

More countries line up to create casinos

Thailand, Taiwan and Japan are said to be considering gaming options which would create more “challenges” to casinos in Asia, a published report said yesterday.

There are currently 121 casinos in East Asia. Macau is the leader with 29, followed by the Philippines with 19 and 14 each for Cambodia and South Korea.

“The sector’s long-term outlook very much depends on the industry’s continued access to affordable capital to finance the building of the mega casino, entertainment, retail projects that consumers seem to crave,” The Business Times quoted E&Y global gaming services leader Tom Roche as saying.

The report, *Reviewing the market: The 2008 Global Gaming Bulletin*, noted that Macau has evolved from a local gambling market to a “destination marked filled with Las-Vegas-style resorts complete with entertainment attractions.”

Several countries in Asia are following Macau’s example.

Two casinos under construction in Singapore are expected to be completed by 2010.

Rounding out the East Asia breakdown are Nepal, Myanmar and Vietnam with six, four and two casinos each respectively. North Korea and Laos each have one.

The tally of casinos in India, the Middle East, Australasia and Central Asia is far higher at 213, the report said.

Applications in the Indian state of Goa have been filed for 22 additional casinos, E&Y noted, but a limit of five is imposed under the law.

In Vietnam, where casinos cater only to foreigners, the government is reported to be considering expansion of different forms of legalized gambling.