

■ By SHYLA SANGARAN

THE recent Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC) Malaysia-Institution of higher learning (IHL) Business Plan Competition 2007/08 finals in Kuala Lumpur saw stiff competition among five finalists.

In the end, the Education Meshup team from Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) clinched the grand prize with its business plan titled *Develop and Maintain Education Services Meshup, Integrated Services Information*. It won RM5,000, vouchers worth RM3,000 and an iPerintis Internship programme.

The Smart Gengs team from Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM) came in first runner-up and won RM3,000 and vouchers worth RM3,000. EZ Weather Solution team from Malaysia University of Science and Technology was the second runner-up. It won RM2,000 and vouchers worth RM3,000.

For the merit categories, MobiPark team from Universiti Putra Malaysia and E-Man Technology from Universiti Malaysia Terengganu won RM500 each.

Former deputy secretary-general (development) of Ministry of Higher Education Datuk Dr Mohd Taib Hashim and Multimedia Development Corporation Sdn Bhd (MDeC) chief executive officer Datuk Badlisham Ghazali presented the prizes.

The winners will be exempted from the evaluation stage to enable them to apply for the MSC Malaysia Pre Seed fund and fast track to the Approval Committee.

This will pave the way for the team members to apply for grants up to RM150,000 (in total RM14 million will be disbursed) in order to conceptualise and commercialise their business plans.

In the past, USM, UTM and Sunway College were among those awarded with the MSC Malaysia Pre Seed fund.

Grooming graduates to become business leaders

This year, 219 business plans were submitted for the competition compared to 124 last year.

The number of tertiary institutions taking part also rose from 21 to 31.

"MDeC plans to nurture more home-grown technologies and talents as Malaysia moves towards a knowledge-based society.

"The competition aims to develop entrepreneurial spirit among graduates, researchers and academicians, so that they can become creators and contributors of technologies instead of mere users," says Badlisham.

The competition was co-organised by National Unipreneur Development programme under the purview of MDeC together with tertiary institutions.

The panel of judges and sponsors were from Telekom Malaysia Bhd, Microsoft (Malaysia) Sdn Bhd, Small and Medium Enterprise Bank Bhd, Sun Microsystems Malaysia Sdn Bhd, Pikom (The Association of the Computer and Multimedia Industry), Technopreneur Association of Malaysia (Team), Cradle Fund Sdn Bhd, iPerintis Sdn Bhd and Malaysia Debt Ventures Bhd.



(From left) Education Meshup team members Seow Siew Hua, Joyce Shee Mooi Yee, Ting Tin Tin and Chan Yew Hiok won the grand prize