

TECHNOLOGY

DE rolls out public-private 5G testbed

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The Digital Economy and Society (DE) Ministry has announced a 5G technology alliance in testbed laboratories and field trials, aiming to promote 5G infrastructure adoption by 2020.

The alliance includes Huawei Technologies, Ericsson, Qualcomm, Intel, Nokia, major local telecom operators and the Thai Federation of ICT Technology Association.

Representatives of the alliance are members of the working committee for the 5G testbed, which was set up on Oct 31. The committee comprises 29 members and is chaired by the permanent DE secretary.

DE Minister Pichet Durongkaveroj said the committee held its first formal meeting last Friday to collaborate on development. The ministry plans to meet executives of Kasetsart University's Sriracha campus on Nov 23 for a discussion about the 5G test base lab.

Previously, Kasetsart University offered space to construct 2-3 buildings for a 5G test base.

The government is establishing test beds for 5G wireless broadband tech at the Digital Park in Chon Buri province to initiate development of the technology infrastructure in the country, to promote

infrastructure-sharing to save on investment costs.

The 5G testbed project was recently approved by National Digital Economy and Society Committee, which is chaired by Deputy Prime Minister ACM Prajin Juntong.

The 5G test bases will operate under the through working committee for 5G preparation, which comprises the National Broadcasting and Telecommunications Commission (NBTC), academics, the Eastern Economic Corridor committee, the National Economic and Social Development Board and the Industrial Estate Authority of Thailand.

The NBTC has been assigned by the government to allot the appropriate spectrum ranges most fit for 5G development in the country, particularly the 3.3-4.2 gigahertz (GHz), and the 24-29GHz, in compliance with the 5G spectrum standards of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU).

Mr Pichet said Huawei initially expressed an interest to invest in some parts of the testbed lab and training programmes that would help 5G adoption in Thailand.

The overall cost of testbed labs have not yet been stated.

For the field trials of 5G tech, he said the working committee will focus on

5G adoption use cases for each vertical industry such as smart vehicles, smart logistics, smart cities, smart healthcare, smart airport.

"The government believes 5G tech adoption will be 40% cheaper if it is done through infrastructure sharing," he said.

The DE Ministry will be responsible for coordinating cooperation with state agencies and private actors.

The adoption of 5G can transform agriculture, healthcare, manufacturing, automobiles, utility meters (water, gas) with Internet of Things (IoT) and embedded technology.

The 5G technology could provide up to 100 times faster data speeds than 4G, which will create opportunities for new IoT use cases, augmented reality and virtual reality applications, smart vehicles, remote healthcare, and robotics.

The upgrade has been set as a critical national agenda as 5G and IoT adoption are considered a foundation to achieve the Digital Thailand vision, so the government needs to prepare spectrum allocation and urge investment to capitalise on the full potential of 5G by 2020.

Previously, an NBTC study said Thailand faces lose 2.3 trillion baht in lost economic opportunity, 20% of GDP, unless 5G is adopted by 2030.

Manufacturing would lose out the most, with 5G anticipated to create added value for businesses of between 700 billion to 1.6 trillion baht.



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PICHET DURONGKAVEROJ

DE minister