

CapitaLand, Razer clinch first enterprise 5G grants by non-telcos

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SINGAPORE has made its first awards for commercial firms to test 5G mobile technology, in two projects announced by the Infocomm Media Development Authority (IMDA) on Thursday.

Banking big on 5G, the Republic set aside S\$40 million in June to support the development of the mobile technology in six strategic clusters, such as advanced manufacturing. The IMDA has also dangled industry grants to hold 5G trials, which would be funded out of this kitty.

Now, CapitaLand will partner mobile new network operator TPG Telecom and Navinfo Datatech to tap 5G for smart mobility trials at Singapore Science Parks 1 and 2, while gaming firm Razer has tied up with Singtel and the IMDA to test 5G for cloud gaming applications.

Minister for Communications and Information S Iswaran said at an industry event on Thursday that, with the 5G ecosystem set to be the backbone of Singapore's digital economy, "we will strengthen Singapore's value proposition as a place to do business by supporting innovative 5G applications and services, undergirded by a secure and resilient 5G infrastructure".

The IMDA has not disclosed how many proposals it has got for these 5G Grants, nor how many it expects to award, although Mr Iswaran said that "the industry has shown keen interest and put forward interesting proposals".

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Still, the IMDA had previously announced a smart port trial with state-owned port operator PSA and Keppel Corp-owned telco M1 in June.

Singtel also inked a memorandum of understanding at the time with state industrial landlord JTC Corp and the Agency for Science, Technology and Research (A*Star), to deploy 5G technology at A*Star's Advanced Remanufacturing and Technology Centre model factory.

But the two newly announced projects will be the first to involve private, non-telco businesses that are exploring 5G commercially on the government's dime.

"One aspect of the government's work with respect to 5G has been to foster collaborations on the demand side for this novel technology," Mr Iswaran told the IMDA's SG:D Industry Day. "Ultimately, it is the specific use cases for 5G that will create the value."

CapitaLand, which picked up the science parks from its S\$11 billion merger with former Temasek unit Ascendas-Singbridge, plans to develop a smart estate where 5G cellular technology enables "vehicle-to-everything" communication processed over the cloud.

The smart mobility project will test how 5G could let self-driving cars process more data from cameras, sensors and other vehicles, and react more quickly to information.

CapitaLand could also open up the network to its tenants, in fields such as biotechnology and advanced manufacturing, for other business innovation tests in future, Mr Iswaran noted.

Meanwhile, the Razer-Singtel tie-up aims to find the optimal network design to support high-quality gaming over the cloud, with trials to be done at not just Hong Kong-listed Razer's South-east Asian headquarters in one-north, but Shaw Centre and Ngee Ann City malls as well.

Razer and Singtel have previously worked together on digital projects such as efforts towards a streamlined electronic payments wallet for the region.

Separately, M1 and Nanyang Technological University (NTU) have also made a pact to hold a 5G trial that will involve both shuttle buses and autonomous vehicles on NTU's campus.

The vehicle-to-everything test bed, which comes with a S\$24 million price tag, is supported by the Economic Development Board. NTU has already done 12 such research projects with industry partners such as European automotive equipment suppliers Continental and Schaeffler.