

For the second year in a row, The Banker acknowledges Banorte as the Bank of the Year

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Mexico, D.F. December 6, 2006. For the third time, the last two consecutively, the Financial Times Group, through its specialized publication The Banker, awarded Banorte with the Bank of the Year recognition.

The Banker based its decision on the substantial growth of Banco Mercantil del Norte's loan portfolio and on the significant exposure reduction in the Instituto para la Protección al Ahorro Bancario (IPAB) that dropped from 12 to less than one.

The magazine, based in London, England, also considered Banorte's enhanced financial margin generated by the loan increase mentioned above and the improved deposit scheme mixture.

Among other factors that influenced The Banker's recognition this time was Banorte's banking subsidiary's high profitability in 2005 - even after excluding its extraordinary revenue - and the innovation that characterizes its products and services.

In 2000, The Banker awarded Banorte as the Bank of the Year pointing out on that occasion its transformation from a regional bank to a national institution. Moreover, last year Banorte earned the same award because of the increase in its profit and loan portfolio, the reduction in past-due loans, and the substantial improvement of its efficiency rate.

The Banker evaluates over 500 banks all over the world every year. "The Banker's Country Awards" takes into consideration the overall performance of the financial institution, their latest results, technology usage level, degree of innovation and development strategies.

Luis Peña Kegel, the Grupo Financiero Banorte CEO, stated that "the fact that The Banker considers us as the best for the second year in a row gives us the certainty that we are offering our clients and users the products that are best suited to satisfy their financial and banking needs, which leads to high satisfaction levels for our investors and for all of us who work at Banorte."