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TNB switches on pilot project

> Using its electrical infrastructure to kick start the National Connectivity Plan

PETALING JAYA: Tenaga Nasional Bhd (TNB) is embarking on a pilot project using its electrical infrastructure this month, to kick start the National Connectivity Plan (NCP), a replacement of the aborted Nationwide Fiberisation Plan (NFP).

Communications and Multimedia Minister Gobind Singh Deo told *SunBiz* recently that the NCP consists of fibre, fixed wireless and satellite access to achieve nationwide internet coverage and it could provide internet access across the nation in the shortest time frame possible.

The NFP was part of the previous government's 2017-2019 plan to connect six million premises in the country to a fibre network, but it was called off in July, resulting in the partnership termination between TNB and Telekom Malaysia Bhd.

In an effort to support the NCP under the new administration, TNB yesterday told Bursa Malaysia the pilot project aims to assess the technical, safety and commercial viability of using its electrical infrastructure for the NCP.

The pilot project will cover 1,100 out of 4,300 houses in three areas, namely Taman Merbau, Taman Maju and Felda Kemendor in Jasin, Malacca, according to chairman Tan Sri Leo Moggie. It is slated for completion by the end of this year.

The households will gain access to high speed broadband (HSBB) network that will be made available through TNB's owned fibre optics which forms part of the company's existing telecommunication network.

"Through this pilot project, TNB is exploring the potential of utilising the available capacity of TNB's telecommunication assets for the NCP - identified as an important catalyst towards the digital economy without compromising the safety, security and reliability of the electricity supply network," he added.

TNB, with full support from the Communications & Multimedia Ministry and the Energy, Science, Technology, Environment and Climate Change Ministry, was earlier invited to participate in the NCP to help expedite the delivery of this programme, which aims to provide faster, cheaper and wider Internet accessibility.

"This pilot project will be the platform to test the concept of Open Access. The platform is expected to stimulate active participation from new and existing providers in backhaul and retail broadband that will create competition that should push broadband prices down for the benefit of Malaysians," said Moggie.