

Mekophar Chemical Pharmaceutical JSC (MKP-OTC)

New prospect from the PIC/S factory

- Stem cell blood bank has huge potential
- High growth prospect for upcoming new factory
- Revenue structure changes will improve profit margins

Outlook and recommendation

Five years after delisting, Mekophar is now back as a listed company with a Japanese strategic partner, Nipro. With the support of Nipro, Mekophar expects to complete building a new PIC/S standard factory at the end of 2018 to manufacture pharmaceutical products under the Nipro brand and start exporting to Japan as well as other Asian markets. Stem cell blood bank with high growth potential is one of the company's strength. Mekophar is the only company in Vietnam that is capable of storing cord tissue stem cell.

At the moment, Mekophar is still behind the industry's leading companies in terms of revenue growth, net income as well as profitability ratios. We expect that from 2019, when the new factory is in operation, the company's performance will improve considerably and help Mekophar catch up with the top firms. However, considering the high investment cost of this new factory, we estimate that it will only be by 2020 that this new unit will contribute to bottom line profits.

We consider a P/E of 15x suitable for the company in 2018 which is a discount to the industry where the average P/E is 20x. Using the FCF method, we forecast a target price for Mekophar's of **VND94,000 /share**. Adding a cash dividend of VND2,000 per share, the total return is estimated at **37%**. We have a **BUY** on this stock.

Key financials

Year end December (VND billion)	FY2015	FY2016	FY2017E	FY2018F
Net revenue	1,076	1,262	1,348	1,387
% growth	-6.0%	17.2%	6.9%	2.8%
Profit after tax	101	120	141	138
% growth	-37.9%	18.8%	17.9%	-2.0%
PAT margin (%)	9.4%	9.5%	10.5%	10.0%
ROA (%)	11.3%	10.4%	10.1%	9.3%
ROE (%)	14.5%	12.2%	13.2%	12.0%
EPS (VND)	6.659	6.161	6.756	6.499
Book value (VND)	46.047	50.400	54.856	59.335
Cash dividend (VND)	2.500	2.300	2.000	1.000
P/E (x)	N/A	N/A	N/A	14.0
P/CF (x)	N/A	N/A	N/A	6.5

Source: MKP, RongViet Securities

BUY

Initial price (VND)	70,000
Target price (VND)	94,000
Dividend yield (%) *	3%

(*) Forecast for the next 12 months

Major shareholders (%)

Nipro Pharma	20
Vinapharm	18
An Sinh hospital	10
Lan Huynh Thi (Chairman)	7
Float available for foreign investors	20

Son Tran

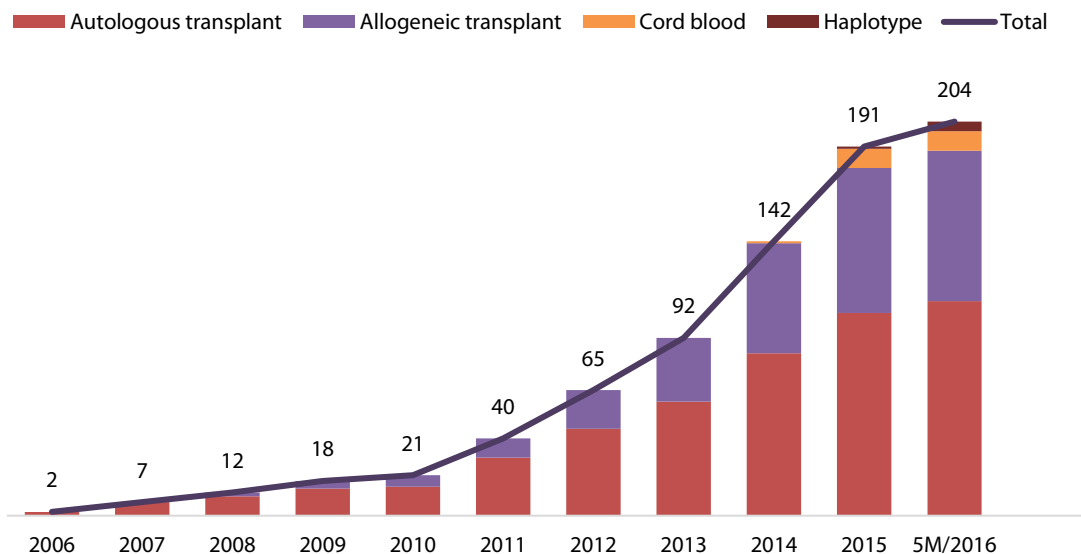
(084) 028- 6299 2006 – Ext 1527

son.tt@vdsc.com.vn

Stem cell banking has huge potential

Stem cell technology (read more in the appendix) is the process of using young cells that are able to transform into various types of cells to replace cells which are dead or damaged. Stem cell therapy can be used to treat many incurable diseases like spinal cord injury, stroke, Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease or other neurological problems. Stem cell banking is a promising business in Vietnam, in part due to rising income per capita.

Figure 1: Number of stem cell transplant at Vietnam's Blood Transfusion Hematology Hospital from 2006 to 2016



Source: Vietnam Blood Transfusion Hematology Hospital

Today there are five cord blood banks in Vietnam: HCMC State Blood Transfusion Hematology Hospital, Vietnam National Children's Hospital, Vietnam Blood Transfusion Hematology Hospital, Mekophar (with Mekostem bank) and Vinmec's international hospital. With exclusive technology from Cell Research from Singapore, Mekostem (a unit of Mekophar) can collect cord blood and cord tissue that allows it to store more data and helps increase treatment opportunities.

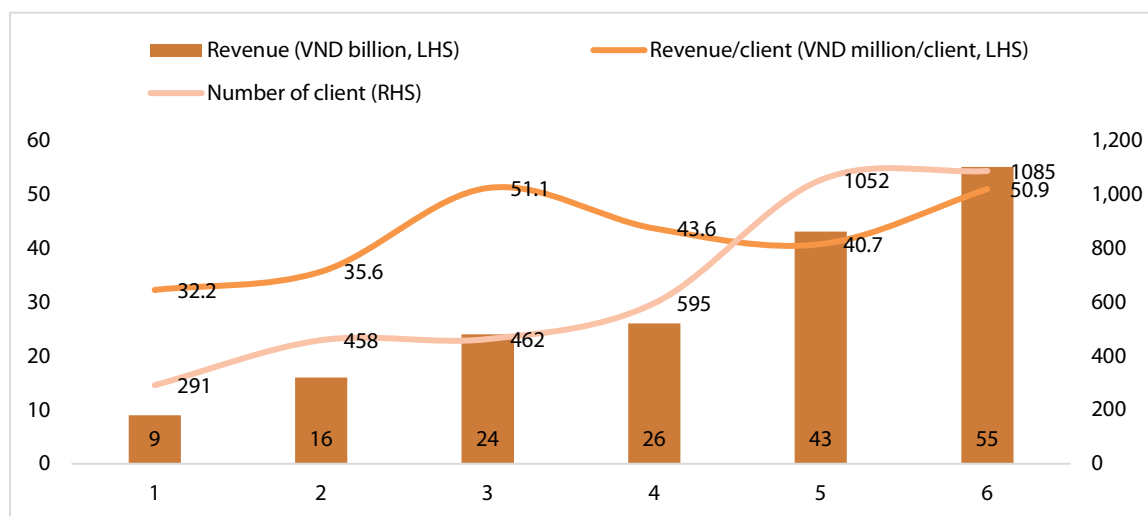
The current price for stem cell collecting and storing at Mekostem is 25.7 VND million (for cord blood) and 16 VND million (for cord tissue). It will gradually rise by VND 2.1 million and VND 2.3million, respectively, each year thereafter. Total collected fees in 18 years will be VND 62 million and VND 52 million, which is not that expensive for middle-class families. Mekostem's storing fees are significantly cheaper than its competitors. **Mekostem is the only place that provides collecting and processing of cord tissue cells.** At the moment cord blood is still more popular and has proven to be able to treat more than 80 diseases. Cord tissue is still in an experimental phase but has more treatment potential in the future.

Table 1: Stem cell service fees (unit: VND million)

Cell types	Company	Collecting and storing fee in first year	Delivery fee (in TPHCM)	1 year storing fee	5 years storing fee	10 years storing fee	17 years storing fee
Cord blood	Mekostem cord blood bank	25.7	0	N/A	11.5	22.0	35.7
	HCMC State Blood Transfusion Hematology Hospital	25.0	0	N/A	10.0	23.0	42.0
	Vinmec international hospital	25.0	2.0	5.0	15.0	29.0	55.0
	Vietnam Blood Transfusion Hematology Hospital	25.5	0	2.6	12.3	25.0	42.2
	Vietnam National Children's Hospital	18.5	0	2.55 per year or 38.25 in 15 years			
Cord tissue	Mekostem cord blood bank	16.0	0	N/A	11.5	22.0	35.7
Both types	Mekostem cord blood bank	41.7	0	N/A	17.0	33.0	52.7

Source: RongViet Securities

Despite off being a new business and only contributing 4.4% of total revenue, cord blood bank is a promising division with gross margin of 82% and making up 17% of gross profit for Mekophar. Growth in the sector should remain robust. The company is currently projecting to obtain its certificate from AABB, the American Association of Blood Banks.

Figure 2: Mekostem's operating data


Source: MKP, RongViet Securities

Upcoming factory will boost growth

MKP's revenues still depend entirely on its WHO-GMP factory in HCMC. Even though the factory is operating at 80% capacity it will be shut down in 2020 because the lending contract on the land on which it is located will expire. New workshops will be added to the new factory in order to replace the closed one.

Table 2: Mekophar's products

Drug type	Unit	Standard	Designed capacity
HCMC's factory		WHO-GMP	
Injection	1,000 vial		7,000
Intravenous fluid	1,000 bottle		5,500
Orally tablet	1,000 tablet		1,800,000
Granulated medicine	1,000 bag		50
Liquid drug	1,000 bottle		1,000
Oily solution	1,000 tube		6,000
Antibiotic materials	1,000 kg		100
Pharma-chemical materials	1,000 kg		30
Non-betalactam factory (late 2018)		PIC/S-GMP	
Orally tablet	1,000 tablet		2,000,000

Source: MKP, RongViet Securities

In late 2018 Mekophar will start production at its newly built facility in Saigon's high-tech park. It will use Japanese PIC/S-GMP standards. The factory has a designed capacity of 2 billion tablets /year, which will produce non-beta lactam drugs for Nipro. We estimate MKP might produce 500 million tablets for Nipro in 2019. The remaining amount will be sold domestically. Japanese PIC/S technology and training from Nipro will help MKP to gain advantages in medicine auction compared to the current GMP-WHO which is out-of-date.

Table 3: EU-GMP and PIC/S GMP standard manufacturers in Vietnam

Manufacturer	Certificated range	GMP standard	Country	Drug tier
Imexpharm	Sterile and nonsterile drugs: beta-lactam antibiotic	EU-GMP	Spain	2
	Imetoxim 1g (Cefotaxim 1g)			1
Pymephaco	Nonsterile drugs: cefalosporin antibiotics	EU-GMP	Germany	2
	Cefaclor Stada (Cefaclor 500 mg)			1
	Cepoxitil 200 (Cefpodoxime 200 mg)			
Stada – Vietnam Joint venture	Nonsterile drugs	EU-GMP	Germany	2
	Bisoprodol, Pantostad 40, Paracetam 800 & 1200, etc.			1
Sanofi Synthelabo Vietnam	Nonsterile liquid drugs	PIC/S GMP	Malaysia	2
Korea United Pharm	Nonsterile drugs, Metformin HCl 500mg	PIC/S GMP	Korea	2
Medochemie Far East	Sterile and nonsterile drugs	EU-GMP	Cyprus	2
Tenamyd Pharmaceutical	Sterile drugs: beta-lactam injections	EU-GMP	Slovakia	2

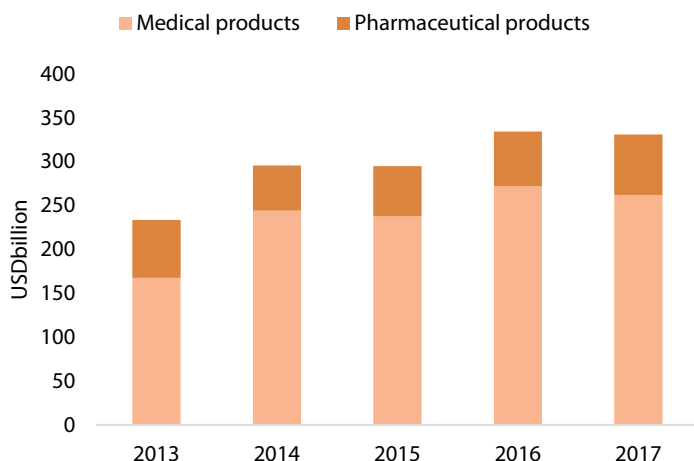
Source: DAV, RongViet Securities

Nipro is currently the biggest contract manufacturing organization (CMO) in Japan with a 90% market share. CMOs are companies that serves other companies in the pharmaceutical industry on a contract basis to provide comprehensive services from drug development through drug manufacturing. This allows major pharmaceutical companies to outsource those aspects of the business, which can help with scalability or can allow the major company to focus instead on drug discovery and drug marketing. Services offered by CMOs include, but are not limited to: pre-formulation, formulation development, stability studies, method development, pre-clinical and Phase I clinical trial materials, late-stage clinical trial materials, formal stability, scale-up, registration batches and commercial production

Nipro has three main business segments: medical products, pharmaceutical products and pharma packaging products. In the event that growth in medical and pharma packaging products slows down,

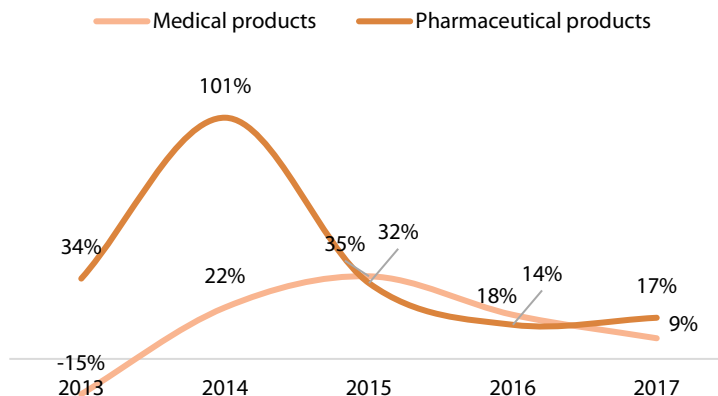
the pharmaceutical product segment takes the relay. At the moment, the pharmaceutical segment only makes up 21% of total revenues but contributes 33% of profits and is growing at over 10% per year.

Figure 3: Nipro's revenue structure 2013-2017



Source: Bloomberg, RongViet Securities

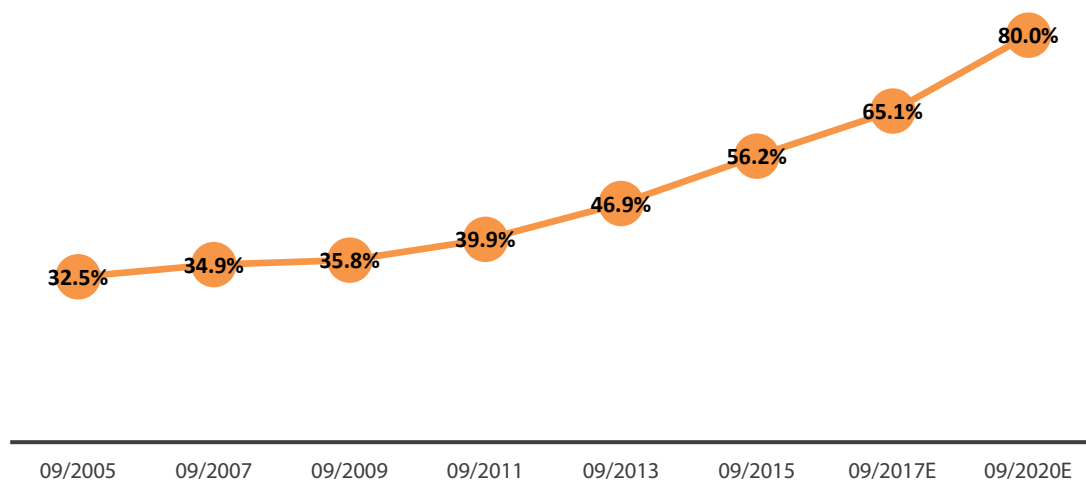
Figure 4: Nipro's profit structure 2013-2017



Source: Bloomberg, RongViet Securities

Nipro has 8 factories in Japan and 1 in Hai Phong city/ Vietnam. There are only 3 factories in Japan producing pharmaceutical products while the rest produces medical equipment and do research. Nipro just completed the expansions of these 3 factories in July 2017 and is planning to build new workshops in its Hai Phong plant to produce medicines. **Mekophar's new factory will play an important role in Nipro's strategy** to increase generic drug production at low prices in order to meet the demand of the domestic market as well as to supply drugs at competitive prices for the Asian market. This is in-line with the Japanese government's policy to strongly support generic drugs, aiming to rise its market share of the general drug market to 80% by September 2020.

Figure 5: Market share of generic drugs and target for Japan by 2020



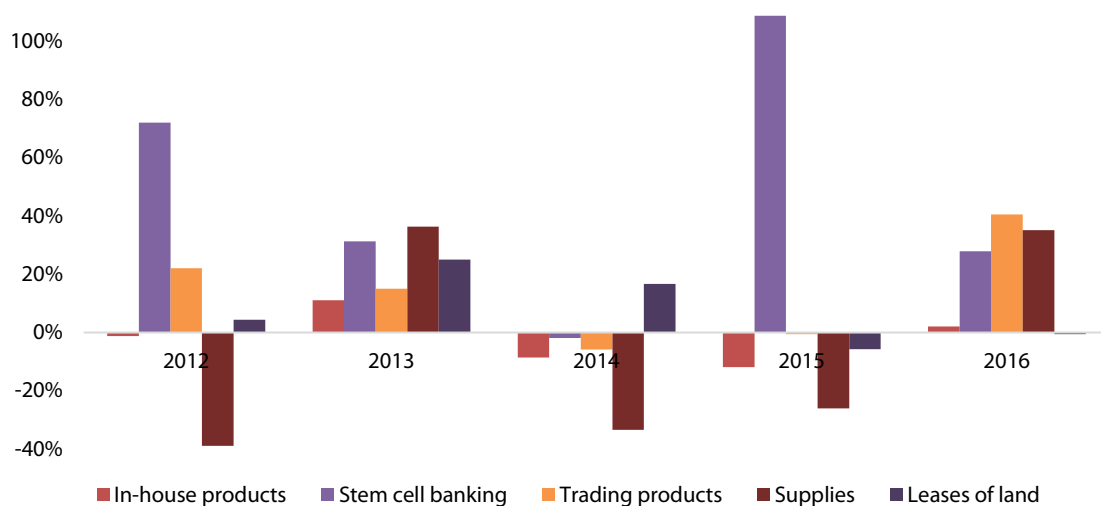
Source: Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare

The new factory will start exporting from 2019 but with a limited volume and high depreciation cost. Therefore, we expect the factory's 2019 profit to be low. From 2020 onwards, when operations stabilizes while capacity reach 70%, Mekophar's revenue and profit margin will considerably improve.

Revenue structure

The current factory is pretty old and its unique product portfolio are the reasons why CAGR is negative (2012-2016 at -2.3%). Meanwhile, material supplies from China account for 70% of Mekophar's input costs. Inconsistency in pricing has been the cause for margins to drop in the last few years.

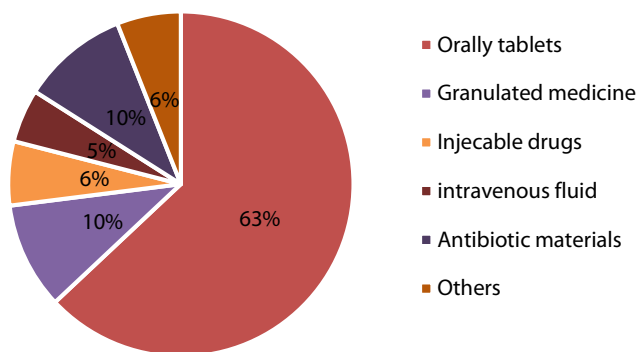
Figure 6: Revenue growth by segment



Source: MKP

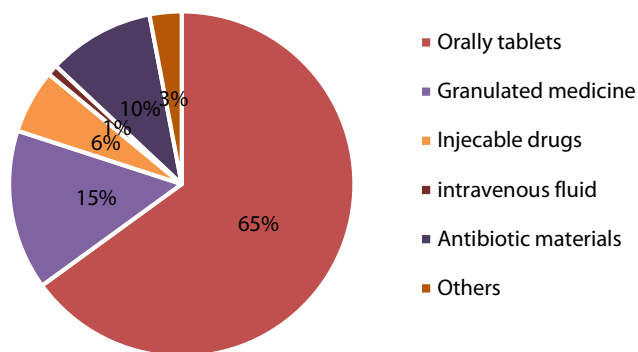
In order to maintain revenue growth, Mekophar had to increase trading of products but profit margin of this sector is very low. Trading products are mostly medicines, pharmaceutical materials and equipment which are aimed to meet clients' demands and maintain relationships with distributors. Overall, these two sectors make up 95% of operating revenues (figures 7 to 10).

Figure 7: Revenue contribution by product type in 2010

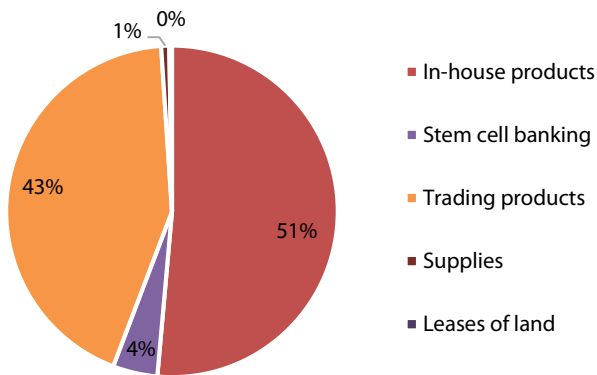


Source: MKP

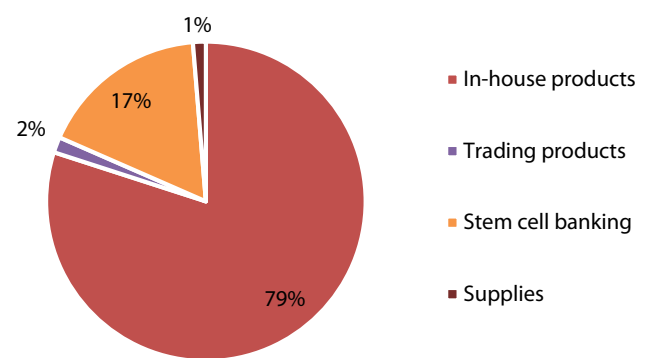
Figure 8: Profit contribution by product type in 2010



Source: MKP

Figure 9: 2016 revenue contribution


Source: MKP

Figure 10: 2016 net profit contribution


Source: MKP

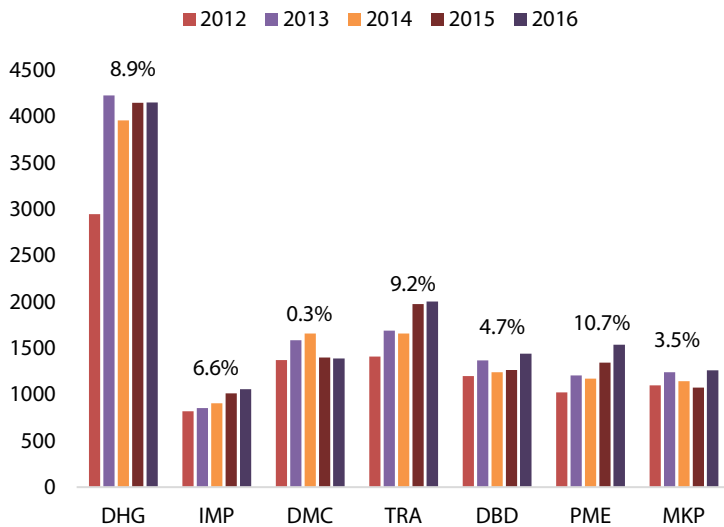
With the new factory coming up, Mekophar will steadily reduce its exposure to trading activities and stop producing products that have low margins. We estimate that in-house products sales will grow from VND667 billion in 2017 to VND 1,161 billion in 2020. Gross margin is estimated to be stable at around 21% in 2019 then increase to 24% in 2020 due to the contribution of the new factory. We also expect the stem cell segment to grow at 20% annually and contribute to 20% of Mekophar's profits by 2020.

Table 4: Estimation of segments' revenues and gross margins by 2020

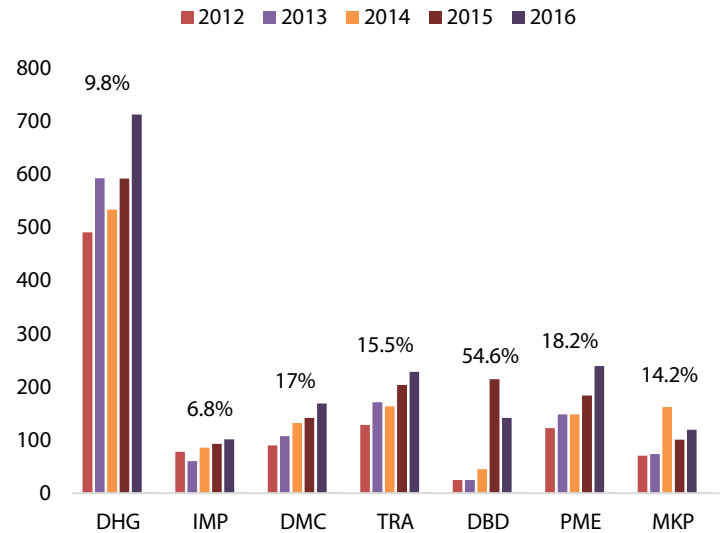
Revenue (VND bn)	2014	2015	2016	2017E	2018F	2019F	2020F
In-house products	721	635	648	667	681	865	1,161
Growth	-9%	-12%	2%	3%	2%	27%	34%
Trading products	390	387	544	604	616	629	641
Growth	-6%	-1%	40%	11%	2%	2%	2%
Stem cell bank	20	42	55	58	69	83	100
Growth	-2%	111%	29%	5%	20%	20%	20%

Gross margin (%)	2014	2015	2016	2017E	2018F	2019F	2020F
In-house products	31%	31%	33%	35%	35%	30%	33%
Trading products	0.6%	0.7%	0.8%	0.8%	0.8%	0.8%	0.8%
Stem cell bank	67%	80%	82%	76%	77%	78%	78%
Overall gross margin	21%	22%	21%	21%	22%	21%	24%

Source: MKP, RongViet Securities

Figure 11: Peers revenues (VND billion, LHS) and CAGR (%) **Figure 12: Peers NPAT (VND billion, LHS) and CAGR (%)**


Source: RongViet Securities



Source: RongViet Securities

Table 5: Comparison with domestic peers

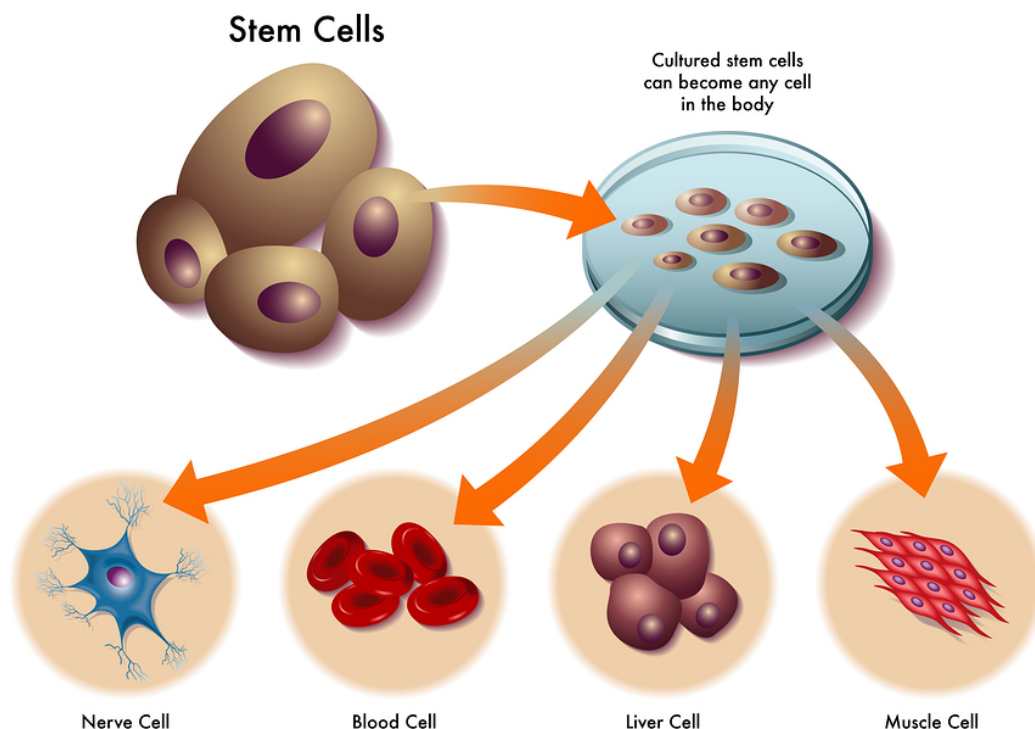
Company	Capitalisation (VND billion)	2016 Revenue (VND billion)	2016 ROE (%)	2016 Profit (VND billion)	2016 profit margin (%)	Trailing P/E	Inventory days	CAGR Revenue 2012-2016	CAGR after-tax profit 2012-2016
MKP	1,359	1,261	12.2	120	9%	N/A	77	4%	14%
Top pharmaceutical firms									
DHG	13,336	3,783	19.4	713	19%	23.4	121	11%	14%
TRA	4,713	1,998	15.8	211	11%	21.2	113	17%	24%
DMC	3,692	1,289	16.3	169	13%	17.8	138	3%	20%
IMP	2,809	1,010	9.0	101	10%	27.4	145	7%	7%
PME	5,479	1,508	16.0	239	16%	19.1	135	11%	18%
Other pharmaceutical firms									
DBD	2,771	1,385	11.3	149	10%	19.0	85	5%	5%
DCL	1,290	738	11.1	90	12%	13.1	142	4%	5%
VDP	470	392	12.5	58	15%	7.9	109	14%	18%
OPC	1,476	790	11.4	79	10%	19.2	205	18%	12%
DP3	452	236	12.1	23	10%	12.5	167	18%	44%
PMC	635	414	26.5	74	18%	11.5	103	12%	18%
DHT	754	1,205	11.3	57	4%	10.8	90	18%	34%
Industry average	2,933	1,174	13.9	151	13%	16.8	127	10%	18%

Source: Bloomberg, RongViet Securities

Appendix

What are stem cells?

Stem cells are young and “immature” cells that have the ability to transform themselves into various types of cells like liver cells, blood cells or nerve cells to replace those cells which are dead or damaged.



Stem cell therapy can be used to treat many incurable diseases like spinal cord injury, stroke, Alzheimer’s disease, Parkinson’s disease or other neurological problems.

The history of stem cell therapy

The development of the atomic bomb during World War II brought the unprecedented devastation to the two Japanese cities, namely Hiroshima and Nagasaki. However, this tragedy also stimulated a wave of biomedical research aimed at both understanding the effects of radiation and developing treatments for radiation exposure. This research ultimately led to the development of the bone marrow transplant, which has saved countless lives and is the most popular stem cell therapy in use today.

The first bone marrow transplant was performed in 1956. Today, this technology has been developing dramatically, stem cells are not only collected from bone marrow but also from different parts of body like infant teeth, umbilical cord, muscle and fat. Among these, cord blood stem cells are the optimal cells for treatments. The biggest advantage for cord blood is the “immaturity” of the cells, which means transplants do not require an exact match. For bone marrow and peripheral blood transplants, donors need to match the patient’s cellular structure. However, cord blood cells can adapt to a wide variety of patients, and don’t require donor matching. Chances for graft-versus-host disease are also much lower for cord blood transplants.

In Vietnam, stem cell therapy already has a long time of development. In 1995, The Blood Transfusion Hematology Hospital performed the first stem cell transplant to cure an anemia patient. However, in the last ten years, there were only 400 transplants performed. As previously mentioned, there are two major limitations of stem cell therapy in Vietnam.

Lack of stem cell supply

For example, at Hanoi Hospital of Obstetrics and Gynecology, while there are hundreds of newborn babies every day, only 4 or 5 blood cord samples are collected. The reason for this is the cost of stem cell banking. At the moment, the average cost of stem cell banking is about VND25 million/sample in the first year and VND2.5 million every year later.

High cost of stem cell treatment

For a stem cell treatment, with 60% health insurance coverage taken into account, a patient still has to pay over VND200 million which is a large amount for many Vietnamese families.

However, in the near future, the demand for stem cell banking will increase when there are more families highly value the importance of stem cell for future treatments. In addition, the increasing average income and the fact that the cost of buying stem cell in Vietnam is relatively cheap in comparison to the global price (USD7,000–USD8,000/sample compared to USD50,000/sample) will be the main factors to push up the development of the stem cell market.

Unit: VND billion

PROFIT & LOSS STATEMENT	2015	2016	2017F	2018F
Revenue	1,076	1,262	1,348	1,387
COGS	837	995	1,055	1,082
Gross profit	239	267	293	304
Selling expenses	60	64	70	73
G&A expenses	73	96	87	91
Financial income	18	29	26	22
Financial expense	-1	1	1	6
Other income/loss	9	1	1	1
Gain/(loss) from joint	0	15	15	15
Profit Before Tax	135	152	176	173
Tax expense	34	33	35	35
Minority interests	0	0	0	0
Profit After Tax	101	120	141	138
EBIT	106	107	136	140
EBITDA	121	122	182	198

FINANCIAL RATIOS	2015	2016	2017F	2018F
Growth				
Revenue	-6.0%	17.2%	6.9%	2.8%
EBITDA	-2.8%	0.2%	49.6%	8.5%
EBIT	-1.9%	1.0%	26.1%	3.2%
PAT	-37.9%	18.8%	17.9%	-2.0%
Total assets	24.0%	29.0%	21.4%	7.0%
Total equity	19.5%	40.6%	8.8%	8.2%
Profitability				
Gross margin	22.2%	21.2%	21.7%	21.9%
EBITDA margin	11.3%	9.6%	13.5%	14.2%
EBIT margin	9.9%	8.5%	10.1%	10.1%
Net margin	9.4%	9.5%	10.5%	10.0%
ROA	11.3%	10.4%	10.1%	9.3%
ROCE	13.6%	10.0%	10.6%	10.4%
ROE	14.5%	12.2%	13.2%	12.0%
Efficiency				
Receivables turnover	8.0	4.2	6.1	8.3
Inventories turnover	3.6	4.7	4.0	4.0
Payables turnover	7.6	12.4	8.8	8.8
Liquidity				
Current	7.0	11.6	4.3	4.7
Quick	5.0	8.9	2.1	2.8
Finance Structure				
Total debt/equity	0.0%	0.0%	9.4%	8.7%
ST debt/equity	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.7%
LT debt/equity	0.0%	0.0%	9.4%	6.9%

Unit: VND billion

BALANCE SHEET	2015	2016	2017F	2018F
Cash and cash equivalents	93	230	-18	212
Short-term investments	317	171	0	10
Accounts receivable	134	301	222	166
Inventories	231	210	264	271
Other current assets (inc. non-trade receivables)	3	12	47	15
Property, plant & equipment	80	161	817	759
Acquired intangible assets (Inc. Goodwill)	8	7	5	2
Long term investments	25	57	57	57
Other non-current assets	0	0	2	0
Total assets	891	1,150	1,395	1,493
Accounts payable	111	80	120	123
Short-term borrowings	0	0	0	20
Long-term borrowings	0	0	100	80
Other non-current liabilities	54	68	78	73
Bonus and Welfare fund	31	22	32	44
Technology-science development fund	0	0	0	0
Total liabilities	195	171	330	340
Common stock and APIC (additional paid in capital)	307	489	489	489
Treasury stock (enter as -)	-14	-14	-14	-14
Retained earnings / accumulated deficit	0	101	142	176
Other comprehensive income / (loss)	0	0	0	0
Investment and Development Fund	404	404	448	502
Total equity	696	979	1,065	1,153
Minority Interest	0	0	0	0

CASH FLOW STATEMENT	2015	2016	2017F	2018F
Profit before tax	135	152	176	173
Depreciation	11	13	47	58
Adjustments	-27	-44		
Change in Working capital	-76	-182	-6	49
Net Operating CFs	43	-60	217	280
Change in Fixed Asset	24	(8)	-602	-198
Change in Deposit, equity investment	-57	57	171	-10
Interest, dividend, cash profit received		15		
Net Investing CFs	-33	64	-431	-208
Change in Capital	20	43		
Change in Debt			100	
Dividend paid & other	9	90	-134	159
Net Financing CFs	29	133	-34	149
Beginning cash & equivalents	51	93	230	-18
Change in cash & equivalents	39	138	-248	230
Ending cash & equivalents	93	230	-18	212

Company Report

This report is created for the purpose of providing investors with an insight into the discussed company that may assist them in the decision-making process. The report comprises analyses and projections that are based on the most up-to-date information with the objective that is to determine the reasonable value of the stock at the time such analyses are performed. Through this report, we strive to convey the complete assessment and opinions of the analyst relevant to the discussed company. To send us feedbacks and/or receive more information, investors may contact the assigned analyst or our client support department.

RATING GUIDANCE

Ratings	BUY	NEUTRAL	SELL
Total Return including Dividends in 12-month horizon	>20%	-20% to 20%	<-20%

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ANALYSIS & INVESTMENT ADVISORY DEPARTMENT

Bernard Lapointe

Head of Research

bernard.lapointe@vdsc.com.vn
+ 84 28 62992006 (1525)

Lam Nguyen

Senior Strategist

lam.ntp@vdsc.com.vn
+ 84 28 6299 2006 (1313)
• Banking
• Conglomerates

Thien Bui

Senior Analyst

thien.bv@vdsc.com.vn
+ 84 28 6299 2006 (1321)
• Market Strategy
• Financial Services
• Personal Goods

Hieu Nguyen

Senior Analyst

hieu.nd@vdsc.com.vn
+ 84 28 6299 2006 (1514)
• Market Strategy
• Pharmaceuticals
• Durable Goods

Duong Lai

Senior Analyst

duong.ld@vdsc.com.vn
+ 84 28 6299 2006 (1522)
• Real Estate
• Building Materials

Vu Tran

Senior Analyst

vu.thx@vdsc.com.vn
+ 84 28 6299 2006 (1518)
• Oil & Gas
• Food & Beverage

Trinh Nguyen

Analyst

trinh.nh@vdsc.com.vn
+ 84 28 6299 2006 (1331)
• Steel
• Construction
• Technology

Quang Vo

Analyst

quang.vv@vdsc.com.vn
+ 84 28 6299 2006 (1517)
• Market Strategy
• Basic Materials
• Personal Goods

Son Phan

Analyst

son.pnt@vdsc.com.vn
+ 84 28 6299 2006 (1519)
• Utilities
• Natural Rubber

Tu Vu

Analyst

tu.va@vdsc.com.vn
+ 84 28 6299 2006 (1511)
• Macroeconomics

Son Tran

Analyst

son.tt@vdsc.com.vn
+ 84 28 6299 2006 (1527)
• Market Strategy
• Retails
• Consumer chemicals

Thuy Nguyen

Analyst

thuy.nb@vdsc.com.vn
+ 84 28 6299 2006 (1528)
• Macroeconomics

Ha Tran

Assistant

ha.ttn@vdsc.com.vn
+ 84 28 6299 2006 (1526)

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