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More British firms to apply for MSC status

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MORE British companies are expected to apply for Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC) status in the next few weeks, British High Commissioner to Malaysia Mr David Moss said yesterday.

He said a significant number of applications from British companies are still being processed by Multimedia Development Corp Sdn Bhd.

"There is no doubt in their minds that the MSC project is going ahead. The decision now is whether their business or technology is relevant to the project and whether they can find a local partner, essential for success in the MSC," Moss said.

He told a news conference this after opening a one-day "Microelectronics in Business" seminar and exhibition in Kuala Lumpur.

Moss said British companies are coming into the country to seek opportunities within the MSC and that of the 78 firms with MSC status, seven are British.

"They generally understand that forming business relationships in Malaysia takes time. None of them expects overnight miracles and they have to start somewhere," he added.

Yesterday's seminar and exhibition is jointly organised by Mimos Bhd and the British High Commission. It displays the products and services of 17 British suppliers, including microelectronics design houses looking for joint-venture opportunities in Malaysia.

"The aim of the seminar and exhibition is to highlight the technologies underlying the areas identified by the Malaysian Government as being among its primary requirements for flagship projects of the MSC," he said.

Moss said British companies in general view the entire MSC project in three broad areas of interest: information technology (IT), telecommunications and information content.

"Many Malaysian companies believe Britain has a good deal to offer in terms of the telecommunications and content sectors. Therefore, I don't think many Malaysians need convincing that Britain has something to offer, but I do think that there is a doubt about whether Britain has anything to offer in the area of IT.

"That's why Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's visit to London in May this year was an eye-opener for both countries," he said.

Moss said British companies do not claim that Britain can compete with America's Silicon Valley, "but we do claim that we have cutting edge technologies in certain IT fields, particularly in software application".

At the same time, Moss said British companies are increasingly coming to Malaysia to learn.

"The MSC is a very imaginative and ambitious project and we are here not just as holders of technologies and to spot business opportunities, but also to learn from Malaysia's experience.

"We believe that we can take away from Malaysia, experience which will prove relevant to the development of our own multimedia approach in the UK," he said.

Moss said although the British Government has launched a number of technology parks in the UK, for example the Cambridge Science Park, it has yet to embark on a venture similar to the scale of the MSC.

Mimos chief executive officer Tengku Datuk Dr Azzman Shariffadeen said British technology is still relatively unknown in Malaysia.

"There is still a need for more promotion of British microelectronics

products and services," he added.

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