



Somchai Lertsutiwong, left, AIS chief executive officer, yesterday hands over a cheque for the second instalment of subsidiary Advanced Wireless Network's upfront fee for its 900MHz licence to Takorn Tantasith, secretary general of the NBTC.

AIS and DTAC collect bid papers for spectrum auctions

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THE NATION

ADVANCED Info Service (AIS) group and Total Access Communication (DTAC) group yesterday picked up the applications to contest auctions for licences to offer services on the 900MHz and 1800MHz spectra.

AIS picked up bid documents for the single licence to be offered on the 900MHz spectrum and for the 1800MHz spectrum, for which nine licences will be put to bids. Its subsidiary Advanced Wireless Network (AWN) also collected one application for each of the spectra offered, as did DTAC subsidiaries DTAC TriNet and DTAC Broadband.

The lone 900MHz licence to be auctioned by the National Broadcasting and Telecommunications Commission (NBTC) will comprise 5MHz bandwidth, and the nine licences for 1800MHz will each be for 5MHz bandwidth.

Potential bidders have until August 7 to pick up the bid applications, which became available on July 9. The forms must be submitted to the NBTC on August 8.

The auctions of the 900MHz licence and the 1800MHz licences will be held on August 18 and 19, respectively.

NBTC secretary general Takorn Tantasith said he was confident many telecommunications opera-

tors would take part in the auctions, but that it remained to be seen how many of them would do so.

Earlier, the NBTC had planned to offer only the 1800MHz licences in an auction set for August 4. It had to change the schedule and revise the auction terms and conditions to the present framework after the three telecom operators declined to submit bid applications on the deadline of June 15. All three cited their sufficient bandwidth for long-term needs.

DTAC yesterday raised two concerns on the bid conditions for the 900MHz licence.

The first concern is the requirement for the bid winner to be responsible for installing equipment to prevent a possible jam in signals between the 900MHz bands used by telecom operators and the other 900MHz band earmarked for communications involving proposed high-speed train services.

The NBTC will allow the 900MHz bid winner in the upcoming auction to deduct a maximum of Bt2 billion from the licence upfront fee for the cost of installing anti-jamming equipment.

Rajiv Bawa, DTAC's chief corporate affairs and business development officer, said that the Bt2 billion cap would not cover the cost of filters and implementation incurred by the bid winner, which has to install the system at telecoms oper-

ators and for the radio equipment of the planned high-speed train operators. DTAC estimates these costs will be significantly higher than Bt2 billion.

Aside from the costs, the winner of the 900 MHz spectrum will be solely responsible for all operational risks relating to the interference. The installation of filters at the base stations of the other operators – required to be done by the bid winner – would not be possible in practice, Bawa said.

DTAC reiterated its intention to make a thorough assessment of the final auction guidelines before deciding whether to participate in the auctions.

The company remained committed to working with the NBTC to

work towards the resolution of the issues it flagged with the 900MHz terms, in order to ensure that the sale for this spectrum has "favourable conditions", Bawa said in a statement yesterday.

Separately, AWN yesterday paid to the NBTC the second instalment of the upfront fee of its 900MHz licence. The total value of the second instalment is over Bt4.301 billion (including VAT).

It also placed a bank guarantee for the combined the third and fourth instalments of more than Bt68.045 billion (including VAT) with the regulator.

AWN won the bid to clinch the

The Nation

The Nation
Circulation: 68,200
Ad Rate: 2,050

Section: Business/First Page

Date: Tuesday 17 July 2018

Volume: 42

No: 55560

Page: 1B(Bottom)

Col.Inch: 56.82

Ad Value: 116,481

PRValue (x3): 349,443

Clip: Full Color

Headline: AIS and DTAC collect bid papers for spectrum auctions

licence in 2016.

It will have to pay the third instalment of more than Bt4.301 billion by July 16 next year and the remaining instalment of over Bt63.744 billion (including VAT) by July 16, 2020.