PRESS RELEASE

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NATIONAL HEALTHTEC CONSORTIUM FORMED FOR COMPANIES TO TAP ADVANCED TECHNOLOGIES FOR HEALTH AND WELLNESS SOLUTIONS

1 To create novel and personalised healthcare solutions built on the latest science and technologies originating from our research labs, the National Research Foundation (NRF) Singapore will set up a national Health Technologies Consortium (HealthTEC) to facilitate companies to translate research outcomes into products and services that can improve the health and wellness of individuals. The consortium will do this by bringing researchers and companies together to leverage deep tech and big data to develop and eventually provide advanced health and wellness solutions that will benefit Singaporeans. This national consortium will be led by the Institute for Health Innovation & Technology (iHealthtech) at the National University of Singapore (NUS). NRF will set aside funding of $1.5 million over three years to support the activities of the consortium.

Strengthening Academia-Industry Linkages to Provide Market-Ready Solutions

2 HealthTEC will bring research outcomes from the lab into market by pooling the scientific expertise of researchers and industry knowledge of companies. Researchers can learn the pain points that companies face in product development, and collaborate with companies to solve them. Companies that join HealthTEC as industry members can access the research and technologies originating from Institutes of Higher Learning (IHLs) and research institutions across the Singapore ecosystem, in deep tech areas such as bioelectronics, biomimetic materials, robotics and smart sensors, so as to apply them in the development of advanced healthcare solutions. In this way, the consortium enables participating companies to gain a competitive edge by applying the latest innovation and technology to improve their existing offerings, or create new products and services.

3 HealthTEC will facilitate industry-academia interactions through regular networking sessions, workshops, roundtable discussions and scientific symposia. The consortium will also provide seed grants to kickstart collaboration projects. In addition, HealthTEC will form alliances with other international consortia or societies to tackle global healthcare challenges through the use of health technologies, giving members the opportunity to benefit from interacting with the international community.

4 The consortium will partner Singapore-anchored companies of all sizes – startups, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), large local enterprises (LLEs), and multinational companies (MNCs) – for this effort. Companies that have joined the consortium as founding industry members include Roceso Technologies Pte Ltd, Tip Biosystems Pte Ltd, ST Engineering and Ferrero Asia Pacific Pte Ltd.
Mr Russell Tham, President, New Enterprises and Ventures at ST Engineering, said: “As population ageing continues to increase and predictive and personalised medicine gains traction, the healthtech industry will continue to see positive growth. Having worked with healthtech startups at our Open Innovation Lab (Innosparks), we believe that digital health is an area where ST Engineering is well-positioned to apply our engineering and technological capabilities to develop and bring to market leading-edge solutions that improve healthcare and hospital operational efficiency. ST Engineering is proud to be a founding member of HealthTEC, and we look forward to collaborating with fellow members and the wider healthcare ecosystem to develop impactful solutions that improve health and wellness outcomes.”

Roceso Technologies Pte Ltd is a Singapore startup that specialises in soft robotic exoskeleton technologies for rehabilitation. Ms Jane Wang, co-founder and CEO of Roceso Technologies Pte Ltd, said: “As a Singapore-based medtech company with pioneering technologies from leading local research institutions, we are very proud to be one of the founding members of HealthTEC Consortium. We look forward to working together with other members to build the healthtech ecosystem in Singapore and improve academic and industry collaboration.”

Mr Lim Tuang Liang, Executive Director at the Research, Innovation and Enterprise Coordination Office at NRF, said: “Around the world, advanced healthcare technologies are changing how we prevent, diagnose and monitor diseases. The new Health Technologies Consortium rides on this development to bring researchers and companies together to translate R&D into innovations that can improve people’s health and wellness. We encourage more companies to join the consortium to benefit from the latest technology and innovation to help them compete in this exciting industry.”

HealthTEC’s Focus Areas

From lab-on-chips to wearables to smart sensors, health technologies have a strong potential to produce disruptive innovations that can improve the health and wellness of individuals by empowering them with personalised and actionable data and insights. It is differentiated from medical technologies that typically require clinical trials to prove clinical claims, and stringent approval from regulatory authorities before being made available or administered to patients.

Some examples of health technologies include wearables that track posture and assess sports performance, sensors to monitor comfort and fatigue levels in drivers, or mobile applications that help users to track their caloric intake when they take photos of the food they eat.

HealthTEC will focus on two areas to develop health and wellness solutions:

a) Health sensing technologies, which refer to innovations to track and collect health-related data.

These could include tactile sensors to detect standing, walking or sitting pressure; imaging technologies to detect fatigue; or molecular diagnostics to collect vital signs of individuals such as glucose level.
b) **Health analytics and artificial intelligence**, which uses predictive modelling and machine learning technologies to make sense of collected data, with the aim of providing insights and suggesting actions that individuals can take, so as to improve their own health and wellness.

An example would be a mobile app that provides users with personalised information about how their vital signs change when they are seated at work and when they are exercising, and provide suggestions on what they can do to improve their health. On a larger scale, health analytics can be used by researchers to find health and wellness patterns across a population.

**Governance**

11 **Professor Chen Tsuhan, NUS Deputy President (Research and Technology), and Chairman of the HealthTEC Steering Committee,** said: “This is a tremendous endeavour that brings together collaboration and contributions from a diverse community comprising scientists, clinicians, domain experts, businesses, government agencies and individuals. NUS is uniquely poised to host the Health Technologies Consortium. Our strong research capabilities in health innovation are well aligned with Singapore’s integrated healthcare clusters, including the National University Health System, hence offering exciting opportunities for prototyping and test-bedding of new health technologies. The consortium will be both citizen- and value-centric in its outputs, and will ultimately benefit both local business and individual Singaporeans.”

12 The HealthTEC Steering Committee comprise members from NRF, Enterprise Singapore, NUS and Nanyang Technological University (NTU), whereas its Technology Management Committee will comprise leading experts from IHLs and the industry.

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**About the National Research Foundation, Prime Minister's Office, Singapore**

The National Research Foundation (NRF) is a department within the Prime Minister’s Office. The NRF sets the national direction for research, innovation and enterprise (RIE) in Singapore. It seeks to invest in science, technology and engineering, build up the technological capacity of our companies, encourage innovation by industry to exploit new opportunities that drive economic growth, and facilitate public-private partnerships to address national challenges.

Under RIE2020, NRF is committed to create greater value in Singapore from our investment in research, innovation and enterprise through 1) closer integration of research thrusts, 2) stronger dynamic towards the best teams and ideas, 3) sharper focus on value creation, and 4) better optimised RIE manpower. Visit www.nrf.gov.sg/RIE2020 for more details.