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Headline: Cyber security sector gets S\$16m boost in grants

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Funding awarded to projects by S'pore-based companies to promote training and research

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SINGAPORE— More than S\$16 million will be invested into new cyber security projects with the potential to be commercialised or to develop capabilities to meet Singapore's cyber security needs, said the National Research Foundation (NRF) yesterday.

Under the National Cybersecurity Research and Development Programme grant call, S\$15.6 million will be given to nine projects, which range from threat detection to building security systems for smartphones, and solutions that secure the exchange of data.

Only projects by Singapore-based companies that were done in collaboration with Institutes of Higher Learning, research institutions or government agencies were accepted.

Another S\$600,000 was given to six projects, under a seed grant call by the Singapore Cybersecurity Consortium, to support the commercialisation of cyber security technologies.

The consortium was set up last year to promote research and training in cyber security.

In his speech at the opening of the Singapore Week of Innovation and Technology, Finance Minister Heng Swee Keat said that research will continue to be key in shaping future innovations.

Noting the NRF's awarding of grants to the nine public-private re-



search projects, he said: "Already, public sector research institutes are working more closely with companies to translate research outcomes into solutions that can be readily adopted for use."

"Should our cyber security researchers arrive at new findings, industry leads, from cyber security start-ups like Attila Cybertech to IT giants like Kaspersky, will stand ready to develop them into game-changing solutions," he added.

Singapore company i-Sprint Innovations' project is among the nine projects that was awarded the funding.

The cyber security solutions provider will be working with Singapore Management University on a security solution for Android smartphones,

One of the world's latest AI robots, Sophia, from Hanson Robotics, was a highlight at the Singapore Week of Innovation and Technology. In his speech at the opening of the event yesterday, Finance Minister Heng Swee Keat said that research will continue to be key in shaping future innovations.
PHOTO: ESTHER LEONG

and aims for a beta launch by the end of next year.

On its commercialisation potential, i-Sprint's chief technology officer Albert Ching said: "As mobile phones have become our personal devices, we will see more and more critical applications such as banking transactions, and Smart Nation applications like those used to control smart home functions.

"Increasingly, people are also carrying personal devices that are issued by their companies, so there are risks involving personal data or commercial secrets.

"We see a gap today, in terms of securing applications and data."

SecureAge Technology's anti-malware solution, which uses artificial in-

telligence to detect malware, is also one of the nine projects selected.

Dr Ngair Teow Hin, chief executive officer of SecureAge, said that in using deep learning to study historical data on viruses and malware, his solution has an edge over the usual solutions in the market.

"The normal solutions today are quite poor in detecting malware that are newly released. Studies have shown that their detection rate on day one of new malware releases is only 5 per cent. But with deep learning, our preliminary results have shown that our solution can detect over 90 per cent of malware on day one."

He said the company plans to commercially launch the solution about a year from now.

Mr Heng also announced that the NRF and Temasek Holdings will be working on "new commercial entities" to build and invest in deep tech start-ups rising from research and development done in Singapore.

He said in bringing deep technology innovations to market, "stimulating smart capital" is essential.

"Because these deeply technical innovations are complex to arrive at, they have longer times to market, and often require substantial follow-on investment, extensive technological expertise and industrial partnerships for successful commercialisation. While large corporations have the means to develop intellectual property, fledgling start-ups and research spin-outs require more help."

"In particular, very early-stage deep tech start-up teams require extensive support to navigate a costly development process and go-to-market strategy," he said.