

# Business review

## Description of business

### Introduction

The Royal Bank of Scotland Group plc is the holding company of one of the world's largest banking and financial services groups, with a market capitalisation of £44.4 billion at the end of 2007. Headquartered in Edinburgh, the Group operates in the UK, US and internationally through its two principal subsidiaries, the Royal Bank and NatWest. Both the Royal Bank and NatWest are major UK clearing banks whose origins go back over 275 years. In the US, the Group's subsidiary Citizens is ranked the ninth largest commercial banking organisation by deposits. The Group has a large and diversified customer base and provides a wide range of products and services to personal, commercial and large corporate and institutional customers.

The Group had total assets of £1,900.5 billion and owners' equity of £53.0 billion at 31 December 2007. It is strongly capitalised with a total capital ratio of 11.2% and tier 1 capital ratio of 7.3% as at 31 December 2007.

### Organisational structure and business overview

The Group's activities are organised in the following business divisions: Corporate Markets (comprising Global Banking & Markets and UK Corporate Banking), Retail Markets (comprising Retail and Wealth Management), Ulster Bank, Citizens, RBS Insurance and Manufacturing. A description of each of the divisions is given below.

**Corporate Markets** is focused on the provision of debt and risk management services to medium and large businesses and financial institutions in the UK and around the world.

**Global Banking & Markets ('GBM')** is a leading banking partner to major corporations and financial institutions around the world, providing an extensive range of debt financing, risk management and investment services to its customers. GBM has a wide range of clients across its chosen markets. It has relationships with an overwhelming majority of the largest UK, European and US corporations and institutions. GBM's principal activity in the US is conducted through RBS Greenwich Capital.

**UK Corporate Banking** is the largest provider of banking, finance and risk management services to UK corporate customers. Through its network of relationship managers across the country it distributes the full range of Corporate Markets' products and services to companies.

**Retail Markets** leads the co-ordination and delivery of our multi-brand retail strategy across our product range and comprises Retail (including our direct channels businesses) and Wealth Management.

**Retail** comprises both the Royal Bank and NatWest retail brands, and a number of direct providers offering a full range of banking products and related financial services to the personal, premium and small business markets across several distribution channels.

In core retail banking, Retail offers a comprehensive product range across the personal and small business market: money transmission, savings, loans, mortgages and insurance. Customer choice and product flexibility are central to the retail

banking proposition and customers are able to access services through a full range of channels, including the largest network of branches and ATMs in the UK, the internet and the telephone.

Retail also includes the Group's non-branch based retail businesses that issue a comprehensive range of credit and charge cards to personal and corporate customers and provides card processing services for retail businesses. Retail is the leading merchant acquirer in Europe and ranks third globally.

It also includes Tesco Personal Finance, The One account, MINT, First Active UK, Direct Line Financial Services and Lombard Direct, all of which offer products to customers through direct channels principally in the UK. In continental Europe, Retail offers a similar range of products through the RBS and Comfort Card brands.

**Wealth Management** provides private banking and investment services to its clients through a number of leading UK and overseas private banking subsidiaries and offshore banking businesses. Coutts is one of the world's leading international wealth managers with offices in Switzerland, Dubai, Monaco, Hong Kong and Singapore, as well as its premier position in the UK. Adam & Company is the major private bank in Scotland. The offshore banking businesses – The Royal Bank of Scotland International and NatWest Offshore – deliver retail banking services to local and expatriate customers, principally in the Channel Islands, the Isle of Man and Gibraltar.

**Ulster Bank Group** including First Active, provides a comprehensive range of retail and wholesale financial services in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland, supported by an extensive network of branch and business centres. Retail Markets operates in the personal and affluent banking sectors. Corporate Markets provides a wide range of services in the commercial, corporate and wealth markets. RBS's European Consumer Finance ('ECF') activities, previously part of RBS Retail Markets, are now managed within Ulster Bank. ECF provides consumer finance products, particularly card-based revolving credits and fixed-term loans, in Germany and the Benelux countries.

**Citizens** is the second largest commercial banking organisation in New England and the ninth largest commercial banking organisation in the US measured by deposits. Citizens provides retail and corporate banking services under the Citizens brand in Connecticut, Delaware, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York state, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island and Vermont and the Charter One brand in Illinois, Indiana, Michigan and Ohio. Through its branch network Citizens provides a full range of retail and corporate banking services, including personal banking, residential mortgages and cash management.

In addition, Citizens engages in a wide variety of commercial lending, consumer lending, commercial and consumer deposit products, merchant credit card services, trust services and retail investment services. Citizens includes RBS Lynk, our merchant acquiring business, and Kroger Personal Finance, our credit card joint venture with the second largest US supermarket group.

**RBS Insurance** is the second largest general insurer in the UK, by gross written premiums. It sells and underwrites retail and SME insurance over the telephone and internet, as well as through

brokers and partnerships. Direct Line, Churchill and Privilege sell general insurance products direct to the customer. Through its International Division, RBS Insurance sells general insurance, mainly motor, in Spain, Germany and Italy. The Intermediary and Broker Division sells general insurance products through independent brokers.

**Manufacturing** supports the customer-facing businesses and provides operational, technology and customer support in telephony, account management, lending and money transmission, global purchasing, property and other services.

Manufacturing drives optimum efficiencies and supports income growth across multiple brands and channels by using a single, scalable platform and common processes wherever possible. It also leverages the Group's purchasing power and has become the centre of excellence for managing large-scale and complex change.

The expenditure incurred by Manufacturing relates to costs principally in respect of the Group's banking and insurance operations in the UK and Ireland. These costs reflect activities that are shared between the various customer-facing divisions and consequently cannot be directly attributed to individual divisions. Instead, the Group monitors and controls each of its customer-facing divisions on revenue generation and direct costs whilst in Manufacturing such control is exercised through appropriate efficiency measures and targets. For financial reporting purposes the Manufacturing costs have been allocated to the relevant customer-facing divisions on a basis management considers to be reasonable.

**ABN AMRO** is a major international banking group with a leading position in international payments and a strong investment banking franchise with particular strengths in emerging markets, as well as offering a range of retail and commercial financial services around the world via regional business units in Europe, the Netherlands, North America, Latin America and Asia.

As discussed on page 28, ABN AMRO was acquired by the Consortium Banks in October 2007 through the Group's subsidiary, RFS Holdings. The ABN AMRO business units that will be retained by RBS are principally the global wholesale businesses and international retail businesses in Asia and the Middle East. In due course, these will be integrated with the Group's existing business and will further diversify the Group's global reach.

**The Centre** comprises group and corporate functions, such as capital raising, finance, risk management, legal, communications and human resources. The Centre manages the Group's capital requirements and Group-wide regulatory projects and provides services to the operating divisions.

### **Competition**

The Group faces intense competition in all the markets it serves. In the UK, the Group's principal competitors are the other UK retail and commercial banks, building societies and the other major international banks represented in London.

Competition for corporate and institutional customers in the UK is from UK banks and from large foreign financial institutions who are also active and offer combined investment and commercial banking capabilities. In asset finance, the Group competes with banks and specialised asset finance providers, both captive and non-captive. In European and Asian corporate and institutional banking markets the Group competes with the large domestic banks active in these markets and with the major international banks.

In the small business banking market, the Group competes with other UK clearing banks, specialist finance providers and building societies.

In the personal banking segment the Group competes with UK banks and building societies, major retailers, life assurance companies and internet-only players. In the mortgage market the Group competes with UK banks and building societies. The Group's life assurance businesses compete with Independent Financial Advisers and life assurance companies.

In the UK credit card market large retailers and specialist card issuers, including major US operators, are active in addition to the UK banks. Competitive activity is across a number of dimensions including introductory and longer term pricing, loyalty and reward schemes, and packaged benefits. In addition to physical distribution channels, providers compete through direct marketing activity and the internet. The market remains competitive, both between issuers and with other payment methods.

In Europe, Asia and the Middle East, the enlarged Group now competes in retail banking with local and international banks. In a number of these markets there are regulatory barriers to entry or expansion, and the state ownership of banks. Competition is generally intensifying as more players enter markets that are perceived to be de-regulating and offer significant growth potential.

In Wealth Management, The Royal Bank of Scotland International competes with other UK and international banks to offer offshore banking services. Coutts and Adam & Company compete as private banks with UK clearing and private banks, and with international private banks. Competition in wealth management activities has intensified as banks have increased their focus on competing for affluent and high net worth customers.

RBS Insurance competes in personal lines insurance and, to a limited extent, in commercial insurance. There is strong competition from a range of insurance companies which now operate telephone and internet direct sales businesses. Competition in the UK motor market remains particularly intense, and price comparison internet sites now play a major role in the marketplace. RBS Insurance also competes with local insurance companies in the direct motor insurance markets in Spain, Italy and Germany.