

# MEASAT 3a set for June launch

Despite a delay on the launch of 3a, MEASAT is confident the new satellite's extra capacity at 91.5° East will help existing customers grow, and is optimistic about the opportunities afforded by AFRICASAT-1 at 46° East. *Television Asia Plus* catches up with MEASAT Chief Operating Officer Paul Brown-Kenyon

"Over the last 12 months, the key highlight for the company has been the clear establishment of MEASAT-3 as a video distribution platform for the Asian region. Two specific things stand out: firstly the commercial launch of the Reliance BigTV platform in India (supported on MEASAT-3) which, after only 11 months in operation, already supports 1.2 million subscribers; and, secondly, the establishment of five HD channels on the MEASAT-3 video distribution platform a number that we always thought was the minimum for PayTV operators to launch HD tiers."

"In addition to the developments in the business, we have also been pleased by the recognition the company has received across a number of industry awards over the year. While the awards in themselves are subjective, we are pleased that the efforts of our staff in establishing an innovative and forward-looking company are being recognized."

Located at 91.5° East, MEASAT-3 was launched in December 2006 and commenced commercial service in January 2007. As of April 2009, the satellite was running at approximately 85 percent utilization supporting DTH, video distribution and telecommunications customers. "We have been very happy at the reception that the satellite has received by the market," says Brown-Kenyon.

Channels currently on MEASAT-3 include VOOM HD, NatGeo HD, History HD, AXN HD, Celestial Movies, Asian Food Channel (AFC), JimJam, BBC Entertainment.

"Over the last 12 months, we have welcomed a host of new channels to the platform including Aruna, Celestial, The Biography Channel, National Geographic Channel, Nat Geo

Wild, Foxcrime, FX, ESPN Star Sports, Sky Channel, JimJam and YR Asia," explains Brown-Kenyon, highlighting the importance of HD as a growth area in the region.

A recent report from Media Partners Asia (MPA) says that HDTV adoption remains nascent in the region and is largely a North Asian phenomenon. Outside Japan, HDTV is largely marketed as a premium, next generation DTV product and its take-up is therefore discretionary and a function of marketability, pricing and affordability as well as attractive content. Increasingly, HDTV adoption has begun to grow because



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Chief Operating Officer, MEASAT

distribution platforms are anchoring the product to PVR and VOD. This is certainly true in Australasia and Japan and will become more so in markets such as Korea and Singapore. MPA forecasts indicate that HDTV adoption on pay-TV networks will grow from 3.5 million homes in 2008 to reach 23.3 million by 2013 and ~47 million by 2018. This means that close to 15 percent of digital pay-TV homes by 2018 will be HD adopters.

Continues Brown-Kenyon, "We are a strong believer in the future of HD and have worked closely with partners across the value chain to provide a distinctive HD offering.



MEASAT

MEASAT's leadership in HD has been demonstrated with the addition of four new HD channels over the last 12 months (National Geographic

MEASAT-3 satellite," he says. "We believe that HD will continue to grow as a segment over the next few years. With the launch of MEASAT-3a, to be co-located with MEASAT-3, we are making sure we have sufficient capacity to support our customers as they grow."

Brown-Kenyon says that while the delay of MEASAT-3 launch, initially planned for August 2008, has been challenging for the company, they are pleased to be able to announce that the satellite will soon be back en-route to the launch site during June 2009. "With the launch of this new satellite, MEASAT will be able to significantly enhance its capacity for our video customers at the key 91.5° East video slot," he says.

"In terms of the future, we are actively looking at opportunities to expand our presence in the Asian region to be able to better support our customer base. We are also looking for opportunities to expand our presence in the African region which we initiated in 2008 with the commissioning of the AFRICASAT-1 satellite at 46° East. We believe the best way of doing this is through partnerships and are exploring some opportunities at the moment. We are hopeful we can share more about these in Q3 and Q4 of this year." TV4plus

Channel HD, The History Channel HD, All Sports Network (ASN) HD and AXN HD bringing the total to five channels."

Regarding MEASAT 3a, to be co-located with MEASAT 3 at 91.5° East, Brown-Kenyon says that while the delay was unfortunate, the company has been able to work closely with its customers to meet their requirements over the last 12 months with the existing satellite.

"MEASAT-3a is on track for a June 2009 launch, adding capacity to the hot orbital slot of 91.5° East, giving room for our customers to grow. Besides that, MEASAT-3a will provide redundancy to the existing