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#### French IT firm to submit bids for two MSC operations

FRENCH information technology firm Gemplus, has confirmed that it will be submitting tenders for two of the first four Multimedia Super Corridor flagship applications under the recently launched Concept Request For Proposals.

Gemplus' vice-president of Asia Pacific operations, Remy de Tonnac said the firm was collaborating with "three or four" Malaysian parties and two major IT firms to form a consortium and bid for tenders in electronic government and smart card applications.

Declining to reveal further details of the consortium, he said the two foreign parties were from Japan and the US.

"The consortium will emphasise electronic government and smart card applications, the latter of which will include a multi-purpose smart card comprising identification card, driving licence and utility payment features, among others," de Tonnac said.

Last weekend, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamed launched the CRFP tender on four of the seven MSC flagship applications estimated to be worth about RM1.6 billion.

Aside from electronic government and smart card applications, the other two applications are telemedicine and smart schools.

The Multimedia Development Corporation has encouraged firms interested in the CRFP tender to set up consortiums.

"Our consortium is now finalising the sharing structure to determine what sort of technology aspects each of the members can contribute," de Tonnac said.

"We hope to submit the proposals before Nov 15," he said at a Press conference in conjunction with Gemplus's contribution worth more than RM100,000 to demonstrate the firm's electronic commerce and smart watch access in conjunction with the third Langkawi International Dialogue.

Gemplus, whose earnings last year stood at around US\$440 million (RM1.1 billion), claims to be the world's number one manufacturer of smart cards, capturing about 42 per cent of the market as well as a 60 per cent share in the Asia Pacific region.

Besides producing some 1.5 million smart cards daily, Gemplus also produces products used in public and cellular telecommunications, financial transactions, transportation, education, health care, gaming and electronic commerce.

De Tonnac said the firm, which has offices in 25 countries and operates in around 100, was keen to establish ties with more Malaysian companies.

"Malaysia will be the most progressive country in the region with the introduction of the MSC.

"Malaysia is also ahead of other nations in terms of the implementation of the multi-purpose smart card, even ahead of France, where the smart card was invented in 1974," he said.

De Tonnac was also confident that around one third of the estimated four billion smart card users worldwide would be in Asia by the turn of the century.

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