## Singapore Banking Sector FY14 Outlook

## PhillipCapital Your Partner In Finance

### SINGAPORE | FINANCIALS | UPDATE

### **Sector Overview**

The Singapore Banking Sector provides traditional lending and depository functions, as well as other services in the areas of commercial banking, financial advisory, asset management, insurance broking and capital market services.

### FY2014 - An exciting year ahead

### **Net Interest Margins to rebound?**

- NIMs have stabilized for 3<sup>rd</sup> consecutive quarter. With the decision on Dec 18<sup>th</sup> to start
  QE tapering, this could mean a revival in the interest rate cycle is in sight and confirms
  our outlook for potential industry NIM recovery in the medium term.
- Potential for higher loan pricings coupled with a strong deposit franchise will benefit
  the banks. As our banks continue to seek higher yielding overseas loans growth, this
  could be an upside to NIMs as well.

### Loans growth remain moderately positive

- Management have generally guided for FY14 loans growth to be in the high single digit region.
- Softness in mortgage loans growth is expected to kick in in 2H14 and the 3 banks have guided that mortgage loans origination have decreased by about 30%.
- Despite tightening system liquidity and increasing LDRs, we remain unchanged on our view that liquidity levels remain healthy and LDRs may further increase past current high levels for better efficiencies.
- As we believe that global and Singapore macro conditions have been showing positive signs, this will pair up well with loans growth.

### Fees and Commission strong, Non II volatile

- Growth of Fees and Commission should continue to be **healthy** from focus on trade flows and favourable market conditions due to global economic recovery.
- Non Interest Income (Non II) continues to be volatile. Higher recurring contributions from customer flow is a positive.

### Credit cost should remain benign

 NPL remains low, little credit quality concern despite liquidity squeeze as focus is shifted towards short-term loans, and improving macro environment.

### **Investment actions**

We are **positive** on the potential for improving margins in the medium term. Loans growth should continue to be broad based but lower than FY13's high base and should be at a moderate pace on the back of positive economic outlook. Fees and commission should continue to drive earnings as trade-related, wealth-related, loans-related and bancassurance fees continue to gain traction. Based on an increasingly **positive** global macro outlook and strong fundamentals, we maintain "**Overweight**" on the banking sector. We maintain our "**Accumulate**" rating on **DBS** and **UOB**, and "**Neutral**" rating on **OCBC** based on our P/B derived valuations and coverage is transferred from previous analyst. **DBS** remains our top pick for its stable earnings growth profile, standing to benefit the most from higher interest rates, and strong foothold in HK while we remain neutral on **OCBC** due to its relatively more volatile earnings profile.

### Rating: Overweight

(Maintained from 9 Sep 2013)

30-Dec-13				
	DBS	Overseas	United	
	Group	Chinese	Overseas	
	Holdings	Banking	Bank	
Company	Ltd	Corp		
Rating	Accumulate	Neutral	Accumulate	
Price (S\$)	17.03	10.18	21.16	
TP (S\$)	19.09	10.62	23.03	
Upside (%) M.Cap.	12.1%	4.3%	8.8%	
(US\$'mn)	32,875	27,587	26,333	

### Phillip Research Team

#### Joshua Tan

joshuatan@phillip.com.sg

### Tel: (65) 6531 1249

Benjamin Ong (Research Associate) benjaminongcw@phillip.com.sg

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Tel: (65) 6531 1535

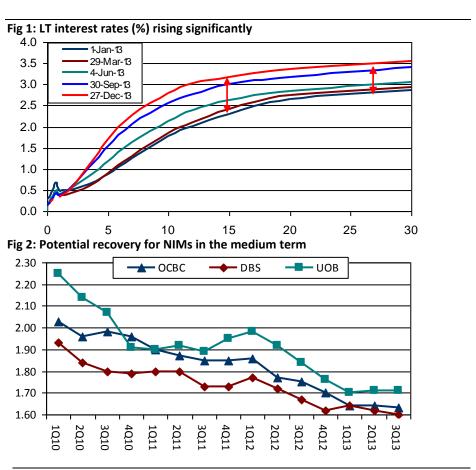
Top pick: DBS

MCI (P) 046/11/2013 Ref. No.: SG2013\_0195



### **Net Interest Margins to rebound?**

**QE tapering has started** – Having experienced significant NIMs compressions for a number of periods, there is finally a clearer sight for a recovery in industry wide NIMs with the start of QE tapering being announced. Yield curves are already steepening as seen from Fig 1 below. Widening spreads could improve the interest income for our banks.

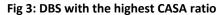


Source: Bloomberg, Company data, Phillip Securities Research

**Short term rates might not yet move** – With US announcing the tapering of QE in end CY2013, the Fed has still promised to keep interest rates environment low in the near to medium term. Hence, although we look forward to a revival in the interest rate cycle, we do not expect it to happen till after FY14. We note that most loans are priced based on shorter termed floating rates. The impact of current rising long term rates may therefore not increase Interest income significantly yet, as short term rates remain lower. We expect NIMs to increase gradually in the medium term.

**Strong deposit franchise is an advantage** – The potential for higher loan pricings as above stands to benefit the bank with the strongest deposit franchise. As seen from Fig 3 and Fig 4, DBS is best positioned in comparison where it has the highest CASA ratio and SGD liquidity.





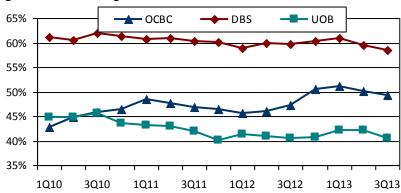
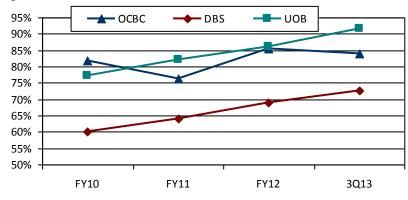


Fig 4: DBS with the lowest SGD LDR ratio



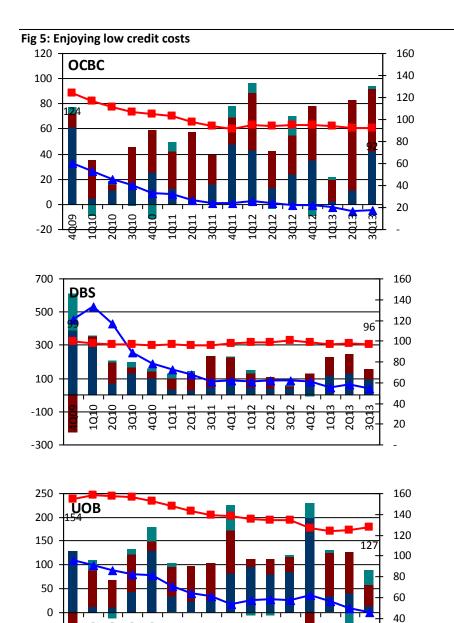
Source: Company data, Phillip Securities Research

**Overseas contributions to boost NIMs** – While Singapore Mortgage and Corporate loans continue to add pressure on interest margins, higher loans growth from regional offices, which are higher yielding, is expected to help improve NIMs moving forward. Recent key rate hikes in Indonesia is likely to increase NIMs through higher lending interest rates.

### Credit quality still robust

NPL ratios and provisions remain low — The banks have been enjoying low credit costs amidst the low interest rate environment as companies have been able to pay off the low interest expense despite the challenging macro landscape over the recent years (Fig 5). With such low NPL ratios and provisions, there is a natural concern that a liquidity squeeze and potential higher interest rate environment might cause an erosion of credit quality and increase in credit costs. However, 1) the positive macro environment with no systemic weaknesses in major markets they are present in should help to support credit quality and reducing the rise of NPLs (Fig 6) 2) The banks have been focusing on growing the trade financing business which is a relatively safer loan segment since the durations of these loans are usually short. Therefore, we believe that credit quality should remain intact and see limited upward pressure to credit costs and NPL ratios unless the macro economic environment starts heading south.





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Source: Company data, Phillip Securities Research

Others (S\$M) - LHS

■ General Provision (S\$M) - LHS ■ Specific Provision (S\$M) - LHS

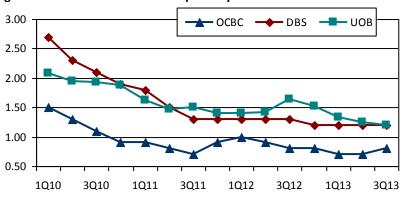
General Allowance/ Total Cust Loans (Bps) - RHS Specific Allowance/ Total Customer Loans (Bps) - RHS

-50

-100



Fig 6: NPL ratios should not see a spike anytime soon



Source: Company data, Phillip Securities Research

### Loans growth remain relatively positive

Moderate loans growth ahead – Loans growth for the banks have been strong and broad based across geographies and industries so far. The banks have mostly guided loans growth for FY14 to be in the high single digit region. The banks will also feel the drag in housing loans growth from 2H14 onwards as mortgage originations have decreased by about 30% as indicated by the banks which is expected from the numerous property cooling measures in place.

Fig 7: Total Loan balances (S\$mil) expected to climb moderately

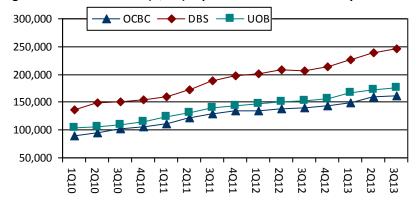
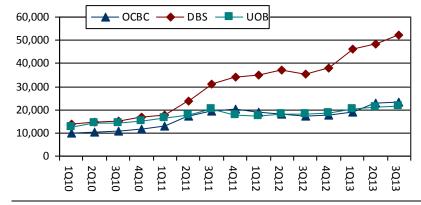
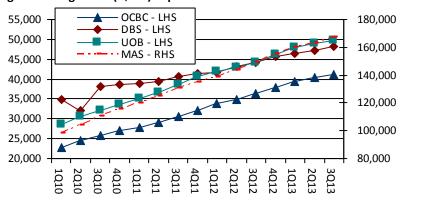


Fig 8: Strong Growth in General Commerce Loans (S\$mil)... Especially DBS





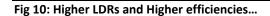


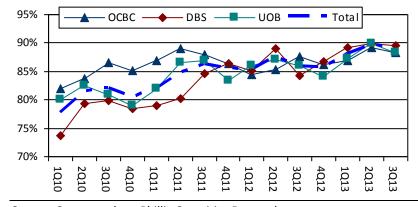


Source: Company data, Phillip Securities Research

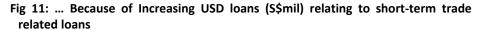
Cautious on depreciating ASEAN currencies - We note weakness in some ASEAN currencies for FY13, including the MYR, IDR, and THB. Loans in these currencies is approximately 17%, <14% and 20% of OCBC's, DBS's and UOB's 3Q13 loan book respectively. DBS has exposure to India too. While the INR has also seen depreciation, we note that a substantial portion of the India loan book is USD denominated. The political situation in Thailand and Indonesia grappling with their current-account deficit which contributed to the weakening of the Thai Baht makes us cautious on estimating strong loans growth including currency effects for FY14.

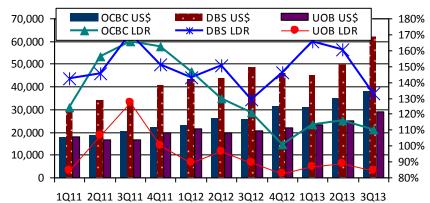
Liquidity levels remain healthy — Previously, we have mentioned that the three banks have consciously kept overall Loan to Deposit ratios (LDRs), a measure traditionally used to demonstrate liquidity, to levels below 100% to assure investors that liquidity is sufficient. While current LDRs are high relative to historical levels (Fig 10), we remain unchanged on our view that liquidity levels still remain healthy. This is because SGD liquidity remains healthy when we examine the SGD LDRs for the 3 banks (Fig 12). To reiterate our top pick, DBS has the most liquid SGD balance sheet. Increasing LDRs for the banks can be attributed to short-term loans like we previously mentioned as well because a chunk of these short-term trade related loans are USD denominated (Fig 11). That is why we are of the view that LDRs may further increase past current high levels for better efficiencies and the banks may see the need for more Commercial papers relative to longer-term deposits. This reduces the mismatch in maturity profile, and reduces drag on returns from inefficient use of capital.





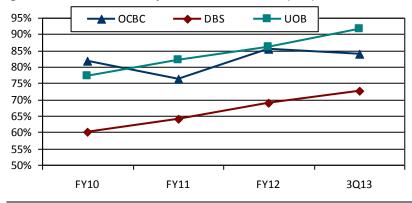






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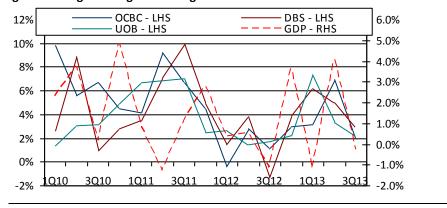
Fig 12: DBS with the most liquid SGD balance sheet (LDR)



Source: Company data, Phillip Securities Research

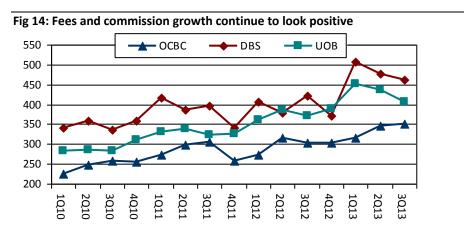
**Positive macro economic environment to benefit loans growth** – We believe that Singapore's GDP growth is a good indication to the direction of loans growth as it is a reflection of both Singapore and global economic outlook (Fig 13). We are positive on the road to recovery for Singapore and major economies hence we believe that the banks should be able to achieve their target loans growth of a moderate pace excluding currency effects.

Fig 13: Loans growth against GDP growth



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Fees and commission revenue driver heading forward



Source: Company data, Phillip Securities Research

Fees and Commission expected to remain strong - The rising affluence and strong value proposition that the banks offer, is expected to further drive growth in this segment. The banks have been gaining good traction is this area and we expect that with the establishment of stronger relationship networks, this will improve their cross-selling capabilities and fees and commission income, especially in trade-related, wealth-related and loans-related segments. Beyond the banks, we see positive signs for trade flows going forward in ASEAN as we remain optimistic on Greater China's economy for FY14 and Asian Development Bank partnering IE Singapore through its Trade Finance Program to help boost trade flows within the Asia Pacific region. Growth of Fees and Commission continues to be favoured by the banks especially since it is less capital intensive and thus favoured in view of Basel III capital requirements. Given that we believe Greater China holds the most potential for fees and commission growth, **DBS** holds an advantage in this area.

**Non-interest income remains volatile** - Although the banks continue to note higher recurring contributions from customer flows, volatile market-related activities may however lead to unpredictable Non II in the near term. Non II remains hard to predict, and may continue to be a wildcard for the banks should we see higher market-related activities from improving market conditions.

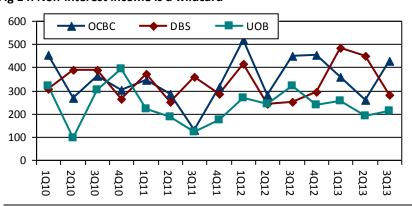


Fig 14: Non-interest income is a wildcard

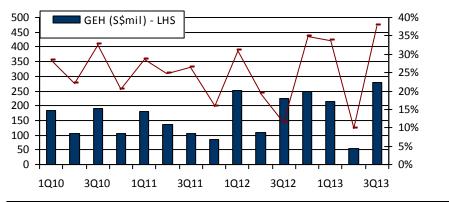
Source: Company data, Phillip Securities Research

**How will the insurance arm fare** – For OCBC, we think it likely to post poorer non-interest income due to mark to market losses for investments held by Great Eastern for FY13. Insurance companies, such as Great Eastern, are likely to hold long term fixed income investments, so as to match forecasted cash flow payouts for its longer term liabilities. With the sharp increase in long term interest rates per Fig 1 above, we expect mark to market losses on these long term investments. Given that Great Eastern

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contributes a substantial portion of OCBC's Non II (Fig 15), we prefer the relatively more stable earnings profile of DBS and UOB. That being said, we see a potential for an upward re-rating on OCBC in the medium to longer term if GEH shows that 1) higher yields generates higher net investment 2) offering higher return products which in turns generate higher new business embedded value (NBEV) and total weighted new sales 3) higher discounting on reserves.

Fig 15: GEH contribution to OCBC's Non-interest income



Source: Company data, Phillip Securities Research

### **Valuations**

Maintain Overweight on Banking Sector - We are positive on the potential of recovery of NIMs in the medium term. Based on our sensitivity analysis, a 10bps increase in NIMs will boost earnings approximately by 5%-7%, a powerful catalyst for potential re-ratings. Loans growth is also expected to be moderately positive together with improving global macroeconomic outlook, though possibly negatively impacted by the depreciation of a few ASEAN currencies and uncertain ASEAN countries per discussed above. Fees and Commission continues to grow, driven by trade-related, wealth-related and loans-related fees. Based on an increasingly positive global macro outlook, and strong fundamentals, we maintain Overweight on the banking sector. We maintain our "Accumulate" rating on DBS and UOB, and "Neutral" rating on OCBC based on our P/B derived valuations. DBS remains our top pick for FY14 given 1) its strong deposit franchise which gives it the best positioning for a revival of the interest rate cycle 2) it has the most penetration into China as compared UOB and OCBC 3) its current lower relative valuations.

### **Key risks for the Sector**

A worsening global economy may result in rise of NPLs and credit costs, as affected customers, especially SMEs and unsecured consumer loans, default on loan repayments. This may result in reduced net profits.

Unfavourable government policies and regulatory measures, both in Singapore and in the key overseas markets, may also impact the banks negatively.

Irrational pricing of loans and deposits, especially in the foreign markets, would also lead to further NIMs compression or loss of market share.



Company	Rating	FYE	Price	TP	Upside	Market	Market
Market price as of:						Cap.	Сар.
27-Dec-13					(%)	(S\$'mn)	(US\$'mn)
DBS Group Holdings Ltd	Accumulate	Dec	17.03	19.09	12.1%	41,668	32,875
Overseas Chinese Banking Corp	Neutral	Dec	10.18	10.62	4.3%	34,945	27,587
United Overseas Bank	Accumulate	Dec	21.16	23.03	8.8%	33,356	26,333

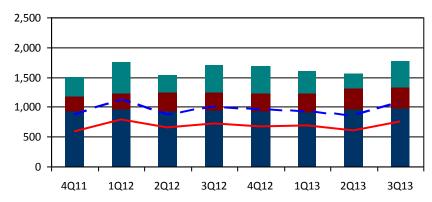
Source: Bloomberg, PSR est.

Equity Multiple (X)				<u>Dividend Yield (%)</u>				
Net Income			Book Value					
FY12	FY13E	FY14E	FY12	FY13E	FY14E	FY12	FY13E	FY14E
10.1	11.7	11.0	1.1	1.2	1.1	4.1%	3.3%	3.3%
12.4	12.4	12.9	1.5	1.5	1.4	3.4%	3.2%	3.3%
11.1	11.3	11.2	1.3	1.4	1.3	3.7%	3.3%	3.5%

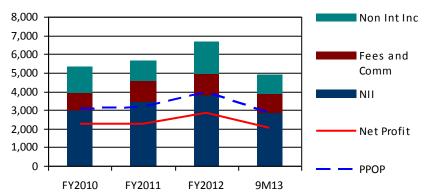
Source: Bloomberg, PSR est.



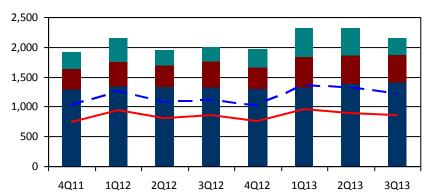
### Oversea-Chinese Banking Corp - Insurance "wildcard"



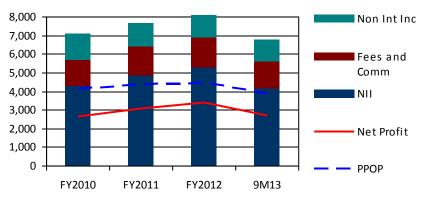
Earnings in near to mid-term might be hurt by GEH



**DBS Group Holdings** – Consistent growth profile

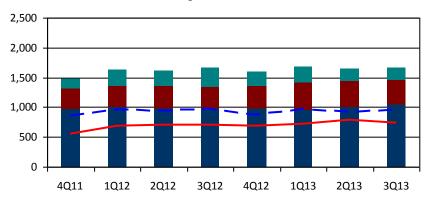


Strong potential for fees and commission and customer flows

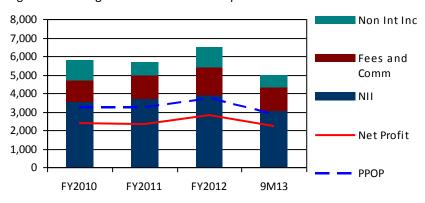




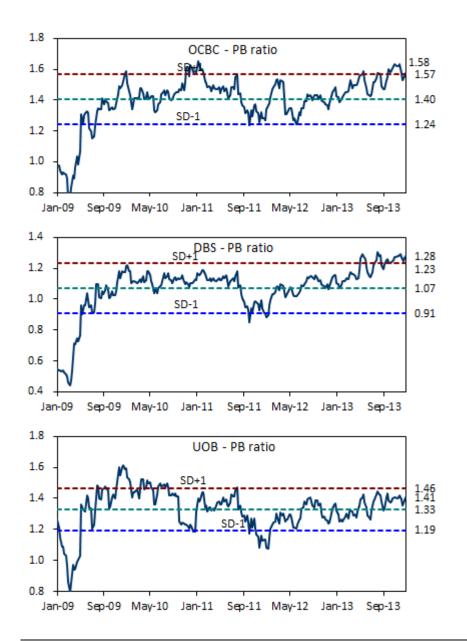
### United Overseas Bank Ltd – Strong in fees and commission



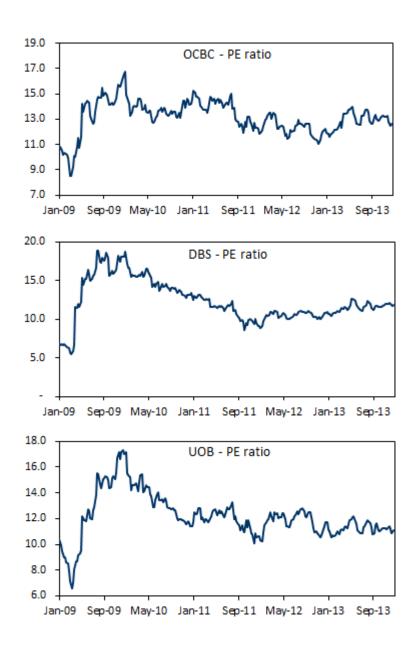
Regionalisation agenda on track but susceptible to noise in ASEAN markets



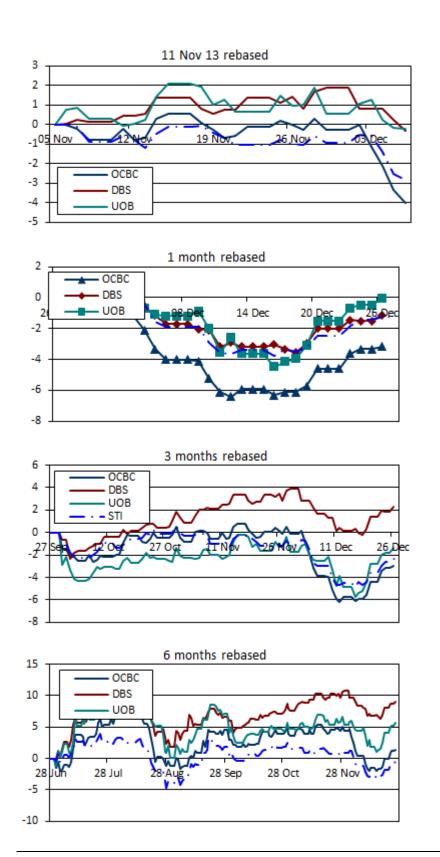




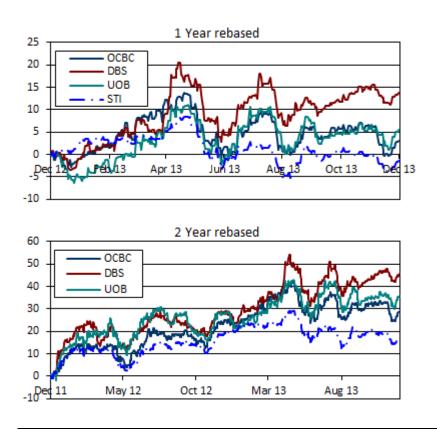








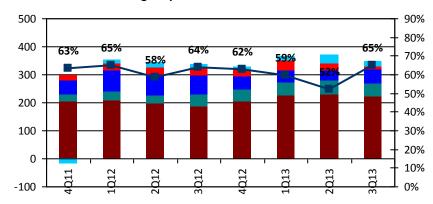




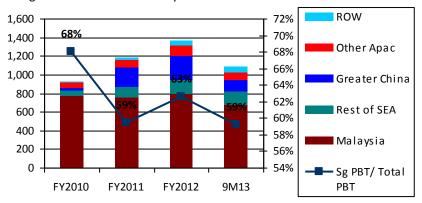


### By Geographical location - Profit before Tax

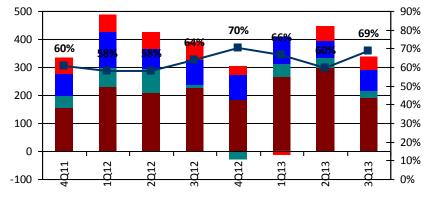
### **Oversea-Chinese Banking Corp**



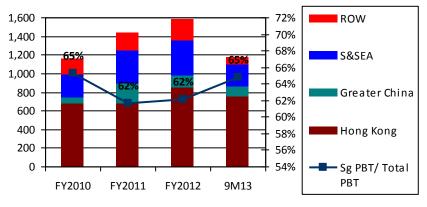
### Strong Contributions from Malaysia



### **DBS Group Holdings**

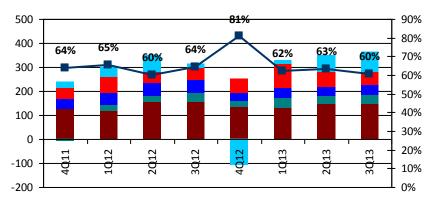


### Contributions from Hong Kong expected to grow

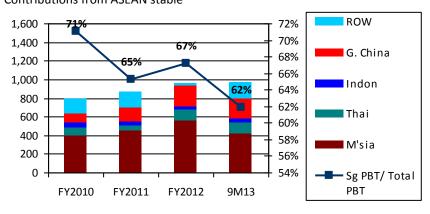




### **United Overseas Bank Ltd**



### Contributions from ASEAN stable



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Contact Information (Singapore Research Team)

Management **Chan Wai Chee** 

(CEO, Research - Special Opportunities)

Joshua Tan

(Head, Research - Equities & Asset Allocation)

+65 6531 1231 +65 6531 1249 **Research Operations Officer** 

Jermaine Tock

+65 6531 1240

Macro | Asset Allocation | Equities

Joshua Tan +65 6531 1249 Commodities | Offshore & Marine Nicholas Ong

**US Equities** Wong Yong Kai

+65 6531 1685

**Telecoms** Colin Tan

+65 6531 1221

Real Estate Caroline Tay

+65 6531 1792

+65 6531 5440

Real Estate Lucas Tan

+65 6531 1229

Market Analyst | Equities

Kenneth Koh +65 6531 1791

#### **SINGAPORE**

### Phillip Securities Pte Ltd

Raffles City Tower 250, North Bridge Road #06-00 Singapore 179101 Tel +65 6533 6001 Fax +65 6535 6631

Website: www.poems.com.sg

### **JAPAN**

### Phillip Securities Japan, Ltd.

4-2 Nihonbashi Kabuto-cho Chuo-ku, Tokyo 103-0026 Tel +81-3 3666 2101 Fax +81-3 3666 6090

Website: www.phillip.co.jp

### **THAILAND**

### Phillip Securities (Thailand) Public Co. Ltd

15th Floor, Vorawat Building, 849 Silom Road, Silom, Bangrak, Bangkok 10500 Thailand Tel +66-2 6351700 / 22680999 Fax +66-2 22680921 Website www.phillip.co.th

### **UNITED STATES**

### Phillip Futures Inc

141 W Jackson Blvd Ste 3050 The Chicago Board of Trade Building Chicago, IL 60604 USA Tel +1-312 356 9000 Fax +1-312 356 9005

### ΙΝΝΙΔ

### PhillipCapital (India) Private Limited

No. 1, C-Block, 2nd Floor, Modern Center, Jacob Circle, K. K. Marg, Mahalaxmi Mumbai 400011 Tel: (9122) 2300 2999

> Fax: (9122) 6667 9955 Website: www.phillipcapital.in

### **Contact Information (Regional Member Companies)** MALAYSIA

### Phillip Capital Management Sdn Bhd

B-3-6 Block B Level 3 Megan Avenue II, No. 12, Jalan Yap Kwan Seng, 50450 Kuala Lumpur Tel +603 2162 8841 Fax +603 2166 5099

Website: www.poems.com.my

### INDONESIA

### PT Phillip Securities Indonesia

ANZ Tower Level 23B, Jl Jend Sudirman Kay 33A Jakarta 10220 - Indonesia Tel +62-21 5790 0800 Fax +62-21 5790 0809

Website: www.phillip.co.id

### FRANCE

### King & Shaxson Capital Limited

3rd Floor, 35 Rue de la Bienfaisance 75008 Paris France Tel +33-1 45633100 Fax +33-1 45636017

Website: www.kingandshaxson.com

#### **AUSTRALIA PhillipCapital**

Level 12, 15 William Street, Melbourne, Victoria 3000, Australia Tel +61-03 9629 8288 Fax +61-03 9629 8882

Website: www.phillipcapital.com.au

### HONG KONG

### Phillip Securities (HK) Ltd

11/F United Centre 95 Queensway Hong Kong Tel +852 2277 6600 Fax +852 2868 5307

Websites: www.phillip.com.hk

### CHINA

### Phillip Financial Advisory (Shanghai) Co Ltd

No 550 Yan An East Road, Ocean Tower Unit 2318, Postal code 200001 Tel +86-21 5169 9200 Fax +86-21 6351 2940 Website: www.phillip.com.cn

### UNITED KINGDOM

### King & Shaxson Capital Limited

6th Floor, Candlewick House, 120 Cannon Street. London, EC4N 6AS Tel +44-20 7426 5950 Fax +44-20 7626 1757

Website: www.kingandshaxson.com

### SRI LANKA

### **Asha Phillip Securities Limited**

No 10, Prince Alfred Tower, Alfred House Gardens, Colombo 3, Sri Lanka

Tel: (94) 11 2429 100 Fax: (94) 11 2429 199 Website: www.ashaphillip.net/home.htm