

TECHNOLOGY

Takorn: 5G adoption could lift 2020 GDP

KOMSAN TORTERMVASANA

5G adoption could contribute 1.02% of the country's GDP of 17.3 trillion baht projected for this year, says the head of the National Broadcasting and Telecommunications Commission (NBTC).

Some 177 billion baht could be generated as a result of activities in relation to 5G adoption this year, NBTC secretary-general Takorn Tantasith told yesterday's "2020: The Year of Investment/Exit for Thailand" seminar held by newspaper *Matichon*.

"5G adoption is expected to help push up the value of the overall economy this year," Mr Takorn said.

The NBTC will auction off four spectrum ranges on Feb 16, comprising 15 megahertz of bandwidth on the 700-megahertz range, 35MHz of bandwidth on 1800MHz, 190MHz of bandwidth on 2600MHz and 2700MHz of bandwidth on the 26-gigahertz range.

Of the 56 spectrum licences up for auction, the NBTC expects 25 to be snapped up by mobile operators, Mr Takorn said.

The 25 consist of two licences on the 700MHz range, 19 licences on the 2600MHz range and four licences on the 26GHz range.

Mr Takorn said 54 billion baht could be raised from the auction on Feb 16. He said 5G adoption is likely to spur the local economy for years to come.

From March to December, 112 billion baht is likely to be invested in the 5G network.

Some 62 billion baht could be generated as a multiplier from 5G development, including employment, Mr Takorn said, adding that a further 1.9 billion baht could be contributed by the use of 5G tech.

5G is seen contributing 177 billion baht to the economy this year, 332 billion baht in 2021 and 476 billion baht in 2022.

Mr Takorn said Thailand will be the first-mover in 5G commercial service in Asean with a possible launch in May.

As the baht has strengthened, the opportunity has arisen for Thai operators to import necessary devices and equipment related to 5G.

"You should quickly buy the equipment," Mr Takorn said. "You can turn the crisis into an opportunity."

He said five telecom and mobile operators have picked up 5G bid documents: Advanced Info Service, True Move H Universal Communication, Total Access Communication, TOT and CAT Telecom.