

28/07/1997

## Gemplus confirms bid for MSC flagship applications

Lokman Mansor

FRENCH smartcard manufacturer, Gemplus, has confirmed that it is participating in proposed bids for two of the first four Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC) flagship applications.

Gemplus Technologies Asia president and managing director Remy De Tonnac said the company's expertise in smartcard applications can be used in the development of both electronic government and the multi-purpose card applications.

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

The four involve 15 pilot projects, which are expected to cost RM1.6 billion. Of the 15 projects, five each will be for electronic government and smart schools respectively, four for telemedicine and one for multi-purpose card.

With the launch of the CRFPs, local and international consortia can start proposing the best solutions for the pilot projects. The Multimedia Development Corp (MDC), however, has indicated that it will encourage mergers among companies in the selection process.

Speaking to reporters in Langkawi yesterday, De Tonnac said for the multi-purpose card application, Gemplus' consortium involves between three to four local companies and another two foreign companies, one each from the US and Japan.

"These are very serious players. I cannot reveal who they are now, but we will be very proud to announce the consortium members when everything is finalised," he added.

The consortium will submit its proposal by November 15 this year. The selection process will be completed by year-end and the pilot projects are due for completion in the year 2000.

De Tonnac said Gemplus will also seek to participate in the development of electronic Government applications as the smart card will be the access-key in dealing with government departments and agencies.

Gemplus is no stranger to the MSC, having been a part of the advisory panel set up by Bank Negara for the national multi-purpose card programme.

For the third Langkawi International Dialogue (LID '97), Gemplus has sponsored RM100,000 worth of live demonstrations on electronic commerce and smart access watch.

Participants upon registering will each receive an access watch which allows them access to a range of services, including access to web browsing systems and a messaging system.

For example, a participant shows his wrist with the contactless watch to a Gemplus reader and the web browser is automatically activated, allowing the participant to surf the web.

"In the future, we envisage watches to be able to store health records, access computer networks, open our doors, warn a doctor via satellite in case of an accident, pay for a restaurant bill, ski lifts, and speedway tolls, without any physical contact," Gemplus Group International chairman and co-founder Dr Marc Lassus added.

He said Gemplus forecasts that smartcards in use around the world will increase from 465 million units in 1995 to 3.8 billion by the year 2000, or an average yearly growth of 52 per cent.

Gemplus is the world leader in manufacturing smart and magnetic stripe

cards.

(END)