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## INVESTMENT

# Quest fund's 28% return attracts additional \$10m

*2002 performance tops stock market which rose by 17%*

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Quest Capital, a Thai-based foreign fund, has attracted new cash inflows of about \$10 million since the beginning of the year, drawn by the fund's strong investment returns of about 28% last year.

The fund roundly beat the overall stock market, which rose about 17% last year.

Doug Barnett, president of Quest Capital, said total assets under management was now \$65 million.

The company has invested for more than 12 years in Thailand, with a 355% increase in value in the past 10 years to last August.

The fund was awarded the Best

Country Fund award by *AsiaHedge* magazine, based on 12-month performance.

Mr Barnett said investors would have seen their wealth rise 15.2 times in the 10-year period than if they had only invested in the Stock Exchange of Thailand (SET) composite index.

He said Quest only held eight to 14 stocks at any one time, allowing the fund to dedicate significant time and resources to working with management of firms held in their portfolio.

For the next few years, the fund would be looking for companies with high-earnings growth and strong market niches, he said.

"We have a positive outlook for Thailand. The economy looks to continue to grow, with domestic consumption booming due to a stimulative government monetary policy. Falling interest rates and strong earnings growth will boost company price-to-earnings ratios."

Mr Barnett said even with SET's strong performance last year, Quest believed

that Thailand was only just at the beginning of the recovery cycle, with room for export growth once the global economy picked up and domestic consumption-related sectors still well below peak levels.

Mr Barnett is one of dozens of speakers scheduled to speak at a three-day seminar titled "Alternative Investment Opportunities in Asia", starting Wednesday at the United Nations Conference Centre.

Matthew Ehrlich, president of conference organiser WorldWide Investment, said now was a good time for Asian countries to attract foreign investors with their continued liberalisation of financial markets and economic reforms.

"Thailand is one of most striking countries in the region, with many advantages over others in terms of geography and fertile natures resources," he said. "The country has also developed in areas like education and public infrastructure." For information on the conference, visit: [www.east-west-invest.com](http://www.east-west-invest.com).