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Grid Network Ready By 2008

ENTERPRISES in Singapore can look forward to gaining access to a powerful national grid computing infrastructure that will be offered on a pay-per-use basis by early next year.

The Infocomm Development Authority of Singapore's deputy chief executive, Leong Keng Thai, announced this target time-frame yesterday. Speaking at the GridAsia 2007 conference, Mr Leong said that putting in place a commercial grid computing infrastructure was a key focus for the National Grid Office under IDA.

IDA also announced the formation of the National Grid Advisory Council (NGAC), to lead the charge in grid computing initiatives over the next three years.

Grid computing refers to the use of software to harness the computing power from multiple computers over a network such as the Internet, to act as one large powerful computer for solving specific computational problems.

The 'National Grid' infrastructure will allow companies to gain access to grid computing resources on a utility model, enabling even small and medium businesses to gain access to these resources.

IDA also said that it was 'in talks with government agencies and industry players such as Hewlett-Packard, IBM, Microsoft, Sun Microsystems and Oracle' to develop the National Grid infrastructure.

Sun currently offers a grid computing service available to 23 countries outside the US, including Singapore, via Network.com. The service offers customers access to computing resources in a Sun data centre, at an access rate of US\$1 per CPU (central processing unit) per hour.

The National Grid Advisory Council, which consists of 14 members from both public and private entities, is chaired by Richard Lim, chief executive officer of the Defence Science and Technology Agency. The NGAC will also provide input to the National Grid Office which is led by an IDA-A*STAR steering panel.