

BROADCASTING

State-owned MCOT buys six Bangkok frequencies

KOMSAN TORTERMVASANA

State-owned MCOT Plc yesterday secured six out of eight radio frequencies allotted for Bangkok during an auction of spectrum bands used for FM broadcasting.

A total of 71 frequencies were allocated for the auction by radio stations across the country, including eight spectrum ranges for Bangkok.

There were four batches of frequencies in the bidding, which was organised by the National Broadcasting and Telecommunications Commission (NBTC). The first consists of eight frequencies in Bangkok, six in the Central Plains and four in the Northeast.

The second batch encompasses 10 frequencies in the North and 12 in the South, while the third involves 12 frequencies in the Northeast and six in the North. The fourth batch includes five in the Northeast and eight in the South.

Only the first two batches were auctioned off by press time yesterday.

MCOT president Kasemsam Chotakornprant told the media that the firm grabbed six frequency ranges allotted for Bangkok for a total of 286.8 million baht.

MCOT participated in the bidding for 55 frequency ranges across the country, which Mr Kasemsam said was thoroughly considered based on potential profits, network coverage areas as well as social perspectives in supplying correct information to the public.

Trusted news and smart entertainment are key elements that could strengthen its core businesses this year, particularly through Thai News Agency and collaboration projects with partners.

The total reserve price for 71 frequencies is 402 million baht but only the first batch of the auction, involving 18 frequencies, saw 443 million baht generated to the state coffers, according to Col Natee Sukonrat, NBTC vice chair.

The bidding of the second batch ended with 160 million baht in combined winning prices, much higher than the combined reserve price of 7.6 million baht. Col Natee said bidding for frequencies allotted for provinces is very competitive.

"The event was a success of a transformation from a state-owned frequency holding system to a licensing regime, which is due to start on April 4," he said.

TECHNOLOGY

Benchachinda Group unveils Cyber Elite

SUCHIT LEESA-NGUANSUK

Benchachinda Group (BCG), a digital infrastructure and solution provider, has set up a subsidiary — Cyber Elite — to make a foray into the 13-billion-baht cybersecurity market in Thailand amid a rise in digital adoption.

Cyber Elite aims to attain 1 billion baht in revenue by 2025.

Speaking via a virtual conference, Cyber Elite managing director Supakorn Kungpisidan said cybersecurity is now increasingly vital for organisations, driven by digital transformation, remote work, cybersecurity regulations and cloud security concerns.

Cybersecurity-related regulations are being enforced by various regulators, such as the Office of Insurance Commission, Bank of Thailand, and

the Office of the National Broadcasting and Telecommunications Commission, which have driven demand for cybersecurity services to another level.

"We expect to see a 20% growth of the cybersecurity market in Thailand this year with a market size of 11-13 billion baht," said Mr Supakorn.

To capture this opportunity, Cyber Elite was established with 50 million baht in investment, including a security operation centre with around 100 employees, 90% of whom are certified personnel, he said.

The company is offering services, covering integration of cybersecurity solution systems, consulting for standard compliance, managed security, research and development as well as training.

He said consultancy services for

compliance with the Personal Data Protection Act (PDPA), which is scheduled to be fully enforced in June, is becoming saturated with price competition, and there are now other interesting areas include identifying risks and overseeing cybersecurity measures to support chief information security officers.

Despite economic woes and budget constraints, firms continue to invest in cybersecurity in prioritised areas, he said.

"To prevent and protect cyberthreats, it's not just a procurement solution, we can advise to improve the process and find potential risk areas with customisation. This will create value proposition from our local service teams," said Mr Supakorn.

The company will soon launch a new generation of log management, capitalising on artificial intelligence to detect cybersecurity incidents, he said.

In 2023, the firm aims to roll out its intelligent security platform, he noted. Enterprise blockchain security is another crucial area for R&D as blockchain and Web 3.0 have raised serious concerns in terms of tackling cyberattacks, he noted.

The firm also aims to expand its reach into the Indochina market amid a surge in demand for managed services.

Mr Supakorn said Cyber Elite aims to attain 350 million baht in revenue in the first year of its operation, crucially catering for bank, telecom and tech firms. The private sector is expected to generate 70% of the firm's revenue and the public sector the remainder.

"We aim to achieve 1 billion baht in revenue by 2025," he said.



Mr Supakorn, second from left, with the Cyber Elite team.