



Develop a vibrant and connected city of opportunity

Coming up with innovative ways to create space, such as clusters of mutually reinforcing and supportive companies, can yield economies of scale and encourage co-development of innovative solutions.

Setting aside test-bedding zones is also useful in helping businesses refine their products, notes the CFE. The Government should create a regulatory environment that supports innovation and risk-taking.

This can be done by testing regulatory innovations to enable trials of new products and services in real-world environments, streamlining support schemes for new enterprises and developing globally competitive enterprises in Singapore.

Develop and implement Industry Transformation Maps

To tie the strategies together, Industry Transformation Maps (ITMs) are crucial platforms to integrate planning and implementation for each industry's growth. Six ITMs in the retail, food services, food manufacturing, precision engineering, logistics and hotel sectors have been rolled out so far, with another 17 to be rolled out.

As different industries have different challenges and opportunities, the CFE recommends adopting a tailored approach for each industry to ensure that efforts and resources are focused on where the potential can be best realised.

Another way to improve the ITMs is to organise related ITMs into clusters to maximise synergies across industries and take advantage of skills adjacencies to support manpower needs.

To succeed in the future economy, the report also emphasises the important role that Trade Associations and Chambers (TACs) and unions play in helping enterprises address future challenges and harness new opportunities. It encourages TACs to step forward to lead more industry-level initiatives, and support enterprises in scaling up and entering overseas markets. Unions should continue to nurture a sense of ownership among Singapore workers and help them prepare for future jobs.

Partner each other to enable innovation and growth

The report also calls for enterprises to work together to support one another. Big players, for instance, can lend a hand by adopting corporate venture capital strategies, while providing startups access to funding and networks.

In 2010, Zicom Group, a precision engineering and manufacturing firm, invested close to \$5 million in Biobot Surgical, a medical technology company.

Biobot had developed a surgical robot for cancer biopsies, which makes the procedure minimally invasive, with high accuracy and lower risks of infection. The solution is just what Zicom Group needed to move from being just a manufacturer to a product owner.

For Biobot, having Zicom Group's support and branding means higher

customer confidence in its products. Biobot can also leverage Zicom Group's team of experts in various fields, such as engineering and finance, to scale up and further improve its product. (See full story on page 16)

In the report, the CFE also recognises that more can be done to drive innovation among SMEs and startups. The Government will generate lead demand under the enhanced Partnerships for Capability Transformation (PACT) programme, known as GOV-PACT, where SMEs and startups will be funded at various stages of product and solution development for these innovative projects initiated by Government agencies as their clients.

Creating and seizing opportunities

Overall, the CFE's approach is an inclusive one, with the aim of ensuring that the fruits of the nation's growth will be enjoyed by all Singaporeans.

"The CFE recommendations aim to help our people and our enterprises develop deep capabilities that will enable Singapore to reshape our economy and seize new opportunities at home and globally," said Minister Iswaran.

Ultimately, Minister Iswaran added, the CFE's efforts must translate into better opportunities for all Singaporeans, with sustainable wage growth and meaningful careers, and a conducive environment for businesses to grow. ■

SEVEN STRATEGIES TO STAY AHEAD IN THE FUTURE ECONOMY

- 1 Deepen and diversify international connections
- 2 Acquire and utilise deep skills
- 3 Strengthen enterprise capabilities to innovate and scale up
- 4 Build strong digital capabilities
- 5 Develop a vibrant and connected city of opportunity
- 6 Develop and implement Industry Transformation Maps
- 7 Partner each other to enable growth and innovation