

# Malaysia Results Review

25 November 2024

## Financial Services | Banks

# **Affin** (ABANK MK)

# Sell (Maintained)

## A Turnaround In Fortunes, But Still Expensive; SELL

Target Price (Return): MYR2.25 (-22%)
Price (Market Cap): MYR2.89 (USD1,554m)
ESG score: 2.9 (out of 4)
Avg Daily Turnover (MYR/USD) 7.65m/1.80m

Maintain SELL, new MYR2.25 TP from MYR1.60, 22% downside. Affin's 9M24 results met Street expectations, but exceeded ours due to further net impairment write-backs. At its results briefing, management shared a cautious but positive outlook for the quarters ahead, with NIM and (negative) credit costs as earnings drivers. Despite this, at 0.64x P/BV (+0.5SD) and 12x P/F (+1SD), we still think valuations have run too far ahead of fundamentals.

## Analysts

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• Results review. Affin's 3Q24 net profit of MYR145.8m (+23% QoQ, +45% YoY) brought the 9M24 total to MYR374.6m – this surpassed our estimates, but came in line with Street's. The heat mainly came from lower-than-

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## **Share Performance (%)**

	YTD	1m	3m	6m	12m
Absolute	38.9	(4.3)	(13.5)	14.2	45.2
Relative	29.7	(1.0)	(10.3)	16.3	36.1
52-wk Price lov	2.01	-3.43			



Source: Bloomberg

- Results review. Affin's 3Q24 net profit of MYR145.8m (+23% QoQ, +45% YoY) brought the 9M24 total to MYR374.6m this surpassed our estimates, but came in line with Street's. The beat mainly came from lower-than-expected credit costs, as Affin recorded a third consecutive quarter of net impairment write-backs in 3Q. For 9M24, total operating income grew 8% YoY after a decent showing in NII (+5%) and non-II (+14%), but opex rose by a higher 18% YoY this led to an elevated CIR of 75% (9M23: 68%). With the abovementioned net impairment write-backs, the group was able to record a 10% YoY growth in PBT. 9M24 ROE of 4.4% (9M23: 4.4%) fell short of management's initial 7% target, which was revised down to 5%.
- On a NIM recovery path. 3Q24 NIM gained 5bps QoQ to 1.45% (YoY: +21bps) due to certain liability management initiatives, including shaving off expensive fixed deposits and pivoting to cheaper long-term borrowings, and engaging in hedging activities through FX and interest rate swaps. Management also reiterated its commitment to growing high-yield loans, eg personal finance and credit cards. The new NIM guidance of 1.4% (revised from 1.6%), however, implies some compression from the 9M24 figure of 1.46%, which we think is fair given the year-end deposit competition.
- Decent asset quality performance. Absolute GILs reduced 6% QoQ (YoY: +4%), lowering the GIL ratio by 15bps QoQ to 1.74% (3Q23: 1.84%). The bulk of the improvement came from the non-retail book, which saw several instances of repayments and write-offs, allowing Affin to write back c.MYR83m in overlays that were tagged to such accounts. The group is left with c.MYR330m in overlays, which form c.27% of total provisions.
- Other highlights. 3Q24 opex charge of MYR456m (+24% QoQ, +22% YoY) was driven by personnel (hiring for new branches/operations, provisions for collective agreement adjustments) and establishment (IT investments, compliance costs) expenses. We think such opex run rates are likely to stay, but CIR could come down via improved income generation. Elsewhere, loan growth from Sarawak has lagged the group total (6% vs 8% YTD), but deposit-gathering activities in the state have seen positive traction.
- We lift FY24-26F earnings by 14%, 5%, and 5% as we factor in lower provision charges, among others. Our TP is now MYR2.25, and includes an unchanged 2% ESG discount.

Forecasts and Valuation	Dec-22	Dec-23	Dec-24F	Dec-25F	Dec-26F
Reported net profit (MYRm)	1,179	402	496	519	610
Net profit growth (%)	210.0	(65.9)	23.2	4.7	17.6
Recurring net profit (MYRm)	432	402	496	519	610
Recurring EPS (MYR)	0.20	0.17	0.21	0.22	0.26
BVPS (MYR)	4.73	4.73	4.94	5.14	5.31
DPS (MYR)	0.12	0.06	0.08	0.09	0.10
Recurring P/E (x)	14.71	16.60	13.68	13.07	11.11
P/B (x)	0.61	0.61	0.58	0.56	0.54
Dividend Yield (%)	4.3	2.0	2.9	3.1	3.6
Return on average equity (%)	11.4	3.7	4.4	4.4	5.0

Source: Company data, RHB

### Overall ESG Score: 2.9 (out of 4)

### **E: MODERATE**

Affin's total emissions decreased YoY in FY23, although it is still lacking Scope 3 operational and financed emissions disclosures. Its sustainable financing targets, however, are ambitious, ie a long-term target for 25% of its loan portfolio is to come from sustainable facilities by FY28.

### S: EXCELLENT

Affin's financial inclusion initiatives include the BizDana/BizDana-I Start-Up financing scheme in collaboration with the Credit Guarantee Corp. The bank is also fairly diverse (50-60% of employees are women), and employees receive a decent 59 hours of training pa on average.

### **G: EXCELLENT**

We do not note any material involvement from the bank in major corruption, money-laundering or terrorism financing cases over the past 10 years. Additionally, board members and senior management are subject to ESG-linked key performance indicators.



## **Financial Exhibits**

Asia Malaysia Financial Services Affin

ABANK MK Sell

## Valuation basis

Our GGM assumptions are:

- i. COE of 9.1%;
- ii. ROE of 6.0%;
- iii. 3.5% long-term growth.

### Key drivers

Our FY24F earnings are most sensitive to changes in:

- i. Net interest margin;
- ii. Credit costs;
- iii. Non-interest income.

#### Key risks

The upside risks include:

- i. Sharper-than-expected NIM expansion;
- ii. Lower-than-expected credit costs;
- iii. Stronger-than-expected non-II.

## Company Profile

Affin's principal activities are commercial banking and hire purchase, Islamic banking, investment banking and stock-broking, and money-broking. The group is also involved in life and general insurance via its jointly controlled entity/associate.

Total provisions / reported NPLs (%)	120.5	113.6	109.4	109.6	115.5
Reported NPLs / gross cust loans (%)	2.0	1.9	1.9	1.9	1.8
Asset quality and capital	Dec-22	Dec-23	Dec-24F	Dec-25F	Dec-26F
	15,751	11,107	11,000	12,000	12,133
Shareholders' equity	10,751	11,109	11,600	12,055	12,455
Share capital	5,245	5,371	5,505	5,643	5,643
Total liabilities	79,500	94,139	89,433	94,495	99,863
Total non-IBLs	2,688	2,017	2,101	2,172	2,245
Total IBLs	76,812	92,122	87,332	92,323	97,618
Other interest-bearing liabilities	11,817	21,288	12,248	12,734	13,254
Customer deposits	64,995	70,834	75,084	79,589	84,365
Total assets	90,251	105,248	101,034	106,550	112,318
Total non-IEAs	6,676	7,268	73,833	4,003	3,179
Total net IEAs	83,575	97,980	93,853	102,547	109,139
Net loans to customers	56,694	63,787	64,888	72,754	78,489
Total provisions	(1,411)	(1,438)	(1,408)	(1,537)	(1,702)
Total gross IEAs	84,985	99,418	95,261	104,084	110,842
Other interest earning assets	26,881	34,193	28,965	29,793	30,650
Total gross loans	58,105	65,225	66,296	74,291	80,192
Balance sheet (MYRm)	Dec-22	Dec-23	Dec-24F	Dec-25F	Dec-26F
Credit cost (bps)	80.7	12.2	(9.9)	8.7	12.9
Cost to income ratio (%)	64.1	71.6	73.8	70.5	67.5
Non-interest income / total income (%)	16.7	30.6	31.2	28.9	27.6
Net interest spread (%)	2.1	1.5	1.5	1.7	1.8
Cost of funds (%) Net interest spread (%)	1.9	3.6	3.6 1.2	3.6 1.3	3.6
Return on IEAs (%)	4.3 2.4				
Return on IFAs (%)		4.8	4.4	4.4	5.0
Return on average equity (%)	1.4	0.4 3.7	0.5 4.4	0.5 4.4	0.6 5.0
Profitability ratios	Dec-22	Dec-23	Dec-24F	Dec-25F	Dec-26F
	702	702	470	31,	510
Recurring net profit	432	402	496	519	610
Reported net profit	1,179	402	496	519	610
Minority interests	(25)	-	(157)	-	-
Taxation	(161)	(121)	(157)	(164)	(193)
Pre-tax profit	1,365	523	652	683	803
Other exceptional items	1,125	30	40	30	00
Income from associates	9	36	40	50	60
Other impairment allowances	(69)	(3)	(10)	(61)	(100)
Pre-provision operating profit Loan impairment allowances	<b>738</b> (439)	<b>565</b> (75)	<b>557</b> 65	696 (61)	845 (100)
Overheads  Pro-provision operating profit	(1,317)	(1,421)	(1,569)	(1,664)	(1,753)
Total operating income	2,055	1,986	2,126	2,360	2,598
Non interest income	344	607	664	681	717
Net interest income	1,711	1,379	1,462	1,679	1,882
Interest expense	(1,690)	(3,008)	(3,266)	(3,242)	(3,456)
Interest income	3,400	4,387	4,728	4,921	5,337
Income statement (MYRm)	Dec-22	Dec-23	Dec-24F	Dec-25F	Dec-26F
Dividend Yield (%)	4.3	2.0	2.9	3.1	3.6
P/B (x)	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.5
Recurring P/E (x)	14.71	16.60	13.68	13.07	11.11
Valuation metrics	Dec-22	Dec-23	Dec-24F	Dec-25F	Dec-26F
BVPS	4.73	4.73	4.94	5.14	5.31
DPS	0.12	0.06	0.08	0.09	0.10
Recurring EPS	0.20	0.17	0.21	0.22	0.26
EPS	0.54	0.17	0.21	0.22	0.26
Financial summary (MYR)	Dec-22	Dec-23	Dec-24F	Dec-25F	Dec-26F

Source: Company data, RHB



## **Results At a Glance**

Figure 1: Affin - summary of 3Q24 and 9M24 results

FYE 31 Dec (MYRm)	3Q23	2Q24	3Q24	QoQ (%)	YoY (%)	9M23	9M24	YoY (%)	Comments
NII (+ Islamic Banking)	314	353	384	8.6	22.0	1,050	1,099	4.7	Largely driven by the 10% YoY loan growth, while reported NIM was flat YoY.
NIM (%) – reported	1.24	1.40	1.45			1.46	1.46		
Non-II	186	142	229	61.9	23.2	450	513	14.2	Of this, core fee income grew 16% YoY, while FX and other income gained 33%.
Non-II/Total income (%)	37.2	28.6	37.4			30.0	31.8		
Operating income	500	495	613	23.8	22.4	1,500	1,612	7.5	
Overhead expenses	(374)	(368)	(456)	24.0	21.8	(1,021)	(1,203)	17.8	Driven upwards by higher personnel (hiring for new branches/operations, provisions for next round of collective agreement adjustments) and establishment (IT and compliance costs) expenses.
CIR (%)	74.8	74.3	74.4			68.1	74.6		
PIOP	126	127	157	23.5	24.4	479	409	(14.5)	At 73% of our initial full-year PIOP forecast, which we deem to be in line.
Impairments on financial assets	(1)	2	(16)	>100	>100	0	(19)	nm	
Impairment losses on loans	(26)	11	55	>100	>100	(64)	89	>100	Writebacks on provisions for impaired non-retail loans from settlements and recoveries.
Annualised credit cost (bps)*	17	(6)	(31)			15	(19)		
Operating profit	99	139	196	40.4	98.2	415	479	15.4	
Associates	7	11	8	(30.6)	8.5	37	20	(45.5)	
Pretax profit	106	151	204	35.0	92.0	452	499	10.4	
Tax	(6)	(32)	(58)	79.5	>100	(90)	(125)	39.1	
Effective tax rate (%)	5.3	21.4	28.4			19.8	25.0		
Minorities	0	0	0	nm	nm	0	0	nm	
Net profit	100.5	118.6	145.8	23.0	45.2	362.7	374.6	3.3	Making up 86% and 73% of our and consensus full-year forecasts.
Other key data and ratios									Driven by higher-yield consumer
Gross loans	64,290	69,016	70,629	2.3	9.9				loan products, eg personal loans (+27% YoY, +8% QoQ) and credit cards (+17% YoY, +5% QoQ).
Customer deposits	71,630	71,226	73,974	3.9	3.3				
Gross impaired loans	1,186	1,306	1,228	(6.0)	3.6				
Total assets	102,149	108,166	112,074	3.6	9.7				
Shareholders' funds	11,000	11,303	11,521	1.9	4.7				
ROAA (%)	0.41	0.46	0.55			0.52	0.48		
ROAE (%)	3.66	4.21	5.11			4.45	4.41		Below its initial target of 7%.
LDR (%)	87.7	95.1	93.8						Below its initial talget of 770.
GIL ratio (%)	1.84	1.89	1.74						
Loan loss coverage (%)	123.9	97.2	99.2						
<b>0</b> , ,									
CET-1 ratio (%)	123.9 14.4	97.2 12.8	99.2 13.3						

Note: \*Based on internally derived estimates

Source: Company data, RHB



## Management guidance

Figure 2: Affin - management guidance and financial targets for FY24

FYE Dec	FY23 actual	FY24F targets	9M24 achieved	Comments
Reported ROE	3.7%	5.0% (from 7%)	4.4%	
NIM*	1.44%	1.40% (from 1.60%)	1.46%	The new NIM target implies some compression in 4Q24, which we think is fair – given the seasonal deposit competition that typically ensues towards the year-end. However, management mentioned that it had taken some pre-emptive measures to shore up liquidity beforehand, eg by securing longer-term funding.
CIR	71.6%	74.0% (from 64%)	74.6%	YoY opex growth of 18% is ahead of the 6-8% guidance provided earlier in the year, and includes provisions taken for the next round of collective agreement adjustments to kick in next year.
Loans growth	12.3%	8.0%	9.9%	Management continues to aim for above-industry loan growth, although it is comfortable with lowering asset yields in order to obtain higher credit quality customers.
GIL	1.90%	1.90%	1.74%	

Note: \*Based on reported figures Source: Company data, RHB

## **Earnings forecasts**

We raise our FY24-26F net profit by 5-14%, after taking into account:

- i. Negative credit costs for FY24F and lower credit costs for FY25-26F, as we think the progress made on recoveries can continue. We also expect overall asset quality to remain stable;
- ii. Stronger non-fee non-II in FY24F, in line with the YTD performance. Our FY25-26F non-II assumptions are maintained;
- iii. Higher opex for FY24-26F, roughly in keeping with the  $3Q24\,\mathrm{run}$  rate.

Figure 3: Affin - revisions to forecasts

	Previous	Previous	Previous	Revised	Revised	Revised	% Change	% Change	% Change
FYE Dec	FY24F	FY25F	FY26F	FY24F	FY25F	FY26F	FY24F	FY25F	FY26F
(MYRm)									
Net interest income	1,459	1,671	1,869	1,462	1,679	1,882	0.2%	0.5%	0.7%
Non-interest income	614	681	717	664	681	717	8.1%	0.0%	0.0%
Operating expenses	(1,513)	(1,604)	(1,691)	(1,569)	(1,664)	(1,753)	3.7%	3.7%	3.7%
PIOP	560	747	895	557	696	845	-0.5%	-6.8%	-5.6%
Impairment charges	(26)	(149)	(188)	55	(63)	(102)	-312.0%	-57.7%	-46.1%
Pretax profit	574	648	766	652	683	803	13.6%	5.4%	4.8%
Net profit	436	492	583	496	519	610	13.6%	5.4%	4.8%
EPS (MYR)	0.19	0.21	0.25	0.21	0.22	0.26	13.6%	5.4%	4.8%
DPS (MYR)	0.07	0.08	0.10	0.08	0.09	0.10	13.6%	5.4%	4.8%
Loan growth (%)	8.0	12.0	8.0	8.0	12.0	8.0			
NIM (%)	1.50	1.68	1.74	1.50	1.68	1.75			
CIR (%)	73.0	68.2	65.4	73.8	70.5	67.5			
Credit cost (bps)	4	21	24	(10)	9	13			

Source: Company data, RHB



## Valuation and TP

We raise our TP to MYR2.25 from MYR1.60. Our TP is based on a new GGM-derived P/BV of 0.45x (from 0.32x). Key model changes include sustainable ROE of 6% (from 5.3%) and CY25F BVPS of MYR5.14 (from MYR5.11), both in line with forecast changes.

We maintain our SELL call on Affin, primarily on the valuation mismatch. While the Sarawak theme provides Affin with a unique growth story, at 0.64x P/BV (+0.5SD) and 12x P/E (+1SD), we believe that valuations appear overly lofty at the moment, especially as yields of 3-4% are not that exciting.

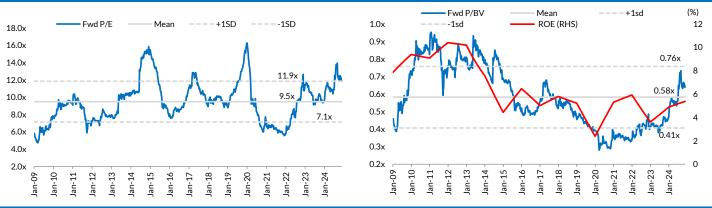
Figure 4: Affin - GGM valuation with ESG overlay

Cost of equity (COE) computation:		Sustainable ROE (%)	6.0
Risk free rate (%)	4.0	COE (%)	9.1
Equity premium (%)	5.1	Long-term growth (g)	3.5
Beta (x)	1.0	Implied P/BV (x)	0.45
Cost of equity - CAPM (%)	9.1	BVPS - FY25F	MYR5.14
		Intrinsic value	MYR2.31
ESG premium/(discount) (%)	(2.0)	ESG premium/(discount)	(MYR0.05)
		TP (rounded)	MYR2.25

Source: Company data, RHB

Figure 5: Affin's 12-month forward consensus P/E

Figure 6: Affin's 12-month forward consensus P/BV



Source: Bloomberg, RHB Source: Bloomberg, RHB

## **Emissions And ESG**

Trend	

Affin's total operational emissions decreased YoY in FY23, primarily as a result of its carbon-optimisation initiatives.

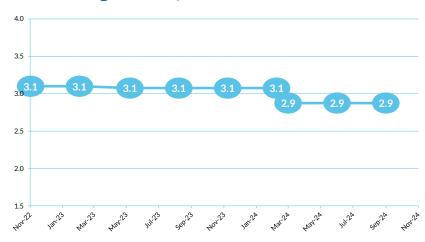
Emissions (tCO2e)	Dec-21	Dec-22	Dec-23
Scope 1	14	14	19
Scope 2	14,301	17,075	15,771
Scope 3	-	-	na
Total emissions	14,315	17,089	15,790

Source: Company data, RHB

## **Latest ESG-Related Developments**

- Solar panel financing for homeowners: Affin recently launched its Solar Financing-I product to assist homeowners with transitioning to solar-powered electricity for domestic use. The bank has also partnered with 14 solar panel providers under this initiative.
- Exclusive partnership with Pro-Net: Affin announced a collaboration with Proton New Energy Technology (Pro-Net), a subsidiary of Proton focused on smart EVs, to become its exclusive financing partner.

## **ESG** Rating History



Source: RHB

## **Recommendation Chart**



Source: RHB, Bloomberg

Date	Recommendation	Target Price	Price
2024-08-25	Sell	1.60	3.23
2024-05-22	Sell	1.65	2.53
2024-03-21	Sell	1.65	2.55
2024-03-01	Sell	1.70	2.60
2024-02-19	Sell	1.90	2.61
2023-11-20	Neutral	1.90	1.99
2023-08-28	Buy	2.20	1.92
2023-05-28	Buy	2.30	2.00
2023-02-28	Buy	2.50	2.08
2022-11-29	Buy	2.80	2.48
2022-09-22	Trading Buy	2.45	2.07
2022-08-25	Neutral	2.25	2.09
2022-03-02	Neutral	2.00	1.86
2022-03-01	Neutral	1.80	1.89
2021-11-23	Neutral	1.65	1.70

Source: RHB, Bloomberg



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Buy: Share price may exceed 10% over the next 12 months

Trading Buy: Share price may exceed 15% over the next 3 months, however longer-

term outlook remains uncertain

Neutral: Share price may fall within the range of +/- 10% over the next

12 months

 Take Profit:
 Target price has been attained. Look to accumulate at lower levels

 Sell:
 Share price may fall by more than 10% over the next 12 months

Not Rated: Stock is not within regular research coverage

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