

4 August 2023

StarHub (STH SP)

**Recalibrated Spending** 

# Singapore Results Review

Communications | Telecommunications

## Neutral (Maintained)

Target Price (Return): SGD1.15 (9.5%) Price (Market Cap): SGD1.05 (USD1,350m) ESG score: 3.18 (out of 4) 0.74m/0.55m

### Avg Daily Turnover (SGD/USD)

Singapore Research

#### **Analyst**

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Project delays for the cybersecurity business, and ii) streamlining of the regional ICT business (JOS), which has manifested in the lower revenue growth guidance for FY23. We see a ramp-up in capex and opex in 2H23, as the group continues to harness positive outcomes from the DARE+ programme. Our TP has baked in a 4% ESG premium. Prefer Singtel (ST SP, BUY, TP: SGD3.40) for exposure to the sector.

• Stay NEUTRAL, higher SGD1.15 DCF TP from SGD1.11, 10% upside.

StarHub's 1H23 results were broadly in line. Notable highlights include: i)

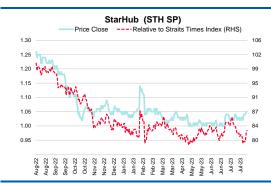
- Opex set to ramp up in 2H23. 1H23 core earnings were up 26% YoY on stronger service revenue and steady EBITDA. While this made up 62% of our forecast (consensus: 69%), we expect a ramp-up in capex and opex in 2H23 from its DARE+ transformation programme.
- Service revenue up 8% in 1H23 with growth across all segments. Most segments displayed fairly routine growth with the exception of the enterprise segment, which saw YoY growth taper off to just 1.8% in 1H23 (FY22: +22% YoY). This was led by weaker regional ICT revenue, comprising of the JOS assets in Singapore and Malaysia, and Strateq. As part of the ongoing integration of its regional businesses, StarHub is adjusting the pipeline of projects - it is removing legacy low yielding segments and pushing new service propositions which would take time to convert to sales. Entertainment segment growth was flattish QoQ but rose YoY with incremental ARPU uplift (from the Premier League) offset by subs deletions.
- Recalibrated spending; guidance fine-tuned. Cost rationalisation and renegotiations have led to a lower guidance on investments for the transformation initiative of SGD120m for FY23F (previously SGD150m; FY22: SGD106m). This does not, however, change the aspirational outcomes and scope of the programme, which is to achieve SGD500m EBITDA breakeven in FY24F. To date, the group has invested SGD136m or c.44% of the targeted SGD310m in total investments to be made over three years (2022-2024). With only SGD30m invested in 1H23, we expect capex and opex to ramp up in 2H23. Due to project execution delays for cybersecurity and the rationalisation of JOS pipelines, StarHub has toned down its service revenue growth guidance for FY23F to 3-5% from 8-10% previously, while EBITDA margin (service revenue) guidance is lifted to 22% from 20%. Post the results call, we raise FY23-25F core earnings by 3-11%, mainly on account of stronger opex efficiencies.
- Downside risks are competition, weaker-than-expected earnings, and weaker-than-expected outcomes from its transformation programme. Upside risks are stronger-than-expected earnings and cost-savings from the DARE+ programme.

Forecasts and Valuation	Dec-21	Dec-22	Dec-23F	Dec-24F	Dec-25F
Total turnover (SGDm)	2,043	2,327	2,343	2,577	2,832
Recurring net profit (SGDm)	149	148	128	148	192
Recurring net profit growth (%)	17.9	(0.7)	(13.8)	15.5	29.9
Recurring P/E (x)	12.15	12.24	14.20	12.29	9.46
P/B (x)	3.1	3.4	3.2	2.9	2.5
P/CF (x)	3.41	3.86	5.78	3.60	3.03
Dividend Yield (%)	6.1	4.8	4.8	4.8	4.8
EV/EBITDA (x)	4.79	6.57	5.56	4.71	3.72
Return on average equity (%)	26.5	10.4	23.2	24.5	27.9
Net debt to equity (%)	74.2	81.7	88.2	64.4	33.4

Source: Company data, RHB

#### **Share Performance (%)**

	YTD	1m	3m	6m	12m
Absolute	1.0	1.0	4.0	(6.3)	(16.7)
Relative	(0.6)	(2.0)	2.7	(3.9)	(18.3)
52-wk Price low	/high (SGD	))		1.00	1.26



Source: Bloomberg

#### Overall ESG Score: 3.18 (out of 4)

### E: GOOD

StarHub is committed to the progressive reduction in overall carbon footprint via proactive measures to increase the efficiency of its networks. The company publishes annual emission metrics.

### S: GOOD

StarHub is committed to helping vulnerable groups in the community through the various StarHub Cares programmes, which in 2020 raised over a million dollars for a COVID-19 Fund for the community. The company is also proactive in the development of its staff and has established partnerships with multiple government agencies such as Skills Future Singapore and Infocomm Media Development Authority to maximise its employees' learning opportunities

#### **G: EXCELLENT**

The Board is made up of 11 non-executive directors, six of which are independent, and three are women. A director's independence is carefully reviewed and monitored once their tenure exceeds nine years. The remuneration disclosures are on a named basis. The company regularly engages with the investment community through multiple channels, embodying good transparency and disclosure practices



**StarHub** 

## Communications | Telecommunications

## **Financial Exhibits**

Asia Singapore Communications StarHub STH SP

Valuation basis

DCF (WACC: 7.8%, TG: 1%)

### Key drivers

Neutral

- i. Enterprise growth and M&As;ii. 5G ARPU uplift;
- iii. Higher-than-expected cost savings

#### Key risks

Downside risks:

- i. Competition;
- ii. Weaker-than-expected earnings;
  iii. Lower-than-expected synergies from DARE+

Upside risks:

- i. Stronger-than-expected earnings;ii. Cost savings from DARE+ program.

#### **Company Profile**

Starhub is Singapore's second largest integrated telecommunications company offering quadruple play services

Financial summary (SGD)	Dec-21	Dec-22	Dec-23F	Dec-24F	Dec-25F
Recurring EPS	0.09	0.09	0.07	0.09	0.11
DPS	0.06	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.05
BVPS	0.34	0.31	0.33	0.37	0.43
Return on average equity (%)	26.5	10.4	23.2	24.5	27.9

Valuation metrics	Dec-21	Dec-22	Dec-23F	Dec-24F	Dec-25F
Recurring P/E (x)	12.15	12.24	14.20	12.29	9.46
P/B (x)	3.1	3.4	3.2	2.9	2.5
FCF Yield (%)	38.9	34.8	34.1	42.0	48.6
Dividend Yield (%)	6.1	4.8	4.8	4.8	4.8
EV/EBITDA (x)	4.79	6.57	5.56	4.71	3.72
EV/EBIT (x)	10.60	20.68	13.06	10.81	7.97

Income statement (SGDm)	Dec-21	Dec-22	Dec-23F	Dec-24F	Dec-25F
Total turnover	2,043	2,327	2,343	2,577	2,832
Gross profit	1,087	1,219	1,293	1,446	1,606
EBITDA	509	385	469	525	610
Depreciation and amortisation	(279)	(262)	(269)	(296)	(326)
Operating profit	230	122	200	229	285
Net interest	(45)	(37)	(38)	(38)	(37)
Pre-tax profit	190	89	167	196	252
Taxation	(40)	(23)	(37)	(43)	(56)
Reported net profit	149	58	128	148	192
Recurring net profit	149	148	128	148	192

Cash flow (SGDm)	Dec-21	Dec-22	Dec-23F	Dec-24F	Dec-25F
Change in working capital	73	131	(113)	20	29
Cash flow from operations	533	470	314	504	599
Capex	173	161	305	258	283
Cash flow from investing activities	173	161	305	260	287
Dividends paid	(111)	(87)	(87)	(87)	(88)
Cash flow from financing activities	299	(391)	(87)	(85)	(80)
Cash at beginning of period	415	833	574	492	625
Net change in cash	1,004	241	532	679	807
Ending balance cash	1,420	1,073	1,105	1,171	1,431

Balance sheet (SGDm)	Dec-21	Dec-22	Dec-23F	Dec-24F	Dec-25F
Total cash and equivalents	848	591	510	642	852
Tangible fixed assets	695	631	667	628	585
Total assets	3,243	3,134	3,055	3,167	3,334
Short-term debt	226	137	137	137	137
Total long-term debt	1,139	1,014	1,014	1,014	1,014
Total liabilities	2,547	2,450	2,329	2,379	2,440
Total equity	696	684	726	788	894
Total liabilities & equity	3,243	3,134	3,055	3,167	3,334

Key metrics	Dec-21	Dec-22	Dec-23F	Dec-24F	Dec-25F
Revenue growth (%)	0.7	13.9	0.7	10.0	9.9
Recurrent EPS growth (%)	17.9	(0.7)	(13.8)	15.5	29.9
Gross margin (%)	53.2	52.4	55.2	56.1	56.7
Operating EBITDA margin (%)	24.9	16.5	20.0	20.4	21.6
Net profit margin (%)	7.3	2.5	5.5	5.7	6.8
Dividend payout ratio (%)	74.2	148.3	67.7	58.6	45.1
Capex/sales (%)	(8.4)	(6.9)	(13.0)	(10.0)	(10.0)
Interest cover (x)	4.69	2.70	4.73	5.42	6.74

Source: Company data, RHB



Communications | Telecommunications

### Figure 1: Results table

FYE Dec (SGDm)	2Q22	1Q23	2Q23	QoQ (%)	YoY (%)	1H22	1H23	YoY (%)	Comments
Revenue	545.9	557.4	548.7	(1.6)	0.5	1,058.6	1,106.1	4.5	
Service revenue	454.5	461.6	476.5	3.2	4.8	870.6	938.1	7.8	
Mobile	134.2	152.1	150.6	(1.0)	12.2	268.3	302.7	12.8	Seasonal effects. Higher YoY from roaming improvement and higher tourist footfalls
Broadband	64.4	62.0	62.6	1.0	(2.8)	115.9	124.6	7.5	Higher take-up of higher-speed plans
Entertainment	49.2	57.1	56.8	(0.5)	15.4	96.4	113.9	18.2	Higher commercial and advertising revenue from Premier League
Enterprise	206.7	190.4	206.5	8.5	(0.1)	390.0	396.9	1.8	Regional ICT revenue fell 10% in 1H23 due to lower hardware sales
Service EBITDA	113.2	103.4	109.1	5.5	(3.6)	213.9	212.5	(0.7)	
Core Profit	31.2	37.5	39.2	4.5	25.6	60.9	76.7	25.9	Broadly in line as we expect capex and opex to ramp up in 2H23 from its transformation initiatives

Source: RHB

Figure 2: Segmental breakdown

FYE Dec (SGDm)	2Q22	1Q23	2Q23	QoQ chg (%)	YoY chg (%)	Comments
Revenue breakdown						
Mobile	134.2	152.1	150.6	(1.0)	12.2	Some seasonal effects. Prepaid and postpaid ARPU stable QoQ
Entertainment	49.2	57.1	56.8	(0.5)	15.4	Higher subscription, commercial TV, and advertising revenue from Premier League YoY
Broadband	64.4	62.0	62.6	1.0	(2.8)	Stronger take-up of higher-speed plans. Contribution from MyRepublic (MR) broadband from 2Q22
Enterprise	206.7	190.4	206.5	8.5	(0.1)	Higher cybersecurity revenue QoQ
Service revenue	454.5	461.6	476.5	3.2	4.8	
Sale of equipment	91.4	95.8	72.2	(24.6)	(21.0)	
Total revenue	545.9	557.4	548.7	(1.6)	0.5	
% of overall revenue						
Mobile revenue	24.6%	27.3%	27.4%	0%	3%	
Entertainment	9.0%	10.2%	10.4%	0%	1%	
Broadband	11.8% 37.9%	11.1% 34.2%	11.4% 37.6%	0% 3%	0% 0%	
Enterprise Business	37.9% 16.7%	34.2% 17.2%	13.2%	3% -4%	-4%	
Sale of equipment Key Mobile Metrics						
Prepaid subs (000s)	534.0	592.0	594.0	0.3	11.2	Higher tourist footfalls and foreign workers
Prepaid-net adds (000s)	17.0	1.0	2.0	100.0	(88.2)	
Postpaid subs (000s)	1,520.0	1,580.0	1,580.0	0.0	3.9	Continued expansion of giga! subs base YoY
Postpaid-net adds (000s)	19.0	15.0	0.0	(100.0)	(100.0)	
Postpaid ARPU (SGD)	29.0	32.0	32.0	0.0	10.3	
Prepaid ARPU (SGD)	8.0	7.0	7.0	0.0	(12.5)	
Entertainment						
Subscribers (000s)	371.0	368.0	355.0	(3.5)	(4.3)	Reductions in certain promotions
Net-adds (000s)	7.0	(6.0)	(13.0)	n.m.	n.m.	
ARPU (SGD)	0.0	43.0	45.0	4.7	(89.7)	Lifted by Premier League
Broadband						
Total subs (000s)	572.0	578.0	577.0	(0.2)	0.9	Including MR broadband from 2Q22
Net-adds (000s)	88.0	0.0	(1.0)	nm	>100	
ARPU (SGD)	34.0	34.0	34.0	0.0	0.0	
Enterprise Business	206.7	190.3	206.7	8.6	(0.0)	
Network solutions	89.2	92.7	90.3	(2.6)	1.2	Including MR broadband voice services from 2Q22
Cyber-security businesses	69.2	53.3	75.7	42.0	9.4	Lumpy revenue recognition

Source: RHB



## **Recommendation Chart**

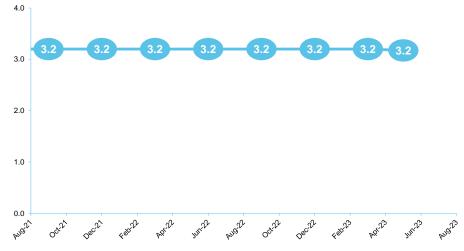


Source: RHB, Bloomberg

Date	Recommendation	Target Price	Price
2023-05-12	Neutral	1.11	1.02
2023-02-08	Neutral	1.11	1.04
2022-11-10	Neutral	1.07	1.03
2022-08-05	Neutral	1.20	1.24
2022-02-13	Neutral	1.29	1.33
2021-11-11	Neutral	1.39	1.28
2021-09-23	Neutral	1.35	1.25
2021-08-06	Neutral	1.35	1.25
2021-04-05	Neutral	1.38	1.32
2021-02-22	Neutral	1.38	1.26
2020-11-09	Neutral	1.30	1.24
2020-08-09	Neutral	1.30	1.21
2020-02-21	Neutral	1.44	1.52
2019-11-06	Neutral	1.44	1.43
2019-08-07	Neutral	1.52	1.45

Source: RHB, Bloomberg

## **ESG** Rating History



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Analyst	Company
-	=

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