

**TELECOMS**

# NBTC keen to snag ITU's international conference

**KOMSAN TORTERMVASANA**

The telecom regulator will ask to host a major conference for the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) in May 2021 as part of a push to outline Thailand's competitiveness in 5G.

Takorn Tantasith, secretary-general of National Broadcasting and Telecommunications Commission (NBTC), said he will talk with ITU secretary-general Houlin Zhao soon via video conference about the proposal to host the ITU Telecom World 2021 conference.

The call will also touch on last month's 5G spectrum licence auctions and the ongoing 5G network roll-out, Mr Takorn said.

He said Thailand is seen as the first mover for commercial 5G adoption in Asean.

Advanced Info Service (AIS) has embarked on commercial 5G services on the 2600-megahertz range since Feb 21, the first day the country's largest mobile operator was formally granted the spectrum won from the auction.

The government is also on the verge of forming a national 5G committee to consolidate efforts by state agencies for 5G adoption and ease hindrances to adoption through vertical industries.

"If the ITU secretary-general agrees with the proposal in principle, the NBTC will submit it to the cabinet for approval," Mr Takorn said.

Apart from spotlighting Thailand's competitiveness in 5G, the conference will be a boon for the country's economy, including tourism and services, he said. By the time the conference is held, the coronavirus outbreak is expected to have subsided.

Mr Takorn said the outbreak is likely to hinder the economy over the next 3-4 months at least.

The outbreak prompted a sharp rise in the use of social media and e-marketplace platforms from January to February, he said.

Today, True Move H Universal Communication (TUC) plans to pay 1.9 billion baht for the first instalment towards 90MHz of bandwidth on the 2600MHz range won during the auction.