

Sberbank Will Offer Pre-Approved Loans

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ATMs will also be offering loans. **Maxim Stulov**

Sberbank hopes to increase the 31.8 percent market share of its overall credit portfolio by using its online banking service to offer pre-approved loans to its regular clients starting in September, the lender said Wednesday.

The bank will offer pre-approved consumer loans to its 70 million customers and is expecting 3 percent to 5 percent of them to take advantage of the offer, said Anatoly Popov, Sberbank's vice president in charge of retail sales.

"We're speaking about the consumer loans first of all, not mortgages, not car loans," he told a news conference.

The size of the loans will depend on a customer's history with the bank, Popov said, adding that bigger loans will be offered to clients having a significant turnover with the bank.

The lender counts on new technologies to develop the service as it will use primarily its online

banking section to inform customers about the loans.

"We're focusing on online services to reach our clients," Popov said, adding that other channels the bank will use to offer such loans are automated teller machines and electronic terminals, e-mail alerts and call centers.

Sberbank will spend "tens of millions of dollars" to develop high technologies to introduce new services.

Popov declined to specify an exact sum, saying only that the costs include the works to unite the regional banks' information technology systems in order to create a common platform, developing online banking and building a new data center located in Skolkovo.

The lender plans to increase the number of ATMs and electronic terminals from the current 49,500 to about 55,000 by the end of this year, and is developing mobile banking applications for popular platforms like Blackberry and Android.

Popov also said Sberbank plans to sign agreements with mobile operators MegaFon and Beeline in the third quarter of this year enabling plastic card holders to pay for mobile services automatically.

The lender already has such an agreement with MTS.

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