

## **Media Factsheets for MICA's Committee of Supply Debate 2009**

### **INVESTING FOR FUTURE GROWTH**

Singapore will continue to invest in Next Generation infocomm infrastructure and ensure that we optimise the use of our Next Generation infrastructure. IDA will also foster the creation of innovative services over Next Gen infrastructure and see to the adoption of infocomm by the wider population, towards a digitally-inclusive society. Some initiatives announced by the Minister for Information, Communications and the Arts, Dr Lee Boon Yang, at the Committee of Supply Debate 2009 are as follows:

#### **1. Next Generation National Broadband Network**

The Next Gen NBN NetCo RFP closed on 5 May 2008 with submissions from Infinity and OpenNet consortia. On 26 Sep 2008, OpenNet consortium was selected as the Next Gen NBN NetCo. OpenNet is led by Axia NetMedia Corporation with Singapore Telecommunications Ltd, Singapore Press Holdings Ltd and SP Telecommunications Pte Ltd as members of the consortium.

IDA is now evaluating the OpCo RFP proposals and is scheduled to announce the result of the OpCo RFP by the first quarter of 2009. The Next Gen NBN OpCo RFP closed on 5 Dec 08 with four proposals received from Intellinet Consortium (comprising Axia NetMedia Corporation and Cisco Systems International B.V); MobileOne Ltd; Singapore Telecommunications Ltd; and StarHub Ltd.

#### **2. Singapore Internet Exchange (SGIX)**

The Singapore Internet Exchange (SGIX) will be an open and neutral Internet exchange point that will enable efficient exchange of local and international Internet protocol (IP) traffic.

SGIX aims to deploy Internet exchange infrastructure in two to four different physical locations around Singapore to form an Internet exchange with wide geographical coverage and to also provide redundancy (backup). This will enable service and content providers at different locations to interconnect directly through the common SGIX infrastructure and exchange traffic.

The SGIX will cement Singapore's position as a regional infocomm hub. It will:

- Improve the efficiency of Internet traffic exchange in Singapore by enabling providers to interconnect locally and at low cost. This reduces the need for providers to interconnect through overseas networks.

- Attract regional and international carriers to use Singapore as a hub for Internet traffic, resulting in improved connectivity to Singapore.
- Increase content hosting and encourage the growth of data centres in Singapore. Content owners will want to host their content in Singapore to take advantage of the improved international and regional networks, in order to better reach their users in Singapore and more importantly, the region. Data centres are important infrastructure for content hosting providers and hence will grow together with the increase of content hosted here.
- Enable local users cheaper and quicker access to such international content because of the proximity of content hosted here and improvements in network performance. Costs for ISPs may go down because they can reduce their dependence on international leased circuits. These cost savings may translate to lower prices for users.

#### **What's an Internet Exchange (IX)?**

The Internet is a large network made up of many smaller interconnected networks which allow computer users to access and exchange information with other users around the world. This information or Internet traffic travels from one network to another via interconnected switches and other equipment. An Internet Exchange (IX) is typically a physical infrastructure made up of one or more of these network switches that allows the exchange of Internet traffic between the networks, which are typically Internet Service Providers (ISPs). The primary purpose of an IX is to allow networks to interconnect directly, via the exchange, rather than through one or more 3rd party networks.

More details on the SGIX will be available in the second half of 2009

### **3. Next Gen Innovation Centres (NGICS) Programme and Next Gen Services Innovation Programme (NGSIP)**

Beyond infrastructure deployment, IDA has developed an overall strategy that focuses on catalysing the delivery and adoption, and spurring the demand for services on the Next Gen NBN. The strategy aims to achieve impactful services deployment that maximise the economic and social benefits from the new all-fibre network. An important guiding principle of the strategy will be to ensure the direct engagement and involvement of the public, private and people sectors for a comprehensive and inclusive approach.

To boost the ease of delivery and adoption of new services, IDA will:

- Facilitate the setting up of Next Gen Innovation Centres (NGICs) to lower the barriers for new Retail Service Providers to enter the market
- Set up a Next Generation Services Innovation Programme (NGSIP) to quicken the deployment of impactful and meaningful next gen services through pilot runs

***Next Gen Innovation Centres (NGICs):*** These are physical centres that will bring end-users from private, people and public sectors to work together with technology and service providers to create next generation services that meet end users' needs. By going to a NGIC, local companies can avoid the costs of acquiring or building their own infrastructure, to better focus on the development and delivery of next gen services that meet market needs. At these centres, RSPs can also get technical and business guidance to conceptualise, develop and prototype next generation services.

The first NGIC, Cisco's Enabling Platform Innovation Centre (EPIC) was launched on 12 Dec 08. EPIC is the first centre in the world dedicated to bring various players from across an industry ecosystem, from end-users to service providers, to help conceptualise, create and deploy next generation services to meet public and enterprise needs.

***Next Generation Services Innovation Programme (Next Gen SIP):*** IDA will launch this programme in the first half of 2009, as part of our larger efforts to develop a thriving retail services layer that leverages the Next Generation National Infocomm Infrastructure, and to quickly deploy useful and impactful next gen services for the nation to adopt. Through this programme, IDA will engage both local and foreign providers, enterprises and consumers, to use Singapore as their centre of excellence for next gen services. IDA will also engage industry players to participate in a Pilot Run to ensure successful delivery of services on Next Gen NBN. More details will be shared later.

#### **4. People Sector Enrichment Programme**

This new programme seeks to enrich the people sector using infocomm and help citizens leverage infocomm technology for a vibrant digital lifestyle. Starting February 2009, IDA will be conducting a broad-based outreach programme to educate citizens about infocomm, incorporating and extending it beyond existing initiatives.

This will complement IDA's existing initiatives to provide assistance and guidance on infocomm usage to specific demographics under programmes such as Infocomm123, Silver Infocomm, NeuPC Plus and Infocomm Accessibility Centres. With the People Sector Enrichment Programme, IDA will be able to expand its reach in order to provide Infocomm Education for All.

Under the new programme, besides educating the people sector in areas such as connecting to the Internet and e-mailing, the programme will cover advanced uses like how to leverage opportunities on the Web for income-generation, employment and personal fulfilment. IDA will also collaborate with key partners within the people sector to reach out. Below are some of the plans in the pipeline.

**Infocomm for the Work Force:** IDA is working with National Trades Union Congress to strengthen online engagement with its 500,000 members, to enable them to leverage emerging technologies and new media to stay connected with one another.

**Infocomm for Non-Profit Organisations:** IDA intends to partner Non-Profit Organisations (NPOs) to provide common IT platforms to better manage common tasks undertaken by them, such as donor management, beneficiary management, volunteer management, online engagement, financial management, audit and compliance. Using common platforms can help lower costs as user organisations only access and acquire modules they need.

**Infocomm for Grassroots Organisations:** IDA will partner with organisations driving grassroots activities to implement platforms for residents, volunteers and grassroots leaders to communicate and forge stronger community ties.

## **5. Towards a Digitally-Inclusive Society**

To ensure infocomm is for all, IDA will continue in initiatives such as:

**Neu PC Plus Programme:** IDA's effort in equipping needy households with computer ownership started in November 1999. The NEU PC programme has benefited about 20,000 needy households whose gross monthly household income do not exceed \$2,000 or whose per capita monthly income do not exceed \$500. In November 2006, the programme evolved to become NEU PC Plus. It started offering both students, and the disabled from low-income households, new computers bundled with three years of free broadband access and software at an affordable price of \$285, which works out to less than 30 cents a day. The programme has benefited some 7,000 needy households (part of the 20,000 households mentioned above) with school-going children. This programme is expected to benefit up to 38,000 needy households by 2015.

In 2007, IDA and the industry<sup>1</sup> set up the iNSPIRE Fund to help those who cannot afford to co-pay, to earn their PC, by doing some form of community service in the spirit of "paying it forward".<sup>2</sup> The iNSPIRE Fund is expected to assist approximately 4,000 students from needy households, whose total monthly income is below \$1,500 or per capita monthly income is less than \$300, over the next four years starting from 2007. IDA will contribute \$2 for every \$1 that is drawn down from the iNSPIRE Fund.

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<sup>1</sup> The corporate donors for the iNSPIRE Fund are Maybank and Singapore infocomm Technology Federation (SiTF). SiTF has collaborated with the National Volunteer & Philanthropy Centre to promote volunteerism using SiTF's V-Fund (a fund set up to promote volunteerism initiatives).

<sup>2</sup> Needy students can render six (for Secondary Two students and below) to 12 (for Secondary Three students and above) hours of community service, such as helping out at old folks and children's homes, in order to receive a fully-paid desktop PC. The community service records must be endorsed by their teachers or the staff of the voluntary welfare organisations which they service and sent to the Singapore Children's Society for processing.

**Silver Infocomm Initiative (SII):** The Silver Infocomm Initiative is a three-year programme that offers training in digital lifestyle skills to 30,000 senior citizens so that they can stay economically active and independent in the digital age. Since Nov 2007, the programmes include:

- Annual Silver Infocomm Day event that comprises talks and workshops on a variety of infocomm and digital lifestyle topics;
- Setting up eight senior-friendly and conveniently located Silver Infocomm Junctions (SIJ) around Singapore. Three SIJs have so far been set up<sup>3</sup>, offering affordable and accessible infocomm courses from as low as \$2 to \$6 per hour; and
- Bilingual and easy-to-understand Silver Infocomm Curriculum, made available from November 2008 for senior citizens to learn basic infocomm and digital lifestyle skills.

**Infocomm Accessibility Centre (IA Centre):** IA Centre, co-funded by IDA and Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sports, with contributions from the private and people sector, has been fully operational from mid-2008. The centre aims to train some 4,000 trainees with disabilities (visually-impaired, hearing-impaired or physically-challenged) over three years to help them make use of infocomm to enhance quality of life and employability, so that they can integrate into mainstream society. Through IA Centre, persons with disabilities will benefit from:

- Customised courses and affordable training that will lead to industry certification;
- Assistive Technology (AT) tools to aid them as they learn and interact;
- Loaning and trying a variety of AT tools so that they can overcome the barriers to accessing a computer and assess the suitability of the equipment prior to purchase; and
- Hands-on workshops, apprenticeship training, vocational assessments and job placement facilitation to enhance their employability and create new employment opportunities (for trainees who show good potential).

Prepared by: Infocomm Development Authority of Singapore (IDA)

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<sup>3</sup> at RSVP Singapore in central district; Marine Parade Family Service Centre in southeast district and CDAC@Bukit Panjang in northwest district.