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Govt approaches Microsoft for halal food hub venture

PUTRAJAYA: The Government has approached Microsoft Corporation to help build up the information technology infrastructure to support Malaysia's bid to be a *halal* food hub.

Science, Technology and Innovation Minister Datuk Seri Jamaluddin Jarjis said ICT applied research and development organisation Mimos Bhd would now start discussing with Microsoft the details of the project.

"We told Microsoft that the Malaysian Government, especially the special Cabinet committee on high impact industries chaired by Deputy Prime Minister, is willing to consider various incentives should it decide to jointly develop our country as the *halal* food hub.

"To steer Malaysia forward, we will need the necessary infrastructure because all the standard work processes will have to be carried out on IT platforms, other supporting computer software as well as suppliers.

"We hope Microsoft will consider helping us in this venture," he told reporters after meeting with Microsoft chief executive officer Steve Ballmer at his office yesterday.

At the same time, Jamaluddin said Microsoft should also consider that they would be partnering Malaysia in entering the *halal* food business

which was estimated to be worth billions of ringgit a year.

He said Ballmer had promised that Microsoft would consider Malaysia's proposal.

Jamaluddin added that the incentives could include tax rebates on the opening of regional offices in the country.

"We will have to match our incentives with what other countries are offering or else we won't be able to attract investors," he said.

On the call by International Advisory Panel members for more Malaysian students to be placed as interns in multinational corporations overseas, he said the Multimedia Development Corp had been writing to all the firms.

"We want to replicate the experience of our students in Infosys in Bangalore, India, with other companies," he said.