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PRESS RELEASE

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## **New national standard to boost trust in edible bird's nest industry**

- *Singapore's first national standard using near-infrared spectroscopy introduced to authenticate edible bird's nest products*
- *New method offers accuracy, speed, and non-destructive testing*
- *Enables producers to verify authenticity of products and build consumer trust, empowers consumers to make informed choices*

**Singapore, 13 October 2025**— Singapore has launched its first national standard to authenticate the quality of edible bird's nest (EBN), a billion-dollar delicacy in Asia. The new standard strengthens consumer trust and levels the playing field for producers in a market long plagued by counterfeits and substitutes.

The new Singapore Standard (SS) 718 was jointly developed by the Duke-NUS Centre of Regulatory Excellence - Standards Development Organisation (CoRE-SDO) and Enterprise Singapore (EnterpriseSG), through the Singapore Standards Council (SSC). The standard leverages **Near-Infrared (NIR) spectroscopy to provide an accurate, rapid, reproducible and non-destructive on-site method of authenticating EBN**. NIR spectroscopy measures how infrared light is absorbed, reflected or transmitted by a material to extract information about the material. This contrasts against conventional methods of authentication, which require EBN producers to send samples to testing facilities and results in wastage.

The development and review of all Singapore Biomedical and Health Standards are coordinated through CoRE-SDO at Duke-NUS in partnership with EnterpriseSG, and follow a consensus-based process involving expert working groups, committee reviews, and public consultation.

The SS 718 has been developed from research involving Nanyang Polytechnic's Standard Operating Procedure for the authentication of edible bird's nest, which has previously demonstrated the efficacy of NIR spectroscopy in food authentication and safety.

The standard provides recommendations on the minimum specifications of the portable NIR that should be used for the authentication, details the procedure to collect the NIR spectra, and provides the steps for data processing and assessment of the authenticity of the EBN sample.

Through SS 718, EBN suppliers can leverage standardised, scientific methodology to authenticate their products and build trust in their brands. Emerging players will also be better equipped to establish themselves as credible producers and have a level playing field to grow their business. Ultimately, consumers stand to benefit from having access to more complete information, allowing them to make decisions with confidence.

**Dr Henry Leung**, Senior Specialist, Nanyang Polytechnic, who led the committee of experts in the drafting of the standard, said:

“Standardized testing methods like SS 718 are setting a new benchmark in EBN authentication, complementing existing gold-standard methods. This rapid, on-site solution enables faster decision-making when advanced analytical facilities are unavailable, thereby

strengthening consumer trust and trade integrity. By adopting this innovation, Singapore positions itself as a strategic global hub for EBN trading, paving the way for international market expansion and supporting the modernization of the Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) industry with science-based, evidence-driven practices.”

**Professor John Lim**, Executive Director of the Centre of Regulatory Excellence at Duke-NUS said:

“This standard is more than a technical advance. It shows how Singapore can lead with science-based, practical solutions that safeguard consumers while giving the industry a competitive edge. By providing a fast and non-destructive way to authenticate edible bird’s nest, we are helping producers to minimise wastage and build trust in their brands, as well as giving consumers the confidence to make informed choices.”

**Ms Choy Sauw Kook**, Director-General (Quality and Excellence) at Enterprise Singapore, shared:

“The SS 718 underscores the vital role that standards play in ensuring quality assurance and driving business growth. Consumers can leverage this standard as an important tool to make informed choices about the products they select, while edible bird’s nest providers can use it to build credibility and trust in their brand. We remain committed to continue working closely with industry experts and stakeholders to develop new and relevant guidelines that enhance trust and safety, especially in the areas of health and food safety.”

SS 718 was developed by the Working Group on Authentication of Edible Bird’s Nest under the Singapore Standards Council, which comprises representatives from the Government, testing and certification bodies, educational and research institutions and industry stakeholders.

SS 718 can be purchased from the [Singapore Standards e-shop](#).

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### **About Duke-NUS Medical School**

Duke-NUS is Singapore's flagship graduate-entry medical school, established in 2005 with a strategic, government-led partnership between two world-class institutions: Duke University School of Medicine and the National University of Singapore (NUS). Through an innovative curriculum, students at Duke-NUS are nurtured to become multi-faceted 'Clinicians Plus' poised to steer the healthcare and biomedical ecosystem in Singapore and beyond. A leader in ground-breaking research and translational innovation, Duke-NUS has gained international renown through its five Signature Research Programmes and ten Centres. The enduring impact of its discoveries is amplified by its successful Academic Medicine partnership with Singapore Health Services (SingHealth), Singapore's largest healthcare group. This strategic alliance has led to the creation of 15 Academic Clinical Programmes, which harness multi-disciplinary research and education to transform medicine and improve lives.

For more information, please visit [www.duke-nus.edu.sg](http://www.duke-nus.edu.sg)

### **About Centre of Regulatory Excellence (CoRE)**

The Centre of Regulatory Excellence (CoRE) was established in 2014 at the Duke-NUS Medical School with the aim of strengthening regulatory systems for health products (including medical devices and pharmaceuticals) and health services in the Asia Pacific, with a special focus on South-East Asia. The centre is unique in offering a multi-pronged approach to regulatory systems strengthening through the three key strategic approaches of education and training, applied research and policy innovation in an Asian context. As a trusted partner with a wide collaborative network comprising major international and regional regulatory authorities, organisations, industry and academic institutions, CoRE is able to effectively play a coordinating role and contribute as an active partner in regional capacity building and systems strengthening initiatives.

Visit <http://www.duke-nus.edu.sg/core> for more information.

### **About Enterprise Singapore**

Enterprise Singapore is the government agency championing enterprise development.

The agency partners committed companies to build capabilities, innovate, and go global. It drives growth – empowering local businesses and shaping industries, anchoring Singapore as a trade and startup hub, and establishing trust in products through quality and standards.

Enterprise Singapore is here for wherever businesses are growing. Visit [www.enterprisesg.gov.sg](http://www.enterprisesg.gov.sg) for more information.

### **About Singapore Standards Council**

The Singapore Standards Council (SSC) facilitates the development, promotion and review of Standards and Technical References in Singapore. This work is done through partnerships with the industry, academia and government organisations, under the national standardisation programme overseen by Enterprise Singapore.

Visit [www.enterprisesg.gov.sg/standards](http://www.enterprisesg.gov.sg/standards) for more information.

## Annex A: Chinese Translations

Duke-NUS Medical School (Official name, for use on first reference)	杜克－新加坡国立大学医学院
Duke-NUS (abbreviated form)	杜克－国大医学院
Duke-NUS Centre of Regulatory Excellence – Standards Development Organisation	杜克-国大医学院 卓越监管中心 – 标准开发组
Enterprise Singapore	新加坡企业发展局
Singapore Standards Council	新加坡标准理事会
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