and PVC products are expected to remain subdued due to the challenging economic situation hence will impact the volumes of Plasticizers (DOP), PA, and AR in near future. The National Tariff Commission of Pakistan also imposed definitive anti-dumping duties on PA imports to support the local players.

Relative Position NCPL is the major producer of PA in the country and captures ~56.85% share. However, there is a new market entrant in PA manufacturing with an installed capacity of 35,000 MT/p.a. The current market share of NCPL in DOP market is ~23.42%. There are also many other manufacturers of DOP, but most of them produce for their captive use and normally small volume is being sold by them. Further, in Alkyd Resins and MA segments, NCPL owns ~14% and ~5.87% shares, respectively.

Revenues Primarily, the Company derives its revenue from the manufacturing and sale of Di Octyl Phthalate (~48.6%) and Phthalic Anhydride (~33.13%), followed by Alkyd Resins (~12.2%) and Maleic Anhydride (~1%). During CY23, the company's topline cloaked at PKR ~12,389mln (CY22: PKR ~9,866mln, CY21: PKR ~8,988mln, CY20: PKR ~6,392mln) registering CAGR of ~25.6% (CY22: ~9.6%). In 1HCY24, the company's topline stood at PKR ~6,170mln registering a meager decline of ~0.4% year-on-year due to price inflation.

Margins During CY23, the company's gross margin bounced back to a solid ~21.4% (CY22: ~12.2%). Resultantly, the net profit margin of the company significantly increased to ~7.5% in CY23 from ~0.3% in CY22 (CY21: ~16.6%) due to a decrease in financial charges. Gross, operating, and net profit margins declined in 1HCY24 and stood at ~15.9%, ~10.3%, and ~5.9%, respectively.

Sustainability Going forward, market conditions are expected to remain same with growth dependent on improvements in forward-linked industries like textile, paint, etc. In the domestic market, activity in the construction industry will remain adequate.

Financial Risk

Working Capital During CY23, the gross working capital days further stretched to ~160 (CY22: ~142 days, CY21: ~99 days). Resultantly, net working capital cycle also increased to ~126 days (CY22: ~74 days, CY21: ~28 days). As of the end of Jun-24, the gross working capital cycle of the Company stood at ~178 days, however net working capital cycle stood at ~135 days.

Coverages During CY23, the FCFO significantly increased to PKR ~1,404mln against PKR ~203mln in CY22 (CY21: PKR ~1,395mln) on account of improved PBIT. Interest coverage ratio of the company also improved to 9.3x from 1.1x in CY22 (CY21: 44x). Whereas, in 1HCY24, the interest coverage and core-debt coverage ratios significantly improved and stood at 10.7x and 10.6x, respectively.

Capitalization The leveraging position of NCPL improved to ~38.9% in CY23 against ~52.3% in CY22 (CY21: ~12.7%). In 1HCY24, the leveraging ratio reduced significantly and was recorded at ~13.4% with decreased STBs during the period under review. Majority portion of the company's debt is comprised of short-term borrowings from various commercial banks to meet working capital requirements.

The Pakistan Credit Rating Agency Limited

Financial Summary
PKR mln

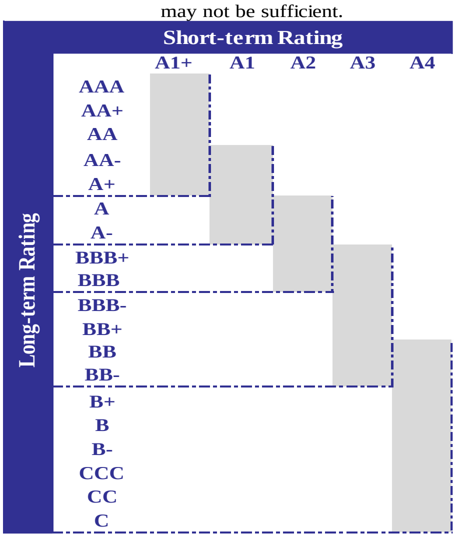
Nimir Chemicals Pakistan Limited	Jun-24	Dec-23	Dec-22	Dec-21
Chemicals	6M	12M	12M	12M
A BALANCE SHEET				
1 Non-Current Assets	2,423	2,434	2,298	2,221
2 Investments	273	611	2	2
3 Related Party Exposure	4	4	1	3
4 Current Assets	7,257	7,728	5,757	4,282
a Inventories	*4,382*	*4,229*	*3,448*	*1,678*
b Trade Receivables	*1,706*	*1,736*	*1,469*	*1,099*
5 Total Assets	9,957	10,777	8,058	6,508
6 Current Liabilities	5,808	4,589	1,809	2,534
a Trade Payables	*2,100*	*805*	*1,530*	*2,184*
7 Borrowings	458	2,110	2,850	213
8 Related Party Exposure	-	-	235	235
9 Non-Current Liabilities	719	708	450	458
10 Net Assets	2,972	3,371	2,714	3,069
11 Shareholders' Equity	2,972	3,371	2,714	3,069
B INCOME STATEMENT				
1 Sales	6,170	12,389	9,866	8,998
a Cost of Good Sold	*(5,187)*	*(9,741)*	*(8,664)*	*(7,113)*
2 Gross Profit	982	2,648	1,202	1,885
a Operating Expenses	(345)	(486)	(342)	(394)
3 Operating Profit	637	2,162	860	1,490
a Non Operating Income or (Expense)	*40*	*(304)*	*(490)*	*(186)*
4 Profit or (Loss) before Interest and Tax	677	1,858	370	1,304
a Total Finance Cost	*(55)*	*(184)*	*(200)*	*(39)*
b Taxation	*(255)*	*(745)*	*(138)*	*(378)*
6 Net Income Or (Loss)	366	928	32	888
C CASH FLOW STATEMENT				
a Free Cash Flows from Operations (FCFO)	*549*	*1,404*	*203*	*1,395*
b Net Cash from Operating Activities before Working Capital Changes	*466*	*1,204*	*51*	*1,379*
c Changes in Working Capital	*(62)*	*1,787*	*(3,050)*	*(303)*
1 Net Cash provided by Operating Activities	404	2,991	(2,999)	1,075
2 Net Cash (Used in) or Available From Investing Activities	(17)	(67)	(303)	(89)
3 Net Cash (Used in) or Available From Financing Activities	(845)	(1,372)	2,307	(515)
4 Net Cash generated or (Used) during the period	(457)	1,553	(995)	471
D RATIO ANALYSIS				
1 Performance				
a Sales Growth (for the period)	-0.4%	25.6%	9.6%	40.8%
b Gross Profit Margin	15.9%	21.4%	12.2%	20.9%
c Net Profit Margin	5.9%	7.5%	0.3%	9.9%
d Cash Conversion Efficiency (FCFO adjusted for Working Capital/Sales)	7.9%	25.8%	-28.9%	12.1%
*e Return on Equity [Net Profit Margin * Asset Turnover * (Total Assets/Sh*	23.1%	30.5%	1.1%	30.6%
2 Working Capital Management				
a Gross Working Capital (Average Days)	178	160	142	99
b Net Working Capital (Average Days)	135	126	74	28
c Current Ratio (Current Assets / Current Liabilities)	1.2	1.7	3.2	1.7
3 Coverages				
a EBITDA / Finance Cost	15.5	14.5	3.3	51.8
b FCFO / Finance Cost+CMLTB+Excess STB	10.6	8.6	1.0	11.2
c Debt Payback (Total Borrowings+Excess STB) / (FCFO-Finance Cost)	0.0	0.0	20.8	0.2
4 Capital Structure				
a Total Borrowings / (Total Borrowings+Shareholders' Equity)	13.4%	38.5%	53.2%	12.7%
b Interest or Markup Payable (Days)	15.7	57.3	87.8	98.7
c Entity Average Borrowing Rate	11.0%	8.3%	13.1%	7.4%

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