

Citi - continuing to enhance its leadership in Thai wealth management

Vira-anong C. Phutrakul, Managing Director, Consumer Business Manager, Citi tells Hubbis how Thailand's rapidly-ageing society is pushing the demand for newer products in the wealth managers space.

THAI INVESTORS ARE INCREASINGLY DEMANDING more choices when it comes to their investment options, and wealth managers have to respond to that trend, according to Phutrakul.



VIRA-ANONG C. PHUTRAKUL
Citi

Citi launched the offshore wealth management funds here in Thailand about two years ago, and is still the only provider able to do that, she says.

“We now have funds that are offshore by nature, USD-denominated, and soon we will be adding Euro currency into the offering to our clients,” she says.

In the past, because of regulations, mutual funds that Citi could offer could be local and/or offshore but had to be wrapped by a local asset manager, and in Thai baht denomination, she explains.

“So, obviously, this has been an excellent development for the market, where our customers and investors have a lot more choices in terms of diversification,” she says.

Since launch, when Citi could only offer mutual funds from nine international fund houses, the firm has also added international-graded bonds, which has further diversified the client offering.

“We believe offshore investments are significant for the Thailand market, where for a very long time, Thai investors didn't have too many choices,” she explains.

For the most part, investors have been putting their money in deposits followed by money market type mutual funds, she laments. “It's only a few years ago that they ventured into the equity and fixed income market.”

In a rapidly ageing society, more and more Thais are also planning for retirement, and thus it becomes doubly necessary for them to get higher yields. “And thus, being able to diversify into multi-markets and instruments will be most important.” ■