How to Choose the Right Offshore Bank for Your Account

Whether you open a corporate or an individual account with an overseas bank you should be careful and aware of a number of issues to pay attention to in order to keep your money safe.

What to Consider When Choosing an Offshore Bank

First of all you will be obviously considering geographical location, political and economical stability, language of jurisdiction where the bank is located as well as the languages supported by the banker. Most of the banks offering bank services to non-residents provide for procedure allowing you to open an account with them without visiting the bank. But you should be able to reach the country and visit the bank personally in case of emergency.

For the most people it will be very important if the bank is offering internet-banking facilities, especially if you have a significant time difference with the country of the bank.

Another thing is bank charges associated with your particular account. It’s good to know them in advance not to loose your money eaten by the fees.

Laws and Legislation Governing the Offshore Bank

Laws and regulations of that country on the privacy as well as double tax or tax exchange treaties with another countries is also of importance to take the decision whether you should place your funds there. You better know in advance whether your banker is obliged to share information with your country of residence and in what occasions.

How stable is the bank itself? How long have they been around? Always check the banker’s creditability, preferably using independent sources of information.

Besides the above listed pretty obvious things there are some more tips.

Identification Documents to Open an Offshore Bank Account

During the account opening procedure any well-established and reputable bank will request you to provide documents proving your identity and quite lots of information about the nature of your business and/or source of funds you are about to place into the bank account.

Most of the banks will ask for at least the following documents in original/by mail:
- certified copy of your passport or another valid ID document
- proof of address (utility bill, credit card statement etc.)
- short description of your business and/or source of funds

Some banks are also asking for letters of reference from your lawyers, auditors, accountants or another bankers that you have an account with for at least a year.

Beneficial Owners of Offshore Bank Accounts

One more important thing to know is that most of the bankers would like and will try to define the real/beneficial owner of the funds on the account and minimum information about that person according to the anti money laundering policy conducted by that bank.

Any real banker will take the time and effort necessary to check the provided information to identify you and your business to get sure your funds are genuine and have no money laundering or WMD connections.

If the banker is claiming the fax copies of your papers will suffice and not asking for at least original ID documents and minimum information on your funds sources be wary of fraud and loosing your money.