

NATIONAL RESEARCH FOUNDATION
PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE
SINGAPORE

PRESS RELEASE

25 July 2022

The National Research Foundation, Singapore (NRF), today announces the retirement of Chief Executive Officer, Professor Low Teck Seng, and the appointment of incoming Chief Executive Officer, Mr Beh Kian Teik

The following changes will take effect from 6 August 2022:

- (a) Professor Low Teck Seng, Chief Executive Officer of National Research Foundation, Singapore, will relinquish his appointment and
- (b) Mr Beh Kian Teik, will be appointed as Chief Executive Officer

Thanking Professor Low, Ms Chan Lai Fung, Permanent Secretary (National Research and Development), said, "Teck Seng has made many impactful contributions in his time at NRF, amongst them, driving the development and implementation of three national Research, Innovation and Enterprise (RIE) plans – RIE2015, RIE2020 and RIE2025, covering a total budget in excess of \$60B. As CEO, he has strengthened the agency's scientific oversight and programme management, policy coordination, as well as funding and grant governance capabilities. I would like to express our appreciation to Teck Seng for his leadership and look forward to working with him in his new role."

NRF will also be appointing Professor Ling San as Chief Scientific Advisor (CSA), NRF, and Professor Phoon Kok Kwang, as Deputy Chief Scientific Advisor (DCSA), NRF. Both appointments are effective 1 August 2022.

RETIREMENT OF CEO, PROFESSOR LOW TECK SENG

Prof Low is well respected amongst leaders in the scientific research fraternity, having demonstrated his leadership capabilities in both academia and research management. Since he joined NRF in July 2012, he has moved many strategic initiatives and gained much traction to drive Singapore's RIE agenda. Specifically, Prof Low has been instrumental in driving three national RIE Plans – RIE2015, RIE2020 and RIE2025. Prof Low organised and coordinated these national strategies across a growing range of stakeholders and agencies, with budgets that had increased from \$16B for RIE2015 to \$25B for RIE2025.

Prof Low has steered the development of many national strategies for science and technology initiatives such as the Future of Microelectronics, National Quantum Strategy and Synthetic Biology Programme. On the innovation front, he introduced

new corporate venture partnerships and the Corp Lab @ University programme, which has established more than twenty corporate laboratories in our universities. He also supported the set-up of more than ten technology consortia, including the Singapore Cybersecurity Consortium, the Singapore Membrane Consortium and the Cooling Energy Science and Technology Singapore Consortium. These programmes involved different agencies from the whole of government and the academia, as well as industry players, working together to establish some of the critical capabilities that Singapore needs. Prof Low's leadership as well as strong networks with industry leaders in many sectors in Singapore, has enabled NRF to leverage these networks to drive national RIE efforts.

In addition, Prof Low developed the Singapore Week of Innovation & TeCHnology (SWITCH), the first platform approach for events in Singapore that brought together various major innovation events under a single event umbrella. He also built the Global Young Scientists Summit into a major event that has attracted the participation of top scientific talent from around the world.

Prof Low will be returning to NUS as Senior Vice President (Sustainability & Resilience) with effect from 8 August 2022. He will also be taking on the role of Advisor to NRF, where he will continue to provide advice to NRF on issues relating to science, technology and research. Information on Prof Low's background can be found at [Annex A](#).

NRF thanks Prof Low for his very significant contributions to the agency over the last 10 years.

APPOINTMENT OF INCOMING CEO, MR BEH KIAN TEIK

Mr Beh Kian Teik has been the Deputy Chief Executive Officer of the National Research Foundation since 1 July 2020. He is responsible for reviewing, developing and implementing the national RIE strategies and governance frameworks, to grow and sustain a vibrant RIE ecosystem in Singapore.

Prior to joining NRF, Mr Beh was Executive Vice President of the Singapore Economic Development Board. He oversaw EDB New Ventures, and worked closely with corporate entrepreneurs with the passion and drive to create early stage ventures in Singapore. He has over 20 years' experience of promoting foreign direct investment and building industries in the manufacturing and internationally tradeable services sectors.

Previously, he was responsible for EDB's activities in innovation & industry incubation and led efforts to foster industry-science linkages. In 2010, he was also the founding director of the Singapore Biomedical Sciences Industry Partnership Office, a unique inter-agency government organisation. In this role, he worked with senior Singapore scientists to partner industry to translate science to medicine, and with industry partners that undertook R&D projects requiring the capabilities of multiple Singapore agencies in basic sciences and clinical research. Information on Mr Beh's background can be found at [Annex B](#).

NRF looks forward to the guidance of Mr Beh as the new CEO.

APPOINTMENT OF CHIEF SCIENTIFIC ADVISOR, PROFESSOR LING SAN, AND DEPUTY CHIEF SCIENTIFIC ADVISOR, PROFESSOR PHOON KOK KWANG

Prof Ling San will be appointed Chief Scientific Advisor (CSA), NRF, and Prof Phoon Kok Kwang, Deputy Chief Scientific Advisor (DCSA), NRF. Both appointments are effective 1 August 2022.

CSA and DCSA will provide advice to NRF on science and technology matters. They will also advise and help shape the design and implementation of our RIE strategies. In addition, both CSA and DCSA will help foster international scientific collaborations, build networks, and forge trust and strong collaborations between the S&T community, industry, government and society.

Prof Ling and Prof Phoon will also retain their current appointments with NTU and SUTD respectively. Information on Prof Ling and Prof Phoon's backgrounds can be found at [Annex C](#).

National Research Foundation

The National Research Foundation is a department within the Prime Minister's Office. NRF sets the national direction for research and development (R&D) by developing policies, plans and strategies for research, innovation and enterprise. It also funds strategic initiatives and builds up R&D capabilities by nurturing research talent. The NRF aims to transform Singapore into a vibrant R&D hub that contributes towards a knowledge-intensive, innovative and entrepreneurial economy; and make Singapore a magnet for excellence in science and innovation.

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Background: Professor Low Teck Seng

Prof Low graduated with First Class Honours in Electrical & Electronic Engineering in 1978 from Southampton University and subsequently received his PhD from the same university in 1982. He joined National University of Singapore (NUS) in 1983 as an academic staff of the Department of Electrical Engineering.

In 1992, Prof Low founded the Magnetics Technology Centre (MTC) at NUS. This served as the catalyst for R&D in the data storage industry, which was a sector of prime importance to Singapore. The MTC was renamed as the Data Storage Institute (DSI) with an expanded charter in 1995. In 1998, Prof Low returned to the Faculty of Engineering at the National University of Singapore as Dean.

In 2001, Prof Low led a team to establish Singapore's fifth polytechnic and served as the founding Principal of Republic Polytechnic from 2002-2008. Under his strong leadership, RP introduced the Problem-Based Learning pedagogy and full-fledged holistic learning experience, which contextualised concepts that students wanted to learn.

Prof Low continued to contribute to the scientific research arena with his role as Managing Director of the Agency of Science, Technology and Research (A*STAR) from 2010 to 2012, where he was instrumental in furthering the strategic priorities of driving innovative research and developing scientific talent to support Singapore's economic and industry development goals.

Prof Low joined NRF as Chief Executive Officer in July 2012.

Prof Low was awarded the National Science and Technology Medal in 2004, the highest honour bestowed on an individual who has made distinguished, sustained, and exceptional contributions, and played a strategic role in the development of Singapore through the promotion and management of R&D. In 2007 he was awarded the Public Administration Medal (Gold) by the President of Singapore for his outstanding contributions to the development of technical education and the management of science and technology for the nation. Prof Low is presently a tenured professor at the National University of Singapore. He is a Fellow of the Singapore Academy of Engineers; Fellow of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE) and International Fellow of the Royal Academy of Engineers, UK.

Prof Low was conferred the Honorary Doctor of Science by Southampton University in recognition for his contributions to Singapore and his profession internationally, in the IEEE, in 2009. He was also conferred the Order of the Legion of Honour with the grade of Knight (Chevalier) by the French Government in Paris on 17 Mar 2016.

Background: Mr Beh Kian Teik

Mr Beh Kian Teik is a Sundstrand-EDB and Glaxo-EDB scholar who graduated from the University of California, Berkeley with an MSc in Electrical Engineering, as well as a BSc in Electrical & Computer Engineering from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

Mr Beh joined EDB in February 1998 and has held roles of increasing responsibilities in EDB over 22 years. He had undertaken several assignments including industry development and investment promotion roles in Communications and Media, Biomedical, International Operations and New Businesses divisions. He also led EDB's Information Technology division to enhance the organisation's digital infrastructure and operations.

In 2017, Mr Beh was appointed as Assistant Managing Director and Chief Digital Officer in EDB. In addition to his Industry Identification and Incubation (i3) and IT portfolio, he was also appointed to oversee Strategic Planning, Corporate Planning, and the Research & Statistics Unit (RSU). Through his leadership, the teams enhanced the rigour of the planning process for EDB. As Chief Digital Officer, he articulated EDB's digital transformation strategy, built EDB's digital capability foundations and pushed for the deployment of technology and digital tools to accelerate EDB's digital transformation efforts.

Following EDB's reorganisation in October 2018, Mr Beh was appointed to oversee the newly formed New Ventures group, concurrent with his appointment as Chief Digital Officer. Under his leadership, the team created new value propositions such as establishing the corporate venture launchpad that would boost Singapore's credibility in the corporate venture scene globally. Having been heavily involved in many innovation-led sectors and initiatives, Mr Beh was well placed to lead EDB's new Innovation division, which was formed in 2019. With a mandate of accelerating Singapore's progress towards an innovation-led economy, he was a rallying force amongst the various stakeholders in the government and industry partners to work towards a common Innovation vision.

Mr Beh joined NRF as Deputy Chief Executive Officer on 1 July 2020.

Chief Scientific Advisor (CSA), Professor Ling San

Prof Ling is currently the Deputy President and Provost at NTU Singapore, as well as the President's Chair in Mathematical Sciences. Prior to joining NTU, he spent 13 years at NUS. Prof Ling's research interests are in the applications of algebra and number theory to combinatorial designs, coding theory, cryptography and sequences. He obtained his Bachelor of Arts and Master of Arts in Mathematics from the University of Cambridge, and has a PhD in Mathematics from the University of California, Berkeley.

Deputy Chief Scientific Advisor (DCSA), Professor Phoon Kok Kwang

Prof Phoon is currently Provost and Cheng Tsang Man Chair Professor at SUTD. Before joining SUTD, he was Distinguished Professor and Senior Vice Provost (Academic Affairs) at NUS. His expertise lies in developing statistical and other data-driven methods to support decision making in geotechnical engineering. He received his Bachelor of Engineering and Master of Engineering from NUS, and subsequently obtained his PhD from Cornell University where his research on reliability-based design has influenced recent codes and specifications.