

Telecom regulator pledges effective spectrum management to embrace Thailand 4.0 initiative

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THE NATIONAL Broadcasting and Telecommunications Commission (NBTC) has planned to ensure more effective spectrum management as its core competency to embark on the Thailand 4.0 model, according to the regulator's secretary general Takorn Tantasith.

Takorn said at the 4th annual Asia Pacific Spectrum Management Conference on Tuesday that the NBTC is prepared to push forward the fifth generation (5G) to society by allocating more spectrums, as it would drive the success of Thailand 4.0, a national initiative to step out of the middle-income trap.

"We do plan to allocate more spectra to meet the spectrum requirement as recommended by the ITU (International Telecommunication Union)," he said.

"We currently have 420MHz in total of spectrum bands in five difference frequency bands; 850, 900 and 1800MHz and 2.1 and 2.3GHz, allocated to telecommunications market. Spectrums are being held by both private and state-owned operators."

As the spectrum concession in the FDD 1800 and 900MHz bands will expire in September, NBTC expects to accelerate mobile broadband by issuing one licence of 5 MHz of 900MHz and releasing 45 MHz of 1800MHz through nine licences of 5 MHz each. Both auctions will be held in the third week of August.

Currently, NBTC allocates 5MHz

of 900 MHz to support field trial for the high-speed railway project under the ministry of transport, he said.

"With our newly-established authority to provide compensation in return for spectrum to be auctioned, we plan to give the telecom market the 2.6 GHz spectrum band," he said.

The band is now under possession of MCOT, a State broadcaster. Around 180 MHz of the 2.6 GHz will be put into consideration for auction by 2020. Following the endorsement of Thailand's position to allocate 700MHz to mobile communications at the World Radiocommunication Conference in 2015, NBTC plans to bring this frequency band in use, once the digital switch over has been finished. Now, the 700MHz band is being used by Thai broadcasting industry.

"We are also considering the possibilities to release more spectrums to support 5G services in Thailand. For that, we plan to verify several aspects to include 3.5 GHz spectrum band for up to 200 MHz into the telecom market," he said.

The moves will complement NBTC's last year allocation of spectrum for IoT (internet of things) access to promote local usage and enhance the IoT development in Thailand.

"I am confident that NBTC will be able to fulfil the necessary and fundamental requirement for Thailand to fully embrace 5G by 2020. We could lead our country to Thailand 4.0 and stand in the upfront position in Asean," he said.