## China / Hong Kong Company Update

# **GDS Holdings**

Bloomberg: 9698 HK Equity | GDS US Equity | Reuters: 9698.HK | GDS.O

Refer to important disclosures at the end of this report

#### DBS Group Research . Equity

20 Jan 2022

#### HK: BUY

Last Traded Price (19 Jan 2022):HK\$41.60(HSI: 24,128)
Price Target 12-mth: HK\$70.00 (68.3% upside) (Prev HK\$71.00)

#### **US: BUY**

Last Traded Price (19 Jan 2022): US\$42.57(NASDAQ: 14,340) Price Target 12-mth: US\$71.00 (66.8% upside) (Prev US\$73.00)

#### **Analyst**

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#### **What's New**

- Expect 30% and 23% capacity expansion in FY22 and FY23 respectively to support revenue growth
- Data centre demand is still strong, especially from cloud service providers
- Southeast Asia expansion a long-term catalyst; expect to secure more projects in the region
- Maintain BUY with a TP of HK\$70, as a key beneficiary of strong data centre demand in China and Southeast Asia

# Price Relative 126.6 126.6 106.6 106.6 107.6 108.6

#### Forecasts and Valuation (H Shares)

FY Dec (RMBm)	2020A	2021F	2022F	2023F
Turnover	5,739	7,798	10,350	13,162
EBITDA	2.311	3.184	4.276	5.507
Pre-tax Profit	(548)	(780)	(1.048)	(1.091)
Net Profit	(738)	(975)	(1,306)	(1,420)
Net Profit Gth (Pre-ex) (%)	(47.5)	(32.1)	(34.0)	(8.7)
EPS (RMB)	(0.59)	(0.62)	(0.83)	(0.91)
EPS (HK\$)	(0.72)	(0.76)	(1.02)	(1.11)
EPS Gth (%)	(29.8)	(5.7)	(34.0)	(8.7)
Diluted EPS (HK\$)	(0.72)	(0.76)	(1.02)	(1.11)
DPS (HK\$)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
BV Per Share (HK\$)	25.04	19.63	19.07	18.56
PE (X)	nm	nm	nm	nm
P/Cash Flow (X)	132.4	20.5	18.4	12.2
P/Free CF (X)	nm	nm	nm	nm
EV/EBITDA (X)	21.7	23.3	19.9	16.9
Net Div Yield (%)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
P/Book Value (X)	1.7	2.1	2.2	2.2
Net Debt/Equity (X)	0.2	0.8	1.2	1.6
ROAE(%)	(4.1)	(3.9)	(5.3)	(5.9)
Adi EBITDA	2,681	3,688	4,922	6,306
Adi EBITDA Gth (%)	47.0	37.6	33.4	28.1
EV/Adi EBITDA	28.2	20.5	15.3	12.0
Adi EBITDA Rev (%):		0.0	(1.3)	(4.2)
Consensus EPS (RMB)		(0.46)	(0.33)	(0.20)
Other Broker Recs:		B:12	S:0	H:0

Source of all data on this page: Company, DBS Bank (Hong Kong) Limited ("DBS HK"), Thomson Reuters

### Riding on cloud demand

#### **Investment Thesis**

Riding on growing demand for cloud services in China. GDS serves fast-growing cloud and Internet giants such as Alibaba, Tencent, and ByteDance. According to iResearch, the cloud market in China is projected to grow at a CAGR of c.42% for 2020-2024E.

Strong data centre services contract pipeline to support growth. GDS has 231k sqm of committed and pre-committed unutilised area (vs 300k sqm utilised area) to support growth in the next one to two years.

#### Strong capacity expansion pipeline to meet rising demand.

GDS has a strong expansion pipeline in the top-tier DC cities and peripheral areas in mainland China, as well as Hong Kong and Southeast Asia, supporting overall capacity growth of 42%, 30%, and 23% in FY21, FY22, and FY23, respectively.

#### Valuation:

Our TP of HK\$70 is based on a 25x FY22 EV/Adjusted EBITDA, higher than its historical average for its strong adjusted EBITDA growth.

#### Where we differ:

The market is concerned about the oversupply of DCs in China. However, supply remains tight in top-tier DC cities due to the scarcity of land and power supply. GDS has a strong expansion pipeline in the top-tier DC cities and peripheral areas, supporting overall capacity growth of 42%, 30% and 23% in FY21, FY22 and FY23 respectively.

#### **Key Risks to Our View:**

A slowdown in demand from major customers will result in lower utilisation and returns.

**Excess DC supply in top-tier cities.** Excess supply of DC capacity in top-tier DC cities will lead to pricing pressure and lower profitability.

#### At A Glance

At A Giance	
Issued Capital (m shrs)	1,495
Mkt Cap (HK\$m/US\$m)	62,192 / 7,984
Major Shareholders (%)	
Singapore Technologies Telemedia Pte. Ltd	8.9
Free Float (%)	91.1
3m Avg. Daily Val. (US\$m)	7.34
GICS Industry: Information Technology / Software & Services	5









#### **Company Background**

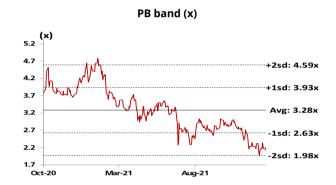
GDS, based in Shanghai, is one of the leading and fastest-growing Chinese data centre operators. The company mainly serves major Chinese cloud service providers and Internet companies with its self-developed data centres located in Beijing, Shanghai, Shenzhen, Guangzhou, and Chengdu. GDS also started to expand in Southeast Asia market in 2021.

#### **Historical EV/EBITDA and PB band**

#### 1yr forward EV/EBITDA chart



Source: Thomson Reuters, DBS HK







#### **Key Assumptions**

FY Dec	2019A	2020A	2021F	2022F	2023F
Area in service (sgm)	229,851.0	333,853.0	473,853.0	613,853.0	753,853.0
Area Utilised (sgm)	156,022.0	234,731.0	314,439.9	421,928.1	533,736.3
Average MSR (end of					
Quarter;	2,581.6	2,438.4	2,365.2	2,341.6	2,294.8
Rmb/sqm/month)					
Source: Company, DBS HK					

#### Segmental Breakdown (RMB m)

FY Dec	2019A	2020A	2021F	2022F	2023F
Revenues (RMB m)					
Service revenue	4,095	5,717	7,794	10,346	13,158
IT Equipment sales	28	22	4	4	4
Total	4,122	5,739	7,798	10,350	13,162

Source: Company, DBS HK

#### Income Statement (RMB m)

FY Dec	2019A	2020A	2021F	2022F	2023F
Revenue	4,122	5,739	7,798	10,350	13,162
Cost of Goods Sold	(3,080)	(4,189)	(6,013)	(8,066)	(10,128)
Gross Profit	1,043	1,550	1,784	2,284	3,034
Other Opng (Exp)/Inc	(563)	(878)	(1,193)	(1,532)	(1,895)
Operating Profit	480	673	591	752	1,139
Other Non Opg (Exp)/Inc	9	66	46	40	30
Associates & JV Inc	0	0	0	0	0
Net Interest (Exp)/Inc	(916)	(1,287)	(1,417)	(1,840)	(2,260)
Dividend Income	0	0	0	0	0
Exceptional Gain/(Loss)	0	0	0	0	0
Pre-tax Profit	(426)	(548)	(780)	(1,048)	(1,091)
Tax	(16)	(121)	(195)	(259)	(329)
Minority Interest	0	0	0	0	0
Preference Dividend	(58)	(69)	0	0	0
Net Profit	(500)	(738)	(975)	(1,306)	(1,420)
Net Profit before Except.	(500)	(738)	(975)	(1,306)	(1,420)
EBITDA	1,622	2,311	3,184	4,276	5,507
Growth					
Revenue Gth (%)	47.6	39.2	35.9	32.7	27.2
EBITDA Gth (%)	78.2	42.5	37.8	34.3	28.8
Opg Profit Gth (%)	185.0	40.3	(12.1)	27.2	51.5
Net Profit Gth (%)	(16.3)	(47.5)	(32.1)	(34.0)	(8.7)
Margins & Ratio					
Gross Margins (%)	25.3	27.0	22.9	22.1	23.1
Opg Profit Margin (%)	11.6	11.7	7.6	7.3	8.7
Net Profit Margin (%)	(12.1)	(12.9)	(12.5)	(12.6)	(10.8)
ROAE (%)	(6.3)	(4.1)	(3.9)	(5.3)	(5.9)
ROA (%)	(1.9)	(1.7)	(1.6)	(1.9)	(1.9)
ROCE (%)	2.0	1.7	1.1	1.2	1.7
Div Payout Ratio (%)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Net Interest Cover (x)	0.5	0.5	0.4	0.4	0.5
Source: Company, DBS HK					





#### Interim Income Statement (RMB m)

FY Dec	1H2019	2H2019	1H2020	2H2020	1H2021
Davague	1 077	2 245	2.502	2.156	2.570
Revenue Cost of Goods Sold	1,877	2,245	2,583	3,156	3,570
	(1,403)	(1,676)	(1,871)	(2,317)	(2,733)
Gross Profit	474	569	711	839	837
Other Oper. (Exp)/Inc	(251)	(311)	(353)	(525)	(569)
Operating Profit	222	257	359	314	268
Other Non Opg (Exp)/Inc	2	3	52	(9)	35
Associates & JV Inc	0	0	0	0	0
Net Interest (Exp)/Inc	(441)	(528)	(562)	(755)	(769)
Exceptional Gain/(Loss)	0	0	0	0	0
Pre-tax Profit	(217)	(268)	(151)	(450)	(467)
Tax	(13)	(3)	(42)	(79)	(110)
Minority Interest	0	0	0	0	0
Net Profit	(230)	(270)	(193)	(529)	(577)
Net profit bef Except.	(230)	(270)	(193)	(529)	(577)
Growth					
Revenue Gth (%)	56.5	41.0	37.6	40.6	38.2
Opg Profit Gth (%)	297.6	129.0	61.3	22.1	(25.4)
Net Profit Gth (%)	(22.2)	(11.6)	16.0	(95.6)	(198.9)
Margins					
Gross Margins (%)	25.2	25.3	27.5	26.6	23.4
Opg Profit Margins (%)	11.8	11.5	13.9	10.0	7.5
Net Profit Margins (%)	(12.2)	(12.0)	(7.5)	(16.8)	(16.2)
Source: Company, DBS HK	(12.2)	(12.0)	(7.5)	(10.0)	(10.2)

#### Balance Sheet (RMB m)

FY Dec	2019A	2020A	2021F	2022F	2023F
NI (E) IA (	40405	20.506	42.000	F2.624	64.242
Net Fixed Assets	19,185	29,596	43,080	53,634	61,343
Invts in Associates & JVs	0	0	0	0	0
Other LT Assets	5,223	9,344	9,267	9,189	9,112
Cash & ST Invts	5,973	16,493	10,387	6,662	6,505
Inventory	0	0	0	0	0
Debtors	880	1,480	1,724	2,529	2,880
Other Current Assets	231	346	346	346	346
Total Assets	31,493	57,259	64,804	72,360	80,186
ST Debt	1,360	2,408	2,408	2,408	2,408
Creditors	1,676	3,657	4,206	4,837	5,562
Other Current Liab	963	1,579	1,788	2,029	2,306
LT Debt	14,829	20,593	27,903	35,294	42,773
Other LT Liabilities	1,308	2,354	2,354	2,354	2,354
Shareholder's Equity	11,356	26,547	26,024	25,318	24,662
Minority Interests	0	121	121	121	121
Total Cap. & Liab.	31,493	57,259	64,804	72,360	80,186
Non-Cash Wkg. Capital	(1,528)	(3,410)	(3,924)	(3,991)	(4,643)
Net Cash/(Debt)	(10,216)	(6,508)	(19,923)	(31,039)	(38,676)
Net Cash/(Debt) Debtors Turn (avg days)	(10,216) 62.7	(6,508) 75.1	(19,923) 75.0	(31,039) 75.0	(38,676) 75.0
Net Cash/(Debt) Debtors Turn (avg days) Creditors Turn (avg days)	(10,216) 62.7 299.9	(6,508) 75.1 381.7	(19,923) 75.0 419.5	(31,039) 75.0 363.3	(38,676) 75.0 329.5
Net Cash/(Debt) Debtors Turn (avg days) Creditors Turn (avg days) Inventory Turn (avg days)	(10,216) 62.7 299.9 N/A	(6,508) 75.1 381.7 N/A	(19,923) 75.0 419.5 N/A	(31,039) 75.0 363.3 N/A	(38,676) 75.0 329.5 N/A
Net Cash/(Debt) Debtors Turn (avg days) Creditors Turn (avg days) Inventory Turn (avg days) Asset Turnover (x)	(10,216) 62.7 299.9 N/A 0.2	(6,508) 75.1 381.7 N/A 0.1	(19,923) 75.0 419.5 N/A 0.1	(31,039) 75.0 363.3 N/A 0.2	(38,676) 75.0 329.5 N/A 0.2
Net Cash/(Debt) Debtors Turn (avg days) Creditors Turn (avg days) Inventory Turn (avg days) Asset Turnover (x) Current Ratio (x)	(10,216) 62.7 299.9 N/A 0.2 1.8	(6,508) 75.1 381.7 N/A 0.1 2.4	(19,923) 75.0 419.5 N/A 0.1 1.5	(31,039) 75.0 363.3 N/A 0.2 1.0	(38,676) 75.0 329.5 N/A 0.2 0.9
Net Cash/(Debt) Debtors Turn (avg days) Creditors Turn (avg days) Inventory Turn (avg days) Asset Turnover (x) Current Ratio (x) Quick Ratio (x)	(10,216) 62.7 299.9 N/A 0.2 1.8 1.7	(6,508) 75.1 381.7 N/A 0.1 2.4 2.4	(19,923) 75.0 419.5 N/A 0.1 1.5	(31,039) 75.0 363.3 N/A 0.2 1.0	(38,676) 75.0 329.5 N/A 0.2 0.9
Net Cash/(Debt) Debtors Turn (avg days) Creditors Turn (avg days) Inventory Turn (avg days) Asset Turnover (x) Current Ratio (x) Quick Ratio (x) Net Debt/Equity (X)	(10,216) 62.7 299.9 N/A 0.2 1.8 1.7 0.9	(6,508) 75.1 381.7 N/A 0.1 2.4 2.4 0.2	(19,923) 75.0 419.5 N/A 0.1 1.5 1.4 0.8	(31,039) 75.0 363.3 N/A 0.2 1.0 1.0	(38,676) 75.0 329.5 N/A 0.2 0.9 0.9
Net Cash/(Debt) Debtors Turn (avg days) Creditors Turn (avg days) Inventory Turn (avg days) Asset Turnover (x) Current Ratio (x) Quick Ratio (x) Net Debt/Equity (X) Net Debt/Equity ex MI (X)	(10,216) 62.7 299.9 N/A 0.2 1.8 1.7 0.9	(6,508) 75.1 381.7 N/A 0.1 2.4 2.4 0.2 0.2	(19,923) 75.0 419.5 N/A 0.1 1.5 1.4 0.8 0.8	(31,039) 75.0 363.3 N/A 0.2 1.0 1.0 1.2	(38,676) 75.0 329.5 N/A 0.2 0.9 0.9 1.6 1.6
Net Cash/(Debt) Debtors Turn (avg days) Creditors Turn (avg days) Inventory Turn (avg days) Asset Turnover (x) Current Ratio (x) Quick Ratio (x) Net Debt/Equity (X) Net Debt/Equity ex MI (X) Capex to Debt (%)	(10,216) 62.7 299.9 N/A 0.2 1.8 1.7 0.9 0.9 30.4	(6,508) 75.1 381.7 N/A 0.1 2.4 2.4 0.2 0.2 35.7	(19,923) 75.0 419.5 N/A 0.1 1.5 1.4 0.8 0.8 52.8	(31,039) 75.0 363.3 N/A 0.2 1.0 1.0 1.2 1.2 37.1	(38,676) 75.0 329.5 N/A 0.2 0.9 0.9 1.6 1.6 26.6
Net Cash/(Debt) Debtors Turn (avg days) Creditors Turn (avg days) Inventory Turn (avg days) Asset Turnover (x) Current Ratio (x) Quick Ratio (x) Net Debt/Equity (X) Net Debt/Equity ex MI (X) Capex to Debt (%) Z-Score (X)	(10,216) 62.7 299.9 N/A 0.2 1.8 1.7 0.9	(6,508) 75.1 381.7 N/A 0.1 2.4 2.4 0.2 0.2	(19,923) 75.0 419.5 N/A 0.1 1.5 1.4 0.8 0.8	(31,039) 75.0 363.3 N/A 0.2 1.0 1.0 1.2	(38,676) 75.0 329.5 N/A 0.2 0.9 0.9 1.6 1.6
Net Cash/(Debt) Debtors Turn (avg days) Creditors Turn (avg days) Inventory Turn (avg days) Asset Turnover (x) Current Ratio (x) Quick Ratio (x) Net Debt/Equity (X) Net Debt/Equity ex MI (X) Capex to Debt (%)	(10,216) 62.7 299.9 N/A 0.2 1.8 1.7 0.9 0.9 30.4	(6,508) 75.1 381.7 N/A 0.1 2.4 2.4 0.2 0.2 35.7	(19,923) 75.0 419.5 N/A 0.1 1.5 1.4 0.8 0.8 52.8	(31,039) 75.0 363.3 N/A 0.2 1.0 1.0 1.2 1.2 37.1	(38,676) 75.0 329.5 N/A 0.2 0.9 0.9 1.6 1.6 26.6





#### Cash Flow Statement (RMB m)

FY Dec	2019A	2020A	2021F	2022F	2023F
Pre-Tax Profit	(426)	(548)	(780)	(1,048)	(1,091)
Dep. & Amort.	1,142	1,638	2,593	3,524	4,368
Tax Paid	(16)	(121)	(195)	(259)	(329)
Assoc. & JV Inc/(loss)	0	0	0	0	0
(Pft)/ Loss on disposal of FAs	1	3	0	0	0
Chg in Wkg.Cap.	(661)	(995)	514	67	652
Other Operating CF	253	343	452	600	763
Net Operating CF	293	321	2,585	2,884	4,363
Capital Exp.(net)	(4,922)	(8,218)	(16,000)	(14,000)	(12,000)
Other Invts.(net)	0	0	0	0	0
Invts in Assoc. & JV	0	0	0	0	0
Div from Assoc & JV	0	0	0	0	0
Other Investing CF	(210)	(1,160)	0	0	0
Net Investing CF	(5,131)	(9,378)	(16,000)	(14,000)	(12,000)
Div Paid	0	0	0	0	0
Chg in Gross Debt	2,294	3,159	7,310	7,391	7,480
Capital Issues	4,990	16,053	0	0	0
Other Financing CF	1,078	932	0	0	0
Net Financing CF	8,362	20,144	7,310	7,391	7,480
Currency Adjustments	164	(567)	0	0	0
Chg in Cash	3,689	10,520	(6,106)	(3,725)	(157)
Opg CFPS (RMB)	0.86	1.05	1.32	1.80	2.37
Free CFPS (RMB)	(4.20)	(6.30)	(8.56)	(7.09)	(4.87)

Source: Company, DBS HK



#### **HK Share - Target Price & Ratings History**

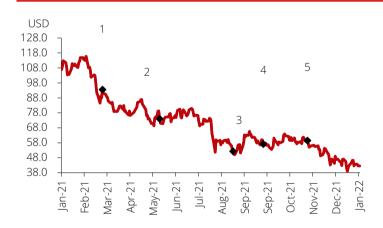


S.No	o. Date	Closing Price	12-mth Target Price	Rating
1:	11-Mar-21	HK\$89.50	HK\$114.00	Buy
2:	20-May-21	HK\$71.45	HK\$106.00	Buy
3:	18-Aug-21	HK\$53.85	HK\$79.00	Buy
4:	24-Sep-21	HK\$59.05	HK\$79.00	Buy
5:	17-Nov-21	HK\$58.80	HK\$71.00	Buy

Source: DBS HK

Analyst: Tsz-Wang TAM, CFA Harry Zhuang

#### **US Share - Target Price & Ratings History**



S.No	o. Date	Closing	12-mth	Rating
		Price	Target	
			Price	
1:	11-Mar-21	US\$88.04	US\$118.00	Buy
2:	20-May-21	US\$79.28	US\$109.00	Buy
3:	18-Aug-21	US\$53.16	US\$81.00	Buy
4:	24-Sep-21	US\$59.68	US\$81.00	Buy
5:	17-Nov-21	US\$58.92	US\$73.00	Buy

Source: DBS HK

Analyst: Tsz-Wang TAM, CFA Harry Zhuang

#### **GDS Holdings**



DBS HK recommendations are based on an Absolute Total Return\* Rating system, defined as follows:

STRONG BUY (>20% total return over the next 3 months, with identifiable share price catalysts within this time frame)

BUY (>15% total return over the next 12 months for small caps, >10% for large caps)

HOLD (-10% to +15% total return over the next 12 months for small caps, -10% to +10% for large caps)

**FULLY VALUED** (negative total return, i.e., > -10% over the next 12 months)

SELL (negative total return of > -20% over the next 3 months, with identifiable share price catalysts within this time frame)

Completed Date: 20 Jan 2022 09:29:38 (HKT) Dissemination Date: 20 Jan 2022 14:40:14 (HKT)

Sources for all charts and tables are DBS HK unless otherwise specified.

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#### **GDS Holdings**



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