

Meralco says planning broadband via power lines

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Pedestrians pass a Meralco sign in Manila. The electricity distributor plans to use its power lines to deliver broadband Internet access, a company statement has said.

Top electricity distributor Manila Electric Co., better known as Meralco, plans to use its power lines to deliver broadband Internet service, a company statement has said.

The move is expected to make the Internet more accessible in the country, where only 20 million out of the population of 90 million can go online.

Listed Meralco told the Philippine Stock Exchange without elaborating that it was "set to implement the pilot test of the broadband over power lines project.

"The results of the said pilot test will guide the company in determining scope and coverage of the project, which will drive the investment requirements."

Meralco sells electricity to about 24 million people in Manila and its surrounding provinces, which comprise the country's richest three percent.

The plan was announced four months after dominant carrier Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. and its pension fund became the largest shareholder in Meralco with a combined 30.17 percent stake.

A first-ever survey of Internet usage in the Philippines conducted by Yahoo! and pollster Nielsen earlier this year found just 22 percent of the population had Internet access -- most of them aged 29 or younger.

Online gaming and social networking were the most popular [Internet](#) activities in the country, with just three percent taking part in online commerce, according to the survey.

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