

TELECOMS

5G test base facilities set for Digital Park

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The government plans to set up test base facilities for 5G wireless broadband at the Digital Park in Chon Buri province this year.

The facilities will also serve as sites for the adoption of innovative technologies, with the goal of infrastructure-sharing and investment cost reduction.

The 5G test base facilities will be handled in collaboration with a working panel, comprising the Digital Economy and Society (DE) Ministry, the National Broadcasting and Telecommunications Commission (NBTC) and private sector organisations.

The NBTC was assigned by the working panel to assess which spectrum range is most suitable for 5G development, with a focus on two ranges between 3.3 and 4.2 gigahertz (GHz) and between 24 and 29 GHz, in compliance with the 5G spectrum standard of the International Telecommunication Union.

Deputy Prime Minister ACM Prajin Juntong yesterday chaired a meeting of the National Digital Economy and Society Committee, where 5G broadband technology was lauded for the value it will bring to vertical industries under the Thailand 4.0 policy. But the government needs to see practical utilisation of innovative technologies because 5G adoption requires intensive investment, he said.

A vertical market is a group of companies that serve each other's specialised needs and do not serve a broader market.

DE minister Pichet Durongkaverroj said the government believes investment costs of 5G broadband adoption in Thailand will be 40% cheaper if it is done through the

concept of infrastructure sharing.

"The DE Ministry will set up a working panel for 5G preparation next week. The ministry will be responsible for cooperation with state agencies and the private sector, while the NBTC will assess spectrum ranges used for the 5G test base facilities and case studies," said Mr Pichet.

He said it is too early to elaborate on an exact budget for the 5G test base facilities, but they will be run as a consortium between the public and private sectors.

The NDESC yesterday approved a draft bill for the Digital Economy and Society Council of Thailand.

The draft bill has been jointly developed by the DE Ministry, the NDESC and the Thai Federation of ICT Technology Association.

Mr Pichet said the DE Ministry will submit a proposal to establish the Digital Economy and Society Council of Thailand to the cabinet by August. After receiving cabinet endorsement, the draft bill will be considered by the National Legislative Assembly.

The Digital Economy and Society Council of Thailand is aimed at creating a centre of self-regulation in digital-related industries with greater efficiency, along with developing a digitally skilled workforce and innovative technology.

The Digital Economy and Society Council of Thailand will also cooperate with other business associations.

"The Digital Economy and Society Council will finally be a centre of digital-related industry, similar to other associations like the Federation of Thai Industries, the Thai Bankers' Association and the Thai Chamber of Commerce," said Mr Pichet.