

Joint Media Release



OCBC BANK AND FIRST STATE INVESTMENTS IN EXCLUSIVE PARTNERSHIP TO OFFER SINGAPORE RETAIL INVESTORS A GLOBAL PROPERTY INVESTMENTS FUND

The First State Global Property Investments¹ gives investors the opportunity to gain access to the global property market

Singapore, 27 January 2005 – Oversea-Chinese Banking Corporation (“OCBC Bank”) and First State Investments (Singapore) announce today, that they will enter into an exclusive partnership to launch a global property investment fund that provides retail investors access to investment in global properties.

A first-of-its-kind fund in Singapore, the First State Global Property Investments (“the Fund”) aims to maximise the total return to the investor by investing in a broad selection of liquid property investments from around the world. This innovative open-ended product with no lock-in period will invest primarily in the securities of real estate investment trusts (“REITs”) or companies which invest in commercial, retail and industrial properties and to a lesser extent, car parks, hotels, leisure, properties and appropriate infrastructure projects worldwide.

“Properties are an asset class well-loved by Asian investors. Besides the usual investment in actual property, the Singapore REITs have been gaining popularity amongst retail investors. Through this strategic partnership with First State, we will soon be offering a fund that gives investors an alternative access to international properties,” says Mr Lim Wyson, Vice President Wealth Management, Consumer Financial Services Singapore, OCBC Bank.

“We are delighted to work with an experienced and reputable partner like First State Investments. First State’s excellent track record of investing in global property securities places them amongst the top-performing property securities managers globally, making them the natural choice for OCBC Bank. In addition, First State has an exclusive alliance with Colliers International, which gives them better reach into global property markets and extensive international property knowledge and expertise¹.”

¹ This document is published for information purposes only. It is neither an offer nor solicitation to purchase units of the Fund. Units in the Fund are not available for subscription at the time of this publication. The prospectus for the Fund is expected to be available on or about 21 February 2005 and will be made available to investors once the units in the Fund are offered for subscription. Investors may obtain the prospectus for the Fund from First State Investments or any branch of OCBC Bank once it is available. Investors should read the prospectus before deciding whether to subscribe for or purchase units in the Fund. Any investment in unit trusts is subject to investment risks, including the possible loss of the principal amount invested. The value of the units in the Fund and the income accruing to the units, if any, may fall or rise. Past performance records as well as any projection or forecast quoted in this publication are not necessarily indicative of the future or likely performance of the Fund.

Mr Lindsay Mann, Chief Executive Officer of First State Investments said, “The Sub-Manager of the Fund will be Colonial First State Investments (“Colonial First State”), our sister company in Australia and a wholly-owned subsidiary of the Commonwealth Bank of Australia. With a track record spanning more than 10 years, Colonial First State has extensive experience in managing this asset class. As at 30 November 2004, Colonial First State manages about AUD3.3 billion² (“SGD4.2 billion”) in property securities.

² Exchange rate : 1 AUD to 1.2791 SGD as at 30 November 2004

With OCBC’s strong presence in the local wealth management industry as well as our track record in Global Property Securities, we believe we have forged a formidable relationship that is likely to ensure the successful launch of this product.”

Mr Lim adds, “We hope that with this new Fund, retail investors will have a new alternative to participate in the growth of property investments. The First State Global Property Investments will give our customers the opportunity to invest in an asset class that they would otherwise have difficulty accessing.”

“This new Fund is ideal for those investors who seek to have some exposure to the specialised property sector through a global diversified portfolio that is currently not available through the Singapore REITs. In addition, investors can invest in global property without necessarily having the entire capital for it or the risk of owning the property themselves.”

This Fund is a good alternative for investors with moderate risk appetite as its risk level lies between equities which are expected to stay fairly volatile and bonds which continue to be relatively safe. It is also suitable for investors who are prepared to take a medium to longer term view and are looking for medium to long-term capital gain potential.

Investors who like having a regular income stream will also be attracted to this Fund as it aims to make regular annual distributions. The initial rate of distribution is estimated to be 4% of net asset value per annum. Investors will also have flexible access to their funds as there is no minimum investment or lock-in period.

The key benefits of the Fund are:

It gives investors the ability to access investment grade properties

One of the key features of the Fund is the easy access it gives to ordinary man-in-the-street investors to investment grade properties which are viewed as cashflow stable assets. Investors do not need to have the relevant management experience and know-how of owning global properties in order to reap returns from this Fund.

It offers comparable and competitive returns

The risk adjusted returns of this asset class are very competitive compared with the returns of other asset classes.

It enhances diversification

The Fund enhances investors’ portfolios as it gives them the opportunity to invest across countries, economic cycles and property sectors. As there is little correlation between

property sectors, regions and equity markets, the Fund is also not bound by sudden market movements.

It combines the expertise of First State with Colliers International

The exclusive alliance between First State and Colliers International combines the former's investment management expertise with the latter's extensive international property knowledge, ensuring that the Fund invests in the most suitable investment opportunities around the world.

About OCBC Bank

OCBC Bank is Singapore's longest established local bank. It has assets of S\$119 billion and a network of 112 branches and representative offices in 14 countries and territories including Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, China, Hong Kong SAR, Japan, Australia, UK and USA. OCBC Bank offers a range of specialist financial services including consumer, corporate, investment, private and transaction banking, global treasury, asset management and stockbroking services to meet the needs of its customers across communities. Its subsidiary, Great Eastern Holdings, is the largest insurance group in both Singapore and Malaysia in terms of assets and market share.

In 2004, OCBC Bank was named Lafferty Group's Retail Bank of the Year in Asia-Pacific and South East Asia and Global Finance magazine's Best Bank in Singapore. Additional information may be found at www.ocbc.com.

About First State Investments

First State Investments is the fund management arm of the Commonwealth Bank of Australia. The group has funds under management of S\$119.2 billion (US\$69.5 billion)³ and is the largest fund manager in Australia⁴ with investment offices in Sydney, London, Edinburgh, Singapore, Hong Kong and Jakarta.

The Commonwealth Bank of Australia is an international financial services company listed on the Australian Stock Exchange and is the second largest bank in Australia. The group has total assets held and funds under management of S\$469.5 billion (US\$273.7 billion)³.

In Singapore, First State Investments offers a range of retail unit trusts that includes global and regional funds, as well as specialist sector funds. The company is one of the largest foreign unit trust managers in Singapore in terms of retail funds under management⁵. Of the 10 First State retail funds currently available, four are rated five-star by Mercer Investment Consulting while one is rated four-star.

³ Exchange rate: US\$1:S\$1.7153, total assets and funds under management are based on 30 June 2004 figures.

⁴ Source : ASSIRT Market Share Report for March quarter 2004 in Australia. Information is preliminary and is subject to change in the final report.

⁵ Source: S&P Fund Services (30 June 2004).