

PRESS RELEASE

THIRD REPORT OF THE ESTIMATES COMMITTEE

1. The Estimates Committee presented its report to Parliament on 27 November 2023. The Estimates Committee had considered the Budget for the Financial Year (FY) 2023/2024 (Paper Cmd. 20 of 2023) and enquired into certain matters, including the Healthier SG initiative, safeguarding Singapore's climate resilience and monitoring of the Research, Innovation and Enterprise (RIE) 2025 Plan.
2. In the course of its enquiry, the Committee held four meetings and considered three memoranda from Ministry of Finance (MOF).
3. The Third Report of the Estimates Committee [Parl. 18 of 2023] is attached.

Healthier SG

4. The Committee received updates on a range of issues. Notably, the Ministry of Health (MOH) shared that to measure the effectiveness of the War on Diabetes (WoD), MOH had been monitoring a set of key performance indicators comprising intermediate-term, longer-term, and national indicators, such as the control of modifiable risk factors (e.g. physical inactivity, unhealthy diet, obesity), uptake of chronic disease screening, management of diabetes and its related complications, as well as diabetes prevalence in the population. The Committee encouraged the Ministry to continue monitoring and updating the public on the results of the WoD based on the indicators above.
5. The Committee was pleased to note that the number of new doctors registered with the Singapore Medical Council (SMC) had increased in the past five years and that the number of doctors per 1,000 population in Singapore had increased from 2.4 in 2018 to 2.8 in 2022. The Committee noted that this is important as Singapore became an aged society in 2017 and is set to attain "super-aged" status in 2026. The Committee urged the Ministry to continue increasing the number of new doctors registered with SMC and the number of doctors per 1,000 population in Singapore. The Committee further encouraged the Ministry to continue to attract more foreign-trained doctors who are Singapore Citizens and Permanent Residents to return to Singapore.

Safeguarding Our Climate Resilience

6. On efforts to safeguard Singapore's climate resilience, the Committee took note of the governance framework to guide the operationalisation of the Coastal and Flood Protection Fund (CFPF) and ensure the prudent and proper utilisation of the funds. As climate adaptation was a long-term endeavour and given Singapore's vulnerability to rising sea levels, the Committee urged the Government to continue monitoring the impact of climate change on Singapore's coastal and flood protection and participate in international efforts to mitigate the impacts of climate change.
7. The Committee noted the commendable efforts to reduce flood-prone areas in Singapore substantially from 3,200 hectares (ha) in the 1970s to less than 30 ha this day. However, climate change may disrupt such efforts and thus it is timely

for Singapore to set aside \$100 billion over the next 100 years and the Committee urged the Government to share the learning and experiences of building the polder at Pulau Tekong.

Research, Innovation and Enterprise 2025 Plan

8. In respect of the Research, Innovation and Enterprise (RIE) 2025 plan, the Committee expressed their appreciation for the updates and efforts undertaken by the Government to catalyse research, innovation and enterprise through the multiple-year and continuous investments through the RIE plans. Due to the complex nature of R&D activities spanning over many years and the sum of public funds involved, the Committee was of the view that it would be important that agencies disbursing RIE funds ensured the accountability and proper usage of such funds, to enable Singapore to reap the most of the RIE investments.
9. The Committee was pleased to learn that the local startup scene had seen strong growth, benefiting from the RIE ecosystem. In particular, the number of startups that benefitted from the RIE ecosystem had more than doubled from 2018 to 2021. The Committee were also pleased to note that the startups had benefitted from a range of resources such as technologies, talent, funding, mentorship, infrastructure, and access to international networks.
10. An example is Lucence, which provides ultra-sensitive non-invasive cancer detection technologies. Its flagship tests include LiquidHALLMARK® which helps physicians with personalised treatment selection for their cancer patients, and LucenceINSIGHT™ which helps healthy asymptomatic individuals detect cancer signals earlier when cancer is most treatable. Lucence was founded in 2016 and spun off from A*STAR in 2017, and it has continued to benefit from its partnership with A*STAR.
11. Another example was ERS Industries, a data centre solutions provider. Operation & Technology Roadmaps (OTR) by EnterpriseSG helped ERS to identify the need to develop R&D capabilities in thermal cooling. This led ERS to collaborate with A*STAR and develop the ERS E@Rack that reduces the costs of thermal cooling for data server racks. ERS then worked with A*STAR to develop an energy-efficient system, KoolLogix, that reduced data centre energy consumption by up to 50%.
12. Mr Ang Wei Neng, the Chairman of the Committee said, “With Singapore transitioning to a Super Aged Society, we would need more doctors per 1,000 population in Singapore and we urge MOH and MOE to consider increasing the intake of medical students in local universities, without lowering the standards and quality of the graduates. Meanwhile, we are pleased that the past and present RIE plans have nurtured a growing innovative ecosystem that benefitted many local start-ups, including two shining examples Lucence and ERS Industries. In particular, Lucence as highlighted by Enterprise SG has benefited from synergies between Singapore and San Francisco’s “innovation ecosystems”.