



WSBI and BTN Collaboration Encourages Global Financial Digitalization and Inclusion

Brussels, 16 December 2022 - World Saving and Retail Banking Institute (WSBI), in collaboration with PT Bank Tabungan Negara (Persero) Tbk (BTN), held [the 28th meeting of the WSBI Asia Pacific Regional Meeting](#). The meeting was held under the theme "Sustainable and Resilient - Savings and Retail Banks in the Post-Pandemic Era". The event was a follow-up to the results of the G20 summit in Denpasar, Bali.

WSBI Managing Director Peter Simon delivered the Paris Declaration to representatives of the Indonesian G20 Presidency. In his speech, Mr Simon insisted on the need for shared solutions to common problems that go beyond geopolitical division. To this end, he reiterated the main points of the Paris Declaration, which calls for harmonizing green taxonomies among jurisdictions following science-based, pragmatic principles.

In line with the theme, there were a number of discussion topics at the Regional Meeting, which was held on December 15-16, 2022, in Bali, Indonesia. Among them are digitalization and financial inclusion, sustainability, green finance, innovation, fintech, and payments. These topics were elaborated from different perspectives: business side and regulatory.

WSBI delegation was led by WSBI – ESBG Managing Director, Peter Simon and the meeting saw the participation of many members such as the President Director of Bank BTN, Haru Koesmahargyo, Shantan Yoosiri Senior Executive Vice President of Government Saving Bank Thailand, and a number of delegates from various countries and banks such as Imagin, CaixaBank, the Sparkassestiftung for International Cooperation, Germany, the Saving Bank of Thailand, Cambodian Bank, Xalk Bank Uzbekistan, Bostwana Savings Bank, Bostwana, the European Union Delegation to ASEAN, the European Investment Bank, European Union.

This very intense three-day event was a great chance to concretely discuss best practices and share strategies both from the perspective of regulators and the banking industry. Participants learnt and discussed practical solutions to improve the reliability of green finance product data. Tools and strategies were presented for very advanced banks as well as for institutions catering for the less well-off. The European Investment Bank and the Indonesian Ministry for Housing and Public Works gave a bunch of concrete projects that are being launched in the region where socially-responsible banks can play a crucial role while developing their green finance portfolio.



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Digitalisation and payments were also discussed in the framework of the post-pandemic economic landscape. Panellists and participants focused on how mobile banking solutions can improve financial inclusion while increasing banks' profitability. Agent banking and the impact that digital transformation is having on it were further explored and tested in the field through a study visit. Participants got the chance to visit a branch of Bank BTN in Denpasar and learn best practices on mortgages and customer segmentation. The visit ended at an agent banker outpost where BTN commitments towards financial inclusion were discussed.

WSBI member banks in the region further agreed on a set of priorities for next year, such as the establishment of a series of cross-regional thematic networks to allow savings and retail banks around the work to regularly work together and exchange best practices on sustainability, cybersecurity, and financial inclusion. Participants also discussed launching exchange programmes for employees among member banks as well as working, at a regional level, on digital cross-border QR-code-based payments.

“One of the solutions to have sustainable and resilient Savings and Retail Banking in the post-pandemic era is by strengthening the digitalization of the banking system through the acceleration of digitalization has become the key activity in any industry around the globe, we are still facing challenges to utilize the impact of economic growth to the poor and vulnerable individuals in every corner of the earth,” said Haru Koesmahargyo, President Director of Bank BTN.

“Financial inclusion can be one of the solutions to address these challenges. The availability of easy, affordable, and appropriate access to financial services can provide a household with significant aid and stimulate society's behaviour to manage their financial resources.

Moreover, the endorsement of the Global Partnership of Financial Inclusion to the G20 leaders and other stakeholders regarding digital transformation for financial inclusion also shows that a concrete action plan to implement a well-regulated environment is still in place, which will drive the impacts of financial inclusion more efficiently and as the SOE's Bank, BTN are fully committed to contributing in the success of this initiatives.

The WSBI event is an excellent opportunity for Bank BTN to broaden our perspective towards our endeavour to provide financial education and financial inclusion for everybody in our country. Discussing and brainstorming with our fellow counterparts will provide Bank BTN with powerful insights and a practical approach so that our business can run in line with our social purpose towards a better future for the people of our country. The Indonesian people are known as avid users of the internet(thejakartapost.com, 2019). Our adaptability and ability to embrace new technology should be used to our advantage in bringing financial education and financial inclusion towards our fellow countrymen on a larger scale in the shortest amount of time available. As more people embrace digitalization, things will take shape easily. We can start introducing more financial instruments over time which hopefully by the end of the day accelerate Indonesia's economic growth, improving the welfare of our country in general.”



“Furthermore”, Jasmin - Managing Director of Distribution & Funding BTN added – “this three days event, participants not only gather to discuss and share information in class formally but also joined in the field visit. BTN Denpasar Branch is selected to be the first destination participants visit in. They learn about how BTN implemented digitalisation and payment through smart branches, mobile banking and online property portal. Following this, participants visit one of the agent banking in Denpasar, which have been servicing open accounts, cash withdrawal, cash deposits, payments and transfers for customers in a remote area, as well as distributing government programs.

During his speech, Peter Simon, Managing Director of WSBI-ESBG said that banking is the main line of defence to support economic stability. After the pandemic, economic challenges remain more exigent, especially in the European continent. “After the pandemic is over, many people hoped that we can go back to what it was before January 2020 just in a few months. Now it’s clear that the pandemic left a number of permanent changes for us. The Ukrainian crisis and the geopolitical outlook is more complicated, and rising inflation in Europe and North America make it difficult for us to adapt to the changes,” Mr Simon noted.

“Our biggest challenge in this new century is to take the seemingly abstract idea of sustainable development and turn it into a reality for everyone in the world,” he added while assessing that there are a number of priorities, including the investment in nature-based solutions, proactively collaborating with communities, dematerializing business models and improving effective global governance and collaboration.

“I believe that there is a compelling reason for optimism in the future. However, Sustainability and Resilience will only be able to be continued and achieved if we have a mature strategy,” he concluded his remarks.

Rionald Silaban, the Director General of State Assets (Dirjen KN) of the Ministry of Finance, who participated in the meeting virtually, said that the pandemic and geopolitical conditions affected the economies of countries in an unforeseen way.

“Although there are many challenges, signs of economic recovery are also visible. Banks play a very crucial role in supporting economic recovery, expanding access to banking services and on the other hand facing profitability challenges while adapting to changes in public consumption,” Mr. Silaban said.

“However, this has resulted in opportunities for banks, such as digitalization, which brings unique opportunities for them to improve their services and add new customers, especially from micro and medium enterprises,” said Rionald.

Concluding his remarks, Mr. Rionald added that Fintech has the potential to realize greater financial inclusion and provide innovative solutions to answer the challenges faced by the retail banking sector.

**About WSBI**

Founded in 1924, WSBI brings together savings and retail banks from 64 countries, representing savings and retail banks worldwide. WSBI focuses on international regulatory issues that affect the savings and retail banking industry and provides a platform for knowledge exchange between member banks. Its aim is to achieve sustainable, inclusive, and balanced growth and job creation. Supporting a diversified range of financial services to meet customer needs, WSBI favors an inclusive form of globalization that is just and fair. It supports international efforts to advance financial access and financial usage for everyone. WSBI recognizes that there are always lessons to be learned from savings and retail banks from different environments and economic circumstances. It, therefore, fosters the exchange of experience and best practices among its members and supports their advancement as sound, well-governed, and inclusive financial institutions.

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