

**BROADCASTING****GMM GRAMMY AND CTH TO GET FIRST LICENCES****NBTC** approves 16 applications for two firms' subscription TV channelsWATCHIRANONT THONGTEP  
THE NATION

**M**usic and entertainment giant GMM Grammy and Cable Thai Holdings (CTH) will be granted the first licences to operate subscription-base TV channels by the National Broadcasting and Telecommunication Commission.

Natee Sukonrat, chairman of the NBTC's broadcasting committee, yesterday said his panel had approved the granting of 16 licences for pay-TV services to the two companies.

CTH, which recently acquired the rights to live broadcasts of English Premier League soccer matches for the 2013-14 to 2015-16 seasons, will receive two licences, for its C Series and C Sport channels.

GMM Grammy will obtain four licences, for its GMM Sport Two SD and HD (standard and high definition)

and Euro Sport SD and HD channels.

Its subsidiary GMM B will receive 10 licences, for GMM Club Channel, Nat Geo Adventure, Nick Junior, Warner TV, GMM Sport ONE, GMM Sport Extra, GMM Football Extra, Nat Geo Wild, GMM Movie Channel and GMM Theatre.

Natee said all 16 licences would be issued by next week for a one-year trial period, before the granting of official licences for another 14 years.

According to the NBTC office, there are about 230 local broadcasters on the waiting list to operate subscription-based TV channels.

Supinya Klangnarong, a member of the NBTC's subcommittee for consumer protection, said the watchdog was currently drafting a standard for pay-TV contracts so that users get appropriate protection.

In response to the licensing development, Thana Thienachariya, chief executive officer

at GMM Z, the GMM Grammy subsidiary for satellite TV and pay-TV service, confirmed to *The Nation* that his company expected to kick off its pay-TV operations in February with a prepaid service for customers.

For example, a package costing Bt300 monthly will offer five or six sports channels, while a Bt200 package will offer four entertainment channels.

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However, GMM Grammy estimates it will suffer at least Bt100 million in lost business opportunity due to the delay until now in the granting of pay-TV licences by the NBTC, he said.

Natee added that the watchdog had approved the NBTC office's signing of a memorandum of understanding with the Royal Thai Army, which operates TV5, MCOT, the operator of Modernine TV, and the Public Relations Department, which runs NBT, next Monday to broadcast programmes on HD services via digital terrestrial TV.

The new service will commence early next year, initially covering only Bangkok and Chiang Mai.

The agreement also opens up options for other analog terrestrial TV broadcasters, including BEC's ThaiTV3 and BBTV Channel 7, if they want to join the process.

Meanwhile, Thai Public Broadcasting Service is planning a separate MoU, which will be announced soon.

The NBTC said earlier that it was prioritising the granting of digital terrestrial network-provider licences to TV5, Modernine TV and NBT, as they already had their own television-broadcast networks and spectra before the implementation of the Radio and Television Broadcasting Business Act of 2008.

Last week, the NBTC also approved trial-service licences to 54 local radio broadcasters. There are some 7,000 registered radio stations around the country.