Executives in Singapore can look forward to more training courses next year with the opening of the ESSEC Asian Centre, ESSEC's first institution outside Paris.

Deputy Prime Minister S Jayakumar says the establishment of the French institution testifies to the excellent bilateral ties between France and Singapore.

The National Library at Victoria Street is home to the top tier French business school.

It comprises a research facility and an executive education campus offering programmes in urban management, ethics and biotechnology as well as luxury brand management in Asia.

Some 200 international and local students are expected to enrol for its 10 programmes annually.

The centre will start offering courses for Singaporeans next year.

Opening the centre, Professor Jayakumar says Singapore is an ideal location for the school and hopes the country can be a knowledge node in Asia.

He says: "It's no coincidence that Singapore is host today to over 7,000 multinational corporations. At the same time, Singapore is also at the confluence of many of Asia's great civilisation and our rich racial cultural and religious heritage gives us a valuable edge in business connectivity between different parts of Asia."

It is believed the presence of private schools in Singapore will add vibrancy to the business hub, by providing more opportunities for tie-ups with the different industries.

Professor Tan Chin Tiong, Provost, Singapore Management University, said: "Each of the university, we play in our own respective spaces, so while competition is healthy, it will create more excitement. There is also this aspect of critical mass and when there are more players, it will create more interest among the consumers."

Specialty schools like the ESSEC Asian Centre will help to diversify Singapore's Global Schoolhouse Programme aimed at offering a range of quality education-providers and attracting top students from all over the world.

ESSEC Asian Centre expects to host its first batch of some 40 students from Paris in July. - CNA/ch