

# RoI is Issuer of the Year; Citi, HSBC vie for Best Bank honours

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It was a good year for the Republic of Indonesia (RoI) in 2011 as it regained its investment grade rating for its sovereign debt, which it lost during the Asian financial crisis in 1997. It successfully arranged two global funds raising a total of USD3.5 billion, which enhanced its credentials to be *The Asset* choice as the Issuer of the Year. It first raised USD2.5 billion for 10 years in April and another USD1 billion in *sukuk* format in November at a tighter yield of four percent. These successful sovereign trips to the international bond market were complemented by the rousing debut of the state-owned oil and gas company Pertamina, whose USD1.5 billion bond offering in May won the awards for Best Bond and Best New Bond.

Apart from the RoI and Pertamina, *The Asset* is honouring several issuers that left their mark in the capital markets in 2011 through their innovative and trailblazing transactions, paving the way for other issuers to tap the market and opening new avenues for funding.

The Export-Import Bank of Korea continues to explore the local currency bond markets to diversify its funding sources and in 2011, it extended its reach to the Peruvian bond market. Port operator International Container Terminal Services Inc of the Philippines arranged in April 2011 the first US dollar international corporate hybrid from an unrated issuer in Asia, outside of Japan, amounting to USD200 million.

Malaysia's investment arm Khazanah Nasional issued in October 2011 the world's first yuan-denominated *sukuk* amounting to 500 million renminbi (USD79.36 million), while the Kingdom of Thailand in July 2011 became the first Southeast Asian country to launch an inflation-linked bond amounting to 40 billion baht (USD1.27 billion). The Korea National Oil Corporation in October 2011 helped re-open the US dollar bond public primary market in Asia, ex Japan with a USD1 billion deal for five years.

For the major regional house awards, the winners of which will be announced Oscar-style at a gala dinner to be held on February 16 2012 at the Four Seasons Hotel in Hong Kong, Citi and HSBC are locked head-to-head for the Best Bank accolade. Citi is very much a different institution from what it was some three years ago in the wake of the global financial crisis and now, with a stronger balance sheet, it is making a strong bid for the other awards as well, including Best Investment Bank, Best M&A House, Best Debt House, Best Bond House, Best Loan House and Best TMT House.

HSBC, which generated more than half of its earnings from the Asia-Pacific markets in the first half of 2011, is also a strong candidate for several house awards, especially in the debt capital markets (DCM) space: Best Debt House, Best Bond House, Best Emerging Market Bond House, Best Asian Currency Bond House, Best Loan House, Best Dim Sum

Bond House, Best Leveraged Finance House, Best Securitization House, Best Project Finance House and Best Project Finance Advisory House.

For the Best Investment Bank Award, the other major contenders, apart from Citi, are Credit Suisse, Deutsche Bank and Morgan Stanley – all of which demonstrated the strength of their franchises across suites of product in 2011.

Another bank that garnered several nominations for the house awards is Standard Chartered Bank, majority of which is in the DCM space as well: Best M&A House, Best Debt House, Best Emerging Market Bond House, Best Asian Currency Bond House, Best Loan House, Best Leveraged Finance House, Best Securitization House, Best FIG House, Best Project Finance House and Best Project Finance Advisory House.

Meanwhile, the outright regional house awards winners in 2011 included Citi as the Best Mid-Cap Equity House, Morgan Stanley as the Best Small-Cap Equity House, Nomura as the Rising Star M&A House and Standard Chartered Bank as the Rising Star Transport Finance House. The Best Private Equity Firm award goes to Affinity Equity Partners.