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Joint Media Release

$12 million Design for Enterprises initiative to help Singapore enterprises get design-savvy

1. Local enterprises, including small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), can now benefit from a new integrated programme launched by DesignSingapore Council, SPRING Singapore, International Enterprise Singapore that will help them to create sustainable value and enhance their competitiveness through the use of design -- a strategic management capability that has moved beyond aesthetics to solving problems, realising potential and creating new and tangible business output.

2. The $12 million Design for Enterprises (DFE) initiative encourages Singapore-based enterprises to improve their competitiveness and strategic advantage by integrating design into their business strategy, processes and product development. The three key thrusts of DFE are Design Touch, Design Engage and Design Excel, which include programmes that are aimed at helping local businesses progress through the different levels of design capabilities, from learning about the value of design to skilful integration of design into business strategies.

3. In announcing the launch of the DFE at the Hotel Intercontinental this morning, Dr Lee Boon Yang, Minister for the Information, Communications and the Arts said that to create sustainable value and differentiation from the competition, enterprises need breakthrough business models which cannot be easily duplicated. "This is where design can play a major role."
Design is an important tool for enterprises to create unique value and sharpen their competitiveness.

**Design Touch**

4. Design Touch is targeted for companies who are taking their first steps at understanding the importance of design as a strategic tool. One of the key components is the setting up of a one-stop centre – the Design for Enterprises Centre – located at the MICA Building. The new centre is the vital touch point for companies to learn more about design, prepare for design integration in their businesses and work with creative agencies. Companies can also seek advice on relevant resources and programmes by visiting the Centre or calling its hotline. The Centre managers would be able to analyse their business needs and guide them to the type of design services they need, as well as tap the resource library for useful design materials and information.

5. In addition, an online portal (www.designforentreprises.sg) has also been developed for companies to obtain useful resources and information on design. Key features include case studies of local and international businesses that have successfully adopted design to their advantage, a design directory to help facilitate access to design services and a design diagnostic toolkit for an initial assessment of where each enterprise stands in terms of design.

**Design Engage**

6. The Design Engage Programme, targeted at enterprises ready to incorporate strategic thinking into their business operations, is a three-year programme to help enterprises understand the value of design and build up their design capabilities through Design Facilitators who are well-versed in design and business management. These experts will equip companies with design principles and tools to develop their business operations and strategies and unlock new business-building opportunities. Some 200 Singapore-based enterprises are expected to benefit from adding the design element into their business strategy over the next three years, through the programme.

**Design Excel**

7. For companies who have successfully transformed and redefined their business by making design their central strategy, Design Excel takes them a step further to achieve design excellence through mentorship and leadership programmes that provide them with opportunities
to tap the minds and skills of internationally renowned design gurus, and in so doing, groom a new breed of creative leaders in their organisations and achieve international recognition.

8. A study on the value of design by the UK Design Council in 2007 showed that enterprises that see design as integral do not need to compete on prices as much as others. In fact, the chances of design contributing to turnover growth rose more than threefold when enterprises used design to lead and guide the process. It also showed that 80% of design-led companies introduced a new product or service, or opened up new markets in the last three years, compared to only 40% of companies overall.

9. SPRING Singapore Chief Executive Mr Png Cheong Boon said that SPRING Singapore is committed to helping local enterprises, especially SMEs, strengthen their design capabilities to ensure sustained competitiveness and growth, especially during these challenging times. “In this economic slowdown, competition will intensify and customers will be more selective and demanding. The Design for Enterprises initiative helps Singapore companies better understand their customers' needs and enables them to create new products and services to meet those needs. It will strengthen our companies' competencies and ability to create new value for their customers.”

10. Said Mr Chong Lit Cheong, Chief Executive Officer, IE Singapore, on the importance of developing design capabilities for international growth, “As overseas markets are highly competitive, design can be a strategic differentiator for companies to retain and improve on their market share. Asian companies are known for their highly efficient and cost-competitive manufacturing. Strong designs can give your company an immediate edge, instantly differentiating your products and services from others in the global market place.”

11. “Bringing design to business boardrooms is a strategy that DesignSingapore Council has been actively pursuing. We have seen many enterprises enjoy sustained growth and recognition by leveraging on design. Statistics from 2003 to 2007 show that the Singapore Design Cluster experienced one of the highest growths in the creative industries, with the Compound Annual Growth Rate at 6.1%. There is great potential for enterprises who tap on design and we are pleased to be partnering SPRING Singapore and IE Singapore through the Design for Enterprises initiative. Our joint efforts will enhance the continued embedding of design across
the economic sector, and raise the long-term competitiveness of Singapore enterprises,” said Dr Milton Tan, Director, DesignSingapore Council.

12. Enterprises interested to find out more about the DFE initiative can contact:
   Design for Enterprises Centre
   Ministry of Information, Communications and the Arts
   140 Hill Street, MICA Building,
   Singapore 179369
   Hotline: +65 6333 3737
   Email: info@designforenterprises.sg

   ~ End of media release ~

About Design for Enterprises
Design is a strategic management capability that local companies can adopt to create value and enhance competitiveness. Design thinking moves beyond aesthetics to solving problems, realizing potential and creating new and tangible business output.

Design for Enterprises (DFE) is a national strategy created by DesignSingapore Council, SPRING Singapore and International Enterprise Singapore. In essence, Design for Enterprises is about helping Singapore-based enterprises understand the power of design and benefit from the impact design can make on business growth, through programmes that help enterprises progress through the levels of design capabilities, from learning about the value of design to skilful integration of design into their business strategies.

Please visit [www.designforenterprises.sg](http://www.designforenterprises.sg) for more information.

About SPRING Singapore
SPRING Singapore is the enterprise development agency for growing innovative companies and fostering a competitive SME sector. We work with partners to help enterprises in financing, capabilities and management development, technology and innovation, and access to markets. As the national standards and accreditation body, SPRING also develops and promotes internationally-recognised standards and quality assurance to enhance competitiveness and facilitate trade.

Please visit [www.spring.gov.sg](http://www.spring.gov.sg) for more information.

About International Enterprise (IE) Singapore
International Enterprise (IE) Singapore is an agency under the Ministry of Trade and Industry spearheading the development of Singapore’s external economic wing.

Our mission is to promote the overseas growth of Singapore-based enterprises and international trade. With a global network in over 30 locations and our “3C” framework of assistance – Connections, Competency, Capital, we offer services to help enterprises export, develop business capabilities, find
overseas partners and enter new markets. At the same time, we work to position Singapore as a base for foreign businesses to expand into the region in partnership with Singapore-based companies.

Please visit www.iesingapore.com for more information.

**About DesignSingapore Council**
Design changes and improves lives, inspires creativity and new forms of expression. It also enhances business competitiveness in today’s crowded marketplace.

DesignSingapore Council is Singapore’s response to these propositions and opportunities. As a national initiative, the Council aims to place Singapore on the world map for design creativity. It looks to developing a thriving, multi-disciplinary design cluster of industries and activities in Singapore that has relevance and impact globally. The initiative also aims to bring design to business boardrooms, new audiences and new markets.

The DesignSingapore Council was formed in August 2003 as a department within the Ministry of Information, Communications and the Arts, as the national agency for the promotion and development of Singapore design. More information on the DesignSingapore Council is available at www.desig nsingapore.org.

**For media enquiries, please contact:**

Ms Goh Liyi
Manager, Corporate Communications
SPRING Singapore
Email: goh_liyi@spring.gov.sg
Tel: 6279 3638
Mobile: 9690 9087

Ms Andrea Goh
Senior Officer, Media and Marcom
International Enterprise Singapore
Email: andrea_goh@iesingapore.gov.sg
Tel: 6433 4942
Mobile: 9839 2969

Ms Lim Jia Ying
Assistant Manager, Corporate Communications
DesignSingapore Council
Email: lim_jia_ying@mica.gov.sg
Tel: 6837 9529
Mobile: 9656 0890