

VimpelCom to Sell Canadian, Algerian Assets

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Telecommunications company VimpelCom is considering selling two of its foreign assets as part of the company's strategy to improve its asset portfolio and raise capitalization, a news report said Monday.

According to the Globe and Mail, VimpelCom is selling its stake in Canada's Globalive Wireless Management Corp., the owner of the Wind Mobile brand, for \$500 million to \$1 billion.

A VimpelCom executive has confirmed the sale, Vedomosti said.

Currently, 32 percent of Globalive's voting stock is owned by a VimpelCom subsidiary, Orascom Telecom Holding.

In January, the company arranged to buy an additional 66.7 percent of Globalive from Canadian businessman Anthony Lacavera, the report said. It is not clear whether

the deal has been closed.

At the same time, VimpelCom may also part with its 51 percent stake in Orascom Telecom Algerie. The company, which works under the Djezzy brand, accounts for about 65 percent of the Algerian mobile communication market.

VimpelCom's share in Orascom Telecom Algerie will be sold to the Algerian government in exchange for lifting the ban on the use of foreign currency and importation of foreign equipment by VimpelCom.

VimpelCom also plans to acquire foreign telecom assets to improve its portfolio and turn the company into a major international player on the telecommunications market, a high-ranking executive with Alfa Group's Altima, which owns 47.9 percent of VimpelCom, told Vedomosti.

A source close to VimpelCom said the company aimed to increase the value of its stock and, therefore, raise its capitalization.

To that end, VimpelCom is interested in buying well-established mobile operators that control significant portions of their local markets.

VimpelCom plans to finance possible acquisitions from its own funds, as well as by taking out loans from the company's shareholders, the report said.

VimpelCom is the third-largest wireless and second-largest telecom operator in Russia. It owns the Beeline mobile communication network brand. VimpelCom's main competitors in Russia are Mobile TeleSystems and MegaFon.

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