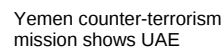


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partners, and will receive S\$42 million over 10 years from the National Research Foundation's medium-sized centre grant.

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The centre will develop innovative solutions in 3D printing, also known as additive manufacturing, where materials such as metal, plastic or resin are printed by layers until a solid object is formed.

Professor Bertil Andersson, NTU's president, said: "We aim to groom the next generation of 3D-printing engineers so as to grow the much-needed manpower for this rapidly developing sector."

The grant by the foundation will go towards consolidating research activities across faculties and universities to create a "critical mass" of researchers.

Professor Andersson said that 3D technologies are changing business models and the way things are being manufactured.

For instance, scientists at the centre are already working on new construction methods, including a new way to 3D-print customised concrete structures for buildings.

It is expected to be more cost-effective and environmentally friendly than current casting methods.

At yesterday's launch, Professor Lam Khin Yong, NTU's chief of staff and vice-president of research, signed four new research collaboration agreements with ST Engineering, Keppel Offshore & Marine Technology Centre, Sembcorp Design and Construction, and Emerson Process Management.

Prof Lam said: "The centre will focus for a start on the construction, maritime and aerospace sectors, which are projected to be growth areas for Singapore's economy."

At the ongoing Smart Nation Innovations Week exhibition held for invited industry players at Marina Bay Sands, a 3D food printer by National University of Singapore researchers was on display — it prints cookies of various shapes and sizes.

Professor Lawrence Wong, from the university's electrical and computer engineering department, said: "It is good for manufacturing — there can be more variety (in) shapes. Now, most cookies are made by moulds, but moulds cannot be changed to fit your designs." TAN WEIZHEN

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