

NUS and NTU launch S\$50m National GRIP programme to incubate 300 startups by 2028



By **Ken Wong** - on 29 Oct 2024, 3:59pm



Deputy Prime Minister and Chairman of the National Research Foundation (NRF), Heng Swee Keat, speaking at the launch of National GRIP. Photo: HWZ.

Speaking at the keynote of the **Research, Innovation and Enterprise (RIE) Deep Tech Day**, partner event of Singapore Week of Innovation and Technology (SWITCH), Deputy Prime Minister and Chairman of the National Research Foundation (NRF), Heng Swee Keat, announced the launch of **National Graduate Research Innovation Programme** (National GRIP), which is a collaboration between the NRF, the National University of Singapore (NUS) and the Nanyang Technological University Singapore (NTU, Singapore).

This integrates **two existing incubator programmes** – NUS’s Graduate Research Innovation Programme 2.0 (NUS GRIP 2.0) and NTU’s Lean Launchpad (LLP2.0), with S\$50 million in financial and in-kind support over five years.

According to an NUS spokesperson, “An integrated approach combines the best of both programmes and better supports our start-ups through resource and network sharing between NUS and NTU. This integration aims to streamline overlapping efforts and enhance resource sharing.”

The new **12-month programme** is designed to help teams to bridge the gap between scientific research and market application. It will support startup teams by helping them refine their initial ideas, validate market needs, and design robust business models through a structured programme framework. Teams will have access to personalised mentorship from industry leaders and access to a network of experts. For example, **Legend Capital**, **SOSV Investments LLC**, and **Vertex Holdings** are early strategic partners in place to provide commercial insights to the teams and to increase their investment readiness and access to specialised markets along with deepening their industry expertise.



Associate Professor Benjamin Tee, Vice President (Ecosystem Building), NUS Enterprise. Photo: NUS.

Associate Professor Benjamin Tee, Vice President (Ecosystem Building), NUS Enterprise said:

By integrating the best practices and insights from our individual programmes, we are confident that National GRIP will accelerate growth of globally competitive deep tech startups by providing a well-structured end-to-end support that closely aligns with our nation's RIE strategic plans.”

National GRIP aims to train up to **300 startup teams by 2028** and nurture more than **150 spin-offs by 2030**. In comparison, the two existing incubator programmes – NUS's Graduate Research Innovation Programme 2.0 (NUS GRIP 2.0) and NTU's Lean Launchpad (LLP2.0) together successfully incubated over 400 startup teams and close to 160 spin-offs since their respective programmes were launched.

The programme will be open to aspiring founders, innovators and researchers from Singapore's autonomous universities (AUs) and A*STAR research institutes (RIs). Participants will come together to form teams and draw on their strengths in the areas of research, design, business, engineering, for deep tech creation.

We spoke to Kit Yong, Founder, [Fortebio.tech](#) who had previously been a participant under NUS GRIP 2.0 who felt that that cachet that the combined programme brought, along with the “Made in Singapore” brand would help the startup teams by lending a “certain amount of weight to the name and would help make people in the regions sit up and take notice.” He added that when Singaporean brands group together to go into overseas markets, it's a lot easier to do so together.

When asked what advice he would give to aspiring startups, he said, it was most important that there be a right product market fit and not to product technology just for the sake of it.