

China Hongqiao (1378 HK)

Lack of interim dividends but new buyback scheme to boost confidence

Hongqiao's net profit came in at RMB12.3bn (+35% YoY) in 1H25, which is in line with the pre-announced profit in Jun. Excluding the fair value loss of convertible bonds (CB), core net profit in 1H25 would reach RMB14.9bn (+42% YoY). While we are a bit surprised that Hongqiao did not propose interim dividends (a change from the practice of interim distribution for many years), it put out a new share buyback scheme with a minimum spending of HK\$3bn, which reflects management's confidence and helps offset the potential dilution of CB conversion, in our view. We revise up our 2025E-27E earnings forecasts by 12-14%, due to higher aluminium price (very tight industry supply with utilisation already reaching 98%) and lower coal price assumption. We revise up our TP to HK\$27 (from HK\$20.6) after rolling over the valuation base to 2026E, based on 8.6x P/E (1SD above historical average). The current price still offers an attractive yield of ~8% (assuming 60% payout) even after a recent rally. Maintain **BUY**.

- **Aluminum alloy products (64% of revenue in 1H25):** The segment revenue in 1H25 increased ~5% YoY to RMB51.9bn (sales volume +2.4% YoY to 2.91mn tonnes; ASP +2.7% to RMB17,853/t). This, together with an only 1.9% YoY increase in unit cost, boosted the unit gross profit by 5.4% YoY to RMB4,506/t.
- **Alumina segment (26% of revenue):** The segment revenue surged ~28% YoY to RMB20.7bn (sales volume +10% YoY to 6.37mn tonnes; ASP +5% to RMB3,243/t). We calculated that the unit gross profit surged 25% YoY to RMB933/t.
- **Aluminum fabrication products (10% of revenue):** The segment revenue increased 6.5% YoY to RMB8bn (sales volume +3.4% YoY to 392mn tonnes; ASP +2.9% to RMB20,615/t). Helped by a stable unit cost, the unit gross profit grew 14% YoY to RMB4,815/t.
- **Continuous share buyback this year.** Following the completion of ~62.3mn shares buyback (0.67% of total o/s shares) in 1Q25, Hongqiao announced in Apr a buyback scheme of RMB2bn (max.). Last Friday, Hongqiao announced another plan to spend at least RMB3bn on buyback, which represents 1.4%/4.5% of total / free float shares. According to the mandate, Hongqiao will be allowed to execute the buyback before May 2026.
- **Earnings sensitivity.** We estimate every 1% increase in aluminium (Al) price will boost Hongqiao's earnings by 3%, while a 1% decrease in coal price will increase earnings by 0.5%.

Earnings Summary

(YE 31 Dec)	FY23A	FY24A	FY25E	FY26E	FY27E
Revenue (RMB mn)	133,624	156,169	159,139	160,561	160,929
YoY growth (%)	1.5	16.9	1.9	0.9	0.2
Adjusted net profit (RMB mn)	11,460.7	24,564.8	26,896.7	27,298.9	27,815.3
EPS (Adjusted) (RMB)	1.21	2.59	2.84	2.88	2.94
Consensus EPS (RMB)	na	0.00	2.35	2.51	2.60
P/E (x)	17.7	9.1	7.6	7.5	7.3
P/B (x)	2.2	1.9	1.6	1.5	1.4
Yield (%)	2.7	6.9	7.9	8.1	8.2
Net gearing (%)	34.3	24.4	6.0	0.4	(9.2)

Source: Company data, Bloomberg, CMBIGM estimates

BUY (Maintain)

Target Price	HK\$27.00
(Previous TP)	HK\$20.60)
Up/Downside	15.5%
Current Price	HK\$23.38

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Stock Data

Mkt Cap (HK\$ mn)	221,538.1
Avg 3 mths t/o (HK\$ mn)	521.9
52w High/Low (HK\$)	23.38/9.49
Total Issued Shares (mn)	9475.5

Source: FactSet

Shareholding Structure

Shipping Trust Company	64.4%
(Zhang's family)	
CITIC Group	6.0%

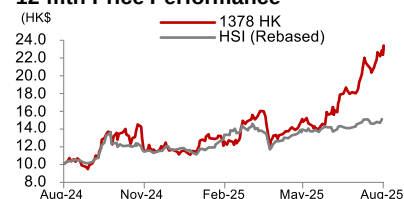
Source: HKEx

Share Performance

	Absolute	Relative
1-mth	28.6%	25.1%
3-mth	57.8%	46.4%
6-mth	85.9%	66.3%

Source: FactSet

12-Mth Price Performance



Source: FactSet

Related reports:

China Hongqiao - Net profit in 2024 +95% in line; 63% payout ratio implies 11% yield at the current price – 17 Mar 2025 ([link](#))

China Hongqiao - Expect higher ASP following China's stimulus – 30 Sep 2024 ([link](#))

China Hongqiao – Net profit in 1H24 +2.7x YoY beat expectations – 19 Aug 2024 ([link](#))

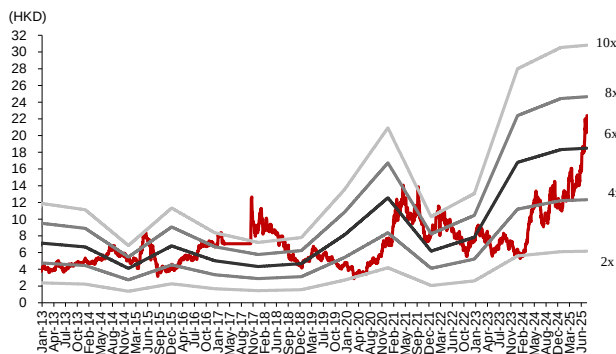
China Hongqiao – A key beneficiary of tight aluminum supply trading at attractive valuation; resume coverage with BUY – 17 Jun 2024 ([link](#))

Valuation

Over the past decade, Hongqiao traded at an average forward P/E of 6x. The stock normally peaked at 10x (except in 2017) and bottomed out at ~3x during the trough cycles (except in 2020 due to the outbreak of COVID-19).

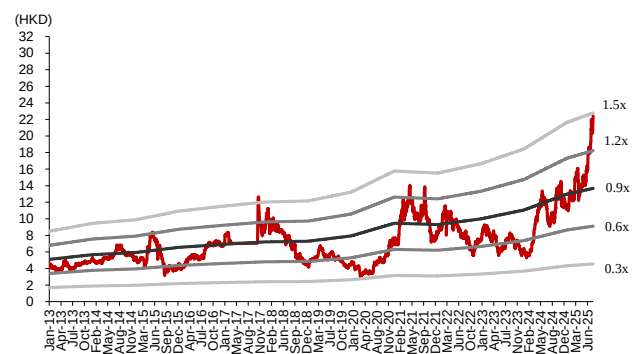
Our new TP of HK\$27 is based on 8.6x 2026E P/E (rolled over), equivalent to 1SD above the historical average of 6x (previously 0.5SD). Our above-average multiple is to reflect the continuous industry upcycle and enhancement of the company's balance sheet (close to net cash by end-2026E from net debt to equity ratio of 22% by end-2024).

Figure 1: Hongqiao's 12M forward P/E band



Source: Bloomberg, company data, CMBIGM estimates

Figure 2: Hongqiao's 12M forward P/B band



Source: Bloomberg, company data, CMBIGM estimates

- **Key risks:** (1) A slowdown of global economy that affects the aluminium price;
- (2) sharp rebounds in input costs such as bauxite and coal.

1H25 earnings review

Figure 3: 1H25 results highlights

(RMB mn)	1H24	1H25	Change (YoY)
Total revenue	73,592	81,039	10.1%
Cost of sales	-55,790	-60,234	8.0%
Gross profit	17,802	20,805	16.9%
Other income	1,712	1,362	-20.4%
S&D expenses	-366	-354	-3.4%
Administrative expenses	-2,454	-2,322	-5.4%
Other expenses	-596	-274	-54.0%
EBIT	16,097	19,217	19.4%
Net finance income/(cost)	-1,435	-1,154	-19.6%
Finance income	126	130	3.0%
Finance expenses	-1,561	-1,284	-17.7%
Other gains/(losses)	-1,615	-2,105	30.4%
Share of profit of JV and associates	824	1,807	119.3%
Pretax profit	13,871	17,764	28.1%
Income tax	-3,863	-4,213	9.0%
After tax profit	10,008	13,551	35.4%
MI	-853	-1,190	39.5%
Net profit	9,155	12,361	35.0%
Recurring net profit	10,542	14,923	41.6%
Key ratios			
			Change (ppt)
Gross margin	24.2%	25.7%	15
S&D expenses ratio	0.5%	0.4%	-0.1
Administrative expense ratio	3.3%	2.9%	-0.5
R&D expense ratio	0.8%	0.3%	-0.5
Net margin	13.6%	16.7%	3.1
Effective tax rate	27.9%	23.7%	-4.1

Source: Company data, CMBIGM

Figure 4: Revenue and gross profit breakdown in 1H25

(RMB mn)	1H24	1H25	Change (YoY)
Revenue			
Aluminum alloy products	49,312	51,878	5.2%
Alumina	16,200	20,655	27.5%
Aluminum fabrication products	7,582	8,074	6.5%
Steam	499	431	-13.5%
Total	73,592	81,039	10.1%
Gross profit			
Aluminum alloy products	12,142	13,092	7.8%
Alumina	4,120	5,945	44.3%
Aluminum fabrication products	1,595	1,881	17.9%
Steam	-55	-113	106.7%
Total	17,802	20,805	16.9%
Gross margin			
			Change (ppt)
Aluminum alloy products	24.6%	25.2%	0.6
Alumina	25.4%	28.8%	3.4
Aluminum fabrication products	21.0%	23.3%	2.3
Steam	-10.9%	-26.2%	(15.2)
Blended gross margin	24.2%	25.7%	1.5

Source: Company data, CMBIGM

Operating assumptions

Figure 5: Change in earnings forecast

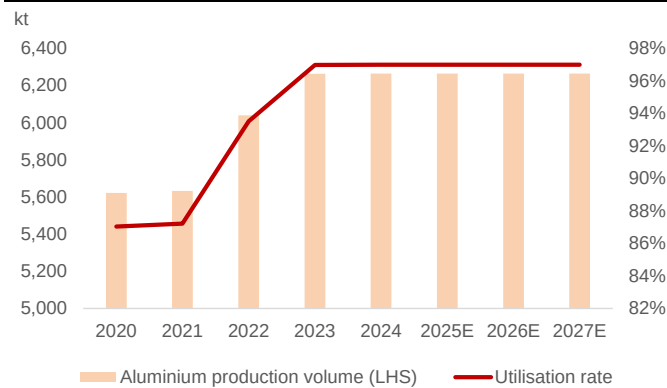
	Old			New			Change		
	2025E	2026E	2027E	2025E	2026E	2027E	2025E	2026E	2027E
(RMB mn)									
Revenue									
Aluminum alloy products	105,419	106,473	106,473	106,969	108,039	108,039	1%	1%	1%
Alumina	34,888	34,888	34,888	38,090	38,090	38,090	9%	9%	9%
Aluminum fabrication products	13,186	13,450	13,719	13,186	13,450	13,719	0%	0%	0%
Steam	893	983	1,081	893	983	1,081	0%	0%	0%
Total	154,387	155,794	156,162	159,139	160,561	160,929	3%	3%	3%
Revenue growth									
Aluminum alloy products	2.9%	1.0%	0.0%	4.4%	1.0%	0.0%	1.5	(0.0)	0.0
Alumina	-6.6%	0.0%	0.0%	2.0%	0.0%	0.0%	8.6	0.0	0.0
Aluminum fabrication products	-15.3%	2.0%	2.0%	-15.3%	2.0%	2.0%	0.0	0.0	0.0
Steam	10.0%	10.0%	10.0%	10.0%	10.0%	10.0%	0.0	0.0	0.0
Average	-1.1%	0.9%	0.2%	1.9%	0.9%	0.2%	3.0	(0.0)	(0.0)
Gross profit									
Aluminum alloy products	25,663	25,402	25,271	28,363	28,576	28,216	11%	12%	12%
Alumina	9,982	9,982	10,651	10,897	10,897	11,628	9%	9%	9%
Aluminum fabrication products	2,637	2,690	2,744	2,637	2,690	2,744	0%	0%	0%
Steam	-63	-49	-54	-63	-49	-54	n/a	n/a	n/a
Total	38,220	38,024	38,612	41,835	42,115	42,534	9%	11%	10%
Gross margin							Change in ppt		
Aluminum alloy products	24.3%	23.9%	23.7%	26.5%	26.4%	26.1%	2.17	2.59	2.38
Alumina	28.6%	28.6%	30.5%	28.6%	28.6%	30.5%	0.00	0.00	0.00
Aluminum fabrication products	20.0%	20.0%	20.0%	20.0%	20.0%	20.0%	0.00	0.00	0.00
Steam	-7.0%	-5.0%	-5.0%	-7.0%	-5.0%	-5.0%	0.00	0.00	0.00
Blended gross margin	24.8%	24.4%	24.7%	26.3%	26.2%	26.4%	1.53	1.82	1.70
Net finance expense	-3,109	-3,019	-2,928	-3,086	-2,963	-2,865	-1%	-2%	-2%
S&D expense ratio	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%	0.0	0.0	0.0
Administrative expense ratio	3.3%	3.3%	3.3%	3.0%	3.0%	3.0%	(0.3)	(0.3)	(0.3)
Other expense ratio	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%	0.0	0.0	0.0
Recurring net profit	23,983	24,013	24,646	26,897	27,299	27,815	12%	14%	13%

Source: Company data, CMBIGM estimates

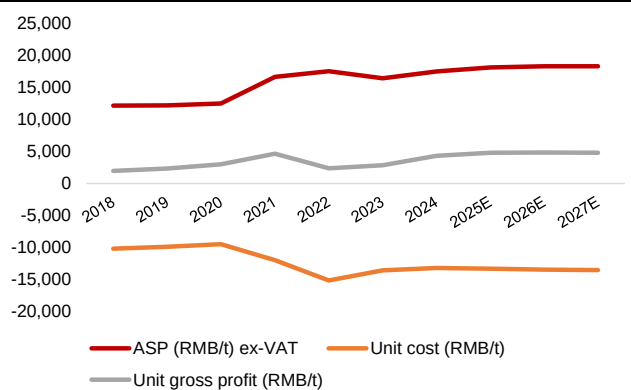
Figure 6: Key operating assumptions

	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025E	2026E	2027E
Sales volume (000 tonnes)							
Aluminum alloy products	5,052	5,473	5,748	5,837	5,889	5,889	5,889
Alumina	7,163	8,298	10,374	10,921	11,601	11,601	11,601
Aluminum fabrication products	657	609	580	766	636	649	662
Change YoY							
Aluminum alloy products	-0.2%	8.3%	5.0%	1.5%	0.9%	0.0%	0.0%
Alumina	6.4%	15.8%	25.0%	5.3%	6.2%	0.0%	0.0%
Aluminum fabrication products	9.3%	-7.3%	-4.8%	32.1%	-17.0%	2.0%	2.0%
ASP (RMB/t) ex-VAT							
Aluminum alloy products	16,689	17,582	16,465	17,549	18,163	18,345	18,345
Alumina	2,369	2,580	2,560	3,420	3,283	3,283	3,283
Aluminum fabrication products	19,062	21,843	19,835	20,328	20,734	20,734	20,734
Change YoY							
Aluminum alloy products	33.5%	5.4%	-6.4%	6.6%	3.5%	1.0%	0.0%
Alumina	18.3%	8.9%	-0.8%	33.6%	-4.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Aluminum fabrication products	30.5%	14.6%	-9.2%	2.5%	2.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Unit cost (RMB/t)							
Aluminum alloy products	-12,035	-15,212	-13,602	-13,232	-13,347	-13,493	-13,554
Alumina	-1,812	-2,186	-2,275	-2,208	-2,344	-2,344	-2,281
Aluminum fabrication products	-14,160	-17,930	-17,016	-15,369	-16,587	-16,587	-16,587
Change YoY							
Aluminum alloy products	26.7%	26.4%	-10.6%	-2.7%	0.9%	1.1%	0.5%
Alumina	8.2%	20.6%	4.1%	-2.9%	6.2%	0.0%	-2.7%
Aluminum fabrication products	24.3%	26.6%	-5.1%	-9.7%	7.9%	0.0%	0.0%
Unit gross profit (RMB/t)							
Aluminum alloy products	4,654	2,370	2,863	4,317	4,816	4,852	4,791
Alumina	556	394	285	1,212	939	939	1,002
Aluminum fabrication products	4,902	3,913	2,819	4,959	4,147	4,147	4,147
Change YoY							
Aluminum alloy products	55.1%	-49.1%	20.8%	50.8%	11.5%	0.8%	-1.3%
Alumina	69.6%	-29.2%	-27.6%	324.9%	-22.5%	0.0%	6.7%
Aluminum fabrication products	52.3%	-20.2%	-28.0%	75.9%	-16.4%	0.0%	0.0%

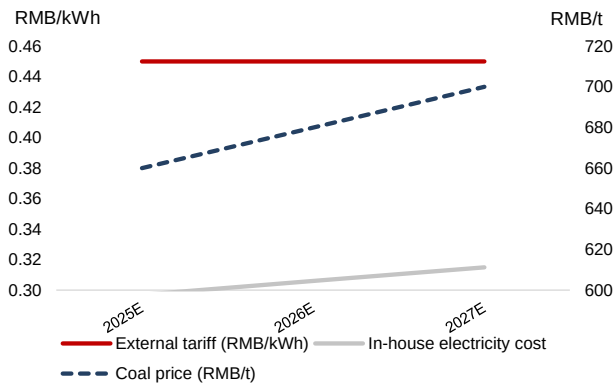
Source: Company data, CMBIGM estimates

Figure 7: Aluminum production volume, utilisation rates

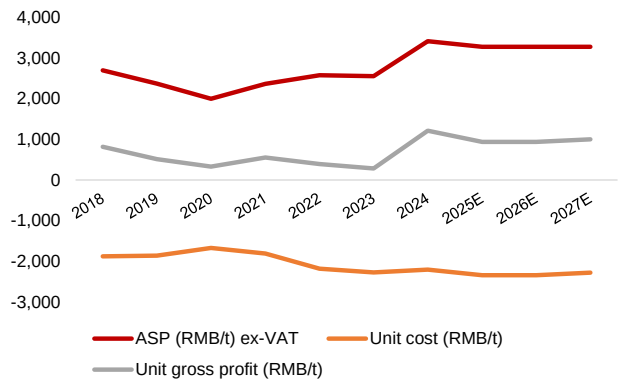
Source: Company data, CMBIGM estimates

Figure 8: Aluminum ASP, unit cost & margin

Source: Company data, Wind, CMBIGM

Figure 9: Electricity and coal cost

Source: Company data, CMBIGM estimates

Figure 10: Alumina ASP, unit cost & margin

Source: Company data, Wind, CMBIGM

Earnings sensitivity

Figure 11: Earnings sensitivity (annualized) to 5% change in Al ASP & coal cost

2025E net profit (RMB mn)		Al ASP (RMB/t)				
		16,347	17,255	18,163	19,071	19,980
Coal cost	594	20,362	24,185	28,007	31,829	35,651
	627	19,807	23,630	27,452	31,274	35,096
	660	19,253	23,075	26,897	30,719	34,541
	693	18,698	22,520	26,342	30,164	33,986
	726	18,143	21,965	25,787	29,609	33,431

Source: CMBIGM estimates

Figure 12: Earnings sensitivity (annualized) to 5% change in Al ASP & external tariff

2025E net profit (RMB mn)		Al ASP (RMB/t)				
		16,347	17,255	18,163	19,071	19,980
External tariff	0.41	20,578	24,400	28,222	32,044	35,866
	0.43	19,915	23,737	27,559	31,382	35,204
	0.45	19,253	23,075	26,897	30,719	34,541
	0.47	18,590	22,412	26,234	30,056	33,878
	0.50	17,927	21,749	25,571	29,393	33,215

Source: CMBIGM estimates

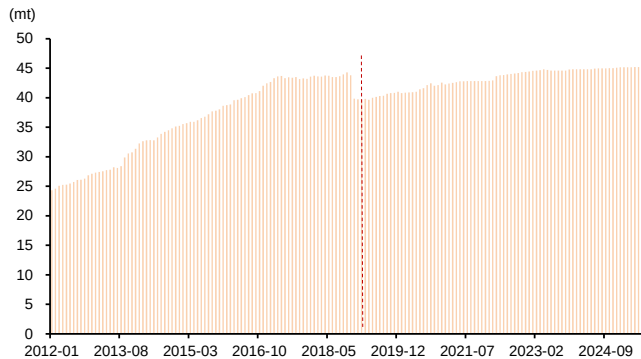
Figure 13: Earnings sensitivity (annualized) to 5% change in alumina ASP & bauxite cost

2025E net profit (RMB mn)		Alumina ASP (RMB/t)				
		16,347	17,255	18,163	19,071	19,980
Bauxite	576	21,170	24,992	28,814	32,636	36,459
	608	20,211	24,033	27,856	31,678	35,500
	640	19,253	23,075	26,897	30,719	34,541
	672	18,294	22,116	25,938	29,760	33,582
	704	17,335	21,157	24,979	28,801	32,623

Source: CMBIGM estimates

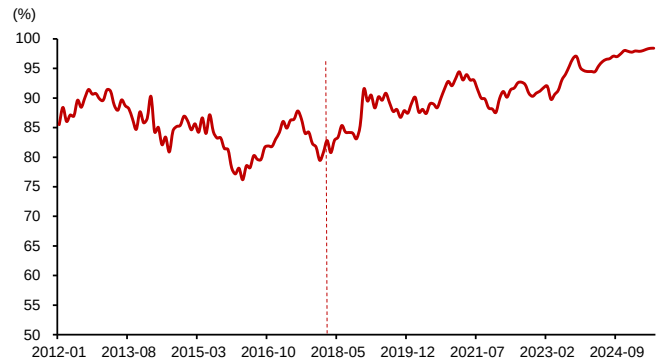
Industry trend

Figure 14: China aluminum annual capacity



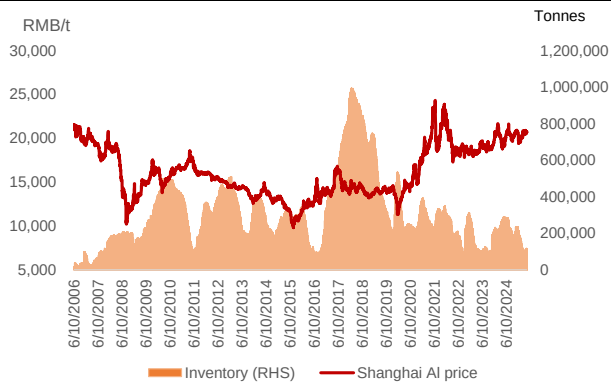
Source: Wind, CMBIGM

Figure 15: China aluminum capacity utilisation rate (%)



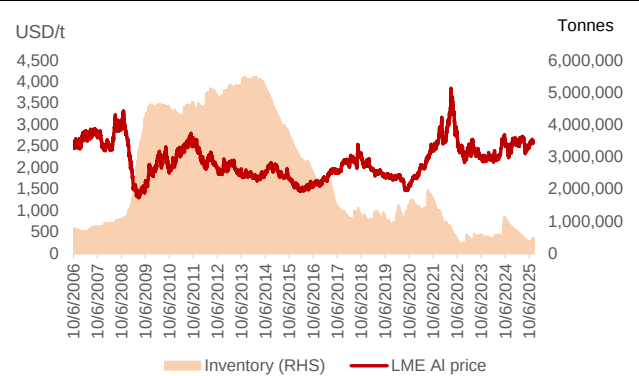
Source: Wind, CMBIGM

Figure 16: Shanghai aluminum price and inventory



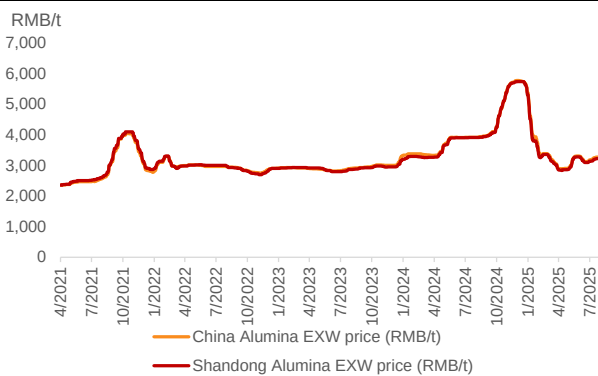
Source: Bloomberg, CMBIGM

Figure 17: LME aluminum price and inventory



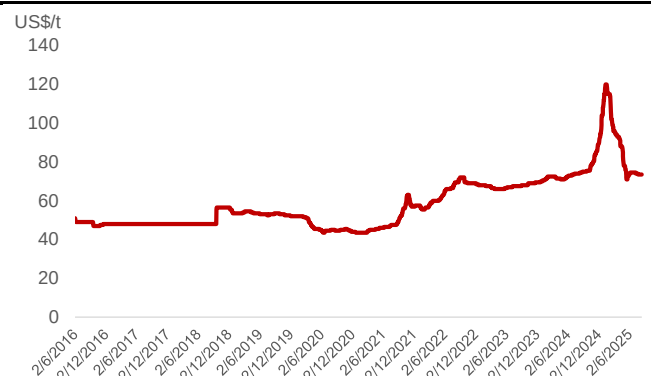
Source: Bloomberg, CMBIGM

Figure 18: Alumina EXW price in China



Source: Wind, CMBIGM

Figure 19: Import price of bauxite from Guinea to China (CIF)



Source: Bloomberg, CMBIGM

Financial Summary

INCOME STATEMENT	2022A	2023A	2024A	2025E	2026E	2027E
YE 31 Dec (RMB mn)						
Revenue	131,699	133,624	156,169	159,139	160,561	160,929
Cost of goods sold	(113,460)	(112,669)	(114,006)	(117,304)	(118,447)	(118,395)
Gross profit	18,239	20,955	42,163	41,835	42,115	42,534
Selling expense	(598)	(755)	(661)	(637)	(642)	(644)
Admin expense	(5,934)	(4,953)	(4,993)	(4,774)	(4,817)	(4,828)
R&D expense	(329)	(945)	(2,899)	(796)	(803)	(805)
Other income	3,736	3,405	2,632	2,864	2,890	2,897
Other gains/(losses)	(185)	(49)	(2,192)	0	0	0
Share of (losses)/profits of associates/JV	503	1,193	1,758	1,539	1,718	1,918
EBITDA	21,836	24,619	42,479	45,008	45,459	46,072
Depreciation	6,721	6,912	6,237	6,515	6,716	6,918
EBIT	15,115	17,707	36,242	38,493	38,743	39,155
Interest income	193	308	353	614	721	809
Interest expense	(3,020)	(3,268)	(3,363)	(3,700)	(3,683)	(3,673)
Net Interest income/(expense)	(2,826)	(2,960)	(3,011)	(3,086)	(2,963)	(2,865)
Pre-tax profit	12,607	15,890	32,797	36,946	37,499	38,208
Income tax	(2,798)	(3,393)	(8,252)	(7,389)	(7,500)	(7,642)
Minority interest	(1,107)	(1,037)	(2,173)	(2,660)	(2,700)	(2,751)
Adjusted net profit	8,702	11,461	24,565	26,897	27,299	27,815
Gross dividends	4,386	5,411	14,094	16,138	16,379	16,689

BALANCE SHEET	2022A	2023A	2024A	2025E	2026E	2027E
YE 31 Dec (RMB mn)						
Current assets	87,568	87,395	109,825	121,687	134,823	143,290
Cash & equivalents	27,385	31,721	44,770	63,124	69,917	83,820
Account receivables	4,611	5,489	9,774	5,050	8,147	5,962
Inventories	37,268	33,958	37,344	36,573	38,713	36,540
ST bank deposits	1,720	1,827	2,797	2,797	2,797	2,797
Other current assets	16,585	14,400	15,139	14,142	15,248	14,170
Non-current assets	98,174	112,925	119,340	125,380	128,397	131,412
PP&E	68,061	70,200	75,393	79,843	81,094	82,144
Deferred income tax	2,605	2,990	2,622	2,622	2,622	2,622
Investment in JVs & assos	10,297	11,034	13,222	14,762	16,480	18,398
Intangibles	34	43	45	51	56	59
Goodwill	278	278	278	278	278	278
Financial assets at FVTPL	1,543	13,127	12,233	12,233	12,233	12,233
Other non-current assets	15,356	15,253	15,546	15,590	15,634	15,678
Total assets	185,742	200,320	229,165	247,067	263,219	274,702
Current liabilities	71,373	74,029	76,983	74,260	76,552	73,848
Short-term borrowings	43,434	49,118	45,104	44,604	44,404	44,204
Account payables	14,911	11,648	14,931	12,708	15,200	12,696
Tax payable	618	2,586	3,674	3,674	3,674	3,674
Other current liabilities	12,410	10,677	13,274	13,274	13,274	13,274
Non-current liabilities	18,063	20,035	33,569	33,569	33,569	33,569
Long-term borrowings	16,236	13,792	25,781	25,781	25,781	25,781
Other non-current liabilities	1,827	6,243	7,788	7,788	7,788	7,788
Total liabilities	89,436	94,064	110,552	107,829	110,121	107,417
Total shareholders equity	84,499	92,245	107,800	125,764	136,925	148,361
Minority interest	11,807	14,012	10,814	13,474	16,174	18,925
Total equity and liabilities	185,742	200,320	229,165	247,067	263,219	274,702

CASH FLOW	2022A	2023A	2024A	2025E	2026E	2027E
YE 31 Dec (RMB mn)						
Operating						
Profit before taxation	12,607	15,890	32,797	36,946	37,499	38,208
Depreciation & amortization	6,721	6,912	6,237	6,515	6,716	6,918
Tax paid	(6,148)	(1,686)	(6,367)	(7,389)	(7,500)	(7,642)
Change in working capital	(8,660)	(983)	(4,459)	4,269	(3,851)	2,932
Others	20,693	11,647	37,386	33,551	42,133	36,000
Net cash from operations	7,622	22,402	33,983	41,888	34,108	41,363
Investing						
Capital expenditure	(8,798)	(5,662)	(12,311)	(11,000)	(8,000)	(8,000)
Acquisition of subsidiaries/ investments	(3,550)	(3,700)	200	0	0	0
Others	(4,425)	(8,526)	(446)	599	706	794
Net cash from investing	(16,773)	(17,889)	(12,557)	(10,401)	(7,294)	(7,206)
Financing						
Dividend paid	(8,226)	(3,786)	(7,659)	(8,933)	(16,138)	(16,379)
Net borrowings	(681)	3,240	7,975	(500)	(200)	(200)
Proceeds from share issues	0	0	0	0	0	0
Others	(3,884)	347	(8,747)	(3,700)	(3,683)	(3,673)
Net cash from financing	(12,790)	(200)	(8,431)	(13,132)	(20,021)	(20,253)
Net change in cash						
Cash at the beginning of the year	49,227	27,385	31,721	44,770	63,124	69,917
Exchange difference	98	22	54	0	0	0
Cash at the end of the year	27,385	31,721	44,770	63,124	69,917	83,820
GROWTH	2022A	2023A	2024A	2025E	2026E	2027E
YE 31 Dec						
Revenue	15.0%	1.5%	16.9%	1.9%	0.9%	0.2%
Gross profit	(40.1%)	14.9%	101.2%	(0.8%)	0.7%	1.0%
EBITDA	(32.8%)	12.7%	72.5%	6.0%	1.0%	1.3%
EBIT	(41.9%)	17.1%	104.7%	6.2%	0.6%	1.1%
Adj. net profit	(45.9%)	31.7%	114.3%	9.5%	1.5%	1.9%
PROFITABILITY	2022A	2023A	2024A	2025E	2026E	2027E
YE 31 Dec						
Gross profit margin	13.8%	15.7%	27.0%	26.3%	26.2%	26.4%
EBITDA margin	16.6%	18.4%	27.2%	28.3%	28.3%	28.6%
Adj. net profit margin	6.6%	8.6%	15.7%	16.9%	17.0%	17.3%
GEARING/LIQUIDITY/ACTIVITIES	2022A	2023A	2024A	2025E	2026E	2027E
YE 31 Dec						
Net debt to equity (x)	0.4	0.3	0.2	0.1	0.0	(0.1)
Current ratio (x)	1.2	1.2	1.4	1.6	1.8	1.9
Receivable turnover days	16.5	13.8	17.8	17.0	15.0	16.0
Inventory turnover days	96.5	115.4	114.1	115.0	116.0	116.0
Payable turnover days	54.1	43.0	42.5	43.0	43.0	43.0
VALUATION	2022A	2023A	2024A	2025E	2026E	2027E
YE 31 Dec						
P/E	22.9	17.7	9.1	7.6	7.5	7.3
P/B	2.4	2.2	1.9	1.6	1.5	1.4
Div yield (%)	2.2	2.7	6.9	7.9	8.1	8.2

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

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