

Strong market dynamics driving DTV growth

Favourable market and industry dynamics will continue to drive future pay-TV industry growth in the Asia-Pacific. **Shawn Liew** reports.

According to the recently published *Asia Pacific Pay-TV and Broadband Markets 2011* report by Media Partners Asia (MPA), 367 million homes were subscribing to pay-TV in the Asia-Pacific at the end of 2010, representing 48% penetration of all TV homes. MPA projects this to grow to 57% of TV homes by 2015, and to 62% of TV homes, or 570 million subscribers by 2020.

Strong DTH (direct-to-home) subscriber growth is likely to be a key growth driver in the Asia-Pacific pay-TV industry, notes MPA, saying that this is "most notable" in India, where the rise of DTH satellite TV is having a "major impact"; while in Indonesia, DTH platforms are "helping to boost" pay-TV penetration from a very low base.

Vivek Couto, executive director of MPA, adds: "The market for DTH pay-TV in the Asia-Pacific is growing at a significant pace again, buoyed by large-scale DTH deployment in India and robust growth in Malaysia, Indonesia and the Philippines."

To illustrate, Malaysian communications satellite operator Measat Satellite Systems recently announced an agreement with Central Tivi Digital, or Centrin TV, to support its DTH service in Indonesia. Under the agreement, which includes Indonesian telecommunications company Patra Telekomunikasi Indonesia as a local partner, Measat will provide Ku-band capacity on the *Measat-3a* satellite for Centrin TV's DTH platform.

Centrin TV is a new DTH operator serving the Indonesian pay-TV market, focusing on bringing family-oriented entertainment to its subscribers. It offers several basic and add-on packages, including channels such as Disney, Nickelodeon, Universal, HBO, CNN International and Discovery.

Yau Chyong Lim, senior director for sales and marketing at Measat, comments: "Measat is delighted to have Centrin TV as

a core customer on our *Measat-3/3a* DTH platform ... [Centrin TV] is the second Indonesian pay-TV provider to join our 91.5°E DTH neighbourhood."

The *Measat-3* and *Measat-3a* satellites, co-located at the 91.5°E orbital slot, currently support five DTH platforms across Malaysia, Brunei, India and Indonesia, including Indian DTH satellite TV provider, Sun Direct.

"With the inclusion of Centrin TV, Measat's DTH neighbourhood at 91.5°E now supports six DTH platforms across Asia, making it the preferred slot for DTH platforms in the region," adds Yau.

Measat's 91.5°E satellite neighbourhood will be further strengthened in 2013 with the launch of the 48 Ku-band transponder *Measat-3b* satellite, designed to provide growth

capacity and in-orbit redundancy for DTH service providers across South and South-east Asia.

Based on the Eurostar E3000 platform, *Measat-3b* will provide an additional 48 Ku-band transponder to the 91.5°E orbital location. Designed to operate in tandem with the *Measat-3* and *Measat-3a* spacecraft, the new satellite will provide high-powered Ku-band capacity for DTH and broadband VSAT services across Malaysia, Indonesia and India, Measat reveals.

"By more than doubling our Ku-band capacity at 91.5°E, *Measat-3b* will allow [Measat] to continue to

centrin **Link Berlangganan**
0894 1222 091 071 2424 2000
http://measat.centrin.tv

Paket Heren Rp49.900

Paket Seru Rp89.900

Paket Transbahari Rp14.900

© 2011 (10/07/11) 20. All Rights Reserved. Measat-3/3a - Sun Direct

Indonesian DTH operator Centrin TV's DTH platform is carried on the *Measat-3a* satellite (right).

Strong direct-to-home subscriber growth is likely to be a key growth driver in the Asia-Pacific pay-TV industry.

meet the increasing requirements of our DTH and telecommunication customers in Malaysia and across the region," elaborates Datuk Umar Bin Haji Abu, chairman of Measat Global. "Co-located with the *Measat-3* and *Measat-3a* spacecraft, *Measat-3b* will also add further redundancy to our fleet, creating the region's most robust satellite network able to provide the highest levels of service assurance to our customers."

By the time the *Measat-3b* satellite lifts off in 2013, the DTH subscriber base in the Asia-Pacific is expected to have grown even bigger.

By MPA's estimations, DTH satellite subscriptions will swell to 74 million by 2014, up from the approximately 31 million subscribers in 2009. India, which MPA foresees to surpass the US as the world's largest DTH satellite pay-TV market by the end of next year, will by itself account for an estimated 45 million DTH subscribers in 2014.

In anticipation of the surge in DTH subscribers, the move to increase distribution capacity has already begun in earnest in India. For instance, Sun TV Network recently inked a multi-year, multi-transponder contract for C-band capacity on the newly launched *Intelsat 17 (IS-17)* satellite.

Sun TV Network is one of the largest TV broadcasters in India and operates 20 satellite TV chan-

nels across four languages – Tamil, Telugu, Kannada and Malayalam – reaching more than 95 million households in India.

Sun TV says it will utilise the new satellite capacity to expand its programming distribution to viewers across India and beyond, beginning with the migration of its current 20 channels to *IS-17*.

The *IS-17* satellite was launched last November and entered service in January this year. It provides C- and Ku-band capacity across Asia, Europe, the Middle East, Africa and Russia from the 66°E orbital location, with an expected service life through to 2026.

Explaining the decision to join the line-up at Intelsat's newly expanded video neighbourhood in the Indian Ocean region, Sivanesh Kannan, CTO of Sun TV, says: "The *IS-17*'s multi-continental coverage provides us with a reliable and resilient distribution platform from which to serve our existing market, and also provides access to all of our potential distribution

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partners across the region."

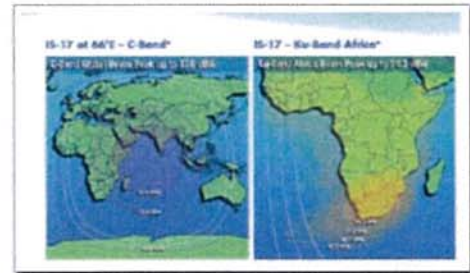
Also utilising the *IS-17* platform is Indian broadcast services provider Essel Shyam Communications, who recently signed a contract for a full transponder on *IS-17* for a new MCPC (multiple channels per carrier) platform using DVB-S2 technology.

Essel Shyam Communications lists Star India, Reliance Broadcast, Disney Channel and UTV Networks as its key clients and currently uplinks more than 200 channels for its customers.

In a move further reiterating its commitment to the Asia-Pacific region, Intelsat earlier this year announced the upcoming launch schedule of four satellites, part of a US\$1.3-billion fleet investment programme. According to Intelsat, the programme is designed to "refresh and expand" satellite capacity available for media programmers and communications providers offering services in the Asia-Pacific region.

Intelsat's fleet investment includes four satellites to be launched this year and next year: *Intelsat 18*, *Intelsat 19*, *Intelsat 20* and *Intelsat 22*.

Kurt Riegelman, Intelsat's senior vice-president of Global Sales, observes: "Today's successful media companies are continually seeking to maximise the audience for their content. As a result, they're choosing Intelsat. Simply put, our satellites deliver 'more eyes' to media



customers through our successful video neighbourhoods serving the Asia-Pacific region."

Of the four satellites to be launched, Intelsat says that *Intelsat 18* will provide "enhanced DTH coverage and network capabilities to the Pacific Islands"; and *Intelsat 19* will offer "increased Ku-band capacity optimised for DTH", while the satellite's C-band will "provide enhanced performance capacity for distribution of international video content throughout the Asia-Pacific region".

With the array of available DTH platforms, MPA's Couto expects DTH to continue its dominance in many markets in Asia. "In strong media consumer markets, where broadband plays a limited role or cable and fixed telecom infrastructure is limited so far or where the satellite player controls and invests in content, DTH satellite remains dominant and will remain so over the medium term." **APB**

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