

GE opens S'pore IT resources and support centre

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AMERICAN conglomerate General Electric on Wednesday opened an Asia Digital Operations Centre (A-DOC) in Singapore as part of a commitment to develop digital industrial capabilities in the city-state.

Underlining the new thrust in Singapore, it also signed partnership agreements with grid operator SP Group, Spring Singapore and Singapore Institute of Management's entrepreneurship centre Platform E.

The group's A-DOC is the first such centre in Asia, and is part of a larger strategy by the company to transform how IT is delivered across the group.

The centre, which helps provide round-the-clock IT resources and support for GE, will house about 60 employees initially, with the potential to expand software jobs three-fold over the next five years.

Separately, GE has also teamed up with SP Group, formerly known as Singapore Power, to develop capabilities in Industrial Internet of Things and intelligent applications so as to enhance the reliability and efficiency of the power network in Singapore.

Specifically, engineering and digital experts from both companies will work to create a digital replica of the Singapore grid, known as a "digital twin", which will enhance the performance of the network and reduce unplanned downtime.

Having a digital twin of the network is akin to providing the doctor with health data every minute instead of going for a medical check-up once a month, SP chief digital officer Samuel Tan explained. With the real-time data, abnormal activity can be picked up more quickly, allowing for predictive maintenance that reduces costs, he told *The Business Times*.

Data about the performance of the grid can also be compared with those from other grids around the world, allowing SP to enhance the grid's performance further, he said, adding that these could potentially result in lower costs.

SP is the first utility to work with GE on a digital twin; results from the partnership can be expected within 12-18 months, Mr Tan said.

GE is also collaborating with Spring Singapore to develop a startup incubation and acceleration programme to promote ideas and solutions in Industrial IoT technology. These include agile programming, machine learning and algorithms for asset performance management, and cybersecurity.

Similarly, it plans to establish a co-working space with Platform E to incubate Industrial IoT startups in Singapore and the region.

"The Industrial Internet represents a multi-billion dollar opportunity for industry," said GE chairman and CEO Jeff Immelt in a statement. "We look forward to working with our partners in Singapore to build a digital ecosystem and support entrepreneurship in the country."