

press release

Asia's mid-sized companies remain optimistic despite slowing economy

- *ASEAN is the most popular foreign market for business for Indonesia and Malaysia*
- *Indian and Chinese companies look West to Europe as a key trading partner*
- *Standard Chartered survey of CEOs and CFOs of mid-sized companies in China, India, Indonesia and Malaysia*

17 March 2015 – Mid-sized companies in Asia are highly confident in their ability to grow, and alongside domestic expansion are increasingly looking to international markets to build further momentum, finds a new independent study commissioned by Standard Chartered.

The survey of CEOs and CFOs of companies with an annual turnover of between USD30-USD100 million across four of Standard Chartered's Asian markets – China, India, Indonesia and Malaysia – points to considerable optimism, despite slowing economies across the region.

90 per cent of the CEOs and CFOs are confident in the potential to grow their business in the next five years, with an average anticipated rise in turnover of 39 per cent. Confidence comes from increasing demand for products and services, much of this driven by a growing middle class.

While overwhelmingly high, levels of optimism vary. Indian business leaders are the most optimistic, with 97 per cent confident that their company will grow in the next five years, while Malaysian respondents have slightly more mixed views, with 78 per cent confident in their growth prospects.

International appetite

Eight in ten of the companies are international, typically doing business with other companies in the region, including ASEAN, China and South Asia. ASEAN is the most popular foreign market for business for Indonesia and Malaysia, with 74 per cent of the Indonesian and 76 per cent of the Malaysian companies currently doing business in other ASEAN markets. In India and China, companies also look to Europe as a key trading

partner, with as many as 68 per cent of Indian companies and 54 per cent of Chinese companies considering Europe as their preferred foreign market.

Expanding internationally is a priority for most of the Asian mid-sized companies in the study, with 67 per cent planning to increase their sales in existing foreign markets, and 63 per cent expecting to expand the number of international markets in which they operate.

Andy Bainbridge, Global Head of Commercial Clients at Standard Chartered, commented: “Mid-sized companies are crucial engines of economic growth and job creation



across Asia, and increasingly active in global trade. They are the Tatas and Alibabas of tomorrow, and this study shows that slowing growth in the region has not dented their confidence in the future. Far from it, these dynamic companies are looking to take on more workers and expand into new markets, growing their turnover in the next five years.”

Job creation

The findings are good news for these four Asian economies, as the companies here look to expand their workforce to meet increased demand for the products and services they provide. Three-quarters of the businesses who plan to grow also expect to take on more workers in the next five years, with headcount expected to increase by an average of one-third.

Future ambition

The CEOs and CFOs cite becoming leaders in their respective industries as their top priority. Quality and consistency are also front of mind, as the companies plan to increase the scale of their operations while continuing to provide the quality of their products and services.

Download the study

Take a look at our infographics for a snapshot of the findings:

[Asian mid-sized companies: confident and growing](#)

[Asian mid-sized companies: being international is a key priority](#)

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Note to Editors

The study surveyed 300 CEOs and CFOs of mid-sized businesses with annual turnover of between USD30 – USD100 million across four Asian markets: China, India, Indonesia and Malaysia.

Standard Chartered partnered with GlobeScan to conduct this study. GlobeScan is an independent specialist consultancy and has been offering stakeholder intelligence and engagement advisory services to global companies, multilateral organizations and NGOs since 1987, including in emerging markets.

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