

Japan Credit Rating Agency, Ltd. (JCR) announces the following credit rating.

Hirogin Holdings, Inc. (security code: 7337)

<Affirmation>

Long-term Issuer Rating: AA-
Outlook: Stable

The Hiroshima Bank, Ltd. (security code: -)

<Affirmation>

Long-term Issuer Rating: AA-
Outlook: Stable

Rationale

- (1) The Hirogin Group (“the Group”) is a regional financial group that has many group companies, such as The Hiroshima Bank, Ltd. (“Hiroshima Bank”), Hirogin Securities Co., Ltd., Hirogin Lease Co. Ltd. and Shimanami Servicer Co., Ltd., under the umbrella of the holding company Hirogin Holdings, Inc. (“Hirogin HD”). The Group was transformed into a holding company structure in October 2020. By promoting its integrated group management, the Group aims to strengthen the provision of solutions including those in non-financial fields, and capture the diversifying customer needs. JCR regards the Group’s creditworthiness as equivalent to AA-, based on the assessment of the solid local business foundation, a relatively good earning capacity, sound asset quality, and capital adequacy relative to risks, among others. JCR will keep an eye on whether strengthening the group collaboration will lead to improvement in basic earning capacity.
- (2) Hiroshima Bank’s core net business income, which accounts for the majority of the Group’s consolidated income, has been stable. Currently, an increase in foreign currency procurement costs is pushing down profits, but this is offset by an improvement in the loan balance and an increase in fee income from syndicated loans and other transactions. In the first half of the fiscal year ending March 2024, Hiroshima Bank achieved an ROA (based on core net business income) in the range of 0.3%, and an RORA on a risk-weighted assets basis of around 1%, which suggests a relatively favorable earning capacity. Although the present contribution of the group companies other than Hiroshima Bank is not large, there is the steady accumulation of achievements in synergies by promoting the integration of banking and securities service as well as group collaboration. JCR hence sees that there is plenty of room to expand non-interest income.
- (3) The soundness of loan assets has been maintained. The ratio of disclosed claims under the Financial Reconstruction Act of Hiroshima Bank, of which assets account for the majority of the total assets of the Group, remains at a low level, in the lower 1% range. Many debtor companies in the ocean shipping industry, which accounts for a majority of its total, have the ability to withstand changes in market conditions, and thanks in part to the tailwind of the yen’s depreciation, almost the entire amount of the loans falls under the category of normal borrowers. Credit costs have been kept low level, partly due to the effects of conservative provisions. Although attention should be paid to changes in business conditions for some creditors, given the degree of credit diversification and credit maintenance status, JCR believes that the possible fluctuations will be within the range that can be fully absorbed by the core net business income.
- (4) The capital level on a consolidated group basis is commensurate with the AA range. The adjusted consolidated core capital ratio excluding losses on valuation of available-for-sale securities was in the lower 10% range as of the end of September 2023. Although valuation losses have increased due to rising interest rates, there has been no change in the capital adequacy relative to the actual risks associated with loan assets and securities. JCR sees that the Group’s current capital level will be maintained, as the Group plans to promote growth investments and shareholder returns while maintaining balance with the equity ratio under a disciplined capital policy. On the other hand, the Group has indicated a policy of gradually increasing its securities balance in order to ensure stable profits, and JCR will keep an eye on whether it can appropriately control risks with respect to capital.

Issuer: Hirogin Holdings, Inc.

Hirogin Holdings, Inc. is the holding company of the Hirogin Group. The issuer rating is regarded as equivalent to the Group's creditworthiness. The double leverage ratio has remained below a certain level, and given the financial management policy, etc., the cash flow balance is expected to remain stable going forward. Hence the rating does not reflect the structural subordination of a holding company.

Issuer: Hiroshima Bank, Ltd.

Hiroshima Bank, Ltd. is the core bank of the Hirogin Group. The issuer rating is regarded as equivalent to the Group's creditworthiness. It is a leading bank with a total funds of more than 9 trillion yen, headquartered in Hiroshima City, the largest city in the Chugoku region, and also operates businesses in the neighboring prefecture, Okayama, Yamaguchi and Ehime. It has strengths in the field of non-interest businesses, and the ratio of non-interest income to earnings has been among the highest in the industry for many years. The soundness of loan assets is high, and there are few financial concerns. Regarding the next-generation core system, it aims to join MEJAR, which is jointly operated by The Bank of Yokohama, Ltd. and others, by around FY2030.

Tomohiro Miyao, Seito Achiha

Rating

Issuer: Hirogin Holdings, Inc.

<Affirmation>

Long-term Issuer Rating: AA- Outlook: Stable

Issuer: The Hiroshima Bank, Ltd.

<Affirmation>

Long-term Issuer Rating: AA- Outlook: Stable

Rating Assignment Date: January 29, 2024

The assumptions for the credit ratings and the definitions of the rating symbols are published as "Types of Credit Ratings and Definitions of Rating Symbols" (January 6, 2014) in Information about JCR Ratings on JCR's website (<https://www.jcr.co.jp/en/>).

Outline of the rating methodology is shown as "JCR's Rating Methodology" (November 7, 2014), "Banks" (October 1, 2021) and "Rating Methodology for Financial Groups' Holding Companies and Group Companies" (September 1, 2022) in Information about JCR Ratings on JCR's website (<https://www.jcr.co.jp/en/>).

The rating stakeholder participated in the rating process of the aforementioned credit ratings.

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JCR publishes its press releases regarding the rating actions both in Japanese and in English on the same day. In case that it takes time to translate rating rationale, JCR may publicize the summary version, which will be replaced by the full translated version within three business days. (Regarding Structured Finance products, JCR only publicize the summary version in English.)



INFORMATION DISCLOSURE FORM

Japan Credit Rating Agency, Ltd.

Disclosure Required by Paragraph (a)(1)(ii) of Rule 17g-7

Issuer:	Hirogin Holdings, Inc. The Hiroshima Bank, Ltd.
Rating Publication Date:	January 31, 2024

1 The Symbol, Number, or Score in the Rating Scale used to Denote Credit Rating Categories and Notches and, the Identity of the Obligor or the Identity and a Description of the Security or Money Market Instrument as Required by Paragraph (a)(1)(ii)(A) of Rule 17g-7

- Please see the news release. If the credit rating is a private rating, please see the report for private rating.

2 The version of the procedure or methodology used to determine the credit rating; as Required by Paragraph (a)(1)(ii)(B) of Rule 17g-7

- Please see the news release. If the credit rating is a private rating, please see the report for private rating.

3 The Main Assumptions and Principles used in Constructing the Procedures and Methodologies used to Determine the Credit Rating as Required by Paragraph (a)(1)(ii)(C) of Rule 17g-7

- The credit rating methodology assumes, in principle, to be applied to assess the likelihood of a given debt payment in light of its issuer's condition and business environment, etc. in the relevant future. There is certain limitation, however, in the time horizon that the rating foresees.
- The credit rating methodology assumes, in principle, that the factors posted in the below are particularly important for such likelihood to be determined, and that the rating determination is made by evaluating each of them not only quantitatively but also employing qualitative analyses.

A) Business Bases

The likelihood of a given debt payment is highly conditional to its issuer's business bases - how they can be maintained/ expanded into the future and thereby secure earnings and cash flows in adequacy and in a sustainable way.

B) Financial Grounds and Asset Quality

The likelihood of debt payment is highly dependent on the degree of the issuer's indebtedness and loss absorption capacity in terms of equity capital. Also notable is that a financial institution might see a significant loss of financial grounds as a result of changes in value of the assets under its possession.

C) Liquidity Positions

The likelihood of debt payment is highly dependent on the adequacy of the issuer's cash and other sources of repayment (liquidity positions).

D) Order of Seniority in Debt Payment

The likelihood of debt payment can be different between given debts of the same issuer. The likelihood of debt payment for an individual debt is dependent on the issuer's discretion, and/ or its rank relative to other debts of the same issuer in the order of seniority in principal/ interest payment which is determined by design as financial product or by laws, etc.

4 The Potential Limitations of the Credit Rating as Required by Paragraph (a)(1)(ii)(D) of Rule 17g-7

- The credit rating herewith presented by JCR is its summary opinion with regard to the likelihood of given debt payment and hence not necessarily a perfect representation of such likelihood. The credit rating is not intended to estimate the probability of default or the loss on given default, either.
- The objective of the credit rating herewith presented does not include any concerns other than the likelihood of debt payment, such as risks of price changes, market liquidity, etc.
- The credit rating herewith presented is necessary to be reviewed along with possible changes of the issuer of rated objects in its business performance and/ or circumstances which include regulatory environment, and hence subject to possible alteration.

5 Information on the Uncertainty of the Credit Rating as Required by Paragraph (a)(1)(ii)(E) of Rule 17g-7

- The information used for the determination of credit rating as herewith presented is obtained by JCR from the issuer of rated objects and other sources that JCR trusts in terms of accuracy and reliability but possibly contains errors due to human, non-human or other causes. Consequently, the credit rating determined on the grounds of such information does not constitute, explicitly or implicitly, any representation or warrant of JCR on the information itself or any consequences of its use in terms of accuracy, relevance, timeliness, wholeness, market value, or usefulness for any specific purposes.

6 Use of Due Diligence Services of a Third Party in Taking the Rating Action as Required by Paragraph (a)(1)(ii)(F) of Rule 17g-7

- There is no use of any third-party due diligence service in the determination of the credit rating herewith presented.

7 Use of Servicer or Remittance Reports to Conduct Surveillance of the Credit Rating Required by Paragraph (a)(1)(ii)(G) of Rule 17g-7

- There is no use of any servicer or remittance report to conduct surveillance of the credit rating herewith presented.

8 The Types of Data Relied Upon for the Purpose of Determining the Credit Rating as Required by Paragraph (a)(1)(ii)(H) of Rule 17g-7

- The information posted in the below, which includes data, is used for the determination of the credit rating herewith presented.

A) Audited financial statements presented by the rating stakeholders

B) Explanations of business performance, management plans, etc. presented by the rating stakeholders

9 Overall assessment of the Quality of Information Available and Considered in Determining the Credit Rating as Required by Paragraph (a)(1)(ii)(I) of Rule 17g-7

- JCR holds its basic policies for securing the quality of information as a base of due diligence for the determination of credit ratings. The information used as a base for the determination of credit rating herewith presented satisfies such policies, which include the audit by an independent auditor, the warranty made by the issuer, the publication by the issuer, some independent media or, otherwise, JCR analyst's scrutiny, etc.
- JCR sees no particular weakness in the quality of information used for the determination of the credit rating herewith presented as compared to the information used in other cases of the credit rating for comparable issuers or ratable objects.
- If the credit rating is an Indication, please see the report for Indication.

10 Information Relating to Conflicts of Interest as Required by Paragraph (a)(1)(ii)(J) of Rule 17g-7

- JCR receives payment of compensation for the determination of the credit rating herewith presented from either one of those parties who are issuer, underwriter, depositor or sponsor.
- JCR received in the last fiscal year in the past payment of compensation from The Hiroshima Bank, Ltd. for any kind of JCR's service other than the determination of public or private credit rating, such as one in the ancillary business.
- JCR did not receive in the last fiscal year in the past payment of compensation from Hirogin Holdings, Inc. for any kind of JCR's service other than the determination of public or private credit rating, such as one in the ancillary business.

11 Explanation or Measure of the Potential Volatility of the Credit Rating as Required by Paragraph (a)(1)(ii)(K) of Rule 17g-7

A) Business Bases

The credit rating is subject to alteration if there is improvement or deterioration of the issuer's business bases, since its revenue, etc. may improve or deteriorate by the change in its business management policies, clients' preferences, competitive situation, or a technological innovation. The resultant alteration of the credit rating is usually by a notch, with possibility of a few notches if and when the change in the business bases is large.

B) Financial Grounds and Asset Quality

The credit rating is subject to alteration if the issuer increases/ decreases its debt/ capital or vice versa and thereby makes its individual debt payment liability less or more bearable and its loss absorption capacity into the future decreased or increased. Also, the changes in the quality of asset under the issuer's holding may affect the credit rating, since such changes could raise or lower the likelihood of future loss of the issuer's financial grounds. The resultant alteration of the credit rating is usually by a notch, with possibility of a few notches if and when the change in the financial grounds and/ or asset quality is large.

C) Liquidity Positions

The credit rating is subject to alteration if there is a change in the issuer's financial management policy or in the relations with fund procurement sources and the change thereby makes its liquidity positions improve or deteriorate. The resultant alteration of the credit rating is usually by a notch, with possibility of a few notches if and when the change is large.

D) Order of Seniority in Debt Payment and Non-Payment Forgiven by Contract

The credit rating is subject to alteration if there is a change in the rated debt's status in the order of seniority relative to other debts caused by the improvement/ deterioration of the issuer's financial condition. The resultant alteration of the credit rating is usually a notch, with possibility of a few notches if and when the change is large. Also, in case of the financial products for which non-payment of interest/ principal is contractually permissible, the credit rating is subject to alteration if and when the likelihood of such non-payment is projected to increase or decrease. The resultant alteration of the credit rating could be by a notch but often as much as a few notches.

E) Rise and Fall in General Economy and Markets

The credit rating is subject to alteration if there is a rise/ fall in the general economy and/ or the markets inducing the issuer's revenues/ expenses to increase/ decrease and vice versa, etc. The resultant alteration of the credit rating is usually by a notch, with possibility of a few notches if and when the change is exceptionally large.

F) Various Events

The credit rating is subject to alteration on occurrence of various events, such as change in the issuer's major shareholders, M&A and other organizational change, accident, violation of the law, litigation, legal/ regulatory change, natural disaster, etc., which are unforeseeable at the time when the credit rating is determined, causing a significant change on the issuer's business bases, financial grounds, etc. The resultant alteration of the credit rating could be by a notch but more often than not as much as a few notches.

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Information on the Content of the Credit Rating, Including the Historical Performance of the Credit Rating and the Expected Probability of Default and the Expected Loss in the Event of Default as Required by Paragraph (a)(1)(ii)(L) of Rule 17g-7

- Historical records of the credit rating herewith presented are posted in the end of this paper.
- The credit rating herewith presented by JCR is its summary opinion with regard to the likelihood of given debt payment and hence not necessarily a perfect representation of such likelihood. The credit rating is not intended to estimate the probability of default or the loss on given default, either.
- Facts of the probability of default are posted as Form NRSRO Exhibit 1 on the JCR website under the URL:

<https://www.jcr.co.jp/en/service/company/regu/nrsro/>

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Information on the Sensitivity of the Credit Rating to Assumptions Made as Required by Paragraph (a)(1)(ii)(M) of Rule 17g-7

A) Business Bases

The credit rating herewith presented could be changed if and when the assumptions made at the time of its determination turn out to be inaccurate with regard to the issuer's business bases and powers of earning or cash flow generation, etc. The resultant change of the credit rating is most likely by a notch, as JCR speculates, but possibly as much as a few notches if the development is rapid in improvement or deterioration of the issuer's business bases on some drastic change in the operational environments, etc.

B) Financial Grounds and Asset Quality

The credit rating herewith presented could be changed if and when the assumptions made at the time of its determination turn out to be inaccurate with regard to the issuer's financial grounds and asset quality. The resultant change of the credit rating is most likely by a notch, as JCR speculates, but possibly as much as a few notches if the development is rapid in improvement or deterioration of the issuer's financial grounds and/ or asset quality on some drastic change in its business bases.

C) Liquidity Risks

The credit rating herewith presented could be changed if and when the assumptions made at the time of its determination turn out to be inaccurate with regard to the issuer's liquidity positions. The resultant change of the credit rating is most likely by a notch, as JCR speculates, but possibly as much as a few notches if the development is rapid in improvement or deterioration of the issuer's liquidity positions on some drastic change in its financial management policy or relations with fund procurement sources, etc.

D) Order of Seniority in Debt Payment and Non-Payment Forgiven by Contract

The credit rating herewith presented could be changed if and when the assumptions made at the time of its determination turn out to be inaccurate with regard to the order of seniority in repayment of interests and principal. JCR assumes the resultant change of the credit rating is most likely by a notch. The change could be as much as a few notches if the issuer's financial structure differs so much and thereby the balance between debts shifted so greatly. Rating change is also possible in case of the financial products for which non-payment of interest/ principal is contractually permissible, if and when the assumptions made at the time of its determination turns out to be inaccurate. The change of the credit rating is assumed to be by a notch but often as much as a few notches.

E) Rise and Fall in General Economy and Markets

The credit rating herewith presented could be changed if and when the assumptions made at the time of its determination turn out to be inaccurate with regard to the prospects of general economy and markets. JCR expects the change should be most likely by a notch but could be as much as a few notches, should the economy or the markets change so greatly.

14 Information on the Representations, Warranties, and Enforcement Mechanisms of an Asset-backed Security as Required by Paragraph (a)(1)(ii)(N) of rule 17g-7

- The credit rating herewith presented is not for an ABS product, and hence no relevant issue.

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The Historical Performance of the Credit Rating

Issuer Name	Issue Name	Publication Date	Rating	Outlook/Direction
Hirogin Holdings, Inc.	Issuer(Long-term)	October 1, 2020	AA-	Stable
Hirogin Holdings, Inc.	Issuer(Long-term)	January 21, 2022	AA-	Stable
Hirogin Holdings, Inc.	Issuer(Long-term)	January 18, 2023	AA-	Stable

The Historical Performance of the Credit Rating

Issuer Name	Issue Name	Publication Date	Rating	Outlook/Direction
The Hiroshima Bank, Ltd.	Issuer(Long-term)	December 6, 2006	A+	Stable
The Hiroshima Bank, Ltd.	Issuer(Long-term)	September 14, 2007	A+	Stable
The Hiroshima Bank, Ltd.	Issuer(Long-term)	October 24, 2008	A+	Stable
The Hiroshima Bank, Ltd.	Issuer(Long-term)	September 1, 2009	A+	Stable
The Hiroshima Bank, Ltd.	Issuer(Long-term)	September 16, 2010	A+	Stable
The Hiroshima Bank, Ltd.	Issuer(Long-term)	September 30, 2011	A+	Stable
The Hiroshima Bank, Ltd.	Issuer(Long-term)	October 5, 2012	A+	Stable
The Hiroshima Bank, Ltd.	Issuer(Long-term)	November 1, 2013	A+	Stable
The Hiroshima Bank, Ltd.	Issuer(Long-term)	October 31, 2014	A+	Stable
The Hiroshima Bank, Ltd.	Issuer(Long-term)	December 28, 2015	A+	Positive
The Hiroshima Bank, Ltd.	Issuer(Long-term)	December 27, 2016	AA-	Stable
The Hiroshima Bank, Ltd.	Issuer(Long-term)	December 19, 2017	AA-	Stable
The Hiroshima Bank, Ltd.	Issuer(Long-term)	January 16, 2019	AA-	Stable
The Hiroshima Bank, Ltd.	Issuer(Long-term)	December 25, 2019	AA-	Stable
The Hiroshima Bank, Ltd.	Issuer(Long-term)	October 1, 2020	AA-	Stable
The Hiroshima Bank, Ltd.	Issuer(Long-term)	January 21, 2022	AA-	Stable
The Hiroshima Bank, Ltd.	Issuer(Long-term)	January 18, 2023	AA-	Stable

Attestation Required by Paragraph (a)(1)(iii) of Rule 17g-7

I, Tomohiro Miyao, have responsibility to this Rating Action and to the best of my knowledge:

- A) No part of the credit rating was influenced by any other business activities.
- B) The credit rating was based solely upon the merits of the obligor, security, or money market instrument being rated.
- C) The credit rating was an independent evaluation of the credit risk of the obligor, security, or money market instrument.

宮尾 知浩

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