

DICT: New telco player named within the year

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The Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT) expects to name a new telco player within the year instead of an initial self-imposed target of making the announcement before President Duterte's State of the Nation Address in July as the terms of reference (TOR) for the selection process has yet to be finalized.

DICT officer-in-charge Eliseo Rio Jr. said the government would name the new telco player "within the year."

Earlier, he said the self-imposed target is to make the announcement before the President's SONA in July. The government is still working on the TOR for the selection process for a third telco player.

An oversight committee composed of the DICT as chair, as well as the Department of Finance, Office of the Executive Secretary and National Security Adviser, is assisting the National Telecommunications Commission (NTC) in coming up with the draft TOR for the selection and assignment of radio frequencies to the new telco player.

"The draft TOR may be published for public discussions by mid May, on a best effort on our part," Rio said.

He said the bidding process, meanwhile, may start before the SONA in July.

"By SONA, the people will know what companies are joining the bidding, and they will be given around 45 days to come up with their bid proposals to be dropped at the same time on bidding day," he said.

Under Memorandum Order 2 released by the DICT earlier this month, parties interested to bid for the third telco slot would need to have a paid in capital of at least P10 billion as indicated on latest audited financial statements.

Interested parties should also hold a Congressional franchise not related to any dominant telco player and should not have any liabilities with the NTC.

In addition, interested parties should have experience in provisioning, delivery and operations of telecommunications services in the last five years.

For the selection process, the applicant with the highest committed level of service or investment for the first five years of operations would be named as the new major telco player.

Earlier, Rio said the groups to be led by firms Philippine Telegraph and Telephone Corp., NOW Corp., and Converge ICT Solutions Inc., are expected to take part in the selection process.