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Headline: Singapore Management University signs MOU with Kajima to jointly develop the built environment sector and shape future cities

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Singapore Management University's (SMU) Institute of Innovation and Entrepreneurship (IIE) has on Friday announced a three-year partnership with Kajima Asia Pacific Holdings Pte. Ltd., a wholly-owned Singaporean regional subsidiary of Kajima Corporation, a Japan-based construction and real estate firm (Kajima).

As part of the public-private partnership, SMU will receive a sponsorship of \$300,000 in cash, training, and usage of facilities to foster innovation within students and to strengthen the startup ecosystem in Singapore, according to a statement issued by the both parties.

The MOU heralds an era of deepened collaboration that combines the strengths of SMU and industry in providing a fertile ground for entrepreneurs to thrive.

By structuring opportunities for students to productively engage with opportunities and challenges in the built environment sector, students are empowered to shape the future of smart, livable cities. The Lee Kuan Yew Global Business Plan Competition (LKYGBPC), organised by SMU IIE, is a prime example.

With the sponsorship of the Kajima Built Environment Innovation Prize, SMU IIE aims to inspire interest in Built Environment among startups to catalyse innovations that shape how people live, work and play.

The largest of its kind in the region, the upcoming 11th edition of the LKYGBPC focuses on deep-tech solutions created by student founders and early-stage start-ups from across a diverse range of industries, including human health & potential, manufacturing, trade & connectivity, media & entertainment, smart nation & digital economy, as well as urban solutions and sustainability, among others.

In June 2023, 50 revolutionary finalists (RVLT50) teams will be selected and two members from each team will be eligible for a sponsored trip (airfare and accommodation) to Singapore to attend BLAZE, LKYGBPC Finals Week from September 11-15, 2023, where they will have the opportunity to participate in activities centred on innovation, knowledge, mentoring and networking over the course of a week.

The exposure offered by SMU strengthens Kajima's position as an innovative leader within the built environment sector, providing Kajima with a pipeline of talent and startups to grow the built environment ecosystem.

Through the subject experts and resources offered by Kajima, SMU will also be able to enrich the understanding, learning, and teaching of built environment within its curriculum.

"At SMU, we proactively forge partnerships with industry to augment our students' learning. Collaborations with leading global innovative trailblazers like Kajima allow our educators to bring in real-world context and inspire curiosity to address the world's most pressing problems," said SMU Prof Lim Sun Sun, Vice President of Partnerships & Engagement.

"Kajima's strong tradition of innovation and commitment towards talent development makes this partnership especially valuable for our community,

"We are confident that this partnership will enrich students' learning journeys, and introduce excellent opportunities to startups in terms of resources, funding, networks and knowledge. It

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will also pave the way for research collaborations between Kajima and SMU faculty,” he added.

Kajima Managing Director Keisuke Koshijima said the partnership with SMU in the development of the Built Environment sector is testament to the group’s long history of driving innovation.

“A key part of that is our commitment to invest in the development of young talents and supporting startups with the necessary tools and resources that can empower them to succeed,” he said.

“We are honoured to strengthen our ties with SMU with this first-of-its-kind strategic partnership, which will offer the talents needed to reimagine the way things are built and used around the world,

“We are very excited to put this partnership to work, and confident that the built environment sector’s future will reap significant gains from it”, he added.

Kajima’s sponsorship will support SMU in the following areas:

1) Kajima Built Environment Innovation Prize for the 11th Lee Kuan Yew Global Business Plan Competition

The Kajima Built Environment Innovation Prize will be awarded, based on selection by members of the Kajima Group including subsidiaries expanding worldwide, to the most innovative business plans / technologies / start-ups / early-stage ventures that are relevant to real estate development and construction projects.

The award winner will receive not only opportunities to demonstrate the concept in actual projects in Singapore or Japan, but also the budget required to develop and execute their plan.

Kajima will also work with SMU IIE to organise the Global Built Environment Discussion Panel to discuss and promote innovations within the industry during BLAZE, LKYGBPC’s Finals Week.

2) Kajima BIG Startup Award

Built environment startups incubated by Business Innovations Generator will be eligible for the Kajima BIG Startup Award.

The awarded startup(s) will be offered a six-month residency at The GEAR and access to data from buildings managed by Kajima.

3) Kajima Innovation Book Prize

Graduating top SMU students with demonstrated achievements in innovation and entrepreneurship within built environment will be eligible for the Kajima Innovation Book Prize.

The collaboration will also enable Kajima to tap on research capabilities within SMU to advance interdisciplinary research with direct relevance to the built environment.

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4) Research Collaboration

Kajima to tap on research capabilities within SMU to advance interdisciplinary research with direct relevance to built environment and offer data from buildings managed by Kajima to members of SMU faculty, undergraduate and postgraduate students for research purposes.

At the event, Kajima provided updates on The GEAR, their company's upcoming new regional headquarters and first global innovation centre which occupies a 5,235 square meter plot at Changi Business Park.

Kajima has invested nearly S\$100 million (\$76.25 million) to develop the 6-storey building spanning 13,052 sqm of gross floor area.

Since the ground-breaking Ceremony in August 2020, the project is on track to meet its expected top in the first quarter of 2023.

The GEAR will house Kajima's 200 local staff and welcome a wider community of built environment innovators and disruptors to co-locate at its open innovation hub on level 3.

Equipped with 18 distinct testbed zones for new solutions, and five laboratories, namely, the human centric design lab, construction robotics lab, digital tech lab, environment bio lab, and underground space creation lab, The GEAR is touted to become a living lab for experimentation, exploration, and co-creation.

This partnership will allow for active collaboration and access to The GEAR for startups under SMU's BIG, tours by the 11th LKYGBPC finalist teams, and other activities.