

## **Bridge Mobile Alliance**

SEVEN MAJOR Asian mobile operators have formed a joint venture regional alliance, which aims to provide seamless cross-border services for subscribers and achieve greater economies of scale for operators. Known as the Bridge Mobile Alliance (BMA), it comprises India's Bharti Tele-Venture, Globe Telecom (Philippines), Maxis Communications (Malaysia), PT Telkomsel (Indonesia), Taiwan Cellular Corporation, Optus (Australia) and SingTel (Singapore). The seven companies have a combined 56 million-strong customer base. This will increase to 70 million when Thailand's Advanced Info Service joins the group early next year. Partners in the alliance each have an equal stake. BMA is in talks with other cellular phone operators in the region to join the alliance but is restricting membership to one operator per country. SingTel the biggest of the seven partners has 28.5% stake in Bharti, 40.1% in Globe Telecom, 35% in PT Telkomsel and owns Optus outright. According to SingTel Mobile CEO Lim Chuan Poh who is also BMA chairman, the alliance will invest US\$40m over the next three years with the bulk used to build common infrastructure to deliver services to customers traveling in the region. "Currently there is no seamless service experience for customers in the Asia Pacific region. This also means loss of business opportunities for operators when customers move out of the home base," Lim said.

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