Gulf Finance House awarded BB- rating with a "Positive Outlook"

[Manama, 26TH August 2013]: Gulf Finance House (GFH), the Bahrain based Islamic investment bank, today announced that Capital Intelligence (CI) has recently concluded a rating exercise on the Bank and has accorded GFH a long-term and short term corporate rating of BB- and B respectively with a 'positive outlook'.

In its report, CI notes that the Bank's ratings reflect a significant reduction in leverage as a result of debt repayments and substantial increases in equity. The rating agency has placed positive weightage on GFH's successful restructuring of all its term debt with extended repayment periods, and the return to profitability in 2012.

Capital Intelligence also highlighted and acknowledged that the fresh injections of capital through the Bank's Convertible Murabaha programme along with debt repayment have substantially improved GFH's leverage.

CI has noted that sector concentrations in the asset base coupled with the difficult investment environment will prove to be a challenge in the immediate future but given the significant improvement in liquidity and leverage in H1 2013, a 'Positive' Outlook was assigned to GFH.

Mr. Hisham Alrayes, Acting Chief Executive Officer of GFH, commented: "We are very pleased with the ratings affirmation by Capital Intelligence and view it as an endorsement of the actions taken by the Bank and its shareholders to strengthen the Bank's financial position and position it for further profitable growth. We believe that the recent rating will strengthen market confidence in the Bank and allow for better business opportunities in the future. We are confident of the future prospects for the Bank and are determined to deliver higher returns for our investors and shareholders as we go forward.

About Gulf Finance House

Since its establishment in 1999, Bahrain based Gulf Finance House (GFH) has while distinguished by managing and placing investment in the Middle East and North Africa "MENA" region. Banks activities are focused on development of Islamic Financial Institutions, Infrastructure Projects, Private Equities, and Asset Management. GFH is listed on the Kuwait Stock Exchange, the Bahraini Stock Exchange, the Dubai Financial Market and the London Stock Exchange (in the form of a GDR).

About Capital Intelligence

Capital Intelligence (CI) has been providing credit analysis and ratings since 1985, and now rates over 400 Banks, Corporates and Financial Instruments (Bonds & Sukuk) in 37 countries. A specialist in emerging markets, CI's geographical coverage includes the Middle East, the wider Mediterranean region, Central and Eastern Europe, South Asia, South-East Asia, the Far East, and North and South Africa. CI head office is in Limassol, Cyprus.

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