By Anca Hampshire, Windows Editor

Technology Partnership Between Elpida Memory and Qimonda

The joint-venture series continues, all for technology boots

The leading global suppliers of dynamic random access memory (DRAM), Elpida Memory and Qimonda AG, announced on Thursday that it had agreed on joining a technology partnership on developing memory chips (DRAMs) and process technologies for their manufacturing, and had signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) in that direction. Elpida and Qimonda will cooperate in boosting innovative 4F² cell concept in calendar year 2010. The jointly developed cell will be introduced in the 40nm generation, and scaled down to the 30nm generation afterwards.Both companies will bring their best in the planned cooperation. Qimonda comes with its "trench technology" (the innovative buried wordline technology), while Elpida provides with the "stack technology" (advanced stack capacitor technology). The two companies involved in this strategic technology cooperation to accelerate their roadmap to DRAM products that will feature cell sizes of 4F². The standard cell size at this moment is 8F², but there are some manufacturers, namely Micron and Samsung, that provide memories with 6F² cell sizes."This strategic cooperation with Elpida is a tremendous endorsement of our innovative buried wordline technology. Qimonda will leverage this partnership to significantly accelerate the introduction of small 4F² cell sizes. This technology alignment of two major DRAM innovators creates excellent opportunities for greater economies of scale in R&D and future joint manufacturing activities," said Kin Wah Loh, president and chief executive of Qimonda AG.Elpida and Qimonda plan to develop together technology platforms and design rules for the exchange of products to be available, as well as for possible manufacturing joint ventures. The plan is for both companies to align their activities in development area, in their sites in Hiroshima and Dresden. Exchange of engineers is possible as well. Moreover, the companies also intend to explore joint development opportunities in the areas of "Through Silicon Via Technology"."Our R&D effort has given us the lead in DRAM technology. In the tough, competitive industry that we are in, however, faster and more efficient development of new process technologies is becoming critically important. We believe this joint development agreement with Qimonda will further accelerate and strengthen our technology leadership, putting us on a path to the top position in the DRAM market," said Yukio Sakamoto, president and chief exec of Elpida said.After signing today the MOU, Qimonda and Elpida expect the negotiations to be concluded in due course, as well as the definitive finalization of their agreements.Nanya and Micron Technology, other two leaders in "trench" and "stack" DRAM production technologies, announced earlier this week that they agreed to cooperate in a memory joint venture. Qimonda and Nanya are also together in a joint-venture called Inotera.