



WHEN THE GOING GETS TOUGH, THE TOUGH GET GOING – and those that perform especially well become winners in *The Banker's* Bank of the Year awards.

In order to triumph, banks need to demonstrate not only resilience in their balance sheet and finances, but also trail-blazing achievements in areas such as overall strategy, success in multi-channel banking and financial inclusion, as well as initiatives in new technology and customer satisfaction.

The competition is fierce and our judging panel spent many hours poring over the finer details of the hundreds of entries we received. After much debate we were able to make awards in 141 countries, together with five regional winners, an award for financial inclusion, and of course, our top award for Global Bank of the Year.

Whatever the challenges of the external environment – whether that be bad politics, recession, new competition from fintechs or another factor – leading banks have a knack for finding ways to surmount these difficulties. In our awards decisions we acknowledge these efforts and, in the many write-ups in the pages that follow, we outline why we came to our conclusions. Congratulations to all our very worthy winners. >>

THE BRACKEN AWARD

Winners at The Banker Awards will receive a prestigious Bracken award, named after Brendan Bracken, the founding editor of *The Banker* in 1926 and the chairman of the modern-day *Financial Times* from 1945 to 1958. Brendan Bracken epitomises the global spirit, vision and integrity of *The Banker* and FT Group, and the winning of a Bracken is a fitting accolade for the performances of the world's top financial institutions.

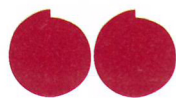
The Banker Awards 2017

Country winners list

The Banker celebrates the best banks in 141 different countries around the world, based on their performance over the past 12 months.

COUNTRY AWARD WINNERS

Country	Winner	Country	Winner	Country	Winner	Country	Winner
Afghanistan	Afghanistan International Bank	Democratic Rep of Congo	Trust Merchant Bank	Lebanon	Blom Bank	Russia	Tinkoff Bank
Albania	Banka Kombetare Tregtare	Denmark	Nordea Bank Denmark	Liechtenstein	LGT Group	Rwanda	Bank of Kigali
Algeria	Citibank Algeria	Djibouti	Exim Bank Djibouti	Lithuania	SEB Lithuania	Saint Kitts and Nevis	Scotiabank St Kitts and Nevis
Andorra	Crédit Andorra	Dominican Republic	Banco de Reservas de la Rep Dom	Luxembourg	Banque Internationale à Luxembourg	Saudi Arabia	Al Rajhi Bank
Angola	Standard Bank Angola	Ecuador	Banco de la Producción	Macau	ICBC Macau	Senegal	UBA Senegal
Argentina	Banco Galicia	Egypt	Arab African International Bank	Macedonia	Ohridska Banka Soc Gén	Serbia	Banca Intesa Beograd
Armenia	Ameriabank	El Salvador	Banco Agrícola	Malawi	Standard Bank	Sierra Leone	GT Bank
Austria	Bawag Group	Equatorial Guinea	Banco Nacional de Guinea Ecuatorial	Malaysia	CIMB Bank	Singapore	DBS Bank
Azerbaijan	PASHA Bank	Estonia	SEB Estonia	Malta	HSBC Malta	Slovakia	Slovenská sporitelna
Bahamas	CIBC First Caribbean International	Finland	OP Financial Group	Mauritius	Mauritius Commercial Bank	Slovenia	SKB banka
Bahrain	Bank ABC	France	BNP Paribas	Mexico	BBVA Bancomer	South Africa	Standard Bank
Bangladesh	Standard Bank Chartered Bank	Gabon	UBA Gabon	Mongolia	XacBank	South Korea	KEB Hana Bank
Barbados	Republic Bank (Barbados)	Gambia	Ecobank Bank Gambia	Montenegro	Societe Generale Mont.	Spain	Banco Santander
Belarus	Priorbank	Georgia	TBC Bank	Morocco	BanMaroc. du Comm. Extérieur	Sri Lanka	Hatton National Bank
Belgium	BNP Paribas Fortis	Germany	HypoVereinsbank	Mozambique	Millennium bim	Sudan	Omdurman National Bank
Benin	Bank of Africa	Ghana	Zenith Bank Ghana	Myanmar	KBZ Bank	Sweden	SEB
Bermuda	Bank of NT Butterfield & Son	Guatemala	Banco Industrial	Namibia	First National Bank (Nam)	Switzerland	UBS
Bolivia	Banco Nacional de Bolivia	Guinea	Ecobank Guinea	Nepal	NMB Bank	Taiwan	First Commercial Bank
Bosnia-Herzegovina	UniCredit Bank	Honduras	Banco Ficohsa	Netherlands	ING Netherlands	Tanzania	NMB Bank Plc
Botswana	First Ntnl Bk of Botswana	Hong Kong	Bank of China (Hong Kong)	New Zealand	ASB Bank	Thailand	Siam Commercial Bank
Brazil	Banco Santander (Brazil)	Hungary	K&H Bank	Nicaragua	Banco Lafise Bancentro	Togo	Ecobank Togo
British Virgin Islands	Scotiabank BVI	Iceland	Islandsbanki	Nigeria	Guaranty Trust Bank	Trinidad and Tobago	First Citizens Bank
Brunei	Baiduri Bank	India	Yes Bank	Norway	Nordea Bank Norway	Tunisia	Attijari Bank
Bulgaria	Raiffeisenbank	Indonesia	Bank Central Asia	Oman	Bank Muscat	Turkey	Garanti Bank
Burkina Faso	Orabank Burkina	Iran	Ayandeh Bank	Pakistan	Allied Bank	Turkmenistan	State Bank for For. Affairs of Turkmen.
Cambodia	Cambodian Public Bank	Israel	Bank Hapoalim	Palestine	Bank of Palestine	Uganda	Ecobank Uganda
Cameroon	Ecobank Cameroon	Italy	Intesa Sanpaolo	Panama	Banco General	UK	Lloyds Banking Group
Canada	Royal Bank of Canada	Jamaica	Natl Commecial Bank Jamaica	Paraguay	Sudameris Bank	United Arab Emirates	Emirates NBD
Cayman Islands	Butterfield Bank	Japan	Mitsubishi UFJ Financial Group	Peru	Banco de Crédito del Perú	Uruguay	Banco Itaú Uruguay
Chad	UBA Chad	Jordan	Arab Bank	Philippines	BDO Unibank	US	Bank of America
Chile	Banco Santander	Kazakhstan	ForteBank	Poland	Alior Bank	Uzbekistan	Asia Alliance Bank
China	China CITIC Bank	Kenya	KCB Bank	Portugal	Banco Santander Totta	Venezuela	Mercantil Banco Universal
Colombia	Banco de Bogotá	Kosovo	TEB	Puerto Rico	Banco Popular de Puerto Rico	Vietnam	Saigon-Hanoi Bank
Costa Rica	BAC Credomatic	Kuwait	National Bank of Kuwait	Qatar	Qatar National Bank	Zambia	Stanbic Bank Zambia
Croatia	Privredna banka Zagreb	Kyrgyzstan	Demir Kyrgyz International Bank	Republic of Congo	UBA Congo	Zimbabwe	Standard Chartered Bank Zimbabwe
Czech Republic	Deskoslovenská obchodní banka	Latvia	SEB Latvia	Romania	UniCredit Bank		



WE TOOK THE CHALLENGING CONDITIONS FOR THE BANKING SECTOR AS AN OPPORTUNITY TO INCREASE OUR FOCUS ON OUR CUSTOMERS' NEEDS AND STRENGTHEN OUR MARKET POSITION *Theodor Weimer* ●●

GERMANY

HypoVereinsbank

Germany is a notoriously difficult market for the banking sector, due to the high number of financial institutions and low eurozone interest rates. But a recovering economy with growth of 1.86% in 2016 and a forecast rate of 2.05% for 2017, according to the International Monetary Fund, bodes well for HypoVereinsbank (HVB).

"We took the challenging conditions for the banking sector as an opportunity to further increase our focus on our customers' needs and strengthen our market position," says Dr Theodor Weimer, country chairman for Germany at UniCredit Group, of which HVB is a subsidiary. "We focus on growth and customer retention and are perfectly positioned to increase our market share."

HVB is working through the 'Transform 2019' strategic programme, which will give HVB's teams more client-facing time and will allow for better services for customers and cost reduction.

HVB saw a reduction in non-performing loans from 4.07% in 2015 to 3.25% in 2016, according to The Banker Database, and results for the first six months of 2017 indicate broader improvement. HVB's pre-tax profits for the first half of 2017 were €933m, compared with €568m in the same period in 2016.

HVB is a leading bank for corporate clients, offering tailored digital solutions such as the UC eBanking global app. This enables entrepreneurs to perform their payments and cash management via mobile devices, while also still offering personal advisory on-site.

To help service underbanked segments of society, HVB offers products and services such as Braille-embossed debit cards for visually impaired customers and a cash home delivery service for those unable to come to a branch. In 2016, HVB introduced a bank account for immigrants, with the aim of helping to integrate them into society.

BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA

UniCredit Bank Mostar

A solid financial performance combined with ongoing technological developments make UniCredit Bank Mostar our Bank of the Year in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

UniCredit Bank Mostar reported the highest net profit in its history in 2016 – Km81.5m (\$49.1m) – and outperformed its peers. This was mainly due to significant growth in market shares in loans (from 17.4% in 2015 to 18.1% in 2016) and deposits (from 19.7% to 19.9% in the same period).

The lender, majority owned by UniCredit of Italy, achieved further reductions in its cost-to-income and non-performing loan (NPL) ratios. Cost-to-income reduced by more than two percentage points to 48.1%, while NPLs fell by one percentage point to 9.7%.

"Performing better and achieving your best results is a constant challenge for any leader in the market," says Dalibor Cubela, chief executive at UniCredit Bank Mostar. "UniCredit Bank, as a leading bank, is successfully and continuously delivering new and innovative solutions for its clients, ensuring all the activities are in compliance with the local and European regulations and legislation."

UniCredit Bank Mostar is investing in digital innovation such as a new platform for the approval and release of loans, which was implemented in 2016. The platform offers a simplified and automated process, which allows the lender to process retail credit products faster.

Mr Cubela notes that UniCredit Bank Mostar's philosophy puts customers first by "providing higher quality and more secured products and services" to all of its clients.

"Satisfied clients are the foundation of our business success, and their satisfaction is possible [only] with developed and dedicated employees providing quality services and being the ambassadors of the bank," he says.



Dalibor Cubela, chief executive, UniCredit Bank Mostar

ROMANIA

UniCredit Bank Romania

Innovative products and services as well as solid financial results make UniCredit Bank Romania the Bank of the Year in the country.

UniCredit Bank Romania achieved a strong increase in deposits in 2016, of some 22.5%, and also increased its lending rates by 8.1% on 2015 figures. Net profits increased by 30% compared with 2015, gradually improving the bank's return on equity and lowering its cost-to-income ratio to 43.88%.

"Among our most notable performances we would highlight the good business results and customer satisfaction," says Rasvan Radu, chief executive at UniCredit Bank Romania. He adds that the bank also showed strong growth in its retail business and "consolidation" of its position in the corporate segment.

To make its corporate customers' lives easier, UniCredit Bank Romania launched mPOS, an innovative device for accepting payments. The product comes with a wide range of advantages for the company using it – such as flexibility and mobility, the easy administration of devices and easy implementation – as well as for the bank.

The bank's Card Menu is a unique product replacing state-funded printed meal tickets for all Romanian employees, offering clients increased cost efficiency and simplification of the benefits distribution process.

Further innovation came from its transaction banking division. UniCredit Bank Romania completed the first ever bank payment obligation transaction carried out in the country, for the payment of a commercial operation between a Romanian company and its German supplier.

"We aim to further strengthen our position through the solid and resilient organic growth of our customer base and revenues," says Mr Radu, who adds that the bank will do this in line with the Transform 2019 strategic plan of the UniCredit group. "Digitalisation, innovation and continuous simplification of operations are the key opportunities we plan to incorporate as drivers of our future growth."



Rasvan Radu, chief executive, UniCredit Bank Romania