

HOLD TP: Rs 387 | △ 7%

AMBUJA CEMENT

Cement

11 February 2023

Steady growth continues, maintain HOLD

- Q4 revenue growth of 11% YoY contributed by volume gains of 8% with realisations up 3%
- Cost inflation well in check; guided to moderate in the near term, helping EBITDA/t retrace to Rs 1,000/t
- Maintain HOLD with SOTP-based TP of Rs 387 as positives baked into valuations

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Steady topline growth: ACEM's revenue grew 11% YoY (+13% QoQ) to Rs 41.3bn in Q4CY22 driven by volume growth of 8% YoY (+9% QoQ) to 7.7mt, alongside realisation gains of 3% YoY (+4% QoQ) to 5,362/t. The company has a healthy presence in the remunerative central and western regions, supporting higher pricing.

Cost inflation well in check: Operating cost increased just 3% YoY to Rs 4,549/t (-4% QoQ) as a decline in logistics cost and other expenses offset higher fuel expense. Energy cost adjusted for raw materials increased by 22% YoY (+6% QoQ) to Rs 2,544/t. Logistics cost/t fell 8% YoY and QoQ due to efficiencies from network optimisation following the market supply agreement with ACC. Other expenditure at Rs 5.5bn declined 16% YoY and 17% QoQ despite the higher sale volumes.

Scope for further EBITDA improvement: ACEM's EBITDA increased 10% YoY (+106% QoQ) to Rs 6.3bn and margins recovered to Q4CY21 levels of 15.2% (8% in Q3CY22). EBITDA/t grew by 3% YoY (+90% QoQ) to Rs 813/t, and management expects to reach Rs 1,000/t in the next couple of quarters backed by cost optimisation. Adj. PAT came in at Rs 4.3bn for Q3, rising sharply due to tax adjustment provisions in Q4CY21. Reported PAT grew by 47% YoY (+168% QoQ) to Rs 3.7bn, similarly aided by lower tax provisions on prior-period reversals.

Aggressive capex plans: ACEM has earmarked Rs 100bn for capex for synergetic improvement. This includes a WHRS, debottlenecking, greenfield clinker grinding units and a brownfield kiln to be undertaken over the next ~18 months. The Ametha plant is to be commissioned in Mar'23 which includes a 3.3mt clinker and 1mt grinding unit as well as debottlenecking. Commercial production is scheduled to commence by Q2FY24.

Maintain HOLD: While we like ACEM for its operating efficiency, presence in key demand centres and recent thrust on capacity building, we believe these positives are factored into valuations. We maintain HOLD and retain our SOTP-based TP of Rs 387 which values the standalone business at 13x CY24E EV/EBITDA and ACEM's 50% stake in ACC at 10% holding company discount. Our TP implies a replacement cost of Rs 14bn/mt (consolidated capacity) – a 2x premium to the industry average.

Key changes

•	U		
	Target	Rating	
	∢ ▶	∢ ▶	

Ticker/Price	ACEM IN/Rs 361	
Market cap	US\$ 8.7bn	
Free float	37%	
3M ADV	US\$ 68.3mn	
52wk high/low	Rs 598/Rs 274	
Promoter/FPI/DII	63%/11%/17%	

Source: NSE | Price as of 10 Feb 2023

Key financials

CY21A	CY22E	CY23E
285,926	339,083	373,473
62,103	55,103	57,656
29,007	20,133	26,720
14.6	10.1	13.5
14.6	10.7	15.2
12.4	9.0	8.7
24.7	35.6	26.8
9.7	10.3	9.4
14.1	(30.6)	32.7
	285,926 62,103 29,007 14.6 14.6 12.4 24.7 9.7	285,926 339,083 62,103 55,103 29,007 20,133 14.6 10.1 14.6 10.7 12.4 9.0 24.7 35.6 9.7 10.3

Source: Company, Bloomberg, BOBCAPS Research

Stock performance



Source: NSE





Earnings call highlights

- Management expects EBITDA/t to rise to Rs 1,000 in the next couple of quarters backed by cost optimisation. This will be led by (i) a reduction in fuel cost (kiln fuel cost has fallen substantially QoQ from Rs 2.84/kcal to Rs 2.45/kcal, resulting in a 14% sequential drop in overall fuel cost in Q3FY23), and (ii) lower logistics cost (on account of operational synergies with ACC and Adani Logistics, leading to rationalising of the warehouse network).
- The Ametha plant is to be commissioned in Mar'23 which includes a 3.3mt clinker and 1mt grinding unit as well as debottlenecking. Commercial production is scheduled to commence by Q2FY24
- As a part of its growth strategy, Rs 100bn has been earmarked by ACEM for capex to improve synergies. This includes a waste heat recovery system (WHRS), debottlenecking, greenfield clinker grinding units and a brownfield kiln to be undertaken over the next ~18 months.
- ACEM plans to increase WHRS capacity to ~190MW by Mar'25 from the existing 65MW as of Dec'22 as part of its target of achieving a ~30% thermal substitution rate by 2027.
- The company currently has 78+ ready-mix concrete (RMC) plants and plans to expand to over 250 in the medium term.
- Per management, payment for coal contracts is not a related party transaction but a contractual agreement with suppliers for close to 1.6mmt of coal to be supplied over a period of six months. Management expects deliveries to be completed between Q4FY23 and Q1FY24, contributing to a reduction in overall fuel cost.
- The company has a captive coal mine, Gare Palma, that caters to almost one-third
 of its requirements. In contrast, ACC relies entirely on supplies from third parties;
 thus, the volume of ACC's coal/fuel-related imports is higher than ACEM's.
- Advance payments include payment for (i) fly ash to government power stations,
 (ii) coal procurement to Coal India, (iii) pet coke to government refineries, and
 (iv) advances for power to GEB (Gujarat Electricity Board).
- The company indicated that ACC and ACEM fall under the same management and function as a single entity for all operations (Finance/HR/Operations), but as independent entities for statutory and legal and regulatory purposes.
- No royalty payment to Holcim is pending.
- ACEM has zero debt with healthy cash and cash equivalents of Rs 95bn as of Dec'22.



Fig 1 – Key metrics

(Rs)	Q4CY22	Q4CY21	YoY (%)	Q3CY22	QoQ (%)
Volumes (mt)	7.7	7.2	7.5	7.1	8.5
Cement realisations (Rs/mt)	5,362	5,217	2.8	5,170	3.7
Operating costs (Rs/mt)	4,549	4,424	2.8	4,741	(4.1)
EBITDA (Rs/mt)	813	793	2.5	429	89.7

Source: Company, BOBCAPS Research

Fig 2 - Quarterly performance

(Rs mn)	Q4CY22	Q4CY21	YoY (%)	Q3CY22	QoQ (%)
Net Sales	41,285	37,351	10.5	36,704	12.5
Expenditure					
Change in stock	1,632	(369)	(542.1)	(1,309)	(224.6)
Raw material	3,782	2,922	29.4	3,057	23.7
Purchased products	2,066	1,156	78.7	1,212	70.5
Power & fuel	12,111	11,263	7.5	14,147	(14.4)
Freight	8,362	8,441	(0.9)	8,395	(0.4)
Employee costs	1,595	1,778	(10.3)	1,532	4.1
Other expenditure	5,475	6,482	(15.5)	6,627	(17.4)
Total Operating Expenses	35,024	31,672	10.6	33,661	4.0
EBITDA	6,261	5,679	10.3	3,043	105.7
EBITDA margin (%)	15.2	15.2	(4bps)	8.3	687bps
Other Income	890	332	167.8	470	89.2
Interest	253	252	0.1	228	10.8
Depreciation	1,648	1,698	(2.9)	1,571	4.9
PBT	5,250	4,061	29.3	1,715	206.1
Non-recurring items	(614)	(657)		(152)	NM
PBT (after non-recurring items)	4,637	3,405	36.2	1,563	196.7
Tax	947	888	6.7	1,375	(31.1)
Reported PAT	3,690	2,517	46.6	1,379	167.6
Adjusted PAT	4,303	3,174	35.6	340	1,166.5
NPM (%)	10.4	8.5	193bps	0.9	950bps
Adjusted EPS (Rs)	2.2	1.6	35.6	0.2	1,166.5

Source: Company, BOBCAPS Research



Fig 3 - Volume gains supported by West/East regions

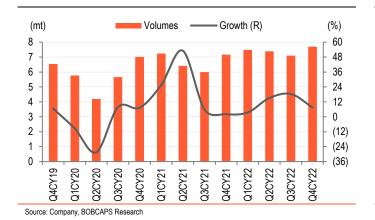


Fig 5 - EBITDA/t guided to recover to Rs 1,000 in the near term

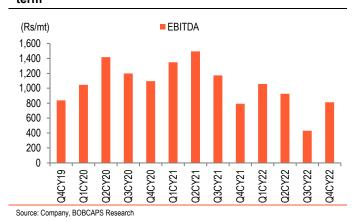


Fig 7 - ACC-ACEM synergies rein in logistics cost

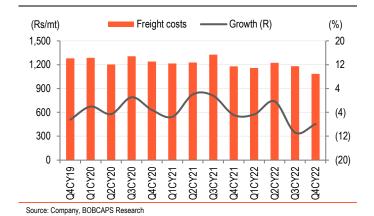


Fig 4 - Dominant presence in trade segment secures realisations



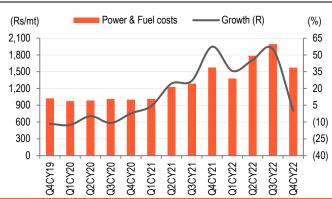
Source: Company, BOBCAPS Research

Fig 6 - Fuel cost behind higher cost inflation YoY



Source: Company, BOBCAPS Research

Fig 8 - Fuel cost inflation expected to moderate in the near term



Source: Company, BOBCAPS Research



Valuation methodology

While we like ACEM for its operating efficiency, presence in key demand centres and recent thrust on capacity addition, we believe these positives are factored into current valuations. We thus maintain our HOLD rating. Our SOTP-based TP of Rs 387 (unchanged) values the standalone business at 13x CY24E EV/EBITDA and ACEM's 50% stake in ACC at 10% holding company discount. Our valuation implies a replacement cost of Rs 14bn/mt (consolidated capacity) – 2x premium to the industry average.

ACEM has traditionally followed a conservative capital allocation policy, causing the company to underperform the industry on volume growth. With the change in management from Holcim to the new domestic business group which is perceived as aggressive in its pursuit of growth, this policy is likely to be revised. As such, intensive capacity expansion going forward represents a key upside risk to our estimates.

Fig 9 - Key assumptions

Parameter	CY21	CY22E	CY23E	CY24E
Volumes (mt)	27.2	29.1	32.63	35.58
Realisations (Rs/mt)	5,060	5,212	5,473	5,637
Operating costs (Rs/mt)	3,892	4,471	4,493	4,634
EBITDA/mt (Rs)	1,247	818	1,082	1,101

Source: Company, BOBCAPS Research

Fig 10 - Valuation summary

Business (Rs mn)	CY24E
Target EV/EBITDA (x)	13
EBITDA (Rs mn)	39,060
Target EV (Rs mn)	5,07,785
Total EV	5,07,785
Net debt	(63,177)
Target market capitalisation	5,70,963
ACEM's standalone value (Rs/sh) (A)	287
Weighted average shares (mn)	1,986
ACC Target M-cap	4,38,930
ACEM Holding in ACC (50.05%)	2,19,465
Holding Co discount (10%)	21,946
ACEM Holding in ACC (50.05%) (Post Hold Co Discount)	1,97,518.5
Total Equity Shares O/S (mn)	1,986
ACEM's value in ACC (Rs/sh) (B)	99.5
Target price (Rs/sh) (A+B)	387
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Source: BOBCAPS Research

Fig 11 - Peer comparison

Ticker	Rating	TP	E	V/EBITDA (x)	EV	//tonne (US	\$)		ROE (%)			ROCE (%)	
ricker	Rating	(Rs)	FY23E	FY24E	FY25E	FY23E	FY24E	FY25E	FY23E	FY24E	FY25E	FY23E	FY24E	FY25E
ACEM IN	HOLD	387	10.2	9.4	7.3	221	211	200	6.0	7.4	8.0	13.1	12.8	14.7
ACC IN	HOLD	2,090	20.8	14.9	8.9	102	102	94	5.3	7.0	11.3	7.0	9.4	14.9
UTCEM IN	BUY	8,310	20.2	16.3	13.1	218	219	219	9.7	12.0	14.5	12.8	15.8	18.3

Source: BOBCAPS Research



Key risks

Key upside risks to our estimates are:

- large capex announcements,
- strong pricing tailwinds in ACEM's key regions, and
- above-estimated cost savings.

Key downside risks are:

- ACEM's placement under the short-term additional surveillance measure framework (Stage I) by the Securities Exchange Board of India and Stock Exchanges in India,
- slower-than-expected capacity growth, and
- continued high cost inflation, especially fuel cost.

Sector recommendation snapshot

Company	Ticker	Market Cap (US\$ bn)	Price (Rs)	Target (Rs)	Rating
ACC	ACC IN	4.3	1,880	2,090	HOLD
Ambuja Cement	ACEM IN	8.7	361	387	HOLD
Dalmia Bharat	DALBHARA IN	4.6	1,939	1,835	HOLD
JK Cement	JKCE IN	2.6	2,803	3,371	BUY
JK Lakshmi Cement	JKLC IN	1.1	758	551	SELL
Orient Cement	ORCMNT IN	0.3	123	140	HOLD
Shree Cement	SRCM IN	10.5	23,971	24,656	HOLD
Star Cement	STRCEM IN	0.6	113	138	BUY
The Ramco Cements	TRCL IN	2.1	734	534	SELL
Ultratech Cement	UTCEM IN	25.2	7,206	8,310	BUY

Source: BOBCAPS Research, NSE | Price as of 10 Feb 2023



Financials

V/E 24 D = - (D =)	4,0040	00/04 6	OVOOR	OVOOR	07645
Y/E 31 Dec (Rs mn)	CY20A	CY21A	CY22E	CY23E	CY24E
Total revenue	241,160	285,926	339,083	373,473	420,333
EBITDA	50,056	62,103	55,103	57,656	70,196
Depreciation	(11,618)	(11,525)	(12,435)	(12,875)	(14,059)
EBIT	42,934	54,103	45,567	47,663	59,005
Net interest inc./(exp.)	(1,402)	(1,457)	(1,667)	(1,735)	(1,665)
Other inc./(exp.)	4,496	3,524	2,899	2,883	2,868
Exceptional items	(1,760)	0	0	0	0
EBT	39,772	52,646	43,900	45,928	57,340
Income taxes	(8,848)	(14,534)	(13,722)	(14,320)	(17,686)
Extraordinary items	0	0	0	0	0
Min. int./Inc. from assoc.	(7,270)	(9,104)	(10,045)	(4,888)	(8,510)
Reported net profit	23,654	29,007	20,133	26,720	31,144
Adjustments	1,760	0	0	0	0
Adjusted net profit	25,415	29,007	20,133	26,720	31,144
Balance Sheet					
Y/E 31 Dec (Rs mn)	CY20A	CY21A	CY22E	CY23E	CY24E
Accounts payables	58,452	68,242	75,066	82,572	90,830
Other current liabilities	33,941	43.791	45,105	46,458	47,851
Provisions	2.926	3,062	3,215	3,376	3,544
Debt funds	4,644	4,429	4,472	4,517	4,562
Other liabilities	6,260	7,562	7,713	7,867	8,025
Equity capital	3,971	3,971	3,971	3,971	3,971
Reserves & surplus	223,605	249,566	263,186	283,393	308,024
Shareholders' fund	290,985	324,988	348,878	374,197	407,563
Total liab. and equities	397,207	452,073	484,448	518,987	562,375
Cash and cash eq.	89,356	116,943	156,030	179,782	210,132
Accounts receivables	5,611	6,458	9,754	10,744	12,092
Inventories	16,486	27,380	24,154	26,604	29,942
Other current assets	54,047	54,811	63,291	73,231	84,900
Investments	2,629	1,981	88	88	88
Net fixed assets	115,565	132,622	125,361	118,193	110,071
CWIP	110,996	109,160	103,056	107,634	112,441
Intangible assets	2,518	2,717	2,714	2,712	2,709
Deferred tax assets, net	2,310	2,717	2,714	0	2,703
Other assets	0	0	0	0	0
Total assets	397,207	452,073	484,448	518,987	562,375
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Cash Flows	CV20A	CY21A	CV22E	CV22E	CY24E
Y/E 31 Dec (Rs mn)	CY20A 49,551	57,534	42,506	40,279	-
Cash flow from operations		•	•		47,335
Change in investments	(19,050)	(26,271)	933	(10,283)	(10,742)
Change in investments	6,741	7,547	(8,456)	(5,175)	(7,762)
Other investing cash flows	0	0	(7.500)	0	(40.500)
Cash flow from investing	(12,309)	(18,724)	(7,523)	(15,458)	(18,503)
Equities issued/Others	(654)	(1,063)	225	225	225
Debt raised/repaid	3,869	(215)	43	44	45
Interest expenses	0	0	0	0	0
Dividends paid	(36,738)	(2,070)	(6,513)	(6,513)	(6,513)
Other financing cash flows	(695)	(976)	0	0	0
Cash flow from financing	(34,218)	(4,324)	(6,245)	(6,244)	(6,243)
Chg in cash & cash eq.	3,024	34,486	28,738	18,577	22,588
Closing cash & cash eq.	89,356	116,943	156,030	179,782	210,132

Per Share	• • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • •	6 1/5 : :	6 1/2	6 1/2 - -	
Y/E 31 Dec (Rs)	CY20A	CY21A	CY22E	CY23E	CY24E
Reported EPS	11.9	14.6	10.1	13.5	15.7
Adjusted EPS	12.8	14.6	10.1	13.5	15.7
Dividend per share	18.5	1.0	2.8	2.8	2.8
Book value per share	146.5	163.7	175.7	188.5	205.3
Valuations Ratios					
Y/E 31 Dec (x)	CY20A	CY21A	CY22E	CY23E	CY24E
EV/Sales	2.6	2.1	1.7	1.4	1.2
EV/EBITDA	12.6	9.7	10.3	9.4	7.3
Adjusted P/E	28.2	24.7	35.6	26.8	23.0
P/BV	2.5	2.2	2.1	1.9	1.8
DuPont Analysis					
Y/E 31 Dec (%)	CY20A	CY21A	CY22E	CY23E	CY24E
Tax burden (Net profit/PBT)	77.8	72.4	68.7	68.8	69.2
Interest burden (PBT/EBIT)	96.7	97.3	96.3	96.4	97.2
EBIT margin (EBIT/Revenue)	17.8	18.9	13.4	12.8	14.0
Asset turnover (Rev./Avg TA)	60.4	67.3	72.4	74.4	77.7
Leverage (Avg TA/Avg Equity)	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.4
Adjusted ROAE	11.0	12.4	9.0	8.7	10.1
Ratio Analysis					
Y/E 31 Dec	CY20A	CY21A	CY22E	CY23E	CY24E
YoY growth (%)	0120/1	012170	VILLE	01202	01242
Revenue	(9.2)	18.6	18.6	10.1	12.5
EBITDA	8.9	24.1	(11.3)	4.6	21.8
Adjusted EPS	21.3	14.1	(30.6)	32.7	16.6
Profitability & Return ratios (%)	20		(00.0)	02	
EBITDA margin	20.4	21.4	16.0	15.2	16.4
EBIT margin	17.5	18.6	13.2	12.5	13.8
Adjusted profit margin	10.5	10.1	5.9	7.2	7.4
Adjusted ROAE	11.0	12.4	9.0	8.7	10.1
ROCE	14.1	16.9	13.1	12.8	14.6
Working capital days (days)					
Receivables	8	8	11	11	11
Inventory	25	35	26	26	26
Payables	109	109	95	94	93
Ratios (x)					
•	1.3	1.4	1.6	1.7	1.9

2.2

27.5

0.0

2.4

35.4

0.0

Source: Company, BOBCAPS Research | Note: TA = Total Assets

1.7

30.6

0.0

1.8

37.1

0.0

2.1

27.3

0.0

Current ratio

Net interest coverage ratio

Adjusted debt/equity



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Recommendation scale: Recommendations and Absolute returns (%) over 12 months

BUY - Expected return >+15%

HOLD - Expected return from -6% to +15%

SELL - Expected return <-6%

Note: Recommendation structure changed with effect from 21 June 2021

Our recommendation scale does not factor in short-term stock price volatility related to market fluctuations. Thus, our recommendations may not always be strictly in line with the recommendation scale as shown above.

Ratings and Target Price (3-year history): AMBUJA CEMENT (ACEM IN)



B - Buy, H - Hold, S - Sell, A - Add, R - Reduce

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