

Media Factsheets for MICA's Committee of Supply Debate 2009

SUSTAINING AND GROWING LOCAL ENTERPRISES

The Minister for Information, Communications and the Arts, Dr Lee Boon Yang, has announced initiatives at the Committee of Supply Debate 2009 to assist local enterprises in the current economic downturn to leverage infocomm technologies to enhance their operations and to be ready for the many opportunities when the economy recovers.

1. SME Infocomm Package (SIP)

The SME Infocomm Package (SIP) offers one stop, ready-to-go bundled infocomm solutions on hardware, sector-specific applications, website development, broadband connectivity and maintenance support for SMEs. Since its official launch in June 2008 as part of the Infocomm@SME programme, more than 600 SMEs have purchased such packages from the three consortia, led by DP Bureau Pte Ltd, iCELL Network Pte Ltd and SingTel that are awarded by IDA through a Call for Collaboration. In addition, SMEs who do not own a website can enjoy a subsidy to develop an online presence for their business.

Leveraging infocomm would be a key enabler for business excellence, especially during these challenging times. Starting April 2009 to March 2011, the subsidy cap for SIP has been raised from \$1,000 to \$2,000 to cover 80% of website or web pages development cost, as well as the items below if they are purchased within the same package:

- i) 80% (up from 50%) of monthly broadband subscription charges for the first 12 months;
- ii) 80% (up from 50%) of monthly hosting and maintenance of website or web pages charges for the first 12 months.

To apply for the SIP subsidy, the SME can approach any of the consortia for advice on their eligibility. Once the SME is assessed to be eligible, the consortia will offer the SME the suitable infocomm packages at a subsidised rate.

2. SME Infocomm Adoption Assistance Framework

For the convenience of SMEs and to simplify the subsidy application process, relevant schemes that subsidise infocomm adoption will soon come under a common framework, known as the "SME Infocomm Adoption Assistance Framework". To be launched in the second quarter of 2009, this framework will be administered by IDA, in collaboration with SPRING Singapore. The

framework, which is part of the Infocomm@SME programme, will provide a streamlined single application process and a single point of contact for SMEs.

The benefits expected from this framework are manifold:

- i) The application process by SMEs to seek subsidies would be simplified and more coordinated with the one-stop service provided;
- ii) IDA will be able to promote infocomm adoption among SMEs in a holistic and seamless manner; and
- iii) IDA can be more responsive to SMEs' changing needs, promote new infocomm solutions and sharing technology trends that are relevant to SMEs.

3. Assistance for Infocomm SMEs to Continue Innovation

IDA believes that a continued pace of innovation is important for the local infocomm industry to build capabilities and remain competitive in order to take advantage when the economy recovers. Thus, the infocomm industry needs to retain a long-term view and continue to innovate to meet competitive pressures.

As SPRING will be enhancing their grant scheme to help SMEs in the area of innovation and capability development during the economic downturn, our infocomm SMEs will be able to benefit from this improved grant scheme. IDA will be working with SPRING to administer the scheme. This grant initiative will help to encourage capability development for our infocomm SMEs and catalyse innovation during this economic downturn.

4. Assisting local companies to go overseas

IDA International is the execution arm for public service infocomm partnerships between Singapore and other countries. Its philosophy is to partner governments who are keen to understand and benefit from Singapore's experience in successful public service infocomm programme implementation. It seeks out opportunities to achieve win-win outcomes for governments and Singapore through such collaborations.

Besides advising and assisting foreign governments in various critical Government Chief Information Office (GCIO) and infocomm industry development functions, IDA International leads and manages the implementation of programmes to achieve the desired objectives and outcomes, by employing public service infocomm professionals, resources and expertise to help governments achieve their eGovernment vision.

Besides helping Government CIOs review, implement and maintain infocomm policies and standards for their governments, IDA International collaborates with governments and international agencies in areas such as national infocomm masterplanning, cluster and industry development, and capacity building.

With experience from the development of successful infocomm programmes over 25 years to transform Singapore into an Intelligent Nation, Singapore is recognised as one of the leading countries in the world in this field and is able to provide expertise, in areas such as masterplanning, architecting and programme management, to foreign governments. IDA International was hence set up in response to increasing international interest in Singapore's experience and expertise in public service infocomm.

Prepared by: Infocomm Development Authority of Singapore (IDA)

Date: 6 February 2009