Best Practice Relating to Innovative Regulatory Sharing Strategies of Thailand

The National Telecommunications Commission of Thailand (NTC) recognizes the six degrees of sharing: innovative infrastructure sharing and open access strategies to promote affordable access for all in order to reduce unnecessary duplication of infrastructure and to promote fair competition through equal access to infrastructure and facility.

The telecommunications industry in Thailand has transformed from state monopoly businesses to more liberalized markets as reflected in the large number of new entrants. Apart from that, NTC has been working actively to stipulate necessary rules and regulations to govern the telecommunications industry for the benefit of consumers. The infrastructure sharing and open access have been issues concerned not only with NTC but also all telecommunications operators. The focused policies are as follows :

Basic Infrastructure Sharing

Telecommunications Business Act B.E. 2544 empowers NTC to ensure that the licensees are able to share basic infrastructure necessary to provide their services. NTC has authority to approve network planning and infrastructure sharing among licensees and other public utilities in order to ensure and promote efficient infrastructure sharing.

Apart from the infrastructure sharing regulation, the interconnection regulation also addresses criteria and conditions of collocation on par with international norms. The telecommunications operator may request another network provider to share its space for locating and installing equipment at network provider's premise for interconnection on a cost-oriented basis.

Open Access to international capacity

To cope with the exploding demand for internet usage, NTC has adopted the policy of fully liberalizing international gateway market e.g. IIG and IPLC. Such policy has created ample opportunities in international traffic business as well as improved quality of service and lower prices, particularly for accessing to the international capacity. Open Access to the international capacity is a major concern of the regulator to promote the ICT access as a basis for building an information society at an affordable price.

The crucial barriers to entry to an international capacity market is the bottleneck problem due to huge investment cost and unfair discrimination. The interconnection regulation designates the landing station as any technically feasible point of interconnection to which the other licensees are able to interconnect on a non discriminatory term at cost-oriented basis.

Policy and Regulatory Harmonization

The NTC recognizes the necessity of policy and regulatory harmonization in driving Thailand's telecommunications sector to international level. Special activities such as engaging a consultancy to work on the guideline for Right of Way and Infrastructure Sharing and a seminar on the subject of Right of Way, Infrastructure and Facility Sharing for NTC personnel and stakeholders have been initiated in order to prepare for the implementation of infrastructure sharing.

The harmonization of technical standards including Quality of Service and NGNs are also important considerations. The NTC also recognizes this aspect of harmonization in the infrastructure level and the draft National Telecommunications Master Plan 2008 – 2010 sets out to encourage the development of network infrastructure that can support various technologies, finally leading towards seamless network connectivity. Development of Preferential ASEAN Roaming Service Standard has also been undertaken in order to promote harmony of using mobile services at the regional level.

Issues to be concerned

Other policies considered as mechanism to benefit the industry are the issues of number portability, spectrum sharing and international mobile roaming. The NTC has announced regulations on transfer, sharing and co-use of spectrum and is currently focusing on the issues and on the stage of gathering information from the industry for further analysis.

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