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Lab for multimedia apps (HL)

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MULTIMEDIA Development Corporation (MDC) will be investing some RM5 million to set up a laboratory for creative multimedia applications in Cyberjaya.

The new facility, called Creative Multimedia Lab, will form a component of the Creative Applications and Development Centre (CADC) launched recently.

Work on the laboratory is expected to begin next month and will be completed in June, according to Kamil Othman, vice president of MDC's corporate affairs, marketing and creative multimedia.

He said MDC has completed a technical evaluation in choosing the vendor to build the lab.

"We are looking for a partner who can provide us with a long-term collaboration in terms of technology transfer," he told Computimes in Cyberjaya last week.

According to Kamil, the Creative Multimedia Lab will form another key component of the CADC, which is currently equipped with state-of-the-art virtual reality and high-performance computing centres.

MDC has so far spent about RM21 million on these centres, which is based on Silicon Graphics Inc's technology.

He said the lab will provide facilities in the development of creative multimedia applications, where output can be viewed or tested at the virtual reality centre, adding that both facilities will leverage on the computing power of the CADC's high-performance computing facilities.

The Creative Multimedia Lab, he said, serves to complement and complete CADC's offerings to catalyse the creation of multimedia content in the country.

With a scheduled completion in June, Kamil said, the lab will have ample time to attract potential users before the next International Advisory Panel (IAP) for the Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC) in September.

He said apart from showcasing facilities at the CADC, MDC will be presenting works from several content development initiatives during the IAP meeting.

One such work is the ancient Malacca project, or a multimedia presentation of ancient Malacca based on historical facts.

The idea to create the project was mooted by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, to serve as a showpiece of Malaysian cultural heritage, said Kamil.

MDC has awarded the ancient Malacca project, which costs about RM800,000, to an MSC-status company called Decimal Point Sdn Bhd, he said.

The project, he said, is an initiative by MDC to finance seed projects in its efforts to catalyse development of local creative multimedia content.

"Seed projects are meant to start the ball rolling for other local developers to produce multimedia content," he said.

Financing for these projects is sourced from part of allocation for MDC under the Eighth Malaysia Plan.

Quoting another seed project - a virtual personality-cum-host called Aida Maya - Kamil said such initiatives could pave the way for local animators to enter the global market.

"We are also collaborating with the Medical Faculty of Universiti Malaya, financed by the Intensification of Research in Priority Areas

grant, on a medical research based on our virtual reality and super computing facilities," he added.