Singapore Company Update

EC World REIT

Bloomberg: ECWREIT SP | Reuters: ECWO.SI

Refer to important disclosures at the end of this report

DBS Group Research . Equity

17 May 2022

BUY

Last Traded Price (13 May 2022): S\$0.615 (**STI**: 3,191.16) **Price Target 12-mth:** S\$0.70 (13% upside) (Prev S\$0.85)

Analyst

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What's New

- Unwelcome surprise from pre-termination compensation to tenant
- Organic growth in portfolio to more than offset absence of income from Fu Zhuo Industrial
- Earnings in FY23 expected to rebound by more than 6% following one-off compensation paid this year
- Maintain BUY with revised TP of S\$0.70

Price Relative SS Relative Index 220 220 200 180 0.8 0.8 0.7 0.7 0.6 0.5 0.4 May-18 May-19 May-20 May-21 May-22 Relative SII (RHS)

| Forecasts and Valuation FY Dec (S\$m) | 2020A | 2021A | 2022F | 2023F |
|--|-------|-------|----------------------|---------------------|
| Gross Revenue | 110 | 125 | 125 | 127 |
| Net Property Inc | 100 | 113 | 113 | 114 |
| Total Return | 15.4 | 24.5 | 44.0 | 47.3 |
| Distribution Inc | 47.2 | 51.9 | 48.3 | 51.8 |
| EPU (S cts) | 3.24 | 6.72 | 5.41 | 5.79 |
| EPU Gth (%) | 73 | 108 | (19) | 7 |
| DPU (S cts) | 5.36 | 6.26 | 5.65 | 6.01 |
| DPU Gth (%) | (11) | 17 | (10) | 6 |
| NAV per shr (S cts) | 88.7 | 92.9 | 92.9 | 92.8 |
| PE (X) | 19.0 | 9.2 | 11.4 | 10.6 |
| Distribution Yield (%) | 8.7 | 10.2 | 9.2 | 9.8 |
| P/NAV (x) | 0.7 | 0.7 | 0.7 | 0.7 |
| Aggregate Leverage (%) | 37.7 | 38.1 | 37.8 | 37.7 |
| ROAE (%) | 3.7 | 7.4 | 5.8 | 6.2 |
| | | | | |
| Distn. Inc Chng (%): Consensus DPU (S cts): Other Broker Recs: | | B: 2 | (10) 7.10 S: 0 | (7) 6.90 H: 1 |

Source of all data on this page: Company, DBS Bank, Bloomberg Finance L.P.

Attractive yields should more than offset surprise compensation payment

Investment Thesis

Revising our TP to reflect divestment of Fu Zhuo

Industrial. ECWREIT has demonstrated its portfolio resilience by reporting improving earnings and stable occupancy rates. However, Fu Zhuo Industrial has undergone a compulsory expropriation by the local government and has ceased income contribution from 1 April 2022. Although built-in rental escalations from its master leases will more than offset the absence of income, ECWREIT is liable for a one-off pretermination compensation of c.S\$4.1m to its tenant.

Leveraged on e-commerce. Earnings are expected to remain robust, as its portfolio caters to the fast-growing logistics and e-commerce sector; 50% of assets are e-commerce logistics and 25% each in port logistics and specialised logistics.

Inherent organic growth in the portfolio underpinned by master leases. With built-in rental escalations ranging from an average of 1.0% to 2.5% for its master leases, this ensures organic growth to ECWREIT's earnings. Moreover, its multitenanted assets that cater to the fast-growing logistics industry also have the potential deliver revenue growth.

Valuation:

Our TP of S\$0.70 is based on DCF with an assumed discount rate of 7.9% (risk-free rate of 3.0%). Our TP implies an 8.1% yield and a P/NAV of 0.75x.

Where we differ:

In addition to the one-off pre-termination compensation to be paid in FY22, we have also assumed an increase in all-in financing costs when maturing loans are refinanced during the year.

Key Risks to Our View:

Key risks include those that are sponsor-related such as failure to extend master-lease agreements and challenges in underlying occupancy.

At A Glance

| , te , t Clair te | |
|---|-----------|
| Issued Capital (m shrs) | 809 |
| Mkt. Cap (S\$m/US\$m) | 498 / 357 |
| Major Shareholders (%) | |
| Forchn Holdings Group Co Ltd | 44.5 |
| China Cinda Asset Management Co Ltd | 10.1 |
| DAZHONG CAPITAL | 5.4 |
| Free Float (%) | 40.0 |
| 3m Avg. Daily Val (US\$m) | 0.34 |
| GIC Industry: Real Estate / Equity Real Estate Investment | (REITs) |







WHAT'S NEW

Attractive yields to balance out surprise compensation

Organic growth in earnings reported in 1Q22. Gross Revenue and NPI increased 0.7% and 3.2% q-o-q, mainly due to rental escalations. The higher earnings were also due to late fee income and the strengthening of the RMB against SGD. On 1 Jan 2022, rents at Fu Heng and Chongxian Port Investment underwent a 2.0% annual rent escalation.

10% decline in DI due to tax expenses and pre-termination compensation. 1022 DI fell by 10% a-o-a to S\$11.2m due to higher income tax expenses and provisions for pretermination compensation at Fu Zhuo Industrial.

Income tax expenses more than doubled in 1Q22 to S\$6.9m due to the repatriation of funds. As income taxes are recognised at the time of repatriation of funds, taxes will revert to normal levels in subsequent quarters.

Compulsory expropriation of Fu Zhuo Industrial has been finalised. The expropriation of Fu Zhuo Industrial by the RPC authorities has been finalised and income contribution from the property has ceased from 1 April 2022. The compensation to ECWREIT for the expropriation of the

asset is RMB108.5m, and ECWREIT will be paid in three tranches.

The compensation from the PRC authorities is 92.8% of the property's latest valuation, or 26.8% higher than its purchase consideration at IPO. We understand that the compensation has also considered the need for the pretermination compensation to the tenant, which amounts to RMB19.2m.

We understand that ECWREIT is liable for a compensation of RMB19.2m to its tenant for the pre-termination of the lease and it was a mechanism that has been baked into its lease since IPO. The tenant had signed a 15-year lease (Oct. 2014 – Oct 2029) and had put in significant capex at the port property which comprises berths and office buildings.

Like the compensation to be paid by the PRC authorities, 30% of the provisions for the pre-termination compensation to the tenant has been recognised in 1022. Future provisions will also be recognised together when the PRC authorities pay ECWREIT the remaining two tranches.

Fu Zhuo Industrial ceased income contribution from 1 April 2022



Fu Zhuo Industrial is a port property which comprises berths and office buildings and is located in the west of Chongxian New City, north of Hangzhou, on the east bank of the Beijing-Hangzhou Grand Canal, and next to the National Highway No. 320 and Jiaxing-Huzhou Expressway.

| Commencement of Operations | Oct 2014 |
|---|----------------|
| Net Lettable Area (sqm) | 7,128 |
| Type of Lease | Multi-tenanted |
| Occupancy ⁽¹⁾ | 100.0% |
| Purchase Consideration (RMB'm) | 85.6 |
| Independent Valuation (RMB'm) (1) | 117.0 |
| % of Portfolio Valuation (1) | 1.48% |
| Compensation package (RMB'm) | 108.5 |
| Provision of Compensation to 3 rd party tenant (RMB'm) | 19.2 |

As at 31 March 2022. As at 31 March 2022. By Gross Rental Income For the financial year ended 31 December 2021

Source: EC World REIT

EC World REIT



Organic growth in earnings will make up for absence of contribution; however, pre-termination compensation remains an unwelcome surprise. Based on our estimates, income contribution from Fu Zhuo Industrial amounts to c.S\$2.0m per annum (c.1.6% of revenues). The built-in rental escalations at its other properties will more than make up for the absence on income contribution from Fu Zhuo Industrial, but the RMB19.2m (c.S\$4.1m) in pre-termination compensation is an unwelcome surprise to our estimates.

In our view, ECWREIT's compensation to the tenant for pretermination seems high and the compensation from the PRC authorities does not seem adequate to account for this. The c.S\$4.1m will be an unwelcome surprise to our projections for ECWREIT, and will hit its earnings in FY22. This will lead to a more than 8.0% reduction in ECWREIT's FY22 distributable income based on our earlier projections. c.S\$1.2m in provisions has been recognised in 1Q22, and we expect the remaining c.S\$2.9m to be recognised over the course of FY22.

Entire offshore borrowings expected to be refinanced before end-May 2022. ECWREIT's leverage improved slightly to 37.3% in 1Q22 following the repayment of some short-term borrowings and its running borrowing costs inched up marginally to 4.2%. of its entire borrowings of S\$706.5m, c.98% (or c.S\$691m) are offshore borrowings that will be maturing at the end of May 2022. The remaining c.2% are onshore borrowings that will only be due in end-July 2029.

New regulations introduced in August 2020 resulted in the tightening of credit to property related companies in China, thereby making lenders more cautious in giving out property related loans. This has been part of the reason for the delays in refinancing its loans that are due this month. However, we understand that ECWREIT is already in the final stages of negotiations and will announce the refinancing in the coming two weeks (before the end of May 2022).

Given the rising interest rate environment, we believe that any refinancing done at this time will likely lead to an increase in all-in borrowing costs, unless the refinancing is done on a shorter tenure (loan tenures of less than 2 years). As such, we have also factored in an increase in financing costs in our projections.

Pre-termination compensation is to be a one-off in FY22, and distributions are expected to rebound in FY23. As highlighted, we have revised our earnings estimates to account for the c.S\$4.1m in pre-termination compensation, as well as our projections for higher financing costs in FY22. Our revised DPU projections of S\$5.65 Scts in FY22 is a c.9.7% decline in DPU compared to FY21. Looking ahead, without the one-off provisions for pre-termination in FY23, we project ECWREIT's distributions to rebound by more than 6%.

Maintain BUY with a lower TP of S\$0.70. Despite the downward revision in our projections, ECWREIT'S FY22 forward yield remains attractive at c.9.2% at its current share price. On a normalised basis in FY23 (without the one-off pre-termination compensation), the projected rebound of more than 6% in distributions implies a FY23 yield of c.9.8%.

In our DCF valuation, we have also tapered down our terminal growth assumptions for ECWREIT to 1.0% (from 1.5%) given the economic uncertainties caused by prolonged lockdowns and a downward revision in China's GDP growth forecasts. Having already accounted for these downside risks, we believe ECWREIT still remains attractive on a valuation perspective. Moreover, we anticipate that the successful refinancing of its maturing loans in the coming weeks will lead to the removal of the near-term overhang and allow the REIT to trade closer to its NAV of \$\$0.93.

As such, we will be maintaining our BUY recommendation with a revised TP of S\$0.70.

Company Background

ECW is the first specialised and e-commerce logistics REIT listed on the SGX. It has a portfolio of quality properties in China, located within one of the largest e-commerce clusters of Hangzhou in the Yangtze River Delta and Wuhan.

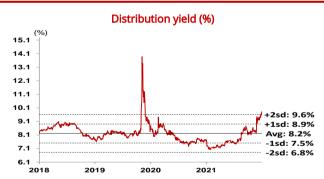


Quarterly / Interim Income Statement (S\$m)

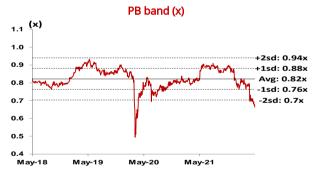
| FY Dec | 1Q2021 | 4Q2021 | 1Q2022 | % chg | % chg |
|------------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------------|---------|
| | | • | | у-о-у | qoq |
| | | | | | |
| Gross revenue | 30.8 | 31.9 | 32.2 | c 4.4 | 0.7 |
| Property expenses | (3.1) | (3.1) | (2.4) | (22.6) | (22.8) |
| Net Property Income | 27.7 | 28.8 | 29.7 | 7.4 | 3.2 |
| Other Operating | (3.3) | (2.0) | (1.9) | (43.3) | (9.1) |
| Other Non Opg | 4.54 | 0.88 | 1.55 | (65.8) | 76.3 |
| Associates & JV Inc | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | nm | nm |
| Net Interest (Exp)/Inc | (9.2) | (9.6) | (9.3) | (1.2) | 3.3 |
| Exceptional | 0.0 | 0.0 | (4.1) | N/A | N/A |
| Net Income | 19.8 | 18.1 | 16.0 | (18.9) | (11.1) |
| Tax | (4.9) | (2.9) | (6.9) | 40.8 | 136.1 |
| Minority Interest | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | N/A | N/A |
| Net Income after | 14.9 | 15.1 | 9.16 | (38.5) | (39.5) |
| Total Return | 14.9 | (14.6) | 7.34 | (50.7) | (150.1) |
| Non-tax deductible | (1.2) | 27.1 | 3.86 | (435.1) | (85.8) |
| Net Inc available for | 13.7 | 12.4 | 11.2 | (18.5) | (10.0) |
| Ratio (%) | | | | | |
| Net Prop Inc Margin | 89.9 | 90.2 | 92.5 | | |
| Dist. Payout Ratio | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | | |

Source of all data: Company, DBS Bank

Historical Distribution yield and PB band



Source: Bloomberg Finance L.P., DBS Bank estimates



Source: Bloomberg Finance L.P., DBS Bank estimates





Income Statement (S\$m)

| FY Dec | 2019A | 2020A | 2021A | 2022F | 2023F |
|-----------------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Gross revenue | 99.1 | 110 | 125 | 125 | 127 |
| Property expenses | (9.4) | (9.4) | (12.5) | (12.5) | (12.7) |
| Net Property Income | 89.7 | 100 | 113 | 113 | 114 |
| Other Operating expenses | (6.5) | (5.7) | (9.6) | (9.3) | (9.7) |
| Other Non Opg (Exp)/Inc | (4.3) | (9.3) | 8.55 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| Associates & JV Inc | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| Net Interest (Exp)/Inc | (31.1) | (37.2) | (37.6) | (40.8) | (41.4) |
| Exceptional Gain/(Loss) | 0.0 | 0.09 | 0.0 | (4.1) | 0.0 |
| Net Income | 47.8 | 48.2 | 74.4 | 58.6 | 63.1 |
| Tax | (32.9) | (22.2) | (20.2) | (14.7) | (15.8) |
| Minority Interest | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| Preference Dividend | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| Net Income After Tax | 14.9 | 26.0 | 54.3 | 44.0 | 47.3 |
| Total Return | 65.2 | 15.4 | 24.5 | 44.0 | 47.3 |
| Non-tax deductible Items | (16.4) | 31.8 | 27.4 | 4.37 | 4.41 |
| Net Inc available for Dist. | 48.9 | 47.2 | 51.9 | 48.3 | 51.8 |
| Growth & Ratio | | | | | |
| Revenue Gth (%) | 3.0 | 10.7 | 14.4 | (0.1) | 1.2 |
| N Property Inc Gth (%) | 2.7 | 11.8 | 12.7 | (0.1) | 1.2 |
| Net Inc Gth (%) | (57.4) | 74.8 | 108.6 | (19.0) | 7.7 |
| Dist. Payout Ratio (%) | 98.7 | 91.3 | 90.0 | 95.0 | 95.0 |
| Net Prop Inc Margins (%) | 90.5 | 91.4 | 90.1 | 90.0 | 90.0 |
| Net Income Margins (%) | 15.0 | 23.7 | 43.2 | 35.1 | 37.3 |
| Dist to revenue (%) | 49.3 | 43.0 | 41.4 | 38.5 | 40.8 |
| Managers & Trustee's fees | 6.5 | 5.2 | 7.6 | 7.4 | 7.7 |
| ROAE (%) | 2.2 | 3.7 | 7.4 | 5.8 | 6.2 |
| ROA (%) | 0.9 | 1.5 | 2.9 | 2.3 | 2.5 |
| ROCE (%) | 1.6 | 3.0 | 4.2 | 4.2 | 4.3 |
| Int. Cover (x) | 2.7 | 2.5 | 2.8 | 2.5 | 2.5 |

S\$4.1m in provisions for pre-termination compensation to be paid to tenant at Fu Zhuo Industrial.

Source: Company, DBS Bank





Quarterly Income Statement (S\$m)

| FY Dec | 1Q2021 | 2Q2021 | 3Q2021 | 4Q2021 | 1Q2022 |
|-----------------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|---------------|
| | 20.0 | 24.2 | 24.6 | 24.0 | 22.2 |
| Gross revenue | 30.8 | 31.2 | 31.6 | 31.9 | 32.2 |
| Property expenses | (3.1) | (3.2) | (3.0) | (3.1) | (2.4) |
| Net Property Income | 27.7 | 27.9 | 28.6 | 28.8 | 29.7 |
| Other Operating | (3.3) | (1.7) | (2.6) | (2.0) | (1.9) |
| Other Non Opg (Exp)/Inc | 4.54 | 0.64 | 2.49 | 0.88 | 1.55 |
| Associates & JV Inc | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| Net Interest (Exp)/Inc | (9.2) | (9.3) | (9.5) | (9.6) | (9.3) |
| Exceptional Gain/(Loss) | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | (4.1) |
| Net Income | 19.8 | 17.6 | 19.0 | 18.1 | 16.0 |
| Tax | (4.9) | (7.1) | (5.2) | (2.9) | (6.9) |
| Minority Interest | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| Net Income after Tax | 14.9 | 10.5 | 13.7 | 15.1 | 9.16 |
| Total Return | 14.9 | 10.5 | 13.7 | (14.6) | 7.34 |
| Non-tax deductible Items | (1.2) | 3.08 | 0.41 | 27.1 | 3.86 / |
| Net Inc available for Dist. | 13.7 | 13.6 | 14.1 | 12.4 | 11.2 |
| Growth & Ratio | | | | | |
| Revenue Gth (%) | 4 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| N Property Inc Gth (%) | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 3 |
| Net Inc Gth (%) | 88 | (29) | 31 | 10 | (40) |
| Net Prop Inc Margin (%) | 89.9 | 89.6 | 90.6 | 90.2 | 92.5 |
| Dist. Payout Ratio (%) | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |

Only S\$1.2m in pretermination compensation recognised in 1Q22. Remaining S\$3.9m has been written back and will be recognised in subsequent quarters.

Balance Sheet (S\$m)

| FY Dec | 2019A | 2020A | 2021A | 2022F | 2023F |
|---------------------------|--------|--------|-------|--------|--------|
| Investment Properties | 1,568 | 1,624 | 1,674 | 1,650 | 1,652 |
| Other LT Assets | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| Cash & ST Invts | 119 | 152 | 169 | 196 | 200 |
| Inventory | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| Debtors | 36.9 | 40.3 | 52.1 | 10.5 | 186 |
| Other Current Assets | 0.11 | 0.01 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| Total Assets | 1,724 | 1,816 | 1,895 | 1,857 | 1,863 |
| ST Debt | 67.9 | 91.0 | 708 | 688 | 688 |
| Creditor | 34.1 | 30.0 | 33.5 | 10.5 | 10.6 |
| Other Current Liab | 16.0 | 33.2 | 21.4 | 21.4 | 21.4 |
| LT Debt | 587 | 593 | 13.2 | 13.2 | 13.2 |
| Other LT Liabilities | 335 | 353 | 367 | 367 | 367 |
| Unit holders' funds | 684 | 716 | 752 | 757 | 762 |
| Minority Interests | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| Total Funds & Liabilities | 1,724 | 1,816 | 1,895 | 1,857 | 1,863 |
| Non Cash Wkg Capital | (12.2) | (22.0) | (2.0) | (21.4) | (21.4) |
| Non-Cash Wkg. Capital | (13.2) | (22.9) | (2.8) | , , | (21.4) |
| Net Cash/(Debt) Ratio | (535) | (532) | (552) | (505) | (501) |
| Current Ratio (x) | 1.3 | 1.2 | 0.3 | 0.3 | 0.3 |
| Quick Ratio (x) | 1.3 | 1.2 | 0.3 | 0.3 | 0.3 |
| Aggregate Leverage (%) | 38.0 | 37.7 | 38.1 | 37.8 | 37.7 |

Lower investment properties due to the compulsory expropriation of Fu Zhuo Industrial.

Source: Company, DBS Bank



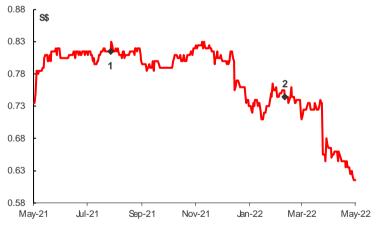


Cash Flow Statement (S\$m)

| FY Dec | 2019A | 2020A | 2021A | 2022F | 2023F |
|---------------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| | | | | =0.5 | |
| Pre-Tax Income | 47.8 | 48.2 | 74.4 | 58.6 | 63.1 |
| Dep. & Amort. | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| Tax Paid | 17.7 | 8.35 | (6.7) | (14.7) | (15.8) |
| Associates &JV Inc/(Loss) | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| Chg in Wkg.Cap. | 18.2 | (3.4) | (8.2) | 18.6 | 0.0 |
| Other Operating CF | 8.59 | 27.9 | 10.7 | 2.57 | 2.61 |
| Net Operating CF | 92.3 | 81.1 | 70.2 | 65.1 | 50.0 |
| Net Invt in Properties | (156) | 0.0 | 0.0 | 23.5 | (1.5) |
| Other Invts (net) | 0.0 | 1.06 | (0.4) | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| Invts in Assoc. & JV | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| Div from Assoc. & JVs | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| Other Investing CF | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| Net Investing CF | (156) | 1.06 | (0.4) | 23.5 | (1.5) |
| Distribution Paid | (48.5) | (43.7) | (49.7) | (45.9) | (49.2) |
| Chg in Gross Debt | 104 | (36.3) | (36.3) | (20.0) | 0.0 |
| New units issued | 3.47 | 3.73 | 4.43 | 4.37 | 4.41 |
| Other Financing CF | (3.5) | (3.7) | (4.4) | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| Net Financing CF | 55.4 | (80.0) | (86.0) | (61.5) | (44.8) |
| Currency Adjustments | (14.2) | 30.1 | 33.7 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| Chg in Cash | (22.7) | 32.2 | 17.6 | 27.1 | 3.70 |
| Operating CFPS (S cts) | 9.31 | 10.5 | 9.71 | 5.73 | 6.11 |
| Free CFPS (S cts) | (8.0) | 10.1 | 8.69 | 10.9 | 5.92 |

Source: Company, DBS Bank

Target Price & Ratings History



| Note: Share price and Target price are adjusted for corporate actions. |
|--|

Source: DBS Bank Analyst: Dale LAI Derek TAN

| S.No. | Date of Report | Closing Price | 12-mth Target Price | Rating |
|-------|-------------------|------------------|---------------------------|--------|
| 1: | 10 Aug 21 | 0.82 | 0.90 | BUY |
| 2. | 24 Feb 22 | 0.75 | 0.85 | BUY |

EC World REIT



DBS Bank 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)

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^{*}Share price appreciation + dividends

EC World REIT



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