

PRESS INFORMATION-FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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***Global Finance* Names the Best Trade Finance Banks and Providers for 2004**

NEW YORK —December 19, 2003 *Global Finance* magazine has named the “Best Trade Finance Banks and Providers” by category in an exclusive survey to be published in the February 2004 issue. *Global Finance* editors — with input from industry analysts, corporate executives and technology experts — selected the best trade finance providers, globally and in 42 countries or regions. The best online trade finance system was also identified. Criteria for choosing the winners included: transaction volume, scope of global coverage, customer service, competitive pricing and innovative technologies. This year, honorable mentions were awarded in the U.S., the world’s largest market for trade finance, to JPMorganChase and the Bank of America. JPMorganChase not only is a leader in the letter-of-credit business, but the bank's treasury services unit also has assembled an array of useful Web-based trade finance products that streamline the trade process and provide the best services available to its clients. Bank of America’s extensive trade-services network includes 22 international trade offices in the US and a global network in 34 countries serving clients in 190 countries. Bank of America offers such trailblazing trade services as electronic management of purchase orders and straight-through processing for the full range of trade products.

The complete list of honored trade finance providers follows:

GLOBAL WINNER:

Citigroup

REGIONAL WINNERS:

Americas: Citigroup

Europe: ABN AMRO

Central and Eastern Europe: RZB

Middle East: National Bank of Kuwait

Asia: HSBC Holdings

COUNTRY WINNERS:

Argentina: Banco Rio de la Plata

Australia: Westpac Banking

Austria: Bank Austria Creditanstalt

Belgium: Fortis Bank

Brazil: Banco do Brasil

Canada: Royal Bank of Canada

China: Bank of China

Colombia: Bancolombia

Finland: Nordea

France: BNP Paribas

Germany: Deutsche Bank

Hong Kong: HSBC Holdings

India: ICICI Bank

Indonesia: Bank Mandiri

Italy: IntesaBci

Japan: Mitsubishi Tokyo Financial Group

Kazakhstan: Kazkommertsbank

Kuwait: National Bank of Kuwait

Mexico: Grupo Financiero Banamex Accival

Netherlands: ABN-AMRO

Nigeria: Union Bank of Nigeria

Norway: Den norske Bank

Oman: BankMuscat

Pakistan: Habib Bank

Russia: Alfa Bank

Saudi Arabia: Saudi American Bank

Singapore: DBS Group

South Africa: Standard Bank

South Korea: Korea Exchange Bank

Spain: Banco Bilbao Vizcaya Argentaria

Sweden: Svenska Handelsbanken

Switzerland: Credit Suisse

Taiwan: International Commercial Bank of China

Turkey: Akbank

UK: Standard Chartered Bank

US: Citigroup (Honorable Mention: JPMorganChase, Bank of America)

Venezuela: Banco Mercantil

BEST ONLINE TRADE FINANCE PROVIDER:

TradeCard

Global Finance, which marked its 16th year of publishing in October 2003, has 50,000 subscribers and more than 300,000 readers in over 160 countries. This audience includes chairmen, presidents, CEOs, CFOs, treasurers, and other financial officers responsible for making investments and strategic business decisions for multinational companies and financial institutions. *Global Finance* targets most of the 8,000 key portfolio investors who control over 80% of all assets under professional management. ###