

Financials

Q1 results review

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VEF

Undiscovered sweet spot

VEF remains broadly overlooked, despite offering growth-oriented investors unique exposure to leading venture capital (VC) investments in rapidly growing, emerging market fintech ecosystems. We forecast 25%+ NAV growth in 2021, as we believe Creditas, Konfio, and Juspay could raise capital at higher valuations, as well as seeing potential upside from portfolio exits. We have raised our fair value to SEK4.0–5.3 (3.9–5.1).

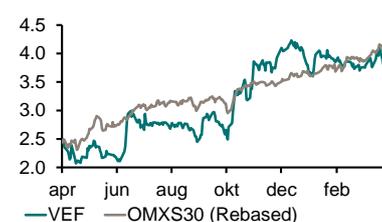
Q1 portfolio highlights. 1) VEF's NAV rose by 4% QOQ in Q1 in USD, as the operating performance of its attractive fintech portfolio more than offset 10%+ FX headwinds and 15–20% peer multiples compression; 2) we expect its Latin American lending portfolio anchors Konfio and Creditas to report 100–200% revenue growth in 2021, while noting strong operating momentum for Indian payment platform Juspay, and would not rule out VEF making the most of this funding window to raise capital, which we believe would act as value catalysts in 2021; 3) Creditas has said it remains on course for a potential IPO in 2022; and 4) with USD44m in net cash, VEF has said it expects to commit ~USD20m to follow-on investments in its current portfolio, and with a lot of capital-chasing assets in the emerging market fintech ecosystem, we would not rule out a portfolio exit in 2021 (CEO Dave Nangle said up to five of its holdings are in some form of discussions with potential acquirors, while its new investment pipeline is also heating up).

14th portfolio holding in Indian asset-backed digital lending platform, Rupeek. VEF invested USD7m in Q1 in Rupeek, which operates in the attractive Indian fintech ecosystem with a proactive regulator, advanced infrastructure, and cheap mobile data acting as key delivery mechanisms in our view. This is a market where 90% of the population does not have access to formal credit. Rupeek offers gold loans (collateralised with gold jewellery), completing the loan underwriting-to-funds transfer within 30 minutes via its state-of-the-art technology and asset-light supply chain. Keeping costs to a minimum through its online-only strategy allows for annual average interest rates of 15–20% (versus the competition in an informal and unorganised gold loan market charging up to 50%). VEF has had success in the past with secured lending marketplace investments (Creditas has a 3-year unrealised IRR of 28% and RoIC of 2.3x). Given the substantial addressable market opportunity (households in India hold 25k+ tonnes of gold worth USD1.5trn combined at current prices, we believe Rupeek should move the NAV-growth needle for VEF in the coming years.

Portfolio at the forefront of sustainable finance. We believe investors continue to overlook VEF's social impact criteria in ESG (increasing accessibility to and affordability of financial services, especially for under-served segments in emerging markets, i.e. low- and middle-income individuals, and SMEs). We also welcome its proposed return to Sweden from Bermuda, enabling a more modern and ESG-compatible governance structure, which should improve local investor appetite.

We have raised our fair value to SEK4.0–5.3 (3.9–5.1) based on four equally weighted valuation methodologies. In our own valuation assessment of VEF's portfolio by 2022e, we calculate 25%+ potential NAV growth. We like that VEF offers unique VC exposure to the wealth catch-up from financial inclusion in emerging markets and see ample prospects for it to repeat its value-creation track record (NAV IRR of 31% since 2016).

VEFLsdb versus OMXS30 (12m)



Source: Factset

SUMMARY

Share price (SEK)	3.93
Tickers	VEFLSDB SS

CAPITAL STRUCTURE

No. of shares (m)	829.3
No. of shares fully dil. (m)	834.4
Market cap. (SEKm)	3,259
NIBD adj end-2021e (USDm)	-44
Enterprise value adj (USDm)	345
Free float (%)	101

Source: Company, DNB Markets (estimates)

NEXT EVENT

Q2 2021	28/07/2021
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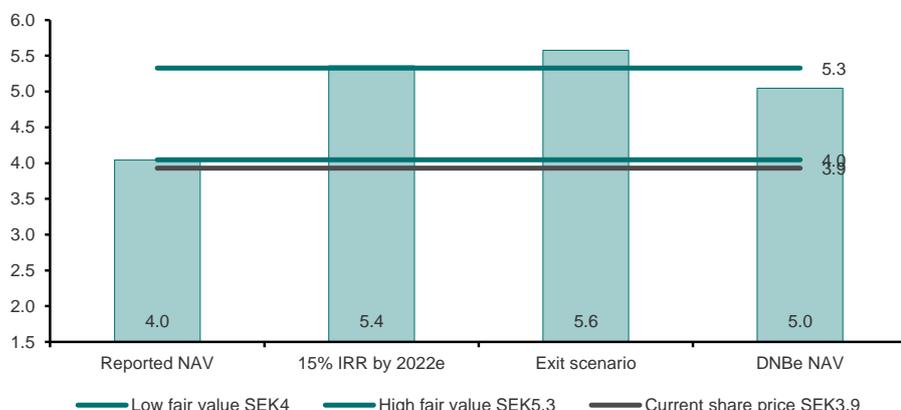
ANALYSTS

Joachim Gunell

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Overview

Valuation (SEK)



Source: DNB Markets

Downside risks to our fair value

- Limited disclosure of early-stage private assets (financial, KPIs, cash-burn etc.) adds valuation uncertainty.
- As VC valuations correlate, albeit with a time lag to public markets, it could trigger a change to the narrative and risk assessed for high-growth loss-making VC investments with little fundamental valuation support if public valuations deteriorate, resulting in private investment impairments, etc.
- Additional capital needs to fulfil its current funding pipeline in combination with new investments.
- Emerging markets carry greater risks in terms of politics, financial stability, and FX (USD versus BRL, MXN, RUB, EUR, and ZAR). Still, VEF's main exposure is to USD/SEK as it invests and reports in USD, but the NAV/share and share price are in SEK, where a weakening of USD (and stronger SEK) should have a negative impact. Accordingly, VEF's benefits from a weak SEK and strong USD.
- Failure to retain key persons in the management team and board of directors to secure the best deal flow

Source: DNB Markets

DNB Markets estimates

- VEF has a track record of generating substantial shareholder value (NAV IRR of 31% since 2016) and is building traction in the investment community from recent successful portfolio exits (Tinkoff Bank exited at 65% IRR, iyzico at 57% IRR in 2019).
- With a solid net cash position of USD44m (10% of GAV), we believe it has firepower to support its portfolio in future funding rounds.
- Creditas and Konfio hold the largest short-term potential to unlock value and move the needle for VEF's NAV (today composing 57% of its NAV) which on a stand-alone basis could boost VEF's NAV by 25%+ by 2022e, according to our analysis.
- VEF is clearly not a low-risk holding, but lends access to VC in some novel fintech markets. The Latin American-tilted portfolio holds leading versions of proven western business models such as Klarna, Tink, Lendo, Betterment, Fortnox, etc., providing potential exposure to wealth catch-up from financial inclusion in emerging markets.

Source: DNB Markets

Valuation methodology

- Our SEK4.0–5.3/share fair value continues to be based on: 1) reported NAV; 2) a target IRR of 20% by end-2022e for its holdings (versus its 30% IRR target); 3) a multiple on invested capital of 4x and 20% cost of capital using an exit period six years from its initial investment; and 4) our 2022e NAV based on its respective holdings' peer multiples.
- We apply a 0% discount to NAV (methodology unchanged) target in our valuation scenarios. VEF is currently trading in-line with its NAV (versus its five-year average discount of 18%).

Source: DNB Markets

Upside risks to our fair value

- Value crystallisation from portfolio exits at attractive terms. We believe VEF strives for 30% IRRs and returns of invested capital of 3–5x.
- New funding rounds (and potentially IPOs in the medium term) in its existing portfolio winners could drive positive NAV revisions from valuation uplifts, which should increase investor appetite, as seen historically.
 - Financing rounds generally take place every 18 months.
 - Short-term potential NAV catalysts: Konfio, TransferGo, Juspay, and Nibo, in our view.
- VEF is improving its communication and documentation of how its fintech investments can generate a positive social impact by increasing accessibility and affordability of financial services in under-served segments, which could increase ESG investor appetite.
- We believe VEF will continue to make share buybacks when it the stock is trading at 20–25%+ below NAV.

Source: DNB Markets

ESG overview

Sustainability assessment

	Positive	Negative
Conclusions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The capital VEF injects into fintech investments can generate a positive social impact by increasing accessibility and affordability of financial services, especially for under-served segments (low- and middle-income, and SMEs) that are ignored by traditional banks. ■ Other key ESG considerations from its portfolio holdings relate to responsible lending and debt prevention, increased client transparency and fair advice. Also, there is a layer of energy efficiency from its digital distribution models. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Domiciles in Bermuda and Cyprus (considered tax havens) could hurt its governance rating. Granularity in how it presents and discloses ESG considerations have until late been relatively poor. ■ VEF's holdings increase access to credit for under-served segments, which we believe acts as a substitute for traditional lending in segments which would otherwise resort to informal or expensive lending. Still, a change in consumer behaviour with rapidly growing consumer debts in emerging markets could reduce financial stability.
Actions being taken by company	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ With sizeable minority stakes of 10–20% and board representation, VEF has the ability to influence its holdings' directions. Its fintech portfolio is an indirect enabler of almost all the UN's SDGs by 2030, but a direct enabler of SDG 1, 2, 4, 5, 8, and 10, with increased financial inclusion and literacy through less-expensive financial services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ As VEF is increasingly communicating and providing documentation regarding how it leverages finance as a force of good in emerging markets, we believe its ESG assessment should improve over time. Also, we do not rule out that it could change to a more modern and ESG-compatible governance structure.

Key ESG drivers

Short-term

- Good examples where VEF's holdings' offer to remove barriers for financial inclusion are:
 - JUMO's mobile money marketplace gives the low-income population and SMEs in Africa and Asia access to financial services (who are otherwise excluded from the financial system).
 - Creditas and Konfio help to materially lower borrowing costs in markets that have some of the highest interest rates in the world.
 - Xerpa allows employees to withdraw portions of their salary before payday in Brazil, where tens of millions Brazilians resort to predatory credits to meet their cash needs till the next pay cycle.
 - TransferGo dramatically reduces the remittance transaction costs for blue-collar workers sending money cross-border to families back home.
- The evolution in borrowing behaviour and large-scale adoption of consumer loans could increase credit losses, lessen consumer protection and comprise financial stability risks in VEF's markets.

Long-term

- VEF has the greatest impact on ESG considerations by being an active and responsible owner. Our analysis suggests VEF is increasingly developing its own ESG competence (from investment screening to board decision-making), and we expect it to place high expectations on its portfolio holdings to drive such trends, mainly focusing on the social aspects of financial inclusion of the underbanked population in emerging markets at lower cost.
- The key to VEF's success is the networks of its skilled management in order to identify successful fintech entrepreneurs and source the best investment ideas. Its future success could depend on its ability to retain and attract new talent. Thus, it is important to have compensation guidelines in line with VC/PE fund benchmarks. VEF's board of directors has a discretionary mandate to pay extraordinary bonuses to key employees upon substantial shareholder value creation (exits, etc.)

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NAV overview

Figure 1: VEF NAV overview

Share price (SEK)	3.9	NAV/share (DNB)	4.0	DNB discount to NAV	2.8%
DNB fair value (low)	4.0	NAV/share (rep)	5.0	Rep. discount to NAV	22.1%
DNB fair value (high)	5.6			DNB discount target	0.0%

Investment portfolio	DNB rec.	Rep. MV (USDm)	DNB value (USDm)	Rep. MV (SEKm)	DNB value (SEKm)	Value (SEK/share)	Weight (%) of NAV	% of cap/votes
Creditas	NO COV	169	202	1,414	1,686	1.7	42%	9.8
Konfio	NO COV	61	108	510	901	0.6	15%	11.0
REVO Group	NO COV	13	13	110	110	0.1	3%	23.0
JUMO	NO COV	13	13	109	109	0.1	3%	6.8
TransferGo	NO COV	26	35	217	295	0.3	6%	15.4
Guiabolso	NO COV	5	12	41	100	0.0	1%	10.9
Xerpa	NO COV	5	5	41	41	0.0	1%	16.0
Nibo	NO COV	13	24	110	202	0.1	3%	20.1
Magnetis	NO COV	9	13	75	112	0.1	2%	17.5
FinanZero	NO COV	12	12	103	103	0.1	3%	18.0
Finja	NO COV	7	7	56	56	0.1	2%	22.8
Juspay	NO COV	19	19	157	157	0.2	5%	9.9
Rupeek	NO COV	7	7	59	59	0.1	2%	1.4
minu	NO COV	0	0	4	4	0.0	0%	1.2
Liquidity management		41	41	340	340	0.4	10%	
Total unlisted		400	511	3,346	4,276	4.0	99%	

Other

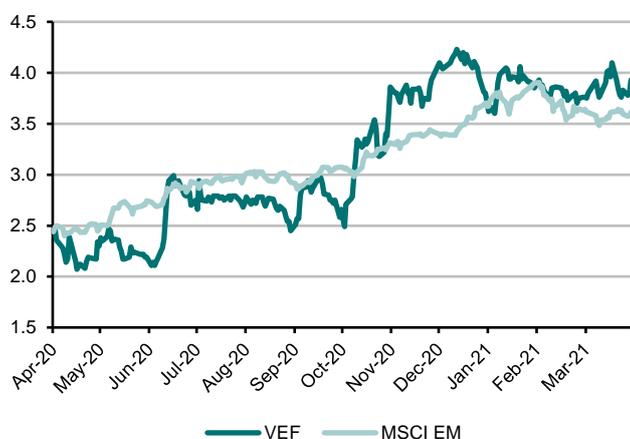
Cash and equivalents	3	3	29	29	0.0	1%
Other net liabilities	0	0	0	0	0.0	0%
Other assets/liabilities	0	0	0	0	0.0	0%

Summary NAV

Total assets	448	559	3,744	4,675	4.5
Current net cash	-44	-44	-369	-369	-0.4
Gearing	-9.9%	-7.9%	-9.9%	-7.9%	0.0
Net asset value	403	515	3,375	4,305	4.0

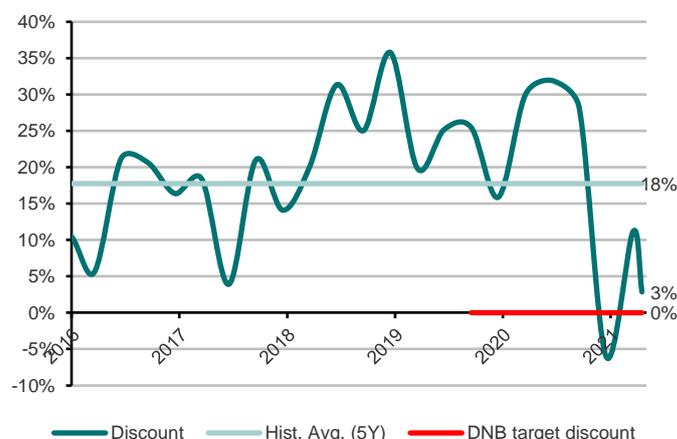
Source: DNB Markets (forecasts), company (historical data)

Figure 2: VEF share price (SEK) versus MSCI EM index



Source: Bloomberg

Figure 3: VEF discount to NAV



Source: DNB Markets

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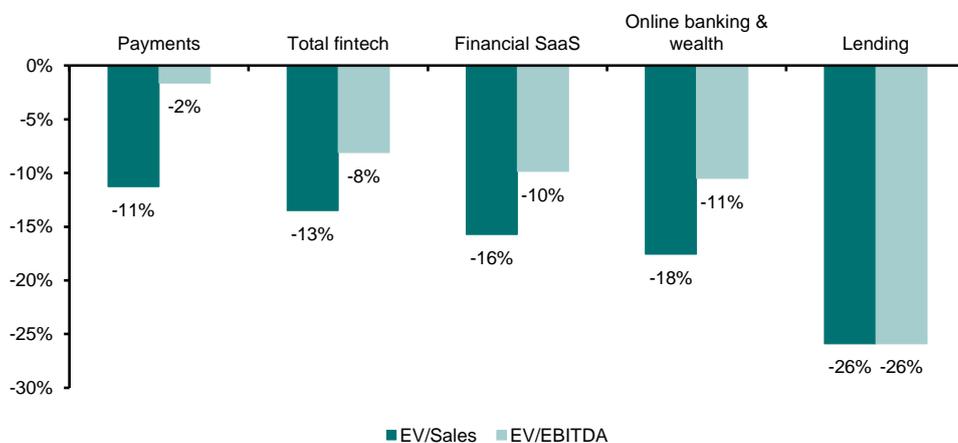
Figure 4: Additional information

Other data	2017	2018	2019	Current	Owners	% of cap	% of votes	5Y track record
Market cap	1,409	1,138	1,927	3,259	Ruane, Cunniff & Goldfarb	21.3	21.3	Ann. TSR 20.9%
NAV	1,635	1,806	2,325	3,375	Libra Fund	21.0	21.0	NAV CAGR 33.4%
NAV growth		11%	29%	45%	Wellington	12.9	12.9	
Net cash	75	40	44	44	Swedbank Robur	8.7	8.7	
Gearing	-4.8%	-2.3%	-1.9%	-12.3%	Fidelity (FMR)	6.5	6.5	
DPS	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	Fidelity (FIL)	3.2	3.2	
Dividend yield	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%				
Management costs to NAV	2.16%	2.72%	2.34%	1.48%	Number of shares (m)			
					VEF		834.1	
					Total		834.1	

Analyst: Joachim Gunell (+468 597 91 201, joachim.gunell@dnb.se)

Source: DNB Markets (portfolio views), company (historical data), Holdings (owner data)

Figure 5: Fintech multiples expansion since 31 December 2020



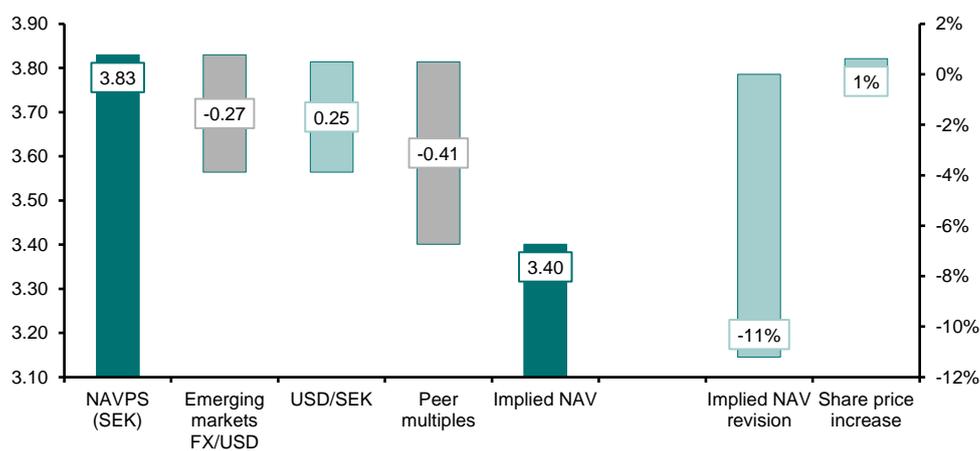
Source: Bloomberg (underlying data), DNB Markets (further calculations)

Figure 6: DNB Markets NAV-based on peer group multiples

	Current NAV (USDm)	NAV growth (USDm)	DNBe 2022e (USDm)
Creditas	169	33	202
Konfio	61	47	108
REVO	13	0	13
JUMO	13	0	13
TransferGo	26	9	35
Guiabolso	5	7	12
Xerpa	5	0	5
Nibo	13	11	24
Magnetis	9	4	13
FinanZero	12	0	12
Finja	7	0	7
Juspay	19	0	19
Rupeek	7	0	7
minu	0	0	0
Total	359	111	470
Other assets/liabilities			0
Current net cash			44
Operating expenses until 2021e			-11
Target NAV			503
Target discount to NAV			0%
Implied fair equity value			503
Number of shares (m)			834
Implied fair value (USD/share)			0.6
Implied fair value (SEK/share)			5.0
Current share price (SEK/share)			3.9
<i>Implied fair value potential</i>			<i>28%</i>

Source: DNB Markets

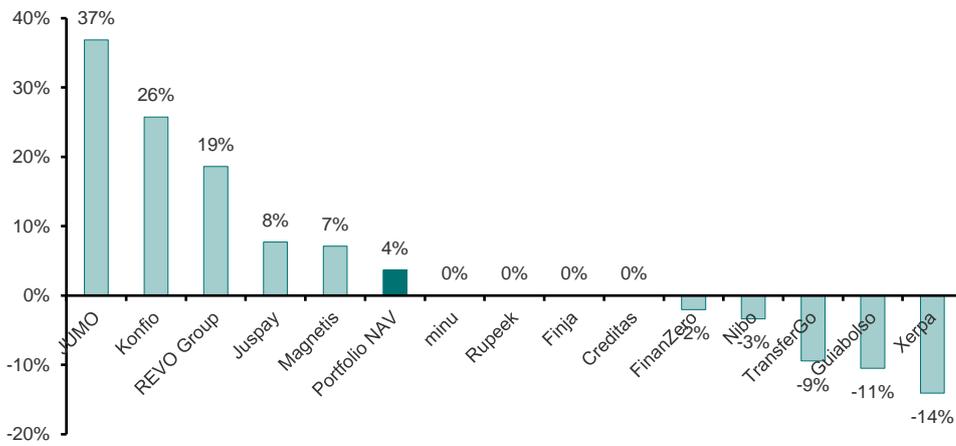
Figure 7: VEF sensitivity analysis (FX and peer multiples) versus Q4 2020



Source: DNB Markets

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Figure 8: NAV change QOQ versus Q4 (USD)



Source: VEF

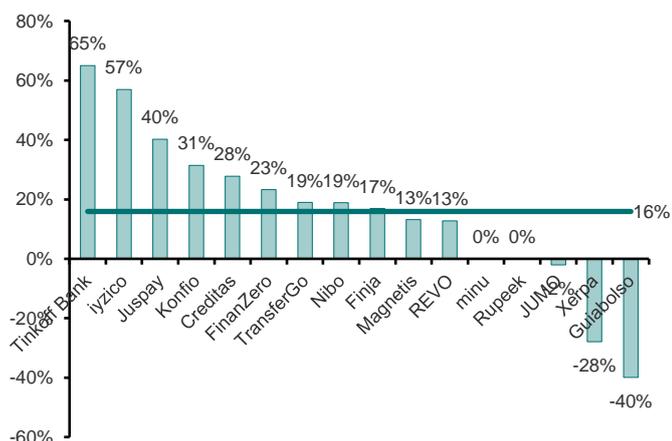
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Figure 9: VEF NAV overview

NAV overview (USDm)	Q2'18	Q3'18	Q4'18	Q1'19	Q2'19	Q3'19	Q4'19	Q1'20	Q2'20	Q3'20	Q4'20	Q1'21
Creditas	25.0	25.0	25.0	25.0	73.2	73.2	73.2	50.4	80.7	102.1	169.0	169.0
Konfio	15.0	15.0	15.0	15.0	25.0	41.6	41.6	32.4	28.1	40.3	48.5	61.0
Juspay								13.0	13.0	13.0	17.4	18.7
Rupeek												7.0
minu												0.5
JUMO	13.4	16.4	16.4	16.4	16.4	16.4	16.9	9.0	7.5	8.6	9.5	13.1
REVO Group	14.0	17.2	14.6	18.0	18.4	19.2	16.2	9.7	10.2	11.6	11.1	13.1
TransferGo	13.0	13.0	12.8	12.6	12.8	12.3	12.6	13.5	21.4	25.2	28.6	25.9
Guiabolso	30.0	19.6	15.3	11.0	10.9	10.4	11.5	9.8	9.6	8.7	5.4	4.8
Nibo	3.3	3.8	5.0	8.6	10.0	8.5	10.6	7.0	11.3	13.1	13.6	13.2
Xerpa						8.5	8.5	4.5	4.5	4.9	5.8	4.9
Magnetis	3.0	3.7	5.8	6.3	6.5	8.1	8.1	5.7	6.6	7.7	8.3	8.9
Finanzero	5.0	5.1	5.0	4.9	7.8	7.3	7.7	5.4	7.6	9.0	9.9	12.3
Finja	1.2	3.3	3.3	3.3	3.3	3.4	3.4	2.3	2.5	4.2	6.7	6.7
Tinkoff Bank	62.2	48.8	7.9									
iyzico	17.6	19.0	25.9	26.1	33.9	33.9						
Invested	202.7	189.9	152.0	147.1	218.2	242.8	210.4	162.7	203.0	248.2	334.0	359.2
Invested % of GAV	92%	92%	75%	72%	90%	95%	84%	87%	91%	92%	86%	89%
Liquidity management	9.5	9.4	44.9	45.4	13.1	6.5	34.5	20.8	18.0	18.0	48.2	40.7
Cash	8.5	6.6	5.5	11.2	12.1	5.2	5.6	3.2	2.5	2.1	4.2	4.1
Cash and liquid investments	18.1	16.0	50.4	56.6	25.2	11.7	40.1	24.0	20.6	20.2	52.4	44.7
Cash % of GAV	8%	8%	25%	28%	10%	5%	16%	13%	9%	8%	14%	11%
Other net liabilities	-0.6	-0.9	-1.0	-0.7	-4.7	-5.5	-1.0	-0.3	-0.4	-0.2	1.7	-0.6
Net asset value	220	205	201	203	239	249	249	186	223	268	388	403
NOSH (fully diluted)	674.0	663.7	663.0	662.8	661.8	659.4	665.4	663.4	663.7	663.4	834.1	834.4
NAV/share (USD)	0.33	0.31	0.30	0.31	0.36	0.38	0.37	0.28	0.34	0.40	0.47	0.48
NAV/share (SEK)	2.83	2.76	2.75	2.81	3.41	3.62	3.60	2.83	3.13	3.63	3.81	4.22
VEF share price (SEK)	2.01	2.05	1.75	2.28	2.50	2.76	2.94	1.99	2.14	2.57	4.04	3.75
Market cap (SEKm)	1,355	1,361	1,160	1,511	1,655	1,820	1,956	1,317	1,420	1,705	3,370	3,129
Discount to NAV	29%	26%	36%	19%	27%	24%	18%	30%	32%	29%	-6%	11%
NAV growth (YOY)	38%	10%	1%	-4%	8%	21%	24%	-8%	-6%	8%	56%	116%
NAV growth (QOQ)	4%	-7%	-2%	1%	18%	4%	0%	-25%	20%	20%	45%	4%
Net investments	-18	-7	-1	6	-34	-13	46	0	0	0	-9	-1
Gearing (net debt/GAV)	-8%	-8%	-25%	-28%	-12%	-7%	-16%	-13%	-9%	-8%	-13%	-11%
Management costs	-1.5	-1.4	-1.3	-0.8	-2.3	-1.3	-1.2	-0.5	-1.4	-0.9	-3.3	-1.0
Management costs/NAV (LTM)	2.45%	2.89%	2.74%	2.45%	2.41%	2.30%	2.26%	2.87%	1.99%	1.48%	1.55%	1.62%
USD/SEK	8.7	8.9	9.0	9.2	9.4	9.6	9.6	10.1	9.3	9.0	8.2	8.7

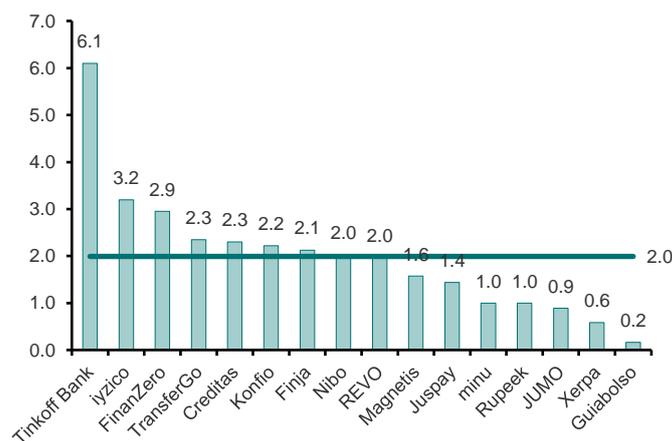
Source: DNB Markets (forecasts), company (historical data)

Figure 10: Portfolio IRRs



Source: DNB Markets

Figure 11: Portfolio CoC multiples



Source: DNB Markets

Summary of positives

Secular growth opportunity from emerging market fintech evolution

We believe the receptiveness and market opportunity for fintech is particularly appealing in VEF's emerging markets (with Latin America composing ~80%), due to a large underbanked population (allowing for scalability), and tech-savvy young population (more likely to adopt fintech solutions). In our view, emerging markets may benefit disproportionately from fintech innovation by leapfrogging traditional banking services. With growing smartphone and Internet access (acting as key delivery mechanisms), the door for financial inclusion opens up, while incumbent banks have long neglected the growing lower-, middle-income and SMEs, spurning innovation for high-margin retail banking products. This makes the oligopolistic banking markets' profit pools (wide interest-rate margins, high lending rates, transaction costs, etc.) rather vulnerable for fintech entrants that can lower spreads/fees, improve transparency, foster financial inclusion and operate with a leaner cost structure, in our view.

Brazil is one of the most interesting structural fintech opportunities, in our view...

With the portfolio maturing, we note potential value catalysts

Our analysis suggests that VEF's portfolio holds the emerging market versions of proven western fintech models such as Klarna, Tink, Lendo, Betterment, and Fortnox, etc., which taps into a potential addressable market opportunity of USD22bn (~SEK190bn), in our high-level breakdown of its sub-sector segments in: 1) lending; 2) payments; and 3) other fintech (accounting SaaS, wealth management, digital banks, mobile wallets, comparison websites, personal finance management, etc.). Our analysis suggests consumer lending companies Credits and Konfio hold the largest short-term potential to unlock value and move the needle for VEF's NAV (today composing 57% of its NAV) by 25%+ by 2022e. In addition, its early stage holdings (Juspay, TransferGo, Nibo, Magnetis, FinanZero, and Finja) could drive material NAV growth long-term (3–5 years+), if they maintain their current 3–5x top-line CAGRs.

...and VEF owns the emerging market versions of Klarna, Tink, Lendo, Betterment, and Fortnox, tapping into an addressable market of over USD22bn...

VEF's venture capital portfolio offers scarcity value...

According to Blackrock's 2020 institutional rebalancing survey, institutional capital has been pouring into private illiquid investments in search of alternative sources of return. With few publicly listed fintechs in emerging markets, it remains challenging for investors to gain access to this theme. With a portfolio of 12 emerging market fintech holdings, diversified by geography, business model, and stage of development, we note that VEF offers exposure to the wealth catch-up from financial inclusion in EMs. With USD44m in net cash (10% of GAV), it appears well-capitalised to support its holdings in future funding rounds, and adding new investments, in our view.

...lending investors' scarce access to VC fintech in emerging markets

...and a solid exit track record, which is key to the narrative

Exits at attractive returns is key to the investment story in VEF, and it is building traction, having started to realise substantial values in 2019 it had built since inception in 2015 through successful exits (Tinkoff Bank at 65% IRR, iyzico at 57% IRR). While it could prove hard to match the first generation of successful exits, management remains focused on building the next wave of value creation. In our view, VEF is well-positioned to crystallise further shareholder value, and its NAV IRR of 31% since 2015 validates its track record.

Management has a track record of creating substantial value through exits and high returns on invested capital (average of 4.7x from two exits)

EM and fintech experience across management and board of directors

VEF was relatively early in 2015 to chase the fintech opportunity in emerging markets, before it became a target market for global investors with larger international funds. In addition, its heritage from Vostok New Ventures (and previously Vostok Nafta) means it enjoys a strong reputation and brand among emerging market entrepreneurs. While the organisational set-up is quite small and reflects a rather concentrated portfolio, VEF can leverage the combined breadth of its management's and board's network, and extensive emerging market and financial services experience, to identify and source the best investment ideas in its regions.

Management and board with extensive emerging market and financial services backgrounds

Summary of negatives

Rare VC exposure, but the risk profile is high

There are inherent risks fintech VC investing in emerging markets, in our view. Given the early-stage nature of VEF's portfolio, it can provide almost no financial disclosure and operational KPIs of its holdings, as well as for competitive reasons. To us, this limits financial forecast visibility, cash burn, etc., which increases valuation uncertainty as investors seldom have the time for the deep-dive required to fully appreciate VEF. Risks related to audit and regulation are higher in the fintech space, we believe. Moreover, VC investing means high illiquidity risk (once you are in, you could be in for good), and while we do not expect a lack of potential interest for high-quality assets (such as Credits and Konfio), VEF may not be able to exit its investments according to plan. As VEF invests primarily in equity, there is also risk that there will be no recoveries in the event of bankruptcy of individual portfolio holdings.

VEF is clearly not a low-risk investment, due to the very nature of the early-stage VC businesses in which it invests

Lofty VC valuations after more than a decade-long fintech market boom

The private-market orchestra has been playing for a decade, as the VC market is strongly correlated to the stock market, albeit with a slight lag leading to sustained imbalances after a correction. Following a protracted stock market boom for over a decade until 2020, risk appetite has increased, with record capital allocated to private VC markets (potential overcrowding from institutions allocations and investors such as Softbank), resulting in high investment activity and lowered investment standards (difficult to maintain a disciplined investment approach), leaving fintech valuations stretched. Unlike the 2000 IT bubble, many of the fintech unicorns have revenues, but in most cases earnings are still far in the distance. If stock market conditions deteriorate, valuations contract, and private investments get impaired, it should in our view trigger a change to the narrative regarding the risk of VC investments, especially for emerging markets, which could hamper VEF's exit opportunities.

VC fintech valuations are sky-high, which could reverse if stock market conditions deteriorate, hampering VEF's exit opportunities

High funding need of its portfolio holdings

As VEF's network of new deal opportunities expands and its current portfolio matures, it has grown its rate of investments, in number and average deal size (USD10m–20m). VEF has funded new investment through rights issues (SEK522m in 2020, and USD69m in 2015), but as it has been able to make two cash realisations from portfolio exits (USD152m to date), balancing net investments, its FCF burn averaged USD0m in 2018–2020. It is currently well-capitalised, with a net cash position of USD44m, suggesting room to support its holdings in the current pipeline of financing rounds. Should it choose to have a more opportune pipeline or in the absence of major realisations, it would imply a need for further financing (either through equity as seen historically or bonds, as seen with its older sibling VNV).

Further funding could be needed if it chooses to be more opportune, but for now it has a strong balance sheet

There are inherent risks from investing in emerging markets

The appeal of emerging markets is clear in terms of their greater potential growth rate, and for VEF a structural wealth catch-up, but they also face greater risks to political and financial stability, while lacking the corporate governance structure of developed markets. 2018–2019 were banner years for Brazilian fintech equities, with the IPOs of Stone, PagSeguro, and XP. Still, Brazil's deep recession in 2015–2016 and the current political turmoil across many Latin American countries are examples of the macroeconomic volatility presented by emerging markets. We also believe that adverse FX effects (stronger USD versus BRL, MXN, RUB, EUR, and ZAR) could have an impact on VEF's results, as we do not believe VEF engages in any hedging. Also, as it invests and reports in USD, while its share price is in SEK, a weaker USD (and stronger SEK) should have a negative impact, in our view.

Emerging markets carry greater political, default, and FX risks

Key-person risk

VEF's holdings are start-ups growing at 3–5x per year in many cases, where the entrepreneurs behind the business models are often a dominant force. Such fast growth and dependence on entrepreneurs adds execution and key-person risks, in our view. Moreover, the key to VEF's success is the professional networks of its skilled management and board of directors in order to identify successful fintech entrepreneurs and source the best investment ideas. Its future success could depend on its ability to retain these persons, making it important to have compensation guidelines in line with VC/PE fund benchmarks for key persons, in our view.

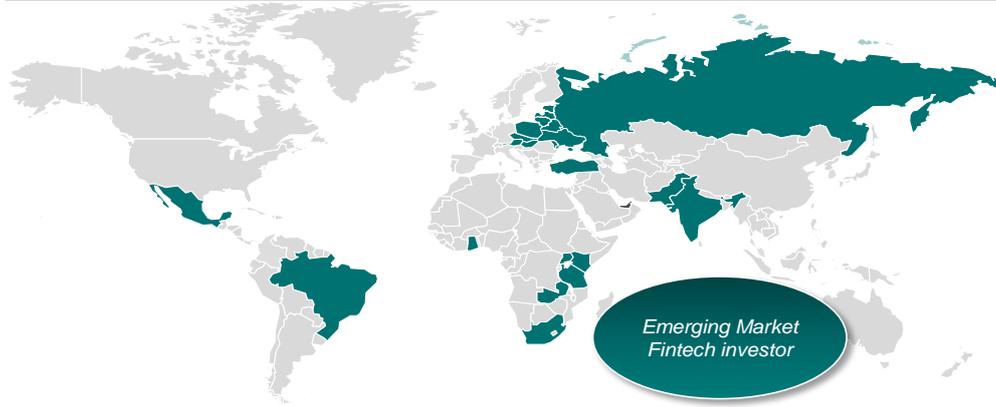
Vital to retain key persons in the management team and board of directors in order to secure the best deal flow

Company overview

Having been spun-out of Vostok New Ventures in 2015, VEF is a Swedish investment company entirely dedicated to invest in growth stage (VC) private fintech companies operating in scale emerging markets. Its target markets (mainly in Latin America) are in pole position to benefit from fintech adoption, as their large populations are largely ‘unbanked’ today, whereas penetration of technology (smartphone and internet access being key delivery mechanisms) is reaching a critical mass, while the current oligopolistic financial market structures mean that disruptive consumer-oriented technology can lower the cost of financial services, which are among the highest in the world, and drive financial inclusion.

VEF is an investment company lending investors unique access to VC fintech in emerging markets

Figure 12: Emerging market fintech investor with a heavy Latin America focus



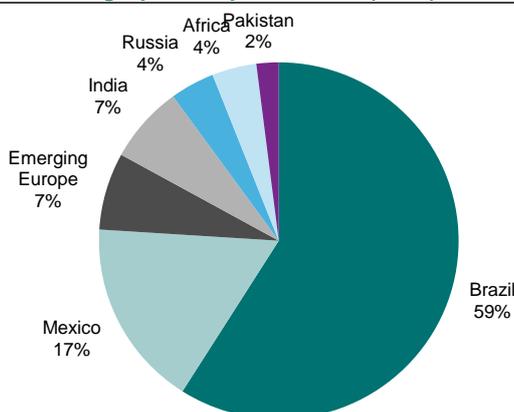
Source: DNB Markets

VEF often takes 10–20% ownership stakes and focuses on backing the entrepreneurs behind the business models, targeting the wealth catch across all lines of fintech sub-sectors including payments, credit, mobile money and financial marketplaces, etc. Today it has a portfolio of 12 holdings diversified by geography, business model, and stage of development, and enjoys a strong brand among emerging market fintech entrepreneurs, which we attribute to:

An active owner with board representation in each of its holdings, striving to find and support the best entrepreneurs behind the business model in each market

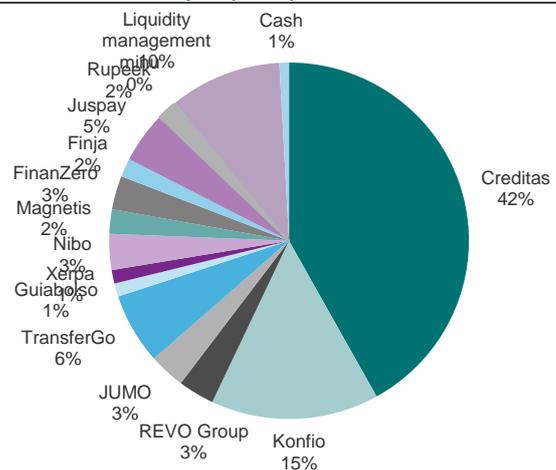
- Being a listed investment company, VEF has access to permanent capital, which means entrepreneurs will not have to worry that it will force an exit before time. (VEF partnered with Tinkoff Bank for almost 14 years).
- With its deep sector expertise and network in emerging markets throughout the world (versus local VCs), it can compare business models, traction, economics, valuation, etc.
- VEF is comfortable with taking a long-term view in the often-volatile world of emerging markets, and can aid its holdings through deep experience of capital-raising processes.

Figure 13: Geographical split ex cash (2021)



Source: VEF

Figure 14: Portfolio split (2021)



Source: VEF

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Figure 15: VEF portfolio overview

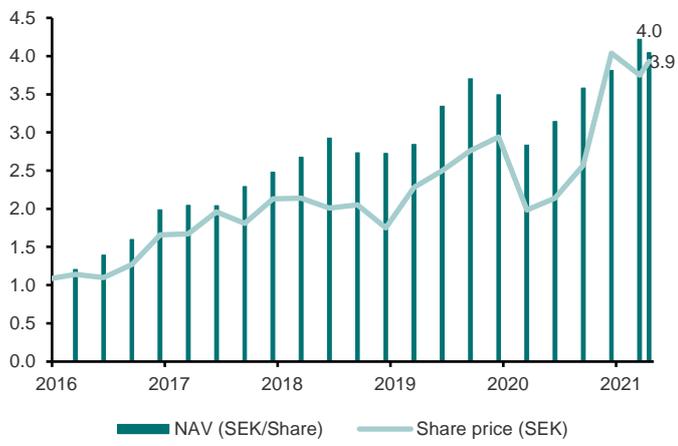
Company	Geography	Business type	% of VEF's portfolio	Ownership	VEF's investment (USDm)	Fair value (USDm)	IRR	CoC return	Investment date
 creditas		Secured lending platform	44%	9.8%	73.4	169.0	28%	2.3	Dec-17
 konfio		SME lending	13%	11.0%	27.5	61.0	31%	2.2	Jun-18
 JUSPAY		Payments	5%	9.9%	13.0	18.7	40%	1.4	Mar-20
 JUMQ	Pan-Africa, Asia	Mobile money marketplace	3%	6.8%	14.6	13.1	-2%	0.9	Oct-15
 pebc+		Payments & consumer credit	3%	23.0%	6.7	13.1	13%	2.0	Sep-15
 transferGo		Cross-border remittances	7%	15.4%	11.0	25.9	19%	2.3	Jun-16
 Guiabolso		Personal finance management	1%	10.9%	30.0	4.8	-40%	0.2	Oct-17
 nibo		Accounting SaaS	4%	20.1%	6.5	13.2	19%	2.0	Apr-17
 XERPA		HR & payroll platform	2%	16.0%	8.5	4.9	-28%	0.6	Sep-19
 magnetis		Digital investment advisor	2%	17.5%	5.7	8.9	13%	1.6	Sep-17
 FinanZero		Consumer credit marketplace	3%	18.0%	4.2	12.3	23%	2.9	Mar-16
 FINJA		Mobile wallet	2%	22.8%	3.2	6.7	17%	2.1	Jul-16
 rupeek		Asset-backed lending platform	2%	1.4%	7.0	7.0	0%	1.0	Mar-21
 minu		Salary on demand	0%	1.2%	0.5	0.5	0%	1.0	Mar-21

Source: DNB Markets

VEF aims to be stage-agnostic in its investments, but we note that it tends to enter its holdings in series B–C financing rounds (new investments typically in the range of USD10m–20m), where there is a funding gap between local VCs and global investors. Over the past four years, there is a track record of successful exits (Tinkoff Bank exited at 65% IRR, iyzico at 57% IRR) that have generated a 27% share price IRR since Q4 2015 (NAV IRR of 31%), suggesting that VEF can rightly claim that it is building substantial shareholder value.

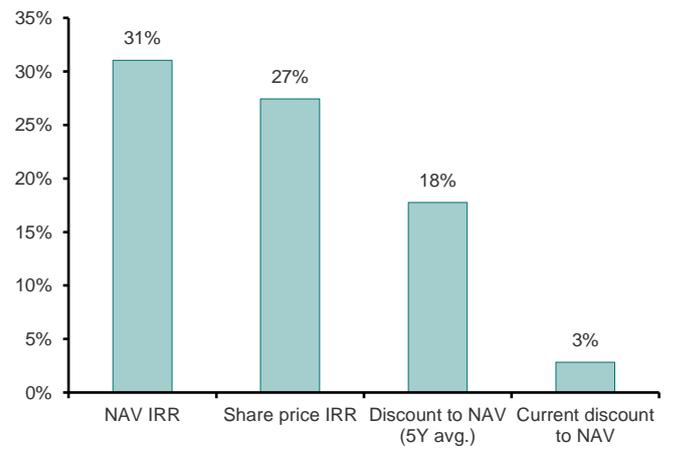
Recent portfolio exits highlight the value creation potential from its early-stage portfolio, having achieved a NAV IRR of 30%+ from Q4 2015

Figure 16: VEF – NAV and share price (SEK)



Source: VEF (underlying data), DNB Markets (further calculations)

Figure 17: VEF performance and IRR (2015–YTD 2020)



Source: VEF (underlying data), DNB Markets (further calculations)

Figure 18: DNB Markets' breakdown of selected VEF's key fintech segments

	Scope of the opportunity	Estimated revenue pool	VEF holding	Western comparables
Credit	<p>Consumer loans (Brazil)</p> <p>The large Brazilian incumbent banks hold 80%+ of the outstanding loans in the system and Brazilian consumers pay among the highest interest rates in the world (high-priced unsecured loans with an average APR of 230%).</p> <p>Fintech has the potential to gain market share from reducing the information asymmetry, bridge the gap between savers and borrowers, and reduce the Brazilian consumer debt burden.</p>	<p>SEK60bn (~USD6bn)</p> <p>Based on a market share of 5% of the USD125bn addressable market for high APR products such as credit cards, overdrafts, and personal loans.</p>	<p> creditas Secured lending</p> <p> FinanZero Consumer loan marketplace</p> <p>45% of NAV</p>	<p> LendingClub</p> <p> SoFi</p> <p> lendingtree</p> <p> Lendo</p>
	<p>SME lending (Mexico)</p> <p>The small business community in Mexico is vast yet underserved by larger banks (7 million SMEs that comprises 35%+ of all outstanding loans to a value of USD50bn). In addition, we note that Mexican SME output to GDP is above 50%, suggesting there is a large financing gap, in our view.</p> <p>For fintechs, there is an opportunity to strengthen SME access to financing by providing convenience and affordability to customers who are creditworthy.</p>	<p>SEK50bn (~USD5bn)</p> <p>We identify an USD50bn total market opportunity within Mexican SME credits and assume a penetration rate of 10%.</p>	<p> konfio Digital SME lending</p> <p>15% of NAV</p>	<p> ondeck</p> <p> prospa</p> <p> CAPITAL FLOAT</p>
Payments	<p>Mobile payments platform (India)</p> <p>India has one of the most advanced and complex electronic payment infrastructures globally, resulting in friction and challenges for merchants and banks in the country.</p> <p>There is a growing need for mobile payment platforms for online merchants to solve the challenges to improve customer conversion rates.</p>	<p>SEK15bn (~USD2bn)</p> <p>We assume digital payments processed through online gateways to be a USD80bn market growing at a 100% CAGR until 2025e and apply a 7.5bp fee</p>	<p> JUSPAY Payment gateway</p> <p>5% of NAV</p>	<p> stripe</p> <p> adyen</p> <p> PayPal</p> <p> amazon pay</p>
	<p>Merchant payments (Russia)</p> <p>While Point-of-sale financing options that can allow for consumers to spread their cost or consumption habits over time are widely available in developed economies, they are only now becoming the norm in emerging markets like Russia.</p> <p>Moreover, technological developments (particularly smartphones and online commerce) have created an entry point for fintechs.</p>	<p>SEK15bn (~USD1.5bn)</p> <p>Assuming a 5% market share of the Russian e-commerce payments market valued at ~USD30bn</p>	<p> pebc+ Merchant payments & consumer credit</p> <p>2% of NAV</p>	<p> Klarna.</p> <p> Affirm</p> <p> AIMIA INSPIRING LOYALTY</p>
	<p>Remittances (EU)</p> <p>Blue-collar workers are the most consistent and regular remittances customers in the world. Still, traditional bank networks are local, expensive, slow, and often inconvenient.</p> <p>Fintech innovation has the potential to lower costs associated with transferring money across borders (a key source of income for many low emerging markets) and reduce transfer times.</p>	<p>SEK6bn (~USD0.6bn)</p> <p>We apply a 1% fee on the annual European remittance flows to low- and middle-income regions of USD60bn</p>	<p> transferGo Cross Border Remittances</p> <p>6% of NAV</p>	<p> TransferWise</p> <p> azimo</p> <p> worldremit</p>
Other Fintech	<p>Digital investment advisory (Brazil)</p> <p>Saving has traditionally been constrained to the wealthy population but digital wealth management could be a way to reach financial inclusion, especially for the younger and more tech savvy population.</p> <p>Robo-advisors can provide savers with tailored user-friendly and dynamically allocated investment options at lower fees than static funds sold by incumbent banks.</p>	<p>SEK2bn (~USD0.2bn)</p> <p>We estimate that Brazilian robo-advisors can penetrate ~5% of the mutual funds AUM and apply a management fee of 0.5%</p>	<p> magnetis Digital investment advisor</p> <p>2% of NAV</p>	<p> wealthfront</p> <p> Betterment</p> <p> ELLEVEST</p>
	<p>Personal finance management (Brazil)</p> <p>As it is difficult to access financial information in combination with complicated financial profiles, Brazilian bank clients have limited tools to monitor and manage a complete view of their income and spending habits.</p> <p>Fintech solutions can help simplify clients' financial profiles by aggregation technology and help them gain a better oversight of their indebtedness and reduce interest costs.</p>	<p>SEK8bn (~USD0.8bn)</p> <p>Based on a 10% market share of the ~USD8bn current account fees generated by Brazilian banks</p>	<p> Guiabolso Personal finance management</p> <p>1% of NAV</p>	<p> credit karma</p> <p> mint</p> <p> tink</p> <p> muse</p>
	<p>Accounting SaaS (Brazil)</p> <p>The Brazilian accounting and tax environment is complex and there are over 400,000 individual accountant professionals servicing 10+ million SMEs that are legally required to have an accountant.</p> <p>There is an opportunity to leverage innovative technology solutions and provide a full suite of cost-effective administrative solutions and financial products to underserved SMEs.</p>	<p>SEK30bn (~USD3bn)</p> <p>We multiply BRL109 for Nibo's monthly pricing plan to an addressable market of 10+ million Brazilian SMEs</p>	<p> nibo Accounting SaaS</p> <p>3% of NAV</p>	<p> xero</p> <p> intuit</p> <p> FORTNOX</p>

Source: DNB Markets

29 April 2021

Important Information

Company: VEF
 Coverage by Analyst: Joachim Gunell
 Date: 28/04/2021

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29 April 2021

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