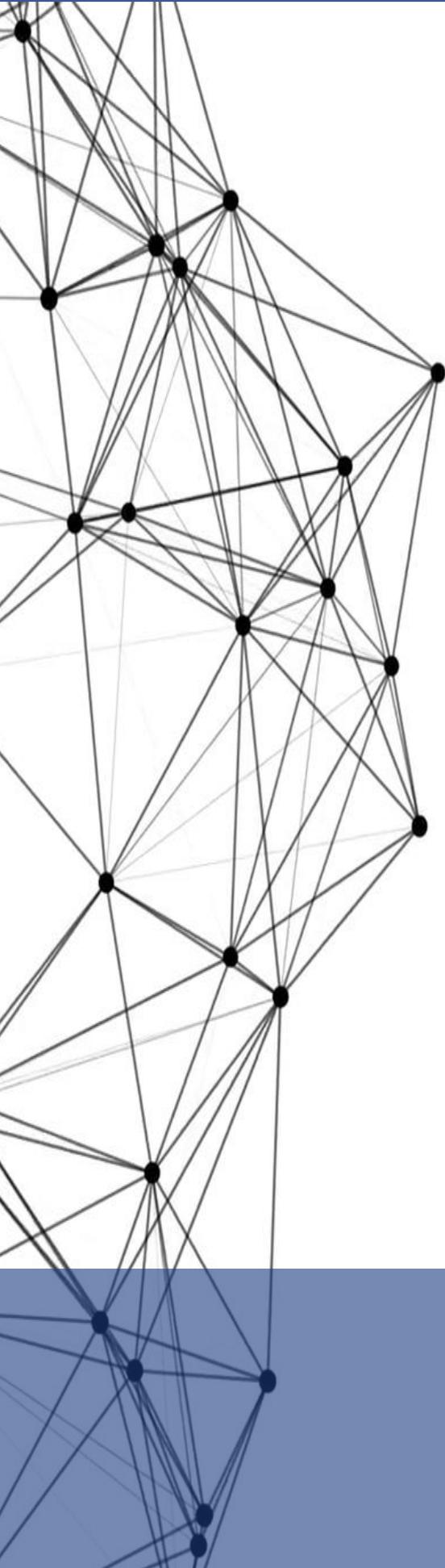


10 OCTOBER 2018



# APAC BYTES

TRPC



### Australia [Launches](#) Consultation on Digital Economy and Corporate Tax System

Since Jul, the govt has mandated overseas e-commerce platforms charge and collect GST at the point of sale on eligible goods. Australia has also moved to close tax loopholes used by international digital platform operators like Google and Facebook. The consultation will explore how the "continually changing and unpredictable nature of digitalisation" will impact corporate taxation in Australia, as well as how the tax system must be overhauled to address issues of transparency, competition, innovation, and fairness.

- Responses are welcome until 30 Nov.

### ASIC Signs Fintech Cooperation [Agreements](#) with Luxembourg and the US

The ASIC has agreed to [cooperate](#) with the Luxembourg Commission de Surveillance du Secteur Financier (CSSF) in furthering exchanges to better understand each country's respective approach to financial innovation, especially in fintech and regtech. The ASIC also [signed](#) a cooperation agreement with the US Commodity Futures Trading Commission (CFTC) and its LabCFTC to enhance awareness of financial regulation compliance technologies.

**Impact Analysis:** Signing such agreements helps undergird initiatives like the proposed Global Financial Innovation Network. In a financial world marked by increasing digital cross-border transactions it is important for regulatory agencies to put in place mechanisms for information sharing with other jurisdictions. The agreement with the CFTC will also be beneficial to Australian fintech companies interested in entering the US market.

### ACCC [Holds](#) External Stakeholder Survey of 2018 Priority Areas

Among priority areas for the ACCC are consumer issues related to the provision of broadband services, competition and consumer issues revolving around the use of digital platforms, algorithms and consumer data, and ensuring better product safety outcomes in online marketplaces. Submissions are welcome until 29 Oct.

### Minister for Communications [Delivers](#) Speech on Internet Governance

The minister stated there is a "clear role" for govt and industry to work together on protecting community interests online, such as dealing with online defamation and cyber-bullying. But Australia is concerned over the dominance digital platforms are starting to exert on civic society and how they are reshaping the economics of media. It feels these large platforms should be more accountable and come to terms with their "social licence". Australia is leaning towards a "regulate only where necessary" stance.

- Google accounts for 90% of desktop PC searches in Australia in 2017 and 98% of domestic mobile search traffic. As of Apr there are 13.5 million active Australian Facebook users.
- The OAIC has received 305 data breach notifications between 22 Feb and 30 Jun.

**Impact Analysis:** Australia is examining where and how far should there be govt intervention in regulating digital platforms. This is a tricky matter, with no easy answer. Different jurisdictions are exploring different approaches to matters like the proliferation of "fake news" and data ownership.

### NTC [Looks](#) at Data Concerns and Automated Vehicle Reform

The National Transport Commission (NTC) is examining new data and privacy challenges arising from autonomous vehicles and cooperative intelligent transport systems (C-ITS). In such systems vehicles, roads, and other infrastructure (intelligent lampposts) are constantly communicating with one another. The NTC has published the "Regulating Government Access to C-ITS and Automated Vehicle Data" [discussion](#) paper in which it expresses concerns over citizen surveillance and the absence of laws restricting govt collection of personal information. Submissions are welcome until 22 Nov.

### Federal Govt Establishes Office of [Future](#) Transport Technologies

Established at a cost of AUD9.7m (USD6.9m), it will be in charge of setting autonomous or automated vehicle policy, and will sit under the Department of Infrastructure, Regional Development and Cities. The future transport and mobility industry in Australia is predicted to generate AUD16bn (USD11bn) in revenue by 2025.

### **Alliance for a Safe and Secure Internet [Lobbying](#) Effort Launched**

Facebook, Apple, Alphabet and Amazon will dig in their heels and oppose the proposed encryption law that requires organisations to comply with court requests to hand over private data to authorities. The four companies are working with the Alliance for a Safe and Secure Internet, of which the Communications Alliance is a part, in a lobbying effort to influence the parliamentary vote expected to take place in a couple weeks. Other partners in the fight include Amnesty International Australia, Digital Rights Watch, and the Human Rights Law Centre.

- Internet Australia has decried the consultation process around the Encryption Bill as “inadequate”. It fears if the bill passes then international markets might view Australian companies with suspicion, as under secret obligations to the Australian govt.
- A hearing on the bill is scheduled for 19 Oct.

### **Review of Identity Information Handling [Kicked Off](#)**

The Department of Home Affairs has convened a [Review](#) of National Arrangements for the Protection and Management of Identity Information which will look at ways Australians can better be protected from identity theft and a better delivery of public services, all the while respecting peoples’ privacy. Recommendations will be incorporated into developing a new National Identity Security [Strategy](#). The focus for now is on the identities of individuals and will not look at arrangements for identity management for businesses. Submissions are welcome until 26 Oct.

- Identity crime costs Australians AUD2bn (USD1.4bn) annually.

### **OAIC Looking at Facebook Security [Breach](#)**

The OAIC is communicating with Facebook to find out how many Australians have been impacted by the recent security breach which affected up to 90 million accounts worldwide. Facebook is required by the Notifiable Data Breaches (NDB) scheme to inform affected individuals whose personal information might have been breached.

### **ACCAN Calls for Internet Access to be [Classified](#) as Essential Service**

The Australian Communication Consumer Action Network (ACCAN) claims the Internet should be treated like the electricity supply when people are moving into new flats and renters have equitable Internet access. There should be a guarantee from landlords the Internet is working and available and for tenants to choose the provider and plan they want. The ACCAN is calling for residential tenancy acts to be modified so fixed telecom services are a part of the minimum standard required in rentals.

### **Telstra [Testing](#) Small Cells on Drones**

The offering is called “cell on wings” (COW) and comprises putting 4G mobile base stations on flying drones to be temporarily deployed during natural disasters and emergency situations when telecom networks might be down or overloaded. Telstra is also looking at “drone swarms” to map areas struck by natural disasters or to find a missing person.

**Tencent [Reshuffles](#) to Focus on Cloud Computing, Content, and Smart Industry Solutions**

Tencent plans to add to its existing business units a Cloud and Smart Industry Group and a Platform and Content Group. This follows the company’s recent experience of vibrant growth in cloud, payment, and related financial services.

- The company will also combine the divisions of technology, social network platforms and online media, attach greater importance to business enterprises instead of consumers.

**Impact Analysis:** Tencent’s third large-scale reorganisation since 2012 comes with no big surprises. Its core business of gaming contributed 40% of revenue could slow down quickly due to regulatory crackdown on online gaming and the continued suspension of licence approvals for new games. The restructuring will shift its reliance on gaming to focus on enterprise solutions such as cloud services and industrial Internet, which warrant higher growth potential in view of the govt’s policies encourage adoption of cloud technologies and the development of Industrial Internet. The setting up of the content division increases its competitiveness against rivals like Bytedance through creating a holistic and strategic focus across news content and different forms of video apps. Tencent also announced the forming of a technical committee to strengthen R&D in AI, robotics, and quantum research to show innovation is still considered as the key driver of growth.

**Microsoft [Partners](#) Eli Lilly and Airdoc to Use AI for Diseases Detection**

Microsoft, together with pharmaceutical company Eli Lilly and startup company Airdoc, will deploy AI and cloud computing technologies in the areas of medical solutions and healthcare practices in China.

- AI and deep learning algorithms can be used in medical image analysis, pathology detection and disease screening to assist medical practitioners in diagnosis and preventive care. Healthcare professional’s workflow can also be enhanced with digitised medical records.

**Lenovo, NetApp [Team up](#) to Co-develop Data Storage Solutions**

Under the JV, the two companies will tailor-make all-flash and hybrid-flash data storage and management solutions for China’s market by combining their hardware infrastructure and core software technology. The new company will be in operation early 2019 and market their products under Lenovo’s brand name.

**State Council [Issues](#) Circular on Fostering Innovation and Entrepreneurship**

To promote innovation and facilitate the development of startups and SMEs, local govt and ministries have been tasked with streamlining administrative procedures to encourage entrepreneurs to set up businesses, accelerating the development of e-govt services, and removing regulations or business practices that undermine competition.

- The govt will exempt incubators and university technology parks from property tax, enhance IPR protection through the provision of online real-time monitoring and tracking, and speed up the development of a social credit system to strengthen supervision.

**NPC [Lays out](#) Five-Year Legislative Plan**

The NPC Standing Committee announced its legislative plan for 2018 to 2023. 116 legislative projects have been categorised into three types with different review timelines. Personal Information Protection Law and Data Security Law are among those draft laws ready for deliberation in the current term.

- The drafting of Telecommunications Law and the Anti-Monopoly Law need to be expedited and will be submitted for review once completed. On the other hand, a number of legislations including those on AI will need further research and discussion before preparation of the draft.

**Emoji Creators [Call for](#) Stronger IP Protection**

As the use of emoji becomes ubiquitous in communication, creators and developers such as StarMoly seek for better IP protection as current supervision is deemed insufficient. Emojis as digital symbols used in instant message apps and social media can be easily replicated.

- Currently, developers collaborate with credible companies to avoid unauthorised commercial use and infringement, but more stringent regulations and public education are called for to enhance IP protection.

#### **MPS to [Grant](#) Police the Right to Inspect ISPs and Data Centres**

With effect from 1 Nov, a new regulation issued by MPS stipulates that public security authorities can enter premises of ISPs, Internet cafes, and data centres to check and copy information considered relevant to cybersecurity. They also have the authority to carry out remote detection of any network security vulnerabilities provided advance notice has been given to the companies.

- The inspection will focus on cybersecurity safeguards and measures undertaken by the service providers to prevent cyberattacks and prohibit restricted information from being transmitted. The police will examine if proper records on user registration information have been kept.

#### **Alibaba Cloud [Becomes](#) Member of AOMedia**

Alibaba Cloud will join hands with members AOMedia, including Amazon, Apple, Facebook, Google, IBM, Intel, Microsoft, Netflix to support the development and adoption of an open, royalty free video compression format and codec such as AV1.

- AOMedia aims to optimise the streaming of different media over the Internet by creating an open, interoperable, cross-platform, and cross-device format. Hardware and software developers can access the reference code, bitstream, and binding specifications of the AV1 to enhance the design of their products.

#### **Baidu [Develops](#) Super Chain Network**

Baidu explains in its white paper that the home-grown Super Chain network is more efficient than traditional blockchain. This is credited to the network architecture uses multi-core parallel computing to maximise the capacity of CPU and optimise blockchain performance.

- The Super Chain features a root chain to support data exchange, manage parallel chains, and the entire network. The new technology can be deployed in the areas of retail, manufacturing, supply chain to monitor food safety, product quality, and enhance IP and digital rights protection.

**OGCIO [Sets up](#) Cross-Sector Cybersecurity Information Sharing Platform**

Cybersec Infohub, a cross-sector and collaborative platform has been established to strengthen Hong Kong's resilience against cyber-threats. The hub will be used for exchanging latest information on cybersecurity trends, best practices on migration measures, and intelligence on cyberattacks.

- 229 representatives from 81 organisations spanning across cybersecurity companies, telcos, ISPs, IT professional bodies, academic institutions, and the two Computer Emergency Response Team Coordination Centres have joined the Cybersec Infohub.
- AI will be deployed in H1 2019 to enhance analysis, acquisition, and distribution of cybersecurity information.

**WeChat Pay HK [Supports](#) Cross-Border Mobile Payment in China**

Tencent and UnionPay collaborate to enable users of WeChat Pay HK to make cross-border m-payment to vendors including DiDi, Meituan.com, Dianping.com, and 12306.cn. The app will automatically convert CNY into HKD while providing shoppers with exchange rate quotes to settle the amount.

**Impact Analysis:** While mainland tourists have long enjoyed the convenience of making m-payments abroad using WeChat Pay and Alipay, WeChat Pay HK is the first local e-wallet to provide such service for HK travellers to pay for their purchases in China. Interoperability of payment systems between Hong Kong and China will enhance adoption of e-wallets in Hong Kong and the new service will give a competitive edge to WeChat Pay over other stored-value facilities operators such as Alipay and Octopus' O!epay.

### Govt **Re-considers** E-commerce Policy Following Stakeholder Objections

India's e-commerce policy was expected to be announced by Oct however, on 23 Sep, the Commerce Secretary Anup Wadhawan has since refused to comment upon the timeline for the policy. The govt seems to be rethinking the e-commerce bill after receiving strong opposition from major e-commerce players like Amazon and Flipkart. The companies' key issues centre on the data localisation requirements, ban of foreign investment in the inventory model of business, and the barring of bulk purchases.

### TRAI **Releases** Draft Telecommunication MNP (Seventh Amendment) Regulations 2018

TRAI has released the Draft Telecommunication Mobile Number Portability (Seventh Amendment) Regulations 2018 for consultation from stakeholders. Comments are welcome until 24 Oct. According to the new draft:

- TRAI has halved the processing time of porting requests within a circle down to two days.
- Processing time for porting requests from one circle to another has been retained at four days.
- Two sets of financial disincentives have been mandated for failures on the part of telcos in sticking to porting request processing timelines.

### Cabinet **Approves** National Digital Communications Policy 2018

The Union Cabinet has approved the National Digital Communications Policy 2018 on 26 Sep. It will now be tabled in Parliament. The DoT aims to kick-start implementation by 2019 and to meet the overall objectives within five years.

- The policy aims to adopt "Optimal Pricing of Spectrum" to ensure sustainable and affordable access to digital communications, provide broadband access to all at a speed of 50Mbps, 5G services, and to create four million jobs in the digital communications sector by 2022.
- TRAI is **planning** to hold consultations with stakeholders to prepare a roadmap for the implementation of the new NDCP 2018.

**Impact Analysis:** It is crucial for India's telecom industry to attract investments into new technologies such as 5G and IoT, as the price war triggered by the entry of Reliance Jio in Sep 2016 has left rival telco operators languishing in debt and unprecedented losses. The tariff war and resultant hit on revenue flows have forced telcos to either shut down or get acquired by larger telcos. Only three private telcos are left – Vodafone Idea Ltd, Bharti Airtel Ltd and Reliance Jio – to compete for market share. High spectrum price and related charges have been the main concern of telecom operators that are reeling under a debt of INR7.8tn (USD108bn). Thus, this policy is expected to improve the financial health of the sector by reducing levies and improving the ease of doing business.

### UIDAI **Launches** Aadhaar Paperless Local e-KYC for offline verification of identity

The govt is pushing for offline tools to verify Aadhaar details of a person in ways that will not require sharing of biometrics or involve UIDAI servers. There are two methods of offline Aadhaar verification – use of the QR code on the Aadhaar card and via Paperless local e-KYC.

- The Paperless local e-KYC allows Aadhaar cardholders to download a digitally signed XML which can be generated by the Aadhaar card holders themselves.
- Only Name and Address will be present in the XML file, and the Aadhaar holder has the option to choose to disclose five other details - photo, date of birth, email, mobile number and gender.

**Impact Analysis:** it is unclear how this method will be popularised by the govt and how easy it will be to verify Aadhaar data offline without sharing the Aadhaar number and biometrics.

### Supreme Court Order **Disallows** Private Entities to Use Aadhaar to Verify Customer Identities

A Supreme Court order struck down part of Section 57 of the Aadhaar Act on 26 Sep, barring its use by private companies without legal backing.

- As a result, telcos [cannot seek](#) Aadhaar authentication from customers. This Supreme Court Order will prolong the time taken to get mobile phone connections and could increase customer acquisition costs by as much as 10 times.
- The UIDAI has issued a circular to telecom companies to submit a detailed plan by 15 Oct on the discontinuation of Aadhaar-based authentication used by them to verify customers. Telcos are unlikely to [meet](#) the UIDAI's deadline as they await instructions from the DoT on the way forward.
- Financial services sector also [face](#) uncertain times following the ban on Aadhaar access for customer verification.

### DoT [Amends](#) UL Norms for Telcos and VNOs for Application of Net Neutrality Principles

DoT has amended the Unified Licence (UL) norms for telcos and virtual network operators (VNOs) to include the regulatory framework for application of net neutrality principles. On 11 Jul, the Telecom Commission had approved the recommendations of TRAI with regard to net neutrality.

- Operators providing Internet services cannot engage in any discriminatory treatment of content.
- Licensees are prohibited from entering into any agreement that has the effect of discriminatory treatment of content.
- Operators who were earlier constrained due to the TRAI's differential pricing regulation will now get some leeway in pricing their valued added services in the three areas of specialised services, content delivery networks, and traffic management.

### Cabinet [Renames](#) TRAI and Telecom Commission of India

The Cabinet renamed India's telecom regulatory, TRAI, to Digital Communications Regulatory Authority of India (DCRAI). The Telecom Commission, the highest decision-making body for the telecom sector, has also been renamed to the Digital Communications Commission (DCC).

### WhatsApp [Appoints](#) a Grievance Officer for India

WhatsApp appoints a grievance officer to meet the demands of the Indian govt to curb the spread of fake news. The grievance officer, Komal Lahiri, was appointed in Aug and will be based in the US. Users can contact the grievance officer through email, signed with an e-signature, or send queries through postal services.

### Telcos and Infrastructure Firms to [Access](#) BharatNet for Wi-Fi and 4G

The DoT is planning to provide access to optic fibre cable deployed under the BharatNet initiative to nearby telecom towers for the facilitation of public Wi-Fi hotspots and enhancement of 4G coverage in the country. Currently only 22% of the 470,000 telecom towers in India are fiberised. DoT recently held talks with telecom infrastructure firms led by lobby group Tower and Infrastructure Providers Association (Taipa) to speed up fiberisation of tower infrastructure. Taipa proposed free Right-of-Way (RoW) and monetisation opportunities for the govt-owned dark fibre.

 **Impact Analysis:** As fiberisation is an essential backhaul requirement for highspeed data network deployments, this initiative would be a win-win situation as it would simultaneously improve service quality while reducing deployment time.

### DoT to [Approach](#) Cabinet for 4G Spectrum to BSNL and MTNL by Nov

The DoT plans to seek the Cabinet's approval in the next two months for the allocation of spectrum to BSNL and MTNL for 4G services. The draft Cabinet note is expected to be ready in mid-Oct after which it will be floated for inter-ministerial consultation. The DoT will approach the Cabinet with a revised draft note in Nov.

**Google Cloud Platform Indonesia Region to be [Established](#) by 2019**

As part of a USD30b investment in the Asia Pacific region over the past three years, Google announced plans to establish a Google Cloud Platform region in Indonesia by 2019.

- Google is currently completing [Project Indigo](#), a fibre optic cable network improving connectivity between Singapore, Indonesia, and Australia.

📌 **Impact Analysis:** We're seeing a number of global cloud service providers set up shop in Indonesia. This Google announcement follows Amazon's recent investment announcement, which would also see AWS establish in Indonesia. The timings of these announcement coincide with rumours circulating that the amendment to Indonesia's data localisation regulation, Govt Regulation No. 82 of 2012 (GR82), is set to be released shortly with reduced data localisation requirements (i.e. only mandating 'strategic electronic data' to be stored and processed in-country, with high and low priority electronic data able to be stored and processed offshore).

**Kominfo to [Prepare](#) Lawful Intercept Rules**

Kominfo is in the process of preparing clear lawful interception rules, as it indicates new permits are required to support law enforcement and the interception of telecommunication networks.

- Kominfo has indicated the forthcoming regulation will allow the Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK) to commence wiretapping without the need to obtain a court order first.

📌 **Impact Analysis:** Indonesia's ears pricked up when they heard news of Australia's attempts to implement lawful interception of encrypted data through the [Assistance and Access Bill 2018](#).

**Tax Identification Numbers for [Online Merchants](#)**

The Ministry of Finance plans to require all online merchants have their own tax identification numbers, to increase e-commerce tax revenue.

- The Ministry of Finance has indicated compliance will be enforced through e-commerce platforms. For example, [e-commerce platforms](#), such as Tokopedia and Bukalapak, will ask sellers for their ID numbers as a condition for operating on their platforms. E-commerce platform operators will then submit monthly reports.
- The Ministry of Finance has taken note of enforcement issues and stated that social media merchants might be spared for the time being.

📌 **Impact Analysis:** Indonesia is also in the process of preparing an e-commerce regulation that focuses on the extent to which platforms should be held liable for delivery of goods and services. This announcement from Ministry of Finance indicates it is extending this liability to tax revenue, implementing a vendor collection model.

**Kominfo to [Hold](#) Weekly Fake News Briefings**

In a bid to combat fake news and improve digital literacy, Kominfo will hold weekly fake news briefings, identifying fake stories and providing facts.

- Fake news has hampered elections in Indonesia, and spread fear due to false reports about further [earthquakes](#) and resulting tsunamis.

**Kominfo [Draft Regulation](#) on Optimising Frequency Usage**

Kominfo is preparing a Ministerial Regulation focused on optimising frequency usage, specifically looking at optimising [radio frequency spectrum](#), simplifying tariff implementation on frequency spectrum usage rights, and [frequency sharing options for high altitude platform station](#) (HAPS).

### Japan **Vows** Quality Infrastructure in Mekong Region

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe has pledged Japan's commitment to promoting quality infrastructure projects in five South-east Asian nations along the Mekong river: Thailand, Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, and Myanmar. Likewise, the leaders of these nations have expressed their support for Japan's Free and Open Indo-Pacific Strategy (FOIPS).

- There are a projected 150 projects under the "Tokyo Strategy 2018 for Mekong-Japan Cooperation" blueprint. This project is expected to run from 2019 to 2021, and will focus on three areas: 1) expanding and building effective connectivity infrastructure; 2) promoting the use of technology to build people-centred societies, especially in sectors such as healthcare; and 3) improving environment and disaster management in these nations.
- The Mekong-Japan Summit has been held yearly since 2009. A leaders meeting is held every three years in Tokyo to review progress made since the inception of the previous blueprint, and to adopt a new one for the coming three.

**Impact Analysis:** Both Japan and China have been vying for influence within South-East Asia. Beijing, the capital of the giant to the north, has been reaching out to the area through initiatives such as the Belt and Road Initiative. Japan is aiming to offer its superiority in quality infrastructure, as well as capacity building by training local workers till the projects are completed.

### NEC **Joins** Cyber-Threat Alliance (CTA)

NEC has announced its membership in the Cyber-Threat Alliance (CTA), a non-profit based in US. The CTA was founded with an emphasis on cybersecurity and with the aim of sharing cross-industrial, exhaustive, and valuable threat information. Including NEC, CTA currently has a membership of 20 global companies.

### Google to **Reverse** Cryptocurrency Ad Ban in US and Japan

Google will soon allow certain regulated cryptocurrency exchanges to advertise in the US and Japan. Advertisers however, are required to be certified with Google for the country in which the ads will appear. The move to ban the ads was previously enacted in Mar.

### Japan Preschools Using Tablets to **Prepare** Tots for Digital Age

With digital skills more pertinent than ever, the govt is making strides to strengthen its technology education national policy. Tokyo-based startup SmartEducation is familiarising preschool students with digital devices to hone their digital skills.

### Carriers May **Start** 5G Services in 2019

NTT DoCoMo, KDDI Corp, and Softbank have expressed their intention to launch their 5G services ahead of the initial 2020 launch. The three carrier are planning to rent out 5G-compatible devices and provide 5G services on a trial basis in 2019. Rakuten, which is set to be the fourth carrier in Japan, plans to launch its 5G service in 2020.

**Impact Analysis:** MIC recently **published** the results of a survey it had conducted on the use of 5G services. Submissions were made by NTT DoCoMo, KDDI, Softbank, and Rakuten. The four telecoms expressed interest in using the 3.7GHz and 4.5GHz bands to aid with the deployment of 5G services. The 28GHz band was also singled out as the recommended band to be deployed nationwide, especially in high-density urban areas to aid with large capacity transmissions services. Whether these bands will be released and allocated in time for the projected rollout of 5G remains to be seen.

### US, Japan, and Australia **Challenge** Huawei's Internet Cable Offer to Papua New Guinea

The US, Japan, and Australia will be working together to put forward an alternative domestic Internet cable proposal, in a bid to counter the current offer made by Huawei to Papua New Guinea.

Justin Tkatchenko, minister of Papua New Guinea, has stated his govt would be willing to work with either nation provided the outcome is best for his citizens.

- Huawei has been blocked by the Australian govt from rolling out the country's 5G's network due to prevailing concerns and security issues. The US House Intelligence Committee has also allegedly found Huawei to be tied to the Chinese govt and military, to which the telecommunications equipment supplier has fervently denied.

### Japanese Telecoms to [Share](#) Wireless Frequency Bands

In a bid to ease networking crowding, the govt has plans to allow multiple telecoms providers to access the same wireless frequency band. The MIC will also develop a method to monitor, in real-time, when and where frequencies are being used so as to parcel out unused spectrum. Other wireless networks will not be affected in the process.

- The govt had issued 236.95 million wireless licenses though Jun, twice the number it had issued a decade ago.

**Impact Analysis:** Current regulations have operators spending a minimum of a month before a consensus is reached with regard to how a frequency band should be shared. While the ministry is planning to base the system and conditions on existing regulations, certain tweaks have to be made – or a new regulation may be written and introduced, specifically to aid in this process. With the Ministry aiming to launch 5G services by 2020, there is a growing eagerness to use wireless spectrum more efficiently in anticipation of the greater demand from 5G.

**UNCDF, BNM, and MDEC [Launch](#) Finance Innovation Hub**

The United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF), BNM, and MDEC launched the Finance Innovation Hub to support financial institutions and startups to use technology for inclusive finance.

- The trio also launched the Inclusive Fintech Accelerator programme to encourage solutions for issues surrounding spending, saving, borrowing, and financial planning.

**MCMC [Plans](#) for Mandatory TSA Certification**

MCMC has plans to make the Technology Security Assurance (TSA) certification mandatory for cybersecurity products to ensure manufacturers uphold cybersecurity standards.

- MCMC will hold discussions internally and with the MCMC Minister before presenting a proposal to the Cabinet.

**MDEC and FMM [Sign](#) MoU to form a Digital Manufacturing Hub**

MDEC and the Federation of Malaysians Manufacturers (FMM) have signed a MoU to form a Digital Manufacturing Hub with the objective of increasing technology adoption, otherwise known as Industry 4.0 adoption, within the manufacturing sector.

- FMM [encourages](#) technology adoption in IoT platforms, sensors, machine automation, and others. Grants will be provided to run pilot projects and to purchase equipment.

**Proposed Amendments to be [Made](#) to CMA 1998**

MCMC Minister Gobind Singh has announced that two sections in the Communications and Media Act 1998 (CMA) will be amended. MCMC will seek views from groups before finalising the proposal and presenting it in Parliament.

- Section 53 will be amended to impose higher penalties on non-compliance licensees.
- Section 233 will be amended to require proof of intent before statements can be deemed as an offence, adding a layer of necessary documentation. The Section had previously been used to stifle political dissent.

**Malaysia and Singapore [Committed](#) to Enhancing Digital Economy**

The communications and information ministries in Malaysia and Singapore have committed to enhance the digital economy and encourage innovation and growth in the ICT industry during the Second Joint Committee Meeting of the Malaysia-Singapore Information and Communications Cooperation.

**Four Telcos Offer [Reduced](#) Broadband Prices**

TM, Celcom, Maxis and TIME dotcom have announced entry level broadband packages below MYR100 (USD24.09) following calls from MCMC to provide affordable broadband services after the implementation of the Mandatory Standard on Access Pricing (MSAP).

- TIME dotcom has also announced a 1Gbps broadband package offered at MYR199 (USD47.93)
- TM has also committed to [increase](#) broadband speed for Streamyx customers

### The China-Myanmar Economic Corridor [Progresses](#) but Remains a Mystery

Myanmar and China have signed the China-Myanmar Economic Corridor (CMEC) MoU on 9 Sep. The content remains classified, but there is mounting indication it will impact several of Myanmar's industries. The CMEC is a wide-reaching initiative with two key objectives:

1. To build a physical corridor that connects China's landlocked Yunnan province through Mandalay to Kyaukphyu and Yangon, on new roads and a high-speed railway;
2. As a conceptual corridor, it will better integrates both economies through initiatives such as industrial zones, trade quotas, tax breaks, as well as enhanced cooperation in areas not directly connected to the economy, such as disaster mitigation and public health.

**Impact Analysis:** Despite the significance of the agreement for Myanmar's future, the talks have taken place behind closed doors and with hardly any public consultations. This is due partly to negotiations taking place against a backdrop of Chinese political support for Myanmar over the Rohingya crisis has been criticised by [NGOs](#), [ASEAN](#), [the EU](#), and [the UN](#). China has been Myanmar's most vocal supporter, providing protection at the UN Security Council. China can use its veto and is likely to block any move to refer Myanmar to the International Criminal Court over the Rohingya crisis. On the ground, however, local business and govt leaders fear the CMEC projects may be a "debt-trap", while the corridor would also cut through unstable conflict areas.

### EU [Considers](#) Trade Sanctions on Myanmar over Rohingya crisis

The EU is considering trade sanctions on Myanmar over the Rohingya crisis, potentially stripping the country of tariff-free access to the world's largest trading bloc. The sanctions, if enacted, would potentially put at risk thousands of jobs and mark a significant shift in policy.

**Impact Analysis:** EU officials believe the formal threat of losing tariff-free access would quickly hit foreign investment in the apparel industry, where European manufacturers take advantage of low labour costs. There is no indication any of this will impact the ICT industry, but it may only be a matter of time. Both national govts and regional organisations are re-examining the way they work with the current govt of Myanmar, a position that may lead to tighter constraints on commerce and investment in key economic sectors.

### Myanmar Telcos [Band](#) Together Against Mobile Phone Scams

Myanmar's four operators – MPT, Ooredoo, Telenor, and Mytel – have teamed up to increase awareness of various types of telecommunications scams and educate mobile phone users in the country.

- Protecting customers from mobile phone scams has become a top priority for all Myanmar operators, as much as educating them on the different ways scammers operate.
- According to the operators, the most common scams involve:
  1. Buying phone-related products/services, which turn out to be substandard or non-existent
  2. Making costly phone calls to premium services by accident
  3. Getting access to personal PINs or passwords
  4. Unknowingly signing up for expensive subscription services.

### Digital Procurement Marketplace [Launched](#)

The online platform [www.marketplace.govt.nz](http://www.marketplace.govt.nz) will make it easier for smaller suppliers and sellers to bid for govt contracts and meet with prospective govt buyers to understand their needs. The move from a manual approach to procurement is a step in the direction of thinking of govt as a “single customer” or selling whole-of-govt services.

- The first channel is for Public Cloud SaaS, with additional catalogues and services will be added in the coming months.

### Law [Demanding](#) Mobile Phone Password Handover Passes Third Reading

The Customs and Excise Act 2018 passed its third reading and now stipulates customs officials can search a person’s cellphone or electronic device if they have reasonable and probable cause.

Travelers who refuse to comply could be fined up to USD3,200. The law does not give a customs officer power to search material accessible from the device but not stored on the device such as what might be stored in the cloud.

- The law also stipulates compliance with Customs can be made easier by letting businesses store their records in the cloud or offshore for goods valuation.
- In 2017 border officials searched 540 electronic devices at New Zealand airports, out of some 14 million entries into the country.

**Impact Analysis:** New Zealand is the first country to fine people who refuse to divulge their passwords. The US can refuse entry to foreign nationals who are “non-cooperative” and can detain US citizens or confiscate their devices. How effective this law will be when it comes to finding actionable intelligence and preventing criminals from entering New Zealand remains to be seen.

### Inland Revenue and New Zealand Policy Reach Information Sharing [Agreement](#)

The govt has agreed to extend the 2014 “Serious Crimes Information Sharing Agreement” to include Inland Revenue, Police, the Customs Service, and the Serious Fraud Office (SFO) to better coordinate the sharing of information when a serious offence is suspected to have been committed, whilst adhering to the Privacy Act. It is still a one-way flow of information but represents a step forward on the path to greater data sharing among govt agencies.

- The govt has issued a discussion [paper](#) and is welcoming feedback until 30 Oct.

### Chorus Broadband Subcontractors Found in [Violation](#) of Employment Standards

An investigation by the govt has found subcontractors involved in the deployment of the Chorus network breached local minimum employment standards by failing to keep work records, failing to pay minimum wages, failing to pay holiday entitlements, and failing to provide work agreements. Some 900 subcontracting firms have agreements with Chorus and its main subcontractors, VisionStream, Downer, Broadspectrum and UCG.

- Chorus has announced it will commission an independent review of its employment practices in regard to small business subcontractors. In Dec 2017 the country’s largest private sector trade union, E tū, had petitioned the govt to look into Ultra-Fast Broadband (UFB) installation practices, saying the subcontracting system was broken.

**Impact Analysis:** This is a serious black eye for Chorus which is responsible for a national infrastructure project of great visibility and importance, the UFB. Chorus initially tried to brush off the allegations as isolated cases but the govt investigation shows the problem is a systemic failure in quality management.

### SBP [Drafts](#) Regulations for EMIs

State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) has launched a consultation, inviting comments on its draft regulations for Electronic Money Institutions (EMIs).

- It aims to enable the entry of non-banking entities in the digital payments sector and lays out requirements for their establishment and operations.

**Impact Analysis:** The digital payments space in Pakistan is very nascent and the govt has shown commitment to develop it. These regulations will encourage the participation of non-banks, while also providing regulatory oversight to maintain safety and trust in the system. Payment instruments such as m-wallets, prepaid debit cards, and contactless payments will see increased competition, likely fuelling innovation and growth.

### FIA to [Establish](#) 15 Cybercrime Centres

The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) cybercrime wing is the designated agency for cybercrime under the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act 2015.

- The Ministry of Interior has allowed it to establish 15 cybercrime centres in all four provinces and Gilgit-Baltistan.
- In Jun the FIA had flagged the rising number of cybercrime complaints, and resource shortage it was facing.

### Govt to [Launch](#) E-services for Infrastructure Projects

The PTI-govt has announced it will introduce e-tendering and e-billing system for infrastructure projects. A mobile phone app would also be launched to provide details of the projects, time to completion, and costs. These e-services are in line with the govt's resolve to bring transparency and accountability to public sector processes.

### Third Telco Application Process [Begins](#)

At least seven prospective bidders have indicated their interest and committed PHP1m (USD18,400) to purchase bidding documents to bid to become the third telco in the Philippines.

- To date interested companies include Mindanao-based TierOne Communications International, Dennis Uy-led Udenna Corp., Norway's Telenor Group, NOW Telecom, China Telecom, and Austria's MobilTel.
- Incidentally, the Supreme Court rule against NOW Telecom's case against the NTC to question the PHP700m (USD12.9m) participation security, multi-billion peso performance security, and PHP10m (USD185,000) non-refundable appeal fee.
- Interested participants have till 7 Nov to submit applications. Bidding will then begin on the same day.

**Impact Analysis:** There is roughly a month left for applications, with foreign telcos Korea Telecom, LG Uplus, KDDI, AT&T, and Vodafone still unaccounted for. The gov't's reiterations that any foreign investor will need to comply with the 60-40 limits on foreign investments will continue to dampen interest from foreign providers.

### Senate [Approves](#) Telecommuting Bill

The Senate has ratified a bicameral conference committee report on a proposed telecommute or work-from-home law – although the decision will ultimately depend on the employer and will be based upon mutual agreement.

- Once enacted into law further guidelines including rate of pay, right to rest periods, and standards equal to those of comparable workers at the employer's premise will be developed.

**Impact Analysis:** While the objectives behind the bill in promoting more work-life balance is commendable, the voluntary agreement means employers have no additional incentives to foster such arrangements where 'trust' between employer and employee will remain the major deciding factor.

### ICT Group [Cautions](#) Against Rushed National ID Rollout

The Computer Professionals' Union (CPU) has indicated its "dismay" of what it cites as a rushed and haphazard implementation of the Philippine Identification System Act. The CPU cites the lack of due diligence as the implementing rules and regulations (IRR) were published a mere two weeks after the draft IRR was released to the public with proactive consultation with the public.

- CPU also cites the law and the IRR as still appearing intentionally ambiguous on two fronts: whether it is mandatory, and for what purpose it really serves.

### BSP [Grants](#) Grab E-money License

Grab will be able to offer its GrabPay m-wallet services to pay for their Grab rides, with other new services such as bill and retail payments progressively offered. The Philippines is the latest country where Grab has launched its GrabPay service after Indonesia, Singapore, Malaysia, and Vietnam.

### Globe [Criticizes](#) DICT Common-tower Policy as Retrogressive

Globe has cited the draft common-tower policy that limits celltower establishments to just two independent and private tower companies as anti-competitive, retrogressive, and against global best practice.

- While independent tower companies may be more efficient and reduce duplicity, limiting to two players reduces competition and does not address the current bureaucracy challenges. For example, an average of 25 permits taking an average of eight months are required to build a single cell site.
- The Better Broadband Alliance (BBA) advocacy group has [asked](#) for performance commitments to be included such as the inclusion of minimum tower deployment based on the network rollout plans of mobile network operators, as well as small telcos and broadband service providers.

### GovTech **Extends** Reach of NDI System with Cloud

GovTech is using AWS to host a developer platform that will allow govt agencies and businesses to develop services to build on the upcoming National Digital Identity (NDI) system. The latter is slated to be operational in 2020.

- GovTech is engaging with developers and partners for more value-added services. To accomplish this, GovTech will require a scalable and digitally engaging model. Hosting the developer portal on a cloud service will not only offer the scalability GovTech seeks, but also offer project management capabilities.

### PM Lee's **Vision** on the Fundamental 'Re-Engineering' of the Govt

Speaking at the inaugural Stack 2018 Developer Conference organised by GovTech, Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong has shared his vision on the fundamental approach of the use of technologies in govt. Under this new approach:

- 1) A centralised system needs to be created for agencies to host their forms and online licensing processes so users will not have to repeatedly provide them to different agencies.
- 2) Govt's systems and services should be placed on the cloud instead of on-site, and for these to be operable at any time.
- 3) For the govt to design its own cloud for systems , which is not commercially available, and to figure out operating sensitive and critical systems that should be isolated.

### MAS' CSAP **Proposes** Ways to Enhance Financial Sector Cyber Resilience

The Cybersecurity Advisory Panel (CSAP) of the MAS has provided their views and suggestions on how Singapore's financial sector can adopt new technologies while remaining cyber resilient.

Recommendations made by the CSAP are:

- 1) FIs should ensure data they store on public cloud services is secure and risk assessments of third parties they work with are performed;
- 2) Cloud service providers should be transparent with customers regarding how they implement security measures to protect their systems and information;
- 3) Measures on the use of APIs FIs may adopt include performing risk assessment of the third parties using their APIs and monitoring activities related to APIs services for suspicious events; and
- 4) The employment of AI and machine learning to augment their cyber defence capabilities, along with the process of 'red-teaming' and bug bounty programmes to identify vulnerabilities.

### Go-Jek **Expected** to Launch Soon in Singapore

Indonesia's Go-Jek is expected to launch in Singapore soon, making Grab its largest rival in the market. Go-Jek expressed in May its intentions on entering Vietnam, Thailand, Philippines, and Singapore. Go-Jek has since launched 'Go-Viet' in Vietnam, begun recruitment efforts in Thailand, and is currently still seeking permit to operate in the Philippines.

**Impact Analysis:** Go-Jek's expansion into Singapore will be one to watch, as the city-state has been home to its strongest and most well-funded rival Grab.

### Startup Accelerator to **Launch** in Feb 2019

IMDA and Facebook have unveiled a free six-month accelerator programme dubbed "Startup Station Singapore", aimed at accelerating startups by providing them access to mentorships by industry leaders, short training modules, and co-working spaces.

- The programme will also provide businesses with connections to investors and access to a regulatory sandbox facilitated by the IMDA.

### MSIT [Reveals](#) ICT Standardisation Map

The MSIT published its ICT standardisation strategy map to enable South Korea to adhere to international standards and drive the “fourth industrial revolution”.

- Standardisation issues of ITU, JTC1, 3GPP and others were analysed, with a focus on areas like 5G mobile communication, AI, and blockchain.
- MSIT also formulated strategic goals regarding next-generation technology, competitiveness, cooperation, and expansion.

### Net Neutrality [Hot](#) Topic at 5G Policy Meeting

Net neutrality and zero rating were heavily deliberated on at the recent 5G Communication Policy Council meeting on 28 Sep. South Korea, like many other countries, presently adopts the net neutrality policy. The telecommunications industry however, is hoping to weaken net neutrality requirements ahead of the introduction of 5G networks in Mar 19. This would allow ISPs such as mobile operators to have more freedom in tweaking data transmission rates for business profit.

- A “fast lane” for small and medium content providers was also proposed during the meeting.

### KISA Aims to [Strengthen](#) Data Industry with Non-Identification Technology

South Korea’s Internet and Security Agency (KISA) announced it would share its spam data with the private sector in 2019, in an attempt to revitalise the data economy. The spam data would consist of more than 100 million cases of spam collected through mobile phones, emails, and spam reports. KISA will only share this data after non-identification processing that removes specific personal information.

- KISA hopes this creates a template for other organisations to follow, and possibly aid in spam prevention and botnet detection as well.
- KISA will also provide support for the pilot projects aimed to bolster the Personal Data Store (PDS), a [research project](#) between KISA and the 4<sup>th</sup> Industrial Revolution Commission, which seeks to emulate Fujitsu’s PDS.

### Huawei [Defends](#) Security Reputation in Midst of 5G Partner Selection

In the face of serious doubts by South Korean telcos of Huawei’s security standards, the latter has come out strong defending its reputation. SK Telecom recently omitted Huawei from its selection of partners in Sep.

- Huawei highlighted its collaboration with international mobile operators and companies in more than 170 countries, including the supplying of LTE equipment to local telco LG Uplus. There have been no security issues with LG Uplus. Huawei has stressed it will continue to make cybersecurity its priority.
- Huawei has also declared it will be amenable to requests by the South Korean govt to authenticate the security of its equipment.

**Impact Analysis:** Huawei’s defense is touted to be its bid at pursuing KT, South Korea’s second largest mobile operator. KT, speculated to follow SK Telecom in 5G partner selection, has yet to make a decision. Industry experts note this is unusual of KT, giving rise to suggestions that KT is indeed still considering Huawei.

### [Investment](#) into Long-Range Wireless Charging Technology

The Global IT Research Center for Smart IT Convergence Systems, a research team of MSIT, announced an investment of KRW20bn (USD18m) into a contactless long-range wireless charging technology by local firm WARP Solution. This technology is based on hybrid RF power amplification and miniaturisation technology, where radio frequency is used to simultaneously charge multiple electronic devices.

### **MOST Strives for AI Edge Semiconductor Development**

The AI Edge Semiconductor Moonshot Project undertaken by MOST aims to accelerate the development of six core AI technologies including: sensing devices, IoT system, cognitive computing, AR and VR apps, advance semiconductor process design, and to nurture talent in processor chips and memory design.

- The project promotes collaboration between research institutions and the private sector to leverage Taiwan’s technological prowess in the semiconductor industry. MOST will join force with 62 business specialised in semiconductor manufacturing, integrated circuit design, device technologies, and material development.

**Impact Analysis:** As international heavyweights Google, Facebook, and Alibaba have started to develop in-house AI chipsets; Taiwan does not want to fall behind but rather spearhead the R&D of AI semiconductor and technologies. Apart from showing strong govt commitment through the Moonshot Project and the plan to establish a nano-chip development centre, the govt has been successful in attracting overseas IT companies such as Microsoft, Amazon, IBM, and Qualcomm to establish AI research centres in the country. With the long established and cutting-edge capabilities in chip manufacturing, tripartite collaborations among Taiwanese manufacturing companies such as TSMC, MediaTek, foreign players and research institutions or universities will give Taiwan a competitive advantage in the race of AI.

### **Taipei Smart City Development Focuses on Mobility, Housing, Education, and Healthcare**

To bolster the development of its smart city, the Taipei city govt is providing a platform for research institutions and industry players to experiment and commercialise smart city apps in different sectors. Smart city solutions such as smart metres, energy saving programmes, and smart parking will be deployed in 127 public housing projects.

- Aside from enhancing transportation services by integrating different transport systems to drive the development of smart mobility, the govt will also encourage the use of electric cars, shared rides with bicycles, electric scooters and cars.
- On education, a budget of TWD1.2bn (USD39.3m) will be allocated to digitise teaching and administrative work in elementary and junior high schools. The govt also plans to join forces with seven municipal hospitals and clinics to streamline hospital administration through digitisation.

### **Supermicro’s Allegedly Compromised Hardware Widely Used**

Supermicro Computer, a Taiwanese-American IT firm, is claimed to have sold hardware that had microchips installed by the People’s Liberation Army’s computer attack unit. Many state-run research institutes in South Korea, a major US telecoms company, Apple, Amazon, are amongst companies who use Supermicro’s servers. Supermicro has vehemently denied the validity of the assertions.

### **APT Unveils 65 Smart Bus Shelters in Taipei**

By partnering with the Taipei city govt, APT will provides free 4G Wi-Fi service and install display smart panels to 65 bus stops in Taipei. Passengers can access real-time information on bus arrivals, bus transfer details, weather conditions, and nearby scenic spots.

### State Agencies [Voice](#) Cybersecurity Bill Concerns to PM

The National Cybersecurity Committee and Thailand Information Security Association (TISA) plans to raise their concerns about Thailand's new Cybersecurity Bill, which has been passed by the Council of State. The powers handed to the Cybersecurity Agency (CSA), an entity to be established under the Bill, is of major concern. One of which includes the right to access computer systems without a court warrant.

- More specifically, Section 58 of the Bill gives the CSA the authority to seize computers suspected of posing "reasonable" cybersecurity threats, with the meaning of "reasonable" still left undefined.
- The Bill [underwent](#) a public consultation, with comments welcomed till the 12 Oct.

### BOT [Initiates](#) Blockchain Pilot to Transform Thailand's Securities Markets Infrastructure

The Bank of Thailand (BOT), in partnership with the Public Debt Management Office, Thailand Securities Depository (TSD), Thailand Bond Market Association, and Selling Agents including Siam Commercial Bank and Bangkok Bank, will be implementing the DLT Scripless Bond Project.

- This pilot project, which holds claim to be one of the world's first uses of DLT in bond sales, will aim to increase operational efficiency and transparency in the sale of govt savings bonds through blockchain technology.

### Startups to [Help](#) Reform Govt Services

To further its agenda to build Thailand into a "startup nation" by 2021, the govt asked startups to build digital solutions for public sector services. These were presented at a two-day event under the banner "Unlock Limits of Startup Development for the Government Market".

- The National Innovation Agency (NIA) is playing the role of matching startups to govt agencies, with 28 startups having signed MoUs with 23 agencies.
- The govt wants to set-up a regulatory sandbox for startups to be able to test new solutions and to support this initiative, the NIA plans to allocate THB500,000 (USD15,160) to each project.

### AIS and True [Move](#) to Sit Out of Second 900MHz Auction

The second round of the 900MHz auction, which was postponed from its original date in Aug due to lack of participation, is currently scheduled for 20 Oct. Two of the three main contenders have informed the Stock Exchange of Thailand (SET) they will not participate, once again putting the future of the auction in jeopardy.

- Both telcos believe they have sufficient bandwidth to continue operations and DTAC, the third telco, has until 16 Oct to submit a bid application if it intends to enter the auction. If DTAC also chooses not to participate, NBTC will have no choice but to again cancel or postpone the auction.

### Subscriber Databases to be [Connected](#) with the Ministry of Public Security's Database

The MIC has released a decree amending some parts of the Telecommunications Law. Revisions include specifying the definitions of “dominant telecoms businesses”, such as 30% market share. A significant revision is a new requirement that telco subscriber information databases must be connected with the Ministry of Public Security's (MPS) database, "for the purpose of controlling and managing subscriber info accordance with the law" -- ostensibly for "national security and social order and safety", to "serve state management", and "to provide professional services to telcos".

- Consultations are open till 24 Nov.

### MIC [Backs Down](#) From Telco Photo ID Registration

In a policy turnaround, the MIC has declared it will not be a requirement for all citizens with a SIM card to register for their account.

🔗 **Impact analysis:** This requirement was intended to sync with another draft amendment to the Telco Act, which would require telcos to cross-check their subscriber databases with the govt database of cellular users. The govt database is yet to be ready.

### Apple Logo [Successfully](#) Protected

A 2017 drive by Apple sending legal notices to domestic retailers requesting them to stop using Apple's brands and logos to advertise (such as on signboards and shopfronts), has seen a significant drop in the number of violations over 2017-2018.

🔗 **Impact Analysis:** Counterfeit goods and misrepresentation are a common IP issue in developing countries, and this improvement in respecting IP is heartening for Vietnam.

### Facebook [Secures](#) Soccer Broadcast Rights in Vietnam

Facebook joins tv broadcasters in a USD264m deal to broadcast the Premier League to Vietnam, Thailand, Cambodia, and Laos.

🔗 **Impact Analysis:** This content offering makes Facebook a very attractive platform to stick with, despite the issues breaches of personal privacy the company is currently facing.



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