"Galaxy Surfactants Limited Q1 FY19 Earnings Conference Call"

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Moderator: Ladies and gentlemen, good day and welcome to Galaxy Surfactants Limited Q1 FY19 Earnings Conference Call. This conference call may contain forward-looking statements about the company which are based on the belief, opinions and expectations of the company as on the date of this call. These statements are not the guarantees of future performance and involve risks and uncertainties that are difficult to predict. As a reminder, all participant lines will be in the listen-only mode, and there will be an opportunity for you to ask questions after the presentation concludes. Should you need assistance during the conference call, please signal an operator by pressing '*' then 'o' on your touchtone phone. I now hand the conference over to Mr. Shekhar – Promoter and Managing Director. Thank you and over to you, sir.

U. Shekhar: A very good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. It is indeed a pleasure to welcome you all for our third investor concall. I am accompanied on this call by Mr. G. Ramakrishnan – our Founder, Promoter and Director; Mr. Ganesh Kamath – our CFO and Executive Director and Mr. K. Natarajan—our COO and Executive Director.

Ladies and gentlemen, the quarter gone by was not a significant buoyancy across markets and demand across categories and geographies. The company continued to attain new heights and has started the year with optimism. Post healthy performance in FY'18, we have posted strong volume growth of 15% for Q1 FY'19. We have witnessed volume growth across both our product segments in line with our two-pronged strategy of growing across categories and markets.

Getting into segment-specific details: The Performance Surfactants as a category registered 12.5% growth in volumes, whereas our Speciality product segment gained significant traction registering 20% YoY growth in volumes. This was primarily on the back of a robust demand, gain in market share across markets and key strategic customer acquisitions. The India and AMET markets continue to register growth above the industry growth rate. The Indian market maintained its momentum growing at 14% on the back of a good FMCG industry performance in the country whereas AMET market grew by 6% despite macro headwinds. The rest of the world market was an outperformer for us growing at 35% YoY. This was on the back of a strong performance registered by ourSpeciality Care product segment.

Galaxy remains committed to volume growth, EBITDA growth and innovation. Our pillars of strength are the Four C's – Character, Competence, Competitiveness and Comfort. Our consumer to chemistry approach towards innovation, customer-first attitude and sustainability having the cornerstones of growth all these years and shall ensure the same going ahead.

To conclude, ladies and gentlemen, the first quarter has set the tone and we remain confident of maintaining the Q1 momentum in the ensuing quarters.

Now, I would like to hand over the mic to Mr. Ganesh Kamath – our CFO and Executive Director.

Ganesh Kamath: Colleagues, against a volume growth of 15%, we had EBITDA growth of 21.2%. The EBITDA margins were at 12.2%. Now, if we compare with previous year exchange rate, it was INR 64.4 to a dollar. For this quarter, it is 66.96. Therefore in exports from India where the conversion is from dollar to INR, we had an estimated benefit of Rs. 1.5 crores which has flown into the EBITDA of GSL India. PAT stood at Rs.45.7 crores which gave a healthy growth of 27.5%. Therefore, the matrix in terms of volume growth to EBITDA growth to PAT growth has been in line with whatever we have been telling on the business model till now**.**

From now, we can take on to the questions.

Moderator: Thank you very much. Ladies and gentlemen, we will now begin the question-and-answer session. We will take the first question from the line of Sanjesh Jain from ICICI Securities. Please go ahead.

Sanjesh Jain: A couple of questions from my side. First, on the AMET market, what is the Turkey contribution to our overall AMET revenue? What is our assessment in terms of impact of Turkey Lira depreciation which has happened over last week?

K. Natarajan: This is Natarajan here. Turkey volumes are about 7% of our overall volumes and we did not see any impact of this in the first quarter result. But what has happened in the last week, we do see some headwinds in terms of way the currency has depreciated. We are well prepared to place in the event that we have any risk fructifying in terms of volume degrowth in Turkey, we are well prepared to place those volumes in the other markets in Africa, Middle East.

Sanjesh Jain: BASF is placed out of Turkey, right, so the competition is there in AMET market. So, should we look at this as an opportunity for you to grab the other market or do you see BASF being more aggressive on the remaining market of Africa and Middle East? How should the scenario play out in your assessment ? and what is your outlook on AMET market both in terms of volume and margin? will you be able to maintain the existing run rate or do you see there will be some headwind in terms of achieving that?

U. Shekhar: Sanjesh, as you see, Galaxy is the market leader for our range of products in the Africa, Middle East and Turkey region. This is something that we have built very progressively over the last certain years. We export to over 40 countries from our Egyptian operations and in spite of the local headwinds, we have continued our volume growth and we have grown ahead of the regional growth across the various categories. So, we will remain very optimistic about our Egyptian operations and would continue to expect particularly in terms of the various categories in these various regions.

Sanjesh Jain: Second on the Specialty products side, what has led to such a strong growth because we have seen Speciality growth in the range of 7-8% in last two years and will these volumes sustain going ahead in the year?

U. Shekhar: It has been on the back of new customer acquisitions and increase in market share with existing customers. As we have said, we will continue to maintain our growth momentum in the way that we have done till date and we do feel that we will continue to maintain the growth momentum.

Sanjesh Jain: So, these numbers are sustainable, there is no one-off kind of an order which has led to such a strong growth in this quarter?

U. Shekhar: No, we would say that we have been growing at our stated growth ahead of the markets. In terms of what is called specific numbers, there could be QoQ, but as I said our growth is very secular as far as both these categories are concerned.

Sanjesh Jain: So, this will also indicate that we are gaining market share in a few of our products. Can you highlight which are the products where we are seeing a very strong growth momentum and where we are gaining incremental market share?

U. Shekhar: As you can see, the Speciality segment itself has seen a good amount of growth. It is across the various platforms that we have on specialties, whether it is conditioners, whether it is preservatives, whether it is surfactants and so on.

Sanjesh Jain: What is the effective tax rate we are expecting for the entire year because last year I understand it was around 27.8% and this quarter around we have come at around 31%-odd?

Ganesh Kamath: Last year, we had some reversal of provisions end of the year, that is one. What happens is that in the first quarter, our profits from India were higher. So, the Indian taxation rates are higher than Egypt and US, that is why the composite effective tax rate is higher. Going ahead, we look at marginally higher than last year. Given that last year, we had benefit in some of provision reversal.

Moderator: Thank you. We will take the next question from the line of Prashant Poddar from Adia. Please go ahead.

Prashant Poddar: If you can give a broad outlook in terms of how Indian market demand is behaving and the AMET market, that would be very helpful?

U. Shekhar: Prashant, Indian market has been pretty buoyant, as you could have seen the FMCG industry has been doing pretty well. As far as the FMCG industry was concerned, it has forecasted about 8-10% growth as far as this year is concerned. We do hope that pans out, the future forecast is also very-very promising. AMET, we still see Egyptian market recovering, of course the growth has been much better than the previous year. There are local headwinds which has been one of the risk factors which we have always highlighted with respect to the geopolitical risk in that region. However, we have always been able to place our volumes across the various countries that we operate in. As you know, we do export to over 40 countries from the Egyptian facility. So, we would maintain our growth momentum as far as Galaxy Chemicals, Egypt is concerned.

Prashant Poddar: In terms of India market, suffice to say you would be able to grow more than 8-10% if that is the volume the industry does?

U. Shekhar: Yes.

Prashant Poddar: In terms of the Turkey market which Sanjesh had asked, so what really happens sir? someone will have to fill in that market, the growth rates will obviously slowdown or maybe come to almost standstill for a very short period but cannot survive for a very long time? In terms of your operations there, you have a marketing office there, right?

U. Shekhar: No, we have a local sales office there.

Prashant Poddar: Are there any outstanding receivables from that market?

U. Shekhar: As far as Turkey is concerned, we have a very interesting position because all payments must be made in advance.

Prashant Poddar: So, you are not likely to see any write-off on receivables, etc., in that market?

Ganesh Kamath: Other than multinational customers, we send it through advance payment or through document against payment. So we do not have a credit risk in it.

Prashant Poddar: Just one more question on Egypt. So, Egypt is a large portion of your business in that market as well as manufacturing. So, can you talk very quickly about the end market as well as political conditions therein. Are you seeing instability or any signs of trouble there as well?

U. Shekhar: Political conditions have been nothing to worry about. I think we have been there steadily producing right from 2011 when the (**Inaudible**) 14:10 Arab Spring happened. So, our operations have never been impacted in the last seven or eight years as far as Egypt is concerned. However, on the back of devaluation in 2016, the Egyptian market had contracted and now volumes are slowly recovering. As I told you, last year, despite the local contraction at Egypt, Egypt had grown in terms of volumes by over 13% as far as the GCU operations were concerned.

Prashant Poddar: In Turkey, there is no manufacturing capacity that was ever planned?

U. Shekhar: We do not have any manufacturing capacity there.

Prashant Poddar: Quickly on raw material and other costs. If you can help us to understand, there was a small dip in gross margin in this quarter. So, how should we look at the gross profit outlook?

U. Shekhar: To repeat, Prashant, we have said that you should always evaluate us on volume growth, EBITDA growth and the PBT, the revenues will keep going up and down.

K. Natarajan: So, the raw material prices have been volatile in the sense that the Fatty Alcohol prices came down very significantly over the last three to four months. But then our risk management framework which is very robust enabled us to ensure that it did not have any impact on our numbers.

Prashant Poddar: FOREX should be of good advantage to you this year, right?

Ganesh Kamath: That will be only in respect of exports from India because the expenses are in INR.

Prashant Poddar: And restatement?

Ganesh Kamath: Restatement you will get the benefit only at the PBT level, because even expenses all these things will be in dollar only.

Prashant Poddar: What is the CAPEX outlook for the next two years?

U. Shekhar: We maintain whatever we have stated. I think this year we will incur Rs.125-150 crores and a similar amount will be there in the next year. So totally, we had said about Rs.300 crores over the next two years or so.

Moderator: Thank you. We will take the next question from the line of Saravanan Viswanathan from Unifi Capital. Please go ahead.

S Viswanathan: With regards to Egypt, you were mentioning that from the facility about exports to over 40 countries being undertaken. So, in terms of billing, is it everything dollar, euro or even some local currencies exposure are taken?

Ganesh Kamath: Books are maintained in dollars only and exports pricing is predominantly in dollars, because we are in an export zone, we are expected to maintain books in dollars.

S Viswanathan: But the only manufacturing cost in Egypt would be in local currency?

Ganesh Kamath: Yes, local currency, to that extent, we may take the realization in local currency, but billing is in US dollar.

K. Natarajan: The imports are also in dollars and most of the raw materials are also imported. Value addition will be in Egypt, the local cost that you incur there like salaries.

Ganesh Kamath: Overheads, transportation.

S Viswanathan: So, that will not be really material for you to alter the economics?

K. Natarajan: Correct.

S Viswanathan: In terms of raw materials, are you facing any shortages, how are you managing those challenges?

K. Natarajan: We are not seeing any shortages as such. Other than you have someone is announcing the force majeure, something happening, but those are all normal, nothing specific to this year. So it has been a normal situation.

S Viswanathan: So, we are not sourcing any starting materials from China or somewhere where we keep hearing about lot of shutdowns?

K. Natarajan: Correct, we do source some of the raw materials from China but then in fact our team visits them, understands, audits them and we see as to whether any of them had a risk of being shut down. But we do not see any significant risk in terms of what we source from China.

S Viswanathan: Another book-keeping question. Last call you had mentioned about some GST receivables outstanding of Rs.55 crores. What is the status now?

Ganesh Kamath: Close of the quarter it has been received in full.

Moderator: Thank you. We will take the next question from the line of Nav Bharadwaj from Anand Rathi. Please go ahead.

Nav Bharadwaj: A couple of questions sir. #1, on Page #5 of your presentation, we have seen 24% rise in Performance segment, out of which we have noted that 12% is volume growth. Is it safe to assume that the remaining 12 is completely from pricing, if you could give me some color?

U. Shekhar: We also need to tell you that please note we have excluded in this volume growth, we have talked about this opportunistic sale. This opportunistic sales have to be deducted from the overall volumes. Now, whatever we have mentioned in terms of 12.5% is net of those opportunistic sales.

Nav Bharadwaj: If you could elaborate a little bit more on opportunistic sales?

U. Shekhar: Opportunistic sales are based on spot opportunities which we had mentioned in the last concall itself. These are not strategic, these need not be long-term.

Nav Bharadwaj: What percentage of the total mix is opportunistic and the other being long-term?

K. Natarajan: Since, it is being spot and opportunistic. We essentially give the numbers on a volume growth after adjusting for that. So, we would not like to share any more details about the opportunistic sale, we would like to keep it there.

Nav Bharadwaj: So, is it safe to assume that when you are saying that we will continue our current momentum, we will continue at 12% growth for the remaining 12% growth that may or may not come?

U. Shekhar: As we have always said that we will grow ahead of the market. We have always at this number with respect to growth rate. Our growth rate has always been ahead of the market whichever markets we have been operating in.

Nav Bharadwaj: My second question was regarding the new customer acquisition in Speciality, the entire growth has been led by volume because volumes you have reported as 20% and revenue growth has grown by 21%. So the growth that happened, you also mentioned in the call right now that it has been due to acquisition of new customer. Was that for a new product or an existing product?

K. Natarajan: It is the acquisition of the new customer. We keep on ceding the market with lot of our Speciality products. It is a combination of some customers who have come for my existing products, some customers who have come for new products. It is not one specific customer or one specific product. Typically, Speciality products takes some amount of gestation in terms of acceptance by customer, then maturity level will vary with various customers, some fructify as far as the pipeline is concerned, that gets reflected.

Nav Bharadwaj: I will rephrase my question probably I came across incorrect, the majority of the growth is because of the basis of the old products or the new products introduction?

K. Natarajan: Significant growth has came from what we had ceded earlier. So it is nothing that has come from new products that we have put in the market. Those are at various stages of maturity in base customers in terms of business development.

Nav Bharadwaj: We saw great traction in the rest of the world segment of growth. So, is this sustainable like this was a high deviation from your historical numbers?

U. Shekhar: What we would like to say that is our quantity momentum is maintained on a continuous basis. In terms of percentages, it is possible that the percentage was very-very high as far as this quarter is concerned, but what is important is quantity momentum that is maintained.

Nav Bharadwaj: My last question would be on a macro level. BASF has come up with the new plant of ethylene oxide and that is specifically going to cater to manufacturing of surfactant. Do you foresee any kind of threat or perhaps kind of competition from growth in the AMET region because of this plant coming up?

U. Shekhar: I do not think we can say anything on the same. Yes, they have been manufacturing ethylene oxide for 40 or 50-years in Europe, this is not something new. We have acquired market leadership in the AMET region in the last seven years, we just made our presence in 2004 and we came up with a plant in 2011 and over the last seven years the market leaders as far as our range of products is concerned in the entire AMET region.

Moderator: Thank you. We will take the next question from the line of Saravanan Viswanathan from Unifi Capital. Please go ahead.

S Viswanathan: Are we planning to commercialize any new products this year in the Speciality grade? I think last time you had communicated about sodium lauroyl glutamine, how is the response for that and this year are we planning any new commercial?

U. Shekhar: As we said, we continue to introduce new products, the response has been very-very encouraging, but every single product has a good amount of gestation period in terms of the customers taking it, formulating it, keeping it for stability studies, but all these steps are being positive and encouraging as far as we are concerned with respect to the various products that we introduce to the various customers across regions not only in India.

S Viswanathan: So, in terms of capacity, how are we placed? Let us say from three to four years perspective, when is the next round of big CAPEX that we need to take besides the normal debottlenecking?

U. Shekhar: One important CAPEX is already happening as you know which will come on line in the first quarter of FY'20.

S Viswanathan: This is at about Rs.125 crores CAPEX that you are talking about?

U. Shekhar: Not entirely Rs.125 crores, the Rs.125 crores include some other small CAPEX also.

S Viswanathan: This would give us how much of capacity?

U. Shekhar: We will always talk about overall capacity. We would not like to tell you in advance in terms of whatever capacities we are setting up because these are obviously competitive confidentiality.

S Viswanathan: But at least for the next two years, whatever growth we have enough capacity?

U. Shekhar: We always create capacities in anticipation of the demand which is coming up. So, we will be always ahead of the growth requirements of our various customers.

Moderator: Thank you. We will take the next question from the line of Rohit Nagraj from Sunidhi Securities. Please go ahead.

Rohit Nagraj: My question pertains to new products which have been introduced in the last couple of years. So, how much would those new products contributed to our overall sales maybe you can give a ballpark figure in terms of percentage, two or three years maybe, I would not like to restrict myself to exactly two years or so?

U. Shekhar: Anywhere up to maybe about let us say 7-10% or so year-on-year.

Rohit Nagraj: This momentum year-on-year is slightly increased with new products which are coming up in terms of specific functionality and…?

U. Shekhar: This has been the sort of average over the last few years and we would expect it to continue.

Rohit Nagraj: Sir, a few book-keeping questions: The other income is negative for this quarter. Specific reason?

Ganesh Kamath: Other income in the consolidation exercise we will be having revaluation of MTM of various subsidiary companies and all, so it flows from there essentially.

Rohit Nagraj: Sir, in terms of CAPEX again, how much have we spent in the first quarter of this Rs.125-150 crores?

Ganesh Kamath: The initial stages generally has lower cash outflows, when you come towards mid of the execution higher cash flows will be there.

Rohit Nagraj: Any new customers which are added in Q1, I guess last year we had 55-odd new customers?

K. Natarajan: Probably it will be five or six of them.

U. Shekhar: Adding customers is a continuous process which happens across various geographies.

Rohit Nagraj: Any new geographies which have been added?

K. Natarajan: We have about five to seven Countires that we added.

Rohit Nagraj: So, last concall I think you suggested we export to about 82 countries, so it will be 85, 87-odd countries now?

K. Natarajan: Correct.

Moderator: Thank you. We will take the next follow up question from the line of Nav Bharadwaj from Anand Rathi. Please go ahead.

Nav Bharadwaj: Just a few questions on capacity. Can you comment on the current capacity utilization about the segments?

U. Shekhar: Our current capacity utilization is approximately 76% on the whole.

Nav Bharadwaj: Also, the CAPEX that we are talking about of Rs.125-150 crores, how much of it would be in debottlenecking and how much will be in Greenfield or Brownfield capacity?

K. Natarajan: This entire Rs.125 crores are Brownfield and debottlenecking, nothing in Greenfield.

Nav Bharadwaj: As you said, Q1 FY'20 this should be commissioned. Once the plant is commissioned, after that how much time does it take to synchronize the plant and following year what capacity utilization can we see?

U. Shekhar: As we said, when we create a capacity, about three to four years in terms of performance surfactants and about 7-8-years for Speciality products, that is the normal horizon as far as our various CAPEX are concerned, we reach about 90-95% capacity.

Nav Bharadwaj: If you could comment on the current receivables, is it in the same line as what we were doing last year or has there been an increase?

Ganesh Kamath: Yes, receivables along the same lines, our current assets have dropped because we have realized as what I mentioned, GST money locked in was around Rs.50-odd crores has been realized.

Nav Bharadwaj: From the Customer segment it is the same as it was?

Ganesh Kamath: Yes, Customer segment remains the same.

K. Natarajan: The quality of receivables remains the same.

Moderator: Thank you. We will take the next question from the line of Subramanyam Vajrala as an individual investor. Please go ahead.

Subramanyam Vajrala: Is there any increase in debt which happens for Rs.125 crores?

Ganesh Kamath: No, debt-equity has dropped because our internal cash generations are more than adequate to meet our requirements.

Subramanyam Vajrala: How many days it will take sir for receivables on an average?

Ganesh Kamath: Basically, what happens is receivable we give only multinational companies we extend the credit. On an average we have around 60-days of receivables.

Moderator: Thank you. We will take the next question from the line of Pankaj Tibrewal from Kotak Mutual Fund. Please go ahead.

Pankaj Tibrewal: A couple of questions: On the net working capital, you talked about receivable days. What was the networking capital as of 30th June?

Ganesh Kamath: As of 30th June, at consol level our net current assets were around 21% of the sales value.

Pankaj Tibrewal: Second, on your volume growth, lot of questions were asked, but just to reiterate, over the last four years when I look at your CAGR it is about 10% and 6% in Performance and Speciality. Do you think this year is the year where you break out of that CAGR and probably the numbers could be much higher than what is in the last four years?

U. Shekhar: We have always said that we grow ahead of the market but normally our growth rate maybe about 1-2% over and above the market. This year also, I have seen some gaining of market share.

So for the entire last year itself, our average volume growth rate was about 13% or so, and this year in the first quarter year-on-year our overall volume growth has been at 15.2%.

Pankaj Tibrewal: So, this probably trend looks to be the way the things are moving in the outlook from customers are, to be sustainable from overall perspective, is that…?

U. Shekhar: The long-term outlook that you should take is we will grow ahead of the market.

Pankaj Tibrewal: Any new customers added at the start of the year which has helped us in the volume growth as well?

U. Shekhar: As we mentioned before, we have added a couple of customers in the last quarter.

K. Natarajan: New customers will be added where contributed to major portion of the volume growth? The answer is no, we did add customer but most of the volumes came from our existing customers and new products also.

Pankaj Tibrewal: In your EBITDA per ton which you gave, normally last year was about Rs.15,000-odd, this quarter you have moved it to Rs.16,000 plus. Is there any one-off out there in that EBITDA per ton or obviously the volatility on the raw material and other things are understandable, but is that the trajectory we could probably see moving upwards because over the last four, five years, you have demonstrated improvement over there on a per ton basis as well?

U. Shekhar: This is obviously a function of the ratios of both Performance Surfactants and Speciality Care products. As we have reiterated, we would be growing on both Performance Surfactants as well as the Speciality Ingredients. So, what we would say is that this would also depend on our capacity utilization and the Speciality products volume percentage or even revenue percentage, but what I would like to tell you is that we measure ourselves in terms of overall growth. We need to grow above the market and we need to ensure that we maintain our position in the various markets where we are present. As you know, the emerging markets including India and the AMET region will be largely driven by the Performance Surfactants because in these markets there is still a good amount of headroom as far as penetration is concerned. Our Speciality Care products are more oriented towards the matured markets, like USA, Europe, etc., The Indian market is today largely mass or masstige, but the content of Speciality Care products grows but is still largely predominantly Performance Surfactants. So, the Performance Surfactants will continue to grow in the major markets that we are present in that is India as well as the AMET region and our EBITDA per ton would be reflective of the combination of product mix.

Moderator: Thank you. We will take the next follow up question from the line of Rohit Nagraj from Sunidhi Securities. Please go ahead.

Rohit Nagraj: My question pertains to the opportunistic space. So, you talked about Performance Surfactants normally the opportunistic sales happen. So, does it mean that it is predominantly for the commodity type of products wherein sometimes maybe it decreases, some shutdowns undertaken by our competitors or we are looking at just marginally better EBITDA margins or per ton margins than competitors and we are selling those products, so what is the….?

U. Shekhar: As I said, they are opportunistic, non-strategic, spot, tactical short-term. So, that is why we do not comment on it. As and when the opportunity arises, we would be there. Now we are there because we have some amount of capacity available but if the capacities were not available, we would not be in this opportunistic business. All the same, we would like to convey that the criteria for taking on these opportunities there it meets our return on capital employed expectation. It is not for just utilization of capacity, but it will be for utilization of capacity if it is available but at the same time it meets our return on capital employed expectations.

Rohit Nagraj: I think the hurdle rate is somewhere near 20-22% if I am not wrong?

U. Shekhar: Very right.

Moderator: Thank you. Ladies and gentlemen, due to time constraints, that was our last question. I now hand the conference back to Mr. Shekhar for closing comments. Thank you. Over to you, sir.

U. Shekhar: Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for your interest and your continued enthusiasm and support to organization. Thank you once again and then meet you again in another three months.

Moderator: Thank you very much. Ladies and gentlemen, on behalf of Galaxy Surfactants, that concludes this conference. Thank you all for joining us and you may now disconnect your lines.