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Mahathir-MSK

MAHATHIR: MSC OFFER TAKERS CREATING VALUE FOR THEMSELVES

KUALA LUMPUR, July 26 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today said companies taking up offers in Malaysia's Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC) project will create value for themselves in an environment uniquely suited to their needs.

"While they will help transform Malaysia and the region they would also be contributing towards their own role in the information age," he said.

Dr Mahathir was launching Concept Request For Proposals (CRFPs) for Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC) Flagship Applications, here.

He said what they learned and tested in the MSC would help prepare them to solve problems faced when applying their technologies and expertise worldwide.

The MSC is a 750 sq km zone south of here devoted to the development of multimedia products and services.

Dr Mahathir said the 15 CRFPs launched for pilot projects under the Electronic Government, Multi-Purpose Card, Smart Schools and Telemedicine flagship applications, were in themselves pioneering initiatives for Malaysia.

He said they must not be perceived merely as documents outlining the requirements for private sector companies to submit their bids for government projects.

"They are actually representative of the government's new approach for partnering with the private sector," said Dr Mahathir.

He said the government had worked with private sector companies to develop the CRFPs that clarified the benefits the government sought but left flexibility for the bidding consortia to innovate solutions.

He said the CRFPs placed more emphasis on defining project objectives and desired benefits rather than specifying detailed technical requirements.

It also called for open technology and business model.

"This approach encourages collaboration among companies and between companies and the government. hopefully, leading to the building of consortia among companies to develop and deliver the best and most comprehensive solutions for the various pilot projects," he said.

The MSC offered many opportunities for companies to explore multimedia technologies to their limits, Dr Mahathir said.

"It is by far the most comprehensive test bed devised for the purpose of devising and testing the technologies and their applications in the Information Age," he said.

Dr Mahathir said to spearhead the development of the MSC and give shape to its environment, seven primary areas for multimedia applications have been identified.

These "flagship applications" contained unprecedented and attractive opportunities for local and international business because of their variety and scope and the manner in which they were being offered to the global community, he said.

He said one of the most important applications which the government would all be helping to develop was the electronic government.

There had been much talk on the subject and many initiatives and systems have been mooted and even tried, but the problem would be to choose the best system or combination of systems, he said.

"Whatever is decided upon and applied in actual administrative

procedures will not be final," Dr Mahathir said.

He said the development of the electronic government would be a continuous process as new ideas and new technologies make current ones out of date.

"We will have to be prepared for these challenges and to be open-minded enough to keep our options and to be ready to accept the new as much as to defend the old and the tried systems and technologies," he said.

On multi-purpose card, Dr Mahathir said its application was an obvious necessity.

That was why the government was willing to participate fully in the project that would not only serve its own needs but those of the private sector as well, he said.

On smart school, he said companies involved in the flagship application would be given the opportunity to help Malaysia make the critical transition from an industrial economy to a knowledge-based one.

"This calls for a technological-literate, thinking force which is able to perform well in a global environment and use of Information Age technology to improve productivity," he said.

He said smart schools were not only categorised by the introduction of technology, but more importantly, by their ability to deliver heightened education in a better and more comprehensive way.

On telemedicine, Dr Mahathir said it was going to contribute towards better medicine for a greater number of people.

The MSC could be developed into a regional hub for telemedicine services, products and education, he said.

Elaborating on CRFPs, Dr Mahathir said one of the key objectives in using the CRFPs approach was to encourage collaboration and technology transfer involving small and medium-scale Malaysian enterprises.

He said most of the solutions provided would involve leading-edge technologies from world-class multimedia companies.

This represented a significant learning opportunity for local companies involved in the consortia, he said.

"In fact, one of the selection criteria is to look at a workable and effective model of technology and knowledge transfer between collaborating companies and institutions, big and small, local and foreign," he said.

He said the government also hoped to encourage smart and equal partnership where both local and foreign parties would offer value-added input.

"We also hope that this will help build platforms for on-going innovations which will in turn stimulate the development of new applications of multimedia in both the public and private sectors, with ownership of these pioneer applications attributed to all the parties involved," he said.

Dr Mahathir said for Malaysians as the whole, the full impact of these flagship applications would not be immediately felt or seen because the pilot projects to be implemented under these applications were part of Malaysia's long-term plan to achieve a developed nation status by 2020. --
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