

24/05/2001

15,000 workers to be trained in 2nd phase of PSMB programme

Hamisah Hamid

A TOTAL of 15,000 workers are expected to be trained in information and communication technology (ICT) in the second half of this year when Pembangunan Sumber Manusia Bhd (PSMB) embarks on the second phase of the programme.

Announcing this yesterday, Human Resources Minister Datuk Dr Fong Chan Onn said PSMB had allocated another RM5 million for the purpose.

"The initial allocation of RM5 million has been used up since the scheme was launched in March this year.

"During this period, some 7,000 workers benefited from the training," he told a news conference after chairing the ministry's weekly post-Cabinet meeting in Kuala Lumpur.

Under the scheme, workers of companies registered with PSMB can apply directly to the agency to undergo ICT training, the cost of which is fully borne by PSMB.

The objective is to upgrade workers' computer literacy skills and knowledge in the technology field, in line with the Government's efforts to produce more knowledge workers.

PSMB chief executive Yau De Piyau said the allocation of the grant under the second phase of the ICT training programme will be more equitable.

This time around, he said, the allocation of the fees will be based on the ratio between workers/employers and the population in the state.

"This way, more states will benefit," he said in an interview with Business Times.

Yau said disbursement of the training grant under the first phase was based on demand, and most of it went to Penang as the response there was overwhelming.

However, he said that if any state does not use the allocated training grant within the three-month period, the sum will be given to other states.

For companies with 500 workers and above, PSMB will cap the number of workers who can undergo the training at 100.

"If not, multinational corporations with 5,000 workers will be major beneficiaries of the scheme.

"The idea is to provide equal opportunities to employees in smaller companies," he added.

Yau said other procedures remain the same whereby workers can apply directly to PSMB to undergo the training, or training providers registered with the agency.

At the same time, the ministry will continue with its weekly computer courses at its Industrial Training Institute (ITI), a follow-up from the IT rally (participated by 1,000 people) launched by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad on February 17 in Bukit Jalil.

Fong said 10,800 Malaysians have benefited from the courses.

"I have the ITIs to establish local advisory outreach committees to promote their activities to the local community," he said.

"To expand our outreach to the people, particularly the rural folk, I have reminded the ITIs throughout the country to make special efforts to encourage them to undergo the weekend courses."

He said the ICT training programmes conducted by the ITIs are short (half-day) and focus on basic computer skills, but the courses provided by PSMB are more specialised and are for a longer duration.

(END)