



## Govt to roll out more initiatives to bring innovation to the marketplace

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SINGAPORE: Expect more initiatives to be rolled out this year to help researchers in Singapore transfer their ideas from paper to marketplace.

Finance Minister Tharman Shanmugaratnam hinted at this when he spoke at the annual **Start-Up@Singapore** award ceremony on Saturday.

**Start-Up@Singapore** - a business plan competition organised by the National University of Singapore (NUS) Entrepreneurship Centre, NUS Business School Alumni Association and NUS Entrepreneurship Society - is aimed at guiding start-ups on their road to success.

The big winners of this year's competition have tapped on the mobile gaming market and the proliferation of online virtual communities.

The team, Pic2Pic, whose idea is to literally make the online community look good, took home the top prize of S\$30,000.

Sean Seah, co-founder of phokki.com, said: "You've got a photo that doesn't look nice, how do you put it on your blog? We have a service that can change your photo to (one that is) very retro-preppy or pop-art... to share it with all your friends."

The youth category award went to The Mobile Gamers, and as the name suggests, their idea is all about giving mobile gaming enthusiasts the option of playing without paying.

The kind of products and services that the young budding technopreneurs have come up with is mind-boggling, and that is the exact spirit of innovation that the government is trying to encourage in order to give Singapore's research and development industry a winning edge on the world's stage.

Tertiary institutions are seen as the key to the whole chain of innovation. Mr Tharman said Singapore needs to have more links between universities, research and commercial enterprises.

He said: "Over the course of this year, we will be rolling out a number of initiatives that will support academic entrepreneurship and help researchers in transferring their knowledge into commercial applications.

"What we are doing at the end of the day is to ensure that we have an ecosystem comprising not just different, discreet entities, but a network of players who depend on each other mutually, who support each other and who gain from each other."

Mr Tharman did not elaborate on these initiatives, but it is understood that the mechanics are being worked out.

The plans will come under the National Framework for Innovation and Enterprise, which was set up to bring innovation to the marketplace.

- CNA/so

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