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SMU's Business Innovations Generator welcomes 36 startups to its August 2026 cohort

These startups comprise startups led by SMU faculty and present and past students, and from founders in Singapore and overseas – with AI-powered startups in the majority

SINGAPORE, [24 September 2026] — Singapore Management University's Institute of Innovation and Entrepreneurship (SMU IIE) has welcomed 36 startups into the August 2026 cohort of its **Business Innovations Generator (BIG)**, the university's equity-free incubation programme which is open to all early-stage founders. Notably, half of the startups in this cohort focus on smart nation and digital economy, alongside ventures in health, urban solutions and sustainability, and manufacturing.

The BIG Aug 2026 cohort includes 22 startups from across the SMU community, comprising three faculty-led ventures, 12 alumni-founded startups, and seven led by current students. As an incubator that is accessible to entrepreneurs regardless of institutional affiliation, this cohort also comprised 14 startups founded by entrepreneurs from outside the SMU community who are building businesses in Singapore and overseas.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is the dominant theme, with 19 of the 36 startups developing products or solutions that incorporate AI across areas, including enterprise software, education, healthcare, sales, sustainability, logistics, finance and climate resilience.

The SMU faculty founders include Professor of Computer Science **Lau Hoong Chuin**, who has conducted research with government agencies and major global corporations such as Fujitsu and IBM. His startup, Horaion, is an AI-powered workforce-scheduling platform for talent solutions in complex, high-volume operations.

Other incubatees include finalists from the biennial Lee Kuan Yew Global Business Plan Competition (LKYGBPC), as well as current SMU student and solopreneur, Lye Jiajun. He is a graduating Information Systems student who founded an AI-powered sales platform that automates sales meetings across email and social channels. Six of the startups in this cohort are incorporated overseas, namely in China (1), India (1), Malaysia (1) and the United States (3). Twelve startups in this cohort have secured early funding, while the rest are founder-funded.

BIG, which was established in 2009, has since incubated 668 startups that have collectively gone on to raise S\$902 million. BIG has also put Singapore on the map as a global launchpad for venture creation. In May 2026, BIG became the first Singapore-based incubation programme to be named the world's Best Accelerator/Incubator Programme at the **Global Startup Awards**, selected from 17 finalists across 154 countries.

Mr Hau Koh Foo, Director of IIE, said, "Entrepreneurship is one of the most powerful ways to turn knowledge into impact. At SMU IIE, we are committed to helping founders move from promising ideas to solutions that can create value for industry, society and the world. The August 2026 BIG cohort demonstrates both the growing maturity of Singapore's innovation ecosystem and the increasing global reach of our community."

"We are particularly encouraged by the number of founders harnessing AI and deep technology to address challenges in healthcare, sustainability, infrastructure and enterprise innovation. Their ambition is exactly what BIG was created to support," he added.

Apart from AI-enabled solutions, a few startups are focused on AI governance, such as **Aethryx**, founded by **Dr Brindha Priyadarshini Jeyaraman**, who holds a Doctor of Engineering degree from SMU. Aethryx helps regulated enterprises deploy trusted AI agents safely, with governance controls, human oversight, and end-to-end auditability. Its platform enables organisations to design, test, and scale agentic AI systems with confidence.

Also addressing a similar issue is **AgentSure**, an SMU spin-out led by a student and faculty member, **Yonghu "Tiger" Li** and **Xiaofei Xie**, Assistant Professor at the SMU School of Computing and Information Systems, respectively. The startup is building the measurement layer for AI resilience. Its platform probes AI agents for behavioural risk and audits their code, enabling enterprises to treat AI risk as something that can be quantified, governed and insured.

Other startups are focused on sustainability, decarbonisation and energy resilience, including US-based **Arculus Solutions**. The company has developed SputteredPipe™, an aluminium and aluminium oxide multilayer coating for oil and gas pipelines that increases throughput, prevents corrosion, and enables existing infrastructure to be repurposed for CO₂ or hydrogen transportation. The team was among the top eight finalists at LKYGBPC last year.

BIG provides founders with an incubation manager, milestone advisory with an Entrepreneur-in-Residence, and direct access to world-class mentors, networking with venture capitalists, and a dedicated team of faculty advisors. BIG startups get access to a range of grants and awards, and curated investor introductions. The founders and their teams can also work at the Jay & Marilyn Ng Greenhouse, an award-winning coworking space in SMU's city campus that serves as a hub for startup building, collaboration and community.

BIG's alumni roster has garnered much success in their fields. These include **SolanaFM**, the blockchain explorer co-founded by Forbes 30 Under 30 honouree Fathurrahman Faizal and acquired by Jupiter Exchange in 2024. **TurtleTree**, is another notable alumnus which was named [Biotech Company of the Year 2022](#) at the Singapore Business Awards for its innovative use of precision fermentation to produce animal-free milk proteins such as lactoferrin.

Sustainability-related startups have also made the headlines in recent years, namely **Magorium**, whose founder Oh Shu Xian is also a [Forbes 30 Under 30](#) honouree for the startup's proprietary technology for converting unsorted plastic waste into NEWBitumen for greener roads; and **AlterPacks**, which won the [United Nations Development Programme \(UNDP\) ASEAN Blue Innovation Challenge](#) in 2025 for its technology that upcycles spent grains and agricultural by-products into home-compostable food packaging.

As Singapore grows as a global innovation and entrepreneurship hub, SMU continues to support founders, boost venture creation and grow connections across academia, industry and the startup ecosystem

Read more about the 36 startups in the August '26 BIG cohort at SMU IIEs website here - iie.smu.edu.sg/big. BIG runs twice a year; interested founders can apply for the January 2027 cohort, [here](#). Photos of BIG Aug 2026 cohort are [here](#).

Enclosure:

Annex: Startups in the August 2026 BIG Cohort

About BIG

The Business Innovations Generator (BIG) is SMU's equity-free incubation programme, established in 2009 under the Institute of Innovation and Entrepreneurship. BIG connects founders to mentors, industry partners, funding pathways and co-working space at the Jay & Marilyn Ng Greenhouse, helping startups move from early concept to market-ready proof points. In May 2026, BIG was named the world's Best Accelerator/Incubator Programme at the Global Startup Awards.

About SMU IIE (新加坡管理大学创新与创业研究院)

The Singapore Management University's Institute of Innovation and Entrepreneurship (IIE) empowers aspiring entrepreneurs and innovators to create positive change. It offers tailored training programmes, an equity-free incubator, and a vibrant community that connects innovators through events and networking opportunities, including the renowned Lee Kuan Yew Global Business Plan Competition (LKYGBPC). For more information visit <https://iie.smu.edu.sg>

About SMU (新加坡管理大学)

Established in 2000, Singapore Management University (SMU) is recognised for its high-impact, multi-disciplinary research that addresses Asian issues of global relevance, and for its interactive, collaborative and project-based approach to learning. Home to over 13,000 students across six schools and two colleges, SMU offers bachelors, masters and PhD programmes across Accountancy, Business, Economics, Information Systems, Integrative Studies, Law and Social Sciences, as well as executive development and continuing education programmes. SMU graduates are consistently ranked among the most employable in Singapore, and command one of the highest mean starting salaries. Through its city campus, SMU enjoys strategic linkages with business, government and the wider community in Singapore and beyond. www.smu.edu.sg

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