

France and Singapore Defence Ministries to Establish First Joint R&D Lab in Artificial Intelligence for Defence

On April 19, France and Singapore strengthened their relations in the field of defence innovation, with the signing of a technical arrangement to create a joint R&D laboratory in the field of artificial intelligence. The objective of this cooperation, which is part of the SAFARI (Singapore and France Advanced Research Initiative) agreement, is to bring together French and Singaporean researchers to propose and undertake projects of interest to both countries. This technical arrangement was signed by Emmanuel Chiva, Délégué général pour l'armement and by Chan Heng Kee, Singapore's Ministry of Defence (MINDEF) Permanent Secretary (Defence), in the presence of Major General (Armament) Patrick Aufort, Director of the Defence Innovation Agency, Tan Peng Yam, MINDEF's Chief Defence Scientist and Her Excellency Minh-di Tang, Ambassador of France to Singapore.

A path breaking cooperation

The objective of this agreement is to set up a Franco-Singaporean laboratory specialized in the field of artificial intelligence (AI), in charge of conducting research projects common to both countries and systematically carried out by a joint Franco-Singaporean team.

Located in Singapore, the joint lab will benefit from the expertise of researchers from the Temasek Laboratories of the National University of Singapore (TL@NUS), and researchers from the CNRS, which is already well established in Singapore, with a subsidiary there and four joint laboratories with Singaporean universities, including the IPAL, which is specialized in artificial intelligence.

The areas of application for AI addresses intelligence, C2, decision making support, autonomy, operational superiority in combat, and research and development support. The cooperation will lead to studies and, if necessary, to models or demonstrators. Potential research areas include computer vision, geospatial AI, robust AI, and automatic language processing.

The Defence Innovation Agency and the Singapore's Ministry of Defence will provide guidance for the laboratory jointly

A partner of choice in the field of artificial intelligence research

The interest of the agreement lies in the fact of benefiting from the common high-level academic work carried out by French and Singaporean academics and researchers. Singapore, known for its excellence in the field of artificial intelligence, has launched numerous national initiatives and programmes in Artificial Intelligence, federating the efforts of the country's universities, research centres, and start-ups. The French National Centre for Scientific Research is a leading research institution, second largest scientific research body in the world (32 000 staffs, 1000 labs), recognised for its excellence.

Scientific and, ultimately, economic interests are the driving force behind the creation of this alliance. If the bi-national mode of operation is satisfactory, the laboratory will be able to extend its work to other themes.

The creation of this laboratory is a first in the SAFARI cooperation, which fully participates in our policy of privileged partnership with Singapore. It responds to the will of both nations to work together in the long term in the field of Artificial Intelligence, to foster closer ties between French and Singaporean researchers, and to improve the synergy between research works and to accelerate collaborations.

To know more about the SAFARI agreement

SAFARI (Singapore and France Advanced Research Initiative) is the framework for cooperation between France and Singapore in research, science and technology. Created in 1997, it has enabled, over the years, to build a solid and trustful bilateral relationship between the government and industrial partners of both countries involved in the cooperation. To date, it has carried out more than 70 joint projects, notably in the naval, robotics, biological and chemical fields.

The SAFARI committee is co-chaired by Major General (Armament) Patrick Aufort, Director of the Defence Innovation Agency, and MINDEF's Chief Defence Scientist, Tan Peng Yam.