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AUG 15 DEADLINE FOR MULTIPURPOSE CARD VENDORS

KUALA LUMPUR, July 26 (Bernama) -- Vendors who are interested to be involved in the multipurpose card (MPC), one of the Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC) flagship applications, should submit their memorandum of intent to Bank Negara by Aug 15, a Bank Negara official said today.

Its Head of the Bank Regulations Department, Mohd Razif Abdul Kadir, said the MSC will be the test bed for the world's first national MPC, which will be issued to all Malaysian citizens. Bank Negara is the lead agency responsible for the MPC's development.

"The smart card will serve as a national identity card, driving licence, immigration and health card, electronic cash, debit, ATM and credit card," he told a presentation on the MPC here.

Through this application, a single common technology platform will be developed to enable government and private application providers to implement smart card solutions without duplication of efforts and investment.

Earlier, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad launched the Concept Request for Proposals (CRFPs) for first four of the seven MSC flagship applications here.

He also outlined the CRFP process, of which the first card to be introduced will be the electronic cash (E-cash) and responses must be submitted by Sept 13, 1997.

The E-cash card scheme will be selected on Oct 25 this year and vendors selected will be informed by Nov 1, he added.

Prior to this, Mohd Razif said the central bank will release E-cash standards as well as specifications and the pilot project will be conducted by July 1998.

He said financial institutions will begin mass marketing by July 1999.

Meanwhile, he also said the submission for the payment and government MPC will be on Nov 26, 1997.

He added that Bank Negara will select a MPC vendor consortium on Feb 26, 1998 and the contract will be finalised by March 26, 1998.

He said the winning consortium is expected to accept certain conditions when awarded the contract for E-cash as well as payment and government MPC.

For E-cash, he said, among others, vendors must provide intellectual property rights, assisting in the development of MPC specifications, supporting implementation of E-cash and provide alternative financial package.

For payment and government MPC, vendors must develop prototype and conduct technical tests; develop facilities for card personalisation, training and testing; conduct field and pilot test; helping Bank Negara to roll out in the MSC and Kuala Lumpur; undertake the on-going operation and managing the implementation of the MSC flagship.

Mohamed Razif said these vendors' proposals will be further evaluated depending on the attractiveness of the software and level of cooperation with Malaysian companies, like special transfer and joint efforts and priority will be given to MSC status companies.

Targeted for full commercial release before the year 2000, the MPC will be introduced to the first two million users in the MSC and Kuala Lumpur area. The card is expected to be tested at the 1998 Commonwealth Games. --
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