



## **JOINT MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **Expanded PIER71™ Programmes to Support Singapore's Development as A Global Maritime Technology Start-Up Hub**

*Three Winners announced at the Smart Port Challenge 2021 Grand Final*

The Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore (MPA) and the National University of Singapore (NUS) renewed its partnership to strengthen the maritime technology (MarineTech) ecosystem through enhanced and new innovation initiatives and start-up programmes for another three years. Under this partnership, MPA and NUS will expand the scope of the PIER71™ (Port Innovation Ecosystem Reimagined @ BLOCK71) initiative to better support Singapore's growing maritime technology or MarineTech start-up ecosystem. This was announced by Mr Chee Hong Tat, Senior Minister of State for Transport, at the Smart Port Challenge (SPC) 2021 Grand Final.

2 The new programme components introduced to the PIER71™ initiative are aimed at strengthening the growth of MarineTech start-ups, attracting more investments, supporting internationalisation, and increasing tech solution deployment to the maritime industry. They include:

- a) **PIER71™ Ascend** – A 12-month, by-invite only scale-up programme, with curated masterclasses, industry networking sessions, and an immersion programme aimed at connecting start-ups to overseas markets and government stakeholders, as well as prospective maritime customers. Promising scale-ups can also apply for grant support of up to S\$100,000 to scale their solutions, under MPA's MINT-STARTUP scheme.
- b) **Investor Connection** – Structured pitching and venture capital (VC) networking events will be organised for start-ups to gain access to investors and capital. This aims to increase the amount of investment into PIER71™ and partner programmes' alumni.

3 The three winners of SPC 2021 were also announced by Mr Chee at the event. The first, second and third place winners are WeavAir, EcoWorth and Spinoff Robotics. Together with the other finalists, they were evaluated by a panel of judges on their proposed solution, business model, market opportunity, impact to the maritime industry and overall team capability. The winning teams walked away with cash prizes of S\$10,000, S\$5,000 and S\$3,000 respectively.

4 The fifth edition of the SPC received over 150 applications from start-ups around the world and 18 were shortlisted as finalists. For the first time, two of the shortlisted start-ups participated as a team, combining their complementary technologies into a joint proposition to automate on-ground cargo management.

5 Solutions addressing safety and well-being of maritime personnel featured strongly this year, in line with the increased attention paid by the industry on this focus area. Other innovative solutions include application of artificial intelligence, data analytics and robotics to optimise the global supply chain, automate processes and create more sustainable shipping operations. All 18 finalists have completed PIER71™ Accelerate, a seven-week market validation and customer discovery programme and are now eligible to apply for a grant of up to S\$50,000 from MPA to embark on pilot projects with maritime companies.

6 Mr Chee said, “As Maritime Singapore emerges from the pandemic, we are going for growth. Our ambition to be a leading MarineTech hub is a key driver of this growth. Through MPA and NUS’s renewed partnership and new initiatives, we will support MarineTech companies with access to markets, technology, funding, and talent, to enable good ideas to become scalable solutions.”

7 Professor Freddy Boey, Deputy President (Innovation and Enterprise), said, “The impact that PIER71™ has made in growing the maritime innovation ecosystem to where it is today, is a testament to the synergies between MPA and NUS. The renewal of our partnership will bring on new initiatives that align with the strategic direction of attracting talent, technologies and investments that will strengthen the maritime sector’s ability to create new ventures as well as a more efficient and sustainable global supply chain.”

8 Natalia Mykhaylova, Founder & CEO of WeavAir commented, “Our team is extremely impressed with the PIER71™ programme, mentorship quality, professionalism and guidance that helped us expand and find validation very quickly. A top-notch programme recommended for all start-ups who are in or considering expanding in the maritime industry.”

9 Six<sup>1</sup> previous SPC finalists also secured funding ranging from Seed to Series A, with the highest being US\$7m raised by a 2018 finalist, dltledgers, a blockchain start-up that was part of successful electronic bill of lading (eBL) trial between Singapore and the Netherlands.

9 A recording of the SPC 2021 Grand Final, as well as information on the finalists, will be available at <https://spc2021.pier71.sg>.

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### **About PIER71™**

Founded by the Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore (MPA) and the National University of Singapore (NUS), through its entrepreneurial arm NUS Enterprise, PIER71™ (Port Innovation Ecosystem Reimagined at BLOCK71) aims to grow Singapore’s maritime innovation ecosystem. PIER71™ boosts innovation in the maritime and maritime-related industries by attracting talents, creating opportunities

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<sup>1</sup> dltledgers; Performance Rotors; Portcast; FUELSAVE; BeeX; Kanda

for the exchange of knowledge and ideas, attracting investments into start-ups and accelerating ventures.

PIER71™ designs and delivers programmes to uncover opportunities within the industry and supports entrepreneurs from ideation to acceleration of their ventures. PIER71™ provides access to various markets, demand drivers, technology solution providers, investors and more. PIER71™ also represents a budding and increasingly vibrant ecosystem of stakeholders who are keen to digitalise and create the next wave of maritime innovation.

For more information, please visit <https://pier71.sg>

### **About the Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore (MPA)**

MPA was established on 2 February 1996, with the mission to develop Singapore as a premier global hub port and international maritime centre, and to advance and safeguard Singapore's strategic maritime interests. MPA is the driving force behind Singapore's port and maritime development, taking on the roles of Port Authority, Port Regulator, Port Planner, IMC Champion, and National Maritime Representative. MPA partners the industry and other agencies to enhance safety, security and environmental protection in our port waters, facilitate port operations and growth, expand the cluster of maritime ancillary services, and promote maritime R&D and manpower development.

For more information, please visit [www.mpa.gov.sg/web/portal/home](http://www.mpa.gov.sg/web/portal/home)

### **About National University of Singapore (NUS)**

The National University of Singapore (NUS) is Singapore's flagship university, which offers a global approach to education, research and entrepreneurship, with a focus on Asian perspectives and expertise. We have 17 faculties across three campuses in Singapore, with more than 40,000 students from 100 countries enriching our vibrant and diverse campus community. We have also established our NUS Overseas Colleges programme in more than 15 cities around the world.

Our multidisciplinary and real-world approach to education, research and entrepreneurship enables us to work closely with industry, governments and academia to address crucial and complex issues relevant to Asia and the world. Researchers in our faculties, 30 university-level research institutes, research centres of excellence and corporate labs focus on themes that include energy; environmental and urban sustainability; treatment and prevention of diseases; active ageing; advanced materials; risk management and resilience of financial systems; Asian studies; and Smart Nation capabilities such as artificial intelligence, data science, operations research and cybersecurity.

For more information on NUS, please visit [www.nus.edu.sg](http://www.nus.edu.sg)

### **About NUS Enterprise**

NUS Enterprise, the entrepreneurial arm of NUS, plays a pivotal role in advancing innovation and entrepreneurship at NUS and beyond. It actively promotes entrepreneurship and cultivates global mind-sets and talents through the synergies of experiential entrepreneurial education, active industry partnerships, holistic

entrepreneurship support and catalytic entrepreneurship outreach. Its initiatives and global connections support a range of entrepreneurial journeys and foster ecosystem building in new markets. These initiatives augment and complement the University's academic programmes and act as a unique bridge to industry well beyond Singapore's shores.

For more information, please visit <https://enterprise.nus.edu.sg>

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