

**DAP wants end to cronyism in Sarawak ICT sector**  
**Free Malaysia Today**  
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**Sarawak DAP says putting a private company in charge of regulation of information and communication technology infrastructure is a conflict of interest.**

PETALING JAYA: Sarawak DAP chairman Chong Chieng Jen has told the state government, in particular Chief Minister Abang Johari Openg, to do away with elements of cronyism in the development of ICT infrastructure there.

“If Abang Jo truly wants to do this, he must do three things.

“One: remove the regulatory powers of Sacofa; two: remove Sacofa’s monopoly of ICT infrastructure projects; and three: appoint a government agency to take charge of the overall planning and tendering processes for ICT infrastructure projects, under the supervision of a committee of elected state representatives from both sides of the house.”

Chong was referring to Sacofa Sdn Bhd, a private company, which he said was also the regulator of information and communication technology infrastructure in Sarawak.

In a statement today, Chong said the practice of appointing a private firm to be also the regulator of a business in which it had vested interests was unheard of in developed economies.

“Telco companies are not allowed to install any transmission equipment in the state except with permission from Sacofa.

“Previous telco towers built by Telekom, DiGi or Maxis were all made illegal overnight by the amendment of the state law and policy, which makes a licence from Sacofa a requirement.

“If the telco wishes to rent the roof of a privately owned shop to put up transmission equipment, it has to obtain that licence.

“To obtain that licence, one has to pay Sacofa a hefty licence fee.

“This is conflict of interest to the highest degree.”

He claimed that in most cases, Sacofa also directed telco companies to dismantle their transmission equipment and replace them with equipment that Sacofa would rent out to them.

Chong claimed that shortly after the CMS Group acquired a 50% stake in Sacofa, the state government announced a RM1 billion allocation for ICT infrastructure projects, including the construction of 5,000 telco towers.

He said Sacofa was given the power to decide the exact location of the towers, the contractors and how much to pay them.

Yesterday, Sacofa corporate affairs manager Mohamad Sait told FMT the management would address Chong's statement later.

"For now, the (construction) awards have yet to be made," he said.

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