



S&P and SIMAH Announce Alliance To Launch Credit Data Consortium In The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

RIYADH/LONDON, January 28 2009 – Standard & Poor's, the leading provider of financial market intelligence, and SIMAH, the Saudi Arabian credit information bureau, today announced an alliance to develop the first industry-wide commercial and corporate credit information service for Saudi banks.

The initiative involves collecting and assessing default and recovery data from 12 local banks and is a key step in the process of strengthening risk management standards in the banking industry in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA).

“This is a very important alliance for Standard & Poor's and our Risk Solutions business, and we are delighted to be working with SIMAH and its participating member banks on such a crucial project,” said Deven Sharma, President of Standard & Poor's. “Standard & Poor's is fully committed to supporting the ongoing development of banking and capital markets in the KSA, drawing on our wide range of data and analytical capabilities, and I look forward to extending this relationship to many other credit risk related activities in the coming years.”

“There is a scarcity of data in some commercial lending asset classes in KSA and in many other countries, as historically defaults have been rare,” explained Bernard O'Sullivan, Managing Director and Head of Standard & Poor's Risk Solutions in Europe, Middle East & Africa. “This has been a significant challenge to overcome for many banks. The data consortium initiative will address this by rapidly building a robust dataset reflecting the underlying factors that drive credit risk. We believe the initiative taken by SIMAH is a very positive example to others and will have attractive and far reaching benefits for the participating member banks and investors in the region.”

“SIMAH has been assigned by the banks to study the best possible options, revise them scientifically, submit them in the form of an integrated project and develop technical models that can be applied to all Saudi banks so as to measure risks,” said Nabil Abdullah Al-Mubarak, General Manager of SIMAH. “Based on that, SIMAH has conducted extensive studies to determine the requirements, know the banks' capabilities, analyze all other experiences in this regard and finally determine the entity that could carry out this project as a technical partner. Accordingly, SIMAH sent out all offers to the companies interested and we chose Standard & Poor's Risk Solutions.”

Under the initiative, the participating member banks will provide information on their mid-market and large corporate defaults, both historically and on an ongoing basis. This information will follow

criteria established by Standard & Poor's Risk Solutions and will be held on SIMAH's secure confidential database in Riyadh. In addition, information on a significant sample of performing commercial loans will be assembled and will enable Standard & Poor's Risk Solutions to develop a probability of default model for Saudi corporate debt, as well as provide industry-wide statistics on historic recovery and default trends in the Kingdom.

About Standard & Poor's

Standard & Poor's, a division of The McGraw-Hill Companies (NYSE:MHP), is the world's foremost provider of financial market intelligence, including independent credit ratings, indices, risk evaluation, investment research and data. With approximately 8,500 employees, including wholly owned affiliates, located in 23 countries and markets, Standard & Poor's is an essential part of the world's financial infrastructure and has played a leading role for more than 140 years in providing investors with the independent benchmarks they need to feel more confident about their investment and financial decisions. For more information, visit <http://www.standardandpoors.com>.

About Standard & Poor's Risk Solutions

Standard & Poor's Risk Solutions helps clients worldwide to develop, enhance, and validate their credit assessment processes, collect and analyse data, model credit risk, and train staff, working on both low default and SME credit risk. Standard & Poor's Risk Solutions leverages Standard & Poor's experience in credit assessment to help institutions manage their credit activities with confidence. For more information about Risk Solutions, visit www.risksolutions.standardandpoors.com

The analytic services provided by Standard & Poor's Risk Solutions are performed as entirely separate activities in order to preserve the independence and objectivity of each Standard & Poor's analytic process. All non-public information received by Risk Solutions is held in confidence, and Risk Solutions analysts do not disclose non-public information outside their specific analytic areas. Risk Solutions' credit risk products and services are based solely on information received by Risk Solutions. Standard & Poor's Risk Solutions has no access to information obtained by other divisions of Standard & Poor's, including Ratings Services, which may in their regular operations obtain information of a confidential nature.

About Standard & Poor's in the Gulf Cooperation Council

Standard & Poor's is the leading provider of financial market intelligence to customers in the Gulf's credit risk management, wealth management, and data and information markets. Since entering the region in the early 1990's, Standard & Poor's has become the largest provider of credit ratings in the G.C.C, rating more than 100 issuers. In equity markets, Shariah-compliant versions of Standard & Poor's global and regional equity market indices - S&P 500, S&P Europe 350, S&P Japan 500 and S&P/IFCI GCC - have created new opportunities for Islamic investors to benchmark their international investments and for asset managers to create new investment products serving the Islamic community. Standard & Poor's Fund Services launched a qualitative fund management rating service for regional asset managers in 2007. For further details on Standard & Poor's regional capabilities please visit www.gcc.standardandpoors.com

About SIMAH

The Saudi Credit Bureau – SIMAH -- is Saudi Arabia's first comprehensive Credit Bureau. SIMAH is an initiative driven by the commercial banks operating in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to provide bureau services to member credit providers to enable them to make improved lending decisions quickly and more objectively. The Saudi Credit Bureau was set up to move in line with the vision of the Saudi Arabia Monetary Agency (SAMA) to enhance risk management capability in the banking industry and the country at large.

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