

BUY (Unchanged)

Change in Numbers

TP: Bt 17.50

Upside : 31.6%

(From: Bt 19.00)

31 AUGUST 2021

Small Cap Research

Sino-Thai Eng. & Cons. (STEC TB)

Overly punished

STEC has been hit with a slew of bad news and its share price has fallen 17% from this year's peak. Given its major earnings hiccup, we cut our earnings by 15-75% over 2021-23F. However, at 23x 2022F PE and 19x in 2023F, vs. its 34x pre-COVID average in 2015-19, we believe STEC is overly punished and see this as an opportunity to BUY.



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Maintaining our BUY rating

This is a part of the Construction Sector report, *Not all is lost*, dated 31 August 2021. We cut our earnings for STEC by 75%, 30% and 15% in 2021-23F and DCF-derived SOTP-based 12-month TP (2022F base year) to Bt17.5 (from Bt19) to reflect the COVID crisis and project delays. But we maintain our BUY call as, **first**, we expect STEC's 3Q21F earnings to reach bottom after the COVID-19 hit. **Second**, with its Bt72bn existing backlog value (Bt102bn at end 2022F if it wins a part of the South Purple Line work and signs the contract for U-Tapao Airport next year), we forecast its EPS growth to resume at 400% y-y in 2022F and 23% y-y in 2023F. **Lastly**, STEC looks to have been overly punished, in our view, trading at 23x PE in 2022F before falling to 19x in 2023F vs. its 34x pre-COVID average in 2015-19.

A lot of bad news is already out

After the plunge in its 2Q21 earnings by 31% y-y and 37% q-q due to the COVID third-wave impact, the government announced a lockdown of construction sites in July. The sites were allowed to reopen in August with strict measures for the movement of workers, entry and exit from the sites, separation of infected workers, etc. Then there was negative news from its partner, BTS Group (BTS TB, Bt9.25, BUY), which lost its appeal at the Supreme Administrative Court regarding the East Orange Line's bidding criteria, implying to us that Ch. Karnchang (CK TB, Bt20.1, BUY) has a higher chance of winning the project. Its Pink and Yellow lines' construction also look set to be delayed for a year as the government cannot deliver the land on time. And the latest one is the cancelation of the South Purple Line bidding.

Large backlog to secure growth

However, we expect STEC's earnings growth to resume strongly in 2022-23F after the government gradually eases the lockdown. Its existing backlog value is high at Bt72bn. Despite facing a delay, we still expect the South Purple Line to reopen for bidding in 2H22 and STEC to win one of its six construction contracts. We also forecast STEC to sign the contract for the U-Tapao Airport project late next year, driving its backlog value to rise to Bt102bn at end 2022F. That is 4x of its revenue base this year. Note that our numbers already assume delays in the Yellow and Pink Lines' completion to late 2022F.

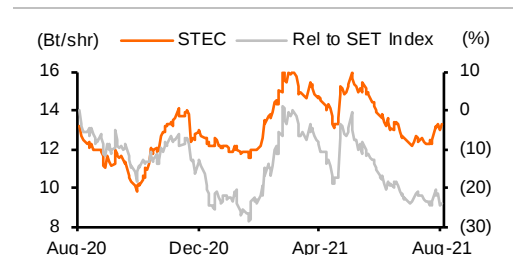
Bad news looks priced in

Given the 17% fall in the share price from its peak this year, STEC now trades at an 23x PE multiple in 2022F and 19x in 2023F vs. its pre-COVID average of 34x in 2015-19. After taking out abnormal peaks and troughs, STEC has traded at an average PE of 24x over the past 10 years.

COMPANY VALUATION

Y/E Dec (Bt m)	2020A	2021F	2022F	2023F
Sales	35,841	25,375	29,363	34,031
Net profit	1,093	177	883	1,090
Consensus NP	—	901	1,233	1,317
Diff frm cons (%)	—	(80.4)	(28.4)	(17.3)
Norm profit	867	177	883	1,090
Prev. Norm profit	—	710	1,254	1,288
Chg frm prev (%)	—	(75.1)	(29.6)	(15.4)
Norm EPS (Bt)	0.6	0.1	0.6	0.7
Norm EPS grw (%)	(39.5)	(79.6)	399.5	23.4
Norm PE (x)	23.4	114.8	23.0	18.6
EV/EBITDA (x)	7.6	15.5	7.3	5.8
P/BV (x)	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.3
Div yield (%)	2.3	0.3	1.3	1.6
ROE (%)	6.0	1.2	6.1	7.1
Net D/E (%)	(37.4)	(36.4)	(38.8)	(43.7)

PRICE PERFORMANCE



COMPANY INFORMATION

Price as of 30-Aug-21 (Bt)	13.30
Market Cap (US\$ m)	624.9
Listed Shares (m shares)	1,525.1
Free Float (%)	65.2
Avg Daily Turnover (US\$ m)	6.3
12M Price H/L (Bt)	16.10/9.75
Sector	Construction
Major Shareholder	Chanvirakul family 21.7%

Sources: Bloomberg, Company data, Thanachart estimates



Ex 1: Key Assumption Changes

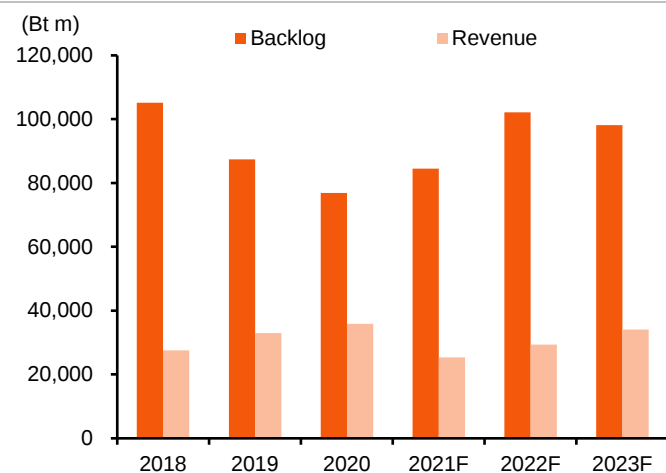
	2019	2020	2021F	2022F	2023F
New work value (Bt bn)					
New	15.3	25.3	33.0	47.0	30.0
Old			33.0	50.0	10.0
Change (%)			—	(6.0)	200.0
Normalized profit (Bt m)					
New	1,434	867	177	883	1,090
Old			710	1,254	1,288
Change (%)			(75.1)	(29.6)	(15.4)
Gross margin (%)					
New	5.6	4.4	3.0	5.5	5.6
Old			4.4	5.7	5.7
Change (pp)			(1.4)	(0.2)	(0.1)

Source: Thanachart estimates

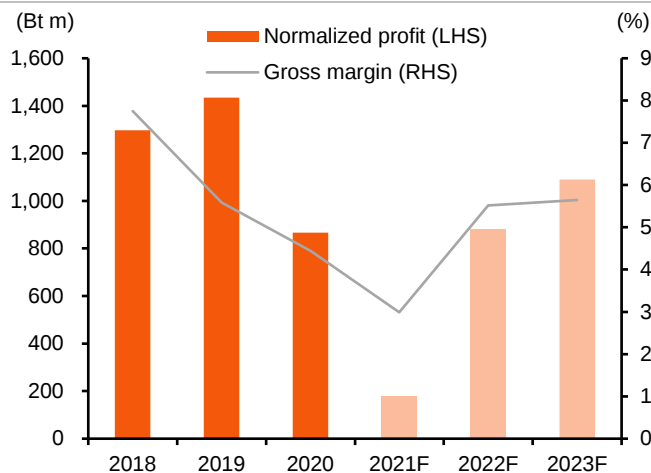
Ex 2: STEC's Potential New Work Value

Project	Project Value (Bn)	Construction Value (Bn)	Chance (%)	New work in 2021F (Bn)	New work in 2022F (Bn)	New work in 2023F (Bn)
Backlog value as of end 2020				77		
Newly signed contracts						
Government Center Zone C				6		
Ayudhaya Division Canal				4		
To be signed contracts						
Double-track Denchai - Chiang Khong's Contract 2,3	46	46	50	23	-	-
U-Tapao Airport's First Phase	31	27	100	-	27	-
Potential projects						
South Purple Line	125	79	25	-	20	-
West Orange Line	129	96	-	-	-	-
Red Line Extension	103	67	25	-	-	17
Double-track Chira – Ubon	36	36	5	-	-	2
Double-track Khon Kaen - Nong Khai	25	25	5	-	-	1
Others	-	-	-	-	-	10
Total new work value		376		33	47	30
Backlog at year end				85	102	98

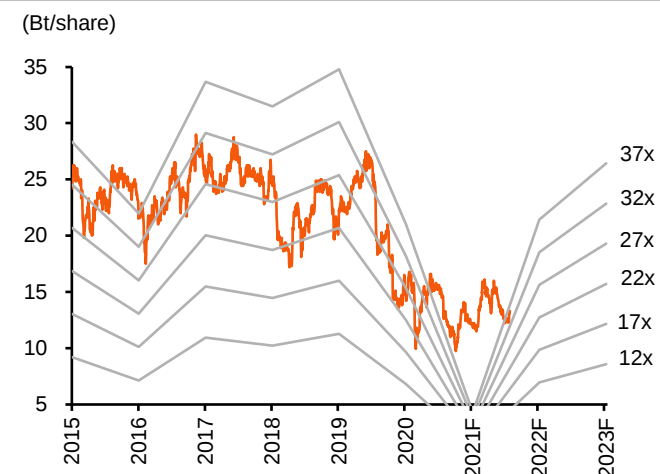
Sources: Company data, Thanachart estimates

Ex 3: STEC's Backlog Value Vs. Revenue

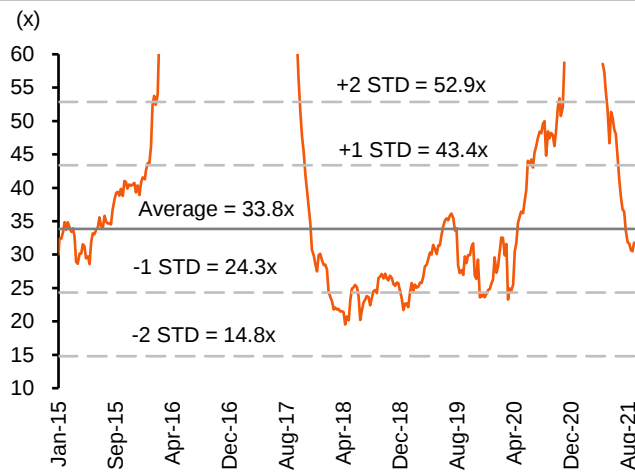
Sources: Company data, Thanachart estimates

Ex 4: STEC's Gross Margin Vs. Earnings

Sources: Company data, Thanachart estimates

Ex 5: STEC's PE Band

Sources: Bloomberg, Thanachart estimates

Ex 6: STEC's PE Standard Deviation

Sources: Bloomberg, Thanachart estimates

Ex 7: 12-month DCF-derived SOTP-based TP Calculation, Using A 2022F Base Year

(Bt m)	2022F	2023F	2024F	2025F	2026F	2027F	2028F	2029F	2030F	2031F	2032F	Terminal Value	
EBITDA	1,900	2,225	2,390	2,457	2,458	2,360	2,121	2,181	2,241	2,301	2,361	—	
Free cash flow	130	709	1,060	1,447	1,475	1,440	1,430	1,213	1,273	1,334	1,395	17,116	
PV of free cash flow	130	593	811	995	923	821	741	573	547	500	474	5,810	
Risk-free rate (%)	2.5												
Market risk premium (%)	8.0												
Beta	1.0												
WACC (%)	9.3												
Terminal growth (%)	2.0												
Enterprise value - add investments	12,918												
Net debt (2021F)	(5,252)												
Minority interest	290												
Equity value	17,880												
# of shares (m)	1,525												
Equity value/share (Bt)	11.7												
Sum-of-the-parts calculation								%			holding		(Bt m)
Enterprise value from construction business												12,918	
Investment equity value												8,896	
TSE								9.00%			572		
BSR JV								15.00%			1,523		
GULF								1.88%			6,802		
Total enterprise value												21,814	
(Less) Net debt (2020F)												(5,252)	
(Less) Minority interest												290	
Total enterprise value												26,776	
# of shares (fully diluted) (m shares)												1,525	
Sum of the parts (SOTP) (Bt/share)												17.5	

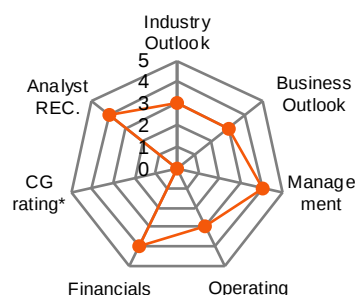
Sources: Company data, Thanachart estimates

COMPANY DESCRIPTION

Sino-Thai Engineering & Construction (STECON) is one of the three biggest engineering and construction companies in Thailand, engaged in civil and mechanical work in buildings, infrastructure, energy, environment and industrial projects. It operates and offers services as a main contractor, sub-contractor, and joint-venture partner to both government and private sector clients. It classifies its construction services into five categories: infrastructure construction, industrial, building construction, power & energy, and environmental projects.

Source: Thanachart

COMPANY RATING



Rating Scale

Excellent	5
Good	4
Fair	3
Weak	2
Very Weak	1
None	0

Source: Thanachart; *No CG Rating

THANACHART'S SWOT ANALYSIS

S — Strength

- Strongest financial position in the sector, with net cash.
- Class-A contractor able to bid for all construction work.
- Expert in power plant construction.

O — Opportunity

- Thailand is in an infrastructure investment cycle.
- Concerns about electricity shortages are also driving investments in power-plant projects.

W — Weakness

- The majority of STEC's revenues are based on projects it has to bid for, and there are no guarantees it will win these bidding contests.
- The construction business is labor-intensive. Thus, there are risks from higher labor costs and labor shortages.

T — Threat

- Covid-19 impacts and the government's time-consuming implementation processes could cause delays to Thailand's infrastructure investment.
- Volatility in building material prices is a major risk that we expect to increase this year.

CONSENSUS COMPARISON

	Consensus	Thanachart	Diff
Target price (Bt)	16.67	17.50	5%
Net profit 21F (Bt m)	901	177	-80%
Net profit 22F (Bt m)	1,233	883	-28%
Consensus REC	BUY: 12	HOLD: 4	SELL: 1

HOW ARE WE DIFFERENT FROM THE STREET?

- Our net profit for 2022F is 28% below the Bloomberg consensus number, which we believe is due to us having a more conservative revenue and gross margin assumption due to the labour shortage and delays in mega project bids.
- However, our TP is higher than other brokers', likely as we are more bullish on its long-term earnings.

Sources: Bloomberg consensus, Thanachart estimates

RISKS TO OUR INVESTMENT CASE

- The key downside risk to our call would be if the implementation of infrastructure projects occurs more slowly than we currently expect. This would likely prompt us to adjust down our new work value assumptions and earnings forecasts.
- Building material expenses account for 50-60% of STEC's total costs. Therefore, higher prices present a downside risk to our earnings forecasts.
- A weaker-than-expected economic recovery could also have a significant negative impact upon people's confidence and new construction projects.

Source: Thanachart

INCOME STATEMENT

FY ending Dec (Bt m)	2019A	2020A	2021F	2022F	2023F
Sales	32,992	35,841	25,375	29,363	34,031
Cost of sales	31,149	34,249	24,618	27,742	32,109
Gross profit	1,843	1,591	757	1,621	1,923
% gross margin	5.6%	4.4%	3.0%	5.5%	5.6%
Selling & administration expenses	530	686	761	734	783
Operating profit	1,313	906	(4)	887	1,140
% operating margin	4.0%	2.5%	0.0%	3.0%	3.3%
Depreciation & amortization	771	1,050	973	1,083	1,155
EBITDA	2,084	1,956	969	1,970	2,295
% EBITDA margin	6.3%	5.5%	3.8%	6.7%	6.7%
Non-operating income	277	166	182	183	190
Non-operating expenses	0	0	0	0	0
Interest expense	(51)	(53)	(37)	(44)	(43)
Pre-tax profit	1,539	1,018	141	1,026	1,287
Income tax	326	236	28	205	257
After-tax profit	1,213	782	113	821	1,029
% net margin	3.7%	2.2%	0.4%	2.8%	3.0%
Shares in affiliates' Earnings	231	95	75	75	75
Minority interests	(11)	(10)	(11)	(13)	(15)
Extraordinary items	50	226	0	0	0
NET PROFIT	1,484	1,093	177	883	1,090
Normalized profit	1,434	867	177	883	1,090
EPS (Bt)	1.0	0.7	0.1	0.6	0.7
Normalized EPS (Bt)	0.9	0.6	0.1	0.6	0.7

We expect STEC's earnings to turn around from this year onward...

...due to a resumption of construction work realizing higher revenues and gross margin

BALANCE SHEET

FY ending Dec (Bt m)	2019A	2020A	2021F	2022F	2023F
ASSETS:					
Current assets:	23,149	21,095	16,633	18,859	21,856
Cash & cash equivalent	7,261	6,496	6,255	6,935	8,055
Account receivables	10,342	9,905	6,952	8,045	9,324
Inventories	4,026	3,227	2,361	2,660	3,079
Others	1,520	1,468	1,066	1,219	1,398
Investments & loans	20,440	17,326	17,326	17,326	17,326
Net fixed assets	5,556	3,223	4,320	4,806	5,222
Other assets	62	2,389	2,307	2,256	2,205
Total assets	49,207	44,033	40,586	43,247	46,609
LIABILITIES:					
Current liabilities:	31,479	26,595	23,618	25,246	27,541
Account payables	27,802	21,673	19,222	20,522	22,432
Bank overdraft & ST loans	0	1,000	1,003	1,004	1,002
Current LT debt	0	0	0	0	0
Others current liabilities	3,677	3,921	3,394	3,720	4,107
Total LT debt	0	0	0	0	0
Others LT liabilities	3,081	2,727	2,528	2,718	2,945
Total liabilities	34,560	29,321	26,146	27,964	30,486
Minority interest	271	279	290	303	318
Preferreds shares	0	0	0	0	0
Paid-up capital	1,525	1,525	1,525	1,525	1,525
Share premium	2,097	2,097	2,097	2,097	2,097
Warrants	0	0	0	0	0
Surplus	2,869	2,264	2,264	2,264	2,264
Retained earnings	7,886	8,546	8,263	9,093	9,918
Shareholders' equity	14,377	14,433	14,150	14,980	15,805
Liabilities & equity	49,207	44,033	40,586	43,247	46,609

Sources: Company data, Thanachart estimates

STEC's financial status looks solid with a net-cash position

CASH FLOW STATEMENT

FY ending Dec (Bt m)	2019A	2020A	2021F	2022F	2023F
Earnings before tax	1,539	1,018	141	1,026	1,287
Tax paid	(326)	(236)	(28)	(205)	(257)
Depreciation & amortization	771	1,050	973	1,083	1,155
Chg In working capital	1,492	(4,893)	1,368	(92)	213
Chg In other CA & CL / minorities	732	483	(51)	248	283
Cash flow from operations	4,208	(2,577)	2,403	2,060	2,679
Capex	(1,880)	1,282	(2,000)	(1,500)	(1,500)
Right of use	0	(2,314)	(10)	(10)	(10)
ST loans & investments	(10)	(59)	0	0	0
LT loans & investments	(8,104)	3,114	0	0	0
Adj for asset revaluation	2,726	(605)	0	0	0
Chg In other assets & liabilities	2,352	(175)	(177)	182	218
Cash flow from investments	(4,914)	1,244	(2,187)	(1,328)	(1,292)
Debt financing	(1,236)	1,000	3	2	(2)
Capital increase	0	0	0	0	0
Dividends paid	(763)	(458)	(460)	(53)	(265)
Warrants & other surplus	(31)	25	(0)	0	0
Cash flow from financing	(2,030)	567	(457)	(51)	(267)
Free cash flow	2,328	(1,295)	403	560	1,179

VALUATION

FY ending Dec	2019A	2020A	2021F	2022F	2023F
Normalized PE (x)	14.1	23.4	114.8	23.0	18.6
Normalized PE - at target price (x)	18.6	30.8	151.0	30.2	24.5
PE (x)	13.7	18.6	114.8	23.0	18.6
PE - at target price (x)	18.0	24.4	151.0	30.2	24.5
EV/EBITDA (x)	6.2	7.6	15.5	7.3	5.8
EV/EBITDA - at target price (x)	9.3	10.8	22.1	10.5	8.6
P/BV (x)	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.3
P/BV - at target price (x)	1.9	1.8	1.9	1.8	1.7
P/CFO (x)	4.8	(7.9)	8.4	9.8	7.6
Price/sales (x)	0.6	0.6	0.8	0.7	0.6
Dividend yield (%)	2.3	2.3	0.3	1.3	1.6
FCF Yield (%)	11.5	(6.4)	2.0	2.8	5.8
(Bt)					
Normalized EPS	0.9	0.6	0.1	0.6	0.7
EPS	1.0	0.7	0.1	0.6	0.7
DPS	0.3	0.3	0.0	0.2	0.2
BV/share	9.4	9.5	9.3	9.8	10.4
CFO/share	2.8	(1.7)	1.6	1.4	1.8
FCF/share	1.5	(0.8)	0.3	0.4	0.8

Sources: Company data, Thanachart estimates

STEC's valuation looks attractive to us at 23x PE in 2022F...

....falling to 19x in 2023F vs. its 34x in pre-COVID 2015-19

FINANCIAL RATIOS

FY ending Dec	2019A	2020A	2021F	2022F	2023F
Growth Rate					
Sales (%)	19.8	8.6	(29.2)	15.7	15.9
Net profit (%)	(8.2)	(26.3)	(83.8)	399.5	23.4
EPS (%)	(8.2)	(26.3)	(83.8)	399.5	23.4
Normalized profit (%)	10.5	(39.5)	(79.6)	399.5	23.4
Normalized EPS (%)	10.5	(39.5)	(79.6)	399.5	23.4
Dividend payout ratio (%)	30.8	42.0	30.0	30.0	30.0
Operating performance					
Gross margin (%)	5.6	4.4	3.0	5.5	5.7
Operating margin (%)	4.0	2.5	(0.0)	3.0	3.3
EBITDA margin (%)	6.3	5.5	3.8	6.7	6.7
Net margin (%)	3.7	2.2	0.4	2.8	3.0
D/E (incl. minor) (x)	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
Net D/E (incl. minor) (x)	(0.5)	(0.4)	(0.4)	(0.4)	(0.4)
Interest coverage - EBIT (x)	25.8	17.2	na	19.9	26.3
Interest coverage - EBITDA (x)	41.0	37.1	26.0	44.3	53.0
ROA - using norm profit (%)	3.0	1.9	0.4	2.1	2.4
ROE - using norm profit (%)	11.3	6.0	1.2	6.1	7.1
DuPont					
ROE - using after tax profit (%)	9.6	5.4	0.8	5.6	6.7
- asset turnover (x)	0.7	0.8	0.6	0.7	0.8
- operating margin (%)	4.8	3.0	0.7	3.6	3.9
- leverage (x)	3.7	3.2	3.0	2.9	2.9
- interest burden (%)	96.8	95.1	79.1	95.8	96.7
- tax burden (%)	78.8	76.8	80.0	80.0	80.0
WACC (%)	9.3	9.3	9.3	9.3	9.3
ROIC (%)	47.0	9.8	(0.0)	8.0	10.1
NOPAT (Bt m)	1,035	696	(3)	709	912
invested capital (Bt m)	7,116	8,937	8,898	9,049	8,752

Sources: Company data, Thanachart estimates

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For sectors, an "Overweight" sector weighting is used when we have BUYS on majority of the stocks under our coverage by market cap. "Underweight" is used when we have SELLS on majority of the stocks we cover by market cap. "Neutral" is used when there are relatively equal weightings of BUYS and SELLS.

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