Singapore Company Update

Singtel

Bloomberg: ST SP | Reuters: STEL.SI

DBS Group Research. Equity

Refer to important disclosures at the end of this report

26 Feb 2024

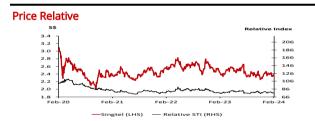
BUY

Last Traded Price (23 Feb 2024): S\$2.37 (STI: 3,184.91) Price Target 12-mth: \$\$3.27 (38% upside) (Prev \$\$3.39)

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What's New

- 3Q24 underlying earnings of S\$559m (flat y-o-y, +1.6% q-oq) was 6%-7% below our estimates, on sharp drop in Airtel Africa and Telkomsel weakness; core operating profit was in line, led by NCS, Digital Infraco, and an absence of Trustwave losses
- We lower our FY24F/25F group earnings by 9% each on weakness in associates, bringing us 8%/15% below consensus
- Maintain BUY with a lower TP of S\$3.27, with 37% upside potential. Key catalysts for the share price will be ROIC upliftment, higher dividends, and divestments



Forecasts and Valuation				
FY Mar (S\$m)	2023A	2024F	2025F	2026F
Revenue	14,624	14,013	14,165	14,653
EBITDA	5,973	5,869	6,136	6,466
Pre-tax Profit	3,212	3,152	3,425	3,576
Net Profit	2,225	2,166	2,355	2,459
Net Pft (Pre Ex.)	2,053	2,166	2,355	2,459
Net Pft Gth (Pre-ex) (%)	6.7	5.5	8.7	4.4
EPS (S cts)	13.4	13.0	14.1	14.8
EPS Pre Ex. (S cts)	12.3	13.0	14.1	14.8
EPS Gth Pre Ex (%)	6	6	9	4
Diluted EPS (S cts)	13.4	13.0	14.1	14.8
Net DPS (S cts)	14.9	11.1	12.7	13.3
BV Per Share (S cts)	156	158	159	161
PE (X)	17.7	18.2	16.8	16.1
PE Pre Ex. (X)	19.2	18.2	16.8	16.1
P/Cash Flow (X)	12.2	11.7	10.0	9.9
EV/EBITDA (X)	8.2	8.0	7.4	6.8
Net Div Yield (%)	6.3	4.7	5.4	5.6
P/Book Value (X)	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5
Net Debt/Equity (X)	0.4	0.3	0.2	0.2
ROAE (%)	8.2	8.3	8.9	9.2
Earnings Rev (%):		(9)	(9)	(10)
Consensus EPS (S cts):		14.6	16.4	18.6
Other Broker Recs:		B: 15	S: 0	H: 2

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

Focus on core operating profit trajectory

Investment Thesis:

Benefits from geographical diversification. Singlel is the No.1 integrated player in Singapore and owns the No.2 mobile player in Australia. Singtel holds significant stakes in its telecom associates in India, Indonesia, the Philippines, and Thailand, which contribute over 67% of the group's operating profit in FY23.

Holding company (HoldCo) discount has expanded to 48% compared to last 5-year average of 33%. The HoldCo discount has expanded from less than 15% in FY18 to 48%, as the share does not reflect the rise in the market value of its associates. This can be explained by Singtel's ROIC falling below its WACC due to a sharp decline in core operating profit over the last five years. We expect the HoldCo discount to narrow to 20%, (i) with a recovery in core operating profit led by annual cost-savings of S\$200m over FY23F-26F and growth in its NCS and data-centre business, and (ii) a divestment target of S\$6bn (>36Scts per share) over FY23-26F including associates. This should uplift the ROIC and support a ~90% payout ratio over the next three years.

Potential catalyst: ROIC exceeding WACC with 2HFY24F results, divestments, and higher dividends. We project Singtel's ROIC would breakeven with its WACC in FY24F. Singtel could also benefit from potential divestments and a higher payout ratio of 90% in 2H24F vs. a 77% payout ratio in 1H24.

Maintain BUY with a lower TP of S\$3.27 (prev: S\$3.39). We cut our FY24F/25F earnings by 9% each, reflecting the lower contribution from Bharti Airtel and Telkomsel. After expanding the HoldCo discount to 20% (15% earlier), regional associates are worth S\$2.51 per share (prev: S\$2.56), mainly due to a drop in Telkomsel's value, offsetting the rise in the market value of Bharti. We also lower the fair value of the core business in Singapore & Australia to S\$0.76 (prev: S\$0.84) per share, as we lower our Optus valuation to 4x 12m forward EV/EBITDA (5x earlier) to reflect its lower ROIC.

Further decline in Aussie dollar or irrational competition in Australia could risk recovery. There can be an adverse impact from Optus due to any irrational competition coupled with a further decline in the Aussie dollar. Our base case assumes a gradual recovery in Optus's operating profit.

At A Glance

Issued Capital (m shrs)	16,504
Mkt. Cap (S\$m/US\$m)	39,116 / 29,123
Major Shareholders (%)	
Temasek Holdings Pte Ltd	52.0
Free Float (%)	48.0
3m Avg. Daily Val (US\$m)	41.7
GIC Industry: Communication Services / Telecom	munication

Services





WHAT'S NEW

3Q24 underlying earnings were ~6%-7% below, on associate weakness

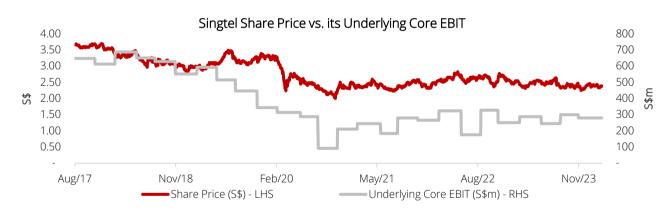
3Q24 underlying earnings of \$\$559m (+1.6% q-o-q, flat y-o-y) were 6%-7% below our expectations on sharp drop in Airtel Africa and Telkomsel weakness. In 3Q24 (Mar YE), Singtel recorded flattish y-o-y (+1.6% q-o-q) underlying earnings of \$\$559m, 6%-7% below our estimates. The weakness stems from lower-than-expected pre-tax contribution from associates, which fell by 8.8% y-o-y (-16% q-o-q) to \$\$509m. Bharti Airtel recorded strong operating profit across the India and Africa segments. However, its pre-tax earnings contribution dropped 21% y-o-y to \$\$146m. This was due to the steep depreciation of local currencies in Africa, especially the Nigerian naira, leading to currency translation losses for its foreign currency-denominated liabilities. Telkomsel's performance was impacted by lower mobile earnings on accelerated declines in legacy services and higher operating expenses and depreciation charges.

3Q24 underlying core operating profit (EBIT) of S\$324m (+16% q-o-q, +13% y-o-y) was in line, led by NCS, Digital InfraCo, and the absence of Trustwave losses. Singtel's core EBIT stood at S\$324m (+16% q-o-q, +13% y-o-y), led by NCS, Digital InfraCo,

and the absence of Trustwave losses. NCS witnessed growth in its Enterprise and Government businesses and NCS EBIT grew by 31% q-o-q (up 139% y-o-y), on the back of resource and cost optimisation and a reduction in acquisition-related costs. NCS recorded strong bookings of \$694m in 3Q24 with a pipeline of projects in various sectors. Trustwave losses were absent in 3Q24, as it was classified as a subsidiary held for sale by the end of 2Q24, saving an estimated \$30m every quarter. Singtel declared an interim dividend of 5.2 Scts per share in 1H24 and is on track to reach the upper end of its 70%-90% payout ratio guidance.

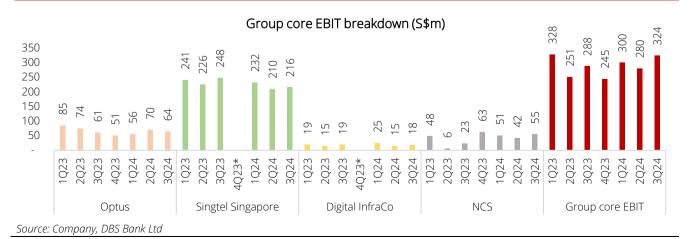
Recovery in core EBIT is crucial in supporting upliftment in ROIC. Return on Invested Capital (ROIC) upliftment is a key catalyst in driving Singtel's share price and we expect Singtel to breakeven with its weighted average cost of capital (WACC) in FY24F. To support this, recovery in core EBIT from Singapore and Australia is critical. Core EBIT has been exhibiting a positive correlation of 83% with Singtel's share price over the last six years.

Singtel's core operating profit (which excludes associates) has a high correlation of 83% with its share price



Source: Company, Reuters, DBS Bank Ltd

Core operating profit (EBIT) of S\$324m (+16% q-o-q, +13% y-o-y) was in line, led by NCS, Digital InfraCo, and the absence of Trustwave losses





We have lowered our FY24F/25F underlying earnings by 9% each on associate weakness. In 3Q24, Telkomsel and Bharti Airtel exhibited weaknesses in their contribution to Singtel's underlying earnings, resulting in a reduction in their overall contribution for FY24F/25F. Hence, based on their 9M24 performance, we have lowered Bharti Airtel's pre-tax contribution by 7%/4% in

FY24F/25F and Telkomsel's contribution by 22% each in FY24F/25F. This results in us revising our underlying earnings for FY24F/25F by 9% each. Our underlying earnings are now 8%/15% below consensus, mainly due to the associate weakness.

Associate pre-tax contribution has been lowered by 11% each in FY24F/25F on weakness in Telkomsel and Bharti Airtel.

		PREV	/IOUS	REV	SED	% ch	ange
S\$m	2023	2024	2025	2024	2025	2024	2025
Telkomsel	862	862	868	802	830	-7%	-4%
Bharti Airtel	694	937	1,134	729	882	-22%	-22%
AIS	297	297	297	297	297	0%	0%
InTouch	113	113	113	113	113	0%	0%
Globe	301	301	301	301	301	0%	0%
NetLink	62	62	62	62	62	0%	0%
Others including SingPost	(42)	(42)	(42)	(42)	(42)	0%	0%
Total	2,287	2,530	2,733	2,261	2,442	-11%	-11%
Growth	7%	11%	8%	-1%	8%		

Source: Company, DBS Bank Ltd

Our revised FY24F/25F underlying earnings is 8%/15% below consensus on associate weakness.

		DBS Revised		Consensus			DBS vs Cons			
S\$m	FY23	FY24	FY25	FY26	FY24	FY25	FY26	FY24	FY25	FY26
Revenue	14,624	14,013	14,165	14,653	14,505	14,969	15,356	-3%	-5%	-5%
EBIT	1,112	1,138	1,198	1,247	1,128	1,250	1,396	1%	-4%	-11%
Associate pre-tax	2,287	2,261	2,442	2,638	2,603	3,078	3,472	-13%	-21%	-24%
Underlying Net Profit	2,053	2,166	2,355	2,459	2,348	2,769	3,079	-8%	-15%	-20%

Source: Company, Visible Alpha, DBS Bank Ltd

Maintain BUY with a lower TP of S\$3.27 (prev: S\$3.39). The lower TP stems from a 11% reduction in associate contribution for both FY24F/25F, reflecting Bharti Airtel's and Telkomsel's weakness. Our fair value for the company's core business in Singapore & Australia is S\$0.76 (prev: S\$0.84) per share on 4x

12m forward EV/EBITDA for Optus (prev: 5x EV/EBITDA) to reflect its low ROIC and its lower net debt position. Regional associates, after a 20% HoldCo discount (prev: 15% discount), are worth \$\$2.51 per share (prev: \$\$2.56) on Telkomsel weakness.

SOTP of Singtel and its associates

Value of the core business in Singapore & Australia is S\$0.76 (prev: S\$0.84) per share

	12m forward EBITDA (S\$m)	EV/EBITDA	Ownership	Value (S\$m)	Per Share (S\$)	Previous
Singapore business excluding Data Centre*	1,682	5.0	100%	8,410	0.50	0.52
Optus telco	1,849	4.0	100%	7,396	0.44	0.58
Data centre**			80%	4,396	0.26	0.26
Enterprise Value of Core Business				20,202	1.21	1.37
Net Debt				(7,519)	(0.45)	(0.54)
Minority interest				34	0.00	0.00
Equity value of the core business				12,717	0.76	0.84

^{*}Excludes data centre EBITDA of S\$172m, which is expected to grow by 40% y-o-y in FY24F

Source: Company, DBS Bank Ltd

^{**}Based on KKR deal on S\$1.1bn for 20% stake



Regional associates are worth S\$2.51 (prev: S\$2.56) per share based on their market values (only Telkomsel is valued at a fair price)

	Share Price	Exchange Rates	Stake	Value (S\$m)	Per share (S\$)	Previous
Bharti Airtel	1,100.00	61.73	29.9%	30,082	1.81	1.79
AIS	209.00	26.72	23.3%	5,420	0.33	0.34
InTouch	70.75	26.72	25.0%	2,123	0.13	0.13
Globe	1,763.00	41.56	46.8%	2,863	0.17	0.17
SingPost	0.41	1.00	21.8%	201	0.01	0.01
NetLink NBN Trust	0.85	1.00	24.8%	821	0.05	0.05
Regional Associates	FY23F (March YE) PER	Exchange Rates	Stake	Value (S\$m)	Per share (S\$)	Previous

Regional Associates	FY23F (March YE) PER	Exchange Rates	Stake	Value (S\$m)	Per share (S\$)	Previous
Telkomsel	14	11,613	30%	10,740	0.64	0.71

	Value (S\$m)	Per share (S\$)	Previous
Total	52,251	3.14	3.20
Hold co discount (20%)	(10,450)	(0.63)	(0.64)
Associate Valuation	41,801	2.51	2.56
Core business valuation		0.76	0.84
Associate valuation		2.51	2.56
SINGTEL VALUATION		3.27	3.39

Source: Companies, Reuters, Oanda, DBS Bank Ltd

HoldCo discount for Singtel has expanded over the last 5 years (last 5-year average is 33%)



Source: Companies, Reuters, Oanda, DBS Bank Ltd

Company Background

Singtel is the largest telecom operator in Singapore and its Australian subsidiary Optus is the second-largest operator in Australia. Singtel also has substantial stakes in various telcos in the region – Telkomsel in Indonesia, Bharti Airtel (Bharti) in India, AIS in Thailand, and Globe in the Philippines.





Interim Income Statement (S\$m)

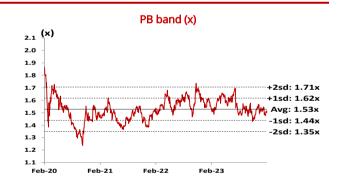
FY Mar	1H2023	2H2023	1H2024	% chg yoy	% chg hoh
Revenue	7,259	7,366	7,028	(3.2)	(4.6)
Cost of Goods Sold	(5,456)	(5,678)	(5,368)	(1.6)	(5.5)
Gross Profit	1,803	1,688	1,660	(7.9)	(1.7)
Other Oper. (Exp)/Inc	(1,225)	(1,155)	(1,080)	(11.8)	(6.5)
Operating Profit	578	533	580	0.3	8.8
Other Non Opg (Exp)/Inc	0	0	0	-	-
Associates & JV Inc	1,157	1,130	1,195	3.2	5.7
Net Interest (Exp)/Inc	(196)	(163)	(128)	34.7	21.5
Exceptional Gain/(Loss)	165	7	1,015	515.2	nm
Pre-tax Profit	1,704	1,507	2,662	56.2	76.6
Tax	(530)	(449)	(521)	(1.7)	16.1
Minority Interest	(5)	(4)	(4)	12.0	22.2
Net Profit	1,169	1,055	2,136	82.7	102.5
Net profit bef Except.	1,004	1,048	1,121	11.7	7.0
EBITDA	1,735	1,663	1,775	2.3	6.7
Margins (%)					
Gross Margins	24.8	22.9	23.6		
Opg Profit Margins	8.0	7.2	8.3		
Net Profit Margins	16.1	14.3	30.4		

Source of all data: Company, DBS Bank Ltd

Historical PE and PB band



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



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





Key Assumptions

FY Mar	2022A	2023A	2024F	2025F	2026F
Singapore Revenue	7,524	7,056	6,913	6,794	6,913
Singapore EBITDA	22.7	24.4	26.0	26.6	26.6
Optus Revenue (A\$m)	7,836	8,053	8,069	8,473	8,896
Optus EBITDA Margin (%)	26.4	25.9	25.5	25.6	25.7
Associate pre-tax	2,136	2,287	2,261	2,442	2,638

Income Statement (S\$m)

FY Mar	2022A	2023A	2024F	2025F	2026F
Revenue	15,339	14,624	14,013	14,165	14,653
Cost of Goods Sold	(11,725)	(11,134)	(10,601)	(10,666)	(11,020)
Gross Profit	3,614	3,490	3,413	3,499	3,633
Other Opng (Exp)/Inc	(2,570)	(2,379)	(2,274)	(2,301)	(2,386)
Operating Profit	1,045	1,112	1,138	1,198	1,247
Other Non Opg (Exp)/Inc	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Associates & JV Inc	2,136	2,287	2,261	2,442	2,638
Net Interest (Exp)/Inc	(312)	(359)	(248)	(215)	(309)
Exceptional Gain/(Loss)	25.0	172	0.0	0.0	0.0
Pre-tax Profit	2,894	3,212	3,152	3,425	3,576
Tax	(934)	(978)	(977)	(1,062)	(1,108)
Minority Interest	(11.0)	(8.4)	(8.4)	(8.4)	(8.4)
Preference Dividend	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Net Profit	1,949	2,225	2,166	2,355	2,459
Net Profit before Except.	1,924	2,053	2,166	2,355	2,459
EBITDA	5,903	5,973	5,869	6,136	6,466
Growth					
Revenue Gth (%)	(1.9)	(4.7)	(4.2)	1.1	3.4
EBITDA Gth (%)	4.8	1.2	(1.7)	4.6	5.4
Opg Profit Gth (%)	(8.9)	6.4	2.4	5.2	4.1
Net Profit Gth (Pre-ex) (%)	11.0	6.7	5.5	8.7	4.4
Margins & Ratio					
Gross Margins (%)	23.6	23.9	24.4	24.7	24.8
Opg Profit Margin (%)	6.8	7.6	8.1	8.5	8.5
Net Profit Margin (%)	12.7	15.2	15.5	16.6	16.8
ROAE (%)	7.1	8.2	8.3	8.9	9.2
ROA (%)	4.0	4.7	4.7	5.1	5.3
ROCE (%)	1.7	1.9	2.0	2.1	2.2
Div Payout Ratio (%)	79.0	111.2	85.0	90.0	90.0
Net Interest Cover (x)	3.3	3.1	4.6	5.6	4.0

Source: Company, DBS Bank Ltd





Interim I	Income S	Statement ((S\$m))
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FY Mar	1H2022	2H2022	1H2023	2H2023	1H2024
Revenue	7,653	7,687	7,259	7,366	7,028
Cost of Goods Sold	(5,810)	(5,915)	(5,456)	(5,678)	(5,368)
Gross Profit	1,843	1,772	1,803	1,688	1,660
Other Oper. (Exp)/Inc	(1,270)	(1,299)	(1,225)	(1,155)	(1,080)
Operating Profit	573	473	578	533	580
Other Non Opg (Exp)/Inc	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Associates & JV Inc	1,047	1,090	1,157	1,130	1,195
Net Interest (Exp)/Inc	(135)	(178)	(196)	(163)	(128)
Exceptional Gain/(Loss)	(29.0)	54.0	165	7.00	1,015
Pre-tax Profit	1,456	1,439	1,704	1,507	2,662
Tax	(496)	(438)	(530)	(449)	(521)
Minority Interest	(6.0)	(5.4)	(5.0)	(3.6)	(4.4)
Net Profit Net profit bef Except.	954 983	995 941	1,169 1,004	1,055 1,048	2,136 1,121
EBITDA	1,620	1,563	1,004	1,046	1,121
EDITUA	1,020	1,303	1,733	1,003	1,773
Growth					
Revenue Gth (%)	(6.9)	0.4	(5.6)	1.5	(4.6)
EBITDA Gth (%)	10.7	(3.5)	11.0	(4.1)	6.7
Opg Profit Gth (%)	4.0	(17.5)	22.2	(7.8)	8.8
Net Profit Gth (%)	996.6	4.3	17.5	(9.8)	102.5
Margins					
Gross Margins (%)	24.1	23.1	24.8	22.9	23.6
Opg Profit Margins (%)	7.5	6.2	8.0	7.2	8.3
Net Profit Margins (%)	12.5	12.9	16.1	14.3	30.4
Balance Sheet (S\$m)					
FY Mar	2022A	2023A	2024F	2025F	2026F
N . 5 . 14	1.1.250	10.005	10.000	12.070	11206
Net Fixed Assets	14,250	13,385	13,698	13,979	14,296
Invts in Associates & JVs	13,040	11,788	10,007	8,845	7,205
Other LT Assets Cash & ST Invts	13,711	12,774	12,479 3,074	12,183	11,888
Inventory	2,130 270	1,668 346	3,074 322	4,572 326	6,468 337
Debtors	5,245	5,013	322 4,721	320 4,773	4,937
Other Current Assets	485	1,556	1,556	1,556	1,556
Total Assets	49,131	46,530	45,858	46,234	46,687
101417 5305	13,131	10,000	15/050	10,23 1	10,007
ST Debt	1,614	983	983	983	983
Creditor	5,596	5,310	4,359	4,406	4,558
Other Current Liab	1,845	2,006	2,252	2,337	2,383
LT Debt	10,254	9,910	9,610	9,610	9,610
Other LT Liabilities	1,713	2,307	2,307	2,307	2,307
Shareholder's Equity	28,125	26,005	26,330	26,565	26,811
Minority Interests	(16.0)	9.00	17.4	25.8	34.2
Total Cap. & Liab.	49,131	46,530	45,858	46,234	46,687
Non-Cash Wkg. Capital	(1,441)	(401)	(11.1)	(88.3)	(111)
Net Cash/(Debt)	(9,738)	(9,225)	(7,519)	(6,021)	(4,125)
Debtors Turn (avg days)	127.2	128.0	126.8	122.3	120.9
Creditors Turn (avg days)	234.6	232.5	217.0	195.8	193.8
Inventory Turn (avg days)	11.0	13.1	15.0	14.5	14.3
Asset Turnover (x)	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3
Current Ratio (x)	0.9	1.0	1.3	1.5	1.7
Quick Ratio (x)	0.8	0.8	1.0	1.2	1.4
Net Debt/Equity (X)	0.3	0.4	0.3	0.2	0.2
Net Debt/Equity ex MI (X)	0.3	0.4	0.3	0.2	0.2
Capex to Debt (%)	20.8	20.9	23.5	23.4	24.6

Source: Company, DBS Bank Ltd



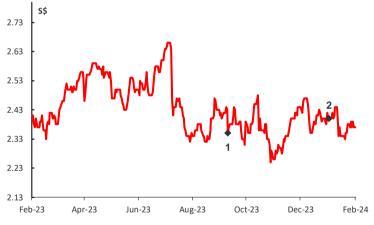


Cash Flow Statement (S\$m)

FY Mar	2022A	2023A	2024F	2025F	2026F
Pre-Tax Profit	2,894	3,212	3,152	3,425	3,576
Dep. & Amort.	2,722	2,574	2,470	2,497	2,581
Tax Paid	(352)	(346)	(731)	(977)	(1,062)
Assoc. & JV Inc/(loss)	(2,136)	(2,287)	(1,244)	(1,343)	(1,451)
Chg in Wkg.Cap.	270	(70.0)	(636)	(7.4)	(23.8)
Other Operating CF	278	146	357	371	381
Net Operating CF	3,676	3,229	3,368	3,964	4,002
Capital Exp.(net)	(2,472)	(2,278)	(2,488)	(2,482)	(2,603)
Other Invts.(net)	127	(47.0)	0.0	0.0	0.0
Invts in Assoc. & JV	(234)	(1,186)	1,400	800	1,300
Div from Assoc & JV	1,622	1,547	1,624	1,706	1,791
Other Investing CF	1,934	1,209	0.0	0.0	0.0
Net Investing CF	977	(755)	536	23.8	488
Div Paid	(1,139)	(1,552)	(1,841)	(2,119)	(2,213)
Chg in Gross Debt	(2,710)	(641)	(300)	0.0	0.0
Capital Issues	(1.0)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Other Financing CF	586	(761)	(357)	(371)	(381)
Net Financing CF	(3,264)	(2,954)	(2,499)	(2,490)	(2,594)
Currency Adjustments	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Chg in Cash	1,389	(480)	1,406	1,498	1,896
Opg CFPS (S cts)	20.6	19.8	24.0	23.8	24.2
Free CFPS (S cts)	7.27	5.71	5.28	8.90	8.40

Source: Company, DBS Bank Ltd

Target Price & Ratings 12-mth History



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

Source: DBS Bank Ltd
Analyst: Sachin MITTAL

S.No.	Date of Report	Closing Price	12-mth Target Price	Rating
1:	04 Oct 23	2.35	3.39	BUY
2:	26 Jan 24	2.40	3.39	BUY



DBS Group Research 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: 26 Feb 2024 06:23:20 (SGT) Dissemination Date: 26 Feb 2024 07:34:36 (SGT)

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^{*}Share price appreciation + dividends



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