

# GMM TO PURSUE DEALS WITH SATELLITE CHANNELS

WATCHIRANONT THONGTEP  
THE NATION

Amid intensified competition in the cable and satellite TV business, GMM Grammy plans to expand its special TV channels to other satellite TV platforms after the launch of GMM Z low-price set-top boxes and its own satellite TV dish.

Thana Thienachariya, chief executive officer of GMM Z, GMM Grammy's subsidiary for the satellite TV business, said the company was selecting special TV programmes exclusively screened on GMM Z set-top boxes to provide to other satellite channels in the coming months.

The move follows that of key rival TrueVisions, the country's largest subscription-based TV operator, which is partnering many local cable TV operators and leading content producers who operate their own satellite-TV stations. For instance, last week TrueVisions partnered with RS, Workpoint Entertainment, Sahamongkol Film International and Kantana Group to broadcast four channels – RS' Channel 8, Workpoint TV, Sahamongkol Channel and Kantana's Miracle channel, on its platform.

Previously, TrueVisions had formed a partnership with Cable Thai Holding (CTH) – a group of

300 local cable-TV operators – and PSI Holding – the largest satellite TV dish distributor and trader. Under this partnership, CTH and PSI Holding are able to show some of TrueVisions' exclusive channels on their platforms.

Thana believes that the decision to broaden its exclusive content to other platforms could boost the sales of GMM Z boxes.

In addition, this month the company will introduce a budget satellite TV set-top box – the "GMM Z mini" – enabled with conditioned access system.

The company has also contracted Dynasat, a satellite TV trader, to manufacture satellite TV dishes to sell with GMM Z boxes, priced at Bt400 to Bt500 per unit.

Given this factor, the company expects to hit its target of 2 million set-top boxes by the end of this year. However, an analyst at Bualuang Securities said the target was unrealistic and according to its estimates only 1.3 million to 1.5 million boxes can be sold.

Bualuang Securities also reported that GMM Z would post net losses for 2012-13 due to heavy investment required for content and production and high marketing expenses. Both content and production costs are estimated at Bt1 billion annually, excluding the 2013-2015 English Premier League broadcasting rights.