

from software divisions of foreign-based local information technology organizations, a number of software companies have been established whose services cater to a spectrum of clients. Client specifications include user-friendliness, installation ease documentation, price and hardware association, marketing considerations covering commission basis to state-level dealers, multiple-copy discounts, upgrading options, applications training, maintenance, and promotion and advertising. Identified as a value added export source, the software development industry is a fertile ground for investments especially when its status as an industry enjoying strong investment incentives and support is combined with the availability of trainable manpower. Joint ventures in this area should bring returns conservatively by the third or fourth year.

With the property market recovering from the aftermath of the recession and the construction industry stirring again, there is scope for exploration of CAD/CAM applications in a centralized environment. Such enterprises should examine the potential for computer applications particularly in agrobased, electronic and electrical, chemical and petrochemical and metal based manufacturing.

The new generation of Malaysians have been given a good measure of exposure to computer technology and plans are in place to initiate a nationwide computers-in-education programme which will equip 300 secondary schools with computers in 5 phases of education software available in Bahasa Malaysia. Malaysian universities have been active in training and their programmes have been given a neo-vocational complement by a number of private institutions and training centres offering overseas-affiliated courses and packaged application courses. Computer courses remain one of the favourite options of many Malaysians.

Local incentives for relocation of operational headquarters and the comparatively low cost of living in the country, supplemented by the ready availability of cost-attractive resources, should point to good potential for a sectoral investment in offshore bureau services including batch data processing and contract programming. This could proliferate as an industry in itself, with spinoffs for developing a pool of trained operators, programmers and support staff.

The Malaysian Government has come out strongly in support of computerization. Without the constraints of regulation, the industry remains favourably disposed for growth and development. The public sector has recognized the need to upgrade its administrative machinery in order to coordinate mechanisms for IT growth propelled by the private sector and for formalization of consultative linkages between government and private sectors and within cross-boundaries of the private sector. Steps have been taken to establish projects such as technology parks where entrepreneurs could enjoy basic administrative facilities and consultative linkages.

The Association of Computer Industry Malaysia (ACIM) had begun to conduct a nationwide survey of the industry with the objective of providing the Government sector with the necessary findings to formulate a national information technology policy for the 21st