The Pakistan Credit Rating Agency Limited

Rating Report

Telenor Microfinance Bank Limited

Report Contents

Rating History

Dissemination Date	Long Term Rating	Short Term Rating	Outlook	Action	Rating Watch
30-Apr-2019	A+	A1	Stable	Maintain	YES
07-Nov-2018	A+	A1	Stable	Maintain	YES
27-Apr-2018	A+	A1	Stable	Maintain	-
23-Nov-2017	A+	A1	Stable	Maintain	-
28-Apr-2017	A+	A1	Stable	Maintain	-

Rating Rationale and Key Rating Drivers

The ratings take comfort from association of Telenor MFB ("the bank") with a strong sponsors – Telenor Group (~66%) and the recently inducted Chinese Fintech equity partner - Ant Financial, through its investment arm, AliPay (Hong Kong) Holding Limited (~34%). The group's shareholding is expected to go up to ~45% by 2020 following injection of the next equity tranche. The bank's business profile emanates from its growing customer base and sustained relative position. Securing a ~17% share in the MFB's gross loan portfolio (GLP) and ~18% in its gross deposits, the bank continues to hold a prominent position in the MFBs market. With the advent of a new investor on board, the bank's strategic direction has shifted towards expanding Pakistan's digital ecosystem through tapping the Mobile-Wallet market potential. Significant developments in this regards are underway. Ambition of a sustainable consumer platform rests upon increasing customer acquisition and retention. The substantial increase in expenditures (monitored on periodic frequency) can be mapped onto the growth initiative of the bank. Rising marketing expenses as part of Bank's strategy to increase digital footprint has resulted in increased administrative costs and affected the profitability ratios for the period under review. Resultantly, the bank recorded a loss of PKR 2,516mln during CY18 as compared to net profit of PKR 417mln last year. With the designed business model and current trends, the bank projects profitability in 2021. Additionally, the bank's asset health also deteriorated during the period under review with infection ratio swelling to ~4% as at End-Dec'18 (~1.7% End-Dec'17). The bank expects it to come down over the short horizon with more stringent controls in place. Strengthened equity base with the induction of Ant Financial, however, provides support to the ratings.

The ratings are dependent upon successful materialization of the devised business plan and translation of the same into positive indicators. Any deviation from the desired targets impacting the performance indicators would be considered negative. Meanwhile, revival of asset health is imperative.

Disclosure	
Name of Rated Entity	Telenor Microfinance Bank Limited
Type of Relationship	Solicited
Purpose of the Rating	Entity Rating
Applicable Criteria	Methodology | Criteria | Rating Modifier(Jun-18),Methodology | Correlation Between Long-Term And Short-Term Rating Scale(Jun-18),Methodology | MFI (Jun-18)
Related Research	Sector Study | Microfinance Bank(Apr-19)
Rating Analysts	Muhammad Nadeem Sheikh | nadeem.sheikh@pacra.com | +92-42-35869504

Profile

Structure Telenor Microfinance Bank Limited (hereinafter referred to as "the bank") was incorporated with the SECP on 1st August 2005, under section 32 of the Companies Ordinance, 1984 (now Companies Act, 2017). The Head office of the bank is located in Central Commercial Area, Karachi.

Background The bank was a wholly owned subsidiary of Telenor Pakistan B.V (Telenor Group). In Nov'18, Ant Financial - an affiliate fintech company of the Chinese Alibaba group, acquired ~34% shares in the bank through its investment arm - Alipay (Hong Kong) Holding Limited.

Operations The bank operates through a nationwide network of 104 branches in the low-income areas within Pakistan offering a diversified range of lending and insurance products. The bank also offers branchless banking services to its clients through its Branchless Banking Brand "EasyPaisa".

Ownership

Ownership Structure After the aforementioned acquisition of shares by Ant-Financial, the shareholding of Telenor Pakistan B.V diluted to ~66% in the bank, while Ant Financial holds ~34% stake as of today.

Stability Ownership structure witnessed a change during 2HCY18 following acquisition of shares by Ant-Financial. Shareholding of Ant Financial is expected to go up to ~45% by 2020 following injection of the next equity tranche.

Business Acumen Telenor ASA, the parent company of the Telenor Group is a subsidiary of the Government of Norway. It is one of the world's major mobile operators headquartered in Oslo, Norway, with operations spread across 13 countries. Inclusion of Ant-Financial is considered positive for the bank, as the group is one of the leading fintech conglomerates across the globe. The bank is well poised to avail benefit from the strategic vision and direction of Ant Financial.

Financial Strength Financial muscle of the sponsors is considered robust.

Governance

Board Structure The overall control vests in seven member board of directors (BOD). Currently, five directors including the Chairman - Mr. Petter Borre Furberg, are representative of the Telenor Group while remaining two directors are independent. Due to emergence of a new equity partner, the Board structure is undergoing revision. Subject to external approvals, the Board composition is expected to be revised with equal representation from Telenor Group and Ant Financial.

Members' Profile The board members carry extensive experience in the telecom industry and financial services. Inclusion of Ant Financial high profile individuals would add strength to the overall board members' profile.

Board Effectiveness Attendance of Board members recorded in the meetings during the period under review was good.

Financial Transparency KPMG Taseer Hadi & Co. Chartered Accountants are the External Auditors of the bank. The Auditor has expressed an unqualified opinion on the financial statements for the year ended Dec'18.

Management

Organizational Structure The bank's operations are grouped under eleven departments with each Department Head reporting directly to the CEO and the head of internal audit reporting to the Audit Committee.

Management Team After the resignation of Mr. Shahid Mustafa from the position of CEO in Feb'19, Mr, Muhammad Aslam Hayat has taken up the role of the CEO (Acting) of the bank. He carries over 30 years of professional experience in banking and finance and has been associated with the Telenor Group for long. He holds the position of Chief Compliance Officer of the bank as well.

Effectiveness The bank has designated various Management Committees to manage and oversee operational efficacy. An Executive Committee is in place which comprises the CFO, CHRO (Chief Human Resource Officer), CRO (Chief Risk Officer) and the COO that report directly to the CEO. Asset liability committee is also in place.

MIS Detailed MIS reports are generated to support the senior management in timely and effective decision making. With the paramount focus diverted on the BB front, special MIS reports to monitor the KPIs related to BB progress are generated and presented to the Board on a monthly and quarterly frequency.

Risk Management Framework Telenor Microfinance Bank has an established Risk Division Unit in place to oversee associated risks. The bank has developed and deployed a credit policy manual, which comprises guidelines for risk management framework.

Technology Infrastructure In light of the forecasted increase in traffic on Easypaisa platforms, the bank's technological infrastructure is considered robust.

Business Risk

Industry Dynamics Pakistan Microfinance Industry comprises 45 microfinance providers including 11 Microfinance Banks (MFBs), 18 Microfinance Institutions (MFIs), 7 Rural Support Program (RSPs) and 9 others projects, MFBs dominate the Industry with a share in lending portfolio of ~69%. Growth in lending book remained relatively slow in CY18 coupled with increased infection ratio owing to delinquencies in crop linked loans and increasing interest rates in 2HCY18 which lowered the repayment capacity of the borrowers.

Relative Position As of End-Dec'18, Telenor Microfinance Bank held ~17% of the total gross loan portfolio of the MFBs industry, and ~22% share in terms of active borrowers. In terms of deposits, the banks's share stood at ~18% (End-Dec'17:~20%).

Revenue During CY18, the bank earned interest/markup of PKR~8,721mln (CY17: PKR 6,064mln), a growth of ~44% YoY. Overall operating income depicted growth but on the contrary, earnings from branchless banking decreased to PKR~7,426mln in CY18 (CY17: PKR~7,775mln).

Profitability As defined in the bank's strategical plan, major expenditure is being incurred in the BB domain for marketing activities in order to attract and retain digital wallet customers. Total spending in the BB front stood at PKR~9,176mln in CY18 (CY17: PKR~7,432mln). Resultantly, loss before tax from BB operations was recorded at PKR~1.9bln in CY18. On the core banking front, performance indicators also deteriorated in CY18 on the backdrop of delinquency in asset quality. Combined bottomline loss from both core and BB operations was recorded at PKR~2,516mln during CY18 (CY17: PKR~417mln).

Sustainability Strong competitive position persists for the bank; strategic alliance with Ant-Financial is expected to bring synergies through collaboration of a leading global fintech with the bank.

Financial Risk

Credit Risk Asset infection ratio swelled to ~4% at End-Dec'18 (End-Dec'17:~1%). The increase in provision originated from negligence and collusion at a few branches in 2HCY18 identified based on investigations carried out. Furthermore, management has cautiously recorded general provision in branches with high delinquency ratio and is of the view that the provisions recorded are adequate.

Market Risk The bank's investment portfolio made up ~14% of its total assets at End-Dec'18 (End-Dec'17:~14%). Investments solely comprised Market Treasury Bills, which limits market risk and is likely to provide hedge against interest rate volatility along with liquidity support to the bank.

Funding The Bank's external funding solely constitutes deposits clocking in at PKR~42,275mln at End-Dec'18 (End-Dec'17: PKR~36,665mln). Deposits during the period ending Dec-18 grew by ~15% (CY17: 32%). Deposits pertaining to BB clocked increased to PKR~7,426mln at End-Dec'18 (End-Dec'17: PKR~4,729) with YOY growth of 57%, excluding the impact of deposits pertaining to BISP's payment. Funding mix is shifting from core to branchless deposits which are a low cost and low ticket size product.

Liquidity Liquidity profile improved during the period under review as the bank's liquid assets-to-deposits and borrowings ratio increased to ~53% at End-Dec'18 (End-Dec'17: ~49%).

Capital Adequacy Equity injection by Ant Financial worth a capital of PKR~9,716mln gave a boom to the bank's Capital Adequacy in 2HCY18. As at End-Dec'18, the bank's CAR clocked in at ~35% (End-Dec'17:~20%).

PKR mln

BALANCE SHEET	31-Dec-18	31-Dec-17	31-Dec-16
Earning Assets			
Advances	32,786	24,746	15,851
Investments (Government Securities)	9,008	6,767	11,568
Deposits with Banks	3,813	4,139	2,551
Lending to Financial Institutions	5,473	3,368	323
	51,080	**39,020**	**30,293**
Non Earning Assets			
Non-Earning Cash	4,262	3,514	3,125
Net Non-Performing Finances	159	16	(15)
Fixed Assets & Others	6,965	4,578	2,901
	11,386	**8,108**	**6,011**
TOTAL ASSETS	**62,466**	**47,128**	**36,304**
Interest Bearning Liabilities			
Deposits	**42,275**	**36,665**	**27,830**
Branch Banking	34,156	27,225	23,851
Branchless Banking	8,119	9,440	3,979
Borrowings	-	-	-
	42,275	36,665	27,830
Non Interest Bearing Liabilities	6,523	5,457	3,888
TOTAL LIABILITIES	**48,798**	**42,122**	**31,718**
EQUITY (including revaluation surplus)	13,613	4,981	4,576
Deferred Grants	56	25	10
Total Liabilities & Equity	**62,466**	**47,128**	**36,304**

INCOME STATEMENT	31-Dec-18	31-Dec-17	31-Dec-16
Interest / Mark up Earned	8,721	6,064	4,487
Interest / Mark up Expensed	(2,595)	(1,767)	(1,113)
Net Interest / Markup revenue	**6,126**	**4,297**	**3,373**
Direct Branchless Banking pre-tax profits	(1,907)	(421)	63
Other Operating Income	1,027	712	560
Total Revenue	**5,246**	**4,588**	**3,997**
Other Income	-	-	-
Non-Interest / Non-Mark up Expensed	(5,973)	(3,629)	(2,486)
Pre-provision operating profit	(727)	959	1,511
Provisions	(1,387)	(271)	(141)
Pre-tax profit	(2,114)	687	1,370
Taxes	(402)	(271)	(474)
Net Income	**(2,516)**	**417**	**896**

Ratio Analysis	31-Dec-18	31-Dec-17	31-Dec-16
Performance			
ROE	-27%	9%	22%
Cost-to-Total Net Revenue	114%	79%	62%
Provision Expense / Pre Provision Profit	-191%	28%	9%
Capital Adequacy			
Equity/Total Assets	22%	11%	13%
Capital Adequacy Ratio as per SBP	35%	20%	31%
Loan Loss Coverage			
Non-Performing Advances /Gross Advances	4%	1%	1%
Loan Loss Provisions / Non-Performing Advances	89%	94%	116%
Funding & Liquidity			
Liquid Assets / Deposits and Borrowings	53%	49%	63%
Advances / Deposits	78%	68%	57%
CASA deposits / Total Customer Deposits	49%	51%	53%
Intermediation Efficiency			
Asset Yield	19%	17%	19%
Cost of Funds	7%	5%	5%
Spread	13%	12%	14%
Outreach			
Branches	104	85	74

Rating Scale

Credit Rating Scale & Definitions

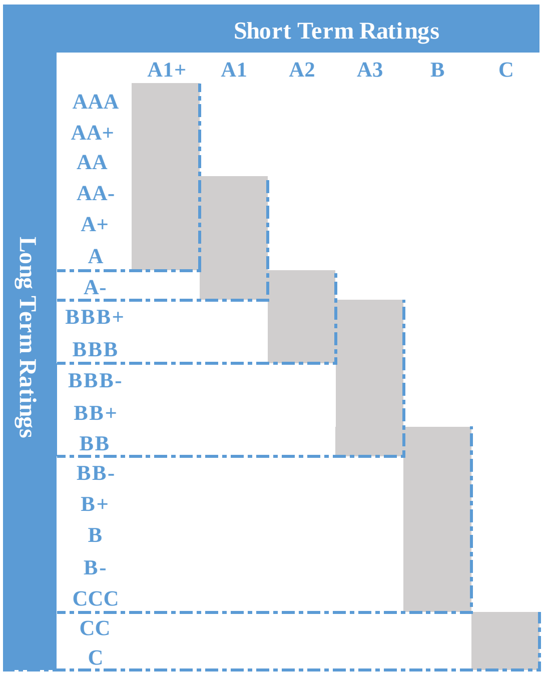
Credit rating reflects forward-looking opinion on credit worthiness of underlying entity or instrument; more specifically it covers relative ability to honor financial obligations. The primary factor being captured on the rating scale is relative likelihood of default.

Long Term Ratings

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 Ratings

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.
B	The capacity for timely repayment is more susceptible to adverse changes in business, economic, or financial conditions.
C	An inadequate capacity to ensure timely repayment.



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, a) some material identifiable event and/or b) deviation from expected trend. 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 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) cessation of underlying entity, c) the debt instrument is redeemed, d) the rating remains suspended for six months, e) the entity/issuer defaults., or/and f) 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.

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.
(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 | 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)

Proprietary Information