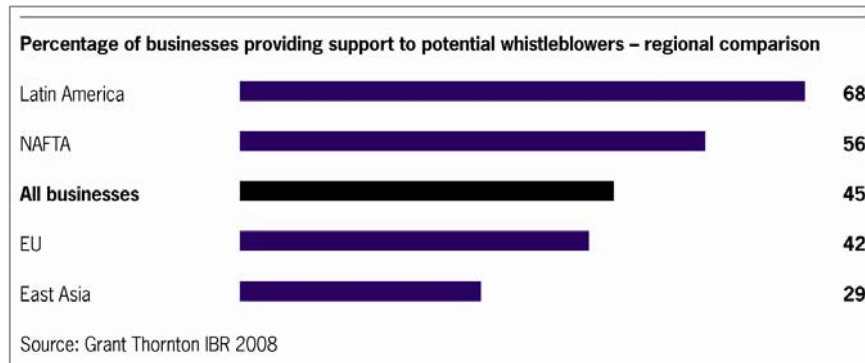


Less than half of privately held businesses support whistleblowing

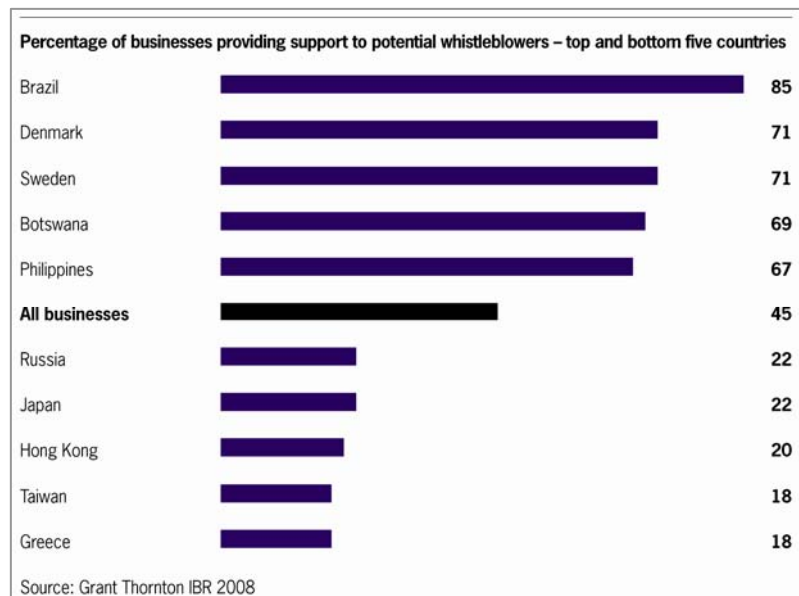
Embargoed until 14 May 2008

Less than half (45 per cent) of privately held businesses (PHBs) globally have measures in place to accommodate potential whistleblowers, according to the Grant Thornton International Business Report. Regionally, Latin America has the highest percentage (68 per cent) of businesses with support for whistleblowers, while with 29 per cent of businesses reporting positively, East Asia (excluding mainland China) has the lowest percentage.



Brazilian PHBs are the top country to accommodate whistleblowing (85 per cent) followed by Scandinavian economies Denmark and Sweden (both 71 per cent). Greek businesses come at the bottom of the table which just 18 per cent of PHBs dealing with whistleblowing, closely followed by three East Asian economies Taiwan (18 per cent), Hong Kong (20 per cent) and Japan (22 per cent).

Alex MacBeath, global leader-privately held business services says, "Whistleblowing can be an invaluable way to alert management to poor business practice within the workplace. Often whistleblowing can be the only way that information about issues such as rule



breaking, criminal activity, cover-ups and fraud can be brought to management's attention before serious damage is suffered.

"Privately held businesses can greatly benefit from introducing measures to accommodate potential whistleblowers within their organisation. Without sufficient measures in place, whistleblowers can be victimised as informants or traitors rather than a valuable early warning system which can save lives, money and reputations. The other, and perhaps greater and more prevalent, risk is that they remain quiet or leave the organisation and the underlying issues remain undetected."

- ends -

Further enquiries, please contact:

Jess Koslow, senior public relations executive

T +44 (0)207 391 9564

E jessica.koslow@gtuk.com

Neil Bird, IBR project manager

T +44 (0)207 391 9516

E neil.bird@gtuk.com

Issued on: May 2008

Notes to editors:

Grant Thornton International Ltd and the member firms are not a worldwide partnership. Services are delivered independently by the member firms.

About IBR:

Grant Thornton International started a major annual survey of the attitudes and expectations of small and medium-sized businesses in 1992 called the European Business Survey (EBS). In 2003 the research project was widened to an international perspective covering medium-sized businesses and renamed the International Business Owners Survey (IBOS).

In 2007, the survey's name was changed from IBOS to the International Business Report (IBR). The IBR survey draws upon 16 years of trend data for original EBS participants and 6 years for original IBOS countries. The 16 year trend data is available for: France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom, while the 6 year trend data is available for Australia, Canada, Hong Kong, India, Japan, Mexico, Russia, Singapore, South Africa and the United States.

Grant Thornton International will donate US\$5 to UNICEF for every completed IBR questionnaire. In 2008, this will result in a donation of over US\$39,000.

The research was conducted by Experian Business Strategies Limited. To find out more about IBR and to obtain details of IBR reports and results please visit www.internationalbusinessreport.com.