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MDC finalising R and D proposals

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THE Multimedia Development Corp (MDC) is finalising proposals from 12 companies interested in participating in research and development activities in the Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC).

MDC executive chairman Tan Sri Dr Othman Yeop Abdullah said these companies have made a firm stand to participate in research and development (R and D) projects, one of the MSC's seven flagship applications.

The 12 companies include Nippon Telegraph and Telephone Corp, Microsoft, IBM, Sun Microsystems, NCR Corp, DHL Worldwide and Telekom Malaysia Bhd.

"Their involvement in R and D will enable greater collaboration with other companies participating in the MSC," he told reporters in Kuala Lumpur yesterday after a Price Waterhousing briefing on the MSC for some 100 chief executive officers.

MDC is the corporatised entity entrusted to develop and promote the MSC, a 15km by 50km area encompassing Kuala Lumpur City Centre, the new federal administrative centre of Putrajaya and the KL International Airport at Sepang.

Othman said the companies have proposed various R and D projects, which he declined to disclose as they are still at the negotiation stage.

He, however, cited IBM as an example, saying that the company is proposing to develop a research institute on electronic government at the MSC.

MDC staff are working hard to support the entry of a large number of multimedia-related companies which have shown keen interest to participate in the MSC, he said.

"We have to work fast also because Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has directed us to implement the MSC project with urgency.

"We are no more talking about the concept (of the MSC) but rather the implementation of the MSC," he said, when asked what transpired during the MSC Implementation Council meeting chaired by Dr Mahathir in Langkawi over the weekend.

On when the infrastructure at Cyberjaya - a designated cybercity within the MSC - will be ready, Othman said the first telecommunications switchboard and fibre optic line will be laid out by April next year.

"Besides Cyberjaya, other infrastructure will encompass the just-completed Kuala Lumpur City Centre, the Technology Park Malaysia in Bukit Jalil and the multimedia centre at Universiti Pertanian Malaysia.

"The first phase of the Technology Park has been completed and people are already operating within this park. They can apply for the MSC status but they must set up a separate entity as stipulated under one of the requirements to obtain the status," he added.

Othman said Dr Mahathir has directed that the ground-breaking ceremony of Cyberjaya be expedited. "We are working with four or five companies participating in the ground-breaking of Cyberjaya. That will be finalised soon," he added.

On the poor participation from insurance companies in the MSC, Othman said a task force is conducting a study to determine the insurance legal liability exposure in practices such as telemedicine.

"We hope the study will be completed in June or the following month, so that that the insurance companies can participate in the MSC."

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