Global Founder Programme

Information Booklet

EDB SINGAPORE

April 2025

Singapore's own journey of nation-building has required us to embrace the qualities of being innovative, bold, nimble, constantly learning, and building deep capabilities — all at the same time.

The Singapore Economic Development Board (EDB), has over the last six decades partnered the world's largest companies and visionaries to reinvent and develop industries.

In recent times, we have worked with serial founders and builders of some of the world's most widely-used products to explore and grow new ventures.

Even the most experienced operators and technologists face many challenges and risks when pursuing new endeavours; we understand that and have developed a targeted and holistic support programme.

Read on to find out what we have in store for you.

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EDB's Global Founder Programme (GFP) is for you if you plan to build a new venture and are:

A successful founder who has founded and scaled a startup into a global business

or

A key employee of an MNC or tech unicorn who has developed and grown a major new product or business line

or

A deep tech founder who has led a startup to achieve strong commercial traction in areas such as healthcare, hardware, AI and green economy

A glimpse into our founder community

William Tanuwijaya

William led Tokopedia as its co-founder, transforming it from an E-commerce startup to become one of Indonesia's biggest tech success stories. The company's merger with GoJek created GoTo, the country's largest consumer tech company that powers millions of businesses today. A seasoned 0-to-1 builder, William is now turning his focus to the next frontier of innovation in consumer tech.

Noah Pepper

Noah co-founded Lucky Sort, a machine learning startup focused on real-time text analysis using visual analytics, which was later acquired by Twitter. At Stripe, he was responsible for shipping key global products. After holding leadership positions in the engineering, product management, and application divisions, he became Stripe's APAC Business Lead, playing a key role in the company's expansion into the region. Noah is now building a new technology company acquiring and transforming high-stakes services firms.

Phil Inagaki

Phil is Managing Partner and Chief Investment Officer at Xora, an early-stage deep tech venture firm. A serial founder and deep tech operator, Phil has built and scaled multiple companies at the frontier of science and engineering. In 2023, Phil co-founded Amperesand, a grid infrastructure solutions startup, which he currently serves as Board Chair. Earlier in his career, he co-founded Polyera, a semiconductor materials startup that grew into a global leader in flexible electronics before its acquisition by SAES Getters.

GFP: Start

Joining GFP starts with getting to know Singapore inside out and plugging into all the right networks.

Experience Singapore on Your Terms

Gain access to exclusive visa pathways to experience Singapore firsthand with your family. This gives you ample time to immerse yourself in a vibrant ecosystem to explore business opportunities, lifestyle options, and more, all while staying in a world-class environment that fosters innovation and growth.

One such pathway is ONE Pass, a five-year visa that accords the holder with:

Flexibility

- You can concurrently start, operate, and work for multiple companies in Singapore at any one time (subject to your employment contract terms).
- No need to reapply for a pass if you change jobs.
- There is exemption from the Complementarity Assessment Framework and Fair Consideration Framework job advertising requirements.

Passes for the family

- Your spouse can work after applying for a Letter of Consent.
- Eligible family members can apply for Dependant Passes (DPs) or Long-Term Visit Passes (LTVPs).

GFP Founders will receive EDB's invitation to apply for the ONE Pass, with facilitation support for your pass application.

Build Connections with an Exclusive Founder Network

Join a thriving community of global founders who are building new ventures in Singapore. Engage in bespoke programming, including a member's forum and closed-door events — all designed to foster collaboration, peer-to-peer support, and access to strategic partners, investors, and advisors who will be your go-to resource for business growth and innovation.

Meaningful connections brokered by EDB

- Venture A received an investment from a leading international venture capital (VC) firm after connecting at one of our events.
- Venture B met and appointed board members through our networks.
- Venture C secured new customer connections via one of our business matching sessions.

Navigate Business and Life with Confidence

Benefit from guided introductions to key resources and networks that will help you explore the full potential of Singapore's business ecosystem with ease. You will also be provided a set of digital resources and personalised recommendations for family needs like education and housing.

GFP: Build

Assemble Your A-Team Quickly and Efficiently

Once you are committed to launching in Singapore, you can access government-backed support to facilitate the visas for co-founders and key employees, giving you speed and certainty in hiring and setting up your venture. Each venture will receive facilitated support for Tech.Pass applications for eligible co-founders and Employment Pass applications for your team setup.

Tech.Pass holders are able to take on multiple roles concurrently in Singapore. They can:

- Start and operate one or more tech companies;
- Be an employee at one or more Singapore-based companies at any time;
- Be a consultant or mentor, or lecture in local institutions of higher learning; and/or
- Be an investor or director in one or more Singapore-based companies.

Tech.Pass holders can have their spouse, children, and parents with them in Singapore by sponsoring their stay via a DP or an LTVP issued by the Ministry of Manpower. The pass will be valid for two years in the first instance and can be renewed for another two years upon meeting renewal criteria.

Once you have established your venture, tap our support to build and ship at record speed.

An A-Team for Arkadiah

Founded by Grab leadership alum Reuben Lai, Arkadiah was born with a mission to establish the largest nature technology platform to support nature restoration across Southeast Asia and help companies and governments value and steward natural capital.

Arkadiah's proprietary technology uses AI, light detection and ranging, satellite imagery, and ground truthing to provide transparent and verifiable data, leading to precise carbon measurement. The platform digitises and streamlines the deployment of climate solutions for project developers, landowners, and corporations.

Establishing Arkadiah's headquarters in Singapore was primarily driven by the opportunity to access the right talent within a conducive ecosystem.

Arkadiah boasts an interdisciplinary Singapore-based team of experts from various fields such as ecology, technology, and finance, hailing from different cultures and countries, including Singapore, India, Germany, Sweden, and the US. Reuben believes this multinational team, with their global perspectives and specialised capabilities, has given the company a competitive edge in addressing environmental challenges holistically.

Secure Strategic Capital

Ventures can be introduced to a range of financial and strategic investors, including corporations, regional VC firms, family offices, and SG Growth Capital.
SG Growth Capital is a government investment entity that brings together the expertise and networks of EDB Investments (EDBI) and SEEDS Capital.

> **At Peak XV, we have partnered with exceptional founders in Singapore to build enduring global businesses. The city-state's unique mix of quality talent, capital access, and connectivity to Asia and the rest of the world has consistently enabled startups to scale with speed and ambition. I look forward to the launch of GFP, which will further strengthen this vibrant community of entrepreneurs and innovators.**

Shailendra Singh, Managing Director, Peak XV

> **In Singapore, technology transcends boundaries. Singapore welcomes and empowers the world's boldest entrepreneurs to amplify their vision worldwide and create transformative global businesses. Through GFP, Singapore provides unparalleled support in offering world-class mentorship and access to strategic connections and capital. GFP also fosters a tight-knit community of entrepreneurs and innovators, which comes together often to discuss global technology advances and build long-lasting business relationships.**

Maninder Gulati, Venture Partner, Lightspeed SEA Advisors Pte. Ltd. Investor in 100+ technology startups across AI, blockchain, consumer, climate, and enterprise tech.

Iterate Your Product-Market Fit with Expert Support and First Customers

Ventures with suitable products will be connected to companies that are looking to pilot new tech and solutions. Eligible pilots developed or deployed in Singapore may also qualify for grant support from EDB.

Beyond lead demand, the programme also provides ventures with access to EDB's Venture Builders and network of experts, who can offer deep insights into Southeast Asia and various industries and networks in Singapore and the larger Asian region.

- Venture Builders: They are dedicated EDB representatives who will be deployed on a full-time basis for a limited duration to support selected ventures on refining your business strategy, validating venture ideas and product-market fit, and improving venture operations.
- Network of Experts: They are industry veterans who can advise on selected venture activities such as fundraising, go-to-market strategy, marketing, technology, and product development.

> **EDB's Venture Builder played a pivotal role in FailSafe's early growth. They helped us refine our problem-solution fit and crafted a high-impact go-to-market strategy to help companies keep their digital assets safe.**
>
> We sharpened our market positioning through extensive customer research. With EDB's guidance, we strengthened our product pitch and secured multiple proof-of-concept partnerships, which accelerated our path to product-market fit. This hands-on, tailored support underscores EDB's deep commitment to empower high-potential ventures. We are grateful for their partnership in advancing FailSafe's mission to fortify blockchain enterprises, digital assets, and smart contracts with defence-in-depth cybersecurity solutions.

Foo Wui Ngiap, President and Co-founder, FailSafe

GFP: Accelerate

Acceleration support starts with us scoping out the job to be done and developing an effective plan to help your venture access the right connections and programmes.

Scale Globally with our Tailored Support for Selected High-Potential Ventures

Whether you are looking for a new customer in the next market or scouting out a like-minded go-to-market partner, you will receive dedicated support from our team to achieve your goals.

Our partnership with EDB was instrumental in conceptualising and kickstarting our business-to-business (B2B) market approach and go-to-market strategy for banks.

Over a focused 13-week period, their deep industry insights and facilitated connections helped refine our proposition into a robust white-label solution. This "wealth-as-a-service" offering is now a core pillar of our expansion strategy, enabling us to partner with large and small banks globally.

Caesar Sengupta,
CEO and Co-founder, Arta Finance

Build Visibility for Your Venture

Uplift your venture's visibility to prospective customers and talent through suitable features on EDB's social media channels (with more than 230,000 followers) and platforms that EDB partners with*, such as Gold House, Founders Forum, and Global Finance & Technology Network.

*This is a non-exhaustive list of partners and platforms.

Access to Government Support Schemes for Growth

As you scale your new venture, you can explore other suitable EDB schemes that offer support for building new capabilities and developing talent. EDB will also facilitate connections to other programmes aimed at catalysing growth in Singapore's tech and business ecosystems.

Apply

https://go.gov.sg/gfp

EDB works closely with each founder and venture to deliver tailored support that maximises their potential for success. To ensure that all founders who join us on this journey have the best shot at building a global business, our support is optimised for a limited programme cohort size.

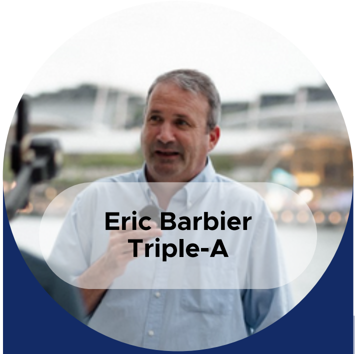
The support and benefits offered through the GFP are designed to meet the unique needs of each founder and venture. While EDB strives to provide a comprehensive range of resources, the availability and scope of benefits may vary between ventures based on factors such as programme fit, stage of growth, and strategic alignment.

Join our community of serial founders and builders of global products

The best founders build better when they are backed by a community of like-minded visionaries. That is why we have brought together some of the world's top unicorn founders and builders whose products have achieved global scale and adoption. EDB's GFP community hails from across the world, bringing their unique networks and experiences together to form a high-powered collective that is transforming industries.

Caesar Sengupta
Arta Finance

Arta is an AI-powered investment platform democratising wealth management solutions previously available only to the ultra-wealthy.



Eric Barbier
Triple-A

Triple-A is a digital currency payment gateway that enables seamless global transactions for businesses.

Huey Lin

Experienced fintech operator, active in angel investing, back to building what's next.

Lu Jianfeng
Wiz.AI

Wiz.AI is a generative AI company providing hyper-localised and omnichannel customer engagement solutions.

Kishore Moorjani & Shawn Low, LXA

LXA is a tech-enabled asset manager institutionalising residential mortgages as an asset class for investors in Asia.

Magnus Ekbom
SEAI

SEAI Technologies delivers proprietary API-based machine learning and AI models that solve real-world business problems for medium- and large-scale enterprises.

Dave Friedman
Lumilens

Lumilens is building next-generation photonics products for high-performance computing.

Greg Mittman
HySights

HySights is a ratings agency for new energy, focusing on low-emission hydrogen-based and bio-based fuels.

Singapore is where the world meets

Singapore is the nexus of global business, innovation, and talent[1].

Our exceptional connectivity underscores our global appeal as a choice location for both business and leisure. Changi Airport facilitates seamless travel in its role as an international aviation hub, connecting more than 100 airlines to over 300 cities.

Playing a pivotal role in global trade and supply chains, Singapore has among the highest number of free trade agreements, along with digital and green economy agreements.

In Singapore's compact ecosystem, you can meet partners, investors, and customers across our city — all within a 45-minute drive or via our world-class public transport. Make new connections and deepen existing relationships at the suite of premier events that take place here. The largest fintech conference in the world? Check. Taylor Swift? Check. Formula 1? Check.

Learn more about why your venture needs a global stage.

1 Between 2013 and 2023, Singapore had the highest number of completed regional HQs in the Asia-Pacific region. More than 4,500 tech startups, 500 VC firms, and 220 accelerators call Singapore home.

A great place to live

> **"We wanted [our children] to experience living in different places and view the world as a bigger place."**
>
> *Serge Longin, Co-founder, BDV (built:different)*

We are proud that Singapore is consistently ranked as one of the best places to live on Earth. But don't just take it from us. Hear it from Belarus-born American serial founder Serge Longin, who made the move and never looked back.

"My wife and I are planners. So, we knew about fifteen years ago that we'd be moving to Singapore."

While Serge did not know the exact details of how this ambitious plan would play out, both he and his wife Lucy knew that they wanted to raise a family outside of the US.

"This is probably a really boring answer, but we knew exactly what we were in for before moving here," Serge mentions when asked if he experienced any culture shock after setting foot in Singapore. "We felt at home after only just a handful of months of having been here."

The people of Singapore also welcomed Serge and his family right off the bat. "We had friends here before we moved. They helped introduce us to others and quickly we had a little community going," he shares.

Having started a career in Microsoft, Serge went on to co-found, scale, and sell two vertical software-as-a-service companies, Club Automation and RevenueWell, prior to the move to Singapore. Serge understood the importance of plugging into the community. In just a matter of months, he has already attended more than 300 coffee chats, making the most of available educational and professional networks to meet new people.

This network has not only supported Serge in settling into Singapore but has also proven critical in fostering the collaboration that led to the launch of his venture studio BDV (built:different). While still in its early days, BDV is positioned to build 16 companies over five years, focused on two themes: reducing friction for cross-border businesses and tech-enabled high-stakes services.

"We want to do our part by helping founders build meaningful B2B companies that make the doing of business simpler across borders. Built in Singapore for the world."

Read the full article by the Singapore Global Network on Serge's journey to and in Singapore [here](#).

A place where founders can build differently

Build with ease

Singapore is consistently ranked as one of the easiest places to do business, and not just for corporates. We are startup friendly too, and proud to have been named the top startup ecosystem in Asia by Startup Genome.

Enjoy a plug-and-play experience with our advanced digital infrastructure. Registering your company, performing Know Your Customer processes, or making banking arrangements? Do them online while you are at the beach or bar enjoying a Singapore Sling.

Our strong rule of law, intellectual property protection framework, and role in international arbitration make us a trusted location for global businesses.

Build for impact

Singapore is in the heart of a fast-growing region — not just in terms of consumer demand, but also trade and business flows. Opportunities abound, but so do challenges, especially in climate change and healthcare.

We have built a pool of more than 47,000 researchers, scientists, and engineers across deep tech. Singapore has also invested S$28 billion to support research and supercharge ideas and S$440 million to drive the development of deep tech startups. Work with us to solve the hardest problems in the advanced manufacturing, sustainability, and digital industries.

We believe in enabling innovation. That is why Singapore has originated several first-in-world regulatory policies, including in the fields of cell-cultured protein and AI governance.

Build with the best

Tap into a multinational, multidisciplinary talent base that has been co-shaped and trained in partnership with tech giants and regional unicorns.

With a foundation of corporate innovation labs from the likes of Hyundai, J&J, Seagate, and Roche that have been established in Singapore, work with industry leaders to scale your ideas.

Singapore ranks 115th internationally for population size, but fourth worldwide for global innovation. We are able to punch above our weight due to the sophistication of our research institutes, quality of our universities, and sustained commitment to investment in research.

Build with capital

Access the region's funding. Singapore accounts for two-thirds of the region's total VC funding AND we rank first globally for VC investment per capita.

You decide how you want to invest your earnings. Enjoy capital gains without taxes AND a 17% flat-rate corporate tax, with exemptions for new startups and preferential rates for high-growth businesses.

With 500 VC firms and 1,400 single-family offices integrated within our ecosystem, there is no wonder Singapore has contributed to 31 out of the 55 unicorns from Southeast Asia.

The Global Founder Programme is designed to supercharge the birth of tomorrow's global champions.

If you're an experienced founder with a bold vision for the future, join us and your fellow founders in creating new value for the world.

Let's build your next venture together, from Singapore.

Apply

https://go.gov.sg/gfp

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