Singapore and Sweden to expand cooperation in emerging tech, sustainable energy

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Singapore President Tharman Shanmugaratnam, with Sweden's King Carl XVI Gustaf, at a ceremonial welcome at the Royal Palace in Stockholm on Oct 19. (ST PHOTO: DESMOND FOO)

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Singapore and Sweden will expand cooperation in sustainable energy and emerging technologies, including in the field of quantum.

Research and academic institutions from both countries will also collaborate on next-generation positioning technologies that tap artificial intelligence and 6G – the next generation of mobile networks, said President Tharman Shanmugaratnam on Oct 19.

Next-generation positioning technologies look to go beyond the traditional Global Positioning System to track and locate.

Both countries pledged to cooperate more in support of innovation and to strengthen their societies and economies as they inked a joint declaration on strategic cooperation on

trusted and innovative technologies on Oct 19 at the headquarters of networking and telecommunications firm Ericsson in Stockholm.

President Tharman, who is on a five-day state visit to the Scandinavian country, said Singapore and Sweden share a conviction that as the world becomes more divided and uncertain, “like-minded countries must join up our capabilities and work closely to address shared challenges and grow opportunities together”.

Speaking to the press at Stockholm’s Royal Palace following a ceremonial welcome, President Tharman said the two countries share several common characteristics as small nations that prosper through constant innovation and connections with the wider world.

“We believe in investing in our people, building strong institutions, and working actively to develop domestic solidarity,” he said in a statement delivered alongside Sweden’s King Carl XVI Gustaf.

“We are like-minded in upholding international law, and a rules-based multilateral order. This common outlook has provided a strong foundation for practical cooperation over many years.”

The joint declaration was signed later in the day by Singapore’s Permanent Secretary for National Research and Development in the Prime Minister’s Office Ng Chad-Son and director-general for global affairs at Sweden’s Ministry for Foreign Affairs Mikael Lindvall, with President Tharman and King Carl XVI Gustaf in attendance.

The declaration states that both governments will explore cooperation in areas including semiconductors, Internet of Things technologies, AI models and applications, quantum technologies and 5G and 6G applications.

It also reflects the two countries’ intentions to strengthen resilience in the information and communications technology domain, and ties in cybersecurity as well as post-quantum cryptography, a defence against potential cyberattacks by quantum computers.

With both sides keen to promote the responsible development and deployment of AI, the pledge also paves the way for possible exchanges on approaches to AI governance, public-sector digital transformation, regulatory approaches, workforce preparedness, and practical measures supporting the responsible use of AI.

Separately, Sweden’s Royal Institute of Technology, Ericsson and Singapore’s Nanyang Technological University (NTU) also agreed to collaborate on next-generation positioning technologies.

The aim is to develop technologies that can accurately and reliably determine the locations of robots, drones and other autonomous systems in complex indoor and outdoor environments, even when signals are obstructed, NTU said on Oct 19.

Sustainable energy is also a central priority in the expanding bilateral relationship, President Tharman said, with Singapore's Energy Market Authority and Sweden's Ministry of Climate and Enterprise exploring further opportunities for collaboration.

These include low-carbon power generation solutions like the direct combustion of ammonia – which would be a world first if found feasible, he noted.

During the state visit, the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy will also advance partnerships with the Royal Institute of Technology and the Stockholm School of Economics, opening up more opportunities for research and academic exchanges.

President Tharman said Singapore welcomes Sweden's engagement with South-east Asia and ASEAN, including its signing of the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in July. Sweden, Lithuania, Poland and Romania were the latest to join the regional bloc's peace pact that is a prerequisite for countries that want to establish formal partnerships with ASEAN.

With Singapore taking on the ASEAN chairmanship in 2027, President Tharman said there is more that the Republic can do to strengthen Sweden's engagement with South-east Asia and, more broadly, the links between ASEAN and Europe.

In his speech, King Carl XVI Gustaf said President Tharman's state visit was an opportunity to reflect on the close partnership between Singapore and Sweden as they celebrate 60 years of diplomatic relations, and also to advance cooperation in areas that will shape their futures.

For example, he said Sweden can learn from Singapore's experience with AI and resilient infrastructure that require strong and secure systems.

There are also significant opportunities in sustainable development, the King said, with Sweden "inspired by Singapore's success in combining sustainable urban planning with growth and innovation".

"The transition to a sustainable economy requires efficient transport systems. Together, our expertise in holistic automotive innovation and maritime trade can drive sustainable mobility, and smart transport solutions," he added.

On Oct 17, President Tharman visited the Kungstradgarden metro station in the middle of downtown Stockholm and observed the operations of Connecting Stockholm – transport operator ComfortDelGro's joint venture with Go-Ahead Group.

Since November 2025, Connecting Stockholm has operated and maintained all of Stockholm Metro's seven lines, including 100 stations and six depots.

The joint venture – ComfortDelGro's largest rail passenger operation outside of Singapore – also handles fleet, station and depot facility maintenance, planning and delivery of rail

services, as well customer service.

President Tharman cited ComfortDelGro's operations as an example of Singapore companies with an active commercial presence in Sweden. They include Temasek, which is growing its engagement with Swedish partners, he noted.

Swedish companies also have had a longstanding presence in Singapore, the President said, having both benefited from and contributed to Singapore's innovation journey.

For example, AstraZeneca broke ground in 2024 on a US$1.5 billion (S$1.9 billion) facility for the end-to-end manufacturing of antibody drug conjugates, which are treatments that deliver highly potent cancer-killing agents directly to cancer cells through targeted antibodies. This was the first such facility for the global pharmaceutical sector, President Tharman noted.

Defence is another area of cooperation between the two countries. Swedish defence technology has played an important role in the development of Singapore's navy and air force capabilities for over 40 years, he said, noting an agreement inked in 2024 that enhanced defence technology cooperation.

Recalling his state visit to Singapore in 2024, the Swedish monarch said the strong ties between both countries reinforced his conviction that they share a firm commitment to a global-based international order, science, innovation and sustainability.

"Mr President, the relationship between Singapore and Sweden has continued to make remarkable progress over the past six decades. It reflects longstanding partnership founded on mutual respect, shared interests and close cooperation," he said.