

Business of Design Programme (BOD) 2021 Open Call Information Kit

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SECTION 1: GENERAL INFORMATION

1. About the BOD Programme

The Business of Design (BOD) programme aims to grow the export value of Singapore designs through building mindshare in both business-to-business and business-to-consumer markets in Asia and the world. It will address targeted aspects of the design studio's development including mentorship, access to networks, brand storytelling, and support their efforts in building capabilities to increase their competitiveness and demand on a global stage. The first run of the BOD programme was launched in 2019 and is currently underway.

The second run of the BOD Programme aims to generate new business opportunities for up to eight (8) established Singapore-based furniture, lifestyle product and multi-disciplinary design studios and design-driven furniture and lifestyle brands with the potential to internationalise in markets such as Europe and Asia (including Japan and Southeast Asia).

To grow businesses and propel them globally, the programme encompasses the following three phases:

1. Connecting design studios and brands to global marketplace

Dsg has rolled out a call for international in-market consultants, and will appoint a panel of consultants to guide design studios and brands in their pitch to secure overseas business opportunities and connect them to business circles, which includes brands, manufacturers, commercial property owners and specifiers, while providing mentorship for follow-through. These consultants will be selected based on their networks and influence. They are expected to have convertible business leads in identified priority markets.

2. Strengthen brand strategy and narrative of individual design studios and brands

Design studios and brands will potentially be provided funding support to engage a brand strategy agency that they would like to work with, to enforce quality perception of the design studio and brand so as to facilitate stronger recall. Dsg will also organise a series of media training sessions for participating design studios and brands. The support for this phase will be provided on a co-funding basis.

3. Promote a set of distinct Singapore design brand values

The BOD programme will culminate in a themed collective showcase at identified established international showcase platforms in 2022. Working with the in-market

consultants, this approach will raise the international standing of Singapore Design, and interest buyers from target markets in Asia and Europe.

Dsg will appoint a curator for the themed collective showcase, with the intent of involving all supported designers and their partner manufacturers, as well as bringing together other spatial, experience, fashion, lighting designers and technologists to present an immersive experience in a cohesive manner.

More information on the BOD programme can be found [here](#). A first-hand account of a design studio's experience in being part of the BOD programme can also be found [here](#).

SECTION 2: OPEN CALL DETAILS

1. About the Open Call

The DesignSingapore Council (Dsg) is calling for interested design studios and brands from the following fields to be part of the second run of the BOD programme:

- a) Furniture and lifestyle product design studios
- b) Multi-disciplinary design studio that covers furniture and lifestyle product design as a part of the offering
- c) Design-driven furniture and/or lifestyle product brands that work with local designers to launch product lines

Through this open call, Dsg is looking to support up to eight (8) established Singapore-based design studios and brands with the potential to internationalise in markets such as Europe Asia and Southeast Asia.

To support interested design studios and brands that are keen to internationalise in understanding the commitment required in entering the European and Asian markets (including the Japanese and Southeast Asian markets), Dsg has co-organised a series of market entry webinars, in addition to the three phases of the BOD programme. These webinars are part of a capability development programme that targets a broader base of design studios and brands alongside prospective BOD participants. The webinars aim to educate interested design studios and brands about essential market entry knowledge, including an overview of specific markets and the essentials of conducting design-related business in that market, such as commercial contract projects and retailing design products.

Key Dates:

- The open call for participants will run from 15 March to 30 April 2021

2. Eligibility Criteria

- a) Applicant must be a Singapore-registered design enterprise from any of the following fields:
 - Furniture and lifestyle product design
 - Multi-disciplinary design
 - Design-driven furniture and/or lifestyle product brand owners
- b) Lead applicant must be a Singaporean or Permanent Resident.

3. Selection Criteria

The BOD programme prioritises established design studios and brands which fulfil the following criteria:

- a) **Have a compelling and differentiated brand philosophy and aspire towards good design**, which impacts positively on the environment, culture, society and/or economy. The ability to design for the Asian cultural context such as incorporating Singapore’s rich heritage within the Southeast Asian context, and translating this for an international audience is one example. This will in turn strengthen Singapore’s position as the Asian gateway for international brands.
- b) **Have strong business fundamentals, and can readily scale up to meet international demand**. To do so, the design studio must, for example, operate with a sound business model, and have sufficient resources, or are prepared (such as manpower and a network of production partners) to scale.
- c) **Have a good understanding of the commitment required in entering a new market**. We strongly encourage interested design studios and brands to attend or view the market entry webinar for the market(s) that they are keen to expand into. The webinars, which cover the European, Japan and Southeast Asian (Thailand and Vietnam) markets have been uploaded onto Dsg’s YouTube channel [here](#).

4. Selection Process

For a successful working relationship, it is critical that the following conditions are fulfilled:

- Design enterprises are confident that the in-market consultants can help deliver successful business outcomes.
- The in-market consultants are confident in the design enterprises’ ability to meet the needs of their business leads.
- Design enterprises and in-market consultants are comfortable with working together.

Therefore, Dsg will facilitate a two-way assessment process so as to find a best fit between the in-market consultants and design enterprises.

STEPS	DETAILS
i. Shortlisting by in-market consultants	<p>The in-market consultants will shortlist applicants based on whether the design philosophy and body of work could best fulfil the requirements of their potential business leads.</p> <p>Dsg will inform eligible applicants by mid-May 2021 on the outcomes of the shortlisting.</p>

ii. **Two-way assessment process of in-market consultants and selected design enterprises**

The in-market consultants will reach out to the shortlisted applicants directly and connect with them virtually or in-person (if possible). Representatives from Dsg will also be present at these meetings.

Selection criteria for two-way assessment

Applicants will be assessed by the in-market consultants based on whether they fulfil the following criteria:

- Have a compelling and differentiated brand philosophy and aspire towards good design.
- Have strong business fundamentals, and can readily scale up to meet international demand
- Will be a good match to fulfil the requirements of the business leads that the IMCs have put forth in their proposals.
- Have a good understanding of the commitment required to enter a new market.

We also encourage shortlisted applicants to do their due diligence of assessing the in-market consultants. Shortlisted applicants may consider the following assessment criteria:

- Proposed business leads have projects of a suitable size/scale for their business, and which are aligned to their brand philosophy.
- Financial status of the business leads to ensure timely payment.
- As well as any other factors they might like to consider.

Applicants who have been successfully paired with in-market consultants must fill up and submit an assessment form, which will be shared later, for our record-keeping **by end-May 2021**.

iii. **Announcement of Successful Pairings**

Successful applicants will need to submit the following documents **by early-June 2021**, prior to their confirmation as a BOD participant:

- **Financial statements for the past two years for proof of financial soundness**
Please submit audited financial statements or annual financial reports lodged with the Accounting and Corporate Regulatory Authority (ACRA). Where unavailable, management/unaudited accounts endorsed by the management may be submitted, or alternative financial documents where applicable.
 - **Signed Letter of participation for the BOD programme**, which will also list the commitment required on the part of the design enterprises.
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5. Deliverables and Expected Outcomes

Successful applicants shall commit to the following for the in-market consultant and brand strategy phases of the BOD programme:

- a) Complete the project(s) that arise as a result of the in-market consultants' business leads;
- b) Be required to embark on at least one business trip per target market within the contract period to meet recommended business leads, and to pay for their own business travel costs related to the BOD programme;
- c) Agree to a set timeline and milestones with their in-market consultants;
- d) Be required to co-pay for costs related to appointing a brand strategy consultant if they choose to strengthen their brand strategy and narrative in entering a market;
- e) Be required to co-pay for costs related to participating in a series of media training sessions.

Successful applicants are also expected to demonstrate a positive increase of their year-on-year business revenue for their individual businesses through the programme, given the extenuating external factor of the COVID-19 pandemic.

SECTION 3: HOW TO APPLY FOR THE BOD OPEN CALL

1. How to Apply

Please read through this information kit for the details of the open call. Interested applicants are required to:

- a) Attend or view the market-entry webinars for the target markets you are interested in. The schedule and registration links for the webinars are listed below. More details can also be found within the respective links:

Company	Key Speaker(s)	Target Market	Link to Webinars
Dezan Shira & Associates	Ms. Do Thanh Huyen, Assistant Manager, Business Intelligence, Dezan Shira & Associates	Vietnam	Please view the webinar playlist here
Tractus Asia	- Sarinrath Kamolratanapiboon, Executive Director, DWP Bangkok - Marijn Beije, Principal, Lines Designworks - Chutayaves Sinthuphan, Creative Economy Agency Moderated by Tractus Asia	Thailand	
Inu LLC	Misako Fujimoto, Director, Inu LLC	Japan	
TC & Friends	Tony Chambers, Founder, Director, TC & Friends	Europe	

- b) Complete [this application form on SG Forms](#) by **Friday, 30 April 2021 (23:59 SGT)**.

2. Contact Details

For further enquiries regarding the Business of Design Programme, please feel free to write in to industry@designsingapore.org.