

10 October 2022

Property | REITS

EC World REIT (ECWREIT SP)

Neutral (Maintained)

Proposed Divestments – Slightly Positive

- **Stay NEUTRAL and SGD0.55 TP, 6% upside.** EC World REIT's proposed divestment of two assets at a price close to the average of the latest valuations is mildly positive outcome, in our view, under the current difficult scenario faced by it. Unitholders are expected to receive a one-off dividend payment of c.11 SG cents from the sale post bank-mandated debt repayments. On the flip side, the sale diminishes its long-term potential with lower annual dividend income, a smaller asset size, and potentially, lower liquidity.
- **A quick recap.** In June, the REIT announced that it had only managed to extend the maturity date of its expiring offshore loan (SGD300m or USD87m) and onshore loan facilities (CNY907m) to Apr 2023. The extensions came with a condition by banks that the REIT's sponsor Forchn Holdings Group Co Ltd provide an undertaking to repay 25% of its offshore loan by Dec 2022 or the REIT will be in default. Subsequently, the REIT signed a non-binding MoU for the sale of Beigang Logistics Stage 1 (BL1) and Chongxian Port Logistics (CPL) to the Sponsor.
- **Divestment to raise CNY2.0bn (SGD407m) in proceeds.** The REIT announced last week that the Sponsor has agreed to purchase BL1 and CPL at CNY1.2bn (~SGD242.6m) and CNY820.1m (SGD164.1m). The agreed values are slightly above book value and at par with the average of two independent valuations done in June. It also represents a blended 17.8% premium to the IPO's (Jul 2016) purchase price. Management cited the reason for picking these two assets as they were no longer as attractive due to changing market trends resulting in a decline in asset value over the years, and the need for major capex to redevelop and repair. This transaction will require unitholder approval at the upcoming EGM.
- **One-off dividend payment of c.11 SG cents (CNY450.9m)** is expected to be declared as special dividend post completion and repayment of 25% of the bank loans. This translates to c.21% yield at current levels.
- **Short-term gain, long-term setback.** The likely special dividend should support unit prices in the near term. The transaction also provides the much-needed comfort that the Sponsor stands ready to support the REIT in times of crisis. On the other hand, the divestment will reduce total asset size by 27% and lower annual distributable income ahead by c.30%. The REIT also faces limited inorganic growth potential considering the banks' limited support, and it is likely to face higher interest costs upon refinancing in Apr 2023.
- **Our numbers currently do not include the divestment impact pending shareholder approval.** EC World REIT's ESG score of 2.4 (out of 4.0) is six notches below the country median. Thus, we apply a 12% ESG discount to its DDM-derived TP.

Target Price (Return): SGD0.55 (+6%)
 Price (Market Cap): SGD0.52 (USD295m)
 ESG score: 2.40 (out of 4)
 Avg Daily Turnover (SGD/USD) 0.19m/0.14m

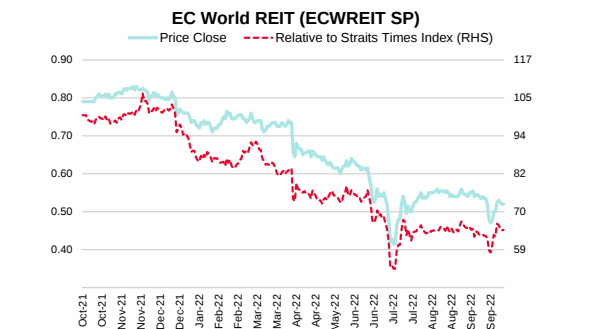
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Share Performance (%)

	YTD	1m	3m	6m	12m
Absolute	(32.5)	(3.7)	11.8	(29.3)	(34.2)
Relative	(33.2)	(1.7)	11.3	(21.7)	(35.6)
52-wk Price low/high (SGD)	0.42 – 0.83				



Source: Bloomberg

Overall ESG Score: 2.40 (out of 4)

E: GOOD

The REIT set a 5-year target in 2017 to gradually reduce energy consumption at its properties over a 5-year period. Since then, ECWREIT has achieved an overall reduction of 29% of its total energy consumption across its properties, although this was in part due to COVID-19 lockdowns. These targets and efforts are still comparably low vis-à-vis other S-REITs under coverage.

S: GOOD

ECWREIT has a Workplace Health & Safety Promotion Plan to monitor and support employee health. There were zero cases of work-related injuries recorded in FY20, although there was a collapse of a berth in 2021 at one of its facilities, but there were no injuries reported.

G: MODERATE

ECWREIT has adopted a diverse range of policies on regulatory compliance to prevent corruption and other illegal practices. However, we see more room for the REIT to increase transparency on master lease agreements, loan maturities, and earnings disclosures. ECWREIT, in our view, lags behind its peers in this aspect.

Note:

Small cap stocks are defined as companies with a market capitalisation of less than USD0.5bn.

Forecasts and Valuation	Dec-20	Dec-21	Dec-22F	Dec-23F	Dec-24F
Total turnover (SGDm)	110	125	118	117	119
Net property income (SGDm)	100	113	107	107	108
Reported net profit (SGDm)	15.4	24.5	24.1	33.3	35.0
Total distributable income (SGDm)	47.2	51.9	44.7	44.9	45.5
DPS (SGD)	0.05	0.06	0.06	0.06	0.06
DPS growth (%)	(11.1)	16.8	(11.9)	0.1	1.0
P/B (x)	0.59	0.56	0.56	0.58	0.58
Dividend Yield (%)	10.3	12.0	10.6	10.6	10.7
Return on average equity (%)	2.2	3.3	3.2	4.5	4.8
Return on average assets (%)	0.9	1.3	1.3	1.8	1.9

Source: Company data, RHB

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Financial Exhibits

Asia	Financial summary	Dec-20	Dec-21	Dec-22F	Dec-23F	Dec-24F
Singapore	Recurring EPS (SGD)	0.02	0.03	0.03	0.04	0.04
Property	EPS (SGD)	0.02	0.03	0.03	0.04	0.04
EC World REIT	DPS (SGD)	0.05	0.06	0.06	0.06	0.06
ECWREIT SP	BVPS (SGD)	0.89	0.93	0.93	0.90	0.89
Neutral	Return on average equity (%)	2.2	3.3	3.2	4.5	4.8
	Weighted avg adjusted shares (m)	803.26	809.49	812.25	814.97	817.26
Valuation basis	Valuation metrics	Dec-20	Dec-21	Dec-22F	Dec-23F	Dec-24F
DDM	Recurring P/E (x)	27.09	17.19	17.51	12.72	12.15
	P/E (x)	27.09	17.19	17.51	12.72	12.15
	P/B (x)	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6
	FCF Yield (%)	19.7	16.6	25.2	18.0	17.9
	Dividend Yield (%)	10.3	12.0	10.6	10.6	10.7
	EV/EBITDA (x)	- 7.06	- 6.57	- 7.03	- 6.95	- 7.00
	EV/EBIT (x)	- 7.06	- 6.57	- 7.03	- 6.95	- 7.00
Key drivers						
i. Rising e-commerce trends in China resulting in increased logistics sector demand;						
ii. Increasing domestic consumption;						
iii. Sponsor-backed master leases that provide rental stability.						
Key risks						
i. Inability to continue to refinance its debt in a timely manner and higher cost of debt;						
ii. Deep and prolonged economic impact from COVID-19 lockdowns;						
iii. Prolonged global tensions leading to a slowdown in economic activity.						
Company Profile						
EC World REIT was established with the investment strategy of investing principally – directly or indirectly – in a diversified portfolio of income-producing real estate. The latter assets are used primarily for e-commerce, supply-chain management, and logistics purposes. The REIT also focuses on real estate-related assets. The initial geographical focus is the People's Republic of China.						
	Income statement (SGDm)	Dec-20	Dec-21	Dec-22F	Dec-23F	Dec-24F
	Total turnover	110	125	118	117	119
	EBITDA	95	107	101	101	103
	Operating profit	95	107	101	101	103
	Net interest	(37)	(38)	(39)	(40)	(39)
	Pre-tax profit	38	45	44	61	64
	Taxation	(22)	(20)	(20)	(27)	(29)
	Recurring net profit	15	24	24	33	35
	Cash flow (SGDm)	Dec-20	Dec-21	Dec-22F	Dec-23F	Dec-24F
	Change in working capital	(15)	(33)	(17)	(22)	(23)
	Cash flow from operations	81	70	83	78	78
	Capex	1	(0)	24	(2)	(2)
	Cash flow from investing activities	1	(0)	24	(2)	(2)
	Dividends paid	(44)	(50)	(45)	(45)	(46)
	Cash flow from financing activities	(80)	(86)	(116)	(83)	(81)
	Cash at beginning of period	119	152	169	180	183
	Net change in cash	2	(16)	(9)	(7)	(5)
	Ending balance cash	123	136	160	173	178
	Balance sheet (SGDm)	Dec-20	Dec-21	Dec-22F	Dec-23F	Dec-24F
	Total cash and equivalents	152	169	180	183	188
	Total investments	1,624	1,674	1,634	1,635	1,637
	Total assets	1,816	1,895	1,867	1,873	1,881
	Short-term debt	91	708	50	50	50
	Total long-term debt	593	13	631	639	626
	Total liabilities	1,100	1,144	1,115	1,142	1,150
	Shareholders' equity	716	752	753	731	732
	Total equity	716	752	753	731	732
	Net debt	532	552	501	506	488
	Total liabilities & equity	1,816	1,895	1,867	1,873	1,881
	Key metrics	Dec-20	Dec-21	Dec-22F	Dec-23F	Dec-24F
	Revenue growth (%)	10.7	14.4	(6.3)	(0.2)	1.4
	Recurrent EPS growth (%)	(76.6)	57.6	(1.8)	37.7	4.7
	Operating EBITDA margin (%)	86.6	84.9	85.8	86.4	86.7
	Net profit margin (%)	14.1	19.5	20.5	28.4	29.4
	Dividend payout ratio (%)	279.6	206.7	185.5	134.9	130.1
	Capex/sales (%)	(1.0)	0.3	(20.0)	1.3	1.3
	Interest cover (x)	2.43	2.68	2.42	2.38	2.48

Source: Company data, RHB

Figure 1: ECWREIT – fair value based on Dividend Discount Model

	FY22F	FY23F	FY23F	FY24F	Terminal Value
DPU (SG cents)	5.5	5.5	5.6	5.6	66.8
Intrinsic Value (SGD)	0.63				
ESG Premium/(discount) (SGD)	-0.08				
Target price (SGD)	0.55				
Current Price (SGD)	0.52				
Price Upside	5.8%				
Distribution Yield	10.6%				
Total returns (%)	16.4%				
Assumptions					
Risk-free rate (%)	4.5%				
Beta	1.0				
Cost of equity (%)	10.6%				
Terminal growth (%)	2.0%				

Source: RHB

Recommendation Chart

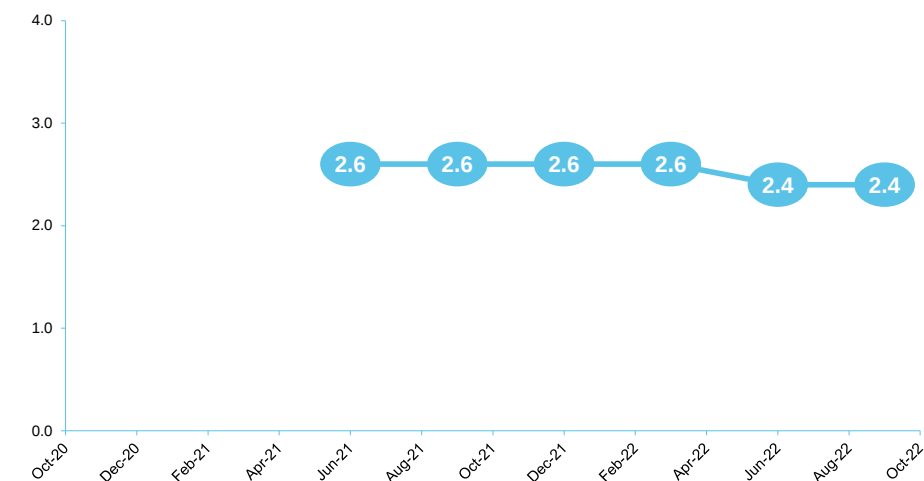


Source: RHB, Bloomberg

Date	Recommendation	Target Price	Price
2022-06-27	Neutral	0.55	0.55
2022-05-16	Neutral	0.65	0.62
2022-02-25	Neutral	0.76	0.75
2021-11-10	Trading Buy	0.87	0.82
2021-05-18	Trading Buy	0.83	0.79
2021-03-04	Neutral	0.76	0.73
2020-08-12	Buy	0.76	0.66
2020-05-13	Buy	0.76	0.68
2020-03-02	Buy	0.78	0.71
2019-08-08	Buy	0.82	0.74
2019-05-14	Buy	0.85	0.79
2019-02-25	Buy	0.84	0.77
2019-01-08	Buy	0.81	0.70
2018-10-24	Not Rated	na	0.70

Source: RHB, Bloomberg

ESG Rating History



Source: RHB

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