

Canadian Solar Inc. (CSIQ)

\$16.80 (As of 03/13/20)

Price Target (6-12 Months): **\$18.00**

Long Term: 6-12 Months

Zacks Recommendation:

Neutral

(Since: 02/11/20)

Prior Recommendation: Underperform

Short Term: 1-3 Months

Zacks Rank: (1-5)

3-Hold

Zacks Style Scores:

VGM:A

Value: A

Growth: D

Momentum: A

Summary

Canadian Solar has a strong pipeline of projects and carries out various acquisitions and strategies to further consolidate its position. Of late, the company has further expanded its global late-stage project pipeline into nations like Argentina, Australia and South Korea, considering these as the markets where the next phase of industrial growth is expected. However, policy changes made in China, earlier this year, is anticipated to be detrimental for international solar stocks like Canadian Solar, as it has increased commitments to ship modules and construct new projects in China. It faces intense competition from manufacturers of different types of solar modules and PV systems, with respect to reliability and selling price per watt. Canadian Solar's shares have underperformed the industry in the past six months.

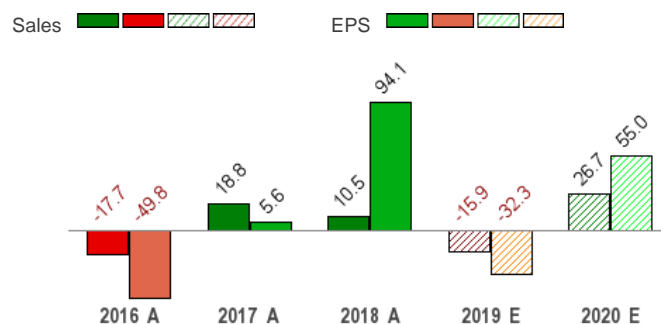
Price, Consensus & Surprise



Data Overview

| | |
|----------------------------|------------------------|
| 52 Week High-Low | \$25.35 - \$14.16 |
| 20 Day Average Volume (sh) | 882,323 |
| Market Cap | \$998.5 M |
| YTD Price Change | -24.0% |
| Beta | 1.64 |
| Dividend / Div Yld | \$0.00 / 0.0% |
| Industry | Solar |
| Zacks Industry Rank | Top 7% (18 out of 253) |

Sales and EPS Growth Rates (Y/Y %)



| | |
|---------------------------|------------|
| Last EPS Surprise | -25.0% |
| Last Sales Surprise | -4.8% |
| EPS F1 Est- 4 week change | -1.2% |
| Expected Report Date | 03/26/2020 |
| Earnings ESP | 0.0% |

Sales Estimates (millions of \$)

| | Q1 | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 | Annual* |
|------|-------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 2021 | | | | | 4,122 E |
| 2020 | 939 E | 1,042 E | 1,046 E | 1,094 E | 3,990 E |
| 2019 | 485 A | 1,036 A | 760 A | 869 E | 3,150 E |

EPS Estimates

| | Q1 | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 | Annual* |
|------|-----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| 2021 | | | | | \$4.88 E |
| 2020 | \$1.06 E | \$1.03 E | \$0.78 E | \$0.57 E | \$3.44 E |
| 2019 | -\$0.29 A | \$0.77 A | \$0.66 A | \$0.51 E | \$2.22 E |

*Quarterly figures may not add up to annual.

| | |
|---------|-----|
| P/E TTM | 6.1 |
| P/E F1 | 7.6 |
| PEG F1 | 0.2 |
| P/S TTM | 0.3 |

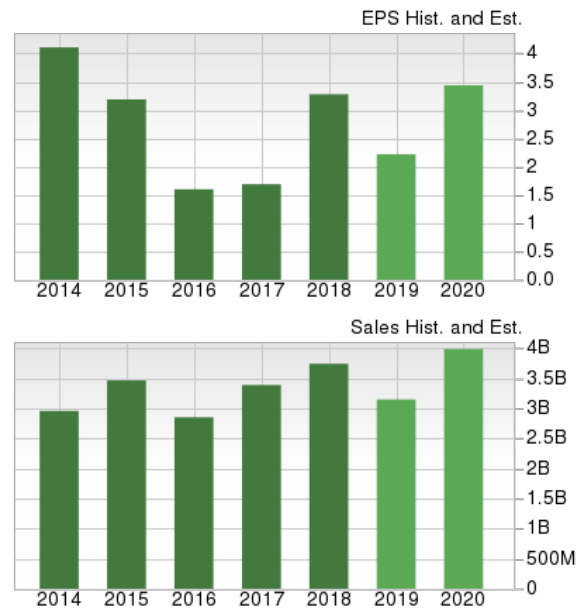
The data in the charts and tables, except sales and EPS estimates, is as of 03/13/2020. The reports text and the analyst-provided sales and EPS estimates are as of 03/16/2020.

Overview

Ontario, Canada-based Canadian Solar Inc. (CSIQ) is a vertically integrated manufacturer of silicon ingots, wafers, cells, solar modules (panels) and custom-designed solar power applications. The company designs, manufactures and delivers solar products and solar system solutions for both on-grid and off-grid use to customers worldwide. The company was incorporated in Canada in 2001. Subsequently, in Nov 2006, the company came out with its maiden public offering.

Canadian Solar's production facilities in Canada, China, Indonesia, Vietnam and Brazil are structured for the manufacturing of ingots, wafers, solar cells, solar PV modules, solar power systems and specialized solar products. A huge number of the company's manufacturing facilities are located in Canada and China.

Canadian Solar operates through eight wholly-owned manufacturing subsidiaries. The company sells its products to customers worldwide, with operations spread across Australia, Brazil, China, Germany, Japan, South Korea, South Africa, Spain, Singapore, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates and the United States. The company has active solar projects in the states of California, North Carolina and Massachusetts. The company also implements solar power development projects, primarily in conjunction with government organizations, to provide solar power generation in rural areas of China.



Reasons To Buy:

- ▲ The company caters to a geographically-diverse customer base spread across key markets in the United States, China, Japan, the U.K. and Canada as well as emerging markets in Brazil, India, Mexico, Italy, Germany, South Africa and the Middle East. Of late, the company has further expanded its global late-stage project pipeline into nations like Argentina, Australia and South Korea, considering these as the markets where the next phase of industrial growth is expected.

Impressively, during the third quarter of 2019, the company shipped around 2,387 MW of solar modules globally. This surely reflects the expanding global footprint of the company and the notable progress it made on the monetization of its global, solar project assets. Notably, the transactions related to the solar-module shipments enable the company to further recycle capital into attractive project opportunities.

- ▲ Canadian Solar has a strong pipeline of projects and carries out various acquisitions and strategies to further consolidate its position. The company continues to identify attractive development opportunities to redeploy capital and ensure future success. At the end of third-quarter 2019, the company's utility-scale solar power plants in operation totaled 795.8 megawatts peak (MWp), with an estimated resale value of \$900 billion. Moreover, the company's late-stage, utility-scale solar pipelines, including the ones under construction, increased to 3.4 GWp.
- ▲ The company is significantly expanding its footprint in the United States. Notably, Canadian Solar's late-stage, utility-scale solar project pipeline totaled 1,285 MW at the end of September 2019 in the United States, excluding the 100 MWac Sunflower project located in Mississippi. Its portfolio also comprised 205.9 MW of operating solar power plants at the end of the third quarter. This indicates stellar growth prospects for Canadian Solar in the country.

Countries in the Asia-Pacific region, like Japan, China and India, are expected to be principal demand drivers of solar modules in the coming years. The company has a significant presence in this region. As of Sep 30, 2019, its solar power plants in operation totaled 89.6 MWp in Japan, 100.1 MWp in Argentina and 35 MWp in India. In China, the company connected a total of 350.3 MWp of solar power projects to the grid. The late-stage, utility-scale power pipeline in China was 145 MWp.

- ▲ The company expects its cost of production to decrease in 2019 due to the reduction in material costs, and the availability of new, higher efficiency cell and module capacity. Further, as costs for solar power production continue to fall on a quicker note compared with other energy sources, solar-generation growth will continue to soar. Moreover, new technologies and products, and the increase in vertical integration along with the manufacturing process will help Canadian Solar deliver a solid performance in the days ahead.
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Canadian Solar has a strong pipeline of projects and carries out various acquisitions and strategies to further consolidate its position.

Reasons To Sell:

- ▼ The Chinese government's announcement of a sudden policy makeover on Jun 1, involving a significant cut down in subsidies offered to the nation's solar projects, dealt a major blow to the solar industry worldwide. Analysts across the globe have expressed their skepticism regarding the latest policy changes through reduction in expectations for the nation's solar projects. Asia Europe Clean Energy (Solar) Advisory (AECEA) lowered its forecast for China's solar capacity addition for 2018 from 40-45 GW to 30-35 GW in response to these policy changes. This policy change is anticipated to be detrimental for international solar stocks like Canadian Solar, as it has increased commitments to ship modules and construct new projects in China.
- ▼ At the end of third-quarter 2019, the company had \$1.97 billion of total debt, escalating its vulnerability to adverse economic or industry conditions. The company's total borrowings directly related to its utility-scale solar power projects were \$670.8 million at the end of the third quarter. Moreover, the company will have to dedicate a portion of its cash flow from operations to repay debt, thereby reducing the availability of cash flow to fund working capital, capital expenditures and initiatives.
- ▼ Canadian Solar faces intense competition from manufacturers of different types of solar modules and PV systems, with respect to reliability and selling price per watt. Though the company presently has a competitive edge over its peers, the current economic scenario does not guarantee the same for the future.
- ▼ A comparative analysis of Canadian Solar's historical P/E ratio reflects a relatively gloomy picture that might be a cause for investors' concern. The stock currently has a trailing 12-month P/E ratio of 8.78. This level compares unfavorably with what the stock witnessed in the past 12 months. The ratio is much higher than the industry's negative average of 32.69. Moreover, the company underperformed its industry in past six months. Notably, Canadian Solar's shares have declined 23.3% in the past six months compared with the industry's decline of 20.4%.

Stiff competition from cheaper alternatives and exposure to foreign exchange risks are added concerns.

Last Earnings Report

Canadian Solar Q3 Earnings & Sales Lag, Down Y/Y

Canadian Solar reported adjusted third-quarter 2019 earnings of 66 cents per share, which missed the Zacks Consensus Estimate of 88 cents by 25%. The figure also declined 31.3% from the year-ago level.

GAAP earnings came in at 96 cents per share in the quarter under review compared with \$1.04 in third-quarter 2018.

Quarter Ending **09/2019**

| Report Date | Nov 12, 2019 |
|------------------|--------------|
| Sales Surprise | -4.76% |
| EPS Surprise | -25.00% |
| Quarterly EPS | 0.66 |
| Annual EPS (TTM) | 2.75 |

Total Revenues

This solar cell manufacturer's total revenues of \$759.9 million lagged the Zacks Consensus Estimate of \$798 million by 4.8%. The top line also declined 1.1% from \$768 million reported in third-quarter 2018.

The year-over-year decline was due lower revenues from the sale of solar power plants.

Operational Update

Solar module shipments in the quarter totaled 2,387 megawatts (MW), which exceeded management's guided range of 2.2-2.3 gigawatt (GW). Solar module shipments recognized in third-quarter revenues totaled 2,156 MW, improving 41.7% from 1,521 MW in the prior-year period.

Gross margin was 23% in the quarter (excluding AD and CVD benefits) compared with 25% in third-quarter 2018.

Total operating expenses were \$118.8 million, up 13.7% year over year. The increase in operating costs in the reported quarter was due to higher selling expenses, general and administrative expenses, and research and development expenses.

Interest expenses were \$19.2 million, down 7.2% from \$20.7 million recorded in the year-ago period.

Financial Update

As of Sep 30, 2019, cash and cash equivalents totaled \$526.2 million, up from \$444.3 million on Dec 31, 2018.

Long-term borrowings as of Sep 30, 2019 were \$525.9 million, up from \$393.6 million on Dec 31, 2018.

Guidance

For fourth-quarter 2019, Canadian Solar expects shipments in the range of 2.3-2.4 GW. This guidance includes approximately 190 MW of shipments to its utility-scale solar power projects that may not be recognized as revenues in the fourth quarter. Total revenues are projected within \$850-\$880 million, while gross margin is expected in the band of 19-21%.

For 2019, Canadian Solar reiterated its guidance for total module shipments in the range of 8.4-8.5 GW. Total revenues for the year are expected in the range of \$3.13-\$3.16 billion.

Recent News

On **Mar 12, 2020**, Canadian Solar announced that its subsidiary Canadian Solar Australia has signed a power purchase agreement (PPA) with Amazon. The solar power will be supplied from the Company's 146 MWp/110 MWac Gunnedah solar farm, which will reach commercial operation by 2021. The solar farm will utilize Canadian Solar's BiKu bifacial modules.

The agreement with Amazon is Canadian Solar's first PPA in New South Wales and marks its strategic entry into the large Australian Consumer and Industrial PPA market.

On **Mar 9, 2020**, Canadian Solar announced that it has signed a PPA contract with Techgen, S.A. de C.V., an affiliate of Ternium, S.A., and Tenaris, S.A.

The PPA contract has a 15-year term and will allow Canadian Solar to finance and build a 103 MWp solar power project located in Ojocaliente Municipality, Zacatecas State, Mexico. The solar plant will use Canadian Solar high efficiency modules and is expected to start operations in 2021.

On **Mar 6, 2020**, Canadian Solar announced its technology team set a world record of 23.81% conversion efficiency for n-type large area multi-crystalline silicon solar cell. The record-setting N-type P5 cell conversion efficiency was recently tested and certified by Germany's Institute für Solarenergieforschung GmbH (ISFH). This is the third time within a span of nine months that the company has set multi-crystalline solar cell conversion efficiency world record.

On **Feb 19, 2020**, Canadian Solar announced it has commenced construction on two solar photovoltaic (PV) power projects in Japan.

The first is a 13.6 MWp project in the Ibaraki Prefecture. The project will be powered by 33,098 pieces of Canadian Solar's high-efficiency MaxPower modules. Once in operation, the plant is expected to generate approximately 15,901 MWh of clean, reliable solar electricity each year, which will be purchased by Tokyo Electric Power Co., Inc. under a 20-year feed-in-tariff contract at the rate of ¥32.0 (\$0.29) per kWh. The company expects the project to reach commercial operation by mid-2021.

On **Feb 18, 2020**, Canadian Solar announced that it has completed the sale of Yamaguchi Shin Mine, a 56.3 MWp operational solar power plant in the Yamaguchi Prefecture in Japan.

Hana Financial Investment, a subsidiary of Hana Financial Group, acquired the solar power plant for an enterprise value of approximately \$205 million. Canadian Solar expects to recognize the revenue from the transaction in the first quarter of 2020.

On **Feb. 6, 2020**, Canadian Solar declared the acquisition of a 47.5 MWp portfolio of solar projects under development in Chile. These projects will become operational in two different stages, beginning from the fourth quarter of 2020.

On **Feb. 5, 2020**, Canadian Solar announced that it has signed a multi-year module supply agreement with Lightsource BP to deliver 1.2 GW of high efficiency polycrystalline solar modules for projects in the United States and Australia.

Valuation

Canadian Solar's shares are down 23.9% in the year-to-date period and 28% over the trailing 12-month period. Stocks in the Zacks sub-industry and the Zacks Oils-Energy sector are down 12.9% and 44.7% respectively in the year-to-date period, respectively. Over the past year, the Zacks sub-industry is up 8.4% whereas the sector is down 49.3%.

The S&P 500 index is down 15.5% in the year-to-date period and 3.3% in the past year.

The stock is currently trading at 0.3X of forward 12-month sales, which compares to 1.2X for the Zacks sub-industry, 0.6X for the Zacks sector and 2.9X for the S&P 500 index.

Over the past five years, the stock has traded as high as 0.7X and as low as 0.2X, with a 5-year median of 0.3X. Our Neutral recommendation indicates that the stock will perform in line with the market. Our \$18 price target reflects 0.27X forward 12-month sales.

The table below shows summary valuation data for CSIQ

| Valuation Multiples - CSIQ | | | | | |
|----------------------------|---------------|-------|--------------|--------|---------|
| | | Stock | Sub-Industry | Sector | S&P 500 |
| P/S F 12M | Current | 0.25 | 1.17 | 0.56 | 2.9 |
| | 5-Year High | 0.7 | 1.66 | 1.45 | 3.44 |
| | 5-Year Low | 0.16 | 0.57 | 0.56 | 2.54 |
| | 5-Year Median | 0.26 | 1 | 0.99 | 3 |
| P/B TTM | Current | 0.73 | 1.84 | 0.71 | 3.65 |
| | 5-Year High | 2.71 | 3.11 | 1.6 | 4.56 |
| | 5-Year Low | 0.6 | 0.6 | 0.65 | 2.85 |
| | 5-Year Median | 0.92 | 1.3 | 1.31 | 3.63 |

As of 03/13/2020

Industry Analysis Zacks Industry Rank: Top 7% (18 out of 253)



Top Peers

| | |
|--|--------------|
| Enphase Energy, Inc. (ENPH) | Outperform |
| SolarEdge Technologies, Inc. (SEDG) | Outperform |
| SunPower Corporation (SPWR) | Outperform |
| First Solar, Inc. (FSLR) | Neutral |
| JinkoSolar Holding Company Limited (JKS) | Neutral |
| Renesola Ltd. (SOL) | Neutral |
| Vivint Solar, Inc. (VSLR) | Neutral |
| Sunrun Inc. (RUN) | Underperform |

| Industry Comparison Industry: Solar | | | | Industry Peers | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------|------------|-----------|----------------|-------------|-----------------|
| | CSIQ Neutral | X Industry | S&P 500 | FSLR Neutral | JKS Neutral | SPWR Outperform |
| VGM Score | A | - | - | A | A | D |
| Market Cap | 998.54 M | 25.85 M | 19.05 B | 3.79 B | 766.27 M | 852.07 M |
| # of Analysts | 1 | 2.5 | 13 | 8 | 1 | 4 |
| Dividend Yield | 0.00% | 0.00% | 2.31% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% |
| Value Score | A | - | - | A | B | D |
| Cash/Price | 0.87 | 0.21 | 0.05 | 0.47 | 1.52 | 0.32 |
| EV/EBITDA | 0.93 | -0.14 | 11.57 | 18.52 | -1.39 | 8.64 |
| PEG Ratio | 0.21 | 0.65 | 1.68 | 1.00 | 0.17 | NA |
| Price/Book (P/B) | 0.73 | 0.99 | 2.56 | 0.74 | 0.49 | 39.57 |
| Price/Cash Flow (P/CF) | 2.97 | 6.19 | 10.18 | 10.45 | 2.71 | 77.37 |
| P/E (F1) | 6.69 | 13.88 | 14.94 | 11.02 | 3.42 | 119.06 |
| Price/Sales (P/S) | 0.31 | 1.05 | 2.02 | 1.24 | 0.18 | 0.46 |
| Earnings Yield | 20.48% | 2.56% | 6.67% | 9.07% | 29.24% | 0.79% |
| Debt/Equity | 0.40 | 0.26 | 0.70 | 0.09 | 0.26 | 45.59 |
| Cash Flow (\$/share) | 5.67 | -0.07 | 7.01 | 3.44 | 6.43 | 0.07 |
| Growth Score | D | - | - | A | B | D |
| Hist. EPS Growth (3-5 yrs) | -11.01% | -15.51% | 10.85% | -33.70% | -26.78% | NA |
| Proj. EPS Growth (F1/F0) | 51.32% | 60.73% | 5.99% | 120.44% | 82.44% | 114.66% |
| Curr. Cash Flow Growth | 106.87% | 17.75% | 6.15% | 31.84% | 54.40% | 209.28% |
| Hist. Cash Flow Growth (3-5 yrs) | 23.91% | 9.19% | 8.52% | -10.06% | 6.91% | -47.08% |
| Current Ratio | 1.09 | 1.35 | 1.24 | 2.73 | 0.95 | 1.54 |
| Debt/Capital | 28.60% | 27.39% | 42.57% | 8.18% | 20.41% | 97.85% |
| Net Margin | 6.77% | -3.75% | 11.64% | -3.75% | 2.27% | 1.19% |
| Return on Equity | 12.91% | -23.92% | 16.74% | 3.06% | 6.70% | NA |
| Sales/Assets | 0.63 | 0.59 | 0.54 | 0.42 | 0.68 | 0.90 |
| Proj. Sales Growth (F1/F0) | 26.65% | 19.92% | 3.54% | -1.34% | 25.51% | 15.85% |
| Momentum Score | A | - | - | F | A | A |
| Daily Price Chg | 3.19% | 0.00% | 8.21% | -1.64% | -2.25% | 0.00% |
| 1 Week Price Chg | -0.44% | 0.00% | -0.67% | -5.24% | -2.85% | -0.23% |
| 4 Week Price Chg | -29.77% | -30.00% | -22.67% | -34.15% | -32.34% | -42.63% |
| 12 Week Price Chg | -18.45% | -18.45% | -20.46% | -36.99% | -20.28% | -34.20% |
| 52 Week Price Chg | -28.45% | -25.79% | -10.79% | -33.95% | -9.84% | -21.31% |
| 20 Day Average Volume | 882,323 | 489,759 | 3,061,271 | 2,533,015 | 1,655,713 | 5,691,476 |
| (F1) EPS Est 1 week change | -1.20% | 0.00% | 0.00% | -3.60% | 0.00% | 0.00% |
| (F1) EPS Est 4 week change | -1.20% | 0.00% | -0.32% | -8.81% | 0.00% | 22.68% |
| (F1) EPS Est 12 week change | -1.20% | -0.60% | -0.65% | -12.03% | 0.00% | 17.58% |
| (Q1) EPS Est Mthly Chg | 0.00% | 0.00% | -0.62% | -45.80% | 0.00% | 3.45% |

Zacks Style Scores

The Zacks Style Score is as a complementary indicator to the Zacks rating system, giving investors a way to focus on the highest rated stocks that best fit their own stock picking preferences.

Academic research has proven that stocks with the best Value, Growth and Momentum characteristics outperform the market. The Zacks Style Scores rate stocks on each of these individual styles and assigns a rating of A, B, C, D and F. We also produce the VGM Score (V for Value, G for Growth and M for Momentum), which combines the weighted average of the individual Style Scores into one score. This is perfectly suited for those who want their stocks to have the best scores across the board.

| | |
|----------------|---|
| Value Score | A |
| Growth Score | D |
| Momentum Score | A |
| VGM Score | A |

As an investor, you want to buy stocks with the highest probability of success. That means buying stocks with a Zacks Recommendation of Outperform, which also has a Style Score of an A or a B.

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