

Consensus on December spectrum bid

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The private sector, digital TV operators and other related parties support the timeline of the planned 700-megahertz spectrum auction, to be held in December, according to yesterday's grand public hearing on the bid.

Col Natee Sukonrat, vice-chairman of the National Broadcasting and Telecommunications Commission, said that before the auction date the NBTC needs at least 10 months to prepare the new master plan for digital TV spectrum, the broadcasting network arrangement and a clear compensation regime.

Digital TV operators will be moved to the 470-510MHz range from the 700MHz range to comply with global standards, leaving the 700MHz range available for 5G adoption in late 2020.

According to a 2016 Thammasat University study, using the 700MHz range for 5G adoption would generate 248 billion baht in benefits for the economy and boost GDP by 3.5%.

Col Natee said the NBTC opened the draft on recall of the 700MHz range, the compensation regime and the auction

conditions to public opinion on the NBTC's website until March 4.

Col Natee chaired yesterday's public hearing. He also heads the NBTC subcommittee working for the 700MHz recall draft and the compensation regime process.

All related parties — digital TV operators, telecom operators and broadcasting network providers — took part in yesterday's hearing.

Previously, the NBTC board and its office tried to push the 700MHz auction to be held in May this year.

The 700MHz range that will be recalled from digital TV operators contains 90MHz bandwidth of spectrum for upload and download (45x2). The NBTC plans to auction only 70MHz of bandwidth, dividing into seven licences each containing 10MHz of bandwidth (5x2).

The licence payment term will be 10 years, and licence validity is 20 years.

The subcommittee, led by Col Natee, insists that there's no reason to run the auction in May, citing unavailability of key factors such as technical details of the bandwidth recall, network rearrangement and compensation to digital TV operators and broadcast providers.