Buy





ACME Solar Holdings

 BSE SENSEX
 S&P CNX

 80,335
 24,274

CMP: INR215 TP: INR290 (+35%)



Stock Info

| Bloomberg | ACMESOLA IN |
|-----------------------|-------------|
| Equity Shares (m) | 605 |
| M.Cap.(INRb)/(USDb) | 130.2 / 1.5 |
| 52-Week Range (INR) | 292 / 168 |
| 1, 6, 12 Rel. Per (%) | 3/-/- |
| 12M Avg Val (INR M) | 448 |
| Free float (%) | 16.6 |

Financials Snapshot (INR b)

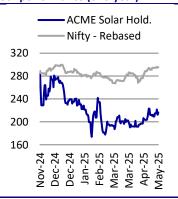
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|---------------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|--|
| Y/E March | FY25E | FY26E | FY27E | |
| Sales | 13.8 | 23.8 | 43.0 | |
| EBITDA | 12.0 | 20.7 | 38.1 | |
| Adj. PAT | 2.0 | 3.5 | 6.3 | |
| EPS (INR) | 3.3 | 5.7 | 10.4 | |
| EPS Gr. (%) | 38.6 | 75.2 | 82.2 | |
| BV/Sh.(INR) | 75.3 | 81.0 | 91.5 | |
| Ratios | | | | |
| ND/Equity | 1.8 | 4.6 | 7.6 | |
| ND/EBITDA | 6.7 | 10.9 | 11.1 | |
| RoE (%) | 5.5 | 7.3 | 12.1 | |
| RoIC (%) | 5.6 | 5.5 | 5.2 | |
| Valuations | | | | |
| P/E (x) | 65.7 | 37.5 | 20.6 | |
| EV/EBITDA (x) | 17.2 | 16.9 | 14.4 | |
| | | | | |

Shareholding pattern (%)

| As On | Mar-25 | Dec-24 |
|----------|--------|--------|
| Promoter | 83.4 | 83.4 |
| DII | 7.1 | 7.0 |
| FII | 4.7 | 5.5 |
| Others | 4.8 | 4.1 |
| | | |

FII Includes depository receipts

Stock performance (one-year)



Lower battery costs creating potential for IRR boost

- Decline in project costs creating potential for 4-5% equity IRR boost: A combination of lower battery/module prices and developers' willingness to tweak original configurations of firm and dispatch able renewable energy (FDRE) projects is creating the potential for ACME Solar (and other independent power producers or IPPs) to boost equity IRRs on FDRE projects. We estimate that a decline in battery/module prices by ~20-25% during CY23-25 could lead to ~15% capex savings on select FDRE projects for ACME, boosting equity IRR by ~4-5%.
- ACME most exposed to FDRE among peers with 2.6GW FDRE pipeline: Note that ACME has 53% FDRE projects (2.35GW) in its under-construction pipeline, for which letters of award (LoAs) were secured in CY23-24. These projects should benefit from cost deflation in battery/module prices. Overall, ACME stands out as the most exposed to FDRE projects among its peers, with 2.6GW (59% of its RE pipeline) under development, positioning it to benefit significantly from falling battery prices.
- Further, developers are also experimenting with changes in project configurations so as to take advantage of lower capex solar/storage. This can further boost IRR. However, as per our channel checks, this entails significant operational challenges (e.g., compliance with stringent capacity utilization factor (CUF) norms—minimum declared CUF of 40% and generation to be maintained within +10%/-15% of the declared value over the 25-year term of power purchase agreements), and the actual implementation will have to be watched out.
- Strong earnings outlook in coming quarters: We expect ACME to report a 29% QoQ increase in EBITDA in 4QFY25 and expect 1QFY26 to gain from the commissioning of 350MW of new capacity. With 53% of its pipeline PPA-backed and 100%/83% PPA coverage for FY26E/FY27E EBITDA, ACME offers strong earnings visibility. We maintain a BUY rating on ACME with a TP of INR290/share.

Abhishek Nigam – Research Analyst (Abhishek.Nigam@MotilalOswal.com)



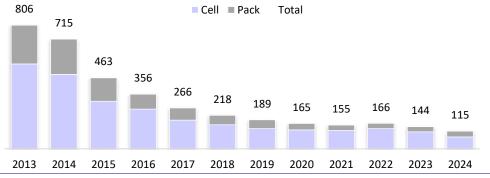
~25% decline in battery prices in CY23-25 re-shaping project economics

- The continued decline in battery prices has significantly enhanced the viability and competitiveness of battery energy storage system (BESS) projects. In CY23, average lithium-ion battery pack prices fell by 13% YoY to USD144/kWh, primarily driven by a reduction in raw material and component costs. This trend gained further momentum in CY24, with prices declining by another 20% YoY to USD 115/kWh—the steepest annual fall observed since CY17.
- Falling battery prices (down from over USD200/kWh in CY18 to ~USD115/kWh in CY24 to ~USD100/kWh now) are 1) leading to savings in capex, thus boosting project IRR; 2) giving developers the option to tweak predetermined combinations of solar/wind/storage so as to maximize returns.

Improved battery economics aid right-sizing wind minimizing penalty risk

- In FDRE projects, developers face performance-linked penalties, typically 1.5x the PPA tariff, for non-compliance with the demand fulfilment ratio (DFR). Meeting DFR targets is especially challenging due to the variability of wind energy generation, unlike solar, which offers greater predictability.
- Wind capacity also exposes developers to penalty risk for under-generation and merchant risk for over-generation. Developers are exploring oversizing solar and battery storage, as solar + tracker systems are achieving plant load factors (PLFs) comparable to or marginally below the wind capacity. Additionally, land and RoW constraints make wind projects more prone to delays than solar.

Exhibit 1: Volume-weighted average lithium-ion battery pack and cell price split (USD/kWh) during CY13-24



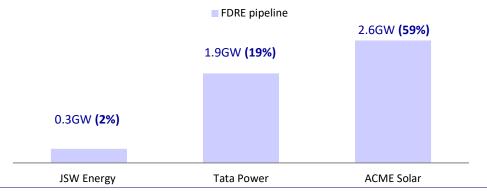
Source: Bloomberg, MOFSL

We estimate ~4-5% rise in FDRE equity IRR for ACME's projects

- For a 250MW FDRE project—comprising 350MW (AC) of solar, 90 MW of wind, and 700 MWh of battery storage— for which we assume LoA in CY23, we estimate battery costs have declined by ~25% and the capital cost associated with solar modules has also reduced meaningfully, driven by a decline in module prices. We estimate that together, this decline in battery/module costs should lead to 15% savings in project capex. We estimate a potential equity IRR improvement of ~400-500bp, assuming other variables remain constant.
- LoAs for ~2.4GW of FDRE projects were issued in FY24-25 at tariffs ranging from INR3.42 to INR4.73/kWh and given the cost deflation since then, we expect an equity IRR boost across these projects, thereby reinforcing the attractiveness of ACME's 2.6GW FDRE pipeline.



Exhibit 2: FDRE pipeline as a percentage of total pipeline



Source: Company, MOFSL

Exhibit 3: ACME's under construction FDRE pipeline of 2.6GW

| Project Name | Contracted Capacity (MW) | Off-taker | Tariff (INR/kWh) | Status | LoA Month |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------|---------------------|----------------------|-----------|
| ACME Surya Power Private Limited | 250 | SJVN | 4.38 | PPA signed | Nov'23 |
| ACME Sun Power Private Limited | 320 | SJVN | 4.38 | PPA signed | Dec'23 |
| ACME Urja One Private Limited | 380 | SECI | 4.73 | PPA signed for 190MW | Apr'23 |
| ACME Platinum Urja Private Limited | 350 | SECI | 3.42 | PPA signed for 150MW | July'24 |
| ACME Venus Urja Private Limited | 400 | NHPC | 4.64 | PPA signed | Mar'24 |
| ACME Hybrid Urja Private Limited | 280 | NHPC | 4.64 | PPA signed | Mar'24 |
| ACME Marigold Urja Private Limited | 400 | NTPC | 4.7 | LoA awarded | Dec'24 |
| SPV 3 | 250 | NHPC | 4.56 | LoA awaited | - |

Source: Company, MOFSL

Upsizing solar/storage to drive up IRR, but beset with challenges

- A decline in battery prices is enabling developers to re-evaluate whether wind capacity can be right-sized and solar/storage capacity can be upsized without compromising the energy output. We estimate that tweaking project configuration by lowering capex costs can increase equity IRR as the optimized project combination can lower overall project capex without compromising the total energy output.
- However, in reality, this is beset with challenges due to the existence of regulatory constraints mandating developers to
- Projects that require maintaining an annual CUF of not less than 40%; and
- Maintaining actual generation within a range of +10% to -15% of the declared CUF over the 25-year tenure of the PPA.

INR25b refinancing at 8.8% to cut interest costs

- On 3rd Apr'25, ACME announced the successful closure of a long-term project finance facility (extended by SBI and REC) of INR24.91b for a tenure of 18-20 years. This refinancing facility is aimed at replacing existing high-cost debt tied to its 490MW operational RE portfolio across Andhra Pradesh (160MW), Rajasthan (300MW), and Punjab (30MW) at a reduced weighted average interest rate of 8.8%.
- Structured under a co-obligor framework, the refinancing has improved credit ratings for the Andhra Pradesh and Punjab entities, backed by a strong operational track record (~9 years for AP & Punjab, ~3 years for Rajasthan).



Earnings momentum picking up over next few quarters

- We expect 4QFY25 EBITDA to jump 29% QoQ, driven by the full contribution from the 1,200MW of newly commissioned solar capacity. 1QFY26 will witness earnings contributions from the commissioning of an additional 350MW of capacity in 4QFY25. This includes a 300MW solar project and a 50MW wind project.
- The company is set to operationalize ~0.35GW/0.1GW/2.3GW projects in 4QFY25/FY26/FY27 (9MFY25-end operational: 2.5GW). We are modelling a stable EBITDA margin of 87%-89% over FY26-27E, in line with peers.

FY27 EBITDA visibility high; largely backed by PPA

- Overall ACME has 53% of its project pipeline backed by PPAs. Its 100%/83% of FY26/FY27 upcoming capacities are also backed by PPAs.
- Of the total under-construction projects, amounting to 4.43GW until FY29, the company has already signed PPAs for projects totaling 2.3GW. This implies that the entire FY26 revenue/EBITDA are 'in the bag' (i.e., backed by PPAs). With PPAs signed for 83% of the capacity coming up in FY27, a significant portion of the FY27 revenue/EBITDA is also 'in the bag'.
- Additionally, LoAs have been granted for the other 1.8GW projects. A few of these projects could be converted into PPAs over 1HFY26 in our opinion, thus enhancing the visibility of FY27 earnings further. Additionally, ACME has grid connectivity in place for all its under-construction projects, with an additional ~2GW of connectivity (both applied and secured) available for future bids. This alleviates any concerns regarding grid availability.

Valuation and view

- In the last one month, ACME has outperformed NTPC Green, with ACME stock price up 14% compared to a 3% rise in NTPC Green's share price.
- We maintain a BUY rating on ACME with a TP of INR290/share. We assign an EV/EBITDA multiple of 11x to FY28E EBITDA. Adjusting for net debt, we derive our TP of INR290, implying 35% potential upside.



Story in charts

Exhibit 4: Breakup of total project portfolio 6,970MW

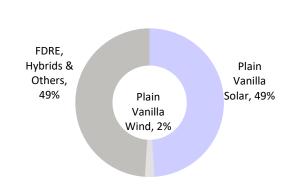
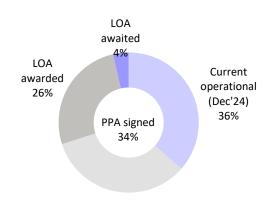
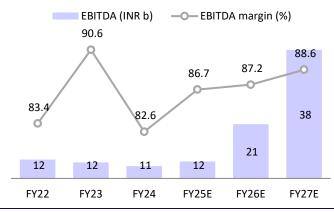


Exhibit 5: PPA & LoA status of total project portfolio-6,970MW



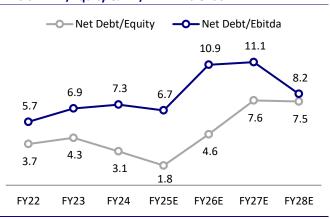
Source: Company, MOFSL

Exhibit 6: EBITDA and EBITDA margin trends



Source: Company, MOFSL

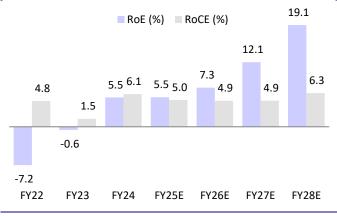
Exhibit 7: ND/Equity & ND/EBITDA trends



Source: Company, MOFSL

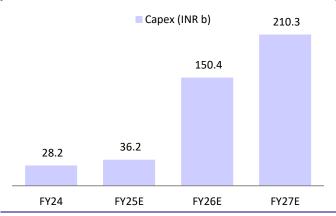
Source: Company, MOFSL

Exhibit 8: RoE and RoCE trends



Source: Company, MOFSL

Exhibit 9: Capex trend (INRb)



Source: Company, MOFSL



Financials and valuations

| Consolidated - Income Statement | | | | | | (INR m) |
|---|------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|--------------------|
| Y/E March | FY22 | FY23 | FY24 | FY25E | FY26E | FY27E |
| Total Income from Operations | 14,879 | 12,949 | 13,193 | 13,808 | 23,777 | 43,007 |
| Change (%) | | -13% | 2% | 5% | 72% | 81% |
| EBITDA | 12,403 | 11,726 | 10,891 | 11,968 | 20,722 | 38,110 |
| Change (%) | | -5% | -7% | 10% | 73% | 84% |
| Margin (%) | 83.4 | 90.6 | 82.6 | 86.7 | 87.2 | 88.6 |
| Depreciation | 5,463 | 4,848 | 3,081 | 3,117 | 4,455 | 8,813 |
| EBIT | 6,940 | 6,878 | 7,810 | 8,851 | 16,267 | 29,296 |
| Net forex loss | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Int. and Finance Charges | 9,960 | 8,091 | 7,673 | 7,431 | 11,276 | 19,961 |
| Other Income | 748 | 665 | 1,470 | 1,627 | 347 | 390 |
| PBT bef. EO Exp. | -2,271 | -548 | 1,607 | 3,046 | 5,338 | 9,725 |
| EO Items | 3,296 | 394 | 7,487 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| PBT after EO Exp. | 1,024 | -154 | 9,094 | 3,046 | 5,338 | 9,725 |
| Total Tax | 404 | -122 | 2,116 | 1,066 | 1,868 | 3,404 |
| Tax Rate (%) | 39.5 | 79.4 | 23.3 | 35.0 | 35.0 | 35.0 |
| Minority Interest/Share of JVs/associates | | | | | | |
| Reported PAT | 620 | -32 | 6,978 | 1,980 | 3,470 | 6,321 |
| Adjusted PAT | -1,375 | -113 | 1,233 | 1,980 | 3,470 | 6,321 |
| Change (%) | | Loss | LP | 61% | 75% | 82% |
| Margin (%) | | -0.9 | 9.3 | 14.3 | 14.6 | 14.7 |
| | | | | | | (mm) |
| Consolidated - Balance Sheet | | | | | | (INR m) |
| Y/E March | FY22 | FY23 | FY24 | FY25E | FY26E | FY27E |
| Equity Share Capital | 1,044 | 1,044 | 1,044 | 1,210 | 1,210 | 1,210 |
| Total Reserves | 18,043 | 17,961 | 24,864 | 44,344 | 47,814 | 54,135 |
| Net Worth | 19,088 | 19,006 | 25,909 | 45,554 | 49,024 | 55,345 |
| Minority Interest | 1,004 | 299 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Loans | 69,509 | 80,993 | 76,964 | 89,091 | 2,27,384 | 4,23,890 |
| Deferred Tax Liabilities | 901 | 1,600 | 2,120 | 2,120 | 2,120 | 2,120 |
| Other non-current liabilities | 2,682 | 6,589 | 10,702 | 10,702 | 10,702 | 10,702 |
| Lease liabilities, Provisions, etc. | 3,222 | 3,687 | 3,982 | 3,982 | 3,982 | 3,982 |
| Non-current liabilities | 76,315 | 92,869 | 93,768 | 1,05,895 | 2,44,188 | 4,40,694 |
| Capital Employed | 96,406 | 1,12,173 | 1,19,677 | 1,51,450 | 2,93,213 | 4,96,040 |
| Gross Block | 84,614 | 94,054 | 90,355 | 1,33,479 | 2,87,599 | 4,97,980 |
| Less: Accum. Deprn. | 22,843 | 27,744 | 22,775 | 25,893 | 30,348 | 39,161 |
| Net Fixed Assets | 61,771 | 66,309 | 67,579 | 1,07,587 | 2,57,251 | 4,58,819 |
| Capital WIP | 12,728 | 21,473 | 28,284 | 21,328 | 17,600 | 17,560 |
| Investments & other financial assets | 1,469 | 1,845 | 549 | 549 | 549 | 549 |
| Non-current tax assets (net) | 413 | 898 | 316 | 316 | 316 | 316 |
| Deferred tax assets (net) | 1,598 | 2,476 | 1,929 | 1,929 | 1,929 | 1,929 |
| Other non-current assets | 7,490 | 1,847 | 2,620 | 2,620 | 2,620 | 2,620 |
| Non-current assets | 85,468 | 94,848 | 1,01,277 | 1,34,329 | 2,80,264 | 4,81,792 |
| Curr. Assets, Loans&Adv. | 23,399 | 27,021 | 32,721 | 31,442 | 27,269 | 28,568 |
| Account Receivables | 9,314 | 6,993 | 4,209 | 2,521 | 4,185 | 6,709 |
| Cash and Bank Balance | 7,631 | 13,385 | 13,149 | 13,557 | 7,720 | 6,496 |
| Loans and Advances | 1,623 | 3,439 | 1,168 | 1,168 | 1,168 | 1,168 |
| Investments | 0 | 0 | 1,499 | 1,499 | 1,499 | 1,499 |
| Other Current Asset | 4,831 | 3,204 | 12,697 | 12,697 | 12,697 | 12,697 |
| Curr. Liability & Prov. | 12,461 | 9,696 | 14,321 | 14,321 | 14,321 | 14,321 |
| Account Payables | 2,730 | 621 | 738 | 738 | 738 | 738 |
| Loans | 6,127 | 5,581 | 5,212 | 5,212 | 5,212 | 5,212 |
| Provisions | 2 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 |
| Other Current Liability | 3,601 | 3,489 | 8,367 | 8,367 | 8,367 | 8,367 |
| | | | | | | |
| Net Current Assets Appl. of Funds | 10,938 96,406 | 17,325 | 18,400 | 17,121 | 12,948 | 14,248 4,96,040 |



Financials and valuations

| Ratios | | | | | | |
|---|---------------|---------------------|--------------------|-------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| Y/E March (INR) | FY22 | FY23 | FY24 | FY25E | FY26E | FY27E |
| Basic (INR) | | | | | | |
| EPS | -2.6 | -0.2 | 2.4 | 3.3 | 5.7 | 10.4 |
| Cash EPS | 7.8 | 9.1 | 8.3 | 8.4 | 13.1 | 25.0 |
| BV/Share | 36.6 | 36.4 | 49.6 | 75.3 | 81.0 | 91.5 |
| Valuation (x) | | | | | | |
| P/E | -81.7 | NA | 91.1 | 65.7 | 37.5 | 20.6 |
| Cash P/E | 27.5 | 23.7 | 26.0 | 25.5 | 16.4 | 8.6 |
| P/BV | 5.9 | 5.9 | 4.3 | 2.9 | 2.7 | 2.4 |
| EV/Sales | 11.9 | 14.5 | 14.1 | 14.9 | 14.7 | 12.7 |
| EV/EBITDA | 14.3 | 16.0 | 17.1 | 17.2 | 16.9 | 14.4 |
| FCF per share | -58.7 | 9.5 | -26.6 | -48.6 | -238.2 | -326.8 |
| Return Ratios (%) | | | | | | |
| RoE | -7.2 | -0.6 | 5.5 | 5.5 | 7.3 | 12.1 |
| RoCE | 4.8 | 1.5 | 6.1 | 5.0 | 4.9 | 4.9 |
| RoIC | 5.4 | 1.8 | 7.0 | 5.6 | 5.5 | 5.2 |
| Working Capital Ratios | | | | | | |
| Fixed Asset Turnover (x) | 0.2 | 0.1 | 0.1 | 0.1 | 0.1 | 0.1 |
| Asset Turnover (x) | 0.2 | 0.1 | 0.1 | 0.1 | 0.1 | 0.1 |
| Debtor (Days) | 228 | 197 | 116 | 67 | 64 | 57 |
| Creditor (Days) | 67 | 18 | 20 | 19 | 11 | 6 |
| Leverage Ratio (x) | | | | | | |
| Current Ratio | 1.9 | 2.8 | 2.3 | 2.2 | 1.9 | 2.0 |
| Interest Cover Ratio | 0.7 | 0.9 | 1.0 | 1.2 | 1.4 | 1.5 |
| Net Debt/Equity | 3.7 | 4.3 | 3.1 | 1.8 | 4.6 | 7.6 |
| Net Debt/EBITDA | 5.7 | 6.9 | 7.3 | 6.7 | 10.9 | 11.1 |
| | | | | | | |
| Consolidated - Cash Flow Statement | | | | | | (INR m) |
| Y/E March | FY22 | FY23 | FY24 | FY25E | FY26E | FY27E |
| OP/(Loss) before Tax | 1,024 | -154 | 9,094 | 3,046 | 5,338 | 9,725 |
| Depreciation | 5,463 | 4,848 | 3,081 | 3,117 | 4,455 | 8,813 |
| Direct Taxes Paid | -256 | -547 | -112 | -1,066 | -1,868 | -3,404 |
| (Inc)/Dec in WC | 3,318 | 8,488 | 2,278 | 1,687 | -1,664 | -2,524 |
| CF from Operations | 9,550 | 12,635 | 14,342 | 6,785 | 6,261 | 12,611 |
| (Inc)/Dec in FA | -40,186 | -7,688 | -28,241 | -36,169 | -1,50,391 | -2,10,341 |
| Free Cash Flow | -30,637 | 4,947 | -13,899 | -29,384 | -1,44,130 | -1,97,731 |
| (Pur)/Sale of Investments | 36,446 | -6,411 | 10,934 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| CF from Investments | -3,741 | -14,099 | -17,307 | -36,169 | -1,50,391 | -2,10,341 |
| Inc/(Dec) in Debt | 3,698 | 9,832 | 9,913 | 12,127 | 1,38,293 | 1,96,506 |
| Issuance of Equity | 0 | 0 | 0 | 24,166 | 0 | 0 |
| Others | -9,256 | -7,678 | -7,755 | -6,500 | 0 | 0 |
| - · · · · · · | | 2,154 | 2,158 | 29,792 | 1,38,293 | 1,96,506 |
| CF from Fin. Activity | -h hhx | | | | | |
| CF from Fin. Activity | -5,558 251 | | | | | |
| CF from Fin. Activity Inc/Dec of Cash Opening Balance | -5,558 251 | 690 4,785 | - 807 5,474 | 408 13,149 | - 5,837 13,557 | - 1,225 7,720 |

Investment in securities market are subject to market risks. Read all the related documents carefully before investing.



NOTES



| Explanation of Investment Rating | | | | |
|----------------------------------|--|--|--|--|
| Investment Rating | Expected return (over 12-month) | | | |
| BUY | >=15% | | | |
| SELL | <-10% | | | |
| NEUTRAL | < - 10 % to 15% | | | |
| UNDER REVIEW | Rating may undergo a change | | | |
| NOT RATED | We have forward looking estimates for the stock but we refrain from assigning recommendation | | | |

*In case the recommendation given by the Research Analyst is inconsistent with the investment rating legend for a continuous period of 30 days, the Research Analyst shall be within following 30 days take appropriate measures to make the recommendation consistent with the investment rating legend.

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