

## Telecommunications - Taiwan

### Three Companies Appointed to Provide Universal Data Services

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Following the completion of its 2007 Broadband Access to Every Village project, the National Communications Commission (NCC) is aiming to extend the construction of the broadband network infrastructure to further remote areas in 2008. The NCC has appointed Chunghwa Telecom, Taiwan Fixed Network Corporation and Central Taiwan Cable Company to offer universal data services for broadband access to 50 mountain villages in 12 different counties.

Last year the NCC selected 45 remote villages to be equipped with broadband access services and accomplished this on December 15 2007 (for further details please see "[NCC Completes Broadband Project in Remote Villages Ahead of Time](#)"). However, some residents in those rural areas have complained that they still have no broadband access due to construction difficulties. In order to use the resources of broadband networks for residents in remote villages and reduce the digital divide between urban and rural areas, the NCC has approved two fixed-line telecommunications companies and a local cable company to provide broadband access services pursuant to the new Regulations on Telecommunications Universal Services, which were amended on February 29 2008.

According to the Council of Indigenous Peoples approximately 200 villages out of a total of 847 have no broadband infrastructure. So far this year, the NCC has selected several locations based on:

- number of residents;
- demand for internet access services;
- local economics;
- landscape;
- cultural characteristics; and
- travel resources.

In addition, the NCC has retained some independent groups to assess:

- the demands of broadband services;
- the distribution of broadband network resources; and
- investment in educational resources and facilities.

The groups will establish mid-term and long-term plans regarding the availability of broadband services.

To deal with geographical obstacles and dispersed residents, the NCC will oversee the construction of broadband networks equipped with wireless transmission or hybridized by optical-fibre lines, and will require a transmission speed up to 2 megabytes per second in order to provide 50 villages with high-speed broadband connections and local phone services. The construction will cost a total of around NT\$78 million (approximately \$2.6 million) and is due to be completed by the end of 2008.

In the meantime, the NCC has engaged [Telecom Technology Centre](#) to carry out an international desk study on the subject of universal data broadband services in order to enhance its regulation of the sector.

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