

## DTAC unit approved for auction

THE NATION

THE BOARD of the National Broadcasting and Telecommunications Commission (NBTC) yesterday approved DTAC Trinet (DTN), a subsidiary of Total Access Communication (DTAC), as qualified to bid for a 900MHz licence.

DTN is the sole bidder in the auction, which will be held by the telecommunications regulator on Sunday. The licence contains 2x5MHz bandwidth (890-895MHz/ 935-940 MHz), with a starting bid price of Bt37.988 billion.

Under the auction rules, a bidder is required to raise the bid price at least one time and at Bt76 million per time. If it wins the 900MHz licence, DTAC will have a combined 110MHz of both low-band and high-band spectrum, equal to True Corp's holdings but less than Advanced Info Service's 120MHz spectrum bandwidth.

Currently, DTAC TriNet has a

licence to operate the 2.1GHz band totalling 2x15MHz bandwidth, and is due to receive a licence to operate the 1800MHz band totalling 2x5MHz bandwidth. It has also partnered with TOT to provide a wireless broadband service on the state agency's 2.3GHz totalling 60MHz bandwidth.

According to the auction terms and conditions, if DTN wins the 900MHz licence, DTAC will be allowed to continue using DTAC's existing 850MHz spectrum for a period not exceeding two years during the DTN rollout of the 900MHz network. This will allow DTAC to continue its 850MHz 3G service in rural areas.

The NBTC had declined to allow DTAC to continue using the 850MHz after its concession expiry date of September 15 this year.

This prompted DTAC to seek a temporary protection for the remaining users on its 850MHz concession at the Central Administrative Court, which in the middle of last month allowed DTAC to continue using the band until December 15.

DTAC is now focusing more on investment. Its capital expenditure this year has been recently revised up to between Bt18 billion and Bt20 billion from an earlier projection of between Bt15 billion and Bt18 billion to accelerate its 2300MHz network expansion.