INSIGHTS 2040 ANNUAL MEETINGS | 16-17 Nov 2026 Singapore

THEMATIC PRIMER



Shaping tomorrow's innovation

SHAPING TOMORROW'S INNOVATION

16–17 November 2026 | Sands Expo & Convention Centre, Singapore | Five roundtables

WHY THIS MATTERS NOW

The next wave of innovation in finance keeps meeting the same bottleneck: good ideas that outrun the capital, skills or buyer signals needed to take them to scale. Climate tech start-ups, SMEs, AI-enabled fintechs and sustainability-minded suppliers all describe a version of the same gap between pilot and scale-up.

The gap is becoming easier to measure. SMEs in developing economies face a financing gap of about US$5.7 trillion, growing faster than the economies themselves. Climate tech funding rose 55% in the first half of 2026, but deal count fell to a five-year low, concentrating money in fewer, larger bets. And as AI reshapes which business models and skills succeed, entry-level hiring in the most AI-exposed jobs has fallen further behind other roles.

THREE THEMES ACROSS THE SESSIONS

Five roundtables take up these questions. Three themes recur across them. The schedule overleaf shows where each one is discussed.

1 Closing the financing gap for innovation that doesn't fit normal timelines

Climate technology and SMEs in developing economies both need capital on terms that conventional investors and lenders don't offer: patient, catalytic or blended with public money. Singapore's FAST-P programme and the push to crowd in private lending for SMEs are both early attempts to structure that kind of capital.

> **Question:** *Which risks should public money absorb, so that each private investor can fund its stage within its mandate?*

2 Scaling AI-enabled finance without losing the first rung of the career ladder

AI is reshaping fintech business models and enabling cross-border growth, but the same shift is changing which jobs exist for graduates and mid-career workers moving into finance. Hiring data shows a slowdown for the youngest workers in the most AI-exposed roles, even where overall employment holds up.

> **Question:** *If AI absorbs the routine tasks that once trained new graduates, who now provides that training: employers, universities or the state?*

3 Turning sustainability expectations into supplier action

Large buyers, public and private, increasingly score suppliers on sustainability data and emissions reporting. Most smaller suppliers have not used the government support available to them, and the financial case for acting is still unclear to many.

> **Question:** *What would make sustainability pay for a small supplier: common buyer requirements, public incentives, or both?*

IN NUMBERS

42%

Share of climate tech funding in H1 2026 that went to the ten largest deals.

Source: Currence, July 2026

US $5BN

Blended finance that Singapore's FAST-P programme aims to mobilise for green and transition projects in Asia.

Source: PIDG, June 2026

24 PTS

Gap in sustainability adoption between large firms (61%) and small firms (37%) in Singapore.

Source: UOB Business Outlook Study, 2026

16.2%

Share of jobs in developing economies that AI could make more productive. By contrast, 4.5% are at risk.

Source: World Bank, World Development Report 2026

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SESSIONS ON THIS THEME

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MONDAY 16 NOVEMBER

TIME	SESSION	THEMES	ROOM
10.15–11.45am	**Industry Meets Policy: Scaling Sustainable Procurement Nationwide** Aligning public and private procurement to give suppliers a clearer sustainability signal.	3	Room 4
12.15–1.45pm	**Connecting the Capital Stack: Financing Climate Innovation from First Risk to Scale** Coordinating capital across stages so climate tech can scale without losing investors' mandates.	1	Room 4
2.15–3.30pm	**Scaling AI-Enabled Financial Services: From Domestic Success to Global Growth** How AI reshapes fintech business models, cross-border growth and scale-up governance.	2	Room 4

TUESDAY 17 NOVEMBER

TIME	SESSION	THEMES	ROOM
1.45–3.15pm	**Policy Meets Capital: Closing the SME Finance Gap** Closing the US$5.7tn SME financing gap through policy, data and blended capital.	1	Room 4
3.45–5.15pm	**Is AI Pulling the Ladder Up? Reimagining Job-Ready Skills in the AI Transition** Whether AI is closing off the first rung of career ladders, and what should replace it.	2	Room 4

Themes: 1 Closing the financing gap for innovation that doesn't fit normal timelines 2 Scaling AI-enabled finance without losing the first rung of the career ladder 3 Turning sustainability expectations into supplier action

All sessions take place in the Roundtable Rooms at Sands Expo & Convention Centre, Level 5, Singapore. Times are Singapore time.

Sources. Currence (formerly Sightline Climate), H1 2026 Climate Tech Investment & Innovation Report, July 2026. PIDG, June 2026. UOB Business Outlook Study, 2026. World Bank, World Development Report 2026.

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