

INFRASTRUCTURE

Six locations eyed for 'Land Bridge'

POST REPORTERS

Six potential locations for a Southern Land Bridge connecting the Gulf of Thailand and Andaman coasts will be proposed to the Transport Ministry this week, according to the Office of Transport and Traffic Policy and Planning (OTP).

OTP director Panya Chupanich said yesterday that an initial study had proposed three locations in each of two provinces as suitable for the ambitious bridge scheme.

They are Laem Pra Chamhiang, Laem Riw and Laem Kho Khao on the Gulf of Thailand side in Chumphon, while the Andaman Sea locations in Ranong are Koh Ta Wua Dam, Koh Son and Laem Ao Ang.

The government aims to promote the land bridge as a transit hub and attract international investment to help drive Thailand's economy alongside its flagship project, the Eastern Economic Corridor (EEC).

Mr Panya said the OTP would submit the completed initial study to the Transport Ministry this week.

As the plans involve a world heritage site and national park area, further advice will be sought from a joint panel made up of the Transport and Natural Resources and Environment Ministries, before they are submitted to the cabinet.

Mr Panya said Transport Minister Saksayam Chidchob has also instructed the OTP to prepare a presentation on the project for the 52nd conference of the Apec Transportation Working Group between Sept 14 and 16, as well as prepare to launch a roadshow on the proposal in June to attract both domestic and foreign investors.

The OTP has also asked for next fiscal year's budget allocation of 80 million baht to carry out a feasibility study set to include tourist routes along the southern seaboard of the Andaman Sea covering Ranong, Phangnga, Phuket, Krabi, Trang and Satun.