



The Pakistan Credit Rating Agency Limited

Rating Report

Sui Southern Gas Company Limited

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Rating History

Dissemination Date	Long Term Rating	Short Term Rating	Outlook	Action	Rating Watch
31-Jan-2023	A+	A1	Stable	Upgrade	Yes
15-Dec-2022	A	A2	Stable	Maintain	Yes
22-Dec-2021	A	A2	Negative	Downgrade	Yes
24-Dec-2020	A+	A1	Negative	Maintain	Yes
28-Dec-2019	A+	A1	Negative	Maintain	Yes
28-Jun-2019	A+	A1	Negative	Maintain	Yes
31-Dec-2018	A+	A1	Negative	Maintain	Yes
30-Jun-2018	A+	A1	Negative	Maintain	Yes
23-Jun-2017	A+	A1	Negative	Maintain	-

Rating Rationale and Key Rating Drivers

SSGC business profile is considered adequate owing to its exclusive license to operate in areas of the franchise (provinces of Sindh and Balochistan) and guaranteed return on its net operating assets. Subsequent to the unfolding of the strategy by the incumbent leadership, company posted a positive bottom line amounting to PKR 1,955mln in FY21 as a result of efficiently re-strategizing its operations to eliminate the inefficiencies pertaining to UFG and reduced it to 15.31% down from 17.25% ultimately supporting the bottom line. In addition, company is continuously working to diversify its business streams in order to manage/ earn Non-Operating Income and ultimately improve the Company's financial position. Cognizant of the challenges being faced by the company. The multi-pronged strategy is being adopted. This will enable new gas addition to the system, primarily from bio material and secondarily from the non-functional wells. To accomplish this, the company already incorporated a fully owned subsidiary; SSGC Alternate Energy (Pvt.) Ltd. Under the proposition, revenue will be generated through toll charges by using current infrastructure. However, timely settlement of pending receivables is also important as the company's liquidity profile is significantly stretched. The management has been working vigorously to resolve the liquidity issues. Furthermore, SSGC has not issued its financial statements for FY22; quarterly financials are also pending. The management is obligated to issue its quarterly statements and yearly financial statements in due time, however; the company sought an extension on issuing of accounts owing to the finalization of a petition filed with OGRA.

The company's financial risk profile was deteriorated owing to consistent losses that have been made for the last few years. However, company's resilience proved by reported profit during FY21 reflects in Assigned Ratings. Also, the delay in the publishing of financial statements is a consideration for rating watch. Going forward, consistency in profits and follow up on the initiatives will be crucial for the Ratings.

Disclosure

Name of Rated Entity	Sui Southern Gas Company Limited
Type of Relationship	Solicited
Purpose of the Rating	Entity Rating
Applicable Criteria	Methodology Corporate Rating(Jun-22),Methodology Correlation Between Long-term & Short-term Rating Scales(Jun-22),Methodology Rating Modifiers(Jun-22)
Related Research	Sector Study Distribution Gas(Jun-22)
Rating Analysts	Anam Waqas Ghayour anam.waqas@pacra.com +92-42-35869504

Profile

Legal Structure Sui Southern Gas Company Limited (SSGC) was formed in 1989 as a result of merger of three pioneering companies, namely Sui Gas Transmission Company Limited, Karachi Gas Company Limited, and Indus Gas Company Limited. SSGC is listed on Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX).

Background SSGC is primarily engaged in the business of purchase, transmission, and distribution of natural gas in its franchise area, comprising the Sindh and Balochistan provinces, where it enjoys a monopoly position.

Operations The Company operates with a transmission and distribution network of 48,449km. SSGC serves ~3mln. customers, across Sindh and Balochistan. Owns and operates gas meter manufacturing plant; company has successfully produced 453,014meters during FY21.

Ownership

Ownership Structure The company is majority (~53%) owned by Government of Pakistan (GoP) excluding 12% through public sector companies and corporations.

Stability The ownership structure is likely to remain the same in foreseeable future.

Business Acumen The business acumen is considered adequate.

Financial Strength Given the strategic importance of the company as an extended arm of the government for its socioeconomic policy implementation, support from the GoP is expected to be forthcoming in times of crisis.

Governance

Board Structure The overall control of the company vests with an eleven-member board. The board comprises Chairperson and ten non-executive directors including six independent members. Board members possess a good mix of skill sets; the risk of political intervention remains.

Members' Profile Dr. Shamshad Akhter (nominee of Govt. of Pakistan) has joined the company as Chairman of the board since Apr-19; wherein Lt. General Javed Zia was previous Chairperson and held the position during FY18. She has been associated with the State Bank of Pakistan; designated as Governor.

Board Effectiveness The board has constituted six committees, namely (i) Human Resource and Remuneration, (ii) Audit, (iii) Finance and Procurement, (iv) Unaccounted for Gas (UFG) Committee (v) Risk Management, Litigation & HSEQA (vi) Board Corporate Governance and Ethics Committee and (vi) Nomination Committee. Audit Committee reports boarding in line with code of corporate governance.

Financial Transparency M/s BDO Ebrahim & Co. are the external auditors of the company. The auditor gave a qualified opinion on the company's financial statements for the year ended June 30, 2021. Highlighting that the majority of receivables from absorption of staggering losses till FY21, aggressive favorable treatment of litigations & other matters mentioned in Contingencies and Commitments, discontinuation of LPS expenses payable to Govt. controlled E&P companies.

Management

Organizational Structure Tall organization structure; adequately long associated and experienced management team. Operational infrastructure requires regular capital expenditure.

Management Team Mr. Muhammad Imran Maniar has been serving as MD since Feb-2021. He is an accomplished professional with more than 30 years of strong track record in building, leading and advising private equity and corporations in mergers and acquisitions, restructurings, turnarounds, capital market transactions, logistics, upstream and midstream operations, oil field and engineering services.

Effectiveness The board has constituted four committees, namely (i) Human Resource and Remuneration, (ii) Audit, (iii) Finance and Procurement, and (iv) Unaccounted for Gas (UFG) Committee. Each committee is headed by a board member and consists of other non-executive board members.

MIS Deploys Oracle-based ERP; comprehensive MIS reporting mechanism.

Control Environment Various MIS reports are generated for the senior management on a daily basis. These include reports pertaining to gas supply & demand, pending connections, field activities, metering, customer billing, etc. However, UFG reports are submitted to the management and board on a quarterly basis.

Business Risk

Industry Dynamics Currently, there are two gas distribution companies – SNGPL and SSGC – operating in Pakistan. Pakistan has an extensive gas network of over ~13,513km transmission, ~155,679km distribution and ~41,231km services gas pipelines to cater for the requirement of more than ~10.7mln connections across the country as of end-Jun22. Production of natural gas from indigenous resources is decreasing. Thus, to bridge the supply demand gap, Pakistan's reliance on imported ReGasified Liquefied Natural Gas (RLNG) has been increased in recent years. Since this sector is a supply deficit, the companies are not exposed to demand risk. The tariff of the companies is determined by OGRA on annual basis. While determining tariff, OGRA allows i) guaranteed return, and ii) operational cost. Gas utilities operate in a highly regulated environment.

Relative Position SSGC is currently catering to the gas requirements of about 305,097 million cubic feet (MMCF) gas was sold in FY22 to industrial, commercial and domestic consumers in designated regions through a distribution network of over 48,449 Km.

Revenues During FY21, the turnover witnessed an increase and was recorded at PKR 296,129m as compared to 290,240m in the corresponding period. Profitability of the company is derived from the Guaranteed Return Formula prescribed by OGRA. Under this formula, SSGC is allowed 17.43% return on its average net operating fixed assets before financial charges and taxes. However, OGRA makes disallowances/ adjustments while determining the revenue requirements based on efficiency related benchmarks viz a viz Un-accounted for Gas (UFG), Human Resource Benchmark Cost, Provision for Doubtful Debts and some other expenses/ charges. These disallowances/ adjustments affect the bottom-line of the Company. Company's profitability had been significantly impacted over the period on account of substantially high UFG disallowances and other matters pertaining to operating / non-operating income. However, during the current period under review (FY21) the company has successfully posted a positive bottom line with net profit of PKR 1,955m as compared to the loss of PKR 21,393m in the previous year.

Margins During FY21, company exhibited the sales growth of 2% as compared to -2.3% in corresponding period. Gross Profit margin at end Jun21 is -1.9% down from -5.9% in last year on back of efficient cost management. Company successfully supplemented the bottom line through non-core income consequently, Net Profit margin rose to 0.7% from -7.4% in FY20. despite the increase in key policy rate, finance cost decreased on back of efficient management as company paid PKR 4,600m in debt servicing as compared to PKR 7,100m in the corresponding period.

Sustainability Going forward, the finalization of financial statements for the year ending June 2022 and quarterly financial statements is of vital importance. Furthermore, asset-liability mismatch, UFG losses and weakened liquidity position are the factors that need urgent attention.

Financial Risk

Working Capital In recent years circular debt issue keeps on impacting the liquidity position of the company. Hence, the company has delayed its payments which impacted the payable days. However, with the unfolding of new strategies implemented by the leadership, company's receivables days shrink to 427 days (FY20: 468days) and payable days stretched to 641 days (FY20: 590days) in FY21. Short term borrowings witnessed an increase to stand at PKR 23,751m (FY20: PKR 14,980m) on account of stretched working capital cycle of the company. Asset liability mismatch exists and short term trade leverage stood at -56.3% (FY20: -24.3%).

Coverages During last few years, increase in the company's losses kept it cash deficit. Resultantly, coverages of the company remained negative. The company is currently relying on short term borrowings to meet the obligations which has created asset liability mismatch. During FY21, the company's free cash flows from operations turned positive. Hence, interest and debt coverage stood at 4.4x and 0.1x respectively. Furthermore, despite the increase in key policy rate, finance cost decreased on back of efficient management as company paid PKR 4,600m in debt servicing as compared to PKR 7,100m in the corresponding period. Going forward, consistent profitability remains vital for the company's going concern status.

Capitalization Since last few years, the company has high leveraged capital structure. Though, company is continuously shredding its borrowing book on back of reinvigorating policies to efficiently managed the new projects as well as the management of working capital. Thus, leveraging of the company is at 169.8% end-Jun 21 down from 180.7% in the corresponding period. The equity base (FY21: PKR -22,172m, FY20: PKR -23,691m) of the company has witnessed drag on unappropriated profits due to the consistent losses in recent years. Going forward, the timely repayment of debt remains important for the company.



The Pakistan Credit Rating Agency Limited

Financial Summary

PKR mln

Sui Souther Gas Company Limited Power	Jun-21 12M	Jun-20 12M	Jun-19 12M	Jun-18 12M
A BALANCE SHEET				
1 Non-Current Assets	139,033	134,769	129,945	120,770
2 Investments	283	311	1,425	1,623
3 Related Party Exposure	109,050	2,535	-	-
4 Current Assets	386,137	470,872	396,653	263,693
<i>a Inventories</i>	1,576	2,347	2,011	1,305
<i>b Trade Receivables</i>	305,801	387,404	356,850	226,001
5 Total Assets	634,503	608,487	528,023	386,087
6 Current Liabilities	557,952	539,091	436,391	285,388
<i>a Trade Payables</i>	518,603	521,364	417,609	267,253
7 Borrowings	53,957	53,059	63,052	66,055
8 Related Party Exposure	-	-	-	-
9 Non-Current Liabilities	44,765	40,027	36,603	31,237
10 Net Assets	(22,172)	(23,691)	(8,022)	3,406
11 Shareholders' Equity	(22,172)	(23,691)	(8,022)	3,406
B INCOME STATEMENT				
1 Sales	296,129	290,240	297,167	177,404
<i>a Cost of Good Sold</i>	(301,879)	(307,291)	(295,120)	(187,181)
2 Gross Profit	(5,750)	(17,051)	2,046	(9,777)
<i>a Operating Expenses</i>	(4,910)	(10,193)	(25,506)	(4,475)
3 Operating Profit	(10,660)	(27,243)	(23,460)	(14,252)
<i>a Non Operating Income or (Expense)</i>	16,414	15,429	13,398	8,866
4 Profit or (Loss) before Interest and Tax	5,754	(11,814)	(10,062)	(5,386)
<i>a Total Finance Cost</i>	(4,619)	(7,235)	(6,758)	(5,440)
<i>b Taxation</i>	820	(2,344)	(1,575)	(4,022)
6 Net Income Or (Loss)	1,956	(21,393)	(18,395)	(14,848)
C CASH FLOW STATEMENT				
<i>a Free Cash Flows from Operations (FCFO)</i>	20,168	1,294	973	3,217
<i>b Net Cash from Operating Activities before Working Capital Changes</i>	14,874	(6,877)	(5,349)	(1,362)
<i>c Changes in Working Capital</i>	(5,431)	27,050	17,765	4,635
1 Net Cash provided by Operating Activities	9,442	20,173	12,416	3,274
2 Net Cash (Used in) or Available From Investing Activities	(10,343)	(8,769)	(9,485)	(11,079)
3 Net Cash (Used in) or Available From Financing Activities	(7,997)	(9,728)	(9,538)	460
4 Net Cash generated or (Used) during the period	(8,897)	1,676	(6,606)	(7,346)
D RATIO ANALYSIS				
1 Performance				
<i>a Sales Growth (for the period)</i>	2.0%	-2.3%	67.5%	13.2%
<i>b Gross Profit Margin</i>	-1.9%	-5.9%	0.7%	-5.5%
<i>c Net Profit Margin</i>	0.7%	-7.4%	-6.2%	-8.4%
<i>d Cash Conversion Efficiency (FCFO adjusted for Working Capital/Sales)</i>	5.0%	9.8%	6.3%	4.4%
<i>e Return on Equity [Net Profit Margin * Asset Turnover * (Total Assets/Sl</i>	-4.3%	67.5%	797.0%	-152.4%
2 Working Capital Management				
<i>a Gross Working Capital (Average Days)</i>	431	471	360	399
<i>b Net Working Capital (Average Days)</i>	-210	-120	-61	-78
<i>c Current Ratio (Current Assets / Current Liabilities)</i>	0.7	0.9	0.9	0.9
3 Coverages				
<i>a EBITDA / Finance Cost</i>	4.1	0.2	0.2	1.0
<i>b FCFO / Finance Cost+CMLTB+Excess STB</i>	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.1
<i>c Debt Payback (Total Borrowings+Excess STB) / (FCFO-Finance Cost)</i>	14.5	-20.3	-18.7	-55.3
4 Capital Structure				
<i>a Total Borrowings / (Total Borrowings+Shareholders' Equity)</i>	169.8%	180.7%	114.6%	95.1%
<i>b Interest or Markup Payable (Days)</i>	1354.6	878.9	1018.8	1317.4
<i>c Entity Average Borrowing Rate</i>	8.2%	12.3%	9.6%	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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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

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(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).

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(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)

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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)

Monitoring and review

(18) PACRA monitors all the outstanding ratings continuously and any potential change therein due to any event associated with the issuer, the security arrangement, the industry etc., is disseminated to the market, immediately and in effective manner, after appropriate consultation with the entity/issuer; | Chapter III | 18-(a)

(19) PACRA reviews all the outstanding ratings on semi-annual basis or as and when required by any creditor or upon the occurrence of such an event which requires to do so; | Chapter III | 18-(b)

(20) PACRA initiates immediate review of the outstanding rating upon becoming aware of any information that may reasonably be expected to result in downgrading of the rating; | Chapter III | 18-(c)

(21) PACRA engages with the issuer and the debt securities trustee, to remain updated on all information pertaining to the rating of the entity/instrument; | Chapter III | 18-(d)

Probability of Default

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

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