

Initiating Coverage VA TECH WABAG LTD.

March 20, 2023





VA TECH WABAG Ltd.

Industry	LTP	Recommendation	Base Case Fair Value	Bull Case Fair Value	Time Horizon
Water Supply & Management	Rs.335.65	Buy in the band of Rs.333-338& add more on dips to Rs.295-299 band	Rs.367	Rs.401	3 quarters

HDFC Scrip Code	VATECHEQNR
BSE Code	533269
NSE Code	WABAG
Bloomberg	VATW:IN
CMP March,17 2023	335.65
Equity Capital (Rscr)	6.22
Face Value (Rs)	2
Equity Share O/S (cr)	12.44
Market Cap (Rs.cr)	2,087
Book Value (Rs)	248
Avg. 52 Wk Volumes	3,73,674
52 Week High	375
52 Week Low	216

Share holding Pattern % (Dec, 2022)	
Promoters	19.12
Institutions	19.39
Non Institutions	61.49
Total	100.0



**HDFCsec Retail research
stock rating meter**

for details about the ratings, refer at the end of the report

* Refer at the end for explanation on Risk Ratings

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Our Take:

VaTechWabag is one of the experienced players with strong presence of more than 25 years engaged in water technology and providing customized water treatment solutions through Engineering, Procurement, and Construction (EPC) services, Operations and Maintenance(O&M) services, research and development, construction and commissioning. The company is a major player having executed more than 1450 plants, including 450+ sewage treatment plants and 320+ water treatment plants. The order-book of the company is well diversified in various segments of Municipal and Industrial projects, with its world-wide presence across various continents. The order inflow in 9MFY23 stood at approx. 1885 crore boosting the total order-book value as at Dec'22 to Rs. 10,037 crores. The company has strong bidpipeline and has emerged as one of lowest bidders for multiple projects and is expecting orders approximately worth Rs.5000crores by April-May 2023. The order book comprised of 29% of Industrial orders while Municipal orders accounting for 71% of total order-book. Wabag has gradually increased its share of Operation and Maintenance business segment which now contributes 37% of its existing orderbook, which is likely to fetch better margins compared to EPC segment. Wabag has reiterated its target of increase in revenue growth on account of better execution of projects and also resumption of its project in Russia and enhancing its current margin level by shifting its focus towards E&P projects in India as well. As of Dec'2022, the order book indicated a robust visibility of 3.3x of FY22 revenue.

The company recently has won a DBO order in Bangladesh worth Rs.800 crores fully funded by World Bank & AIIB, the scope of which includes Design, Engineering, Supply, Construction, Installation and commissioning of the 200 MLD STP followed by Operation & Maintenance (O&M) for a period of 60 months.

Wabag is also diversifying its business by entering into Zero Liquid Discharge (ZLD) which is likely to witness steady growth over the years as authorities have tightened discharge monitoring and control. The ZLD system is more capex and high Initial investment oriented. Wabag has strategically managed and is reducing its core working capital cycle to 81 days. On account of its healthy order book, strong execution capabilities, robust order pipeline, stable EBITDA margins, and positive expectation out of government's budget allocation we remain positive on the stock.

Valuation & Recommendation:

We are optimistic on the strong long term outlook and revenue growth in the coming years for Wabag.We expect revenue/EBITDA/PAT to grow at a CAGR of 10%/15.2%/20.9% over FY22–25E.**We think the base case fair value of the stock is Rs.367(10xDec24E EPS) and the bull case fair value is Rs.401 (11x Dec24E EPS) over the next three quarters.Investors can buy the stock in the band of Rs.333-338(9.2x Dec24E EPS) and add more on dips to Rs.295-299 band (8.2x Dec24E EPS).**



Financial Summary

Particulars (Rs.Cr)	Q3FY23	Q3FY22	YoY-%	Q2FY23	QoQ-%	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23E	FY24E	FY25E
Total Operating Income	651.6	745.5	-12.6	750.4	-13.2	2,557.2	2,834.5	2,979.3	3,098.5	3,532.3	3,956.1
EBITDA	74.8	76.2	-1.8	53.7	39.3	217.0	218.8	237.0	241.6	302.7	358.7
Depreciation	2.2	2.3	-6.4	2.2	-2.2	15.4	12.1	10.1	10.2	12.3	14.7
Other Income	2.0	5.5	-62.6	22.9	-91.1	35.2	8.2	32.4	60.0	38.0	43.0
Interest Cost	16.2	22.3	-27.2	17.0	-4.6	109.0	90.3	87.7	70.2	77.2	73.3
Tax	13.3	10.9	22.3	13.2	1.2	48.6	29.5	36.3	52.2	59.0	75.6
PAT	47.1	44.2	6.7	46.7	1.0	79.2	95.1	135.2	169.0	192.2	238.1
Adjusted PAT	47.1	44.2	6.7	46.7	1.0	79.2	95.1	135.2	169.0	192.2	238.1
EPS (Rs)	7.6	7.1	6.7	7.5	1.0	16.6	18.8	21.2	28.5	30.6	37.9
RoE-%						7.0	7.4	9.3	10.5	10.7	11.8
P/E (x)						20.1	17.8	15.8	12.3	10.8	8.8
EV/EBITDA(x)						9.2	8.9	8.8	8.4	6.7	5.6

(Source: Company, HDFC sec)

Q3FY23 Earnings Update:

- Consolidated Operating Revenue of Q3FY23 stood at Rs.651.5 crores, -12.6% YoY/-13.2% QoQ due to slower execution of projects. Consolidated EBITDA for Q3FY23 stood at Rs. 74.8 crores,-2% YoY/39.3% QoQ.
- Consolidated EBITDA margin for Q3FY23 stood at 11.5%.
- 9MFY23 revenue from the EPC segment stood at Rs.1,737 crores (86%) and O&M segment of business contributed a revenue of Rs.285 crore (14%). Both India and International projects contributed equally to the 9MFY23 revenue.
- The company has seen a recovery in EBITDA margin over last few quarters due to its International high margin projects contributing to it and also shifting of its focus from EPC based contracts to E&P contracts. The company going forward is primarily focused on yielding better margins and generating positive cash flows.
- Consolidated PAT reported for Q3FY23 is Rs. 47.1 crore 6.7% YoY/1.0% QoQ.
- The company has secured order inflow approx. Rs.1885 crore in 9MFY23 majority being the desalination orders from Reliance, Purolite Victoria & Senegal, boosting total orderbook to Rs. 10,037 crore.

Con-Call Highlights:

- Management refrained on giving guidance on Order inflow, Top line and Margin front, The order Inflow in the 9MFY23 was close to Rs.1885 crore and company expects some of the big orders of approximately Rs. 5000 crores to flow in by April-May 2023 in which the company has emerged as one of the preferred bidders. The company is also optimistic about increase in order inflow in coming years on account of healthy budgetary allocation.



- Company will continue to focus on multilaterally- and centrally funded projects in India with limited exposure to state-backed projects. Focus will also be on projects backed by national schemes such as NamamiGange and Swachh Bharat or backed by payment securities.
- The change in promoter holding from 21.7% to 19.12% in Q2 is due to a classification change of a promoter who has superannuated and is declassified from the promoter to public category, there is not any sale of share by the promoter.
- The company was the first to introduce the concept of one city one operator model, and believes that more states and cities will adopt this model, which will benefit both the state government as well as experienced companies like WABAG.
- Change of strategy to move to E&P player from an EPC player to focus on advanced technology has benefitted company in improving the efficiency and the margins and is reflected in last few quarters, overall the company is expecting its operating margins to grow in near future.
- The company's intention to expand more on Industrial and International projects are mainly because of the export incentives the company receives, duration of the such projects are shorter because of projects being E&P in nature rather than including construction ultimately also helps in fetching better margins, lower receivables and cash growth.
- Bidding for Chennai 400MLD desalination project, in which the company was shortlisted among the top 4 bidders is expected to get awarded in the next few months.

Key Drivers:

Strong Order Inflow and Diversified Order Book Mix:

The company has received orders worth Rs. 1,885 crore till end of 9MFY23, and company is expecting to secure more orders in which company has emerged as L1 bidder in areas of Desalination and Industrial water treatment. The order inflow has gained momentum in the recent years and desalination, waste water treatment plants orders are increasing due to stricter government norms and increasing demand for water related projects. The company is focusing on improving the International order inflow for higher margin projects and accepting projects that are funded by multinational agencies like World Bank, ADB and JICA thereby reducing the cashflow risk. The company is also receiving more inquiries from Russia on account of major European players exiting the territory and India not being the sanctioned bidder. The drinking water supply and sanitation projects continue to get priority, Government has allocated Rs. 77,223 crore as against allocation of Rs. 67,221 crores towards drinking water and sanitation department in Union Budget 2023-24 which is further likely to provide momentum in order awarding and intake.

The Company has diversified order-book from both domestic and International Projects constituting ~50% to orderbook. The order wins in O&M segment has increased recently driving the O&M orders to 37%, while the municipal orders continues to dominate the orderbook with 71% share. The company is gradually focusing on increasing its share in O&M segment and has increased from 30% to 37% from FY 2020 to 9MFY23.

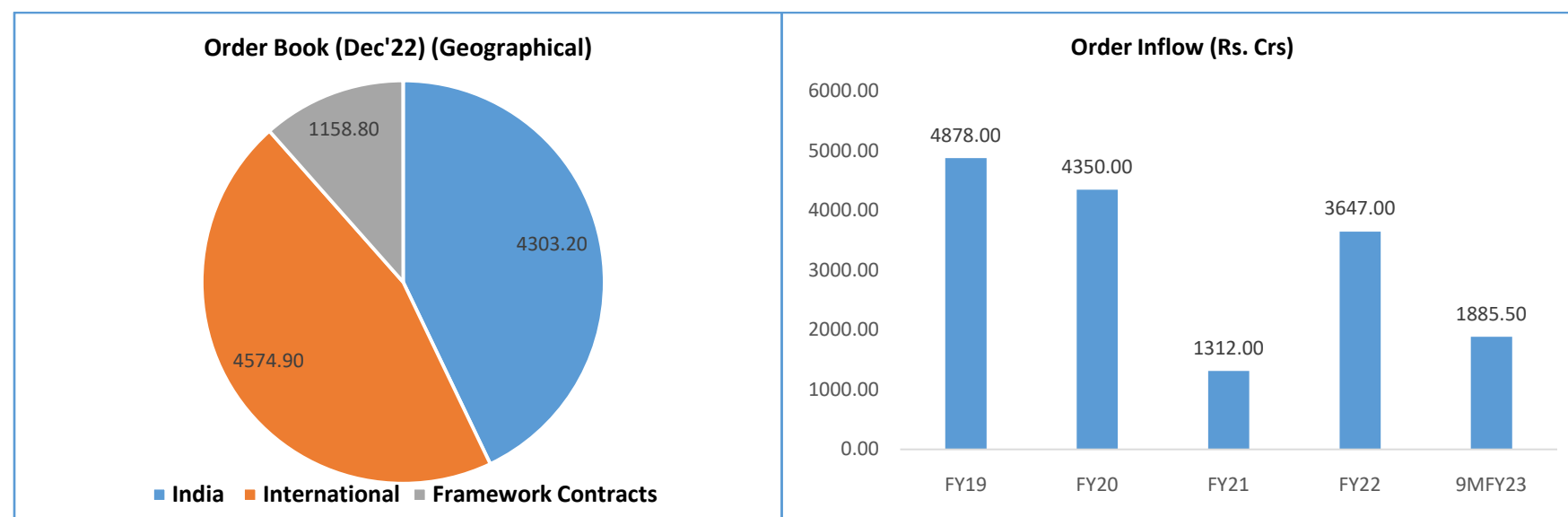


Order Book Composition (Business Segment) (Rs Cr)	Municipal	Industrial	Total
EPC	3421	2199	5620
O&M	2897	360	3257
Framework Contracts			1158
Total	6318	2559	10037

(Source: Company, HDFC sec)

Resumption of Order Execution in Russia:

The company was awarded with an Integrated Industrial ETP in AGCC, Russia which was suspended in April'22 due to geo-political uncertainty in region, which is now resumed and is expected to aid revenues significantly going forward. This can further support the earnings along with softening in commodity prices and improvement in margins.



(Source: Company, HDFC sec)



Key Contracts	Contract Value (Rs.Crs)	% of OrderBook
UPJN, O&M of Agra & Ghaziabad	1,414	13.7
AGCC, Russia – Integrated Industrial ETP	1,025	9.9
BUIDCO, Digha&Kankarbagh – STP & Network	823	8.0
Hassyan UTICO SWRO	730	7.1
50 MLD Senegal – Desal	371	3.6
RIL, Jamnagar - Desal	296	2.9
Purolite Victoria WWTP-ETP	262	2.5
GNN, Ghaziabad – TTRO	221	2.1
Koyambedu O&M, Chennai – TTRO	187	1.8
KMDA, Howrah – STP	130	1.3

(Source: Company, HDFC sec)

Improvement in Operating Margins & Profitability:

Wabag has been constantly focusing on higher margin projects since last few quarters, the company has gradually shifted its focus from EPC based contract to E&P contracts, the company has also started to secure more International industrial orders which will yield higher operating margins. The company's focus is to generate more cash rather than achieving more revenue. The company in its past has maintained its EBITDA margins near 8.5%, and is aiming to increase its margins due to softening of input prices. As a result of the same the company is able to post better operating margin in Q3 at 11.5%. Company's focus on debt reduction is expected to bring down finance cost and eventually improve PAT margins. The company has been able to maintain its debt to sustainable levels.

One City One Operator Model:

Wabag is the pioneer in the one city one operator model winning 2 projects in 2019 for period of 10 years in Ghaziabad and Agra out of total 4 bids for ensuring treatment over 670 MLD, where one operator is in charge of the entire sewage system operator in the city which provides long term opportunity for players operating in those cities. Also, company operates in Delhi, Bangalore and Chennai where substantial part is managed by Wabag. The company is successful in carrying out the model and it is aiming more opportunities in the states of UP and Gujarat.

Zero Liquid Discharge Technology (ZLD):

The company has started executing few ZLD plants including NMDC plant, which the company is completing and the Sibur project in Russia. ZLD plants are capital Intensive and requires more initial investment but company believes ZLD technology could be more popular due to multiple benefits like monitoring of the wastage within the limits, saving in the penalty cost of discharging waste as ZLD plant doesn't discharge anything. It also generates reliable source of water for water neutral plants and less dependency on outside water. The significant



industrial sectors like Sugar, Distilleries, Tanneries, Pulp & Paper, Textile, Dyeing, and Dairy would need special emphasis for enforcement of ZLD.

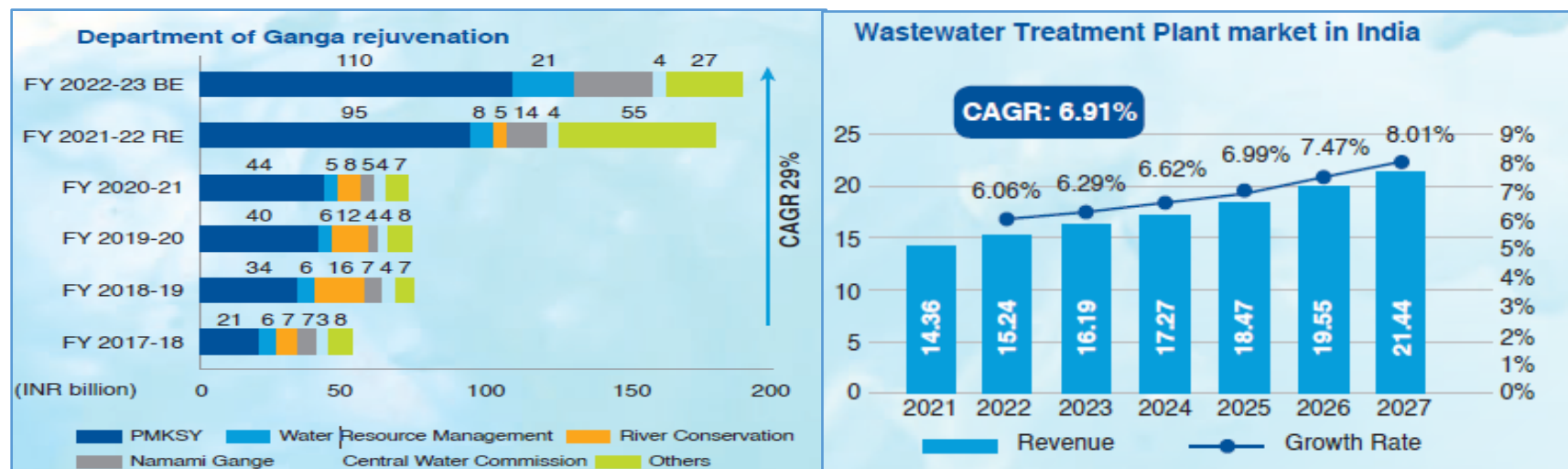
Increasing Desalination Opportunity:

Company has continued its rich legacy of being a leader in desalination and has continued setting up Desalination plants. WABAG has been recognised for promoting a drinking water model for coastal India. Due to decrease in fresh water resources, fast-paced industrialisation and rising need for effective wastewater management systems, rapidly growing sectors like agriculture, oil and gas, power paper and pulp that require high amount of water, the Desalination market is growing at a rapid pace. It was valued at USD 16.5 billion in 2020 and is likely to reach USD 28.1 billion by 2026 at CAGR of 9.32% over 2020-26. Currently desalination plants provide approximately 1% of the world's drinking water supply and the number is increasing every year. According to a report published by the Planning Commission of India in 2020, the average annual per capita water availability in the country declined to 1,486 cubic meters in 2021. It may continue to decline to 1,367 cubic meters in 2031. Thus, municipalities have taken up the responsibility to treat seawater and generate potable water so that people can get access to clean drinking water. Wabag is an experienced player having executed more than 60 desalination plants and 1.2 MLD water per day.

Industry Outlook

India is the leading largest extractor of groundwater globally to the tune of 25%. As per the latest report of Central Pollution Control Board, India has generated 72,368 MLD of sewage. Out of this, only 20,236 MLD was treated. The total capacity installed can be utilised to treat only 28% of sewage generated. The Wastewater Treatment Plant market size is estimated to be USD 15 billion in 2021 witnessing a CAGR of 6.9% over 2021-26 to reach the size of USD 21 billion.

The government under its Jal Shakti mission has launched various initiatives like NamamiGange Program, National River Conservative Plans, Jal Jeevan Mission. Under the NamamiGange Program the government has focussed on abatement of pollution, conservation and rejuvenation of National River Ganga. The government in FY 2022-23 Budget allocated Rs.28 Billion towards NamamiGange Program. The central government offered creation and maintenance of sewage treatment infrastructure under hybrid annuity-based PPP model under National Mission for Clean Ganga. NMCG would provide 40% funding while balance 60% to be arranged by the concessionaire. Company has been keen to take up HAM projects under NamamiGange as EBITDA margins on EPC portion are expected to be in the range of 10-12%.

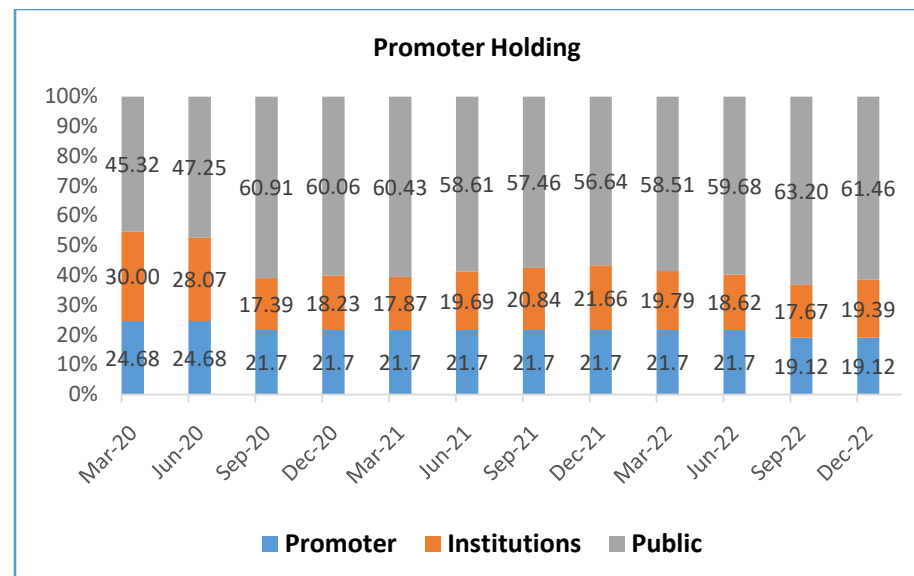


Key Risks:

More Exposure towards Municipal Orders: As on Dec'22 Municipal/ Governmental orders constituted 71% of the order-book of the company, which may result in slower execution of projects, eventually resulting in lesser revenue recognition, the receivables might increase due to slower pace of recovery and hence resulting in higher requirement of working capital.

Currency Risk: 49% of the revenue amounting to Rs.966 Crore is derived from International contracts in 9MFY23 and with 50% of the existing order book from International projects; more revenue is expected to accrue from outside India hence increasing the risk of volatility of changes in rate of currency, that can eventually impact margins of the company.

Low Promoter Holding and Decrease in Institutional Holding: Since Sept'19, the Institutional shareholding has been reducing continuously from 33.37% to 17.67% in Sept 2022 quarter (though rising to 19.39% in Dec 2022 quarter). On the contrary the public holding has been increasing from 41.85% in Sept'19 to 61.46% as on Dec 2022.



(Source: Company, HDFC sec)

Elongated Working Capital Cycle and Higher Bad Debts: The Company has constantly stretched working capital cycle. The working capital is mainly elongated due to higher receivables from municipal projects. The company had Rs. 138 crore of undisputed receivables due for more than 1 year and disputed receivables considered good amounting to Rs.222 crore. The company has made a provision of Rs. 115 crore on account of bad debts in 2021-22.

Global Economic Slowdown: The International business revenue has started contributing to almost 49% of company's topline in recent quarter and also 50% of the existing order book comes from International Projects. The company is operating across multiple geographies thus facing risk of global slowdown in western countries of Europe, Middle East, Russia.

Company Background:

VaTech WABAG is the leading pure-play global water technology-based company operating in India since last 25 years, company is primarily engaged in business of water treatment activities, it is mainly engaged into customized water solutions providing Waste Water treatment, Drinking water treatment, Water Recycling, Industrial water treatment, Desalination treatment etc. The company has a presence across the entire value chain of water solutions which include R&D, marketing, design & technology, engineering, procurement, construction and



commissioning & operations & maintenance (O&M). The company in its span of last 25 years has successfully executed more than 1450 plants, including 450+ sewage treatment plants and 320+ water treatment plants, the company has started executing Desalination plants and has completed more than 60 plants.

The company has built wastewater treatment plants treating over 27 million m³ liters per day of municipal and industrial wastewater and desalination plants with an installed capacity of 1.2 million m³ liters per day, WABAG is classified among top 10 desalination companies globally.

WABAG has a strong global presence in more than 25 countries across India, South-East Asia, Middle East, Africa, Europe and Latin America and a rich clientele base. The company has existing order book of Rs.10,037 crore as on Dec'22, giving a strong 3.37x revenue visibility.

The company has developed technological focus, it has developed 125+ IP rights for water treatment technology solutions, and has also developed 3 R&D centers globally in Vienna, Winterthur and Chennai.

WABAG was ranked 3rd globally by GWI in 2022 for ensuring safe drinking water and clean environment for over 88Mn people.



Financials

Income-Statement

(Rs Cr)	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23E	FY24E	FY25E
Net Revenues	2557.2	2834.5	2979.3	3098.5	3532.3	3956.1
Growth (%)	-8	10.8	5.1	4	14	12
Operating Expenses	2340.2	2615.7	2742.3	2856.9	3229.6	3597.4
EBITDA	217	218.8	237	241.6	302.7	358.7
Growth (%)	11.8	0.8	8.3	1.9	25.3	18.5
EBITDA Margin (%)	8.5	7.7	8	7.8	8.6	9.1
Depreciation	15.4	12.1	10.1	10.2	12.3	14.7
EBIT	201.6	206.6	226.9	231.3	290.4	344
Other Income	35.2	8.2	32.4	60	38	43
Interest expenses	109	90.3	87.7	70.2	77.2	73.3
PBT	127.7	124.5	171.6	221.2	251.2	313.7
Tax	48.6	29.5	36.3	52.2	59	75.6
PAT	79.2	95.1	135.2	169	192.2	238.1
Adjusted PAT	79.2	95.1	135.2	169	192.2	238.1
Growth (%)	-7.8	20.1	42.2	25	13.7	23.9
EPS	16.6	18.8	21.2	28.5	30.6	37.9

Balance-Sheet

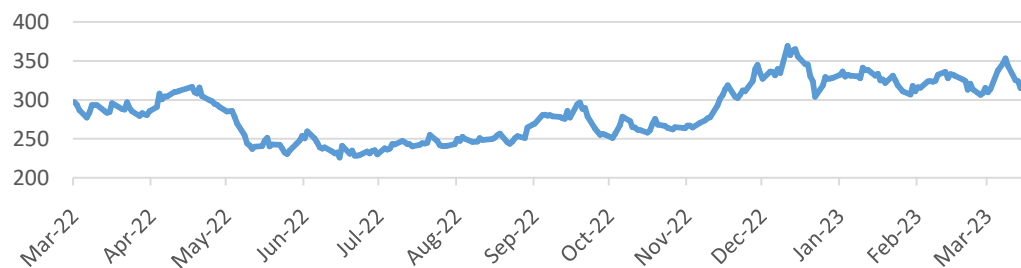
As at March	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23E	FY24E	FY25E
SOURCE OF FUNDS						
Share Capital	11	12	12	12	12	12
Reserves	1161	1384	1513	1688	1880	2118
Shareholders' Funds	1172	1396	1526	1700	1893	2131
Long Term Debt	30	132	94	84	76	68
Net Deferred Taxes	-23	-25	-33	-33	-33	-33
Long Term Provisions & Others	235	264	210	230	252	276
Total Source of Funds	1414	1767	1797	1982	2187	2442
APPLICATION OF FUNDS						
Net Block & Goodwill	86	86	80	95	107	118
CWIP	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other Non-Current Assets	582	741	922	1015	1116	1228
Total Non Current Assets	668	827	1002	1109	1224	1346
Current Investments	0	0	0	0	0	0
Inventories	26	30	32	34	39	43
Trade Receivables	1589	1350	1326	1426	1645	1843
Cash & Equivalents	321	371	429	516	501	465
Other Current Assets	1394	1554	1178	1295	1425	1567
Total Current Assets	3331	3305	2964	3271	3610	3918
Short-Term Borrowings	453	218	335	368	376	338
Trade Payables	1627	1078	985	1104	1258	1377
Other Current Liab & Provisions	505	1070	849	927	1013	1107
Total Current Liabilities	2585	2365	2169	2399	2647	2822
Net Current Assets	746	940	794	872	964	1096
Total Application of Funds	1414	1767	1797	1982	2187	2442



Cash Flow Statement

(Rs Cr)	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23E	FY24E	FY25E
Reported PBT	137.2	136	165.2	226.7	251.2	313.7
Non-operating & EO items	42.3	93.2	110.5	0	0	0
Interest Expenses	54	28.5	22.9	52.2	55.2	61.3
Depreciation	15.4	12.1	10.1	10.2	12.3	14.7
Working Capital Change	37.4	-96.8	-281.7	-92.9	-188.6	-214.9
Tax Paid	-36.8	-31.9	-18.6	-52.2	-59	-75.6
OPERATING CASH FLOW (a)	249.5	141.1	8.5	144	71.1	99.2
Capex	65	-13.6	-2.6	-25	-25	-25
Free Cash Flow	314.6	127.5	5.8	119	46.1	74.2
Investments	0	0	-18.3	-3.8	-4.1	-4.5
Non-operating income	-31.2	9.5	-13.1	18	22	12
INVESTING CASH FLOW (b)	33.8	-4.1	-34	-10.8	-7.1	-17.5
Debt Issuance / (Repaid)	-79.2	-173.7	82.6	24.1	-1.1	-45.2
Interest Expenses	-57	-34.7	-36.4	-70.2	-77.2	-73.3
FCFE	178.4	-80.9	52	143.1	45	29.1
Share Capital Issuance/ (Buy Back)	0	117.8	0	0	0	0
Dividend	-1.8	-1.3	0.2	0	0	0
Others	-5.8	-2.8	0	0	0	0
FINANCING CASH FLOW (c)	-143.8	-94.7	46.4	-46	-78.2	-118.5
NET CASH FLOW (a+b+c)	139.6	42.2	21	87.2	-14.3	-36.8

1 Year Price Chart



Key-Ratios

	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23E	FY24E	FY25E
PROFITABILITY RATIOS						
EBITDA Margin	8.5	7.7	8	7.8	8.6	9.1
EBIT Margin	7.9	7.3	7.6	7.5	8.2	8.7
PAT Margin	3.1	3.4	4.5	5.5	5.4	6
RoE	7	7.4	9.3	10.5	10.7	11.8
RoCE	12.1	12.2	12.3	11.3	12.9	14.1
SOLVENCY RATIOS						
Debt/EBITDA (x)	2.2	1.6	1.8	1.9	1.5	1.1
D/E	0.4	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.2
PER SHARE DATA						
EPS	16.6	18.8	21.2	27.2	30.9	38.3
CEPS	19.5	20.9	22.8	29.9	32.6	40.3
Dividend	0	0	0	0	0	0
BVPS	214.8	241.1	247.5	275.7	306.3	344.2
TURNOVER RATIOS						
Debtor days	210	189	164	162	159	161
Inventory days	3	4	4	4	4	4
Creditors days	230	174	126	123	122	122
VALUATION						
P/E	20.1	17.8	15.8	12.3	10.8	8.8
P/BV	1.6	1.4	1.4	1.2	1.1	1
EV/EBITDA	9.2	8.9	8.8	8.4	6.7	5.6
EV/Revenues	0.8	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.6	0.5



HDFC Sec Retail Research Rating description

Green Rating stocks

This rating is given to stocks that represent large and established business having track record of decades and good reputation in the industry. They are industry leaders or have significant market share. They have multiple streams of cash flows and/or strong balance sheet to withstand downturn in economic cycle. These stocks offer moderate returns and at the same time are unlikely to suffer severe drawdown in their stock prices. These stocks can be kept as a part of long term portfolio holding, if so desired. These stocks offer low risk and lower reward and are suitable for beginners. They offer stability to the portfolio.

Yellow Rating stocks

This rating is given to stocks that have strong balance sheet and are from relatively stable industries which are likely to remain relevant for long time and unlikely to be affected much by economic or technological disruptions. These stocks have emerged stronger over time but are yet to reach the level of green rating stocks. They offer medium risk, medium return opportunities. Some of these have the potential to attain green rating over time.

Red Rating stocks

This rating is given to emerging companies which are riskier than their established peers. Their share price tends to be volatile though they offer high growth potential. They are susceptible to severe downturn in their industry or in overall economy. Management of these companies need to prove their mettle in handling cyclicity of their business. If they are successful in navigating challenges, the market rewards their shareholders with handsome gains; otherwise their stock prices can take a severe beating. Overall these stocks offer high risk high return opportunities.

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Any holding in stock – No

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