

TECHNOLOGY

Mr Abhisak, Mr Patompong, Mr Tinnakorn and Mr Natwut, from left to right, give their views on the digital industry at Post Today's virtual forum yesterday.

Depa unveils digital roadmap

KOMSAN TORTERMSASANA

The Digital Economy Promotion Agency (Depa) has introduced its digital blueprint for Thailand as a driver of digital transformation, to cope with rapid changes in technology, consumer behaviour and the business environment.

The blueprint was crafted to ensure the success of Thailand's 20-year digital economy development roadmap, which started in 2016.

Only 0.4% of companies in the industrial sector have achieved Industry 4.0 practices, where smart production is involved, the agency indicated.

Depa president and chief executive Nuttapon Nimmanphatcharin said the way forward for enterprises is to adopt digital technology by developing products with new platforms.

Those who only operate physical functions must gear towards non-physical features, while traditional

businesses need to go for digitalisation, he said.

Digital technology would facilitate all sectors and the country's competitiveness, said Mr Nuttapon.

He was speaking at a virtual conference on digital industry operators and the new normal, organised yesterday by Post Today.

According to the country's 20-year digital economy development roadmap, key digital foundations were to be established by 2017 and digital inclusion must take place by 2021.

Full digital transformation is planned to take place by 2026 and the country aims to be in the league of global digital leaders by 2036.

Depa's digital blueprint is a five-year digital economy promotion master plan, starting in 2020, that serves as a catalyst for the digital economy.

The blueprint is divided into four categories.

The first is to build manpower for

the digital era, in which Depa targets 500,000 digital workers and 30 million digital citizens.

The second concerns efforts to transform the economy towards digital development, in which 25,000 digitalised enterprises are expected to be created.

The third involves community empowerment for the digital future with the target of 24,700 digitalised communities.

The final category concerns the creation of a digital innovation ecosystem via smart cities, big data and cybersecurity development.

"We are facing insufficient digitally skilled manpower, as there are only 20,000 new graduates with digital skills per year, but demand is as high as 40,000," said Mr Nuttapon.

Abhisak Chulya, vice-chairman for the Federation of Thai Industries' Digital Industry Club, said enterprises must be aware of digital disruption trends

and new regulations, including the Personal Data Protection Act. Companies need to cope with the impact of digital transformation globally, said Mr Abhisak.

The government should provide assistance to enterprises so they can weather rapid changes in the digital realm and ensure their competitiveness, he said.

Natwut Amornvivat, president of True Digital Group, said corporations must figure out how to protect their business from borderless competition in the new economy.

They need to learn how to take advantage of technology for their operations, he said.

As a telecom service provider, Mr Natwut said the company is an enabler for digital and industrial ecosystem.

"Don't be pessimistic — Thais can be disrupters in the new economy too," he said.

Patompong Srinuan, an economist at the National Broadcasting and Telecommunications Commission, said the agency has eased its regulatory conditions to promote 5G adoption in vertical industries.

These include the use of certain telecom spectrum in selected areas, he said.

Tinnakorn Laoraoviro, president of the Association of Thai Software Industry, said the local software market is worth 130 billion baht with an annual growth rate of 10-20%.



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NUTTAPON NIMMANPHATCHARIN
President, Depa

Software business has been affected by both intense competition and the pandemic.

"The competition comes from global platforms that wield both technology and strong business models," he said.

Enterprises must study consumer behaviour as much as possible to increase their engagement, said Mr Tinnakorn.