



Manufacturing Day Summit 2026: Empowering Manufacturers to Navigate Change and Lead Transformation in the Age of AI and Sustainability

The Singapore Manufacturing Federation’s annual flagship conference convened industry leaders and policymakers to drive Industry 5.0 transformation through innovation, collaboration and human-centric leadership, with new partnerships and initiatives unveiled

Singapore, 30 January 2026 – The Singapore Manufacturing Federation (SMF) today hosted the Manufacturing Day Summit 2026, its annual flagship conference that brought together industry experts, policymakers and business innovators to explore how Singapore’s manufacturing sector can harness advanced technologies, human-centric approaches and sustainable practices in the Industry 5.0 era.



The sector recorded strong growth of 7.6%¹ in 2025, reaffirming its role as a key pillar of the economy. At the same time, however, manufacturers face evolving challenges, including geopolitical tensions, shifting trade dynamics and pressures on global supply chains, alongside the need to balance technological advancement with workforce readiness, safety and sustainability.

Against this backdrop, the Summit's theme, "*Industry 5.0 with Next-Gen: Co-Inventing the Future of Manufacturing for People and Planet*", examined how the industry as a whole can build on the sector's strong momentum by accelerating the adoption of advanced manufacturing, robotics and artificial intelligence (AI), while embedding sustainability, human capability and resilience at the core of transformation.

This year's Summit was graced by **Minister of State, Ms Gan Siow Huang, Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Ministry of Trade and Industry**, and welcomed regional dignitaries, including **H.E Faisal Riza, Indonesian Vice Minister of Industry**. Approximately 1,500 delegates across the manufacturing ecosystem, including industry leaders and government agencies, attended the 2026 Summit, strengthening existing relationships and creating new connections for learning and greater collaboration.

This year, SMF also announced several new developments at the Summit. Designed to promote the advancement of Singapore's manufacturing sector, they include²:

Reducing Barriers for Cross-Border Growth in the Johor–Singapore Special Economic Zone and the Batam-Bintan-Karimun (BBK)

Since the establishment of the Johor–Singapore Special Economic Zone (JS-SEZ) in January 2025, interest among Singapore manufacturers in expanding into the zone continues to grow. Beginning July 2025, SMF has engaged over 100 companies to raise awareness of the JS-SEZ, facilitated site visits across the border for close to 50 companies, and supported manufacturers that are ready to progress through regulatory clarification and partner introductions. Through these engagements, SMF observed strong interest among manufacturers in the JS-SEZ, and the importance of convening information, aligning regulatory understanding, and providing practical insights to support confident cross-border expansion.

¹ Ministry of Trade and Industry Singapore (2026): [Singapore's GDP Grew by 5.7 Per Cent in the Fourth Quarter of 2025 and by 4.8 Per Cent in 2025](#)

² Please refer to the Appendix at the end of this release for a full list of launches and MoUs established at the Summit.



To facilitate this knowledge-exchange, the Manufacturing Day Summit 2026 saw the launch of *the Johor-Singapore Special Economic Zone Playbook for Manufacturers: A Guide to Setting Up and Operating in Johor*. This playbook is the first comprehensive resource specifically designed to guide manufacturers interested in operating within the JS-SEZ. Drawing on SMF's on-the-ground experience, with contributions from Enterprise Singapore (Enterprise SG), Malaysian Investment Development Authority (MIDA), DXC Technology, EY, and UOB, the playbook consolidates key considerations into a structured, end-to-end operating guide, covering critical factors at each stage of setup.

“The Singapore Manufacturing Federation plays a key role in fostering the collaboration and internationalisation of Singapore’s manufacturing sector. With the launch of the Playbook, we aim to support companies with faster decision cycles, clearer investment pathways, and increased confidence in executing cross-border setups in the Johor–Singapore Special Economic Zone”, said **Lennon Tan, President, SMF**.

“The JS-SEZ playbook offers investors a practical framework to evaluate and capitalise on opportunities within the JS-SEZ. With UOB’s extensive experience supporting cross-border investments and SEZ developments across ASEAN, we hope our insights in the playbook will help investors assess risks, optimise capital deployment and accelerate market entry. As a long-term financial partner to regional and global businesses, we remain committed to helping companies turn cross-border opportunities into sustainable growth”, said **Jimmy Koh, Head, Network Partnerships and Strategic Marketing, Group Foreign Direct Investment Advisory, UOB**.

Complementing the playbook is an AI-enabled chatbot, which will be launched by SMF in one to two months’ time. A domain-specific assistant trained on JS-SEZ materials curated by SMF and other verified sources, the content will be updated regularly, ensuring users have timely access to the latest regulatory changes, incentives, ecosystem developments, and practical implementation pathways. Over time, it will provide increasingly personalised guidance, helping companies navigate opportunities most relevant to their specific sector, scale, or internationalisation ambition.

Together, these tools aim to reduce ambiguity, lower barriers to entry, and provide manufacturers with a common reference point to support more informed and confident decision-making.



“As manufacturers expand across borders, digital readiness becomes just as important as physical setup”, said **Ng See Sing, Managing Director, DXC Technology**. “The JS-SEZ playbook highlights how companies can leverage data, automation, and AI to build scalable and resilient operations from day one, supporting more sustainable growth within the zone.”

“The JS-SEZ presents significant opportunities for companies that look to leverage the complementary strengths of Singapore and Johor to grow their businesses, but careful planning is essential,” said **Neo Sing Hwee, Global Client Service Partner, Government & Public Sector, Consulting, EY**. “By aligning operating models, tax, incentives and supply chain considerations from the outset, companies can manage cross-border risks and build sustainable, resilient operations.”

Building on this support, SMF brought together Enterprise SG, MIDA, the Federation of Malaysian Manufacturers (FMM) and UOB during a breakout session at the Summit. Together, they focused on how companies can scale effectively and achieve win-win outcomes in the JS-SEZ.

In addition, the Batam-Bintan-Karimun (BBK) Free Trade Zone also came into the spotlight at the Summit. As a key hub for Singapore-based manufacturers seeking to expand in Southeast Asia, representatives from the Singapore Economic Development Board, the Indonesia Investment Promotion Centre (IIPC) Singapore and the Industrial Estates Association of Indonesia (HKI) gathered to discuss the incentives, operational realities, and essential considerations for setting up in BBK. The discussion showcased how companies can leverage the strengths of the Singapore-Johor-Riau Islands (SIJORI) growth triangle to access new opportunities across Southeast Asia.

Strengthening Leadership for AI-Enabled Manufacturing Transformation

The Summit also marked the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the SMF Advanced Manufacturing Training Academy (AMTA) and the A*STAR Singapore Institute of Manufacturing Technology (A*STAR SIMTech) to jointly launch the Manufacturing Leadership Elevation Certificate Programme, a flagship leadership development initiative for the manufacturing sector.

The programme aims to build the next generation of manufacturing leaders by equipping them with the skills to strategise, design and lead AI-enabled, value-centric transformation. It will emphasise frameworks such as *Learn-Practise-Implement* to



enhance participants' leadership decision-making skills, connect technology investments to measurable outcomes and support organisation-wide change.

“The Manufacturing Leadership Elevation Certificate Programme represents a new pathway in supporting Singapore’s manufacturing sector in strengthening competitiveness, resilience and long-term growth,” says **Dr Zeng Xianting, Director of the Advanced Manufacturing Training Academy**. “By combining A*STAR SIMTech’s expertise in advanced manufacturing, AI and sustainable technologies with SMF AMTA’s deep industry relevance and workforce transformation insights, this programme will equip leaders with the confidence and capability to translate technology into impact and strategy into execution.”

“This programme aims to nurture leaders who can bridge organisational ambition with action and translate technology into impact. Together with SMF AMTA, we are equipping future leaders to navigate technological change and build a competitive manufacturing sector in Singapore,” said **Dr David Low, Executive Director at A*STAR SIMTech**.

Launching in March 2026, the pilot run of the programme will be tailored for women leaders from companies under the SMF Women in Manufacturing Committee, in response to strong industry interest in strengthening leadership capabilities amid rapid technological change. This pilot seeks to empower women leaders to navigate the evolving demands of AI-enabled manufacturing while advancing leadership diversity and contributing to a more inclusive and resilient manufacturing ecosystem.

Supporting Technology Adoption and Collaboration between MNCs and Local Enterprises

The Summit also marked the first year milestone for the launch of the MNC–LE Alliance, a programme by the SMF in collaboration with Enterprise Singapore and the Economic Development Board. Since its inception, the Alliance has served as a platform to connect multinational corporations (MNCs) with local enterprises (LEs) to co-create solutions, accelerate the adoption of advanced manufacturing technologies, and unlock new business opportunities.

To deepen and expand the Alliance’s impact, two MoUs were signed during the Summit between SMF and ecosystem partners HP Singapore, as well as IPI Singapore:

The MoU with HP formalises the company’s role as a strategic partner in the MNC–LE Alliance. The partnership aims to strengthen local manufacturing capabilities even



further by supporting LEs in adopting advanced technologies, advancing sustainable practices, and scaling competitively in global markets. Together, SMF and HP reaffirmed their commitment to uplifting local manufacturing enterprises and reinforcing Singapore as a hub for co-creation, innovation and impact.

“Our partnership with the Singapore Manufacturing Federation underscores HP’s commitment to strengthening Singapore’s manufacturing ecosystem. By sharing our expertise and working closely with local enterprises, we aim to accelerate technology adoption, cultivate new capabilities, and unlock opportunities for innovation and global growth,” said **Mr. Albert Chan, Vice President, Inkjet Supplies Development and Operations, HP.**

In addition, the MoU signed with IPI Singapore – a subsidiary of Enterprise Singapore – will provide enterprises with access to innovative ideas, technologies, and advisory expertise to spur growth. Through this partnership, SMF and IPI Singapore will collaborate to support technology transfer, expand outreach through shared networks and forums, and catalyse innovation via international launchpads, strengthening pathways for impactful MNC–LE collaboration.

Michael Goh, Chief Executive Officer, IPI Singapore added: “This collaboration with the Singapore Manufacturing Federation reflects IPI’s focus on fostering co-innovation and capability building within Singapore’s manufacturing ecosystem. Innovation needs to be justified by a strong business case, which is why working more closely with industry under the MNC–LE Alliance turns innovation into something practical and outcome-oriented, while strengthening collaboration between local enterprises and multinational partners.”

John Eng, Vice President, Singapore Economic Development Board, added that global developments are pushing MNCs to examine how to build greater supply chain resilience and pursue growth. “There is a greater demand now for trusted local partners to support these ambitions, and successful partnerships will ensure that we continue to generate good opportunities for our businesses and workforce, creating a win-win for our companies, Singaporeans and Singapore”.

The Summit also saw the signing of a MoU between SMF and Life3 Biotech, which formalised Life3’s role as a strategic partner in the MNC-LE Alliance and will deepen collaboration between MNCs and LEs. By leveraging Life3’s expertise in AI and



biotechnology, particularly in bio-manufacturing, the partnership aims to strengthen local manufacturing capabilities in the development of sustainable and functional food ingredients (including proteins and omega-3 fatty acids), bio-materials such as concrete and asphalt, and bio-fuels – a resource-efficient alternative to traditional production methods. Ultimately, this collaboration supports the advancement of high-efficiency manufacturing, contributes to global sustainability goals, and helps lay the foundation for a greener, more resilient bio-economy.

Promoting Safe and Responsible Manufacturing

Furthering this commitment to accessible education, the SMF Centre for Corporate Learning (CCL) is also launching a new Metalworking Microlearning Programme (MLP), in collaboration with the Workplace Safety and Health Council (WSHC), specifically for the metalworking sector.

Delivered through the Learning Management System, these engaging, multi-language modules allow workers to refresh their safety knowledge and practices, anytime, anywhere on their personal mobile device/s. By integrating this technology-enabled learning, the programme helps workers apply safety principles directly on the job and stay prepared for recertification, directly supporting the national WSH 2028 Strategy.

Through these verification and training initiatives, SMF strengthens a culture of safe machine operation, empowering businesses and upholding national standards for workplace safety.

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About Singapore Manufacturing Federation

Founded in 1932, the Singapore Manufacturing Federation (SMF) champions the nation's manufacturing sector by driving innovation and sustainable growth. Organized into 10 Industry Groups and supported by Associated Services, SMF addresses distinct industry needs. Focusing on sustainability, human capital, internationalization, and productivity, SMF enhances sector resilience. As a collaboration catalyst, it fosters



strategic alliances and market expansion locally and globally. With above 5,000 diverse members, including SMEs, MNCs, and Affiliates, SMF shapes Singapore's manufacturing ecosystem and drives industry advancement.

Visit www.smfederation.org.sg for more information.



APPENDIX

List of Memorandum of Understanding signed at the Manufacturing Day Summit 2026

Purpose	Signatories
<p>Joint effort by SMF and Singapore Environment Council to help companies accelerate their sustainability journey</p> <p>By combining the Singapore Manufacturing Federation’s industry reach with Singapore Environmental Council’s sustainability expertise, businesses will be supported in building practical sustainability capabilities, improving environmental performance, and gaining greater market recognition and trust.</p> <p>This collaboration will help companies meet rising customer and regulatory expectations, while enhancing long-term competitiveness and resilience.</p>	<p>Singapore Manufacturing Federation (SMF)</p> <p>Singapore Environment Council (SEC)</p>
<p>Strategic partnership with the Institute of Technical Education to strengthen talent development and workforce capabilities in the manufacturing and engineering sectors</p> <p>Through industry-aligned curriculum development, talent pipelines, professional development, and lifelong learning initiatives, the collaboration between SMF and ITE aims to align with evolving manufacturing industry needs. The partnership will support technology adoption, skills upgrading, and applied innovation, while providing SMF’s member companies with access to industry-ready talent and relevant training.</p>	<p>Singapore Manufacturing Federation</p> <p>Institute of Technical Education (ITE)</p>
<p>Co-development of an advanced manufacturing line by SMF, Ngee Ann Polytechnic and industry partners to support Industry 5.0 transformation</p> <p>The partnership integrates industry expertise, technology, and applied learning to strengthen workforce readiness in the manufacturing sector. The line will serve as a shared platform for training programmes, innovation, internships, and applied projects, enhancing industry-academia collaboration and skills development.</p>	<p>Singapore Manufacturing Federation</p> <p>Ngee Ann Polytechnic</p> <p>Flexspeed Technology Pte Ltd</p> <p>Beckhoff Automation Pte Ltd</p> <p>Delta Electronics Int'l (Singapore) Pte Ltd</p> <p>JM Vistec System Pte Ltd</p> <p>LKH Precicon Pte Ltd</p>



	<p>Neptrix Pte Ltd</p> <p>Schunk Intec Pte Ltd</p> <p>Turck Banner Singapore Pte Ltd</p> <p>Zhejiang Galaxis Technology Group Co Ltd</p>
<p>Establishment of a collaborative framework between SMF, Singapore Polytechnic and Coherent to develop courses tailored to industry needs</p> <p>This new collaborative framework will encompass the development of courses tailored to the needs of Coherent in the areas of Artificial Intelligence (AI), Sustainability in Manufacturing, and Data Analytics, with a focus on upskilling and reskilling of the workforce; strengthening AI, digital, and data literacy, enhancing the application of AI and data analytics in sustainable manufacturing practices; and deepening continual learning to support innovation and digital transformation.</p>	<p>Singapore Manufacturing Federation</p> <p>Singapore Polytechnic</p> <p>Coherent</p>
<p>A formal partnership to advance the MNC-LE Alliance ecosystem</p> <p>On the first anniversary of the MNC-LE Alliance, three additional MoUs were signed with HP Singapore, Innovation Partner for Impact (IPI) Singapore – a subsidiary of Enterprise Singapore, and Life3 Biotech.</p> <p>The MoU with HP aims to support local enterprises (LEs) in adopting advanced technologies, advancing sustainable practices and scaling internationally, while IPI has committed to collaborating with SMF on providing enterprises with access to innovative ideas, technologies, and advisory expertise with the aim of spurring growth among LEs. The partnership with Life3 Biotech seeks to deepen collaboration in AI-enabled bio-manufacturing, supporting the development of sustainable food ingredients, bio-materials and bio-fuels, and strengthening local capabilities in high-efficiency, green manufacturing.</p>	<p>Singapore Manufacturing Federation</p> <p>HP Singapore</p> <p>Innovation Partner for Impact (IPI) Singapore</p> <p>Life3 Biotech</p>
<p>Advancing industrial cooperation between SMF and the Bank of China</p>	<p>Singapore Manufacturing Federation</p>



<p>SMF and BOC Singapore have signed an MoU to strengthen support for Singapore’s manufacturing sector, combining BOC’s global financial network with SMF’s deep connections across the local ecosystem. The partnership will facilitate knowledge sharing and engagement with key industry stakeholders, including dialogues with Chinese industry associations, participation in milestone events, and collaboration on sector-specific initiatives.</p> <p>By offering cross-border financial solutions, trade facilitation, and access to sustainable finance, the collaboration aims to empower manufacturers to expand internationally, adopt innovative technologies, and embed sustainability into their operations. Together, SMF and BOC Singapore will explore projects that drive capacity building, industry benchmarking, and practical solutions for green and technology-enabled manufacturing, providing companies with the support needed to compete and grow across borders.</p>	<p>Bank of China (BOC)</p>
<p>Collaborative framework between SMF and Himpunan Kawasan Industri Indonesia (HKI) for the development and promotion of industrial estates across Singapore and Indonesia</p> <p>Focused on supporting manufacturers pursuing cross-border expansion, this collaboration will facilitate information exchange on industrial estates and manufacturing industries, reciprocal business delegation visits, and partnerships between industry and institutes of higher learning in areas such as research and technology transfer. SMF and HKI will also explore a hub-to-hub support model, with both organisations serving as industry connectors for companies operating across both markets.</p> <p>The partnership will place a strong emphasis on capacity building, as well as the co-development of industry benchmarking reports, sectoral studies and demand forecasts. SMF and HKI will work with financial institutions to support cross-border financing and explore joint initiatives in carbon reduction, green certification, circular economy practices and pilot projects such as smart logistics, renewable energy and AI-enabled manufacturing.</p>	<p>Singapore Manufacturing Federation</p> <p>Himpunan Kawasan Industri Indonesia (HKI)</p>
<p>Upskilling and transformation of the manufacturing workforce</p>	<p>Singapore Manufacturing Federation Advanced</p>



Under this Memorandum of Understanding, the A*STAR Singapore Institute of Manufacturing Technology (SIMTech), a leading Continuing Education and Training centre for advanced manufacturing, and the SMF Advanced Manufacturing Training Academy (AMTA) will jointly develop a national initiative dedicated to manufacturing workforce upskilling and transformation.

A*STAR SIMTech brings deep expertise across advanced manufacturing technologies, AI, Industry 4.0 and sustainability, with a strong track record in translating R&D into industry impact. Singapore Manufacturing Federation AMTA contributes strong industry relevance, leadership credibility and deep insights into manufacturing challenges, supported by SMF's close engagement with manufacturing enterprises and direct access to industry decision-makers.

Manufacturing Training Academy (SMF AMTA)

A*STAR Singapore Institute of Manufacturing Technology (SIMTech)