

## Essar, Quipo, GTL plan to invest together

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**Mumbai:** Essar Telecom Tower and Infrastructure, GTL Infrastructure and Srei Group's Quipo, all biggies in the telecom tower business, will collectively invest around Rs 5,000 crore to roll out close to 18,000 towers during the current fiscal.

Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) estimates that the country requires approximately 330,000 towers by 2010 against the present number of approximately 100,000 towers to achieve 500-million telecom subscriber base by 2010.

This provides the required impetus to the third-party infrastructure providers in the telecom space to go gung-ho to tap the unlimited opportunities, thanks to the brisk run at which the telecom sector is currently passing through. India added 66.51 million subscribers during the last fiscal compared to 41.91 million in FY'06, registering a growth of 58 per cent-- the highest in a fiscal.

Sources at Essar said the company plans to add another 5,000 towers from the existing level of 800 by the end of the current fiscal at an investment of Rs 1,200 crore.

GTL Infrastructure has already executed 1,200 cell-sites in eight circles and is in the process of rolling out 6,700 sites by March 2008 with an investment of Rs 2,030 crore. Quipo is also set to increase its towerbase to 6,000 sites from 800 now with an approximate investment of Rs 2,000 crore by end of the current fiscal, a company spokesman said.

The company has plans to invest \$ 2.5 billion by 2010 to set up 30,000 cell-sites. It would invest another half a billion in FY 11, he added.

Source: Moneycontrol.com