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\$1.4 million Programme to Nurture Aspiring Furniture Designers

Aspiring furniture designers can look to a new \$1.4 million programme to help them nurture their talent and contribute to the local industry.

The Singapore Furniture Industries Council, together with SPRING, have come up with Design DNA, a three-year programme of workshops, overseas immersion courses and study missions.

Through them, the council and SPRING hope to nurture about 300 local designers in the next three years on whom design companies can then tap.

Announcing the new initiative today was Minister of State for Trade and Industry Lee Yi Shyan.

He was speaking at the opening of the International Furniture Fair and 26th ASEAN Furniture Show at the Singapore Expo.

Citing a survey done last year, Mr Lee says the local furniture industry has grown at 10% over the last 5 years.

In 2007, exports to the world including Europe, the UK and the US stood at \$3.2 billion.

Working with overseas designers is one way for local companies to move out of competing in the mass market.

Another way is for companies to work with firms in other industries to create niche markets.

Such industries could be fashion, jewellery, even precision engineering, says Mr Lee.