

## SIMAT'S REGIONAL PLOY

SASITHORN ONGDEE  
THE NATION

Simat Technologies believes its market expansion into the region this quarter will help keep its mobile-computing revenues from falling below last year.

Vice chairman Thongkam Manasilapapan said yesterday that in the first quarter the company posted a loss for the first time since listing on the Market for Alternative Investment in 2007, due mainly to the plunging economy, which weakened the retail industry, where its major customers are.

Simat lost Bt2.6 million in the first quarter, compared to a Bt6.57-million net profit in the same quarter last year.

The company expects to repeat last year's Bt24.3 million revenues but net profit will drop, as the company has to keep its customer base by offering lower prices.

Simat's net profit last year was Bt16.59 million.

The IT products and services developed for the automobile and electronics industries were undermined as these businesses were hardest hit by the economic slump in the first quarter.

To tap more markets in the region, the company has joined hands with its parent, Grand-Flo Solution, a leading integrated bar-coding solutions provider in Malaysia, in setting

up an expert team for IT and software development for Asia.

The expert team will be under the supervision of its new unit, in which Simat and Grand-Flo Solution each hold an equal stake. The budget for research and development is about Bt20 million a year.

The R&D unit will focus on developing software for warehouse management systems, fixed asset management, sales force automation and marketing surveys.

"The software will be designed to apply to each country in Asia with the same quality in different languages such as English, Chinese, Thai and Vietnamese," Thongkam said.

The company will also focus more on building its own brands, especially in "solution" services, covering consulting, design, software, hardware and installation.

About 80 per cent of its total revenues are from sales of services and the remaining 20 per cent from software, hardware and maintenance services.

Recently, Simat launched ManageSuite for warehouse management and distribution systems, mainly used in the retail, automobile and electronics industries.

"After witnessing the shrinking of the automobile and electronics industries, the company has returned its focus to the retail sector again until those industries recover," he said.