

For immediate release

10 winners selected at the seventh edition of Start-up Express *Covering different areas in health / climate / education tech and more to promote diversified entrepreneurial ecosystems*

- In the Final Pitch Day of Start-up Express, 10 winning start-ups were selected. CHOMP and Petalife won the **ESG Award** and the **My Favourite Start-up Award** respectively
- Nearly 200 industry players from Hong Kong's I&T ecosystem attended, helping start-ups seeking partners and enhancing brand awareness
- Many finalists integrated artificial intelligence into their products and solutions
- The third Start-up Express International will return during Entrepreneur Day in December

1 July 2024 – The seventh edition of Start-up Express, an entrepreneurship development programme organised by the Hong Kong Trade Development Council (HKTDC), came to a successful conclusion today with the selection of 10 winning start-ups. The **ESG Award** went to CHOMP in recognition of its sustainable and socially impactful business solution while the **My Favourite Start-up Award**, decided through audience live-polling, was awarded to Petalife. The 10 start-ups will participate in a series of local and overseas business events organised by HKTDC to develop their profiles through **building connections, exploring markets, seeking partners** and **enhancing brand awareness**.

HKTDC is fully committed to supporting and promoting the development of start-ups, helping them to expand into Mainland and international markets to showcase Hong Kong's strengths in innovation and technology.

Stephen Liang, Assistant Executive Director of the HKTDC, said: "Start-up Express is now in its seventh year and, over the past six years, we have assisted 60 Hong Kong start-ups by helping them to expand and venture into overseas markets. Many have won international awards, secured large orders, and received new rounds of investment. China's clear support along with the collaborative efforts by various stakeholders, continues to drive Hong Kong's development as an international innovation and technology hub, charting a new direction for the city's I&T development. HKTDC will continue to foster a favourable environment for start-ups and help them achieve new heights while advancing Hong Kong's economic development."

This year's Start-up Express attracted more than 200 applications, with finalists from the **education tech, fintech, AR/VR, climate tech** and **food tech** sectors. Several **green tech, health tech** and **smart city start-ups** integrated **AI** to provide innovative and creative services and products. Nearly 200 industry players, including business leaders and investors, attended the Final Pitching Day. Booths were also set up during the event enabling the Start-up Express finalists to showcase their businesses to all attendees and participants.

Comprehensive range of networking and matching initiatives provided to winning start-ups

The 10 winners were selected from 20 contestants in the final pitching round and each presented

innovative business ideas and answered questions raised by the distinguished panel of judges. The 10 winning start-ups are: Braillic, CathovenAI, CHOMP, Lacess, Libpet Tech, PharmCare Technology, PointFit Technology, Stellerus Technology, Vidi Labs and Xtra Sensing.

Click [here](#) to download the list of winners and their company profiles.

The HKTDC will arrange a series of exposure opportunities for the winning teams to interact with potential investors, buyers and partners.

Exceptional presentations at Final Pitching

Start-up Express judges this year were Jimmy Tao, Chairman, Hong Kong Startup Council; Andrew Young, Associate Director (Innovation), Sino Group and Cindy Zhang, Executive Director, Gobi GBA. **Jimmy Tao**, Chairman of Hong Kong Startup Council, said: "The exceptional performances of this year's finalists and business diversity demonstrated that local start-ups have considerable strengths in innovative thinking. Hong Kong's start-up community continues to thrive, with a record high of more than 4,200 start-ups launched last year, demonstrating Hong Kong's appeal as an ideal destination for establishing a business. The Start-up Express winners will be able to gain more valuable opportunities to expand their markets and networks and help fast track business development."

Assist start-ups expanding business in Mainland China and international market

Start-up Express provides extensive promotional opportunities for start-ups with winners able to take part in exhibitions in Mainland China and internationally, and attend meetings with investors to learn more about the industry, market trends and investors' preference.

Edmund Chan, COO and co-founder of **Meat the Next**, a new generation food producer and **Start-up Express 2023 winner**, said: "We have gained a lot from our participation in the Start-up Express, which helped us to broaden our brand awareness. We have also participated in various activities and training sessions organised by HKTDC to explore markets and build connections on all fronts. Earlier this year, we participated in the SIAL Shanghai Global Food Industry Summit under the Hong Kong Pavilion organised by the HKTDC and signed a Memorandum of Understanding with a leading Hangzhou e-commerce platform to launch plant-based milk in Mainland China. The HKTDC's support is instrumental in enabling Hong Kong brands like us to successfully enter the vast Mainland market."

Wada Bento, a Start-up Express winner in 2021, targeted the Japanese market by setting up an office in Osaka with HKTDC's assistance and has so far raised 400 million yen (approximately HK\$21 million) for further expansion in Japan. Wada Bento plans to install 100 bento vending machines in Osaka and Tokyo by the end of the year to develop a brand-new sales platform for the Japanese food industry.

Start-up Express International returns in December with global start-ups

The HKTDC has always given its full support to Hong Kong's entrepreneurial ecosystem, helping to maintain the city's status as a competitive business centre and hub for innovation.

Start-up Express International was launched in 2022 for overseas early-stage start-ups to share the stage with local Start-up Express winners.

So far, Start-up Express International has attracted participants from around the world, including Australia, France, Germany, Japan, Korea, Turkey, Singapore, United Arab Emirates and the United States. The third Start-up Express International will return during Entrepreneur Day in December and the HKTDC will support the winners in setting up their businesses in

Hong Kong and to explore the mainland and Greater Bay Area markets.

Websites

Start-up Express: <https://portal.hktdc.com/startupexpress/>

Photo download: <https://bit.ly/4bnxdx7>



The 10 Start-up Express 2024 winners with the judges and guests. Back row from the fourth left: Jimmy Tao, Chairman, Hong Kong Startup Council; Cindy Zhang, Executive Director, Gobi GBA; Stephen Liang, Assistant Executive Director of the HKTDC and Andrew Young, Associate Director (Innovation), Sino Group



Students were invited to present their innovative solutions at the Final Pitch Day of Start-up Express. Sarah Tong (second from right), co-founder of Big Bang

Academy – the winner from last year - provided guidance and presented the appreciation certificates to the students



Nearly 200 industry players were invited to participate in the Final Pitch Day of the Start-up Express, allowing start-ups to interact with investors and business leaders



A start-up exhibition at the Start-up Express Final Pitch Day venue, enabled the finalists to introduce their companies to the attendees

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About HKTDC

The [Hong Kong Trade Development Council \(HKTDC\)](#) is a statutory body established in 1966 to promote, assist and develop Hong Kong's trade. With 50 [offices](#) globally, including 13 in Mainland China, the HKTDC promotes Hong Kong as a two-way global investment and business hub. The HKTDC organises [international exhibitions](#), [conferences](#) and [business missions](#) to create business opportunities for companies, particularly small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), in the mainland and international markets. The HKTDC also provides up-to-date market insights and product information via [research reports](#) and [digital news channels](#). For more information, please visit: www.hktdc.com/aboutus. Follow us on  Twitter @hktdc and  LinkedIn