

**LICENSING REJIG IN THE OFFING**

The National Broadcasting and Telecommunications Commission may rejig the licence terms for operating services. **B3**

# NBTC mulls licensing rejig

## Adjustment to bring about 3 categories

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The National Broadcasting and Telecommunications Commission (NBTC) will consider amending the existing conditions and terms of licensing for operating services in Thailand by using foreign satellites to deal with a more complicated space business in the near future.

A source from the NBTC board who requested anonymity said the NBTC's subcommittee responsible for the satellite business discussed the amendment on July 18.

It reached a resolution that the existing licence should be subdivided into three categories: a gateway licence; a landing rights licence; and a service licence.

Under the new concept, the gateway licence would be required for a company which would provide gateway station facilities to serve foreign satellites.

The landing rights licence would be for the foreign satellite operator to hold the right to uplink and downlink a satellite signal in the country, while the service licence would be for a company to provide commercial satellite services in the local market via each of the foreign satellites.

All three categories of licence require operations through Thai companies or joint ventures between a domestic and foreign company.

The existing licensing regime is like a bundled package licence, the source added.

The subcommittee has to revise the

licensing conditions in line with the development of the space economy, such as the emergence of commercial satellite services through low Earth orbit (LEO) satellites, the source said.

LEO satellites operate at between 500 and 2,000 kilometres above the Earth's surface compared to the 36,000 km of so-called geostationary satellites, the traditional type of communications satellite.

The advantage of the lower orbit is lower latency. It will benefit everyone with access to high-speed internet services via 5G technology, Internet of Things devices, machine to machine technology, as well as drone technology and applications in areas that require high levels of accuracy, such as remote surgery.

The source added that the plan to amend the licensing system needs to pass the discussions of a focus group and a public hearing before being submitted to the NBTC's board for consideration.

The timeframe has yet to be set when the new licensing regime would come into force.

In a related development, the state enterprise National Telecom (NT), in partnership with LEO satellite company Oneweb, recently officially submitted its proposal to the NBTC, seeking permission to provide gateway station facilities to serve foreign satellites.

The proposal includes the requirement for imported equipment related to the station's facilities as well as the use of some frequencies for uplink and downlink transport.

The gateway station for OneWeb's LEO connectivity will be established in NT's gateway station in Ubon Ratchathani province.