

For Immediate Release**BEA Launches 2004 Corporate Tax Loan Programme**

Loan Amounts Available up to 200% at Rates as Low as the Best Lending Rate -1%

Hong Kong, 15th September 2004 – The Bank of East Asia (“BEA”) today announces the launch of its Corporate Tax Loan Programme for 2004. Riding on the success of its programmes in the past two years, the Bank will offer highly competitive tax loan services to corporate clients this year.

The Corporate Tax Loan Programme will provide tax loan amounts up to 200% of the tax amount. Interest rates can be as low as the Best Lending Rate (“BLR”) minus 1% or HIBOR (whichever is higher). Currently, BEA’s BLR is set at 5%.

Mr. Adrian Li, BEA’s General Manager and Head of Corporate Banking Division, said, “Our Bank has developed close relationships with businesses in Hong Kong – not only local businesses but also multi-nationals. We are pleased to announce a new set of features that will definitely be of considerable interest to businesses of all sizes.”

This year, tax loans can be repaid in tenors ranging between 6 and 24 months, in equal monthly instalments. The arrangement fee is fixed at 0.5% of the loan amount, or HKD1,000 (whichever is higher). The financing ratio is up to 200% of the tax amount and drawdowns can be made through either the issuance of a cashier’s order to be paid directly to the government, or credited to a designated BEA corporate account.

“We are providing business clients with substantial flexibility regarding the amount they can borrow and the time they have to repay,” added Mr. Li.

To enhance customer convenience, BEA has also streamlined the application process. To apply, corporate clients simply need to submit copies of relevant documentation including their tax demand notes, business registration certificates, and bank statements for the past six months. For more details on BEA’s Corporate Tax Loan Programme, please contact the Corporate Tax Loan Hotline on 2211 1338 or 2823 9276, or visit any BEA branch.

BEA has developed a full range of corporate loan products that suit the diverse needs of its clients. In addition to corporate tax loans, the Bank also offers overdrafts, term loans, equipment financing, and loans under the SME Loan Guarantee Scheme. For more details of BEA Corporate Banking services, please visit the bank’s following websites:

BEA Main website: www.hkbea.com

BEA Corporate Cyberbanking website: www.hkbea-cyberbanking.com/corporate

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About The Bank of East Asia

Established in 1918, BEA is the largest independent local bank in Hong Kong with total assets of HKD194 billion (USD24.9 billion) as of 30th June 2004. Over the years, BEA has gained an international reputation as a professionally managed and prudent financial institution that understands customers' needs. The BEA Group now operates over 100 branches and SupremeGold Centres in Hong Kong, 20 outlets in Greater China, and maintains an extensive presence in the U.S.A., Canada, the U.K., the British Virgin Islands, and Southeast Asia.

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