

Press Release
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The Asian Banker Excellence in Retail Financial Services Awards 2009

Standard Chartered Bank (Brunei) wins Best Retail Bank in Brunei for the year 2008

- *Standard Chartered Bank wins the award for Best Retail Bank in Brunei, 2008.*
- *For the 2nd time, Standard Chartered Bank won the prestigious award having maintained its market leadership in a difficult year.*
- *Over 120 banks and financial institutions from 22 countries across the Asia Pacific, Gulf and Central Asian regions were evaluated as part of the Excellence in Retail Financial Services Programme.*

Singapore, 20 March 2009 – Standard Chartered Bank has been named Brunei's Best Retail Bank in the eighth Asian Banker Excellence in Retail Financial Services Awards Programme. The bank received the award at The Asian Banker Excellence in Retail Financial Services Awards 2009 ceremony, held in conjunction with the region's foremost retail banking event, the Excellence in Retail Financial Services Convention. The ceremony was held at the Grand Hyatt in Singapore on the evening of March 19th, 2009.

About 120 senior bankers from award winning banks in 22 countries across the Asia Pacific, the Gulf and Central Asian regions attended the formal gala dinner, the industry's celebration of the region's best retail bankers that recognizes their efforts in bringing superior products and services to their customers.

The awards programme, administered by The Asian Banker and refereed by prominent global bankers, consultants and academics, is the most prestigious of its kind.

A stringent three month-long evaluation process, based on a balanced and transparent scorecard, determined the winners and the position of the different retail banks in the region. A full list of winners is attached.

Standard Chartered Bank wins the award for Best Retail Bank in Brunei, 2008

Standard Chartered Bank (SCB) won the Best Retail Bank in Brunei award for its strong performance in 2008, having gained higher scores than the other banks surveyed in the programme, including HSBC (Brunei) and Baiduri bank.

The Brunei financial services sector has reached a very sophisticated level over the years and all the major players do reasonably well in the struggle for market share in this small market.

The judges acknowledged that SCB still dominated its peers in 2008, but at the same time acknowledged the narrowing margin.

SCB's retail division disclosed profit growth of 10% year on year, on 30 September 2008. The bank grew especially in SME banking and mortgages. Since its launch in 2005, SME had a CAGR of more than 70% in terms of assets and liabilities. In 2008, it achieved a revenue growth of 9% with double digit growth in asset outstanding. SCB's mortgage business also grew significantly at a rate of 47% in revenue, even against the backdrop of a mature market, a small population and GDP growth of less than 3%.

Although the bank launched several new retail products, such as iBanking, the eCash prepaid card and executed several operational and technology upgrades, it was still able to manage its costs effectively and maintain a cost to income ratio of 35%.

SCB employs a reliable credit risk framework with a healthy asset portfolio including low non-performing loans of 2.2%. In 2008, several significant risk management initiatives have been taken in the areas of acquisition and underwriting, portfolio management as well as collections and recoveries. The bank also invested heavily in enhancing existing IT systems and management information system.

SCB placed specialised wealth management consultants in the branches, which explains its extraordinary growth rate of the wealth management business in Brunei. With a robust training curriculum for the staff, the bank managed to improve its sales quality and maintain a high level of productivity consistently.

For the 2nd time, Standard Chartered Bank won the prestigious award having maintained its market leadership in a difficult year

"In 2008, the bank was more profitable than any other player in the market. It was also highly successful in enhancing its customer relationships. SMS banking, internet banking, various air miles conversion programmes and new credit card products made banking with SCB Brunei more convenient for its customers," said Mr. Chris Kapfer, head of Excellence in Retail Financial Services Awards Programme at The Asian Banker.

SCB launched several SME products, such as the SME Business Instalment Loan and SME Property Term Loan which enhanced growth in revenue. The bank also grew its value of franchise and its profits considerably.

The bank offered a 'Home Ownership' guide, with the aim of assisting customers not only to make better financial decisions but also to get a clearer picture on the process and stages of home purchase. In this guide book, prospective home owners are guided step by step on managing finances in order to make their home purchase a reality, from documentation required for applying for housing loan to handy tips on house renovation.

In the Global Annual Market Probe Survey, the bank continuously displayed higher values than its peers in all categories, such as customer loyalty, distribution channels and problem resolution. SCB enjoys market leadership in personal loans, savings and/or current account as well as priority banking.

Over 120 banks and financial institutions from 22 countries across the Asia Pacific, Gulf and Central Asian regions were evaluated as part of the Excellence in Retail Financial Services Programme

“This year over 120 banks and financial institutions in 22 countries across the region were evaluated as part of the Excellence in Retail Financial Services Programme. It has become the single most prestigious, comprehensive and anticipated awards programme that recognises the pursuit of excellence amongst retail financial institutions available almost anywhere in the world today,” said Philip Strause, Chairman of The Asian Banker Excellence in Retail Financial Services Programme.

The transparent award evaluation process uses a balanced scorecard approach and a comprehensive methodology to evaluate the strength of individual banks’ retail banking businesses that involves extensive research and probing interviews, and taps on the combined experience of a team of experienced researchers.

Strause, who has over 30 years experience as a principal consultant to leading financial institutions in North America and the Asia Pacific, added: “The Asian Banker Excellence Programme was instituted in 2001 on the premise that an outstanding player in the retail financial services industry should build business franchises that are sustainable, competitive and profitable over a period of time.”

About The Asian Banker

The Asian Banker is the foremost provider of strategic business intelligence on the financial services industry in the Asia Pacific and Middle East regions. The organization has offices in Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, Beijing and Dubai as well as representatives in Shanghai, London and New York. With a business that revolves around publications, research services, training and forums, the organization is highly regarded in the financial services community for its incisive and independent commentaries on developments in the industry. The company’s website is www.theasianbanker.com.

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