



Gulf Air signs up US\$75million loan arrangement with Standard Chartered Bank

31 March 2009, Manama, Bahrain - National carrier Gulf Air has signed a loan facility of US\$75 million with Standard Chartered Bank. An agreement to this effect was concluded between the two organizations recently.

The three year loan will be injected into the working capital of the company to finance its corporate development plans.

"We are glad to have partnered with Standard Chartered Bank, the oldest and one of the well-known banks in Bahrain, on this loan arrangement," says Gulf Air Deputy Chief Executive Officer Mr. Ismail Karimi.

"Gulf Air is moving on with its realignment programme in tune with Bahrain's 'Vision 2030' strategy and is committed to strengthen its presence as a leading player in the regional and global aviation industry," said Mr. Karimi.

"The loan arrangement will facilitate implementing these plans that include upgrading and introducing new products and services, forming part of our working capital. Our ultimate aim is to make Gulf Air the carrier of choice."

"Gulf Air and Standard Chartered Bank, Bahrain have been working together for many years now and this loan arrangement is another example of mutual trust and long-standing working relationship between the two," Mr. Karimi concluded.

Jonathan Morris, Chief Executive Officer, Standard Chartered Bank, Bahrain said, "We are committed to strengthening our long standing relationship with Gulf Air, a subsidiary company of Bahrain Mumtalakat Holding Company, the investment arm of the Kingdom of Bahrain, and to participating in the growth of our national airline."

"We are delighted to arrange this facility to meet Gulf Air's financing requirements, particularly in this challenging economic climate. Standard Chartered has significant capabilities in aircraft finance and this transaction further demonstrates our commitment to our client base and the aircraft industry in the Middle East."

"Standard Chartered's key brand promise is clear; we believe in establishing ourselves as our clients' 'Right Partner' in their banking and financial needs. We aim to offer innovative products and services that fully meet our clients' financial needs."

"In Bahrain, we will also continue to partner with Bahrain Government, and leading Corporates in driving significant infrastructure projects that will help shape Bahrain's future as part of the 'Vision 2030'."

Standard Chartered Bank Bahrain, established in 1920, is the First Bank in Bahrain and has a network of 5 branches and a sales outlet.

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About Gulf Air

Founded in 1950, Gulf Air is the proud national carrier of the Kingdom of Bahrain. Having been operating for over half a Century, it ranks as one of the oldest airlines in the Middle

East region. Though it continually strives to develop; its goal has remained unchanged - to maintain a constant commitment to the latest aviation technology and an adherence to traditional Arabian hospitality. It is currently owned by Bahrain Mumtalakat Holdings Company.

One of the prime motives of the carrier is to link Bahrain to the GCC as well as connect it to the rest of the world. The airline's network stretches from Europe to Asia, connecting 41 cities in 27 countries, with a current fleet consisting of 32 aircraft. Renown for its direct network to its non-stop flights schedules, Gulf Air covers the Middle East, the Americas, Africa and Asia-Pacific.

The airline's business strategy is to re-fleet itself over the next five years to further strengthen its presence. It recently signed a deal with Boeing worth nearly US\$ 6 billion to purchase up to 24 Boeing 787 aircraft, and another deal with Airbus for 35 aircraft, including A320s and A330s.

Gulf Air is the Official Airline and Sponsor of the Gulf Air Bahrain Grand Prix 2009 and London based football club Queens Park Rangers.

About Standard Chartered Bank

Standard Chartered – leading the way in Asia, Africa and the Middle East

Standard Chartered PLC, listed on both London and Hong Kong stock exchanges, ranks among the top 25 companies in the FTSE-100 by market capitalisation. The London-headquartered Group has operated for over 150 years in some of the world's most dynamic markets, leading the way in Asia, Africa and the Middle East. Its income and profits have more than doubled over the last five years primarily as a result of organic growth and supplemented by acquisitions.

Standard Chartered aspires to be the best international bank for its customers across its markets. The Bank derives more than 90 per cent of its operating income and profits from Asia, Africa and the Middle East, generated from its Wholesale and Consumer Banking businesses. The Group has around 1,750 branches and outlets located in over 70 countries.

The extraordinary growth of its markets and businesses creates exciting and challenging international career opportunities.

Leading by example to be the right partner for its stakeholders, the Group is committed to building a sustainable business over the long term and is trusted worldwide for upholding high standards of corporate governance, social responsibility, environmental protection and employee diversity. It employs 75,000 people, nearly half of who are women. The Group's employees are of 115 nationalities, of which 60 are represented among senior management.

For more information, please visit: www.standardchartered.com

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Photocaption:

Mr. Shayne Nelson, Regional Chief Executive Officer Middle East & North Africa Standard Chartered Bank exchanging agreement with Mr. Ismail Karimi Gulf Air Deputy Chief Executive Officer in the presence of Mr. Jonathan Morris, Chief Executive Officer Standard Chartered Bank Bahrain (left), Mr. Neil Canty, Gulf Air Chief Financial Officer (centre) and Mr. Mohammed Lutfalla Head of Treasury(right).