

Kasikorn Asset Management's vision for Thai distribution

The firm is looking to take its product offering, infrastructure, and digital and data capabilities to the next level as it strives to bring something new and wholly more international to wealthy Thai investors, explains Benjarong Techamuanvivit.

The key to wealth management, across most of Asia's markets, is balancing demand and supply.

Customers' needs are evolving rapidly and getting more complex, requiring providers to fit new products to their demands. All this has to be achieved within a tougher regulatory framework that is also changing.

by offering investment products which now span global markets. On offer are a mix of asset types, specific industries and regions.

And the firm is eager to expand direct investment capabilities to the regional level, says Benjarong Techamuanvivit, first senior vice president in the strategic planning division.

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**BENJARONG
TECHAMUANVIVIT**
Kasikorn Asset Management

In Thailand, Kasikorn Asset Management (KAsset) has emerged as one of the country's leading firms of its type

At the moment, it has a domestic market share of around one-quarter in various funds – ranging from mutual funds to

index funds to foreign investment funds (FIFs) to money market vehicles, explains Techamuanvivit.

The firm has also kept a keen eye on service, by ensuring its technology is up-to-date and multi-channel, making it relevant to however clients want to invest.

A BALANCED STRATEGIC VISION

Doing this via digital solutions is very much front-of-mind for the firm as part of its strategy.

This includes enhanced platforms that make investment easy, under the banner of 'Simplify Your Investment Life'.

For example, KAsset has said it wants to introduce investment portfolios customised for individuals' financial aspirations. And in line with this, in the pipeline is a new service called 'Portfolio Simulation Program'.

This will allow investors to find the most suitable investment plans available.

across the globe. In February 2016, for example, besides FIFs, KAsset introduced K-AEC for direct investment in ASEAN stocks.

Further, demographic shifts have motivated KAsset to develop products that cater to the needs of every market.

For instance, K-GA is suitable for investors who prefer to diversify their investments in various types of assets around the globe.

K-STAR, meanwhile, offers automatic investment unit redemption once the investment units reach their expected value. This allows investors with little time to follow the markets to yield profits.

Additionally, K-GINCOME is for investors which want a regular cash flow.

Tangible growth goals for KAsset

With all the plans that KAsset has for 2016, it says that it expects to attract about 27,000 new customers over the course of the year.

The firm is also continuing to focus on growing AUM - from THB1.136 trillion as of December 31, 2015, by 4% year-on-year.

with online functionality for its range of mutual funds and other businesses.

When it comes to the product offering too, she says KAsset is not just focused on launching new products.

Instead, there is an ongoing review process to determine which ones to take off the shelf and which products need to be launched.

The ASEAN-focused funds are a good example. Plus, having such a capability also indicates the way forward.

"In the future there may be some other asset class that we can leverage via our research," says Techamuanvivit.

The local knowledge the firm has is also important.

"We do company visits and research work ourselves and, of course, if we are talking about the longer term - three years onwards - I think the middle-income clients will still need our advisory service," she adds. ■

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Yet while enhanced distribution will enable the firm to reach new investors, Techamuanvivit says product development remains a cornerstone of the business.

Externally, KAsset is looking to further diversify its investment options, driven by what it foresees as economic interconnectedness. More specifically, the firm has plans to extend investments

IMPROVING INSIGHTS

Amid these growth plans, Techamuanvivit's objectives, she adds, include improving business analytics.

"We are enhancing our customer relationship management capability."

These initiatives will also form the foundation to develop mobile tools along