

MCOT may get 30% of 2600MHz price

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The National Broadcasting and Telecommunications Commission could compensate state broadcaster MCOT for the recall of the 2600-megahertz spectrum with 30% of the winning price for the range at auction, says a source at the NBTC who requested anonymity.

The figure would also have to be adjusted according to the amount of bandwidth successfully auctioned off and the remaining term for MCOT's possession of the spectrum, the source said.

The proposal was raised by the NBTC's subcommittee considering compensation for the recall of the 2600MHz range from MCOT.

The NBTC board is expected to consider the proposal on Wednesday.

For the 5G licence auction scheduled for Feb 16, the 2600MHz range is divided into 19 licences, each of which contains 10MHz of bandwidth with a reserve price of 1.86 billion baht each.

The 2600MHz range is among the four spectrum ranges up for auction. The others are the 700MHz, 1800MHz and 26-gigahertz ranges.

MCOT's 2600MHz concession expires in 2022. The range has been left unused so far.

MCOT earlier planned to capitalise on the range with a pay TV service under an agreement with partner Playwork, a deal made in 2010. That project never got off the ground, as the NBTC never approved the idea.

MCOT might have to pass some of the compensation to Playwork under the proposed deal, according to the source.

The new compensation rate is expected to be much higher than the 3 billion baht proposed for compensation

by NBTC secretary-general Takorn Tan-tasith late last year.

MCOT has staunchly rejected the 3-billion-baht figure.

Mr Takorn told the *Bangkok Post* on Friday that the new compensation rate must be approved by the NBTC board before the end of January so as not to affect the auction, for which bidders must submit bid proposals and bank guarantees on Feb 4.

NBTC commissioner Prawit Leesathapornwongsa said he was aware of the subcommittee's proposal.

He said MCOT may have to keep an eye on how much the NBTC board is willing to pay for the compensation and decide how much will be passed on to Playwork.

Of the 190MHz of bandwidth on the 2600MHz range put up for auction, 160MHz is held by MCOT and the rest by the Government Public Relations Department.

MCOT president Kematat Paladesh stressed that the compensation should be fair for the company.

"The 3 billion baht, which was floated last year, is unacceptable to MCOT's management," he said, adding that the company's board is keeping abreast of the NBTC board's deliberations on the issue.

MCOT's 2600MHz spectrum usage should not expire in 2022, Mr Kematat said, as the range has yet to be used because of the NBTC's delay in approval.

True Move H Universal Communication (TUC), Total Access Communication (DTAC), TOT and CAT Telecom have picked up 5G bid documents.

Advanced Info Service reportedly plans to pick up bid documents tomorrow.