



Operator group ranking, 2015

European operator groups sacrifice ranking positions as developing market groups take advantage

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The developing world was home to most of the biggest climbers in GSMA Intelligence's latest ranking of mobile operator groups, with América Móvil, China Telecom and Bharti Airtel all moving up the top 10 since our last publication. Meanwhile, Orange and Vimpelcom both slipped out of the first 10 places, symptomatic of a wider trend of European-based groups losing ground to those based primarily in other regions.

The study ranks global operators using a model based on reported mobile connections (including cellular M2M) and mobile revenue (see methodology below). China Mobile was comfortably the largest group by both measures, reaching 886.2 million connections and recording annualised revenue of £69.4 billion during 2015. China Mobile's two domestic rivals, China Unicom and China Telecom, are ranked fourth and seventh, respectively.

The remaining positions in the top 10 were predominantly filled by operator groups with substantial global footprints across multiple markets and/or a strong presence in the US, including Vodafone, América Móvil, Telefónica, Bharti Airtel, AT&T, Verizon Wireless and Deutsche Telekom.

Since our last ranking in Q2 2014, the larger European operator groups have slipped down the table – Deutsche Telekom and Orange both fell four places, while Telefónica fell by one. This reflects the challenging environment that operators face in the region, comprising largely saturated markets with little or indeed negative revenue growth. Other European-headquartered groups have chosen to downsize and focus on their key operations, and have therefore fallen down the rankings. As a result, VimpelCom slipped out of the top 10, down seven places to 16th, while Telia Company fell 13 places to 35th, and KPN fell 20 places to 49th.

Alongside the scaling back of European groups within the ranking, developing market players made significant strides. Indian groups fared particularly well; as well as Bharti's five-place move into the top 10, Idea Cellular rose six places to 21st and rival Reliance Communications jumped three places to move into the top 30. América Móvil displaced both China Unicom and Telefónica; its acquisition of a majority stake in Telekom Austria enabled it to move into third place, while MTN climbed two places to 12th.

Although not enough to establish itself as a top 30 operator group, Altice was the biggest mover in the ranking, climbing 58 places to 34th following its acquisition of operator group SFR.

Notes on methodology

Subsidiaries are included within a parent group as per reported consolidation. Minority holdings (less than 50% plus one share) are included where a group does so within its audited financial statements.

Data for connections is shown as the period-ending value, excluding customers from any subsidiaries that have been divested over the course of the year. Revenue data is annualised, such that revenue attributed to any qualifying subsidiary is included on a quarterly basis over the four quarters provided the subsidiary meets the rules for consolidation in the respective quarter.

The ranking gives equal weighting to period-ending connections and annualised mobile revenue in determining final positions. The ranking by connections and revenue is combined to give a GSMA Intelligence December 2015 overall 'score', with a lower combined score ranking higher. For example, Vodafone is ranked second by connections and fourth by revenue, giving it a combined score of 6 (2+4). This ranks the group second behind China Mobile, which scores 2 (1+1), as it is the largest group by both connections and revenue. Where scores are tied, the rank by connections is used as the deciding factor.

		Connections, inc. cellular M2M (million) ¹	Rank	12-month mobile revenue (£ billion) ¹	Rank
1	China Mobile, China ^{2, 3}	886.2	1	£69.4	1
2	Vodafone Group ³	461.0	2	£40.2	4
3	América Móvil Group ³	285.5	5	£25.3	7
4	China Unicom, China ^{2, 3}	307.3	4	£19.4	10
5	Telefónica Group ³	247.1	6	£20.7	9
6	Bharti Airtel Group	336.2	3	£8.3	16
7	China Telecom, China ²	211.8	8	£16.5	11
8	AT&T Group ²	138.5	16	£49.5	3
9	Verizon Wireless, United States ²	133.5	17	£60.0	2
10	Deutsche Telekom Group	156.4	14	£32.6	6
11	Orange Group ³	205.3	9	£13.8	12
12	MTN Group ³	232.5	7	£7.5	18
13	Telenor Group	202.8	10	£8.5	15
14	SoftBank Group ³	102.1	21	£39.9	5
15	Etisalat Group ³	167.0	13	£9.2	14
16	VimpelCom Group	196.3	11	£7.0	21
17	NTT DOCOMO Group ²	69.7	29	£23.9	8
18	CK Hutchison Group	101.9	22	£7.7	17
19	Ooredoo Group	116.0	18	£5.0	27
20	Telecom Italia Group ³	96.2	25	£7.1	20
21	Idea Cellular, India	171.9	12	£3.6	35
22	Telkomsel, Indonesia ²	154.9	15	£3.7	33
23	Sistema Group ³	115.8	19	£4.8	29
24	au (KDDI), Japan	45.2	39	£10.8	13
25	Axiata Group	93.3	26	£3.3	38
26	SK Telecom, South Korea ³	29.0	46	£7.3	19
27	Maxis Communications Group ^{2, 3}	99.0	23	£2.6	45
28	MegaFon Group	76.8	28	£3.1	40
29	STC Group ^{2, 3}	29.0	47	£6.7	22
30	Reliance Communications, India ³	100.9	20	£1.9	51

Operator-group ranking, consolidated ownership, 2015

Source: GSMA Intelligence

¹ Connections and revenue are aggregated as the sum of each group's consolidated

subsidiaries

² Estimated connections

³ Includes minor contribution from fixed-line services

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