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Headline: Two new programmes unveiled to nurture tech entrepreneurs

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**SINGAPORE** – To further support entrepreneurship efforts in Singapore, two new programmes were launched yesterday — a polytechnic incubator programme and an entrepreneurial training programme for researchers.

Announced by Finance Minister Heng Swee Keat at the opening of the Singapore Week of Innovation and Technology, incubator Pollinate in Block 71, at JTC LaunchPad@one-north, will target growth-stage start-ups with products or services that are ready to be commercialised, or those poised for market expansion.

Jointly overseen by Ngee Ann Polytechnic, Singapore Polytechnic and

Temasek Polytechnic, Pollinate will be funded by the National Research Foundation (NRF), at close to S\$1 million over three years.

The Pollinate network provides access to a pipeline of student, faculty and alumni talent. Start-ups can look forward to services such as user analytics and digital marketing, and access to overseas markets through the polytechnics' overseas industry networks. It will also be a platform for small and medium enterprises (SMEs) to collaborate with start-ups to solve industry challenges.

Mr Clarence Ti, principal of Ngee Ann Polytechnic, said: "Polytechnic

students embark on entrepreneurship journeys at different stages of their lives, some while in school and others, much later. Pollinate seeks to support these students and add value to their start-ups. In return, these established entrepreneurs at Pollinate will share their time and experiences with aspiring entrepreneurs who are still studying in polytechnics."

The Lean LaunchPad programme, where research scientists and engineers learn about the technology commercialisation process, will also be rolled out nationwide, with funding of S\$8 million over five years by the NRF.

Previously a pilot by NUS Enterprise, it had trained more than 400 participants. Now, it will be expanded to carry out the programme within the campuses of Nanyang Technological University, Singapore Management University and the Singapore

University of Technology and Design.

During the programme, which takes place over 10 weeks, participants gain knowledge about the technology commercialisation process by directly engaging with potential users and customers.

Over the next five years, it aims to train over 1,000 research scientists and engineers.

Professor Wong Poh Kam, director of the NUS Entrepreneurship Centre, who leads this programme, said its objective was to cultivate an entrepreneurial mindset among researchers.

"By pushing researchers to get out of the lab and talk to potential users and customers, they will better understand users' needs and think from the customers' perspective. With the right product-market fit, they will have a better chance of commercialising their technological inventions," he said. **TAN WEIZHEN**