

Singapore Budget 2026: S\$1 Billion Boost for Startups and Enhanced SME Grants of Up to 70% Now in Effect

Description

Singapore's startup and SME ecosystem received a major shot in the arm with Budget 2026, and as of **1 April 2026**, several key measures have officially kicked in. From a massive S\$1 billion injection into the Startup SG Equity scheme to enhanced grant support levels of up to 70% for local SMEs, here is everything business owners and entrepreneurs need to know about the changes now in effect.

S\$1 Billion for Startup SG Equity

The centrepiece of Budget 2026's enterprise support measures is the **S\$1 billion top-up to the Startup SG Equity (SSGE) scheme**. Previously focused on early-stage deep tech startups, the scheme has been expanded to include **growth-stage companies** as well – a significant shift that addresses one of the longest-standing gaps in Singapore's startup funding landscape.

For years, founders have spoken about the "Series B cliff" – the difficulty of raising growth capital in Singapore after the seed and Series A stages. With global venture capital funding tightening and investors becoming more cautious, many promising Singapore-based startups were struggling to scale despite having proven products and revenue. The expanded SSGE aims to change that by co-investing alongside private investors in growth-stage deep tech firms.

The S\$1 billion allocation is expected to catalyse significantly more private investment, as government co-investment typically gives private investors greater confidence to participate in funding rounds.

MRA Grants Enhanced to 70% for SMEs

From **1 April 2026 to 31 March 2029**, the **Market Readiness Assistance (MRA) grant** support levels have been enhanced to **up to 70% of eligible costs** for local SMEs, up from the previous cap of 50%. This is a substantial increase that makes it significantly more affordable for small businesses to expand overseas.

The MRA grant helps Singapore companies defray the costs of internationalisation activities, including:

- Overseas market entry and setup costs
- Business matching and market assessment
- Overseas marketing and promotion activities
- Legal and compliance costs for entering new markets

Non-SMEs also benefit from enhanced support of **up to 50%** during this period. Both enhancements run until 31 March 2029, giving businesses a three-year window to take advantage of the higher support levels.

S\$1.5 Billion for the Anchor Fund

Beyond startups and SMEs, Budget 2026 also allocated a second tranche of **S\$1.5 billion to the Anchor Fund**, a co-investment initiative between the government and Temasek aimed at attracting high-quality public listings to Singapore. First established in 2021, the Anchor Fund's expansion signals the government's commitment to making the Singapore Exchange (SGX) a more vibrant and attractive capital market.

An additional **S\$1.5 billion top-up to the Equity Market Development Programme** will further support fund managers and institutional investors in Singapore's capital markets ecosystem.

AI Adoption Among SMEs Tripling

The budget measures come at a time when Singapore SMEs are increasingly embracing technology. According to recent data, **AI adoption among Singapore SMEs tripled from 4.2% to 14.5%** between 2023 and 2024. While this figure still leaves significant room for growth, the trajectory is encouraging and suggests that government digitisation initiatives are bearing fruit.

Events like [GITEX AI Asia 2026](#), which recently drew 23,000 tech leaders to Singapore, underscore the country's growing position as a regional AI and technology hub. The enhanced grant support should further accelerate technology adoption among smaller firms.

What This Means for Business Owners

If you are a startup founder or SME owner in Singapore, here is what you should do:

- **Check your eligibility for enhanced MRA grants:** If you have been considering overseas expansion, the 70% support level makes this the best time to apply. Visit [Enterprise Singapore's website](#) for details.
- **Explore Startup SG Equity:** If you are running a deep tech company at the growth stage, the expanded SSGE scheme could provide the co-investment you need. Applications are processed through Enterprise Singapore.
- **Leverage digital transformation grants:** With AI adoption accelerating, grants like the Productivity Solutions Grant (PSG) and the Enterprise Development Grant (EDG) remain available to help SMEs adopt new technologies.
- **Use GoBusiness as your starting point:** The [GoBusiness portal](#) is the one-stop shop for discovering all available government grants and support programmes.

The Bigger Picture

Budget 2026's enterprise measures are part of Singapore's broader refreshed economic strategy, which aims to position the country as a global hub for innovation, deep tech, and high-value manufacturing. By supporting companies from the startup stage through to public listing, the government is building a comprehensive pipeline of support that few other countries can match.

For SMEs that have been on the fence about expanding or investing in new capabilities, the enhanced grant levels provide a compelling reason to act now. The three-year window runs until 31 March 2029, but given the competitive nature of grant applications, earlier movers are likely to benefit most.

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