

Telecommunications - Taiwan

NCC Sets Out New Policy Goals

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Introduction

Since the new National Communications Commission (NCC) was formed in August 2008 (for further details please see "[New NCC Commissioners Appointed](#)"), the seven newly elected commissioners have attempted to complete the tasks left unfinished by the previous commissioners, while also setting out new policy goals. The commission has set out its "Middle-Term Policy Plan for 2009 to 2012", so as to distinguish it from the policy plan established by the previous commission in 2006 (for further details please see "[Telecommunications Watchdog Unveils Policy Goals](#)").

The document:

- assesses the circumstances and priorities for development;
- reviews the outcomes of past and current plans and resource allocation;
- sets out performance goals and indices of evaluation; and
- summarizes the implementation of the plan.

The document begins with an analysis of recent developments in the telecommunications industry from a domestic and international perspective. It then reviews the outcomes of past and ongoing plans and outlines four policy priorities for future development. Five performance goals, discussed below, have been set out to correspond to these policy priorities.

Assessment of Current Situation

The plan contains a brief analysis of:

- international and domestic trends towards the digital convergence of the telecommunications and broadcasting industries;
- regulatory reforms;
- recent developments in the communications industry;
- advances in the cultural diversification culture; and
- new wireless technologies.

The regulatory reforms, in addition to the structural reforms (for further details please see "[Grand Justices: Nomination of NCC Commissioners was Unconstitutional](#)" and "[Congress Amends the Formation of National Communications Commission](#)"), focus on three significant areas:

- technological convergence;
- industry order; and
- sociological effects.

Technological convergence

With respect to technological convergence, the reforms aim to:

- introduce the notion of multi-layer regulation of transmission, service and content application;
- establish the principle of independence between networks and operations;
- regulate the business of cross-ownership; and

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- reduce the digital divide.

Industry order

With respect to industry order, the reforms aim to:

- set out the principles governing wireless spectrum allocation and assignment;
- regulate industry monopolization and unfair competition;
- preserve the environment for grass-root creative industries; and
- preserve the media and encourage self-regulation.

Sociological effects

The reforms also aim to:

- reinforce the universal right to media access;
- foster a multicultural society;
- encourage properly designed programming and advertising; and
- protect consumer interests.

As to new technological advances, the NCC plans to auction the spectrum frequency of 700 megahertz (MHz), while keeping an eye on the development of wireless technologies, including third generation, Wireless Broadband Access (WBA) and Long-Term Evolution. In addition, the commission is considering implementing a more aggressive auctioning system for this spectrum, rather than including it in the auctioning process governing the issuance of service licences.

Policy Priorities and Performance Goals

In terms of telecommunications policy, the performance goals correspond to the priorities laid out for future development. These goals are set out below.

Promotion of digital convergence and effective competition

The commission is reviewing the laws and regulations regarding communication with a view to adjusting the conventional regulatory structure in order to cope with the impact of communication convergence. Also, the commission has continued the trend of relaxing barriers to entry into the existing markets, thus encouraging new entrants to create new services for consumers.

Establishment of sound regulation of communication

The commission has implemented new tariff-balancing policies, including a revised price cap formula (for further details please see "[Tariffs to be Cut under Price Caps](#)" and "[Price-Cutting Policy Enters Second Year](#)") and calling party pricing on local calls to mobile phones (see "[Radical Changes Expected Following Call Pricing Overhaul](#)"). Those policies will be fully implemented in 2011. The commission is also conducting initial research into frequency arrangements, focusing on the 700 MHz spectrum, WBA services, digital radio and military telecommunications, as a precursor to work on frequency turn-in and coordination. Further, the commission plans to establish a new system of telecommunications number management to improve the efficiency of number usage.

Protection of interests of nationals and consumers

The commission has held numerous public sessions in order to dispel fears over the possible effects of the electro-magnetic waves emitted by wireless base stations, and on 'cyber safety' for children.

Fostering of a multicultural society and encouragement of respect of minority groups

The commission has confirmed its intention to promote access to television programmes for disabled people. The commission will also continue to monitor the implementation of broadband networks and cable services in remote rural areas (for details please see "[NCC Completes Broadband Project in Remote Villages Ahead of Time](#)" and "[New Universal Service Scheme Raises Concerns for Chunghwa Telecom](#)"), in order to reduce the digital divide.

Provision of diversified public-service channels

The commission has created a one-stop service window via its official website, available at: www.ncc.gov.tw/English. It connects three services in one platform:

- data search and inquiry;
- online application; and
- two-way communication between the government and the public.

Over 1,500 documents are downloadable from the website and it provides access to approximately 400 online application forms.

Comment

After protracted political and legal disputes over the formation of the commission and the overhaul of various laws and regulations, the new commissioners have finally taken their first steps on the long journey towards regulatory reform.

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