

## China Pacific Insurance Group - H (2601 HK)

**Overweight**

Price: HK\$35.55

27 Mar 2015

Price Target: HK\$48.00

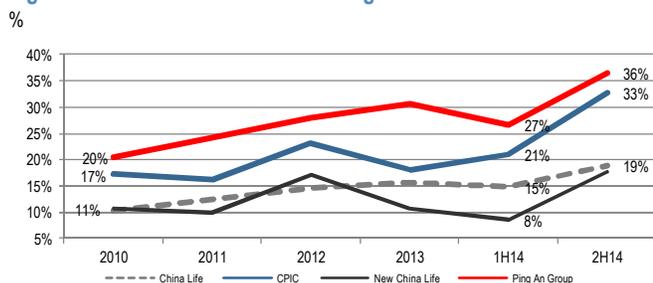
PT End Date: 30 Jun 2015

2H14 first cut: Life NBV acceleration offset by larger-than-expected P&C underwriting deterioration

Despite strong FY14 NBV growth (+16% y/y) with record margin, the overall result was blurred by poor underwriting control in its non-life operation (combined ratio: 103.8%). As a result, overall earnings for FY14 were below market expectations. (FY14 NP: Actual: 11.0B vs Consensus: 12.6B). However, **given that the company is one of the few YTD underperformers (CPIC-H: -10% vs Ping An-H/ China Life-H: +15%/ +6%, respectively) in our view, its poor P&C underwriting might be partially priced-in at current share price levels and/or its strong life fundamental acceleration looks not fairly valued.** Looking ahead, 1) underwriting turnaround potential for its non-life operation, 2) further acceleration on life NBV, and 3) more conservative liability reserving recognition during 2014 should suggest a better risk/return profile from earnings/ fundamental re-rating outlook for a year. We will review our estimates following the analyst briefing.

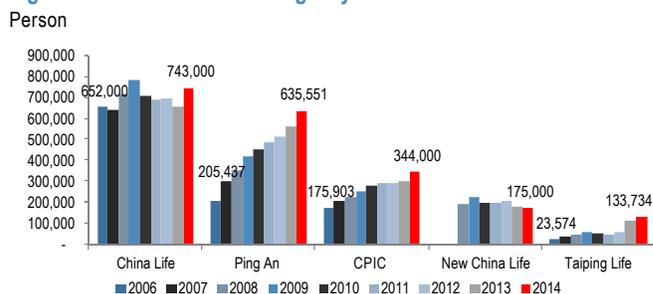
- **Worth reviewing the variance on weaker-than-expected earnings.** Contrary to high market expectations on its solid earnings outlook following the A-share market recovery/ life business re-rating, overall earnings do not look strong enough to meet this expectation (FY14 NP: Actual: 11.0B, +19% y/y vs Consensus: 12.6B). Based on our observations, its weaker-than-expected earnings reporting in FY14 was mainly due to the record deterioration in non-auto underwriting margin (combined ratio: 112.6%) and the normalization of its liability reserving top-up similar to peers (pretax basis additional reserving amount in FY14: Rmb ~4.6B). Given that the company's relatively aggressive liability reserving practice in 2012-14 has been the key concern among the investor community, we view its conservative reserving top-up with a positive angle. In addition, although the company did not well utilize better-than-expected industry non-life underwriting cycle during 2014, its conservative volume growth would suggest better-than-expected claim loss ratio potential for 1H15, in our view.
- **Clear sign on the life business acceleration.** Notably, thanks to faster-than-expected channel transformation into the agency-based business model (agency FYP out of total FYP: 54% vs 23%/31%/42% in FY11/12/13), the company delivered double-digit NBV growth in 2014 with record product margin (FY14 NBV: ~ Rmb 8.7B, +16% y/y vs NBV margin: 25%). Coupled with solid in-force business growth (+9% y/y), its business de-coupling with the bancassurance channel should work as its key differentiation factor considering peers' still high business dependency on bancassurance channel (>70% of FYP) as well as margin compression (i.e., lower investment return, higher funding cost) on this channel following monetary easing and the life pricing liberalization outlook.
- **Large deterioration on non-life operation is expected to be stabilized gradually.** Although we have been bearish on its non-life underwriting margin for a year (JPMe: ~100%), we did not expect its 103.8% (+4.3%p y/y) combined ratio reporting for 2014. However, we do not think this is due to its under-reserving status on its past claims. We have reviewed the company's claim loss development table for last five years. In our view, overall IBNR reserving looks prudent and not likely to drive an additional claim jump in the near term. Instead, we found that the company has meaningfully increased its retention ratio (87%, +4%p y/y) taking more risk in the balance sheet for a year, seemingly leveraging its business on a better underwriting cycle trend in 2014. As well indicated in its non-auto combined ratio (112.6%, +14.2%p y/y), despite attractive historical underwriting margin (combined ratio: <90%), the non-auto (or casualty) underwriting generally shows higher risk/return profile as it is the tail risk underwriting. Considering auto pricing liberalization from April 2015 and the company's bad experience on casualty underwriting, in 2015, the company's non-life underwriting is expected to be stabilized in a way of: 1) lower retention ratio, 2) more focus on the auto insurance underwriting, and 3) selective casualty underwriting, we believe. Although we need to check the company's non-life strategy in the result presentation (9:30 AM Hong Kong, 30 March, 2015), we do not expect the company to take more tail risk in the balance sheet in 2015.
- **Price target, valuation and key risks.** We will review our estimates following the analyst briefing. Downside risks include: 1) slower than expected NBV growth, 2) potential liability reserve top-up, and 3) a worse-than-expected underwriting cycle in non-life.

Figure 1: China life insurers: NBV margin trend



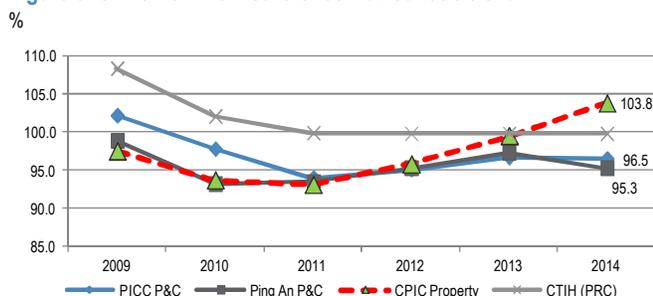
Source: Company reports  
Note: NBV margin= NBV/ FYP

Figure 2: China life insurers: Agency headcount trend



Source: Company reports

Figure 3: China non-life insurers: combined ratio trend



Source: Company reports

Figure 4: CPIC Property (PRC): Retention ratio trend



Source: Company reports and J.P. Morgan estimates.

Table 1: CPIC: 2H14 earnings results

Rmb in millions, %

	1H14	2H14	HoH Chg	YoY Chg	2H14E	Vs. Est	2013	2014	YoY Chg	2014E	Vs. Est
<b>Gross written premium &amp; fees</b>	<b>108,413</b>	<b>83,392</b>	<b>-23%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>88,720</b>	<b>-6%</b>	<b>176,923</b>	<b>191,805</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>197,133</b>	<b>-3%</b>
Premium ceded to re-insurers	(7,476)	(5,961)	-20%	-29%	(10,926)	-45%	(15,295)	(13,437)	-12%	(18,402)	-27%
Net written premium & fees	100,937	77,431	-23%	11%	77,794	0%	161,628	178,368	10%	178,731	0%
Chg. in unearned premium reserves	(5,309)	(168)	-97%	n.m.	1,389	n.m.	(2,003)	(5,477)	n.m.	(3,920)	40%
Net premium earned & fees	95,628	77,263	-19%	7%	79,183	-2%	159,625	172,891	8%	174,811	-1%
<b>Total technical outgo</b>	<b>(74,815)</b>	<b>(73,143)</b>	<b>-2%</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>(71,476)</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>(135,183)</b>	<b>(147,958)</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>(146,291)</b>	<b>1%</b>
Total expenses	(25,213)	(25,403)	1%	26%	(21,731)	17%	(42,365)	(50,616)	19%	(46,944)	8%
Underwriting profits	(4,400)	(21,283)	n.m.	n.m.	(14,024)	52%	(17,923)	(25,683)	43%	(18,424)	39%
<b>Investment income</b>	<b>14,138</b>	<b>27,290</b>	<b>93%</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>21,868</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>30,972</b>	<b>41,428</b>	<b>34%</b>	<b>36,006</b>	<b>15%</b>
<b>Other operating income</b>	<b>(559)</b>	<b>(708)</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>(591)</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>(1,135)</b>	<b>(1,267)</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>(1,150)</b>	<b>10%</b>
Operating income	9,179	5,299	-42%	6%	7,253	-27%	11,914	14,478	22%	16,432	-12%
Profit before tax	9,179	5,321	-42%	7%	7,253	-27%	11,914	14,500	22%	16,432	-12%
<b>Income tax</b>	<b>(2,220)</b>	<b>(1,035)</b>	<b>-53%</b>	<b>-9%</b>	<b>(1,482)</b>	<b>-30%</b>	<b>(2,519)</b>	<b>(3,255)</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>(3,702)</b>	<b>-12%</b>
Minority interests	(111)	(85)	-23%	63%	(134)	-37%	(134)	(196)	46%	(245)	-20%
<b>Net income</b>	<b>6,848</b>	<b>4,201</b>	<b>-39%</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>5,637</b>	<b>-25%</b>	<b>9,261</b>	<b>11,049</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>12,485</b>	<b>-12%</b>

Source: Company reports and J.P. Morgan estimates.

Table 2: CPIC: EV/ NBV Trend

Rmb in millions, %

	1H14	2H14	Ch. HoH	Ch. YoY	2H14E	Vs. Est	2013	2014	Ch. YoY	2014E	Vs. Est
Group EV	153,891	171,294	11%	19%	160,577	7%	144,378	171,294	19%	160,577	7%
NBV (at 100%)	5,230	3,495	-33%	8%	3,064	14%	7,499	8,725	16%	8,294	5%

Source: Company reports and J.P. Morgan estimates.

## Investment Thesis

Established in 1991 and headquartered in Shanghai, CPIC is one of the few composite insurers in China with nationwide operations. As a top-three underwriter of both life and non-life insurance, we think the company's rapid business transformation into high-margin protection-type policies, backed by solid agency operations and improving efficiencies in non-life sales distribution with low-cost telemarketing, will see higher NBV/earnings growth momentum for 2015/16. The company's relatively poor P&C underwriting control is expected to be improved gradually with further scale increase and/or better underwriting experience.

## Valuation

Our Jun-15 PT of HK\$48 is based on our SOTP valuation, using 14x NBM for life and 2.1x P/BV for non-life. We use the appraisal value approach for the life business and P/BV for non-life. We then combine them and apply a 20% discount to capital at the holding company level to arrive at our PT of HK\$48.

	HK\$	Methodology
Life operation (FY15E)	34.7	Appraisal value
Embedded value	17.7	Embedded value movement analysis
Goodwill	16.9	Implied new business multiple of 13.5x
Non Life operation (FY15E)	8.8	20.3% ROE, 11.5% CoE & 2.1x blended P/BV
Others (FY15E)	2.3	20% discount on holding company capital
<b>Share price equivalent (Dec-15)</b>	<b>50.0</b>	<b>Sum-of-the-parts</b>
<b>Share Price Target (Jun-15)</b>	<b>48.0</b>	

Source: J.P. Morgan estimates

## Risks to Rating and Price Target

Downside risks to our rating and price target include: 1) weak premium growth in the bancassurance channel; 2) slower-than-expected NBV growth from the protection market and 3) a faster-than-expected deterioration in auto underwriting performance, given increased competition.

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## Insurance

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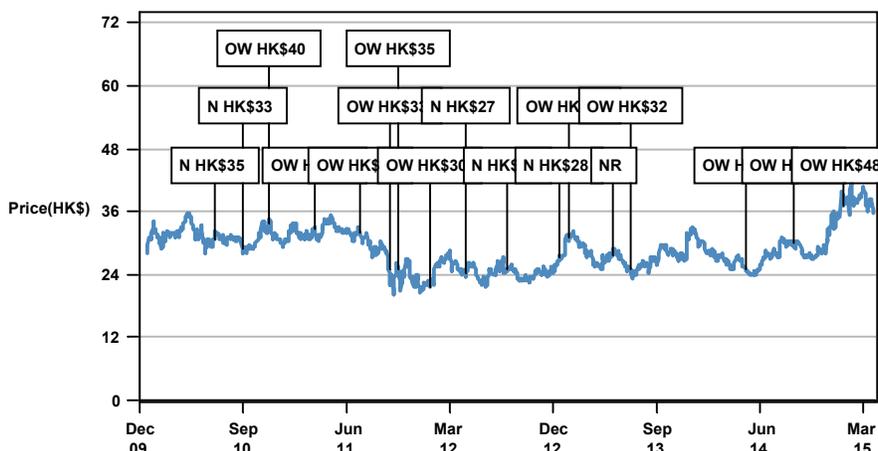
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China Pacific Insurance Group - H (2601.HK, 2601 HK) Price Chart



Date	Rating	Share Price (HK\$)	Price Target (HK\$)
18-Jun-10	N	30.90	35.00
30-Aug-10	N	28.70	33.00
07-Nov-10	OW	33.90	40.00
07-Mar-11	OW	32.55	39.00
07-Jul-11	OW	31.85	38.00
23-Sep-11	OW	24.90	33.00
18-Oct-11	OW	25.20	35.00
09-Jan-12	OW	21.50	30.00
13-Apr-12	N	24.15	27.00
02-Aug-12	N	25.20	26.00
17-Dec-12	N	27.45	28.00
09-Jan-13	OW	31.05	34.00
07-May-13	NR	27.75	--
22-Jun-13	OW	24.95	32.00
25-Apr-14	OW	25.00	34.00
25-Aug-14	OW	30.00	37.00
08-Jan-15	OW	37.30	48.00

Source: Bloomberg and J.P. Morgan; price data adjusted for stock splits and dividends.  
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