

# Bangkok Post

## AUDITING

### SEC offering SME classes

#### NUNTAWUN POLKUAMDEE

The Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) plans to increase the number of auditors qualified to audit the accounting of companies listed on the SME board by 50 this year to remove a hurdle in establishing a subboard for the listing of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

Auditors will be classified into two groups, with the first tier eligible to audit companies listed on the Stock Exchange of Thailand (SET) and the Market for Alternative Investment (MAI), while the second group can audit only companies listed on the SME board, said SEC secretary-general Vorapol Socratyanurak.

The securities watchdog is pushing the SME board, which is expected to be unveiled this year, as a new source of funding for small companies. However, the cost of listing including stringent rules and accounting standards along with a shortage of auditors skilled in SME accounting have limited the viability of the new board.

The SEC expects only cash trading will be allowed initially on the SME board to mitigate risks for both investors and stock

brokerage houses.

There are only 145 auditors qualified to audit the accounting of listed companies. This group must have 10 years of auditing experience, auditing signing authority for three consecutive years in the past five years, and be partners or heads of auditing firms.

To qualify to audit listed companies on the SME board, auditors must pass the Capital Market Auditors project, an agreement between the SEC and the Federation of Accounting Professions.

"The SEC will provide a three-day training programme on auditing listed companies. We're aiming at 50 qualified auditors in the first phase, which can help SMEs prepare for the listing process. We have a shortage of auditors, as nearly 700 firms have listed on the SET and MAI," Mr Vorapol said.

He said the SME auditing group required work experience of seven years and authorised auditing for two of the past five years.

The auditors must be department heads, managers, partners or heads of companies. Auditors in the SME group can join the SET and MAI group after sufficient experience.

