

BROADCASTING

MCOT banks on content revamp to boost revenue

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SET-listed MCOT Plc, the state-owned broadcaster, projects its revenue will increase 14% this year from 4.2 billion baht last year, driven by new content line-up.

It is investing 2 billion baht on content production and broadcasting equipment. Of the total budget, 800 million baht will go on content such as news and entertainment programmes and the remaining 1.2 billion baht is earmarked for broadcasting and equipment facilities.

President Sivaporn Chomsuwan said its content would suit every viewer group. MCOT is shifting its focus to news and entertainment variety and reducing the proportion of TV series and dramas.

Of the 800 million baht budget for content, 520 million baht will go for self-produced programmes and 280 million baht for time-sharing programmes with content providers.

"We hope our new and specialised content will help drive the TV viewership rating and attract more viewers," he said.

The company has changed the image of its MCOT HD channel (Channel 9) to

target younger viewers since late last year. Its previous image was that of a channel for people aged 40 and over.

It hopes the channel will be an alternative digital TV channel when the market becomes very competitive.

Last year, MCOT achieved full-year revenue of 4.2 billion baht and is projected to see a 14% increase this year. Its nine-month profit stood at 129.4 million baht.

Its core TV business contributed 44% of total revenue last year, radio 25%, joint ventures 13%, new media 5%, digital TV network rentals 7% and others 6%.

MCOT runs two digital TV channels, MCOT HD (Channel 9) and MCOT Family children's channel.

Mr Sivaporn said the request by 24 digital TV operators for an action plan from the regulator to help them by the end of next month might benefit MCOT.

They demanded the National Broadcasting and Telecommunications Commission help them solve financial difficulties arising from 10 issues.

Among the issues, three of them that could directly benefit MCOT are the delay to the third instalment of auction fees due

on May 22, the extension of the digital TV channel licence period from 15 years, and licence suspension for poor financial performance by the TV station.

However, Mr Sivaporn denied the rumour that MCOT would return the licence to operate MCOT Family, its children's channel.

"We're still moving on and producing content to serve this channel," he said.

MCOT shares closed on Friday on the Stock Exchange of Thailand at 8.90 baht, down five satang, in trade worth 1.98 million baht.