

**SOURCE:** National Telecommunications Commission, Thailand

**TITLE:** **Enabling Open Networks**

Telecommunication infrastructure has been reckoned to one of the most vital facilities for improving telecom market competitiveness as well as people quality of life. Once people are able to access telecommunication infrastructure it means that not only they can access to borderless knowledge in which be used for improving their quality of life but also they can use telecommunication infrastructure to facilitate their business to increase competitiveness. All those benefits end up with gaining country competitiveness as a whole. Then, one of the most important roles of regulator is how to encourage telecommunication infrastructure sharing as much as possible in order to enable all people to access to telecommunication service especially broadband service.

The National Telecommunications Commission of Thailand (NTC) has also consented on this vital role. One of major NTC goals is to increase broadband penetration as soon as possible. However, most of telecommunication infrastructures in Thailand belong to a few operators. Opening the existing telecommunication infrastructure is the only way to reach the goal.

As of 2nd quarter 2010, Thailand has 7.1 millions fixed line subscribers, while there are only 2.5 millions broadband internet subscribers which are only 35% of fixed lines and most of them are using ADSL technology. In order to promote broadband penetration to cover the remaining 65%, NTC has already imposed LLU obligation to mandate incumbents to open an access to their copper wires. With LLU, NTC believes that new entrants and existing operators will have less barrier to entry and be able to access to any copper wire throughout the country and will be able to provide sufficient ADSL services to almost every household.

Regarding mobile penetration, Thailand currently has 68.5 millions mobile subscribers which is more than 100% of population. NTC is now in the process of granting 3G license. We have put the roll-out obligation to our 3G licensees. The obligation includes infrastructure sharing, national roaming, and guarantee of capacity for MVNOs. All of these can be considered as open network and all new 3G licensees will be able to roll out their entire network faster.

- Infrastructure Sharing: NTC separates mobile network infrastructure into 2 parts, passive and active. Our mandatory is mainly emphasized on passive elements such as tower/mast and site. Due to privacy, security and competition issues, we prohibit spectrum sharing, HLR/MSC sharing, and microwave link sharing. However we leave other kinds of infrastructure sharing for commercial negotiation. We consider that our obligation will create competition, and at the same time, will not discourage innovation and new network deployment.

- National Roaming: existing (2G) mobile operators have to facilitate 3G licensees with roaming service. Also new 3G licensees must allow roaming service among each other. Thus 3G operators can utilize existing 2G network while they are deploying their new 3G network.
  - Guarantee of Capacity for MVNOs: 3G licensees have to open their network by making 40% of their network capacity available for non-affiliated MVNOs with reasonable price. NTC believes that there will be new MVNOs coming from existing telecom operators and content providers, so we have to provide enough rooms for this kind of operator and let them be able to compete and survive in the market.
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In addition to mobile service, NTC has foreseen that international gateway would be a bottleneck and critical part of network, we then liberalized the international gateway by issuing an automatic license. As a result, operators have an alternative to route their international traffic, and they can set up their own gateway if they wish. Lastly, NTC believes that all open network regulation will enable the nationwide citizen to access broadband service at anytime and anywhere.