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News Release

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UOB, IMDA and ecosystem partners strengthen support for SMEs to adopt AI

Programme has facilitated over 800 ecosystem connections between SMEs, technology providers and industry experts, helping businesses accelerate AI implementation at scale

Singapore, 28 September 2026 – UOB today announced the launch of AI Ready 2.0, the enhanced next phase of its AI Ready Programme led by UOB FinLab, the Bank's strategic community enabler for SMEs. Developed in partnership with IMDA, the programme is designed to help small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) accelerate AI adoption and scale implementation across their businesses.

The enhanced programme builds on a successful first year, during which more than 600 SMEs participated in workshops, discovery engagements and ecosystem activities aimed at helping businesses understand AI opportunities and identify practical use cases.

While awareness of AI has grown significantly among SMEs, many businesses continue to face challenges when moving from exploration to implementation due to limited resources, expertise and access to suitable solutions.

AI Ready 2.0 addresses these challenges by providing end-to-end support across capability development, prototyping, financing and implementation, helping SMEs move from awareness to implementation and achieving real business outcomes.

Janet Young, Head of Group Channels and Digitalisation, UOB, said:
"AI is no longer a future opportunity. It is becoming a business imperative. While many SMEs recognise its potential, translating interest into tangible business outcomes remains a challenge.

AI Ready 2.0 is designed to close this gap by bringing together capability building, expert guidance, ecosystem partnerships and financing support. The goal is to help SMEs move beyond experimentation and implement AI solutions that improve productivity, strengthen competitiveness and create long-term business value.

Through our partnership with IMDA and ecosystem partners, UOB is making it easier for businesses to access the expertise, resources and support they need to adopt AI with confidence and at scale."

Strong first-year outcomes

Since its launch in July 2025, the AI Ready Programme has:

- Engaged more than 600 SMEs
- Conducted over 10 workshops on AI awareness, use-case identification, implementation planning, and executive leadership.
- Conducted over 50 personalised AI discovery engagements
- Facilitated over 800 ecosystem connections between SMEs, technology providers and industry experts

As the operating model matures and ecosystem partnerships deepen, the programme aims to scale participation from 600 SMEs in Year 1 to 3,000 SMEs by Year 3.

SMEs who participated in the AI Ready Programme have applied AI across customer acquisition, operational efficiency, compliance and quality assurance. Early results include:

- Up to 125% increase in lead generation through AI-powered customer acquisition tools[1]
- Up to 30% reduction in tender preparation time[1]
- Documentation review processes reduced from hours to minutes
- Improved operational accuracy through AI-enabled validation workflows
- Greater confidence and capability to scale AI adoption across business function

[1] Data is representative for Singapore only, excludes regional markets.

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Supporting SMEs from idea to implementation

AI Ready 2.0 strengthens support for SMEs through three new enhancements to help SMEs accelerate adoption:

Enhanced Financing Support
Through enhanced financing support, technology vendors can accelerate delivery of AI solutions while SMEs gain resources to develop, deploy and scale AI-driven innovations, strengthen capabilities and upgrade technology infrastructure.

AI Prototyping Workshops
Developed with our ecosystem partners, these hands-on workshops will help SMEs identify AI opportunities, validate use cases and build prototypes agents that can be further refined and scaled for real-world implementation.

UOB AI Ready Community Support
A new peer-led community to help SMEs accelerate their AI journeys by connecting them with technology experts, AI practitioners and fellow SME AI champions who have already adopted AI for practical advice on adoption, implementation, and scaling.

SME success stories

Krislite Pte Ltd
Following participation in UOB FinLab's AI workshops and discovery sessions, Krislite Pte Ltd prioritised the development of a Tender AI Agent through UOB FinLab's proof-of-concept programme. The solution will augment their in-house initiatives, reducing tender preparation time by up to 30%.

Events Partner Pte Ltd
Operating with a lean team, Events Partner participated in UOB FinLab's AI Ready Programme and developed an AI-powered lead generation platform and prospecting solution

that more than doubled monthly targeted outreach, from approximately 30–40 prospects to 80–100, while improving the effectiveness of its sales prospecting process. Building on the success of the initiative, Events Partner is progressively expanding AI adoption across multiple business functions to support scalable future growth.

Seng Heng Engineering Pte Ltd

Through the UOB FinLab AI Ready Programme, Seng Heng Engineering Pte Ltd developed an AI prototype to automate quality assurance documentation review and compliance validation. The solution is expected to reduce review time from hours to minutes, document error rates to below 2%, improve compliance traceability and deliver up to S$350,000 in cost savings over three years.

-ENDS-

About UOB FinLab

UOB FinLab is the strategic community enabler of UOB Group that empowers and equips all businesses at any stage of growth through access to a curated value chain of partners and the Bank, as well as capability building initiatives.

Since its establishment in 2015, UOB FinLab has built a growing network of 40,000 professionals including private and public companies, institutes of higher learning and industry experts across ASEAN. This ecosystem creates a more interconnected business community that enables all enterprises to unlock new growth opportunities.

UOB FinLab further supports SMEs with capability building through diverse initiatives, such as workshops, mentorship and masterclasses, to successfully navigate the complexities of digitalisation (including AI) and sustainability. As part of the UOB Group, UOB FinLab lays the path to streamlined and direct access to banking solutions to scale business ambitions into reality.

Find out more here: https://thefinlab.com/

About UOB

UOB is a leading Asian bank with a global network in Southeast Asia, Asia Pacific, Europe and North America. Operating through our head office in Singapore and banking subsidiaries in China, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand and Vietnam, we have a global network of about 430 branches and offices in 19 markets.

Since its incorporation in 1935, UOB has grown organically and through a series of strategic acquisitions. Today, UOB is rated among the world's top banks: Aa1 by Moody's Investors Service and AA- by both S&P Global Ratings and Fitch Ratings.

For more than nine decades, UOB has adopted a customer-centric approach to create long-term value by staying relevant through its enterprising spirit and doing right by its customers. UOB is focused on building the future of ASEAN – for the people and businesses within, and connecting with, ASEAN.

The Bank connects businesses to opportunities in the region with its unparalleled regional footprint and leverages data and insights to innovate and create personalised banking experiences and solutions catering to each customer's unique needs and evolving preferences. UOB is also committed to help businesses forge a sustainable future, by fostering social inclusiveness, creating positive environmental impact and pursuing economic progress. UOB believes in being a responsible financial services provider and is steadfast in its support of education, children and art, doing right by its communities and stakeholders.

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