

BAND BREAK-UP

The telecom regulator sets an April deadline for 21 state agencies to relinquish 537 radio spectrum ranges. **B4**

TELECOMMUNICATIONS & TECHNOLOGY

Radio spectrum ranges to return to NBTC in April

KOMSAN TORTERMVASANA

The telecom regulator has set a deadline of next April for 21 state agencies and enterprises to return a combined 537 radio spectrum ranges for reallocation.

According to Takorn Tantasith, secretary-general of the National Broadcasting and Telecommunications Commission (NBTC), the regulator's board yesterday approved a resolution in line with the master plan for radio broadcasting announced in the *Royal Gazette* in April 2012.

The NBTC's master plan states all state agencies and enterprises must return radio spectrum to the NBTC within five years after the master plan is implemented.

Most of the 21 state agencies are related to the military and national security.

The resolution issued yesterday does not include the 105.5MHz band, which is operated by state-owned public broadcaster MCOT, because it is still valid under the concession given to Bangkok Entertainment Co.

Mr Takorn said MCOT still must return the 105.5MHz band to the NBTC by January

2020, when the concession expires.

The NBTC board has assigned its management team to consider the possible impact on the 21 state agencies and enterprises that have to return to total of 537 spectrum ranges back to the regulator.

The NBTC will consider possible rescue measures for state agencies and state enterprises to help minimise the impact of the reallocation on their businesses.

The NBTC might also invite representatives of those state agencies and enterprises to meet soon in order to discuss possible rescue measures they would need.

Mr Takorn said the NBTC has yet to determine a plan for reallocating the 537 radio spectrum ranges.

He said the NBTC's management must consider clear details for the reallocation plan to submit for the NBTC's board consideration. It also needs to submit a plan for digital radio in the future.

In a related development, Mr Takorn said the NBTC board yesterday also approved 72 million baht in financial support to 12 digital-related projects through the NBTC's Broadcasting and Telecommunications Research and

Development Fund for the Public Benefit (BTFP).

The 12 projects were proposed to the NBTC last year under the BTFP's budget, demanding financial support for research and development.

The projects include Mae Fah Luang University's project for education development in rural areas with digital technology, the energy management National Smart Grid project by Chulalongkorn University and Bangkok University's project to improve cybercrime awareness among the public.