

**OCBC BANK SETS UP DEDICATED HOTLINE TO ASSIST SMEs**

Businesses facing financing issues may call  
1300-88-7000 for advice

Kuala Lumpur, 12 August 2008 – OCBC Bank (Malaysia) Berhad has set up a dedicated hotline to help SMEs that are facing financing issues.

The *OCBC SME Hotline*, which begins operating today, aims to complement the recent efforts by Bank Negara Malaysia (BNM) to provide avenues for SMEs to seek assistance and enhance their efficiency and productivity. Any SME may access the *OCBC SME Hotline* by just dialling 1300-88-7000 and choosing option “6” to speak to an OCBC staff concerning SME financing.

According to OCBC Bank’s Director and CEO, Mr Jeffrey Chew, the *OCBC SME Hotline* is designed to support BNM’s timely initiative and also represents a reiteration of the Bank’s resolve to continue to be there for its customers through thick and thin.

“We realise that several SMEs are facing one difficulty or another today. For many, although their businesses remain viable and profitable, getting the necessary financing to keep up with their growth goals has become even more difficult today than before.

“Our commitment is to help each SME to tide over the current tough times and come out even stronger. The *OCBC SME Hotline* is the channel through which any SME may gain easy access to us in order to find suitable resolutions to any current financing predicament.

“We have, in recent times, been receiving and responding to calls from SMEs through various channels. However, this is the first time we are setting up a dedicated line to attend to these calls. We expect that through this disciplined approach, the assistance we are waiting to render would reach those who are unaware of its existence,” he said.

The *OCBC SME Hotline* assists SMEs by providing information on the various sources of financing available, facilitating the loan application process, addressing specific difficulties faced when securing loans from financial institutions and offering advisory services.

SMEs may also seek the Bank’s assistance by visiting any of its branches or logging on to [www.ocbc.com.my](http://www.ocbc.com.my)

Last month, BNM announced the setting up of two new facilities to aid SMEs, namely the RM700 million SME Assistance Facility and RM500 million SME Modernisation Facility. OCBC Bank has since become one of the first banks

to tangibly support the initiative, having already approved 18 cases for the facilities and received another 150 applications within the first week of the launch.

OCBC Bank is today considered one of the key banks supporting SMEs. It is recognised by Credit Guarantee Corporation (CGC), a subsidiary of BNM, as a top SME supporter through its annual Top SMI Supporter Award (Financial Institutions Category).

On OCBC Bank's long-term support of the SME industry, Mr Chew said: "I am pleased to report that during 2007, OCBC Bank approved RM3.8 billion in loans to SMEs, and we looking to grow those numbers by double digits in the current year. We see this as significant, particularly considering our limited branch network. We will continue to pay special attention to our role among SMEs by providing innovative financial solutions to them whilst establishing a long-term banker-customer relationship. Alongside this, we will continue to leverage on our position as the only foreign bank to participate in CGC's Direct Access Guarantee Scheme (DAGS)."

Also present at the launch was Mr Wong Chee Seng, Head of Retail Commercial Banking.

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## **About OCBC Bank**

Singapore's longest established local bank, OCBC Bank currently has assets of S\$181 billion and a network of more than 460 branches and representative offices in 15 countries and territories including Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, China, Hong Kong SAR, Brunei, Japan, Australia, UK and USA. This network includes more than 350 branches and offices in Indonesia operated by OCBC Bank's subsidiary, PT Bank NISP. OCBC Bank and its banking subsidiaries offer a wide range of specialist financial services, from consumer, corporate, investment, private and transaction banking to treasury and stock-broking services to meet the needs of its customers across communities.

OCBC Bank's insurance subsidiary, Great Eastern Holdings, is the largest insurance group in Singapore and Malaysia, in terms of assets and market share, and its asset management subsidiary, Lion Global Investors is one of the largest asset management companies in Southeast Asia. Additional information may be found at [www.ocbc.com](http://www.ocbc.com).

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