

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

MCOT to return unused spectrum to NBTC

Compensation set at 100 million baht

POST REPORTERS

MCOT Plc has finally agreed to return its unused 2600-megahertz broadcasting spectrum to the telecommunications regulator for the fourth-generation (4G) auctions after almost a month of negotiations.

The state-run broadcaster will receive 100 million baht in compensation for the return from the National Broadcasting and Telecommunications Commission, NBTC secretary-general Takorn Tantasith said.

"The auctions for the 2600-MHz spectrum are expected to take place in 2016," he said.

Mr Takorn said Deputy Prime Minister MR Pridiyathorn Devakula confirmed to the NBTC that the government had reached a successful conclusion with MCOT to recall its unused 60 MHz of bandwidth out

of 144 MHz on the 2600-MHz spectrum and bring it into the auctions for 4G wireless broadband service.

MR Pridiyathorn discussed the issue with the NBTC chairman and Mr Takorn yesterday, he said.

MCOT plans to raise the spectrum-return issue at the next board meeting.

"The NBTC will discuss the return in more detail with MCOT to avoid any possible legal issues," Mr Takorn said.

He said the sum of 100 million baht as revenue compensation had been calculated on the potential revenue MCOT expected to gain during the concession period.

The NBTC will use proceeds from the 2600-MHz spectrum auction to pay MCOT, Mr Takorn said.

He said MCOT was willing to return its unused frequency without compensation if the regulator could not find the money to compensate the state agency.

Mr Takorn said MR Pridiyathorn had pledged to negotiate with CAT Telecom asking the state telecom to bring the unused 25 MHz of bandwidth on the

upper end of the 1800-MHz spectrum of Total Access Communication (DTAC) for the 4G auctions.

DTAC has a total 50 MHz of bandwidth on the 1800-MHz spectrum, and the company now uses only half the frequency under a concession contract with CAT Telecom, which is due to expire in 2018.

It is also willing to reshuffle its existing 25 MHz of bandwidth on the lower end of the 1800-MHz spectrum with 12.5 MHz of bandwidth on the 1800-MHz spectrum now used by True Move.

The reshuffle will allow a contiguous spectrum that will eliminate inefficiency and waste inherent in block sizes.

However, Mr Takorn acknowledged that DTAC's frequency recall might take time, and it could not happen together with the planned auctions of the existing 1800- and 900-Mhz spectra, which are scheduled to take place on Nov 11 and Dec 15, respectively.

The CAT board also refused to recall unused spectra from DTAC on Monday, saying that was the NBTC's remit.



The NBTC will use proceeds from the 2600-MHz spectrum auction, expected to take place next year, to pay MCOT.