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## NEWS RELEASE

### **United Overseas Bank Awarded Best SME Bank In The Asia-Pacific**

*The Bank Understands The Growing Complexity of SME's Financing Needs*

**07 November 2007, Singapore** - The United Overseas Bank Limited (UOB) has been awarded the Best SME Bank in Asia-Pacific in the inaugural Asian Banking and Finance Retail Banking Awards 2007.

The panel of five judges comprising Mr Dominic Nixon, Asian Financial Services Leader of PricewaterhouseCoopers; Professor Claudia Zeisberger, Adjunct Professor of Finance of INSEAD; Mr Roman Scott, Managing Director of Calamander Group Singapore; Mr Tim Charlton, Editor-in-Chief of Charlton Media Group and Ms Rowena Everson, Group Editor of Charlton Media Group concurred that UOB "understands the growing complexity of SMEs financing needs. Leveraging on its own financial expertise and extensive global network, UOB is able to also support globalizing SMEs, as well as provide comprehensive solutions for SMEs including cash management and trade financing services."

UOB possesses the key success factors critical to meet the growing needs of SMEs. Amongst which are its specialised skills set, and deep industry knowledge and experience with SMEs. These factors are further reinforced by the stability of its management team and the Bank's consistent policies.

Being part of a leading bank in Singapore and a dominant player in the Asia-Pacific, UOB Commercial Banking is able to provide a comprehensive suite of financial services through its global network of branches/offices and subsidiaries/associates. Products and services include personal financial services, private banking, trust services, investment banking, corporate

finance, capital market activities, treasury services etc which cater well to the growing sophistication of our SME customers' need for augmenting advisory knowledge. Indeed, this is manifested in our strong cross-selling culture where we work closely with our product specialists to offer value-added solutions to our SME clients.

In recent years, many SMEs are expanding regionally into countries such as China, Malaysia, Indonesia and Thailand. With the history and track record of operating in the regional markets that SMEs wish to venture into, as well as experience in operating in the markets where their buyers and suppliers are, UOB's regional and international presence is able to effectively and efficiently service our SME clients.

UOB was the first local bank to set up a dedicated Global Business Development (GBD) unit with Commercial Banking to assist local enterprises in their efforts to expand beyond the local market and internationalise their businesses. This runs in close concurrence with the Singapore government's constant push for the internationalisation of Singapore-based corporations. Similarly, SMEs overseas can also make use of our GBD counterparts in our overseas subsidiaries and branches like Malaysia, China, Thailand and Indonesia to make their forays into Singapore as well.

"In the last 23 years, we have been through cycles of strong growth and deep recession. During this time, we are unfazed by the challenges because we have a strong supporter, UOB, behind us. UOB has been our banker, business advisor and friend for as long as we have been in business. Their unwavering faith in us and our business has recently helped us secured a large project by structuring a financing facility for us in record time. With the project, our sales have since tripled in the last 2 years and we expect to exceed S\$100 million in sales by next financial year", said Mr Chan Huan Yong of Tat Petroleum Pte Ltd, a long-time UOB customer.

The judging panel also commended UOB on its corporate social responsibility initiative undertaken to support SMEs by sponsoring the 'UOB-SMU Entrepreneurship Alliance' to promote entrepreneurship in Singapore. The UOB-SMU Entrepreneurship Alliance, spearheaded in 2005, is a noteworthy initiative to feed SMEs' growing quest for knowledge and help budding SMEs. Apart from facilitating the exchange of knowledge and resources and supporting the growth and development of local enterprises and academic excellence in Singapore, it is also a very tangible way of contributing back to society to fulfill UOB's social

responsibility. It garnered more than S\$3 million in sponsorship to kick off its activities by bringing in funds from local businesses and individuals, and pooling them into the UOB-SMU Entrepreneurship Alliance Fund (the "Fund"). Promising local enterprises can tap on the Fund to partially finance business projects undertaken by teams of SMU students, who will work on these projects under close supervision of SMU professors.

"We are honoured to be picked as the Best SME Bank in this inaugural award. UOB has grown in tandem with the SME community in Singapore, progressing from its traditional function as a corporate lender - providing SMEs with the necessary financing to grow their businesses, to its current existing role as a total solutions provider – providing these companies with a full range of banking facilities that fit in well with any SME, regardless of which stage of their life cycle they are in", said Mr Yeo Eng Cheong, Executive Vice President, UOB Commercial Banking.

Mr Yeo added, "Rest assured that we will not rest on our laurels after being conferred the Best SME Bank. We will strive to retain our dominant market share by constantly improving our service standards and introducing innovative products to facilitate the business of our customers."

### **About United Overseas Bank**

UOB is a leading bank in Singapore that provides a wide range of financial services through its global network of over 500 offices in 18 countries and territories in the Asia Pacific, Western Europe and North America. It has banking subsidiaries in Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand and the Philippines.

UOB is focused on enhancing its leadership in the consumer market, and is today, the largest credit card-issuing bank in Singapore with a card base that has exceeded one million. The Bank also has the largest base of merchants in Singapore, both for consumer and commercial credit card acceptance.

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