



Press release

Kuala Lumpur, 26 November, 2019

AXA EMPOWERS 3 MALAYSIAN SMEs TO TAKE CONTROL WITH RM300,000 WORTH OF CASH & PRIZES

ArtVenture with Sarah, Bondahaven and Me Books Asia emerged as the top 3 winners of **AXA #TakeControl SME Challenge 2019**. The prize giving ceremony was held at the head office of AXA Affin General Insurance Berhad (AXA), Kuala Lumpur yesterday, graced by the presence of En. Syed Nahar Syed Harun, Deputy Director of Corporate Management Division, SME Corporation Malaysia; Gan Teck Hooi, Founder of ICFO Solutions; Kristine Ng, CEO of Fundaztic; Wayne Lim, Group CEO of Malaysia SME® Media Group and En. Rizal Bin Mohd Yusof, Head of Strategy & Planning, SME Banking, AFFIN Bank Berhad.



Emmanuel Nivet, CEO of AXA together with the top 3 winners of AXA #TakeControl SME Challenge 2019. Launched in July 2019, the Challenge aimed to empower 3 most aspirational entrepreneurs with the skills, funding and know-how to take control of their business growth and future. Winners were each rewarded with cash and prizes worth more than RM100,000 to take their business to greater heights.

The top 3 winners — **ArtVenture with Sarah**, a homegrown brand dedicated to helping children grow and discover fun through arts and crafts; **Bondahaven**, a breastfeeding specialist offering lactation consultation services and spa to mothers and **Me Books Asia**, a children bookstore aiming to make world-class education



content accessible for children across Asia — were each rewarded with cash and prizes worth more than RM100,000 to take their business to greater heights:

- RM20,000 cash;
- 1-year AXA Business Advantage Plus (Enhanced) coverage worth RM 3,000;
- media coverage on MALAYSIA SME® business newspaper worth RM 59,000;
- RM 10,000 QU points on Qu-Exchange platform;
- 3 months personal business coaching by iCommunity worth up to RM13,500;
- RM2,000 Fundaztic Bonus on Fundaztic peer-to-peer lending platform and
- Preferential rate for SME financing by AFFIN Bank Group.

Launched in July 2019, AXA #TakeControl SME Challenge aimed to empower 3 most aspirational entrepreneurs with the skills, funding and know-how to **take control** of their business growth and future. Recognising the growing prominence of SMEs in the country's economy, AXA is committed to play an active role in supporting SMEs throughout their journey, in line with its Payer-to-Partner strategy.

Emmanuel Nivet, CEO of AXA and also one of the panel judges, attributed the low coverage rate among SMEs to their lack of awareness on the need for business insurance and the mentality which does not prioritise risk. "With our experience, expertise and resources, we can create stronger awareness on risk mitigation topics among SMEs and offer the right solutions. We are proud to see how our contestants have grown and progressed throughout the Challenge. It shows more entrepreneurs are becoming aware of how they can find a reliable partner on business protection and risk management, while they focus on building and growing their business," he said.

AXA #TakeControl SME Challenge was open to all Malaysian SMEs nationwide. Interested participants were encouraged to submit their business ideas online via www.axasme.com. 10 finalists were shortlisted to undergo a structured business coaching to refine their business idea prior to a final face-to-face pitch with the panel of judges consisting of Emmanuel Nivet, CEO of AXA; Syed Nahar Syed Harun, Deputy Director of SME Corp Corporate Management Division; Ferdaus Toh bin Abdullah, Deputy CEO of Affin Islamic Bank Berhad; Wayne Lim, Group CEO of Malaysia SME® Media Group and Gan Teck Hooi, Founder of ICFO Solutions.

During the ceremony, Emmanuel also commended the tenacity, passion and excellent business tactics demonstrated by contestants during the Challenge.

"Selecting the top 3 winners was not an easy task given all the great business ideas that we had received. Each of our winner's journey into business success tells a story fuelled by strong entrepreneurial spirit and vision, which we believe will serve as an inspiration for others follow. We look forward to their greater achievements and contributions, which augur well for our local community, business landscape and economy," Emmanuel added.

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The AXA Group is a worldwide leader in insurance and asset management, with 171,000 employees serving 105 million clients in 61 countries. In 2016, IFRS revenues amounted to Euro 100.2 billion and IFRS underlying earnings to Euro 5.7 billion. AXA had Euro 1,429 billion in assets under management as of December 31, 2016.

The AXA ordinary share is listed on compartment A of Euronext Paris under the ticker symbol CS (ISN FR 0000120628 – Bloomberg: CS FP – Reuters: AXAF.PA). AXA's American Depository Share is also quoted on the OTC QX platform under the ticker symbol AXAHY.

The AXA Group is included in the main international SRI indexes, such as Dow Jones Sustainability Index (DJSI) and FTSE4GOOD.

It is a founding member of the UN Environment Programme's Finance Initiative (UNEP FI) Principles for Sustainable Insurance and a signatory of the UN Principles for Responsible Investment.

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ABOUT AXA International New Markets

AXA International & New Markets provides protection to customer, people and businesses alike – so that they can pursue their lives and ventures with peace of mind – in fifth geographies, Asia, Middle-east, Africa, Europe & Latin America, and gathers the smaller and high-growth markets of the AXA Group. AXA International & New Markets is part of the AXA Group, a worldwide leader in insurance and asset management, with 160,000 employees serving 105 million clients in 64 countries. In 2017, IFRS revenues amounted to Euro 98.5 billion and underlying earnings to Euro 6.0 billion. AXA had Euro 1,439 billion in assets under management as of December 31, 2017.

About AXA Affin General Insurance Berhad

AXA Affin General Insurance Berhad was incorporated in Malaysia on July 12th, 1975 as a licensed general insurance company. It is an associate company of AFFIN Bank. As one of the fastest growing insurance companies in Malaysia and leader in medical and health insurance (Source: ISM), the Company protects over 1.4 million Malaysians, supported by over 800 employees in 23 offices and its multi-distribution channels which include brokers, bank partners, franchise and more than 5,000 agents nationwide.

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Corporate Responsibility strategy:

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