

April 2009

Infocomm@SME Programme

Infocomm@SME programme was launched in June 2007, aligned to IDA's iN2015 masterplan for Singapore to be a world leader in leveraging infocomm to add value to the economy and society. This programme also builds on IDA's strategic key thrust to encourage sophisticated demand of infocomm among SMEs, to help them gain a competitive advantage in this technologically advanced world. Initiatives under the Infocomm@SME Programme support SMEs¹ in their adoption of infocomm to be more productive, to grow and to differentiate.

Under Infocomm@SME, a three-pillar approach is used:

- i) Educating SMEs on the value and possibilities of infocomm;
- ii) Providing SMEs with hassle-free and trusted access to infocomm; and
- iii) Making infocomm affordable to SMEs.

First Pillar: Educating SMEs on the value and possibilities of infocomm

These initiatives aim to help SMEs to:

- i) Become more aware of the "whats", "whys", and "how-tos" of infocomm. This is an important first step for the infocomm adoption roadmap before SMEs will consider using infocomm in their business; and
- ii) Have a better understanding of their current level of infocomm adoption and how to advance the use of infocomm for the benefit of their business.

SME Roadshows & Education (SRE)

To help SMEs see the value of infocomm, IDA will continue to work with the other government agencies, chambers and trade associations to reach out to SMEs through the participation of events, such as seminars and workshops that are targeted at SMEs. In addition, success stories on how some SMEs become more competitive and efficient as a result of the use of infocomm will be featured in collaterals and various media platforms to inspire other SMEs. More than 8,000² SMEs have attended seminars/ conferences in which IDA participated to promote the value of infocomm transformation.

SME Infocomm Resource Centres (SIRCs)

¹ Local SMEs are defined by SPRING Singapore as enterprises with: (a) at least 30% local equity; (b) less than \$15 million fixed assets investment; and (c) less than 200 employees (for non-manufacturing sectors).

² All figures and statistics are accurate as at end December 2008.

The SIRC's serve as a one-stop channel to advise SMEs on the usage of infocomm. Besides advisory, SMEs are encouraged to tap on the resources available to try out or pilot innovative solutions. The SIRC's also organise regular workshops or technology learning sessions to educate SMEs on common infocomm business application, such as IP telephony, security software and updates of current technology trends. The first SIRC was set up at the Singapore Polytechnic in June 2007, followed by a second SIRC at the Singapore Chinese Chamber of Commerce & Industry in August 2008. As at December 2008 more than 2,200 SMEs were assisted via advisory services or attended seminars at the two SIRC's.

Second Pillar: Providing SMEs with hassle-free and trusted access to infocomm

These initiatives aim to provide SMEs with a hassle-free experience in using infocomm.

Sectoral Transformations

Generally, SMEs in the same industry would have similar business processes, such as billing and inventory management. In some instances, SMEs form partnership to strengthen their business foothold through sharing of resources and knowledge. Sectoral champions such as trade associations know the needs of the sector best, and IDA works with them to drive transformation in some key industries. It is envisaged that SMEs through aggregation of demand can achieve better synergies and economies of scale via implementation of infocomm to streamline and automate these business processes. With the success testimonials of these industry champions, SMEs who have not adopted infocomm would potentially be inspired to follow likewise.

SME Infocomm Package (SIP)

The SME Infocomm Package (SIP) offers one stop, ready-to-go bundled infocomm solutions and provision of maintenance support for SMEs. Since its official launch in June 2008, more than 600 SMEs have sought advice, purchased conveniently packaged infocomm solutions and enjoyed the one-stop customer support from the three consortia³ awarded by IDA through a Call for Collaboration. In addition, SMEs who do not own a website can enjoy a subsidy⁴ to develop an online presence for their business. SMEs can also leverage on SIP to acquire software applications for their operational and security needs.

With the present economic climate, SMEs are encouraged to enhance their operations and be ready for new business opportunities when the economy recovers. Leveraging infocomm would be a key enabler for business excellence and during these challenging times. Starting April 2009, the subsidy cap for SIP has been raised from \$1,000 to \$2,000.

³ led by DP Bureau Pte Ltd, iCELL Network Pte Ltd and SingTel

⁴ for website development, broadband subscription, and website hosting and maintenance

SME Domain Name Reservation (SDR)

As of December 2007, newly registered SMEs have the option to choose and reserve their preferred domain name for free⁵ when they register their entity with the Accounting & Corporate Regulatory Authority (ACRA). These businesses have up to three months to activate their preferred domain name. With SDR, SMEs without a domain name can enjoy promotional discounts of up to \$30 on their first domain name registration for the first year. As at December 2008, more than 3,200 SMEs have registered domain names for first time.

Online Infocomm Directory for SMEs (i-Directory)

In August 2008, IDA launched a dedicated one-stop portal with easy classification of infocomm products and services to better help SMEs look for suitable infocomm solutions for their businesses. The directory offers short profiles of infocomm solutions providers, their contact information and details of available infocomm products and services.

i-Directory is available under the Infocomm Singapore Portal⁶ at: infocommsingapore.sg/idirectory. SMEs can have access to more than 250 unique infocomm products and services in i-Directory.

Third Pillar: Making infocomm affordable to SMEs

These initiatives aim to motivate SMEs to invest in infocomm by making it more affordable through government co-funding.

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 will provide a streamlined single application process and a single point of contact for SMEs.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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⁵ In the past, businesses had to pay between \$39 and \$84 to register their domain names.

⁶ Infocomm Singapore portal is a virtual storefront with a one-stop directory listing and capability maps of local infocomm companies.