

HACKATHON

FOR A
BETTER
WORLD

2026

FUTURE-PROOFING THE RULE OF LAW

Cross-Border Capability

How can Singapore lawyers deepen cross-border capabilities and regional presence?

Co-organised by:



FEARSOME FOURSOME PRESENTS:

ALREE

ASEAN LEGAL READINESS & EXPANSION ECOSYSTEM
BRIDGING SINGAPORE'S LEGAL TALENT TO THE ASEAN REGION

CHALLENGE STATEMENT:

HOW CAN SINGAPORE LAWYERS DEEPEN CROSS-BORDER CAPABILITIES AND REGIONAL PRESENCE?

VIABILITY & FEASIBILITY

Start with phase one : Singapore × Malaysia
Common law foundation | High transaction volume |
Strong bilateral legal ties
Focus areas: Corporate Law · Employment Law ·
Contract Law
12-month rollout → Year 2 expansion to Thailand &
Indonesia

WHAT IS ALREE?

ALREE is a unified digital ecosystem that equips Singapore lawyers with the knowledge, tools, and networks to operate confidently across ASEAN

KEY STAKEHOLDERS

Ministry of Law · Law Society of Singapore ·
Enterprise Singapore · NUS · NTU · Regional
ASEAN Law Firms

HOW DOES ALREE WORK?



STEP 1 — LEGAL INTELLIGENCE

Access a shared ASEAN legal database
with AI-generated jurisdiction
summaries and live regulatory updates

STEP 2 — AI COMPARISON TOOL

Instantly compare legal frameworks
across countries

For example: contracts, enforcement,
dispute resolution and more



STEP 3 — COLLABORATION NETWORK

Get matched with verified local
lawyers across ASEAN for
seamless cross-border case
collaboration

STEP 4 — CAPABILITY BUILDING

Join bootcamps, simulations,
regional workshops and overseas
secondments to build real cross-
border experience



Infinite Possibilities





Cross-border ADR that grows small firms through the clients they already serve.

Hackathon for a Better World **Team Krishman** Krishna Ravichandran & Emanuele Huan

01

DISCOVER · THE CHALLENGE

Singapore wants regional lawyers. Most firms are not going.



65%

Of firms are unlikely to expand regionally in the next few years.



~80%

Of Singapore practices are small firms of one to five lawyers.



800+

Small firms have no on-ramp to the region. The gap sits here.

Sources: LPS 2025 Pre-Event Survey; Law Society of Singapore / Ministry of Law practice statistics.

THE TWO PEOPLE WHO FEEL IT



Mei · SME founder

Exports consumer goods into ASEAN

"A buyer in Vietnam stopped paying. I was told my contract would be hard to enforce there."

Wants: To get paid abroad and expand into the region safely.



Daniel · small-firm partner

Four-lawyer firm, SME & startup clients

"My clients are going regional and taking the work to the big firms. I want to grow with them."

Wants: To win higher-value regional work, not be left behind.

02

DEFINE · THE INSIGHT & THE INSTRUMENT

Small firms already sit on the on-ramp: their own clients.

Don't send small firms abroad to compete. Grow them at home, through their departing clients. **Arb-Med-Arb (AMA)** is the entry product: enforceable, and learnable from a standing start.



Court judgments don't travel

A Singapore judgment is patchy to enforce across ASEAN.



Arbitration is too big

The average 2024 SIAC dispute was ~US\$19m. SMEs are priced out.



Mediation is unbacked

Cheap and fast, but fewer than 20 states back it by treaty.



The answer: Arb-Med-Arb

Mediate first, with an arbitration backstop. Any settlement becomes a **consent award that rides the New York Convention, enforceable in 170+ countries.**

Sources: SIAC Annual Report 2024; New York Convention (170+ states); UNCITRAL Singapore Convention status.

03

DEVELOP · THE SOLUTION

Anchor: a two-sided programme that compounds.

Make Singapore-seated ADR the default when an SME contracts abroad, which creates **demand**. Then train that SME's own firm to do the work, which builds **capability**.



DEMAND SIDE

Anchor Clause + Health Check

A default clause. A pre-vetted Singapore-seated AMA clause, built into cross-border templates.

A 2-minute Health Check. It flags enforceability risk and generates the right clause.

At the point of contracting. Delivered through EnterpriseSG, SBF and banks like DBS.



SUPPLY SIDE

Anchor Pathway: a capability ladder

- 1 Advise SMEs on cross-border dispute clauses.
- 2 Represent clients in mediation at SIMC.
- 3 Run the full Arb-Med-Arb process.
- 4 Co-counsel on larger SIAC arbitrations.

Anchor clause set as default

ADR work is created

Small firm builds capability

Firm wins a bigger mandate

1

2

3

4

Demand and capability compound

04

DELIVER · VIABILITY & FEASIBILITY

Test before scale, inside what already exists.

1

PHASE 1 0 to 12 months

Pilot one cohort

- One cohort via SBF / EnterpriseSG.
- Test that a default clause beats opt-in.
- Track adoption and matters handled.

2

PHASE 2 1 to 2 years

Scale the channels

- Widen distribution and bank channels.
- Open SIAC / SIMC panel pathways.
- Publish results to recruit the next cohort.

3

PHASE 3 3+ years

Embed as default

- AMA clause becomes the SME default.
- Ladder folded into SAL certification.
- A standing pipeline of regional firms.

THE IMPACT · ACCESS TO JUSTICE, AND A REGIONAL PROFESSION



800+

Small firms reachable through one channel.

For Mei she expands abroad with protection she can enforce.



ASEAN

SME footprint becomes the distribution network.

For Daniel higher-value work that expands his market reach and expertise.



Enforceable

Cross-border justice for SMEs priced out of arbitration.

For Singapore a profession that is regional in practice, not just rhetoric.

Small firms don't have to chase the region. They can sail in with the clients they already serve.

ANCHOR



How can Singapore lawyers deepen cross-border capabilities and regional presence?

An SAL Hackathon 2026 pitch by **LEX ORCHESTRATA**

Introduction

Focus: Cross-Border Capabilities

- Technical knowledge:**
 - sufficient familiarity with selected regional legal systems and frameworks in ASEAN
 - ability to identify/understand key issues and engage substantively with foreign counsel and clients
- Interpersonal skills** - skills important in building trust:
 - communicating effectively across cultural and professional boundaries
 - navigating differing legal traditions
 - managing relationships with counterparts and clients from diverse jurisdictions

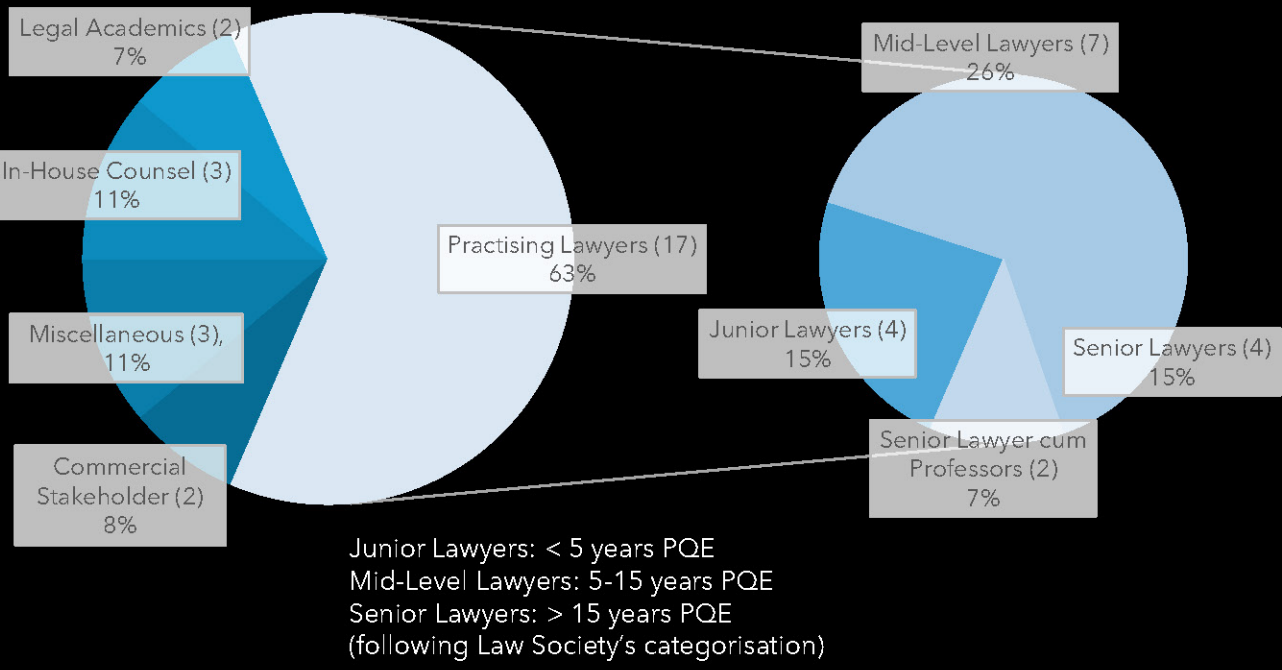
Our Why: Leveraging Singapore's Position as a Premier Gateway to Capture Rapid Legal Services Growth in APAC



- Fast-growing APAC legal services market creates demand-side pressures**
- Singapore is a commercial gateway to APAC:**
 - Top 5 APAC markets for M&A transaction value and deal volume ([S&P](#) (2025))
 - Singapore's AUM reached S\$6.07 trillion in 2024, with 77% of AUM sourced outside Singapore and 88% of AUM invested globally ([MAS](#) (2024))
- Singapore as a dispute resolution hub**
 - SIAC is the preferred arbitral institution in APAC, with >90% of new cases filed in SIAC international in nature ([Withers](#) (2026))
- The rise of cross-border wealth inflows to Singapore:**
 - Family offices and private capital from Greater China, SEA, and the Middle East require increased sophistication in trust, tax advisory, succession planning

Our Process

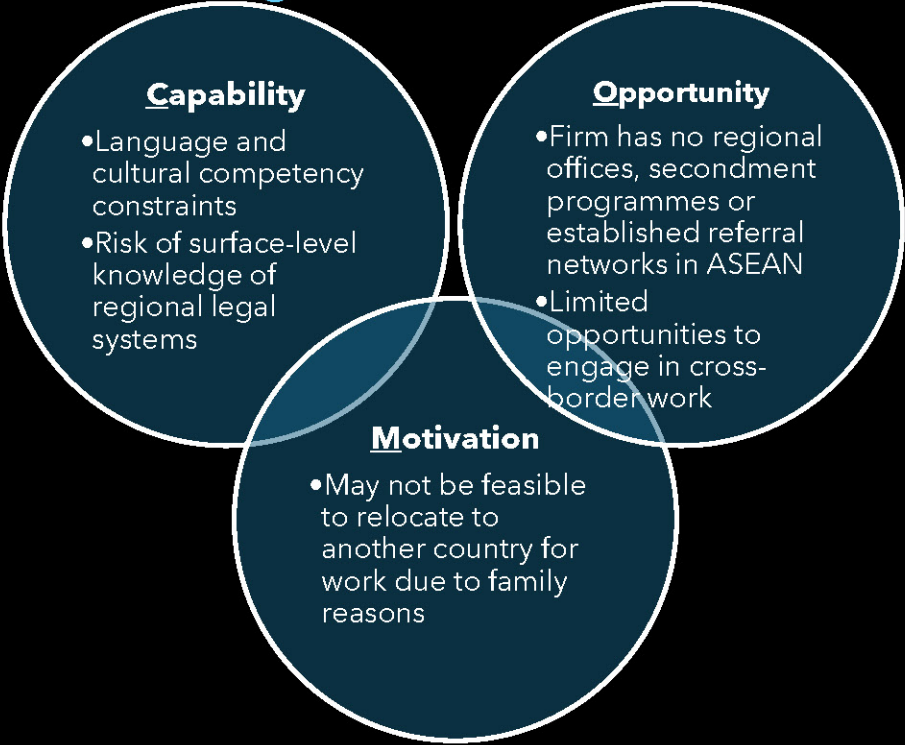
Interviewee Profiles



- Total:** 21 interviewees
- Legal Sector Stakeholders:** 16
 - Including LawSoc council member (previously in charge of International Relations) and ex officio member of SILE
- Practising Lawyers:** 11
 - Including 8 local counsel and 3 foreign counsel
- Other interviewees are legal academics and users of legal services including listed company director, listed company chief legal officer, a business founder and a diplomat

The Problem

Challenges - The COM-B Model



Our Persona - Daniel Tan

- Status:** Married with two kids, primary breadwinner with two sets of parents and grandparents to take care of
- Position and PQE:** Senior Associate, 6 years PQE
- Works in:** Mid-sized law firm in Singapore, doing cross-border corporate transactions (some Southeast Asia exposure but mostly governed by Singapore law)
- Client Base:** (1) Listed companies and SMEs, headquartered in Singapore with regional presence; (2) foreign companies investing in Singapore



Daniel's Jobs-to-be-Done

When...	I want to... (Functional JTBD)	So that I can... (Social JTBD)	And... (Emotional JTBD)
(1) My shallow knowledge of foreign laws limits a holistic understanding of issues to advise clients; and (2) Overseas postings/ secondments are not feasible due to family commitments	Have access to alternative pathways to build on my capabilities,	Be recognised as a credible lawyer with regional capabilities, defined by the depth I have built from Singapore	(1) Let go of the guilt that comes with prioritising my family; and (2) Not let my restrictions limit my prospects as a cross-border lawyer
My communication style, cultural assumptions limit my ability to build trust and develop long-lasting relationships with foreign clients and counsel	Develop practical cultural fluency relevant to my key ASEAN markets	(1) Build and maintain long-term relationships with clients and counsel in these jurisdictions; and (2) Grow to be a trusted adviser and friend	Be fulfilled by having genuine and deep connections with clients and counsel, not just a technical resource

Insights Uncovered



Effective Pathways

- The most effective traditional pathways (e.g., secondments, business relationship travels) are blocked by family and law firm constraints
- Solutions must de-couple regional capability-building from physical presence



Credentials and Capabilities

- ASEAN-focused credentials and capabilities can be developed (e.g. through LawSoc and SAL) to address mid-career concerns
- Capabilities are also relational. This is built through cultural sensitivities, track record, network proximity, etc.

Our Solution

Overview



1. Professional Learning for Regional Competencies

Modular, stackable ASEAN-focused training and credentials through continuing professional development (CPD)



2. Leveraging Existing Institutional Platforms to Build Lawyer-Centric Cross-Border Network

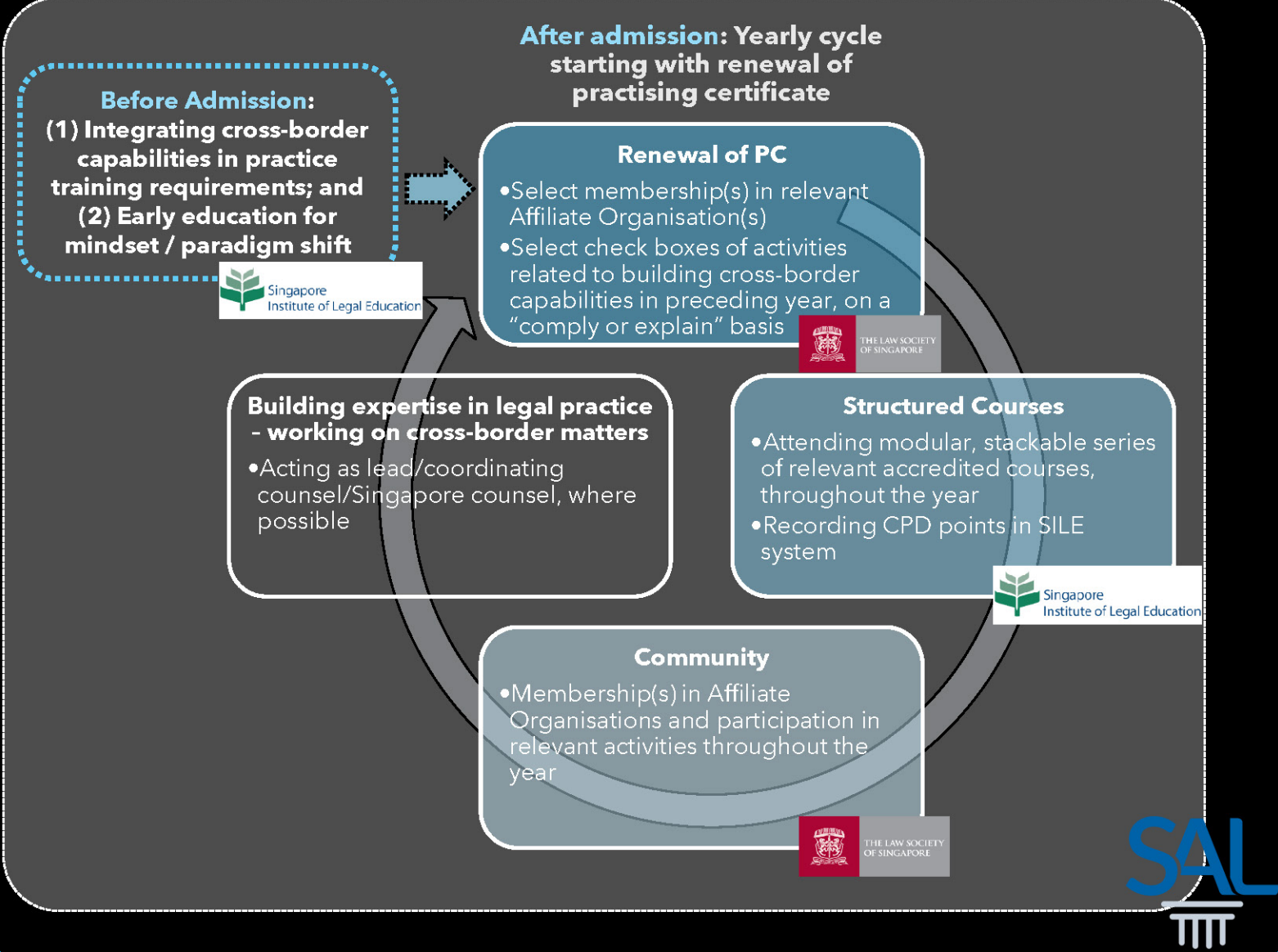
e.g. SAL, LawSoc, and SILE to attract legal professionals to contribute to the network, through which lawyers can learn legal cultures, business norms, communication styles and stakeholder expectations directly from the source in a semi-formal setting



3. Encouraging Paradigm Shifts

Promote early exposure to cross-border matters, complexities and nuances in university or Bar courses

Our Solution in Practice



Why Would Our Solution Work?

Ideation and Testing - The EAST Framework for Late-Stage Solution Prototype

	Easy	Attractive	Social	Timely
Ideating Stage	Lawyers already subject to mandatory CPD requirements	Association with well-respected institutions makes participation professionally salient	Institutional backing creates professional identity; community ensures peer relationships are formed by and part of learning process	Alignment of self-declaration with PC renewal cycles converts existing deadline into natural trigger across profession
Testing (User Feedback)	May not address need for Singapore lawyers to have bold mindset shift to embrace cross-border complexities	Solution may not be relevant to e.g. community lawyers; does not directly help with client acquisition	Nothing beats hands-on work to build capability; LawSoc has existing initiatives but awareness of such can be improved	Overly intensive compliance and monitoring during University or Part B may inadvertently be discouraging
Addressing User Feedback in Final Solution	Propose that SILE incorporate cross-border requirement during practice training period	"Tick-off-the-checklist" model modified to "comply or explain" model; solution tackles technical and interpersonal skills required for client acquisition	Propose that SILE incorporate cross-border requirement during practice training period; LawSoc to raise awareness of work and membership in Affiliate Organisations	Practice Training checklist builds general/ foundational awareness of cross-border considerations, with an N/A option for those without relevant experience

Implementing Our Solution - Setting the Groundwork and Processes with Existing Institutions



1. Convene key stakeholders



2. Constitute advisory or oversight committee to govern curriculum development



3. Provide continuing research and thought leadership



4. Build and manage regional practitioner network

- ✓ **Provide institutional authority to align stakeholders around this shared framework**

1. Build the community

Raise awareness of work and memberships in IR Committee, different country chapters, ASEAN Bar Council, etc. ("Affiliate Organisations")

2. Build the skills and capabilities

At PC renewal, lawyers to state memberships in Affiliate Organisations and select check-boxes of relevant activities in building cross-border capabilities in the year preceding the PC renewal, on a "comply or explain" basis



1. CPD Integration

- Guard the substantive and pedagogical standards required for CPD recognition
- Evaluate proposed modules and set CPD accreditation criteria
- Integrate cross-border competency into CPD framework i.e., allocate CPD points for relevant activities (e.g. teaching and speaking on related topics)

2. Driving the Paradigm Shift

- Integrate cross-border exposure in Part B or during the practice training period
- Engage with Singapore (and regional) law schools - advocate for and facilitate the integration of cross-border and ASEAN-focused content at university levels

Desirability, Viability, and Feasibility

- ✓ **Social Impact and Benefits**
 - Better equipped lawyers to serve clients in regional matters
 - Capacity-building within the regional legal profession
 - Reduced friction in cross-border dealings
 - Promotes inclusion within the legal profession
- ✓ **Viability and Continued Impact**
 - Institutional anchoring provides:
 - structural durability
 - governance credibility
 - administrative infrastructure
 - Solution is embedded in existing CPD framework
 - Modular design enables continuous renewal
 - Self-reinforcing network effects increase value of participation for subsequent cohorts
- ✓ **Feasibility of Implementation**
 - Institutional infrastructure already exists
 - CPD mechanisms are operationally proven - administrative processes are mature and widely understood
 - Alignment of interests of stakeholders (anchor institutions, participating and contributing lawyers, and law firms)

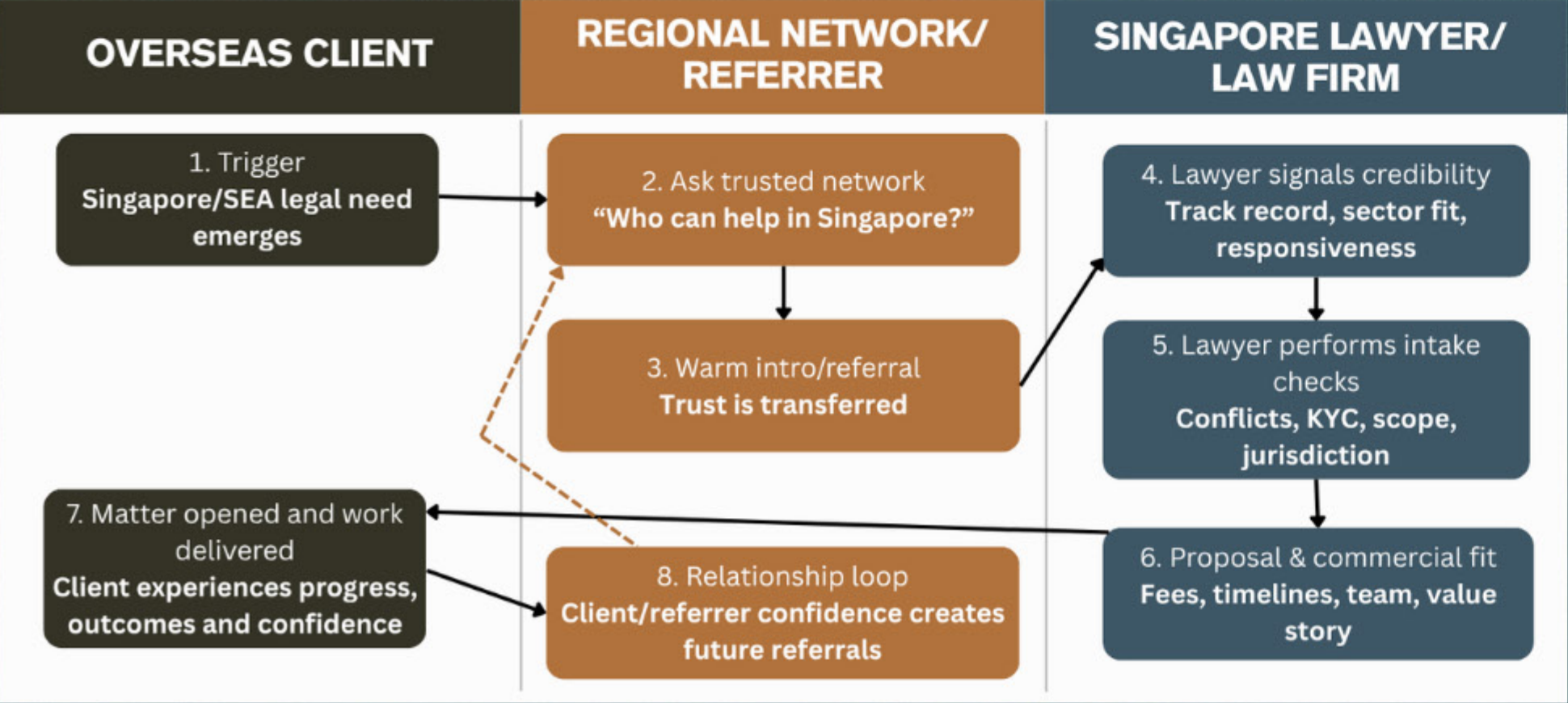
BUILDING BRIDGES WITH THE REGION, FOR THE REGION

By NAKAthoners

HACKATHON FOR A BETTER WORLD

“Deepening cross-border capabilities and regional presence” as a two-pronged approach with both in-bound and out-bound efforts.

1 Current Workflow of Acquisition of Overseas Clients via Regional Networks



2 Pain Points of the Current Workflow

- Invisible networking labour
- Unequal access to trust networks
- Weak measurement of relationship value

Our proposal was shaped by interviews with lawyers across practice areas and firm types, including large and small-sized firms.

"The most important capability for regionalisation is networking."
- Mid-career lawyer

4 Value of Proposition: Social Impact, Viability, Feasibility of Implementation

IMPACT	VIABILITY	FEASIBILITY
Builds long-term professional and business networks across ASEAN	SLF: \$200,000 ALF: \$100,000 Staff costs – 1xSAD: \$150,000 Admin costs: \$35,000 Annual budget: \$485,000	Can leverage SAL's existing networks with local and regional lawyers
Develops internationally minded lawyers with cross-border experience	Caps on stipends and allowances ensure sustainability	Attachments already exist (e.g. to Essex Court), but not to regional markets
Increases familiarity with Singapore legal services and institutions		

3 Proposed Solution

- A dedicated office within the Singapore Academy of Law, resourced to run outbound exchanges, inbound placements, secondments, partnerships and business development opportunities.
- Such efforts conducted on an ad hoc basis by different industry stakeholders; overseas mission trips and exchanges occur sporadically.
- Mirror Enterprise Singapore and EDB in their efforts to globalise local economy.
- Two signature programmes:
 - Singapore Legal Fellowship
 - ASEAN Legal Fellowship

SINGAPORE LEGAL FELLOWSHIP

- Who:**
- Regional lawyers (6 – 15 years' PQE)
- What:**
- A two-month attachment to small/medium-sized law firms in Singapore
- Why:**
- Grows BD and referral networks for all parties
 - Deepens ASEAN insights of all parties
- How:**
- SAL pays salary of incoming lawyer (based on their home country rate) and a living stipend (\$3,000) [capped at \$10,000]
 - 10 applicants a year

ASEAN LEGAL FELLOWSHIP

- Who:**
- Singapore lawyers (6 – 15 years' PQE)
- What:**
- A one-month attachment to fast-growing SMEs and start-ups in the region
- Why:**
- Grows BD and referral networks for all parties
 - Offers growth-stage legal support (e.g. contracts, governance, data protection)
- How:**
- SAL pays salary of outgoing lawyer (based on their Singapore rate) and a living stipend [capped at \$10,000]
 - 10 applicants a year

The Singapore lawyer as the orchestration hub for cross-border ASEAN legal work.

THE CHALLENGE

How can Singapore lawyers deepen cross-border capabilities and regional presence — for both in-house teams and law firms?

Capability through coordination, not omniscience.

One hub maintains the knowledge; local counsel verify it; the deal reuses it.

THE PROBLEM

Advising a cross-border deal across ASEAN must be **accurate in every jurisdiction** and **tailored to the specific transaction**. But today's models — hourly billing, referral networks, federated firms — **re-buy local-law knowledge matter by matter**, never reuse it, leave its reliability implicit, and bury the cost and delay of coordinating local counsel inside the deal's critical path. The result: advice that is slow, costly, inconsistent across borders, and detached from the business decision.

THE SOLUTION – THREE CONNECTED COMPONENTS

A

Jurisdiction–Outcome Matrix

A living knowledge base: ASEAN jurisdictions × transaction types. Every cell carries a RAG rating, verification flags, and auto-decay so it never asserts currency it can't back.

B

AI Analysis Engine

Lawyer-run prompts read the matrix to update cells from new regulation and tailor the law to a live deal — surfacing where a position is verified vs merely assumed.

C

Local-Counsel Service Desk

Turns each verification flag into a precise, costed instruction to local counsel — splitting reusable verification from bespoke deal work, then feeding answers back.

HOW IT WORKS & WHY IT'S NEW



01 – TWO PRODUCTS

Type 1 vs Type 2

Reusable cell verification (amortised across deals) is priced and tracked separately from bespoke deal application (charged to the deal). Stops paying deal rates for reusable knowledge.

02 – EPISTEMIC GATE

Amber-Blocked

A distinct state meaning "we cannot yet rely on this" — separate from Red ("the law prohibits this"). Makes the verification gap explicit, never silently assumed.

03 – DECAYING ASSET

Time-bounded reuse licence

A verified position is treated as a licensable asset with a freshness window and dependency triggers — re-verified before it goes stale, off the deal critical path.

RISK RATING ■ **Green** — proceed ■ **Amber** — proceed w/ mitigation ■ **Red** — restructure or exclude

■ **Amber-Blocked** — verify before reliance

CHALLENGE STATEMENT

How can Singapore lawyers deepen cross-border capabilities and regional presence?

CURRENT STATE

Singapore is a Hub for
Cross-Border Legal Work

89%

of SIAC cases are
international

70%

of deal volume is
cross-border

Inherent Complexity in the Region



Legal Systems

- Mix of common law, civil law, and hybrid systems
- No single dominant legal approach across ASEAN



Languages

- 11 jurisdictions with different national languages
- Legal proceedings often conducted in local languages



Regulatory & Market Maturity

- Variation across business entry, dispute resolution, compliance
- Different levels of efficiency, transparency, and predictability

PAIN POINTS



Trust & Verification Gaps

Cross-border legal information lacks consistent reliability and difficult to be verified independently.



Law-Practice Execution Gap

Legal rules are accesible, but how the operate in local contexts is often unclear



Fragmented Access to Practice

Cross-border knowledge is dispersed and finding counsel relies heavily on informal networks

THE SOLUTION

LexiNavi is an AI-powered cross-border legal intelligence platform that connects lawyers to trusted insights, actionable guidance, and local expertise – all in one platform.

01



JURISDICTION SNAPSHOTS

Delivers **structured intelligence** by synthesising jurisdiction-specific laws, requirements, and procedures

PRACTICE INTELLIGENCE

Captures **lived experience** on regulatory behaviour, court expectations, and more

02

04



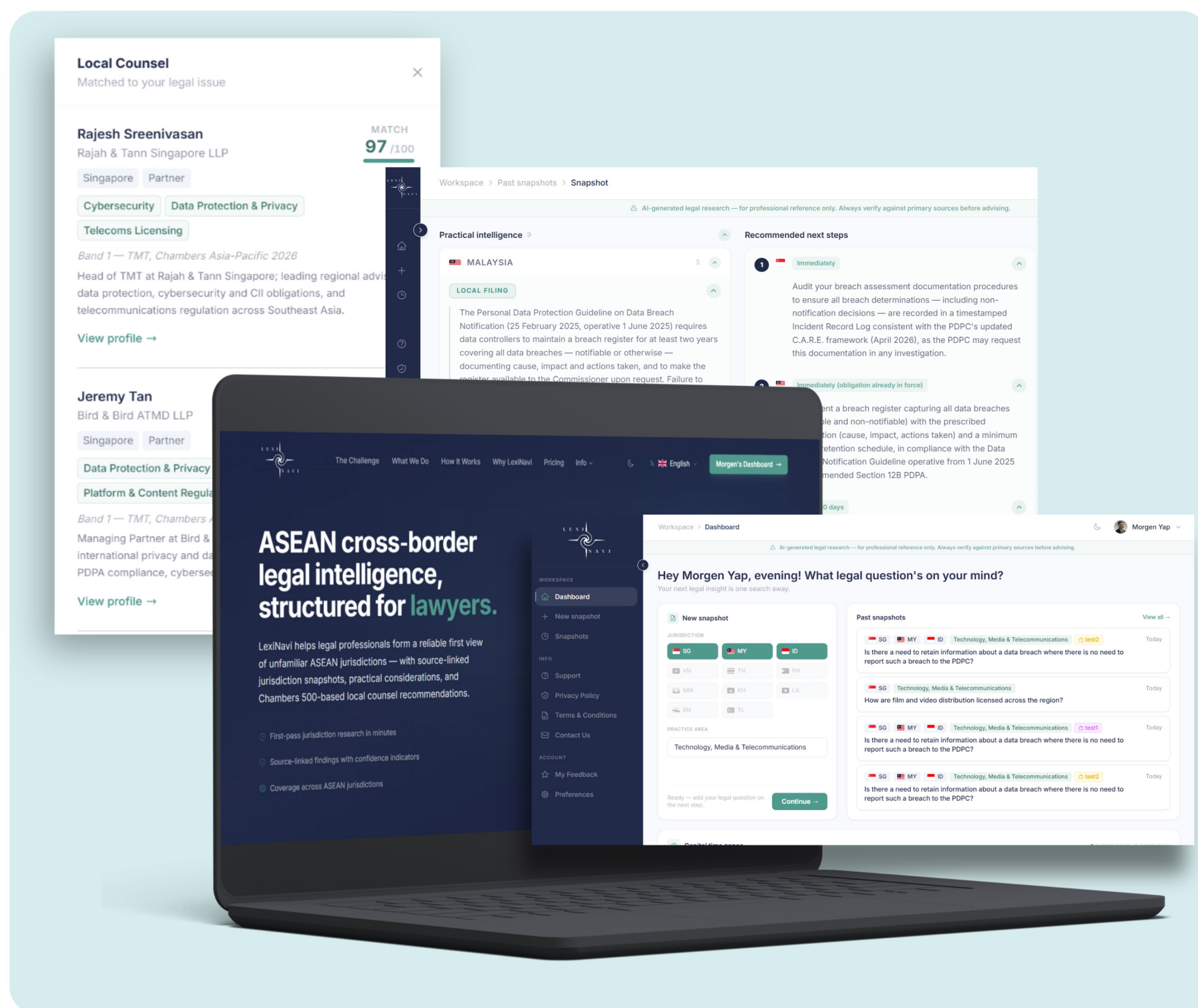
ADAPTIVE CORE

Continuous refinement that improves accuracy and recalibrates trust signals across the system.

COUNSEL INDEX

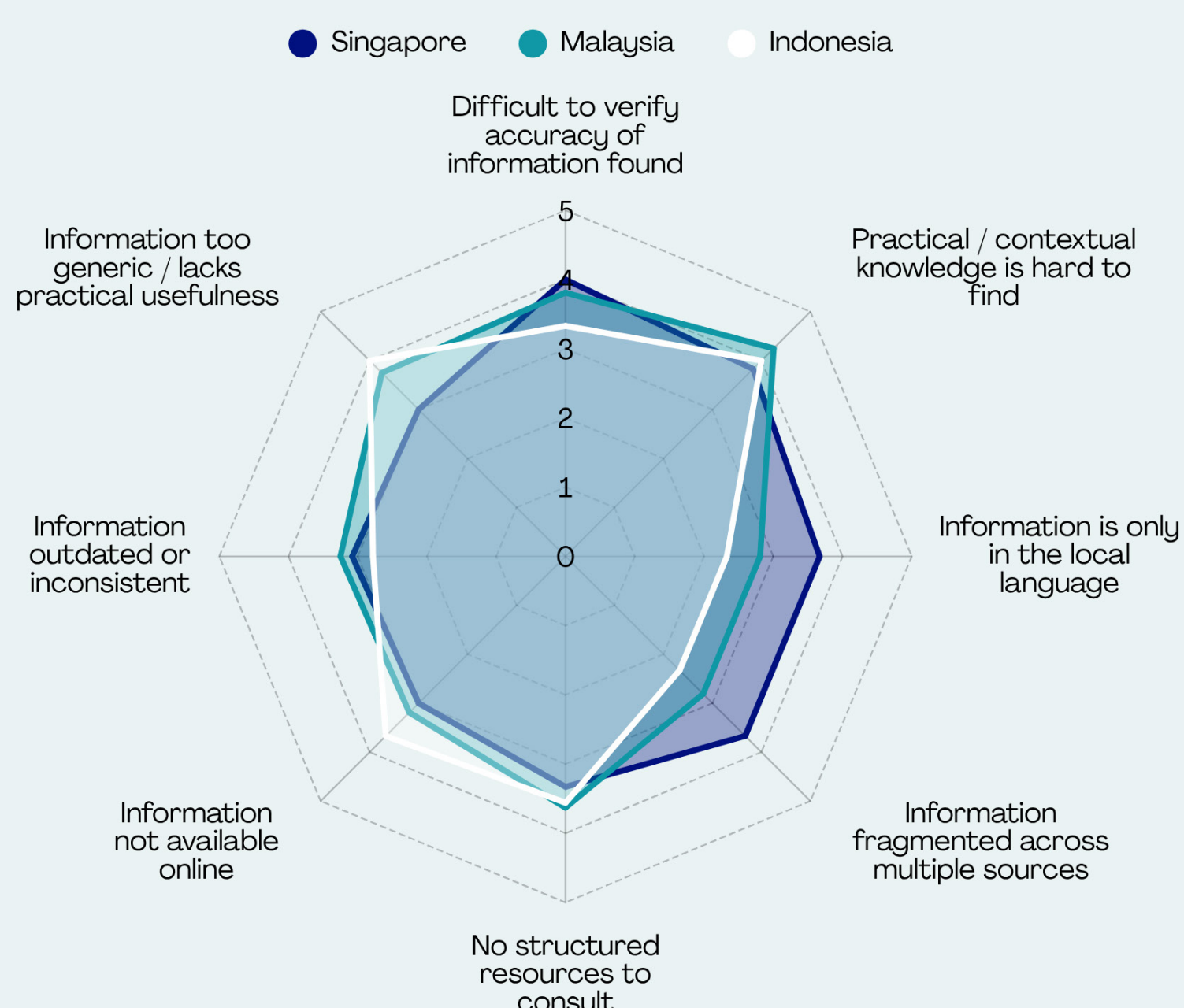
Curated selection and recommendations of external counsel to support localisation

03



FROM GAP TO GROWTH

Singapore reflects a broader structural gap, presenting an opportunity to scale.



CORE ARCHITECTURE DESIGN



JURISDICTION-AGNOSTIC ARCHITECTURE

Core matching logic, workflow rails, and institutional memory remains constant, enhanced by jurisdiction-specific knowledge



CAPITAL-EFFICIENT GEOGRAPHIC EXPANSION

New markets are added through configurable data sources, without core system redevelopment



COMPOUNDING INTELLIGENCE

Every matter and engagement enriches the platform's understanding of markets, counsel, and legal workflows

2 LONG TERM VALUE CREATION



ENTERPRISE INTEGRATION

Embedding LexiNavi into firm workflows, including internal protocols, precedent libraries, and counsel relationships



PROPRIETARY COUNSEL INTELLIGENCE

Scale shifts counsel intelligence from external sourcing to internally generated, usage-driven data.

Compounding data asset improves differentiation over time

The Cross-Border Compass

A structured framework for mid-career Singapore lawyers to decide whether — and how deep — to build cross-border capabilities.

Erik Widjaja · Zhao Jiawei · Insan Fernaldi



THE PROBLEM

Structured public support for cross-border capability largely runs out after a lawyer's early career. A mid-career Singapore lawyer lacks a widely accessible framework to deliberately build and sustain cross-border capability — leaving this highly dependent on individual circumstance rather than deliberate design. This is a structural gap in the talent base behind Singapore's regional-hub ambition.

1

Programmes front-loaded to early career

SAL's JLP capped at 5 yrs PQE; LIFTED covers competencies, not decision making.

2

No mid-career assessment framework

No framework on "whether cross-border fits my practice and what follows."

3

Capability by circumstance, not by design

Outcome set by individual circumstances..

"Ask ten of us how we built our networks and you will get ten stories. Not one of them is repeatable."

"A bit of luck to start, a lot of trial and error since. That is the whole methodology."

"The mindset is personal and no one teaches it. Too many colleagues realise that far too late."

VOICES FROM THE FIELD — FEEDBACK GATHERED DURING RESEARCH

THE SOLUTION

The Cross-Border Compass

Decision-first. Individually directed. Freely accessible.

Individual-facing & self-directed

Built for the individual lawyer making the decision — not the firm, not the institution.

Widely accessible

A single web page that should work on any device, online or offline.

Decision-first framework

Answers "whether, and how deep" — before any course or qualification is considered.

Completes the ecosystem

Sits as the missing front-end to LIFTED and the existing training frameworks.

1

Assess the fit

Four lenses + 12-question self-check: practice, clients, market and personal circumstances.



2

Decide the depth

Five levels — from cross-border literate (Level 1) to fully qualified in-market (Level 5).



3

Pick the mode

Regional desk · secondment · requalification · relocation · portfolio alliance.



4

Consider the practicalities

27 prompts across 7 groups: regulatory, immigration, tax, finances, family, ethics, housekeeping.



5

Sustain & evidence

Capability log · jurisdiction watchlist · network cadence · visibility plan · annual loop.

INSIDE THE COMPASS

Interactive fit-check

12-question self-assessment scores fit across 4 lenses and flags weakest area.

Practical-gate checklist

~27 prompts across 7 groups, each naming the exact source to verify against.

Practice-area map

Where your work sits on the cross-border spectrum — from leading Singapore law firm practice groups classification.

Jurisdiction due-diligence

10 questions to run against any target market before committing time or money.

Depth ladder

Five levels from cross-border literate to in-market. Costed and explained for each.

Keyword filter & navigation

Jump to any topic. Filter the entire guide by a single term. Works offline.

HOW THE COMPASS COMPLETES THE ECOSYSTEM

THE DECISION LAYER

The Cross-Border Compass

Assess whether cross-border capability fits.
Choose depth and route.
Work through the practicalities.
→ A guide to decision-making.



THE TRAINING LAYER

LIFTED & other training

Build the specific competencies the decision calls for. Programmes and accreditation already in place. Answers "what skills."



THE OUTCOME

From incidental to deliberate

Cross-border capability by design — not by chance. Open to any mid-career lawyer, not just the well-placed few. Furthers the hub ambition.

Together, they turn cross-border capability from incidental to deliberate — the shift the problem statement called for.

METHODOLOGY & SOURCES

1

Anchor in primary sources

Ministry of Law, SAL, Law Society and Enterprise Singapore — official programme pages, press releases and committee reports throughout.

2

Pressure-tested before asserting

Before claiming a gap, we searched for resources that would disprove it. Earlier propositions were broken and sharpened into survivable claims.

3

Fact separated from inference

Primary findings kept apart from trade-press reporting; we flag where the gap is reasoned rather than directly sourced.

Key sources and claim integrity

- SAL Junior Lawyers Programme (JLP) — programme pages
- Legal Industry Framework for Training and Education (LIFTED)
- Lawyers Go Global — Ministry of Law / Law Society / Enterprise SG
- Minister Edwin Tong SC, "The Next Charter" speech, 6 March 2026
- SAL LawNet regional guides
- Singapore International Dispute Resolution Academy (SIDRA)

Note: The gap is inferred from published scope of what exists — not from a source stating the gap. LIFTED exists and supports the claim but addresses different objectives.

The Cross-Border Compass

Prepared by Team A&G Asia for Hackathon for a Better World 2026

Open in any browser · Works offline

events.sal.sg/event/Hackathonforabetterworld2026

For the mid-career Singapore lawyers wondering whether cross-border capabilities should be developed or deepened

The Cross-Border Compass

Suggested framework for assessing relevance of cross-border capability and if it should be explored further.

Overview

Journey map

The five stages

- 1 · Assess your personal fit
- 2 · Decide on your depth
- 3 · Pick the mode
- 4 · Practical considerations
- 5 · Sustain & evidence

The journey, in one map

Each stage only makes sense once the one before it is answered — and the loop never fully closes.

Start — you, today: mid-career, Singapore-qualified lawyer



Stage 1 · Assess your personal fit

Does your practice, your client profile, market and life actually point cross-border?

Edge-only fit? Seriously consider building Level 1 referral excellence first before running through this stage again.

"How can Singapore lawyers deepen cross-border capabilities and regional presence?"

Hackathon for a Better World 2026
Khoo Ken-Hui • Lee Ai Ling • Chai Yi • Elizabeth Lim

Our Perspective

- As **in-house lawyers at Temasek sitting on the client side of cross-border legal work**, we deal with these issues every day.
- Catalyst, not blueprint** — our focus is on mid-sized and boutique Singapore law firms who wish to deepen cross-border capabilities and regional presence.

Framing the Problem

E Education

- ✗ Cross-border knowledge not embedded in legal education — law school modules typically elective, not compulsory; while CPD modules focus on Singapore laws
- ✗ Release of modules typically not coordinated across various bodies

E Experience

- ✗ Foreign law firm placements and programmes exist, but tend to be ad hoc and relatively less structured
- ✗ Current programmes are well meaning, but would benefit from more focus as well as defined KPIs around cross-learning

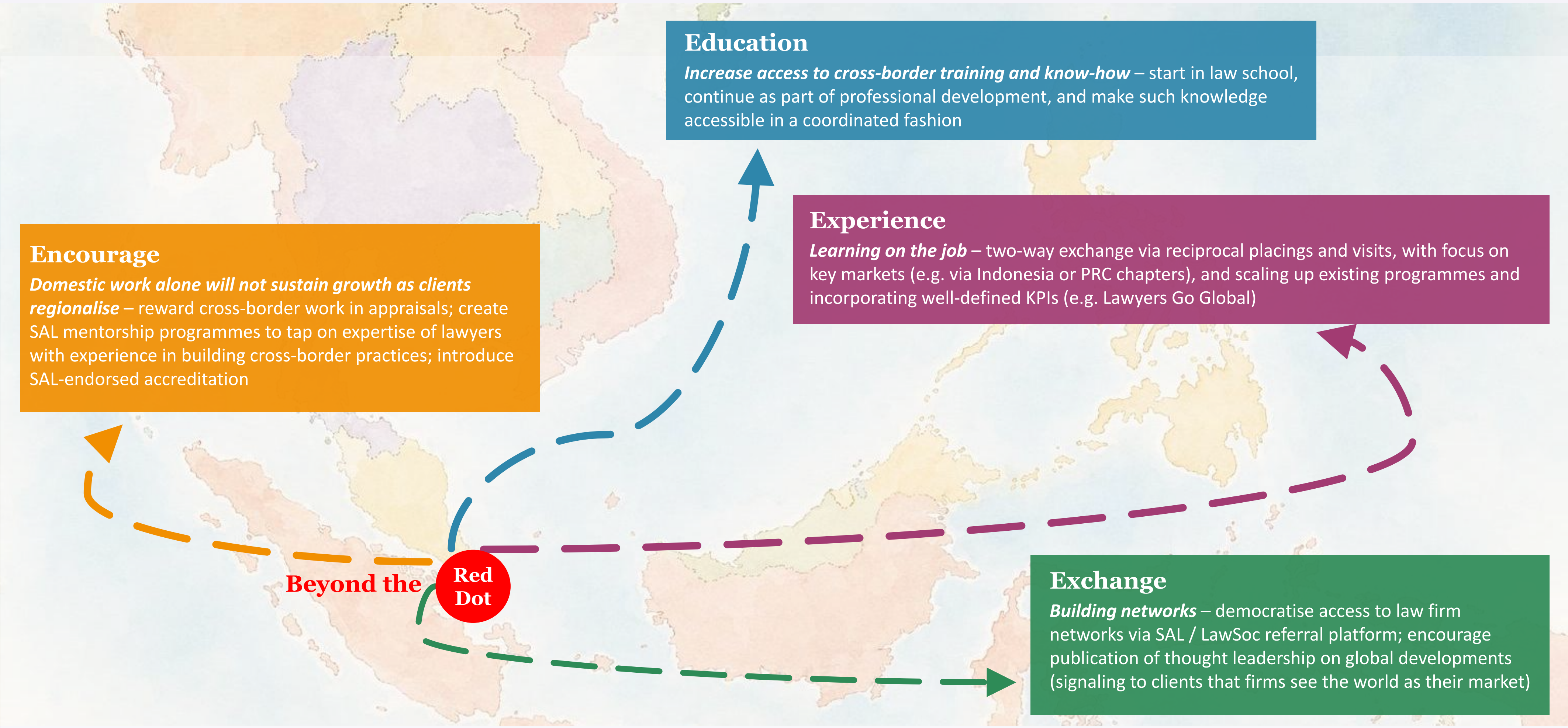
E Encourage

- ✗ Law firm appraisals typically narrowly focused on billables, with little consideration for efforts on developing cross-border networks / knowledge
- ✗ Lack of mentors with regional experience; no formal accreditation of law firms encouraging cross-border capabilities

E Exchange

- ✗ Law firm networks and alliances restrict access for many firms
- ✗ Singapore law firms tend to “stick to their lane” in only marketing their Singapore law expertise and not their cross-jurisdictional perspectives

The 4Es Virtuous Cycle



Feasibility of Implementation

Builds on existing infrastructure

- Leverage established platforms, but sharpen mandate and focus

Phased low-cost pilots

- 10–15 lawyers across 3–5 firms; one mandatory CPD module; extend current co-funding programmes

Measurable KPIs

- Secondment completions, cross-border matters originated, referral activity, % fees from regional clients and regional work etc

Envisioning Future State

Lawyers who think "Beyond the Red Dot"

- Trained with a regional perspective
- Think and advise with a regional lens

Singapore Law Firms as a one-stop shop

- Structuring regional deals
- Coordinating multi-jurisdictional advice

Benefits to Society

- Supports Singapore's vision as a leading legal & dispute resolution hub
- Better access to quality counsel who provide value-for-money advice for Singapore SMEs expanding regionally
- More regional career pathways for Singapore lawyers and enhancing talent retention



FROM LOCAL SPECIALISTS TO REGIONAL DEAL LEADERS

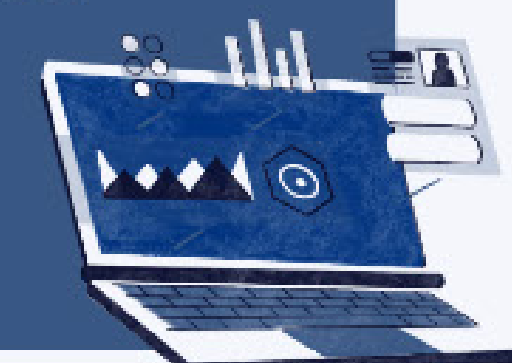
Assessing how Singapore lawyers can deepen cross-border capabilities and regional presence

Key Challenges

- Fragmented Delivery Models
- Execution & Coordination Gaps
- Limited Regional Exposure
- Perception that local lawyers are domestic experts, not regional deal leaders
- In the longer term, lower margin work leads to difficulties in retaining talent

Overarching Outcomes

- Shift to Regional Positioning
- Stronger Execution & Service Delivery
- Sustainable Talent & Capability Growth
- Tech-Enabled Scale and Efficiency
- Expanded Influence & Market Reach



Potential Solutions



Shift Mindset & Positioning

- Move from local law specialists → regional legal advisers
- Position as solution-oriented, cross-border partners
- Reframe client perception to regional deal leaders

Strengthen Delivery & Execution

- Build integrated cross-border delivery models
- Improve project management (timelines, budgets, risks)
- Enhance coordination with overseas counsel

Leverage Technology, Networks & Branding

- Use AI and tech to improve efficiency and scalability
- Tap into Singapore in-house counsel ecosystem
- Strengthen ASEAN branding, visibility, and thought leadership

Deepen Regional Capability & Exposure

- Increase lawyer mobility and cross-border experience
- Develop ASEAN market-specific expertise
- Build long-term capability through talent development

Grow Market & Differentiate

- Focus on ASEAN corridors and regional specialisation
- Build leadership in ESG, AI regulation, geopolitical risk
- Leverage Singapore's reputation as a legal hub



Harnessing Tech & AI

Client Onboarding Enhancements

Onboarding with tech-simplified engagement letters, transparent pricing, and modular scoping reduce client friction

Matter Scoping & Planning

Developing structured playbooks and legal project management tools ensure predictability

Drafting & Execution Efficiency

Leverage AI to review matters using structured playbooks, compliance frameworks, and template drafts

Ongoing Management

Digital dashboard providing real-time insights and continuous improvement enhance client confidence and value

