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Orange Line to pilot commercial project

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» The Metropolitan Rapid Transit has selected the Orange Line electric train route for a pilot scheme under the land transformation management programme.

Mass Rapid Transit Authority of Thailand governor Peerayuth Singpattanakul said recently that a decision was made to develop areas along the Orange Line route in eastern Bangkok, linking the Thailand Cultural Centre with Min Buri, for commercial purposes.

It will serve as the MRT's pilot project under the land transformation management programme, and is part of the government's policy to develop areas along the electrical train routes for commercial purposes. According to Mr Peerayuth, the project will allow people whose land and communities are close to the areas to benefit.

He said the programme received a positive response from residents living along the route when MRT officials conducted a survey to determine their opinions.

Mr Peerayuth said the programme is seen as a win-win approach to make the most of the empty plots near the route, with the government, the private sector and residents all likely to benefit from the programme.

However, land expropriation has been a hindrance to the programme, he said. The government is amending related laws and regulations to make the project happen.

The Minister of Transport has given the green light to the project, while the MRTA has proposed the plan for initial screening.

Meanwhile, bidding processes for construction contracts for the Pink Line, Yellow Line and the eastern Orange Line are under way.

The MRTA sold bid envelopes for construction of the 34.5km Pink Line (Khae Rai-Min Buri), costing 56.7 billion baht, the 29.1km Yellow Line (Lat Phrao-Samrong), costing 54.7 million baht, and the 21km Orange Line, costing 92.5 billion baht.

Several contractors bought bid envelopes as the bid conditions are open for private companies to contest.

They are required to submit bids by Oct 30 for the Orange Line project and by Nov 7 for the Pink Line and the Yellow Line, Mr Peerayuth said.

The winners are expected to sign construction contracts in April, the MRTA governor added.

Mr Peerayuth said the MRTA's electrical construction projects will help stimulate the economy and generate job opportunities, while expenditure for the project will be circulated within the country and job vacancies will be filled.

The projects will also produce a positive indirect economic impact that benefit contractors, workers and construction material agents, he added.

Mr Peerayuth estimated around 100,000 workers will fill construction jobs under the project by next year.