

## **FACTSHEET – WISEPORT LAUNCH**

### **1) Funding from MINT Fund TRIDENT<sup>1</sup> Programme**

The MINT Fund TRIDENT Programme provides S\$800,000 in co-funding support to the WISEPORT project. The co-funding will assist QMax in deploying and rolling out the national infrastructure for the sea port.

The S\$100 million MINT (Maritime Innovation and Technology) fund was set up by the MPA in 2003 to build up a pool of skilled maritime R&D manpower, support innovative R&D projects and fund promising maritime technology start-up companies.

### **2) Infocomm@SeaPort Programme**

The Infocomm@SeaPort Programme was launched on 26 September 2007 by Mr Raymond Lim, Minister of Transport and Second Minister for Foreign Affairs, at the opening of the 2<sup>nd</sup> International Maritime – Port Technology and Development Conference (MTEC 2007).

This is a joint initiative by the Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore (MPA) and the Infocomm Development Authority of Singapore (IDA). The two agencies have set aside S\$12 million for the programme, which aims to catalyse business transformation and operational excellence in the port community through the use of innovative infocomm technologies.

Through the set up of new services using infocomm, the projects identified under this programme aim to enhance communications for the maritime community, improve operational management, and increase the port community's efficiency.

### **3) How wireless broadband technology used for WISEPORT differs from the existing shore-based broadband technologies**

WISEPORT will leverage on the latest wireless broadband technology known as Mobile WiMAX. The Mobile WiMAX services, which are provided by QMax Communications Pte Ltd (QMax), offer download access speed ranging from 512kbps to 8Mbps. The coverage range is farther than WiFi's estimated range of 100m.

Further, WiMAX provides for higher bandwidth and downloads than 3G cellular broadband alternatives.

### **4) The base stations' coverage for the Singapore waters**

Under the project, at least six WiMAX base stations will be set up. Each has an estimated coverage range of up to 15km extending into the port waters.

Three base stations have been deployed thus far: the first is Fuji Xerox Towers in the CBD; the second is PSA Building in the west; and the third is the Institute for Chemical Engineering and Sciences (ICES) Building on Jurong Island. The next three base stations will be set up in the eastern and western parts of Singapore and the offshore islands in the next 3-6 months when the demand builds up. More base stations will be set up depending on demand.

Apart from covering the southern port waters, WISEPORT will also cover the container terminals, oil terminals and shipyards at four maritime hotspots: Tuas, Jurong, Pasir Panjang and Tanjong Pagar.

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<sup>1</sup> TRIDENT – Testbedding, Research, Innovation and Development of New-maritime Technologies.

## **5) How wireless broadband technology benefits the maritime community**

With WISEPORT, ships can expect increased efficiency and lower operational costs. WiMAX (which stands for Worldwide Interoperability for Microwave Access) is a low-cost, high-bandwidth communications. By tapping into the WISEPORT service, ships can download data-intensive updates, such as electronic navigational charts (ENC), wirelessly rather than physically delivering the data as in the past or using satellite communication. Ships can also electronically submit regulatory documentations over the wireless network when they arrive in Singapore waters.

The maritime community can also look forward to operating in a more efficient and safer environment. This is because WISEPORT allows for remote monitoring and surveillance within the port areas and on vessels.

Further, welfare for the crew may be improved because they can now enjoy easy and lower cost access to VoIP services, video conferencing and Internet access within Singapore waters. Users of WISEPORT can access internet applications and web-based services on board, download navigational charts, and make use of remote video surveillance.

## **6) The current communication methods used by the ships and the benefits of signing up for WISEPORT**

Currently, crew members use expensive communication methods such as satellite (about US\$0.66/min for some services) or telegrams. Alternatively, they can use land lines when their vessels are berthed alongside the wharves or when they go onshore.

By subscribing to WISEPORT, crew members can easily communicate with each other, family members, friends, shore-based companies, and customers via low cost, high-bandwidth and secure connection. Compared to normal means of communication, WISEPORT offers users a more cost effective and convenient mode of communication within the Singapore port waters.

At the moment, QMax is offering a special package. Subscribers will receive free 512kbps unlimited data access plan during the first year of the WISEPORT launch. They will also receive a thumbdrive-sized WiMAX modem to access the wireless broadband network anywhere from the southern port waters and offshore islands of Singapore to mainland areas. A one-time activation fee of for each user account applies (Note: subject to changes due to market demand).

## **7) The number of companies who have signed up for the service**

The target set by QMax Communications is 500 WiMAX accounts in the first year of the WISEPORT launch. More than 250 accounts have been subscribed to, even before the official launch of WISEPORT. We expect the subscription numbers to surge following the launch - from general feedback received, many have expressed interest in signing up.

## **8) WISEPORT is NOT limited to the business community; it can be used for leisure activities such as accessing personal email accounts**

Passengers on board cruise ships, regional ferries and passenger boats can also enjoy broadband Internet access as long as they are within the WISEPORT coverage. In addition, consumers within the coverage of WISEPORT, such as those working, living and enjoying the sea-front can also subscribe to the services.

By providing broadband Internet access within the Singapore port waters and selected coastal areas, WISEPORT makes it possible and easy for the crew and other users to access personal emails, make VoIP (Voice-over IP) calls, and video conferencing on board their vessels at rates lower than those of the satellite's.