

S'pore firm Novoflex could turn making of SIM cards on its head

By Jacquelyn Cheok
jaccheok@sph.com.sg
@JacCheokBT

Singapore

A HOMEGROWN company has developed a first-of-its-kind technological process that could revolutionise the making of SIM cards and even devices for the Internet of Things (IoT) globally, *The Business Times* has learnt.

Novoflex, founded in 2003, is behind Secure Authenticable Identification Laminates (sAIL), a novel process that redefines how integrated circuit (IC) chips are embedded in SIM cards.

sAIL SIM inlays cut manufacturing time by half and costs by 40 per cent. The process eliminates two major steps from traditional manufacturing processes – module packaging and module embedding.

The sAIL process also requires less gold, which is used as a conductor, across all steps of the process, said Novoflex.

The company's technology has since 2011 been patented in 20 countries and put to market. In Asia, Novoflex has partnered smart-card makers Eastcompeace in India and CIPTA in Indonesia to use the IC chip in SIM cards issued by major mobile operators in both countries.

sAIL has also been garnering in-

terest from major SIM card vendors worldwide, Novoflex added.

This year, the company expects to bring in US\$30 million in revenue, but it has already hit 90 per cent of that target.

The company recorded US\$3.67 million in profits in 2015, but while Novoflex now makes its money from selling sAIL SIM inlays, it is also exploring other business models which may include licensing, BT understands.

Novoflex believes that sAIL has far wider-reaching applications beyond SIM cards and the telecommunications sector. It said: "Typical smart card applications such as credit and debit cards, ID cards and transportation cards can adopt this technology utilising the same benefits of cost and operational efficiency. But what is really exciting are the possibilities for IoT."

The flexible form factor of sAIL, which comes in a thin plastic foil, enables it to be integrated into everyday objects for IoT functions, said Novoflex.

Company chief Eric Ng said: "Our mission at Novoflex is to provide the enabling technologies to make objects smarter. We are very proud to introduce this new technology in India and Indonesia ... and hope to expand very quickly beyond telecoms."