MEDIA FACTSHEET

TRANSFORMING OUR ECONOMY THROUGH DIGITALISATION AND INNOVATION

1.   COVID-19 has reinforced the imperative for businesses and workers to seize digital opportunities for growth and be digitally ready. As we position ourselves to emerge stronger, transforming our economy through digitalisation and innovation will continue to be a priority for the Ministry of Communications and Information (MCI) in 2021.

2.   We will focus our efforts to accelerate the growth of new digital capabilities and scale digital innovation for our enterprises and workers to emerge stronger through these four key thrusts:

   a.   **Scale broad-based digitalisation** by providing small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) access to relevant digitalisation resources and advisory;
   b.   **Develop Digital Leaders** by building a local core of enterprises which are digital leaders that can compete regionally and globally;
   c.   **Catalyse new products and business models** by scaling and speeding up digital innovation to solve business challenges; and
   d.   **Help businesses to remain competitive** through the responsible use of data by providing tools and guidance.

Chief Technology Officer as-a-Service

3.   First, the Infocomm Media Development Authority (IMDA) will introduce a new Chief Technology Officer-as-a-Service (CTOaaS) initiative under the SMEs Go Digital programme. CTOaaS will help SMEs identify and utilise digitalisation resources based on their business needs. It will include (i) a web application to provide quick access to digitalisation resources; and (ii) a shared pool of skilled CTOs for SMEs that need more in-depth digital advisory.

Web application for digitalisation resources

4.   Through the one-stop web application, CTOaaS aims to simplify the search for suitable solutions and speed up SMEs' digitalisation efforts. SMEs will be able to assess their digital maturity and digitalisation needs. Based on their identified needs, enterprise profile and business goals, SMEs will receive tailored recommendations on digital solutions, including the relevant grant support.

5.   SMEs will also be able to compare solutions that best meet their needs and make more informed decisions, as well as request for sales quotations or meeting appointments with shortlisted solution vendors.

6.   The web application can be accessed on the desktop or on-the-go through their mobile devices, catering to SMEs' convenience given their different business operating context.
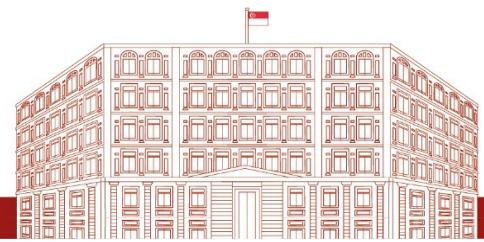
Shared pool of CTOs to provide in-depth digital advisory

7.   Professional and experienced Digital Consultants are often out of reach for SMEs with limited resources. For SMEs that require more in-depth advice, CTOaaS will allow them to tap on a shared pool of CTO-equivalents, or Digital Consultants, who can help them identify their digitalisation needs, select useful digital solutions and manage the implementation of the solution.

8.   Managed by IT consultancy firms appointed by IMDA, these Digital Consultants will be selected based on their digital skills and experience in the respective industries which SMEs belong to. Through CTOaaS, IMDA will help to aggregate SMEs' demand for such digital consultancy so that SMEs can access them at no charge or at an affordable rate.

9.   To ensure that SMEs maximise the benefits from the digital consultancy services, SMEs will conduct a preliminary self-assessment before meeting with the assigned Digital Consultant. This may include a review of their business objectives and digital maturity using a new Digital Acceleration Index (DAI) Tool[1]. This ensures that SMEs are matched to Digital Consultants with the relevant expertise.

10.   More details on how SMEs can access CTOaaS will be made available later in the year.
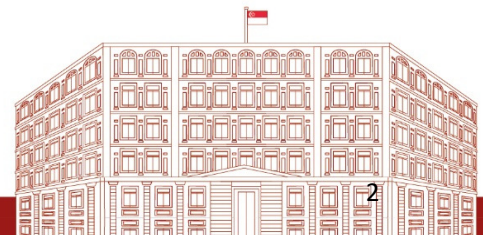
Digital Leaders Programme

11.   Second, the Digital Leaders Programme (DLP), developed jointly by IMDA and Enterprise Singapore (ESG), seeks to help promising local companies across all industries to accelerate their digital transformation journey. The programme will help companies who are ready to integrate digital technology into their core business strategy to develop new digital capabilities, so that they can develop new business models and capture new growth opportunities.

12.   To be eligible for this programme, companies should already have some level of digital maturity. They will be invited to participate in a two-year pilot with support for up to 70% of the qualifying cost in three areas:

   a.   <u>Build an in-house core digital team</u>. Companies will receive funding support to hire a core Digital Team to help them enhance their business model through digitalisation. The team will comprise a senior digital leadership role (e.g. Chief Technology Officer/ Chief Digital Officer), as well as a team of up to five digital talents (e.g. enterprise architects) to execute digital initiatives for the organisation;

   b.   <u>Chart a digital roadmap</u>. Engage consultancy services to develop digital roadmaps which will guide key action plans and implementation of digital projects; and

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1 The DAI Tool uses the Boston Consulting Group's Digital Acceleration Index (DAI) to measure and benchmark a SME's digital maturity against that of its peers. The DAI is a composite index of 36 digital maturity indicators, ranging from digital business strategies and investments in digital talent, to digitalisation of business processes and integration with sector-wide digital ecosystems. It provides a wholistic picture of an SME's digital maturity and helps the SME to make more informed decisions on the next steps to take to deepen its digital capabilities. With the DAI Tool, SMEs can conduct self-assessments all year round.

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2

c. <u>Develop Proof of Concepts for new markets/ customer segments</u>. Development of new digital products and services to create new revenue streams.

13.   To support companies in the programme, they will also be linked up with ecosystem partners such as system integrators, technology companies, strategy consultants and talent search firms, to facilitate the recruitment of the digital team, development of the digital roadmaps as well as to support the company's innovation plans.

14.   The DLP, to be launched in April 2021, will be implemented and managed by IMDA and ESG. Companies will be assessed based on factors such as their commitment to digital transformation, digital ambition as well as the ability to create economic spin-offs (e.g. development of new business models and creating good job opportunities for local talent in Singapore).

Scale up of IMDA's Open Innovation Platform

15.   Third, IMDA is also enhancing its Open Innovation Platform (OIP) in mid-2021 to catalyse digital innovation nationwide. The enhanced OIP will comprise new features to increase accessibility to innovation and accelerate the development and adoption of digital solutions.

16.   Since its launch in 2018, OIP has facilitated over 190 challenges from across the economy with a vibrant pool of tech solvers. With a pool of more than 10,000 solvers, and over 60 innovation projects developed or currently in development, the OIP has successfully helped to solve the innovation needs of enterprises and public agencies, while providing tech companies access to commercial opportunities.
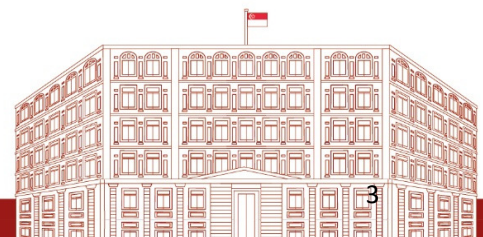
17.   Building on this success, IMDA aims to bring tech solutions to more businesses quickly and enable digital transformation at scale. The enhanced OIP will further strengthen Singapore as a thriving regional innovation hub that supports economic growth for both large and small enterprises.

18.   It will provide smarter and faster recommendations, and tools for faster testing and development. This will be done through two new features:

a. A <u>Discovery Engine</u> that makes the searching and matching of tech solvers to problem owners easier, through automated recommendations by analysing problem statements and recommending solvers with relevant experience. This will increase the accessibility of innovation to more enterprises.

The improved matching process will also allow more companies, including SMEs and multinational corporations, to effectively participate in co-innovation and digital transformation.

b. A <u>Digital Bench</u> that speeds up Proof-of-Concept (POC) development through a virtual sandbox and testing environment. It will provide direct access to digital tools, reusable software assets, testbed environments and community partners – to support the testing and development of POCs. By providing a digital testbed hosted on cloud infrastructure, the OIP will fast-track development and the

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3

eventual commercialisation of innovative solutions. The Digital Bench is expected to shorten the development cycle of POCs from months to weeks.

19.	Together, both features are expected to enable OIP to scale and cater to an even wider spectrum of innovation needs, facilitating hundreds more matches between enterprises and solution providers.
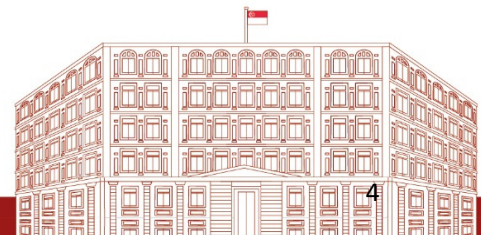
Better Data Driven Business Programme

20.	Lastly, IMDA is launching the Better Data Driven Business (BDDB) programme to provide free tools and guidance to help businesses better safeguard their customers' personal data while making more effective use of data to remain competitive.

21.	The programme follows the amendment of the Personal Data Protection Act in Nov 2020, which came into force on 1 Feb 2021. As part of these amendments, the requirements for organisational accountability were strengthened. Businesses need to collect and use data responsibly to maintain consumer trust and participation in the digital economy.

22.	The BDDB aims to support two types of SMEs – (i) those that are starting to learn how to use data to generate insights; and (ii) those that seek to apply and share data for more complex uses. The BDDB, which is embedded with data protection measures and practices, adopts a differentiated approach to better assist both types of SMEs.

Type of SME	Approach
SMEs that are starting to learn how to use data to generate insights	The BDDB programme aims to help them to start using data – with a focus on anonymised data and non-personal data - to support decision making. It will offer a free, plug-and-play business intelligence tool for these businesses. The tool will allow businesses to convert their data into interactive visual dashboards, which will help them glean business insights to achieve common business objectives. These business objectives are growing the sales of their top products, acquiring new customers, upselling or cross selling products, optimising their inventory management and allocating manpower. Step-by-step guidance will also be provided to help these businesses process and interpret data for insights to develop actionable business plans while protecting customers' personal data at the same time. These resources will be made available in the second half of 2021.
SMEs that want to apply and share data for more complex uses	The BDDB programme aims to equip them with the knowledge, tools and training so that they have the confidence to leverage data in a safe and responsible manner for wider and more complex range of uses.

	Many of these SMEs face challenges in making full use of the data they collect due to various reasons (e.g. lack of resources, time or in-house technical expertise). They may also be cautious about sharing and combining datasets across business lines, departments, or external partners. The BDDB programme will help these SMEs: a. Collect necessary data safely, via guidance on how to anonymise data collected; b. Combine data across systems, by offering relevant data tools and training that include appropriate protection of data; and c. Share data externally with partners and suppliers safely, by providing guidance and sample contract clauses for data sharing, in line with the requirements of the PDPA obligations. The resources for this group of SMEs will be available at a later date.

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5