

Thailand's Act on Digital Development for Economy and Society Comes into Force

Thailand has finally enacted the Act on Digital Development for Economy and Society B.E. 2560 (A.D. 2017) (“Digital Development Act”). It was published in the Royal Gazette on 24th January 2017 and has been effective on and from 25th January 2017.

The Digital Development Act is a consolidation of the three Bills, i.e. Digital Economy and Society Committee Bill, Digital Economy and Society Development Fund Bill, and Promotion of Digital Economy and Society Bill.

Under the Digital Development Act, the National Digital Economy and Society Committee (the “**Digital Economy Committee**”), chaired by the Prime Minister, is established to set out guidelines and policy under the digital economy framework, aiming mainly at maximizing the benefits of digital technologies, developing infrastructure for digital technology, raising the country's competitiveness with digital innovation, creating equal opportunities with information and digital services, developing human capital for the digital era, creating public confidence in the use of digital technology and implementing digital technology to enhance Thailand's economy and society.

The Digital Economy Committee is also responsible for advising and proposing to the Cabinet with regard to financial policy, investment policy, tax measures and privileges related to digital development for economy and society.

The Digital Development Act establishes the Digital Economy and Society Development Fund (“**Digital Economy Fund**”) for operation and development of digital economy and society under the digital economy framework and national master plan. The sources of the Digital Economy Fund include, for examples, government seed money, money allocated from government annual budget, 15% of the NBTC's licensing fees, and donations.

The Digital Development Act also establishes the Promotion of Digital Economy and Society Bureau (the “**PDES Bureau**”). The main objective of the PDES Bureau is to promote and support the development of digital industries and innovations, and the utilization of digital technologies for benefits to economy, society, culture and public security.

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