

FIVE FOR FIGHTING

The NBTC announces that five mobile operators have qualified for Sunday's 5G spectrum licence auction. **B3**

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

NBTC announces 5G auction players

Spectrum	700MHz (3 licences)	2600MHz (19 licences)	26GHz (27 licences)
Bidder			
AIS	✓	✓	✓
true move H	✓	✓	✓
dtac			✓
CAT	✓	✓	
TOT			✓

Source: NBTC

BKPgraphics

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Five mobile operators have qualified for the 5G spectrum licence auction on Sunday, while the telecom regulator has tentatively agreed on a 6.6-billion-baht compensation package to recall state-owned broadcaster MCOT's 2600-megahertz spectrum range.

Yesterday the National Broadcasting and Telecommunications Commission (NBTC) announced the qualified bidders for the auction. They are Advanced Info Service (AIS), True Move H Universal Communication (TUC), Total Access Communication (DTAC), TOT and CAT Telecom.

The 700MHz and 2600MHz ranges

will be contested by AIS, TUC and CAT.

All but CAT will vie for the 26-gigahertz range. No one bid for the 1800MHz range.

Takorn Tantasith, secretary-general of the National Broadcasting and Telecommunications Commission (NBTC), said the auction on Sunday will start at 9am and is expected to finish by 9pm.

"Due to the financial constraints from the previous 4G licence auctions, the bidders may not want to see exorbitant winning prices," said Mr Takorn.

The combined winning prices in the auction could surpass 70 billion baht, he said. Overall 5G network investment could reach 130 billion baht this year and 200 billion in 2021, said Mr Takorn.

"The industry is likely to watch the competition between the big two — AIS and TUC — to acquire more spectrum bandwidth, which is a key issue for mobile operators' services," he said.

Mr Takorn said mobile operators can use the 700MHz range to boost their 4G service capacity and prepare for 5G adoption.

The NBTC plans to allow the import of 5G-related equipment from March to facilitate 5G adoption.

A source in the telecom industry who requested anonymity said both AIS and TUC are ready to launch 5G marketing campaigns at Siam Paragon and Siam Square as soon as one week after the auction to boost public perception of their brands' 5G services.

Yesterday the NBTC board agreed 6.6 billion baht is appropriate compensation for MCOT. This was one of the three options studied by Chulalongkorn University.

The other two options studied were 1.57 billion baht and 3.8 billion.

"The 6.6 billion baht is around 25% of the 27 billion the 146MHz of bandwidth on the 2600MHz held by MCOT is worth," said Mr Takorn. This is based on a 15-year term.

He said this is not the final amount as the NBTC subcommittee needs to calculate for the duration of MCOT's 2600MHz concession contract, which could be 10, 13.5 or 15 years.