# Sonata Software (SONSOF)

CMP: ₹ 940 Target: ₹ 1095 (16%)

Target Period: 12 months

May 17, 2023

# Growth momentum likely to sustain in FY24...

**About the stock:** Sonata Software (Sonata) offers IT services (26% of mix) and product licensing & deployment (74% of mix) in FY23.

- The company provides IT services to travel, retail, agri & commodities and manufacturing and software vendors
- Net debt free and healthy double digit return ratio (with RoCE of >30%)

#### Q4FY23 Results: Sonata continues to report strong revenue growth in Q4

- IT services dollar revenues in CC terms grew 8% QoQ & on organic basis grew 4.1% QoQ
- Normalised EBITDA margins in IT services excluding one-time expenses & other income grew 10 bps QoQ to 23.9%
- Won three large deals including its largest ever deal with TCV of US\$160 mn

What should investors do? Sonata's share price has grown by  $\sim$ 3.3x over the past five years (from  $\sim$ ₹ 262 in May 2018 to  $\sim$ ₹ 940 levels in May 2023).

• We maintain our **BUY** rating on the stock

Target Price and Valuation: We value Sonata at ₹ 1095 i.e. 22x P/E on FY25E EPS.

## Key triggers for future price performance:

- Integration of Quant systems along with strong organic growth likely to bring in strong growth momentum
- Strong digital capabilities helping it to accelerate digital revenue growth enhancing digital revenue mix i.e. 73% of mix now vs. 68% a year ago
- Upgrades in Microsoft Dynamics and tapping Fortune 1000 clients in the medium to large category bode well for revenue growth
- Robust hiring trend, winning large deals prompt us to build IT service dollar revenue growth of over 26.9% CAGR over FY23-25E

## Alternate Stock Idea: Apart from Sonata, in our IT coverage we also like Infosys.

- Key beneficiary of improved digital demand, industry leading revenue growth and healthy capital allocation prompt us to be positive
- BUY with a target price of ₹ 1,600



**BUY** 



Particulars	
Particular	Amount
Market Capitalization (₹ Crore)	13,029.1
Total Debt(₹ Crore)	493.6
Cash and Investments (₹ Crore)	936.1
EV (₹ Crore)	12,586.6
52 week H/L	963 / 458
Equity capital	13.9
Face value	1.0

Shareholding pattern								
Jun-22 Sep-22 Dec-22 Mar-23								
Promoters	28	28	28	28				
FII	13	13	13	13				
DII	15	13	14	14				
Public	44	46	45	45				

### Price Chart (Adj. Bonus issue)



#### Recent event & key risks

- Acquired Quant Systems & won its largest ever deal of TCV US\$160 mn in Q4
- Key Risk: (i) Lower-thanexpected revenue growth ii) Lower than expected margins

#### **Research Analyst**

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## Key Financial Summary

(₹ Crore)	FY21	FY22	FY23	5 year CAGR (FY18-23)	FY24E	FY25E	2 year CAGR (FY23-25E)
Net Sales	4,228	5,553	7,449	24.9%	9,667	11,999	26.9%
EBITDA	379	464	604	21.2%	759	956	25.8%
EBITDA Margin (%)	9.0	8.4	8.1		7.9	8.0	
PAT	244	376	452	18.7%	537	691	23.7%
EPS (₹)	23.5	27.2	32.6		38.7	49.8	
P/E (x)	40	35	29		24	19	
RoNW (%)	26.9	34.2	34.7		35.4	38.6	
RoCE (%)	33.5	39.8	25.9		28.4	32.6	

# Key takeaways of recent quarter & conference call highlights

- IT services revenue grew 8% QoQ in CC terms with Quant contribution coming in at 3.9%. In dollar terms, the company reported revenue of US\$65.8 mn, up 8.8% QoQ. In rupee terms, the company reported a revenue of ₹ 533.5 crore, up 9% QoQ. Domestic product business declined 22% due to seasonality impact in Q4 and reported revenue of ₹ 1,383.4 crore. At consolidated level, Sonata reported revenue of ₹ 1,913.5 crore
- For IT services, Sonata reported EBITDA margin excluding other income of 20.7% in Q4 compared to 23.8% in Q3. The company mentioned that the margins of IT services declined 320 bps due to the following headwinds: i) salary increase impact ~100 bps, ii) one time M&A related costs -320 bps mitigated by the tailwinds of i) SG&A optimisation impact ~+55 bps & ii) Quant Systems higher margin impact ~+45bps. The company mentioned that excluding the above its EBITDA margin improved 10 bps QoQ to 23.9% in Q4
- In the domestic products business, the company reported 100 bps QoQ EBITDA margin improvement to 3.9% while in absolute terms the EBITDA came at ₹ 54 crore. At the consolidated level, Sonata reported EBITDA excluding other income of ₹ 151.6 crore with a corresponding EBITDA margin of 7.9%. The company reported a PAT of ₹ 113.8 crore while PAT margin came in at 5.9%. The company mentioned that excluding the one time acquisition cost, PAT came in at ₹ 126.8 crore
- Geography wise in IT services US region (52% of mix) grew 6.7% QoQ while Europe region (20% of mix) grew 8.8% QoQ. Vertical wise Retail & Manufacturing (42% of mix) grew 17.1% QoQ while BFSI & Healthcare reported QoQ growth of 24.3% & 32.9%, respectively. TMT vertical (31% of mix) reported muted growth of 2.2% QoQ due to slowdown in spending of couple of clients in hitech segment, which is included in TMT vertical
- For FY23, the company reported consolidated revenue of ₹ 7,449.1 crore, up 34.1% with IT services revenue coming at US\$240.9 mn, up 18.7%. In rupee terms, IT services revenue came in at ₹ 1,920.3 crore, up 28.6% while domestic product services came in at ₹ 5,540.3 crore, up 36.2%. The company mentioned that 75.8% of the domestic cloud business was contributed by annuity business. Consolidated EBITDA excluding other income for the company came in at ₹ 604.2 crore with corresponding EBITDA margin coming at 8.1%
- The company mentioned that it continues to make progress on the targets it had given in October 2022 when the new CEO had taken charge. The company reiterated its target of achieving US\$500 mn revenues in international IT services by FY26 and the building blocks of the same are i) large deal wins ii) Quant's integration iii) improving presence in BFSI and healthcare verticals. The company mentioned that it is looking to achieve that milestone (of US\$500 mn revenues) organically (Quant integration is already complete). The company mentioned that it may go for some small tuck in acquisitions in the journey, if required but it is not looking to acquire anything bigger for this target achievement
- The company mentioned that during the quarter, integration of Quant system (QS) is complete. Sonata acquired Quant Systems, a Texas based IT services company, which is specialised in Enterprise data & cloud capabilities in BFSI & Healthcare verticals, for total consideration of US\$160 mn (4.3x CY22 revenues). QS' revenue grew more than 4x in the last three years from US\$8 mn in CY20 to US\$37 mn in CY22. The company has an EBITDA margin profile of 35%+. As far as payment of US\$160 mn is concerned, the company mentioned that US\$65 mn will be paid upfront and US\$95 mn will be deferred achievement-based payout over the next two years. Sonata indicated that for CY23 & CY24 QS' revenue is expected to grow 30-35% and EBITDA margin is expected to be in range of 30-35%. The

company mentioned that Quant System is helping the company win deals in the enterprise data and data privacy side

- The company mentioned that its large deal momentum continues as it won three large deals in Q4 on the base of two large deals in Q2 and four large deals it won in Q3 FY23. 1) Sonata won one of its largest deal of US\$160 mn with a client having strong private equity backing. It is a 10 year deal with a client in retail & finance vertical having US\$1.5 bn revenues. The company mentioned that pressure points for the client were legacy tech stack, high cost of IT operations, lack of standardisation. The company mentioned that revenue flow from this deal is likely to be in linear in nature and deal execution will start in H1FY24 while deal ramp up is likely to be from H2FY24 onwards. 2) The company also won multiyear deal with a leading network provider for its IT stock modernisation as well as cost efficiency tools. 3) it won a multi-year deal with a manufacturing company outside US. The company mentioned that in the pipeline as well as deals it is winning, 70-80% are transformation deals while rest are cost optimisation deals
- The company mentioned that unlike its peers, apart from some client specific issues at Hi-Tech vertical (25-30% of Hi-tech vertical), it is not witnessing any issue as far as other verticals are concerned. The company mentioned that in the BFSI space there facing some issues in few pockets but the company is focused on consumer banking space, data privacy and in regulatory space where the demand continues to be robust. The company also mentioned that TMT vertical growth rates may have moderated but they are not witnessing any major issue there. Overall, the company is seeing strong order wins in all verticals except Hi-Tech
- As far as EBITDA margins in IT services is concerned, the company mentioned as indicated in the earlier quarter, it is planning to invest back 150-200bps of margin for the revenue acceleration and hence margins likely to have an impact of similar numbers in FY24. The company is now targeting 20%+ EBITDA margins for FY24. The company mentioned that it is planning to give wage hike (only to senior leaders in Q1FY24), which is almost 50% of the hike they have given in Q4FY23. The company also mentioned that it is not planning to give any 'out of the cycle wage hike' to any other employees this year on account of supply side easing. The company also mentioned that its domestic product business margin is not comparable to its international IT services. The company called out following levers for margin improvement in domestic business: i) involvement of the company product implementation where it can command better margin ii) enhancing competency to make sure the company is involved into areas when it promotes their products
- The company mentioned that it is excited about generative AI and continues to make inroads here. Sonata added that it won its first contract in this space where the company is looking to take care of modernising productivity requirement of the client. The company indicated that there would be an incremental cost of ₹ 23 crore every quarter starting from Q1FY24 on account of i) amortisation impact of ₹ 9.5 crore on Quant acquisition ii) ₹ 5 crore which is interest for the loan they have taken for Quant acquisition & iii) ₹ 8.5 crore related to interest on deferred payment consideration. The company mentioned that interest related cost will come down as it plans to repay the loan in 12-15 months and deferred payments will start from January 2024
- The company mentioned that it added 15 new clients during the quarter bringing the total clients it added during the year to 57. Sonata mentioned that its revenue from top 10, top 20 clients increased 6.8% & 8.8% QoQ, respectively
- The company mentioned that it added six, three & three clients, respectively
  to its client's revenue mix of 1-3 mn, 3-5 mn & 5+ mn, respectively, during
  the quarter. The company mentioned that QS acquisition helped the

company to add four, three and two clients to 1-3 mn, 3-5 mn & 5+mn, respectively

- The company indicated that it added 707 net employees including 140 freshers in IT services business. The company net additions excluding QS employees was 409. The company mentioned as on March 2023 it had total employee of 6,429 in both IT services & domestic product business. The company mentioned that due to easing of supply side challenges the attrition is also moderating. The company mentioned that its attrition during the quarter declined to 12%. The company's utilization during the quarter improved by 220 bps QoQ to 86.4%
- The company informed that it has appointed Suresh HP as the Chief Delivery
  Officer. He was last associated with LTIMindtree and has over 30 years of
  experience across companies like Infosys, Motorola & Mindtree. The
  company informed that his appointment is a strategic decision as the
  company wants to enhance its capability of winning & delivering the large
  deals
- The company declared final dividend of ₹ 8.75 per share during the quarter taking the total dividend for FY23 to ₹ 15.75 per share

Exhibit 1: P&L	O4EV22	04EV22	V-V (0/)	OaEVaa	0-0 (%)	Commando
	Q4FY23	Q4FY22	YoY (%)	Q3FY22	QoQ (%)	Comments
Revenue	1,914	1,464	30.7	2,261	(15.4) II Q	「services grew by 8% QoQ in CC terms with organic growth of 4.1% toQ. Domestic product services declined by 22% QoQ
Employee expenses	257	205	25.1	240	7.1	
Purchase of stock-in trade & other	1,361	1,036	31.3	1,755	(22.5)	
Gross Margin	296	222	33.2	266	11.4	
Gross margin (%)	15.5	15.2	28 bps	11.7	372 bps	
Other expenses	144	114	26.5	109	32.1	
EBITDA	152	108	40.2	156	(3.0)	
EBITDA Margin (%)	7.9	7.4	54 bps	6.9	to 101 bps or Si	If services EBITDA margin declined by $\sim$ 315 bps QoQ to 20.7% due to the following headwinds: i) salary increase impact $\sim$ 100 bps, ii) ne time M&A related costs -320 bps mitigated by the tailwinds of i) G&A optimization impact $\sim$ +55 bps & ii) Quant Systems higher nargin impact $\sim$ +45bps
Depreciation & amortisation	19	13	44.8	14	38.9	
EBIT	133	95	39.6	143	(7.0)	
EBIT Margin (%)	6.9	6.5	44 bps	6.3	62 bps	
Other income (less interest)	18	41	(56.4)	13	40.2	
PBT	150	136	10.8	155	(3.1)	
Tax paid	37	35	5.1	38	(2.6)	
PAT	114	101	12.8	118	(3.3)	

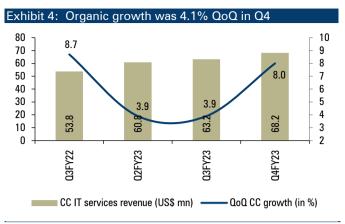
Source: Company, ICICI Direct Research

Exhibit 2: Change	in estima	tes					
		FY24E		FY25E			Comments
(₹ Crore)	Old	New %	Change	Old	New	% Change	
Revenue	8,336	9,667	16.0	9,311	11,999	28.9	Growth momentum in both IT services and domestic product business likely to sustain, as guided by management
EBITDA	798	759	-4.9	951	956	0.5	
EBITDA Margin (%)	9.6	7.9	-172 bps	10.2	8.0	-225 bps	margins trimmed due to continued investments and as per management guidance
PAT	544	537	-1.3	655	691	5.6	
EPS (₹)	38.8	38.7	-1.3	46.7	49.8	5.6	

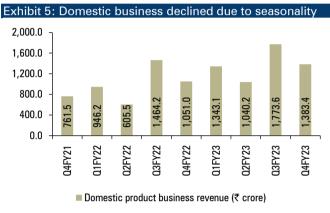
## **Key Metrics**



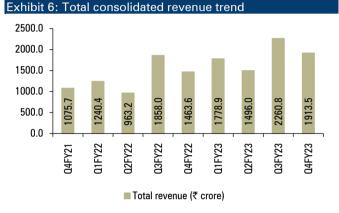
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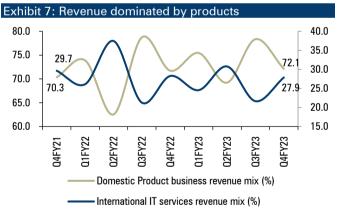
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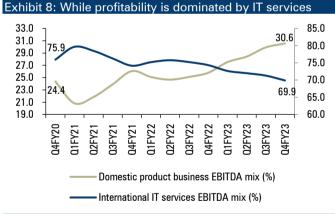
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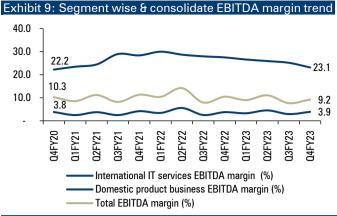


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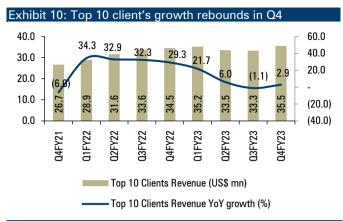


Source: Company, ICICI Direct Research





Source: Company, ICICI Direct Research



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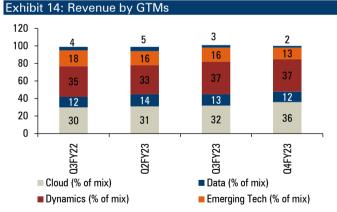
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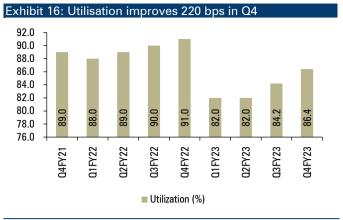
Source: Company, ICICI Direct Research



Source: Company, ICICI Direct Research







Source: Company, ICICI Direct Research

# Financial summary

Exhibit 17: Profit and loss statement ₹ cro						
(Year-end March)	FY22	FY23	FY24E	FY25E		
Total Revenues	5,553	7,449	9,667	11,999		
Growth (%)	31.3	34.1	29.8	24.1		
Total Operating Expenditure	5,090	6,845	8,908	11,043		
EBITDA	464	604	759	956		
Growth (%)	22.2	30.3	25.7	25.9		
Depreciation & Amortization	47	59	97	96		
Other Income	102	71	75	78		
Interest costs	18	19	40	40		
PBT before Exceptional Items	500	597	698	898		
Growth (%)	42.1	19.4	16.8	28.7		
Tax	124	145	160	207		
PAT before Exceptional Items	376	452	537	691		
Exceptional items	-	-	-	-		
PAT before MI	376	452	537	691		
Minority Int & Pft. from associates	-	-	-	-		
PAT	376	452	537	691		
Growth (%)	54	20	19	29		
EPS	27.2	32.6	38.7	49.8		
EPS (Growth %)	16	20	19	29		

Source: Company, ICICI Direct Research

Exhibit 18: Cash flow staten	nent			₹ crore
(Year-end March)	FY22	FY23	FY24E	FY25E
Net profit before Tax	500	597	698	898
Depreciation & Amortization	47	59	97	96
WC changes	100	(177)	90	94
Other non cash adju.	(6)	(36)	(35)	(38)
Income taxes paid	(156)	(175)	(160)	(207)
CF from operations	486	268	689	844
Capital expenditure	(10)	(41)	(34)	(42)
$\Delta$ in investments	(126)	(852)	-	-
Other investing cash flow	17	38	75	78
CF from investing Activities	(119)	(855)	41	36
Issue of equity				
$\Delta$ in debt funds/lease liablities	(81)	421	(24)	(24)
Dividends paid	(187)	(232)	(322)	(415)
Other financing cash flow	(3)	(2)	(40)	(40)
<b>CF from Financial Activities</b>	(271)	187	(386)	(479)
$\boldsymbol{\Delta}$ in cash and cash bank balance	96	(400)	343	401
Effect of exchange rate changes	(3)	(4)	-	-
Opening cash	641	770	730	1,074
Closing cash	770	730	1,074	1,475

Source: Company, ICICI Direct Research

Exhibit 19: Balance sheet				₹ crore
Year-end March)	FY22	FY23	FY24E	FY25E
Equity	10	14	14	14
Reserves & Surplus	1,089	1,287	1,502	1,778
Networth	1,099	1,301	1,516	1,792
Minority Interest	-	-	-	-
LT liabilties & provisions	166	588	588	588
Total Debt	38	494	494	494
Source of funds	1,303	2,382	2,597	2,873
Net fixed assets	206	635	596	566
Goodwill	221	1,098	1,098	1,098
Long term loans and advances	-	-	-	
Other non current assets	188	209	267	328
Loans and advances	-	-	-	
Inventories	3	29	37	46
Current Investments	145	206	206	206
Debtors	893	1,236	1,604	1,991
Cash & Cash equivalents	770	730	1,074	1,475
Other current assets	130	214	278	345
Current liabilities	1,223	1,944	2,523	3,131
Provisions	29	31	40	50
Net current assets	688	440	636	882
Application of funds	1,303	2,382	2,597	2,873

Source: Company, ICICI Direct Research

Exhibit 20: Key ratios				₹ crore
(Year-end March)	FY22	FY23	FY24E	FY25E
Per share data (₹)				
EPS-diluted	27.2	32.6	38.7	49.8
Cash per share	55.5	52.6	77.4	106.3
BV	79.3	93.8	109.3	129.2
DPS	21.0	15.8	23.2	29.9
Operating Ratios (%)				
EBITDA Margin	8.4	8.1	7.9	8.0
Adjusted PBT Margin	9.0	8.0	7.2	7.5
Adjusted PAT Margin	6.8	6.1	5.6	5.8
Return Ratios (%)				
RoNW	34.2	34.7	35.4	38.6
RoCE	39.8	25.9	28.4	32.6
RoIC	107.1	37.7	50.3	72.1
Valuation Ratios (x)				
P/E	34.6	28.9	24.3	18.9
EV / EBITDA	26.2	20.8	16.1	12.4
Price to Book Value	11.9	10.0	8.6	7.3
EV/Total Revenues	2.2	1.7	1.3	1.0
MCap/Total Revenues	2.3	1.7	1.3	1.1
Turnover Ratios				
Debtor days	59	61	61	61
Creditors days	69	63	63	63
Solvency Ratios				
Debt/EBITDA	0.1	0.8	0.6	0.5
Total Debt / Equity	0.0	0.4	0.3	0.3
Current Ratio	1.5	1.2	1.2	1.3
Quick Ratio	1.5	1.2	1.2	1.3
Debt / EBITDA	0.1	0.8	0.6	0.5

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Buy: >15%

Hold: -5% to 15%;

Reduce: -15% to -5%;

Sell: <-15%



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### ANALYST CERTIFICATION

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