

Malaysia Infrastructure

Sector outlook

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8 August 2023

Malaysia

Infrastructure

| Gamuda | GAM MK |
|-------------|-----------|
| Rec | BUY |
| Market cap | US\$2.5bn |
| 3M ADV | US\$4.7m |
| Price | RM4.40 |
| Target | RM4.95 |
| Up/downside | +12.5% |

| IJM | IJM MK |
|-------------|-----------|
| Rec | BUY |
| Market cap | US\$1.1bn |
| 3M ADV | US1.5m |
| Price | RM1.51 |
| Target | RM1.90 |
| Up/downside | +25.8% |

| SunCon | SCGB MK |
|-------------|-----------|
| Rec | O-PF |
| Market cap | US\$0.5bn |
| 3M ADV | US\$0.1m |
| Price | RM1.77 |
| Target | RM1.92 |
| Un/downside | +8.5% |

To get back on track

Takeaways from the high-speed rail request for information briefing

MyHSR started its request for information (RFI) process with a briefing on highspeed rail (HSR). Designed to be privately funded, risk may be high for HSR but government is not opposed to a public-private partnership (PPP) to enhance project viability. Getting the project off the ground is a broad sector positive and is supportive of our Overweight stance on the sector, though it is still early days. Mid-November will be a better time to assess this when proposals are submitted.

Private sector takes on more risk but it could be softened by a PPP

- ☐ Requirements will likely encourage consortiums. Compared to previous projectdelivery-partner model, MyHSR will look to award a contract encompassing design, finance, build, operate and transfer. Financial muscle will be key, as will encouraging consortiums to be formed, especially as entities are required to bring together construction, systems installation, and an operational track record all in a single bid.
- Door not closed to funding requests. The HSR is intended to be developed without government funding or guarantees. Firms nevertheless are welcome to propose and justify the need for government assistance or a risk-sharing model.
- Sweetener is key. Land acquisitions are commonly performed by government. We observe that, regionally, it is common for government to shoulder 20%-50% of the total cost (Fig 1). The Malaysian government appears open to help via a PPP (link).

On balance, more flexibility and autonomy is given to improve yield

- □ Not seen as prescriptive. From the RFI, we see that instead of prescribing thresholds and fixed parameters, MyHSR is open to proposals and strategies vis-à-vis the degree of localisation, industry collaboration, number of stations and routes, etc. There is no revised sum for project as yet. To be clear, HSR is still in the feasibility stage.
- Just needs an option to connect to Singapore. News that Singapore is ready (link) to start HSR talks with Malaysia again raises the viability of HSR (4m passenger movements between KLIA and Singapore annually). Talks had broken down over an assets company dispute (link). MyHSR allows proposals from Kuala Lumpur to Singapore or to the southern corridor with an option to connect to Singapore.
- ☐ Improving yield is the task. MyHSR stressed that firms can include transit-oriented or transit-adjacent developments to create value and supplement fares; this can help shorten the payback period. With significant upfront investments, the concession period could vary, from 30 years (eg, in the UK), at the shorter end, up to 70-80 years. Concession extensions are also common, recently seen for the Jakarta-Bandung HSR.
- Optimising. There are 36 industrial parks along the current route and 117 tourist sites, though operating in silos, MyHSR says adding HSR could be the enabler to create hubs. This is in line with a broader policy harmonisation, such as a geography-based industrial policy under the Madani economic framework. Sue Lin Lim, CLSA's head of research in Malaysia, expounded on the prime minister's economy framework (link).

Outcome still fluid in our view; we retain our Overweight stance on the sector

- ☐ Encouraging interest. There is a three-month window (until 15 Nov) to submit concept proposals, followed by a shortlisting and a winner announcement. MyHSR revealed that at least 30 local and international firms have purchased RFI documents (link).
- □ Proposals likely still taking shape. The Edge newspaper cited MMC Corp, MRCB, Berjaya Group, YTL Group and WCT, as firms (all N-R) assessing the HSR (link). Among locals, YTL has experience in rail concessions, it operates the Express Rail Link that connects KLIA to KL Sentral. We expect firms to evaluate opportunities once RFI documents/details are released by 11 August. We think there may be interest from the likes of Gamuda (as high speed requires tunnels/bridges), IJM and SunCon.
- ☐ May be a broad-based positive. Local content usage may be sector positive over a multi-year construction phase, ie, opportunities in the supply chain via materials (cement), consultants, property developers with exposure in the southern corridor (though depends on alignment/stations). We watch out for cannibalisation to airlines or MAHB: Singapore formed c.20% of KLIA international 2019 passenger movements.







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To get back on track

Previously there were RM40bn worth of which would have been

construction opportunities, split into 60 parcels

We think meeting the requirements of a bid will mean forming a consortium, potentially with foreign

Private sector takes on risk but government is open to consider a PPP

MyHSR will be looking for contractors that can shoulder more risk-reward as it looks to award a contract that encompasses design, finance, build, operate, and transfer. This is a departure from the earlier 2018 contract which was based on a project delivery model. Under that procurement model, the construction component worth RM40bn of construction opportunity was removed (split into 60 work packages).

Previously, the project delivery partner (PDP, or project manager) roles were awarded to Gamuda-MRCB consortium for the northern stretch, and YTL teamed up with a subsidiary of Lembaga Tabung Haji to secure the southern section. We believe that this time around consortiums are more likely to be formed, given that entities either individually or in a consortium will have to meet three criteria: experience in railway, (or highway); experience in design and installation of rail systems; and experience in operating HSR or railway projects.

Figure 1

| Comparison of HSF | R roll out | | | | | | |
|--------------------------------|---|---|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|--|-----------------------------------|
| Country | Japan | China | Taiwan | Laos | Thailand | Indonesia | UK |
| Project | Tokaido Shinkansen | Beijing-Hong Kong HSR | Taiwan HSR | Lao-China Railway | 3-airport HSR link | Jakarta- Bandung HSR | HS1 (Channel Tunnel Rail link) |
| Value (equivalent US\$ m) | 1,000 | 48,000 | 15,000 | 6,000 | 6,430 | 7,200 | 7,400 |
| Length (km) | 553 | 2,300 | 345 | 422 | 220 | 142 | 110 |
| Value per distance (US\$ m/km) | 2 | 21 | 43 | 14 | 29 | 51 | 67 |
| Project completion date | 1964 | 2018 | 2007 | 2021 | 2029 | 2023 | 2007 |
| Connecting cities | Tokyo to Osaka | Beijing to Hong Kong | Nangang to Zuoying | Vientiane to Boten | Don Mueang to U-Tapao | Jakarta to Bandung | London to Channel tunnel |
| Ridership potential (daily) | 229,000 | 400,000- 500,000 | 196,000 | 7,000- 10,000 | 147,000 | 30,000- 60,000 | 70,000 |
| Max speed (km/h) | 285 | 200-350 | 300 | 160 | 250 | 200-385 | 320 |
| Private funding (%) | 65% by Japan govt, 15% by World Bank, and other sources | Government borne | 79% | China/Laos government borne | 52% | 75% | 70% |
| Remarks/ Concession | Now operated by JR Central | Operated by China Railway Corporation for Mainland China section, and KCR Corporation for the HK section | 70 years (originally 35 years) | 50 year concession | 50 year concession | Extended from 50 to 80 years. By PT Kereta Cepat Indonesia China, a 60-40 JV between Indonesia SOEs and China Railway Group Limited | 30 year concession |

Source: CLSA, MyHSR, various agencies

Government reportedly open to PPP model Transport Minister Anthony Loke has commented that the RFI is being conducted to gauge the project's feasibility via a public-private partnership (PPP) model (link). The minister stressed that the government is not awarding anything yet. During the RFI briefing, some HSR examples in the region were mentioned, which are being studied. In those examples, it is not uncommon that funding from private segment

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will range from 50% to 79%. This provides a yardstick with which to compare potential government assistance (although in some instances cost is fully funded by government). Assuming a RM70bn (or US\$20.7bn) price tag for HSR roll-out locally, this would be equivalent to c.US\$45m per KM, within the regional norm.

More flexibility likely given to help improve yield

Proposals to connect to Singapore or provide an option to connect to Singapore HSR must be capable of speeds of up to 350 kilometres per hour (km/h), or at least falling under the high-speed definition (usually 250km/h and greater). There is also leeway given for submitted proposals to reach Singapore or to reach the southern corridor of Malaysia with an option to connect to Singapore. The latter raises viability of HSR (10.2m tourists in 2019). In terms of the number of passengers flying from/to Singapore/Kuala Lumpur, the figure is 4m arrivals and departures (link). Based on previous estimate of RM400 ticket price for a round trip (link), this is additional opportunity to capture the RM800m of annual revenue, compared to just stopping at Johor, all else equal.

Companies welcome to propose ways to maximise value including from non-fares

Interested firms are also invited to submit as part of their proposals ways to create more value and supplement fares. Transit-oriented development or transit-adjacent development (defined as more than 400 meter radius from transit station) should help and shorten investment payback period. The concession period for HSR tends to be 50 years or more, and it is not uncommon for it to get extended, as was case in Taiwan's and Indonesia's HSR projects. Recently, we saw a model where the Mass Rapid Transit Corp (MRT Corp Sdn Bhd) emulated Hong Kong MTR Corp's "rail plus model", whereby MRT Corp Sdn Bhd contributed land for property development at Johor Bahru and will share in the profits when units are sold (*link*).

Creating impact in the southern corridor

MyHSR pointed out that along the route there is no shortage of industrial parks (36), 117 tourist key sites, and 52 multimedia super corridor status assets. MyHSR sees the need for HSR stations as potential stops will turn into clusters and hubs. We expect that policy support would also have to be forthcoming, in creating specific tailored incentives in different geographic locations, for example.

Some names are reportedly interested

Outcome still fluid in our view; maintain our Overweight stance

We believe proposals are still taking shape

Earlier, the Edge newspaper highlighted a few firms that have been discussing the HSR - namely MMC Corp, MRCB, Berjaya Group, YTL Group and WCT (all N-R). We note that YTL has experience in rail concessions, specifically the express rail link that connects between KLIA and KL Sentral.

We believe the industry will be evaluating details/documents from RFI. We think Gamuda may be interested in tunnelling/bridge opportunities, given that precision is needed for high speed. Separately, we think IJM and SunCon may be interested given they were among the members of a consortium submitted a bid for the project delivery partner role in 2018. Mid-November, the deadline for concept proposal submissions will be a good time to reassess this issue.

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Valuation details - Gamuda Bhd GAM MK

We value Gamuda's construction division based on 13.5x sustainable earnings and apply 12x sustainable earnings for its local property project, with a 40% discount. We use DCF to value expressway and water supply operations and maintenance concessions. Our target price for Gamuda is based on an estimated fully diluted RNAV/share.

Investment risks - Gamuda Bhd GAM MK

Execution risk on construction projects could lead to cost overruns while a slowdown of the Vietnam economy could dampen demand for property launches in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City. We are concerned about EPS dilution from a potential increase in the employee share option scheme and warrants; we include these concerns in our valuation. Given its job concentration in large projects, Gamuda is exposed to policy risk. The ability to replenish jobs before the MRT2 civil works are complete is also a concern. A prolonged Covid-19 outbreak could reduce work efficiency.

Valuation details - IJM Corp Bhd IJM MK

Our valuation reflects PE-based valuations for IJM's construction and industrial divisions and an RNAV-based valuation for its property segment, with an 8.8% WACC and DCF for its concessionaire stakes as well as a discount of 20%.

Investment risks - IJM Corp Bhd IJM MK

With a near-record-high order book, the key risk is execution of projects to ensure profitability and completion according to schedule. Slower property demand due to weaker consumer sentiment has affected IJM's property sales, and the risks are a sustained slowdown or further margin pressure. Rising labour costs could put pressure on construction profit margins. Regulatory risks related to toll-road and port concessions are not uncommon. Prolonged Covid-19 could also hinder operating efficiency.

Valuation details - Sunway Construction Group Bhd SCGB MK

Our target price is derived from 14.0x 24CL earnings, one standard deviation above the 10-year mean PE for the KL Construction index. We accord an above-sector average PE, given the company's flow of internal jobs and strong balance sheet.

Investment risks - Sunway Construction Group Bhd SCGB MK

The main concern is construction risk. Specific risks include lower-than-expected margins (below 5-8%) or if the amount of projects secured falls below our expectation, either due to an inability to secure projects or project rollout delays. Higher-than-expected steel price increases could cut into margins as SunCon hedges steel needs for a future six-month period. On the precast segment, another risk is margin recovery timing, currently in the doldrums due to competition. Prolonged Covid-19 could also reduce operating efficiency.



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Companies mentioned

Berjaya Corp (N-R)

China Railway (N-R)

China Railway Group Limited (N-R)

Gamuda (GAM MK - RM4.40 - BUY)

IJM (IJM MK - RM1.51 - BUY)

JR Central (N-R)

KCR Corporation (N-R)

Lembaga (N-R)

Malaysia Airports (MAHB MK - RM6.85 - O-PF)

MMC (N-R)

MRCB (N-R)

PT Kereta Cepat Indonesia China (N-R)

SunCon (SCGB MK - RM1.77 - O-PF)

WCT (N-R)

YTL (N-R)

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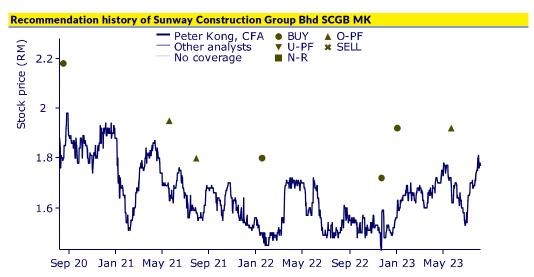
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| Date | Rec | Target | Date | Rec | Target |
|-------------|------|--------|-------------|------|--------|
| 31 May 2023 | O-PF | 7.65 | 24 Aug 2021 | O-PF | 7.00 |
| 10 Feb 2023 | O-PF | 7.75 | 31 May 2021 | O-PF | 6.45 |
| 17 Jan 2023 | U-PF | 7.25 | 01 Mar 2021 | O-PF | 6.90 |
| 30 Nov 2022 | O-PF | 6.95 | 24 Dec 2020 | U-PF | 5.60 |
| 22 Sep 2022 | O-PF | 6.50 | 01 Dec 2020 | U-PF | 5.25 |
| 30 Nov 2021 | U-PF | 6.50 | 30 Oct 2020 | O-PF | 5.25 |
| 11 Oct 2021 | U-PF | 7.00 | | | |

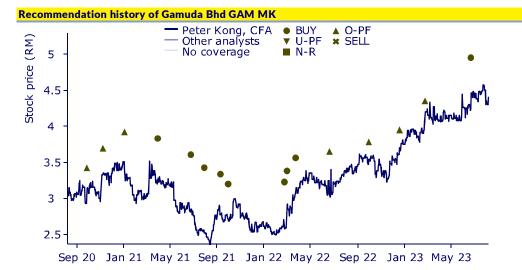
Source: CLSA





| Date | Rec | Target | Date | Rec | Target |
|-------------|------|--------|-------------|------|--------|
| 23 May 2023 | O-PF | 1.92 | 30 Jul 2021 | O-PF | 1.80 |
| 03 Jan 2023 | BUY | 1.92 | 21 May 2021 | O-PF | 1.95 |
| 23 Nov 2022 | BUY | 1.72 | 19 Aug 2020 | BUY | 2.18 |
| 17 Jan 2022 | BUY | 1.80 | | | |

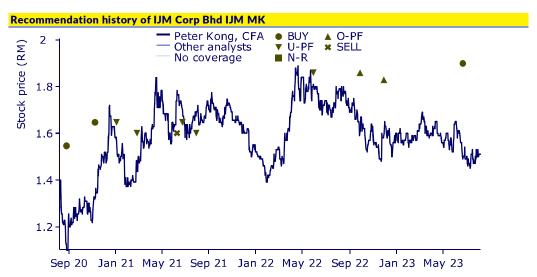
Source: CLSA



| Date | Rec | Target | Date | Rec | Target |
|-------------|------|--------|-------------|------|--------|
| 22 Jun 2023 | BUY | 4.95 | 30 Sep 2021 | BUY | 3.20* |
| 23 Feb 2023 | O-PF | 4.35 | 10 Sep 2021 | BUY | 3.33* |
| 19 Dec 2022 | O-PF | 3.95 | 30 Jul 2021 | BUY | 3.42* |
| 30 Sep 2022 | O-PF | 3.79* | 25 Jun 2021 | BUY | 3.61* |
| 20 Jun 2022 | O-PF | 3.65* | 31 Mar 2021 | BUY | 3.83* |
| 24 Mar 2022 | BUY | 3.56* | 04 Jan 2021 | O-PF | 3.92* |
| 02 Mar 2022 | BUY | 3.38* | 09 Nov 2020 | O-PF | 3.70* |
| 23 Feb 2022 | BUY | 3.23* | 28 Sep 2020 | O-PF | 3.42* |

Source: CLSA; * Adjusted for corporate action





| Date | Rec | Target | Date | Rec | Target |
|-------------|------|--------|-------------|------|--------|
| 22 Jun 2023 | BUY | 1.90 | 10 Jun 2021 | SELL | 1.60* |
| 29 Nov 2022 | O-PF | 1.83 | 26 Feb 2021 | U-PF | 1.60* |
| 28 Sep 2022 | O-PF | 1.86 | 04 Jan 2021 | U-PF | 1.65* |
| 30 May 2022 | U-PF | 1.86 | 09 Nov 2020 | BUY | 1.65* |
| 30 Jul 2021 | U-PF | 1.60* | 27 Aug 2020 | BUY | 1.55* |
| 24 Jun 2021 | U-PF | 1.65* | | | |

Source: CLSA; * Adjusted for corporate action

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Restricted - CLST: 0.00%. Data for 12-month period ending 1 Jul 2023.

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