

## India Telecoms Sector ----- Maintain MARKET WEIGHT

### Impact of the liquidity crunch

Bhuvnesh Singh / Research Analyst / 65 6212 3006 / bhuvnesh.singh@credit-suisse.com

Sunil Tirumalai / Research Analyst / 91 22 6777 3714 / sunil.tirumalai@credit-suisse.com

Vikramaditya Narendra / Research Analyst / 91 22 6777 3943 / vikramaditya.narendra@credit-suisse.com

- With tightened liquidity raising concerns on growth plans of corporates, we conducted a quick survey of Indian telecom companies to understand the impact.
- While companies are not seeing any increased reluctance from banks to lend, RCOM mentioned an increase in borrowing costs over the last six months.
- RCOM could be the most affected by this crisis, due to large capex outlay and already high leverage. The company has already softened its stance on GSM launch, and we are building only Rs179 bn capex spend versus guidance of Rs240 bn.
- For Bharti and Idea, we do not foresee any significant problems due to funding. Bharti is turning FCF-positive and has comfortable leverage levels, while Idea had an opportune equity stake sale in the beginning of the year at good valuations.
- In this scenario, we would avoid the execution and capex risks associated with RCOM – maintain UNDERPERFORM and Rs260 TP. We retain our OUTPERFORM ratings on Bharti (target price Rs950) and Idea (target price Rs60).

With tightening liquidity raising concerns of slowdown in corporate growth, we conducted a quick survey of Indian telecom companies to understand the impact. We focussed on the stance of banks on lending, short-term repayment requirements, increases in borrowing costs and the impact of all these on business plans.

#### Overview of sector liquidity situation

Our conversations with Indian telecom operators indicated that there is no reluctance from banks to lend to the sector. Bharti, RCOM and Idea have open lines of credit which they can draw down anytime.

However, for new loans, RCOM is seeing an increase in the cost of debt (Libor + 200 bp now versus Libor+ 100 bp earlier). Bharti and Idea are not seeing any increase in cost of borrowing.

With the Indian telecom market being predominantly prepaid in nature, problems in receivables should not be significant.

#### Stock implications – RCOM

In our view, RCOM could be the worst affected from the credit crisis. The company's large capex plans (driven by nationwide GSM launch and global capex) require significant funding, which the company accepts has become dearer. This is already pinching, going by softening stance on GSM launch dates and possible reduction in capex compared to beginning of the year guidance (adjusted for forex).

The company is working on converting short-term borrowings to long-term, so that near-term liquidity is improved (short-term borrowings as a percentage of total has come down from 45% to 30% over the last six months).

#### Stock implications – Bharti and Idea

Bharti and Idea could remain unaffected by the current liquidity crisis. For Bharti, the operations are turning FCF-positive, and the current debt position is quite comfortable. Management does not envisage any additional funding for current operations, and has open lines of credit if any new opportunities arise.

Idea, like RCOM, has new operations starting off, and has recently made an acquisition. However, it has resolved most of its funding requirements for the next couple of years, through equity stake sale in the beginning of the year.

#### Investment recommendation

In this scenario of tight credit, we would stay away from the uncertainty and execution risks associated with RCOM. We build around Rs179 bn capex for FY3/09 for the company, versus the guidance of Rs240 bn. We retain our UNDERPERFORM rating and Rs260 target price.

Bharti is our top pick in the sector, and should be able to manage the current credit crunch due to low external financing needs. We retain our OUTPERFORM rating and target price of Rs950 on the stock.

While Idea cellular has execution risks from new operations attached to it, these are already well captured by current prices in our view. As far as funding is concerned, the company is in a strong position thanks to recent stake sales. Maintain OUTPERFORM and target price of Rs60.

Figure 1: Key financial ratios of Indian telecom companies

Company	Ticker	CS Rating	Price		FCF +ve?	Quick ratio	ST debt /total	Gearing (%)		Interest cover (x)		Avg int rate		P/E (x)		P/B FY09
			Cur	Target				FY09	FY10	FY09	FY10	Pre crisis	Latest	FY09	FY10	
Bharti Airtel	BRTI.BO	O	639	950	Y	0.74	32%	35	28	23.2	28.1	6.1%	6.1%	14.0	10.5	3.9
Reliance Com	RLCM.BO	U	216	260	N	0.64	30%	93	99	3.9	4.3	LIB+100bps	LIB+200bps	7.6	9.3	1.3
Idea Cellular	IDEA.BO	O	46	60	N	1.17	27%	55	35	2.0	2.6	10.2%	10.2%	14.6	13.3	1.1

Note: O = OUTPERFORM, N = NEUTRAL, U = UNDERPERFORM; Bharti's debt is primarily foreign currency denominated, leading to lower interest rates

Source: Company data, Credit Suisse estimates

**Companies Mentioned** (Price as of 05 Nov 08)

Bharti Airtel Ltd (BRTI.BO, Rs684.75, OUTPERFORM, TP Rs950.00, MARKET WEIGHT)  
 Idea Cellular Ltd (IDEA.BO, Rs48.00, OUTPERFORM [V], TP Rs60.00, MARKET WEIGHT)  
 Reliance Communication Ltd (RLCM.BO, Rs226.70, UNDERPERFORM [V], TP Rs260.00, MARKET WEIGHT)  
 TM International Snd Bhd (TMIT.KL, RM4.76, OUTPERFORM [V], TP RM7.50)  
 Spice Communications (SPCM IN, Rs34.20)

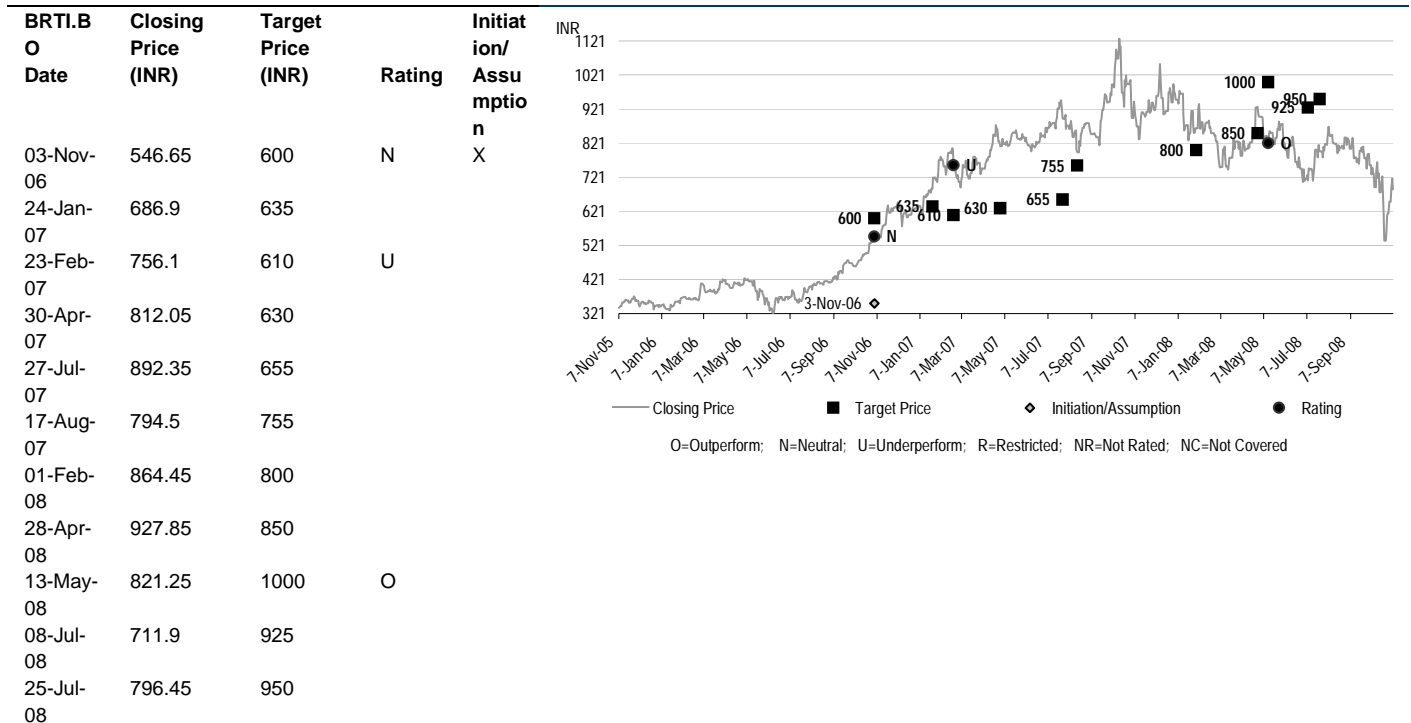
**Disclosure Appendix**

**Important Global Disclosures**

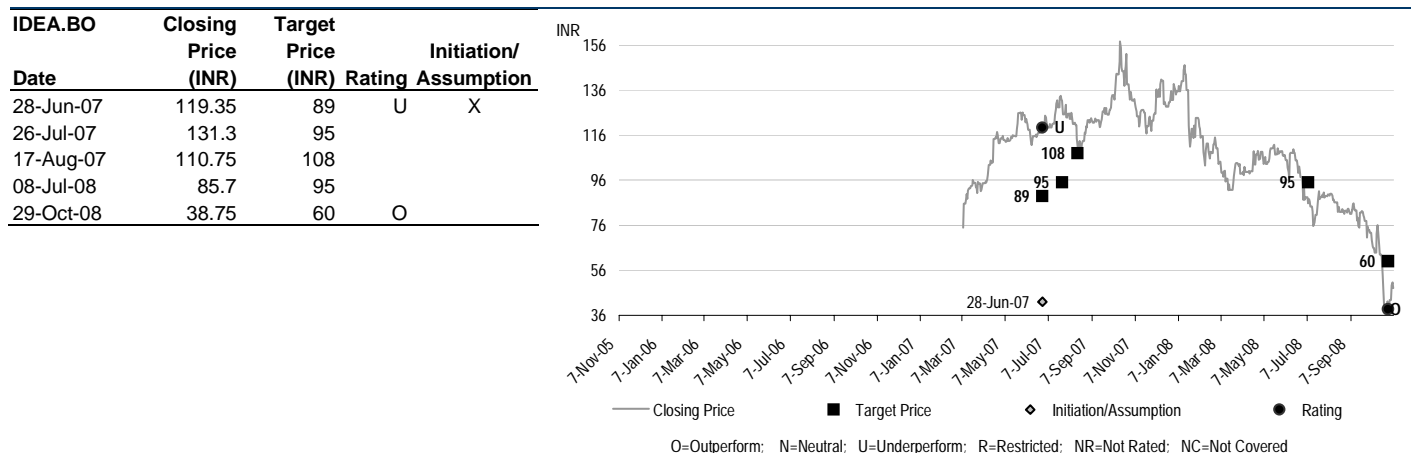
I, Bhuvnesh Singh, certify that (1) the views expressed in this report accurately reflect my personal views about all of the subject companies and securities and (2) no part of my compensation was, is or will be directly or indirectly related to the specific recommendations or views expressed in this report.

See the Companies Mentioned section for full company names.

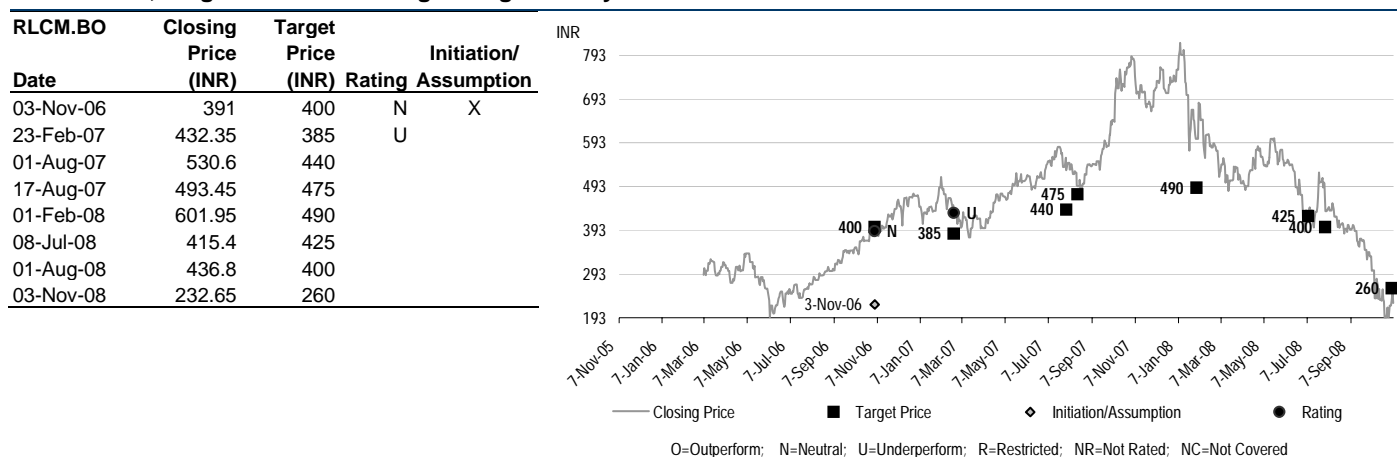
**3-Year Price, Target Price and Rating Change History Chart for BRTI.BO**



**3-Year Price, Target Price and Rating Change History Chart for IDEA.BO**



**3-Year Price, Target Price and Rating Change History Chart for RLCM.BO**



The analyst(s) responsible for preparing this research report received compensation that is based upon various factors including Credit Suisse's total revenues, a portion of which are generated by Credit Suisse's investment banking activities.

**Analysts' stock ratings are defined as follows\*\*\*:**

**Outperform (O):** The stock's total return is expected to exceed the industry average\* by at least 10-15% (or more, depending on perceived risk) over the next 12 months.

**Neutral (N):** The stock's total return is expected to be in line with the industry average\* (range of ±10%) over the next 12 months.

**Underperform (U)\*\*:** The stock's total return is expected to underperform the industry average\* by 10-15% or more over the next 12 months.

\*The industry average refers to the average total return of the relevant country or regional index (except with respect to Europe, where stock ratings are relative to the analyst's industry coverage universe).

\*\*In an effort to achieve a more balanced distribution of stock ratings, the Firm has requested that analysts maintain at least 15% of their rated coverage universe as Underperform. This guideline is subject to change depending on several factors, including general market conditions.

\*\*\*For Australian and New Zealand stocks a 7.5% threshold replaces the 10% level in all three rating definitions, with a required equity return overlay applied.

**Restricted (R):** In certain circumstances, Credit Suisse policy and/or applicable law and regulations preclude certain types of communications, including an investment recommendation, during the course of Credit Suisse's engagement in an investment banking transaction and in certain other circumstances.

**Volatility Indicator [V]:** A stock is defined as volatile if the stock price has moved up or down by 20% or more in a month in at least 8 of the past 24 months or the analyst expects significant volatility going forward.

**Analysts' coverage universe weightings are distinct from analysts' stock ratings and are based on the expected performance of an analyst's coverage universe\* versus the relevant broad market benchmark\*\*:**

**Overweight:** Industry expected to outperform the relevant broad market benchmark over the next 12 months.

**Market Weight:** Industry expected to perform in-line with the relevant broad market benchmark over the next 12 months.

**Underweight:** Industry expected to underperform the relevant broad market benchmark over the next 12 months.

\*An analyst's coverage universe consists of all companies covered by the analyst within the relevant sector.

\*\*The broad market benchmark is based on the expected return of the local market index (e.g., the S&P 500 in the U.S.) over the next 12 months.

**Credit Suisse's distribution of stock ratings (and banking clients) is:**

Global Ratings Distribution		
Outperform/Buy*	40%	(60% banking clients)
Neutral/Hold*	44%	(56% banking clients)
Underperform/Sell*	13%	(50% banking clients)
Restricted	2%	

\*For purposes of the NYSE and NASD ratings distribution disclosure requirements, our stock ratings of Outperform, Neutral, and Underperform most closely correspond to Buy, Hold, and Sell, respectively; however, the meanings are not the same, as our stock ratings are determined on a relative basis. (Please refer to definitions above.) An investor's decision to buy or sell a security should be based on investment objectives, current holdings, and other individual factors.

Credit Suisse's policy is to update research reports as it deems appropriate, based on developments with the subject company, the sector or the market that may have a material impact on the research views or opinions stated herein.

Credit Suisse's policy is only to publish investment research that is impartial, independent, clear, fair and not misleading. For more detail please refer to Credit Suisse's Policies for Managing Conflicts of Interest in connection with Investment Research:

[http://www.csfb.com/research-and-analytics/disclaimer/managing\\_conflicts\\_disclaimer.html](http://www.csfb.com/research-and-analytics/disclaimer/managing_conflicts_disclaimer.html)

Credit Suisse does not provide any tax advice. Any statement herein regarding any US federal tax is not intended or written to be used, and cannot be used, by any taxpayer for the purposes of avoiding any penalties.

*See the Companies Mentioned section for full company names.*

**Price Target:** (12 months) for (BRTI.BO)

**Method:** Our 12-month target price of Rs950 for Bharti Airtel Ltd is based on discounted cash flow (DCF) analysis. We assume a weighted average cost of capital (WACC) of 12 and beta of 0.9. Our DCF model builds in strong cashflow growth till FY3/15, a 4% medium term growth (FY3/15 - FY3/30) and 3% terminal growth. Our target price also includes the value add due to sharing of infrastructure.

**Risks:** Risks to our 12-month target price of Rs950 for Bharti include faster than expected roll out of operations by new competitors entering the Indian telecom market and players looking for new network roll out like RCOM, Aircel etc., as also faster than expected drop in pricing

**Price Target:** (12 months) for (IDEA.BO)

**Method:** Our 12-month target price of Rs60 for Idea Cellular Limited is based on discounted cash flow (DCF) analysis. We assume a weighted average cost of capital (WACC) of 12.5 and beta of 1.1. Our DCF model builds in negative cash flows for two years, followed by a period of strong cashflow growth till FY3/16, and a 2% terminal growth rate.

**Risks:** Risks to our 12-month target price of Rs60 for Idea are: 1) execution risk - Idea is entering new circles, where it is the sixth or seventh operator. If marketshare or margins are below our estimates or capex higher than our numbers, it could lead to a downside risk to our target price, 2) market risk - this would include the possibility of irrational competition from some players trying to gain market share, which could negatively impact margins and returns. 3) economic risk - a slowdown in the Indian economy could slow down subscriber additions. Our model assumes around 9 mn monthly net additions per month for FY09. 4) valuation risk - continuous pressure on telecom stocks or Indian market could keep the share performance weak

**Price Target:** (12 months) for (RLCM.BO)

**Method:** Our 12-month target price of Rs260 for Reliance is based on discounted cash flow (DCF) analysis. We assume a weighted average cost of capital (WACC) of 12.4 and beta of 1. Our DCF model builds in strong cashflow growth till FY3/16, a 2.5% medium term growth (FY3/16 - FY3/31) and 3% terminal growth. Our target price also includes the value add due to sharing of infrastructure.

**Risks:** Key risk to our target price of Rs260 for Reliance includes 1) execution risk of the shift to GSM network from CDMA network, 2) stronger than expected margin performance and 3) continuous uptrend in overall market

*See the Companies Mentioned section for full company names.*

The subject company (RLCM.BO) currently is, or was during the 12-month period preceding the date of distribution of this report, a client of Credit Suisse.

Credit Suisse provided investment banking services to the subject company (RLCM.BO) within the past 12 months.

Credit Suisse expects to receive or intends to seek investment banking related compensation from the subject company (BRTI.BO, IDEA.BO, RLCM.BO) within the next 3 months.

### **Important Regional Disclosures**

The analyst(s) involved in the preparation of this report have not visited the material operations of the subject company (BRTI.BO, IDEA.BO, RLCM.BO) within the past 12 months.

Restrictions on certain Canadian securities are indicated by the following abbreviations: NVS--Non-Voting shares; RVS--Restricted Voting Shares; SVS--Subordinate Voting Shares.

Individuals receiving this report from a Canadian investment dealer that is not affiliated with Credit Suisse should be advised that this report may not contain regulatory disclosures the non-affiliated Canadian investment dealer would be required to make if this were its own report.

For Credit Suisse Securities (Canada), Inc.'s policies and procedures regarding the dissemination of equity research, please visit [http://www.csfb.com/legal\\_terms/canada\\_research\\_policy.shtml](http://www.csfb.com/legal_terms/canada_research_policy.shtml).

As of the date of this report, Credit Suisse acts as a market maker or liquidity provider in the equities securities that are the subject of this report.

Principal is not guaranteed in the case of equities because equity prices are variable.

Commission is the commission rate or the amount agreed with a customer when setting up an account or at anytime after that.

To the extent this is a report authored in whole or in part by a non-U.S. analyst and is made available in the U.S., the following are important disclosures regarding any non-U.S. analyst contributors:

The non-U.S. research analysts listed below (if any) are not registered/qualified as research analysts with FINRA. The non-U.S. research analysts listed below may not be associated persons of CSSU and therefore may not be subject to the NASD Rule 2711 and NYSE Rule 472 restrictions on communications with a subject company, public appearances and trading securities held by a research analyst account.

- Bhuvnesh Singh, non-U.S. analyst, is a research analyst employed by Credit Suisse Singapore Branch.
- Sunil Tirumalai, non-U.S. analyst, is a research analyst employed by Credit Suisse Securities (India) Private Limited.
- Vikramaditya Narendra, non-U.S. analyst, is a research analyst employed by Credit Suisse Securities (India) Private Limited.

For Credit Suisse disclosure information on other companies mentioned in this report, please visit the website at [www.credit-suisse.com/researchdisclosures](http://www.credit-suisse.com/researchdisclosures) or call +1 (877) 291-2683.

Disclaimers continue on next page.

**Disclaimers**

This report is not directed to, or intended for distribution to or use by, any person or entity who is a citizen or resident of or located in any locality, state, country or other jurisdiction where such distribution, publication, availability or use would be contrary to law or regulation or which would subject Credit Suisse, the Swiss bank, or its subsidiaries or its affiliates ("CS") to any registration or licensing requirement within such jurisdiction. All material presented in this report, unless specifically indicated otherwise, is under copyright to CS. None of the material, nor its content, nor any copy of it, may be altered in any way, transmitted to, copied or distributed to any other party, without the prior express written permission of CS. All trademarks, service marks and logos used in this report are trademarks or service marks or registered trademarks or service marks of CS or its affiliates.

The information, tools and material presented in this report are provided to you for information purposes only and are not to be used or considered as an offer or the solicitation of an offer to sell or to buy or subscribe for securities or other financial instruments. CS may not have taken any steps to ensure that the securities referred to in this report are suitable for any particular investor. CS will not treat recipients as its customers by virtue of their receiving the report. The investments or services contained or referred to in this report may not be suitable for you and it is recommended that you consult an independent investment advisor if you are in doubt about such investments or investment services. Nothing in this report constitutes investment, legal, accounting or tax advice or a representation that any investment or strategy is suitable or appropriate to your individual circumstances or otherwise constitutes a personal recommendation to you. CS does not offer advice on the tax consequences of investment and you are advised to contact an independent tax adviser. Please note in particular that the bases and levels of taxation may change.

CS believes the information and opinions in the Disclosure Appendix of this report are accurate and complete. Information and opinions presented in the other sections of the report were obtained or derived from sources CS believes are reliable, but CS makes no representations as to their accuracy or completeness. Additional information is available upon request. CS accepts no liability for loss arising from the use of the material presented in this report, except that this exclusion of liability does not apply to the extent that liability arises under specific statutes or regulations applicable to CS. This report is not to be relied upon in substitution for the exercise of independent judgment. CS may have issued, and may in the future issue, a trading call regarding this security. Trading calls are short term trading opportunities based on market events and catalysts, while stock ratings reflect investment recommendations based on expected total return over a 12-month period as defined in the disclosure section. Because trading calls and stock ratings reflect different assumptions and analytical methods, trading calls may differ directionally from the stock rating. In addition, CS may have issued, and may in the future issue, other reports that are inconsistent with, and reach different conclusions from, the information presented in this report. Those reports reflect the different assumptions, views and analytical methods of the analysts who prepared them and CS is under no obligation to ensure that such other reports are brought to the attention of any recipient of this report. CS is involved in many businesses that relate to companies mentioned in this report. These businesses include specialized trading, risk arbitrage, market making, and other proprietary trading.

Past performance should not be taken as an indication or guarantee of future performance, and no representation or warranty, express or implied, is made regarding future performance. Information, opinions and estimates contained in this report reflect a judgement at its original date of publication by CS and are subject to change without notice. The price, value of and income from any of the securities or financial instruments mentioned in this report can fall as well as rise. The value of securities and financial instruments is subject to exchange rate fluctuation that may have a positive or adverse effect on the price or income of such securities or financial instruments. Investors in securities such as ADR's, the values of which are influenced by currency volatility, effectively assume this risk.

Structured securities are complex instruments, typically involve a high degree of risk and are intended for sale only to sophisticated investors who are capable of understanding and assuming the risks involved. The market value of any structured security may be affected by changes in economic, financial and political factors (including, but not limited to, spot and forward interest and exchange rates), time to maturity, market conditions and volatility, and the credit quality of any issuer or reference issuer. Any investor interested in purchasing a structured product should conduct their own investigation and analysis of the product and consult with their own professional advisers as to the risks involved in making such a purchase.

Some investments discussed in this report have a high level of volatility. High volatility investments may experience sudden and large falls in their value causing losses when that investment is realised. Those losses may equal your original investment. Indeed, in the case of some investments the potential losses may exceed the amount of initial investment, in such circumstances you may be required to pay more money to support those losses. Income yields from investments may fluctuate and, in consequence, initial capital paid to make the investment may be used as part of that income yield. Some investments may not be readily realisable and it may be difficult to sell or realise those investments, similarly it may prove difficult for you to obtain reliable information about the value, or risks, to which such an investment is exposed.

This report may provide the addresses of, or contain hyperlinks to, websites. Except to the extent to which the report refers to website material of CS, CS has not reviewed the linked site and takes no responsibility for the content contained therein. Such address or hyperlink (including addresses or hyperlinks to CS's own website material) is provided solely for your convenience and information and the content of the linked site does not in any way form part of this document. Accessing such website or following such link through this report or CS's website shall be at your own risk.

This report is issued and distributed in Europe (except Switzerland) by Credit Suisse Securities (Europe) Limited, One Cabot Square, London E14 4QJ, England, which is regulated in the United Kingdom by The Financial Services Authority ("FSA"). This report is being distributed in Germany by Credit Suisse Securities (Europe) Limited Niederlassung Frankfurt am Main regulated by the Bundesanstalt fuer Finanzdienstleistungsaufsicht ("BaFin"). This report is being distributed in the United States by Credit Suisse Securities (USA) LLC; in Switzerland by Credit Suisse; in Canada by Credit Suisse Securities (Canada), Inc.; in Brazil by Banco de Investimentos Credit Suisse (Brasil) S.A.; in Japan by Credit Suisse Securities (Japan) Limited, Financial Instrument Firm, Director-General of Kanto Local Finance Bureau (Kinsho) No. 66, a member of Japan Securities Dealers Association, The Financial Futures Association of Japan; elsewhere in Asia/Pacific by whichever of the following is the appropriately authorised entity in the relevant jurisdiction: Credit Suisse (Hong Kong) Limited, Credit Suisse Equities (Australia) Limited, Credit Suisse Securities (Thailand) Limited, Credit Suisse Securities (Malaysia) Sdn Bhd, Credit Suisse Singapore Branch, Credit Suisse Securities (India) Private Limited, Credit Suisse Securities (Europe) Limited, Seoul Branch, Credit Suisse Taipei Branch, PT Credit Suisse Securities Indonesia, and elsewhere in the world by the relevant authorised affiliate of the above. Research on Taiwanese securities produced by Credit Suisse Taipei Branch has been prepared by a registered Senior Business Person. Research provided to residents of Malaysia is authorised by the Head of Research for Credit Suisse Securities (Malaysia) Sdn. Bhd., to whom they should direct any queries on +603 2723 2020.

In jurisdictions where CS is not already registered or licensed to trade in securities, transactions will only be effected in accordance with applicable securities legislation, which will vary from jurisdiction to jurisdiction and may require that the trade be made in accordance with applicable exemptions from registration or licensing requirements. Non-U.S. customers wishing to effect a transaction should contact a CS entity in their local jurisdiction unless governing law permits otherwise. U.S. customers wishing to effect a transaction should do so only by contacting a representative at Credit Suisse Securities (USA) LLC in the U.S.

Please note that this report was originally prepared and issued by CS for distribution to their market professional and institutional investor customers. Recipients who are not market professional or institutional investor customers of CS should seek the advice of their independent financial advisor prior to taking any investment decision based on this report or for any necessary explanation of its contents. This research may relate to investments or services of a person outside of the UK or to other matters which are not regulated by the FSA or in respect of which the protections of the FSA for private customers and/or the UK compensation scheme may not be available, and further details as to where this may be the case are available upon request in respect of this report.

Any Nielsen Media Research material contained in this report represents Nielsen Media Research's estimates and does not represent facts. NMR has neither reviewed nor approved this report and/or any of the statements made herein.

If this report is being distributed by a financial institution other than Credit Suisse, or its affiliates, that financial institution is solely responsible for distribution. Clients of that institution should contact that institution to effect a transaction in the securities mentioned in this report or require further information. This report does not constitute investment advice by Credit Suisse to the clients of the distributing financial institution, and neither Credit Suisse, its affiliates, and their respective officers, directors and employees accept any liability whatsoever for any direct or consequential loss arising from their use of this report or its content.

Copyright 2008 CREDIT SUISSE and/or its affiliates. All rights reserved.

**ASIA/PACIFIC: +852 2101-6000**

**EUROPE: +44 (20) 7888-8888**

**UNITED STATES OF AMERICA: +1 (212) 325-2000**