

# Two initiatives to equip 12,000 over 3 years with AI knowledge

## Singapore

TALENT development in Singapore's burgeoning artificial intelligence (AI) scene is set to receive a boost with two new nation-wide initiatives announced on Thursday.

Speaking at an event commemorating AI Singapore's (AISG) first anniversary, Minister for Communication and Information S Iswaran said there is a consensus among governments, industry leaders and recruitment firms worldwide that there is a global shortage of AI talent.

He added that Singapore needs a deeper bench strength of talent to further grow the AI ecosystem here. "AI Singapore can and will play a key role in this regard by working closely with its research and industry partners to nurture a strong pipeline of AI talent in Singapore," he said at the event held at Innovation 4.0 in the National University of Singapore.

The two initiatives to be developed by AISG – AI for Industry (AI4I) and AI for Everyone (AI4E) – will equip 12,000 Singaporeans over the next three years with various levels of AI knowledge.

AI4I will see 2,000 executives, as well as those technically inclined in AI, going through a subsidised three-month foundational course on developing basic AI and data applications to prepare them for future job opportunities.

AI4E is a free introductory three-hour workshop that will expose 10,000 people to AI and data science. The workshop aims to help them appreciate the practical use of AI and identify potential uses in their work and daily lives.

The Infocomm Media Development Authority (IMDA) said people keen on applying for AI4I, which will start at the end of October, must be either a Singaporean or Permanent Residents, and must have a polytechnic diploma or university degree.

IMDA will sponsor up to 100 per cent of the S\$500 course fee for full-time national servicemen and students, while SME-sponsored trainees and Singaporeans above 40 will receive up to 90 per cent subsidy. Other participants can receive support of up to 70 per cent.



**To grow the AI ecosystem, the Artificial Intelligence Innovation Centre, with 490,000 sq m of offices, has been set up and will be completed at the end of August 2018. It will house small and medium-sized technology companies involved in areas such as software and hardware development, semi-conductors and comics, animation and gaming.**

The course will have content sponsored by Microsoft, Intel and Datacamp, and the curriculum will be a mix of online and offline learning.

No payment is required for AI4E, which will be conducted by IMDA, Microsoft and Intel, but participants have to be above 12. It will start rolling out by the end of August.

AI4I and AI4E are the latest in a slew of initiatives introduced by AISG, a programme under the National Research Foundation, to grow the AI talent pool here.

Last November, AISG said it would train up to 200 AI professionals by 2020 under a nine-month apprenticeship programme called the AI Apprenticeship Programme (AIAP).

Mr Iswaran on Thursday said that the AIAP had inducted its first batch of apprentices in May and a second batch will start in November.

He also named members of the Advisory Council on the Ethical Use of AI and Data, which was announced in June. It is led by Senior Counsel V K Rajah.

The 10 members are a mix of international and local leaders, as well as advocates of consumer interest, including DBS Group chief executive Piyush Gupta; president of Temasek International Chia Song Hwee; and founder of Parrot Social Hamidah Aidillah Mustafa.

"The Advisory Council will canvass widely for views, from businesses, trade associations and chambers, and consumers, and I look forward to the Advisory Council's recommendations on how organisations can develop and deploy AI solutions in a responsible and trusted manner," he said.