MEDIA RELEASE

Ngee Ann Polytechnic Launches SEA Unbound to Build Singapore's Largest Network of Future-Ready Regional Talent

$10 million SEA Talent Fund to equip every NP student with Southeast Asia knowledge, networks and in-market experience

First polytechnic to establish overseas centres in Bangkok, Ho Chi Minh City and Jakarta, anchoring a regional partnership network of more than 40 corporations, universities and government agencies

Singapore, 28 May 2026 – Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) today launched "**SEA Unbound**", its Southeast Asia (SEA) Readiness Strategy to equip students with the skills, experience and networks to seize opportunities across the region. The launch was graced by **Ms Gan Siow Huang, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs and Trade & Industry**.

Backed by a **$10 million SEA Talent Fund** from The Ngee Ann Kongsi and bolstered by a **40-member strong regional partnership network**, SEA Unbound sets out NP's ambition to build Singapore's largest network of future-ready talent for Southeast Asia over the next five years.

With the establishment of overseas centres in Bangkok, Ho Chi Minh City and Jakarta, NP is the **first polytechnic in Singapore** with a presence across three key Southeast Asian cities. These on-the-ground hubs will connect students, staff and alumni with local industry leaders, start-up founders and mentors, providing in-country support for NP's immersion programmes and enabling sustained collaboration.

According to the SBF National Business Survey 2025 [1], Singapore businesses remain highly internationalised, with Indonesia and Thailand among the most preferred markets for expansion. With a population of 700 million, a youthful demographic and a fast-growing middle class, Southeast Asia is already the world's fifth-largest economy and on track to become the fourth by 2030.

As intra-regional trade and investment grow, demand is rising for talent who can operate with cultural intelligence across diverse markets – making Southeast Asia readiness both a national imperative and a competitive advantage.

"Opening doors for our students to be Southeast Asia ready is a core pillar of our NP2030 vision, and SEA Unbound brings this commitment to life. Through our partnerships, in-market programmes and overseas centres, our students will graduate with real-world experience, strong networks and the cultural intelligence to thrive across the region. We are also deeply grateful to The Ngee Ann Kongsi for their generous support in helping us expand these opportunities for our students," said Mr Lim Kok Kiang, Principal & CEO, Ngee Ann Polytechnic.

[1] Singapore Business Federation National Business Survey 2025- Scaled Internationally Supplement report

"The Ngee Ann Kongsi is proud to support initiatives that give youths meaningful exposure to Southeast Asia. We hope these experiences will inspire students to better understand the region and prepare them to navigate an increasingly interconnected future," said Dato' Sri Chia Chor Meng, JP, BBM (L), President, The Ngee Ann Kongsi.

Expanding Regional Exposure through New Fully-Funded Student Programmes

At the core of SEA Unbound are two new fully-funded programmes to give students direct, immersive exposure to the region over the course of five years:

- **SEA Immersion and Leadership (SAIL) Programme**: A two-week flagship leadership programme for 300 student leaders. Participants will immerse themselves in two vibrant Southeast Asian cities engaging with industry leaders, entrepreneurs and community changemakers through curated site visits and dialogues that explore how the region is evolving. They will also collaborate with students from local universities to address urban challenges through hackathons.

- **SEA Study-Observe-Adapt-Reflect (SOAR) Programme**: A one-week overseas programme offered as part of students' curriculum. Over 3,500 students enrolled in 17 courses will deepen their domain skills and understand how their discipline applies in a Southeast Asian context.

Supporting the SAIL and SOAR signature programmes, as well as overseas internships to SEA cities, the dedicated SEA Talent Fund allows students to deepen their engagement with this region. The SEA Talent Fund complements existing grants that support NP's line-up of established overseas programmes, enabling **three in four NP students to graduate with global immersion experience by 2030**.

Embedding Southeast Asia in Learning

Beyond overseas exposure, Southeast Asia readiness will be embedded in students' curriculum. By 2028, every NP student will acquire foundational knowledge of Southeast Asia through regional content integrated into their learning.

NP will also roll out a suite of staff programmes aimed at equipping one in three academic staff with Southeast Asian expertise to bring current, on-the-ground knowledge into the classroom. These will range from one-week regional exposure trips, three-week industry immersions, to five-month in-market attachments.

Grounding SEA Unbound in Real-World Expertise

At the heart of SEA Unbound is NP's **SEA Partners Network**, which brings together more than 40 corporations, universities and government agencies across the region – a number that is expected to grow as SEA Unbound gains momentum. Notably, many of the members from the Network are NP alumni who have found success in their foray into the region and are keen to mentor the next generation of talent.

Key partners include PT Elang Mahkota Teknologi (EMTEK), Innovation Factory by the Salim Group, King Mongkut's University of Technology Thonburi, Mapletree Vietnam, Sea Limited, United Overseas Bank

and Yayasan Tarumanagara. Together, they give NP students direct access to the industries and institutions shaping the future of Southeast Asia.

Supporting this ecosystem is an eight-member Advisory Panel of regional business leaders, providing strategic direction and ensuring alignment with industry needs and emerging trends. The panel also contributes to student mentorship and development programmes, industry partnerships, staff capability building and regional network expansion – grounding NP's approach in real-world insight.

"Operating across Southeast Asia means navigating different market conditions, business environments and ways of working. Graduates who can adapt quickly across these contexts will have a clear advantage. Giving students early exposure to the region helps them build that adaptability from the start," said Mr Jason Bay, Senior Director, Chief Operating Officer's Office and Country Head, Vietnam, Sea Limited and Chairperson of NP's SEA Advisory Panel.

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About Ngee Ann Polytechnic

Ngee Ann Polytechnic started in 1963 and is today one of Singapore's leading institutions of higher learning with over 13,000 enrolled students in close to 40 disciplines. It seeks to develop students with a passion for learning, values for life, and competencies to thrive in a global workplace. The polytechnic also supports Continuing Education and Training (CET) through its CET Academy, which offers a wide range of part-time programmes and short courses. It works closely with industry partners to curate programmes for emerging skills, develop talent pipeline for the industries and help adult learners stay agile in today's rapidly changing global economy. For more information, please visit www.np.edu.sg.

About SEA Unbound

SEA Unbound is part of Ngee Ann Polytechnic's Southeast Asia Readiness Strategy to develop future-ready graduates through immersive, applied learning, deep regional networks and in-market experience. Backed by a $10 million fund, SEA Unbound delivers fully-funded student programmes, staff capability-building and a comprehensive network of more than 40 regional partners. With overseas centres in Bangkok, Ho Chi Minh City and Jakarta, NP is the first polytechnic in Singapore to establish a physical presence across three Southeast Asian cities.

ANNEX A: NP's SEA Partners Network

- ACTE Technology Co., Ltd.
- Airbus Helicopters SAS
- Altitude Lab Pte. Ltd.
- Antler Innovation Pte. Ltd. (Antler)
- Business China Singapore
- Chiang Mai University
- Chulalongkorn University School of Integrated Innovation (BASCii)
- Expresso NB Company Limited (ExpressSo)
- FPT Corporation
- FPT University
- Frasers Property Limited
- Holicay Pte. Ltd.
- Innovate 360 Pte. Ltd.
- KHAAR Pte. Ltd. (KHAAR)
- King Mongkut's University of Technology Thonburi (KMUTT)
- Living Lab Ventures
- Mahidol University International College (MUIC)
- Mulax Pte. Ltd.
- National Economics University
- Orlar Vietnam Co., Ltd. (ORLAR)
- PT Coffeenatics Indonesia (Coffeenatics)
- PT Ciptabuana Sukses Lestari (Innovation Factory)
- PT Elang Mahkota Teknologi Tbk. (EMTEK)
- PT Super Bank Indonesia (Superbank)
- PT Ruang Kreasi Berdaya (KUMPUL)
- PT Real Estate Teknologi (Rentfix)
- Randamu ACG Group Pte. Ltd.
- SATS Food Solutions (Thailand) Co., Ltd.
- Sekolah Vokasi Universitas Gadjah Mada
- Shenzhen Polytechnic University
- Shenzhen Puruichi Technology Co., Ltd. (Minieye)
- Singapore Chamber of Commerce Vietnam
- Singapore Gateway Pte. Ltd.
- Singapore Thai Chamber of Commerce
- Sleek EV Pte. Ltd.
- Sripathum University
- Tarumanagara Foundation
- Technode
- Tin Men Capital Pte. Ltd. (Tin Men Capital)
- Turn Green Pte. Ltd.
- United Overseas Bank Limited (UOB)
- Universitas Airlangga (UNAIR)
- Universitas Indonesia
- Universitas Kristen Petra
- Universitas Padjadjaran (UNPAD)
- University of Economics Ho Chi Minh City
- Vimatec Corporation
- Xi An Jiaotong Liverpool University
- Xnode

ANNEX B: NP's SEA Advisory Panel

- **Mr Jason Bay (Chairperson of the SEA Advisory Panel)**
  Senior Director, Chief Operating Officer's Office and Country Head (Vietnam)
  Sea Limited

- **Mr Andre Lim**
  CEO
  Mapletree Vietnam

- **Mr Mohamed Salim**
  Director
  Salim Group

- **Ms Angie Ng**
  Finance Director
  Radisson Hotel Group, Southeast Asia & Pacific

- **Dr Lu Gang**
  Founder & CEO
  TechNode Group

- **Mr Joseph Seet**
  President, Fullerton China
  Associate Professor
  Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University

- **Mr Lim Kok Kiang**
  Principal & CEO
  Ngee Ann Polytechnic

- **Ms Fong Pin Fen**
  Director, Careers & Global Immersion
  Ngee Ann Polytechnic

ANNEX C: Student Profiles

Ariqah Mufidah
Diploma in Psychology & Community Development, Year 3
SAIL Programme Participant

Wanting to better understand the realities shaping Southeast Asia, Ariqah Mufidah joined the SAIL programme to experience firsthand how communities and businesses across the region tackle social and environmental challenges.

During a visit to Kertabumi, a Jakarta-based social enterprise that transforms waste materials into sustainable products, Ariqah was struck by the level of technical expertise and operational planning involved. The experience challenged her assumptions about sustainability and highlighted the importance of understanding communities before proposing solutions.

This perspective deepened further in Thailand, where Ariqah heard how businesses approached similar challenges in different ways, broadening her understanding of how solutions can vary across the region.

Through these experiences, Ariqah gained a deeper appreciation of the diverse challenges, ideas and approaches shaping the region today.

"Southeast Asia is incredibly diverse, and there's no one-size-fits-all solution to the challenges different communities face," she said. "The experience taught me the importance of listening, understanding local contexts, and thinking more carefully about how we can contribute meaningfully."

Koh Jing Ya
Diploma in Early Childhood Development & Education, Year 3
SAIL Programme Participant

Koh Jing Ya joined the SAIL programme to better understand how communities across Southeast Asia tackle social and sustainability challenges in different ways.

During the programme in Bangkok and Jakarta, she tackled sustainability challenges ranging from building a plant-based economy to addressing waste management and plastic reduction. Working with unfamiliar communities meant navigating language barriers and adapting ideas on the ground.

While Jing Ya's team came prepared with proposed solutions, conversations with local partners quickly revealed different perspectives. Concerns around cost and day-to-day realities challenged the team to refine their ideas to better suit the community's needs.

For Jing Ya, the programme reminded her that solutions cannot simply be transplanted from one place to another without understanding the people and context behind them. Collaborating across language barriers and differing perspectives also taught her the importance of listening,

adaptability and cultural sensitivity – skills she believes will help her work more effectively with people from diverse backgrounds in the future.

Jeffrey Chua
Diploma in Business Studies, Year 3
Participated in NP's Global Entrepreneurial Internship Programme

Currently interning in Thailand as a Venture Builder at ExpresSo NB, Jeffrey Chua is gaining first-hand exposure to Southeast Asia's evolving business landscape.

During his internship, Jeffrey worked on researching Thailand's residential solar market, where differing pricing structures and service standards made it challenging for customers to compare providers. The experience pushed him to adapt to a market with different consumer behaviours and operating conditions.

Beyond market research, Jeffrey also gained exposure to Thailand's collaborative innovation ecosystem, where start-ups and large corporations work closely together to develop new business opportunities.

Through the experience, Jeffrey grew more confident navigating unfamiliar business environments and working across different market contexts.

"Working in Thailand pushed me out of my comfort zone," he said. "It gave me more confidence navigating unfamiliar environments and taught me how businesses need to adapt to different markets and consumer needs."