

STARFLEX SFLEX TB

THAILAND / PACKAGING

BUY

 UNCHANGED

Strong profit growth on margin spike

- 1Q23 core profit came in at THB40m, an increase of 19% q-q and 153% y-y, reaching the highest level in almost four years.
- Major driver was the strong gross margin at 20.5% – the highest in ten quarters.
- A turnaround play. Maintain BUY rating with TP of THB4.70.

TARGET PRICE	THB4.70
CLOSE	THB3.60
UP/DOWNSIDE	+30.6%
TP vs CONSENSUS	-3.1%

Profit boosted by ten-quarter-high gross margin

SFLEX's 1Q23 core profit came in at THB40m, an increase of 19% q-q and 153% y-y, exceeding our expectation by 15% and reaching the highest level in almost four years. 1Q23 earnings continued to grow, mainly from an improved gross margin of 20.5% – the highest in ten quarters since 3Q20. The strong gross margin was close to its level before the spike in the oil price and freight rates in 2021-22.

Key driver was an improved margin, rather than sales growth

SFLEX's sales revenue rose 12% both q-q and y-y to THB472m, slightly better than our expectation. The revenue proportion of non-food to food packaging came in at 78:22, not much changed from the past. Its sales revenue has usually hovered around THB400m-450m per quarter during the past three years. The key growth driver was the cost management alone. Our projection assumes an 18.5% gross margin for 2023, recovering from its lowest level of 12.6% in 2022.

Vietnam business to manifest in 3Q23 onwards

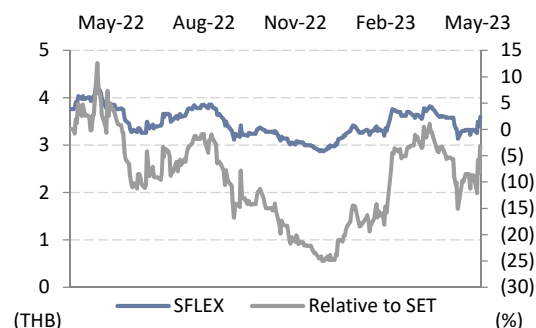
SFLEX's 1Q23 core profit accounts for 25% of our full-year forecast of THB160m, skyrocketing 193% y-y. We maintain our profit growth projection of an 11.8% CAGR in 2023-25, assuming sales growth at a 9% CAGR with a gradual gross margin improvement to 18.5% in 2023 and 20.0% in 2025. In April, the company's board of directors approved the acquisition of a 25% stake in Star Print Vietnam JSC (SPV), a leading folding carton packaging manufacturer in Vietnam, with an investment cost of THB383m. The transaction is expected to be completed in 3Q23. We estimate that SFLEX should benefit from an additional THB25m-30m in annual profit from the acquisition. We consider it a good investment at a good price with an implied P/E cost of 10.8x SPV's 2022 profit.

Maintain BUY

We maintain BUY for SFLEX with a TP of THB4.70 based on 24x 2023E P/E, within -0.5SD of its four-year average since listing on the SET. Its share price, currently trading at 18.4x 2023E P/E and only 12.3x 2023E EV/EBITDA, within -1.0SD of its four-year P/E and EV/EBITDA averages, is at its lowest level since it was listed on the SET.

KEY STOCK DATA

YE Dec (THB m)	2022	2023E	2024E	2025E
Revenue	1,669	1,802	2,001	2,143
Net profit	55	160	186	200
EPS (THB)	0.07	0.20	0.23	0.24
vs Consensus (%)	-	(2.4)	(2.1)	-
EBITDA	124	251	289	317
Core net profit	55	160	186	200
Core EPS (THB)	0.07	0.20	0.23	0.24
EPS growth (%)	(63.1)	191.1	16.3	7.5
Core P/E (x)	53.6	18.4	15.8	14.7
Dividend yield (%)	-	-	-	-
EV/EBITDA (x)	25.1	12.3	10.3	9.4
Price/book (x)	3.0	2.6	2.5	2.3
Net debt/Equity (%)	16.3	11.2	3.3	1.4
ROE (%)	5.7	15.2	16.1	16.1



Share price performance	1 Month	3 Month	12 Month
Absolute (%)	0.6	7.8	(11.8)
Relative to country (%)	2.5	14.5	(9.2)
Mkt cap (USD m)	85		
3m avg. daily turnover (USD m)	0.2		
Free float (%)	0		
Major shareholder	Mr. Printhorn Apithanasriwong (24%)		
12m high/low (THB)	4.48/2.76		
Issued shares (m)	820.00		

Sources: Bloomberg consensus; FSSIA estimates


Jitra Amornthum

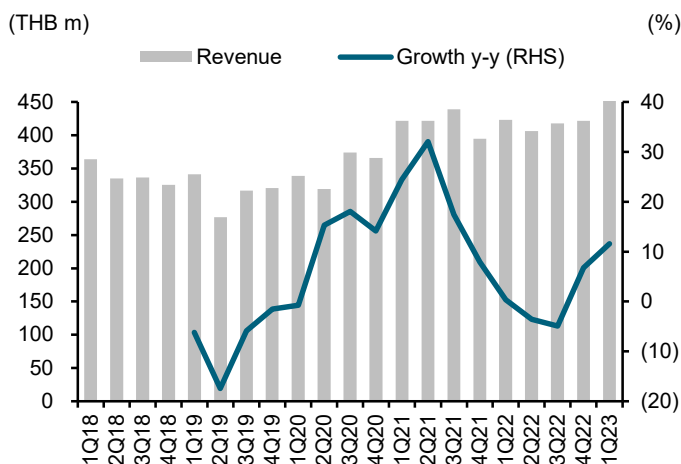
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Exhibit 1: 1Q23 results review

Year to Dec 31	1Q22	2Q22	3Q22	4Q22	1Q23	-----Change-----		2022	2023E	Change
	(THB m)	(THB m)	(THB m)	(THB m)	(THB m)	(q-q %)	(y-y %)	(THB m)	(THB m)	(y-y %)
Sales	423	406	418	422	472	12	12	1,669	1,802	8
Cost of sales*	(367)	(361)	(372)	(357)	(375)	5	2	(1,458)	(1,469)	1
Gross profit	56	45	45	64	97	51	72	211	333	58
Operating costs	(44)	(47)	(45)	(34)	(51)	49	16	(170)	(169)	(1)
Operating profit	100	92	90	99	148	50	48	381	502	32
Operating EBITDA	35	14	23	54	66	21	88	124	251	102
Other income	5	6	6	10	5	(48)	7	27	27	1
Interest expense	(1)	(1)	(1)	1	(1)	(179)	(28)	(3)	(3)	9
Profit before tax	16	2	6	41	50	23	213	65	189	191
Tax	(3)	1	(1)	(8)	(10)	28	250	(10)	(28)	194
Reported net profit	13	3	5	33	41	22	205	55	160	191
Core profit	16	4	4	34	40	19	153	55	160	191
Reported EPS (THB)	0.02	0.00	0.01	0.04	0.05	23	207	0.07	0.20	191
Core EPS (THB)	0.02	0.00	0.00	0.04	0.05	19	153	0.07	0.20	191
Key ratios (%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(ppt)	(ppt)	(%)	(%)	(ppt)
Gross margin	13.3	11.1	10.8	15.3	20.5	5.3	7.2	44.0	42.7	(1.3)
Operating margin	4.1	0.8	1.7	9.4	10.9	1.5	6.8	17.6	16.9	(0.7)
EBITDA margin	8.3	3.5	5.6	12.9	13.9	1.0	5.6	19.4	18.6	(0.8)
Recurring net margin	3.8	0.9	1.0	8.1	8.6	0.5	4.8	14.9	14.2	(0.6)
SG&A / Sales	10.4	11.6	10.8	8.1	10.8	2.7	0.4	26.9	26.3	(0.7)
Revenue structure	(THB m)	(THB m)	(THB m)	(THB m)	(THB m)	(q-q %)	(y-y %)	(THB m)	(THB m)	(y-y %)
Non-food packaging	322	305	312	320	362	13	12	1,258	1,359	8
Food packaging	97	100	99	98	102	5	6	393	436	11
Gross margin (%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(ppt)	(ppt)	(%)	(%)	(ppt)
Non-food packaging	16.7	14.2	13.8	18.3	23.4	5.1	6.7	15.8	20.0	4.2
Food packaging	2.5	1.5	1.7	4.9	10.2	5.4	7.8	2.6	8.5	5.9

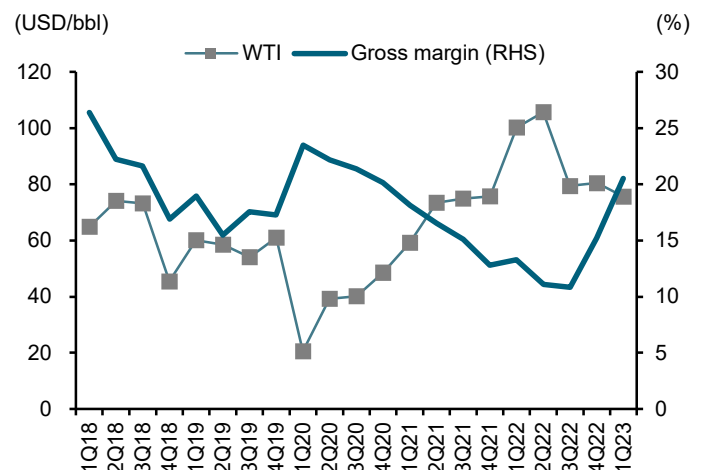
*Include depreciation
Sources: SFLEX; FSSIA estimates

Exhibit 2: Revenue and growth



Source: SFLEX

Exhibit 3: Gross margin vs crude oil prices



Sources: SFLEX, Bloomberg

Financial Statements

Starflex

Profit and Loss (THB m) Year Ending Dec	2021	2022	2023E	2024E	2025E
Revenue	1,677	1,669	1,802	2,001	2,143
Cost of goods sold	(1,352)	(1,401)	(1,410)	(1,550)	(1,651)
Gross profit	325	267	393	451	492
Other operating income	50	27	27	26	28
Operating costs	(152)	(170)	(169)	(188)	(202)
Operating EBITDA	223	124	251	289	317
Depreciation	(62)	(57)	(59)	(61)	(63)
Goodwill amortisation	0	0	0	0	0
Operating EBIT	161	67	192	228	254
Net financing costs	(4)	(3)	(3)	(4)	(4)
Associates	-	-	-	0	0
Recurring non-operating income	0	0	0	0	0
Non-recurring items	0	0	0	0	0
Profit before tax	157	65	189	225	250
Tax	(7)	(10)	(28)	(38)	(50)
Profit after tax	149	55	160	186	200
Minority interests	-	-	-	-	-
Preferred dividends	0	0	0	0	0
Other items	-	-	-	-	-
Reported net profit	149	55	160	186	200
Non-recurring items & goodwill (net)	0	0	0	0	0
Recurring net profit	149	55	160	186	200
Per share (THB)					
Recurring EPS *	0.18	0.07	0.20	0.23	0.24
Reported EPS	0.18	0.07	0.20	0.23	0.24
DPS	0.005	0.003	0.006	0.007	0.007
Diluted shares (used to calculate per share data)	820	820	820	820	820
Growth					
Revenue (%)	20.0	(0.5)	8.0	11.0	7.1
Operating EBITDA (%)	(4.2)	(44.4)	102.8	15.2	9.6
Operating EBIT (%)	(7.4)	(58.2)	185.0	19.0	11.4
Recurring EPS (%)	4.6	(63.1)	191.1	16.3	7.5
Reported EPS (%)	4.6	(63.1)	191.1	16.3	7.5
Operating performance					
Gross margin inc. depreciation (%)	15.7	12.6	18.5	19.5	20.0
Gross margin of key business (%)	15.7	12.6	18.5	19.5	20.0
Operating EBITDA margin (%)	13.3	7.4	13.9	14.5	14.8
Operating EBIT margin (%)	9.6	4.0	10.6	11.4	11.9
Net margin (%)	8.9	3.3	8.9	9.3	9.4
Effective tax rate (%)	4.8	14.9	15.0	17.0	20.0
Dividend payout on recurring profit (%)	-	-	-	-	-
Interest cover (X)	40.7	26.0	60.1	62.7	69.5
Inventory days	75.9	86.9	87.5	79.8	77.4
Debtor days	66.1	66.6	61.8	65.4	66.0
Creditor days	78.2	74.3	73.8	72.5	71.4
Operating ROIC (%)	18.1	5.4	14.1	15.7	(4.0)
ROIC (%)	15.7	4.8	12.8	14.3	(3.6)
ROE (%)	16.2	5.7	15.2	16.1	16.1
ROA (%)	11.0	3.7	9.8	10.5	10.5
* Pre exceptional, pre-goodwill and fully diluted					
Revenue by Division (THB m)					
Non-food packaging	1,309	1,258	1,359	1,501	1,607
Food packaging	365	393	436	492	527
Others	3	18	7	8	9

Sources: Starflex; FSSIA estimates

Financial Statements

Starflex

Cash Flow (THB m) Year Ending Dec	2021	2022	2023E	2024E	2025E
Recurring net profit	149	55	160	186	200
Depreciation	62	57	59	61	63
Associates & minorities	0	0	0	0	0
Other non-cash items	-	-	-	-	-
Change in working capital	(134)	50	(191)	(9)	(126)
Cash flow from operations	78	162	29	239	137
Capex - maintenance	-	-	-	-	-
Capex - new investment	(196)	(144)	(15)	(45)	(56)
Net acquisitions & disposals	-	-	-	-	-
Other investments (net)	-	-	-	-	-
Cash flow from investing	(196)	(144)	(15)	(45)	(56)
Dividends paid	(70)	(37)	(48)	(56)	(60)
Equity finance	0	0	0	0	0
Debt finance	128	66	0	1	3
Other financing cash flows	-	-	-	-	-
Cash flow from financing	58	29	(48)	(54)	(57)
Non-recurring cash flows	-	-	-	-	-
Other adjustments	0	7	45	0	0
Net other adjustments	(34)	7	45	(54)	(1)
Movement in cash	(94)	54	11	85	23
Free cash flow to firm (FCFF)	(114.34)	20.98	16.97	197.27	85.55
Free cash flow to equity (FCFE)	(23.95)	91.15	58.90	141.28	83.32

Per share (THB)

FCFF per share	(0.14)	0.03	0.02	0.24	0.10
FCFE per share	(0.03)	0.11	0.07	0.17	0.10
Recurring cash flow per share	0.26	0.14	0.27	0.30	0.32

Balance Sheet (THB m) Year Ending Dec	2021	2022	2023E	2024E	2025E
Tangible fixed assets (gross)	859	1,046	1,136	1,206	1,276
Less: Accumulated depreciation	(428)	(307)	(366)	(427)	(490)
Tangible fixed assets (net)	431	739	770	779	786
Intangible fixed assets (net)	47	54	55	56	57
Long-term financial assets	-	-	-	-	-
Invest. in associates & subsidiaries	0	32	32	32	32
Cash & equivalents	75	129	140	226	249
A/C receivable	346	263	347	371	404
Inventories	334	333	342	336	365
Other current assets	185	22	23	24	25
Current assets	939	747	852	956	1,043
Other assets	89	29	30	31	32
Total assets	1,507	1,602	1,739	1,853	1,950
Common equity	960	985	1,121	1,200	1,284
Minorities etc.	0	0	0	0	0
Total shareholders' equity	960	985	1,121	1,200	1,284
Long term debt	84	175	176	177	180
Other long-term liabilities	43	43	49	56	65
Long-term liabilities	127	218	225	233	244
A/C payable	295	276	294	322	323
Short term debt	121	114	90	89	88
Other current liabilities	4	8	9	9	10
Current liabilities	419	398	393	420	421
Total liabilities and shareholders' equity	1,507	1,602	1,739	1,853	1,950
Net working capital	566	334	409	398	461
Invested capital	1,133	1,188	1,296	1,296	1,367

* Includes convertibles and preferred stock which is being treated as debt

Per share (THB)

Book value per share	1.17	1.20	1.37	1.46	1.57
Tangible book value per share	1.11	1.14	1.30	1.39	1.50

Financial strength

Net debt/equity (%)	13.5	16.3	11.2	3.3	1.4
Net debt/total assets (%)	8.6	10.0	7.2	2.2	0.9
Current ratio (x)	2.2	1.9	2.2	2.3	2.5
CF interest cover (x)	44.5	91.9	24.2	52.1	39.0

Valuation	2021	2022	2023E	2024E	2025E
Recurring P/E (x) *	19.8	53.6	18.4	15.8	14.7
Recurring P/E @ target price (x) *	25.8	70.0	24.0	20.7	19.2
Reported P/E (x)	19.8	53.6	18.4	15.8	14.7
Dividend yield (%)	1.2	0.8	1.6	1.9	2.0
Price/book (x)	3.1	3.0	2.6	2.5	2.3
Price/tangible book (x)	3.2	3.2	2.8	2.6	2.4
EV/EBITDA (x) **	13.8	25.1	12.3	10.3	9.4
EV/EBITDA @ target price (x) **	17.9	32.4	15.8	13.5	12.2
EV/invested capital (x)	2.7	2.6	2.4	2.3	2.2

* Pre-exceptional, pre-goodwill and fully diluted ** EBITDA includes associate income and recurring non-operating income

Sources: Starflex; FSSIA estimates

Public disclosures related to sustainable development evaluation of Thai listed companies

Rating regarding the sustainable development of Thai listed companies, both on the SET and MAI, are publicly available on the website of the Securities and Exchange Commission of Thailand (SEC). Currently, ratings available are 1) "**CG Score**" by the Thai Institute of Directors Association (Thai IOD); 2) "**AGM Checklist**" by the Thai Investors Association (TIA), a "**CAC certified member**" of the Thai Private Sector Collective Action Against Corruption (CAC); and 3) **Sustainability Investment List (THSI)** by the Stock Exchange of Thailand. The ratings are updated on an annual basis. FSS International Investment Advisory Company Limited does not confirm nor certify the accuracy of such ratings.

CG Score by the Thai Institute of Directors Association (Thai IOD)¹

The **CG Score** indicates corporate governance (CG) strength in the sustainable development of Thai listed companies. Annually, the Thai IOD, with support from the Stock Exchange of Thailand (SET), surveys and assesses the CG practices of companies and publishes the results on the [Thai IOD website](#) in a bid to promote and enhance the CG of Thai listed companies in order to promote compliance with international standards for better investment decisions. The results are from the perspective of a third party, not an evaluation of operations, as of the date appearing in the report, and may be changed after that date.

The **five underlying categories and weighting** used for the CG scoring in 2022 include the rights of shareholders and equitable treatment of shareholders (weight 25% combined), the role of stakeholders (25%), disclosure and transparency (15%), and board responsibilities (35%).

The CGR report rates CG in six categories: 5 for Excellent (score range 90-100), 4 for Very Good (score range 80-89), 3 for Good (Score range 70-79), 2 for Fair (score range 60-69), 1 for Pass (score range 60-69), and not rated (score below 50).

AGM Checklist by the Thai Investors Association (TIA)²

The "**AGM Checklist**" quantifies the extent to which shareholders' rights and equitable treatment are incorporated into business operations and the extent to which information is sufficiently disclosed and the level of its transparency. All the considered factors form important elements of two out of five the CG components. Annually, the TIA, with support from the SEC, leads the project to evaluate the quality of Annual General Meetings of Shareholders (AGMs) and to rate quality of the meetings.

The **Checklist** contains the minimum requirements under law that companies must comply with, or best practices according to international CG guidance. Representatives of the TIA will attend the meetings and perform the evaluation. The assessment criteria cover AGM procedures before the meeting (45%), at the meeting date (45%), and after the meeting (10%). The first assesses 1) advance circulation of sufficient information for voting; and 2) facilitating of how voting rights can be exercised. The second assesses 1) the ease of attending meetings; 2) transparency and verifiability; and 3) openness for Q&A. The third involves the meeting minutes that should contain discussion issues, resolutions and voting results.

The results are classified into four categories: 5 for Excellent (score 100), 4 for Very Good (score 90-99), 3 for Fair (score 80-89), and not rated (score below 79).

CAC certified member by the Thai Private Sector Collective Action Against Corruption (CAC)³

A **CAC certified member** is a listed company whose Checklist satisfies the CAC Certification's criteria and is approved by the CAC Council. The core elements of the Checklist include corruption risk assessment, establishment of key controls, and the monitoring and developing of policies. Note that the CAC does not certify the behaviour of the employees nor whether the companies have engaged in bribery, and Certification is good for three years.

Companies deciding to become a CAC certified member **start with** by submitting a Declaration of Intent signed by the Chairman of the Board to kick off the 18-month deadline for companies to submit the CAC Checklist for Certification. The 18-month provision is for risk assessment, in place of policy and control, training of managers and employees, establishment of whistleblowing channels, and communication of policies to all stakeholders.

The checklist document will be reviewed by the CAC Certification Committee for adequate information and evidence. It is worth noting that the committee consists of nine professionals in business law, corporate governance, internal audit, financial audit and experienced representatives from certified members.

A passed Checklist will move on to the **CAC Council** for granting certification approvals. The CAC Council consists of twelve prominent individuals who are highly respected in professionalism and ethical achievements. Among them are former ministers, a former central bank governor, the former head of the Thai Listed Companies Association, Chairman of Anti-Corruption Organizations (Thailand), Chairman of Thai Institute of Directors, and reputable academic scholars.

Sustainability Investment (THSI)⁴ by the Stock Exchange of Thailand (SET)

Thailand Sustainability Investment (**THSI**) quantifies responsibility in **Environmental**, and **Social** issues, by managing business with transparency in **Governance**. The THSI serves as another choice for investors who desire to adopt a responsible investment approach, according to the SET.

Annually, the SET will announce the voluntary participation of the company candidates which pass the preemptive criteria, and whose two key crucial conditions are met, i.e. no irregular trading of the board members and executives and a free float of >150 by the number of shareholders, and combined holding must >15% of paid-up capital. Some key disqualifying criteria include a CG score of below 70%; independent directors and free float violation; executives' wrongdoing related to CG, social and environmental impacts, equity in negative territory, and earnings in the red for more than three years in the last five years. To become eligible for THSI, the candidate must pass three indicators in data declaration: **Economic** (CG, risk management, customer relation management, supply chain management, and innovation); **Environmental** (environmental management, eco-efficiency, and climate risk); **Social** (human rights, talent attraction, operational health & safety, community development, and stakeholder engagement); and the incorporation of ESG in business operations.

To be approved for THSI inclusion, verified data must be scored at a 50% minimum for each indicator, unless the company is a part of the Dow Jones Sustainability Indices⁵ (DJSI) during the assessment year. The scoring will be fairly weighted against the nature of the relevant industry and materiality.

Note that, from the **THSI list**, the SET further developed a sustainability **SETTHSI Index** in June 2018 from selected THSI companies whose 1) market capitalisation > THB5b (~USD150b); 2) free float >20%; and 3) liquidity >0.5% of paid-up capital for at least 9 out of 12 months. The SETTHSI Index is a market capitalisation-weighted index, cap 5% quarterly weight at maximum, and no cap for number of stocks.

Sources: [SEC](#); [Thai IOD](#); [Thai CAC](#); [SET](#); FSSIA's compilation

Disclaimer:

¹ Thai Institute of Directors Association ([Thai IOD](#)) was established in December 1999 and is a membership organisation that strives to promote professionalism in directorship. The Thai IOD offers directors certification and professional development courses, provides a variety of seminars, forums and networking events, and conducts research on board governance issues and practices. Membership comprises board members from companies ranging from large publicly listed companies to small private firms.

² Thai Investors Association ([TIA](#)) was established in 1983 with a mission to promote investment knowledge and to protect the investment rights of Thai investors. In 2002, the association was appointed by the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) to represent individual shareholders. To obtain information for evaluation, the association recruits volunteer investors to join AGMs and score the meetings. Weightings for each meeting are at a 45:45:10 ratio. They have been applied since 2017 and subject to change.

³ Thai Private Sector Collective Action against Corruption ([CAC](#)) was founded in 2010 and is 100% privately funded. It is an initiative by the Thai private sector to take part in tackling corruption problems via collective action. The CAC promotes the implementation of effective anti-corruption policies in order to create a transparent business ecosystem by developing a unique certification program for large/medium/small companies to apply for and to control corruption risk systematically and efficiently. The CAC's operations are sponsored by the US-based Center for Private Enterprise (CIPE) and the UK Prosperity Fund.

⁴ Sustainability Investment List ([THSI](#)), created by the Stock Exchange of Thailand in 2015, comprises the listed companies that conduct sustainable business operations.

⁵ Dow Jones Sustainability Indices – [Wikipedia](#) – Launched in 1999, DJSI evaluates the sustainability performance of companies based on corporate economic, environmental, and social performance.

GENERAL DISCLAIMER

ANALYST(S) CERTIFICATION

Jitra Amornthum FSS International Investment Advisory Securities Co., Ltd

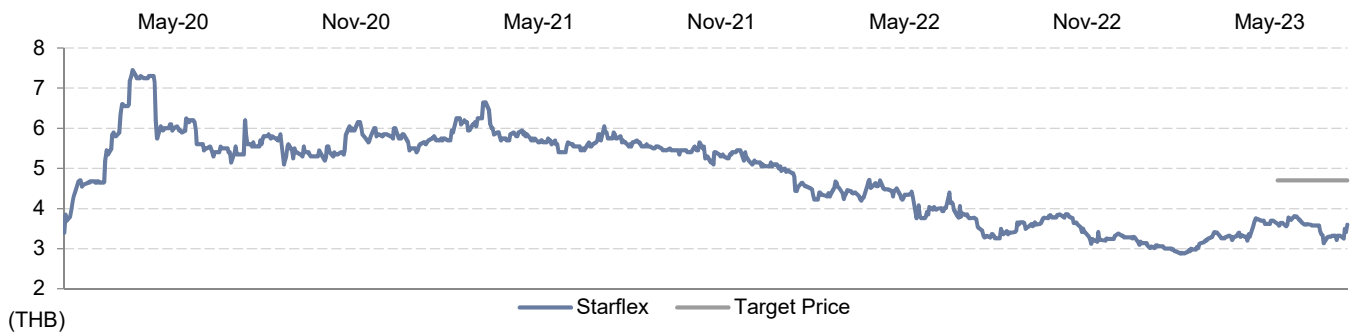
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History of change in investment rating and/or target price

Starflex (SFLEX TB)



Date	Rating	Target price	Date	Rating	Target price	Date	Rating	Target price
10-Mar-2023	BUY	4.70	-	-	-	-	-	-

Jitra Amornthum started covering this stock from 10-Mar-2023

Price and TP are in local currency

Source: FSSIA estimates

Company	Ticker	Price	Rating	Valuation & Risks
Starflex	SFLEX TB	THB 3.60	BUY	Downside risks to our P/E-based TP include 1) a sharp rise in crude oil prices; 2) rising inflation pressuring consumers' purchasing power; and 3) baht depreciation.

Source: FSSIA estimates

Additional Disclosures

Target price history, stock price charts, valuation and risk details, and equity rating histories applicable to each company rated in this report is available in our most recently published reports. You can contact the analyst named on the front of this note or your representative at Finansia Syrus Securities Public Company Limited

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All share prices are as at market close on 11-May-2023 unless otherwise stated.

RECOMMENDATION STRUCTURE

Stock ratings

Stock ratings are based on absolute upside or downside, which we define as $(\text{target price}^* - \text{current price}) / \text{current price}$.

BUY (B). The upside is 10% or more.

HOLD (H). The upside or downside is less than 10%.

REDUCE (R). The downside is 10% or more.

Unless otherwise specified, these recommendations are set with a 12-month horizon. Thus, it is possible that future price volatility may cause a temporary mismatch between upside/downside for a stock based on market price and the formal recommendation.

* In most cases, the target price will equal the analyst's assessment of the current fair value of the stock. However, if the analyst doesn't think the market will reassess the stock over the specified time horizon due to a lack of events or catalysts, then the target price may differ from fair value. In most cases, therefore, our recommendation is an assessment of the mismatch between current market price and our assessment of current fair value.

Industry Recommendations

Overweight. The analyst expects the fundamental conditions of the sector to be positive over the next 12 months.

Neutral. The analyst expects the fundamental conditions of the sector to be maintained over the next 12 months.

Underweight. The analyst expects the fundamental conditions of the sector to be negative over the next 12 months.

Country (Strategy) Recommendations

Overweight (O). Over the next 12 months, the analyst expects the market to score positively on two or more of the criteria used to determine market recommendations: index returns relative to the regional benchmark, index sharpe ratio relative to the regional benchmark and index returns relative to the market cost of equity.

Neutral (N). Over the next 12 months, the analyst expects the market to score positively on one of the criteria used to determine market recommendations: index returns relative to the regional benchmark, index sharpe ratio relative to the regional benchmark and index returns relative to the market cost of equity.

Underweight (U). Over the next 12 months, the analyst does not expect the market to score positively on any of the criteria used to determine market recommendations: index returns relative to the regional benchmark, index sharpe ratio relative to the regional benchmark and index returns relative to the market cost of equity.