

NBTC board gives the nod to auction rules for 700MHz

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THE NATIONAL Broadcasting and Telecommunications Commission (NBTC) board yesterday approved in principle the draft rules for recall of the 700MHz band for auctioning.

The main issues in the draft include the rules for reclaiming the 700MHz band, the rules for granting the 700MHz licences for providing a telecom service,

as well as the use of the auction proceeds to compensate digital TV broadcasters who will be affected by the NBTC move to reclaim the spectrum.

NBTC secretary-general Takorn Tantasith said yesterday that the draft is expected to be up for hearing late next month.

The hearing will also discuss if digital TV broadcasters should be allowed to return their licences to the watchdog in the case that they want to exit the busi-

ness.

The NBTC subcommittee drawing up this draft had proposed that the watchdog auction 35MHz bandwidth of the 700MHz, which will be divided into seven lots, each containing 5MHz. The licence is valid for 20 years.

The licence fee upfront is divided into 10 instalments but paid in nine instalments. The bid winners will pay the first instalment in the first year, get a break in the second year and resume paying the remainder in each of the following eight years.

Takorn earlier expected the NBTC to invite telecom operators to bid for the 700MHz in April this year and the auction is expected to take place in May.

The watchdog's subcommittee tasked with valuing the licence price has yet to determine the starting bid price.

The NBTC is also in the process of recalling 2.6GHz from state agencies for reallocation through auction.