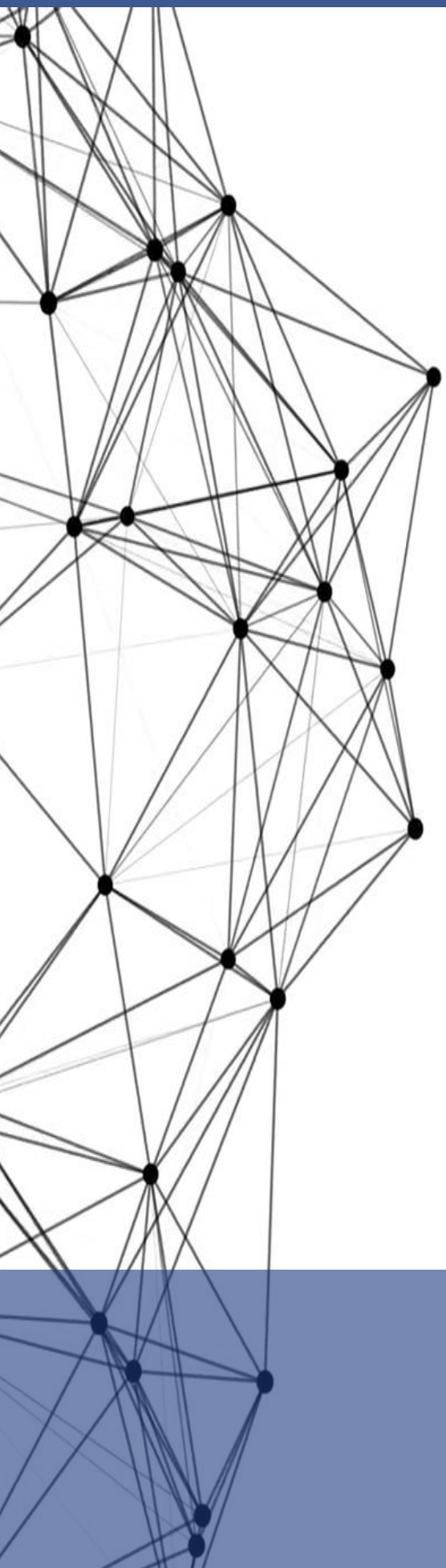


MAY 2020



# APAC BYTES

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### **[Submissions](#) to International Production Orders Bill Inquiry Are Being Published**

The Inspector-General of Intelligence and Security (IGIS) will have oversight of how the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO) uses the international production orders (IPO) regime. The IGIS wrote that requirements in the two-step approval, which would be consent by the Attorney-General and authorisation by an Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT) member, are more rigorous than those of domestic warrants. The IGIS wrote it expects the ASIO to consider privacy and proportionality matters in its applications and the IGIS welcomes some form of public statistical reporting. The bill will let Australia reach a bilateral agreement with the US for implementing the US Clarifying Lawful Overseas Use of Data Act (Cloud Act). The ASIO welcomes the bill as it will let the ASIO access encrypted communications stored overseas for investigation purposes and strengthen its ability to fulfil its functions. Google wrote that it did not like the possibility of civil penalties being applied for the failure to comply with an IPO and wants that reference removed.

- The Department of Home Affairs is confident that Australia will be the next qualifying foreign govt to reach a bilateral agreement with the US under the Cloud Act. Negotiations have been going on since Oct. The UK and the US have had an agreement in place since Oct 2019.
- Civil liberties groups expressed concern that the bill does not contain any requirement for govt officials to notify data subjects of requests.
- The Communications Alliance wrote it wants more information on the cost of compliance for carriers and carriage services providers (CSPs).

### **ASIC Working on ERS Administration Approach**

The ASIC (Australian Securities and Investments Commission) is working with the govt to create the regulations for the Enhanced Regulatory Sandbox (ERS) framework, which will govern how the ERS should be administered. The ASIC is working on a guidance for businesses outlining how the ERS operates and what is expected of firms that make use of the ERS. The ASIC has received a number of enquiries related to the ERS.

- The ASIC will also put together a national [group](#) on youth financial wellbeing to help identify issues impacting young people's financial lives and shape work in this area. In 2018 Australia was ranked fifth in the OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) financial literacy results.
- The ASIC published virtual tech [guidelines](#) for investor meetings which it considers a valuable tool for addressing the challenges of COVID-19.

### **ACCC and OAIC [Release](#) CDR Compliance and Enforcement Policy**

The policy describes how the ACCC and the OAIC will encourage compliance among CDR participants and deal with breaches of the Consumer Data Right (CDR) regulatory framework by adopting a risk-based approach focused on building consumer confidence in the security and integrity of the CDR system. Monitoring, business reporting, audits, assessments, information requests and compulsory notices are part of the approach to ensure that participants meet with all their CDR obligations including those dealing with privacy safeguards. Enforcement actions could involve administrative resolutions, suspension of accreditation, determination and declarations and court proceedings. The ACCC is also currently developing a Conformance Test Suite (CTS) which data holders and recipients will have to pass in order to become active on the CDR Register. Fintech firm Frollo has become the second participant to be granted accreditation as a Data Recipient.

### **COVIDSafe Contact Tracing [App](#) Launched by the Govt**

The govt also [published](#) a Privacy Impact Assessment (PIA) for COVIDSafe. Now the govt hopes there is public confidence and trust enough in the app to boost the take-up rate to at least 40%. The public health app is part of a multi-pronged effort to contain the spread of the coronavirus through early notification of possible exposure. The govt has introduced a draft special [legislation](#) – the Privacy Amendment (Public Health Contact Information) Bill 2020 – to protect the information collected by

the app and the purposes for which the information will be used. Until then the govt has made a determination under the Biosecurity Act 2015 to protect the information collected. The draft legislation makes it a criminal offense and illegal to use contact data for anything other than contact tracing by the state and territory authorities, for any of that data to be sent offshore, for anyone to be forced to download the app and for anyone to decrypt data associated with the app. The OAIC will have an oversight role. Questions remain, such as who will be responsible for certifying that the app data has been properly deleted, how period reporting with parliament will be tabled and what happens between agencies if laws are breached. Loopholes in the law also still exist such as making govt payments, tax breaks and financial rewards conditional on downloading and using the app. There are furthermore no restrictions on the amount of data that can be collected and sent to a national database. How the govt addresses concerns such as the lack of oversight and reporting on the app use, and how the govt will institute a robust complaints mechanism will go a long way to persuading people to download the app. To date the app has seen 5.3 million registers. There are 16.4 million smartphones in Australia.

- The University of South Australia and Canadian drone manufacturer Draganfly are looking at how drones equipped with thermal cameras and AI could be used to monitor people's health in an effort to track and slow the spread of the coronavirus.
- Boston Consulting Group, Shine Solutions Group for helpdesk support, and Ionize for cybersecurity assessment worked with the DTA on COVIDSafe. AUD1.5m (USD1m) was spent on developing the app.
- Australia is expected to be one of the first adopters of the Bluetooth API changes made by the Apple and Google collaboration on contact tracing infrastructure.
- The Australian Data and Digital Council has started a discussion on the role of data in supporting decision-makers and their ability to develop an effective coronavirus response and recovery.
- A local tech expert has written a detailed [report](#) on the privacy issues with the Android version of COVIDSafe. The app code, but no server code, has been released and while it is the server that performs the encryption of the data, there is no opportunity to examine the server code for bugs. For example, Australia has given no explanation why it is rotating the encrypted user IDs every two hours instead of Singapore's 15 minutes.

**Impact Analysis:** The DTA was under extreme pressure to get COVIDSafe app out and more than 5 million Australians have downloaded the app since its release, testifying to some good work on the part of the DTA. The agency is under great public scrutiny and has an email address where people can give their feedback. Some other agencies are not as forthcoming as the DTA.

### **Govt Consulting on CDR Draft Designation [Instrument](#) for the Energy Sector**

As part of extending the Consumer Data Right (CDR) to cover energy retailers the govt is consulting on a framework that will help consumers find and switch to the best energy deals and drive competition between energy retailers to provide new innovative retail products. The govt welcomes views until 31 May on the draft designation instrument which will empower the ACCC to make the CDR rules for the energy sector.

### **DFAT [Determining](#) Engagement with UN Cyberspace Responsible State Behaviour Processes**

The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) has [published](#) submissions it received on how Australia should proceed with the Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) and the Open Ended Working Group (OEWG), both established in Dec 2018. Microsoft said it agreed with Australia's position that the Framework for Responsible State Behaviour in Cyberspace (2010, 2013, 2015) lays an important foundation but that the GGE And OEWG should work to strengthen existing UN norms and establish additional norms in a world of escalating numbers of cyberattacks. Russian cybersecurity firm Kaspersky recommended the establishment of a working framework for Responsible State Behaviour that is transparent and exchanges best practices.

### **ACMA and TIO Sign Collaboration and Information Sharing [MOU](#)**

The ACMA and the Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman (TIO) have refreshed their collaboration on compliance and enforcement issues. The MOU will make sure telcos join and comply with the TIO dispute resolution scheme and help proactively deal with complaints about landline phones, mobiles and Internet services, especially billing and coverage issues. The TIO can refer telcos to the ACMA which can take enforcement actions.

- The govt is [disrupting](#) and blocking scammers making phone calls which fraudulently appear to come from the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) in a tactic called spoofing. The ATO received 107,000 reports of impersonation scams from the community in 2019.
- The ACMA has [published](#) its latest action on spam and telemarketing.

### **APS [Puts](#) Out Australian Public Service Digital Professional Stream Strategy**

The Australian Public Service Digital Professional Stream Strategy will help accelerate the adoption of data and digital technologies across the Australian Public Service (APS) and will be overseen by the DTA CEO. The DTA will be responsible for championing support for upskilling digital capability across the APS, defining what good digital capability looks like and guiding the strategy's implementation. The six themes of the strategy are establishing the digital profession, define leadership of the profession, developing professional standards, highlighting career pathways, growing capability, and investing efforts in professional communities.

### **Fourth [Iteration](#) of the Trusted Digital Identity Framework (TDIF) Released by DTA**

The TDIF is made up of 13 policies that are needed for creating a reusable digital identity. The TDIF now includes biometric verification requirements and two new identity proofing levels. The TDIF will be reviewed again by Jul 2022. A list of current accredited TDIF providers may be accessed [here](#).

### **Department of Home Affairs [Hit](#) by Data Breach**

The data breach revealed the personal details of 774,000 migrants and people aspiring to migrate to Australia. The breach occurred on the DHA-run SkillsSelect platform, which lets skilled workers and businesses post expressions of interest. This site had poor security and hackers could easily obtain applicants' ADUserIDs, which would let the hackers gain more personal details.

### Ministries **Identify** 12 National Service Export Bases to Promote Digital Trade

After extensive review and consultation with provincial govts, the MOC, MIIT and CAC have jointly designated 12 software parks and high-tech industrial zones located in cities like Beijing, Tianjin, Shanghai, Hangzhou, Guangzhou as service export bases to spur the growth of digital trade and bolster the application of digital technology.

- The selected export bases will form a cluster to strengthen the country's competitiveness in digital service trade by developing new business models, accelerating the digital transformation of service exports.

### Measures for Cybersecurity Review to Take **Effect** on 1 Jun

Following a public consultation undertaken last May, the Measures for Cybersecurity Review drafted by 12 ministries and regulatory authorities including the CAC, MIIT, MOF, MPS, NDRC will become effective on 1 Jun 2020.

- The Measures have specified the scope of network products and services as core network equipment, high-performance computers and servers, high capacity storage devices, large databases and application software, network security equipment, cloud computing services, and other products and services that can have major impacts on the security of critical information infrastructure.
- Operators of critical information infrastructure are required to submit a cybersecurity review application for the procured networking equipment and services according to the procedures laid out in the Measures.
- The Review Office under CAC will target to complete the preliminary review in 30 working days and send its recommendations and conclusion to members of the cybersecurity review committee for comments. A special review, to be completed in 45 working days, will be carried out if members cannot reach a consensus.

### MIIT to **Promote** Cellular IoT Migration and Development

MIIT issues a notice outlining the targets and key tasks for facilitating the establishment of an integrated ecosystem comprising NB-IoT, LTE Cat1 and 5G.

- By the end of 2020, the NB-IoT networks will achieve wide coverage in the urban areas of prefectural-level cities. The number of cellular IoT connections will reach 1.2 billion and a myriad of NB-IoT applications, benchmarking projects and application scenarios with millions of connections will be developed.
- To attain these targets, the govt will accelerate the construction of cellular IoT networks, strengthen cellular IoT standards development and research, promote the development of supply chains and service platforms, enhance security for cellular IoT networks and improve data protection.

### State Council **Approves** Establishment of Cross-Border E-Commerce Pilot Zones in 46 Cities

To revive foreign trade dampened by the COVID-19 outbreak, the State Council greenlights the development of integrated cross-border e-commerce pilot zones in 46 cities.

- The State Council will provide policy support such as exemption from value-added and sales tax as well as guidance to ensure high product quality for imports and exports, the safeguarding of transaction security and cybersecurity.
- Local govts are tasked with facilitating the establishment and implementation of the pilot zones through proper allocation of resources and improvement in management mechanism.

### China **Debuts** Blockchain-Based Services Network

The unveiling of the Blockchain-based Services Network (BSN) on 25 Apr represents a move by China to drive the adoption of blockchain technology through strengthening backbone infrastructure, boosting connectivity across the country as well as with its trade partners around the globe.



- The BSN will integrate with public chains and other blockchain platforms offered by private companies such as Baidu, WeBank, Hyperledger.
- The goal of BSN is to connect 200 cities over the next year and eventually cover all 451 urban cities at the prefecture level. Through BSN, individuals and SMEs can have access to blockchain cloud computing services by paying ultra-low cost of less than USD400 per year.



### OGCIO [Proposes](#) Full Rollout of ERKS by 2025

OGCIO recommends a full implementation of a central ERKS on the Govt private cloud platform by 2025 after a review on the pilot carried out in 11 govt bureau and departments confirms that the operational efficiency of govt services has been improved.

- With stringent requirements on the system capabilities and records management, the central ERKS not only ensures interoperability among different agencies, but also prevents the unauthorized modification or deletion of documents and records, to enhance information security and legal compliance.
- While the implementation of the central ERKS will incur a non-recurrent cost of HKD1.23bn (USD158.7m) and an annual recurrent cost of HKD270m (USD34.8m), estimated benefits of the ERKS, including savings from costs of printing and paper, storage space and manpower will amount to HKD264m (USD34.1m) per year.

### OFCA [Announces](#) Subsidy Scheme to Foster 5G Deployment

To accelerate the deployment of 5G technology in different application scenarios and sectors such as health care, transport and logistics, tourism and property management, OFCA unveils a subsidy scheme as part of the Anti-epidemic Fund to subsidize 50% of the cost of an approved project.

- The maximum amount of subsidy for each qualified project is capped at HKD500,000 (USD6,450) and the scheme is expected to benefit 100 projects. [Application](#) is open until 30 Nov on a first-come, first-served basis.

### WeLab Bank to [Conduct](#) Trials of Flexible Time Deposit, Virtual Debit Card

Virtual bank licensee WeLab Bank will pilot under the HKMA Fintech Supervisory Sandbox several banking services including remote account opening, time deposits and numberless debit cards, with 2,000 selected customers in the first instance.

- Remote account onboarding enables customers with HKID cards to open accounts instantly within 5 mins. Attractive time deposit interest rates of up to 4.5% per year will be offered when customers save together with family and friends.
- Partner with Mastercard, WeLab Bank's numberless debit card protects cardholders' privacy by storing the account number and CVV code on their mobile app only.

 **Impact Analysis:** One year on after HKMA has granted a total of eight virtual banking licences, only one licensee, ZA Bank, has officially commenced operation and three others including Airstar Bank, Mox Bank and WeLab Bank are piloting different services under the regulator's fintech sandbox. The launching timeline for the other digital banks is pushed back largely due to the social unrest started in H2 of last year and the recent coronavirus outbreak. While the delay gives some breathing space to the traditional incumbent banks, customers still need to wait another 3-6 months before they can enjoy innovative financial services other than those centred on offering high deposit rate.



### Govt to [Partner](#) with Telcos for Contact Tracing

The govt intends to expand the Aarogya Setu app to include more phone users and will partner with telcos to enable calls to their subscribers.

- The voice calls to approximately 550 million feature phone users in the country, will use an Interactive Voice Response System (IVRS) from a central helpline number. They will check for symptoms and local health authorities will be notified accordingly.
- Smartphone users without the app will also be getting notifications from their service providers.

**Impact Analysis:** While the govt expands the use of Aarogya Setu across the country, the on-going debate on privacy and state surveillance is heating up. The app uses Bluetooth and Location Services to trace a user's contacts. But there are emerging questions about transparency and purpose limitation, with the risk that it may morph into a permanent surveillance tool. These risks are higher in India as it lacks a data protection law.

### Telcos, States and DoT [Tracking](#) Patients

Telcos and DoT are working together with State Govts to use call location details of subscribers to closely track the movement of COVID-19 patients.

- The cell sites of patients and places visited for 15 days prior to being tested are also being tracked to inform others who may have come in contact.
- This is also being used in helping to track migrant laborers as they head home, in order to provide them with food and other services.
- There are privacy concerns as subscribers' permission has not been sought.

### TRAI Open House [Focuses](#) on SMS Rates

TRAI held its first virtual open house discussion on curbing unsolicited commercial communication on 6 May.

- Telcos zeroed in on the continuation of the govt's regulation on charging higher SMS rates to curb spam messages from unregistered telemarketers.
- They argued that TRAI's order of Dec 2012, mandating a charge of USD0.007 (INR0.50) for every SMS over 100 per day per SIM was a deterrent to unsolicited commercial communication (UCC), even while TRAI highlighted rising complaints.

**Impact Analysis:** While the higher charge on SMS is a minor disincentive, and has not inconvenienced customers who seldom cross the 100 SMS a day cap, it may have unintended consequences for other stakeholders. Indian Railways for instance, prefers mass SMS for internal communications. It ends up paying approximately INR2 crore (USD264,880) a year because due to this regulation.

### Kominfo [Announces Relief for ICT Sector](#)

On 7 May, Kominfo announced incentives to help the ICT sector in Indonesia deal with COVID-19. Regulated in Ministerial Regulation No. 3/2020 concerning Maturity of Payment of Universal Post Service Contribution, Telecommunications Operational Rights Fee, Universal Service Obligation Contribution, and Broadcasting Permit License Fee, the initiatives [cover](#):

- Payment of Telecommunications Operating Fee (BHP) and Universal Service Obligation (USO) contributions for fiscal year 2019
- Payment of Universal Postal Service Contribution (LPU) for fiscal year 2019
- Payment of Broadcasting Operational Permits (IPP) and Payment Orders (SPP)

### Kominfo [Deploys Smart Machines to Curb COVID-19](#)

Kominfo announced the deployment of 1,000 smart IoT machines to support the implementation of Large Scale Social Restrictions (PSBB) in areas such as Jakarta, Bogor, Tangerang, Bekasi, Depok, Bandung, Bali, Sidoarjo, etc.

- The dual Access-Information capabilities of the smart machines are aimed at reducing human interaction between cashiers and customers through AI and AR technologies at strategic retail and pharmacy locations, as well as to accelerate the delivery of accurate information from the govt through chatbots and applications such as Care Protect and 10 Safe Houses.

### Discrepancy in COVID-19 Data [Raised](#)

West Java Governor Ridwan Kamil has raised questions over the accuracy of the central govt's data, claiming that it does not match the regional administration's. Ridwan has also asserted that when COVID-19 abates, he will press the central govt to give more powers to regional govts in dealing with crisis as the latter have a better grasp of grassroots level data.

- Ridwan claims the data discrepancies extended to COVID-19 govt aid, creating confusion and public dissatisfaction.

### Tokopedia Database [Breached](#)

It was reported on 2 May that homegrown e-commerce unicorn Tokopedia had its database breached in Mar, resulting in a massive data leak that allegedly affects 15 million users. While confirming that a breach had occurred, Tokopedia insists that crucial user data remain secure. Tokopedia had a [meeting](#) with Kominfo and BSSN to reassure authorities that further investigations would take place.

- Tokopedia is not the first Indonesian e-commerce platform to have been breached, e.g. [Bukalapak](#) in 2017. Bukalapak recently [denied](#) another incident.

🔗 **Impact Analysis:** At present, personal data protection in Indonesia is still weak. Under Ministerial Regulation No. 20/2016, there is currently a notification of 14 days. However, if the personal data protection bill had already been passed, the notification period would have been drastically reduced to three days. Coupled with the renewed focus on data protection in the COVID-19 era, the PDP draft bill is likely to re-emerge as a top priority of the House.

**‘MIC Overseas Expansion Action Plan 2020’ [Released](#)**

The MIC is promoting overseas expansion across a range of fields including ICT and e-govt to support the revitalisation of the Japanese economy. The ‘MIC Overseas Expansion Action Plan 2020’ was crafted in order to fully mobilise policy resources and to promote overseas expansion more effectively.

- Through the Action Plan, the MIC hopes to promote the introduction of Japanese 5G models including local 5G and promote the development of high-quality infrastructure that support 5G, such as optical submarine cables. The Action Plan also seeks to advance international cooperation utilising Japanese technology and experiences to deal with new coronavirus infections (communication network development, big data usage, telemedicine, etc.)

**Govt to [Release](#) COVID-19 Tracking App**

The Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare was the main developer behind the app, and is examining issues on user privacy concerns and API specifications for smartphones using Apple and Google OS to use the app.

- The app, which will alert users of close contact with COVID-19 patients, is set to be released by end-May.

### Govt to [Implement](#) Short-and Medium-Term Economic Recovery Plan to Rejuvenate Economic Growth

The plan will highlight capacity building, job creation, health guidelines and safe operating procedures, and increase consumer spending through digital channels. In addition, support will be given to the restructuring, recovery and growth of SMEs via digital technology, and enhancing resilience and developing growth opportunities for medium and large companies that will boost investor confidence, generating short-term economic growth.

- The plan is expected to be [announced](#) by end-May.

### TM Bhd [Leveraging](#) GITD Division to Drive Company's Digital Development

The Group's Information and Digital Technology (GITD) division emphasises on strategic partnerships to provide Malaysia's first cloud and AI data centre. The establishment of GITD is aimed at promoting the role of TM as a technology-enabled and data-driven services provider which would see the creation of a single 'data lake' where the data will be collected and stored in its original format in a repository system until the data is required by a downstream process.


### Local Businesses [Encouraged](#) to Embrace New Normal with IR4.0

The international Trade and industry Ministry is encouraging local companies to leverage on the use of technology, such as IoT technologies, towards the fourth industrial revolution (IR4.0) and has set up the Industry 4WRD Readiness Assessment (Industry4WRD-RA) which sets out tests to gauge capabilities and readiness of firms, identifying gaps towards its digitalising journey.

### Alibaba's eWTP Hub to [Distribute](#) Medical Supplies

Alibaba's electronic world trade platform (eWTP) at Malaysia's Kuala Lumpur International Airport (KLIA) will serve as a global hub for delivery of medical supplies to combat COVID-19. The move is set to further strengthen Malaysia's role as a major trade hub in the APAC region for logistics operation.

- The eWTP will be the delivery location for contributions, a temporary storage, and relocation hub before the aid is distributed to neighbouring countries.
- Malaysia's eWTP hub will function as one of three global hubs besides Belgium and Ethiopia.

 **Impact Analysis:** With Malaysia's Digital Free trade Zone (DFTZ), the eWTP is aimed for Malaysian SMEs to optimise digital transformation facilities, especially in e-commerce adoption, expanding exports and promoting local brands across borders.

### MDEC's e-Dagang Expo (eDX) [Takes Off](#)

In collaboration with the KKMM, the eDX initiative has been launched which runs from 4-8 May. The initiative is expected to ramp up trade and commerce digitalisation in the 'new normal' era resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, and aims to address the need for MSMEs to adopt e-commerce.

### Myanmar Telco MPT [Institutes](#) One-way Block on Unregistered SIM Cards

Myanmar telco MPT has instituted a one-way block on SIM cards which failed to complete SIM registration. This means that outgoing calls, SMS, data and other chargeable services are blocked, with exceptions being access to the MPT4U app or MPT customer service. A grace period for registration remains in place, and users may reverse the one-way block by registering with MPT prior to the 30 Jun. Failing to do so would result in their SIM cards being permanently deregistered, and deactivated.

### Ministry of Health [Plans](#) Voluntary Contact Tracing App to be Available Soon

Version one of the app will feature voluntary pre-registration so that the Ministry of Health can have up-to-date contact details for users of the app. The Ministry is also looking at the use of QR codes for entering businesses and places. Uptake of contact tracing apps in other jurisdictions has been low, so being very clear and transparent about the app's purpose and reassuring the public about the app's security and what will happen to the data collected is important in driving uptake. The Ministry of Health has set up a Contact Tracing Assurance Committee (CTAC) to strengthen oversight of the national tracing system which involves both manual and (coming soon) digital means of contact tracing.

- Local construction companies are subscribing to tracing systems and adopting electronic tracking (GPS enabled) tags worn on hard hats for fear that a construction site might be shut down by a single sick worker. The GPS data is geo-fenced so tracking stops once workers leave the construction site. One mobile app available is SiteM8 (at NZD30 (USD18) a month per worker) but companies have only offered it to staff on company-provided mobile phones for fear that if workers downloaded it on their private phones, privacy laws would be breached.
- The govt will invest NZD25m (USD15m) in a COVID-19 Innovation Acceleration Fund aimed at the fast development of new products and services that could help detect, diagnose, treat or prevent COVID-19.

### ComCom [Issues](#) Coronavirus Business Collaboration Guidance

The [guidance](#) shows how the ComCom will assess business collaboration during the coronavirus pandemic so that it does not become an anti-competition coordination – collusion – among businesses. Collaboration between businesses is required to ensure and secure the supply of essential goods and services.

- The ComCom issued a reminder to online retailers that they have to operate under rules that prohibit misleading conduct such as not selling goods the retailers do not think they will be able to supply on the terms offered. The ComCom has recently received a flood of consumer complaints about online retailers as more people place online orders while working from home. Consumers have been confused by online retailers with a “.co.nz” web address, who are in actuality overseas retailers.

### NCSC Publishes Securing AWS Resources [Guidance](#)

The National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) has released a guidance to help organisations secure AWS cloud resources such as dealing with AWS Identity and Access Management (IAM) system and other important security tools and services. The guidance is intended for organisations who are considering the use of AWS cloud services and resources for the first time.

- The NCSC also [released](#) a guidance on video, voice and messaging platforms which included warnings about technology supply chains and their security. It is suggested to use multiple vendors to avoid lock-in.

### PaymentsNZ [Releases](#) API Centre Standards 2.0

The standards apply to Payment Initiation and Account Information and are a stepping-stone in new payments related innovation for New Zealand customers and businesses. The upgrade promotes ecosystem efficiency, safety and security by leveraging the UK open banking standards. New functionalities include enduring payment consent where a customer does not need to be present in order to make a payment within certain pre-approved parameters and decoupled flow where a customer could get a text message from their bank to authorise a payment while online shopping. The PaymentsNZ ecosystem now has 9 API provider Standards Users, 16 API third party Standards Users and 17 Community Contributors.



**Govt [Makes](#) NZD20m Available for Tertiary Students for Digital Devices and Internet Connections**

The NZD20m (USD12m) will help eligible tertiary students continue their studies online during the coronavirus pandemic. A survey by the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) and New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) shows 11,150 learners do not have the right devices to engage in distance learning and 11,350 learners do not have access to broadband Internet at home.



**DICT [Offering](#) Public Key Infrastructure to Other Govt Agencies**

The DICT is offering the Philippine National Public Key Infrastructure (PNPKI) to other government agencies to increase cybersecurity for online transactions. DICT has reached out to the Civil Service Commission, Commission on Audit, Supreme Court, and the national legislature, and has offered the service to parts of the Department of Justice and the National Economic Development Authority.

**Politician [Calls](#) for NTC Abolition After Broadcaster Shutdown**

Following the issuance of a cease and desist order from the NTC to broadcaster ABS-CBN, House of Representatives Minority Leader Bienvenido Abante Jr. called for the abolition of the telecom regulator. In addition to the shutdown of ABS-CBN, the legislator cited the NTC's poor regulation of the telecoms sector and lack of dynamism in keeping up with new technologies as reasons to eliminate the regulator.

**Impact Analysis:** The shutdown of ABS-CBN is largely seen as a political matter due to President Duterte's previous statements against the broadcaster and the president's allies sitting on the company's legislative franchise renewal. However, the shutdown issue may increase calls for reform in telecom regulation regarding the legislative franchise requirement, which can be subject to political whims rather than public necessity.

**Senators [Seek](#) Probe on National ID System Implementation**

Senate President Vicente Sotto III and Senators Panfilo Lacson and Ramon "Bong" Revilla have filed resolutions seeking an investigation into the implementation of Republic Act No. 11055, or the Philippine Identification System (PhilSys) Act. The senators argue that implementation of the PhilSys system is urgently needed to assist in aid distribution during the COVID-19 crisis.

**NPC [Investigating](#) COVID-19 Privacy Complaints**

The NPC is probing 17 personal data breaches affecting at least 154 data subjects who are suspected or confirmed COVID-19 patients and those being monitored for the disease. In response, the NPC has urged healthcare providers to strengthen the protection of patient data.

**PH Economic Development Head [Stresses](#) Need to Transition to Digital Economy in COVID-19**

Karl Chua, the Acting Head of the National Economic Development Authority, emphasised the need to improve the Philippines' digital infrastructure and address the digital divide in the road to recovery from the COVID-19 crisis.

**BSP [Waives](#) Digital Services Fees for 6 Months**

In a bid to further encourage use of digital channels during COVID-19, the BSP has decided to suspend licensing fees for mobile apps and digital channels providing electronic payment and financial services, including online banking and e-money platforms. The exemption period will last for 6 months starting from 8 Mar, when a public health emergency was declared by President Duterte, and may be extended.

**Customs Bureau to [Implement](#) Electronic Cargo Tracking System**

The Bureau of Customs will roll out the Electronic Tracking of Containerized Cargo System beginning Jun in several ports to allow real-time monitoring of goods using an ICT-enabled system, including GPS-enabled tracking devices.

**Local Govts [Using](#) Web-Based SMS Platform for COVID-19 Awareness**

Local govt units around the Philippines have been using a web-based SMS platform called Smart Infocast to send out text broadcasts to keep residents informed of COVID-19 updates. The system is powered by telco PLDT.



**DOST [Rolls Out](#) Telehealth Devices in COVID-19 Fight**

In collaboration with universities and the Department of Health, the DOST rolled out a telemedicine device called RxBox that can take patient measurements remotely. The device is intended to be deployed at rural health centers and allows doctors to make diagnoses without being physically present.

**DICT [Calls](#) for Free Access to Online Learning Resources**

The DICT has requested that the NTC obtain the support of telcos to ensure that the Department of Education's online learning platform, DepEd Commons, can be accessed free of any data charges. DepEd Commons is a free-for-use service containing materials produced by public school teachers and is intended to assist in distance learning.

### Emerging Stronger Taskforce [Recommendations](#) on Post-COVID-19 Economy

The Future Economy Council (FEC) established an Emerging Stronger Taskforce (EST) to plan for and make recommendations for a post-COVID-19 Singapore.

- Recommendations are expected to come in phases, with the first tranche provided in early 2021. Recommendations will focus on industry (digital) transformation strategies.

✎ **Impact Analysis:** COVID-19 is forcing industries to digitally transform. Although this taskforce is attempting to get ahead of the curve and map out a way forward, releasing recommendations early next year may not provide the roadmap to success that is needed in a post-COVID-19 world.

### IMDA [Announces](#) 5G Winning Proposals

IMDA announced that Singtel, and a Starhub-M1 joint venture are winners of its 5G Call For Proposal.

- Singtel and the Starhub-M1 JV will be able to roll out 5G Standalone networks from Jan 2021, and are required to [provide](#) coverage for at least half of Singapore by end 2022, before expanding to nationwide coverage by end 2025.
- IMDA, IBM, M1 and Samsung also [announced](#) Singapore's first 5G Industry 4.0 trial, which aims to design, test and benchmark 5G enabled Industry 4.0 services across industries.

### IPOS [Pilot Programme](#) to Fast Track Technology Patents

The Intellectual Property Office of Singapore (IPOS) is launching SG Patent Fast Track, a pilot programme to speed up patent applications in all technology fields. The application-to-grant process is expected to take just six months.

### TraceTogether [Adoption](#) Falters

To combat the low adoption rate of Singapore's contact tracing app, [TraceTogether](#)—currently at 25% of Singapore's population or 1.4m users—experts have suggested merging functionality with other government apps, such as Singapore's SafeEntry digital check-in system.

- SafeEntry has been [deployed](#) to more than 16,000 venues and facilitates employees and visitors' entry. Use of SafeEntry is [mandatory](#) for businesses opening back up as part of easing Circuit Breaker measures.
- The govt is also [liaising](#) with Apple and Google to enhance the TraceTogether app, and address complaints of high battery drain.

**Govt to [Pursue](#) Digital Infrastructure Construction Projects Under “South Korean New Deal”**

Preparing for the post COVID-19 era, the govt announced the direction for “South Korean New Deal” for the next 2-3 years as it turns its attention to projects focused on the construction of digital infrastructure, and the promotion of “Untact (no-contact)” industries including education and health.

- 10 major projects announced include the expansion in the collection and utilization of data, early construction of 5G infrastructure, acceleration of 5G+ projects, expansion of AI data and infrastructure, spread of AI use to all industries, the creation of the foundation for spread of “Untact” services, strengthening of cloud and cyber safety networks, and digitalization of old Social Overhead Capital (SOCs).
- A detailed plan is expected to be released in H2.

**Apr “DNA” Best Practise Cases [Named](#)**

The MSIT has identified three cases under its “Data”, “Network”, and “AI” – DNA plan to showcase best practises in coping with the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic each month.

- Under Data, SoftNet’s health monitoring app was identified allowing healthcare workers to monitor vitals remotely; for Network, Alsupport’s teleconferencing and telecommuting solutions were provided to SMEs and educational centres for free; and for AI, Practine Technology’s API provided public mask information using open data.
- The MSIT will continue each month to highlight best practices under these three categories to exemplify how organisations can better cope with the challenges of operating during this period in a safe and responsible manner.

**Sejong Smart City to [Develop](#) Blockchain-based ID Verification Platform for Self-driving Vehicles**

Together with the MSIT and the Korea Internet & Security Agency, Sejong City, which is the country’s testing ground for major smart city solutions, will develop a blockchain-based platform for storing and verifying the digital identities of self-driving vehicles.

- The use of blockchain will help strengthen security and crack down on the cloning of identities or hacking of self-driving vehicles. The system will deploy multiple layers of encryption to the data shared between cars and on-road facilities using “vehicle-to-everything”, or V2X, communication.

**Govt [Strengthens](#) ISMS-P Integrated Certification Scheme**

The govt is continuing to promote and strengthen its Information Protection and Personal Information Protection Management System (ISMS-P) since launching it a year ago to streamline certification compliance with personal information management the ISMS-P and duplicative requirements under the Personal Information Management System (PIMS).

- The govt will lower fees for ISMS-P certification and aims to list certified organisations on the website of the Korea Internet Promotion Agency.

**MSIT to [Recruit](#) 17 Schools for VRAR Education Content Trial**

17 schools will be recruited to experiment with the MSIT’s range of 32 different kinds of immersive education content using VR and AR technologies to improve the learning experience for students.

### **NCC [Drafts](#) Measures for the Management of Universal Telecommunications Services**

, NCC has drafted new Administrative [Measures](#) for Universal Telecommunications Services to further narrow the digital divide and promote fair and non-discriminatory access to communication services.

- Apart from stipulating the types and scope of universal services which include voice communication service and data transmission service and their applicable conditions, the Measures also specify the service coverage, universal service providers, implementation plan and costing principles for the two types of universal services as well as the operation and management of the universal services fund.
- Members of the public are invited to provide feedback and comments to the NCC via [mlshieh@ncc.gov.tw](mailto:mlshieh@ncc.gov.tw) before 24 May.

### **Taiwan [Tightens](#) Cybersecurity Efforts to Protect Core Industries and Medical Data**

In view of the possible increase in the frequency and intensity of cyberattacks, the Executive Yuan has set up taskforces dedicated to the monitoring of govt websites and malicious online activities to fend off attacks targeting govt agencies and core industrial sectors including energy, finance and transportation.

- As regards protection against cyber threats to medical data and facilities, the Ministry of Health and Welfare will ramp up security measures to prevent unauthorized Internet access with help from the National Center for Cyber Security Technology.

### **NCC [Releases](#) Draft Regulations Governing the Establishment and Use of Dedicated Telecommunications Networks**

The draft [laws](#) regulate dedicated telecommunications networks established with radio frequency allocated by the competent authority and used only by the telecommunications network operator.

- The draft regulations stipulate the application procedures, assessment criteria employed by the relevant authorities for public service networks and private networks. Details on the procedures for radio station installation, issuance and renewal of permit are also included in the draft.
- The public can provide feedback to the NCC via [csteng@ncc.gov.tw](mailto:csteng@ncc.gov.tw) before 28 May.

### **CPTPP on [Hold](#) Due to COVID-19**

Jurin Laksanawisit, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Commerce, has announced he will not be proposing the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) to the Cabinet for consideration due to the ongoing COVID-19 outbreak.

- The Ministry of Commerce was to present the findings of a study that shows CPTPP membership could boost Thailand's economic growth, investment, and exports.
- However, Thai opposition parties, civil society groups, and prominent social figures have opposed CPTPP membership on the grounds that it would hurt key economic sectors such as agriculture and healthcare.
- In this context, all discussions on this topic have been shelved indefinitely, with no indication on whether they will be brought up once the pandemic is under control.

### **Thai Govt [Preparing](#) a COVID-19 Contact-Tracing App**

The Thai govt will soon [launch](#) a COVID-19 contact-tracing app as part of its latest efforts to contain the spread of the coronavirus.

- According to Dr Taweessin Visanuyothin, spokesman of the govt's Centre for COVID-19 Situation Administration (CCSA), contact-tracing has proved effective in slowing the spread of the virus in several countries.
- On the public's concerns over privacy, he announced that only the data of at-risk groups would be collected. At-risk individuals included medical personnel, newly suspected persons or those in state quarantine, drivers of public-transport vehicles, parcel deliverers, migrant workers, and those working in pubs, bars, or other entertainment venues.

### **THB50bn for the [Digitalisation](#) of Rural Schools**

The Thai Cabinet recently approved a budget of THB50bn (USD1.5bn) to improve some 8,000 primary and secondary schools in remote areas of Thailand between 2020 and 2022.

- The budget will be used to recruit more foreign-language teachers to strengthen students' foreign language skills.
- It will also be devoted to acquiring more tech-based educational tools to foster students' digital skills.
- Together, these measures are expected to narrow the equality gap between schools in urban and rural areas, though the current COVID-19 crisis may dampen these efforts for the time being.

### Mobile Money Project [Proposed](#) for Vietnam

A pilot project for mobile money in Vietnam has been proposed to the Prime Minister, although details are still lacking.

### Vietnam's Domestic IT Sector Promoted

An increasing number of local Vietnamese IT initiatives have been heavily promoted in the press over Apr and May, in what appears to be an opportunistic protectionist approach by both the govt and local private sector. For example:

- Local smartphone brand Vsmart has [partnered](#) with Italian industrial designer Pininfarina, and is targeting the high-end smartphone market - with the former being lauded as the "third best known smartphone brand in Vietnam, after Samsung and Apple"
- Bkav's made-in-Vietnam smartphone the Bphone [launches](#) their new line of high-end smartphones on 10 May.
- In early May, FPT [started](#) construction of their Ho Chi Minh City data centre, heralded as the country's largest.
- In Apr, Vietnam's MIC [released](#) EGOV JITSI, a made-in-Vietnam videoconferencing solution which routes traffic through Vietnam, reducing its reliance on international apps and connectivity solutions.





TRPC is a boutique consulting firm which specialises in telecommunications and information technology, particularly the policy and regulatory issues associated with national information infrastructure development, with an emphasis on the Asia-Pacific region. We offer specialised advisory, research, and training services, with a focus on economics, regulatory and strategic business issues, and possess an extensive network of industry experts and professionals throughout the region.

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