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MSC Flagship Applications: A world of opportunities

THE Multimedia Super Corridor is Malaysia's gift to the world. 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 contain an unprecedented and attractive opportunity for local and international business - in their variety and scope, and in the manner in which they are being offered to the global community.

Driving the development of the Flagship Applications are government ministries and agencies that report directly to the MSC Implementation Council, chaired by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and Acting Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim. These agencies work in close partnership with leading international and Malaysian multimedia companies to clarify the concepts and create detailed implementation plans.

Joint government-private sector teams have developed concrete proposals for each Flagship Application between December 1996 and last month and these have now entered the implementation phase this month.

Through the Flagship Applications, the Government extends an open invitation to the multimedia community in Malaysia and throughout the world to participate in the MSC. Companies that take up the offer will be able to create value for themselves and their shareholders in an environment uniquely suited to their needs, and at the same time have the opportunity to help transform Malaysia and the region.

The MSC Flagship Applications are divided into two distinct categories: "Multimedia Development" Flagship Applications offering concrete business opportunities to facilitate the MSC's developments and, "Multimedia Environment" Flagship Applications providing an optimal environment that supports multimedia companies entering the MSC.

These projects have long-term objectives that reach far beyond the MSC's borders. Supporting Vision 2020, they aspire to transform core elements of Malaysia's technology infrastructure and social systems in areas such as education or public administration, using multimedia technologies as a critical enabler in the process.

Each application will provide companies with concrete opportunities to collaborate with the Government in creating and implementing innovative multimedia solutions in a unique environment. Elements of these applications have already been implemented in other parts of the world.

Nowhere has the entire breadth of each of these applications been attempted before in a single location. Thus, these projects will allow their implementation partners to use the MSC as a global test bed for multimedia and IT development.

The Flagship Applications and the lead agencies responsible for their development are: Electronic Government (Malaysian Administrative Modernisation & Management Unit); Multi-Purpose Card (Bank Negara); Smart Schools (Ministry of Education); Telemedicine (Ministry of Health).

For each of these four Flagship Applications, teams comprising MDC, lead agencies and private-sector representatives have developed 'Concept Request for Proposals' (CRFPS) that describe the requirements of identified pilot applications and give consortia of private sector companies the flexibility required to innovate and deliver the best solutions.

CRFPs may best be described in comparison to Request For Proposals (RFPs), which are documents typically issued by companies or public institutions in the course of implementing all types of projects (for example installation of IT systems, infrastructure projects, procurement of equipment, etc). The purpose of the RFPs is to motivate potential suppliers to submit proposals for project implementation, allowing the company or public institution to choose the most favourable offer.

The RFPs normally outline the requirements of the issuing organisation in sufficient detail for respondents to assess the opportunities and risks involved and accordingly prepare their bids. The structure and information provided in the RFP also ensures that bids are comparable to the extent necessary.

For MSC Flagship Applications however, a refined approach using CRFPs has been employed. The principal difference between a regular RFP and a CRFP is that in the latter, more emphasis is placed on defining the project objectives and targeted benefits, rather than specifying detailed technical requirements. This gives companies the opportunity to collaborate with government and other companies in developing innovative solutions.

The CRFPs will hence support the objectives of the MSC by:

- * Helping to attract leading multimedia companies to Malaysia;
- * Motivating them to leverage their full potential in providing technologies that maximise benefits to users and the country; and
- * Encouraging collaboration and technology transfer, especially with Small-and Medium-Scale Enterprises.

Five CRFPs will be issued for Electronic, one for Multi-Purpose Card, five for Smart Schools and four for Telemedicine.

These CRFPs will be officially launched by Dr Mahathir on Saturday, following which the documents will be made immediately available from the lead agencies and the MSC website at <http://www.mdc.com.my>

Recognising the specific needs of emerging businesses and value-added service companies, these Flagship Applications substantiate the MSC's bid to develop a "Multimedia Utopia" for innovative producers and users of multimedia technologies.

The "Multimedia Environment" Flagship Applications will provide both Malaysian and international companies with the opportunity to operate in an environment of close co-operation with leaders in the multimedia industry, research and academic institutions, and customers, in one of the world's most attractive business regions. These applications will also allow companies to build centres of excellence for their R&D activities, create hubs to efficiently deliver value-added services to companies throughout the region, and innovate entire businesses by taking full advantage of the MSC's unique environment and infrastructure.

The Applications and the agencies responsible for their development are: R&D Cluster (Ministry of Science, Technology & Environment); Worldwide Manufacturing Webs (Ministry of International Trade & Industry); Borderless Marketing (MDC).

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