

## News Release

### SAL Launches Future Law Innovation Programme, Signs MOU With IMDA and SMU

**Singapore, 10 January 2018** – The Singapore Academy of Law (SAL) today launched its Future Law Innovation Programme (FLIP), a two-year pilot programme to encourage the adoption of technology, drive innovation and create a vibrant ecosystem for legal technology.

FLIP was announced last July by Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon at SAL’s annual Appreciation Dinner. It aims to bring together lawyers, technopreneurs, investors, academics and regulators, in an initiative that will support the development of the model for the delivery of legal services in the future economy.

FLIP comprises three components, the first two of which are part of today’s launch. They are a Legal Innovation Lab located at the Collision 8 co-working space across the road from the Supreme Court; and a virtual collaboration platform called *LawNet Community*. The third component, South East Asia’s first legal tech accelerator to groom promising legal tech start-ups, will be launched in April.

To date, 31 participants from 23 entities have signed up for FLIP. These range from large law firms (such as Rajah & Tann Singapore LLP and Dentons Rodyk & Davidson), small law firms (including ECYT Law LLC and Consigclear LLC), to local and international legal tech enterprises like SingaporeLegalAdvice.com, LexQuanta, MyLawyer and Zegal (formerly Dragon Law), as well as in-house counsel from Discovery Networks and BNP Paribas.

Participants may enrol in a maximum of three tracks – “Lighten-up!” for smaller law firms that want to leverage technology to operate a lean back-end; “Ideate!” which brings together lawyers and technopreneurs to collaborate on legal innovation, and “Accelerate!”, a 100-day acceleration programme to help promising tech-based legal enterprises start-ups scale up their business.

Mr Paul Neo, SAL’s Chief Operating Officer and Chief Financial Officer, said: “We are encouraged by the strong response from the legal community to the FLIP initiative. Over three-quarters of the planned capacity for the pilot programme have been taken up in a short time and we have no doubt more will join as the programme gains momentum.

“We look forward to working with the first batch of participants to take advantage of the digital disruption that is transforming many industries and professions.”

To assist FLIP participants in technology adoption and innovation, SAL is partnering the Infocomm Media Development Authority (IMDA) and Singapore Management University (SMU). Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) were signed between the parties, with SMU in the morning, and IMDA’s at the FLIP launch in the evening.

SMU will be SAL’s academic partner for issues relating to legal innovation and the future business of law. The University will collaborate with FLIP on several fronts, including student and curriculum development, thought leadership, as well as case studies and research.

SMU School of Law will co-host dialogues and seminars with SAL, develop thought leadership through case studies and research on future law topics, and explore the possibility of curating modular executive education programmes to support leadership and/or legal innovation for FLIP participants.

SMU undergraduates will also have the opportunity to do internships with SAL and firms participating in FLIP, as well as participate in FLIP-based consulting projects through the University’s experiential and multi-disciplinary SMU-X modules.

One of the projects SMU students have been working on involved helping to collate the catalogue of 100 legal industry problem statements from legal counsel, paralegals, other supporting staff and service providers, as well as consumers of legal services, such as corporates, SMEs and private clients. Other teams of students have also been trained by FLIP and will begin to provide consultancy services to law firms from January 2018 onwards under FLIP's mentorship.

Associate Professor Goh Yi Han, Dean of SMU School of Law, said: "The impact of technology on the legal landscape is clear. We are very pleased therefore to play our part and contribute our academic expertise as Singapore's legal profession transforms in response to technology. In the area of research, SMU's partnership with SAL will certainly catalyse the development of insights into future law topics which will be meaningful, relevant and impactful to the fraternity. In legal education, we have begun to explore incorporating technology-related issues in our legal curriculum, and thus we value this opportunity for SMU undergraduates to be involved in SAL's FLIP initiatives, as these platforms broaden their perspectives and expose our future lawyers to the possibilities of innovation in the legal sector."

FLIP will work with IMDA on two projects under the MOU. The first project will involve FLIP and IMDA working together to build up a team of legal technologists. They will be trained in the latest IT tools for law practices and equipped with current cyber security and system integration know-how. They can be deployed to law firms to help identify existing issues in their business processes, recommend improvements and adopt appropriate technology tools.

Initially, this will be through a Business Process Re-engineering (BPR) toolkit developed by FLIP in close consultation with industry and the Law Society; with the expectation that such collaboration will catalyse the development of new job roles within the legal sector and new legal technology services which smaller law firms can tap on. Both the technologists and BRP are targeted to commence in the first half of 2018.

The second project builds on the 100 legal industry problem statements from SMU. Together with IMDA, FLIP will look to share and compare these problem statements with other professional industries as part of a cross industry approach. The intent is for solution providers to identify multi-sectoral opportunities and be encouraged to develop solutions that have applications across sectors for greater synergy and economic potential.

Mr Tan Kiat How, Chief Executive, IMDA, said: "IMDA believes that every business needs to be a digital business to remain relevant and to seize growth opportunities. We are encouraged by the legal community's participation in the FLIP programme, which aims to identify key challenges in the legal sector and source for innovative solutions for these pain points. Through FLIP, we aim to equip our law firms with the best practices and technologies for them to be globally competitive."

SAL's Mr Neo said: "It is our vision to extend the legal ecosystem in FLIP to the wider community. We are grateful for the support that IMDA and SMU have given us. The digital transformation of the legal sector is a long process and its success relies on the collective efforts of organisations in and outside of the legal sector."

FLIP is part of the Legal Technology Vision, a five-year road map by SAL for the digital transformation of Singapore's legal sector. This vision, put together by representatives from the Judiciary, the Ministry of Law, Attorney-General's Chambers and private sector lawyers, is a call to action for lawyers to become part of the digital disruption that faces the legal industry today.

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## **About the Singapore Academy of Law**

The Singapore Academy of Law (SAL) is a promotion and development agency for Singapore's legal industry. Our vision is to make Singapore the legal hub of Asia.

SAL works with our stakeholders to set new precedents of excellence in Singapore law through developing thought leadership, world class infrastructure and legal solutions. Our mandates are to build

up the intellectual capital of the legal profession by enhancing legal knowledge, raise the international profile of Singapore law, promote Singapore as a centre for dispute resolution, and improve the standards and efficiency of legal practice through continuing professional development and the use of technology.

As a body established by statute, SAL also undertakes statutory functions such as stakeholding services and appointment of Senior Counsel, Commissioners for Oaths and Notaries Public.

SAL is led by a Senate headed by Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon, and comprising the Attorney-General, the Supreme Court Bench and key leaders of the various branches of the legal profession. It has more than 12,000 members, including the Bench, all persons who are called as advocates and solicitors of the Supreme Court (i.e. the Bar) or appointed as Legal Service Officers, corporate counsel, faculty members of the three local law schools (i.e. National University of Singapore, Singapore Management University and Singapore University of Social Sciences) and foreign lawyers in Singapore.

More information can be found at [www.sal.org.sg](http://www.sal.org.sg).

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