

Singapore 'may become largest offshore financial centre by 2015'

04:46 AM Jan 16, 2012

SINGAPORE - Singapore, which has the world's highest density of wealthy people, may overtake Switzerland as the world's largest offshore financial centre as early as 2015, according to a forecast by United Kingdom financial consultant Wealth Insight.

The report says that, as of the end of last year, Singapore had just over 150,000 high-net-worth individuals (HNWIs), each worth more than US\$1 million (S\$1.29 million). That equates to about one in 30 Singaporeans, it says. The combined wealth of Singapore's HNWIs is US\$730 billion, equivalent to 274 per cent of the country's gross domestic product. Wealth Insight says HNWIs make up 2.9 per cent of Singapore's population.

In the 10 years to 2010, the total assets managed by the Singapore's wealth management and private banking sector increased 11-fold to US\$550 billion. "By 2015, Singapore is expected to have gained significant ground on, and could even surpass, Switzerland as the world's largest offshore financial centre," said Wealth Insight analyst Andrew Amoils.

"This will be fuelled by HNWI growth in the Asia-Pacific region and global clients moving their offshore funds from other financial centres to Singapore," he said in a statement.

Channel NewsAsia