

# LICENSING PROECESS FOR SATELLITE, CABLE TV BEGINS

WATCHIRANONT THONGTEP  
THE NATION

The National Broadcasting and Telecommunication Commission kicks off the regulation process for cable and satellite TV operators today by opening registration for licences for network and service providers.

In a meeting with television companies, Natee Sukonrat, chairman of the NBTC's broadcast committee, said the commission expected to grant the first licences for network and service providers to cable and satellite TV operators this month.

This is an attempt to bring about 1,000 cable and satellite TV operators in the Kingdom under the broadcasting laws. There are about 500 each of cable and satellite TV operators. Of all cable TV operators, there are about 20 network providers.

Today the NBTC will start a two-day registration process at the Government Complex on Chaeng Wattana Road. Those operators who attend the event will be able to garner advice from the NBTC.

Natee said the operators could also apply for pay-TV licences.

Vilasinee Jiwanon, GMM Z deputy chief executive, said her company was prepared to apply for network and service-provider licences for 10 satellite TV channels and 10 pay-TV channels. GMM Z is the satellite TV subsidiary of media and entertainment giant GMM Grammy.

Adisak Limprungpatanakij, president of Nation Broadcasting Corp, said his company was also ready for this process to be a licensed service

provider.

Natee said analog terrestrial TV broadcasters such as BEC's ThaiTV3, the Army's TV5, BBT Channel 7, MCOT's Modernine TV, the Public Relations Department's NBT and Thai Public Broadcast Service, as well as subscription-based operators like TrueVisions, would undergo a separate process as they were under concession contracts.

The NBTC expects to grant licences for infrastructure and network providers and operating licences for digital TV for public purposes in January and to begin the bidding for operating licences for commercial digital TV in April.

In the morning session yesterday, the NBTC held a public hearing on three drafts of broadcasting regulations involved with consumer protection, must-have TV programmes for free-TV channels and TV programming.

Natee said the draft would be revised after the public hearing and published in the *Royal Gazette* next month.

The regulation about must-have programmes will guarantee the basic right to equal access to international and regional sports events, including the Southeast Asian Games, Asean Para Games, Asian Games, Asian Para Games, Olympic Games, Paralympic Games, and the Fifa World Cup final round.

Under the TV programming and scheduling regulation, digital broadcasters of public and community-based service must commit to produce their own news, information and edutainment programmes for at least 70 per cent of total airtime slots. However, broadcasters for community service must offer 50 per cent of all airtime slots to local producers.

At least 25 per cent of the content of commercial broadcasters should be news, information and edutainment programmes, while own-produced shows should account for 50 per cent.