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NUS commits $150m to boost growth of deep tech start-ups via new scheme

The entrepreneurial arm of the National University of Singapore is committing $150 million to a new venture capital (VC) programme, the school said on July 22.

Via the NUS Venture Capital Programme, the university will invest $50 million in selected VC firms to support NUS tech start-ups.

The first two VC partners are Granite Asia, a multi-asset investment platform, and specialist life sciences investor 4Bio Capital, which focuses on advanced therapeutics.

The other $100 million will be committed to an autonomous investment fund focused on NUS-affiliated start-ups, which is able to invest alongside selected VC partners.

The initiative is the first of its kind in Asia, said NUS, and seeks to enhance support for early-stage tech innovation by focusing on high-potential ventures within the university's ecosystem, including start-ups from the National Graduate Research Innovation Programme (Grip).

Launched in January, Grip is an incubator programme run by NUS and Nanyang Technological University to foster start-ups from Singapore's autonomous universities and research institutes.

NUS Enterprise's VC programme complements the National Grip framework by addressing the need for downstream venture development. Various National Grip start-ups are still in the early stages of technological readiness and require continued, strategic support to advance from laboratory to market, NUS said in a press release.

While Grip currently provides up to $250,000 in seed funding per start-up, NUS' VC programme focuses on accelerating post-seed growth and preparing ventures for external capital. NUS says its VC programme aims to fill funding and mentorship gaps faced by tech start-ups in the region.

With a 5 per cent decline from 2023, early-stage funding has totalled less than $38 billion in 2024.

This effort is set apart by direct engagement with leading VC firms selected not only for their track records, but also for their market access in global innovation hubs, said NUS.

The programme offers structured support such as mentorship, market entry, fund-raising networks, and operational guidance by combining capital with deep venture expertise.

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