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MGRM Net, Bell ID form JV for India market

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NEW DELHI

E-GOVERNANCE firm MGRM Net has entered into a JV with Dutch identity solutions provider Bell ID to tap the opportunity presented by the India market.

Both companies will jointly invest Rs 1,500 crore (Rs 750 crore each) in the first phase into the JV that aims to work with other technology partners and provide back-end support for projects like the Unique ID one headed by the co-founder and vice chairman of Infosys Technologies Nandan Nilekani.

Both partners said they would

commit additional investments into the JV to target the emerging space of identity management in India which is expected to generate business worth several billions of dollars over the next couple of years.

The MGRM-Bell ID JV will become operational in the next quarter even as an operational team is expected to begin work as early as next month.

MGRM Net is the Indian subsidiary of the US-based MGRM group. It is also one of India's largest e-governance firms and is currently executing a slew of projects for leading educational institutes, pharmaceutical companies and insurance players here.

It is also handling several e-governance projects for several state governments and central ministries in India.

For instance, the company runs the back-end platform for the health ministry for codifying and classifying all the drugs.

On the other hand, Bell ID is the global leader in the field of smart card management and boasts of one of the largest teams in the world dedicated exclusively to developing software that manages the life-cycles of cards and their associated applications and cryptographic keys.

The company manages over 125 million cards in different applications in all continents including

handling over 1,00,000 corporate identities for Boeing in the US and executing the national ID for citizens in Macau & Qatar.

"This JV synergises the unique strengths of both MGRM & Bell ID. Bell ID has experience in managing an unrivalled portfolio of international customers in many key markets while MGRM is the first in the world to offer research based integrated e-governance platforms," Dr KVR Murthy, founder of MGRM Net, told ET.

Asked if JV would compete against software majors like Infosys, TCS and others for the Unique ID project, the MGRM group chairman for JVs Ashwani Windlass said these IT companies were

only bidding to execute the project.

"We are in a different space, which is to provide the back-end and the platform for such projects. So our business case does not depend on who wins these major projects in India," Mr Windlass added.

According to the chairman of Bell ID, Pat B Curran, India offered exciting prospects in this emerging space. "The MGRM-Bell ID venture will explore 'smart card related opportunities' secured by biometric applications based on domain research and integrate them with MGRM's OmV card capability," he added.

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Both cos will together invest Rs 1,500 cr in 1st phase. JV aims to work with other tech partners and provide back-end support for projects like the Unique ID one headed by the co-founder and VC of Infosys Nandan Nilekani