

## Unique arts programme to engage S'poreans on governance issues

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Singaporeans will be encouraged to give their views on the type of government they hope to see exist in 2022. This will be done through a unique arts programme organised by the Institute of Policy Studies.

The thinktank is collating the views as part of its initiative that aims to map the political trends and attitudes in Singapore.

Some 140 Singaporeans from different sectors had participated in the first phase which began in June, and they came up with possible scenarios of the type of government that could exist 10 years from now.

In the Singastore.com scenario, the government is pro-business - prioritising economic growth and ensuring better-paying jobs for Singaporeans.

SingaGives.gov is a pro-Singaporean government - it promotes social values and nationalises providers of important public goods through a one-off spending of the reserves.

The WikiCity.sg scenario is one where a coalition government exists and public trust is low.

One of the participants in the programme, Jeremy Lim, said: "These scenarios really represent what we think the future can look like, not what the future will look like. The intent of it is to get Singaporeans thinking, to worry about or to be optimistic about what the future holds.

"We had deliberately set out for these to be plausible because we did not want them to be so out of whack that people cannot relate to them."

To give Singaporeans a sense of the scenarios, an arts programme consisting of multimedia installations and exhibits will be put up in November.

Ngiam Su-Lin, a producer from Drama Box, said: "The arts have never been used in this way before - to engage the public about issues of governance. We are enlivening the scenarios from this process, we are making it come alive for people so that they can actually relate to it, and to see what is their response to each of these scenarios.

Senior Research Fellow at IPS, Dr Gillian Koh, said visitors can give their responses through a survey.

Dr Koh said: "What we want to do is try to analyse and understand the different views that are out there. At the end of the day, when we have these scenarios, it kinds of challenges our assumptions, we can think more deeply, more broadly, more widely about what will shape Singapore over the next 10 years."

"It now complements the government initiated Our Singapore Conversations, so we see this creating even more buzz and more dialogue about how we see Singapore being governed over the next 10 years."

The findings will be presented at IPS' flagship conference, Singapore Perspectives, which will be held in January 2013.