

TECHNOLOGY

NBTC tells DES to get 5G panel set up

Crucial time to steer new development

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The National Broadcasting and Telecommunications Commission (NBTC) has urged the Digital Economy and Society (DES) Ministry to quickly seek cabinet approval for the establishment of a national 5G committee to promote innovation development in the country.

This is "the most proper time" to launch the committee, following the 5G multi-band licence auction on Feb 16, said NBTC secretary-general Takorn Tantasith.

The panel, chaired by the prime minister, would serve as a key mechanism fostering collaboration between related government agencies to push 5G development.

The panel is also tasked with mitigating obstacles regarding the recall of unused spectrum.

The NBTC office will serve as the secretariat of the committee.

Mr Takorn said he understands the DES minister will forward the issue to the cabinet meeting next week, following the censure debate against the cabinet ministers and the prime minister in the House of Representatives this week.

"This committee should be formed to promote vertical 5G development, ensuring optimum benefits of 5G

adoption for the economy and end users," he said.

Mr Takorn submitted a resignation letter to NBTC chairman Gen Sukit Khamasundara last week, saying he wants to work until May 18, even though his term ends in September.

There are rumours he may step down to become either a candidate for an NBTC board seat or the DES minister.

Recruitment of the new NBTC commissioners is expected to start in July after the parliament pushes through an amendment of the NBTC Act.

Mr Takorn said he wants to see the new NBTC board pressing ahead with the underground cable conduit project in line with the government's policy.

The NBTC, Bangkok Metropolitan Authority and Metropolitan Electricity Authority have a plan to embed overhead cables in the capital underground spanning 150 kilometres.

Last year, some 27km of cable lines were brought underground, and another 52km are scheduled to be installed this year.

Mr Takorn also wants new board members to come up with regulations to boost innovative developments.

"The board needs more than support. Leadership is needed move ahead with what is good for the industry in the face of some opposition," he said.

"When rolling out new regulations, opposing or different views are unavoidable. Decision-making cannot wait for a clear path."