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By moving overseas, expats pocket more cash

*** Expat Explorer survey reveals the average expat earns \$400 extra a week or \$21,000 a year ***

*** Singapore named the best place in the world to live as an expat for the fourth year in a row ***

*** Vietnam ranks second among six surveyed ASEAN countries and nineteenth globally in overall league table ***

*** Vietnam ranks the first place in the world helping expats save more and have more disposable income ***

By taking a job overseas, an expat will add on average US\$21,000 to their annual salary – enough to buy a new car, pay off the average household’s debt twice over, or cover your rent for two years¹ – according to HSBC’s 11th annual Expat Explorer survey.

The world’s leading international bank’s research has also revealed savvy workers shop around to make the most of their skill set with 45% receiving more money for doing exactly the same work abroad while 28% said they moved for a promotion.

By moving to Switzerland expats can enjoy an average salary increase of a whopping US\$61,000. Unsurprisingly the Alpine country also boasts the world’s highest pay-packets with an average annual expat salary, of US\$202,865.

Territory	Average annual expat salary	Territory	Average annual expat salary
1. Switzerland	\$202,865	6. United Arab Emirates	\$155,039
2. USA	\$185,119	7. India	\$131,759
3. Hong Kong	\$178,706	8. Indonesia	\$127,980
4. Mainland China	\$172,678	9. Japan	\$127,362
5. Singapore	\$162,172	10. Australia	\$125,803

¹ Average household consumer credit debt £7,840, June 2018 <https://themoneycharity.org.uk/money-statistics/>; Average private rent in England £675 per month (Valuation Office Agency, April 2017–March 2018 <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/private-rental-market-statistics#2018>).

The U.S. came in second place with an average expat salary of US\$185,119 followed by Hong Kong in third with US\$178,706.

Mainland China's booming economy has fuelled an average salary jump from US\$34,093 in 2016 to US\$172,678 this year. With international businesses eager to appeal to Chinese consumers, there are big rewards up for grabs for hard-working expats.

Meanwhile, expats in Vietnam reveal that annually they earn on average US\$90,408 with 31% of them seeing an income rise of 25% and above. Vietnam ranks first place in the world with nearly three quarters (72%) say moving to Vietnam helps them save more while 72% also agree that they have more disposable income than they did in their home country. Both proportions are higher than the aforementioned global average (52% for savings and 56% for disposable income). The most popular purpose of their saving or investment still belongs to retirement (43%), followed by buying the first/next property (30%). Nevertheless, when it comes to property ownership, one-fourth (26%) of expats own property in Vietnam, while the global average is 36%.

Expats experience other material benefits by moving abroad. More than half (55%) of expats in Vietnam say they take more holidays; many also live in a better property (41%), have more household staff (39%) and spend more on children's education (16%).

Why did expats move to Vietnam? The top three reasons listed included finding a new challenge (26%), progressing their career (26%) and improving their quality of life (24%). With these aspirations in mind, almost half (47%) agree that Vietnam is a good place for expats who want to progress their career while expats in the Hongkong and US are most likely to agree, with 72% and 71% respectively saying they are good places to progress their careers, higher than the global average (56%).

Expat employment also comes with its perks. A vast majority (54%) of expats in Vietnam receive benefits as part of their employment contract with 73% receiving health and medical allowances, 57% an annual trip home or airfare allowance, and 42% accommodation allowance compared to the global average 43%, 17% and 18% in respective order. Although the average income for an expat in Vietnam is US\$90,000, fewer expats have financial concerns than among expats globally thanks partly to a reasonable cost of living and good allowances.

However, there may be clouds in the expat sky. Globally, although 50% feel confident about the local economy, nearly one third are concerned that economic uncertainty (24%) and political uncertainty (29%) in host country may affect their financial well-being. The picture, meanwhile, is slightly different in Vietnam. Two-thirds (66%) of expats say they feel confident about the Vietnamese economy. In regard to their financial wellbeing, the issues that most concern them are a) more restrictions on moving their money across countries (37%), b) economic uncertainty globally (24%) and c) less favourable exchange rate (22%), less job security for expats and their partner (22%) in Vietnam

Expat Explorer league table

The Expat Explorer overall league table ranks each country or territory using a score that summarises expats' views on economics, experience and family life aspects in their host country.

Looking for more money and a wider social circle? Singapore is rated the best destination for the fourth year in a row, followed closely by New Zealand, Germany, Canada and Bahrain. This year,

Vietnam has increased its ranking from 23rd to 19th place as a country where expats are eager to live and work.

Singapore leads the world for the whole expat package

The best places to live and work as an expat	Change from 2017	The best places to live and work as an expat	Change from 2017
1. Singapore	=	6. Australia	-1
2. New Zealand	=	7. Sweden	-1
3. Germany	=	8. Switzerland	=
4. Canada	=	9. Taiwan	+3
5. Bahrain	+4	10. UAE	-3
		19. Vietnam	+4

A combination of strong economic, working, family, social and wellbeing ratings makes Singapore the global leader for expats yet again this year. No matter their age, gender, circumstances, nationality or career, expats enjoying life here all agree it's tough to beat.

Vietnam stays relatively competitive in the eyes of expats in terms of economic elements. The country ranks 10th in the Economics sub league table, the second high after Singapore (third) among the six ASEAN countries. In Economics, Vietnam ranks the first place in the world helping expats save more and have more disposable income (both 72%).

The country, however, receives less favourable feedback when it comes to Experience (rank 17th) and Family (rank 26th). Only 42% of expats in Vietnam agree that they enjoy the better overall quality of life including everything from health to culture compared to more than half (52%) of expats across the world saying so about their host country. Thinking about their early experience of life as an expat in Vietnam, under one third (27%) of expats enjoy the ease of organising finances (e.g. bank account, insurance, paying taxes) and more than one third (35%) experience healthcare issues such as local doctor and insurance without difficulty (global average 43% and 46% respectively). Besides that, just 18% of expat parents agree that the quality of child care in Vietnam is better than that in their home country, compared to global average of 38%.

However, work is less stressful than it was at home for almost 40% of expats say they are more fulfilled working in Vietnam than they were at home. With work colleagues making up the majority of the expat social circle, getting on well at work means getting on well in other areas of life. The Vietnamese workplace offers that too, with 35% of expats here saying they can socialise at work better than in their home country. All in all, 92% of expats working in Vietnam say they are as happy or happier working here than they were at home.

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“There are many reasons to move overseas, such as career progression, a better life for your family or just to embark on a new adventure. One thing is clear, those who take the leap enjoy a world of different experiences, gaining new skills and learning about themselves along the way,” says John Goddard, Head of HSBC Expat. “Making that first step abroad requires courage but the rewards are well worth it. If you are thinking of taking the plunge into a new life, there is a lot to consider, whether it’s your visa, bank account or where you are going to live. Planning is key so that you can focus on what really matters – meeting new people, discovering a new country and finding a new perspective.”

Sabbir Ahmed, Head of Retail Banking and Wealth Management, HSBC Vietnam, said: “This year, findings from Expat Explorer survey show Vietnam is a promising host country for expats who are seeking both opportunities and challenges to boost and develop their careers. We expect Vietnam to improve several areas to enhance experience of expats and their families by developing further the environment, educational programmes and financial services.”

Expat Explorer online:

Report and country comparisons: <https://expatexplorer.hsbc.com/survey/>

Twitter: @expatexplorer

Facebook: /hsbcexpat

Expat experiences blog: www.expatexplorer.blogspot.com/

Expats’ ratings of 31 host countries are available to explore online through the [Expat Explorer interactive tool](#).

Media contact:

Ly Hoai Anh +84 28 3520 3483

anh.hoai.ly@hsbc.com.vn

Notes to editors:

About the Expat Explorer survey and country league table

The Expat Explorer survey was open to adults over 18 years old currently living away from their country of origin/home country. The survey was completed by 22,318 expats from 163 countries and territories through an online questionnaire in March and April 2018, conducted by YouGov and commissioned by HSBC Expat. A minimum sample of 100 expat respondents and at least 30 expat parents is required for a country to be included in the league tables, with 31 countries qualifying in 2018.

The HSBC Group

HSBC Holdings plc, the parent company of the HSBC Group, is headquartered in London. The Group serves customers worldwide from around 3,800 offices in 66 countries and territories in Europe, Asia, North and Latin America, and the Middle East and North Africa. With assets of US\$2,603bn at 30 September 2018, HSBC is one of the world’s largest banking and financial services organisations.

HSBC Bank (Vietnam) Ltd.

HSBC has been in Vietnam for more than 140 years – the bank first opened an office in Saigon (now Ho Chi Minh City) in 1870. HSBC was the first foreign bank to launch its locally incorporated entity on 1 January 2009 as HSBC Bank (Vietnam) Ltd. The bank’s current network includes two branches and five transaction offices in Ho Chi Minh City, one branch and four transaction offices in Hanoi, and two full-service branches in Binh Duong and Da Nang. HSBC is one of the largest foreign banks in the country in terms of investment capital, product range, and customer base.

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