

## MEDIA RELEASE

### **ESG enhances Startup SG Founder programme to groom new startups to seed next lap of innovation in Singapore**

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1. Enterprise Singapore (ESG) will be enhancing the Startup SG Founder programme to boost the pipeline of new innovative startups in Singapore. Deputy Prime Minister Heng Swee Keat announced during his Ministerial Speech on 17 August that up to S\$150 million has been set aside for this. Rolled out since 2017, Startup SG Founder provides first-time entrepreneurs with mentorship support and startup capital grant through Accredited Mentor Partners (AMPs).
2. Minister for Trade and Industry, Chan Chun Sing, and Minister for Manpower, Josephine Teo, shared more details on the enhancements today during a visit to The Greenhouse, a new incubation space at the Singapore Management University (SMU). The enhancements are:
  - a. Introduction of three-month Venture Building programmes to groom aspiring entrepreneurs with no business experience to build and scale innovative startups; and
  - b. Raising the grant support while maintaining the matching amount for the Startup SG Founder grant to help willing entrepreneurs take their first step.
3. Said Mr Edwin Chow, Assistant Chief Executive Officer (Innovation & Enterprise), Enterprise Singapore, “Our startup ecosystem has contributed to Singapore’s ongoing transformation to an innovation-driven economy. Startups have an innate ability to adapt and pivot, to quickly spot opportunities and provide effective solutions. This is especially important during crises. By enhancing the Startup SG Founder programme, we hope to enable more aspiring entrepreneurs to start new ventures and accelerate the formation of innovative startups in Singapore.”

## **Grooming a pipeline of entrepreneurs through Venture Building programmes**

4. To help aspiring new entrepreneurs get their foot off the ground, **ESG will introduce a new track by appointing Venture Builders to provide a three-month Venture Building programme.** The programme will provide support for sourcing innovation, commercialising these ideas into scalable businesses, getting product/solution validation from customers and finding capital. The appointed partners will also serve as the AMPs, providing support for the participants to seek co-founders, connect them to industry experts for mentorship, as well as provide them with shared resources such as co-working spaces.
5. These Venture Building programmes will help participants build a stronger foundation in entrepreneurship, and develop innovative products or solutions that are relevant to market needs. This will increase their chances of success in the long run. The Venture Building programmes will be open to Singapore Citizens and Permanent Residents. Each participant will receive a monthly stipend of S\$1,500 for the duration of the programme.
6. Venture Builders will be selected based on their track record in generating strong ventures. As a start, five Autonomous Universities (Nanyang Technological University, National University of Singapore, Singapore Management University, Singapore University of Technology and Design and Singapore University of Social Sciences) will come on board as partners to provide Venture Building programmes. They will be launching their call for applications by end August 2020<sup>1</sup>. ESG will progressively expand the list of partners for the Venture Building programmes.

## **Enhancing support for startup capital for willing entrepreneurs**

7. **ESG will raise the grant quantum of Startup SG Founder from S\$30,000 to S\$50,000.** This will help to extend the runway for startups to develop their business ideas, as generating revenue will be more challenging than before during this period. To support willing startups who wish to start their companies during this period, the matching amount for startups will remain at S\$10,000.
8. In addition, to tap the Startup SG Founder grant, startups must now be formed with minimally three<sup>2</sup> Singaporeans and/or Permanent Residents, inclusive of founder(s), of which at least

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<sup>1</sup> Interested startups can apply via the respective Autonomous Universities' websites.

<sup>2</sup> This is up from one, in the previous programme.

two of them must be first-time founders. This will encourage founders to start with a range of competencies that will be complementary in scaling their businesses<sup>3</sup>.

### **Accredited Mentor Partners (AMPs) to continue to provide guidance**

9. Entrepreneurs who are ready to launch their startups will continue to receive mentorship from close to 50 AMPs appointed by ESG under Startup SG Founder. The AMPs help to identify eligible startups based on the uniqueness of their business concepts, feasibility of business models, strength of their management teams, and their potential market value.
10. The enhanced Startup SG Founder programme adds to the comprehensive support that is already available to existing startups, covering various aspects such as equity funding, mentorship and other resources.

### **Annex 1: Enhancements for Startup SG Founder**

### **Annex 2: Overview of assistance available for startups**

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### **About Enterprise Singapore**

Enterprise Singapore (ESG) is the government agency championing enterprise development. We work with committed companies to build capabilities, innovate and internationalise.

We also support the growth of Singapore as a hub for global trading and startups, and build trust in Singapore's products and services through quality and standards.

Visit [www.enterprisesg.gov.sg](http://www.enterprisesg.gov.sg) for more information.

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<sup>3</sup> Studies have shown that founders that start with a team are more likely to be successful as compared to solo founders. For example, "*First Round 10 Year Project*" by First Round Capital in 2016 and "*Patterns Of Successful Internet Startups*" by Startup Genome in 2011; European Startup Monitor in 2019 also stated that one of the most important success factors for a startup is 'right cofounding team' which was ranked the highest, reiterating that startups is a cooperative/collaborative effort.

### Enhancements for Startup SG Founder

The existing Startup SG Founder programme provides mentorship and startup capital grant of S\$30,000 to first-time entrepreneurs with innovative business ideas<sup>4</sup>. Startups are required to raise 3:1 matching (i.e. S\$10,000) as co-matching fund to the grant.

ESG has appointed Accredited Mentor Partners (AMPs) that will identify qualifying applicants based on the uniqueness of business concept, feasibility of business model, strength of management team, and potential market value. Upon successful application, the AMP will assist the startups with advice, learning programs and networking contacts.

#### **The Startup SG Founder programme will be enhanced in the following areas:**

- **Addition of Venture Building programmes to Startup SG Founder:**

	<b>New</b>
<b>Who is eligible</b>	<p>Aspiring entrepreneurs who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May have an innovative idea but need help to develop, launch and scale their business plans<sup>5</sup></li> <li>• Need training and coaching to get started</li> </ul> <p><i>Following the 3-month Venture Building programme, graduates from the programme may be supported with mentorship provided by current AMPs.</i></p>
<b>Venture Building programmes</b>	<p>These will be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conducted in partnership with appointed Venture Builders</li> <li>• Structured programmes to help form co-founding teams, identify business ideas, develop ideas into products/solutions, validate them with the market and find capital.</li> </ul> <p>As a start, participating partners include the five Autonomous Universities, namely Nanyang Technological University, National University of Singapore, Singapore Management University, Singapore University of Technology and Design and Singapore University of Social Sciences.</p>
<b>Stipend</b>	Participants get monthly stipends of S\$1,500 / month for 3 months paid through appointed Venture Builders
<b>How to apply</b>	<p>Via the appointed Venture Builders, in August 2020</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nanyang Technological University – <a href="#">Here</a></li> <li>• National University of Singapore – <a href="#">Here</a></li> <li>• Singapore Management University – <a href="#">Here</a></li> <li>• Singapore University of Technology and Design – <a href="#">Here</a></li> <li>• Singapore University of Social Sciences – <a href="#">Here</a></li> </ul>

<sup>4</sup> These are startups that are newly incorporated less than 6 months by first-time founders.

<sup>5</sup> The startup must not be in the following list: cafes, restaurants, night clubs, lounges, bars, foot reflexology, massage parlours, gambling, prostitution, social escort services, employment agencies (including recruiting foreign work permit holders and workers/support staff, relocation services, and manpower services), and geomancy.

- **Higher grant support:**

	<b>Existing</b>	<b>Enhanced</b>
<b>Grant support</b> for each startup over a 12-month period	S\$30,000 pre-seed grant  (Co-matching of S\$10,000 required by startup)	<b>S\$50,000 pre-seed grant</b>  <b>(Co-matching required by startup maintained at S\$10,000)</b>
<b>Implementation date</b>	NA	<b>September 2020</b>

## Overview of assistance available for startups

# SUPPORT FOR SINGAPORE'S INNOVATIVE STARTUPS



Enhanced support measures amidst COVID-19

### ENHANCED

#### MENTORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

##### Enhanced Startup SG Founder

Venture building, mentorship and startup capital support for aspiring entrepreneurs



Up to S\$150 million has been set aside to enhance Startup SG Founder through:

- Venture building programmes for aspiring entrepreneurs who need help to develop, launch and scale their innovative ideas
- Mentorship support and startup capital grants for first-time entrepreneurs through Accredited Mentor Partners (AMPs)
  - Increased grant quantum from S\$30,000 to S\$50,000

### ENHANCED

#### ACCESS TO EQUITY FINANCING

##### Enhanced Startup SG Equity

Additional VC funding for deeptech startups through co-investment and fund-of-funds



Additional S\$300 million in funds to catalyse private sector investments in key sectors such as Advanced Manufacturing, Medtech and Agritech

- Increased investment cap for deeptech startups from S\$4 million to S\$8 million

##### Special Situation Fund for Startups

To catalyse private sector investments in early- to late-stage startups



S\$285 million in investments through EDBi and SEEDS Capital to support promising startups with strong growth potential

- Sustain innovation and entrepreneurship activities
- Bridge financing gap, especially for startups with good pre-COVID growth trajectory

### GROWING YOUR NETWORKS

##### Startup SG Network

Continue to discover new investment, business and deal-making opportunities through Singapore's vibrant network



Connect with local and global markets



Connect and grow with a vast startup community

**180+** accelerators    **3000+** startups    **300+** investors

### FAST-TRACKING THE GROWTH OF DEEPTECH STARTUPS

##### Startup SG Tech

Continued funding support for deeptech commercialisation



Accelerates the development of proprietary technology solutions



Catalyses the growth of deeptech startups through non-dilutive funding

### FACILITATING INVESTMENT AND BUSINESS DEALS



##### Deal Fridays

Curated sessions to match investors, potential customers and partners with startups



##### National Innovation Challenges

Catalysing demand for innovation through open innovation challenges. Participate via [openinnovationnetwork.sg](http://openinnovationnetwork.sg)

- Gain track record and commercialisation opportunities for your solutions

### OTHER RESOURCES AND SUPPORT FOR STARTUPS

##### Action Community for Entrepreneurship (ACE)'s Resources and Support for Startups

A useful list of financial and talent resources, private & public assistance schemes and pro-bono networks

Access the updated list at [ace.org.sg/covid-19/](http://ace.org.sg/covid-19/)



For the full list of programmes under Startup SG, please visit our website via the QR code.

STARTUP SG

AN INITIATIVE OF  
Enterprise Singapore