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Transport Ministry accelerates study on South land bridge project

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Transport Minister Saksayam Chidchob



By The Nation

Transport Minister Saksayam Chidchob is calling on the Office of Transport and Traffic Policy and Planning to complete the feasibility study on the "southern land bridge" project linking the Gulf of Thailand and Andaman Sea within a year.

The project also includes the development of a deep-sea ports in Chumphon and Songkhla provinces, a double-track railway between Chumphon and Ranong as well as a motorway.

Saksayam said his ministry will study investment options for the project, which should be on a public-private partnership basis.

He said bids will be called for the project in its entirety, not separately, adding that the combined value of the project is estimated at Bt100 billion.

Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha had said that he wants this land-bridge project to be another new economic engine like the much-touted Eastern Economic Corridor.

Meanwhile, National Economic and Social Development Council secretary-general Thosaporn Sirisamphand said this project is part of the government's master plan for the economic development of the South.

Danucha Pichayanan, NESDC deputy secretary-general, said the project development will be based on existing facilities, including the deep-sea port in Ranong. A similar port will be developed in Chumphon and linked to the one in Ranong with a double-track railway.

The railway, which is expected to cost Bt45.84 billion, will be 108 kilometres long and feature nine stations.

Danucha said the council will visit the areas between Chumphon and Ranong to hear people's opinions about the project.