

Sunpower Group Ltd.

Full steam ahead

SINGAPORE | INDUSTRIAL | NON-RATED

- Steam sales volume grew at a CAGR of 31% over FY18-21 to 7.93 mn tons. In 4Q21, the Shantou Project Phase 1 began full production; the Tongshan Project commenced trial production; while the Shanxi Xinjiang project is expected to be completed by 2022.
- China's urban steam demand is expected to grow at a CAGR of 3.6% from 2020 to 2025, to 4.88bn GJ in 2025, with steam being the non-discretionary input for production by industrial customers.

Company Background

Sunpower's main business segment is Green Investments (GI), under which it supplies industrial steam to a wide range of industries. The company has strong R&D capabilities, having been granted 163 patents, including 61 invention patents.

Green Investment (GI) portfolio consists of a total of 11 projects, including nine in operation, one in trial production and one under construction. The company's projects are all long-term, with recurring high-quality income and cash flows expected, on typically 30-year concessions.

Key Highlights

- 1. Strong growth in steam sales volume. Steam sales volume increased at CAGR of 31% from FY18 to 7.93mn tons in FY21. Sunpower's GI portfolio consists of 11 projects. For the Changrun Project, steam supply to its new large customer Sanli started in May 2021 and it will continue to connect to new customers. For Xinyuan Project, Sunpower further expanded the clean heating supply coverage area by 2mn sqm in Jimo International Trade Park. Shantou Project Phase 1 is now at full production level, with one boiler of Phase 2 in trial production. The Tongshan Project has commenced trial production, while construction on the Shanxi Xinjiang Project is expected to be completed by 2022. Sunpower continuously ramps up their GI projects, including expanding coverage areas and customer base.
- 2. China's urban steam demand is expected to grow at CAGR of 3.6% from 2020 to 2025, from 4.09bn GJ in 2020 to 4.88bn GJ in 2025. According to the National Bureau Statistics of China, the total area covered by central heating grew at CAGR of 7.7% from 7.39bn sqm in 2016 to 9.95bn sqm in 2020. The GI business can provide "clean and green, ultra-low emission" steam supply to enterprises in industrial parks, where Sunpower is the exclusive supplier. Steam is also the non-discretionary input for production by industrial customers situated in industrial parks. The length of project pipelines grew 23% YoY to 372km and is expected to continue expanding with new projects, supported by the strong demand for urban steam.
- 3. High entry barriers. Sunpower has 30-year exclusive concession rights for most of their projects with the first right of refusal. The company has an extensive network of steam pipelines covering a total of 300km. Sunpower is also able to maintain high-quality cash flows. With its fuel cost pass-through mechanism, it allows long-term stable profitability when viewed across cycles.



4 May 2022

NON-RATED

TOTAL RETURN	N.A.
TARGET PRICE	N.A.
FORECAST DIV	N.A.
CLOSING PRICE	SGD 0.43

COMPANY DATA

Bloomberg CODE:	SPWG SP
O/S SHARES (MN):	793.1
MARKET CAP (USD mn / SGD mn) :	244 / 337
52 - WK HI/LO (SGD) :	0.82 / 0.42
3M Average Daily T/O (mn):	0.49

MAJOR SHAREHOLDERS

Guo Hong Xin	19.3%
Ma Ming	17.3%

PRICE PERFORMANCE (%)

	1MTH	ЗМТН	YTD
COMPANY	(7.6)	0.0	(11.5)
STI RETURN	(0.8)	4.4	8.3

PRICE VS. STI



Source: Bloomberg, PSR

KEY FINANCIALS

KETTINANCIALS				
Y/E Dec, RMB (mn)	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21
Revenue	3,262.9	3,604.6	1,335.1	2,902.3
EBITDA	496.0	709.2	484.2	1,386.1
PATMI	253.6	352.2	377.0	453.4
Adj PATMI	253.6	352.2	198.8	135.7
Adj EPS (SGD cents)	7.0	9.6	5.4	3.6
P/E (x)	6.4	4.7	8.4	12.4
Dividend yield (%)	0.4%	0.6%	0.7%	53.6%
ROE	14.6%	16.6%	19.0%	24.5%
ROA	3.8%	4.6%	4.6%	6.9%

Source: Company, PSR

VALUATION METHOD

N.A.

Vivian Ye (+65 6212 1856)

Research Analyst yeqw@phillip.com.sg

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REVENUE

Green Investments (GI). Sunpower invests in and operates centralized facilities to supply:

- 1. Clean industrial steam to a diverse range of industries supported by structural demand
- 2. Pollution-free civil heating to a large base of households
- 3. Electricity to the State Grid

With the disposal of its Manufacturing and Services (M&S) segment, GI has been the sole contributor of revenue from 3Q21, and all revenue is derived from the People's Republic of China. Other than the provision of utilities including steam and electricity, Sunpower also sells heating products for residential use and other waste produced as a by-product of steam production.

The steam sales volume has grown at a CAGR of 31% over the past four financial years, from 3.53mn tons in FY18 to 7.93mn tons in FY21.

Disposal of Manufacturing & Services (M&S) segment. As of 21 May 2021, Sunpower has received the Tranche 1 Consideration out of the escrowed amount from the Onshore Escrow Account, and the Tranche 1 Consideration amounts to 70% of the Consideration. As of 2 July 2021, Sunpower has received the Tranche 2 Consideration, which is the balance 30% of the Consideration.

The M&S business is a manufacturing and services-based, order book-driven business, whereas the GI business is a stable asset-based business where Sunpower owns and operates industrial infrastructure projects which generate recurring income and cash flow through typically exclusive long-term concessions of approximately 30 years.

Figure 1: GI revenue contribution grew at a CAGR of 108%

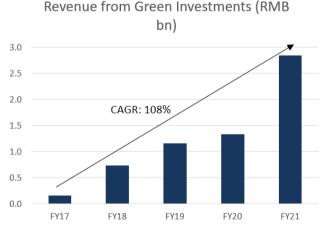
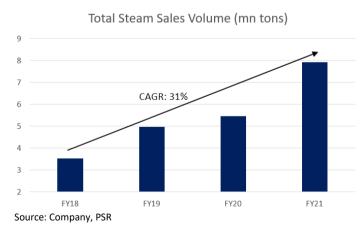


Figure 2: Total steam sales volume grew at a CAGR of 31% over past four years





EXPENSES

Cost of sales mainly includes feedstock costs, for example, coal. The Circular Economy model has been able to partly alleviate cost pressures on the production operations of the GI projects. Costs are reduced through measures such as blending sludge as a coal substitute and also the use of treated recycled water.

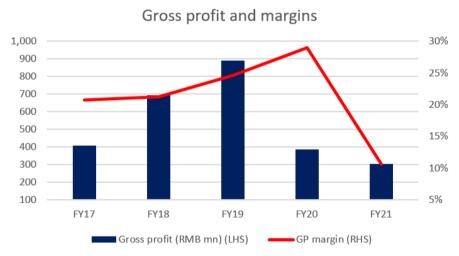
MARGINS

Gross profit margins ranged from 20% to 29% over FY17-20 (Figure 3). Gross profit first fell in FY20 due to the disposal of the M&S business. Sunpower faced compressed margins in FY21 due to high feedstock costs, as coal prices surged almost five times in 2H21 but have since returned to close to pre-pandemic levels.

EBITDA margins ranged from 12% to 20% over the same period.

Despite the compressed margins, GI recurring PATMI stayed positive at RMB135.7mn in FY21, down 31.7% from RMB198.8mn in FY20.

Figure 3: Gross margins impacted due to GI expansion





BALANCE SHEET

Assets. As of FY21, 58% of its RMB6.6bn worth of assets were intangible assets, consisting of service concession agreements, technical know-how, trademark and licenses (Figure 4). Sunpower entered into service concession agreements with the local government authorities pursuant to the construction and operation of centralised steam and electricity facilities during the concession period of up to 38.5 years. Intangible assets arise from costs incurred during the construction phase which are projected to be recoverable during the operating period.

Trade receivables decreased from RMB1.8bn in 4Q20 to RMB782.7mn in 4Q21 due to the disposal of the M&S business.

Property, plant and equipment decreased from RMB999.5mn in 4Q20 to RMB 647.2mn in 4Q21 for the same reason (Figure 5).

Liabilities. Sunpower has been in a net debt position over the past five financial years, more recently recording net debt of RMB2.34bn for FY21. Its total borrowings were at RMB2.7bn in the same period, but this compares to RMB3.8bn of Intangible assets, which are expected to generate cash flow in future operating periods.

Figure 4: Comparison of asset breakdown

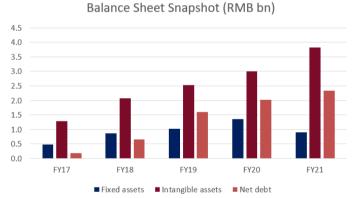
FY21 asset breakdown	% of assets
Intangible assets	58%
Trade & other receivables	12%
Cash	6%
PPE	10%

Source: Company, PSR

CASH FLOW

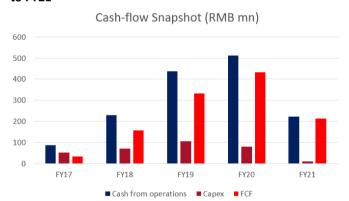
Operating and free cash flows were positive from FY17 to FY21 (Figure 6). Operating cash flow increased to RMB223.2mn, while free cash flow decreased to RMB214mn in FY21, mainly due to lower recurring profit, as a result of higher raw material costs.

Figure 5: Intangible assets have been rising steadily



Source: Company, PSR

Figure 6: Historical record of generating positive FCF from FY17 to FY21





Key Highlights

- Strong growth in steam sales volume. Steam sales volume increased at CAGR of 31% from FY18 to 7.93 mn tons in FY21. Sunpower's GI portfolio consists of 11 projects. For the Changrun Project, steam supply to its new large customer Sanli started in May 2021 and it will continue to connect to new customers. For Xinyuan Project, Sunpower further expanded clean heating supply coverage area by 2mn sqm in Jimo International Trade Park. Shantou Project Phase 1 is now at full production level, with one boiler of Phase 2 in trial production. The Tongshan Project has commenced trial production, while construction on the Shanxi Xinjiang Project is expected to be completed by 2022. Sunpower continuously ramps up their GI projects, including expanding coverage areas and customer base.
- China's urban steam demand expected to grow at a CAGR of 3.6% from 2020 to 2025, from 4.09bn GJ in 2020 to 4.88bn GJ in 2025. According to the National Bureau Statistics of China, the total area covered by central heating grew at CAGR of 7.7% from 7.39bn sqm in 2016 to 9.95bn sqm in 2020. The GI business can provide "clean and green, ultra-low emission" steam supply to enterprises in industrial parks, where Sunpower is the exclusive supplier. Steam is also the non-discretionary input for production by industrial customers situated in industrial parks. The length of project pipelines grew 23% YoY to 372km, and is expected to continue expanding with new projects, supported by the strong demand for urban steam.
- 3. High entry barriers. Sunpower has 30-year exclusive concession rights for most of their projects with first right of refusal. The company has an extensive network of steam pipelines covering a total of 300km. Sunpower is also able to maintain high-quality cash flows. With its fuel cost pass-through mechanism, it allows long-term stable profitability when viewed across cycles.

Key Risks

- High coal prices. Coal is the main raw material for Sunpower, and the record prices negatively impacted Sunpower's results in 2H21. Gross profit margins declined from 27% in 2Q21 to 10% in 3Q21, and 5% in 4Q21. Coal prices surged almost five times but have since softened. Even though Sunpower takes steps to mitigate impact of high raw material costs including using sludge as a substitute of coal, they are prone to be affected during times of huge changes of commodity prices.
- High finance costs. Not considering the one-off finance costs following the disposal of the M&S business in FY21, Sunpower's finance costs have averaged RMB82.6mn from FY18 to FY20. With total borrowings increasing 7% to RMB2.7bn in FY21, finance costs could continue to increase.



BUSINESS SEGMENT

Green Investments. Anti-pollution investment projects generate long-term intrinsic value in the form of recurring income and cash flows. This segment focuses on the development and operation of centralised heat, steam and electricity generation plants and investment.

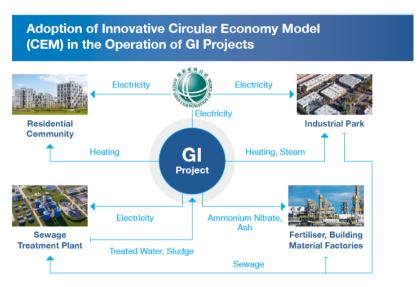
A small proportion of the steam produced is also used to drive electrical turbines, to generate electricity. Besides, Sunpower sells steam for heating and waste from steam production.

Changrun Project's total pipeline network has been extended from 50km to 80km, with the connection of the new pipeline network to Sanli (Hebei Sanli Group and Hebei Sanli Wool Spinning), one of the largest towel and blanket manufacturing enterprises in China.

There are currently nine plants in operation and two plants under construction, Tongshan project which Phase 1 construction is expected to be completed in 2021 and Shanxi Xinjiang Project which construction is expected to be completed in 2022.

A part of the new facility of the Xintai Zhengda Project has started commercial operation and the remainder is under construction. The old facility is still in operation and will remain operational until the commissioning (bringing into working condition) of the new plant.

Figure 7: Adoption of Innovative Circular Economy Model (CEM) in Operation of GI Projects



Source: Company

Such a closed-loop production model cuts resource waste and pollution to a minimum. The reusing, repurposing and recycling of products and materials, help Sunpower to reduce cost while achieving ultra-low emissions in industrial parks where GI projects are located.

Adoption of innovative technologies. Sunpower makes use of long distance steam distribution pipeline technology. This increases geographical reach and also increases the economies of scale. With the new technology, the company is thus able to reduce feedstock, with minimal temperature and pressure lost during transmission.

For its production process, Sunpower uses environmental protection technologies including low nitrogen combustion, desulphurisation and denitrification. With these technologies, the company can keep emissions far below the approved limit (Figure 8).

Other technologies include energy saving technologies, like high efficiency heat exchange technology.



Figure 8: Sunpower is able to keep emissions lower than national standards

Ability to meet or even be lower than emission standard of natural gas

Emission Limit (mg/m³)	Newly-built Coal-fired Boilers ⁽¹⁾	Newly-built Coal-fired Power Generation Boilers ⁽²⁾	Coal-fired Power Generation Boilers in Key Areas* (2)	Natural Gas Boilers & Gas Turbines ⁽²⁾	Sunpower's Capabilities
Dust	50	30	20	5	< 5
SO ₂	300	100	50	35	< 35
$NO_{\mathbf{X}}$	300	100	100	50	< 50

Figure 9: Locations of Sunpower's projects

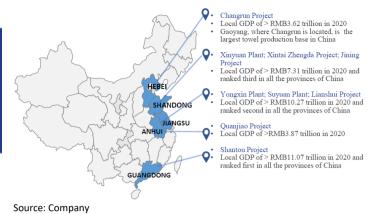


Figure 10: Updates announced in 2021 and further expansion plans

2021 Updates	Remarks
Changrun Project	Steam supply to new customer Sanli started in May 2021 following completion of pipeline connection
Yongxing Project	Commencement of blended sludge combustion in 1Q21 improved efficency and increased revenue
Shantou Project	Phase 1 commenced full production in 3Q21
Tongshan Project	Commenced trial production in 4Q21
Shantou Project	Phase 1 commenced full production in 3Q21 Phase 2 with one boiler in trial production
Xinyuan Project	Expanded clean heating supply coverage by 2mn sqm in Jimo International Trade Park
Xintai Zhengda Project	Two additional boilers commenced operations in early 2022

Expansion Plans	Remarks	
Shanxi Xinjiang Project	Construction expected to complete in 2022	



INDUSTRY

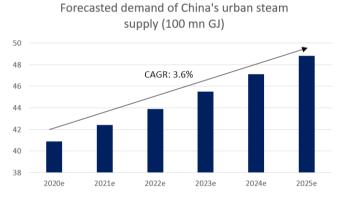
The Chinese government continues to combat air pollution and implement environmental protection policies in cities across China. The GI business can provide "clean and green, ultralow emission" steam supply to enterprises in industrial parks, where Sunpower is the exclusive supplier. Steam is also the non-discretionary input for production by industrial customers situated in the industrial parks.

GI projects have helped eliminate more than 600 high energy consumption, pollutive coal-fired boilers and reduced the emissions of dust, sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxide by over 60,000 tons every year.

On 7 July 2021, the National Development and Reform Commission released the 14th Five Year Plan for Circular Economy Development, covering 2021 to 2025. The Plan promotes the circular economy and centralised steam facilities as part of China's efforts to achieve its carbon neutral goals.

According to a report released by Zhiyan Consulting, the total demand for urban steam supply in China is forecasted to grow at CAGR of 3.6% to 4.88 bn GJ from 2020e to 2025e (Figure 12). This is expected to provide enormous growth potential and opportunities for the GI business. According to the National Bureau of Statistics of China, the total area covered by central heating grew at a CAGR of 7.7% to from 7.39bn sqm in 2016 to 9.95bn sqm in 2020.

Figure 12: China's urban steam supply to increase by 3.6% from 2020-2025



Source: Company, PSR

Sunpower has a robust pipeline of projects in different stages of evaluation including a couple of projects in late stages of evaluation.

The GI business can provide "clean and green, ultra-low emission" steam supply to enterprises in industrial parks, where Sunpower is the exclusive supplier. Steam is also the non-discretionary input for production by industrial customers situated in the industrial parks.

Coal prices. Coal is a crucial raw material for Sunpower's operations, as it uses coal to generate steam. Coal prices were on the uptrend since the start of 2021, and surged to record levels of about RMB 2,500/tonne, almost five times normalised levels (Figure 13). This was a result of tight supply due to various factors, including low stocks and supplies hit by extreme weather and transport-related disruptions. China stopped importing coal from Australia since late 2020. The Chinese government stepped in to mitigate the cost pressures, by enforcing power rationing in certain regions in 2021, and coal prices have since normalized, but are still relatively volatile.

Coal production in 2021 reached a record high of 4.13bn tonnes, which was up 5.9% YoY (Figure 14). YTD Mar22, coal production was up 11.7% YoY to 1083.9mn tons. China is still expecting coal output to grow further albeit at a slower pace, as the country is still looking to balance energy security and climate targets. The country's state planner in early March said that it will keep coal output at a record level of more than 12mn tonnes per day.

Figure 11: Approximate locations of pipeline under evaluation



Source: Company

Source: CEIC, PSR



Figure 13: Coal futures price rose to record levels of almost five times normalised levels in 2H21

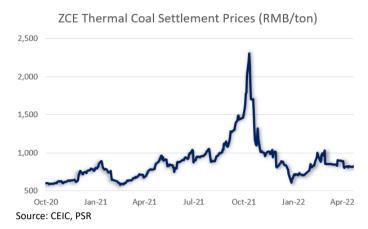


Figure 14: Monthly coal production in China hit record high in December 2021



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Total Equity



Financials

Income Statement				
Y/E Dec, RMB '000	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21
Revenue	3,262,893	3,604,632	1,335,133	2,902,319
Cost of sales	(2,569,081)	(2,716,075)	(948,919)	(2,557,549)
Gross profit	693,812	888,557	386,214	344,770
Selling & distri expenses	(58,052)	(53,752)	-	(40,022)
Admin expenses	(271,152)	(269,335)	(85,809)	(131,255)
Other opex	(30,003)	(83,672)	(4,505)	(42,812)
Gain on disposal of discontir	-	-	-	934,334
EBITDA	495,977	709,161	484,219	1,386,081
Depreciation & amortisation	(106,419)	(142,502)	(169,452)	(175,683)
EBIT	389,558	564,124	310,580	1,209,956
Finance costs	(61,824)	(109,912)	(76,056)	(530,216)
Profit before tax	327,734	454,212	234,524	679,740
Taxation	(62,147)	(90,708)	(75,309)	(241,914)
Minority interest	12,035	11,302	27,386	12,013
PATMI	253,552	352,202	377,026	453,372
Adj. PATMI	253,552	352,202	198,800	135,700

Per share data				
Y/E Dec	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21
EPS (RMB cents)	33.1	45.2	18.0	51.5
Adj EPS (RMB cents)	33.1	45.2	25.2	17.1
Adj EPS (SGD cents)	7.0	9.6	5.4	3.6
DPS (SGD cents)	0.2	0.3	0.3	24.1
BVPS (RMB cents)	195.1	268.3	321.2	252.1
RVPS (SGD cents)	40.7	56.0	67.1	52.6

Cash Flow				
Y/E Dec, RMB '000	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21
<u>CFO</u>				
Profit before tax	327,734	454,212	234,524	679,740
Adjustments	173,610	299,030	316,750	380,425
WC changes	(174,409)	(168,315)	(123,436)	(898,314)
Cash generated from ops	326,935	584,927	709,249	434,469
Income tax paid	(46,641)	(83,421)	(128,537)	(83,033)
Cashflow from ops	229,251	436,559	512,650	223,208
<u>CFI</u>				
CAPEX, net	(71,105)	(104,664)	(79,027)	(90,000)
Others	(695,606)	(1,139,191)	(702,043)	562,204
Cashflow from investments	(766,711)	(1,243,855)	(781,070)	472,204
<u>CFF</u>				
Loans, net of repayments	170,517	877,481	263,817	451,724
Dividends paid	(4,239)	(7,302)	(10,001)	(936,609)
Others	153,764	(57,747)	(141,214)	(346,578)
Cashflow from financing	320,042	812,432	112,602	(831,463)
Net change in cash	(217,418)	5,136	(155,818)	(136,051)
CCE, end	685,306	690,482	534,495	398,399

Source: Company, PSR

Balance Sheet				
Y/E Dec, RMB '000	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21
ASSETS				
Trade and other receivables	1,581,719	1,693,174	1,759,771	1,317,197
Cash	685,306	690,481	534,491	398,399
Inventories	499,862	545,015	541,003	122,706
Total current assets	2,982,368	3,234,381	3,354,419	1,367,572
PPE & IA	2,943,541	3,539,689	4,006,566	4,620,883
Land use rights	285,513	294,217	-	-
Others	411,979	551,876	924,132	616,271
Total non-current assets	3,641,033	4,385,782	4,930,698	5,237,154
Total Assets	6,623,401	7,620,163	8,285,117	6,604,726
LIABILTIES				
Trade and other payables	2,499,235	2,093,828	2,130,790	664,243
Bank borrowings	492,904	1,009,611	766,378	766,378
Others	72,709	88,398	71,743	45,853
Total current liabilities	3,064,848	3,191,837	2,968,911	1,476,474
Long-term borrowings	839,429	1,272,203	1,783,137	2,142,726
Convertible bonds	836,803	816,978	1,326,284	909,727
Others	148,190	221,255	222,314	225,004
Total non-current liabilities	1,824,422	2,310,436	3,331,735	3,277,457
Total Liabilities	4,889,270	5,502,273	6,300,646	4,753,931
Net assets	1,734,131	2,117,890	1,984,471	1,850,795
Represented by:				
Share capital	55,439	57,251	57,251	57,662
Retained earnings	1,026,344	1,308,380	1,011,993	1,028,665
Others	411,931	485,689	601,909	500,297
Non-controlling interest	240,417	266,570	313,318	264,171
condoming medicat	2-0,-1	200,570	313,310	20-7,171

Valuation Ratios				
Y/E Dec	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21
P/E (x)	6.4	4.7	8.4	12.4
P/B (x)	1.10	0.80	0.67	0.86
EV/EBITDA (X)	5.0	5.0	8.3	3.1
Dividend Yield (%)	0.4%	0.6%	0.7%	53.6%
Growth & Margins				
Growth				
Revenue	66.0%	10.5%	-63.0%	117.4%
EBITDA	113.5%	43.0%	-31.7%	186.3%
EBIT	113.8%	44.8%	-44.9%	289.6%
Net profit, adj.	117.5%	38.9%	-43.6%	-31.7%
<u>Margins</u>				
Gross margin	21.3%	24.7%	28.9%	11.9%
EBITDA margin	15.2%	19.7%	36.3%	47.8%
EBIT margin	11.9%	15.6%	23.3%	41.7%
Net profit margin	7.8%	9.8%	28.2%	15.6%
Key Ratios				
ROE (%)	14.6%	16.6%	19.0%	24.5%
ROA (%)	3.8%	4.6%	4.6%	6.9%
Net Gearing (%)	37.3%	75.1%	101.5%	135.7%
Net Debt/EBITDA (X)	1.3	2.2	4.2	1.8

1,734,131 2,117,890 1,984,471 1,850,795



Research Admin

Banking & Finance

Qystina Azli - qystina@phillip.com.sg

US Technology Analyst (Internet)

Glenn Thum - glennthumjc@phillip.com.sg

Jonathan Woo - jonathanwookj@phillip.com.sg



Contact Information (Research Team)

Head of Research

Small-Mid Cap

Credit Analyst

Paul Chew - paulchewkl@phillip.com.sg Consumer | Industrials | Conglomerate

Shawn Sng - shawnsngkh@phillip.com.sg

Vivian Ye - yeqw@phillip.com.sg

Terence Chua – terencechuatl@phillip.com.sg

Property | REITs

Natalie Ong - natalieongpf@phillip.com.sg

US Technology Analyst (Hardware)

Timothy Ang - timothyang@phillip.com.sg

US Technology Analyst (Software/Services)

Ambrish Shah – amshah@phillipcapital.in

Contact Information (Regional Member Companies) MALAYSIA

Phillip Capital Management Sdn Bhd

B-3-6 Block B Level 3 Megan Avenue II,

No. 12, Jalan Yap Kwan Seng, 50450

Kuala Lumpur

Tel +603 2162 8841

Fax +603 2166 5099

Website: www.poems.com.my

INDONESIA

PT Phillip Securities Indonesia

ANZ Tower Level 23B,

Jl Jend Sudirman Kav 33A

Jakarta 10220 - Indonesia

Tel +62-21 5790 0800

Fax +62-21 5790 0809

FRANCE

King & Shaxson Capital Limited

3rd Floor, 35 Rue de la Bienfaisance 75008

Paris France

Tel +33-1 45633100

Fax +33-1 45636017

AUSTRALIA

Phillip Capital Limited

Level 10, 330 Collins Street

Melbourne, Victoria 3000, Australia

Tel +61-03 8633 9803

Fax +61-03 8633 9899

Website: www.phillipcapital.com.au

Website: www.kingandshaxson.com

Website: www.phillip.co.id

HONG KONG

Phillip Securities (HK) Ltd

11/F United Centre 95 Queensway Hong Kong Tel +852 2277 6600

Fax +852 2868 5307 Websites: www.phillip.com.hk

CHINA

Phillip Financial Advisory (Shanghai) Co Ltd

No 550 Yan An East Road, Ocean Tower Unit 2318, Postal code 200001 Tel +86-21 5169 9200 Fax +86-21 6351 2940

Website: www.phillip.com.cn

UNITED KINGDOM

King & Shaxson Capital Limited

6th Floor, Candlewick House, 120 Cannon Street, London, EC4N 6AS Tel +44-20 7426 5950 Fax +44-20 7626 1757

Website: www.kingandshaxson.com

CAMBODIA

Phillip Bank Plc

Ground Floor of B-Office Centre, #61-64, Norodom Blvd Corner Street 306, Sangkat Boeung Keng Kang 1, Khan Chamkamorn, Phnom Penh, Cambodia

Tel: 855 (0) 7796 6151/855 (0) 1620 0769 Website: www.phillipbank.com.kh

DUBAI

Phillip Futures DMCC

Member of the Dubai Gold and Commodities Exchange (DGCX) Unit No 601, Plot No 58, White Crown Bldg, Sheikh Zayed Road, P.O.Box 212291 Dubai-UAE

Tel: +971-4-3325052 / Fax: + 971-4-3328895

SINGAPORE

Phillip Securities Pte Ltd

Raffles City Tower 250, North Bridge Road #06-00 Singapore 179101 Tel +65 6533 6001 Fax +65 6535 6631

Website: www.poems.com.sg

JAPAN

Phillip Securities Japan, Ltd.

4-2 Nihonbashi Kabuto-cho Chuo-ku, Tokyo 103-0026 Tel +81-3 3666 2101 Fax +81-3 3666 6090 Website: www.phillip.co.jp

THAILAND

Phillip Securities (Thailand) Public Co. Ltd

15th Floor, Vorawat Building, 849 Silom Road, Silom, Bangrak, Bangkok 10500 Thailand Tel +66-2 6351700 / 22680999 Fax +66-2 22680921 Website www.phillip.co.th

UNITED STATES

Phillip Capital Inc

141 W Jackson Blvd Ste 3050 The Chicago Board of Trade Building Chicago, IL 60604 USA Tel +1-312 356 9000 Fax +1-312 356 9005 Website: www.phillipusa.com

INDIA

PhillipCapital (India) Private Limited

No.1, 18th Floor, Urmi Estate 95, Ganpatrao Kadam Marg Lower Parel West, Mumbai 400-013 Maharashtra, India

Tel: +91-22-2300 2999 / Fax: +91-22-2300 2969 Website: www.phillipcapital.in

TURKEY

PhillipCapital Menkul Degerler

Dr. Cemil Bengü Cad. Hak Is Merkezi No. 2 Kat. 6A Caglayan 34403 Istanbul, Turkey Tel: 0212 296 84 84 Fax: 0212 233 69 29

Website: www.phillipcapital.com.tr

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