



MEDIA RELEASE

For immediate release

SMU's Business Innovations Generator welcomes the largest cohort ever

- 43 innovative start-ups accepted in BIG's August 2021 cohort, the largest in its history
- Notable mentors who are veterans in their own industries to help start-ups drive the next phase of growth



Founders from the 43 start-ups in the August 2021 cohort of the BIG programme

SINGAPORE, 9 September 2021 (Thursday) - Singapore Management University (SMU) Institute of Innovation and Entrepreneurship (IIE) today welcomed the August 2021 cohort to its flagship Business Innovations Generator (BIG) incubation programme. A total of 43 early-stage start-ups, its largest cohort to date, have been accepted into the programme's last intake for the year.

The COVID-19 pandemic has posed several challenges to IIE's high-touch approach with its start-ups and necessitated much of the programme to be operated virtually. Despite these constraints, the biannual programme received a record number of 124 applicants for this intake, the largest number of applications received since the launch of BIG programme in 2009.

Applications are assessed based on the viability of their business models, validated market needs and potential, as well as the attributes of the founding team such as coachability, integrity, grit and community-orientation. This intake witnessed an extremely competitive application pool of talented and passionate founders, and selecting these 43 start-ups was exceedingly difficult. Applicants had to clear three stages in the application journey before they pitched their business plans to a panel of evaluators made up of IIE's Entrepreneur-in-Residence, mentors, venture capitalists and industry experts.

SMU Classification: Restricted

In addition to the 10 mentors who participated in the final interview, industry leaders and experts were invited as guest evaluators. Guest evaluators include SMU alumnus John Cheng, Director of Cheng Yew Heng Candy Factory and Founder of Innovate360 and Jonathan Chang, Head of Growth for Governments and Organizations at Shopify amongst other professionals. Please refer to Annex B for list of evaluators.

While BIG is industry agnostic, this batch is one of the most diverse with start-ups in sectors like food & beverage, e-commerce, logistics, urban wellness, sustainability, healthtech, edutech and spacetech. For more information regarding the start-ups from the August 2021 cohort, please refer to Annex C.

As part of BIG's roadmap to spur collaboration, promote intergenerational dialogues, and provide support to the start-ups, the programme features [36 mentors](#) comprising business and public sector leaders, a former minister, CEOs, venture capitalists, tech drivers and more in this year's line-up. Each is a veteran in their industry and brings a wealth of experience that would benefit the founders. Leveraging the expertise of these mentors, many start-ups who had joined the programme earlier have been able to grow and thrive.

BIG start-ups receive benefits such as 9-month access to co-working space at IIE's innovation facility, The Greenhouse, that is located at the heart of Singapore's city centre, access to University's faculty expertise, opportunities to funding, grants and other resources. Aligned with IIE's objectives of nurturing the entrepreneurial mindset and fostering a vibrant community of innovators, BIG accepts early-stage start-ups and aspiring entrepreneurs including those who are not affiliated with SMU, and takes no equity from its start-ups.

Watch the introduction video of BIG August 2021 cohort [here](#).

For more information on SMU IIE's BIG programme, visit here: <https://iie.smu.edu.sg/big-incubation-programme>

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About SMU IIE:

The Singapore Management University (SMU) Institute of Innovation and Entrepreneurship (IIE) is a practice-oriented institute that nurtures changemakers and founders who aspire to make the world a better place. To achieve this mission, IIE focuses on its three areas of competencies which include customised training programmes, an equity-free incubation programme, and fostering a cohesive innovation and entrepreneurship community through activities such as its marquee event – the Lee Kuan Yew Global Business Plan Competition (LKYGBPC). For more information: <https://iie.smu.edu.sg/>

About the BIG incubation programme:

First launched in 2009, the BIG incubation programme is an equity-free four-month long incubation programme for entrepreneurs and startups, designed to provide valuable assistance for early-stage startups and their founders to validate their product and prepare for seed investment. The programme is also industry-agnostic, welcoming startups across all industries to apply.

For media enquiries, please contact:

Christine Wee
SMU IIE
christinewe@smu.edu.sg

Serene Goh
APRW
serene@aprw.asia

ANNEX A - QUOTES**Shirley Wong, Entrepreneur-in-Residence at SMU IIE**

“Singapore’s start-up system is continually growing, and we are honoured to be able to play our part through this programme in the advancement of the local start-up ecosystem. We are excited to be able to provide such a platform to groom the entrepreneurs of the future, giving them the resources and support that they need to thrive.”

John Cheng, Director of Cheng Yew Heng Candy Factory, Founder of Innovate360 and SMU alumnus (BBM, 2007) (Guest evaluator)

“I am grateful to have witnessed the talent and grit that these young and daring founders have displayed during the final interview round. It is truly inspiring and heartening to see that the entrepreneurial spirit is well and alive within the younger generation. I wish the 43 participating start-ups of the August 2021 cohort the very best.”

Jonathan Chang, Head of Growth for Governments and Organizations at Shopify

(Guest evaluator)

“This year, it is exciting to see an increase in applications from so many aspiring young innovators across such a diverse range of industries. As mentors, we strive to not only impart knowledge and guide participants in this programme - but to also give back to the community. For example, start-up The Sustainability Project has already educated 22,000 readers about zero waste, eliminated 8,000 plastic products and recycled 4,000 pieces of packaging - an impressive feat for an early-stage start-up.”

Raymond Choong, Venture Partner at Focus Tech Ventures (IIE Mentor)

“Being one of the mentors of this programme has allowed me to witness first-hand the potential and spirit of entrepreneurship that exists within the next generation of entrepreneurs. I am happy to be able to play my part to ensure that these budding entrepreneurs are provided with everything they need to take their businesses to the next level.”

Bryan Koh, Founder of Sekoni Originals (BIG’s incubatee, May’20 cohort)

“Looking back, this programme was a blessing for us. It was the right platform for us at an early stage of our journey, providing us with the right network and connections, mentorship and access to the start-up and VC community which is critical at that stage of growth - they were vital in getting us up on our feet.”

ANNEX B - LIST OF EVALUATORS FOR BIG AUG’21 INTAKE PANEL

Name	Designation	Organisation
Shirley Wong (Entrepreneur-in-Residence)	Managing Partner	TNF Ventures Pte Ltd
Aaron Sarma	General Partner	ScaleUp Malaysia
Alan Kuan Hsu	General Partner	KK Fund
Alvin Poh	Founder	SuperScaling.com
Chak Kong Soon	Managing Partner	Stream Global
Chong Chiet Ping	Managing Partner	Greenmeadows Accelerator

Chua Ruo Mei	Founder & Chief Impact Officer	SUTW Impact Consulting
David Yin	CEO	Storms
Jeffrey Nah	Managing Director	JN Capital & Growth Advisory
Jeremy Loh	Managing Partner	Genesis Alternative Venture
John Cheng	Director Director	Cheng Yew Heng Candy Factory Innovate360
Johnson Chen	Founder & Non-Executive Director	Clearbridge Health Ltd
Jörg Dietzel	Managing Director	Jorg Dietzel Brand Consultants
Jonathan Chang	Head of Growth for Governments and Organisations	Shopify
Kwan Chong Wah	CEO	Acorn Asia Pacific
Lim Ee Ling	Head of APAC Business Development	500 Startups
Mary Kan	Director, MedTech / Diagnostics/Digital Health, Enterprise	A*STAR
Michel Lu	Executive Director	Revolver Asia / Beluga Capital/ Global Kitchens/ Liquid Assets
Pauline Tay	Executive Director, Head of Innovation Partnerships	Tech Connect SEA, UBS AG
Peter de Caluwe	CEO	Thunes
Richard Yen	Managing Director	EdNovation
Ronnie Wee	Founder & Managing Partner	IncuVest Pte Ltd
Shwetank Verma	Co-founder	Leo Capital
Unmish Parthasarathi	Founder	Picture Board
Yong Sheng Le	Deputy Director (FinTech & Innovation)	MAS
Yulanda Chung	Head of Sustainability, Institutional Banking Group	DBS Bank

ANNEX C: BUSINESS INNOVATIONS GENERATOR (BIG) AUGUST 2021 COHORT

Company Name	Founder(s)/Representative(s)	Description
<u>Akadasia</u>	Bhatia Neelesh Jaikishin	AKADASIA is a Singapore-based mission-driven EdTech startup that aims to Empower Educators Everywhere - from learning to earning.
Bluente	Daphne Tay	Bluente is the world's first business language learning mobile app with the mission to empower business communities internationally to achieve effective communication and connect with one another.
<u>Bovem</u>	Lydon Ong	Bovem is a premium men's grooming brand that specialises in below-the-waist care and hygiene. The goal is to build the quintessential lifestyle for men, starting from where it matters the most – the golden globes.
Coldcane	Julien Amet	Coldcane offers fresh sugarcane juice in vending machines enhanced by a proprietary mobile app and inventory management system.
<u>Cosmiqo International Pte Ltd</u>	Koh Niak Wu	Cosmiqo is an A.I.-enabled system-agnostic orchestration, optimization and visibility middleware for people and robot warehousing.
<u>Deskpax</u>	Lim Su Fern	Deskpax is a global booking platform to help remote or hybrid workforce book a conducive working space whenever they need it with flexible terms.
<u>Evexia Collective</u>	Rebecca Kane	Evexia Collective aims to rebrand mental health to be about mental fitness and help corporates support their employees triggered by mental health issues (e.g. anxiety, depression, stress disorders or burn out).
Floramis	Ojus Sharma	Floramis offers an integrated hardware and software solution for plant parents to maintain and make plant care more interactive.
FollowTrade	Roy Ling	FollowTrade is a social trading app with one community sharing and following each other's investment journey in a simple & engaging way.
<u>GoHalfHalf</u>	Krystie Ma	GoHalfHalf is a Social E-commerce Platform that provides access to group purchase services and products inexpensively with many other users through a on-demand crowd-source algorithm.
<u>GoNsave</u>	Maria Antonia Hoyos GutierrezZ	GoNsave is the first virtual advisor for low-wage workers to earn extra and reach financial well-being
<u>Handprint</u>	Simon Jan D Schillebeeckx	Handprint is on a mission to integrate positive impact into every business transaction. Handprint offers Impact as a Service by connecting companies to causes they and their customers care about.
<u>HaruPlate</u>	Irwin Tan	HaruPlate puts the "fun" in functional food for kids,

		delivering what the little ones need through all-natural, yummy and engaging products that create a lifetime of delicious experiences.
HeHealth	Lu Mei Ling	HeHealth is a mobile-centric, AI based solution that helps men to solve embarrassing health issues such as sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) and genital health problems anonymously.
Holo Data Security	Wang Yao Ping	Holo Data Security focuses on providing truly end-to-end encryption (EE2E) solutions for enterprise users to protect and share their data in zero trust computing environment. Holo Data Security is a recent spinoff from the Secure Mobile Centre (SMC), School of Computing and Information System, Singapore Management University (SMU), with a mission of “using data security to protect and drive digital business and innovations”.
Immercion	Edward Sylvanus Iskandar	immercion connects new generations to the Great Books through gamified reading technology that immerses you in the story of the human experience.
<u>Insect Feed Technologies</u>	Sean Tan	Insect Feed Technologies is a biotechnology company that farms the Black Soldier Fly as a sustainable source of nutrition for the animal feed industry. It is currently focused on optimizing nutrition for the aqua feed sector and develops proprietary processing techniques for each phase of the Black Soldier Fly's development.
<u>Ira Noah</u>	Ahmad Syafik Jaafar	Ira Noah is a food technology startup that focuses on creating plant based meat products that constitute alternative proteins and dietary fiber.
JUN AND JUNG	Junsam Choi	Jun and Jung is an IoT-tech startup that uses Big Data, Machine Learning and AI technology to provide customers with values in Energy saving and Operation efficiency for the IoT products in operation.
<u>K Hotel Group</u>	Noel Neo	Singapore's largest lease and operate hotel company by number of locations.
<u>Little Blossom</u>	Gillian Choo	Little Blossom is Singapore's newest organic all-natural baby food brand, created to help young, busy parents find healthy food that is affordable & convenient for their little ones.
<u>Load and Go</u>	Bryan Koh	Load and Go provides end-to-end logistics solution for e-commerce companies that includes last-mile delivery, warehousing, inventory management, and more.
Locable	Abel Teo	Locable empowers individuals especially those in underserved communities to kickstart micro-businesses, and grow through a one-stop solutions portal.

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MARK+	Lee Suling	MARK+ seeks to empower educators with an AI powered question bank with worksheet creation capabilities. The company automates the uploading and categorization of questions, and simplify the distribution of learning materials.
<u>Mead It</u>	Tan De Xun	Mead It is a local alcohol beverage startup that aims to create a premium floral-infused craft-brewed mead with natural flavoring for the adventurous and curious palates.
Meydou	Shuan Wu	Meydou is a B2B Software-as-a-Service for the F&B industry that helps to digitize work processes and provides meaningful data insights. By bridging the digital divide, Meydou enables every F&B business to focus on growing better and faster while at the same time, being operationally efficient.
Moto Square	Ng Pei Wen	Moto Square is a revolutionary motorbike bidding platform that allows users to place bids using the auction online so that there is transparency and a fair market price for motorbikes in Singapore.
<u>Munin Space</u>	Jorge Iglesias Garcia	Munin Space offers seamless end-to-end global remote asset monitoring using Space Tech.
<u>Nervotec</u>	Mary Grace Yeo	Nervotec is a frontier healthtech Software as a Service startup that provides video-based health monitoring and analytics solutions to businesses and governments.
Optimise	Mohammad Abdullah Bin Tariq	Complementing the emission reduction framework, Optimise provides an AI-IOT cloud platform that monitors, controls, and optimises energy assets while helping companies reap economic benefits. Optimise aims to work with companies to customise an emission reduction framework by considering the companies' unique operation chain and assets.
Playard	Trini Tan	Playard is a Singapore-based sports startup with the mission to revolutionise the sports scene.
<u>PNP Technologies</u>	Genevieve Toh	PNP Technologies delivers lead time assurance and savings to the Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF) supply chain through on-demand biofuel blending and distribution, directly or near airports. PNP Technologies manages SAF blends with our patented technologies – AlphaLite.
<u>SocialLive</u>	Darien Tan	SocialLive connects businesses with livestreamers to maximize ROI on any livestream platform.
Tea is Great (Joytea)	Zachary Loke	Tea is Great (Joytea) is the next generation Tea Beverage company that aims to create accessible and great tasting tea products for health-conscious Millennials with fast-paced lifestyles.
<u>The Sustainability Project</u>	Joline Tang	The Sustainability Project is a Singapore-based business that aims to encourage and inspire consumers and businesses to adopt a low or zero

		waste lifestyle.
Thinkspace	Chua Yi Fang	Thinkspace is the next generation innovation management software that helps organisations to streamline, digitalise and track innovation efforts.
Tingkat Hero	Gan Teng Fong	Tingkat Hero offers a platform to connect customers with local hawkers and crowdfund for digitally disadvantaged hawkers.
TrinityEco	Michael Yiin	TrinityEco data integration platform to help companies do sustainability compliance and green financing.
Upcircle	Tay Wee Leng	Upcircle is an ecosystem that seeks to connect communities with participation in the circular economy. Upcircle offers a mobile application that enables anyone to crowdsource for things easily, connecting consumers with businesses and organisations based on flow of resources.
UserTip	Rodney Yap	UserTip is a no-code digital adoption software that tracks user behaviour data to determine the digital proficiency and adoption rate of each user and optimises for maximal user experience and adoption.
WeLiveFit	Caleb Seow	WeLiveFit is a digital coaching platform connecting people to a real-life fitness coach for virtual one-on-one coaching, personalized workouts, and comprehensive progress tracking.
Z Foods Singapore	Dominic Li	Z Foods Singapore was established with the goal of making eating and living healthy easier, more accessible and more affordable.