

# NBTC sets up panels to steer auction

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THE NATION

THE National Broadcasting and Telecommunications Commission (NBTC) has set up two working panels to prepare for the auction of a 700MHz spectrum band for providing 5G wireless broadband services.

NBTC secretary-general Takorn Tantasith said yesterday that one panel would draw up the licensing rules and the other would evaluate the price of the band. Both panels will finish the tasks within 30 days.

Takorn said that the 700MHz band totalling 45MHz bandwidth should be divided into nine lots each with 5MHz bandwidth. He estimated its starting bid price at between Bt5 billion and Bt6 billion per 5MHz.

The proposals of the two panels will be put to the NBTC board for its consideration and to a public hearing.

The final licensing rules and spectrum starting bid price are

expected to be finalised in March 2019.

The NBTC will state in the auction rules that the winning bidders are required to start paying the upfront fees in 2020.

The NBTC aims to get 5G services off the ground in 2020.

Recently the NBTC subpanel tasked with recalling the 700MHz band from digital TV broadcasters called the first meeting with related parties on issues surrounding the recall.

The subpanel expects to see the auction of this band in either middle of next year or in the third quarter. Part of the proceeds from the auction will be used to compensate those broadcasters and related parties that will be affected by the recall.

In a separate matter, the NBTC board yesterday approved the granting of a 1800MHz licence and a 900MHz licence to DTAC TriNet, a subsidiary of Total Access Communication (DTAC).

The 1800MHz licence will be valid from December 16 this year

and end on September 15, 2033, while the 900 spectrum will be valid for 15 years from December 16 this year, until December 15, 2033.

DTAC Trinet yesterday submitted to the NBTC the first instalment payment of the 900 MHz licence, Bt4.301 billion (including value-added tax), from the total upfront charge of Bt38.064 billion.

Last month the company paid over Bt6.963 billion as the first instalment of the 1800MHz spectrum licence fee to the NBTC.

The acquisition of this licence completes DTAC's spectrum portfolio, which now includes the low-band 900 MHz and the high-band 1800 MHz and 2100 MHz.

In addition, DTAC operates 60 MHz of 2300 MHz spectrum in a partnership agreement with TOT. With a total bandwidth of 110 MHz, DTAC will now quickly update all its systems operating on 850 MHz to 900 MHz to support the rapid growth of mobile Internet.