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Karamjit Singh Dec 16, 2014

- *Exabytes sees value in tapping Celcom's 13mil customers*
- *SK Planet's experience and expertise to come into play*

CEOs shake on it (l-r): Planet Celcom's Hoseok Kim and Exabytes' Chan Kee Siak.

AS it builds up towards its launch in the second quarter of 2015, Celcom Planet Sdn Bhd, the US$80- million (RM278-million) joint venture between Celcom Axiata Bhd and SK Planet has started to create partnerships that will help populate its mobile commerce-focused portal.

SK Planet is a South Korean e-commerce open marketplace provider wholly-owned by mobile operator, SK Telecom; while Celcom Axiata is the Malaysian subsidiary of Asia's second largest telco, Axiata Group Bhd.

In a recent interview with Digital News Asia (DNA) on its digital strategy, Axiata's group chief executive officer Jamaludin Ibrahim said that Axiata sees its investment into Celcom Planet as an effort to tap the opportunities emerging from an increasingly digital-savvy population.

First to partner Celcom Planet is Exabytes Network Sdn Bhd, which already operates its own e-commerce mall, easystore.my.

The rationale to partner with Celcom Planet is easy enough for Exabytes founder and chief executive officer Chan Kee Siak. "We want to give our merchants access to Celcom's 13 million customers."

Going by how SK Planet has launched similar portals in South Korea and Indonesia, expect the portal in Malaysia to be a cross-platform offering with a specific mobile-built site to encourage mobile commerce, and a web-based site.

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Chan is also looking beyond Malaysia as he expects SK Planet to eventually offer a cross-country platform for merchants from the four countries it operates in – South Korea, Malaysia, Indonesia and Turkey.

"The e-commerce market today is fiercely competitive. Hence, partnering with Celcom Planet will allow the e-commerce merchants registered on Easy.my to exploit more business opportunities by boarding onto an optimised e-commerce platform," he told DNA.

Chan noted that SK Planet hosts one of South Korea's top e-commerce marketplaces (www.11st.co.kr), serving more than 30 million consumers with gross merchandise value of around US$5 billion last year.

He also sees benefits for Exabytes, mainly through learning how SK Planet will build out the Malaysian site.

Chan is also particularly interested to see how SK Planet builds out its Seller Zone. This is basically a physical set-up occupying an entire floor at KL Sentral, offering brick-and-mortar merchants the 'A to Z' of setting up a website and how to promote it.

"This is something new in Malaysia and the concept has apparently proven to be particularly successful for SK Planet in South Korea," he said.

Celcom Planet chief executive officer Hoseok Kim said that bolstered with 11ST expertise and know-how, "Celcom Planet will introduce tools and features that enable both existing e-commerce merchants as well as brick-and-mortar merchants to take their businesses to the next level."