# **Aether Industries**

# **Expansion and diversification**

Aether Industries (Aether) has experienced sectoral environmental challenges in the fiscal year 2023-24. The broader operating environment presented hurdles, including volatile macroeconomic conditions, ongoing geopolitical tensions, slowdowns due to inventory de-stocking, and margin pressures from aggressive competition from Chinese manufacturers. Additionally, last year the company was fraught with the unfortunate fire incident at the company's primary manufacturing facility. All this put the company on the back foot.

Despite these hurdles, the company has successfully diversified across various industries, including oilfield drilling services, electronic chemicals, sustainable polyols, circular plastic recycling technology, and numerous other rapidly advancing projects within R&D and pilot plant facilities.

Aether has commissioned site 4 to execute the strategic supply agreement with Baker Hughes. It has received the revocation of the closure order from the Gujarat Pollution Control Board (GPCB) for site 2. The expansion project at sites 3+ and 3++ is on track and will be commissioned by FY25-end. This will accelerate its revenue growth in near term. Phase I at site 5 (Panoli) is proceeding according to the planned commissioning schedule by end of FY26. The company's strategic capital investments are being fuelled by internal accruals and money raised (INR 7,500mn) through QIP. We expect a revenue CAGR of ~43% and an earnings CAGR of ~58% over FY24-27E. Maintaining BUY with a TP of INR 1,117.

- Increased spending on Research and Development: Constant focus on research and development is the key success factor in a technology oriented business model. Research & development (R&D) is the core strength of Aether. The company's business model requires it to launch products regularly and continuously add competencies. In order to achieve this, it has to invest in R&D infrastructure. The company's R&D expenditure almost doubled from INR 501mn in FY23 to INR 987mn in FY24. Aether has spent 16.5% of revenue on R&D in FY24 up from 7.7% in FY23. Total no of scientist increased from 111 to 148. Company has also increased highly qualified employees from 233 to 276. Company commissioned pilot plant in Q4FY24 at site 1. This will help for faster scale up of newly developed products in R&D. This expanded pilot plant will help in CRAMS business. This will increase no of fumes to 55 while reactors will be more than 200.
- The company has appointed Dr James Ringer as the Chief Technology Officer (CTO) with a focus on process safety. He has been associated with Aether since last 3 years as Business development leader.



# BUY

CMP (as on 23	INR 903	
<b>Target Price</b>	INR 1,117	
NIFTY		24,823
KEY	OLD	NEW
CHANGES	OLD	INLIV
Rating	BUY	BUY
Price Target	INR 1,110	INR 1,117
EDC 0/	FY25E	FY26E
EPS %	(-4.6%)	(-3.3%)

### **KEY STOCK DATA**

No. of Shares (mn)	133
MCap (INR bn) / (\$ mn)	119/1,426
6m avg traded value (INR mn)	76
52 Week high / low INR	1,065/762

#### STOCK PERFORMANCE (%)

	3M	6 <b>M</b>	12M
Absolute (%)	9.0	4.1	(13.9)
Relative (%)	1.5	(6.7)	(37.8)

#### **SHAREHOLDING PATTERN (%)**

	Marc-24	June-24
Promoters	81.79	81.79
FIs & Local MFs	11.82	11.56
FPIs	2.22	2.90
Public & Others	4.17	3.75
Pledged Shares	0.00	0.00
Source: BSE		

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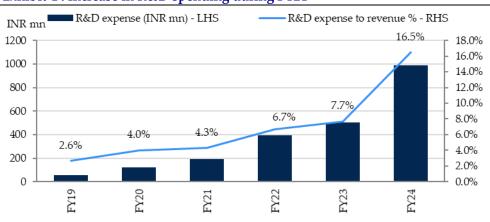


Exhibit-1: Increase in R&D spending during FY24

### Transition towards sustainable businesses

### Saudi Aramco and H B fuller -Novel Converge Polyols contract

Aether has signed a license agreement with Saudi Aramco Technologies company, Saudi Arabia for the commercialisation of the Converge polyols technology. This agreement initiates Aether's activities towards the manufacturing and commercialisation of the Converge polyols technology and product series. The company is progressing towards adopting sustainable business practices and transitioning to low environmental footprint. These polyols could contain up to 40% of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) by weight, thus reducing overall CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. These are a differentiated series of polyols with promising applications in the CASE (coatings, adhesives, sealants, elastomers) industry. The targeted market of these polyols is 850 KTPA and a growing at CAGR of 5%.

Aether and Aramco, along with H.B. Fuller, global leader in adhesive manufacturing has jointly announced the commercialisation of the Converge polyols technology. This announcement further underscores the company's collaborative endeavours in the CASE industry to identify sustainable alternatives that not only enhance performance but also prioritise sustainability. Aether has appointed Dr. Ron Valente as a Business Development Leader (Speciality polyols).

### Partnership with Novoloop on the sustainable plastic management project

Aether has partnered with Novoloop for Lifecycling technology. This technology offers an economical and sustainable solution for hard-to- recycle plastics, with operations set to begin in FY25 at company's newly built pilot plant dedicated to the project. This technology transforms post-consumer plastic waste into virgin-quality monomers for the synthesis of virgin-quality, high performance materials such as the company's Lifecycled<sup>TM</sup> thermoplastic polyurethane. This pilot plant is a testament to the commitment of the Novoloop and Aether to tackle the global plastic crisis. By scaling this technology, a pathway is being created towards a truly circular world, where plastic waste becomes a valuable resource. By using this scalable mechanism of oxidation to convert postconsumer polyethylene into useful monomers for durable materials, Novoloop expects to provide its products at prices competitive with fossil-based products. It will help in carbon footprint reduction of upto 91%.



### Agreement with major global lithium ion battery manufacturer

Aether executes strategic agreement with Global Lithium-Ion Battery Producer and enter into the electrolyte additives space. The agreement includes the commercial supply finalisation of one specific electrolyte additive and initiates the discussion on three others. The company was developing products for this field for a long time but wanted to make it public knowledge only after securing a substantial commercial contract with a global lithium-ion battery producer.

### Other highlights

- Company commenced production at site 4 with strategic supply agreement with Baker Hughes on March 2024. The company will manufacture 6 products for the Baker Huges under the contract/exclusive manufacturing model. Production commenced in wholly owned subsidiary; Aether Speciality Chemicals limited. In June 2023, the company signed LOI for the same. The Tenure of the agreement is 5 years with additional 1-year term.
- On November 29, 2023, there was a fire accident at company's manufacturing facility 2. This accident significantly impacted human and material capital. The closure of the site by GPCB for 39days has impact on the manufacturing operations. The plant was 50% operational by end of February post revocation of closure order by GPCB.
- Company will incur additional capex on land parcel near site 3 named as site 3+,3++. On Site 3+ and 3++ company will incur capex of ~INR 2bn of which INR 1.383bn will be infused from QIP. Total capacity of site 3+, 3++ is 3,500 tons which will be together double the total capacity of site 3.
- For future expansion the company has acquired land for manufacturing facility 4 and manufacturing facility 5.
- Manufacturing Facility 3+/3++ is projected to be operational by the end of FY25, with the first phase of manufacturing facility 5 expected to come online by the end of FY26.



# Financials (Consolidated)

Income statement as on 31st March, 2024

INR mn	FY22	FY23	FY24 Co	mments
Revenues	5,900	6,511	5,982	LSM, CRAMS and CEM contributed 59%,14% and 26% Domestic CRAMS sells were lower in FY24 by 65% YoY Exports 43% of total revenue Italy:10.8%, Germany:7.3%, USA:5.8% and Spain:4% Expect contribution from middle east region to increase significantly with start of Baker Hughes contract
Growth %	31.2	10.3	(8.1)	Estimated sales volume grew 8% YoY  Correction in product realisation resulted in revenue declined by 8%
Raw Material	2,880	3,173	3,209	The company sources raw material from open market Prices corrected during the year and for most of them prices have stabilised now Gross margin reduced by 491bps in FY24
Employee Cost	270	345	386 •	ESOP cost increased by 137% to INR36.76mn
Other Expenses	1,069	1,130	1,064	26% saving on power and fuel cost expenses to INR268.5mn 30% saving on electricity expenses to INR135.1mn
EBITDA	1,681	1,862	1,322	
EBIDTA Margin (%)	28.5	28.6	22.1	
EBITDA Growth %	49.9	10.8	(29.0)	
Depreciation	155	232	397 <b>•</b>	The insurance claim process wrt fire accident is being accessed and hence the impairment has not been charged
ЕВІТ	1,526	1,630	926 •	Increase was primarily due to (i) interest on FDs created out of Idle IPO/QIP funds (ii) duty drawback earned on exports done by the company in FY24 and (iii) MEIS duty credit  Exceptional items of INR137.6 includes all the expenses made towards the fire accident and revenue from selling the scrap  Other Income includes gain of INR 35.45mn on foreign currency on account of appreciation of Indian currency
Other Income (Including EO Items)	70	166	254	
Interest	131	51	85 •	The increased is largely owing to (i) interest on cash credit and (ii) interest on bill discounting  Repayment of debt from QIP money has resulted in saving in interest
PBT	1,465	1,745	1,095	
Tax	375	441	270	
PAT	1,089	1,304	825	Net margins decreased from 20% in FY23 to 15.5% in FY24. The decrease is primarily due to decrease in realisation
EO (Loss) / Profit (Net Of Tax)	-	-	(104)	
APAT	1,089	1,304	929	
Share from associates	-	-	-	
Minority Interest	-	-	-	
Consolidated APAT	1,089	1,304	929	
Consolidated APAT Growth (%)	53.2	19.7	(28.8)	
AEPS	8.2	9.8	7.0	
AEPS Growth %	53.2	19.7	(28.5)	



# Balance sheet as on 31st March, 2024

INR mn	FY22	FY23	FY24 Co	mments
SOURCES OF FUNDS				
Share Capital	1,127	1,245	1,326 •	80,12,820 Equity Shares of face value INR10 each at a price of INR 936.00 per Equity Share (including a premium of INR 926 per Equity Share), issued in QIP in June 23
Reserves And Surplus	2,742	11,201	19,308	26,732 Equity Shares of face value INR10 each at a price of INR321 per Equity share (including a premium of INR311 per Equity share), issued under exercise of ESOPs  Company wrote off INR 180.63mn of QIP expenses from securities
			•	premium reserve.
<b>Total Equity</b>	3,869	12,446	20,633	·
Minority Interest	-	-	-	
Long-term Debt	1,218	-	-	
Short-term Debt	1,633	1	1,686 •	Working capital loan
Total Debt	2,851	1	1,686	
Deferred Tax Liability	139	268	364	
Long-term Provision and others	51	145	119	
TOTAL SOURCES OF FUNDS	6,909	12,860	22,803	
APPLICATION OF FUNDS				
Net Block	2,571	6,462	8,595	
Capital WIP	577	372	2,261 •	95% of CWIP is on the projects which are less than one year
Other non-current assets	450	212	121 •	Reduction in capital advances has resulted in decrease
Non-current Investments	2	2	2	
Total Non-current assets	3,600	7,047	10,979	
Inventories	1,627	2,488	3,435	The increase in inventory is primarily due to restart of site 2 in February 2024, following the fire incident, which led to higher in process inventory levels for many of products as of 31st March, 2024
Debtors	1,635	2,590	2,329	
Cash and Cash Equivalents	180	1,023	5,557	
Other Current Assets	656	651	1,707	Increase on account of increase in (i) balances with government authorities and (ii) advances recoverable in cash/in kind
<b>Total Current Assets</b>	4,098	6,752	13,027	
Creditors	699	815	1,035	
Other Current Liabilities & Provns	91	124	168	
<b>Total Current Liabilities</b>	789	939	1,204	
Net Current Assets	3,309	5,813	11,823	
TOTAL APPLICATION OF FUNDS	6,909	12,860	22,802	

Exhibit-2: Revenue EBITDA margin growth YoY

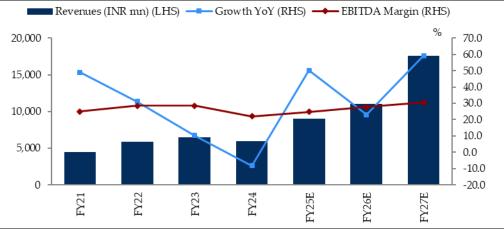
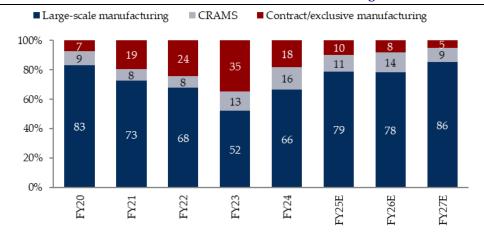


Exhibit-3: Increased contribution from site 3+,3++ in LSM segment



Source: Company, HSIE Research

Exhibit-4: ROE is expected to improve in FY25 and FY26



Exhibit-5: Domestic/ Export Revenue trend

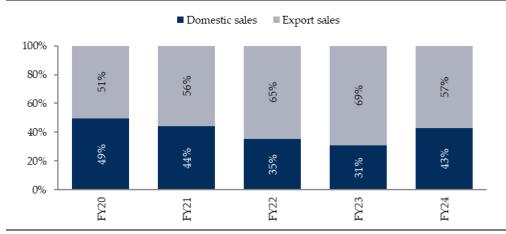
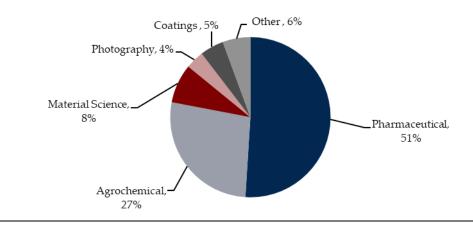


Exhibit-6: Revenue break up by end user industry





# Financials (Consolidated)

# **INCOME STATEMENT**

INR mn	FY21	FY22	FY23	FY24	FY25E	FY26E	FY27E
Revenues	4,498	5,900	6,511	5,982	8,981	11,059	17,609
Growth %	49.0	31.2	10.3	(8.1)	50.1	23.1	59.2
Raw Material	2,307	2,880	3,173	3,209	4,580	5,419	8,453
Employee Cost	221	270	345	386	464	533	613
Other Expenses	849	1,069	1,130	1,064	1,706	2,046	3,170
EBITDA	1,122	1,681	1,862	1,322	2,231	3,061	5,374
EBIDTA Margin (%)	24.9	28.5	28.6	22.1	24.8	27.7	30.5
EBITDA Growth %	56.3	49.9	10.8	(29.0)	68.7	37.2	75.6
Depreciation	110	155	232	397	598	733	844
EBIT	1,011	1,526	1,630	926	1,632	2,328	4,530
Other Income (Including EO Items)	40	70	166	254	250	390	270
Interest	113	131	51	85	85	85	136
PBT	938	1,465	1,745	1,095	1,797	2,633	4,664
Tax	227	375	441	270	404	579	1,026
PAT	711	1,089	1,304	825	1,393	2,053	3,638
EO (Loss) / Profit (Net Of Tax)	-	-	-	(104)	-	-	-
APAT	711	1,089	1,304	929	1,393	2,053	3,638
Share from associates	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Minority Interest	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Consolidated APAT	711	1,089	1,304	929	1,393	2,053	3,638
Consolidated APAT Growth (%)	78.0	53.2	19.7	(28.8)	50.0	47.4	77.2
AEPS	5.4	8.2	9.8	7.0	10.5	15.5	27.5
AEPS Growth %	78.0	53.2	19.7	(28.5)	49.4	47.4	77.2

Source: Company, HSIE Research

## **BALANCE SHEET**

INR mn	FY21	FY22	FY23	FY24	FY25E	FY26E	FY27E
SOURCES OF FUNDS							
Share Capital	101	1,127	1,245	1,326	1,326	1,326	1,326
Reserves And Surplus	1,642	2,742	11,201	19,308	20,701	22,754	26,392
<b>Total Equity</b>	1,743	3,869	12,446	20,633	22,026	24,080	27,718
Minority Interest	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Long-term Debt	1,038	1,218	-	-	-	-	-
Short-term Debt	1,044	1,633	1	1,686	1,686	1,686	2,686
Total Debt	2,082	2,851	1	1,686	1,686	1,686	2,686
Deferred Tax Liability	102	139	268	364	364	364	364
Long-term Provision and others	27	51	145	119	-	-	-
TOTAL SOURCES OF FUNDS	3,955	6,909	12,860	22,803	24,076	26,130	30,768
APPLICATION OF FUNDS							
Net Block	2,162	2,571	6,462	8,595	12,892	15,433	17,282
Capital WIP	2	577	372	2,261	1,365	1,091	898
Other non-current assets	28	450	212	121	121	121	121
Non-current Investments	2	2	2	2	5	5	5
Total Non-current assets	2,194	3,600	7,047	10,979	14,384	16,650	18,306
Inventories	847	1,627	2,488	3,435	2,707	3,333	5,307
Debtors	1,082	1,635	2,590	2,329	3,199	3,939	6,272
Cash and Cash Equivalents	56	180	1,023	5,557	4,403	2,965	2,089
Other Current Assets	350	656	651	1,707	910	1,121	1,785
<b>Total Current Assets</b>	2,335	4,098	6,752	13,027	11,218	11,358	15,453
Creditors	478	699	815	1,035	1,353	1,666	2,653
Other Current Liabilities & Provns	97	91	124	168	172	212	338
<b>Total Current Liabilities</b>	575	789	939	1,204	1,526	1,878	2,991
Net Current Assets	1,760	3,309	5,813	11,823	9,693	9,479	12,462
TOTAL APPLICATION OF FUNDS	3,955	6,909	12,860	22,802	24,076	26,130	30,768
Source: Company HSIF Research	·			-	-	-	



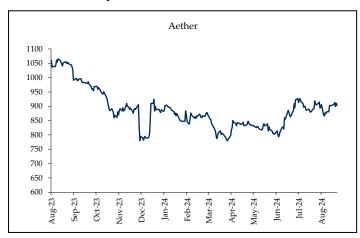
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INR mn	FY21	FY22	FY23	FY24P	FY25E	FY26E	FY27E
Reported PBT	938	1,465	1,745	1,095	1,797	2,633	4,664
Non-operating & EO Items	(40)	(70)	(166)	(254)	(250)	(390)	(270)
Interest Expenses	113	131	51	85	85	85	136
Depreciation	110	155	232	397	598	733	844
Working Capital Change	(687)	(1,424)	(1,661)	(1,476)	976	(1,224)	(3,859)
Tax Paid	(201)	(339)	(312)	(174)	(404)	(579)	(1,026)
OPERATING CASH FLOW (a)	233	(82)	(110)	(328)	2,803	1,258	489
Capex	(809)	(1,139)	(3,918)	(4,419)	(4,000)	(3,000)	(2,500)
Free Cash Flow (FCF)	(576)	(1,221)	(4,028)	(4,747)	(1,197)	(1,742)	(2,011)
Investments	-	-	(0)	-	(2)	-	-
Non-operating Income	40	70	166	254	250	390	270
Others	31	(422)	238	90	-	-	-
INVESTING CASH FLOW (b)	(738)	(1,491)	(3,514)	(4,074)	(3,752)	(2,610)	(2,230)
Debt Issuance/(Repaid)	377	769	(2,850)	1,685	-	-	1,000
Interest Expenses	(113)	(131)	(51)	(85)	(85)	(85)	(136)
FCFE	(312)	(583)	(6,929)	(3,147)	(1,283)	(1,827)	(1,146)
Share Capital Issuance	15	1,026	118	80	-	-	-
Dividend	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Others	245	34	7,249	7,256	(119)	0	0
FINANCING CASH FLOW (c)	525	1,697	4,467	8,936	(205)	(85)	864
NET CASH FLOW (a+b+c)	20	125	843	4,534	(1,154)	(1,437)	(876)
EO Items, Others							
Closing Cash & Equivalents	56	180	1,023	5,557	4,402	2,965	2,089

# KEY RATIOS Ratios

Ratios	FY21	FY22	FY23	FY24P	FY25E	FY26E	FY27E
PROFITABILITY %							
Gross Margin	48.7	51.2	51.3	46.4	49.0	51.0	52.0
EBITDA Margin	24.9	28.5	28.6	22.1	24.8	27.7	30.5
EBIT Margin	22.5	25.9	25.0	15.5	18.2	21.0	25.7
APAT Margin	15.8	18.5	20.0	15.5	15.5	18.6	20.7
RoE	56.3	38.8	16.0	5.6	6.5	8.9	14.0
RoIC	24.5	22.6	13.8	5.9	7.6	9.0	14.2
RoCE	24.4	21.9	13.6	5.6	6.2	8.4	13.2
EFFICIENCY							
Tax Rate %	24.2	25.6	25.3	24.7	22.5	22.0	22.0
Fixed Asset Turnover (x)	2.3	2.1	1.3	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.9
Inventory (days)	69	101	139	210	110	110	110
Debtors (days)	88	101	145	142	130	130	130
Other Current Assets (days)	28	41	37	104	37	37	37
Payables (days)	76	89	94	118	108	112	115
Other Current Liab & Provns (days)	8	6	7	10	7	7	7
Cash Conversion Cycle (days)	102	148	220	328	162	158	155
Net Debt/EBITDA (x)	1.8	1.6	(0.5)	(2.9)	(1.2)	(0.4)	0.1
Net D/E	1.2	0.7	(0.1)	(0.2)	(0.1)	(0.1)	0.0
Interest Coverage	8.9	11.6	32.0	10.9	19	27	33.4
PER SHARE DATA (INR)					43		
EPS	5.4	8.2	9.8	7.0	10.5	15.5	27.5
CEPS	6.2	9.4	11.6	10.0	15.0	21.0	33.8
Dividend	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Book Value	13.2	29.2	93.9	155.7	166.2	181.7	209.2
VALUATION							
P/E (x)	299.5	168.3	109.9	91.8	128.4	85.9	58.3
P/Cash EPS(x)	250.3	145.7	96.2	77.9	90.0	60.1	42.9
P/BV (x)	152.9	68.6	30.9	9.6	5.8	5.4	5.0
EV/EBITDA (x)	169.1	108.5	72.8	63.7	87.6	52.4	38.7
EV/Revenue (x)	40.2	27.1	20.7	18.2	19.4	13.0	10.7
Dividend Yield (%)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
OCF/EV (%)	0.1	0.2	(0.1)	(0.1)	(0.3)	2.4	1.1
FCFF/EV (%)	(0.3)	(0.5)	(1.0)	(3.4)	(4.1)	(1.0)	(1.5)
FCFE/M Cap (%)	0.0	(0.3)	(0.5)	(5.8)	(2.6)	(1.1)	(1.5)
Source: Company, HSIE Research							

## 1 Yr Price history



## **Rating Criteria**

BUY: >+15% return potential
ADD: +5% to +15% return potential
REDUCE: -10% to +5% return potential
SELL: >10% Downside return potential



### Disclosure:

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