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ASIA EDITION

TechInnovation 2021: Collaboration, Innovation, and Sustainability at entrepreneurship

September 30, 2021 | News | By Hithaishi C Bhaskar

The 10th edition of TechInnovation presents an array of opportunities to catalyse technology transfer and partnerships for business growth.



TechInnovation 2021, IPI's flagship technology matching event, was held as a fully digital event that runs for 24 hours a day from 28 to 30 September 2021. It brought together international technology providers and enterprises to accelerate the commercialisation of emerging technologies, seed licensing opportunities, and foster open innovation collaborations.

At the Opening Ceremony, Dr Tan See Leng, Second Minister for Trade and Industry, Singapore called upon SMEs to tap into innovation, technology, and intellectual property (IP) to stay relevant and competitive in these challenging times. "It is increasingly important for our enterprises to collaborate, innovate, and seize opportunities. TechInnovation is one such platform for businesses to network and co-develop technological solutions and it enables SMEs and start-ups to learn best practices, cross-pollinate ideas and explore new collaborations," he said.

In highlighting some of the partnerships that have materialized out through IPI and TechInnovation over the few past years, Dr Tan also assured Singapore enterprises that the Singapore government has dedicated resources to build up a strong innovation ecosystem with a comprehensive suite of levers for the industry.

2021 marks the 10th edition of TechInnovation as well as IPI's tenth anniversary. This year more than 160 exhibitors including 11 national innovation agencies and technology consortia, and more than 2,000 participants from across the world are participating in the event. Over 400 technologies from 20 countries will be showcased at TechInnovation.

The theme of TechInnovation 2021 is "A Sustainable and Resilient Future". Over 50 leading industry thought leaders in technology and design-led innovation have been invited to speak. They will discuss how to use sustainable technologies to meet current challenges, such as the ways in which cities can overcome the impact of climate change, build a more resilient food future, and transform the way we look at health and wellness post-pandemic.

Among some of the sustainable city solutions being exhibited include technologies to recover precious materials from electronic waste streams, smart energy storage systems, new approaches that tackle environmental and food waste and enabling solutions in healthcare.

Open Innovation

At TechInnovation 2021, eleven key partners such as Hong Kong Baptist University, National IT Industry Promotion Agency from South Korea, the Netherlands embassy and the National Research and Innovation Agency (BRIN) from Indonesia, will present technology showcases featuring more than 100 virtual pitches on enabling technologies.

These sessions are available as on-demand webinars on the TechInnovation Virtual Portal. Crowdsourcing @TechInnovation offers corporates an open innovation platform to engage members of industry, research and development, to co-innovate and pilot scalable solutions for deployment. This year, global industry leaders WS Audiology, Shell, and Unilever, will share their challenges and opportunities in their respective sectors and extend an invitation to collaborate on solutions, technologies, and partnerships, in the spirit of Open Innovation.

In addition, TechInnovation will feature Design Think Tank, a partnership between DesignSingapore Council and IPI to explore a design-led approach in addressing challenge statements from corporates, and foster meaningful collaborations between designers and technologists. Some of the organisations crowdsourcing for solutions this year include Gloobe AB, Cheng Yew Heng Candy Factory for Food Culture Singapore and the Tsao Foundation.

Sustainable Food and Nutrition

The conference at TechInnovation will also see speakers discuss the challenges of sustainably feeding a growing world population that is currently beset with climate change and a pandemic.

In Singapore, which imports 90% of its food from over 170 countries, a quest has been set to enhance food security. The ambitious ‘30 by 30’ goal is a challenge that will see Singapore aim to produce 30% of its nutritional needs locally by 2030.

“The role of innovation will be instrumental in addressing a host of complex issues surrounding food security – ranging from alternative food sources, food waste and sustainable farming methods, all while meeting the nutritional needs and demands of today’s consumers,” said Wong Lup Wai, CEO of IPI. At TechInnovation 2021, exhibitors are showcasing a range of technologies that can support the food supply chain. Solutions include blockchain technology to enhance food traceability, LED light recipes to extend harvest periods, and algae platform solutions for various applications.

TechInnovation is also hosting IPHatch 2021, a programme that unlocks and matches technologies from multinational companies (MNCs) with start-ups to accelerate their business. The idea is to empower start-ups with deep tech like IoT, sustainable food production, and agritech, to bring about social and economic impact.

Health and Wellness

The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed how we manage healthcare systems and brought the matter to the fore in all nations. This crisis has accelerated demand for innovation in healthcare and provided fertile ground for forward-looking, agile, and innovation-ready SMEs to grow rapidly and start new lines of business.

TechInnovation 2021 will showcase the latest opportunities in this field, including the work of some exciting Singapore companies, such as non-invasive diagnostics, as well as innovative technological solutions for commercialisation from the Singapore Health Technologies Consortium (HealthTec).

Professor Tan Chorh Chuan, Executive Director of MOH Office for Healthcare Transformation (MOHT) and the first Chief Health Scientist at the Ministry of Health (MOH) says, “A major priority for Singapore’s health transformation is to redouble efforts to promote health and prevent disease at the population level. To do so, we need innovations that effectively empower individuals and patients to take charge of their own health, and for care teams to better support this shift. Data analytics and management, AI and digital technologies will play a key role.”

Covergae by Hithaishi Bhaksar