

India

REDUCE (no change)

| Consensus ratings*: | Buy 5 | Hold 2 | Sell 2 |
|--------------------------------|----------|--------|----------|
| Current price: | | | Rs926 |
| Target price: | 7 | | Rs809 |
| Previous target: | | | Rs841 |
| Up/downside: | | | -12.6% |
| InCred Research / Co | nsensus: | | -31.1% |
| Reuters: | | F | NXC.NS |
| Bloomberg: | | ı | FNXC IN |
| Market cap: | | US | \$1,699m |
| | | Rs1 | 41,637m |
| Average daily turnove | r: | ι | JS\$6.8m |
| | | R | s567.6m |
| Current shares o/s: | | | 152.9m |
| Free float: *Source: Bloomberg | | | 64.1% |

Key changes in this note

- FY24F revenue/EBITDA/PAT raised by 1.4%/3.7%/3.4%.
- FY25F revenue/EBITDA/PAT raised by 3.1%/5%/2.2%.



| Price performance | 1M | 3M | 12M |
|-------------------|-------|--------|------|
| Absolute (%) | (0.8) | (13.3) | 63.2 |
| Relative (%) | (1.6) | (14.2) | 52.0 |

| Major snarenoiders | % neid |
|----------------------------|--------|
| Promoters | 35.9 |
| Finolex Industries Limited | 14.5 |
| Nippon India MF | 3.5 |
| | |

Research Analyst(s)



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Finolex Cables

Steady 2Q; looming family conflict not good

- 2QFY24 actuals largely in line with expectations. Gross margin recovery aided margins. Electrical wire sales volume: +10% yoy; power cables: +37% yoy.
- Capex of ~Rs5bn across electrical & communication cable segments on track
 & will be incurred by Mar 2025F. The additional revenue potential is ~Rs20bn.
- Given the C&W upcycle, we expect core business FY23-26F EPS CAGR of 20%. However, the looming promoter family row bothers us. Retain REDUCE.

No surprises in 2Q; wire volume grows 10% yoy, gross margin better Finolex Cables' (FCL) 2QFY24 consol. revenue/EBITDA/PAT stood at

Finolex Cables' (FCL) 2QFY24 consol. revenue/EBITDA/PAT stood at Rs11.8bn/Rs1.5bn/Rs1.4bn, +9%/48%/156% yoy, respectively, albeit on an eroded base quarter. EBITDA beat our estimate by 10% owing to better gross margin. Electrical cable/communication cable revenue stood at Rs9.8bn/Rs1.4bn, +13%/ (14%) yoy, respectively. The electrical cable segment's EBIT margin was at 14.2%, +418bp yoy. Consol. gross/EBITDA margin stood at 22.3%/12.3%, +351bp/+326bp yoy, respectively. Electrical wire sales volume grew 10% yoy while power cable sales volume grew 37% yoy. Sales volume of metal-based communication cables was flat yoy while optical fibre volume fell yoy due to the delay in order inflow. The FMEG segment's revenue stood at Rs549m, +14% yoy, with the EBIT margin at 1.6%, +53bp yoy. Other income was at Rs388m, 2.3x yoy, which included one-time profit from the sale of equity stake in a joint venture (optic fibre JV with Corning) of Rs126m. Net working capital improved significantly to 34 days of TTM sales. Net cash (incl. liquid investments) was ~Rs28bn as of end-Sep 2023.

Incremental Rs4bn of capex outlay across segments

Most of the capex announced for electrical cables (electron beam cables) and communication cable (optic fibre preform, cable drawing towers) is on track to be incurred by Mar 2025F. New orders for optic fibre cable from private telcos and Indian government are delayed, and the bidding is expected to start in Jan 2024F, as per management. The company aims to create new OFC capacity on time and be ready to capitalize on very large new orders likely related to 5G rollout and Bharat Net connectivity program over the next two years in India. We expect a higher operating margin on incremental capex but RoCE could be at risk, given the payment delay associated with government business.

Change in our estimates, valuation and risks

We increase our revenue/EBITDA/PAT estimates by 1-5% over FY24F-25F and introduce FY26F estimates. Higher optic fibre salience increases business cyclicality, and the stock could structurally trade at a meaningful discount to its electrical C&W peers, in our view. We retain our REDUCE rating on it with a lower target price of Rs809 {Rs603 based on a P/E of 14x (25% discount to five-year mean+1SD of 18x) core FY25F EPS + Rs207/share for a 32.4% stake in Finolex Industries at a 25% discount to CMP} vs. Rs841 earlier. Upside risks: Faster and amicable settlement of promoter family's legal dispute and a sudden rise in optic fibre prices.

| Financial Summary | Mar-22A | Mar-23A | Mar-24F | Mar-25F | Mar-26F |
|-----------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Revenue (Rsm) | 37,681 | 44,811 | 51,710 | 59,005 | 66,915 |
| Operating EBITDA (Rsm) | 4,285 | 5,094 | 6,593 | 7,671 | 8,833 |
| Net Profit (Rsm) | 5,991 | 5,043 | 7,250 | 8,533 | 9,451 |
| Core EPS (Rs) | 33.1 | 33.0 | 43.4 | 53.8 | 61.8 |
| Core EPS Growth | 9.7% | (0.4%) | 31.7% | 23.9% | 14.9% |
| FD Core P/E (x) | 23.64 | 28.09 | 19.54 | 16.60 | 14.99 |
| DPS (Rs) | 6.0 | 7.0 | 8.0 | 9.0 | 10.0 |
| Dividend Yield | 0.65% | 0.76% | 0.86% | 0.97% | 1.08% |
| EV/EBITDA (x) | 28.49 | 23.11 | 17.33 | 14.24 | 11.56 |
| P/FCFE (x) | 153.64 | 0.00 | 38.41 | 26.01 | 18.54 |
| Net Gearing | (49.9%) | (54.8%) | (55.1%) | (57.0%) | (61.0%) |
| P/BV (x) | 3.61 | 3.24 | 2.85 | 2.49 | 2.19 |
| ROE | 13.8% | 12.2% | 14.2% | 15.4% | 15.5% |
| % Change In Core EPS Estimates | | | (3.78%) | (5.25%) | |
| InCred Research/Consensus EPS (x) | | | | | |

SOURCE: INCRED RESEARCH, COMPANY REPORTS

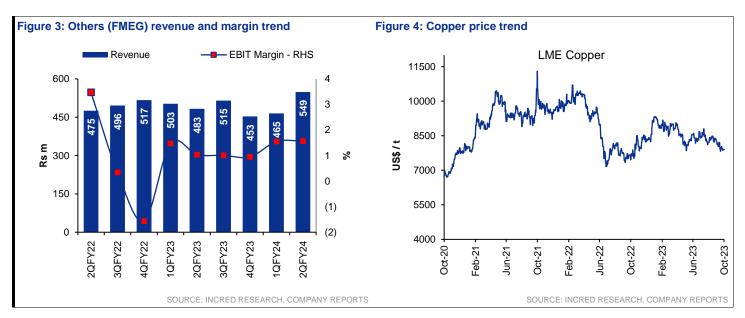


2QFY24 earnings-call highlights

- **Growth and margin outlook:** Management expects 2HFY24F to be better vs. 1H, like the past trends. The demand for construction, industrial, agriculture and automotive cable and wires is expected to sustain its strong momentum going ahead, as per management. If input prices stay at the 2Q level, gross margin could expand by a further ~100bp in the 23-24% range. The electrical cable segment's EBIT margin is expected to sustain the 13.5-14% range going ahead.
- Change in the board of directors: The reappointment of Mr. Deepak Chhabria (part of the promoter family) as the whole-time director and designated also as the executive chairman of the board was voted against by the shareholders at the 55th annual general meeting or AGM of the company. Pursuant to orders passed by the Honourable Supreme Court of India and National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) in this regard, Mr. Deepak Chhabria has ceased to be whole-time director designated as 'executive chairman' of the company with effect from 16 Oct 2023. The board, at its meeting held on 19 Oct 2023, appointed Mr. Nikhil Naik, non-executive director of the company, as chairman of the board with immediate effect and until conclusion of the next AGM of the company.
- Capacity utilization: The overall capacity utilization stood at ~60% across product segments, as per management's estimate, in 2QFY24.
- Price cuts: FCL made price cuts in the range of 3-4% for electrical cables in Oct 2023, given the softening copper prices.
- FMEG segment update: Lighting, switches and conduit product sales did well
 while appliances, including fans, had a soft 2Q. FCL intends to increase the
 spending on branding in the festive season in 2HFY24F. Meaningful EBIT
 breakeven of the segment can be achieved at a revenue run-rate of
 ~Rs200m/month.
- Optic fibre business outlook: Communication cable revenue declined by 14% yoy in 2Q due to the delay in government and private telco tenders related to the layout of optic fibre for 5G rollout and better internet connectivity in smaller towns (via Bharat Net program). Management expects the tender bidding to start around Dec 2023F/Jan 2024F. The anti-dumping duty levied on optical fibre cable or OFC imports from China, Indonesia and Vietnam has not yielded meaningful benefits in 2Q. The OFC pricing remains at ~US\$3.15/fkm and management expects it to recover over the next six months, leading to higher margins.
- OFC JV final exit: FCL has fully exited its long-standing joint venture with Corning for the manufacture of optic fibre in 2Q. The liquidation proceeds of Rs142m were received and the company recognized profit on the sale to the tune of Rs126m as one-time income in 2QFY24.
- **Distribution network:** FCL had ~700 distributors and 66k active retailers at the end of Sep 2023.
- Cash conversion cycle: Net working capital cycle improved significantly to 34 days of TTM sales at end of Sep 2023 vs. 55 days at the end of Mar 2023. Management indicated this to be a result of the benefits accruing from the engagement with consultants focused on improving inventory management. However, the company expects 50 days of sales as the normalized cash conversion cycle to sustain in the long term. Net cash, including liquid investments, stood at ~Rs28bn at the end of Sep 2023.



Figure 1: Electrical cable revenue and margin trend Figure 2: Communication cable revenue and margin trend EBIT Margin - RHS EBIT Margin - RHS Revenue Revenue 12000 16 2000 6 1600 9000 12 1200 6000 800 (3) 3000 400 0 1QFY24 1QFY23 4QFY23 1QFY24 1QFY23 2QFY23 4QFY23 2QFY24 2QFY23 2QFY22 3QFY22 SOURCE: INCRED RESEARCH, COMPANY REPORTS SOURCE: INCRED RESEARCH, COMPANY REPORTS



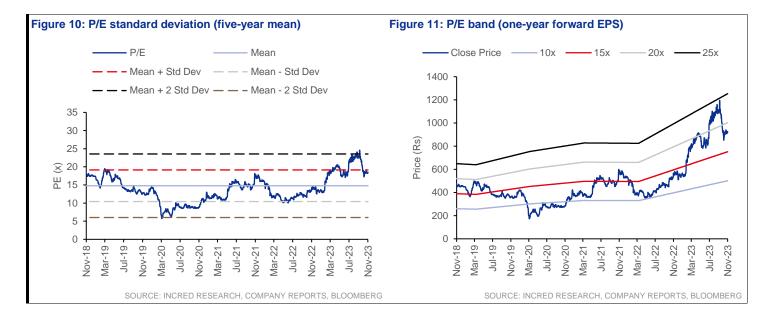
| Figure 5: 2QFY24 results snapshot | | | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|--------|---------|--------|---------|--------|--------|---------|--|--|
| Y/E Mar (Rs m) | 2QFY24 | 2QFY23 | yoy (%) | 1QFY24 | qoq (%) | H1FY24 | H1FY23 | yoy (%) | | |
| Revenue | 11,874 | 10,908 | 8.9 | 12,043 | (1.4) | 23,917 | 21,065 | 13.5 | | |
| EBITDA | 1,461 | 987 | 48.1 | 1,465 | (0.3) | 2,926 | 2,178 | 34.4 | | |
| EBITDA margin (%) | 12.3 | 9.0 | 326 bp | 12.2 | 14 bp | 12.2 | 10.3 | 190 bp | | |
| Adj. PAT | 1,416 | 554 | 155.7 | 1,604 | (11.7) | 3,020 | 1,750 | 72.6 | | |
| Diluted EPS (Rs) | 9.3 | 3.6 | | 10.5 | | 19.8 | 11.4 | | | |
| | SOURCE: INCRED RESEARCH, COMPANY REPORTS | | | | | | | | | |

| Figure 6: 2QFY24 s | egmental | results | snapshot | | | | | |
|------------------------|----------|---------|----------|--------|------------|-----------|---------|---------|
| YE Mar (Rs m) | 2QFY24 | 2QFY23 | yoy (%) | 1QFY24 | qoq (%) | H1FY24 | H1FY23 | yoy (%) |
| Revenue | | | | | | | | |
| Electrical Cables | 9,885 | 8,784 | 12.5 | 10,115 | (2.3) | 20,000 | 17,049 | 17.3 |
| Communication Cables | 1,365 | 1,586 | (14.0) | 1,365 | (0.0) | 2,730 | 2,922 | (6.6) |
| Copper rods | 4,473 | 2,616 | 71.0 | 3,831 | 16.7 | 8,303 | 5,609 | 48.1 |
| Others(FMEG) | 549 | 483 | 13.7 | 465 | 18.0 | 1,013 | 985 | 2.9 |
| Inter-segment revenues | 4,397 | 2,561 | 71.7 | 3,733 | 17.8 | 8,130 | 5,500 | 47.8 |
| Total | 11,874 | 10,908 | 8.9 | 12,043 | (1.4) | 23,917 | 21,065 | 13.5 |
| EBIT | | | | | | | | |
| Electrical Cables | 1,399 | 876 | 59.7 | 1,328 | 5.3 | 2,727 | 1,937 | 40.8 |
| Communication Cables | 27 | 30 | (10.3) | 27 | (0.7) | 54 | 63 | (13.9) |
| Copper rods | 9 | 5 | 69.8 | 8 | 16.9 | 17 | 20 | (17.7) |
| Others(FMEG) | 9 | 5 | 72.0 | 7 | 19.4 | 16 | 12 | 27.4 |
| Total | 1,444 | 916 | 57.5 | 1,370 | 5.4 | 2,814 | 2,033 | 38.4 |
| EBIT margin (%) | | | | | | | | |
| Electrical Cables | 14.2 | 10.0 | 418 bps | 13.1 | 102 bps | 13.6 | 11.4 | 227 bps |
| Communication Cables | 2.0 | 1.9 | 8 bps | 2.0 | -1 bps | 2.0 | 2.2 | -17 bps |
| Copper rods | 0.2 | 0.2 | 0 bps | 0.2 | 0 bps | 0.2 | 0.4 | -16 bps |
| Others(FMEG) | 1.6 | 1.0 | 53 bps | 1.5 | 2 bps | 1.6 | 1.3 | 30 bps |
| Total | 8.9 | 6.8 | 207 bps | 8.7 | 19 bps | 11.8 | 9.7 | 211 bps |
| | | | | SOUR | CE: INCRED | RESEARCH, | COMPANY | REPORTS |

| Figure 7: Actuals vs. our estimates | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------|----------------|--|--|--|--|--|
| Rs m | 2QFY24 | 2QFY24F | Var (%) | | | | | |
| Revenue | 11,874 | 11,790 | 0.7 | | | | | |
| EBITDA | 1,461 | 1,326 | 10.2 | | | | | |
| EBITDA margin (%) | 12.3 | 11.3 | 105 bp | | | | | |
| Adj. PAT | 1,416 | 1,416 | (0.0) | | | | | |
| | SOURCE: INCRED RESEAR | RCH ESTIMATES | COMPANY REPORT | | | | | |

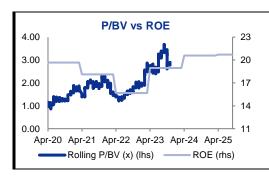
| Figure 8: Actuals vs. Bloomberg consensus | | | | | | | | |
|---|-------------------------|------------------|----------------|--|--|--|--|--|
| Rs m | 2QFY24 | 2QFY24C | Var (%) | | | | | |
| Revenue | 11,874 | 12,408 | (4.3) | | | | | |
| EBITDA | 1,461 | 1,494 | (2.2) | | | | | |
| EBITDA margin (%) | 12.3 | 12.0 | 27 bp | | | | | |
| Adj. PAT | 1,416 | 1,665 | (14.9) | | | | | |
| | SOURCE: INCRED RESEARCH | I, COMPANY REPOR | RTS, BLOOMBERG | | | | | |

| | New estimates | | | Old | Old estimates | | | ange (%) |) |
|----------------------|---------------|--------|--------|--------|---------------|-------|-------|----------|-------|
| | FY24F | FY25F | FY26F | FY24F | FY25F | FY26F | FY24F | FY25F | FY26F |
| Revenue | 51,710 | 59,005 | 66,915 | 50,991 | 57,211 | NA | 1.4 | 3.1 | NA |
| EBITDA | 6,593 | 7,671 | 8,833 | 6,356 | 7,303 | NA | 3.7 | 5.0 | NA |
| EBITDA margin (%) | 12.8 | 13.0 | 13.2 | 12.5 | 12.8 | NA | 28 bp | 23 bp | NA |
| Adjusted consol. PAT | 6,440 | 8,128 | 9,451 | 6,227 | 7,954 | NA | 3.4 | 2.2 | NA |
| EPS | 42.1 | 53.1 | 61.8 | 40.7 | 52.0 | NA | 3.4 | 2.2 | NA |





BY THE NUMBERS





| Profit & Loss | | | | | |
|------------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| (Rs mn) | Mar-22A | Mar-23A | Mar-24F | Mar-25F | Mar-26F |
| Total Net Revenues | 37,681 | 44,811 | 51,710 | 59,005 | 66,915 |
| Gross Profit | 8,019 | 9,366 | 11,376 | 13,335 | 15,190 |
| Operating EBITDA | 4,285 | 5,094 | 6,593 | 7,671 | 8,833 |
| Depreciation And Amortisation | (389) | (464) | (492) | (654) | (775) |
| Operating EBIT | 3,897 | 4,630 | 6,101 | 7,017 | 8,058 |
| Financial Income/(Expense) | 659 | 1,065 | 1,308 | 1,979 | 2,221 |
| Pretax Income/(Loss) from Assoc. | 2,053 | 700 | 1,348 | 1,871 | 2,212 |
| Non-Operating Income/(Expense) | 40 | 100 | 100 | 105 | 110 |
| Profit Before Tax (pre-EI) | 6,648 | 6,495 | 8,856 | 10,972 | 12,601 |
| Exceptional Items | 1,218 | | 810 | 405 | |
| Pre-tax Profit | 7,866 | 6,495 | 9,666 | 11,377 | 12,601 |
| Taxation | (1,875) | (1,452) | (2,417) | (2,844) | (3,150) |
| Exceptional Income - post-tax | | | | | |
| Profit After Tax | 5,991 | 5,043 | 7,250 | 8,533 | 9,451 |
| Minority Interests | | | | | |
| Preferred Dividends | | | | | |
| FX Gain/(Loss) - post tax | | | | | |
| Other Adjustments - post-tax | | | | | |
| Net Profit | 5,991 | 5,043 | 7,250 | 8,533 | 9,451 |
| Recurring Net Profit | 5,064 | 5,043 | 6,642 | 8,229 | 9,451 |
| Fully Diluted Recurring Net Profit | 5,064 | 5,043 | 6,642 | 8,229 | 9,451 |

| Cash Flow | | | | | |
|----------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| (Rs mn) | Mar-22A | Mar-23A | Mar-24F | Mar-25F | Mar-26F |
| EBITDA | 4,285 | 5,094 | 6,593 | 7,671 | 8,833 |
| Cash Flow from Invt. & Assoc. | | | | | |
| Change In Working Capital | 1,495 | (330) | (324) | (999) | (1,084) |
| (Incr)/Decr in Total Provisions | | | | | |
| Other Non-Cash (Income)/Expense | | | | | |
| Other Operating Cashflow | 929 | 596 | 3,566 | 4,360 | 4,544 |
| Net Interest (Paid)/Received | (659) | (479) | (1,308) | (1,979) | (2,221) |
| Tax Paid | (1,320) | (1,318) | (2,417) | (2,844) | (3,150) |
| Cashflow From Operations | 4,731 | 3,563 | 6,110 | 6,208 | 6,922 |
| Capex | (671) | (310) | (2,750) | (1,763) | (526) |
| Disposals Of FAs/subsidiaries | 3 | (3,245) | | | |
| Acq. Of Subsidiaries/investments | (4,302) | 810 | (1,000) | (1,000) | (1,000) |
| Other Investing Cashflow | 1,187 | | 1,328 | 2,000 | 2,243 |
| Cash Flow From Investing | (3,783) | | (2,422) | (762) | 717 |
| Debt Raised/(repaid) | (25) | (12) | | | |
| Proceeds From Issue Of Shares | | (39) | | | |
| Shares Repurchased | | | | | |
| Dividends Paid | (838) | | (1,224) | (1,377) | (1,530) |
| Preferred Dividends | | | | | |
| Other Financing Cashflow | (6) | (915) | (20) | (21) | (22) |
| Cash Flow From Financing | (869) | | (1,244) | (1,398) | (1,552) |
| Total Cash Generated | 78 | | 2,444 | 4,048 | 6,087 |
| Free Cashflow To Equity | 922 | | 3,688 | 5,445 | 7,639 |
| Free Cashflow To Firm | 932 | | 3,668 | 5,424 | 7,617 |

SOURCE: INCRED RESEARCH, COMPANY REPORTS



BY THE NUMBERS...cont'd

| Balance Sheet | | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| (Rs mn) | Mar-22A | Mar-23A | Mar-24F | Mar-25F | Mar-26F |
| Total Cash And Equivalents | 19,569 | 23,943 | 27,387 | 32,435 | 39,523 |
| Total Debtors | 1,772 | 2,178 | 2,550 | 2,910 | 3,300 |
| Inventories | 6,531 | 6,746 | 7,792 | 8,891 | 10,083 |
| Total Other Current Assets | 1,020 | 1,001 | 708 | 808 | 917 |
| Total Current Assets | 28,891 | 33,868 | 38,438 | 45,045 | 53,822 |
| Fixed Assets | 3,697 | 4,218 | 4,935 | 7,544 | 7,295 |
| Total Investments | 10,954 | 10,935 | 10,935 | 10,935 | 10,935 |
| Intangible Assets | 3 | 14 | 14 | 14 | 14 |
| Total Other Non-Current Assets | 1,399 | 770 | 2,310 | 810 | 810 |
| Total Non-current Assets | 16,052 | 15,937 | 18,194 | 19,303 | 19,053 |
| Short-term Debt | | | | | |
| Current Portion of Long-Term Debt | | | | | |
| Total Creditors | 1,901 | 2,087 | 2,550 | 2,910 | 3,300 |
| Other Current Liabilities | 1,017 | 1,078 | 1,417 | 1,617 | 1,833 |
| Total Current Liabilities | 2,918 | 3,165 | 3,967 | 4,526 | 5,133 |
| Total Long-term Debt | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| Hybrid Debt - Debt Component | | | | | |
| Total Other Non-Current Liabilities | 185 | 238 | 238 | 238 | 238 |
| Total Non-current Liabilities | 187 | 240 | 240 | 240 | 240 |
| Total Provisions | 2,617 | 2,695 | 2,695 | 2,695 | 2,695 |
| Total Liabilities | 5,723 | 6,101 | 6,902 | 7,462 | 8,069 |
| Shareholders Equity | 39,221 | 43,704 | 49,730 | 56,886 | 64,807 |
| Minority Interests | | | | | |
| Total Equity | 39,221 | 43,704 | 49,730 | 56,886 | 64,807 |

| Key Ratios | | | | | |
|---------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| | Mar-22A | Mar-23A | Mar-24F | Mar-25F | Mar-26F |
| Revenue Growth | 36.1% | 18.9% | 15.4% | 14.1% | 13.4% |
| Operating EBITDA Growth | 15.8% | 18.9% | 29.4% | 16.3% | 15.2% |
| Operating EBITDA Margin | 11.4% | 11.4% | 12.7% | 13.0% | 13.2% |
| Net Cash Per Share (Rs) | 127.92 | 156.53 | 179.06 | 212.06 | 258.40 |
| BVPS (Rs) | 256.43 | 285.75 | 325.16 | 371.95 | 423.74 |
| Gross Interest Cover | 256.35 | 373.35 | 305.03 | 334.14 | 365.43 |
| Effective Tax Rate | 23.8% | 22.4% | 25.0% | 25.0% | 25.0% |
| Net Dividend Payout Ratio | 13.8% | 16.5% | 13.8% | 12.5% | 12.1% |
| Accounts Receivables Days | 17.13 | 16.08 | 16.69 | 16.89 | 16.94 |
| Inventory Days | 86.66 | 68.36 | 65.78 | 66.67 | 66.95 |
| Accounts Payables Days | 22.52 | 20.53 | 20.98 | 21.82 | 21.91 |
| ROIC (%) | 30.9% | 40.2% | 51.9% | 48.9% | 49.0% |
| ROCE (%) | 11.7% | 12.9% | 15.0% | 16.1% | 16.2% |
| Return On Average Assets | 14.3% | 11.5% | 14.2% | 14.9% | 15.1% |

SOURCE: INCRED RESEARCH, COMPANY REPORTS



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