

2 December 2021

Industrials | Industrial Products

Aurelius Technologies (ATECH MK)

Auspicious Prospects On Ambitious Expansion

- **MYR1.73 FV on 18x FY23F (Jan) P/E.** Aurelius Technologies (ATech) will raise MYR105m from its IPO to fund its ambitious expansion plan and deleverage. The forecasted explosive 3-year earnings CAGR of 36% is premised on robust job orders from existing customers, and progressive contributions from a new one in the semiconductor space. Priced at a >20% discount to the EMS sector average, we believe its valuation is attractive – considering the earnings growth and promising prospects, while the 100% local labour force should alleviate intensifying concerns on migrant workers.
- **Exciting new semiconductor exposure.** ATech has transformed and ventured into the semiconductor arena in FY20 after securing an electronics manufacturing services (EMS) agreement with Customer F (Figure 4). Revenue from the semiconductor product surged to MYR5.3m in 7MFY22 from MYR1.3m in 7MFY21, following the ramp-up in production and the group recorded a gross profit of MYR3m (GPM: 57%) from a loss a year ago. After adding two more production lines in August and October to bring the total to four, ATech is aiming to further increase the production lines to seven by end-2023 to accommodate the volume demanded by Customer F. As such, we expect this division to contribute more significantly going forward, and consequently lifting group margins. We forecast net margin to expand to 8.2% in FY23, from 6.6% in 7MFY21.
- **Massive capacity expansion to anchor long-term growth.** ATech has set aside MYR16m to build a new plant – of which construction began in May, and operations are expected to commence by 1H2022. The new plant, which is adjacent to ATech's existing one, will extend the group's total floor space by 61.9k sq ft, or by c.69% to 132.8k sq ft. The additional space will house production that caters to additional volume from existing customers, whilst providing more capacity for ATech to secure more customers. This should support its forecasted 3-year revenue CAGR of 9%. It will also enable ATech to further diversify its product offerings to cover lithium-ion battery pack systems. On this, the group is in the development phase and working in collaboration with a third party – it expects to begin commercial production by end-2022.
- **No headaches over migrant workers.** Notwithstanding the relatively smaller profit base vs other EMS peers, we believe ATech's valuation may catch up to that of its competitors, due to a more compelling risk-reward profile. This is considering the factors of semiconductor exposure and a 100% local labour force – the former provides a sustainable uplift to margins, whilst the latter spares ATech from issues related to migrant workers. Essentially, we highlight ATech has complied with the code of conduct set by Responsible Business Alliance (RBA), the world's largest industry coalition dedicated to corporate social responsibility in global supply chains. On top of that, ATech is upgrading its facilities towards Industry 4.0 – encompassing the use of automation, artificial intelligence, Internet of Things (IoT) and real-time data – to increase productivity and reduce its dependence on human labour.
- **Risks to our recommendation include** a change in customer concentration, major disruptions to the supply chain, and delays in its expansion plans.

Fair Value (Return)	MYR1.73 (+27%)
IPO Price:	MYR1.36
Closing Application Date:	5pm, 3 Dec 2021
Indicative Listing Date	16 Dec 2021

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Company Description

Aurelius Technologies (ATech), through its subsidiary BCM Electronics, is principally a provider of EMS for industrial electronics products, and has an established track record of 28 years. ATech has carried out EMS for three product categories: i) Communication and IoT products; ii) electronic devices; and iii) semiconductor components.

IPO Details

Public Issue (%)	29
Shares outstanding (m)	358m
Implied market cap	MYR487m

Major Shareholders (%)

Main Stream Holdings	71.0
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Utilisation of IPO Proceeds

Purchase of new machinery	MYRm 40
Repayment of bank borrowings	29.5
General working capital	28.1
Estimated listing expenses	7.1
TOTAL	104.7

Additional Data

Listing Market	Main Market
Bursa Code	5302
Shariah-compliant	Yes

Forecasts and Key Data	Jan-20	Jan-21	Jan-22F	Jan-23F	Jan-24F
Total turnover (MYRm)	389.3	362.2	399.0	433.4	465.5
Gross margin (%)	11.9	8.3	12.0	12.8	13.0
Recurring net profit (MYRm)	23.6	15.1	26.6	34.2	38.1
Recurring net profit growth (%)	-1.2	-36.0	76.4	28.5	11.2
Net margin (%)	6.1	4.2	6.7	7.9	8.2
Recurring P/E (x)	20.6	32.3	18.3	14.2	12.8
P/BV (x)	5.0	4.3	3.0	2.5	2.1
Dividend Yield (%)	7.9	1.0	1.1	1.5	1.8
Return on average equity (%)	32.6	18.0	22.6	23.6	21.9
Net debt to equity (%)	1.4	1.4	0.9	0.5	0.4

Source: Company data, RHB

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Valuation

We believe ATech could trade at a FV of MYR1.73. The FV is derived by pegging 18x P/E to its FY23F EPS of 9.6 sen. The P/E implies a 5-20% discount from the valuations we ascribed to the EMS stocks under our coverage, given ATech's relatively smaller market capitalisation and profit base. This is in line with the current average of its peers' market valuations.

We chose not to widen the discount gap further, to take into account ATech's relatively faster earnings growth – we forecast a 3-year net profit CAGR of 36%, which is higher than the 18% and 20% forecasted for SKP Resources (SKP MK, BUY, TP: MYR2.40) and VS Industry (VSI MK, BUY, TP: MYR2.01). In addition, its exposure to the semiconductor sector and zero-reliance on foreign labour should also render its risk-reward profile more compelling than that of the typical EMS peer – the former should strengthen margins whilst the latter spares ATech from migrant worker-related issues.

We are generally positive on the EMS sector, premised on the robust job flows – underpinned by the established expertise of the local players and availability of a complete supply chain. This facilitates an efficient cost structure and solid execution, which should entice more customers to expand their manufacturing sources to Malaysia. Meanwhile, the cost-plus model commonly practiced in the EMS business is also attractive under the current environment of rising costs. Such growth dynamics will be appreciated by the investors seeking for growth amidst a challenging broad environment, which in turn would drive a valuation rerating.

Figure 1: Peer comparison

Company	FYE	Mkt Cap (USDm)	Last price (MYR)	P/E (x)			Div. Yld (%) 1 Yr Fwd	ROE (%) 1 Yr Fwd	EV/ EBITDA 1 Yr Fwd	NP Growth (%)	
				Actual	1 Yr Fwd	2 Yr Fwd				1 Yr Fwd	2 Yr Fwd
VS Industry	Jul	1289	1.42	21.6	16.2	13.8	3.0	15.2	9.8	33.4	17.8
SKP Resources	Mar	691	1.86	22.5	18.4	14.8	2.8	5.3	11.4	22.2	24.1
Kobay Technology	Jun	503	6.52	77.5	47.3	37.8	0.6	5.1	26.7	64.0	25.1
PIE Industrial	Dec	353	3.87	32.6	25.7	20.0	1.8	2.9	12.5	26.6	28.5
ATA IMS	Mar	123	0.43	3.4	33.3	11.4	2.6	0.5	10.1	-89.8	193.5
Salutica	Jun	54	0.535	-22.9	na	na	na	na	na	na	na
EG Industries	Jun	45	0.525	12.7	na	na	na	na	na	na	na
Mkt. Cap Weighted Avg.				30.6	23.1	18.1	2.3	8.8	12.9	29.1	28.2

Source: Bloomberg, RHB

Financial Overview

Earnings forecasts. We are projecting a 3-year earnings CAGR of 36% for ATech, underpinned by robust demand flows from existing key customers whilst Customer F is expected to contribute more significantly moving forward. The volume growth will be captured by the ongoing and future capacity expansion, with the group's manufacturing floor space estimated to increase by c.69% to 133k sq ft by end-2021.

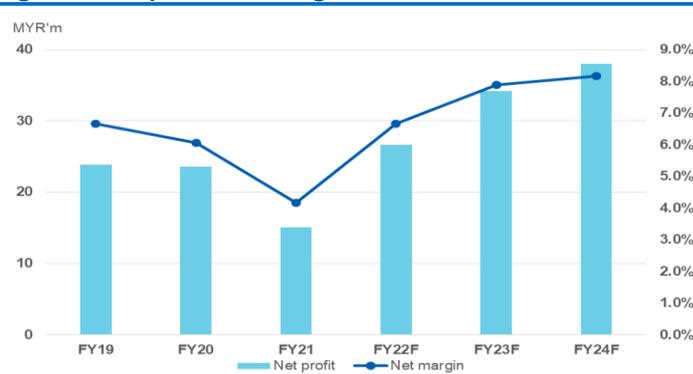
To cater for the high order demand from Customer F, the group is planning to increase the production lines earmarked for this customer to seven by end-2023, from four currently. Meanwhile, we forecast GPM to expand to 13% in FY23 from 12.3% in 7MFY22, primarily driven by progressively higher contributions from Customer F, which commands a much higher margin vs the other jobs. Together with the assumptions of a well-controlled opex and lower effective tax rate on tax incentives going forward, we forecast net profit to grow by 29% YoY in FY23, following a sharp rebound from a low base in FY22F (+76% YoY).

Figure 2: ATech's revenue trend (FY19-24F)



Source: IPO prospectus, RHB

Figure 3: Net profit and margin forecasts



Source: IPO prospectus, RHB

Net gearing and dividend payout. As at 7MFY21, ATech's net gearing stood at 1.2x. Post listing, c.MYR30m of IPO proceeds will be used to pare down borrowings and its net gearing to 0.5x. Meanwhile, the group targets a dividend payout ratio of not less than 20% of net profit, and we forecast DPS at 1.5 sen, 2 sen and 2.5 sen for FY22F-24. This translates to prospective dividend yields of 1.1-1.8%, based on the indicative IPO price of MYR1.36.

7MFY22 results review. ATech's 7MFY22 revenue grew 7.8% YoY to MYR200m, thanks to robust growth in electronic devices (+136%) and semiconductor components (to MYR5.3m from MYR1.3m). That more than offset the softness in communication and IoT products (-3.5%), which was relatively more affected by the workforce restrictions under the lockdown enforcements and partly due to seasonal factors. Its 7MFY22 gross margin expanded to 12.3% (+5.3ppt) on a favourable product mix and normalisation, as 7MFY21 was a low base due to the impact of the full lockdown. As a result, 7MFY22 net profit more than doubled to MYR13.2m, from MYR5.3m in 7MFY21.

Key Risks

Customer concentration

ATech's top five major customers accounted for c.89-91% of its FY19-21 revenue. In the event it loses these major customers, the group's performance could be materially impacted if it is unable to secure new major ones. In the event it loses these major customers spanning 5-24 years, there can be no assurance that they will issue new purchase orders or renew agreements upon expiry in the future.

In the event it loses these major customers, the group's performance could be materially impacted. ATech will need to increase sales from existing customers and/or secure new ones to substitute the loss of the major customers in a timely manner, to mitigate the impact of such a loss.

Figure 4: ATech's top five customers (90.9% of FY21 revenue) and Customer F

Customer	Principal activity	Length of relationship (years)	FY21 revenue contribution
A	Assembly and manufacture of computers, computer peripherals, electronic sub assembly, medical, telecommunications, multimedia, consumer and renewable energy products	5	35.9%
B	Provision of communication infrastructure, devices, accessories, software, services and systems integration for radio and TV broadcasting and communications equipment	23	24.1%
C	Provision of wireless IoT communication devices including telematics, GPS asset tracking, cellular modems, wireless telemetry, and rental applications	14	17.5%
D	Manufacture of machinery and equipment, and provision of support services for the energy industry	12	6.9%
E	Provision of wireless infrastructure communication systems, radio communications and its accessories	24	6.5%
F	Design, production, R&D and sales services of wireless communication modules and solutions in the IoT field	2	-

Source: Company data

Disruption in the global supply chain

ATech's manufacturing operations are dependent on imported input materials including printed circuit boards (PCBs), semiconductor components, and mechanical parts. The group sources for input materials from Malaysia as well as from foreign countries, with imported input materials accounting for c.70-75% of purchases of input materials for the FY under review.

Any serious and prolonged global shortage of such input materials may lead to lost business opportunities and delays in production, which may affect the group's reputation and revenue recognition, while dampening growth. The cost of production is also dependent on the cost of input materials used which, in turn, is dependent on the prevailing price trends in the market.

That said, the group minimises its exposure to shortages and price fluctuations by purchasing from suppliers recommended by its customers, and sourcing from suppliers based on the concept of competitive priorities. Customers have generally accommodated price increases with respect to input materials, but there is no assurance that the group will be able to pass on the increase in the costs of input materials to customers.

FX fluctuations

ATech is exposed to FX fluctuation risks, as its revenue and purchases are principally denominated in USD and MYR (c.99-100% of revenue and c.98% of purchases in USD). Any fluctuation in USD would have an impact on revenue from the group's contract with customers, as well as on its cost of sales and GP margins. However, ATech currently does not use any financial instrument to hedge its exposure transactions in foreign currencies – as a significant portion of its EMS business is naturally hedged due to sales and purchases being principally denominated in the same currency.

Company Overview

Aurelius Technologies, through its subsidiary BCM Electronics, is principally a provider of EMS for industrial electronics products, with an established track record of 28 years. Currently, ATech has carried out EMS for three product categories:

- i. Communication and IoT products;
- ii. Electronic devices; and
- iii. Semiconductor components.

In FY21, the three categories accounted for 89.5%, 9.4% and 1.1% of ATech's revenue of MYR362.2m (ATech first started producing semiconductor components in FY21). ATech operates in Malaysia but serves customers across 11 countries, with the top three markets being the US, Malaysia and Singapore – which jointly accounted for 89.3% of its revenue in FY21.

Figure 5: ATech's product portfolio



Source: Company

ATech has the facilities to handle a range of EMS requirements from customers, offering end-to-end solutions such as engineering support services, manufacturing services, and customised test development. A key strength for ATech is its in-house-designed manufacturing execution systems (MES) that enables full traceability of all material movements and manufacturing processes in the production facility in real time. The reports generated by this system provide greater transparency among customers.

Additionally, ATech has various certifications to substantiate its ability to meet the quality standards and expectations of customers, including the ATEX Certification, a European Union certification for equipment intended for use in a potentially explosive atmosphere. This indicates that its ATEX-certified radio equipment is manufactured based on a stringent set of requirements, which serves as a positive reference point for customers.

ATech is led by an experienced management team. CEO Lee Chong Yeow has over 42 years of operational knowledge of the manufacturing industry. Loh Hock Chiang, the group CFO, has 28 years of experience in operational and finance-related functions within the industry. They are supported by the rest of the senior management team, who all have over 20 years of experience in the field, with most having joined BCM Electronics since the early 2000s.

Future Plans And Strategies

Expansion into semiconductor component manufacturing

The group is targeting to have a total of seven production lines dedicated to semiconductor manufacturing for Customer F by end-2023 to cater for its increased demand. This is based on the mutual understanding in terms of the quantity the customer requires, and takes into account the prospects of the industry's growth.

Expansion of production facilities

The group has commenced construction of a new manufacturing plant on the plot of vacant land spanning approximately 3 acres, which is adjacent to its existing manufacturing plant. The new single-storey manufacturing plant's footprint is 62k sq ft, which will increase its total floor space by c.69% to 133k sq ft by end-2021. The group targets to increase its annual capacity by close to two times by end-2023, when there will be a total of 15 surface-mounted technology or SMT lines in its production facilities. This will cater to the business expansion and growth of its existing business. The total cost for the purchase of machinery and equipment is estimated at MYR43.3m – of which MYR30m is to be funded by IPO proceeds, and remaining MYR13.3m from internally generated funds and bank borrowings.

Upgrading of manufacturing facilities towards Industry 4.0

It aims to upgrade its facility, adopting an automated material handling system through Automated Guided Vehicle (AGV) and undertaking the development and implementation of customised software and systems for factory automation including smart warehousing system and production operations. The total cost to develop and integrate the customized software and system is estimated at MYR4m, which will be funded through internally generated funds and bank borrowings. The upgrade is targeted to be completed progressively, by end-2023.

Introduction of new products

ATech plans to manufacture lithium-ion battery pack systems for use in light vehicles including golf carts/electric carts, forklifts and AGVs. It is currently working in collaboration with a third party for the development phase of the lithium-ion battery pack system. The company expects to commercialise the lithium-ion battery pack system by the end of 2022. The estimated cost for the development of this new product is MYR5.3m – which is expected to be funded through internally generated funds.

IPO Details

Figure 6: Indicative IPO timeline

Opening of institutional offering	29 November 2021
Issuance of the prospectus/opening of the retail offering	10am, 29 November 2021
Closing of the institutional/retail offering	5pm, 3 December 2021
Price determination date	6 December 2021
Allotment	15 December 2021
Listing	16 December 2021

Source: Company data

Figure 7: Utilisation of IPO proceeds

Details of use of proceeds	Estimated timeframe	MYRm	% of proceeds
Purchase of new machinery and equipment	Within 24 months	40	38.2
Repayment of borrowings	Within 6 months	29.5	28.2
Working Capital	Within 36 months	28.1	26.9
IPO expenses	Within 6 months	7.1	6.7
Total		104.7	100.0

Source: Company data

Figure 8: Offering structure

	m shares	% of enlarged share base
Institutional	81	22.6%
<i>Bumi</i>	44.8	12.5%
<i>non-Bumi</i>	36.2	10.1%
Retail	22.9	6.4%
<i>Eligible persons (directors, employees and etc)</i>	5	1.4%
<i>Public</i>	17.9	5.0%
Total IPO offering (74% primary:26% secondary)	103.9	29%

Source: Company data

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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
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