

For Immediate Release

BEA Officially Launches Personal Renminbi Services in Hong Kong

Customers will enjoy highly attractive interest rates during promotional period

Hong Kong, 24 February 2004 – The Bank of East Asia (“BEA”) today announces the launch of its Renminbi (“CNY”) Services for Hong Kong residents. BEA’s latest offering includes deposit-taking, exchange and remittance services.

To mark the launch of the new services, BEA is providing a number of special promotional offers between 25 February 2004 and 31 May 2004. Customers who open CNY Deposit Accounts in Hong Kong will enjoy benefits including an additional, preferential interest rate on savings deposits of 0.18%, which brings the interest rate up to 0.68% per annum¹. This is significantly higher than the prevailing Hong Kong Dollar interest rate for general savings accounts.

Select customers can also enjoy interest rates of more than 0.74% per annum on one-month time deposits².

In addition, handling fees for CNY exchange will be waived and discounts will be provided on handling fees for remittances.

Dr. David K.P. Li, BEA’s Chairman and Chief Executive, said: “We are extremely pleased to be participating in the Renminbi business approved by the governments in Hong Kong and the Mainland. With attractive returns, BEA’s CNY Deposit Accounts present customers with an excellent alternative to general savings accounts.”

Having served customers in Hong Kong and the Mainland for more than eighty years, BEA has built extensive networks in both markets and is well positioned to provide Hong Kong residents with quality CNY Services. “We are already making preparations to further expand the breadth of our Personal CNY Services offering, including the provision of Renminbi cards,” Dr. Li added.

Deposit Services are available at all BEA Hong Kong branches during opening hours. The minimum initial deposit for savings accounts is just CNY200 and CNY10,000 for time deposits. Exchange and remittance services are also available for customers.

In addition to its strong branch network in Hong Kong, BEA currently has 17 outlets on the Mainland. Its Shanghai, Shenzhen, Guangzhou, Zhuhai and Dalian branches provide CNY services to all cities in China open for foreign participation. BEA's Shanghai Branch has recently been granted approval to conduct Renminbi business with locally-owned companies on the Mainland.

Remarks:

¹ Calculated using the Standard Interest rate for Renminbi Savings Account of BEA of 0.5% p.a. offered on 25 February 2004. BEA reserves the right to adjust the standard interest rate on a Renminbi Savings Account at any time.

² Calculated using the interest rate offered to the time deposit with a tenor of one month of SupremeGold Account and Supreme Account on 25 February 2004. The actual interest rate depends on the prevailing interest rate offered on the day the deposit is placed.

All terms and conditions for Renminbi Services are governed by the regulations of the Renminbi Clearing Bank in Hong Kong.

About The Bank of East Asia

Established in 1918, BEA is the largest independent local bank in Hong Kong with total consolidated assets of HK\$198 billion (US\$25 billion) as of 31 December 2003. Over the years, BEA has gained an international reputation as a professionally managed and highly prudent financial institution that understands customers' needs. The BEA Group now operates more than 100 branches and SupremeGold Centres in Hong Kong, 17 outlets in China, and maintains a strong presence in the U.S.A., Canada, the U.K., the British Virgin Islands, and Southeast Asia. For more information on BEA, please visit its website at: <http://www.hkbea.com>.

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