

CRISIL IER Independent Equity Research

Astra Microwave Products Ltd

Initiating coverage

Enhancing investment decisions

Explanation of CRISIL Fundamental and Valuation (CFV) matrix

The CFV Matrix (CRISIL Fundamental and Valuation Matrix) addresses the two important analysis of an investment making process – Analysis of Fundamentals (addressed through Fundamental Grade) and Analysis of Returns (Valuation Grade) The fundamental grade is assigned on a five-point scale from grade 5 (indicating Excellent fundamentals) to grade 1 (Poor fundamentals) The valuation grade is assigned on a five-point scale from grade 5 (indicating strong upside from the current market price (CMP)) to grade 1 (strong downside from the CMP).

CRISIL Fundamental Grade	Assessment	CRISIL Valuation Grade	Assessment
5/5	Excellent fundamentals	5/5	Strong upside (>25% from CMP)
4/5	Superior fundamentals	4/5	Upside (10-25% from CMP)
3/5	Good fundamentals	3/5	Align (+-10% from CMP)
2/5	Moderate fundamentals	2/5	Downside (negative 10-25% from CMP)
1/5	Poor fundamentals	1/5	Strong downside (<-25% from CMP)

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CRISIL is a global analytical company providing ratings, research, and risk and policy advisory services. We are India's leading ratings agency. We are also the foremost provider of high-end research to the world's largest banks and leading corporations.

About CRISIL Research

CRISIL Research is India's largest independent and integrated research house. We provide insights, opinions, and analysis on the Indian economy, industries, capital markets and companies. We are India's most credible provider of economy and industry research. Our industry research covers 70 sectors and is known for its rich insights and perspectives. Our analysis is supported by inputs from our network of more than 4,500 primary sources, including industry experts, industry associations, and trade channels. We play a key role in India's fixed income markets. We are India's largest provider of valuations of fixed income securities, serving the mutual fund, insurance, and banking industries. We are the sole provider of debt and hybrid indices to India's mutual fund and life insurance industries. We pioneered independent equity research in India, and are today India's largest independent equity research house. Our defining trait is the ability to convert information and data into expert judgments and forecasts with complete objectivity. We leverage our deep understanding of the macro economy and our extensive sector coverage to provide unique insights on micro-macro and cross-sectoral linkages. We deliver our research through an innovative web-based research platform. Our talent pool comprises economists, sector experts, company analysts, and information management specialists.

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Analyst Disclosure

Each member of the team involved in the preparation of the grading report, hereby affirms that there exists no conflict of interest that can bias the grading recommendation of the company.

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Astra Microwave Products Ltd

Astra's radar steers around for opportunities

Fundamental Grade	4/5 (Superior fundamentals)
Valuation Grade	5/5 (CMP has strong upside)
Industry	Aerospace and defence

Astra Microwave Products Ltd (Astra) **designs, develops and manufactures sub-systems** for defence and space applications. Its strong R&D, technical capability and established record places it ahead of its peers. Order book of more than 3x FY12 revenues provides visibility for the next two years. Healthy growth in defence capex and increase in the government's focus on indigenous manufacturing will keep its order book healthy. However, increasing competition, volatile earnings and lack of succession plans are key risks. We initiate coverage on Astra with a fundamental grade of **4/5**, indicating that its fundamentals are superior relative to other listed securities in India.

Strong R&D, experienced team and established track record provide an edge

Astra has a strong R&D set-up with four in-house facilities and highly qualified and experienced personnel. The management team has over two decades of experience in DRDO and ISRO. By partnering with government agencies in many prestigious programmes, it has proved its technical capabilities. During any order bidding, technical competence weighs more than cost competitiveness, which gives Astra an edge over competitors.

Increasing defence capex and focus on indigenous manufacturing to drive growth

India's expenditure on defence equipment has increased at a CAGR of 12% over the past 10 years. In the Union Budget for FY13, the military spending has been increased by 17% to ~US\$40 bn. Further, in order to improve self-dependency, the government has introduced an offset clause, which has created another opening for Indian players. Astra has already started benefitting from this; it recently bagged an order worth Rs 3,100 mn. Although competition is high, the company's strong record will ensure a steady flow of orders.

Current order book provides visibility for next two years

Astra's order book of Rs 7,300 mn, which is more than 3x FY12 revenues, provides visibility on its performance for the next two years. Further, we believe AESA radar (which CABS has productionised in association with Astra) will attract demand in the long term.

Volatile business and unclear succession plan is a risk

Astra's profitability is highly susceptible to the uncertainty in the order inflows. In the past decade, its profit margins varied from 7% to 36%. The current order book provides visibility only for the next two years but long-term prospects are unquantifiable. However, increasing contribution from the offset orders is expected to moderate the volatility. Further, the company's future is highly dependent on the top personnel, who are fast approaching retirement age. An unclear succession plan adds to the uncertainty.

Expect two-year revenue CAGR of 41% and profit margins of ~11% in FY14

Driven by the execution of its current order book, Astra's revenue is expected to grow at a two-year CAGR of 41% to Rs 4,038 mn in FY14. Its profit margins are expected to contract to 11% in FY14 due to the execution of the low-margin offset order.

Valuations: Current market price has strong upside

CRISIL Research has used the price-to-earnings (P/E) method to value Astra. We have assigned a P/E multiple of 10x FY14E EPS of Rs 5.5 to arrive at a fair value of Rs 55.

KEY FORECAST

(Rs mn)	FY10	FY11	FY12#	FY13E	FY14E
Operating income	1,043	1,583	2,038	2,949	4,038
EBITDA	251	433	649	771	831
Adj Net income	78	186	383	428	451
Adj EPS-Rs	1.4	2.3	4.7	5.2	5.5
EPS growth (%)	(51.2)	58.2	105.5	11.9	5.3
Dividend Yield (%)	1.2	1.2	1.7	1.2	1.2
RoCE (%)	7.8	17.0	25.8	24.8	22.0
RoE (%)	6.1	13.5	24.1	22.5	19.6
PE (x)	28.1	17.7	8.6	7.7	7.3
P/BV (x)	1.7	2.3	1.9	1.6	1.3
EV/EBITDA (x)	9.7	8.0	5.4	4.9	4.5

based on abridged financials, NM: Not meaningful; CMP: Current market price

Source: Company, CRISIL Research estimates

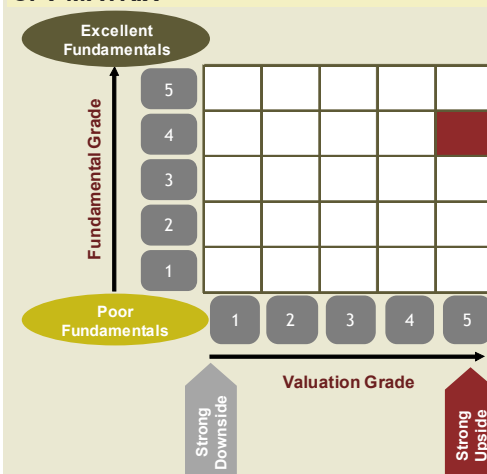


June 18, 2012

Fair Value Rs 55

CMP Rs 40

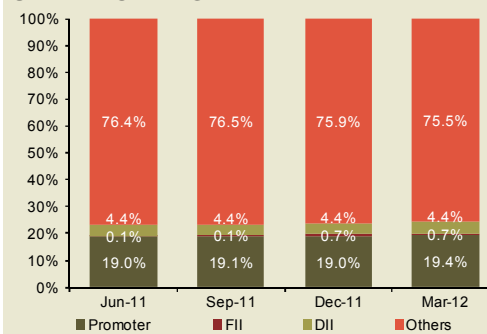
CFV MATRIX



KEY STOCK STATISTICS

NIFTY/SENSEX	5139/16949
NSE/BSE ticker	ASTRAMICRO/ ASTRAMIC
Face value (Rs per share)	2
Shares outstanding (mn)	81.8
Market cap (Rs mn)/(US\$ mn)	3,253/58
Enterprise value (Rs mn)/(US\$ mn)	3,447/62
52-week range (Rs)/(HL)	45/23
Beta	0.83
Free float (%)	81%
Avg daily volumes (30-days)	268,460
Avg daily value (30-days) (Rs mn)	4.8

SHAREHOLDING PATTERN



PERFORMANCE VIS-À-VIS MARKET

	Returns			
	1-m	3-m	6-m	12-m
Astra	-0.5%	9%	10%	33%
NIFTY	4%	-4%	8%	-6%

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Table 1: Business environment

Parameter	Defence		Space	Others (meteorology and telecom)
	Defence	Offset		
Key business activity				
Product application	Missiles guidance system, radars, electronic warfare		ISRO projects such as RISAT	Automatic weather stations, signal jammers
Geographic presence	India. Started receiving offset orders from other countries		India	India
Revenue CAGR (FY09-12)	40%	90%	-21%	-56%
Revenue CAGR (FY12-14)	-3%	301%	24%	-9%
Revenue contribution (FY12)	84%	8%	7%	1%
Revenue contribution (FY14)	37%	58%	4.5%	0.5%
Key competitors	Data Patterns, Avental, Ananth Technologies, Tata Advanced Systems and L&T Cassidian Ltd			
Demand driver	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increasing government's defence capital expenditure Focus on self reliance by Indian government and, hence, indigenous manufacturing Offset clause in defence contract 			
Key risks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sales highly dependent on the order inflow Lumpy nature of the order inflow makes sales volatile Volatile margins 			

Source: Company, CRISIL Research

Grading Rationale

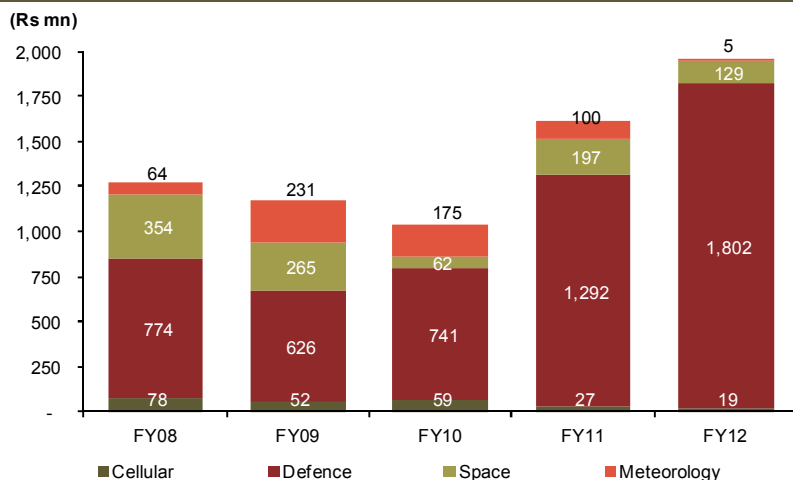
One of the few in a niche space

Astra designs, develops and manufactures sub-systems for defence and space organisations; it is one of the few private players in this space. It has designed and developed various products in collaboration with government agencies like Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), Electronics and Radar Development Establishment (LRDE) and Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO). Its key competitors are Data Patterns, Avental, Ananth Technologies, Tata Advanced Systems and L&T Cassidian Ltd (a JV between Larsen & Toubro and EADS Deutschland).

This is how it works: The Indian armed forces express the requirement of a new technology / product to DRDO, which in turn undertakes the responsibility of designing and developing the product. Bharat Electronics Ltd (BEL) takes the responsibility of production. Bids are invited from players to participate in the design and development of the sub-systems as per the specification of the product. Players are paid for the prototype developed with margins dependent on the competitive bidding. Once the product is developed and a prototype is approved by the respective armed forces, bids are invited for commercial production or it can be given to the player that designed. The bids are evaluated **first on technical strength**; the **remaining players then compete on cost**. Same private players who were involved in the design and development of the sub-components hold a good chance of winning the commercial order because 1) the prototype made by them has already been approved by user, and 2) their knowledge about the technology has already been proven.

A wide-ranging product portfolio – defence (missiles, radars, electronic warfare), space (satellites, radars) and telecom (jammers, amplifiers, antennas) – has diversified Astra's revenue stream. Over the past five years, defence has been the main revenue contributor (65-70%), followed by space and meteorology (10-15% each). Astra is one of the key vendors of BEL – a manufacturer of advanced electronic products for the Indian armed forces.

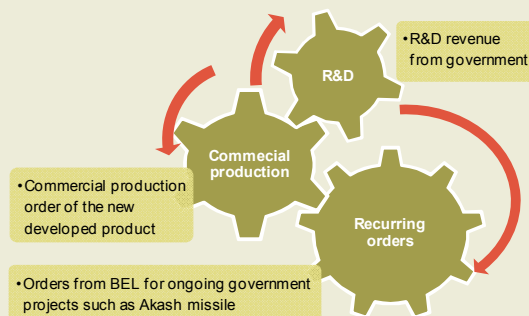
Figure 1: Defence segment is the major contributor



Source: Company, CRISIL Research

Radar (a detector) is a system manufactured by BEL for which it requires mainly three components / sub-systems – antenna, transmitter and receiver. Astra supplies these sub-systems

Astra's revenue drivers





Strong in-house R&D helps to win orders

Astra's growth has been driven by continuous product development primarily based on the client's requirement and then commercial order inflow of these new products. Given, the Indian government's increasing focus on indigenous manufacturing, we believe these drivers will continue to benefit Astra going ahead. It has already partnered with DRDO in the deployment of some new products (explained later) which, we believe, will be the key technology for the future and will drive demand.

Long history of product development

Leveraging on its strong technical skill set, Astra has developed many products in association with defence and space agencies such as DRDO, LRDE and ISRO. It develops the product primarily on the client's requirement. The company's facilities are recognised by the Ministry of Science and Technology, Government of India and are ISO 9001:2000 certified by Intertek, the UK.

Table 2: Ready reckoner: Products

Year	Segment	Products
FY02	Cellular	Cell jammers and V-SAT antennas in Ku band
FY03	Defence	RF front end sub-systems with LRDE (electronics and radar development establishment)
	Cellular	CDMA filters
FY05	Defence	TR module for active aperture radar for electronic warfare application
	IMD	Automatic weather station (AWS) in association with ISRO
	Cellular	Optical repeaters for cellular applications
FY07	Defence	TR module for phased array radar in S band
	Space	TR module for "RISAT" entered into critical stage and some systems of flight module were delivered
FY08	Defence	Central acquisition radar (3D-CAR) in association with LRDE
FY10	Defence	S-band Active Aperture Array of 1244 elements using 100W TR modules

Source: CRISIL Research

Recently, Astra, in association with Centre for Air Borne System (CABS), has productionised new technology radar (AESA radar) which is highly efficient than the old radars and considered as a big achievement for India.

The DRDO itself has appreciated the development as a significant and high-value indigenous effort (<http://drdo.gov.in/drdo/labs/CABS/English/index.jsp?pg=compact.html>).

Further, Astra has made significant contribution to prestigious programmes like RISAT, Akash missile and battle field surveillance radar (BFSR). This provides comfort on the company's execution capabilities. In RISAT programme - India's first indigenous all weather radar imaging satellite launched on April 26, 2012 - it has supplied critical components of radar.

Astra executed R&D order of BFSR on the basis of which it received production order. The order helped sales grow from Rs 392 mn in FY04 to Rs 1,168 mn in FY06

Has a highly skilled and experienced team

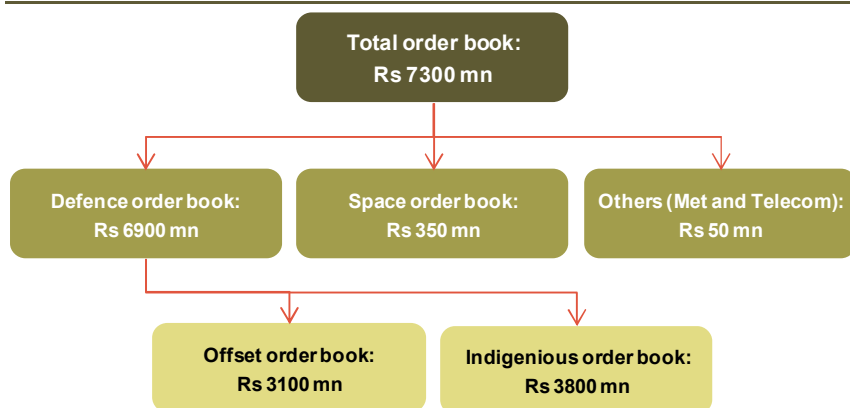
Astra is a knowledge-driven company; manpower is its most valuable asset. It is promoted by a team of highly qualified people with an experience of 20-25 years with renowned government agencies such as DRDO, LDRE and ISRO in radio technology. It has more than 700 employees. Most of the senior employees have experience of more than a decade (more than five years with Astra) with government organisations like ECIL, HAL, BEL and DRDO. It mostly hires experienced scientists from these organisations only. New entrants, usually hired from IITs, undergo a training of six months before joining the laboratories.

Rich order book provides visibility for next two years

We expect Astra to grow phenomenally in the next two years with the help of its existing order book of Rs 7,300 mn; more than 3x FY12 revenues of Rs 2,038 mn. Out of the total order book, 90% is production and 10% is R&D. The company is expected to execute most of its production order book in the next two years. Revenues are expected to grow at a 41% CAGR in the next two years to Rs 4,038 mn in FY14.

Astra to grow phenomenally in the next two years with the help of its existing order book of Rs 7,300 mn

Figure 2: Order book break-down



Source: Company, CRISIL Research

The current order book is dominated by the defence segment (Rs 3,100 mn offset order from ELTA) and indigenous orders from ongoing projects like CAR-1100, Akash, etc.

Offset order worth Rs 3,100 mn: Astra has bagged an order worth Rs 3,100 mn under the offset clause from ELTA. The offset clause mandates a foreign vendor to source at least 30% of the contract value from India for any Indian contract above Rs 3 bn. Under the contract, Astra will deliver 11000 T/R modules manufactured as per the design provided by ELTA.

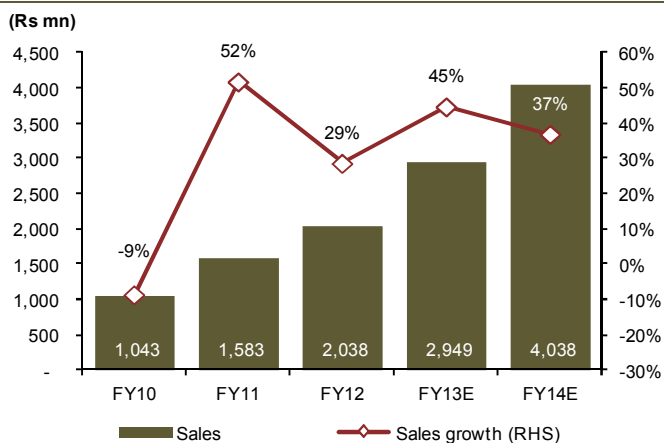
Astra has bagged an order worth Rs 3,100 mn under the offset clause

ELTA is required to service the order for India before FY16 so we assume it will need the sub-systems at least one year before the delivery date. Further, as per the delivery schedule, Astra will deliver the first batch of 60 T/R modules in November which will be tested in ELTA's laboratory. If no change is suggested, then the whole order will be delivered in 10 batches within 10 months. However, after factoring in the delay due to testing and approval, we believe Astra will execute the complete order over the next two years (mostly in FY14).

Indigenous orders worth Rs 3,800 mn: Astra's indigenous book mostly consists of order from Akash missile and Central Acquisition Radar (3D-CAR). The company is expected to execute most of the order book in FY13.

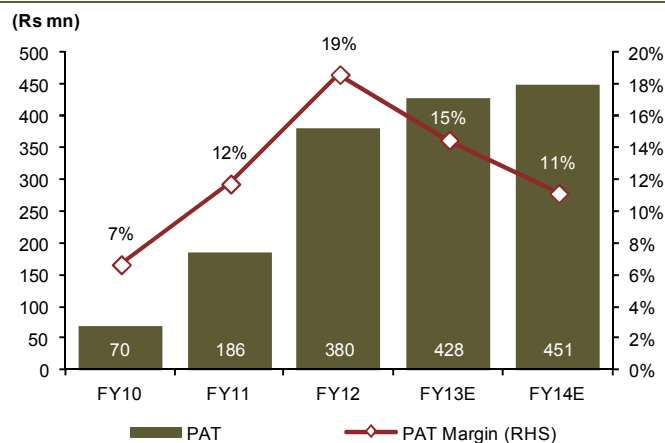
As per our study of annual reports of past ten years, the company has largely performed in line with the guidance given by the management. It shows management's visibility on the order book in hand. We derive comfort from this. We expect revenue to grow at an average 41% in the next two years to Rs 4,038 mn in FY14. However, profit margins are expected to be lower at 11% in FY14 primarily on account of the low-margin offset order, which is expected to contribute ~58% to the total sales in FY14.

Figure 3: Sales growth on the back of healthy order book



Source: Company, CRISIL Research

Figure 4: PAT margin to be lower



Source: Company, CRISIL Research

Immense opportunities in future to support order flow

We expect Astra's order book to remain healthy in the near term on account of recurring demand from on-going defence projects such as Akash missile, 3D-CAR and RISAT. There are few more projects which are expected to release orders such as Weapon Locating Radar (WLR), Flycatcher radar and AWS, which will boost growth. Further, the offset clause will provide more opportunities. In the long run, we believe AESA radar technology will attract demand. We believe there will be sizeable opportunities in the market. Considering its past record and its association with the government agencies in the R&D, we believe Astra will be able to win some of the projects and grab a part of the large pie.

Strong industry growth to boost the order book

With increase in defence expenditure and various ongoing projects of Indian armed forces and ISRO, we expect Astra to continue to benefit from the recurring demand for sub-systems. Projects like Akash missile and 3D-CAR are expected to run for a long time. Astra enjoys a long and healthy relationship with key suppliers to Indian armed forces such as BEL, Bharat Dynamics Ltd (BDL) and the space agency - ISRO. Based on Astra's long execution record in terms of product development with government agencies, final product delivery and participation in prestigious projects like RISAT, we believe the company will keep bagging orders.

Increase in defence capex to drive demand

India's expenditure on defence equipment has increased at a CAGR of 12% over the past ten years. In the recent Union Budget for FY13, the military spending has been increased by 17% to ~US\$40 bn. This is being done at a time when the country is already upgrading the ageing military hardware. The defence capital expenditure is pegged at US\$15.84 bn, an increase of 14.89% over the last year's defence capital expenditure budget of US\$14.12 bn. According to the draft 12 Five-Year Plan, the defence expenditure (as a percentage of GDP) is projected to be ~1.83% of GDP in FY12 and 1.56% of GDP in FY17.

We believe Astra's order book will continue to be in favour of the defence segment for the next two-three years. BEL, the largest defence electronics supplier and one of the large clients for Astra, has a strong order book of Rs 276 bn at the end of FY12. Radar and missiles (Astra's major market) contributed 50% to the total order book of FY12. The consensus estimate of the growth in the BEL's order book is 11% CAGR over the next two years to Rs 340 bn.

Expected order flow in the next few years: As per the management, some orders are expected under various programmes in the next two-three years. In the space segment, IMD is planning to announce an order for 400 AWS (automatic weather stations) under phase-II of its modernisation programme. This is the same product which Astra developed during FY05-FY06 and executed an order for ISRO during FY08 and FY09. As per the management, the earnings potential from this contract for players like Astra would be ~Rs 350-400 mn. Further, ISRO is planning for repeat launches of RISAT which will open up one more opportunity for Astra. Considering its established technical capabilities, we believe Astra would be a strong contender in bidding.

Table 3: History of order bidding of major projects

Project	No. of competitors	Comments
RISAT	4	Astra was L2 bidder but still managed to get the order due to technical strength of its product
BFSR	6	Astra won the R&D bid outbidding five competitors. Further commercial production bid came proprietary
WLR (R&D Order)	3	Competitors were eliminated based on technical evaluation and Astra won the order
Brahmos missiles	3	Astra lost the bid to ECIL and Data Patterns on commercial grounds. But supplying RF component to ECIL for the same project

Source: Company

Products under development to accelerate growth

Astra, in association with DRDO and ISRO, is developing many products such as AESA radar (S-band T/R module, X-band T/R module), See-through radar and L-band radar. AESA radar, once tested and approved, will be in demand because it is far more efficient than the existing radars. Further, cost competitiveness will push demand for indigenous production. A T/R module can be produced indigenously at less than 25% of the imported cost of an equivalent device. The prime reason of such a high cost differential is the difference in the manpower cost. Although bids will be invited for commercial production, there is no doubt that Astra will qualify the competitive competency test. We expect the demand to start flowing post FY14.

BEL rated Astra 98 out of 100 in vendor performance for FY10

Rating above 70 is acceptable and above 90 is considered good

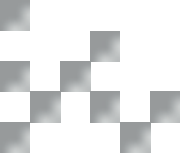


Table 4: Different programmes – AESA radar and scope for Astra

Project	Description	What Astra can supply	Comments
AEW&C	ELTA, Israel and Brazilian Embraer are supplying aircrafts to India. The aircrafts from Brazilian Embraer will be without radars. Indigenously manufactured S-Band AESA radars will be tested in these aircrafts	S-band T/R modules	Partnered in the development of the product. Already supplied 3 units of T/R module array. User testing is in progress
WLR (Weapon Locating Radar)	28 units are on order and are being manufactured by BEL. Total order worth Rs 15 bn. The WLR will eventually service the army's requirement for 40-50 systems	S-band T/R modules	Partnered in the development of the product. Expected to get the commercial production order
MPR (Medium Power Radar)	Active phased array radar being developed for the Indian Air Force for range exceeding 300 km	X-band T/R modules	Partnered in the development of the product. Astra has already supplied two modules of X-band T/R. User is testing the same
LCA (Light Combat Aircraft)	The Tejas (LCA) was cleared in January 2011 for use by Indian Air Force pilots. It will reach final operational clearance until 2014	X-band T/R modules	Partnered in the development of the product. Astra has already supplied two modules of X-band T/R. User is testing the same

Source: Company

Further, there are many long-term ongoing projects, which currently use the old technology such as Akash missiles, Central Acquisition Radar, etc. The potential for usage of AESA radar in these projects is huge. We believe Astra will derive a lot of value from expected demand as it has already established its know-how and production capabilities. The recent offset order from ELTA is an example.

Shift in the value chain to provide incremental growth: Apart from the expected demand, any sub-system manufacturer like Astra will also benefit from the new technology due to the shift in the value chain. With the introduction of T/R module in the radars, the share of a sub-system manufacturer in the complete value chain of system manufacturing has increased from 30% to 60%.

For mechanically steered radars, Astra supplies sub-systems such as antennas and receivers, which contribute 20-30% of the total cost of radar. It is capable of producing transmitters till 500W only. For radar of more than 500W, which requires a transmitter of the same power, it keeps its supplies limited to only antennas and receivers. However, for AESA radar it can produce complete antenna microwave assembly (transmitter and receiver module) as it required several small power T/R modules fitted in the antenna which compositely produce the required high power. In AESA, antenna cost is 60-70% of the total cost of radar.

For a total radar cost of Rs 100 mn, earlier Astra provided sub-systems worth Rs 30 mn, while now it will supply the sub-systems (T/R module) worth Rs 60 mn. This shift in the value chain towards the sub-system manufacturer will accelerate Astra's growth.

Government's emphasis on indigenous manufacturing to benefit Astra

We believe the government will continue to award new contracts to industry players for the development of new technology/products. Astra is just waiting in the wings to grab this opportunity. The Indian government has been increasing its focus on indigenous manufacturing due to a) high maintenance cost of imported goods, b) large cost differential

“Development of the Transmit-Receive Multi-Module (TRMM) was a significant and high-value indigenous effort as the technology” – DRDO website

between imported and indigenously manufactured products, and c) to reduce dependency. As technical competence weighs more than cost competitiveness, we believe Astra will continue to win contracts in the future also. There have been instances where contracts were awarded based on only technical competitiveness.

Offset clause is a boon: India is the largest importer of arms and equipment in the world. Nearly 70% of total defence equipment requirement is met by imports. The offset clause opens sizeable opportunity for Indian players. Astra has already started reaping the benefits of it. It recently won an offset order worth US\$59.9 mn (~Rs 3,100 mn) from ELTA to manufacture T/R modules as per design given by them. This is the second order from ELTA, the first one was received in FY10. This order was directly given to Astra, which is a manifestation of its execution capability.

We believe Astra will benefit from the number of on-going defence programmes such as medium multi-role combat aircraft (MMRCA), very short range air defence (VSHORAD), etc. Astra has already signed a MoU with tier 1 supplier of **Dassault Rafale** – winner of the MMRCA project. The order from this is expected to flow in the next two years. Astra supplies export components from its 100% export oriented unit, which provides it tax benefits.

Volatile performance is a concern

Astra's performance is highly dependent on the order inflow. In the past decade, its revenue and profitability has witnessed very high volatility. Its PAT margin has ranged from 7% to 36%. In the past decade, over FY07-FY10, the company reported flat sales with decreasing profitability. Today also, the current order book provides visibility for only two years but its long-term growth remains uncertain. However, considering the company's position and opportunity universe, we expect the company will keep getting some orders but the risk of high volatility cannot be ignored. Further, we believe additional business from the offset order will moderate the volatility.

Increasing competition will lower profitability

With increasing opportunities, attractive margins and the government's focus on public-private participation, many private players are eyeing the defence manufacturing sector. Industry sources reveal that some Indian players are opting for the joint venture route to skip the long gestation period of research and development - L&T Cassidian Ltd is a JV between Larsen & Toubro and EADS Deutschland. We expect competition to increase which will a) reduce Astra's share in the order flow and b) impact its margins due to aggressive bidding.

In the R&D segment, the government has already started focussing on diversifying its vendor base. We believe in some of the future development projects, the government will partner with at least two parties. Further, as most of the technology or products developed in collaboration with government agencies are not patented, there is a risk of the government (in order to diversify its vendor base) transferring the technology to other players for the commercial production. However, the company is trying to reduce its cost to fight competition but this is at the cost of profitability.

Offset opportunity to opens sizeable opportunity for Indian players



Cost reduction strategy to provide an edge but at the cost of profitability: Most of the RF component manufacturers import most of the raw material (silicon chips) from the US and Europe due to non-availability in India. Astra has collaborated with a Taiwan-based foundry for the manufacturing of these chips. Leveraging on its technical strength, it will now design the chips in-house and then outsource the manufacturing to the foundry. This will save two-third of the raw material cost which contributes ~80% in the cost of production. This will help the company to bid more aggressively.

Capacity expansion planned for next level of growth

Automisation and expansion

In order to meet the expected growing demand, Astra has planned capacity expansion to the tune of Rs 560 mn over the next three-four years. It will fund the capex with a mix of debt and equity. It is planning the expansion in two phases.

Generally, the company does not require any heavy machinery for its operations. We believe, even post expansion its D/E will remain at modest levels (0.3 in FY14) which will provide it with the financial flexibility to further expand its capacity.

Phase 1 – Automatic SMT (surface mount technology) line: SMT lines are used to assemble the product as per the required design. Currently, Astra outsources its assembly operations to approved vendors who assemble the components as per the design provided. Astra designs and tests the prototype before mass production.

As a function of its outsourced business model, capacity is not a constraint for Astra but to speed up the process of assembly, it is planning to set up an automatic SMT line in its Hyderabad unit. It will also help the company in a) reducing the dependency on vendors for small scale production of prototypes used during R&D, and b) reducing the cost of manufacturing as vendors generally command 15-20% margins.

Although one assembly line will be able to service only 20-25% of its existing order book, for the next two to three years, Astra plans to outsource commercial production to assemblers but will decrease the dependency by automating more SMT lines. The capacity is expected to come on stream in FY13; total capex planned is Rs 230 mn.

Phase 2 – Setting up a production facility: To cater to the growing demand from the defence segment and to be in close proximity to end customers, Astra is setting up a facility in the five-acre aerospace industrial park, near the International Airport, Bengaluru. The operations are expected to commence in FY15. Total planned capex is Rs 330 mn. The company has already applied for the land; as per the management, it will receive the land in the next three-four months.

No succession plan in place – a big threat to sustainability

Astra was incorporated by six promoters, of whom three have retired. The other three are also nearing the retirement age. All three promoters hold critical positions in the company. Based on our discussion with the management we have learnt that promoters are highly involved in day-to-day business activities. New product development is also undertaken by the R&D chief who is one of the promoters.

Management has informed that currently, they do not have any succession plan in place. As we believe that Astra's future is highly dependent on the management, an unclear succession plan is disconcerting. However, they are grooming the second line of management to address the concern.

Usually, a PE investor has an investment horizon of three to five years, but Strategic Ventures Fund (Mauritius) has remained invested in the company for 10 years. It bought 28.8% stake in FY02 but subsequently disinvested 13.4% during FY05 and FY06. Hence, we believe it may

be looking to exit. We also believe that L&T Capital Company Ltd (a subsidiary of Larsen & Toubro Limited), which holds 9.7% in the company, may be interested in increasing its stake. Way back in 2008, a section of the media had reported that L&T wanted to buy Strategic Ventures Fund's stake in Astra. Further, the promoter's low holding at 19.4% makes the company an acquisition target.

Lengthy cash generation cycle

Astra primarily caters to the government organisations and the products manufactured generally have a production cycle of a year. Because of this, it has long debtor days (average 200 days in past five years) and inventory days (average 213 days in past five years). However, it receives advance payments, generally 30%, for any contract which helps to reduce the cash generation cycle, but it remains higher (average 188 days in last five years). We expect debtor days to come down in FY14 as the payment from ELTA, which will contribute a major part of the company's sale, is backed by a letter of credit (LC).

Unclear succession plan adds to the uncertainty

Key risks

Retention of employees is a challenge

For a knowledge-driven company like Astra, manpower is the most important asset. Retention of its employees is very important. There have been instances in the past where employees have been poached by competitors by offering higher packages. So far, the company has maintained a low attrition rate (<3%, as per the management) on account of a) unavailability of much options for scientists, and b) high compensation levels (high remunerations + sales linked bonus + ESOPS). However, with increasing competition, retention of employees will be a challenge.

Foreign exchange risk

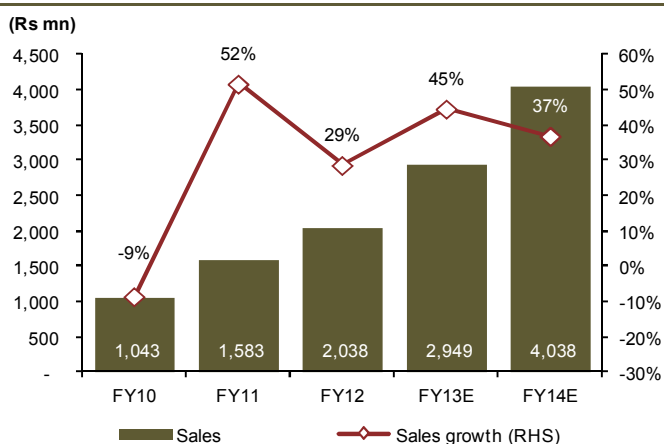
The company is expected to realise a significant portion (58% of total sales in FY14) of revenue from exports. It has won an offset order worth US\$ 59.9 mn (~Rs 3,100 mn at an exchange rate of Rs 51.8 per US\$). CRISIL Research expects the rupee to appreciate from current levels, to 50 per dollar by FY13-end. This assumes a modest recovery in Eurozone towards the second half of FY13 which will bring back capital inflows. If domestic and global recovery strengthens further in FY14, then the country could see a revival of capital inflows which could strengthen the rupee further. Currently, the company does not have a hedging policy, hence it remains exposed to the foreign exchange risk in case the rupee appreciates from Rs 51.8 per US\$. However, the company always has an option to hedge its open position in the future.

Financial Outlook

Order book execution to drive revenue growth

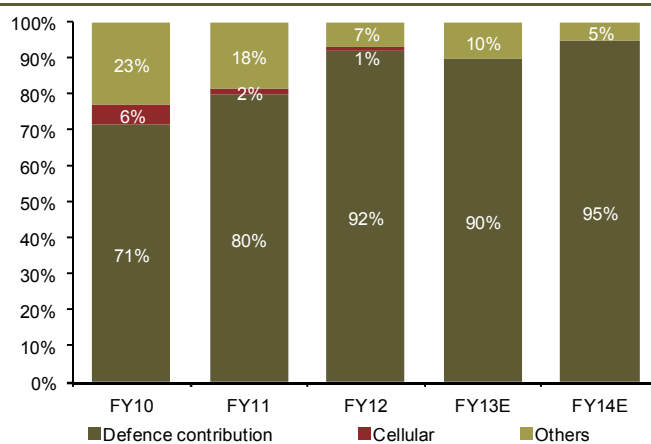
Driven by the execution of a big order book, Astra is expected to report revenues of Rs 2,949 in FY13 (up by 45% y-o-y) and Rs 4,038 mn in FY14 (up by 37% y-o-y). Revenues are expected to be skewed towards the defence segment. We expect the company to complete most of the indigenous defence orders in FY13, while a major part of the offset order (Rs 3,100 mn) will be executed in FY14. To calculate the realisation from the offset order, we have assumed an exchange rate of Rs 48 per USD.

Figure 5: Revenues to grow at a CAGR of 41%



Source: Company, CRISIL Research

Figure 6: Defence segment to dominate sales

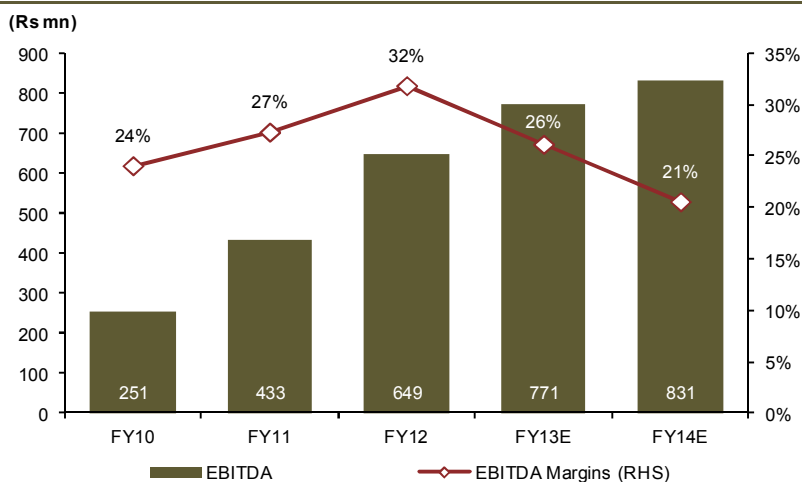


Source: Company, CRISIL Research

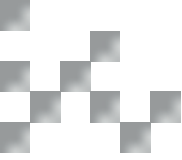
EBITDA margins to contract

We expect Astra's EBITDA margin to drop by 570 bps in FY13 to 26% and further by 560 bps in FY14 to 21%. The contraction is due to execution of the low-margin offset order. However, in any new product delivery, profit margins are higher as the company charges development cost along with normal margins. Any domestic order will improve margins.

Figure 7: EBITDA margin to contract in FY14; still remain healthy



Source: Company, CRISIL Research

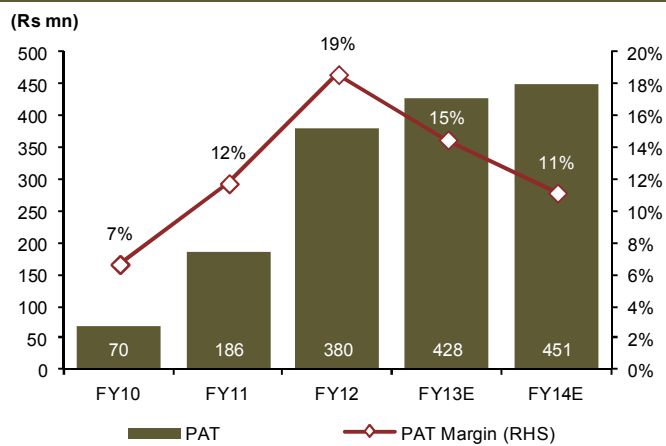


PAT margin to decline in line with operating performance

We expect the company to report 15% PAT margin in FY13 and 11% in FY14. The drop is in line with the EBITDA margins and is supported by increased depreciation expense and higher interest cost. The company will commission the automatic SMT line in FY13, capitalisation of which will increase the depreciation.

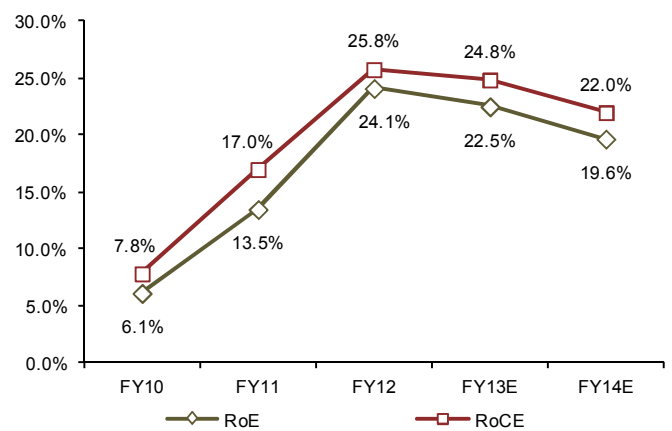
The EPS is expected to be Rs 5.2 in FY13 and Rs 5.5 in FY14. The company is expected to report RoE of 22% and 20% in FY13 and FY14, respectively.

Figure 8: PAT margin to decline in FY13 and FY14...



Source: Company, CRISIL Research

Figure 9: ...so will RoE and RoCE



Source: Company, CRISIL Research

Management Overview

CRISIL's fundamental grading methodology includes a broad assessment of management quality, apart from other key factors such as industry and business prospects, and financial performance.

Well qualified and experienced management

Astra has an experienced and well qualified management team headed by Mr B. Malla Reddy (managing director). Mr P.A. Chitrakar (COO) and Mrs C. Prameelamma (director - technical) support him. The management team has an average two decades of experience in government organisations like DRDO, ISRO and LRDE. They are highly qualified in the field of electronics and have in-depth knowledge of the business. Using management technical expertise, Astra has developed various products and broadened its product offerings. Astra has grown manifold under the guidance of the management team.

Mr B. Malla Reddy	Masters in Engineering (Automation) from the Indian Institute of Science, Bengaluru. He has over 23 years of experience at the Systems Division of ISRO, Bengaluru and as a scientist at DRDO, Hyderabad.
Mr P.A. Chitrakar	M.Sc (Physics) from Mysore University and M.Tech (Advanced Electronics), Jawaharlal Nehru Technological University (JNTU), Hyderabad. He has been with Defence Electronics Laboratory, Hyderabad as a scientist for over 20 years. He has vast knowledge in the design aspects of a wide range of microwave components.
Mrs. C. Prameelamma	Master's degree in Engineering (Instrumentation & Control Systems) from S. V. University, Tirupathi. She had worked with Electronics Research and Development Establishment, Bengaluru and Defence Electronics Research Laboratory, Hyderabad. Her areas of expertise include the computer-aided design work stations, manufacture and testing of microwave components.

Further, the management has mostly met its guidance given in the annual reports. This gives us comfort in terms of its capability and foresight.

Professional second line of management

Astra has a strong second line of management with professionals having experience between 15 and 40 years. Most of the professionals have worked with government agencies like Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd (HAL), BEL and LRDE. Most of the key managerial personnel have been associated with the company for more than five years.

Corporate Governance

CRISIL's fundamental grading methodology includes a broad assessment of corporate governance and management quality, apart from other key factors such as industry and business prospects, and financial performance. In this context, CRISIL Research analyses the shareholding structure, board composition, typical board processes, disclosure standards and related-party transactions. Any qualifications by regulators or auditors also serve as useful inputs while assessing a company's corporate governance.

Overall, corporate governance at Astra meets the regulatory requirement – it has reasonably good board practices and an independent board.

Board composition

The board consists of six members, two of whom are independent directors and one is non-executive director, which is in line with the requirements under Clause 49 of SEBI's listing guidelines. The board is chaired by an independent director, Dr Shibhan K. Kaul – professor and head of the Department of Centre for Applied Research in Electronics at IIT-Delhi. The other independent director is Mr J. Venkata Das, who was with Canara Bank's venture fund, when it provided the seed capital to the company. The board also consists of a non-executive director, Mr Atim Kabra, who represents Strategic Ventures Fund (Mauritius) on the board.

Board's processes

The company's quality of disclosure can be considered good judged by the level of information and details furnished in the annual report, websites and other publicly available data. The company has all necessary committees in place to support corporate governance practices. The audit committee is chaired by an independent director, Mr J. Venkatadas. The committee meets at timely and regular intervals. The remuneration committee is chaired by Dr Shibhan K. Kaul and includes Mr J. Venkatadas and Mr Atim Kabra.

Corporate governance practices at Astra meet the regulatory requirement

Valuation

Grade: 5/5

Astra operates in an industry where revenues and profitability are highly dependent on the order inflow. Considering the volatile nature of the business, we believe the P/E multiple approach is the best one to value the company.

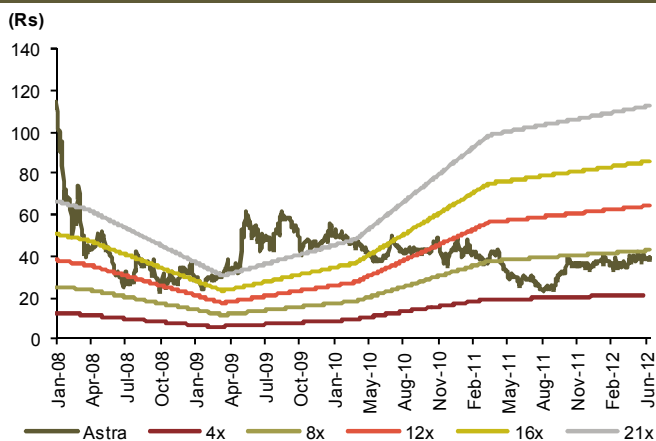
We assign P/E multiple of 10x to Astra's FY14E EPS and arrive at a fair value of Rs 55 per share. Based on the current market price of Rs 40, our valuation grade is **5/5**, indicating that the market price has a **strong upside** from the current levels.

One-year forward P/E

Name	5-years Average	5-years Median
Astra	17.5	16.1
BEL	14.2	14.4
Avantal	13.1	12.1

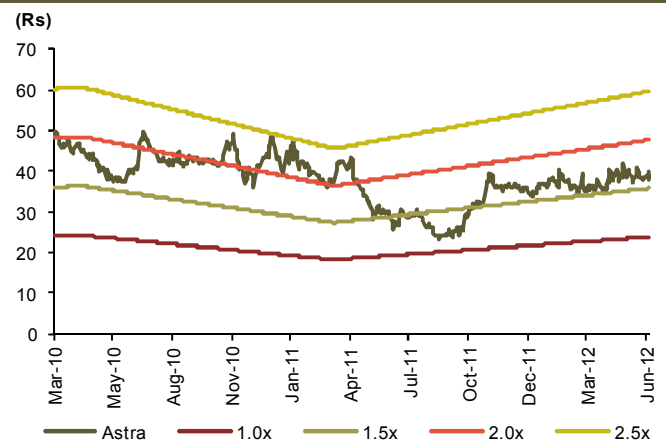
Astra commanded a P/E multiple of an average 10.4x during FY04 to FY06 – high growth years in the last decade. As the next two years are expected to be high growth phase for the company, we believe it should command a P/E multiple of 10x on FY14 earnings.

One-year forward P/E band

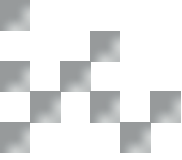


Source: NSE, CRISIL Research

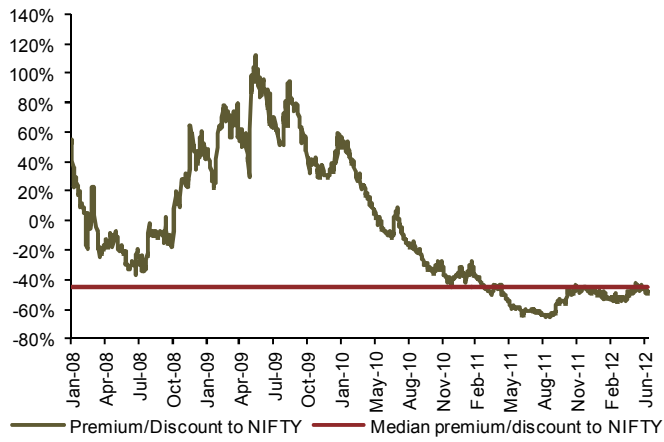
One-year forward P/B band



Source: NSE, CRISIL Research

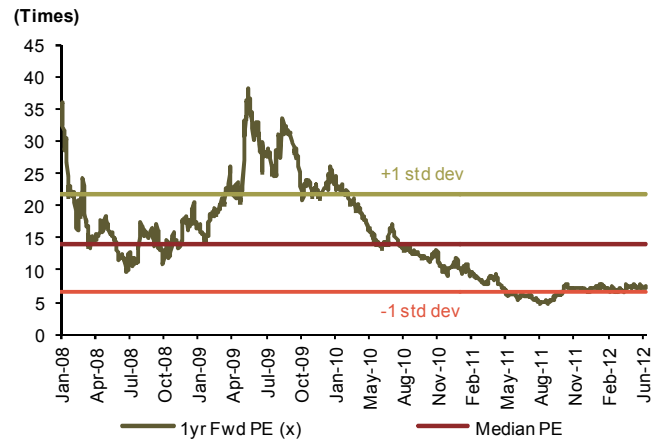


P/E – premium / discount to NIFTY



Source: NSE, CRISIL Research

P/E movement



Source: NSE, CRISIL Research

Company Overview

Hyderabad-based Astra is one of the few suppliers of components for defence, space, meteorology and telecom segments. It started as a component manufacturer for telecom in 1991 but it now caters to defence and space segments. During the past five years, defence has contributed 65-70% to revenues, followed by the space and the meteorology segments (10-15% each). It has four production units covering 120,000 sq.ft. in Andhra Pradesh.

Table 5: Product portfolio

Segments	Products	Application
Defence	Command guidance units, radar components, radio proximity fuse	Missiles, radars, electronic warfare
Space	MSS terminal, radar components	Satellites, radars
Cellular	Amplifier, jammer, VSAT antenna	Civil
Meteorology	Automatic weather stations	Weather monitoring

Source: Company, CRISIL Research

Key Milestones

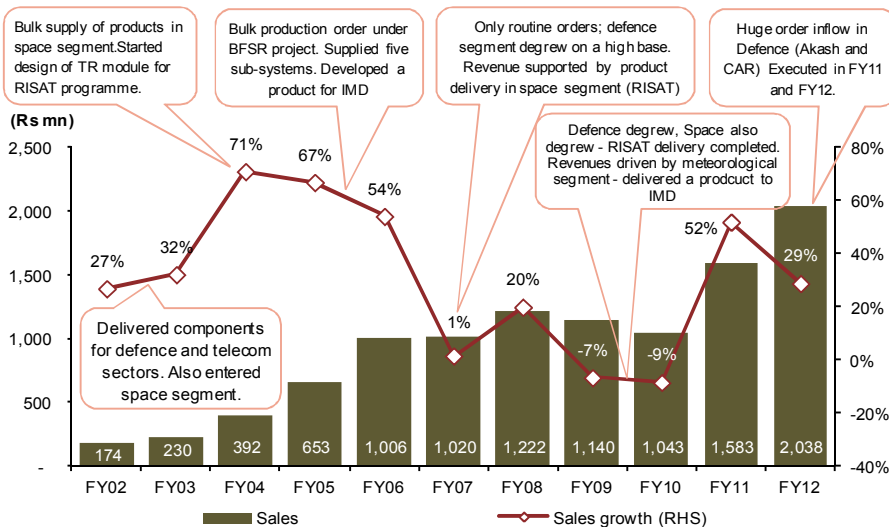
2001	Best technology absorption award from the Government of India for the year 2001 for successfully adopting the technology for producing sub-systems for critical defence applications. Import substitution (2 nd prize) award from 62nd All India Industrial Exhibition
2003	Entered the space segment through supply of MSS terminals during the year
2004	Set up facility for TR module for satellite application. Prototype development orders were received at the end of the year
2005	Designed and developed Automatic Weather Station (AWS) in association with ISRO
2005	Designed and developed optical repeaters for cellular applications
2007	Entered an offset for supply of RADAR sub-systems
2012	Received Rs 3,100 mn offset order from ELTA

Snap shot of financial performance in last decade

Astra's performance in the past decade has been very volatile driven by the lumpy nature of sales order/prototype tender from the sourcing agencies. Sales and profitability are highly dependent on the nature of order flows from these departments and their execution. Although recurring orders remain, any lumpy order execution increases the volatility of performance.

During FY02 and FY03, Astra delivered sub-systems for defence and telecom sectors, which helped in top line growth of 27% and 32%, respectively. In FY04, it executed a big order for ISRO in which it supplied managed security services (MSS) terminals which are used for communication during disasters. Sales grew by 71% to Rs 392 mn in FY04. Next year, the company received a bulk order to manufacture five sub-components for the battle field surveillance radar (BFSSR) project, which fuelled growth in FY05 and FY06. Revenue grew phenomenally to Rs 653 mn in FY05 and then Rs 1,006 mn in FY06.

Figure 10: Astra's performance is highly dependent on order inflow

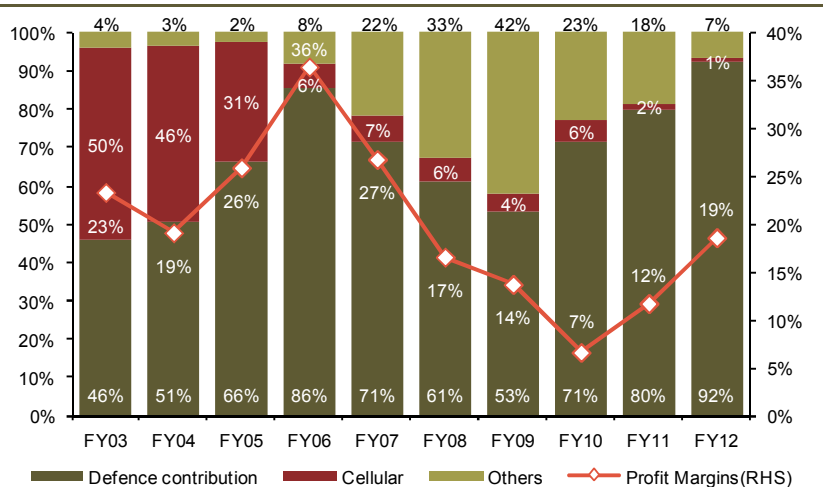


Source: Company, CRISIL Research

Astra's revenue remained almost flat during FY07 to FY10. As most of the orders in defence had already got executed till FY06, sales from the defence segment in FY07 de-grew by 22% on a higher base of FY06. Although, during FY09 and FY10, the company received large production orders in the defence segment but the execution got delayed primarily on account of delay in approvals and large gestation nature of orders. However, the company managed to maintain Rs 1 bn level of sales with the help of recurring orders in defence and new products in other segments (space and meteorology). The pending orders in the defence segment were executed in FY11 and FY12, which pushed sales up by 52% in FY11 to Rs 1,583 mn and by 22% to Rs 1,953 mn in FY12. Although, the revenue of the company remained volatile but a long-term measure of revenue growth - 10-year CAGR, remained healthy at 27%.

Astra's profitability is also linked with the order inflow. Generally, orders from the defence segment command better margins than orders in other segments.

Figure 11: Profitability linked with order inflow



Source: Company, CRISIL Research

Annexure: Financials

Income statement						Balance Sheet					
(Rs mn)	FY10	FY11	FY12#	FY13E	FY14E	(Rs mn)	FY10	FY11	FY12#	FY13E	FY14E
Operating income	1,043	1,583	2,038	2,949	4,038	Liabilities					
EBITDA	251	433	649	771	831	Equity share capital	108	164	164	164	164
EBITDA margin	24.1%	27.4%	31.9%	26.2%	20.6%	Reserves	1,197	1,298	1,549	1,929	2,332
Depreciation	117	128	124	141	154	Minorities	-	-	-	-	-
EBIT	134	305	525	631	676	Net worth	1,305	1,461	1,713	2,093	2,496
Interest	39	71	54	79	98	Convertible debt	-	-	-	-	-
Operating PBT	95	234	470	552	579	Other debt	471	359	539	737	836
Other income	10	10	15	26	22	Total debt	471	359	539	737	836
Exceptional inc/(exp)	(8)	(0)	(3)	-	-	Deferred tax liability (net)	56	44	48	48	48
PBT	97	244	482	578	601	Total liabilities	1,832	1,864	2,300	2,879	3,380
Tax provision	28	58	102	150	150	Assets					
Minority interest	-	-	-	-	-	Net fixed assets	971	925	893	1,113	958
PAT (Reported)	70	186	380	428	451	Capital WIP	2	7	-	-	220
Less: Exceptionals	(8)	(0)	(3)	-	-	Total fixed assets	974	932	893	1,113	1,178
Adjusted PAT	78	186	383	428	451	Investments	0	0	0	0	0
Ratios						Current assets					
	FY10	FY11	FY12#	FY13E	FY14E	Inventory	471	558	747	1,010	1,438
Growth						Sundry debtors	831	821	875	1,293	1,659
Operating income (%)	(8.5)	51.8	28.7	44.7	36.9	Loans and advances	127	182	205	354	485
EBITDA (%)	(24.0)	72.5	49.9	18.9	7.7	Cash & bank balance	219	196	344	293	403
Adj PAT (%)	(51.1)	139.1	105.5	11.9	5.3	Marketable securities	-	-	-	-	-
Adj EPS (%)	(51.2)	58.2	105.5	11.9	5.3	Total current assets	1,648	1,757	2,171	2,949	3,986
Profitability						Total current liabilities	796	831	764	1,183	1,784
EBITDA margin (%)	24.1	27.4	31.9	26.2	20.6	Net current assets	853	926	1,407	1,766	2,202
Adj PAT Margin (%)	7.5	11.8	18.8	14.5	11.2	Intangibles/Misc. expenditure	6	6	-	-	-
RoE (%)	6.1	13.5	24.1	22.5	19.6	Total assets	1,832	1,864	2,300	2,879	3,380
RoCE (%)	7.8	17.0	25.8	24.8	22.0	Cash flow					
RoIC (%)	8.4	16.8	25.6	24.0	20.9	(Rs mn)	FY10	FY11	FY12#	FY13E	FY14E
Valuations						Pre-tax profit	105	244	485	578	601
Price-earnings (x)	27.6	17.5	8.5	7.6	7.2	Total tax paid	(31)	(70)	(98)	(150)	(150)
Price-book (x)	1.6	2.2	1.9	1.6	1.3	Depreciation	117	128	124	141	154
EV/EBITDA (x)	9.6	7.9	5.3	4.8	4.4	Working capital changes	(65)	(97)	(332)	(410)	(325)
EV/Sales (x)	2.3	2.2	1.7	1.3	0.9	Net cash from operations	126	205	179	158	279
Dividend payout ratio (%)	39.2	22.0	15.1	9.6	9.1	Cash from investments					
Dividend yield (%)	1.3	1.3	1.8	1.3	1.3	Capital expenditure	(124)	(86)	(80)	(360)	(220)
B/S ratios						Investments and others	3	-	-	-	-
Inventory days	244	194	248	187	180	Net cash from investments	(121)	(86)	(80)	(360)	(220)
Creditors days	339	238	163	168	168	Cash from financing					
Debtor days	271	180	152	153	143	Equity raised/(repaid)	7	28	(0)	-	-
Working capital days	207	160	184	174	155	Debt raised/(repaid)	61	(113)	180	198	99
Gross asset turnover (x)	0.7	1.0	1.2	1.6	2.0	Dividend (incl. tax)	(32)	(48)	(57)	(48)	(48)
Net asset turnover (x)	1.1	1.7	2.2	2.9	3.9	Others (incl extraordinary)	1	(11)	(73)	-	-
Sales/operating assets (x)	1.1	1.7	2.2	2.9	3.5	Net cash from financing	37	(142)	49	150	51
Current ratio (x)	2.1	2.1	2.8	2.5	2.2	Change in cash position	42	(23)	148	(51)	111
Debt-equity (x)	0.4	0.2	0.3	0.4	0.3	Closing cash	219	196	344	293	403
Net debt/equity (x)	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.2	Quarterly financials					
Interest coverage	3.4	4.3	9.6	8.0	6.9	(Rs mn)	Q4FY11	Q1FY12	Q2FY12	Q3FY12	Q4FY12
Per share						Net Sales	439	263	370	468	852
Adj EPS (Rs)	1.4	2.3	4.7	5.2	5.5	Change (q-o-q)	-20%	-40%	40%	27%	82%
CEPS	3.6	3.8	6.2	6.9	7.4	EBITDA	107	75	127	198	180
Book value	24.1	17.9	20.9	25.6	30.5	Change (q-o-q)	-40%	-30%	69%	56%	-9%
Dividend (Rs)	0.5	0.5	0.7	0.5	0.5	EBITDA margin	24%	29%	34%	42%	21%
Actual o/s shares (mn)	54.1	81.8	81.8	81.8	81.8	PAT	37	34	89	108	105
						Adj PAT	37	34	89	108	105
						Change (q-o-q)	-65%	-7%	162%	21%	-3%
						Adj PAT margin	8%	13%	24%	23%	12%
						Adj EPS	0.4	0.4	1.1	1.3	1.3

based on abridged financials

Source: CRISIL Research



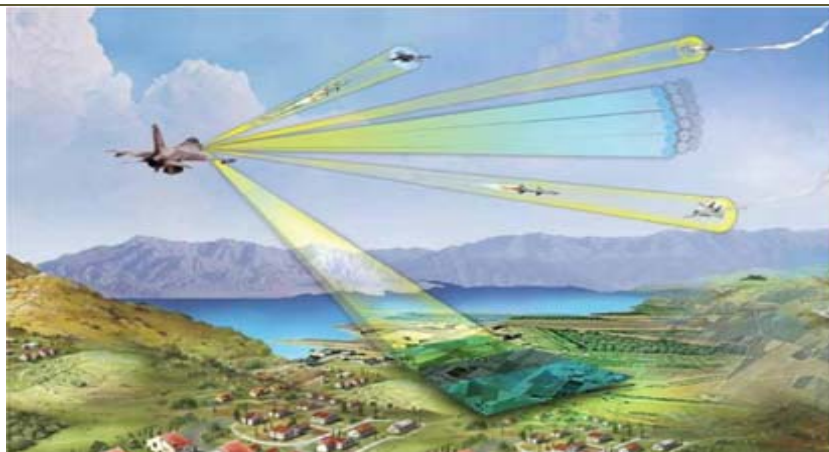
Annexure: Glossary of terms

AESA Radars

Astra in association with Centre For Airborne Systems (CABS) has successfully productionised T/R modules (transmit-receive multi module) – the basic building block of the AESA radar. This new technology has enabled traditional airborne radars with many revolutionary features. With the introduction of T/R module, the radars have gone through a sea change in terms of their functionality. AESA radars are relative more efficient than the mechanically steered radars.

An active electronically scanned array (AESA) is a type of phased array radar whose transmitter and receiver functions are composed of numerous small transmit/receive (T/R) modules. Each T/R module has its own transmitter, receiver, processing power, and a small radiator antenna on top. It can position its beam rapidly from one direction to another without mechanical movement of large antenna structures (like in mechanically steered radars). The T/R modules all work together to create a powerful radar, but they can do different tasks parallelly, with some operating together as a radar warning receiver, others operating together as a jammer, and the rest operating as a radar.

Multiple tracking by AESA radar



Source: CRISIL Research

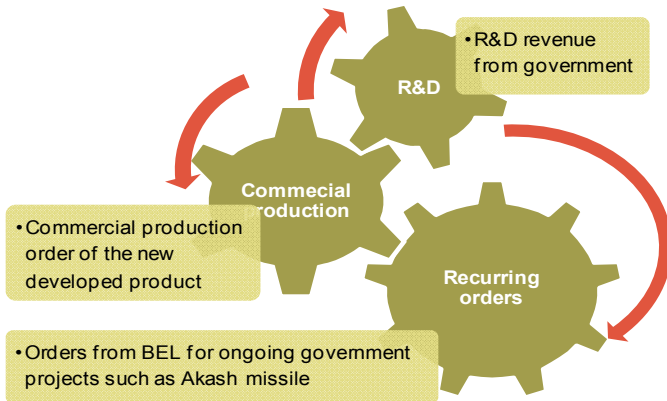
AESA radar is more efficient than the mechanically steered radars as 1) agile, rapid beam switching permits the AESA radar to track many targets simultaneously, and 2) transmitter power stage is distributed across hundreds or over a thousand T/R modules, rather than being concentrated in a single transmitter tube. Hence, failure of up to 10% of the T/R modules will not cause the loss of the antenna function, but merely degrade its performance.

Offset Clause

To achieve greater self-reliance in defence production, the Indian government has announced the offset policy as part of the defence procurement procedure (DPP) 2006. Under this, foreign vendors winning a defence contract above Rs 3 bn are obliged to source at least 30% of the contract value from India. This offset obligation is like a current account which can be discharged against the same or other orders.

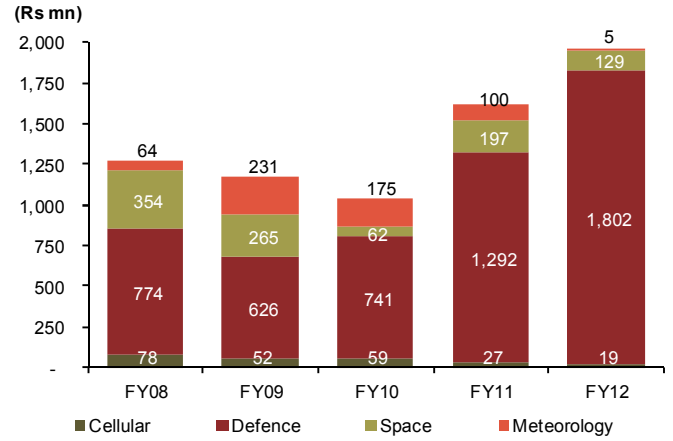
Focus Charts

Revenue drivers



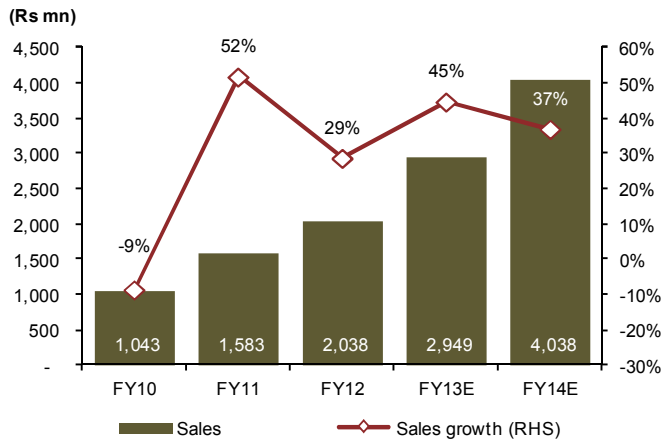
Source: Company, CRISIL Research

Revenue and segmental contribution trend



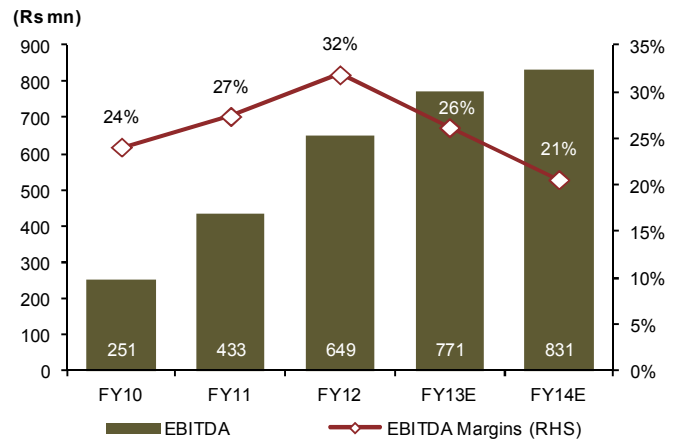
Source: Company, CRISIL Research

Order book execution will drive sales growth



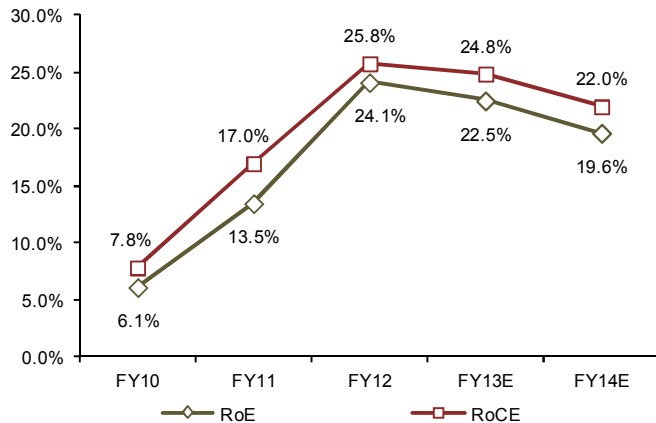
Source: Company, CRISIL Research

Margin to contract due to execution of low margin orders



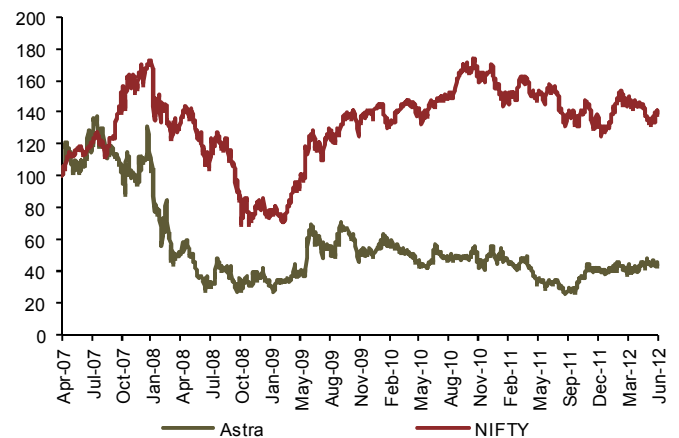
Source: Company, CRISIL Research

RoE and RoCE to improve



Source: Company, CRISIL Research

Share price movement



-Indexed to 100

Source: Company, CRISIL Research

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Our Capabilities

Making Markets Function Better

Economy and Industry Research

- Largest team of economy and industry research analysts in India
- Coverage on 70 industries and 139 sub-sectors; provide growth forecasts, profitability analysis, emerging trends, expected investments, industry structure and regulatory frameworks
- 90 per cent of India's commercial banks use our industry research for credit decisions
- Special coverage on key growth sectors including real estate, infrastructure, logistics, and financial services
- Inputs to India's leading corporates in market sizing, demand forecasting, and project feasibility
- Published the first India-focused report on Ultra High Net-worth Individuals
- All opinions and forecasts reviewed by a highly qualified panel with over 200 years of cumulative experience
- Largest independent equity research house in India, focusing on small and mid-cap companies; coverage exceeds 100 companies
- Released company reports on all 1,401 companies listed and traded on the National Stock Exchange; a global first for any stock exchange
- First research house to release exchange-commissioned equity research reports in India

Funds and Fixed Income Research

- Largest and most comprehensive database on India's debt market, covering more than 14,000 securities
- Largest provider of fixed income valuations in India
- Value more than Rs.33 trillion (USD 650 billion) of Indian debt securities, comprising 85 per cent of outstanding securities
- Sole provider of fixed income and hybrid indices to mutual funds and insurance companies; we maintain 12 standard indices and over 80 customised indices
- Ranking of Indian mutual fund schemes covering 73 per cent of assets under management and Rs.5 trillion (USD100 billion) by value
- Retained by India's Employees' Provident Fund Organisation, the world's largest retirement scheme covering over 50 million individuals, for selecting fund managers and monitoring their performance

Equity and Company Research

- Largest independent equity research house in India, focusing on small and mid-cap companies; coverage exceeds 100 companies
- Released company reports on all 1,401 companies listed and traded on the National Stock Exchange; a global first for any stock exchange
- First research house to release exchange-commissioned equity research reports in India
- Assigned the first IPO grade in India

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