

Real Estate

Neutral (Maintained)

Challenging Macroeconomic Outlook To Cap Recovery

Macro

Risks

Growth

Value

Company	Current discount to RNAV	RNAV/share (MYR)
E&O	-68%	4.49
Glomac	-60%	2.17
Hua Yang	-41%	3.21
IOI Properties	-54%	4.75
Mah Sing	-39%	2.29
MRCB	-44%	2.28
Matrix	-28%	3.41
Paramount	-45%	3.00
SP Setia	-27%	4.38
Sunway	-42%	5.15
Tambun	-47%	2.58
UEMS	-66%	3.15
UOAD	-48%	3.99

Source: RHB

We expect property sales growth to be flat next year, after an estimated 28% fall in 2015. The macroeconomic environment remains challenging while local banks continue to tighten mortgage lending. The key silver linings could be the news flow on the high-speed rail, MRT2 and the possible return of foreign/Chinese buyers into Malaysia's property scene. Current sector valuations are undemanding. Our stock picks are UOA Development, Tambun Indah and MRCB.

- ◆ **Another challenging year ahead.** Although the property market's weakening trend has largely stabilised after a slowdown in the past 1.5 years, the recovery could be mild and limited. Macroeconomic factors have yet to turn supportive, as: i) GDP growth is expected to slide to 4.5% in 2016 from 4.8% in 2015, ii) sluggish commodity prices should continue to exert pressure on the MYR, and iii) global interest rates are set to rise. Meanwhile, banks continue to tighten credit financing. The key upside risk would be a sharp strengthening of the MYR that may instill market confidence.
- ◆ **High-speed rail coming soon?** News flow on the Kuala Lumpur (KL)-Singapore high-speed rail could potentially garner investor interest on the sector. After the disposal of 1Malaysia Development Bhd's (1MDB) power assets to a China-based corporation, the Chinese party is also said to be keen on the rail project. In our view, the closer ties between Malaysia and China as well as the cheap MYR could help to attract more foreign/Chinese buyers to re-enter Malaysia's property scene.
- ◆ **Opportunity to accumulate value stocks.** Although we keep our NEUTRAL sector rating, we see value in some property stocks. The sector has rebounded slightly since September to a 48% discount to RNAV from 51%, and trading opportunities may arise especially for developers that are trading at undemanding valuations.
- ◆ **Stock picks.** Our stock picks are UOA Development, Tambun Indah Land (Tambun Indah) and Malaysian Resources Corp (MRCB). We believe UOA Development and Tambun Indah's property sales should rebound strongly this year, given the strong pipeline of projects that will be rolled out after a lacklustre 2015. We also continue to like MRCB's turnaround story. Management has thus far delivered what it has guided, and we think its efforts in re-strategising the company should help to keep the momentum of construction job flow and property development works in 2016.

Company Name	Price	Target	P/E (x)	P/B (x)	Yield (%)	Rating
			Dec-16F	Dec-16F	Dec-16F	
Eastern & Oriental	MYR1.44	MYR1.80	24.1	1.2	2.7	ADING BUY
Glomac	MYR0.87	MYR0.98	7.8	0.6	5.3	NEUTRAL
Hua Yang	MYR1.88	MYR2.25	4.7	0.8	7.0	BUY
IOI Properties Group	MYR2.20	MYR2.38	16.6	0.6	2.7	ADING BUY
Mah Sing	MYR1.40	MYR1.49	10.5	0.9	5.0	NEUTRAL
Malaysian Resources Corp	MYR1.27	MYR1.60	24.6	1.0	1.2	BUY
Matrix Concepts Holdings	MYR2.44	MYR2.73	6.0	1.3	7.0	BUY
Paramount Corp	MYR1.65	MYR2.40	8.8	0.7	5.2	BUY
SP Setia	MYR3.18	MYR3.50	14.3	1.3	3.1	NEUTRAL
Sunway	MYR3.00	MYR3.60	10.0	0.9	3.7	BUY
Tambun Indah Land	MYR1.37	MYR1.81	6.4	1.2	5.1	BUY
UEM Sunrise	MYR1.06	MYR1.26	20.9	0.8	2.8	NEUTRAL
UOA Development	MYR2.08	MYR2.40	9.2	1.1	6.7	BUY

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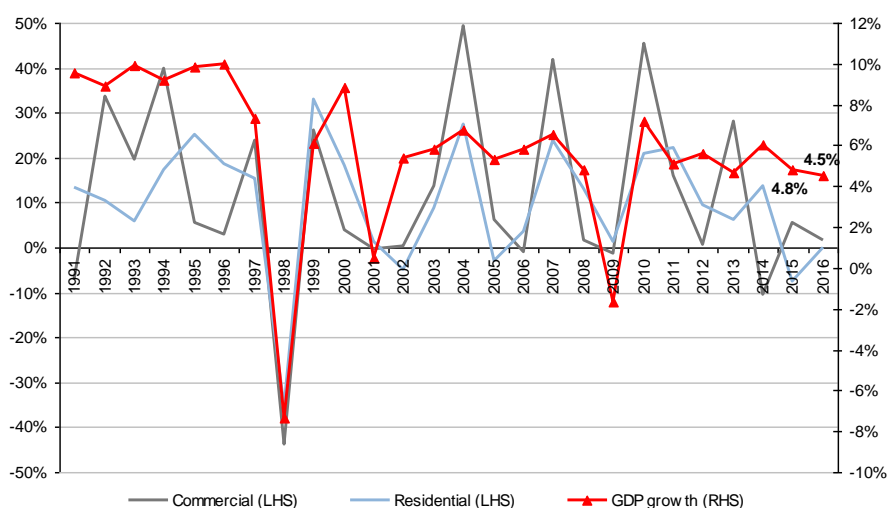
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Opportunity To Accumulate Value Stocks

Another challenging year ahead

Malaysia's property sector has seen a slowdown in the past 1.5 years. Although the weakening property sales trend for the sector has largely stabilised, we believe the potential recovery next year could be mild and capped by the unexciting economic growth outlook, as shown in Figure 1. Macroeconomic factors have yet to turn supportive, as: i) RHB economists expect GDP growth to fall to 4.5% in 2016 from 4.8% in 2015, ii) sluggish commodity prices may continue to exert pressure on the MYR, and iii) global interest rates are set to rise next year. All these factors are unfavourable to the revival of market sentiment. Residential property sales value for the industry has contracted by 7.4% in 2015 on an annualised basis, and we forecast it to be +0.1% in 2016, largely flattish. In our view, the key upside risk could come from a sharp appreciation of the MYR if crude oil price rises, as this should help to instill market confidence.

Figure 1: YoY % change in quarterly house price index



Source: Bloomberg, RHB

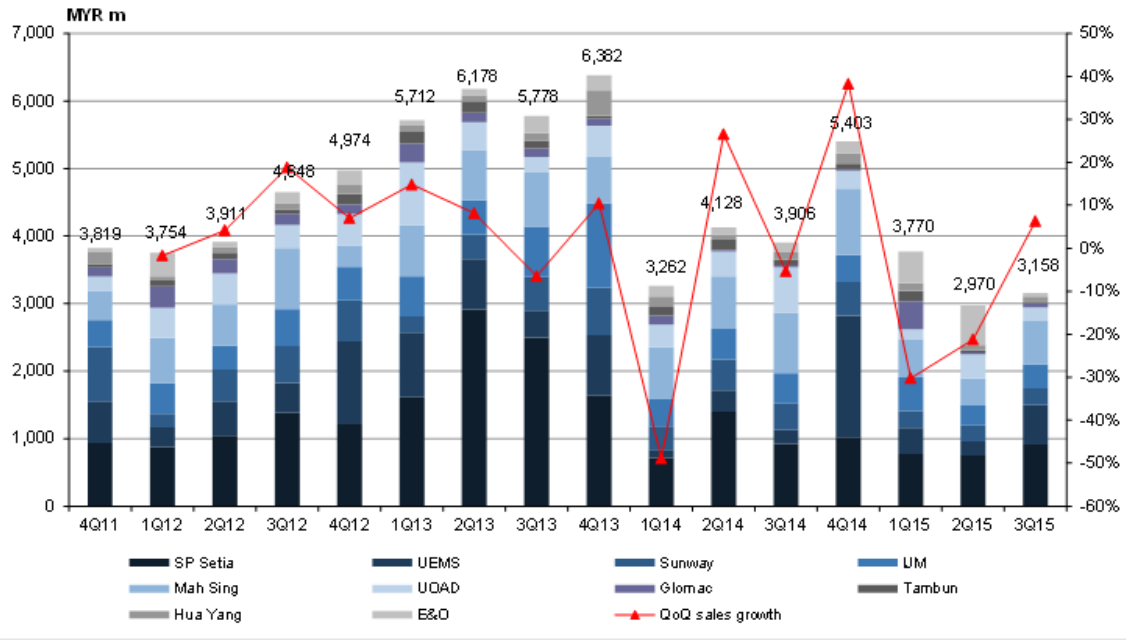
Expect flat property sales growth and slight margin contraction in 2016

2015 is largely the year for developers to unwind their inventories. Not many projects have been rolled out, given the weak market sentiment and negative news flow on the macro economy. The cautious sentiment will likely continue going into 2016, and we expect new launches to gradually come back and developers will likely launch the projects in batches to test the market.

After a record property sales growth of +41% in 2013 for key developers under our coverage, the numbers fell by 26% in 2014 and 28% (estimated) in 2015, largely led by the impact of cooling measures in 2014 and the challenging market conditions in 2015 (the implementation of the goods and services tax (GST), a plunge in crude oil price and a sharp weakening of the MYR). As economic growth is expected to be lethargic, we expect property sales growth to be flat next year.

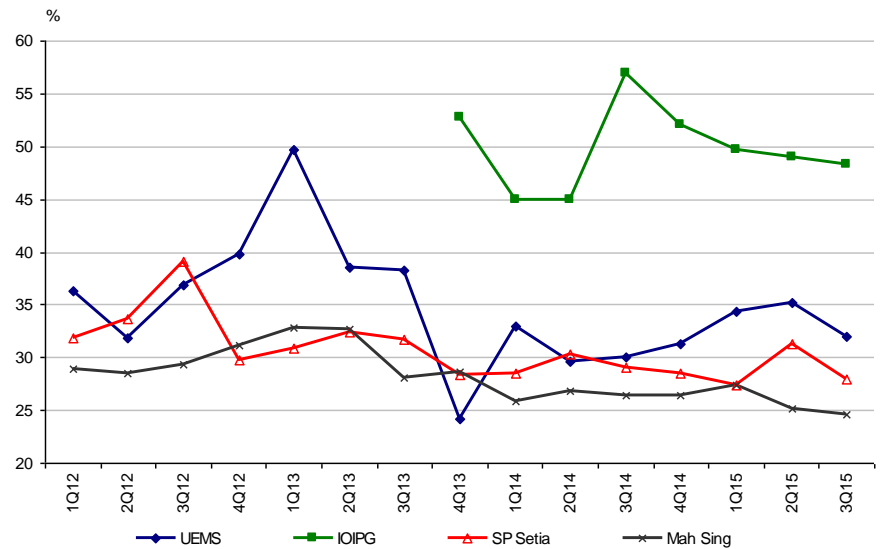
Property price growth and transaction volume should remain sluggish, as developers have limited power to mark up given the soft sentiment. In fact, we expect developers' margins to contract gradually over the medium term as they will likely offer more rebates or discounts, more interior furnishing, and furniture vouchers to draw buyers. Already, we saw gross margins of key developers in Malaysia declining to 25-30% this year from 30-35% in 2013.

Figure 2: New property sales by key developers under our coverage (including overseas sales)



Source: RHB

Figure 3: Declining trend in gross margin for key Malaysian developers



Note: IOIPG was only listed in Jan 2014

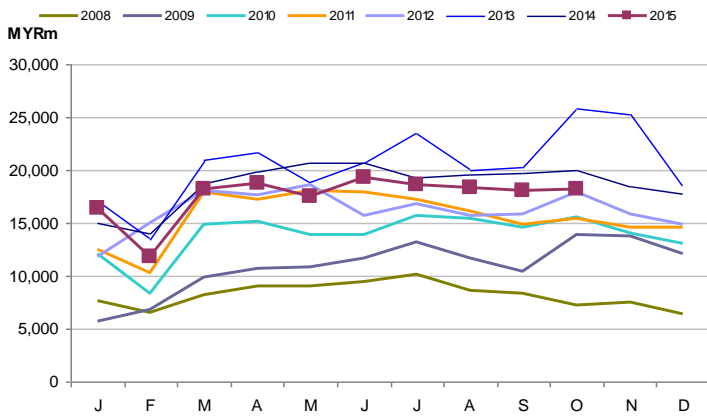
Source: BloombergRHB

Banks continue to curb lending

Commercial banks are expected to continue to tighten credit financing as there seems to be no plan for easing by the Central Bank any time soon, given the high household leverage. Since the Central Bank issued prudent lending guidelines in 2013, the banks have not aggressively grown their mortgage lending, and loan rejections have been the key reason for slow take-ups in many property projects. According to the Central Bank's monthly statistics, the number of loan applications and loan approvals for residential properties has dipped below 2013 and 2014 levels. We believe this trend should continue going into 2016, as banks emphasise more on improving asset quality. Furthermore, Malaysia's household debt-to-GDP currently stands at 88.1%, one of the highest in the region. As GDP growth slows, we believe the ratio will likely stay at high levels even though the growth in household debt moderates. According to many developers, the average loan rejection rate is as high as 50-60% currently.

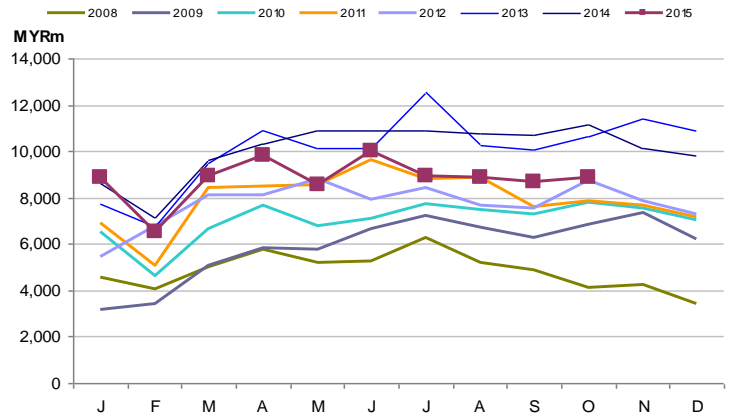
In the meantime, although house price growth has softened considerably to +5.6% in 2Q15 from +12.2% in late 2013, we do not expect the Government and the Central Bank to relax any of the macroeconomic prudential measures, including the developer interest bearing scheme (DIBS). Both authorities indicated that there is a mismatch between supply and demand, particularly for affordable houses. If DIBS is to be reinstated, we are concerned that this may drive up home prices again.

Figure 4: Loan applications for purchase of residential property



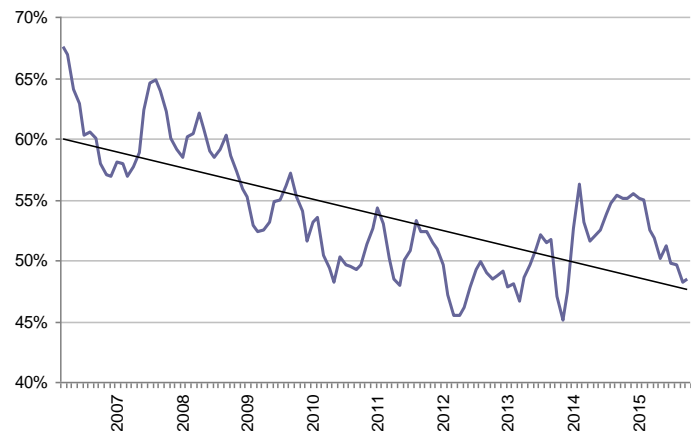
Source: Bank Negara Malaysia (BNM)

Figure 5: Loan approvals for purchase of residential property



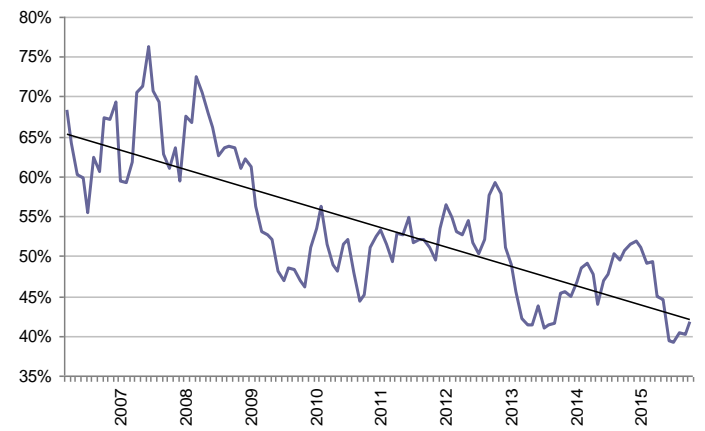
Source: BNM

Figure 6: Loan approval rates for the purchase of residential property



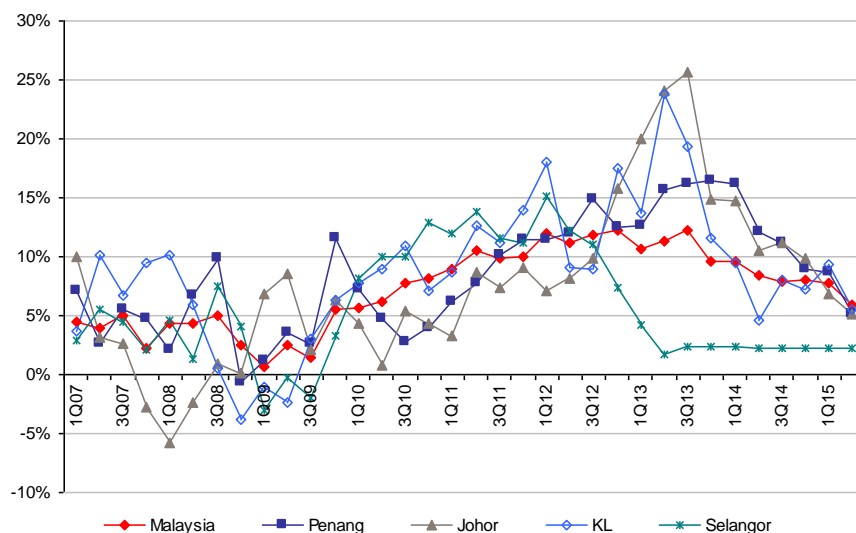
Source: BNM

Figure 7: Loan approval rates for purchase of non-residential property



Source: BNM

Figure 8: YoY % change in quarterly house price index



Source: Bloomberg, RHB

High-speed rail and potential China money flow

The upside potential for the sector could come from news flow on the KL-Singapore high-speed rail. After the recent disposal of 1MDB's power assets to China General Nuclear Power Corporation, the media reported that the Chinese party is also interested in the high-speed rail project that could be finalised this year. This may stir up investor interest in the property sector, as the infrastructure development should have a positive spillover effect on the Klang Valley property market, especially around the city centre area, as the connectivity between Kuala Lumpur and Singapore will be further enhanced.

Apart from the power asset transaction, we have witnessed greater involvement of Chinese corporations in Malaysia's construction, infrastructure and property development segments in 2015. Malaysian companies or government agencies have been joining hands with China-based corporations in projects across Malaysia, such as Eastern & Oriental's (E&O) reclamation work, the completed Penang Second Bridge, the ongoing construction of many high-rise projects in KL city centre, as well as massive property projects in Iskandar, Johor. Recently, according to some media reports, some Chinese corporations are also among the bidders for the Bandar Malaysia development. Hence, given the cheap MYR and closer ties between Malaysia and China, we think the link would help to attract more foreign/Chinese buyers to re-enter Malaysia's property scene.

Figure 9: Some recent links between Malaysian developers and Chinese corporations

Company	Project	Value (MYRm)
E&O	Award of reclamation of Seri Tanjung Pinang 2 contract to China Communications Construction Company Limited	1,035 (for Package 1)
Ewein Bhd (indirect exposure)	Consortium Zenith BUCG, formed by Beijing Urban Construction Group, Zenith Construction SB, and Juterias SB, was appointed by the Penang state government as the contractor to undertake three major road and undersea tunnel projects in Penang. The consortium subsequently entered into a joint venture (JV) with Ewein to develop a property project on a parcel of land that the consortium received from the state government, for the feasibility study works that have been carried out for the undersea tunnel/road infrastructure projects on Penang Island. China Railway Construction Corporation (CRCC) is involved in the engineering, procurement, construction (EPC) and design consultation of the state's infrastructure project.	6,300

Source: RHB

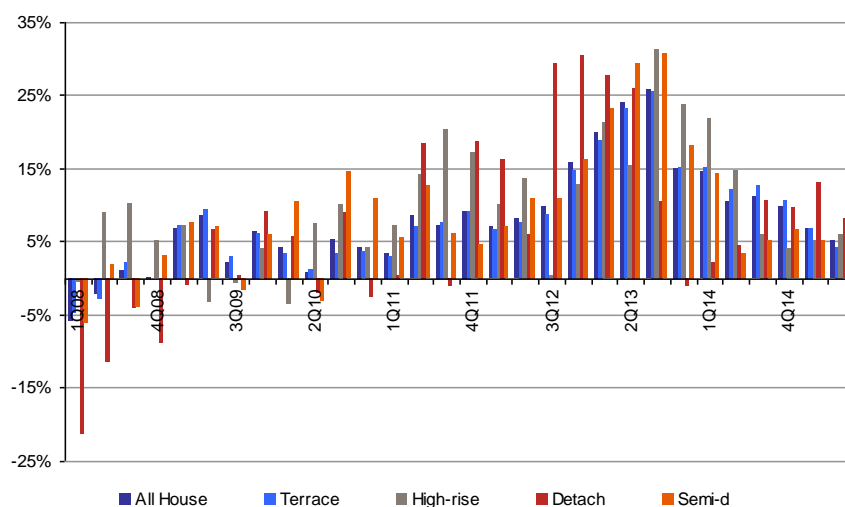
Prefer Klang Valley and Mainland Penang developers

Apart from the high-speed rail project, the tender of the Mass Rapid Transit 2 (MRT2) project connecting Sungai Buloh and Putrajaya as well as the Light Rail Transit 3 (LRT3) project linking Bandar Utama and Johan Setia (Klang) will start next year. Hence, we believe that Klang Valley developers could fare better, given the support of infrastructure developments. The key player that focuses on this area is UOA Development, as most of its projects are located within 20km from the city centre.

In northern Peninsular Malaysia, we remain positive on Mainland Penang's property market, as it captures the young population shift from Penang Island due to home affordability issues while catalytic investment projects in Batu Kawan are still moving ahead. These include the IKEA store, the Design Village premium outlet, and other education institutions. Unlike elsewhere in Malaysia, where demand for properties is sluggish coupled with a moderate oversupply issue, the Penang mainland market remains healthy. This is because many developers have not been able to release new projects due to the delay in approvals. Tambun Indah is the prime beneficiary of the influx of investments in that area, as its flagship township development, Pearl City, is 15 minutes away from Batu Kawan, where the Penang Second Bridge ends. In addition, after numerous delays, the company finally obtained the advertising permit and developer licence (APDL) in early December to roll out new projects that were initially slated for launch in 1Q15. We expect good take-ups for these projects.

In the southern region, we keep our negative view on the physical market in Iskandar, Johor, as the fundamentals remain weak and ongoing concerns on the oversupply issue will likely persist over the near term. Among all the states in Malaysia, Johor saw the steepest decline in house price growth (YoY) to +5.2% in 2Q15 from +25.7% in 3Q13. Newly-launched projects have seen sluggish take-ups since 2014. However, given the prevailing negative sentiment, any positive news flow on Iskandar, such as sizeable foreign industrial investments, may lead to some trading opportunities on UEM Sunrise.

Figure 10: YoY growth of house prices in Johor



Source: Bloomberg, RHB

Valuations

We maintain our NEUTRAL sector rating. The sector still lacks re-rating catalysts and many macroeconomic factors remain unexciting. Valuations have rebounded somewhat since September to a 48% discount to RNAV (about the mean level) from a 51% discount to RNAV (near to -1SD from the mean). We believe there are trading opportunities on selective stocks, given the current undemanding valuations. Our stock picks are UOA Development, Tambun Indah and MRCB. For bigger-cap stocks, we like IOI Properties.

Stock picks

UOA Development

The company has a solid balance sheet with MYR748m net cash or 50 sen net cash per share. We expect its property sales to rebound strongly to about MYR1.5bn in 2016 from MYR1bn in 2015, given the strong pipeline of projects that will be rolled out after a lacklustre 2015. These include Desa Sentul Phase II (GDV: MYR1.5bn), Kepong V (GDV: MYR1.5bn) and Danau Kota Suite Apartment in Setapak (GDV: MYR230m). The good location of these projects should ensure encouraging take-ups. Meanwhile, the progressive completion of Scenaria, Desa Green and Kencana Square shops and offices should underpin earnings momentum from 4Q15-1H16.

Tambun Indah

The company's financial position is healthy at only 15% net gearing. Similarly, we expect its property sales to also rebound strongly going into 2016 to about MYR350m-400m from an estimated MYR220m in 2015. Tambun Indah has recently obtained its APDL to launch two projects – Avenue Garden and Raintree Park 2 with a combined GDV of MYR300m. The APDL was delayed for almost one year as both projects were initially slated for launch in 1Q15. We expect these two projects to receive positive demand, especially after the opening of GEMS International School in September that has provided good visibility on the growth prospects of Pearl City township. Unlike elsewhere in Malaysia, where demand for properties is sluggish coupled with a moderate oversupply issue, the Penang mainland market remains healthy.

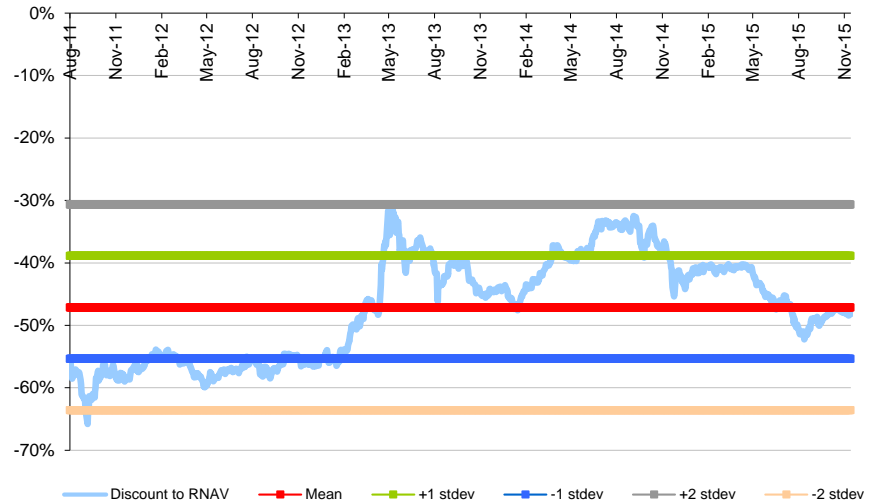
MRCB

We like the company's turnaround story. Its recent appointment as the LRT3 project delivery partner (PDP) and its winning of the Bukit Jalil land swap contract are a good indication of management's ability to secure strategic deals. Earnings should see better growth from 2016 as LRT3 PDP fees kick in and margins for the newer batch of construction contracts are higher. Efforts in enhancing its balance sheet are ongoing, given that management is recycling its property asset (Menara Shell) into 31%-owned MRCB-Quill REIT (MQREIT MK, BUY, TP: MYR1.23). Management has thus far delivered what it has guided, and we think its efforts in re-strategising the company should help to keep the momentum of construction job flow and property development works going into 2016.

IOI Properties

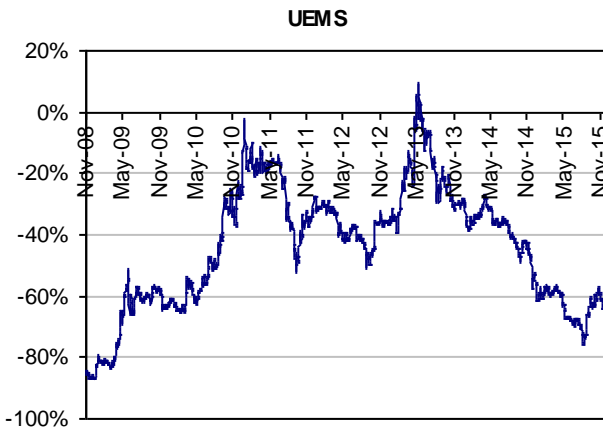
We like IOI Properties for bigger-cap exposure. IOI Properties is backed by a solid pool of investment properties that contribute about 15-20% of EBIT, and this is expected to grow stronger over the medium term given that the construction of some property assets in Putrajaya, Singapore and Xiamen will be completed over the next five years. The company has high exposure to township development, which is a more resilient segment given market preference for landed properties. We are also positive on the recent land injection from its chairman, Tan Sri Lee Shin Cheng, as this should strengthen the company's foothold in Putrajaya. Tan Sri Lee's higher shareholding in the company is a positive indication of his long-term confidence and commitment to IOI Properties.

Figure 11: Sector's discount to RNAV (big caps only)



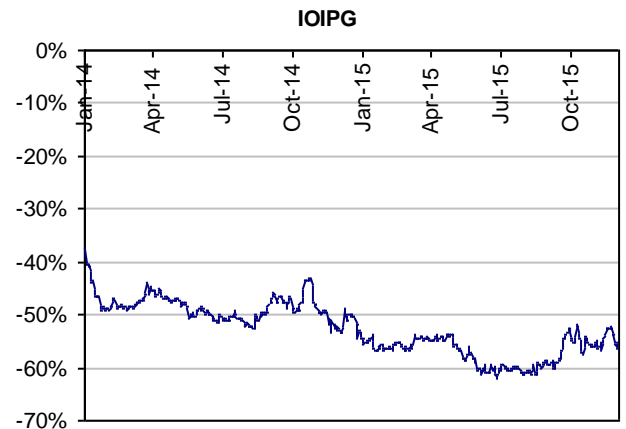
Source: Bloomberg, RHB

Figure 12: Discount to RNAV for UEM Sunrise



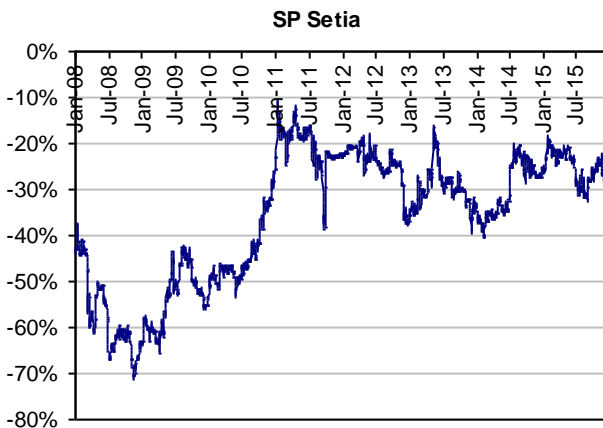
Source: Bloomberg, RHB

Figure 13: Discount to RNAV for IOI Properties



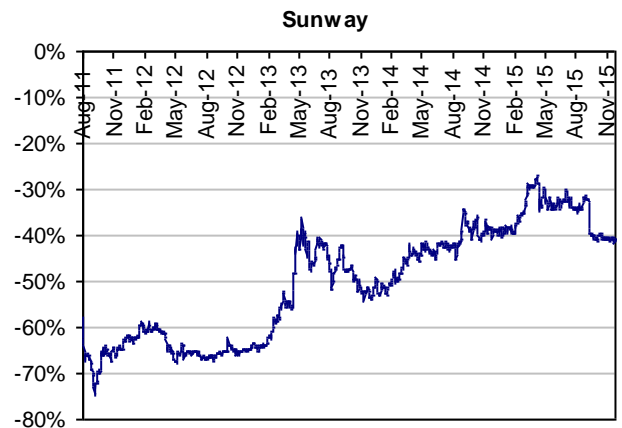
Source: Bloomberg, RHB

Figure 14: Discount to RNAV for SP Setia



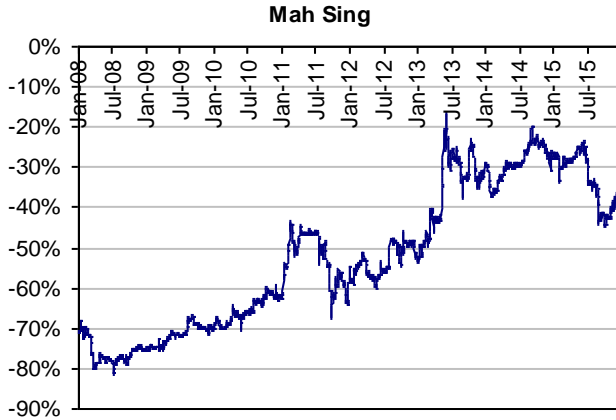
Source: Bloomberg, RHB

Figure 15: Discount to RNAV for Sunway



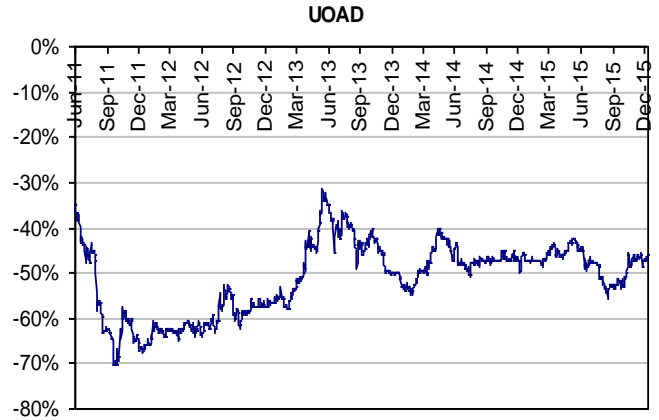
Source: Bloomberg, RHB

Figure 16: Discount to RNAV for Mah Sing



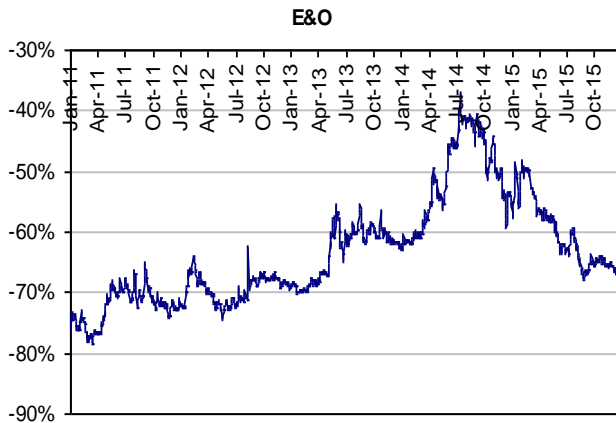
Source: Bloomberg, RHB

Figure 17: Discount to RNAV for UOA Development



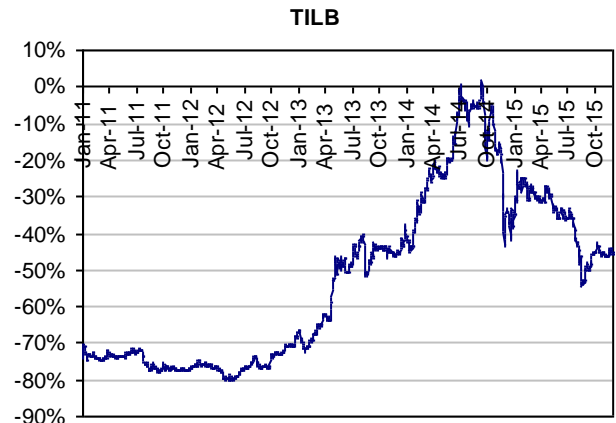
Source: Bloomberg, RHB

Figure 18: Discount to RNAV for E&O



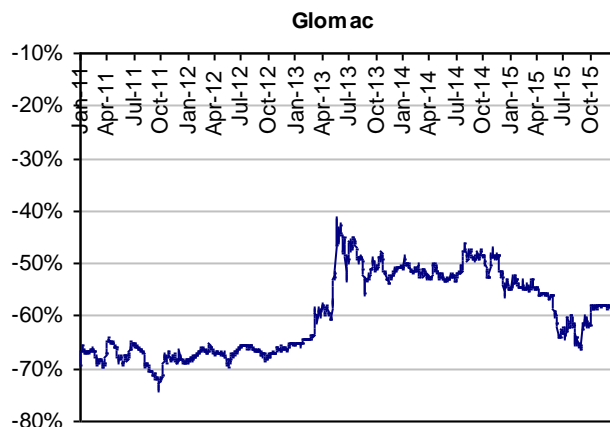
Source: Bloomberg, RHB

Figure 19: Discount to RNAV for Tambun Indah



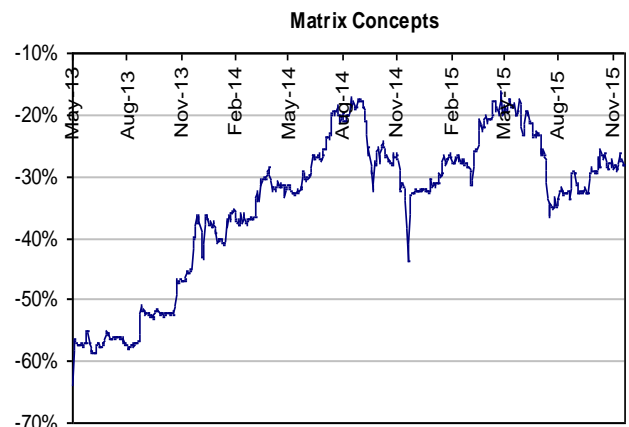
Source: Bloomberg, RHB

Figure 20: Discount to RNAV for Glomac



Source: Bloomberg, RHB

Figure 21: Discount to RNAV for Matrix Concepts



Source: Bloomberg, RHB

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Neutral: Share price may fall within the range of +/- 10% over the next 12 months

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