

29 September 2023

Energy & Petrochemicals | Regional Oil & Gas

## Regional Oil & Gas

## Overweight (Maintained)

### Tight Oil Market; Still OVERWEIGHT

Stocks Covered 16  
 Rating (Buy/Neutral/Sell): 11 / 3 / 2  
 Last 12m Earnings Revision Trend: Neutral

- **Still O/W; Top Picks: Yinson, Dayang Enterprise, PTT Exploration & Production (PTTEP), Star Petroleum Refining (SPRC).** We expect oil prices to average at USD92/bbl in 4Q23 and USD85/bbl in 2024 on the assumption that Saudi Arabia and Russia will extend their production cuts until Mar 2024. Global oil demand is expected to grow by 1.9mbpd in 2024, thereby driving the market to an average theoretical deficit of 1.4mbpd.
- **Saudi Arabia and Russia are largely in control.** The recent rally is very much led by Saudi Arabia's and Russia's extension of their voluntary oil output cuts until the end of this year, and further anchored by lower global observed oil inventories to 13 months in August. The question now is whether the two countries will extend the production cuts into next year. If Saudi Arabia continues its current production cut, we expect the deficit to continue. In terms of demand, we are seeing another year of positive growth projection in the range of 1-2.4mbpd, depending on assumptions on the strength of the global economy, China's recovery, and the magnitude of structural declines in road and transport fuel use in major markets.
- **We raise our 2023 and 2024 Brent crude oil price assumptions to USD84/bbl and USD85/bbl from USD81/bbl and USD80/bbl, and maintain the 2025 projection at USD80/bbl.** We raise our 4Q23 projection to USD92/bbl as the oil market should remain in deficit. Most international agencies such as the International Energy Agency (IEA), US Energy Information Administration (EIA), and OPEC are projecting positive QoQ global oil demand growth of an average of 1mbpd in 4Q23. We lift our 2024 projections by USD5/bbl to impute tighter supply from OPEC, premised on continuous voluntary cuts until Mar 2024 and healthy oil demand growth (+1.9mbpd YoY). The theoretical deficit is estimated at 3.1mbpd in 4Q23 and should average at 1.4mbpd in 2024F. Despite the supply tightness, we are mindful that US oil production has picked up to near-record levels at 12.9mbpd, and the EIA expects US crude oil production to stay at this level before averaging at 13.2mbpd (+0.4mbpd; +3% YoY) in 2024.
- **Sector view.** As oil prices are projected to average above USD80/bbl over the next three years, we believe this will continue to encourage oil companies to maintain their capex and opex spending plans. We are still positive on upstream services players, given the elevated level of activities. Drilling activities are guided to remain robust, similar to maintenance activities. We remain bullish on FPSO players for the robust demand and resilient earnings. In Thailand, PTTEP and SPRC are our preferred picks, as they should benefit from higher oil prices and stronger GRM.
- **Downside risks to our sector weighting:** Weaker oil prices and demand, as well as a decrease in spending by clients.

### Top Picks

### Target Price

Dayang Enterprise (DEHB MK) – BUY	MYR2.47
Yinson (YNS MK) – BUY	MYR3.06
PTT Exploration & Production (PTTEP TB) – BUY	THB186
Star Petroleum Refining (SPRC TB) – BUY	THB11.10

### Analysts

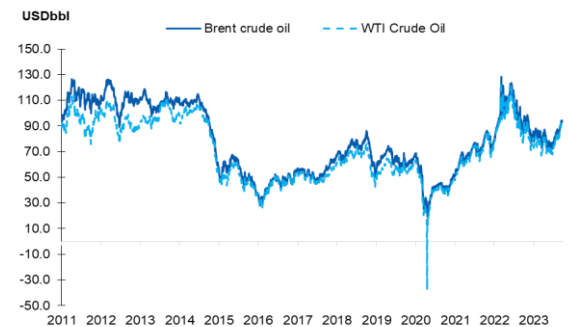
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### Brent and WTI crude oil price trends



Source: Company data, RHB

Company Name	Rating	Target	% Upside (Downside)	P/E (x) Dec-24F	P/B (x) Dec-24F	ROAE (%) Dec-24F	Yield (%) Dec-24F
Bangchak Corp	Buy	THB38.00	(7.3)	6.6	0.9	13.6	4.7
Bumi Armada	Buy	MYR0.73	26.4	4.3	0.5	12.9	-
Coastal Contracts	Neutral	MYR2.15	9.7	7.0	0.5	7.5	-
Dayang Enterprise	Buy	MYR2.47	28.0	11.7	1.3	10.7	1.6
Dialog	Buy	MYR2.85	31.3	23.5	2.2	9.7	1.7
IRPC	Buy	THB4.00	90.5	6.0	0.5	8.2	9.5
Malaysia Marine & Heavy Engineering	Buy	MYR0.60	10.2	19.2	0.5	2.7	1.8
MISC	Buy	MYR8.12	14.0	13.7	0.8	6.1	5.1
Petronas Dagangan	Neutral	MYR23.17	2.1	22.1	3.7	16.9	3.6
PTT	Buy	THB44.00	29.4	8.5	0.8	10.2	5.6
PTT Exploration & Production	Buy	THB186.00	9.1	9.6	1.3	13.5	4.2
PTT Oil and Retail Business	Buy	THB28.00	50.5	18.1	1.9	10.9	1.7
Sapura Energy	Sell	MYR0.02	(63.6)	na	na	9.6	-
Star Petroleum Refining	Buy	THB11.10	20.7	6.1	0.8	14.0	5.7
Thai Oil	Buy	THB65.00	31.3	7.4	0.6	8.6	6.1
Yinson	Buy	MYR3.06	21.4	10.5	1.5	15.3	0.8

Source: Company data, RHB

## Crude Oil Price Forecasts

We increase our Brent crude oil price forecast for 2023 and 2024 to USD84 per bbl and USD85 per bbl from USD81 per bbl and USD80 per bbl, while maintaining the 2025 projection at USD80 per bbl. 3Q23 QTD crude prices averaged USD85 per bbl, bringing the YTD average to USD83 per bbl. This was above our expectations, largely due to the extension of the voluntary production cuts by Saudi Arabia and Russia. We increase our 4Q23 projection to USD92 per bbl, as the oil market will remain in deficit in 4Q23. Most international agencies such as the IEA, EIA, and OPEC are projecting a positive QoQ global oil demand growth of an average of 1mbpd in 4Q23. We lift our 2024 projections by USD5 per bbl to impute tighter supply from OPEC, premised on the continuous voluntary production cuts till Mar 2024 as well as healthy oil demand growth (+1.9mbpd YoY).

Our main assumptions are:

- Global oil demand will grow by 2.4mbpd to 102.0mbpd in 2023 and by another 1.9mbpd to 103.9mbpd in 2024;
- Russia's oil and condensate production will remain at 9.57mbpd in 4Q23 and the country will sustain its voluntary cut until 1Q24. The full-year average is estimated at 10.2mbpd in 2024;
- OPEC's production could stay at 27.4mbpd (flat QoQ) in 4Q23. We now assume Saudi Arabia will extend its 1mbpd voluntary cut until Mar 2024, and hence, OPEC's production should average at 28.4mbpd (+0.4mbpd YoY) in 2024F.

With these assumptions, the theoretical deficit is estimated at 3.1mbpd in 4Q23 and is expected to average at 1.4mbpd in 2024F.

**Figure 1: Demand/supply and crude oil prices/forecasts**

	2020	2021	2022	1Q23	2Q23	3Q23	4Q23F	2023F	1Q24F	2Q24F	3Q24F	4Q24F	2024F
<b>Crude oil price (USD/bbl)</b>													
Brent, RHB (new)	43	71	99	82	78	85	92	84	90	85	85	80	85
Brent, RHB (old)	43	71	00	82	78	80	85	81	80	80	80	80	80
<b>World oil demand and supply balance (mbpd)</b>													
Total demand	91.2	97.1	99.6	101.7	101.3	102.1	103.0	102.0	103.5	103.1	104.2	104.8	103.9
YoY change	-9.2	5.9	2.5	2.2	2.9	2.5	1.9	2.4	1.7	1.9	2.2	1.8	1.9
Total non-OPEC	63.1	63.9	65.8	67.7	67.4	67.4	67.0	67.4	67.4	68.3	68.9	69.6	68.6
OPEC NGLs	5.2	5.3	5.4	5.4	5.5	5.4	5.4	5.4	5.5	5.5	5.5	5.5	5.5
Total non-OPEC +OPEC NGLs	68.3	69.2	71.2	73.2	72.9	72.8	72.5	72.8	72.9	73.9	74.4	75.1	74.1
YoY change	-2.5	0.9	2.0	2.2	2.6	1.6	0.1	1.6	0.6	0.9	1.6	2.6	1.4
OPEC	25.7	26.4	28.9	28.9	28.3	27.4	27.4	28.0	27.4	28.5	28.8	28.8	28.4
Total production	94.0	95.5	100.1	102.0	101.2	100.2	99.9	100.8	100.3	102.4	103.2	103.9	102.5
Balance	-2.8	1.6	-0.4	-0.3	0.1	1.8	3.1	1.2	3.1	0.8	1.0	0.9	1.4

Note: Data as at Sep 2022

Source: OPEC, RHB

### Impact on equities

Oil prices have seen a decent recovery since end-September, owing to the continuous production cuts. The strong recovery in oil prices will directly benefit companies with exploration and production businesses such as PTTEP, Hibiscus Petroleum (HIBI MK, NR), and Dialog, as well as selected petrochemical companies. Indirectly, it will continue to encourage oil companies to sustain their capex and opex spending plans, which will be a boon to upstream services players like Yinson, Dayang Enterprise, and Coastal Contracts.

In Thailand, PTTEP and SPRC are our preferred picks. PTTEP, as an upstream producer, will benefit from the high oil prices, while SPRC should see a positive effect from high oil prices and strong GRMs. SPRC should also benefit from the US driving season and tight supply during the third quarter. Going into the fourth quarter, the company is likely to see positive outcomes from heating oil demand, while the tight supply continues.

### Solid demand projections in 2024

As per OPEC's monthly report for Sep 2023, global oil demand growth is still estimated at 2.4mbpd YoY, taking total demand to 102.1mbpd for 2023F (premised on global GDP growth of 2.7% YoY). The non-Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) region is projected to chart higher growth, at 2.3mbpd, vs OECD regions' 100kbpd in 2023F. Most international agencies such as the IEA, EIA, as well as OPEC are projecting a positive QoQ global oil demand growth of an average of 1mbpd in 4Q23.

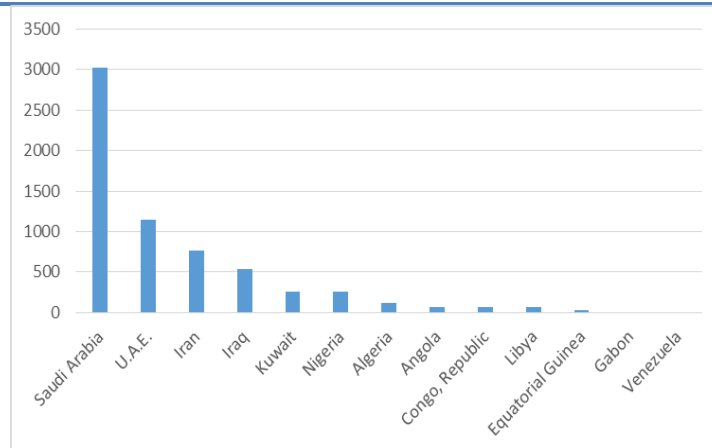
For 2024, we are also seeing another year of positive growth projection, in the range of 1-2.4 mdpd, depending on assumptions on the strength of China's recovery and the magnitude of structural declines in road transport fuel use in major markets. OPEC has the highest growth demand projection of 2.2mbpd in 2024, led by China, India, the Middle East, and other parts of Asia. We have a relatively lower demand growth projection than OPEC for 2024, at 2.0mbpd, largely due to lower demand projections for China and Europe. Our in-house economist has relatively conservative China GDP growth forecasts for 2023 and 2024 at 4% and 4.5% (vs the Bloomberg consensus estimate of 5.0% and 4.5%).

### Saudi Arabia and Russia are largely in control

The recent rally is very much led by Saudi Arabia's and Russia's extension of their voluntary oil output cuts until the end of this year, and is further anchored by lower global observed oil inventories to 13 months in August. Now, with non-OPEC supply slowing, it is becoming evident that OPEC is back in control of oil markets. As a result of Saudi Arabia's voluntary production cut, OPEC's oil production stood at 27.4mbpd in August, down by an average of 0.9mbpd QoQ from 2Q23.

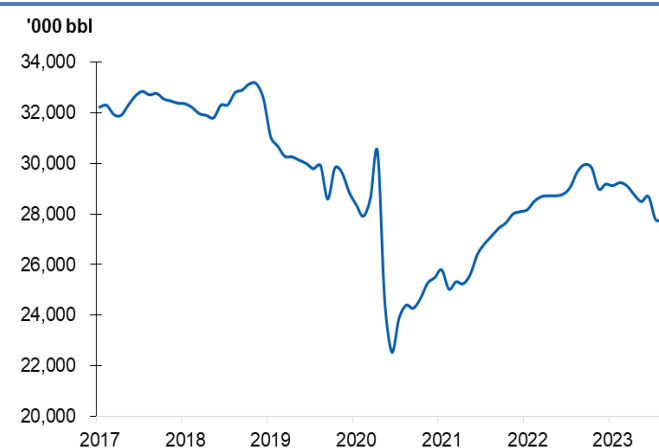
The question now is whether Saudi Arabia and Russia will extend such production cuts into next year. If Saudi Arabia continues its current production cut, we expect the deficit to continue. According to the International Monetary Fund, Saudi Arabia's 2023 fiscal breakeven oil price is estimated at USD80.90 per bbl, which is lower than 2021's USD83.60 per bbl and 2022's USD85.80 per bbl. Saudi Arabia has been trying to diversify its revenue base from oil, and Fitch Ratings estimated that the fiscal breakeven oil price will reduce gradually to USD76 per bbl in 2025. As such, we believe Saudi Arabia is comfortable with keeping oil prices above USD80 per bbl.

Figure 2: OPEC's spare capacity



Source: Bloomberg

Figure 3: OPEC – crude oil production



Source: Bloomberg

According to Upstream, Russia's Deputy Prime Minister Alexander Novak said the Government sees full-year production of oil and condensates at c.10.6mbpd (-0.14mbpd, -1.3% YoY) in 2023. Early this year, S&P Global Commodity Insights estimated Russia's fiscal breakeven oil price to be at USD114 per bbl in 2023, up from USD64.50 per bbl before its invasion of Ukraine.

The IEA also highlighted that Russian oil export revenues surged by 12% to USD17.1bn in August, as higher prices more than offset lower shipments. Platts reported that Russian seaborne oil exports had fallen to an 11-month low in August, according to tanker tracking data, mainly due to heavy refining maintenance, output cut pledges, and as Black Sea tensions continued to limit crude flows. Total Russian shipped crude and oil product exports averaged 5.27mbpd – the lowest since Sep 2022 – and 650kbpd below pre-war levels.

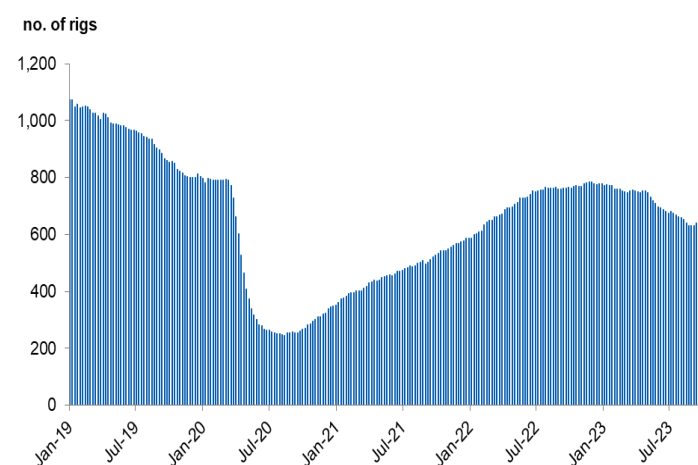
Although there is less shipment to China and India, these two countries are still the largest buyers, accounting for more than half of the volume. We think there is more incentive for Russia to keep prices high in order to offset lower exports, to maintain its fiscal health.

**US production near record high levels**

The EIA expects US crude production to improve by 0.9mbpd (+7% YoY) to 12.8mbpd in 2023. This would make the US the producer that delivers the strongest output growth in 2023. US production has been hovering at around 12.2mbpd, but has spiked above 12.5mbpd since August and is nearing its record-high pre-pandemic level of 12.9mbpd.

EIA expects US crude oil production to stay at this level and subsequently average at 13.2mbpd (+0.4mbpd, +3% YoY) in 2024. The recent higher production levels were mainly led by stronger oil prices and better well productivity in the near term. The US rig count stood at 630 at end-September, indicating a 19% decline YTD. We expect the rig count to also pick up in 2024 on the back of higher operating cash flow from US producers to trigger higher capex spending.

**Figure 4: US rig count**



Source: Bloomberg

**Figure 5: US crude oil production**



Source: Bloomberg

**Figure 6: US annual oil production is anticipated to reach record high levels in 2024**

(mbpd)	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023F	2024F
US crude oil production	9.35	10.99	12.29	11.28	11.25	11.91	12.78	13.16
US crude oil production growth	0.51	1.64	1.3	-1.01	-0.03	0.66	0.87	0.38

Source: EIA, RHB

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<b>Trading Buy:</b>	Share price may exceed 15% over the next 3 months, however longer-term outlook remains uncertain
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Analyst	Company
-	-



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