

# SIA launches its blueprint for digital innovation

**It will partner government agencies such as A\*Star to find solutions to give the airline an edge amid competition**

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## Singapore

SINGAPORE Airlines (SIA) has launched a digital innovation blueprint as it strives to build itself into a top digital airline amid keen competition in the aviation sector.

The airline group announced on Monday that it is establishing partnerships with government agencies such as the Agency for Science, Technology and Research (A\*Star), the Civil Aviation Authority of Singapore (CAAS) and the Economic Development Board (EDB), in addition to the National University of Singapore (NUS).

South-east Asia's largest airline has earmarked "hundreds of millions of dollars" to invest towards its overall digital efforts, which falls under its ongoing three-year transformation programme. This comes as it grapples with a competitive operating environment and declining yields.

Chief executive Goh Choon Phong said: "We are mindful that we need to continue to reinvent ourselves and find new ways to distinguish the SIA group from others in order to stay ahead of the competition."

He added: "Today, we're showing just how serious we are with our vision, which is to be the leading digital airline in the world through our comprehensive digital innovation blueprint."

Speaking at the launch on Monday morning, Minister for Trade & Industry S. Iswaran, said: "Digitalisation is transforming, if not disrupting industries, whilst catalysing new growth areas. We are likely to see a significant impact across the entire value chain – from customer service and airline operations to aircraft manufacturing and maintenance, repair and overhaul (MRO)."

Among the partnerships is a master research collaboration agreement with A\*Star to drive the use of technologies such as virtual reality and data analytics within the airline group.



**SIA chief executive Goh Choon Phong (left) presenting a gift to Minister for Trade and Industry (Industry) S Iswaran at the launch of the SIA Group's Digital Innovation Blueprint.**

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For instance, SIA will work with A\*Star to develop predictive maintenance solutions by using data analytics. This will enable the airline to monitor critical components in its aircraft and to identify the parts that need repair or replacement ahead of failure. Aside from lowering maintenance

costs and decreasing aircraft delays, this means a better flying experience for passengers. Work has already started on A380 aircraft components and will be progressively extended to other aircraft types in SIA's fleet.

The airline has already started to leverage data analytics in other ways,

such as studying passengers' past travel patterns to offer more personalised service and to market airfares to passengers in a more targeted manner.

Meanwhile, two memoranda of understanding (MOU) were inked between SIA and the NUS. Under the

first MOU, the airline will work with certain NUS faculties to do research into the challenges facing the airline business; in the other MOU, SIA will work with the university's entrepreneurial arm, NUS Enterprise.

NUS President Tan Eng Chye, said: "We hope to open new opportunities for our researchers, students and start-ups to create and commercialise disruptive technologies that could accelerate the digital transformation of Singapore's aviation sector and redefine the air travel experience."

In addition, a 3,200 square foot Innovation Lab is being established in-house to enable SIA staff to experiment with new ideas as well as to work with other units within the group and start-ups. Staff who successfully pitch potential solutions will be given a S\$5,000 grant to work on them.

Mr Goh also told reporters on the sidelines of Monday's event that the group is reviewing an online feature which auto-includes travel insurance for online bookings of flight tickets. The move has since come under criticism by the airline's customers.

Mr Goh said that SIA is looking, in particular, at how to make the add-on more prominent to passengers so they can opt out if they choose to.