

NEC to Open RFID Center in Singapore

The multinational provider of broadband and mobile networking solutions is creating a facility that will offer a range of RFID services to southeast Asian companies.

By Claire Swedberg

Mar. 14, 2005—[NEC Solutions Asia Pacific](#) (NESCAP), the Singapore-based subsidiary of [NEC](#), is establishing a new center for RFID research and development at Singapore's [Republic Polytechnic](#). The center, known as RFID@NEC, will focus on developing new RFID-based logistics and supply chain management solutions, and will work with regional hardware manufacturers to develop integrated offerings and interfaces with NEC's RFID Manager middleware. RFID@NEC will also help local small and midsize enterprises expand their regional footprint by using NEC's regional infrastructure. The center's establishment should help NEC expand its influence in southeast Asia.

RFID@NEC will be NEC's first center related to RFID technology outside of Japan, as well as Singapore's first provider of EPC Information Services (EPC IS), an EPCglobal Network element that enables users to exchange EPC-related data with trading partners in the country. NEC says its EPC IS infrastructure will allow companies across a supply chain to share and exchange information with others about a product's status, providing them with supply chain visibility. In the U.S. last September, Internet services provider [VeriSign](#) launched its own EPC IS offerings (see [VeriSign Initiates Two EPC Services](#)).

During the next two years, NEC will invest S\$5 million (US\$3 million) to staff and equip the 450-square-meter facility, which will be located at Phoenix Park, part of the campus of Republic Polytechnic, a public technical institution established in 2003. RP's staff and students will have access to the center for research projects and will also be able to work on the development and adoption of RFID in Singapore in a real-world, as opposed to academic, environment. Scheduled to open by June 2005, the center will employ a staff of 10, as well as accommodating RP staff and students.

"We decided to locate RFID@NEC in Singapore for business and strategic reasons," says Vikram Mengi, NESCAP's regional director of RFID solutions and services. "Over the years, NEC has successfully developed and deployed RFID-based solutions in manufacturing, retail, logistics and security applications in Japan and Asia Pacific." It is for that reason, he says, that RFID@NEC is "well-positioned to spearhead NEC's RFID solutions business in southeast Asia."

NEC plans to generate new RFID applications and intellectual property (IP) for its target markets in southeast Asia, "focusing on solutions in logistics and supply chain management and security," Mengi says. By letting its customers use its RFID infrastructure on a subscription basis, RFID@NEC intends to make it easier for its customers to test and adopt new RFID concepts in Singapore. Mengi adds that as Singapore assumes a leading role in the RFID field, RFID@NEC will help drive the adoption of NEC's RFID-based solutions throughout southeast Asia.

"Singapore is positioned to be the logistics hub for RFID technology," Mengi says. This is in part due to the fact that Singapore is a growing industrial market, has the world's second largest port outside the U.S., and has

a government-driven goal to become the world's most-wired nation by spending billions of dollars on building its telecommunications infrastructure.

The government has also announced its support for RFID technology. By 2006, the Singapore government will have contributed S\$10 million (US\$6 million) to develop five RFID-enabled supply chain clusters. These clusters will consist of manufacturers, logistics service providers, retailers, infrastructure providers and solutions providers in the high-tech, pharmaceutical and fast-moving consumer goods sectors.

In the past two years Singapore's Infocomm Development Authority (IDA) has worked closely with local RFID solution providers and leading educational institutes to train students, add RFID infrastructure and improve technology in RFID. (For more information, see [Singapore Seeks Leading RFID Role.](#))

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