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CME Group Foundation Grants \$1 Million to Support the Study of Alternative Finance by the University of Cambridge Judge Business School

The University's Cambridge Centre for Alternative Finance will study crowdfunding and peer-to-peer lending

CHICAGO and LONDON, Feb. 11, 2016 /PRNewswire/ -- [CME Group Foundation](#) today announced it will provide a \$1 million grant to benefit research at the Cambridge Centre for Alternative Finance (CCAF) at the University of Cambridge into the rapid growth of alternative financial channels and instruments such as crowdfunding and peer-to-peer lending. CME Group Foundation was established by CME Trust to support a variety of education initiatives designed to advance the global economy.

The \$1 million grant, to be disbursed over five years, is the largest CME Group Foundation grant outside the United States. This grant underscores the Foundation's growing international educational reach and its commitment to fostering greater understanding of alternative finance - an area of increasing importance to the global financial system.

CME Group is the world's leading and most diverse derivatives marketplace offering the widest range of global benchmark products across all major asset classes.

"We are delighted to partner with the University of Cambridge Judge Business School and a prestigious consortium of leading universities globally on their research into alternative finance," said Jim Oliff, Chairman of CME Group Foundation. "The Foundation has a long track record of supporting academic institutions on innovations close to the futures and derivatives industry. This partnership will strengthen the research framework around the alternative finance sector and enable further collaboration between academics, policymakers, regulators and industry participants."

The grant will support pioneering benchmarking studies by the CCAF on the development of alternative finance in five regions around the world, as well as an annual alternative finance conference organized by the Centre, which is held at the University of Cambridge Judge Business School. The conference will be a platform to distribute research results and discuss other research themes related to alternative finance.

"We are grateful for the generous support of CME Group Foundation as we research the growth and development of alternative finance. We firmly believe this is a structural, rather than transitory, change in the global financial system," said Robert Wardrop, executive director of the Cambridge Centre for Alternative Finance. "This grant represents a blue chip endorsement of the importance of our mission to educate business, policymakers and the public about these vital new areas of finance, which represent both opportunities and challenges for financial institutions around the world."

The CCAF is an interdisciplinary academic research institute dedicated to the study of alternative finance, including financial channels and instruments that emerge outside the traditional banking system. Examples of alternative finance include equity- and reward-based crowdfunding, peer-to-peer consumer and business lending, third-party payment platforms, SME mini-bonds, private placements and emerging currencies.

An inaugural report by the CCAF in 2015, the first pan-European study of alternative finance, found that the European market for alternative finance grew by 144 percent in 2014, from €1,211 million in 2013 to €2,957 million in 2014. The new CME Group Foundation grant will support annual reports covering five global regions - Europe, the Americas, Greater China, the Asia-Pacific region and the UK.

About CME Group Foundation

CME Group Foundation works to advance the economy by supporting education from cradle to career. The Foundation partners with universities, school districts, charter networks and nonprofit organizations that work to ensure at risk young children are prepared for kindergarten; provide effective K-12 education that prepares disadvantaged students for success in college and career; prepare university students for careers in financial services and risk management; and conduct academic research in areas that advance derivatives knowledge and best practices. The Foundation was created in 2008 and endowed with a gift of \$16 million from the Chicago Mercantile Exchange Trust, which was established by CME in 1969 under the direction of its then chairman, Leo Melamed, to provide financial protection to customers in the event a CME member firm became insolvent or unable to meet its obligations to its customers.

About Cambridge Centre for Alternative Finance at University of Cambridge Judge Business School

The Cambridge Centre for Alternative Finance is based at University of Cambridge Judge Business School. Since 1990, Cambridge Judge has forged a reputation as a centre of rigorous thinking and high-impact transformative education, situated within one of the world's most prestigious research universities, and in the heart of the Cambridge Cluster, the most successful technology entrepreneurship cluster in Europe. Cambridge Judge pursues innovation through inter-disciplinary insight, entrepreneurial spirit and collaboration. Cutting edge research is rooted in real-world challenges and students and clients are encouraged to ask excellent questions to create real-world change. Undergraduate, graduate and executive programmes attract innovators, creative thinkers, thoughtful and collaborative problem-solvers, and current and future leaders, drawn from a huge diversity of backgrounds and countries.

As the world's leading and most diverse derivatives marketplace, CME Group (www.cmegroup.com) is where the world comes to manage risk. CME Group exchanges offer the widest range of global benchmark products across all major asset classes, including futures and options based on [interest rates](#), [equity indexes](#), [foreign exchange](#), [energy](#), [agricultural commodities](#), [metals](#), [weather](#) and [real estate](#). CME Group brings buyers and sellers together through its [CME Globex®](#) electronic trading platform, its trading facilities in New York and Chicago, and through its London-based [CME Europe](#) derivatives exchange. CME Group also operates one of the world's leading central counterparty clearing providers through [CME Clearing](#) and [CME Clearing Europe](#), which offer clearing and settlement services across asset classes for exchange-traded contracts and over-the-counter derivatives transactions. These products and services ensure that businesses everywhere can substantially mitigate counterparty credit risk.

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