

Thailand becomes Acer's regional centre

Acer Inc, the world's fourth-largest computer maker, has positioned Thailand as an operations centre for Indochina in a strategic drive to catch increased IT spending stemming from the arrival of the Asean Economic Community.

The move by the Taiwanese company is also aimed at increasing operational efficiency and reducing costs.

"Indochina is an emerging market with great growth potential for IT spending thanks to a population of over 300 million, and the region's IT market is still in its nascent stages," said Alan Chiang, newly appointed country manager of Acer Computer, which is responsible for Thailand, Myanmar, Laos and Cambodia.

Since its inception in Thailand two decades ago, Acer Computer has functioned as a business cooperation centre in the region supporting marketing activities, IT infrastructure and service centres.

Mr Chiang said Acer expected to reduce its operating costs by at least 10% this year as a result of promoting Thailand as a centre in Indochina.

"We expect our revenue in Indochina to grow by 20% in 2015, up from 10% last year," he said.

"The Thai operating unit expects a return to double-digit growth in revenue this year, compared with flat growth in 2014 due largely to the continuous decline in PC sales."

Mr Chiang said Acer would continue to focus on its core PC business.

Acer expects its corporate revenue to increase from 20% of total revenue last year to 25% this year, rising to 50% by 2017.

The company aims to go beyond selling hardware by adding value to its products through innovative software and services in a major drive to create new revenue streams.

Thailand's PC market is expected to grow in line with GDP this year after bottoming out last year with a contraction of 17% to 2.5 million units.

However, Mr Chiang said Acer Computer saw only a contraction of 7% in its PC sales last year to 600,000 units, allowing it to maintain its leadership of the Thai market.

Market researcher GfK reported that Acer captured a record 38% market share of PC sales in Thailand in December last year alone. Its average share in 2014 was 25%.

Acer has set up a new unit to boost its revenue from smartphones and tablets.

"We expect revenue from smartphones and tablets to account for 20% of our total this year, up from 19% last year," said Mr Chiang.

Acer has promoted Harry Yang to vice-president for Indochina after he previously served as country manager for the Thai unit.

