

News Release

UOB Asset Management launches Sustainability Academy to deepen understanding of sustainability among its employees across Asia

Singapore, 30 October 2020 – UOB Asset Management (UOBAM) announced today it has launched a Sustainability Academy to offer a series of comprehensive training and development programmes on sustainable investing to more than 400 employees across the region¹. The in-house academy will equip employees in both investment and non-investment roles with the fundamentals of sustainable investing and help embed environmental, social and governance (ESG) considerations within the organisational culture.

The inaugural programme by the Sustainability Academy will kick off in the fourth quarter of 2020 and is a collaboration that taps investment company Robeco’s expertise in sustainable investing. Robeco is one of 20 investment managers recognised globally as leaders for their “breadth of responsible investing excellence”² among the more than 3,000 signatories of the United Nations-backed Principles for Responsible Investment (PRI). UOBAM became a PRI signatory in January 2020.

The Robeco programme comprises two modules, namely The Essentials of Sustainable Investing and The Essentials of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)³ Investing, and will cover key topics such as ESG integration, active ownership and measuring the contribution of companies to the UN SDGs.

UOBAM is the first financial institution in the world to offer Robeco’s SDG Investing module as a training course. The two modules are recognised under The Institute of Banking and Finance Singapore’s (IBF) Financial Training Scheme (FTS)⁴. Time spent by UOBAM employees on these modules will also count as Continuing Professional Development (CPD) hours, as part of the requirements financial practitioners have to meet.

Mr Thio Boon Kiat, CEO of UOB Asset Management, said, “The global emphasis on sustainable investing has grown tremendously in recent years, with ESG considerations now core to the investment philosophy

¹ UOBAM has offices in Brunei, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Singapore, Taiwan and Thailand.

² This group of 20 investment managers and 16 asset owners were selected by the United Nations-backed PRI to form the [Leaders’ Group 2020](#).

³ The [Sustainable Development Goals](#) are a set of 17 global goals set by the United Nations General Assembly in 2015, covering areas like poverty eradication, quality education, economic growth, reducing inequality and climate action.

⁴ For more information on FTS, visit <https://www.ibf.org.sg/programmes/Pages/IBF-FTS.aspx>

of major asset managers around the world. At UOBAM, we believe in investing for profit and purpose as we forge a sustainable future for the generations to come. We have taken significant steps to integrate sustainable thinking into our business, including in all our research and investment processes⁵.

“Setting up the Sustainability Academy reinforces our commitment to sustainability at UOBAM and enables us to become active stewards of sustainability for our clients and partners. Through the tie-up with Robeco, a world leader in sustainable investing, UOBAM employees will deepen their understanding of sustainability principles and nurture an ESG mindset that will permeate all aspects of our daily work.”

UOBAM and Robeco have a history of sustainability-related tie-ups. In March 2020, UOBAM launched the first bond fund focused on the UN SDGs – the United Sustainable Credit Income Fund (USCIF) – for retail investors in Singapore⁶. UOBAM Thailand and Robeco also jointly launched a sustainable global equity fund in August 2020 to retail investors in Thailand.

Mr Tom Keenan, CEO of Robeco Singapore and Regional Head of Wholesale Asia ex-Japan at Robeco, said, “We are thrilled to be the sustainable investment partner of UOBAM, which has been recognised as among the first asset managers in Asia to take steps to expand their ESG teams and to deepen their capabilities in ESG investments. We share UOBAM’s pioneering spirit and have the same goal in enhancing sustainability knowledge and embracing a strong corporate sustainability culture.

“As a global leader in sustainable investing and one of the first asset managers to develop a proprietary investing framework based on the SDGs, Robeco developed the Robeco Sustainable Investing and SDGs online education modules to address the need for education in Asia. More importantly, they clarify the trends and misconceptions around sustainable investing, take a closer look at performance and active ownership, explain what SDGs are and why they are important. We trust that supporting UOBAM with this education platform will further encourage UOBAM employees to be sustainable investing ambassadors and to have deeper conversations with investors.”

⁵ UOBAM was recently highlighted in [the Singapore Asset Management Report 2019 published by the Monetary Authority of Singapore \(MAS\)](#) for having taken meaningful steps to expand its ESG team and to deepen capabilities in ESG investments, disclosure and stewardship.

⁶ Please see UOBAM news release: [UOB Asset Management launches first sustainable bond fund focused on impact investing and stable income for retail investors](#), 27 March 2020.

The training tie-up between UOBAM and Robeco kickstarts a longer series of training and development programmes offered by the Sustainability Academy to UOBAM employees. The academy will launch a second IBF-FTS-recognised training programme in November 2020, to be offered by KPMG in Singapore, that spans topics such as sustainability reporting and regulatory expectations on ESG matters. The specially tailored programme will be conducted online for UOBAM employees across the region.

In line with UOBAM's vision to become a regional leader in sustainability in the asset management sector, its employees are also actively giving back to communities. Over the past year, they have raised funds and donated essential food and other items such as laptops to help vulnerable segments of society overcome difficulties arising from COVID-19. In addition, to keep individual and institutional investors well-informed about the importance of sustainability, UOBAM has been hosting regional seminars and workshops to share insights into market trends and investment opportunities.

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About UOB Asset Management

UOB Asset Management Ltd (UOBAM) is a wholly-owned subsidiary of United Overseas Bank Limited. Established in 1986, UOBAM has been managing collective investment schemes and discretionary funds in Singapore for more than 30 years. We currently manage 60 unit trusts in Singapore and are one of the largest unit trust managers in terms of assets under management. As at 30 September 2020, UOBAM and our subsidiaries manage about S\$33.6 billion (US\$24.8 billion) in clients' assets.

UOBAM has an extensive presence in Asia with regional business and investment offices in Brunei, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Singapore, Taiwan and Thailand. Our network includes UOB Islamic Asset Management Sdn Bhd in Malaysia. We have a joint venture with Ping An Fund Management Company Limited (China) and we have also forged strategic alliances with UTI International (India) and Wellington Management Singapore.

UOBAM is one of the most awarded fund management companies, winning 'Best Asset Management House (Regional)', 'Best Fintech Innovation in Asset Management (Singapore)' for corporate robo-adviser UOBAM Invest and 'Best Investor Education (Brunei)' at the *Asia Asset Management Best of the Best 2020 Awards*, 'Asia Fund House of the Year' and 'Best Fund House (Thailand)' at the *AsianInvestor Asset Management Awards 2020* and 2019, 'Top Investment Houses in Asian G3 Bonds' – ranked fourth at *The Asset Benchmark Research Awards 2020*, 'Best Asset Management Firm Singapore' and 'Best Asia Fixed Income Fund House Singapore' at the *International Finance Awards 2018* and 'Best Fixed Income Fund House' award at the *Morningstar Awards 2017*.

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