

NBTC sets tougher condition for satellite bid winners

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The winning bidders of the upcoming satellite orbital slot auction will be obliged to reserve one transponder per broadcast satellite, or 400 megabits per second capacity per broadband satellite, for state use and public services without charge, says the telecom regulator.

The condition is seen as tougher than the previous satellite concession regime, in which the concessionaire was required to allot one transponder per concession, regardless of how many satellites it operated, and received a rental fee payment from the state for the capacity.

The new auction rule was established in the *Royal Gazette* earlier this month.

Air Marshal Thanapant Raicharoen, a commissioner of the National Broadcasting and Telecommunications Commission (NBTC), said the auction is due to be held on Jan 8 next year.

The auction offers five slot packages, covering 50.5°East and 51°E with a starting price of 374 million baht; 78.5°E with a starting price of 360 million; 119.5°E and 120°E with a starting price of 397 million; 126°E with a starting price of 8 million; and 142°E with a starting price of 189 million.

The licences for orbital slot usage run for 20 years.

Interested companies are allowed to pick up bid documents at the NBTC office until the end of November and

the information session about related document preparation will be held on Dec 2.

Interested firms are scheduled to submit their bid documents on Dec 27.

The list of qualified bidders will be announced on Jan 4 and then a mock auction held on Jan 7.

If there is only one bidder, the auction will be postponed to Jan 29, giving more time for other interested parties to apply.

AM Thanapant said the NBTC sees the importance of the allotment of the satellite capacity for state usage.

The auction condition also stipulates that if state agencies want to use more satellite capacity than stipulated in the condition, especially for the 119.5°E slot, they must not participate in the auction, he said.

They can negotiate with the winning bidders for the usage.

The winning bidders must allow the assigned state agencies to participate in the construction of a satellite gateway control centre to allow the agencies to manage the allotted capacity for the state tasks and train their personnel for future tasks.

AM Thanapant said the 119.5°E slot is expected to be the most desirable slot for bidders, followed by 78.5°E.

Last year's satellite orbital slot auction, set for Aug 28, was scrapped as TC Space Connect, wholly owned by Thaicom, was the sole bidder.

The NBTC then amended some bidding conditions for the new auction.

True open to reallocation of matches

Rivals can share 16 World Cup games

POST REPORTERS

True Corporation has no objection to the Sports Authority of Thailand (SAT) reallocating a quota of football World Cup matches.

The National Broadcasting and Telecommunications Commission (NBTC) yesterday discussed the matter with SAT representatives following a complaint by the Association of Digital Television Broadcasting (ADTEB).

Acting NBTC secretary-general Trairat Viriyasirikul said after the meeting that the two agencies asked True to return a broadcast quota of 16 World Cup matches for reallocation so other digital TV channels can broadcast them in parallel with True which owns True4U, a digital channel that has been awarded the rights to broadcast 32 of the 64 World Cup matches.

"True has no objection. The SAT will now make a decision on the reallocation," Mr Trairat said.

Teeradet Dumrongbhalasit, co-president at True, confirmed that True has allowed the rights to 16 World Cup matches to be granted to other digital TV channels.

These include the opening and final matches which will be aired in

parallel with the T Sport 7 channel.

The right to view the matches via online platforms will need to comply with copyright laws and rules stipulated by the football governing body, Fifa.

Regarding a petition lodged by True seeking the NBTC's permission to broadcast World Cup matches in high definition (HD) format instead of standard definition (SD), Mr Trairat said the matter will go before the NBTC today.

Speaking after the meeting, SAT governor, Kongsak Yodmanee, said that the SAT was willing to listen to suggestions and tried to find the best solution to ensure a fair allocation of

World Cup matches.

The ADTEB had previously criticised the allocation of World Cup 2022 matches for being unfair.

In a petition to the NBTC protesting against the allocation on Monday, the ADTEB once again called the SAT's decision to award

True — a major sponsor in the purchase of the 1.4-billion-baht World Cup broadcasting rights — the right to pick up to 32 matches "completely unfair".

Sponsors' cash was needed to meet the funding gap that had threatened to jeopardise the prospects of watching the World Cup in Thailand. The NBTC had already spent 600 million baht, but it was still way short of the 1.6-billion-baht price Fifa had initially demanded.

