

CSIRO launches ASEAN presence

Australian science and technology will be front and centre in the ASEAN region as Australia's national science agency, CSIRO, formally launched its presence in Singapore on 18 September.

The announcement coincided with Singapore-headquartered investment company, Temasek, becoming the third largest investor in the A\$232 million CSIRO Innovation Fund, managed by Main Sequence Ventures.

The CSIRO Innovation Fund supports new spin-outs, start-ups, and Small and Medium Enterprises engaged in the translation of research generated in the Australian publicly funded research sector, including the CSIRO and universities.

Speaking at a launch event in Singapore the previous night (17 September) to celebrate the Australian Good Science = Great Business festival in Singapore, CSIRO Chief Executive Dr Larry Marshall said CSIRO would strengthen the bridge between the Australian and ASEAN innovation ecosystems based on new and existing long-term partnerships.

Dr Marshall commented: *'In a more interconnected world, facing rapid disruption, our regional opportunity is for each country to play to our respective strengths, creating more new value through collaboration than any individual nation could have alone.'*

'Innovation has become too hard to do alone – it must be a team sport.'

'It will take global collaboration to deliver the real moon-shots like transforming human health through precision medicine; or sustainable management of our environment despite unprecedented industrial growth; or our work targeting every single one of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals.'

'Temasek's substantial investment in the CSIRO Innovation Fund is testament not just to international confidence in Australia's growing innovation economy and the returns it will deliver, but to the power of science to deliver real solutions to the world's problems.'

'As Australia's innovation catalyst, CSIRO is creating great opportunities across ASEAN, from the SMEs empowered by our SME Connect programme, to the start-ups spinning out of our national sci-tech accelerator ON, to the companies funded by the CSIRO Innovation Fund.'

CSIRO's Director, ASEAN, Ms Liza Noonan, said the Singapore presence would anchor CSIRO's ASEAN programme, supported by staff in Vietnam and Indonesia.

She added: *'CSIRO is solving the world's greatest challenges through innovative science and technology, and we've been doing that throughout the region for decades.'*

'CSIRO will build on the strong foundation of our existing partnerships with ASEAN governments, research institutes and business to grow the region's scientific excellence, pathways to market, and collaborative networks, while increasing opportunities for our Australian partners on the world stage.'

'CSIRO is looking forward to working with DFAT¹ across the region as a key partner to scale Australian innovation efforts across the region.'

This builds on existing partnerships in the region including in Singapore with Nanyang University, the National University of Singapore and A*STAR², and in Vietnam with the National Space Centre and the Ministry of Science and Technology.

CSIRO's work in the region covers a diverse range of projects, including boosting the Vietnamese prawn industry with Novacq feedstock, optimising supply chains through South East Asia with TraNSIT modelling technology, and a number of new partnerships in additive manufacturing, precision medicine, and futures modelling.

Guests at the launch event in Singapore also heard from Australian start-ups including tele-health platform Coviu, biofuel developers Folear, weather-forecasting technology Cloud180CAM, and gut-health diagnostic tool NoisyGuts, all graduates of the ON accelerator programme, run by CSIRO, as well as AI healthcare company Maxwell Plus, supported by the CSIRO Innovation Fund, managed by Main Sequence Ventures.

¹Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (www.dfat.gov.au)

²Singapore's Agency for Science, Technology and Research (www.a-star.edu.sg)

Picture caption

Australian science and technology will be front and centre in the ASEAN region as Australia's national science agency, CSIRO, formally launched its presence in Singapore, 17 September 2018 - photo: CSIRO ©.