



**Rating Action: Moody's upgrades Mills Estruturas e Serviços de Engenharia's ratings to B2/Ba1.br; stable outlook**

15 Jul 2019

Sao Paulo, July 15, 2019 -- Moody's América Latina ("Moody's") upgraded Mills Estruturas e Serviços de Engenharia's ("Mills") corporate family ratings and senior unsecured ratings to B2 (global scale) and Ba1.br (national scale) from B3 (global scale) and B2.br (national scale). The outlook was changed to stable from negative.

**Ratings upgraded:**

-Corporate Family Rating ("CFR"): to B2 from B3 (global scale); to Ba1.br from B2.br (national scale)

-BRL 109.06 million senior unsecured debentures due 2020: to B2 from B3 (global scale); to Ba1.br from B2.br (national scale)

Outlook changed to stable from negative.

**RATINGS RATIONALE**

The upgrade of Mills' ratings to B2/Ba1.br reflects the conclusion of the business combination with Solaris Participações, Equipamentos e Serviços S.A. ("Solaris"), as well as the recovery observed in the company's credit metrics over the last year. Accordingly, leverage and interest coverage improved mainly as consequence of better operating performance, continued debt reduction, and the company's ability to maintain an adequate liquidity profile and cash generation even under adverse market conditions.

The business combination with Solaris will increase Mills' size and scale, and improve its business profile and profitability due to higher fixed cost dilution and expected cost synergies. The business combination also better positions Mills to capture the mild recovery of Brazil's economic and industrial activities, even when considering potential integration and execution risks.

Pro forma for the transaction, Mills' revenues will increase to BRL463 million from BRL293 million in the LTM ending March 2019, while we estimate that the company's consolidated EBITDA margin could reach 30-40% from 20-25% after synergies, as Mills will benefit from an additional demand while incurring minimal marginal costs. Mills' operations and margins were hit hard by the downturn in Brazil's homebuilding and heavy construction sectors and, since then, the company has been pursuing a diversification towards the industrial segment. The business combination with Solaris marks an important step in Mills' strategy of diversification away from the construction segment. With the business combination, 81% of Mills' revenue will come from the rental segment and 19% from the construction segment, compared to 47% and 53% in 2014, respectively.

Mills' pro forma leverage measured by adjusted total debt to EBITDA will improve to around 2.5x from 3.3x in the LTM ending March 2019 and will remain at around 1.0-2.0x in the medium term, even though we expect the ratio to increase to 3.0-4.0x in the short term with integration costs. Mills has been reducing its total debt in the past six years with proceeds from idled equipment sales to adjust its capital structure to the lower demand environment and on the successful execution of its strategy in the rental business unit to generate cash. The company paid down more than BRL500 million in total debt since 2014 and has proven its ability to generate cash and maintain an adequate liquidity profile during market downturns.

Going forward, we expect Mills' operating performance to continue to recover gradually along with Brazil's economy, and the company to capture significant cost synergies with Solaris, which will support growth in the company's revenues and cash generation in the medium term. We also expect Mills' liquidity to remain adequate, with a cash position that fully covers short term debt maturities, and the company to pursue liability management initiatives to lengthen its debt amortization schedule.

The ratings are constrained by Mills' small size relative to global peers, its concentration of operations in Brazil and in the industrial sector, and by the integration and execution risks associated with the business combination with Solaris. Additional rating constraints are our estimates that conditions in the heavy construction industry will remain weak at least until the end of 2019 and that Brazil's industrial sector will recover only mildly in the short term.

The stable outlook reflects our expectation that Mills' credit metrics will remain near current levels as the company integrates its operations with Solaris, and that the company will remain prudent in managing liquidity to meet its debt obligations in the next 12-18 months.

The ratings could be upgraded if there are clear signs of sustained recovery in the construction industry and in Brazil's industrial sector that support significant revenue growth for Mills, and if Mills is successful in integrating its business with Solaris, while maintaining adequate leverage and a solid liquidity position. Quantitatively, the ratings could be upgraded if Mills' credit metrics remain near current levels, with total adjusted debt to EBITDA below 3.5x (3.3x in LTM ending March 2019), EBITDA to interest expense above 3.0x (2.7x in LTM ending March 2019) and EBITDA margin above 20% (25.5% in the LTM ending March 2019) on a sustained basis.

The ratings could be downgraded if market conditions deteriorate or if Mills faces difficulties in integrating its business with Solaris. Quantitatively the ratings could be downgraded if leverage increases to above 5.5x, interest coverage (EBITDA/interest expense) declines to below 2.0x and EBITDA margin declines to below 15% without prospects for improvement. A deterioration in the company's liquidity profile or cash generation would also trigger a downgrade.

Founded in 1952 and headquartered in Rio de Janeiro, Mills Estruturas e Serviços de Engenharia ("Mills") is the largest aerial work platform rental company in Latin America and the largest provider of infrastructure engineering solutions in Brazil, having reported BRL 293 million (USD 92 million) in net revenues in the last twelve months ended March 2019. Solaris was founded by Sullair Argentina S.A. (B2/A2.ar stable) and has been providing equipment rental solutions for the industrial sector in Brazil for more than 20 years, including the rental of aerial platforms, illumination towers, energy generators and air compressors. Pro forma to the business combination, Mills will be the largest rental company of aerial work platforms in Brazil, with a fleet of more than 9,000 equipment and annual revenues and EBITDA of BRL463 million and BRL107 million, respectively.

The principal methodology used in these ratings was Business and Consumer Service Industry published in October 2016. Please see the Rating Methodologies page on [www.moodys.com.br](http://www.moodys.com.br) for a copy of this methodology.

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