

AIS POSTS B8.7BN PROFIT IN Q3Advanced Info Service (AIS) posts total revenue of 52.2 billion baht and a net profit of around 8.7 billion baht for Q3. **B4**

AIS reports B52.2bn in Q3 revenue

Net profit tallies B8.7bn for period

KOMSAN TORTERMSASANA

Advanced Info Service (AIS) posted total revenue of 52.2 billion baht and a net profit of around 8.7 billion baht in the third quarter of this year.

The growth of AIS's profit and earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortisation (Ebitda) were driven by more efficient cost management, a decrease in capital expenditure for network expansion, reduced competition of the market, especially in mobile services, along with a boost from the tourism sector, according to Pisut Ngamvijitvong, senior vice-president of the securities analysis

department at Kasikorn Securities (KS).

KS has revised upward its revenue growth forecast of the overall mobile service market for the whole of 2024 to 4% from its previous guideline of 3%. He added that net profit of the overall market of mobile services in 2024 would grow 118%, mainly driven by a sharp decline in True Corporation's losses.



An AIS store at CentralWorld. The company now serves 46.3 million mobile subscribers, with the number of 5G users reaching 11.5 million, a 35% increase year-on-year. The company's 5G intelligence network covers over 95% of the population.

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However, KS believes growth of mobile business revenue in the overall market in 2025 would stand at 3.2%, a slight decline from 2024, due to more market saturation.

For overall service revenue of major telecom operators, including mobile and fixed broadband businesses, KS forecast the total service revenue for 2024 would expand 10%, while that of 2025 would expand only 3.5%.

According to AIS, the company now serves 46.3 million mobile subscribers, with 5G users reaching 11.5 million — a 35% increase year-on-year. Its 5G intelligence network covers over 95% of the population.

Its broadband business, AIS 3BB FIBRE3, gained 62,900 new subscribers in the third quarter, bringing the total to 4.94 million. AIS enterprise business grew 20% year-on-year.

AUCTION PLAN

Mr Pisut said KS believes the market is being overly complacent about uncertainties regarding the upcoming spectrum auction in 2025.

The National Broadcasting and Telecommunications Commission (NBTC) is set to auction the 850-Mhz, 2100-MHz and 2300-MHz ranges as part of a series of spectrum that the NBTC has planned to auction by the second quarter of next year or prior to Aug 3, the latter referring to the expiry date of these three spectrum ranges being used by state telecom enterprise National Telecom (NT).

The other spectrum group is in the process of being reallocated via an auction, including the 1500-MHz and 1800-MHz ranges.

NT was created following the amalgamation of TOT and CAT Telecom. NT, through a deal with TOT, partnered with AIS on the 2100-MHz range. NT partnered with the now defunct Total Access Communication on TOT's 2300MHz.

DTAC and True merged to become True in 2023.

NT, via a deal with CAT Telecom, partnered with True Move H Universal Communication on 850MHz.

KS's base case scenario assumes that AIS and True will get equal blocks of the 2300-MHz band, or 35MHz of bandwidth each.

"Putting all our assumptions together, KS estimates that AIS will benefit from the transition from NT's roaming arrangement to the telecom regulator's licences by 468 million baht [pre-tax] in 2025 and 1.2 billion baht in 2026."

AIS has paid 3.9 billion baht per year for using the 2100-MHz spectrum under its partnership with NT, while True has paid 8 billion baht per year to NT under its partnership, according to Mr Pisut.