

ONLINE MUSIC**LOCAL MEDIA FIRMS TIE UP WITH GLOBAL GIANTS****GMM** in deals with Spotify, Deezer; RS makes regional moveWATCHIRANONT THONGTEP
THE NATION

To cash in on the digital music trend, leading media companies are seeking overseas partners to expand their downloading services for both international and local listeners.

Surachai Sensri, managing director of GMM Grammy's international business, said last week that 3G cellular connections would improve following the auctioning of 3G licences by the regulator.

With this technology, smart device users can enjoy mobile Internet services, including digital music downloading, streaming and broadcasting.

The company plans to partner with two leading global digital music streaming services – Sweden's Spotify and France's Deezer.

Founded in 2006 in Sweden, Spotify raises its headquarters' flag in the UK with offices in Paris, Oslo, Madrid, Amsterdam and New York. It counts more than 10 million registered users worldwide.

Deezer said last year it would integrate its Web-based service with the Facebook platform to allow users to discover music through their Facebook

friends. Surachai said that next year Spotify would likely come to Thailand, where smart device penetration is growing, while Deezer might follow later.

GMM Grammy has already developed its supporting technology, equip-

Apple's iTunes Store Thailand was introduced to local music lovers.

GMM Grammy also provides its content on this online music store.

ment and human resources for this coming service.

Last month, Apple's iTunes Store Thailand was introduced to local music lovers. GMM Grammy also provides its music content on this online music store.

More than 10,000 songs produced by its artists can be found at iTunes stores located in many major markets such as Singapore, Malaysia, the Philippines, Vietnam, Laos,

Cambodia, Sri Lanka, Macao, Brunei and Hong Kong.

Prior to this online music store's arrival in the region, GMM Grammy provided digital music downloads on iTunes in the US, Europe, Japan and Australia. Its popular songs have been downloaded over one million times.

The company expects to see 500,000 downloads via the new iTunes Store in Thailand this year, generating at least Bt15 million in sales.

RSiam, the country music business of RS, is also seeking strategic partners in Laos and Cambodia as the music and entertainment group bids to expand its operations regionally.

Soopachai Nillawan, the RS executive vice president overseeing RSiam, said the company had been in talks with several firms in the telecommunications and broadcasting industry in both countries. It expects to strike the first deal in Laos.

The company plans to introduce a new service in the two countries, namely digital music downloads via mobile phones, and hopes to keep piracy problems to a minimum.

It will also appoint an exclusive agent in each of the markets to be responsible for conducting shows and marketing events for RS' sponsors.