

# **Equities**

18 January 2011 | 12 pages

# **AXIS Bank (AXBK.BO)**

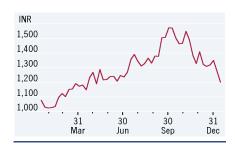
# Upgrade to Buy: Reasonable Valuation, Healthy Business Outlook

- Upgrade to Buy: Attractive valuations for a strong operating franchise We are upgrading Axis to Buy (1L) with a revised EVA based target price of Rs1,510, benchmarked off 2.75x FY12E P/BV (3x earlier). While the business growth and momentum remains unchanged (and robust); we reduce our benchmark valuation multiples to account for currently higher market risks and its own elevated business risks (high growth, peak margins and a recent acquisition). However, we believe the recent sharp stock price correction (down 23% in 3 months) appears to be pricing in significantly higher stock risks/ weaker economy. The stock is trading at 2.3x P/BV and should offer reasonable returns over the medium term.
- 3Q11 profits up 36% yoy; slightly above our estimates 3Q11 profits grew 36% yoy (3% above our estimates) driven by a sharp jump in loan growth, surprise NIM expansion and stabilization in asset quality. The business momentum remains robust, and while there could be some moderation in loan growth, margins and fees, there appears to be ample P&L cushion to absorb these.
- P&L: NIM surprise on upsides, fee growth revives Axis' NIMs increased 12bps qoq a surprise given the increasing funding costs. Management has guided to a 15-20bps decline in 4Q11, but it will still remain at the higher end of its medium term NIM band of 340-360bps. Fee growth accelerated (to 21% yoy) after a couple of sluggish quarters and operating cost levels seem to have stabilized and should remain at current levels. Strong quarter, but likely too good to sustain.
- Balance Sheet: High growth but funding seems to be fine Loan growth accelerated to 46% yoy (+12% qoq) and even after adjusting for one-offs (Rs25bn for govt sponsored mortgage applications) still remains well above industry and own guidance levels could lead to higher asset risks medium term. Funding however, remains good as ever mix is even improving slightly. Overall, we believe Axis' franchise remains undiminished, fundamentals remain strong and operating momentum healthy. Recent stock correction provides opportunity to Buy.

- Company Update
- Rating Change
- Target Price Change
- Estimate Change

1L
Rs1,227.55
Rs1,510.00
23.0%
1.3%
24.3%
Rs503,173M
US\$11,092M

# Price Performance (RIC: AXBK.BO, BB: AXSB IN)



#### Statistical Abstract

Year to	Net Profit	Diluted EPS	EPS growth	P/E	P/B	ROE	Yield
31 Mar	(RsM)	(Rs)	(%)	(x)	(x)	(%)	(%)
2009A	18,154	48.84	50.9	25.1	4.3	19.1	1.0
2010A	25,145	63.51	30.0	19.3	3.1	19.2	1.1
2011E	32,911	81.23	27.9	15.1	2.7	18.9	1.2
2012E	40,129	94.21	16.0	13.0	2.3	19.5	1.3
2013E	48,167	114.96	22.0	10.7	1.9	19.7	1.4

Source: Powered by dataCentral

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See Appendix A-1 for Analyst Certification, Important Disclosures and non-US research analyst disclosures.

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Fiscal year end 31-Mar	2009	2010	2011E	2012E	2013E
Valuation Ratios					
P/E adjusted (x)	25.1	19.3	15.1	13.0	10.7
P/E reported (x)	25.1	19.3	15.1	13.0	10.7
P/BV (x)	4.3	3.1	2.7	2.3	1.9
P/Adjusted BV diluted (x)	4.5	3.2	2.7	2.3	1.9
Dividend yield (%)	1.0	1.1	1.2	1.3	1.4
Per Share Data (Rs)					
EPS adjusted	48.84	63.51	81.23	94.21	114.96
EPS reported	48.84	63.51	81.23	94.21	114.96
BVPS	284.50	395.99	462.22	533.22	631.18
Tangible BVPS	284.50	395.99	462.22	533.22	631.18
Adjusted BVPS diluted	273.93	382.90	462.22	533.22	631.14
DPS	11.71	14.01	15.00	16.00	17.00
Profit & Loss (RsM)					
Net interest income	36,862	50,045	66,955	76,788	91,405
Fees and commissions	21,733	25,652	30,269	39,350	48,794
Other operating Income	7,236	13,806	13,664	14,196	17,045
Total operating income	65,831	89,503	110,888	130,334	157,245
Total operating expenses	-28,582	-37,097	-47,130	-58,603	-70,491
Oper. profit bef. provisions	37,249	52,406	63,758	71,732	86,754
Bad debt provisions	-9,032	-14,126	-12,643	-10,631	-13,475
Non-operating/exceptionals	-362	234	-1,250	-300	-299
Pre-tax profit	27,855	38,514	49,866	60,801	72,979
Tax	-9,701	-13,368	-16,954	-20,672	-24,813
Extraord./Min. Int./Pref. Div.	0	0	0	0	0
Attributable profit	18,154	25,145	32,911	40,129	48,167
Adjusted earnings	18,154	25,145	32,911	40,129	48,167
Growth Rates (%)	-, -	-,	- ,-	-,	-, -
EPS adjusted	50.9	30.0	27.9	16.0	22.0
Oper. profit bef. prov.	67.3	40.7	21.7	12.5	20.9
Balance Sheet (RsM)					
Total assets	1,477,220	1,806,479	2,225,513	2,669,815	3,200,750
Avg interest earning assets	1,204,744	1,556,187	1,928,894	2,352,373	2,827,368
Customer loans	821,274	1,052,421	1,313,584	1,613,290	1,981,485
Gross NPLs	8,978	13,180	18,574	24,613	30,596
Liab. & shar. funds	1,477,220	1,806,479	2,225,513	2,669,815	3,200,750
Total customer deposits	1,173,741	1,413,002	1,766,253	2,131,858	2,574,949
•		8,990			
Reserve for loan losses Shareholders' equity	5,706 <b>102,136</b>	1 <b>60,446</b>	17,128 <b>187,280</b>	21,003 <b>223,405</b>	25,640 <b>264,448</b>
Profitability/Solvency Ratios (%		100,440	107,200	223,403	204,440
• • •	•	10.0	10.0	10.5	10.7
ROE adjusted	19.1	19.2	18.9	19.5	19.7
Net interest margin	3.06	3.22	3.47	3.26	3.23
Cost/income ratio	43.4	41.4	42.5	45.0	44.8
Cash cost/average assets	2.2	2.3	2.3	2.4	2.4
NPLs/customer loans	1.1	1.3	1.4	1.5	1.5
Reserve for loan losses/NPLs	63.6	68.2	92.2	85.3	83.8
Bad debt prov./avg. cust. loans	1.3	1.5	1.1	0.7	0.7
Loans/deposit ratio	70.0	74.5	74.4	75.7	77.0
Tier 1 capital ratio	9.3	11.2	10.0	9.7	9.3
Total capital ratio	13.7	15.8	15.2	14.9	14.3

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Figure 1. Axis Bank: 3Q11 Results -- Key Highlights (Rupees Million, Percent)

	3Q11	3Q10	YoY %	2Q11	QoQ%	CIRA Comments
Interest Income	38,383	28,837	33.1	36,243	5.9	
Interest Expense	(21,052)	(15,345)	37.2	(20,092)	4.8	
Net Interest Income	17,331	13,491	28.5	16,151	7.3	Driven by strong loan growth and NIM expansion by 12bps qoq
Fee-Based Income	10,127	8,185	23.7	9,248	9.5	Healthy growth and above our expectations - seem to be driven by the high loan growth as well
Other Non-Interest Income	1,350	1,696	-20.4	1,084	24.5	Largely stable despite the volatile yield environment
Non Interest Income	11,477	9,881	16.2	10,332	11.1	
Operating Income	28,808	23,372	23.3	26,483	8.8	
Operating Expenses	(12,224)	(9,626)	27.0	(11,620)	5.2	Higher than our estimates - will likely remain on the higher side as bank continues to focus on network expansion
Pre-Provision Profit	16,585	13,746	20.6	14,864	11.6	
Charges for Bad Debts	(3,285)	(3,600)	-8.8	(3,210)	2.3	Largely stable and in-line with estimates; trend should continue for the fiscal
Other Operating Items	146	(131)	NM	(578)	NM	
Operating Profit	13,446	10,015	34.3	11,076	21.4	
Tax	(4,532)	(3,455)	31.2	(3,725)	21.7	
Net Profit	8,914	6,560	35.9	7,351	21.3	Overall a well rounded quarter with strong loan growth, margins and stable asset quality
Customer Loans	1,235,470	847,699	45.7	1,105,928	11.7	Sharp jump in loan growth - some one-offs (Rs25bn) during the quarter; but quite sharp (+9.4% qoq) even excluding this. Management ups loan growth guidance to 28-30% for FY11E
Customer Deposits	1,558,106	1,138,532	36.9	1,568,871	-0.7	Deposit growth negative QoQ but on average daily balance basis, deposits are up 3% qoq - CASA deposits also up 2% qoq on average daily balances
AIEA	1,821,364	1,349,159	35.0	1,754,079	3.8	dully buildinoss
AIBL	1,786,696	1,298,636	37.6	1,715,136	4.2	
Total Assets	2,067,058	1,504,560	37.4	1,998,331	3.4	
Avg Assets	2,185,147	1,510,848	44.6	2,014,587	8.5	
Non-Performing Loans (NPL)	14,829	11,735	26.4	13,624	8.8	Stable asset quality, with sequentially lower slippages (1.6% annualized) and higher coverage (82.7%), management guides to stabilization of asset quality at current levels
Loan Loss Reserves (LLR)	(10,974)	(7,440)	47.5	(9,530)	15.1	Build up of provisioning coverage - adds to asset quality comfort
Shareholders' Funds	186,224	157,970	17.9	176.822	5.3	
Book Value Per Share	454	391	16.1	432	5.0	
Key Ratios (%)	3Q11	3Q10	Bps Δ YoY	2Q11	Bps Δ Qo0	3
ROAA (annualized)	1.63	1.45	18	1.46	17	
ROAE (annualized)	19.15	16.61	254	16.63	252	
Net Interest Margin (bps)	381	400	-19	368	12	Key positive surprise despite uptick in funding costs; Management guides to a possible 15-20bps margins downside for 4Q11
Fee Inc/Operating Income	35.2	35.0	13	34.9	23	Fee income levels continue to remain stable
Other Non-Interest Inc/Op Inc	39.8	42.3	-244	39.0	82	
Op. Cost/ Operating Income	42.4	41.2	125	43.9	-145	Operating costs likely to remain high as management focuses on distribution expansion
Loan-to-Deposit Ratio (LDR)	79.3	74.5	484	70.5	880	Despite sharp jump, average CD ratio was 73% in 3Q11, marginally higher than 72% in 2Q11
NPL/Loan Ratio	1.2	1.4	-18	1.23	-3	
LLR/NPL Ratio	74	63	1,060	70	405	Inclusive of Technical write-offs, coverage was strong at 82.7%
CAPAD	12.46	16.80	-434	13.68	-122	

Source: Company Reports and CIRA

Figure 2. Axis Bank: 3Q11 Deposit and Loan Profile (Rupees Million, Percent)

Deposit Profile	3Q11	3Q10	YoY %	2Q11	QoQ%
Savings	391,320	296,280	32.1	378,120	3.5
Current	267,990	222,810	20.3	273,740	-2.1
Low Cost Deposits	659,310	519,090	27.0	651,860	1.1
Term	898,800	619,440	45.1	917,010	-2.0
Total Deposits	1,558,110	1,138,530	36.9	1,568,870	-0.7
% CASA	42.3	45.6	-327.8	41.5	1.8

Loan Mix	3Q11	3Q10	YoY %	2Q11	QoQ%
Corporate	705,180	415,999	69.5	608,260	15.9
SME	170,530	155,820	9.4	168,120	1.4
Agricultural	107,720	86,880	24.0	90,730	18.7
Retail	252,040	189,000	33.4	210,010	20.0
Total Advances	1,235,470	847,699	45.7	1,077,120	14.7

Source: Company Reports

Figure 3. Fee Income and Fee Income Growth (Rsm, %YoY)

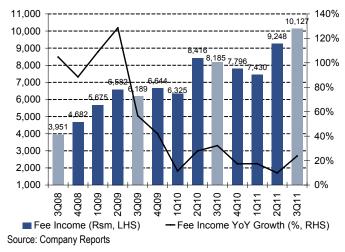


Figure 5. Loans Restructured in 3QFY11 - Portfolio Break-up (%)

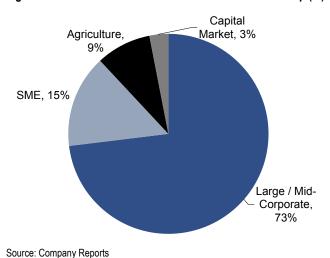


Figure 4. Operating Expenses and Growth (Rsm, % YoY)

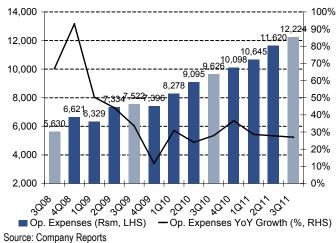
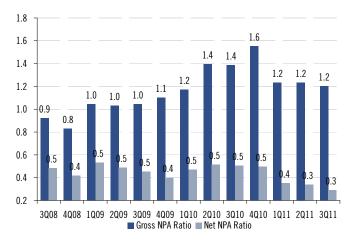


Figure 6. Gross NPA and Net NPA Ratios (%)



Source: Company Reports

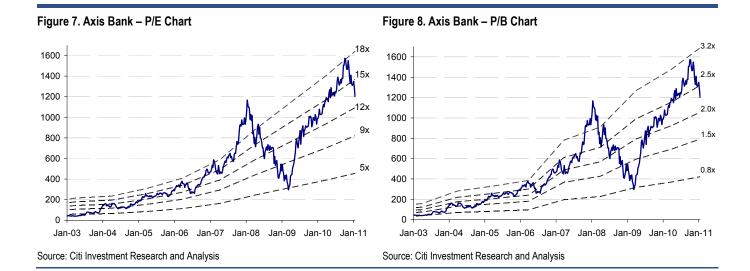


Figure 9. Earnings Revision Summary

	<u></u>	Net Profit		EPS*			DPS		
	Old	New	% change	Old	New	% change	Old	New	% change
FY11E	32,726	32,911	0.6	78.1	78.5	0.6	15.0	15.0	0.0
FY12E	39,523	40,129	1.5	94.3	94.2	-0.1	16.0	16.0	0.0
FY13E	46,516	48,166	3.5	111.0	111.3	0.2	17.0	17.0	0.0

<sup>\*</sup> EPS data calculated on year-end share count

Source: Citi Investment Research and Analysis estimates

18 January 2011

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Data as of: 14-Jan-11

#### **Radar Screen Quadrant Definitions**

Glamor Poor relative value but superior relative momentum	Attractive Superior relative value and superior relative momentum
Unattractive  Poor relative value and poor relative momentum	Contrarian Superior relative value but poor relative momentum

# **Quants View - Unattractive**

Axis Bank currently lies in the Unattractive quadrant of our Value-Momentum map with weak momentum and weak value scores. The stock has moved from the Glamour quadrant to the Unattractive quadrant in the past 3 months indicating a fall in momentum along with valuations remaining weak. Compared to its peers in the Banks sector, Axis Bank fares worse on the valuation metric and on the momentum metric. On the other hand, compared to its peers in its home market of India, Axis Bank fares better on the valuation metric but worse on the momentum metric.

From a macro perspective, Axis Bank has a high Beta to the region so is likely to rise (or fall) faster than the region. It is also likely to benefit from Value outperformance, falling Commodity (ex-oil) prices, and a weaker US dollar.

Figure 10. Radar Quadrant Chart History

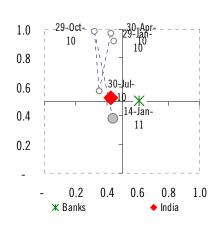
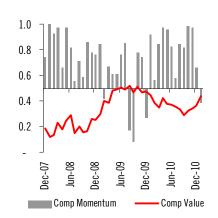


Figure 11. Radar Valuation and Momentum Scores



Source: CIRA Source: CIRA

Figure 12. Radar Model Inputs

### IBES EPS (Actual and Estimates)

FY(-2)	31.80	Implied Trend Growth (%)	24.84
FY(-1)	50.68	Trailing PE (x)	18.53
FY0	63.38	Implied Cost of Debt (%)	6.93
FY1	78.41	Standardised MCap	0.63
EV2	QR 01		

Note: Standardised MCap calculated as a Z score - (mkt cap - mean)/std dev - capped at 3

Source: Citi Investment Research and Analysis, Worldscope, I/B/E/S

#### Figure 13. Stock Performance Sensitivity to Key Macro Factors

Region	1.69	Commodity ex Oil	(0.66)
Local Market	1.34	Rising Oil Prices	0.01
Sector	1.51	Rising Asian IR's	0.10
Growth Outperforms Value	(1.07)	Rising EM Yields	(0.23)
Small Caps Outperform Large Caps	0.62	Weaker US\$ (vs Asia)	3.61
Widening US Credit Spreads	0.02	Weaker ¥ (vs US\$)	0.16
Source: Citi Investment Research and Analysis			

### **AXIS Bank**

#### **Valuation**

Our target price of Rs1,510 is based on an EVA model using the following key assumptions: a) risk-free rate of 8.0%, b) long-term loan loss of 120bps per annum (higher than sector averages, due to greater lumpiness in its loan book growth), and c) long-term cost-to-income ratio of 42%. We prefer using an EVA-based valuation benchmark to P/BV because EVA concentrates on the economic value creation of the bank. We use P/BV as a secondary valuation methodology. Believing that Axis should trade above government banks and in line with the highest multiples for large private-sector banks given its ROE, we ascribe 2.75x FY12E P/B to Axis, equating to Rs1,465.

#### **Risks**

We rate Axis Bank as Low Risk, in line with our quantitative risk-rating system, and to reflect the bank's well diversified loan portfolio and relatively healthy asset quality, along with its sustained high profitability. Key downside risks to achieving our target price include: 1) Greater-than-expected asset quality pressures, as Axis has grown rapidly; 2) Sharp slowdown in rapidly growing fee income; 3) The bank's large share of wholesale funding could be exposed to tighter funding; 4) Dependence on treasury returns; 5) A government-related entity is a dominant shareholder in Axis; any disorderly sale would have an impact on the stock.

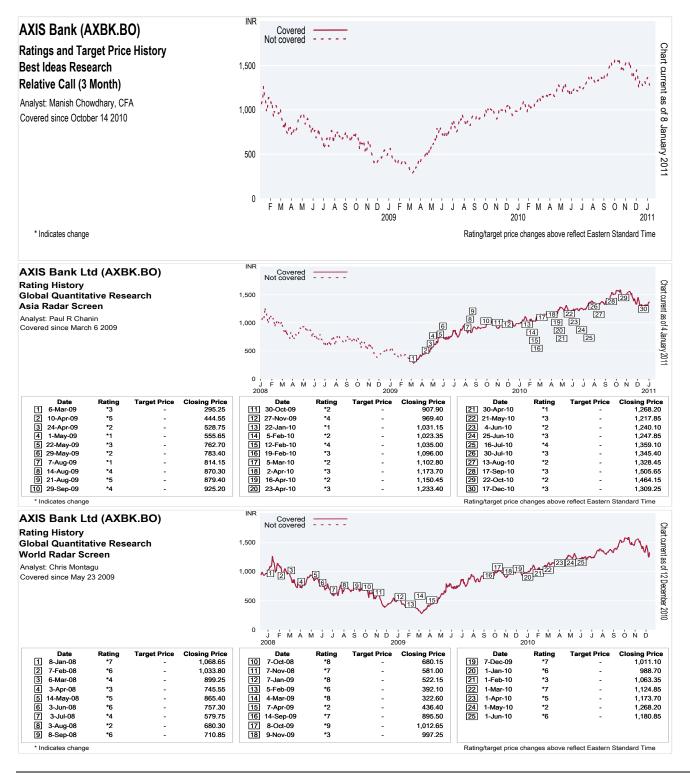
# **Appendix A-1**

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	12 Wonth Rating				Relative Rating			
Data current as of 31 Dec 2010	Buy	Hold	Sell	Buy	Hold	Sell		
Citi Investment Research & Analysis Global Fundamental Coverage	52%	37%	11%	0%	100%	0%		
% of companies in each rating category that are investment banking clients	45%	44%	40%	0%	44%	0%		
Citi Investment Research & Analysis Quantitative World Radar Screen Model Coverage	30%	40%	30%					
% of companies in each rating category that are investment banking clients	24%	23%	19%					
Citi Investment Research & Analysis Quantitative Decision Tree Model Coverage	45%	0%	55%					
% of companies in each rating category that are investment banking clients	55%	0%	50%					
Citi Investment Research & Analysis Asia Quantitative Radar Screen Model Coverage	20%	60%	20%					
% of companies in each rating category that are investment banking clients	23%	20%	20%					
Citi Investment Research & Analysis Australia Radar Model Coverage	51%	0%	49%					
% of companies in each rating category that are investment banking clients	30%	0%	15%					

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To satisfy regulatory requirements, we correspond Under Review to Hold in our ratings distribution table for our 12-month fundamental rating system. However, we reiterate that we do not consider Under Review to be a recommendation.

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