

Telecoms - Taiwan

More 4G spectrum available in 2016

Contributed by **Shay & Partners**

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On August 21 2014 the Ministry of Transportation and Communications and the National Communications Commission (NCC) both confirmed that the NCC will release the 2600 megahertz (MHz) band, currently in use by wireless broadband access (WBA) operators, by auction for more fourth generation (4G) services. The NCC expects the upcoming spectrum auction to bring in another NT\$15 billion (approximately US\$500 million) for the treasury, further to its previous success in October 2013.

Less than 24 hours before the NCC revealed the spectrum auction plan, it turned down Tatung Telecom's WBA licence renewal on the grounds that Tatung Telecom had failed to implement its deployment plan, in spite of the fact that the NCC had earlier refused to give permits on its upgrade proposal to equipment sourcing. Tatung Telecom, now a 100% owned subsidiary of VeeTime, will be turning on its licensed frequency when its licence expires on December 3 2014.

The NCC is looking to First International Telecom, a WBA operator in the 2600 MHz band and a personal handy-phone system operator in the 1900 MHz band, which is now restructuring under court supervision in order to survive. According to the draft plan prepared by the ministry, the spectrum auction on the 1900 MHz and 2100 MHz bands should follow in 2016 and no later than by the end of 2017. The ministry is in the process of a spectrum re-farming plan for the next five years, which could indicate the possible release of 2.3 gigahertz (GHz) and 3.4 GHz bands for 5G development.

The proposal is not necessarily inviting overwhelming welcome. Critics are questioning why the authorities did not complete due diligence before releasing the 4G spectrum. Critics have also pointed out that there has been serious interference from new 4G services on microphones deployed by radio and television stations in adjacent frequencies. Similar troubles could occur in the electronic toll collection system on the highways, which use microwave technology also at adjacent frequencies.

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