

Baker Tilly Cambodia: Ready to go full force after pandemic

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Baker Tilly Cambodia Managing Partner Oknha Tan Khee Meng (2nd from R) receives the “ASEAN Chinese Professional Outstanding Award” and “ASEAN Chinese Enterprise Professional Award”. Supplied

The Cambodia branch of Baker Tilly International, one of the world’s leading accountancy and business advisory networks, is ready to go ‘full force’, with the Kingdom now on the road to recovery.

Baker Tilly International network’s firms have total staff strength of nearly 40,000 people across 700 plus offices in 148 countries and territories in Asia-Pacific, Middle East, Africa, Europe, North America and Latin America, with its global office located in London, United Kingdom.

In an interview at his office in Phnom Penh, Oknha Tan Khee Meng, Managing Partner of Baker Tilly (Cambodia) Co., Ltd., said they are now more confident to face the future and capture the opportunities, after facing and overcoming the challenges during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Cambodia is now on the post-recovery stage, after going through the ravages of the pandemic for more than two years.

“The economy has become more resilient since the re-opening of Cambodia to the outside world in November 2021,” he said. “We can see the momentum post-recovery.”

Like everyone else, Baker Tilly Cambodia was affected by the pandemic.

“It was something that the world has not experienced in more than a hundred years,” he pointed out.

The pandemic, according to him, was followed by the war in Ukraine, which also affected the global business sector and slowed down the flow of investments to many countries, including Cambodia.

“Cambodia has been doing very well in this post-pandemic situation. The economy is growing stronger. There is an increase in tourism and increase in factory output, which offset the adverse effects of the pandemic and the Russia-Ukraine conflict,” he noted.

According to Tan, their company continued to grow and prosper, despite of the many challenges posed by the situation.

“In fact, we achieved growth in both 2020 and 2021,” he noted. “We were very fortunate that we were able to overcome the situation very well.”

Tan said they have to adapt to the pandemic.

“We had to respond to the situation. We adapted new technologies, we changed our working method,” he said, pointing out that the pandemic forced them to transfer to an online working environment. “The fact that we were able to achieve growth despite all the challenges is a testament to the effort put up by the staffs,” Tan stressed. “They were very cooperative.”

Baker Tilly Cambodia currently employs more than a hundred staff in their two offices in Phnom Penh.

The pandemic also did not stop Baker Tilly Cambodia from being recognised for their outstanding work it was doing in the Kingdom.

Tan himself received the “ASEAN Chinese Professional Outstanding Award” and “ASEAN Chinese Enterprise Professional Award”.

Baker Tilly Cambodia, meanwhile, received the “Best Companies to Work for in Asia” recognition in 2020 and 2021. The award, courtesy of HR Asia, recognises the companies in the region with exemplary working environments. Very few companies in Cambodia have received the award to date.

“Our emphasis on teamwork, bonding and staff engagement has paid off,” he stressed. Tan said they have no plans yet to expand to other provinces and cities in the Kingdom.

“Most of our clients are based in Phnom Penh, so our focus is here for now,” he said. What we are planning to expand is the scope of our services, especially the ones we have started during the pandemic,” Tan added, mentioning cyber-security and technology consulting.

“We are more into vertical expansion for now,” he said, adding that they are set to transfer to a new, much bigger owned office tower in Koh Pich (Diamond Island) early next year.

Originally from Malaysia, Tan is the current president of the Malaysian Business Chamber of Cambodia (MBCC). He is also a member of Cambodia’s Government-Private Sector Forum, Representatives of Employers’ Association in National Council on Minimum Wage (NCMW), and an advisor to the Tax Working Group of Chinese Chamber of Commerce and General Department of Taxation in Cambodia.

The company’s website lists the following high-level affiliations of Oknha Tan : Fellow Member of the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (UK); Chartered Accountant of the Malaysian Institute of Accountants (MIA); and Member of the ASEAN Chartered Professional Accountants.

A few months back, King Sihamoni bestowed the title of Oknha to Tan “It’s great honour for me. It inspires and encourages me to continue my journey, to do better and more for Cambodia,” he stressed.

Baker Tilly Cambodia, which entered the Cambodian market in 2007, offers a wide range of professional services related to accounting and business consultancy, including audit & assurance, taxation, accounting service, company secretarial works, forensics & investigation, corporate recovery & restructuring and insolvency management, among others.

The company operates according to this principle: “Best Place to Work, Best Firm to Partner With.”

Its clients include many of the top multi-national and local companies in Cambodia that are engaged in construction, insurance, real estate, banking, food & beverage, among other businesses.