BLOCK71 Launches UniVentures, Powering Vietnam's Next Generation of University Founders

A regional initiative by BLOCK71 in partnership with Temasek Foundation, and backed by NIC and Golden Gate Ventures' US$250K prize to accelerate top startups. Nearly 1,500 applications mark strong first wave of startup ambition

Singapore, Singapore Nov 5, 2025 ([Issuewire.com](https://www.issuewire.com)) - Vietnam's university startup scene is getting a bold new boost with the launch of **UniVentures**, a regional innovation programme led by **BLOCK71 by NUS Enterprise**, in partnership with Temasek Foundation and supported by **Vietnam's National Innovation Center (NIC)**, the **Tony Blair Institute for Global Change**, **Golden Gate Ventures**, Singapore Global Network, Google Cloud, IBM, and Reactor School. UniVentures was created to bring together the strengths of Singapore's and Vietnam's innovation systems — connecting founders from Vietnam's universities with mentorship, market access, and investment networks across the region. The programme is built around the vision of **"University to Unicorn"**, aiming to nurture top, **future-looking startups** founded by students, alumni, and researchers.

Originally designed to support 1,000 of Vietnam's top university founders, the programme has already attracted **nearly 1,500 applications** from across Vietnam, signalling strong entrepreneurial ambition and confidence in Vietnam's innovation landscape. "We don't just want to run a programme, we want to change the trajectory of these 1,500 young Vietnamese founders," said Edward Lim, Vietnam Country Manager at BLOCK71 – NUS Enterprise. "UniVentures is our way of betting on Vietnamese founders and turning ambition into access. By unlocking opportunities for Vietnam's young founders and connecting them to the wider Singapore innovation ecosystem, we're building not just startups — we're building future-ready talent and lasting bridges between Singapore and Vietnam." The programme is part of BLOCK71's continued efforts in Vietnam and broader Southeast Asia strategy to build connected innovation ecosystems across the region. It includes expert-led masterclasses, investor-readiness training, pitch clinics, and mentorship from founders and venture capitalists across ASEAN, culminating in a Demo Day to showcase top-performing teams.

In a major show of confidence in Vietnam's innovation ecosystem, Golden Gate Ventures has partnered with UniVentures to create the 'GGV UniVentures Prize', a **US$250,000 prize pool to support up to 10 top-performing startups** from the programme. The 'GGV UniVentures Prize' will offer selected teams a launchpad to pursue follow-on investment and international scale.

"At Golden Gate Ventures, we don't just invest in companies: we build the scaffolding of startup ecosystems. After 15 years of backing Southeast Asia's most iconic startups, we've learned that the next unicorn doesn't come from capital alone; it comes from community, mentorship, and belief. That's why we are leveraging the human, social and financial capital we have amassed over the years behind this programme, and putting up a US$250,000 prize as a catalyst. It's our way of accelerating Vietnam's next wave of founders and supporting the entrepreneurial ties between Singapore and Vietnam," said Vinnie Lauria, Founding Partner at Golden Gate Ventures.

Mr. Vu Quoc Huy, Director of NIC also added, "NIC has supported UniVentures from the very beginning, with a vision to create a national incubation programme that elevates startups and innovative ideas spun off from universities in Vietnam to their full potential. More than just a startup programme, UniVentures serves as a platform for transformation—bringing together the public and private sectors to accelerate innovation for the next generation to thrive in global markets." This initiative builds on the deepening strategic partnership between Singapore and Vietnam, which was elevated to a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership in March 2025. Innovation, technology, and entrepreneurship are central pillars of this enhanced relationship. During General Secretary Tô Lâm's official visit to Singapore and Prime Minister Lawrence Wong's
reciprocal visit to Hanoi, both countries signed a series of forward-looking agreements in areas such as digital transformation, green energy cooperation, and innovation. A key example of this growing collaboration is the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed in 2023 between NUS Enterprise and Vietnam's NIC to create new cross-border opportunities for entrepreneurs [1].

UniVentures emerges as a flagship initiative to translate this high-level ambition into tangible outcomes for a new generation of founders. It further strengthens bilateral innovation flows and provides a scalable model for how two fast-growing economies can co-create entrepreneurial ecosystems. The programme kicked off with a series of engagements with top universities across Vietnam, including Hanoi University of Industry, Hanoi University of Science and Technology, HCMC University of Technology and VinUniversity, ensuring a strong first cohort of budding entrepreneurs.

The programme is done in partnership with Temasek Foundation, whose support has made the initiative possible. A philanthropic organisation committed to programmes that drive positive outcomes for individuals and communities – now and for generations to come – Temasek Foundation plays a vital role in enabling inclusive entrepreneurship and capacity- building at scale—ensuring the long-term sustainability of UniVentures.

Each partner brings distinctive strengths to UniVentures. Startups are selected based on innovation potential, team capability, and market applicability. The most promising startups will also benefit from incubation at BLOCK71 Vietnam and Singapore, networking with investors and industry mentors, and investments from venture capital funds such as Golden Gate Ventures.

More information on UniVentures can be found on:
https://block71.co/en/page/univentures-en.

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About BLOCK71

BLOCK71 is an initiative by NUS Enterprise to drive innovation and entrepreneurship globally. It forms part of a global network of innovation and entrepreneurial gateways that connect NUS with major startup ecosystems around the world. Through curated programmes and strategic partnerships, BLOCK71 acts as a technology ecosystem builder and business connector — catalysing, aggregating, and developing the capabilities of the start-up community. With 11 centres globally in Silicon Valley, China, Japan, and Southeast Asia, BLOCK71 provides founders with access to technology, talent, markets and funding opportunities, serving as a launchpad and bridge for ventures moving into and out of Singapore and the broader NUS innovation network.

For more information, please visit www.vietnam.block71.co.

About Golden Gate Ventures

Golden Gate Ventures is a global, early-stage venture capital firm that empowers audacious founders across 3 continents. Founded in 2011, Golden Gate Ventures combines the knowledge and experience of Silicon Valley with the passion and experience in emerging startup ecosystems, establishing local roots with global reach. For over a decade, the firm's role is not just to fund founders as investors, but to nurture vibrant startup ecosystems with sustained growth. Golden Gate Ventures has invested in over 100 companies with 9 unicorns and 2 IPOs across its portfolio. Notable companies include Carro, Coda Payments, Stripe, Carousell, Xendit, AngelList, and Multiplier.

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