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## **Media Release**

### **Singapore Management University Expands Regional Presence with Overseas Centre in Bangkok**

*SMU Overseas Centre Bangkok will be the second member of a regional network of knowledge-sharing nodes that enable SMU to act as Asia's Knowledge Gateway*

**Bangkok, 27, October 2023** – Singapore Management University (SMU) is taking a significant step in its mission to foster knowledge-sharing and regional collaboration with the opening of its second Overseas Centre in Bangkok, Thailand.

[SMU Overseas Centre Bangkok](#) (OCB) will serve to catalyse, facilitate and coordinate for SMU in Thailand by leveraging the university's expertise and offerings, cultivating its local network and creating opportunities for new collaborations and partnerships between SMU and Thai institutions. It will also connect interested parties such as businesses, academia and potential students with the various programmes SMU has to offer.

This strategic move is part of SMU's [Vision 2025](#), through which it has committed to furthering growth in Asia by offering a deep understanding of Asia's economy, polity and society that will contribute to the region's social and economic development. It follows the successful launch of SMU's first overseas centre in Jakarta in 2022. SMU plans to further strengthen its presence in the region with the opening of another overseas centre in Ho Chi Minh City next, advancing its "Growth in Asia" strategic priority.

"The selection of Thailand as the location for our second Overseas Centre is the result of both strategic intent and strong relationships with our Thai partners," **SMU President Professor Lily Kong said**. "Thailand is a major economy in Southeast Asia and a rising player in shaping the future of Asia as a whole. We believe our presence in Thailand will allow us to contribute research and expertise in vital fields such as sustainability and digital transformation and our vision is aligned with Thailand's aspirations for a sustainable and knowledge-driven future. SMU is committed to making a meaningful impact on local communities and economies in Asia through education, research, and innovation, and OCB is a testament to our dedication to knowledge-sharing and positive community impact in this dynamic region."

As Thailand's digital economy continues its robust growth, achieving a market value of [2.6 trillion baht in 2022](#), according to the Digital Economy Promotion Agency (DEPA), the demand for skilled professionals has become increasingly urgent. The country is also recognising the importance of addressing sustainability concerns and goals as part of its economic growth. SMU is committed to bridging this skills gap while also fostering sustainable development through SMU's expertise and specialised programmes. The new overseas centre is poised to become a knowledge gateway that facilitates social and economic development in Thailand while deepening the bond between Thailand and Singapore.

To fulfil this role, SMU via OCB will collaborate with local partners in education and industry to bolster human capital development in Thailand and promote the exchange of knowledge and expertise. OCB will



primarily focus on student exchanges, experiential learning, thought leadership events, executive development courses, post-graduate programmes and adult learning courses. These areas will facilitate knowledge exchange and collaboration between both countries, with OCB acting as SMU's "embassy" in Thailand, promoting the university's values, knowledge base, culture, and interests in the region.

In conjunction with the OCB launch ceremony, the SMU-Bangkok Bank Industry Leaders Dialogue was held and the panel discussed artificial intelligence (AI) as a current digital phenomenon and its implications on businesses in the region. Moderated by Professor Lim Sun Sun, the panel featured SMU's Assistant Professor of Law and Deputy Director of the Centre for Computational Law, Assistant Professor Jerrold Soh; Ms Weng Wanyi, Director of Government Data Office, Smart Nation and Digital Government Office, Singapore; Dr Pichet Durongkaveroj, a member of the Executive Directors Board at Bangkok Bank PCL and Dr Supachai Parchariyanon, Chief Executive Officer and Co-Founder, RISE Corporate Innovation Powerhouse.

These experts shared valuable insights about how AI has become a critical force which can effect positive transformations in businesses – from work process efficiency gains, to greater streamlining of services, to increased ease of ideation and prototyping. Nevertheless, digital transformation can also be highly disruptive and necessitates that organisations are well equipped to support their employees through any shifts or upheavals. The panel also discussed how organisations can leverage the gains from AI adoption while managing emerging challenges. The discussion closely aligns with one of OCB's objectives which is to meet the evolving demands of the workforce in the digital era.

SMU Overseas Centre Bangkok will be led by Centre Director Ms Celine Kuok. Residing in Thailand since 2017, Ms Kuok brings a wealth of experience and a robust network within the higher education sector. Her extensive background in developing leadership programmes and a strong business acumen place her in a good position for OCB to make a positive impact on the local community and the region at large.

"I am privileged to lead OCB's mission to foster transformative knowledge-sharing in Thailand, contributing to its economic growth," said **Celine Kuok, Centre Director of SMU Overseas Centre Bangkok**. "Our goal is to equip individuals with the knowledge and skills to thrive in today's evolving landscape and to empower communities and sectors in Thailand through educational and strategic partnerships."

Setting up the SMU OCB would not have been possible without the strong support from the SMU Board of Trustees. In particular, Khun Panote Sirivadhanabhakdi, Group CEO of Frasers Property Limited and his team have provided invaluable advice and guidance to aid the establishment of OCB.

SMU has longstanding relationships in Thailand through its International Advisory Council, which was established in 2018 and includes leading Thai organisations such as Bangkok Bank, Central Group and Dusit International. Additionally, SMU currently has partnerships with four respected institutions in Thailand: Chulalongkorn University (CU), Mahidol University (MU), Thammasat University (TU) and the National Institute of Development Administration (NIDA). SMU's long-standing partnership with CU since 2001 will be elevated to a strategic level on 27 Oct 2023. As strategic partner universities, SMU and CU will embark on deep and wide collaborations in our common priority focus areas of Digital Transformation, Sustainable Living, and Innovation and Entrepreneurship. This strategic partnership builds on existing collaborations that span student and academic programmes. It leverages our unique strengths and shared



commitment as City Universities to transformative education and impactful research that address societal challenges.

Together with these local partners, SMU has carried out many study, professional and continuing education programmes, faculty study missions, joint research, and has developed joint SMU-X overseas courses which are experiential courses where students collaborate with the public and private sectors to solve real-world problems. Several scholarships and grants are available for prospective SMU students from Thailand, including the Bangkok Bank Scholarship, Ian R. Taylor Asia Scholarship and Mochtar Riady Scholarship.

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### **About Singapore Management University**

A premier university in Asia, the Singapore Management University (SMU) is internationally recognised for its world-class research and distinguished teaching. Established in 2000, SMU's mission is to generate leading-edge research with global impact and to produce broad-based, creative, and entrepreneurial leaders for the knowledge-based economy. SMU's education is known for its highly interactive, collaborative, and project-based approach to learning.

Home to over 12,000 students across undergraduate, postgraduate professional and postgraduate research programmes, SMU comprises eight schools: School of Accountancy, Lee Kong Chian School of Business, School of Economics, School of Computing and Information Systems, Yong Pung How School of Law, School of Social Sciences, College of Integrative Studies and College of Graduate Research Studies. SMU offers a wide range of bachelors', masters', and PhD degree programmes in the disciplinary areas associated with its schools, as well as in multidisciplinary combinations of these areas.

SMU emphasises rigorous, high-impact, multi- and interdisciplinary research that addresses Asian issues of global relevance. SMU faculty members collaborate with leading international researchers and universities around the world, as well as with partners in the business community and public sector. SMU's city campus is a modern facility located in the heart of downtown Singapore, fostering strategic linkages with business, government, and the wider community. [www.smu.edu.sg](http://www.smu.edu.sg)

### **About SMU Overseas Centre Bangkok**

The Singapore Management University (SMU) [Overseas Centre Bangkok](#) (OCB) is the second Overseas Centre established by the University, in alignment with its Growth in Asia strategic priority as part of SMU Vision 2025. The first Overseas Centre was launched in Jakarta in 2022. OCB will be a part of a regional eco-system network of knowledge-sharing nodes that will enable the University to execute initiatives and programmes that will positively impact local communities.

OCB will work with local partners in education and industry to support human capital development in Thailand and enable exchange of knowledge and expertise between Singapore and Thailand. The Centre will provide direct access to innovative, in-depth knowledge across Institutes of Higher Learning in Thailand; build deeper engagement with Thai business leaders and policy makers; and facilitate regular exchanges between SMU students and Thai youth.



OCB will partner with the University's Schools, Offices, Institutes and Centres to contribute to the social and economic development of Thailand and in the process enhance SMU's brand and reputation as a premier Asian university.

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