

Conpet

Hold

Maintained

Price: RON 117.8
Price target: RON 132.3
(From RON 108.0)

Dividends overflowing

Last year, Conpet's majority shareholder (the Ministry of Energy) finally approved the distribution of cash from the significant reserves accumulated by the company, and its share price reached historical highs, before correcting in the second half of the year. We anticipate more regular and special dividends to be paid this year, as the state budget needs money. Also, the company's financials remain on an upward trend, supported by: the positive macro environment; increases in oil prices and oil products consumption; and, potentially, hikes in tariffs. We have increased our net profit forecasts by 15% for 2018E and 18% for 2019E, and also added special dividends worth RON 85m in 2018E. As a result, we have increased our price target (PT) to RON 132.3/share, implying 12.3% upside. We maintain our HOLD rating.

Highest dividend yield in Romania. As the state will need money to cover the budget deficit, we forecast Conpet to pay a regular dividend, implying a yield of 7% in 2018E, and another dividend from the reserves, implying an 8% yield. Potentially also distributing out of the modernisation quota (if the state approves such a distribution) could send the total dividend yield above 25%, on our estimates.

Investments provide catalysts. Conpet still holds important cash reserves resulting from the modernisation quota. The development of oil storage facilities in Romania could provide another source of profit. The country is currently not meeting its storage obligations, as provided by EU regulations, and a harmonisation of regulations is being debated in the Chamber of Deputies after being passed by the Senate already. Once implemented, it could provide additional business to Conpet. We do not incorporate such a development in our model currently.

Positive long-term volume dynamics. We expect medium-to-long-term growth in oil consumption of 1.5% (50% of GDP growth) in Romania. While we expect domestic volumes to see a 2018-25E CAGR decline of 1.5%, due to OMV Petrom's exploration fields maturing, imported volumes should more than make up for the loss, growing at a CAGR of 4%. Still, not all the growth might be captured by Conpet. Given the high client concentration in its portfolio, we also expect a 2018-25E CAGR in tariffs below inflation, at 1%. We expect the EBIT to grow at a 2.4% 2017-25E CAGR, as a combined effect of the above.

Potential tariff hike in February. Management's previous expectations were that the regulator (ANRM) would impose another increase in tariffs in early-2018E. For the moment, the old contracts have been renewed. We see the possibility of an adjustment in tariffs with inflation and, considering that volumes are likely to remain strong, we see more upside in the financial results in 2018E. Still, considering that Conpet has only two significant clients (OMV Petrom and Lukoil), we also see a risk that the tariff could be maintained.

Risk of dilution with land plots. The risk of the dilution of the minority shareholders with the value of the land plots held by the state (valued at RON 54m) is still present, and we incorporate it into our valuation. A potential change in the legislation is being debated currently in the senate, and this could facilitate the process.

Year	Sales (RON m)	Net profit (RON m)	Shares out (m)	EPS (RON)	EPS growth	P/E (x)	EV/EBITDA (x)	ROE (%)	DPS (RON)	Dividend yield
2015	381	63	8.7	7.3	25.2%	10.5	1.9	8.5%	7.3	9.5%
2016	382	71	8.7	8.2	12.8%	12.1	3.1	9.1%	25.4	25.6%
2017E	382	79	8.7	9.1	10.6%	12.9	4.9	10.9%	18.2	15.5%
2018E	385	80	8.7	9.2	1.3%	12.8	5.4	13.0%	12.0	10.2%
2019E	388	81	8.7	9.4	1.5%	12.6	5.5	14.3%	8.9	7.5%
2020E	393	83	8.7	9.6	2.1%	12.3	5.3	14.9%	9.1	7.7%

*adjusted with the development quota

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Expected events

4Q17 results	15 February 2018
Results conference call	29 March 2018

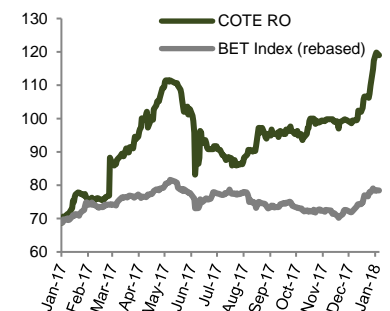
Key data

Market cap	RON 1,025m
Free float	41.3%
Shares outstanding	8.7m
3M ADTV	EUR 71k
Major shareholder	Ro State 58.7%
Bloomberg code	COTE RO
BET index	8,423.91

Price performance

52-w range	RON 68.8 – 119.8
52-w performance	73.1%
Relative performance	59%

Conpet 12M share price performance



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Closing Prices as of 30 January 2018

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A dividend story

As the state will need money to cover the budget deficit, we forecast Conpet to pay a regular dividend, implying a yield of 7% in 2018E, and another dividend from the reserves, implying an 8% yield. The company holds a total of RON 344m (as of September 2017), out of which RON 209m corresponds to the modernisation quota (which is a fiscal facility similar to depreciation, and which leads to extra cash to be used only for investments). RON 85m will be deducted by year-end for a special dividend, which was paid in November 2017. This should still leave enough cash this year (RON 276m at the beginning of the year, plus another c. RON 80m in FCF) to be distributed as special dividends, to generate an additional yield ranging from 8% (if only the free cash is distributed) to more than 25%, if the state approves a distribution from the modernisation quota.

Dividend payment

Dividend payment	Regular dividend @90%	Distribution of cash not blocked by modernisation quota	Distribution of all cash
Dividend (RON m)	71	158	276
Yield	7.0%	15.6%	27.2%
Dividend per share (RON)	8.2	18.2	31.8

Source: WOOD Research

4Q17E results preview

Conpet is due to report its 4Q17E results on 15 February. We expect net profit of RON 15.9m, up 109% yoy, but 30% lower qoq. The fourth quarter is usually weaker, due to provisions for employee benefits, which we estimate at RON 6.2m.

In terms of revenues, we forecast increases of 2% yoy and 3% qoq to RON 108.9m, driven by increases in imported crude oil volumes and tariffs over the quarter, while internally-produced crude should be in line with 3Q17. The gain in revenues should be more than offset by opex being 14% higher qoq, driven mainly by the RON 6.2m employees benefits provision. We expect EBITDA of RON 30.2m, 42% higher yoy, but 19% lower qoq, which translates into a margin of 28%, compared to 20% in 4Q16. In terms of net profit, we expect a 109% increase yoy due to opex, and particularly other expenses, being 8% lower.

Conpet: 4Q17E results preview

(RON m)	4Q16	3Q17	4Q17E	yoy	qoq
Turnover	97.6	96.2	99.5	2%	3%
Total operating revenues	107.0	105.5	108.9	2%	3%
Transported volumes	1.8	1.8	1.9	2%	4%
opex	85.8	68.0	78.7	-8%	16%
EBITDA	21.3	37.5	30.2	42%	-19%
Depreciation	11.4	11.1	11.7	3%	5%
EBIT	9.9	26.4	18.5	87%	-30%
Financial profit	1.0	0.7	0.4	-63%	-50%
Pre-tax profit	10.9	27.1	18.9	73%	-30%
Profit tax	3.3	4.4	3.0	-8%	-31%
Net profit	7.6	22.7	15.9	109%	-30%

Source: Conpet, WOOD Research

Changes in our estimates

	2017E			2018E			2019E		
	New	Old	% chg.	New	Old	% chg.	New	Old	% chg.
Turnover	382	360	6%	385	368	4%	388	371	5%
Domestic transport	286	280	2%	286	285	0%	284	286	-1%
Import	93	77	21%	96	80	19%	101	82	23%
Modernisation quota	30	32	-6%	32	37	-14%	33	38	-14%
Total operating revenues	417	406	3%	421	412	2%	426	414	3%
Total volumes transported (mt)	7	7	3%	7	7	3%	7	7	5%
Personnel	111	111	0%	112	112	0%	113	113	0%
Depreciation	45	41	11%	44	41	7%	43	41	5%
Third parties	101	104	-3%	102	103	-1%	103	102	1%
Royalties	29	28	2%	29	28	0%	28	29	-1%
Others	70	73	-5%	71	72	-1%	72	71	2%
Modernisation quota	48	50	-4%	50	55	-9%	51	56	-9%
Total operating expenses	326	327	0%	329	333	-1%	333	335	-1%
EBITDA	136	119	14%	136	120	13%	137	120	14%
EBIT	91	79	15%	92	79	16%	93	79	18%
Financial profit	3	3	0%	3	3	0%	3	3	0%
Pre-tax profit	94	82	15%	95	82	15%	96	82	18%
Net profit	79	69	15%	80	69	15%	81	69	18%
Dividends	158	89	76%	104	90	15%	77	69	12%

Source: WOOD Research

Valuation

Our valuation for Conpet is based on the average of: i) our DCF calculations; and ii) a DDM valuation. As the company can more easily distribute the cash it holds as special dividends, we are not discounting the cash in the DCF valuation any more. As our dividend estimates for the next few years do not include distributing the entire cash position, however, the DDM valuation results in a lower price target (PT) than the DCF valuation, thus accounting for the delay in the distribution of cash, or the fact that it might not all be distributed in the near term.

Valuation summary

	Equity value (RONm)	Per share (RON)
1. DCF	1,167	134.8
2. DDM	1,025	118.4
Average (50:50)	1,096	126.6
Value of land plots that belong to the state	-54	-6.2
Resulting price	1,042	120.4
Adjusted with cost of equity		132.3
Current price		117.8
Upside		12.3%

Source: WOOD Research

DCF assumptions

- ✓ A risk free rate (RFR) of 4.5%
- ✓ An equity risk premium (ERP) of 5.0% and a beta of 1.1x.
- ✓ A terminal growth rate of 1.0%.

DCF valuation

	2018E	2019E	2020E	2021E	2022E	2023E	2024E	2025E
EBIT	92	93	96	98	100	102	104	106
Corporate tax rate [T]	16.0%	16.0%	16.0%	16.0%	16.0%	16.0%	16.0%	16.0%
EBIT*(1-T)=NOPAT	77	79	80	82	84	85	88	89
Depreciation & amortisation	44	43	43	42	41	40	39	40
Development quota (net)	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18
Cash from working capital	-4	-3	-3	-3	-3	-3	-3	-3
Capex [I]	-60	-55	-50	-50	-50	-55	-60	-60
Unleveraged free cash flow [FCF]	75	82	88	89	89	85	82	84
Discount factor	0.92	0.83	0.76	0.69	0.63	0.57	0.52	0.47
Present value of FCFs [PV:FCF]	69	68	67	61	56	48	43	39
Sum of [PV:FCF]	451							
Long term FCF growth rate	1.0%							
Residual value at horizon (modernisation quota adjusted)	943							
PV of residual value	445							
Net cash	270							
EV	1,167							
Number of shares	8.66							
Equity value per share	134.8							

Source: WOOD Research

DDM assumptions

- ✓ We use a cost of equity of 10%, a 4.5% RFR, a 5.0% ERP and a beta of 1.1x.
- ✓ To forecast the dividends, we have applied a payout varying from 200% to 95% of net profits in 2020E. This includes special dividends paid out of the reserves.
- ✓ A 1.0% terminal growth rate.

DDM valuation

	2018E	2019E	2020E	2021E	2022E	2023E	2024E	2025E
Dividends	157.6	103.8	77.0	78.6	80.3	81.8	83.4	85.8
Discount factor	0.96	0.87	0.79	0.72	0.66	0.60	0.54	0.49
Present value	151	90	61	57	53	49	45	42
Sum	548							
Long-term FCF growth rate	1.0%							
Residual value at horizon	968							
PV of residual value	477							
EV	1,025							
Number of shares	8.66							
Value per share	118.4							

Source: WOOD Research

Peer comparison

We present a comparative peer valuation for Conpet on 2018-20E P/E and EV/EBITDA multiples, as well as dividend yields. We use a peer group composed of companies that have regulated earnings as a large part of their total profit. This group includes both Western and Eastern European peers.

On a 2019E P/E of 12.6x, Conpet trades in line with the blended average of the entire group of peer companies. On a 2019E EV/EBITDA of 5.5x, the company trades at a 24% discount to its peers' average. While a discount to its Western peers is justified, in our view, by Conpet's less-efficient balance sheet (no net debt and a still high cash position), and the higher regulatory and country risks, we believe a premium is justified vs. its CEE peers, which are being affected by their generation activity and the plans to expand more into upstream, which makes their cash distributions uncertain. Conpet, in turn, pays a 10% dividend yield for 2018E and a 8% dividend yield for 2019E, on our estimates, significantly higher than the sector average.

Peer comparison

	Mkt Cap (USD m)	P/E			EV/EBITDA (BEST EV)			Dividend Yield		
		2018E	2019E	2020E	2018E	2019E	2020E	2018E	2019E	2020E
Transgaz Sa Medias	1,338	13.4x	13.0x	14.7x	7.0x	8.0x	n.a.	6.0%	6.2%	5.6%
Transelectrica Sa	525	16.4x	12.7x	10.6x	4.2x	4.0x	n.a.	3.3%	4.2%	5.1%
Societatea Energetica Electr	1,120	12.4x	11.7x	10.6x	5.2x	5.2x	5.7x	6.9%	7.3%	9.1%
Enagas Sa	6,613	12.6x	12.5x	11.1x	9.8x	9.7x	8.5x	6.8%	7.1%	7.5%
Snam Spa	17,237	14.3x	14.1x	13.7x	12.2x	12.1x	11.9x	5.5%	5.7%	5.8%
Engie	42,270	13.7x	12.6x	11.8x	6.2x	6.1x	5.6x	5.0%	5.4%	5.8%
Red Electrica Corporacion Sa	11,607	13.3x	12.8x	13.0x	9.2x	8.9x	9.2x	5.6%	6.0%	6.1%
Terna Spa	12,046	14.0x	13.8x	13.5x	11.2x	11.0x	10.8x	4.7%	4.9%	5.0%
Elia System Operator Sa/Nv	3,647	12.6x	13.1x	n.a.	14.3x	14.0x	n.a.	3.5%	3.6%	n.a.
Cez As	23,403	13.8x	12.6x	11.9x	7.5x	7.2x	7.0x	5.1%	5.6%	6.2%
E.On Se	11,934	11.0x	9.6x	8.6x	7.2x	7.0x	6.8x	3.4%	4.3%	4.7%
Polskie Gornictwo Naftowe I	38,234	13.3x	12.8x	12.3x	10.2x	10.0x	9.9x	5.8%	6.0%	6.1%
Enea	13,732	20.1x	20.8x	17.9x	8.0x	7.7x	7.2x	4.9%	4.5%	5.1%
PGNiG	11,568	10.8x	10.6x	10.3x	4.9x	n.a.	4.6x	4.1%	4.3%	4.2%
Tauron	1,509	4.9x	4.9x	5.9x	4.0x	3.9x	3.9x	2.6%	2.6%	2.2%
Rwe Ag	11,568	10.8x	10.6x	10.3x	4.9x	4.7x	4.6x	4.1%	4.3%	4.2%
Energa Sa	1,639	5.0x	5.1x	4.5x	4.7x	4.9x	4.9x	0.0%	2.4%	n.a.
Transgaz Sa Medias	998	4.3x	4.4x	4.9x	4.6x	4.5x	5.2x	1.6%	1.6%	1.1%
Shell Midstream Partners	5,483	16.7x	12.4x	n.a.	13.5x	10.3x	n.a.	5.1%	5.8%	6.5%
Energy Transfer Partners	23,191	15.1x	12.1x	9.8x	7.4x	6.8x	n.a.	11.9%	12.2%	11.9%
Conpet (WOOD's est.)	276	12.8x	12.6x	12.3x	5.4x	5.5x	5.3x	10.2%	7.5%	7.7%
Peers' median		13.3x	12.6x	10.9x	7.3x	7.2x	6.8x	5.0%	5.2%	5.7%
Premium/discount (Bloomberg est.)		-4%	0%	13%	-26%	-24%	-21%	105.2%	46.2%	35.2%

Source: WOOD Research

Risks

- ✓ **Regulatory risk.** We assess the regulatory risk as high, as we believe that the regulatory framework is less complex, and obsolete vs. that for the other regulated monopolies, such as Transgaz or Transelectrica. This leaves room for several interpretations, in our view, and implies a much higher dependency on the regulator's decision, which may directly influence the profit that Conpet can achieve in the future.
- ✓ **Investments needed to maintain the system in an active fashion.** The company might be subject to several investments needed in order to maintain the system as operational, and in line with the environmental regulations.
- ✓ **High dependency on a single client.** The revenues related to the services performed for OMV Petrom represented close to 70% of total revenues in 2016. Petrom's oil fields are mature and production is on a downward trend. We assess the dependency as high, representing a significant risk related to the future of Conpet.
- ✓ **Political risk.** Conpet is state-owned, with the state's decisions regarding the operation of the company affecting its profitability and financial position. While corporate governance practices (as defined by OUG 109/2011) have been implemented, there might still be misalignments between the interests of the minority shareholders and those of the state. Changes to the corporate governance practices and exceptions are being debated by parliament. Also, the company's board has been elected for a temporary period, which makes it more difficult to implement a long-term strategy.
- ✓ **Legal risks.** The Court of Accounts has asked Conpet to increase the value of the share capital with some state-owned land plots that the company is using. The share capital increase can only be performed with the presence of shareholders holding more than 75% of the shares, a quorum that has not been reached. As a consequence, the decision of the Court of Accounts could not be implemented. If implemented, Conpet would need to increase the share capital by RON 54m (the value of the land plots), representing 5% of the market cap. We have already adjusted our valuation with the value of the land plots.
- ✓ **Low market liquidity.** The average traded volumes over the past 12 months have been as low as EUR 110k per day, which creates the risk of higher price fluctuations.
- ✓ **A switch from domestic system volumes to import volumes might cause a contraction in the margin.** Our assumptions are that the overall volume of oil processed in the country should not decline significantly; instead, the decline in the oil produced internally by OMV Petrom should be replaced with imports, in our view. Currently, the profit on the import lines is lower than on the domestic pipelines, due mainly to the low capacity utilisation; however, once volumes increase, the economies of scale (as the costs are fixed, to some extent) could also help to improve margins.
- ✓ **Lukoil can switch production to Burgas.** According to company representatives, a significant increase in the tariffs charged to Lukoil for imports may not be possible, as the company could switch production to the Burgas refinery.

Financials

Income statement

RON m	2014	2015	2016	2017E	2018E	2019E	2020E
Turnover	375	381	382	382	385	388	393
Domestic transport	314	309	296	286	286	284	283
Import	59	70	82	93	96	101	107
Modernisation quota	25	31	28	30	32	33	33
Total operating revenues	402	414	411	417	421	426	431
<i>Total volumes transported (mt)</i>	6.63	6.99	7.08	6.89	6.96	7.06	7.17
Personnel	98	106	112	111	112	113	114
Depreciation	46	51	40	45	44	43	43
Third parties	118	108	104	101	102	103	105
Royalties	30	31	30	29	29	28	28
Others	86	75	72	70	71	72	74
Modernisation quota	58	60	55	48	50	51	51
Total operating expenses	348	344	331	326	329	333	335
EBITDA	100	121	121	136	136	137	138
EBIT	54	70	80	91	92	93	96
Financial profit	10	6	4	3	3	3	3
Pre-tax profit	64	75	84	94	95	96	99
Net profit	50	63	71	79	80	81	83
Dividends	51	63	220	158	104	77	79

Source: Company data, WOOD Research

Balance sheet

RON m	2014	2015	2016	2017E	2018E	2019E	2020E
Fixed assets	419	402	406	393	391	385	374
Current assets	385	434	459	328	249	225	240
Trade and other receivables	34	42	42	43	44	45	46
Cash and bank balances	343	380	408	276	196	171	185
Total assets	804	836	865	721	640	610	614
Equity	723	765	796	655	577	554	560
Long-term liabilities	6	5	5	5	5	0	0
Short-term liabilities	75	67	64	61	58	56	54
Trade and other payables	30	20	21	18	15	13	11
Other liabilities	24	26	30	30	30	30	30
Total equity and liabilities	804	836	865	721	640	610	614

Source: Company data, WOOD Research

Cash flow

RON m	2014	2015	2016	2017E	2018E	2019E	2020E
Pre-tax income	64	75	84	94	95	96	99
Tax	-13	-14	-13	-15	-15	-15	-16
Depreciation & amortisation	46	51	40	45	44	43	43
Other non-cash adjustments	33	29	28	18	18	18	18
Changes in working capital	14	-20	0	-4	-4	-3	-3
Other adjustments	17	-1	-9	-5	-6	-7	-6
Operating cash flow	160	120	130	133	131	133	135
Purchase of fixed assets	-45	-34	-45	-50	-60	-55	-50
Investing cash flow	-45	-34	-45	-50	-60	-55	-50
Dividends, net	-30	-51	-63	-220	-158	-104	-77
Long-term debt issued (repaid)	-2	-1	1	0	0	-5	0
Financing cash flow	-29	-49	-59	-215	-152	-102	-69
Cash balance changes							
Beginning cash	257	343	380	408	276	196	171
- Change in cash flow	86	37	27	-132	-80	-24	14
Ending cash	343	380	408	276	196	171	185

Source: Company data, WOOD Research

Ratios

	2014	2015	2016	2017E	2018E	2019E	2020E
Number of shares (m)	8.7	8.7	8.7	8.7	8.7	8.7	8.7
Price (year-end)	55.1	77.0	99.4	117.8	117.8	117.8	117.8
Net debt	-337	-376	-402	-270	-190	-171	-185
EPS (RON)	5.83	7.30	8.23	9.10	9.22	9.36	9.56
- EPS growth	61%	25%	13%	11%	1%	2%	2%
Dividend (RONm)	51.4	63.2	219.9	157.6	103.8	77.0	78.6
DPS (RON)	5.94	7.30	25.40	18.21	11.98	8.89	9.08
- Payout ratio	102%	100%	308%	200%	130%	95%	95%
Dividend yield	11%	9%	26%	15%	10%	8%	8%
BVPS (RON)	83.6	88.3	91.9	75.6	66.6	64.0	64.7
ROE	7%	8%	9%	11%	13%	14%	15%
PER (x)	9.4	10.5	12.1	12.9	12.8	12.6	12.3
EV/EBITDA (x)	1.4	2.4	3.8	5.5	6.1	6.2	6.0
EV/EBITDA (x) -adj. for development quota	1.0	1.9	3.1	4.9	5.4	5.5	5.3
P/BV	0.7	0.9	1.1	1.6	1.8	1.8	1.8

Source: Company data, WOOD Research

Important disclosures

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WOOD's ratings and price targets history for Conpet

Rating		Price target	
22/10/2015	HOLD	22/10/2015	RON 74.3
		08/02/2017	RON 105.3
		29/06/2017	RON 108.0
		31/01/2018	RON 132.3

Explanation of Ratings

BUY: The stock is expected to generate total returns of over 15% during the next 12 months as measured by the price target.

HOLD: The stock is expected to generate total returns of 0-15% during the next 12 months as measured by the price target.

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Equity Research Coverage	46%	46%	7%	0%	N.A.%	1%
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