



## News Release

### For Immediate Release

#### **Rice Bowl Startup Awards: Celebrating Rising Startups Across Southeast Asia**

*Winners were awarded in 12 categories at gala event in Kuala Lumpur*

KUALA LUMPUR, 22 November, 2015 – Winners for the inaugural Rice Bowl Startup Awards were celebrated at a gala event closing the 1 Asean Entrepreneurship Summit in Kuala Lumpur earlier today. The Golden Rice Bowl Award for Startup of the Year was awarded to NeonRunner, a startup from Malaysia which offers last mile on-demand services for the masses at an affordable price.

“From the very beginning our goal was to celebrate the rising stars of entrepreneurship throughout Southeast Asia, and tonight’s gala honoured startups who are a clear embodiment of excellence and innovation,” said Ashran Dato’ Ghazi, Chairman of New Entrepreneurs Foundation (myNEF).

All 33 finalists were automatically in the running for the Golden Rice Bowl Award, and were awarded startup training worth USD15,000, regional media engagements and investor matching.

“Cumulatively, RM82million in funding has been pledged by investors to date to invest in the finalists, and we are confident that this figure will expand as more investors recognise the quality and innovation of these startups,” added Ashran.

The Rice Bowl Startup Awards is the first ASEAN awards to celebrate rising startups that harness technology to propel their business regionally, with the aim of building an ASEAN ecosystem for the startup community. The awards focus on developmental elements, with all of our finalists being media trained, given media exposure and matched with investors. 376 entries were submitted from nine countries across South East Asia during the nomination phase from 1 June to 15 September 2015. A panel of over 30 judges from the awards’ community partners then evaluated the entries in four broad areas – Business, Traction, USP and Investability.

Finalists were judged by the Rice Bowl Startup Awards Grand Jury, lead by Tan Sri Dr. Mohamed Irwan Serigar Abdullah, Chairman of the 1 ASEAN Entrepreneurship Summit as Head Judge and comprising of Nadira Yusoff, President of Nadi-Ayu Technologies & Co-Chairperson of 1 ASEAN Entrepreneurship Summit; Hamdi Mokhtar, Board Member of New Entrepreneurs Foundation; Cheryl Yeoh, CEO of Malaysian Global Innovation & Creativity Centre; Leigh Reyes, President & Chief Creative Officer of LOWE Philippines; Matthew Badalucco, Vice President of Catcha Group; and Amran Hassan, Head of Innovation of Maybank.

The Finalists for the inaugural Rice Bowl Startup Awards are (winners in bold):

### INDUTRY AWARD CATEGORY

#### 1. **Retail Startup of the Year**

Poundit (Phillipines) - E-commerce site for consumer electronics founded by Kristian Salvo, CEO.

#### 2. **Media Startup of the Year**

FoodAdvisor.my (Malaysia) - Food review and recommendation site founded and curated by Kenny Hew, CEO and Kay Stanford Jr. Kastum, Digital Producer.

#### 3. **Digital/Online Startup of the Year**

Eatigo (Thailand) - Online restaurant reservations with time-based discounts. Co-founded by Michael Cluzel, CEO and Siddhanta Kothari, COO.

#### 4. **Tech Startup of the Year**

Star Ticket (Myanmar) - The first bus ticketing solution in Myanmar. Co-founded by Thet Mon Aye and Zarni Nway Oo.

### CROSS-SECTOR AWARD CATEGORY

#### 5. **Product Startup of the Year**

QLIPP (Singapore) - Lightweight sensor that helps improve tennis game. Co-founded by Donny Soh, CEO and Lee Chee How, COO.

#### 6. **Service Startup of the Year**

NeonRunner (Malaysia) - On demand, same day delivery service enabler co-founded by M. Kanashan, CEO and Arvind Patmarajah, CFO.

#### 7. **Innovative Go-To-Market Startup of the Year**

GetLinks (Thailand) - Connects companies with the next generation of passionate digital talent and innovators. Co-founded by Djoann Fal and Polpat Songthamjitti.

### SPECIAL AWARD CATEGORY

#### 8. **FinTech Business Startup of the Year** (category sponsored by Maybank)

Qwikwire (Phillipines) - Pay bills from anywhere in the world brought by Bing Bryan Tan, CTO and Zairo Hererro Ko, Head Of Business Development.

#### 9. **University Startup of the Year** (category sponsored by University Malaya)

Flexilicate (Malaysia) - Custom designed optical fibers for telecommunications applications, sensing & non-linear effects spearheaded by Prof. Dr. Faisal Rafiq Mahamd Adikan, Director and Dr. Ghafour Amouzad Mahdiraji, Managing Director.

### STAR AWARD CATEGORY

#### 10. **Social Enterprise Startup of the Year**

Kapital Boost (Singapore) - Islamic crowdfunding platform that helps small businesses pay for goods and capital purchases. Co-founded by Erly Witoyo, Managing Partner and Umar Munshi, Partner.

#### 11. **Woman in Business Startup of the Year**

Silvia Wetherell, MumRadar (Singapore) - Helping mums find nursing rooms, baby friendly cafes, playgrounds and more on the go. Co-founded by mums Silvia Wetherell and Rita Bishop.

The awards were held as a closing ceremony for the 1ASEAN Entrepreneurship Summit (1AES2015). 1AES2015 aims to inspire and promote ideas by sharing the learnings of successful entrepreneurs and industry exoerts with young entrepreneurs. At the same time, motivating youths to think big and leverage on the ASEAN community to capture the global market.

According to YBhg Tan Sri Dr Mohd Irwan Siregar bin Abdullah, the Secretary General of Treasury, “We have been receiving an overwhelming response from both the local and ASEAN entrepreneurs since the 1AES kicked off in March, early this year. We, here at 1AES strive to provide knowledge, inspiration, motivation and ifeas as well as networking platform within the 1 week period.

The Malaysian Global Innovation and Creativity Centre (MAGiC) is the awards’ strategic partner, and the event is sponsored by Maybank”, Microsoft and UStart. Trophy design is by Melinda Looi International, and was 3D printed by UTC Additive Manufacturing Pte Ltd. Infinite Ventures matched the finalists with investors around the region, and the awards were audited by Adib Azhar & Co. Ammanz, Aquila, Thailand Startup Review and the Malaysian Reserve are all supporters of this year’s awards.

The awards’ community partners include:

Bangkok Entrepreneurs, Brand Geeks, Cradle, Cyberview, Digital Kaway, Geeks in Cambodia, Hubba, IdeaSpace, Iglu, Lithan, Mad Inc, MDEC, My Harapan, MyIPO, My Performing Arts, NEF, Startup Jobs Asia, Startup Malaysia, Startup Myanmar, Startup Thailand, Startup Vietnam, The Spark Project, UStart 2015, WatchTower & Friends, Webmob, Women Entrepreneurs Network (WENA), and World Islamic Economic Forum Foundation (WIEF).

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#### **About the New Entrepreneurs Foundation**

New Entrepreneurs Foundation (myNEF) is a not for profit organization that focuses on creating and developing sustainable entrepreneurs via strategic developmental programs. MyNEF designs and caters programmes with the entrepreneurs in mind, helping them achieve their business goal. For more information, visit [www.mynef.com](http://www.mynef.com).

#### **About the Rice Bowl Startup Awards**

Just as rice is a staple among Southeast Asians, so is technology for fuelling businesses of the future. The Rice Bowl Startup Awards is the first ASEAN awards that recognize breakout startups in the region that harness digital technology. The Rice Bowl honours rising entrepreneurs in various categories of excellence including industry awards, cross-sector awards, and star awards celebrating Best Startup of the Year and Best Woman in Business Startup of the Year. Mooted by the New Entrepreneurs Foundation (myNEF), the inaugural Awards will be held in November 2015 at the 1ASEAN Entrepreneurship Summit (1AES) in Kuala Lumpur. For more information, visit [www.ricebowlawards.com](http://www.ricebowlawards.com).