CMB International Global Markets | Equity Research | Company Update

Trip.com (TCOM US)

Pent-up demand boosts revenue recovery

Trip.com Group (TCOM) announced 4Q22 results on 7 Mar: net revenue was RMB5.0bn, up 7% YoY. 3/4% ahead of our/Bloomberg consensus estimates, and was 60% of the 4Q19 level. Non-GAAP net income was RMB498mn, better than our forecast/consensus estimate of loss at RMB140/152mn, thanks to betterthan-expected cost saving. Recovery in both domestic and outbound travel in 1Q23 was better than our expectation, aided by the release of pent-up demand, especially for business travel. The cost saving measures adopted by TCOM amid industry headwind could aid rapid margin recovery when revenue generation normalizes, in our view. To account for better-than-expected revenue and earnings recovery, we lifted our DCF-based target price by 12% to US\$44.6 per ADS, translating into 37x/23x 2023/2024E PE (non-GAAP). Maintain BUY.

- Recovery in both outbound travel and international travel business is better than expectation. Although the industry level international flight capacity has only recovered to 15-20% of pre-pandemic level, management highlighted recent outbound travel bookings on TCOM's platform has recovered more than 40% of pre-pandemic level despite capacity limitation, which management attributed to TCOM's deeper ties with suppliers. In addition, management noted that overall air ticket revenue from TCOM's global platform has fully recovered compared to pre-pandemic level, and hotel bookings on global platform has hit a record high in 4Q22.
- Domestic hotel and air bookings have surpassed 2019 level in 1Q23. In 4Q22, TCOM's revenue from transportation-ticketing (TT) services was RMB2.2bn, up 45% YoY and reached 64% of the 4Q19 level. Revenue from accommodation reservation (AR) business was RMB1.7bn, down 12% YoY and was 57% of the 4Q19 level. Management noted a rapid recovery trend post the relaxation of pandemic prevention policy, and highlighted that quarter-to-date domestic hotel and air booking volume in 1Q23 has surpassed the 2019 level. Driven by the release of pent-up demand, improvement of macro, and steady development of international business, we forecast TCOM to record RMB3.0bn AR revenue in 1Q23, flat compared to 1Q19 level, and achieve RMB3.7bn in TT revenue, up 11% compared to 1Q19 level. We lifted TCOM's 2023E total revenue forecast by 11% to RMB34.0bn, indicating a YoY growth of 69%, and was 95% of 2019 level.
- Cost control measures could aid rapid margin recovery when revenue recovers. TCOM's non-GAAP OPM for 4Q22 was 1.4%, 4.5pp better than our forecast, mainly on better-than-expected cost saving. TCOM has adopted stringent cost reduction and saving measures amid industry headwind, which should aid strong margin expansion when revenue generation normalizes. Recovery in revenue generation from relative high-margin outbound travel business could aid further margin recovery. We forecast non-GAAP OPM to expand to 19.0% in 1Q23E (1Q19: 16.8%; 1Q22: -3.3%), and estimate it to recover to 19.2% in 2023E (2019: 18.9%; 2022: 6.4%).

Earnings Summary

(YE 31 Dec)	FY21A	FY22A	FY23E	FY24E	FY25E
Revenue (RMB mn)	20,029	20,055	33,952	42,894	47,259
YoY growth (%)	9.3	0.1	69.3	26.3	10.2
Net profit (RMB mn)	(550.0)	1,403.0	3,870.1	7,034.3	8,812.4
Adjusted net profit (RMB mn)	1,356.0	1,294.0	5,465.9	8,964.6	10,891.8
Adj. NP (Consensus; RMBmn)			4,960.5	8,291.5	9,321.8
EPS (Adjusted) (RMB)	2.14	1.97	8.32	13.64	16.58
P/E (x)	na	79.9	44.8	24.6	19.7

Source: Company data, Bloomberg, CMBIGM estimates



BUY (Maintain)

Target Price (Previous TP

US\$44.60

Up/Downside **Current Price**

US\$40.00) 15.5% US\$38.61

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Stock Data

Mkt Cap (US\$ mn)	25,370.4
Avg 3 mths t/o (US\$ mn)	36.4
52w High/Low (US\$)	40.06/16.75
Total Issued Shares (mn)	657.1
Source: FactSet	

Shareholding Structure

Baidu Entities	10.8%
Morgan Stanley	5.8%
Source: HKEx	

Share Performance

	Absolute	Relative
1-mth	6.8%	8.6%
3-mth	16.6%	9.9%
6-mth	55.0%	53.1%
Source: FactSet		

12-mth Price Performance





Figure 1: TCOM: quarterly financial results

(RMBbn)	3Q20	4Q20	1Q21	2Q21	3Q21	4Q21	1Q22	2Q22	3Q22	4Q22	CMBI estimates	Diff%
Total revenue	5.5	5.0	4.1	5.9	5.3	4.7	4.1	4.0	6.9	5.0	4.9	2.7%
YoY growth (%) Accommodation	- 47.9%	- 40.4%	-13.2%	86.5%	-2.2%	-5.7%	0.0%	- 31.9%	29.0%	7.4%	4.5%	
reservation	2.5	2.2	1.6	2.5	2.2	1.9	1.5	1.4	2.9	1.7	1.7	1.4%
YoY growth (%)	- 39.8%	- 24.4%	36.8%	95.8%	- 11.5%	- 14.5%	-8.2%	- 44.7%	32.4%	- 12.0%	-13.2%	
Transportation ticketing	1.9	1.7	1.5	2.1	1.8	1.5	1.7	1.8	2.6	2.2	2.1	4.3%
YoY growth (%)	- 48.8%	- 51.0%	-37.1%	79.7%	-4.6%	- 10.8%	10.4%	- 14.7%	44.4%	45.4%	39.4%	
Packaged tour	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.4	0.4	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.4	0.2	0.2	- 8.5%
YoY growth (%)	- 80.1%	- 67.3%	-67.7%	182.3%	20.2%	- 32.4%	- 26.6%	- 66.8%	-1.3%	-7.3%	1.2%	
Corporate travel	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.3	0.4	0.2	0.2	0.4	0.3	0.3	1.9%
YoY growth (%)	- 15.8%	- 17.7%	100.0%	140.7%	19.9%	19.5%	- 11.9%	- 46.2%	9.5%	- 24.5%	-23.1%	
Others	0.5	0.5	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.7	0.7	0.6	0.6	0.7	0.7	6.1%
YoY growth (%)	- 31.3%	- 38.0%	11.9%	31.8%	27.9%	54.8%	8.3%	-8.1%	1.3%	-0.9%	-6.5%	
Gross profit	4.4	4.1	3.1	4.7	4.1	3.6	3.0	3.0	5.6	3.8	3.6	4.9%
Operating profit	0.8	0.0	-0.8	0.3	-0.2	-0.7	-0.4	-0.2	0.9	-0.2	-0.5	N.A.
Non-GAAP net profit	1.4	1.1	-0.2	0.7	0.5	0.3	0.0	-0.2	1.0	0.5	-0.1	N.A.
												1.6
GPM (%)	81.1%	81.6%	74.8%	79.2%	77.1%	76.1%	74.0%	75.6%	81.5%	76.1%	74.5%	ppt 5.6
OPM (%)	14.5%	-0.3%	-19.2%	5.5%	-4.6%	- 15.0%	-8.7%	-4.2%	12.4%	-4.8%	-10.4%	ppt 12.8
Adjusted NPM (%)	25.6%	21.4%	-5.0%	12.4%	9.8%	6.6%	-0.9%	-5.1%	15.0%	9.9%	-2.9%	ppt

Source: Company data, CMBIGM estimates

Revision of forecast and valuation

Key changes in our forecast are set out below, and we introduced our 2025E forecast.

- 1. We lifted 2023/2024E revenue forecast by 11/11%, driven by better-than-expected recovery in both domestic business and outbound travel business, aided by the relaxation of pandemic prevention policy, release of pent-up demand, and recovery in macro environment.
- 2. We lifted our 2023/2024E non-GAAP net profit by 10/12%, driven by the lift in revenue forecast; in addition, TCOM's stringent cost reduction and saving measures amid industry headwind should aid robust margin expansion when revenue generation normalize, in our view.



Figure 2: TCOM: forecast revision

		Current		Pre	evious	C	nange (%)	
RMB bn	2023E	2024E	2025E	2023E	2024E 2025E	2023E	2024E	2025E
Revenue	34.0	42.9	47.3	30.7	38.8	10.6%	10.7%	
Gross Profit	26.9	34.0	37.5	23.9	30.7	12.5%	10.8%	
Operating Profit	4.9	8.0	10.0	3.2	6.5	52.7%	23.9%	
Non-GAAP net profit	5.5	9.0	10.9	5.0	8.0	9.7%	11.6%	
Gross Margin	79.2%	79.3%	79.5%	77.9%	79.2%	1.3 ppt	0.1 ppt	
Operating Margin	14.5%	18.7%	21.2%	10.5%	16.7%	4.0 ppt	2.0 ppt	
Non-GAAP net margin	16.1%	20.9%	23.0%	16.2%	20.7%	-0.1 ppt	0.2 ppt	

Source: CMBIGM estimates

Figure 3: CMBIGM estimates vs consensus

СМВІ			(Diff (%)					
RMB bn	2023E	2024E	2025E	2023E	2024E	2025E	2023E	2024E	2025E
Revenue	34.0	42.9	47.3	30.1	39.2	45.0	12.7%	9.4%	5.0%
Gross Profit	26.9	34.0	37.5	23.5	30.8	35.4	14.4%	10.4%	5.9%
Non-GAAP net profit	5.5	9.0	10.9	5.0	8.3	9.3	10.2%	8.1%	16.8%
Gross Margin	79.2%	79.3%	79.5%	78.0%	78.6%	78.7%	1.2 ppt	0.7 ppt	0.7 ppt
Non-GAAP net margin	16.1%	20.9%	23.0%	16.5%	21.1%	20.7%	-0.4 ppt	-0.2 ppt	2.3 ppt

Source: Bloomberg, CMBIGM estimates

DCF based target price of US\$44.6

Our DCF-based target price was lifted to US\$44.6 (WACC of 10.5% and terminal growth of 2.0%; both unchanged). Our target price translates into 37.1x 2023E PE and 22.6x 2024E PE (non-GAAP). Our previous DCF-based target price of US\$40.0 translates into 35.2x 2023E PE (non-GAAP).

TCOM is currently trading at 38/23x 2023/2024E PE (non-GAAP) based on Bloomberg consensus estimate, higher than industry average of both 18x (Fig.5). We think TCOM's valuation premium could be justified by its strong earnings recovery post pandemic. We forecast TCOM to achieve 2022-2024E non-GAAP net profit CAGR of 163%.

TCOM is one of the key beneficiaries of consumption recovery in post pandemic era, in our view, and future catalysts on stock price could come from: 1) better-than-expected recovery of outbound travel that accounts for c.25% of TCOM's pre-COVID revenue generation; 2) stronger-than-expected domestic long-haul travel recovery, aided by release of pent-up demand; and 3) better-than-expected margin expansion aided by the recovery in revenue generation.

Figure 4: TCOM: DCF valuation (WACC of 10.5%, terminal growth of 2.0%)

(RMBbn)	2023E	2024E	2025E	2026E	2027E	2028E	2029E	2030E	2031E	2032E
Total revenue	34.0	42.9	47.3	51.4	55.3	58.9	62.1	65.1	67.7	70.0
NPV of FCF Discounted	96.5	86.7								
terminal value Total equity	81.3	89.9								
valuation No. of shares	199.3	214.2								
(diluted, mn) Valuation per	657	657								
share (USD)	44.6									

Source: CMBIGM estimates

Note: 1) our USD:RMB exchange rate assumption is 1:6.925; 2) our target price is based on weighted average of 9-month target price in 2023E and 3-month target price in 2024E.

Figure 5: Industry valuation comps



Figure 5: Industry value	uation comps					
Company name	Ticker	Price	PE (x	()	PS(x)
		(Local)	2023E	2024E	2023E	2024E
Platform						
Alibaba Group	BABA US	89.6	10.3	10.5	1.7	1.5
Tencent	700 HK	357.0	21.6	18.4	4.9	4.3
Baidu	BIDU US	149.5	15.6	13.5	2.6	2.4
Meituan	3690 HK	137.4	NA	26.8	2.7	2.2
JD.com	JD US	47.9	17.3	13.7	0.4	0.4
Average			16.2	16.6	2.5	2.2
E-commerce and local life	services					
Alibaba Group	BABA US	89.6	10.3	10.5	1.7	1.5
JD.com	JD US	47.9	17.3	13.7	0.4	0.4
Pinduoduo	PDD US	93.8	22.0	17.8	5.0	4.1
Meituan	3690 HK	137.4	NA	26.8	2.7	2.2
VIPShop	VIPS US	14.5	9.3	8.8	0.5	0.5
Average			14.7	15.5	2.1	1.7
Online games						
Tencent	700 HK	357.0	21.6	18.4	4.9	4.3
NetEase	NTES US	86.5	18.9	16.6	3.8	3.4
Kingsoft	3888 HK	27.3	NA	29.6	3.6	3.1
XD Inc	2400 HK	24.4	NA	29.9	2.3	1.9
Average			20.2	23.6	3.6	3.2
Social entertainment						
Kuaishou	1024 HK	55.6	NA	23.5	2.0	1.7
Bilibili	BILI US	21.6	NA	NA	2.4	2.0
TME	TME US	8.0	18.4	16.2	3.2	2.9
Cloud Village	9899 HK	89.0	NA	23.9	1.6	1.4
China Literature	772 HK	36.3	20.8	17.9	3.7	3.3
Average			19.6	20.4	2.6	2.3
Online ads						
Baidu	BIDU US	149.5	15.6	13.5	2.6	2.4
Weibo	WBUS	18.3	8.2	7.2	2.2	2.1
Average			11.9	10.4	2.4	2.2
ΟΤΑ						
Trip.com Group	TCOM US	38.6	37.7	23.0	5.7	4.4
TCEL	780 HK	16.8	25.4	19.6	3.7	3.0
Average			31.6	21.3	4.7	3.7
Online healthcare						
Ali Health	241 HK	5.8	NA	NA	2.2	1.8
JD Health	6618 HK	59.0	NA	NA	2.8	2.2
Pingan Healthcare	1833 HK	18.8	NA	NA	2.4	2.1
Average			NA	NA	2.5	2.0
Total average			18.1	18.2	2.8	2.4

Source: Bloomberg, CMBIGM estimates



Financial Summary

INCOME STATEMENT	2020A	2021A	2022A	2023E	2024E	2025E
YE 31 Dec (RMB mn)						
Revenue	18,327	20,029	20,055	33,952	42,894	47,259
Cost of goods sold	(4,031)	(4,598)	(4,513)	(7,022)	(8,830)	(9,682)
Others	(11)	(6)	(16)	(27)	(30)	(28)
Gross profit	14,285	15,425	15,526	26,902	34,034	37,548
Operating expenses	(15,708)	(16,836)	(15,438)	(21,983)	(26,019)	(27,535)
SG&A expense	(8,041)	(7,844)	(7,097)	(12,077)	(14,274)	(15,208)
R&D expense	(7,667)	(8,992)	(8,341)	(9,906)	(11,745)	(12,327)
Operating profit	(1,423)	(1,411)	88	4,919	8,016	10,013
Interest income	2,187	2,132	2,046	1,233	1,811	1,959
Interest expense	(1,716)	(1,565)	(1,514)	(1,409)	(1,266)	(1,226)
Other income/expense	(273)	373	2,015	50	0	0
Pre-tax profit	(1,225)	(471)	2,635	4,793	8,560	10,745
Income tax	(355)	(270)	(682)	(959)	(1,712)	(2,149)
Others	(1,689)	96	(586)	0	150	180
Minority interest	62	95	36	36	36	36
Net profit	(3,207)	(550)	1,403	3,870	7,034	8,812
Adjusted net profit	(913)	1,356	1,294	5,466	8,965	10,892
BALANCE SHEET	2020A	2021A	2022A	2023E	2024E	2025E
YE 31 Dec (RMB mn)						
Current assets	58,011	66,108	61,435	79,407	99,910	115,729
Cash & equivalents	18,096	19,818	17,083	33,151	48,628	62,065
Restricted cash	1,319	1,378	1,404	2,377	3,003	3,308
Account receivables	4,119	4,649	5,486	6,790	8,579	9,452
Prepayment	7,855	9,032	11,917	11,544	14,155	15,359
Other current assets	26,622	31,231	25,545	25,545	25,545	25,545
Non-current assets	129,238	125,751	130,256	127,873	127,952	128,397
PP&E	5,780	5,534	5,204	5,655	5,940	6,251
Investment in JVs & assos	47,943	44,961	50,177	47,533	47,184	47,259
Intangibles	13,256	12,960	12,825	11,856	11,785	11,713
Goodwill	59,353	59,353	59,337	59,337	59,337	59,337
Other non-current assets	2,906	2,943	2,713	3,491	3,707	3,838
Total assets	187,249	191,859	191,691	207,280	227,862	244,127
Current liabilities	58,369	66,218	57,035	71,539	81,783	86,486
Short-term borrowings	33,665	39,866	28,470	28,470	28,470	28,470
Account payables	4,506	6,019	7,569	10,183	12,450	13,265
Tax payable	1,217	1,065	0	1,917	2,568	3,224
Other current liabilities	18,503	18,868	20,996	30,407	37,677	40,946
Accrued expenses	478	400	0	562	618	581
Non-current liabilities	27,313	15,185	21,637	16,898	18,105	18,611
Long-term borrowings	22,718	11,093	17,381	11,093	11,093	11,093
Obligations under finance leases	618	400	534	534	534	534
Other non-current liabilities	3,977	3,692	3,722	5,271	6,478	6,984
Total liabilities	85,682	81,403	78,672	88,436	99,889	105,097
Share capital	6	6	6	6	6	6
Capital surplus	83,960	93,829	95,067	97,013	99,143	101,422
Retained earnings	19,470	18,823	20,191	24,026	31,026	39,803
Other reserves	(3,082)	(2,981)	(2,981)	(2,981)	(2,981)	(2,981)
Total shareholders equity	100,354	109,677	112,283	118,064	127,194	138,251
Minority interest	1,213	779	736	779	779	779
Total equity and liabilities	187,249	191,859	191,691	207,280	227,862	244,127



CASH FLOW	2020A	2021A	2022A	2023E	2024E	2025E
YE 31 Dec (RMB mn)						
Operating						
Profit before taxation	(2,914)	(375)	2,049	4,793	8,710	10,925
Depreciation & amortization	1,217	1,021	836	917	1,010	1,108
Change in working capital	(6,934)	177	(1,509)	13,573	5,845	2,625
Others	4,808	1,652	446	577	158	(130)
Net cash from operations	(3,823)	2,475	1,822	19,860	15,723	14,529
Investing						
Capital expenditure	(532)	(570)	(571)	(966)	(1,221)	(1,345)
Acquisition of subsidiaries/ investments	(2,861)	(3,585)	0	0	0	0
Others	(428)	7	0	0	0	0
Net cash from investing	(3,821)	(4,148)	(571)	(966)	(1,221)	(1,345)
Financing						
Net borrowings	18,209	5,615	(11,396)	0	0	0
Proceeds from share issues	0	7,984	0	0	0	0
Others	(12,184)	(9,680)	7,435	(1,853)	1,600	559
Net cash from financing	6,025	3,919	(3,961)	(1,853)	1,600	559
Net change in cash						
Cash at the beginning of the year	21,747	19,415	21,196	18,487	35,528	51,631
Exchange difference	(713)	(465)	0	0	0	0
Others	(1,619)	2,246	(2,709)	17,041	16,103	13,743
Cash at the end of the year	19,415	21,196	18,487	35,528	51,631	65,373
GROWTH	2020A	2021A	2022A	2023E	2024E	2025E
YE 31 Dec						
Revenue	(48.7%)	9.3%	0.1%	69.3%	26.3%	10.2%
Gross profit	(49.5%)	8.0%	0.7%	73.3%	26.5%	10.3%
Operating profit	na	na	na	5,489.9%	62.9%	24.9%
Net profit Adj. net profit	na na	na na	na (4.6%)	175.8% 322.4%	81.8% 64.0%	25.3% 21.5%
PROFITABILITY	2020A	2021A	2022A	2023E	2024E	2025E
YE 31 Dec	202077					
Gross profit margin	77.9%	77.0%	77.4%	79.2%	79.3%	79.5%
Operating margin	(7.8%)	(7.0%)	0.4%	14.5%	18.7%	21.2%
Adj. net profit margin	(5.0%)	6.8%	6.5%	16.1%	20.9%	23.0%
Return on equity (ROE)	(3.1%)	(0.5%)	1.3%	3.4%	5.7%	6.6%
GEARING/LIQUIDITY/ACTIVITIES	2020A	2021A	2022A	2023E	2024E	2025E
YE 31 Dec						
Current ratio (x)	1.0	1.0	1.1	1.1	1.2	1.3
VALUATION	2020A	2021A	2022A	2023E	2024E	2025E
YE 31 Dec						
P/E	na	na	79.9	44.8	24.6	19.7
P/B	1.2	1.2	1.0	1.5	1.4	1.3
P/CFPS	na	73.4	90.8	9.3	12.1	13.3

Source: Company data, CMBIGM estimates. Note: The calculation of net cash includes financial assets.



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