

Retail | Singapore | February 28, 2024



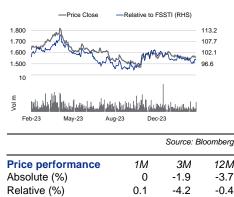
Singapore

ADD (no change)

Consensus ratings*: Buy 4	Hold 1 Sell 1
Current price:	S\$1.56
Target price:	S\$1.88
Previous target:	S\$1.82
Up/downside:	20.5%
CGSI / Consensus:	9.9%
Reuters:	SHEN.SI
Bloomberg:	SSG SP
Market cap:	US\$1,746m
	S\$2,346m
Average daily turnover:	US\$1.56m
	S\$2.09m
Current shares o/s:	1,504m
Free float:	42.6%
*Source: Bloomberg	

Key changes in this note

Finetuned FY24-25F EPS.



Major shareholders	% held
SS Holdings	29.9
Lim Hock Chee	9.2
Lim Hock Leng	9.1

Analyst(s)



ONG Khang Chuen, CFA T (65) 6210 8685 E khangchuen.ong@cgsi.com Kenneth TAN T (65) 6210 8678 E kenneth.tan@cgsi.com

Sheng Siong Group

Store opening could reaccelerate in FY24F

- 4Q23 net profit of S\$34m (+1% yoy) was in line. Higher operating expenses was offset by continued GPM expansion and higher interest income.
- Store opening likely stronger in FY24F SSG secured 2 new leases in early-2024; HDB tender pipeline is robust (10 stores in FY24F; double yoy).
- Reiterate Add. We like SSG's ability to deftly navigate business challenges and view it as a defensive play amid macro uncertainties in FY24F.

4Q23: Another set of resilient earnings

Sheng Siong Group's (SSG) 4Q23 net profit of S\$34m (+1% yoy) was in line, with FY23 net profit forming 100%/99% of our/Bloomberg consensus' forecasts. 4Q23 revenue of S\$331m (+1% yoy) was slightly below Bloomberg consensus' expectation — management attributed this to impact from: 1) more outbound travel during the holiday season, and 2) delayed festive effect, with Chinese New Year falling in Feb 2024 compared with Jan in the preceding year. 4Q23 net margin remained flattish yoy, as higher operating expenses were offset by continued GPM expansion (+1.1% pts yoy) and higher interest income.

Store opening likely to reaccelerate in FY24F

FY23 had been a slow year in terms of new store openings for SSG (+2 in Singapore), mainly due to a slower pace of tendering exercise for commercial units by the Housing Development Board (HDB). Out of the five units released for tendering in CY23, SSG secured three units, including two that were only awarded in early-2024. Its supply pipeline is robust for CY24F, with HDB having released four supermarket sites for tendering in Jan 2024, with six more slated for the remainder of the year (according to HDB). We forecast four new store openings in Singapore and one store addition in China for SSG in FY24F.

Deftly navigating business challenges

We forecast 3% EPS growth for FY24F riding on its store count expansion. FY24F revenue outlook remains strong, in our view, buoyed by consumers cutting back on non-essential spending and shifting spend towards groceries and fresh food, coupled with supportive government measures including targeted cash handouts. While competition remains keen in Singapore's supermarket industry, we think SSG's FY23 GPM expansion of +0.6% pt yoy is a testament to its ability to navigate this challenge. SSG continues to see room to improve GPM via sales mix optimisation and margin uplift in the non-fresh category. We think opex pressure could ease in FY24F as SSG has renewed its electricity contract in Oct 2023 for FY24F at lower tariffs yoy and continues to roll out more self-checkout terminals at its stores to improve labour productivity amid rising wages.

Reiterate Add

Reiterate Add as we continue to like SSG as a defensive play amid the current backdrop of elevated inflation and economic slowdown. Our TP rises to S\$1.88 as we roll over our valuation base year to FY25F, still based on 19.6x P/E (0.5 s.d. below 5-year historical mean). Re-rating catalysts: increase in HDB new store tender counts. Downside risks: weaker sales due to contracting grocery demand, and margin erosion from heightened industry competition.

Financial Summary	Dec-22A	Dec-23A	Dec-24F	Dec-25F	Dec-26F
Revenue (S\$m)	1,339	1,368	1,431	1,490	1,537
Operating EBITDA (S\$m)	162.9	157.4	169.2	176.6	181.2
Net Profit (S\$m)	133.3	133.7	138.0	144.5	148.5
Core EPS (S\$)	0.089	0.089	0.092	0.096	0.099
Core EPS Growth	0.35%	0.26%	3.23%	4.72%	2.77%
FD Core P/E (x)	17.60	17.55	17.00	16.23	15.80
DPS (S\$)	0.062	0.063	0.065	0.068	0.069
Dividend Yield	3.99%	4.01%	4.14%	4.33%	4.45%
EV/EBITDA (x)	12.72	12.86	11.77	10.97	10.39
P/FCFE (x)	14.96	13.16	14.97	12.89	12.70
Net Gearing	(60.5%)	(65.3%)	(66.4%)	(70.7%)	(74.3%)
P/BV (x)	5.19	4.75	4.38	4.06	3.77
ROE	30.8%	28.3%	26.8%	26.0%	24.7%
% Change In Core EPS Estimates			(1.09%)	(1.37%)	
EPS/Consensus EPS (x)			0.98	1.00	

SOURCES: CGSI RESEARCH, COMPANY REPORTS



Store opening likely to reaccelerate in FY24F

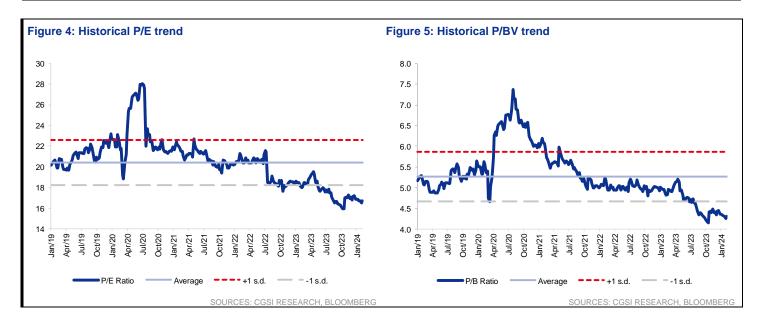
Figure 1: Results co	ompariso	n								
FYE Dec (S\$ m)	4Q23	4Q22	yoy % chg	3Q23	qoq % chg	FY23	FY22	yoy % chg	Prev FY23F	Comments
Revenue	331.4	329.2	0.7	345.8	(4.2)	1,367.7	1,339.5	2.1	1,376.3	FY23 was in line with our expectations (99% of our FY23F), but below streets' (98% of Bloomberg consensus forecast)
COGS	(231.0)	(232.9)	(0.8)	(240.9)	(4.1)	(957.2)	(946.0)	1.2	(962.0)	
Gross profit	100.4	96.3	4.3	105.0	(4.3)	410.5	393.5	4.3	414.3	
Gross margin (%)	30.3%	29.2%		30.3%		30.0%	29.4%			
OpEx	(60.5)	(54.6)	10.8	(65.5)	(7.6)	(255.1)	(231.3)	10.3	(259.9)	
EBIT	39.9	41.7	(4.2)	39.4	1.2	155.4	162.2	(4.2)	154.3	
Interest expense	(0.6)	(0.6)	2.2	(0.9)	(34.4)	(3.5)	(2.8)	26.7	(4.0)	
Interest income	2.9	1.9	55.7	2.8	4.1	11.2	3.7	205.5	10.9	
Exceptionals	0.0	0.0	na	0.0	na	0.0	0.0	na	0.0	
Pretax profit	42.3	43.0	(1.6)	41.4	2.2	163.1	163.1	0.0	161.2	
Тах	(8.6)	(9.7)	(11.9)	(6.6)	30.0	(29.1)	(29.4)	(1.1)	(27.4)	
Tax rate (%)	20.3%	22.6%		16.0%		17.9%	18.1%			
Minority interests	(0.1)	(0.1)	54.4	(0.0)	195.7	(0.3)	(0.3)	2.1	(0.3)	
Net profit	33.6	33.2	1.2	34.7	(3.3)	133.7	133.3	0.3	133.5	
Core net profit	33.6	33.2	1.2	34.7	(3.3)	133.7	133.3	0.3	133.5	In line, FY23 formed 100% of our and 99% of Bloomberg consensus forecast
EPS (Scts/share)	2.2	2.2	1.2	2.3	(3.3)	8.9	8.9	0.3	8.9	
Core EPS (Scts/share)	2.2	2.2	1.2	2.3	(3.3)	8.9	8.9	0.3	8.9	

Figure 2: Quarterly results summary														
	1Q21	2Q21	3Q21	4Q21	1Q22	2Q22	3Q22	4Q22	1Q23	2Q23	3Q23	4Q23	qoq (%)	yoy (%)
Revenue	337.5	344.1	348.1	340.0	358.0	318.8	333.5	329.2	356.5	333.9	345.8	331.4	-4.2%	0.7%
Gross margin (%)	27.6%	28.9%	29.0%	29.4%	28.7%	30.2%	29.4%	29.2%	28.8%	30.6%	30.3%	30.3%	0.0% pts	1.1% pts
Operating margin (%)	11.2%	12.4%	12.0%	11.8%	12.1%	12.2%	11.5%	12.7%	10.9%	11.1%	11.4%	12.1%	0.6% pts	-0.6% pts
Net profit	30.8	35.1	34.4	32.5	35.1	32.3	32.8	33.2	33.2	32.1	34.7	33.6	-3.3%	1.2%
									SOLIE		RESEARCH		ES COMPANY	(REPORTS

Figure 3: Earnings revision

	N	ew	C	ld	% change		
FYE Dec (S\$ m)	FY24F	FY25F	FY24F	FY25F	FY24F	FY25F	
Revenue	1,430.8	1,490.2	1,437.8	1,504.0	-0.5%	-0.9%	
Gross profit	429.8	448.0	433.1	453.5	-0.8%	-1.2%	
Net profit	138.0	144.5	139.5	146.5	-1.1%	-1.4%	
Core net profit	138.0	144.5	139.5	146.5	-1.1%	-1.4%	
Basic EPS (Scts/share)	9.2	9.6	9.3	9.7	-1.1%	-1.4%	



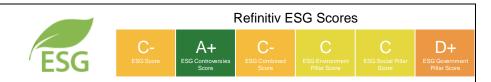


				Target	Market					Recurring	Dividen
	Bloomberg		Price	Price	Cap	P/E ((x)	2-year EPS	P/BV (x)	ROE (%)	Yield (%
Company	Ticker	Recom.	(Icl curr)	(Icl curr)	(US\$ m)	CY23F	CY24F	CAGR (%)	CY23F	CY23F	CY23
DFI Retail Group	DFI SP	Hold	2.16	2.90	2,924	17.3	11.4	115.8%	2.93	17.3%	3.6%
Sheng Siong Group	SSG SP	ADD	1.56	1.88	1,746	17.5	17.0	3.6%	4.75	27.8%	4.0%
Singapore grocery retail simp	le average					17.4	14.2	59.7%	3.8	22.5%	3.8%
Sun Art Retail Group	6808 HK	Hold	1.30	1.10	1.585	na	221.1	na	0.49	-1.1%	1.8%
Yonghui Superstores	601933 CH	Hold	2.65	3.20	3.341	106.3	31.9	na	3.28	3.1%	0.0%
Jiajiayue Group Co Ltd	603708 CH	NR	10.15	na	900	28.7	19.9	138.3%	2.73	9.3%	1.7%
Hong Kong/China grocery reta	ail simple average					67.5	91.0	138.3%	2.2	3.8%	1.2%
	051414		0.00	0.40	400		05.0	4.00/	44.07	00.40/	0.00
7-Eleven Malaysia Holdings	SEM MK	Hold	2.00	2.10	466	26.0	25.6	-1.9%	14.27	62.1%	2.3%
Aeon Co M Bhd	AEON MK	NR	1.13	na	333	13.8	12.7	6.0%	0.86	6.3%	3.5%
Malaysia retail simple averag	e					26.0	25.6	-1.9%	14.3	62.1%	2.3%
Ace Hardware Indonesia Tbk P	ACES IJ	NR	840	na	918	19.4	17.0	12.7%	2.34	12.1%	2.9%
Ramayana Lestari Sentosa Tbk	RALS IJ	NR	498	na	225	11.2	10.2	-6.7%	0.88	7.8%	7.5%
Mitra Adiperkasa Tbk PT	MAPI IJ	NR	1,935	na	2,047	15.1	13.2	7.0%	3.18	21.4%	0.4%
Industri Jamu Dan Farmasi Side	SIDO IJ	NR	610	na	1,176	19.2	18.0	-4.2%	5.45	27.6%	4.8%
Indonesia retail simple avera	ge					16.2	14.6	2.2%	3.0	17.2%	3.9%
Puregold Price Club Inc	PGOLD PM	Add	27.95	45.77	1,435	8.9	8.0	3.9%	0.90	10.5%	3.1%
Robinsons Retail Holdings Inc	RRHI PM	Add	36.50	50.22	948	13.0	7.7	10.2%	0.71	5.6%	5.5%
Philippines grocery retail ave		7100	00.00	00.22	540	11.0	7.8	7.1%	0.8	8.0%	4.3%
CP All	CPALL TB	Add	58.50	73.50	14,656	28.9	23.8	22.7%	4.68	16.8%	1.7%
Berli Jucker	BJC TB	Hold	24.30	25.00	2,716	20.0	15.1	13.3%	0.81	4.0%	3.3%
Home Product Center	HMPRO TB	Add	10.90	12.90	3,998	22.3	21.0	4.7%	5.61	25.5%	3.7%
Thai grocery retail simple ave	erage					23.7	20.0	13.6%	3.7	15.5%	2.9%
Average (simple)						27.0	28.9	36.5%	4.6	21.5%	3.1%
Average (simple) - Excluding	DFI					27.0	29.3	27.1%	4.8	22.4%	3.1%

SOURCES: CGSI RESEARCH ESTIMATES, COMPANY REPORTS, BLOOMBERG

Note: Forecasts for Not Rated (NR) companies are based on Bloomberg consensus' estimates





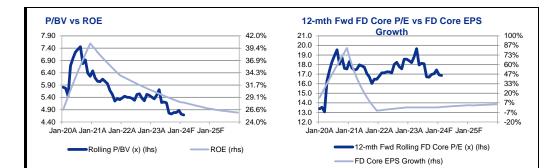
ESG in a nutshell

We see SSG's market share gain over the past four years as a proxy indicator for its success on multiple fronts, including: 1) consumer satisfaction, 2) pricing/affordability of goods sold, and 3) quality of product offerings. We also believe SSG has good social practices in place, as seen from its high emphasis on employee wellbeing. SSG is working on further diversifying its product sourcing to ensure the resiliency of its supply chain, including working with more local partners and suppliers to promote the uptake of local produce.

Keep your eye on	Implications
SSG is now working with local partners and suppliers to promote the uptake of local produce, in line with Singapore's "30 by 30" vision (for 30% of Singapore's nutritional needs to be supplied locally by 2030) and to support "made in Singapore" products.	The focus on food security in Singapore has sharpened following the Covid-19 pandemic, which highlighted just how connected the world has become. With global supply chains constantly at risk of disruption due to lockdown measures around the world, the need to have a diversified sourcing strategy has become ever more crucial to ensure minimal disruptions to goods flow, as well as pricing competitiveness.
ESG highlights	Implications
hypermarket segment grew in 2022 despite keen competition. Prior to 2022, SSG's market share grew from	We are pleased that SSG has been able to achieve continued market share growth. We believe that market share is a good proxy indicator for its success on multiple fronts, including: 1) consumer satisfaction, 2) pricing/ affordability of goods sold, and 3) quality of product offerings.
Trends	Implications
SSG's energy intensity rose to 0.261 megajoules per S\$ revenue in FY22 from 0.249 in FY21. Meanwhile, its GHG emissions intensity also rose slightly to 0.05 kg CO2e per S\$ revenue in FY22, compared with 0.04 kg CO2e per S\$ revenue in FY21. To minimise future energy usage, SSG has fitted out all its outlets with LED lights (as of end FY22), potentially reducing lighting energy consumption by up to 80% (according to the group's FY22 sustainability report).	5
	SOURCES: CGSI RESEARCH, REFINITIV



BY THE NUMBERS



Profit & Loss

(S\$m)	Dec-22A	Dec-23A	Dec-24F	Dec-25F	Dec-26F
Total Net Revenues	1,339	1,368	1,431	1,490	1,537
Gross Profit	393	411	430	448	463
Operating EBITDA	163	157	169	177	181
Depreciation And Amortisation	(20)	(18)	(19)	(18)	(18)
Operating EBIT	143	139	150	158	164
Financial Income/(Expense)	1	8	7	7	6
Pretax Income/(Loss) from Assoc.	0	0	0	0	0
Non-Operating Income/(Expense)	19	16	11	11	11
Profit Before Tax (pre-El)	163	163	168	175	180
Exceptional Items					
Pre-tax Profit	163	163	168	175	180
Taxation	(29)	(29)	(29)	(31)	(32)
Exceptional Income - post-tax					
Profit After Tax	134	134	138	145	149
Minority Interests	(0)	(0)	(0)	(0)	(0)
Preferred Dividends	0	0	0	0	0
FX Gain/(Loss) - post tax					
Other Adjustments - post-tax					
Net Profit	133	134	138	144	148
Recurring Net Profit	133	134	138	144	148
Fully Diluted Recurring Net Profit	133	134	138	144	148

Cash Flow

Casil I low					
(S\$m)	Dec-22A	Dec-23A	Dec-24F	Dec-25F	Dec-26F
EBITDA	162.9	157.4	169.2	176.6	181.2
Cash Flow from Invt. & Assoc.					
Change In Working Capital	(25.7)	2.9	(16.9)	2.6	2.0
(Incr)/Decr in Total Provisions	0.0	0.0	(0.4)	(0.4)	(0.4)
Other Non-Cash (Income)/Expense					
Other Operating Cashflow	53.5	54.4	48.3	48.1	47.6
Net Interest (Paid)/Received	(2.8)	(3.5)	(4.0)	(4.0)	(4.0)
Tax Paid	(21.2)	(34.0)	(29.3)	(30.7)	(31.6)
Cashflow From Operations	166.8	177.1	166.9	192.1	194.9
Capex	(8.8)	(10.2)	(10.2)	(10.2)	(10.2)
Disposals Of FAs/subsidiaries	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Acq. Of Subsidiaries/investments	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Other Investing Cashflow	3.8	11.4	0.0	0.0	0.0
Cash Flow From Investing	(5.0)	1.2	(10.2)	(10.2)	(10.2)
Debt Raised/(repaid)	(5.0)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Proceeds From Issue Of Shares	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Shares Repurchased	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Dividends Paid	(94.0)	(92.0)	(97.0)	(101.6)	(104.4)
Preferred Dividends					
Other Financing Cashflow	(34.5)	(37.4)	(27.2)	(27.2)	(27.2)
Cash Flow From Financing	(133.5)	(129.5)	(124.2)	(128.8)	(131.6)
Total Cash Generated	28.4	48.8	32.5	53.2	53.1
Free Cashflow To Equity	156.8	178.3	156.7	182.0	184.8
Free Cashflow To Firm	164.6	181.8	160.7	186.0	188.8

SOURCES: CGSI RESEARCH, COMPANY REPORTS



BY THE NUMBERS... cont'd

(S\$m)	Dec-22A	Dec-23A	Dec-24F	Dec-25F	Dec-26F
Total Cash And Equivalents	275.5	324.4	357.3	410.8	464.4
Total Debtors	19.5	28.5	19.6	20.4	21.1
Inventories	101.2	91.8	82.3	85.7	88.3
Total Other Current Assets	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total Current Assets	396.2	444.7	459.1	516.9	573.7
Fixed Assets	291.6	283.7	274.7	266.5	259.0
Total Investments	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Intangible Assets	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total Other Non-Current Assets	97.3	101.8	101.8	101.8	101.8
Total Non-current Assets	388.9	385.5	376.5	368.3	360.8
Short-term Debt	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Current Portion of Long-Term Debt					
Total Creditors	197.5	199.9	164.5	171.3	176.6
Other Current Liabilities	68.3	64.0	64.0	64.0	64.0
Total Current Liabilities	265.8	264.0	228.6	235.4	240.7
Total Long-term Debt	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Hybrid Debt - Debt Component	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total Other Non-Current Liabilities	62.6	66.9	66.9	66.9	66.9
Total Non-current Liabilities	62.6	66.9	66.9	66.9	66.9
Total Provisions	1.5	2.3	2.3	2.3	2.3
Total Liabilities	329.9	333.2	297.8	304.6	309.9
Shareholders' Equity	452.2	493.8	535.0	578.2	622.6
Minority Interests	2.9	3.2	2.9	2.6	2.3
Total Equity	455.2	497.0	537.9	580.8	624.9

Key Ratios

	Dec-22A	Dec-23A	Dec-24F	Dec-25F	Dec-26F
Revenue Growth	(2.21%)	2.11%	4.61%	4.15%	3.14%
Operating EBITDA Growth	(4.47%)	(3.41%)	7.51%	4.35%	2.65%
Operating EBITDA Margin	12.2%	11.5%	11.8%	11.8%	11.8%
Net Cash Per Share (S\$)	0.18	0.22	0.24	0.27	0.31
BVPS (S\$)	0.30	0.33	0.36	0.38	0.41
Gross Interest Cover	51.64	39.65	37.53	39.55	40.89
Effective Tax Rate	18.1%	17.9%	17.5%	17.5%	17.5%
Net Dividend Payout Ratio	70.2%	70.3%	70.3%	70.3%	70.3%
Accounts Receivables Days	4.24	6.41	6.16	4.90	4.92
Inventory Days	38.50	36.79	31.82	29.41	29.55
Accounts Payables Days	79.07	75.77	66.64	58.81	59.10
ROIC (%)	52.5%	47.5%	51.5%	52.6%	56.8%
ROCE (%)	33.4%	31.5%	31.0%	30.1%	28.7%
Return On Average Assets	17.4%	15.8%	15.9%	16.2%	15.8%

Key Drivers					
	Dec-22A	Dec-23A	Dec-24F	Dec-25F	Dec-26F
Acreage addition ('000 sq ft)	25.0	10.0	20.0	15.0	10.0
CGSI calculated rev psf growth (%)	-4.4%	0.0%	1.5%	1.4%	1.2%

SOURCES: CGSI RESEARCH, COMPANY REPORTS



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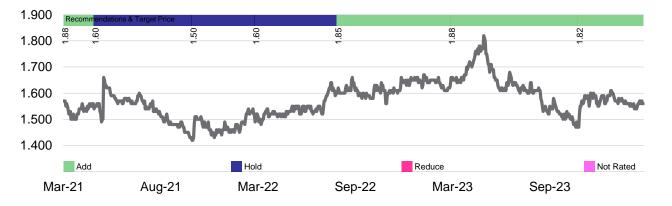


Distribution of stock ratings and investment banking clients for quarter ended on 31 December 2023			
636 companies under coverage for quarter ended on 31 December 2023			
	Rating Distribution (%)	Investment Banking clients (%)	
Add	67.5%	1.3%	
Hold	22.5%	0.0%	
Reduce	10.1%	0.2%	

Spitzer Chart for stock being researched (2 year data)

Sheng Siong Group (SSG SP)





Recommendation F	ramework
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