

## Centre to meet skilled engineer shortage in Penang

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THE shortage of skilled engineers in Penang, Malaysia's 'Silicon Island', may soon be a thing of the past, when a Shared Services Centre (SSC) set up by the Penang Skills Development Centre (PSDC) takes off this year.

PSDC chief executive officer Datuk Boonler Somchit said a proposed Electromagnetic Compatibility (EMC) laboratory, which is currently under construction, is due to be completed by May this year.

"By then, the installation of the EMC lab chambers would have begun and would be expected to be completed in September 2010," he told Business Times.

EMC is the study of electrical disturbances on electrical and electronic devices.

The government last year approved a RM30 million grant to set up an SSC at the PSDC premises in Bayan Baru in Penang.

Of the figure, RM17 million will be used for the EMC lab while RM13 million is meant for a Radio Frequency (RF) and Embedded Systems laboratory. "The PSDC has further invested RM4 million to upgrade its infrastructure via a 18,000 sq ft building expansion to house the EMC lab." PSDC, set up in 1989 and serves as a training and education centre in Malaysia, boasts over 140 local and foreign member companies.

Apart from the government grant, PSDC has benefitted from expert advice to ensure relevancy of the EMC lab.

From September this year, the lab will undergo a phased qualification and certification of the targeted 40 test standards. "We expect the lab to attain the necessary accreditation by 2012," he added, saying that the facility will be available to the industry player on a pay-per-use basis.

Meanwhile, on the RF and Embedded Systems lab, Boonler said these are meant to serve as both learning and development laboratories.

"PSDC will be working with the industry to enable fast-track training of new hires or graduates.

"The facility will be made available for organisations to use as their project lab if they are short of equipment capacity and capability," Boonler added.

PSDC is currently taking delivery of equipment and is in the midst of setting up the facility. It is expected to be ready in April this year.

