## China / Hong Kong Company Update

## **Bank of Communications**

Bloomberg: 3328 HK EQUITY | 601328 CH Equity | Reuters: 3328.HK | 601328.SS

Refer to important disclosures at the end of this report

#### DBS Group Research . Equity

#### H: BUY (Reinstating coverage)

Last Traded Price (H) ( 21 Apr 2022):HK\$5.59(HSI: 20,682) Price Target 12-mth (H):HK\$6.70 (19.9% upside)

A: BUY (Reinstating coverage)

Last Traded Price (A) ( 21 Apr 2022): RMB5.09(CSI300 Index : 3,996)

Price Target 12-mth (A):RMB6.10 (19.8% upside)

#### Analyst

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

- NIM to stabilise with further cut in high-cost liabilities
- Expect 7% fee income CAGR in FY22-24F, driven by WM and bank card strategy
- Improving asset quality with 1.48% NPL in FY21
- Reinstate coverage with BUY and TP at HK\$ 6.70





#### Forecasts and Valuation (H Shares)

FY Dec (RMB m) Pre-prov. Profit Pre-prov. Profit Gth (%) Pretax Profit Net Profit EPS (RMB) EPS (HK\$) EPS (HK\$) Div Yield (%) BV Per Share (HK\$) P/Book Value (x) ROAE (%) ROAE (%)	2021A 162.373 9 93.959 81.968 1.10 1.27 11 4.4 0.41 7.3 12.27 0.5 10.8	202F 174,686 8 101,967 88.772 1.20 1.38 8 4.1 0.44 7.9 13.24 0.4 10.8	2023F 186.867 7 107.707 94.086 1.27 1.46 6 3.8 0.46 8.3 14.26 0.4 10.6	2024F 198,914 6 114,607 100,473 1.356 7 3.6 0.49 8.8 15.36 0.4 10.5
ROA (%)	0.73	0.74	0.73	0.74
Earnings Rev (%): Consensus EPS (RMB) Other Broker Recs:		New 1.18 B:14	New 1.27 S:2	New 1.40 H:5

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

#### 22 Apr 2022

# Improving liability structure to stabilise NIM

#### **Investment Thesis**

Continuous improvement in liability structure. BOCOM has relatively higher interest costs than its peers. We expect its NIM to drop by 1bp only in FY22F, from 1.56% in FY21, given its continuous focus on lowering its high-interest cost liabilities such as structured deposits.

Double-digit fee income growth. We expect a 10%-11% y-o-y fee income growth in FY22-24F, driven by the company's strategy to 1) improve wealth management (WM) clients' experience with a wider product choice and 2) improve the capability of all channels to acquire clients.

**Improving asset quality.** BOCOM's NPL ratio dropped by 19bps to 1.48% in FY21. We believe the resumption of business activities and efforts of its loan collection team would help enhance its book quality.

#### Valuation:

We reinstate coverage with a TP of HK\$ 6.70, based on the DDM method and assuming an unchanged 13.2% cost of equity, 8.5% ROE, and 3.5% terminal growth. Our TP implies a 0.5x FY22F P/BV, or its five-year average.

#### Where we differ:

We have a more positive view on its NIM in FY22-24F, as we see room for BOCOM to further lower its liability interest costs with its continuous efforts to lower down high-cost structural deposits. Average interest costs have dropped by 12bps to 2.17% in FY21. We expect a better-than-peers 1bp down in NIM in FY22F, following a recovery trend thereafter.

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

Lower efficiency driven by reform initiatives and lower-thanexpected growth in core deposits.

#### At A Glance

Issued Capital - H shares (m shs)	35,012
- Non H shrs (m shs)	39,251
H shs as a % of Total	47
Total Mkt Cap (HK\$m/US\$m)	441,256 / 56,267
Major Shareholders (%)	
Ministry of Finance of the PRC	33.6
National Social Security Fund	7.9
Major H Shareholders (As % of H shares)	
HSBC Holdings PLC	40.4
National Social Security Fund	25.9
Ministry of Finance of the PRC	13.0
H Shares-Free Float (%)	20.8
3m Avg. Daily Val. (US\$m)	15.35
GICS Industry: Financials / Banks	







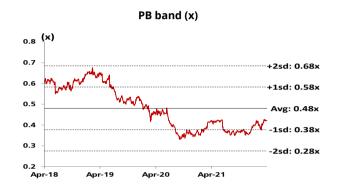
#### **Company Background**

Founded in 1908, BOCOM is one of the oldest banks and was one of the note-issuing banks in China in the past. It is the first nationwide state-owned commercial bank in China. The bank was listed on the HKEX in June 2005 and on the SHEX in May 2007. By the end of 2021, BOCOM had Rmb11.7tn in total assets.

#### **Historical PE and PB band**

# Forward PE band (x) 6.7 (x) 6.2 +2sd: 6x 5.7 5.2 +1sd: 5.1x 4.7 4.2 3.7 3.2 -1sd: 3.4x -2sd: 2.6x Apr-18 Apr-19 Apr-20 Apr-21

Source: Thomson Reuters, DBS HK





#### **Key Assumptions**

FY Dec	2020A	2021A	2022F	2023F	2024F
NIM (%)	1.57	1.56	1.55	1.56	1.58
Loan growth (%)	10	12	12	10	9
Fee growth (%)	3	6	7	7	7
Cost-to-income (%)	35.5	35.7	35.4	35.2	35.4
Credit cost (%)	1.12	1.10	1.05	1.03	1.00
Customer Deposits Growth (%) Growth (%)	9	7	6	5	5
Yld. On Earnings Assets (%)	3.82	3.63	3.65	3.67	3.68
Avg Cost Of Funds (%) Source: Company, DBS HK	2.29	2.17	2.19	2.20	2.22

#### Income Statement (RMB m)

FY Dec	2020A	2021A	2022F	2023F	2024F
Net Interest Income	153,336	161,693	174,383	186,855	199,816
Non-Interest Income	77,437	90,724	95,999	101,734	108,105
Operating Income	230,773	252,417	270,382	288,589	307,921
Operating Expenses	(82,027)	(90,044)	(95,696)	(101,722)	(109,007)
Pre-provision Profit	148,746	162,373	174,686	186,867	198,914
Provisions	(62,543)	(68,691)	(73,020)	(79,478)	(84,645)
Associates	222	277	301	318	338
Exceptionals	0	0	0	0	0
Pre-tax Profit	86,425	93,959	101,967	107,707	114,607
Taxation	(6,855)	(5,020)	(6,118)	(6,462)	(6,876)
Minority Interests	(1,296)	(1,358)	(1,464)	(1,546)	(1,645)
Preference Dividend	(4,394)	(5,613)	(5,613)	(5,613)	(5,613)
Net Profit	73,880	81,968	88,772	94,086	100,473
Net Profit bef Except	73,880	81,968	88,772	94,086	100,473
Growth (%)					
Net Interest Income Gth	6.42	5.45	7.85	7.15	6.94
Net Profit Gth	(0.98)	10.95	8.30	5.99	6.79
Margins, Costs & Efficiency (	%)				
Spread	1.53	1.46	1.46	1.46	1.47
Net Interest Margin	1.59	1.55	1.56	1.57	1.58
Cost-to-Income Ratio	35.5	35.7	35.4	35.2	35.4
Business Mix (%)					
Net Int. Inc / Opg Inc.	66.4	64.1	64.5	64.7	64.9
Non-Int. Inc / Opg inc.	33.6	35.9	35.5	35.3	35.1
Fee Inc / Opg Income	19.5	18.8	18.7	18.8	18.9
Oth Non-Int Inc/Opg Inc	14.0	17.1	16.8	16.5	16.2
Profitability (%)					
ROAE Pre Ex.	10.4	10.8	10.8	10.6	10.5
ROAE	10.4	10.8	10.8	10.6	10.5
ROA Pre Ex.	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8
ROA	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7
Source: Company, DBS HK					



#### Quarterly Income Statement (RMB m)

FY Dec	402020	102021	202021	302021	402021
Net Interest Income	39,322	38,553	39,933	40,758	42,449
Non-Interest Income	18,860	22,942	21,584	22,663	23,535
Operating Income	58,182	61,495	61,517	63,421	65,984
Operating Expenses	(18,878)	(21,500)	(21,538)	(21,300)	(25,706)
Pre-Provision Profit	39,304	39,995	39,979	42,121	40,278
Provisions	(10,467)	(15,085)	(18,415)	(19,346)	(15,845)
Associates	79	56	58	56	107
Exceptionals	0	0	0	0	0
Pretax Profit	28,916	24,966	21,622	22,831	24,540
Taxation	(2,811)	(2,654)	(1,061)	(212)	(1,093)
Minority Interests	(537)	(366)	(488)	(278)	(226)
Net Profit	25,568	21,946	18,318	22,341	23,221
Growth (%)					
Net Interest Income Gth	4.1	4.9	7.6	1.5	8.0
Net Profit Gth	49.2	2.3	48.4	37.9	(9.2)

Source: Company, DBS HK

#### Interim Income Statement (RMB m)

FY Dec	2H2019	1H2020	2H2020	1H2021	2H2021
Net Interest Income	74,021	73,849	79,487	78,486	83,207
Non-Interest Income	36,846	42,003	35,434	44,526	46,198
Operating Income	110,867	115,852	114,921	123,012	129,405
Operating Expenses	(41,074)	(42,487)	(39,540)	(43,038)	(47,006)
Pre-Provision Profit	69,793	73,365	75,381	79,974	82,399
Provisions	(30,674)	(33,492)	(29,051)	(33,500)	(35,191)
Associates	122	85	137	114	163
Exceptionals	0	0	0	0	0
Pretax Profit	39,241	39,958	46,467	46,588	47,371
Taxation	(4,327)	(2,961)	(3,894)	(3,715)	(1,305)
Minority Interests	(382)	(492)	(804)	(854)	(504)
Net Profit	34,532	33,791	41,769	40,264	41,704
Growth (%)					
Net Interest Income Gth	5.4	5.4	7.4	6.3	4.7
Net Profit Gth	5.1	(15.7)	21.0	19.2	(0.2)

Source: Company, DBS HK



#### Balance Sheet (RMB m)

FY Dec	2020A	2021A	2022F	2023F	2024F
Cash/Bank Balance	817,561	734,728	708,906	705,174	699,298
Government Securities	0	0	0	0	0
Inter Bank Assets	571,130	632,708	569,437	540,965	595,062
Total Net Loans & Advs.	5,720,568	6,412,201	7,145,712	7,871,327	8,570,548
Investment	2,754,749	2,884,766	2,942,461	2,942,461	2,883,612
Associates	4,681	5,779	5,779	5,779	5,779
Fixed Assets	169,471	171,194	172,935	174,693	176,469
Goodwill	0	0	0	0	0
Other Assets	659,456	824,381	891,377	946,147	1,054,713
Total Assets	10,697,616	11,665,757	12,436,607	13,186,547	13,985,480
Customer Deposits	6,607,330	7,039,777	7,462,164	7,835,272	8,227,035
Inter Bank Deposits	1,787,491	1,947,768	2,045,156	2,147,414	2,254,785
Debts/Borrowings	497,755	503,525	559,145	622,710	695,404
Others	926,412	1,197,451	1,301,845	1,415,554	1,540,468
Minorities	12,021	12,589	11,136	12,681	14,326
Shareholders' Funds	866,607	964,647	1,057,161	1,152,915	1,253,462
Total Liab & S/H's Funds	10,697,616	11,665,757	12,436,607	13,186,547	13,985,480

Source: Company, DBS HK

#### Financial Stability Measures (%)

FY Dec	2020A	2021A	2022F	2023F	2024F
Balance Sheet Structure					
Loan-to-Deposit Ratio	88.7	93.4	98.3	103.3	107.4
Net Loans / Total Assets	53.5	55.0	57.5	59.7	61.3
Investment / Total Assets	25.8	24.7	23.7	22.3	20.6
Cust. Dep./Int. Bear. Liab.	67.2	67.3	66.7	66.5	66.1
Interbank Dep / Int. Bear.	21.8	19.9	19.6	19.2	18.9
Asset Quality					
NPL / Total Gross Loans	1.7	1.5	1.4	1.4	1.4
NPL / Total Assets	0.9	0.8	0.8	0.9	0.9
Loan Loss Reserve Coverage	142.6	165.4	183.4	200.4	214.3
Provision Charge-Off Rate	1.1	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
Capital Strength					
Total CAR	15.3	15.4	16.2	16.5	16.7
Tier-1 CAR	10.9	10.6	10.8	10.9	11.1
Source: Company, DBS HK					



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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)

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