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Urban solutions, sustainability take centre stage at SMU's LKYGBPC startup challenge in 2025

This year's LKYGBPC is enhancing its support for participants by connecting finalists with Southeast Asia's leading business families

Sainul Abudheen K 14 Jan, 2025



The Lee Kuan Yew Global Business Plan Competition (LKYGBPC), a prominent university-led startup challenge in Asia, has announced the opening of applications for its 12th edition.

The biennial competition, organised by Singapore Management University's (SMU) Institute of Innovation and Entrepreneurship (IIE), is focused on Urban Solutions and Sustainability, inviting young founders globally to develop cutting-edge solutions for future cities.

This year's LKYGBPC is enhancing its support for participants by connecting finalists with Southeast Asia's leading business families, as well as offering exclusive access to senior venture capitalists at the region's largest Venture Capital Office Hours.

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The competition also welcomes the Agency for Science, Technology and Research (ASTAR) as its first official Scientific Knowledge Partner, to evaluate applications for scientific excellence and mentor startups. ASTAR will collaborate with teams to transform their ideas into real-world solutions.

The competition has grown significantly since its inception in 2002, attracting over 1,000 entries from 1,100 universities across 77 countries in its 11th edition. LKYGBPC alumni have raised US\$1 billion in the past five years, with some startups expanding into Singapore.

SMU's Vice President of Partnerships and Engagement, Professor Lim Sun Sun, stated that this edition will focus on urban solutions and sustainability. She added that the competition's global reach will enable them to drive positive change for a better future.

The competition is popular among founders because of its increasing prize pool, which is over S\$1 million (US\$730,000), its global exposure platform, and access to international industry leaders.

Fifty finalist teams will be flown to Singapore for BLAZE, a week-long innovation festival that culminates in the LKYGBPC Grand Finale from 29 September to 2 October 2025. BLAZE will also include innovation showcases and networking opportunities and will coincide with the Singapore Grand Prix night race, creating an extraordinary platform for startup founders.

Key events during BLAZE include:

Southeast Asia's Largest VC Office Hours

- Networking with Southeast Asia's Business Families
- Grand Finals, featuring live pitches
- Fireside Chats & Changemaker Conversations
- Mixer Night

Participants can enter individually or as a team in one of two categories:

- 0 to 1: For pre-revenue teams
- 1 to Infinity: For revenue-generating early-stage start-ups.

The winners will share a prize pool supported by partners including Kajima, Lee & Lee law firm, TRIREC and Wavemaker.

In the 11th edition, held in 2023, MEDEA Biopharma from the Technical University of Munich (Germany) and PlasticFri from Karlsruhe Institute of Technology (Germany) were declared Grand Final winners.

Applications are now open and can be submitted [here](#).

Written by Sainul Abudheen K Editor, e27



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