

Smart sets stage for 5G

Philippine Daily Inquirer · 6 Jun 2018 · @miguelrcamus INQ By Miguel R. Camus

PLDT Inc.'s Smart Communications said it was preparing for the advent of 5G even as it pursued the rollout of its 4G network infrastructure.

Specifically, the telco said it had launched its so-called 5G techno lab. The facility will be used for the research and development of 5G, which is expected to deliver faster internet speed and lower latency.

The final standards of 5G are still due for launch in 2019, GSM Association said. Its commercial rollout is seen by 2020.

“Even as 5G network technology is still at its early stages, and keeping in mind that it may take some time before 5G can be available commercially, we are already investing in pilot testing our 5G system and paving the way toward having a ‘5G-ready’ network by 2020,” Ernesto R. Alberto, PLDT and Smart executive vice president and chief revenue officer, said in a statement yesterday.

Last year, PLDT and Smart announced the signing of a memorandum of understanding with China's Huawei “to shape the strategic and commercial development of the 5G ecosystem in the Philippines.”

In particular, the two parties were looking to identify and develop the areas of technological innovation needed to deliver 5G.

“There is more to what 5G can do, which includes enhanced mobile broadband services, massive machine type communications, and ultrareliable and low-latency communications,” said Mario G. Tamayo, PLDT and Smart senior vice president for network planning and engineering.

PLDT allotted a record P58 billion for capital spending in 2018. It said around 54 percent of the amount would be allocated to its wireless business while 46 percent would go to the fixed-line segment.

PLDT recently sold most of its shares in Germany-based Rocket Internet to partly finance its capital spending plans. PLDT said it sold back to Rocket 6.8 million shares valued at a total of 163.2 million euros, or about P10 billion.