# **News Release**



### Japan Credit Rating Agency, Ltd.

24-I-0004 April 10, 2024

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

# True Corporation Public Company Limited (security code: -)

<Assignment>

Foreign Currency Long-term Issuer Rating: A-Outlook: Stable

#### Rationale

- (1) True Corporation Public Company Limited (the company) is the holding company of a telecommunications group that provides mobile and other services in Thailand. JCR considers the rating of the company to be equivalent to the group's creditworthiness, given its control over its subsidiaries, its central role in the group's strategy and fundraising and its double leverage ratio. The group's creditworthiness is supported by its solid operational base on the back of two-company oligopoly market environment in Thailand and its relatively stable ability to generate cash flow. On the other hand, it is constrained by its financial position with a large interest-bearing debt. Therefore, JCR considers that the group's creditworthiness is equivalent to A-. The company's merger with DTAC (Total Access Communication) of Telenor in March 2023 has greatly expanded its operational base and leads to potentially significant synergy effects. This is expected to accelerate the group's development of IT and modernize its network such as 5G through its Single Grid Consolidation and Network Modernization strategy. The group has a large amount of interest-bearing debt due to the acquisition of spectrum licenses of the past and leaves significant room for improvement in its financial position. The group plans to improve its financial leverage through improvement of both operational and investment efficiencies to be brought about by the synergy effects of the merger. JCR will closely monitor how the group will make progress.
- (2) The company is a core company of Charoen Pokphand Group (CP Group), one of the major conglomerates in Thailand and founded in 1990 as TelecomAsia, a telecommunications company in Thailand. The CP Group was founded in 1921 as a seed shop by the Chinese-Thai Chearavanont brothers. Today, it is engaged in eight business lines, including retail/distribution, media/telecommunications, property development and automotive/industrial products, with agroindustry and food as its core. After the company was listed on the Stock Exchange of Thailand in 1993, China Mobile acquired 18% of its shares in 2013. In March 2023, the company merged with DTAC which is operated by Telenor, a Norwegian state-owned telecommunications company. After the merger, the company is owned 30.3% each by the CP Group and Telenor, 7.8% by China Mobile and 31.6% by general shareholders. Its board of directors and management team are equally staffed by the CP Group and Telenor.
- (3) The group provides mobile communications, broadband and pay TV services, all of which have a strong operational base with the top market share. The mobile market in Thailand used to see fierce competition over prices and investments in the spectrum licenses. However, the merger has made it an oligopoly market between the company and its competitor. Therefore, the competitive market has been improving. On the other hand, the National Broadcasting and Telecommunications Commission (NBTC) of Thailand imposed certain regulations including a cap on mobile usage fees on the company upon the merger. On the back of this business environment, the group's mobile business had a 54% market share at the end of 2023 and the number of subscribers has been increasing moderately. Out of the 51.9 million subscribers, prepaid subscribers accounted for about 70%. Therefore, expanding post-paid subscribers will be important to raise ARPU in the future. Under its Single Grid Consolidation and Network Modernization strategy, the group is consolidating its overlapping towers brought by the merger, installing enhanced and modernized equipment on towers with a broader spectrum portfolio. This is planned to increase 4G and 5G coverage throughout Thailand to 99% and 97%, respectively. In addition, the group is striving to provide easy connectivity to subscribers by equipping a broader spectrum portfolio ranging from 700 MHz to 2600 MHz and enhance customer experiences through Simplified Omni-Channel Customer Journey. The company's broadband business has room for future subscriber growth in Thailand. While the number of subscribers at the end of 2023 remained flat from the end of 2022, ARPU expanded in the same period due to cross-selling through convergence. In the pay TV business, the number of subscribers



- and ARPU remain flat. However, the group has been aiming to expand its subscriber base via streaming platform and acquiring quality contents.
- (4) In 2023, the group's revenue declined moderately by 5.7% year-on-year to THB 202.9 billion due to reduced product sales as a result of reduction in handset subsidy post the merger. However, its service revenue remained relatively flat and its EBITDA increased by 3.6% to THB 85.7 billion resulting from the commencement of synergy effects and efficient cost management program. This indicates the company's ability to generate cash flow is relatively solid. However, it had a THB 15.7 billion net loss in 2023 mainly due to post merger related one-time items and increased depreciation. From 2024 onward, the group's profitability is expected to be strengthened through an increased number of mobile subscribers and expanded ARPU as well as synergies from the merger. The group is also planning to gradually reduce its interest-bearing debt, which may lead to a decrease in interest expenses. JCR will keep a close eye on results to be brought by those efforts.
- (5) On the fiscal front, the group's net debt/EBITDA and the equity ratio attributable to owners of the parent stood at 5.2 times and 11.5%, respectively, at the end of 2023, leaving room for improvement compared to its domestic peer. While the group will continue to develop infrastructure for 5G, it plans to streamline and reduce capital expenditures from 2024 onward through the synergies from the merger. Therefore, JCR do not expect any significant increase in the group's interest-bearing debt in the near term. In addition, as the group's cash flows such as EBITDA stay relatively stable, its financial indicators such as net debt/EBITDA are expected to improve gradually.

Kiichi Sugiura, Hiroshi Tonegawa

Rating

Issuer: True Corporation Public Company Limited

<Assignment>

Foreign Currency Long-term Issuer Rating: A- Outlook: Stable

Rating Assignment Date: April 10, 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" (February 1, 2024), "Rating Methodology for a Holding Company" (January 26, 2015) and "Telecommunications" (June 15, 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:	True Corporation Public Company Limited
Rating Publication Date:	April 10, 2024

- 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.
- 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.
- 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) Related Parties' Status and Stance of Support/ Assistance for the Issuer

The likelihood of debt payment is affected one way or the other by the issuer's related parties such as parent company, subsidiary, guarantor, and the government of the issuer's business domicile, etc. - by their own conditions and/ or position of support/ assistance for the issuer.

### E) 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.

- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- The Types of Data Relied Upon for the Purpose of Determining the Credit Rating as Required by Paragraph (a)(1)(ii)(H) of Rule17g-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

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Overall assessment of the Quality of Information Available and Considered in Determining the Credit Rating as Required by Paragraph (a)(1)(ii)(l) 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.

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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 did not receive in the last fiscal year in the past payment of compensation from the same party for any kind of JCR's service other than the determination of public or private credit rating, such as one in the ancillary business.

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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) Related Parties' Status and Stance of Support/ Assistance for the Issuer

The credit rating is subject to alteration if there is a change in the issuer's parent company or subsidiary, guarantor or other provider of credit enhancement, or the government of the issuer's business domicile, or other related parties' own conditions and/ or position of support/ assistance for the issuer, and the change thereby makes its business bases, financial grounds and/ or liquidity positions improve or deteriorate, and/ or making the effectiveness of guarantee and other credit enhancement improve or deteriorate. The resultant alteration of the credit rating is usually a notch, with possibility of a few notches if and when the change is large.

### E) 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.

### F) 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.

#### G) 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.

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

- 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/

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) Related Parties' Status and Stance of Support/ Assistance for the Issuer
  - 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 parent company or subsidiaries, guarantor or other providers of credit enhancement, the government of the issuer's business domicile or other related parties' status and stance of support/ assistance for the issuer. 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 there is a major change on the part of related parties, such as replacement, disappearance, some drastic improvement/ deterioration of financial grounds/ balances, etc.
- 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.
- 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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## Attestation Required by Paragraph (a)(1)(iii) of Rule 17g-7

- I, Kiichi Sugiura, 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.

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Kiichi Sugiura General Manager of International Rating Department