

Citigroup Makes (and Then Fixes) an \$81 Trillion Mistake

The bank temporarily credited a customer's account with trillions of dollars, adding to scrutiny of risk management systems after a series of errors.

We all make mistakes on the job. But rarely do they involve moving funds that outshine the gross domestic product of every country in the world.

Citigroup accidentally credited a client's account with \$81 trillion when it meant to send only \$280, the latest mistake at a bank that is struggling to repair its reputation after a string of errors in recent years.

The massive transfer far exceeds Citi's stock market value of about \$150 billion, was initially missed by two employees and was caught 90 minutes after it was posted, The Financial Times first reported. No funds left the bank, and Citi told the Federal Reserve and Office of the Comptroller of the Currency about the error, calling it a "near miss."

The mistake was the latest in a string of glitches at the bank. In 2022, a Citi employee caused a crash in Europe by accidentally adding a zero to a trade, igniting a sell-off that at one point erased about \$322 billion, from European stocks. Last year, British regulators fined Citi about \$78 million, for the incident.

Citi's problems with technology and internal systems contributed to the departure of Michael Corbat as chief executive of the bank in 2021. Jane Fraser, who succeeded Mr. Corbat, has said improving risk and controls is a priority, but regulators fined Citi \$136 million last year for not making enough progress in fixing its data-management issues.

Citi said in a statement that its systems prevented the transfer from actually being made. "Despite the fact that a payment of this size could

not actually have been executed, our detective controls promptly identified the inputting error between two Citi ledger accounts, and we reversed the entry,” the company said.