

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Renewed push to tidy overhead cables

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The National Broadcasting and Telecommunications Commission (NBTC) has vowed to clean up overhead communications lines covering 400 kilometres in Bangkok and 2,000km in the provinces through collaboration with related parties this year.

The commitment is spelled out in an NBTC resolution approved by the board late last week, in line with the cabinet's resolution on Nov 23 last year.

Trairat Viriyasirikul, acting secretary-general of the NBTC, said the move to clear up cable clutter is part of its three-year overhead cable management plan, in tandem with the Metropolitan Electricity Authority (MEA), the Provincial Electricity Authority (PEA), the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration

(BMA) and telecom operators.

"For 2022, a stretch of some 400km in Bangkok is considered an urgent zone for this task. In the provinces, 2,000km will be prioritised. The work is likely to start from Feb 15," he said.

The NBTC is responsible for spearheading the tasks.

Mr Trairat said the NBTC plans to cover some of the expense for the work using its Broadcasting and Telecommunications Research Development Fund, particularly in the urgent areas in Bangkok.

Apart from the urgent zones, telecom operators can deduct expenses for the upgrade from their revenue subject to annual fee payment to the NBTC, in line with the regulator's rules, he said.

According to Mr Trairat, all relevant parties have come up with a joint

resolution on the tasks.

The MEA is responsible for the cost of equipment used to hang communications cables on electric poles in Bangkok and surrounding areas.

The PEA is responsible for the cost of equipment to hang communications lines on electric poles in the provinces.

The BMA is tasked with providing space for cable rubbish awaiting disposal and facilitating the organisation of communications lines.

The NBTC office is in charge of the cost for cable removal and disposal.

"During the process of organising communication lines, people living in areas where the tasks are being performed may experience some inconveniences," he said.

"But after the work is completed, the city will look nicer and be safer for travel."

In 2019, the NBTC, BMA and MEA worked together to put overhead cables underground that span 27km, said Sutsak Tantayotin, deputy secretary-general for telecom service at the NBTC office.

The trio worked together to put overhead cables into overhead pipes in 106 roads across the country, stretching 275km, including 24 roads in Bangkok (27km) and 82 roads (247km) in the provinces.

In 2020, cable lines stretching 52km were buried underground, while cable lines were put into overhead pipes on eight Bangkok roads stretching 40km, according to the regulator.

The project slowed last year because of the pandemic, the NBTC indicated.



A rat's nest of cable wires hang above an overpass on Phahon Yothin Road in Bangkok. APICHT JINAKUL