

# Telenor to Set More Footprints in Asia

From a strong base in Scandinavia, Telenor is emerging as one of the fastest growing providers of mobile communications services worldwide. Over ten years of success in Asia, Telenor is now looking forward to expand its presence in the region.

By: Rapeepat Jumnonjit

“In this business you need a big amount of patience,” says the brain behind Telenor’s movement in Asia, Arve Johansen. He is senior Executive Vice President and Deputy Chief Executive Officer of the Telenor group and head of Telenor Asia.

Arve has been with Telenor since Norway’s telecommunication monopoly broke down in 1989. With background in a private sector Arve joined Telenor to reshape and reform the old state enterprise to a modern industrial company.

He was the one who suggested that the company should invest abroad. Today Telenor has 75 per cent activities outside of Norway and more than 130 (as of today) million mobile subscriptions worldwide. He has proved it when he said success doesn’t happen overnight. Telenor is an industrial international group, an active owner providing companies competence, global coordination, giving access to all the technologies, systems, applications, services, scale advantage in purchasing and opportunity for developing people in the group.

## The ladder to success

In the second half of the 1990s, Telenor became involved in mobile operations in a number of countries in Europe and Asia. In 1996 the company made contact with GrameenPhone, the largest mobile



“What makes Telenor stand out from other mobile groups and makes the difference, is that we have more emphasis on local adaptation than other groups. That is one of the keys to the success we claim that we have.”

telephony company in Bangladesh. Later in 1999 Telenor set its step in Malaysia and managed to own majority shares of DiGi, Malaysia’s third largest mobile telephony company. Months later Telenor approached dtac, one of the largest mobile operators in Thailand and in 2005 Telenor successfully launched in Pakistan.

“In Asia we are growing more quickly than anywhere else, in Bangladesh the business is growing tremendously and the biggest market mobile operation in the region has always been Thailand. We are not number one in Thailand but we have good progress and a good number two position,” says Arve, who was appointed the Senior Executive Vice President and Head of Asia Region of Telenor ASA since early 2006.

## Fresh market in Asia

Telenor is already doing well in Bangladesh, Thailand and Malaysia. The second-quarter profits in the region overall have increased impressively.

Moreover Telenor sees a benefit from expanding further in the region rather than finding new markets on other continent. The company has identified a number of targets in Asia after Norwegian telecoms giant confirmed it was

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