

MRT programme to benefit more than 50 firms

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KUALA LUMPUR: More than 50 firms will benefit from a "work" programme awarded to six main contractors to build the Klang Valley Mass Rapid Transit (KVMRT) from Sungai Buloh to Kajang.

Called the "KVMRT Offset Programme", it should also contribute some RM3.53 billion to the economy, Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) Corp said.

Its chief executive officer Datuk Wira Azhar Abdul Hamid said the programme is designed to address seven areas that support national economic development.

They are design and development, which is expected to contribute about RM218 million to the economy, human capital development (RM329 million), global market access (RM509 million), local works packages (RM913 million), transfer of technology (RM667 million), investment (RM70 million) and parts and component manufacturing (RM482 million).

Azhar was speaking after signing agreements with the six contractors, or work package contractors (WPCs), for the programme yesterday.

The WPCs are Meidensha-Meiden Malaysia Sdn Bhd joint venture (JV), Bombardier (Malaysia) Sdn Bhd, Siemens Malaysia Sdn Bhd-Siemens AG-SMH Rail Sdn Bhd JV, MMC-Gamuda KVMRT (T) Sdn Bhd, Af-

filiated Computer Service Solutions France SAS and Mitsubishi Heavy Industries Ltd.

MRT Corp has made purchases with different contractors for the MRT project and invested heavily on expertise and machinery not available in the country.

These included trains, which cost RM1.37 billion, and tunnel boring machines costing between RM30 million and RM45 million each.

"These purchases are a huge undertaking for MRT Corp and it is only logical that the contractors give back to the Malaysian economy," Azhar said.

The beneficiaries of the KVMRT Offset Programme are not only those directly linked with MRT Corp, but also other parties, including Land Public Transport Commission, railway engineering industry players, rail operators and students from local universities.

The offset programme has generated 32 projects, to be provided by the WPCs, Azhar said.

Some of the projects have begun, with 30 MRT Corp employees recruited for a structured training programme with Siemens in various disciplines of rail systems and technology for between 36 and 60 months in Malaysia, Austria and Germany.

Meanwhile, work on the first line of the KVMRT is expected to be completed by 2017, Azhar said.