

SOCIÉTÉ GÉNÉRALE & SINGTEL

Société Générale relies on SingTel to provide robust, scalable and cost effective network solutions seamlessly across Asia

To meet Société Générale's varied needs across the region, SingTel implemented Ethernet Line (E-Line) technology, Ethernet Virtual Private Network (E-VPN), and Internet Protocol Virtual Private Network (IP VPN) to provide Société Générale with a seamless, scalable, reliable, flexible and cost-effective network that is ready to support its business requirements well into the future.

› Bridging Different Network Needs Across the Asia Pacific

Société Générale, which operates in 82 countries and employs 151,000 people worldwide, is one of France's oldest bank; and a key global financial services institution. It offers value-added, integrated financial solutions, in terms of capital raising, financing, risk management and investment, to corporates, financial institutions, investors and the public sector.

As Société Générale's Corporate and Investment Banking business grew in Asia Pacific, the institution experienced an exponential growth in data traffic between its headquarters in Paris and offices in Asia. The institution realised that its existing frame relay network could no longer scale up cost effectively to meet its expansion needs, nor could the existing infrastructure support growing demand for advanced financial and voice applications. Société Générale decided to upgrade its core networking infrastructure in Asia with SingTel, as the provider was the only one which satisfied all of the institution's stringent evaluation criteria.

› The Business Challenge

Every three years, Société Générale conducts an internal Information Technology (IT) review, and had decided that the institution's current network technology based on frame relay would be unable to meet its business goals going forward.

Scalability and cost were two main concerns: as the volume of data traffic between Asia and Europe grew, so too did the complexity of the network. A key business driver for the institution was to enable direct communications between multiple sites. To enable this with the existing frame relay network, Société Générale would need

Executive Summary

> Customer Name

Société Générale, Corporate and Investment Banking

> Industry

Financial Services Institution (FSI)

> Business Challenge

- Existing frame relay network could not scale up cost-effectively to meet the institution's rapid business expansion in Asia
- High latency experienced in data traffic travelling over the institution's frame relay network between Asia and Europe
- Robust business continuity needed to ensure continuous exchange of mission-critical information between regional offices and headquarters

> SingTel Solution

A seamless network solution that combined the following ConnectPlus services:

- ConnectPlus Ethernet Line (E-Line) for 7 regional business hubs in Asia
- ConnectPlus Ethernet Virtual Private Network (E-VPN) for 5 sites in the Greater China region
- ConnectPlus Internet Protocol Virtual Private Network (IP VPN) for Singapore, Vietnam and Jakarta subsidiaries.

> Business Value

- A scalable and robust enterprise-class network that allows new locations, users and applications to be added quickly, easily and cost-effectively to its network
- Up to 99.99% SLGs for network availability and guaranteed SLAs for network latency for mission-critical front-office and trading applications
- Fully diverse network that ensured minimal disruptions to network operations
- Improved manageability and accountability due to consolidation with one service provider

 “We had more than 10 different SLAs [Service Level Agreements] that the service provider had to meet. It became apparent...that SingTel's footprint in Asia Pacific, its wide portfolio of solutions, and its track record for technical ability and service, made the provider the ideal choice in this part of the world.” 

Mr. Bong Kok Wei, Deputy CIO (South East Asia),
Information Technology

to manage a larger number of complex mesh network configurations that translated to additional costs and management headaches.

“Many telecommunications providers were declaring frame relay as obsolete and had stopped supporting further developments in the technology, making it expensive for us to continue investing in the technology,” said Mr Morgan Gourlay, Regional Head of Networks, Société Générale, Corporate and Investment Banking. “We had to consider other more cost-effective ‘any-to-any’ networking technologies that could grow with our business requirements.”

In addition, the offices in Asia were becoming increasingly dependent on multiple financial applications which were served out of the institution's headquarters in Paris. As Société Générale's network footprint grew in Asia, the data traffic travelling over the institution's frame relay network started to experience high latency, mainly because the traffic had to travel to the Paris hub site before reaching its final destination in the institution's hub-and-spoke configuration.

“Our existing network was built on the premise of steady volumes of communications traffic flowing primarily between the headquarters and branch,” said Mr. Bong Kok Wei, Deputy CIO for Information Technology in South East Asia. “Today, the reality is that network demands from the sites in Asia can fluctuate dramatically from hour to hour, and any latency in data transmissions is not tolerated well by our systems, and our users.”

Mr. Bong added, “At higher bandwidths, frame relay could not provide us the bandwidth granularity we needed. For example, if we needed to meet a small step up in network demand, we had no choice but to purchase a larger bandwidth increment than was necessary, which raised our costs.”

Finally, given the mission-critical nature of the data, Société Générale had to ensure that the network was robust enough to withstand disruptive events. Mr. Gourlay explained, “When the Taiwan earthquake occurred in December 2006, our network connections between the different parts of the globe were badly affected. That experience made it clear to us that redundancy and diversity of links was an extremely important consideration. Unfortunately, it was very costly to set up

redundant access lines for our frame relay network with our existing provider.”

› A solution for every networking need

To meet its demanding requirements, the institution embarked on an exhaustive 3-month evaluation process to determine the most appropriate service provider and networking solution.

“We had more than 10 different SLAs [Service Level Agreements] that the service provider had to meet,” said Mr. Bong. “It became apparent early on that SingTel’s footprint in Asia Pacific, its wide portfolio of solutions, and its track record for technical ability and service, made the provider the ideal choice in this part of the world.”



To meet Société Générale’s diverse needs in the region, SingTel provided three different network technologies: ConnectPlus E-Line for seven regional hubs in Asia Pacific, ConnectPlus E-VPN for five sites in the Greater China Region, and ConnectPlus IP VPN for its subsidiaries.

› SingTel ConnectPlus E-Line – connecting key Asian financial hubs to Paris

SingTel’s ConnectPlus E-Line was deployed to connect seven regional sites in Asia, which included Hong Kong, Seoul, Singapore, Taipei, and Tokyo. ConnectPlus E-Line is a highly secure and reliable international, dedicated point-to-point Ethernet service deployed over SingTel’s extensive cable infrastructure. Highly granular, it addresses Société Générale’s requirement for scalability, flexibility to support multiple applications, robust service level agreements and global interoperability.

› SingTel ConnectPlus E-VPN – enabling business growth in China

Fives sites in the Greater China region namely Beijing, Guangzhou, Tianjing, Shanghai and Wuhan deployed SingTel ConnectPlus E-VPN, a Layer-2 VPN built on SingTel’s state-of-the-art MPLS (Multi-Protocol Label Switching) network. The service provides Société

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Mr. Morgan Gourlay, Regional Head of Networks

Générale with any-to-any multipoint connectivity with reliable Quality of Service, and combines the flexibility of IP with the simplicity of Ethernet. These sites were then connected to the rest of Societe Generale’s global network through the ConnectPlus E-VPN POP in Hong Kong.

› SingTel ConnectPlus IP VPN – right capabilities at the right price for subsidiaries

ConnectPlus IP VPN is a high performance, fully managed and secured networking service. Société Générale chose to deploy this service in three subsidiary sites, namely Singapore, Vietnam and Jakarta, as ConnectPlus IP VPN helped it penetrate into these key sites by providing it with the right capabilities at the right price for its subsidiaries’. As its business grows in the region, Societe Generale is also exploring growing this network for its subsidiaries.

› Migration made easy

Once the project was awarded, SingTel took less than four months to implement the three solutions for Société Générale’s 17 sites in the region.

Mr. Gourlay expressed his satisfaction with SingTel’s implementation effort, “Despite the size and complexity of the project, SingTel amply demonstrated its extensive experience by rolling out the deployment across Asia in double quick time, with minimum disruption to our business. For example, I was pleased that the SingTel team took only five days to set up the link between Tokyo and Seoul, two of our most important financial hubs. Previously, such an upgrade would have taken weeks.”

“It’s even more impressive when we take into account the implementation of three different networking technologies across Asia, and the immense diversity of local telecommunications providers in places like China,” added Mr. Gourlay. “SingTel’s strong relationship and robust network-to-network interfaces with its partners in the region, especially in such a highly-regulated country like China, really showed throughout the entire deployment.”

› A robust, scalable and cost-effective network in Asia

By migrating from its old ‘hub and spoke’ frame relay network to a full ‘point-to-point, any-to-any access’ topology of ConnectPlus E-Line, EVPN and IP VPN, Société Générale is now able to connect new locations, users and applications quickly and easily to its network.

“ConnectPlus E-Line gave us exactly what we needed for our regional financial hubs in the region: the ability to scale up on demand, seamless upgrades that won’t disrupt our

network, and dedicated, cost-effective bandwidth to carry data from multiple business applications. Combined with ConnectPlus EVPN & IP VPN, the SingTel solution enabled us to deploy a seamless network effectively into key markets” stated Mr. Gourlay. “From the cost savings that we’ve experienced so far, we expect our payback target to be achieved in two years.”

› Network performance that can be banked on

Société Générale now enjoys 99.99% SLGs on network availability, thanks to SingTel’s state-of-the-art 24x7 proactive network monitoring and management system. Network latency has also improved by leaps and bounds; SingTel ConnectPlus E-VPN and IP VPN, for example, provide the institution with four classes of service for different business application requirements.

“SingTel ConnectPlus solutions guaranteed the SLAs for network performance and latency that our front-office and trading applications needed.” said Mr. Bong. “Our mission-critical information will always get the highest priority and will be delivered on time.”

He also praised SingTel’s dedicated team that monitors the network continuously. “The team has, at times, proactively identified and resolved performance and congestion issues before we were even aware of them.”

› Business as usual, 24x7x365

Communications disruption from events such as earthquakes is now a thing of the past, given the ConnectPlus solution enables re-rerouting of network links over SingTel’s diverse network backbone, in the event of any cable cuts.

“As Corporate and Investment Banking is also responsible for IT infrastructure for other divisions in Société Générale, especially for asset management and consumer finance transactions which are time sensitive, we have peace of mind that it will be business-as-usual even in times of adversity,” stated Mr. Bong.

› Future plans

To tap into the burgeoning opportunities in the region, Société Générale plans to further expand its network to more cities in China, and to develop an IT infrastructure for its business in India. For Mr. Gourlay and Mr. Bong, the partner of choice is obvious.

“Given SingTel’s unwavering commitment and top-notch service so far, it’s difficult to imagine working with anyone else for our networking needs in the region,” finished Mr. Gourlay.

› About SingTel

SingTel is Asia’s leading communications group with operations and investments around the world. With significant operations in Singapore and Australia (through wholly-owned subsidiary SingTel Optus), the Group provides a comprehensive portfolio of services that include voice and data services over fixed, wireless and Internet platforms for both the corporate and consumer markets. SingTel’s network includes 37 offices in 19 countries and territories throughout Asia Pacific, Europe and the United States. For more information, please go to www.singtel.com and www.optus.com.au.

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