

Utilities

The Rise Of Renewables; Still OVERWEIGHT

- Still OVERWEIGHT; Top Picks: Tenaga Nasional, YTL Power, and Solarvest.** Following the Regulatory Period 4 (2025-2027) announcement, we believe major key themes, ie grid infrastructure upgrade cycle, domestic renewables capacity ramp-up, and experienced independent power producers (IPPs) bridging the supply gap will continue to play out amidst the implementation of NETR. The renewable energy (RE) subsector introduction offers investors with clearer access to opportunities, while RE companies could benefit from increased visibility and funding potential for sustainable development.
- RP4 is out.** We believe the base tariff 45.62 sen/kWh which will be implemented starting 2H25 would have factored in an average 3-year demand growth of 4-5%. The contingent capex, in our view, will be entitled for the same regulatory return of 7.3% and to be included into RAB. The 3-year planned contingent capex is mainly to cater for potential additional demand (such as data centres) and energy transition-related projects. The list of projects under contingent capex has been pre-approved by the Energy Commission (EC) and will be implemented once the trigger occurs. We see an upside of 5-7% to our net regulatory returns if the full capex numbers are being pencilled in. This somewhat demonstrates that TNB is able to capitalise on the potential upside if electricity demand comes in stronger than what has been imputed in base tariffs.
- Renewable energy subsector.** Bursa Malaysia has launched a new subsector, reclassifying 13 companies effective 13 Jan 2025 – highlighting the growing prominence of RE. Excluding Cypark, which is an outlier with a P/E of 86x due to its turnaround expectations, the FY25 P/E for the group ranges between 10-23x. Mega First Corporation's (MFCB) low valuation reflects its asset-owner focus. Solar EPCC players are valued at a premium due to Malaysia's RE growth plans targeting a 70% mix by 2050. Share prices for the companies under the subsector have mostly shown strong three-year returns, driven by sector recovery post Large Scale Solar 4 (LSS4) overhang and initiatives like National Energy Transition Roadmap (NETR), Corporate Green Power Programme (CGPP), and Large Scale Solar 5 (LSS5).
- LSS5 spurring news flow.** Shortlisted bidders were notified on 23 Dec 2024, and companies have since begun announcing their awarded quotas, with more announcements anticipated. EPCC contracts, estimated at MYR7bn, are expected to be awarded in 2H25, providing a strong pipeline of opportunities for solar contractors. This will ensure orderbook replenishment following the expected completion of most CGPP projects by the end of 2025.
- Risks:** Lower-than-expected new RE capacity rollouts, and higher-than-expected operating costs.

Company Name	Rating	Target (MYR)	% Upside (Downside)	P/E (x) Dec-25F	P/B (x) Dec-25F	ROAE (%) Dec-25F	Yield (%) Dec-25F
BM Greentech	Neutral	1.85	8.2	21.1	2.8	14.1	1.3
Malakoff Corp	Buy	1.06	18.2	15.4	1.0	6.4	4.6
Petronas Gas	Neutral	17.47	(0.5)	18.5	2.5	13.4	4.6
Ranhill Utilities	Sell	1.10	(22.2)	38.9	2.3	5.9	0.9
Samaiden Group	Buy	1.62	33.5	17.8	3.1	18.5	1.6
Solarvest	Buy	2.00	19.9	22.0	3.2	16.1	-
Taliworks Corporation	Buy	0.98	25.9	17.1	2.0	12.0	5.2
Tenaga Nasional	Buy	16.60	19.4	17.2	1.3	7.6	3.8
YTL Power	Buy	4.70	17.5	12.0	1.4	12.3	1.9

Source: Company data, RHB

Overweight (Maintained)

Stocks Covered	9
Rating (Buy/Neutral/Sell):	6 / 2 / 1
Last 12m Earnings Revision Trend:	Neutral

Top Picks

	Target Price
Tenaga Nasional (TNB MK) – BUY	MYR16.60
YTL Power (YTLP MK) – BUY	MYR4.70
Solarvest (SOLAR MK) – BUY	MYR2

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ESG scores

Company	ESG scores
Solarvest	3.4
Samaiden Group	3.3
Ranhill Utilities	3.2
Taliworks Corporation	3.0
YTL Power	2.9
BM Greentech	2.8
Petronas Gas	2.7
Tenaga Nasional	2.7
Malakoff Corp	2.5

Source: Company data, RHB

RP4. The Government approved the implementation of the RP4 under the Incentive Base Regulation (IBR) framework for the period of Jan 2025 to Dec 2027. The new tariff schedule, with a base tariff of 45.62 sen/kWh for RP4, is proposed to be implemented from 1 Jul 2025. There are no further details as the tariff schedule is currently under review and yet to be finalised. Any differences from Jan-Jun 2025 will be funded through Kumpulan Wang Industri Elektrik (KWIE).

Higher base tariff and capex. The announced base tariff is c.14% higher than the 39.95sen/kWh in Regulatory Period 3 (RP3). Subsequently, it was explained in the press releases and news reports that the higher base tariffs are also factoring in higher fuel benchmarks including: i) Coal price of USD97/mt (from USD79/mt under RP3); ii) Gas prices: Tier 1 to MYR24-35/mmbtu and Tier 2 to MYR46/mmbtu (vs MYR24-30/mmbtu and MYR33/mmbtu under RP3).

The allowed capex is MYR42.8bn, which consists of MYR26.6bn base capex and MYR16.3bn contingent capex. This translates to MYR14.3bn average annual approved capex – 108% higher than the approved capex in RP3, of which the base tariff is already 29% higher than the RP3-approved capex. The allowed opex was also lifted by 16% to MYR20.8bn vs RP3 in order to support the planning and execution of necessary operational and maintenance activities for all of TNB's electrical infrastructure. The regulatory rate of return has been maintained at 7.3% as per RP3.

How could the potential contingent capex mechanism work? We believe the contingent capex will be entitled for the same regulatory return and included into RAB. The 3-year planned contingent capex are mainly to cater for potential additional demands (eg data centres (DCs)) and Energy Transition (ET)-related projects. The list of projects under contingent capex has been pre-approved by EC and will be implemented once the triggers occur. TNB will be able to recover the investment through a recovery mechanism that is being finalised and further details will be shared in due course.

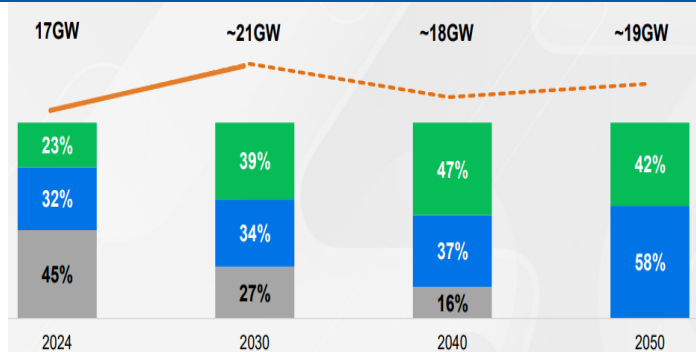
Positive surprise and potential earnings upside. Overall, we are positive on the RP4 announcement as the total allowed average annual capex of MYR14.3bn is higher than our expectations of MYR8.6-9.6bn. We believe the base tariff would have factored in an average 3-year demand growth of 4-5%. However, pending further disclosure by TNB, we are still uncertain on how the recovery mechanism on the contingent capex will be implemented. We maintain our earnings estimate for now but we see an upside of 5-7% to our net regulatory returns if the full capex numbers are being pencilled in. This somewhat demonstrates that TNB is able to capitalise the potential upside if electricity demand comes in stronger than the numbers imputed in base tariffs.

Outlook. Electricity demand rose 6.1% YoY in 3Q24, largely driven by the stronger commercial (+8.8%) and domestic (+6.6%) segments. TNB's current RE capacity rose slightly QoQ to 4.4GW (21% of total capacity). Electricity exports under the Laos-Thailand-Malaysia-Singapore Power Integration Project began in Sep 2024 under a willing buyer-willing seller arrangement (c.7.5GWh delivered to date). TNB signed a 50MW agreement with winning bidders in Dec 2024 under the cross-border electricity sales RE scheme (CBES RE) pilot phase 1 via Energy Exchange Malaysia (ENEGEM). TNB Power Generation's capacity is expected to grow from 17GW currently to 21GW by 2030 with a new plant (up to 10GW of mostly solar and hydro), offsetting a retirement of 5.9GW. TNB anticipates this will moderate to 19GW by 2050 with a RE:gas ratio of 42:58 following the coal plant retirement.

Johor-Singapore Special Economic Zone (JS-SEZ) to spur RE take up. Malaysia and Singapore have formalised an agreement to create the JS-SEZ, which will leverage on the strengths of each country to catalyse growth, attract investments, create jobs, and promote sustainability. Additionally, JS-SEZ facilitates cross-border RE trading between the two countries, allowing Malaysia to export renewable energy to meet Singapore's growing demand. TNB and Sembcorp Power have signed an agreement to supply 50MW of RE to Singapore. The first phase of RE trading has commenced in December last year but the pricing and additional details are still unknown for now.

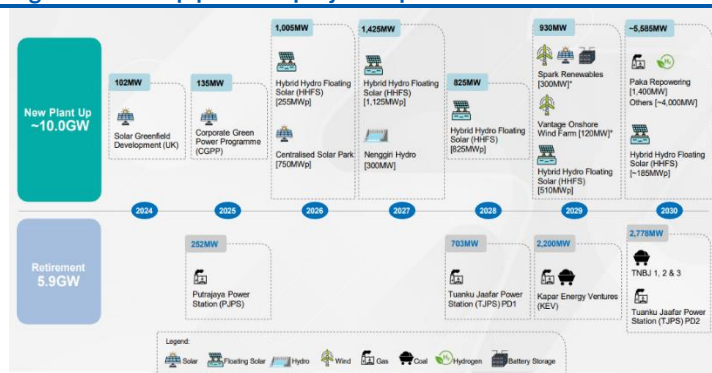
What's next? West Malaysia's electricity consumption growth over the next decade is expected to surpass the 10-year average of 2.4%, led largely by the continued expansion of DCs. We see DC energy consumption alone having a CAGR of 1.6-2.6% between 2023-2035, if 3-5GW of DCs are to be fully operational by 2035. TNB guided that there are 17 projects, including 1.7GW DC projects, completed as of 3Q24 with an actual load utilisation of 248MW. There is another 3GW (1.9GW under construction and 1.1GW electricity supply agreements signed) in the pipeline, bringing the total DC capacity to 4.7GW (31 projects). Bridge DC will be the first DC customer to take 100MW of RE supply under the Corporate Renewable Energy Supply Scheme (CRESS).

Figure 1: TNB's generation capacity mix projection by 2050



Source: Company data

Figure 2: TNB's pipeline of projects up to 2030



Source: Company data

More upside from power generation segment. The Government has projected the reserve margin at 28-36% for 2024-2030. To accommodate such strong demand, we do not discount the possibility of power purchase agreements (PPA) being extended for gas-fired plants and believe IPPs that are experienced in running gas-fired power plants, ie TNB and Malakoff Corp (MLK MK, BUY, TP: MYR1.06), should benefit from additional gas capacity expansions in the long-term (to replace coal). Interestingly, Malakoff believes coal will remain relevant over the next decade and existing coal plants will most likely need to be extended in the medium-term after the PPA expiry if the gas plant additions are insufficient. Even if there is a new gas capacity, cost of generation would be 30-40% higher as new gas molecules will have to be imported at market prices. Furthermore, higher reliance on gas imports may heighten supply sustainability risks in the long-term due to the dependence on the import's country of origin.

The Rise of Renewables

Yesterday, Bursa Malaysia announced the launch of a new RE sub-sector, highlighting the growing significance of the RE space in the market. A total of 13 companies have been finalised for reclassification under this sub-sector, effective 13 Jan 2025.

Figure 3: Sector reclassification for 13 companies

Company	Previous		New	
	Sector	Subsector	Sector	Subsector
1 Reneuco	Consumer Products & Services	Personal Goods	Energy	Renewable Energy
2 BM Greentech	Industrial Products & Services	Industrial Materials, Components & Equipment	Energy	Renewable Energy
3 Cypark Resources	Industrial Products & Services	Industrial Services	Energy	Renewable Energy
4 Elridge Energy Holdings	Industrial Products & Services	Industrial Services	Energy	Renewable Energy
5 Pekat Group	Industrial Products & Services	Industrial Services	Energy	Renewable Energy
6 Samaiden Group	Industrial Products & Services	Industrial Services	Energy	Renewable Energy
7 Solarvest Holdings	Industrial Products & Services	Industrial Services	Energy	Renewable Energy
8 Sunview Group	Industrial Products & Services	Industrial Services	Energy	Renewable Energy
9 Kinergy Advancement	Industrial Products & Services	Industrial Engineering	Energy	Renewable Energy
10 Trive Property Group	Technology	Technology Equipment	Energy	Renewable Energy
11 Nuenergy Holdings	Transportation & Logistics	Transportation & Logistics Services	Energy	Renewable Energy
12 Eden Inc.	Utilities	Electricity	Utilities	Renewable Energy Electricity
13 Mega First Corporation	Utilities	Electricity	Utilities	Renewable Energy Electricity

Source: Bursa Malaysia

Valuation-wise, based on the forward P/E for FY25, the weighted average stands at 18x. This figure is slightly skewed by Cypark's high P/E of 86x, as the company is expecting a turnaround this year and is anticipated to achieve a normalised P/E by FY26. Excluding Cypark, the sector's P/E generally ranges between 10-23x. MFCB has the lowest P/E in the group, reflecting its status as primarily an asset owner rather than a player in the solar EPCC space. Companies in the solar EPCC segment are valued at a premium due to the significant growth opportunities as Malaysia accelerates its RE initiatives to achieve the country's target of a 70% RE mix by 2050.

Figure 4: Peer comparison for the 13 companies

Company Name	FYE	Last Price	Market Cap	P/E (x)			P/BV (x)	EPS Growth (%)		ROE (%)		EV/EBITDA	Div. Yield (%)
				FY24	FY25	FY26		FY25	FY26	FY24	FY25		
Mega First Corporation	Dec	4.64	4,373.4	9.8	9.6	9.5	1.1	2.1	13.5	13.1	6.7	2.1	
Solarvest Holdings	Mar	1.70	1,228.1	25.4	19.5	18.1	3.4	29.9	8.0	16.9	16.3	12.0	0.3
BM Greentech	Mar	1.72	1,183.0	25.3	21.0	19.8	2.8	20.6	6.1	12.0	12.2	14.4	1.3
Elridge Energy Holdings	Dec	0.42	840.0	22.1	17.5	15.0	na	26.3	16.7	23.4	21.5	8.9	1.2
Kinergy Advancement	Dec	0.35	717.2	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na
Cypark Resources	Apr	0.86	707.6	na	86.0	22.6	0.5	110.9	280.0	-7.2	4.4	13.2	0.0
Pekat Group	Dec	1.09	703.0	41.9	22.7	18.5	5.2	84.6	22.9	14.6	20.3	10.9	0.6
Samaiden Group	Jun	1.28	535.9	23.7	19.7	16.4	3.0	20.4	20.0	14.5	16.2	9.5	0.9
Sunview Group	Mar	0.44	249.8	24.4	16.9	14.2	na	44.4	19.2	5.8	na	9.2	na
Nuenergy Holdings	Dec	0.50	93.5	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na
Eden Inc	Jun	0.16	78.3	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na
Reneuco	Jun	0.06	68.5	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na
Trive Property	Jul	0.04	44.2	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na	na
Weighted Average				15.8	18.2	13.0	1.7	23.3	24.6	11.8	12.5	8.6	1.2

Source: Bloomberg, RHB

14 January 2025

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Share price performance. Measuring against the three-year timeframe, most stocks have exhibited positive returns, reflecting the sector boom in 2022. This growth followed the resolution of the LSS4 overhang, which was previously impacted by COVID-19 disruptions and high solar panel prices. Since then, several key initiatives have been announced, including the NETR, CGPP, and LSS5, which have further bolstered investor confidence in the sector.

Figure 5: 1-year and 3-year performances of the 13 companies

Company Name	Last Price	1-year % chg	3-year % chg
Mega First Corporation	4.64	25.6	37.4
Solarvest Holdings	1.70	24.1	40.5
BM Greentech	1.72	94.8	91.3
Elridge Energy Holdings	0.42	na	na
Kinergy Advancement	0.35	-17.9	11.3
Cypark Resources	0.86	-4.4	-0.6
Pekat Group	1.09	147.7	55.9
Samaiden Group	1.28	8.7	77.5
Sunview Group	0.44	-42.9	na
Nuenergy Holdings	0.50	-33.1	30.3
Eden Inc	0.16	-18.4	-6.1
Reneuco	0.06	-70.7	-85.2
Trive Property	0.04	-46.2	-63.2
Weighted Average		29.9	37.3

Source: Bloomberg, RHB

Figure 6: Coverage and calls for the 13 companies

Company Name	Coverage	Calls		
		Buy	Neutral	Sell
Mega First Corporation	6	4	2	-
Solarvest Holdings	10	9	1	-
BM Greentech	3	1	1	1
Elridge Energy Holdings	-	-	-	-
Kinergy Advancement	-	-	-	-
Cypark Resources	3	-	3	-
Pekat Group	4	4	-	-
Samaiden Group	7	6	1	-
Sunview Group	2	1	1	-
Nuenergy Holdings	-	-	-	-
Eden Inc	-	-	-	-
Reneuco	-	-	-	-
Trive Property	-	-	-	-

Source: Bloomberg, RHB

Developments in the RE space

LSS5 is here. The solar sector is seeing a surge in news flow, with recent developments driving the industry towards notable growth. On 23 Dec 2024, the EC notified the shortlisted bidders for the much-anticipated 2GW LSS5 programme. Unlike previous cycles, the EC did not reveal the full list of winners or the range of tariff bids. Based on listed company announcements (Figure 7) and news report from *The Edge* (Figure 8), c.385.05MW of capacity remains unallocated, leaving room for further awards. There is also the possibility that the total awarded quota could exceed the initial 2GW target. This is timely as asset owners are able to capitalise on the low prices of solar panels which are expected to persist through 2025.

Figure 7: LSS5 announced shortlisted bidders

No	Companies	Capacity (MWac)
1	Tenaga Nasional	500.00
2	Samaiden Group	99.99
3	Wawasan Demi (63%-owned by AIZO group)	99.99
4	Unique Fire Holdings (60%) and HSS Engineers (40%)	95.00
5	Eden Inc	29.99
	Total	824.97

Source: Bursa Malaysia

Figure 8: Potential LSS5 shortlisted bidders

No	Companies	Capacity (MWac)
1	Edra Power Holdings and Worldwide Holdings	300.00
2	Gentari	100.00
3	Ditrolic Energy Holdings	100.00
4	Parkland Renewable Energy	99.99
5.	Nusantara Suriamas (70%-owned by Gadang Holdings)	99.99
6.	Conextone Energy	90.00
	Total	789.98

Note: Companies that made announcements have been excluded.

Source: The Edge

This momentum is expected to lead to the dishing out of EPCC contracts – estimated at c.MYR7bn – starting in 2HCY25, providing a strong pipeline of projects for solar contractors such as Solarvest, Cypark, Samaiden, Sunview, and Pekat, and ensuring sustained orderbook replenishment following the completion of most CGPP projects, which we estimate will conclude by 2025.

Sabah's LSS-SABAH2024 initiative. Sabah is adding to the excitement in the solar sector with its own LSS-SABAH2024 programme. Under the supervision of the Energy Commission of Sabah (ECoS), this initiative aims to develop 100MWac of solar PV power plants, with capacities ranging from 1MWac to 15MWac, encompassing ground-mounted, floating, and rooftop designs, with operations targeted to commence in 2026. The submission deadline for proposals was 23 Sep 2024, and some awarded companies have already announced their successful bids.

Figure 9: LSS-SABAH2024 announced shortlisted bidders

No	Companies	Capacity (MWac)
1	Regional Utilities (60%-owned by Gadang Holdings and 40%-owned by Hotrend)	15.00
2	Coastal Contracts (95%) and Bina HT (5%)	15.00
3	Nestcon	4.00
	Total	34.00

Source: Bursa Malaysia

Activities under CRESS are expected to gain traction following the LSS5 announcement, as developers unable to secure quotas under LSS5 are likely to redirect their planned projects to this scheme. However, the outlook remains subdued as off-takers are adopting a wait-and-see approach due to the high system access charge (SAC). On a positive note, the recently announced base tariff – c.14% higher than the 39.95 sen/kWh in RP3 – could improve the viability of projects and encourage greater off-taker participation, potentially boosting CRESS adoption.

Other notable ongoing initiatives include the Low Carbon Energy Generation programme, which focuses on non-solar renewable resources, ie wind, small hydro, biogas, biomass, and hydrogen. However, participation has been low due to the priority given to solar projects, which offer faster construction timelines. Profitability issues under this programme, related to the feed-in tariffs (FIT), are also under review. The ENEGEM programme also has generated less excitement due to its mechanism, which does not allow the power producers to leverage on higher tariffs for supplying energy to neighbouring countries. Currently, the only agreement under the programme is between TNB and Sembcorp Power for the supply of 50MW of electricity.

Meanwhile, the Net Energy Metering (NEM) initiative continues to see steady quota additions, encouraging adoption among residential and commercial & industrial (C&I) users. Additionally, the Ministry of Energy Transition and Water Transformation, through the EC, announced a competitive bidding process for the development of Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) on 28 Nov 2024. Each project will have a capacity of 100MW/400MWh, with a total tender capacity of 400MW/1,600MWh. These projects are expected to commence operations by 2026, with proposal submissions due by 12 Feb 2025. While many RE players have expressed interest, the stringent screening process – requiring a proven track record and strong financial capabilities – has narrowed the field to players with the resources and expertise to meet these criteria. We expect shortlisted bidders to be announced in 2H25. Overall, we remain upbeat as the sector shows strong growth potential, with several key drivers set to boost the industry's performance in the near-term.

Top Picks

Tenaga Nasional (TNB MK, BUY, TP: MYR16.60). We continue to like TNB as a proxy to Malaysia's energy transition growth journey under the NETR. It should also continue to benefit from the continuous upgrade in transmission and distribution assets, where the demand for energy can be anchored by mushrooming DC developments. Overall, we are positive on the RP4 announcement as the total allowed average annual capex of MYR14.3bn was higher than our expectations of MYR8.6-9.6bn. We believe the base tariff of 45.62 sen/kWh, which will be implemented starting 2H25, would have factored in an average 3-year demand growth of 4-5%. The contingent capex, in our view, will be entitled for the same regulatory return of 7.3% and to be included into RAB. The 3-year planned contingent capex is mainly to cater for potential additional demand (such as DCs) and energy transition-related projects. The list of projects under contingent capex has been pre-approved by EC and will be implemented once triggers occur. We see an upside of 5-7% to our net regulatory returns if the full capex numbers are being pencilled in. This somewhat demonstrates that TNB is able to capitalise on the potential upside if electricity demand comes in stronger than what has been imputed in base tariffs.

YTL Power (YTLP, BUY, TP: MYR4.70). Although there is uncertainty over the proposed US rules on advanced chip exports into countries like Malaysia, we still like YTLP for its long-term Artificial Intelligence (AI)-DC play. It was quoted in the news report that YTLP's MD Datuk Seri Yeoh Seok Hong does not expect the AI-DC rollout to be impacted given that YTLP is the first non-US company selected in Asia to partner Nvidia Corp to deploy and manage a supercomputer driven by the GB200 Blackwell GPUs or graphic processing units in the region. He further reiterated that American hyperscalers, which include Nvidia, are not subject to the limits and the customer pipeline for AI-DC shall not be affected. On the other hand, we are positive on Wessex Water's PR24 final determination outcome as it allows Wessex Water to collect higher revenue through higher tariff adjustments. Wessex Water's earnings are expected to improve starting from April 2025 post-tariff adjustments but its bottomline could still be affected by accounting anomalies/additional finance cost from index-linked bonds, albeit at lower amount, as well as potential higher depreciation given higher capex spending.

Solarvest (SOLAR MK, BUY; TP: MYR2). We prefer Solarvest in the RE sector due to its notable market share of c.20-30% in the utility-scale space, based on its involvement in CGPP and LSS4 – underscoring its strong competitive position in the industry. Additionally, it has a robust and consistent replenishment rate for C&I EPCC projects, contributing c.MYR50m to its quarterly revenue. The group has also successfully commercialised its utility-scale asset under LSS4, comprising a total of 67.3MWp from three solar farms, which provides recurring income to balance the lumpy nature of EPCC earnings. Moreover, its strategic regional expansion enhances its ability to tap into emerging markets, supporting its sustainable growth trajectory in the renewable energy industry.

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Buy:	Share price may exceed 10% over the next 12 months
Trading Buy:	Share price may exceed 15% over the next 3 months, however longer-term outlook remains uncertain
Neutral:	Share price may fall within the range of +/- 10% over the next 12 months
Take Profit:	Target price has been attained. Look to accumulate at lower levels
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Not Rated:	Stock is not within regular research coverage

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