

Global MVNO brands like Virgin Mobile and Tune Talk may foray into India

Kalyan Parbat, ET Bureau Apr 13, 2016, 04.12AM IST

KOLKATA: Virgin Mobile, Lebara Mobile and Tune Talk - well known globally as mobile virtual network operators (MVNO) - may shortly foray into India.

Hyderabad-based Xius, a supplier of mobile infrastructure solutions and payments technology, will soon approach the three global MVNO brands to launch their services in India, chief executive GV Kumar told ET. "Apart from initiating talks with Virgin, Lebara and Tune Talk, we will also approach large mobile carriers in the Gulf who may be keen to don the MVNO hat to enter India, especially to offer customised products to their Indian expat customers frequently travelling home," the Xius CEO added. Xius's plans come on the heels of it partnering with UK's Hebitel, a global MVNO management consulting firm, to help international MVNOs foray into India.

The Xius-Hebitel partnership was announced earlier this month after the Modi government allowed MVNOs to set up shop in India.

An MVNO provides telecom services without owning either spectrum or network infrastructure. It relies on the network of its partner telecom company to provide services to customers under its brandname. It does so by buying bulk talktime and bandwidth from an operator, and selling it to users. "Xius will offer its mobile services platform (MSP) to global MVNOs entering India, and along with Hebitel, will offer complete end-to-end solutions, right from identifying local telecom partners, developing business plans to even helping out with branding, marketing and customer acquisitions," said Kumar.

"Tune Talk is already our customer in Malaysia, and we would be happy to work with them if they decide to launch MVNO operations in India," said another Xius executive. At press time, Virgin, Lebara and Tune Talk did not reply to ET's queries on their tapping into the emerging MVNO opportunity in India.

Though the global MVNO market is slated to top the \$73-billion mark by 2020, it largely remains a western trend, with Germany, US and UK home to maximum number of MVNOs, according to an internal study by Xius. According to industry experts, MVNOs are most prevalent in mature telecom markets where penetration (based on connections) has surpassed 100%.



Gearing Up

Mobile virtual network operators (MVNOs) Virgin Mobile, Lebara Mobile and Tune Talk may foray into India

What Do They Do

Offer telecom services without owning either spectrum or network infrastructure

Rely on network of its partner telco to provide services to customers under its brand name

How

They buy bulk talktime and bandwidth from an operator and sell it to users

Key Opportunity

Xius plans to offer its mobile services platform to global MVNOs entering India

