# **Recent amendments relating to Corporate Bonds**

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Vinita Nair, Aanchal Kaur Nagpal & Payal Agarwal M/s Vinod Kothari Company

<u>Kolkata:</u> 1006-1009, Krishna 224 AJC Bose Road Kolkata – 700 017 Phone: 033 2281 3742/7715 Email: info@vinodkothari.com <u>New Delhi:</u> Nukleus, 501 & 501A, Salcon Rasvilas, District Centre, Saket, New Delhi – 110017 Phone: 011 41315340 Email: delhi@vinodkothari.com

<u>Mumbai:</u> 403-406, Shreyas Chambers 175, D N Road, Fort, Mumbai Phone: 022 2261 4021/ 6237 0959 Email: bombay@vinodkothari.com

<u>Bengaluru:</u> 04, Union Street, Infantry Rd, Shivaji Nagar, Bengaluru, Karnataka 560001 Email: info@vinodkothari.com

Website: www.vinodkothari.com

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### Outline

### Introduction to Debentures

- Concept, mode of issuance and regulatory framework
- Recent amendments, immediate actionable
  - Amendments relating to SEBI (ILNCS) Regulations, 2021
    - Nominee Director of DT
    - Green Debt Securities
    - Offer period for public issue of debt
    - Others
  - Consultation paper for amending SEBI (ILNCS) Regulations, 2021
    - Disclosure requirements, GID, KID, mandatory listing

- ISIN restrictions for private placement
- Timelines for listing privately placed debentures
- Revised framework for EBP
- High Value Debt Listed Entities
- Consultation paper for HVDLE
- Large Corporate Borrower Framework;
- Impact of Budget 2023-24 on Corporate Bonds

# Introduction to Debentures Concept, mode of issuance and regulatory framework

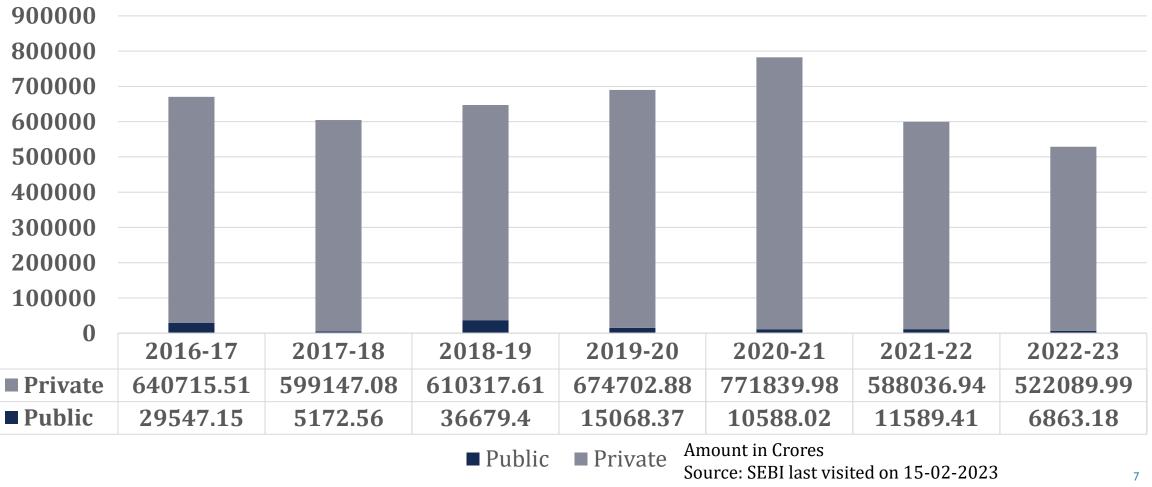
### Definition

- Companies Act, 2013 defines "debenture" as-
  - "Debenture" includes debenture stock, bonds or any other instrument of a company evidencing a debt, whether constituting a charge on the assets of the company or not;
  - Provided that—
    - the instruments referred to in Chapter III-D of the Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934; and
    - such other instrument, as may be prescribed by the Central Government in consultation with the Reserve Bank of India, issued by a company,

shall not be treated as debenture.

- SEBI (Issue and Listing of Non-Convertible Securities) Regulations, 2021
  - " "debt securities" means non-convertible debt securities with a fixed maturity period which create or acknowledge indebtedness and includes debentures, bonds or any other security whether constituting a charge on the assets/ properties or not, but excludes security receipts, securitized debt instruments, money market instruments regulated by the Reserve Bank of India, and bonds issued by the Government or such other bodies as may be specified by the Board;

### **Data on Listed Debentures**



Figures for FY 2022-23 reflects issuance till December, 2022.

### **Regulatory Framework**

- Companies Act, 2013
  - Section 23,
  - Section 29 r/w Rule 9A of PAS Rules
  - Section 42 r/w Rule 14 of PAS Rules
  - Section 71 r/w Rule 18 of SHA Rules
  - Sections 179, 180
- SEBI Regulations
  - SEBI (Issue and Listing of Non Convertible Securities) Regulations, 2021
    - SEBI Operational Circular dated August 10, 2021
  - SEBI (Issue of Capital and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2018
  - SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015
    - SEBI Operational Circular dated July 29, 2022
  - SEBI (Debenture Trustees) Regulations, 1993

### • FEMA

- FEMA (Non-Debt Instruments) Rules, 2019
- FEMA (Debt Instrument) Regulations, 2019
- FEMA (Borrowing and Lending) Regulations, 2018

- RBI
  - RBI Master Directions for NBFC SI
    - Directions on Raising Money through Private Placement of Non-Convertible Debentures (NCDs) by NBFCs, HFCs
  - RBI Master Circular on Basel III Norms.

# Amendments relating to SEBI (ILNCS) Regulations, 2021



### **Appointment of Nominee Director of Debenture Trustees**

Amendments in NCS Regulations effective from February 2, 2023

- Appointment of nominee director by DTs [Reg. 23 (6)]
  - Power to appoint comes from Reg. 15 (1) (e) of DT Regulations, 1993
    - two consecutive defaults in payment of interest to the debenture holders; or
    - default in creation of security for debentures; or
    - default in redemption of debentures.
  - AOA to provide for enabling clause
    - Timeline for issuers with listed debt as on February 2, 2023 – Till September 30, 2023
    - For first time issuers of debt within 6 months from listing SEBI Circular of February 9, 2023
      - SEs to obtain an undertaking at the time of granting the in-principle approval.
      - The issuer to comply and report compliance to SEs. SEs to periodically monitor/ remind such issuers on doing the needful.
  - Once nomination received from DT, appointment to be made
    - Within 30 days from receipt of nomination or Feb 2, 2023, whichever is later.

Amendment in DTD [Reg. 18 (6A)]

- Mandating issuer to appoint nominee director of DT on its Board of Directors at the earliest and not later than 1 month from the date of receipt of nomination from DT
  - Debenture Trust Deed for existing issuance to be amended by September 30, 2023.

### • What should the AOA capture?

- Just the enabling clause or terms around it?
- What if AOA already provides a general clause?
  - In line with Section 161 (3) of CA, 2013.
- Other aspects relating to nominee directors
  - Manner and terms of appointment;
  - Tenure *till default made good or maturity?*
  - Impact on Board composition;
  - Duties, role and responsibilities;
  - Office liable to retire by rotation;
  - Liability, immunity

### **Other Amendments in NCS Regulations effective from February 2, 2023**

- Green Debt securities
  - Refer next slides.
- Manner of serving the notice of recall/redemption prior to maturity of NCS [Reg. 15 (6) & (7)]
  - Issuer to send the notice to eligible holders in the following manner:
    - Soft copy via e-mail in case email address registered with the Listed Entity (LE) or Depository;
    - Hard copy in case email address is not registered
    - The issuer should simultaneously provide a copy of the such notice to Designated Stock Exchange (DSE).
      - Newspaper advertisement not required.

- Timeline of offer period of public issue[Reg. 33A]
  - Offer to be kept open for minimum 3 working days and up to maximum 10 working days.
    - Aligned with ICDR Regulations (Reg. 46, 142)
  - Grounds for extension of bidding period upto maximum 10 working days
    - In case of revision in price band or yield as disclosed in the offer document
      - the issuer should extend the issue for minimum 3 working days.
    - In case of force majeure The issuer may extend the issue period by recording the reasons in writing.
- Regulatory fee for PDIs and PNCPs [Reg 50 (4) & Schedule VI]
  - DSE will collect regulatory fee as per Schedule VI
  - 0.00025% of issue size, subject to
    - minimum Rs. 25,000 and
    - maximum Rs. 50,00,000

## Sustainable Finance and Sustainable bonds



## MEANING OF SUSTAINABLE FINANCE AND SUSTAINABLE BONDS

### Sustainable finance

- The European Commission defines 'Sustainable Finance' as
  - the process of taking due account of environmental, social and governance (ESG) considerations
  - when making investment decisions in the financial sector
  - leading to increased longer-term investments into sustainable economic activities and projects
- Products of sustainable finance may include
  - Green loans

- Sustainable bonds
- ESG mutual funds
- Green securitization etc.

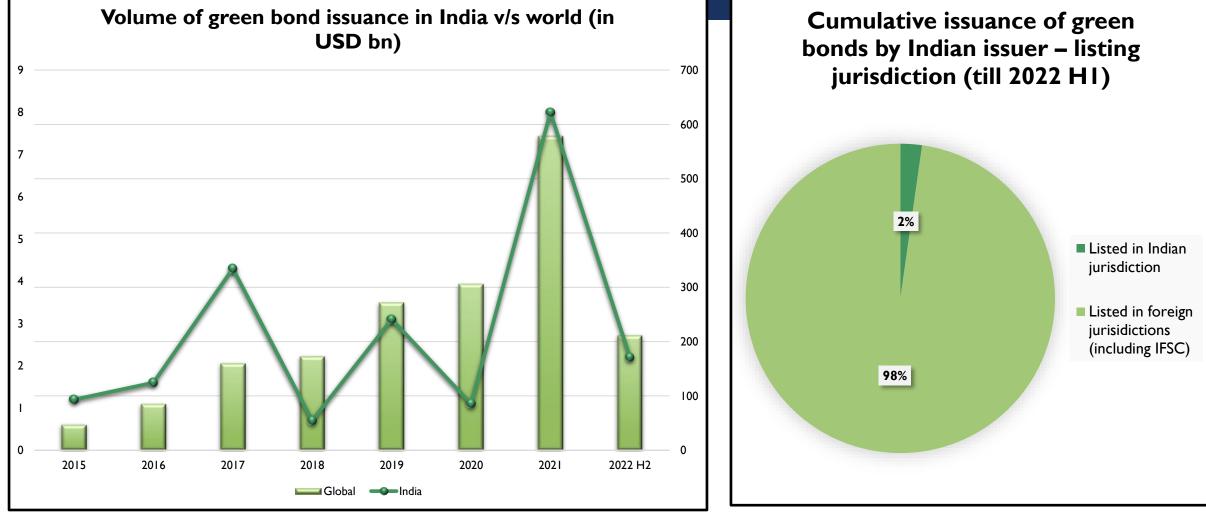
### Sustainable bonds

- Sustainable bonds are capital market instruments with generally prescribed end use.
- Also referred to as GSS, GSS+, GSSS or ESG bonds
  - G Green
  - S Social
  - S Sustainability
  - + other labeled bonds including transition and sustainability-linked bonds
- Generally issued in compliance with one or more internationally recognized frameworks such as –
  - International Capital Markets Association (ICMA) principles
  - <u>Climate Bonds Standards</u>
  - <u>ASEAN Standards</u> etc.

## GENERAL TYPES OF SUSTAINABLE BONDS

Type of bond	Green Bonds	Social Bonds	Sustainability Bonds	Sustainability-linked Bonds (SLBs)			
Use of Proceeds	Finance/Re-Finance new/ existing eligible green projects	Finance/Re-Finance new/ existing social projects	Finance/Re-Finance combination of both green and social projects	General corporate purpose or such other purpose as may be indicated by the issuer			
Project Evaluation and Selection	Method of determining	Communication of objectives Method of determining fitness of project and Eligibility criteria of project with associated risks					
Management of Proceeds	Balance of tracked pro	Net proceeds (or equivalent) to be kept in separate sub-account for tracking Balance of tracked proceeds to be adjusted for allocations to eligible projects Auditor or independent third party to verify internal tracking method and allocation of proceeds					
Reporting	<ul> <li>Annual Report to include</li> <li>1. List of projects in</li> </ul>	Up-to-date information on use of proceeds to be reviewed annually Annual Report to include the following- 1. List of projects in which proceeds allocated 2. Description, amount and expected impact					
External Review		To assess through pre-issuance review alignment of bonds with the guidelines Post issuance- verification of internal tracking and allocation of funds					

### MARKET DATA ON GREEN BOND ISSUANCE BY INDIAN ISSUERS



Source: Collated from <u>Climate Bonds Initiative</u>

Source: Collated from various incl. SEBI

### MOTIVATIONS FOR GDS – FOR ISSUER AND INVESTOR

### For issuers

- Diversification of investor base
- Signalling commitment to sustainability
- Cheaper funding
- Demonstration of responsible corporate citizen image
- Access to international capital and foreign currency

### For investors

- Financial returns with additional environmental benefits
- Long term value expectations from ESG-compliant issuers
- "values"-driven approach contributing to transition to lowcarbon economy
- Responsible investments

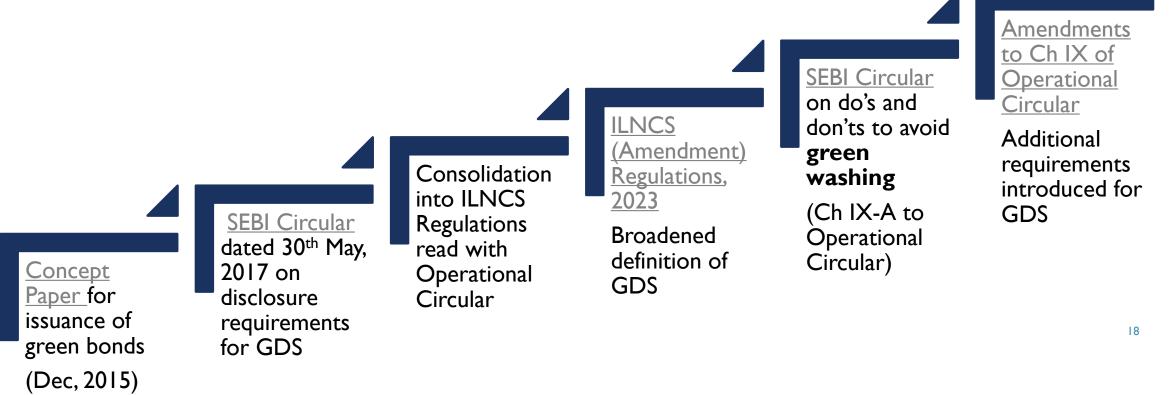
## Regulatory framework on GDS issuance in India



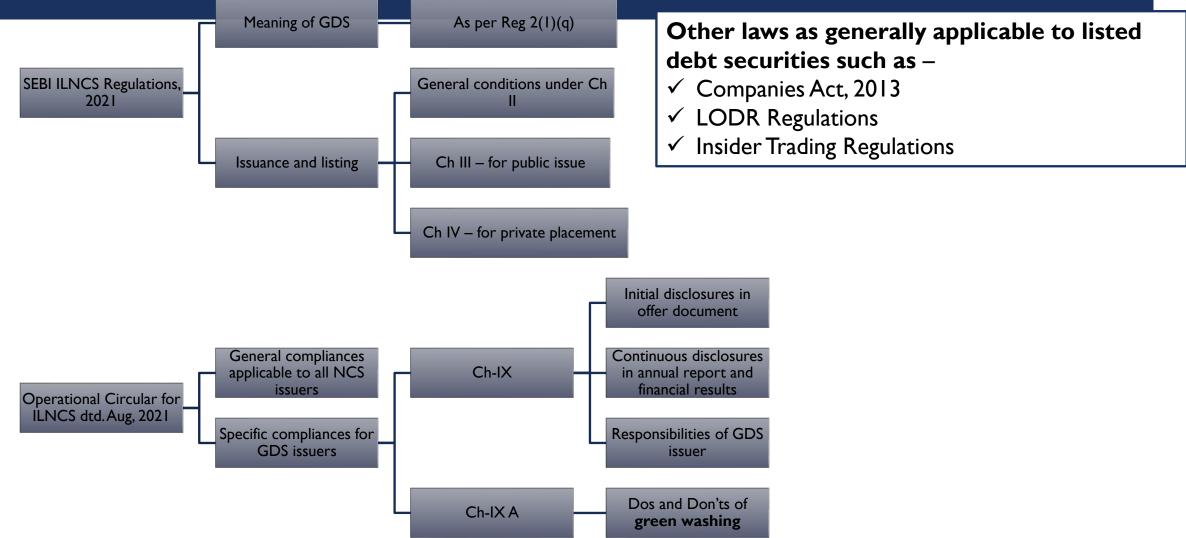
# HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT OF REGULATORY FRAMEWORK ON GDS

Scenario prior to notification of regulatory framework on GDS by SEBI

- > Yes Bank issued first green bonds in India in Feb, 2015.
- Subsequent issuances by CLP India, EXIM India and IDBI Bank
- > Issuance, listing and disclosures similar to any regular corporate bond issuance.
- > Voluntary principles laid down by ICMA for the "green" label in 2015.



### **REGULATORY FRAMEWORK FOR GDS ISSUANCE**



### SNAPSHOT OF RECENT AMENDMENTS TO GDS FRAMEWORK

- Categories of projects/ assets for which GDS proceeds can be utilized has been broadened
  - Includes new categories in alignment with voluntary ICMA Green Bond Principles
  - Includes "transition bonds" for funding activities aligned with India's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs)
  - Includes new colored bonds, viz., "blue" bonds and "yellow" bonds for easier identification and attracting investors

### Amendments to Ch IX of the Operational Circular

- Enhances initial and continuous disclosure requirements on GDS issuers
  - Requires mandatory appointment of independent third party reviewer/ certifier
  - Promotes transparency of information by requiring disclosure of relevant standards/ taxonomies referred for determining eligibility
  - Attracts impact reporting on an annual basis
  - Requires disclosure of specific elements of BRSR in terms of Principle 6 of the NGRBC principles relating to environmental conservation

### Insertion of Ch IX-A to the existing Operational Circular

- Prescribes certain Do's and Don'ts for avoidance of green washing by GDS issuers
  - Requires disclosure to GDS investors in case of use of proceeds for un-authorized purposes, and early redemption if so required by investors in such case
  - Prohibits use of misleading lables, cherry-picking data or making untrue claims
  - Requires the issuer to quantify the negative externalities associated with the utilization of GDS proceeds

### MEANING OF GREEN DEBT SECURITIES (GDS)

- means a **debt security** issued for raising funds
  - Ordinary debt securities with "green" label attached to it
- subject to the conditions as may be specified by the Board from time to time,
  - Prescribed under Ch IX and IX-A of Operational Circular
- to be utilised for project(s) and/ or asset(s) falling under any of the following categories
  - Categories of projects/ assets specified under the definition clause

- renewable and sustainable energy
- clean transportation
- sustainable water management
- climate change adaptation
- **Energy efficiency** including efficient and green buildings
- sustainable waste management
- sustainable **land use**
- biodiversity conservation
- pollution prevention and control
- circular economy adapted products, production technologies and processes and/or eco-efficient products
- blue bonds (for sustainable water management)
- yellow bonds (for solar energy creation)
- transition bonds (for transition in line with India's Intended Nationally Determined Contributions)

## APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT THIRD-PARTY REVIEWER

Existing requirements	Amended requirements	
The issuer may appoint an independent third party reviewer/ certifier, for reviewing/ certifying the processes including project evaluation and selection criteria, project categories eligible for financing by green debt securities, etc. Such appointment is at the option of the issuer; however, any such appointment of reviewer/ certifier, shall be disclosed in the offer document.	The issuer <b>shall</b> appoint an independent third party reviewer/ certifier, for reviewing/certifying the processes including project evaluation and selection criteria, project categories eligible for financing by green debt securities, etc.	
<ul> <li>For review/ certification of</li> <li>processes including project evaluation and selection criteria, project categories eligible for financing by GDS.</li> <li>Post-issue management of the use of proceeds from GDS and</li> <li>verification of the internal tracking and impact reporting</li> <li>Eligibility to act as independent third party reviewer</li> <li>Not specified under the existing regulatory framework</li> <li>Voluntary institutes such as ICMA and Climate Bonds Standards Board (CBSB) provides list of existing verifiers</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Applicable on a "comply" or "explain" basis</li> <li>Applicable for issuances launched on or after 1<sup>st</sup> April, 20</li> <li>On a comply or explain basis for a period of 2 years, i.e., f FY 23-24 and FY 24-25</li> <li>Issuer shall endeavor to achieve full compliance within 2 years from issuance of the Circular</li> <li>Disclosure in annual report of the issuer <ul> <li>Explain the reasons for non-compliance/ partial compliance, and</li> <li>Steps initiated to achieve full compliance</li> <li>In the event of failure to comply within such time</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
Will such mandatory requirement act as a deterrent to the	growth of green bonds market in India?	

### INITIAL DISCLOSURE REQUIREMENTS IN OFFER DOCUMENT FOR ISSUANCE OF GDS (1/3)

Clause	Existing requirements	Amended requirements	Remarks/ Actionable
1.1	A statement on environmental objectives of the issue of green debt securities	A statement on environmental <b>sustainability</b> objectives of the issue of green debt securities	Clarificatory change, no actionable
1.2	Brief details of decision-making process followed/ proposed for deter for which the proceeds are being raised through issuance of green de		No change
	a) process followed/ to be followed for determining how the project(s) and/ or asset(s) fit within the eligible green projects categories as defined under Regulation 2 (q) of NCS Regulations,	a) Process followed/ to be followed for determining how the project(s) and/or asset(s) fit within the eligible green projects categories as defined under Regulation 2 (1) (q) of NCS Regulations,	
	b) the criteria making the project(s) and/ or asset(s) eligible for using the green debt securities proceeds; and	b) The criteria making the project(s) and/ or asset(s) eligible for using the green debt securities proceeds; and	
	c) environmental sustainability objectives of the proposed green investment.	NA	Omitted since the same is covered under (1.1) above.

## INITIAL DISCLOSURE REQUIREMENTS IN OFFER DOCUMENT FOR ISSUANCE OF GDS (2/3)

Clause	Existing requirements	Amended requirements	Remarks/ Actionable
		c) Details of taxonomies, green standards or certifications both Indian and global, if any referenced and the alignment of projects with said taxonomies, related eligibility criteria, and exclusion criteria, if applicable.	<ul> <li>Standards for determining eligibility of a project to be considered as green is required to be disclosed. For example,</li> <li>IGBC Rating, GRIHA, LEED etc for green buildings</li> <li>BIS standards on energy efficiency and renewable energy – for clean energy projects</li> <li>CPCB standards on pollution control</li> <li>ISO standards</li> <li><u>Climate bonds Sector Criteria</u> etc.</li> </ul>
		d) Details of the alignment of the objective of the issue	In case of transition bonds, how the

### INITIAL DISCLOSURE REQUIREMENTS IN OFFER DOCUMENT FOR ISSUANCE OF GDS (3/3)

Clause	Existing requirements	Amended requirements	Remarks/ Actionable
1.4	Details of the project(s) and/ or asset(s) or areas where the issuer, proposes to utilise the proceeds of the issue of green debt securities, including towards refinancing of existing green project(s) and/ or asset(s), if any.	Details of the project(s) and/or asset(s) or areas where the issuer, proposes to utilise the proceeds of the issue of green debt securities, including towards refinancing of existing green project(s) and/or asset(s), if any	No change
1.5		Details of an indicative estimate of distribution of proceeds raised though issuance of green debt security between financing and refinancing of project(s) and/ or asset(s); if applicable	Bifurcation between financing and refinancing activities (estimated) to be provided
1.6		Details of the intended types of temporary placement of the unallocated and unutilised net proceeds from the issue of green debt securities	Types of activities in which the unutilized GDS proceeds can be temporarily placed is required to be disclosed
1.7		Details related to the perceived social and environmental risks and proposed mitigation plan associated with the project(s) proposed to be financed/ refinanced through the proceeds from the issue of	Potential social and environmental risks, and mitigation plan proposed

## CONTINUOUS DISCLOSURE REQUIREMENTS ON GDS ISSUER (1/3)

Clause	Existing requirements	Amended requirements	Remarks/ Actionable	
2.1	Utilisation of the proceeds of the issue, as per the tracking done by the issuer using the internal process as disclosed in offer document. Utilisation of the proceeds shall be verified by the report of an external auditor, to verify the internal tracking method and the allocation of funds towards the project(s) and/ or asset(s), from the proceeds of green debt securities.	Utilisation of the proceeds of the issue, as per the tracking done by the issuer using the internal process as disclosed in offer document. Utilisation of the proceeds shall be verified by the report of an external auditor, to verify the internal tracking method and the allocation of funds towards the project(s) and/or asset(s), from the proceeds of green debt securities.	No change	
2.2	Details of unutilized proceeds.	Details of unutilized proceeds including the temporary placement/utilization of unallocated and unutilized proceeds from each ISIN of green debt security issued by the issuer.	<ul> <li>ISIN-specific disclosures</li> <li>Temporary placement of issue proceeds also required to be disclosed</li> </ul>	

## CONTINUOUS DISCLOSURE REQUIREMENTS ON GDS ISSUER (2/3)

Clause	Existing requirements	Amended requirements	<b>Remarks/ Actionable</b>
2.3 (a)	List of project(s) and/ or asset(s) to which proceeds of the Green Debt Securities have been allocated/ invested including a brief description of such project(s) and/ or asset(s) and the amounts disbursed. However, where confidentiality agreements limit the amount of detail that can be made available about specific project(s) and/ or asset(s), information shall be presented about the areas in which such project(s) and/ or asset(s) fall into.	List of project(s) and/or asset(s) to which proceeds of the Green Debt Securities have been allocated/invested including a brief description of such project(s) and/or asset(s) and the amounts disbursed.	The limitation of disclosures in case of confidentiality agreement has been removed. Can it be taken to mean that the issuer will be required to disclose requisite information even if barred by confidentiality agreements?
2.3 (b)	Qualitative performance indicators and, where feasible, quantitative performance measures of the environmental impact of the project(s) and/ or asset(s). If the quantitative benefits/ impact cannot be ascertained, then the said fact may be appropriately disclosed along with the reasons for non-	Qualitative performance indicators and, where feasible, quantitative performance measures of the environmental impact of the project(s) and/or asset(s). If the quantitative benefits/impact cannot be ascertained, then the said fact may be appropriately disclosed along with the reasons for non-ascertainment of the benefits/impact on the environment	No change

## CONTINUOUS DISCLOSURE REQUIREMENTS ON GDS ISSUER (3/3)

Clause	Existing requirements	Amended requirements	Remarks/ Actionable
2.3. (d)		Details of the deployment of the mitigation plan (as disclosed in the offer documents) for the perceived social and environmental risks	Actual implementation of mitigation plan for the social and environmental risks in the course of green project/asset
2.4	any agent appointed by the issuer complying with globally accepted standard(s) for the issuance of green debt securities including measurement	Impact Reporting: Information, on a project-by-project basis, pertaining to reporting of the environmental impact of the projects financed by the green debt securities. Reporting standards or taxonomies followed by the issuer with regard to reporting of environmental impact, if any, shall also be disclosed.	Disclosure of environmental impact of financed projects, along with standards followed for such reporting. Reference may be taken from International Standards followed for impact reporting. This would mainly require disclosures of relevant indicators along with baseline figures to indicate the impact created.
		Disclosures of major elements of Business Responsibility and Sustainability Reporting (BRSR) as	Reporting was earlier based on the global standards, if any adopted by the

# CONTINUOUS DISCLOSURES W.R.T. ELEMENTS OF BRSR (ESSENTIAL

- Electricity consumption
- Fuel consumption

- Consumption through other sources
- Energy intensity per rupee of turnover
- Name of external agency carrying out evaluation/ assessment, if any.
- Any sites / facilities identified as <u>designated consumers</u> (DCs) under the PAT Scheme of the Government of India?
  - Disclose whether targets achieved?
  - If not, remedial action taken?
  - Generally includes energy-intensive sectors such as cement, railways, iron & steel etc
- Details relating to water withdrawal (by source), water consumption and water intensity
- Coverage and implementation of Zero Liquid Discharge mechanism, if implemented by the issuer
- Details of air emissions (other than GHG emissions) by the entity

- adopted to reduce usage of hazardous and toxic chemicals in the products and processes and the practices adopted to manage such wastes
- Details of environmental clearance (EC) if applicable
  - Location of operations/ offices
  - Type of operations
  - Compliance with conditions of EC
  - Corrective actions for non-compliance
- Details of environmental impact assessments (EIA)
  - Details of project
  - EIA notification no.
  - Date
  - Whether conducted by independent agency?
  - Results communicated in public domain
  - Relevant web-links
- Compliance with applicable environmental laws
  - Specify law not complied with
  - Details of non-compliance
  - Fines/ penalty/ action taken by regulator
  - Corrective action taken, if any

## CONTINUOUS DISCLOSURES W.R.T. ELEMENTS OF BRSR (LEADERSHIP INDICATORS)

- Break-up of the total energy consumed (in Joules or multiples) from renewable and non-renewable sources
- Details of water discharged by destination and level of treatment
- Water withdrawal, consumption and discharge in areas of water stress
- Details of total Scope 3 emissions & its intensity
- Details of significant direct & indirect impact of the entity on biodiversity in ecologically sensitive areas along-with prevention and remediation activities for ecologically sensitive areas
- Details and outcome of any specific initiatives/innovative technology/solutions undertaken to improve resource efficiency, or reduce impact due to emissions / effluent discharge / waste generated
- Does the entity have a business continuity and disaster management plan? Details/ link
- Disclose any significant adverse impact to the environment, arising from the value chain of the entity. What mitigation or adaptation measures have been taken by the entity in this regard
- Percentage of assessment of value chain partners (by value of business done with such partners) for environmental impacts.

### REGULATORY FRAMEWORK FOR ESG DEBT SECURITIES IN IFSC

- A broader concept closely related to GDS are ESG debt
- IFSCA (Issuance and Listing of Securities) Regs, 2021
  - Provides for issuance and listing of ESG debt securities
  - In accordance with Ch IX (compliances for all debt securities) and Ch X (additional compliances for ESG debt)
- Types of eligible entities (issuer)
  - Company incorporated in IFSC/ India/ foreign jurisdiction, if
    - Duly incorporated in accordance with the relevant laws of its place of incorporation;
    - Operating in conformity with its constitution, and
    - listing of securities in IFSC is in accordance with the applicable laws of the jurisdiction of incorporation
- IFSC Exchanges in operation
  - India International Exchange (BSE)
  - NSE International Exchange

- Green/ social/ sustainability/ sustainability-linked bonds in alignment with standards such as –
  - ICMA Principles
  - Climate Bonds Standards
  - ASEAN Standards
  - European Union Standards/ Taxonomy
  - Any framework/ methodology specified by a competent authority in India
- Mandatory independent external review of alignment of ESG bonds with recognized frameworks
  - shall be independent of the issuer, its directors, senior management, key managerial personnel and advisers
  - Remunerated in a manner to avoid conflicts of interest
  - Shall have sufficient expertise in assessing ESG debt securities
- Additional disclosures in offer document and annual reports-

### **GUIDELINES ON GREEN WASHING**

a product, service, or business operation.

- Globally, concerns are raised over green washing
- SEBI <u>Circular dated 3<sup>rd</sup> February, 2023</u> provides for dos' and don'ts for avoidance of green washing
  - To be appended as Ch IX-A to the existing Operational Circular
- Guidelines include the following -
  - Continuous monitoring of actual reduction of the adverse environmental impact and contribution towards sustainable economy
  - Prohibition on utilisation of green bonds' proceeds for purposes not provided under ILNCS Regs
  - Prohibit use of misleading labels or picking data selectively that highlight green practices and obscure unfavourable data
  - Maintain highest standards while adhering to assigned rating
  - Quantify negative externalities associated with utilization of the green bonds' proceeds
  - Prohibition on making untrue claims giving false impression of certification by a third-party entity

provided under ILNCS Regulations

- Mandatory disclosure to GDS holders
- Undertake early redemption of GDS if so required by the majority of GDS holders
- Are GDS investors required to approach issuer for redemption or issuer to take steps for seeking approval?
  - The language reads "if required, by majority of debenture holders"
  - So one may contend that investor is required to approach
- However, utilization for un-authorized purpose leads to breach of contract
  - Therefore, in our view, issuer will be required to obtain approval from GDS holders
    - Through calling a meeting of GDS holders, or
    - Seeking no-objection letters from GDS holders

## GDS ISSUANCE UNDER INDIAN LISTING JURISDICTION (1/2)

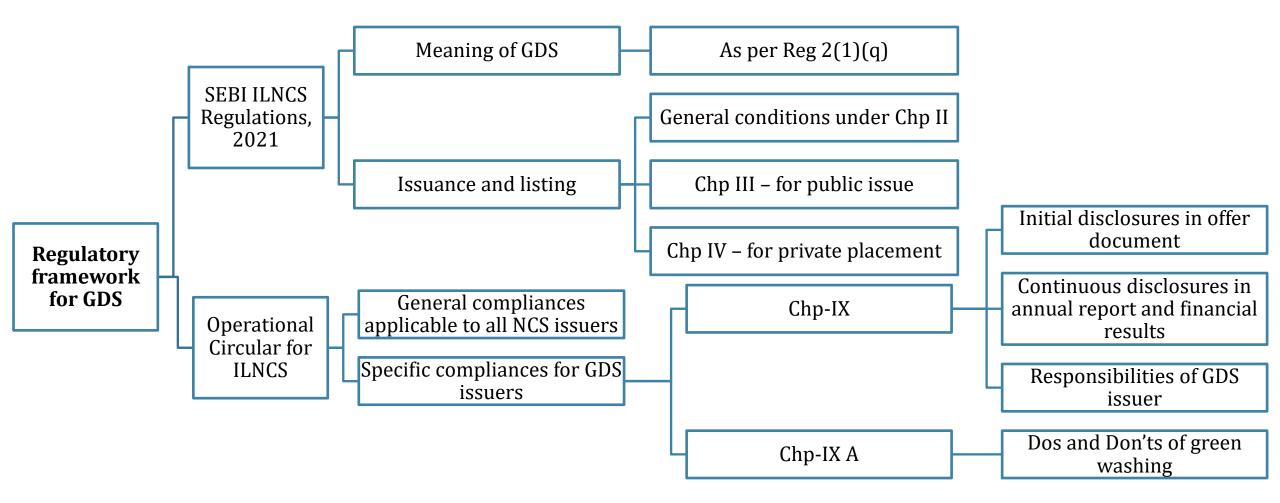
As of 14<sup>th</sup> September, 2022, 15 issuers have listed GDS on indian stock exchanges aggregating to Ks. 4559 crores in volume. (Source- <u>SEBI statistics</u>)

Issuer	Category of	Third party	Listed on	Date of	Date of	Amount	Coupon	Tenure
	project	reviewer		issue	maturity	in crs		
L&T Infrastructure Finance Company Ltd				29/06/2017	18/11/2024	667.00	7.59%	7.39
Tata Cleantech Capital Limited	Renewable energy	Not appointed	NSE	18/12/2018	18/12/2023	180.00	8.74%	5.00
Indian Renewable Energy	Solar, SPV and wind	KPMG India Emorgant Vontures India	NSE and BSE	03/01/2019	03/01/2029	275.00	8.51%	10.01
<u>Development Agency</u> <u>Limited</u>	energy	Emergent Ventures India Pvt Ltd		17/01/2019	17/01/2029	590.00	8.47%	10.01
<u>Ghaziabad Nagar Nigam</u> *	Sustainable waste management (Waste- water treatment)	Not appointed	BSE	31/03/2021	06/04/2025	150.00	8.10%	4.02
<u>Yarrow Infrastructure</u> Private Limited	Green-field solar PV projects	KPMG	BSE	01/07/2021	01/07/2024	581.00	6.49%	3.00
Priapus Infrastructure Limited				01/07/2021	01/07/2024	16.00	6.49%	3.00
<u>RattanIndia Solar 2 Private</u> <u>Limited</u>	Solar electricity generation	KPMG	BSE	01/07/2021	01/07/2024	227.00	6.49%	3.00

### GDS ISSUANCE UNDER INDIAN LISTING JURISDICTION (2/2)

lssuer	Category of project	Third party reviewer	Listed on		Date of maturity		Coupo n	Tenure
Malwa Solar Power Generation Private Limited				01/07/2021	01/07/2024	197.00	6.49%	3.00
Citra Real Estate Limited				01/07/2021	01/07/2024	19.00	6.49%	3.00
Sepset Constructions Limited				01/07/2021	01/07/2024	197.00	6.49%	3.00
Fermi Solarfarms Private Limited				28/02/2022	28/02/2025	337.00	6.75%	3.00
Clean Sustainable Energy Private Limited				28/02/2022	28/02/2025	334.00	6.75%	3.00
<u>Avaada Sataramh Private</u> <u>Limited</u>	Solar electricity generation		BSE	28/02/2022	28/02/2025	270.00	6.75%	3.00
Avaada Solarise Energy Private Limited				28/02/2022	28/02/2025	499.00	6.75%	3.00

### Regulatory framework for GDS issuance



### Details of GDS issuances in India

 As of 14<sup>th</sup> September, 2022, 15 issuers have listed GDS on Indian stock exchanges aggregating to Rs. 4539 crores in volume. (Source- <u>SEBI statistics</u>)

Issuer	Date of issue	Date of	Amt in	Coupon	Tenure	ISIN
		maturity	crore			
L&T Infrastructure Finance Company Ltd	29/06/2017	18/11/2024	667.00	7.59%	7.39	INE691I07DZ9
Tata Cleantech Capital Limited	18/12/2018	18/12/2023	180.00	8.74%	5.00	INE857Q07216
Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency Limited	03/01/2019	03/01/2029	275.00	8.51%	10.01	INE202E07260
Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency Limited	17/01/2019	17/01/2029	590.00	8.47%	10.01	INE202E07278
Ghaziabad Nagar Nigam *	31/03/2021	06/04/2025	150.00	8.10%	4.02	INE0GVF24014
Yarrow Infrastructure Private Limited	01/07/2021	01/07/2024	581.00	6.49%	3.00	INE001W07011
Priapus Infrastructure Limited	01/07/2021	01/07/2024	16.00	6.49%	3.00	INE964M07011
Rattanindia Solar 2 Private Limited	01/07/2021	01/07/2024	227.00	6.49%	3.00	INE935V07012
Malwa Solar Power Generation Private Limited	01/07/2021	01/07/2024	197.00	6.49%	3.00	INE999X07014
Citra Real Estate Limited	01/07/2021	01/07/2024	19.00	6.49%	3.00	INE969M07010
Sepset Constructions Limited	01/07/2021	01/07/2024	197.00	6.49%	3.00	INE961M07017
Fermi Solarfarms Private Limited	28/02/2022	28/02/2025	337.00	6.75%	3.00	INE404X07015
Clean Sustainable Energy Private Limited	28/02/2022	28/02/2025	334.00	6.75%	3.00	INE00JT07017
Avaada Sataramh Private Limited	28/02/2022	28/02/2025	270.00	6.75%	3.00	INE0CSU07013
Avaada Solarise Energy Private Limited	28/02/2022	28/02/2025	499.00	6.75%	3.00	INE07H107012

## Amended definition of Green Debt Securities (GDS)

- GDS is defined under Reg 2(1)(q) of NCS Regs
  - means a **debt security** issued for raising funds
    - Ordinary debt securities with "green" label attached to it
  - subject to the conditions as may be specified by the Board from time to time,
    - Prescribed under Ch IX and IX-A of Operational Circular
  - to be utilised for project(s) and/ or asset(s)
     falling under any of the following categories
    - Categories of projects/ assets specified under the definition clause

- Eligible categories for GDS
  - renewable and sustainable energy
  - clean transportation
  - climate change adaptation
  - **Energy efficiency** including efficient and green buildings
  - sustainable waste management
  - sustainable land use
  - biodiversity conservation
  - pollution prevention and control
  - circular economy adapted products, production technologies and processes and/or eco-efficient products
  - blue bonds (for sustainable water management)
  - yellow bonds (for solar energy creation)
  - transition bonds (for transition in line with India's Intended Nationally Determined Contributions)
    - climate targets determined by India under the Paris Agreement at the Conference of Parties 21 in 2015, and at the Conference of Parties 26 in 2021, as revised from time to time

# Snapshot of recent amendments to GDS framework

## SEBI (ILNCS) (Amendment) Regulations, 2023

- Categories of projects/ assets for which GDS proceeds can be utilized has been broadened
  - Includes new categories in alignment with voluntary ICMA Green Bond Principles
  - Includes "transition bonds" for funding activities aligned with India's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs)
  - Includes new colored bonds, viz., "blue" bonds and "yellow" bonds for easier identification and attracting investors

#### Amendments to Ch IX of the Operational Circular

- Enhances initial and continuous disclosure requirements on GDS issuers
  - Requires mandatory appointment of independent third party reviewer/ certifier
  - Promotes transparency of information by requiring disclosure of relevant standards/ taxonomies referred for determining eligibility
  - Attracts impact reporting on an annual basis
  - Requires disclosure of specific elements of BRSR in terms of Principle 6 of the NGRBC principles relating to environmental conservation

#### Insertion of Ch IX-A to the existing Operational Circular

- Prescribes certain Do's and Don'ts for avoidance of green washing by GDS issuers
  - Requires disclosure to GDS investors in case of use of proceeds for un-authorized purposes, and early redemption if so required by investors in such case
  - Prohibits use of misleading lables, cherry-picking data or making untrue claims
  - Requires the issuer to quantify the negative externalities associated with the utilization of GDS proceeds

# Appointment of Third Party Reviewer

- Mandatory appointment of third party reviewer on a continuous basis
  - On a comply or explain basis for the period of two years from issuance of Circular
- For review/ certification of
  - processes including project evaluation and selection criteria, project categories eligible for financing by GDS.
  - Post-issue management of the use of proceeds from GDS and
  - verification of the internal tracking and impact reporting
- Eligibility to act as independent third party reviewer
  - Not specified under the NCS Regulations/ Operational Circular
  - Any person having the requisite technical knowledge and expertise may act as such
  - Voluntary institutes such as ICMA and Climate Bonds Standards Board (CBSB) provides list of existing verifiers
- Motivation for investors or demotivation for issuers?
  - Increased compliance burden may act as a deterrent for sustainable debt market in India
  - However, such appointment is already in practice among existing GDS issuers (e.g. <u>Yes Bank, State Bank of India</u>, <u>Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency Ltd (IREDA)</u> etc)

# Guidelines on Green Washing

- Green-washing is generally referred as 'making false, misleading, unsubstantiated, or otherwise incomplete claims about the sustainability of a product, service, or business operation.'
  - Globally, concerns are raised over green washing
- SEBI <u>Circular dated 3<sup>rd</sup> February, 2023</u> provides for dos' and don'ts for avoidance of green washing
  - To be appended as Ch IX-A to the existing Operational Circular
- Guidelines include the following -
  - Continuous monitoring of actual reduction of the adverse environmental impact and contribution towards sustainable economy
  - Prohibition on utilisation of green bonds' proceeds for purposes not provided under ILNCS Regs
  - Prohibit use of misleading labels or picking data selectively that highlight green practices and obscure unfavourable data
  - Maintain **highest standards** while adhering to assigned rating
  - Quantify negative externalities associated with utilization of the green bonds' proceeds
  - Prohibition on making untrue claims giving false impression of certification by a third-party entity

- Utilisation of GDS proceeds for purposes other than as provided under ILNCS Regulations
  - Mandatory disclosure to GDS holders
  - Undertake early redemption of GDS if so required by the majority of GDS holders
- Are GDS investors required to approach issuer for redemption or issuer to take steps for seeking approval?
  - The language reads "if required, by majority of debenture holders"
  - So one may contend that investor is required to approach
- However, utilization for un-authorized purpose leads to breach of contract
  - Therefore, in our view, issuer will be required to obtain approval from GDS holders
    - Through calling a meeting of GDS holders, or
    - Seeking no-objection letters from GDS holders

# Consultation Paper for amendment in SEBI (ILNCS) Regulations Time till February 24, 2023 for public comments



## Summary of changes proposed – 1/2

#### Common disclosure requirement

- To bring parity between initial disclosures to be provided for public issue and private placement of NCS.
- Once listed, privately placed debt is akin to a security through public issue.

#### General Information Document (GID)

- Applicability: Issue of NCS & Commercial Papers (CPs) on a private placement basis.
- When to file: Issuers to file GID with the stock exchanges (SEs) at the time of first issuance.
- Validity: 1 year from date of opening of first offer of NCS under the GID.
- Contents: Shall contain the following disclosures as specified:
  - In Annex-I of the Consultation Paper;
  - In CA, 2013;
  - Additional disclosures as maybe specified by SEBI.

### Key Information Document (KID)

- Intent: Save time, cost and effort of repeated disclosures
- Applicability: Issue of NCS & Commercial Papers (CPs) on a private placement basis.
- When to file: : Issuers to file KID with the SEs for subsequent private placement of NCS and CPs.
- **Frequency:** At the time of each issue
- **Contents:** 
  - details of the offer made through the KID;
  - financial information as per Para 3.3.8 of Annex-I of the Consultation Paper(not more than 6 months old);
  - material changes and developments, not disclosed in GID.
  - In case of CPs Additional disclosures specified in Annex II of the Consultation Paper.

### Shelf Placement Memorandum to be done away with

- suffered the deficiency of shelf limit but the KID has no limit on the issue size to be raised during the validity period.
- KID will dispense the requirement of filing numerous<sup>42</sup> documents for subsequent issuances.

## Summary of changes proposed – 2/2

#### Mandatory listing of NCS

- Intent: to address concerns;
  - information asymmetry;
  - undesirable opacity in the corporate bond market;
  - regulatory or information arbitrage;
  - possibility of mis-selling;
  - counterparty risk as trades not settled on clearing corporation;
  - liquidity risk for investors as no buyers for unlisted debt security;
  - No recourse to SEBI's grievance redressal mechanism.
- Applicability: Issuers having outstanding listed debt securities and proposing to make further issuances
- Timeline for listing:
- Prospective issuances: To be listed as per provisions applicable to specified securities (Reg. 28 of LODR Regulations)
- Past issuances:
  - O/s unlisted debt securities of maturity of more than 5 yrs Mandatory listing within a specified time period
  - O/s unlisted debt securities of maturity of less than 5 yrs Optional listing within a specified time period

- Mandatory disclosure of issue related expenses
  - Intent: To ensure transparency in disclosure of issue related expenses
  - Requirement: Issuers to disclose various issue expenses incurred on issuance of NCS irrespective of type of issuance.
  - Manner of Disclosure: Shall include break up for various heads and percentage of contribution to total issue expenses of respective categories
    - Lead manager(s) fees including underwriting commission, if any.

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- Brokerage, selling commission and upload fees.
- Registrars to the issue
- Legal Advisors.
- Advertising and marketing expenses.
- Regulators including stock exchanges.
- Printing and distribution of issue stationary

# **ISIN Restrictions for Private Placement of NCS**



## SEBI further caps limit for ISINs to reduce fragmentation and boost liquidity (1/2)

SEBI, vide <u>circular</u> dated October 31, 2022, has further capped the number of ISINs for debt securities issued on private placement basis maturing in a given financial year. The position may remail unchanged for large issuers of NCDs.

- The revised cap will be **effective from April 01, 2023**.
- The present limits, as introduced on June 30, 2017, were included in Chapter VIII of the <u>operational circular</u> dated August 10, 2021.

Particulars	<b>Existing limit</b>	Revised limit		
Maximum ISINs maturing in a financial year	17	14		
<ul> <li>Further bifurcation of ISINs:</li> <li>i. Maximum ISINs for plain vanilla debt securities</li> <li>ii. Additional limit in case of breach of a aforesaid limit if total o/s amount across the 9 ISINs maturing in a given FY reaches Rs. 15,000 Cr</li> <li>iii. Maximum ISIN for structured/MLDs are issued</li> </ul>	12 N.A. 5	9 3 5		
Maximum ISINs for the issuance of capital gains tax securities by the authorized issuers under section 54EC of the Income Tax Act, 1961 on private placement basis	12	6		
Maximum ISINs, if only structured/MLDs are issued *Additional 3 ISIN in case the conditions stated above is satisfied.	12	9*		
The newly capped limits shall not be applicable to ISINs utilised for issuance of debt securities upto March 31, 2023 and maturing in later years.				

# Manner of computing ISIN

Year of issue	Tenure in years	Maturity year	Number of ISIN
April, 2023	4	April, 2027	1
June, 2023	4	June 2027	2
December 2023	4	December 2027	3
January 2024	3.5	June 2027	4
March, 2024	3.5	September 2027	5
April, 2024	3	April 2027	6
May 2024	3.25	August 2027	7
November 2024	3	November 2027	8
February, 2025	2.5	August 2027	9
March, 2025	2.75	December, 2027	Depends on o/s value of above ISINs If less than 15000 crore – no new ISIN (consider re-issuance) If 15,000 crore or more – additional 3 ISINs

## SEBI further caps limit for ISINs to reduce fragmentation and boost liquidity (2/2)

The operability of this circular for an issuer with respect to ISINs (plain vanilla debt securities) issued prior to and from March 01, 2023 is illustrated as under:

Date of Issuance of listed debt securities	Year of maturity (cited as an example)	No. of ISINs already maturing in the FY (citied as an example)	Value of listed debt securities outstanding (in INR)	Applicability of this circular
Up to March 31, 2023	FY 2024-25	11	Any amount	Since the issuance is within March 31, 2023, the existing limit of 12 ISINs will apply.
April 01, 2023	FY 2025-26	7	Less than Rs. 15000 crore	Revised limits specified in this circular <b>shall apply</b> . Issuers will have only 2 more ISINs.
April 01, 2023 onwards	FY 2026-27	9	Less than Rs. 15000 crore	Revised limits specified in this circular <b>shall apply</b> . As the limit of 9 ISIN has been exhausted, no fresh ISIN will be allotted.
April 01, 2023 onwards	FY 2026-27	9	Equal to or more than Rs. 15000 crore	Issuer eligible for additional 3 ISINs and can make fresh issuance.

# Timeline for listing of privately placed debt



## **Timelines for listing of privately placed debentures – Till Dec 31, 2022**

Sl. No	Details of Activities	Due Date
1	Closure of Issue	T day
2	Receipt of Funds	To be completed by T+2 working day
3	Allotment of Securities	
4	Issuer to make listing application to stock exchange(s)	To be completed by T+4 working day
5	Listing permission from stock exchange(s)	

## **Revised** Timelines for Issuances made on or after Jan 01, 2023 – 1/2

Category	Timeline (Working day)	Nature of Activity		
		EBP	Non-EBP	
In-principle approval	Prior to T-2/ T-5 (EBP); Prior to T (Non-EBP)	In-principle approval from SEs- Prior to the date of providing PM & Term sheet to EBP(s)	In-principle approval from SEs- prior to issue open date.	
Bidding announcement	On or before T-1	Bidding start time & close time to be provided to the EBP	Open and close date to be disclosed in PM	
Day of bidding/ Issue period	Т	<ul> <li>Bidding on EBP.</li> <li>Provisional allocation</li> <li>pay-in obligations to bidders</li> </ul>	Final allotment to investor to finalize on closure date.	
ISIN allocation/ assignment/ confirmation by Depository	On or before T+1	Receipt of ISIN from depository to be ensured by issuer prior to pay-in	Receipt of ISIN from depository to be ensured by issuer prior to pay-in	

**'T' – Being the day of bidding/Issue Period** 

## **Revised** Timelines for Issuances made on or after Jan 01, 2023 – 2/2

		EBP	Non-EBP
se Is	On or before T+1/ T+2 (as per settlement cycle chosen by ssuer) (EBP) On or before T+2 ( Non-EBP)	<ul> <li>Pay-in by bidders,</li> <li>Communication of receipt by issuer,</li> <li>Final allocation</li> <li>Payment of stamp duty.</li> <li>Filing of corporate action by RTA.</li> <li>Credit of securities to investors</li> <li>pay out to Issuer</li> <li>Issue of credit confirmation by depository to issuer</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Receipt of funds by issuer,</li> <li>finalization of allotment,</li> <li>payment of stamp duty,</li> <li>Filing of corporate action by RTA.</li> <li>Credit of securities to investors,</li> <li>pay out to Issuer,</li> <li>Issue of credit confirmation by depository to issuer.</li> </ul>
Listing 0	On or before T+3	<ul> <li>Make application of listing</li> <li>Confirmation of listing permission by SEs</li> <li>ISIN activation by depositary</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Make application of listing</li> <li>Confirmation of listing permission by SEs</li> <li>ISIN activation by depositary</li> </ul>

PM- Placement Memorandum

EBP – Electronic Book Process

# Revised framework for Electronic Book Provider Platform

## **EBP Framework : An overview – 1/2**

#### Platforms

- BSE <u>BSE Bond</u>
- **NSE** <u>NSE</u> EBP

#### Eligible participants/ bidders

- Qualified Institutional Buyers (QIBs) as defined in SEBI ICDR;
- Non-QIB who/which has been authorised by the issuer, to participate in particular issue.
- Reqd. to enroll with EBP as onetime exercise. KYC to be done in the manner prescribed.
  - For QIBs by EBP
  - For non- QIBs bidding directly by issuer
  - For non-QIBs bidding through arranger by arranger.

#### Issuer obligations

- Ensure compliance with applicable law, including CA, 2013;
- Provide placement memorandum and term sheet at least 2 WD before issue opening date, with reqd. disclosures;
- Disclosure details of allotment after closure of issue;

## Applicability

- Private placement of NCS
  - Single issue, inclusive of green shoe option;
  - Shelf issue, consisting of multiple tranches, in a financial year;
  - Subsequent issue, in a financial year,
  - That aggregates to or exceeds Rs. 100 crore.
    - Threshold revised w.e.f. Jan 1, 2023.
- Private placement of NCDs/ NCRPS by issuers who are in existence for less than 3 years
  - The issue is made on the EBP platform irrespective of the issue size; and
  - The issue is open for subscription only to QIBs
- issuance of PDIs, PNCPS, PCPS, RNCPS, and instruments of similar nature which are essentially non-equity regulatory instruments, forming part of a bank's or NBFC's capital
  - The issue is made on the EBP platform irrespective of the issue size.

## **EBP Framework : An overview – 2/2**

#### Bidding process

- Bidding on EBP platform can take place between 9 am to 5 pm on SE working days
- Period of bidding window decided by issuer. Should be open atleast for 1 hour.
- Bidding announcement to be done by issuer
  - Atleast 1 WD before initiating the bidding process.
  - Details of bid opening and closing time, with other details.
  - Can be changed by issuer, maximum 2 times.
    - To be done atleast 1 day before bidding date.
- Participants to enter bids, may place multiple.
  - Cancellation, modification permitted during bidding period.
- Bids are disclosed on EBP Platform
  - Open bidding on real time basis. Except bidder name.
  - Closed bidding disseminated after the closure.
- Allotment and settlement parameter
  - Discussed in next slide.

#### Pay-in obligations

- To be done from the account of bidder to whom allocation to be made.
  - The funds pay-in by the successful bidders will be made only from the bank account(s), which have been provided/ updated in the EBP system.
- Manner of pay-in to be given by Issuer in the PM
- In case of non-fulfillment by allottees
  - be debarred from accessing the bidding platform across all EBPs for a period of thirty days from the date of such default.
  - For arranger refer next slide.
- RTA, to reconcile the information received from escrow bank and then intimate to the issuer about receipt of funds, give instruction for corporate action, instruct for release of funds

#### Withdrawal of issue

- Bids not received upto base issue size, bidder defaulted, cut-off yield higher than estimated cut-off yield disclosed to EBP.
- Otherwise, debarred from accessing platform for a period of 7 days.

## SEBI rationalizes issuances on <u>Electronic Book Platform ('EBP')</u> – Limits | Bidding Process | Anchor Investor | Basis of Allotment. w.e.f. January 01, 2023

- □ Limit for Mandatory issuance on EBP reduced to **Rs. 50** crore from Rs. 100 crore. (made stringent)
- Limit for Greenshoe portion (*new*)
  - **C**annot exceed **5 times the base issue size**.
- Additional disclosure on Interest rate parameters to be made in Placement Memorandum ('PP') and term sheet (new)
  - Zero Coupon,
  - Fixed Coupon,
  - Floating coupon.
- □ System-related confirmation by Eligible participants (*new*)
  - Not using software algorithms, bots, or automation tools for placing bids.
- □ No preferential access to any bidder on a selective basis
  - EBP has to ensure the same.

□ Limits for bids upto which can be made through arrangers' modified

- **5% of base issue size** or;
- **100 crore** (earlier 15 crores); whichever is **lower**.
- Arranger to ensure while bidding on behalf of multiple participants.
- □ New term introduced **Client bid** 
  - Bids entered on behalf of eligible participants by the arranger.
  - Disclosure norms for the arranger w.r.t. proprietary bids or client bid or consolidated bid remains the same
- □ Bidding time and period (*new*)
  - List of eligible participants to be provided to the EBP by the issuer at least one hour before the bidding start time.
- □ Basis of entering bid
  - Price (in INR)
  - Coupon (in %) in 4 decimal places. (same was disclosed in basis points earlier) 55
  - Spread in basis points (new)

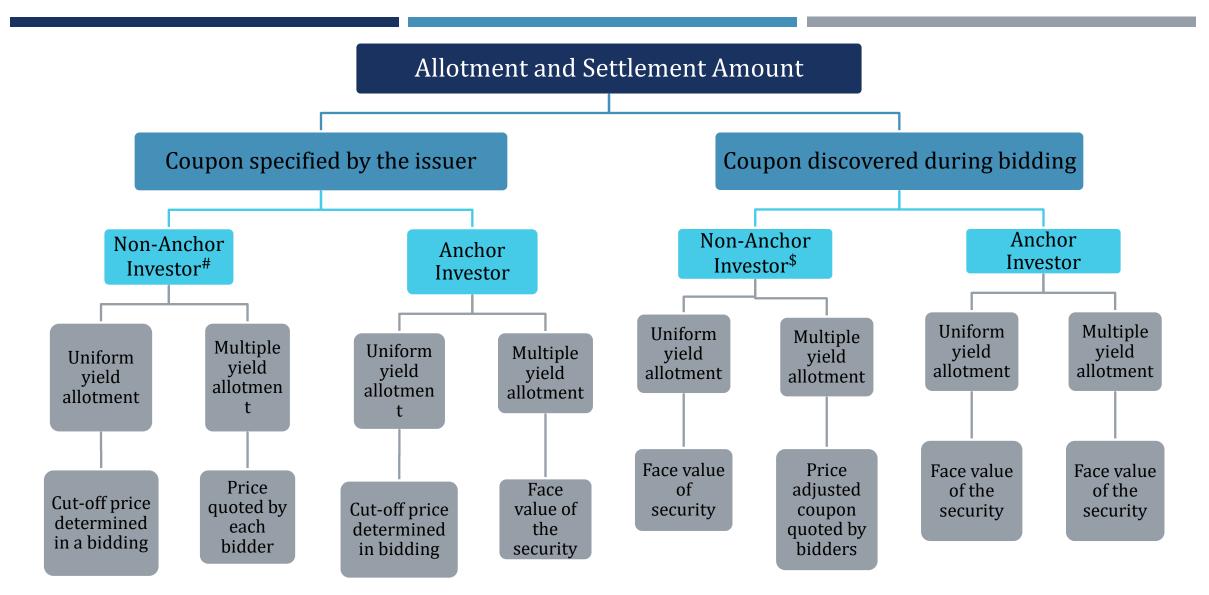
## SEBI rationalizes issuances on <u>Electronic Book Platform ('EBP')</u> – Limits | Bidding Process | Anchor Investor | Basis of Allotment. w.e.f. January 01, 2023

#### Bidding Process

- Coupon Specified by issuer The face value and coupon remaining constant, bids/ quotes shall be placed by the bidders in terms of price.
- **Coupon/ spread discovered during bidding** The face value remaining constant, bids/ quotes shall be placed by the bidders in terms of coupon/ spread.
- Modification of Bids during the last 10 mins of the bidding period allowed for:
  - Downward revision of coupon/spread; (new) or
  - Upward modification of price; and/ or (new)
  - Upward revision in terms of bid size.
- Basis of allotment modified
  - Refer next slide.
  - Earlier was based on first on "yield priority" basis.

#### □ Reservation for anchor portion permitted (new)

- No bidding for the anchor portion on the EBP.
- Total allocation cannot exceed 30 % of the base issue size.
- Disclosure requirement Details of Anchor Investor, quantum allocated
- Eligible for bidding in the non-anchor portion.
  - If identified as an eligible participant by the issuer.
- Grounds for debarment of arranger across all EBPs. *(new)* 
  - In case of 3 instances of non-fulfillment of pay-in obligations by clients, debarment for a period of 7 days from the date of such 3rd or subsequent default.
- □ Measures introduced to avoid "fat finger" errors by eligible participants (*new*)
  - EBP to provide facility to define limits/ range within which quotes to be placed.



# Bids shall be arranged as per 'price time priority'.\$ bids shall be arranged as per 'yield time priority'.

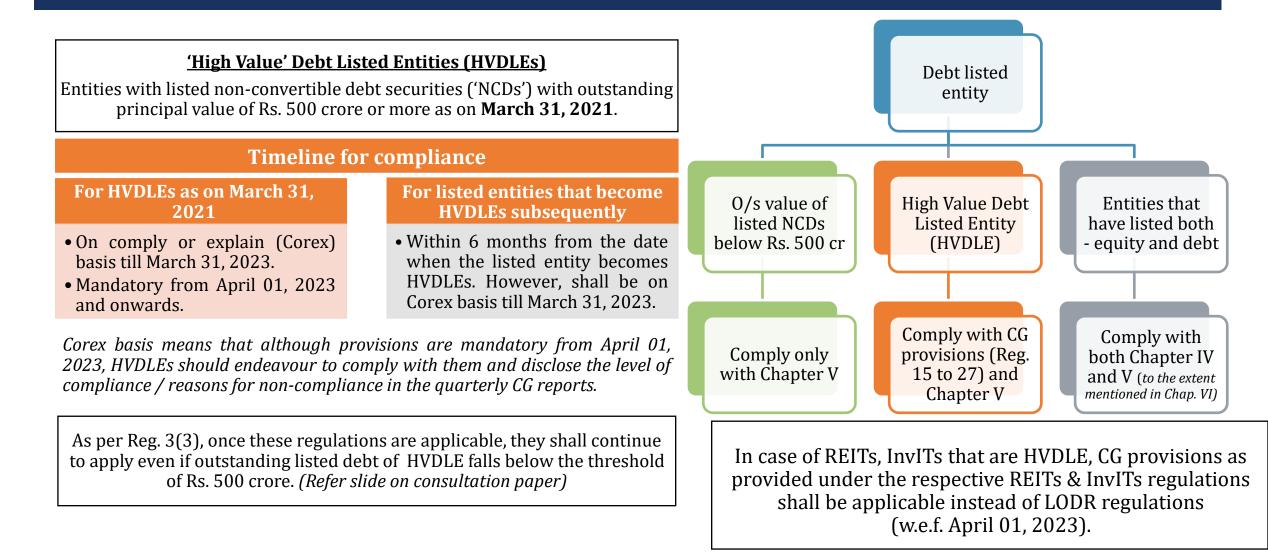
## Analysis of issuances made on EBP in 2023\*

Particulars	Parameter and % of issuance made			
Security	Secured - 73%		Unsecured - 27%	
Coupon rate	Fixed - 92%	Floa	ating - 6%	Zero Coupon - 2%
Type of Bidding	Coupon Discovery - 25%		Price discovery	7 -75%
Manner of Allotment	Multiple Yield/Price - 24%	6	Uniform Yield/	Price- 76%
Type of Book Bidding	Closed - 41%		Open - 59%	
Type of issuance	Fresh - 78%		Re-issuance - 2	2%

\* Basis on the issuance data of 51 issuances made under revised EBP mechanism, available on BSE-Bond (21) & NSE- EBP (30) as on February 21, 2023

# High Value Debt Listed Entities

## Applicability of LODR Regulations on 'High Value' Debt Listed Entities



### Immediate actionable for HVDLEs (1/2)

- **D** Board Composition as per reg. 17 :
  - There shall be at least one woman director and not less than 50% of the board shall comprise of NEDs;
  - Where the Chairperson of the board is a NED- at least 1/3rd of the board shall comprise of IDs and where the listed entity does not have a regular NED as Chairperson – at least ½ of the board shall comprise of IDs
  - Incase of appointment of director, shareholder approval to be taken in the next AGM or within 3 months of appt. (whichever is earlier).
- **Appointment of Independent Directors** 
  - Board has to undertake D & O Insurance, familiarization program for all IDs on the board.
- **Board meeting :** 
  - CEO, CFO to give a compliance certificate to Board, in format as mention in Part B of schedule II.
- **Committees:** 
  - All mandatory committees for a listed entity have to be constituted viz; AC, NRC, SRC, RMC;
- **Framing of policies** 
  - RPT policy, material subsidiary policy, Code of Conduct for Directors and SMP, Succession planning policy, Board diversity policy;
  - Frame, board approval, disseminate on website.
- **RPTs:** 
  - AC approval as per revised mechanism for all RPTs;
  - Half yearly disclosure disclosures on RPT along with the results.

# ❑ Corporate Governance requirements with respect to subsidiary of listed entity u/r 24 :

- ID on the board of listed entity to be on the board of such material subsidiary;
- AC to review of the investments made by unlisted subsidiary (whether material / not).
- Minutes of Board meeting of unlisted subsidiary to be placed before the Board of the company.

#### Secretarial Audit u/r 24A :

- Such listed entity and its material unlisted subsidiaries incorporated in India shall undertake secretarial audit
  - The secretarial audit report shall be annexed to the annual report;
- Secretarial compliance report to be filed with the stock exchange(s) within 60 days from the end of each financial year;

#### **Obligations of senior management / Directors u/r 26:**

- Director to notify about the changes in his/her committee positions;
- Directors and SMP to annually affirm compliance with the code of conduct.
- SMPs to disclose all material, financial and commercial transactions where they have personal interest that may have a potential conflict with the interest of the listed entity.
  - conflict of interest relates to dealing in the shares of listed entity, commercial dealings with bodies, which have shareholding of management and their relatives etc.
- **Submission of quarterly CG report to SE u/r 27** 
  - As per <u>SEBI Circular</u>, only Annexure 1 to be submitted.

### 1. Identification of RPs

- HVD to revisit list of related parties of the HVD
  - List is wider than that provided under Companies Act

### 2. Identification of RPTs

- As the meaning of RPT is wider now, certain further information is required w.r.t. RPs
  - If HVD has a listed parent entity
  - If HVD have subsidiaries

## 3. Frame RPT policy

Including criteria for regarding a 'material modification'

## 4. Prior approval of AC for FY 23-24 RPTs

- Validly constituted Audit Committee in terms of Reg 18
  - Only ID members should vote to approve RPTs
- All RPTs by HVD to be placed before AC
  - with its own RP, RP of parent listed entity or RP of subsidiaries
- All RPTs by subsidiaries of HVD with own RP or RP of HVD or RP of other subsidiaries
  - Only if significant under Reg. 23 (2), if HVD is not a party

- Information as per <u>SEBI Circular of November 22</u>, <u>2021</u> applicable to HVDLEs.
  - As per <u>SEBI Circular dated January 7, 2022</u>

## **5. Identifying Material RPTs for FY 23-24**

- for transactions by HVD or any of its subsidiary with RP of HVD or RP of subsidiaries exceeding the thresholds
  - 1000 crore or 10% of annual consolidated turnover of HVD, whichever is lower.
- Obtain prior approval of shareholders of HVD.
  - In case of closely held companies, Explain and not comply.
  - Refer slides on Consultation Paper

## 6. Disclosure of RPTs on half yearly basis

- In the format prescribed by SEBI
  - <u>SEBI Circular dated January 7, 2022</u>
- Along with standalone financial results for HY
- publish the same on its website62

# SEBI on January 22, 2020 issued a circular providing fines for non-compliance with provisions of LODR Regulations. The fines for non-compliance of various regulations of LODR are as follows:

Regulation	Fine/action	Regulation
<b>Regulation 6(1)</b> Non-compliance with requirement to appoint a CS as the compliance officer	₹ 1,000 per day	<b>Regulation 17(2A)</b> Non-compliance with the requirements pertaining to quorum of Board meetings.
<b>Regulation 7(1)</b> Non-compliance with requirement to appoint STA	₹ 1,000 per day	<b>Regulation 18(1)</b> Non-compliance with the constitution of audit committee
<b>Regulation 13(1)</b> Failure to ensure that adequate steps are taken for	₹ 1,000 per day	<b>Regulation 19(1)/ 19(2)</b> Non-compliance with requirement to appoint STA
expeditious redressal of investor complaints <b>Regulation 13(3)</b> Non-submission of the statement on shareholder	₹ 1,000 per day	<b>Regulation 20(2) / (2A)</b> Non-compliance with the constitution of stakeholder relationship committee
complaints within the period prescribed under this regulation or under any circular issued in respect of redressal of investor grievances		<b>Regulation 21(2)</b> Non-compliance with the constitution of risk management committee
<b>Regulation 17(1)</b> Non-compliance with the requirements pertaining to the composition of the Board including failure to appoint woman director	₹ 5,000 per day	<b>Regulation 23 (9)</b> Non-compliance with disclosure of related party transactions on consolidated basis.
<b>Regulation 17(1A)</b> Non-compliance with the requirements pertaining to appointment or continuation of Non-executive director who has attained the age of seventy five years	₹ 2,000 per day	<b>Regulation 24A</b> Non-compliance with submission of secretarial compliance report
<b>Regulation 17(2)</b> Non-compliance with the requirements pertaining to the number of Board meetings	₹ 10,000 per instance	<b>Regulation 27(2)</b> Non-submission of the Corporate governance compliance report within the period provided under this regulation

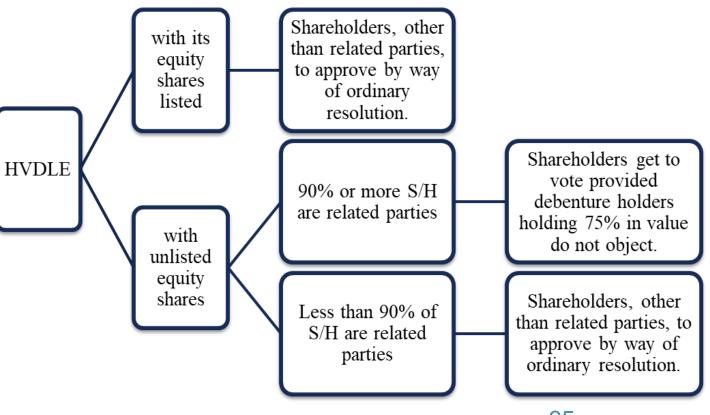
# Consultation Paper for LODR amendment relating to HVDLEs

Time till February 22, 2023 for public comments



## **Summary of changes proposed**

- Criteria for ceasing to be an HVDLE
  - the outstanding value of listed NCDs of such entity reduces and remains below the specified threshold (Rs. 500 crore) for a period of three consecutive financial years.
    - To be ascertained as on financial year end.
    - To align with condition under second proviso to Reg. 15 (2) (a), that applies to equity listed entities.
      - paid up equity share capital remains below Rs. 10 cr and net worth below Rs. 25 cr.
- Manner of approving Material RPTs
  - Proposed process applicable to HVDLEs that are only debt listed and with 90% or more shareholders as related parties.
    - As per data sought by SEBI, out of 138 HVDLEs as on March 31, 2022, 104 HVDLEs fall in above category.
  - Other HVDLEs to follow existing process under Reg. 23 (4)
    - no related party shall vote to approve such resolutions whether the entity is a related party to the particular transaction or not.



## **Debenture holders get a right to object Material RPTs**

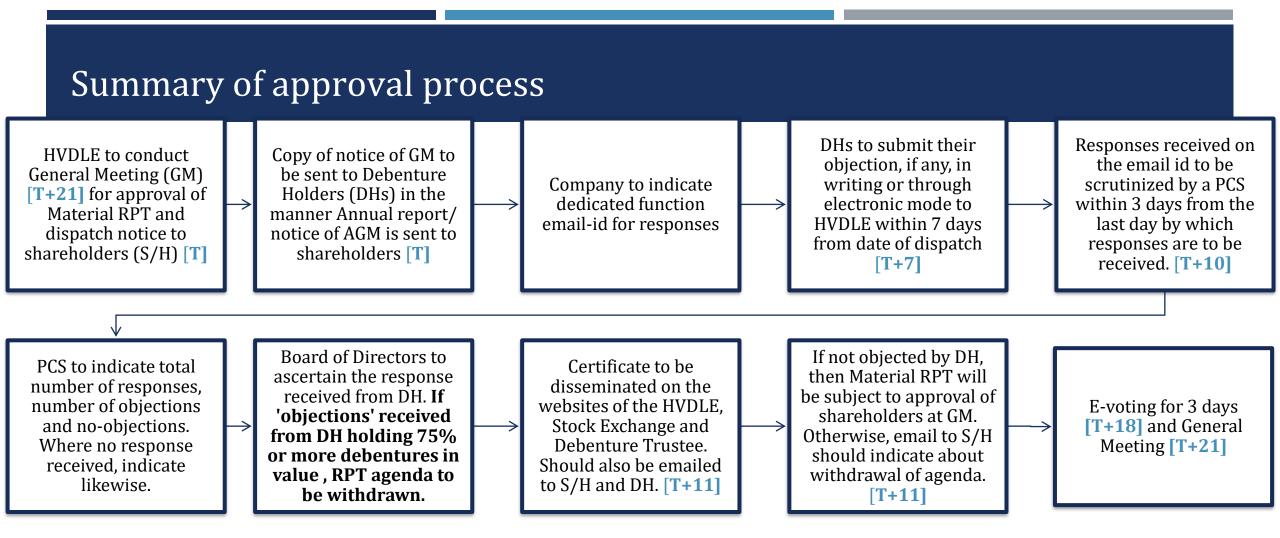
#### Process to be followed by HVDLE

- Notice of general meeting to approve material RPT to be sent to Debenture Holders (DHs) too;
- DH have the right to submit objection, if any, on a dedicated functional email id.
  - Within 7 days of dispatch of agenda item
- PCS to scrutinize the response received from DHs and submit report within 3 days from the last day to receive response from DHs.
- Report to indicate
  - Total number of responses received from DHs;
  - Number of no-objections received from DHs; and
  - Number of objections received from DHs;
  - If no response is received from the debenture holders, the PCS shall provide a certificate to that effect.
- Report to be disseminated promptly on website
  - Of company, SE, DT and
  - Emailed to S/H and DHs
- If objection received from DHs holding 75% or more in value, based on the number of responses received, Board to withdraw the RPT agenda
  - No response should be regarded as no-objection.

### **Illustration by SEBI in Consultation Paper**

Sr. No.	Particulars	Amount in INR Cr.
1	Total value of listed outstanding debentures held by the Company	1000
2	Value of the outstanding debentures held by DHs who have sent their responses on RPT	500
3.	75% of value mentioned in point (2)	375

- If the debenture holders having outstanding value of Rs. 375 crores object to the proposed RPTs, the same shall not be placed for approval by the shareholders in the GM.
- Where no response from any DH is received, then on the basis of the PCS certificate, it will be presumed that DHs do not have any objection and the proposal of such RPTs shall be placed before the shareholders in the GM for approval.

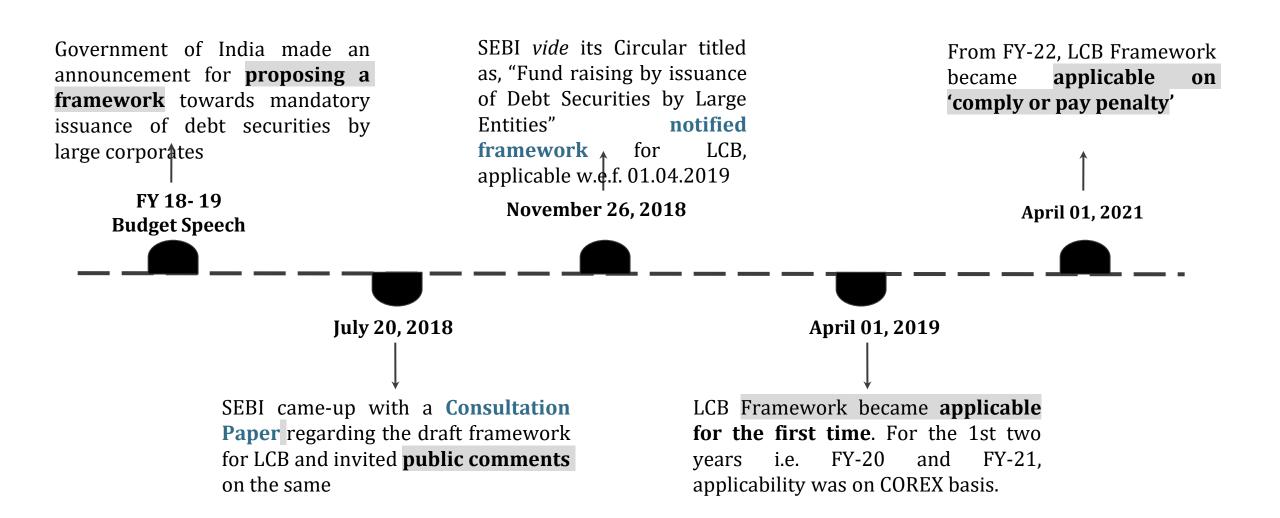


Determining only on the basis of response received from DHs will not be a correct approach. No-objection should be regarded as deemed consent. 75% of value of DHs should be based on total outstanding value and not just basis response received.

# Large Corporate Borrowers Framework



# Background



# **Highlights - Large Corporate Borrower (LCB) Framework**

SEBI *vide* its <u>Circular</u> dated 26th November 2018, came up with a circular, mandating the <u>'Large Corporates'</u> to <u>raise at</u> <u>least 25%</u> of their <u>incremental borrowings</u> by way of <u>issuance of debt securities</u>.

- □ When will the framework become applicable?
  - Applicability from FY 19-20/ CY 2020 and onwards
  - For the first two FYs/ CYs, compliance requirement was on annual basis.
  - From FY22, compliance requirement has to be met over a block of 2 FYs.
- □ Who is a Large Corporate Borrower (LCB)?
- A listed entity, meeting the trigger conditions, (discussed later)

#### □ What is Incremental Borrowing (IB)?

- Any borrowing done during a particular FY/ CY, of original maturity of more than one year.
- Irrespective of whether such borrowing is for refinancing/ repayment of existing debt or otherwise.
- ECB and inter-corporate borrowings between parent and subsidiary are **excluded**
- □ What type of securities are to be issued?
- Debt securities, as defined under SEBI NCS Regulations, 2021 which includes:
  - Non -convertible debt securities with a fixed maturity period;
  - With or without constituting a charge on the assets/ properties.

#### **Consequences of non-compliance**

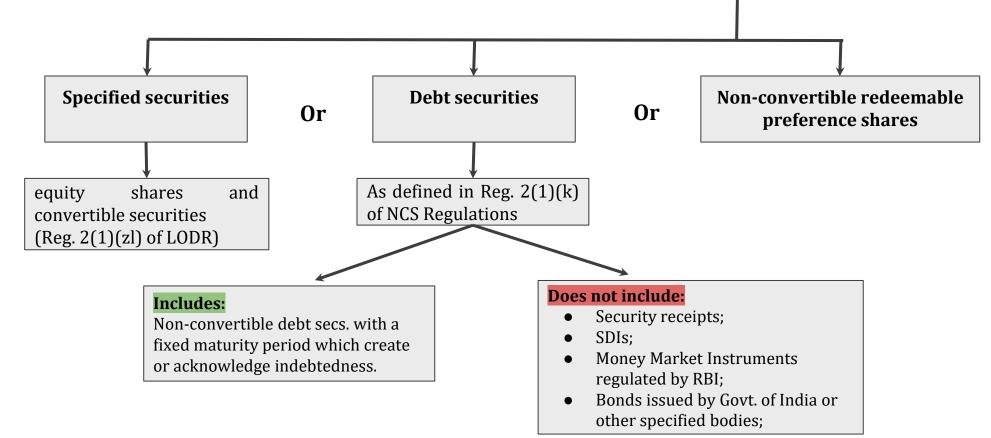
- For the first 2 years (FY-20 and FY-21 or CY 20 and CY 21) furnish explanation for shortfall in mandatory bond issuance
- For block commencing from FY 22 Penalty for shortfall.

# Point of checking applicability & time period for IB

	T-1	Т	T+1
Meaning	Last day of the previous FY, preceding the FY, for which the applicability of the Framework is to be checked	<b>FY for which the compliance has</b> <b>to be made</b> with the Framework	<b>The FY succeeding the FY</b> during which the LCB Framework was applicable
Example	Last day of FY 21 i.e. 31.03.2021 is T-1 for FY 2021-22	Entire FY 2021-22 is T	Entire FY 22-23 is T+1 for FY 2021- 22
Purpose	To <b>determine applicability</b> for T by fulfilling 3 cumulative conditions are as on T-1	To determine the <b>quantum of IB</b> , done during T	To <b>comply with the debt issuance</b> <b>requirement in addition to T</b> , if there is any shortfall during T
Illustration	e	<b>IB</b> during T - <b>Rs. 100 cr.</b> Now, the issuer has to mandatorily <b>issue debt secs.</b> of <b>at least Rs. 25 cr.</b> during <b>T and T+1</b>	

## **1**<sup>st</sup> **Trigger Condition - Type of Entity**

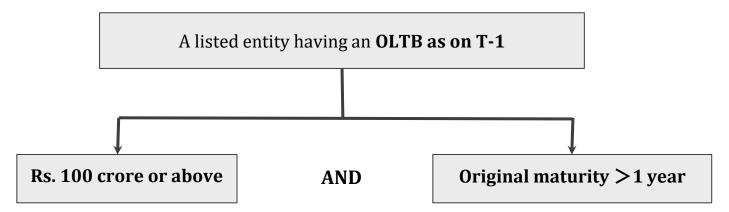
□ The Framework shall be applicable to all the **listed entities**\*, which as **on T-1** have **listed** their:



\* This framework does not applies to **Scheduled Commercial Banks** 

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Trigger Condition - Outstanding Long Term Borrowing (OLTB)

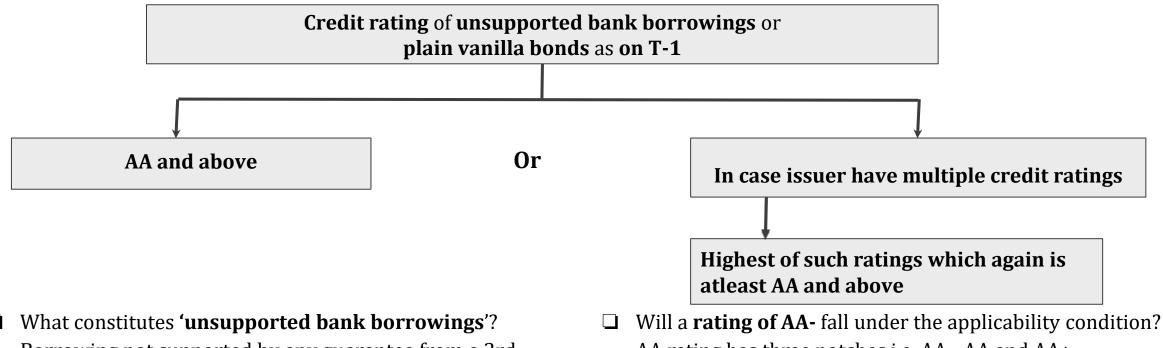
The Framework shall be applicable to all the **listed entities as mentioned in the prev. slide**, which as **on T-1** have:



□ External commercial borrowings and inter-corporate borrowings between a parent and subsidiary(ies) are excluded for the purpose of OLTB. ★

# **3<sup>rd</sup> Trigger Condition - Credit Rating**

#### □ The Framework shall be applicable to all the **listed entities as mentioned in the prev slides**, which as **on T-1** have



- Borrowing not supported by any guarantee from a 3rd party to uplift its credibility / is not structured
- It does not mean 'unsecured borrowings'

- AA rating has three notches i.e. AA-, AA and AA+
  AA- is certainly a notch below AA
- Therefore, reference to "AA or above" does not include AA-

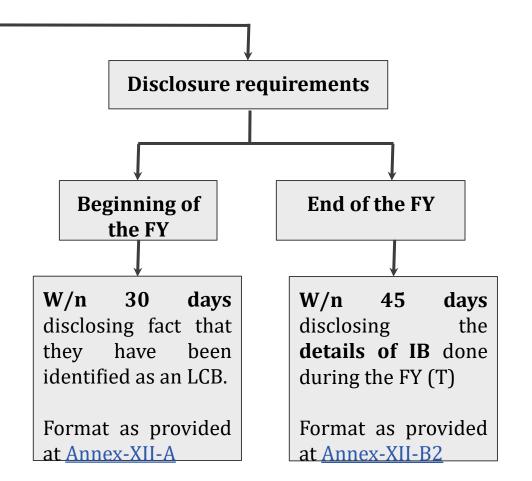
## **Compliance requirements for an LCB**

□ The two major **<u>compliance requirements</u>** for an entity identified as a LCB on T-1 are:

Raise at least **25% of its incremental borrowings** during a FY by way of **issuance of debt securities** 

#### □ Meaning of **Incremental Borrowings**:

- Any fresh borrowing done during T; and
- having a original maturity >1 year
- does not include ECB and inter-corp. borrowing between holding and subsidiary(ies)



## Illustration

FY	Outstandin g borrowings as on the last day of FY (in crores)	Whether LCB for the relevant FY?	Incremental borrowings during the FY (in crores)	Amount required to be raised through debt markets	Amount actually raised through debt markets	Shortfall	Penalty for shortfall
2019	120	-		-	-	-	
2020	200	Yes	100	25	20	5	Reason to be recorded
2021	80	Yes	0	0	0	Nil	NA
2022	120	No	40	0	20	NA	NA
2022	150	Yes	50	12.5	10	2.5	NA (see note 1)
2023	200	Yes	120	(2.5 +30)= 32.5 (see note 2)	1.5	31	Rs. 20,000 (see note 3)

<u>Notes -</u>

- 1. The incremental borrowings through debt securities can be achieved within the 2-years' block, i.e., FY 2022 and FY 2023. Therefore, the shortfall will be carried over to FY 2023 and fine will not be levied for FY 2022.
- 2. For FY 2023, 25% of the incremental borrowings for that financial year including the shortfall of previous financial year of the same block will be required to be raised through debt markets.
- 3. Fine will be levied @0.20% of the shortfall amount for FY 2022. The shortfall of FY 2023 can be carried over to the next 2-years' block and can be met within FY 2024.

# **Responsibilities of stock exchanges**

□ Stock exchanges shall have **following responsibilities** under the Framework

Collate the information about the LC, disclosed on their platform

> within 14 days of the last date of submission of annual financial results

Submit the information collated to SEBI

Stock exchanges shall collect the fine, in the event of a shortfall in the requisite borrowing,

> within 10 days from the end of the month in which the fine was collected

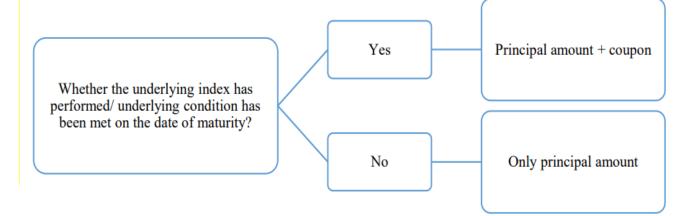
Remitted by the stock exchanges to SEBI IPEF

# Impact of Budget 2023- 24 on Corporate Bonds



## UNDERSTANDING MARKET LINKED DEBENTURES (MLDS)

- MLDs have been quite popular with NBFCs,
  - Particularly attractive for UHNIs.
- From April, 2022 to December 2022, MLD issuances amounted to Rs.16,463 crs. (source <u>NSDL data</u>)
- MLDs fall under the category of 'structured products' or 'hybrid instruments



## **Market Linked Debentures**

Tenure	12-36 months				
Coupon	Usually low, mostly payable on redemption				
Premium	High, to make up for the return				
Nature	Privately placed; listed				
Market linkage	Often with events which are quite remote in short term				

# MOTIVATIONS FOR ISSUING MLDS

#### lax Exemptions

- Exempt from withholding tax carve-out u/s 193
  - Applicable to other listed bonds as well:
  - any interest payable on any security issued by a company, where such security is in dematerialised form and is listed on a recognised stock exchange in India in accordance with the Securities Contracts (Regulation) Act, 1956 (42 of 1956) and the rules made thereunder.
- Taxed as LTCG on holding period for 12 months or more,
  - 36 months in case of normal capital assets. [sec. 2 (42A)].

### Regulatory arbitrage

- Exemption from EBP mechanism for MLDs
- Additional 5 ISINs permitted for MLDs

Plain Vanilla Debentures	MLDs				
Return					
Fixed and regular rate of return- monthly,	No regular return. Return paid at the time of				
quarterly, annually etc.	maturity along with principal amount				
Risk					
No additional risk apart from risk of default.	Higher and additional risk as no return maybe received (in case of PP-MLDs) or loss on investment/ principal amount (in case of NPP- MLDs) if the underlying moves downward.				

## MARKET LINKED DEBENTURES ISSUANCE ILLUSTRATION

Instances		Terms of I	ssue	Underlying	Scenario At the time of redemption Where underlying performance is		Likeliness of the event
	Returns (type)	Tenure	Payment on		where underlying pe	erformance is	
<u>Case 1</u>	Premiu m	3 years	redemption	10-year Indian Governmen t Bond (IGB)	Underlying Performance ≥25% of the Final Fixing Level Maturity value = <b>Rs.12,67,000</b> <b>yield - approx 8.18%</b>	Underlying Performance < 25% of the Final Fixing Level Maturity Value <b>= Rs.10,00,000</b>	Conclusion - This condition is <b>highly</b> <b>unlikely</b> to happen. Looking at past trends, the probability that G- sec would fall below 25% of the initial level is low.
<u>Case 2</u>	coupon	2.2 years	redemption	Nifty 50 Initial level -	Final Fixing Level > 25% of the Initial Fixing level Coupon = 22.738% Yield approx 9.76%	Final Fixing Level ≤25% of the Initial Fixing level <b>Coupon = 0%</b>	Conclusion - The condition is <b>highly</b> <b>unlikely.</b> Looking at past trends, the probability that Nifty 50 will fall to 25% is very low.

## AMENDMENTS PROPOSED IN RELATION TO MLDS & RELATED CONCERNS

- be taxed as STCG
  - leads to hike in the tax rate (from 10% to the slab rate as may be applicable)
- Exemption from withholding tax goes
- New section 50AA to be inserted
  - Provide: irrespective of the holding period, capital gains on MLDs will be taken as "short term capital assets"
  - If tenure of the MLDs ≥ 36 months (which is the usual holding period for qualifying as a long term capital asset): Still be treated as shortterm capital assets
- We.f. 1st April, 2024
- No grandfathering for the provisions of proposed section 50AA

Potential action by issuers:

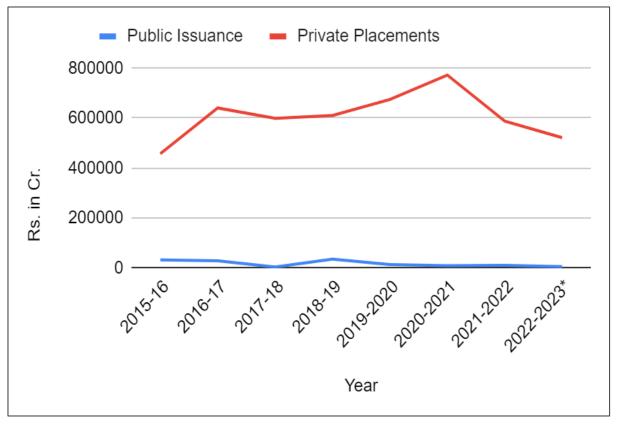
- If issued MLDs are older than 12 months: call option may be exercised to avail the LTCG benefit before April 01, 2023.
- There is no call option typically:
  - May be based on request of the holder, the company may buyback and extinguish
- Change of structure of the existing MLDs in terms of Reg 59 of LODR Regulations i.e. material modification
  - Approval of BoD and DT
  - Approval of DHs holding 3/4th, by value, of the MLDs
  - Prior approval of SE where the MLD is listed

## LISTED BONDS MARKET: BRIEF OVERVIEW

- The market for bond issuance in India is mostly a private placement market
- Investors are mostly institutional investors
  - Retail participation mostly happens in case of public issues of bonds, or
  - Through secondary market activity in the debt segment of SEs.
- As per RBI in '<u>Corporate Bond Markets in</u> <u>India – Challenges and prospects</u>'
  - the investor base for corporate bonds is largely dominated by domestic institutions – insurance companies, banks and mutual funds
  - Retail participation remains low

#### Corporate bonds issuance: <u>Fublic Issuance</u> vs. <u>Frivate</u>

#### **Placements**



\* till 1st week of December, 2022

## PROPOSED AMENDMENTS IN RELATION TO LISTED BONDS

- Interest received from listed debentures is not subject to TDS, irrespective of any limit [section 193 (ix) of IT Act]
  - Budget-2023 proposes to <u>delete</u> the said clause.
  - With a 'retroactive effect': Applies to bonds that may have already been issued.
- **No Grandfathering:** TDS payment on existing issuances made prior to effective date?
- Unclear intent of the proposal-
  - Intent of Withholding tax to avoid potential for tax evasion
  - In case of listed bonds the apprehension becomes baseless
  - Investor has demat account, bank account, etc.
  - Trail of the information including the income earned on the investment is easily available

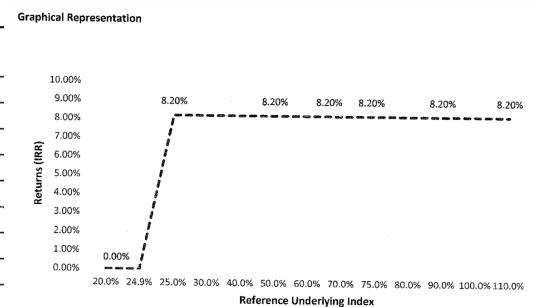
- Likely impact on the market?
  - Discourages retail investors
  - Complex return filing system for claiming set off / refund of the tax deducted.
- Major deterrent for bond issuers:
  - Deduction of tax at source is a hassle, complete with filing of tax deduction forms
  - In many cases, the interest is paid quarterly or half yearly

# UNDERLYING CONDITIONS

#### Scenario Analysis - 36 months

The following table shows the value of the Debenture at maturity under different market conditions

Underlying Performance	Issue Price	Annualized Pre-Tax Return IRR	Maturity Value ₹ 12,67,000	
120.00%	₹ 10,00,000	8.20%		
100.00%	₹ 10,00,000	8.20%	₹ 12,67,000	
80.00%	₹ 10,00,000	8.20%	₹12,67,000	
75.00%	₹ 10,00,000	8.20%	₹12,67,000	
70.00%	₹ 10,00,000	8.20%	₹12,67,000	
50.00%	₹ 10,00,000	8.20%	₹12,67,000	
30.00%	₹ 10,00,000	8.20%	₹12,67,000	
25.00%	₹ 10,00,000	8.20%	₹12,67,000	
20.00%	₹ 10,00,000	0.00%	₹10,00,000	
10.00%	₹ 10,00,000	0.00%	₹ 10,00,000	
0.00%	₹ 10,00,000	0.00%	₹ 10,00,000	



# CONTACT US

## Vinod Kothari & Company

<u>Kolkata:</u> 1006-1009, Krishna 224 AJC Bose Road Kolkata – 700 017 Phone: 033 2281 3742 Email: <u>info@vinodkothari.com</u> <u>New Delhi:</u> A-467, First Floor, Defence Colony, New Delhi-110024 Phone: 011 41315340 Email: <u>delhi@vinodkothari.com</u> Mumbai: 403-406, Shreyas Chambers 175, D N Road, Fort Mumbai Phone: 022 2261 4021/ 6237 0959 Email: <u>bombay@vinodkothari.com</u>

<u>Bengaluru:</u> 4, Union Street, Infantry Rd, Shivaji Nagar, Bengaluru, Karnataka 560001 Email: <u>qasim@vinodkothari.com</u>

Website: <u>www.vinodkothari.com</u> Mail us: <u>corplaw@ vinodkothari.com</u>