

For Immediate Release

BEA Obtains Preliminary Approval to Establish Qingdao Branch

Hong Kong, 27th March, 2006 – The Bank of East Asia (“BEA”) today announces that it has received the preliminary approval of the China Banking Regulatory Commission to establish a branch in Qingdao in Shandong Province. Having secured this approval, BEA will soon commence preparatory work to upgrade its current representative office in Qingdao to an official branch. Qingdao Branch is expected to open for business in the second half of 2006.

Located at the southern tip of Shandong Peninsula, Qingdao is the third largest seaport in China and was among the first coastal cities to be opened to foreign investment as an economic and technological development zone. The establishment of a branch in Qingdao will enable the Bank to enhance its level of customer support and to explore new business opportunities in the region.

As part of the Bank’s strategy to develop its China market business, BEA will continue to expand its branch network on the Mainland by establishing new branches, upgrading representative offices to full branches, and by actively establishing sub-branches in the cities where the Bank already has a presence, for additional customer support.

About BEA’s China Services

BEA is one of the top foreign banks in terms of branch coverage on the Mainland. The Bank currently has 24 outlets on the Mainland, including eleven branches (Shanghai, Shenzhen, Xiamen, Guangzhou, Zhuhai, Dalian, Xi’an, Beijing, Chengdu, Hangzhou, and Chongqing), seven sub-branches (three in Shanghai, one in Guangzhou, two in Shenzhen, and one in Dalian), and six representative offices (Fuzhou, Qingdao, Wuhan, Tianjin, Suzhou, and Dongguan).

BEA provides a wide range of banking services to a growing customer base in China. In addition to foreign currency services extended to all types of customers, the Bank offers Renminbi services to customers (except local residents) through its eight branches in Beijing, Shanghai, Shenzhen, Dalian, Guangzhou, Zhuhai, Xi’an, and Xiamen. For more details on BEA’s China services, please visit the Bank’s China website at www.hkbea.com.cn.

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For press enquiries, please contact:

Mr. Chan Kay-cheung
Executive Director and Deputy Chief Executive, BEA

Tel: (852) 3608 8238