Vessel Traffic Management and Information System (VTMIS) Project

As a result of the 911 tragic incident, members of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) have adopted the amendments of the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) which led to the implementation of the International Ship and Port Facility Security Code (ISPS Code). Besides, other maritime security measures have also been adopted including the installation of the Automatic Identification System (AIS) on sea-going vessels of 300 GRT and up, which enables such vessels to transmit radio signals containing vessel information to other AIS-equipped vessels and AIS Base Stations.

Thailand, as a member of IMO and a party to SOLAS, has established the Maritime Security and Vessel Traffic Control Center under the supervision of the Marine Department of Thailand in order to effectively comply with the requirements of ISPS Code and other maritime security measures adopted by IMO. However, there is currently no AIS Base Station other than a station at Map Ta Put Port, which is not sufficient to effectively implement ISPS Code and other maritime security measures. As maritime security has been a critical issue at national, regional and international levels, this indicates the necessity for Thailand to establish additional AIS Base Station. In addition, the newly established Maritime Security and Vessel Traffic Control Center needs to be well equipped with state-of-art technology to ensure effective operation.

In view of above, the Marine Department of Thailand has engaged the Aeronautical Radio of Thailand Co., Ltd. (AeroThai), a state enterprise under the Ministry of Transport responsible for air traffic control and management, to design and develop the vessel traffic control system and the vessel traffic management information system (VTMIS). The two government agencies have signed a Memorandum of Cooperation between the AeroThai and the Marine Department for the Design, Research and Development of Vessel Traffic Management and Information System on 7 February 2005 with a view to enhancing the efficiency of work on vessel traffic control and maritime security in accordance with relevant IMO rules and regulations. Under the Memorandum of Cooperation, the Marine Department and AeroThai will work together in developing a vessel traffic control and maritime security system to link and facilitate communications between sea-going vessels and earth stations. This system will also facilitate pilotage services for sea-going vessels calling at Thai ports, provide security services, disseminate weather forecasts and meteorological news and other information as well as facilitate search and rescue operation.

After the signing of MOC, the Marine Department and AeroThai sent a mission for a field survey of vessel traffic control systems and equipment in several developed countries, particularly those with good reputation on heavy vessel traffic management. Currently, AeroThai is working on the preliminary design of the system.