

**TELECOM**

# TC Space Connect sole bidder for orbital slots

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TC Space Connect, a subsidiary of SET-listed Thaicom, was the only company to submit a bid proposal for the rights to use orbital slots 50.5° East and 142°E by the submission deadline of Oct 7.

The company applied for the licenses of both unsold orbit packages at the Office of the National Broadcasting and Telecommunications Commission (NBTC), which previously stated it plans to award them via a combined method of direct awarding and beauty contest.

A source on the NBTC board who requested anonymity said the regulator will consider TC Space Connect's qualifications and its bid proposal, though it has no other bidders for comparison.

According to the NBTC's new timeline for awarding the two unsold packages, after consideration of the proposals on Oct 8-10, it will negotiate with the bidders on proposal details on Oct 11, with the results of the consideration process submitted to the NBTC board on Oct 16.

The regulator expects to announce the names of the winning bidders by Oct 17.

In January 2023, the NBTC held the country's first auction of the rights to

satellite orbital slots, offering five packages: 50.5°E and 51°E; 78.5°E; 119.5°E and 120°E; 126°E; and 142°E.

Space Tech Innovation, an affiliate of Thaicom, won the second and third packages, while state enterprise National Telecom won the fourth package. The first and fifth packages were unsold.

Previously the NBTC planned to award the rights of the two unsold packages on Aug 24 via an auction.

Only two companies picked up bid envelopes, but they did not submit them by the July 23 deadline.

This prompted the NBTC to devise a new awarding method, combining direct awarding and beauty contest strategies.

Somphop Purivigraipong, an NBTC commissioner responsible for the telecom business, earlier told the *Bangkok Post* the new conditions for awarding the rights for these two orbital packages were announced in the *Royal Gazette* on Sept 26.

According to the latest conditions, when scoring the proposals, the NBTC gives 40% weight to the bidder's readiness to keep the rights to use such orbital slots, followed by 25% for the bidder's experience.

The finances and details for financial guarantees for orbital use rights are weighted 20%, and the return rate for the state is allocated 15%.

The NBTC board recently agreed to scrap the condition that required winning bidders to send satellites into orbit within three years.

The source on the NBTC board said the planned awarding of these two unsold packages should be done before the rights to use the orbital slots expire, as determined by the International Telecommunication Union.

The right to use the 50.5°E slot expires on Nov 27.