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	Net Profit(\$ mn)	ROACE (%)	ROAA(%)	Cost-to-Income (%)
BLOM	116.83	15.21	1.42	37.03
Audi	114.08	12.00	1.05	50.50
BoB	50.68	10.50	1.11	47.00
Byblos	27.85	5.31	0.49	60.70

The un-audited financial results of the four largest listed Lebanese banks -- BLOM, Audi, Byblos, and Bank of Beirut (BoB) -- show that they have maintained their steady performance in the first quarter 2018, despite economic slowdown in Lebanon, higher taxes on Lebanese banks, and continued political troubles in the region . Aggregate net profit of the four banks increased to \$309.44 million in 1Q2018, growing by 2.73% from the same period in 2017.

On an individual basis, BLOM Bank attained the highest level of net profit at \$116.83 million at end March 2018, growing by 4.28% from end March 2017. Bank Audi came second with net profit at \$114.08 million, up by 3.52%; whereas Bank of Beirut came third with net profit at \$50.68 million, up by 0.87%. Byblos Bank's net profit ranked fourth, falling by 3.09% to \$27.85 million.

The profit performance of the four banks can also be seen by looking at profitability ratios, namely the rate of return on average common equity (ROACE) and on average assets (ROAA), which measure the productivity to generate earnings from equity and assets. BLOM Bank recorded the highest ROACE at 15.21% and the highest ROAA at 1.42%. The three other banks followed, with Bank Audi's ROACE at 12.00% and ROAA at 1.05%; Bank of Beirut's ROACE at 10.05% and ROAA at 1.11%; and Byblos Bank's ROACE at 5.31% and ROAA at 0.49%. BLOM Bank's effective performance can be attributed to its highly managerial and operational efficiency. This is demonstrated by BLOM Bank's cost-to-income ratio of 37.03%, the lowest of all four, followed by 47.00% for Bank of Beirut, 50.50% for Audi, and 60.70% for Byblos

Growth was not limited to profits only, since it was also registered in most key balance sheet items. For Audi, its assets stood at \$43.48 billion, falling by 1.00% from 1Q2017, and its loan portfolio was \$15.6 billion, decreasing by 8.24%, while its shareholder's equity rose by 12.71% to \$4.27 billion. BLOM reported \$33.19 billion in assets, growing by 10.13%, and its loan portfolio

grew by 6.53% to \$7.58 billion, while its shareholder's equity rose by 9.41% to \$3.13 billion. BLOM Bank's balance sheet aggregates naturally benefited from its acquisition and merger of the assets and liabilities of the three HSBC Lebanon branches on 17/6/2017. Assets at Byblos reached \$23.08 billion, growing at 8.46%, and its loan portfolio increased by 6.87% to \$5.55 billion, while its shareholder's equity increased to \$1.91 billion at a rate of 4.04%. As to Bank of Beirut, its assets rose by 7.17% to \$18.13 billion, with its loan portfolio increasing by 9.93% to \$5.29 billion, while its shareholder's equity rose by 1.57% to \$2.40 billion.

These results show the top four listed Lebanese banks' ability to sustain good growth and financial strength through excellent management and a conservative business model. As a result, they reconfirm the Lebanese banking sector's position as the leading financial pillar in the country and the backbone of the economy. They also look forward to better operating conditions in the near future with the onset of the "Cedre" conference and the completion of parliamentary elections.

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