

a national strategy for workplace safety and health in singapore

# WSH

# 2018



WSHCOUNCIL

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# FOREWORD

*The new WSH target is a challenging but attainable one for Singapore, if stakeholders commit themselves to reaching this goal.*

The then-Workplace Safety and Health (WSH) Advisory Committee and the Ministry of Manpower co-drafted the WSH 2015 Strategy to complement the new WSH framework introduced by the Ministry in March 2005. WSH 2015 supported Singapore's efforts to realise the national target of halving our workplace fatality rate from 4.9 fatalities per 100,000 workers in 2004 to 2.5 by 2015.

There have been many changes to the WSH landscape since then. Last year, the WSH Advisory Committee was elevated to a full-fledged industry-led WSH Council with executive powers. We also have a new national target for WSH. Recognising the progress we have made in bringing down the workplace fatality rate, Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong had in April 2008, challenged MOM and the WSH Council to bring down the rate to less than 1.8 fatalities per 100,000 workers by 2018. While the current economic downturn poses challenges for many companies, WSH is a long term goal that should remain a priority. We can take advantage of the spare capacity during this period of slower growth to improve the WSH capability of our people and infrastructure. This will enable us to emerge stronger when the business cycle is back on the upswing. The new WSH target is a challenging but attainable one for Singapore, if stakeholders commit themselves to reaching this goal.

To guide our efforts to meet the new target, the WSH Council and MOM have reviewed WSH 2015 and identified enhancements to the Strategy. The updated national strategy will be known as WSH 2018. We have also consulted the International Advisory Panel for WSH, which comprises renowned international experts, in October 2008, and their recommendations have been incorporated into WSH 2018.

In addition, the WSH Council had invited close to 13,000 subscribers of the WSH Council's electronic news bulletin to provide feedback on WSH 2018. The WSH Council and the Ministry of Manpower, in conjunction with the Singapore Business Federation and National Trades Union Congress, also organised a consultation session that attracted over 440 registered participants from employer associations, unions, trade associations and relevant professional bodies. All feedback and comments have since been incorporated to ensure a robust national strategy owned by all stakeholders.

The final WSH 2018 Strategy is strongly supported by the tripartite partners – the Ministry of Manpower, the Singapore National Employers Federation and the National Trades Union Congress. This will serve as the guide to achieve sustainable improvements in WSH standards and performance in Singapore.



Mr. Lee Tzu Yang  
Chairman, Workplace Safety and Health Council

# STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT

We, the tripartite partners and key stakeholders in WSH, acknowledge our role in the enhancement and implementation of Workplace Safety and Health 2018: A National Strategy for Workplace Safety and Health in Singapore (WSH 2018). We are steadfast in our responsibility to ensure the continued improvement of Singapore's standards in the area of workplace safety and health. We also recognise and value the contributions of all other stakeholders and invite them to join us in our efforts to realise the National Strategy.

This National Strategy provides a concrete and comprehensive map to direct our collective efforts in the next few years, to implement actions that produce

sustainable quantum improvements in Singapore's health and safety climate, and to encourage companies to value and prioritise workplace safety and health.

We are committed to greater cooperation and aligning ourselves to the objectives and tasks outlined in WSH 2018. We will also undertake continual reviews of our performance against the targets set in WSH 2018 and enhance WSH 2018 in the light of our achievements. Together, we aim to make Singapore a safe and healthy workplace for everyone and an international centre of excellence in the field of workplace safety and health.



**Mr. Stephen Lee**  
President,  
Singapore National  
Employers Federation



**Mr. John De Payva**  
President,  
National Trades  
Union Congress



**Mr. Ho Siong Hin**  
Commissioner for Workplace  
Safety and Health

# INTRODUCTION

*"Our original aim had been to halve the workplace fatality rate to 2.5 by 2015. This looks well within reach. I think we should set a more ambitious goal, to reduce the rate to 1.8 within a decade. We should aim not only for as good a safety record as the developed countries, but to have one of the best workplace safety records in the world. I am confident that we can achieve this, because if we analyse the accidents which are taking place, we can find many creative and innovative ways to tighten up safety standards and practices, to put right what we are still not doing properly, and to get our employers and workers trained and imbued with safety consciousness."*

**Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong**  
*at the Launch of the Workplace Safety and Health Council, 29 April 2008*

Over the past few decades, Singapore has made significant strides in improving workplace safety and health (WSH). In 2004, major workplace accidents such as the collapse of Nicoll Highway added further impetus to our efforts to fundamentally reform WSH practices in Singapore. Yet, fatalities and injuries continue to happen at our workplaces, and more can be done to protect our workers.

Singapore's new WSH framework was put in place in 2005. It was announced in Parliament by then-Minister for Manpower Dr Ng Eng Hen on 10 March 2005. The new framework was designed to engender a paradigm shift in the mindset of all stakeholders, by shifting their focus from compliance with prescriptive rules on WSH, to eliminating and reducing risks created. The framework was also designed to bring about greater industry ownership of WSH outcomes. With this framework, the Minister for Manpower also set a target to halve the number of workplace fatalities to 2.5 per 100,000 workers by 2015.

In April 2008, recognising the progress that had been made since 2004, Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong announced a new target for WSH, challenging stakeholders to lower the number of

workplace fatalities to less than 1.8 per 100,000 workers by 2018. This would allow Singapore to have one of the best workplace safety records in the world.

## Comparison of Workplace Fatality Rates

Country / Region	Latest (Year)
Sweden	1.7 <sup>1</sup> (2005)
United Kingdom	1.4 <sup>1</sup> (2005)
Australia	2.0 <sup>2</sup> (2005)
United States	1.8 <sup>3</sup> (2006)
EU15 Average	2.3 <sup>1</sup> (2005)
Japan	1.9 <sup>4</sup> (2005)
<b>Singapore</b>	<b>2.8 (2008)</b>

### Note

The workplace fatality rate is defined as the number of workplace fatalities per 100,000 workers.

### Data Sources

<sup>1</sup>Eurostat;  
<sup>2</sup>International Labour Organization, LABORSTA;  
<sup>3</sup>Estimated from data obtained from the US Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics;  
<sup>4</sup>Estimated from data obtained from the Japan International Center for Occupational Safety and Health

**Workplace Fatalities, 2004 - 2008**  
 (Number and rate per 100,000 employed persons)



# WORKPLACE SAFETY AND HEALTH ACT



# 06 WORKPLACE SAFETY AND HEALTH ACT

*"...While the passage of time may have lessened the pain, we must not forget the lessons learnt. If there can be any good from the tragic loss of lives, then let it be this – a constant reminder to us all that we ignore safety and health risks at our peril and to move us from platitudes to action, to create structures that will shape better behaviour and outcomes at the workplace..."*

**Minister for Manpower Dr Ng Eng Hen,**  
*at the second reading of the Workplace Safety and Health Bill, 17 Jan 2006*

The WSH Act is the key legal instrument supporting the WSH framework in Singapore. It was enacted on 1 March 2006, replacing the Factories Act.

The WSH Act marks a shift from the prescriptive legislative approach under the Factories Act, to a performance-based regime. To illustrate, the law no longer prescribes that factory windows must be 10% of the floor size; instead, a duty is placed on employers to ensure that there is sufficient ventilation at the workplace. The Act emphasises the importance of proactively managing WSH by requiring stakeholders to identify and mitigate risks and hazards at the workplace before they occur. The WSH Act also recognises that a broad range of stakeholders have a part to play in ensuring the safety and health of workers and other persons who may be affected by the work being carried out. It therefore assigns liability to those who create, and have management or control over WSH risks, which includes not only stakeholders such as occupiers and employers, but also principals, workers, manufacturers and suppliers, as well as persons who erect, install or maintain equipment and machinery.

When the WSH Act was first enacted, its coverage mirrored that of the Factories Act, covering high-risk workplaces such as construction worksites, shipyards

and other factories. On 1 March 2008, the WSH Act was extended to cover six new sectors: healthcare activities, hotels and restaurants, landscape care and maintenance service activities, services allied to transportation of goods, veterinary activities, and water supply, sewerage and waste management. The coverage of the WSHA will be extended to all workplaces over time.

To further strengthen the WSH framework, two key pieces of subsidiary legislation, the WSH (Risk Management) Regulations and the WSH (Incident Reporting) Regulations, were introduced in 2006, together with the WSH Act. The WSH (Risk Management) Regulations require workplaces that are covered under the WSH Act to have in place proper risk assessments and control measures to eliminate or minimise the identified risks. The WSH (Incident Reporting) Regulations require all workplaces to report work-related accidents, dangerous occurrences and occupational diseases, thereby facilitating the identification and monitoring of WSH trends and hotspots for all workplaces.

**WSH 2018:  
A STRATEGY FOR  
WORKPLACE SAFETY AND  
HEALTH IN SINGAPORE**





# 08 WSH 2018: A STRATEGY FOR WORKPLACE SAFETY AND HEALTH IN SINGAPORE

*To realise our goal of having one of the best safety records in the world, the right mindset and attitude are needed at the workplace to reinforce the importance of WSH.*

## Development of WSH 2018

Although the WSH Act forms the cornerstone of the new WSH framework, it is only one of several pieces that will help us achieve sustained progress in our WSH standards and outcomes. To complement the new legislative framework, the Ministry of Manpower (MOM) and the WSH Advisory Committee – the predecessor of the WSH Council – developed a national strategy known as WSH 2015 to achieve the initial target of halving the number of workplace fatalities to 2.5 per 100,000 workers by 2015. WSH 2015 outlined proposals

to build strong capabilities in WSH management, enhance the regulatory framework, encourage the integration of safe and healthy practices at the workplace by employers and employees, and develop strong partnerships and networks to help drive improvements in WSH.

By mapping out the key strategies and priority areas for improving WSH outcomes, WSH 2015 has played a critical role in guiding stakeholders' efforts. With the workplace fatality rate in 2007 standing at 2.9 per 100,000 workers, Singapore is well on track to meet, even surpass, the 2015 target of 2.5 per 100,000

workers. MOM and the WSH Council agreed that a more ambitious target was achievable. In April 2008, Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong announced a new goal to reduce the workplace fatality rate to less than 1.8 per 100,000 workers by 2018.

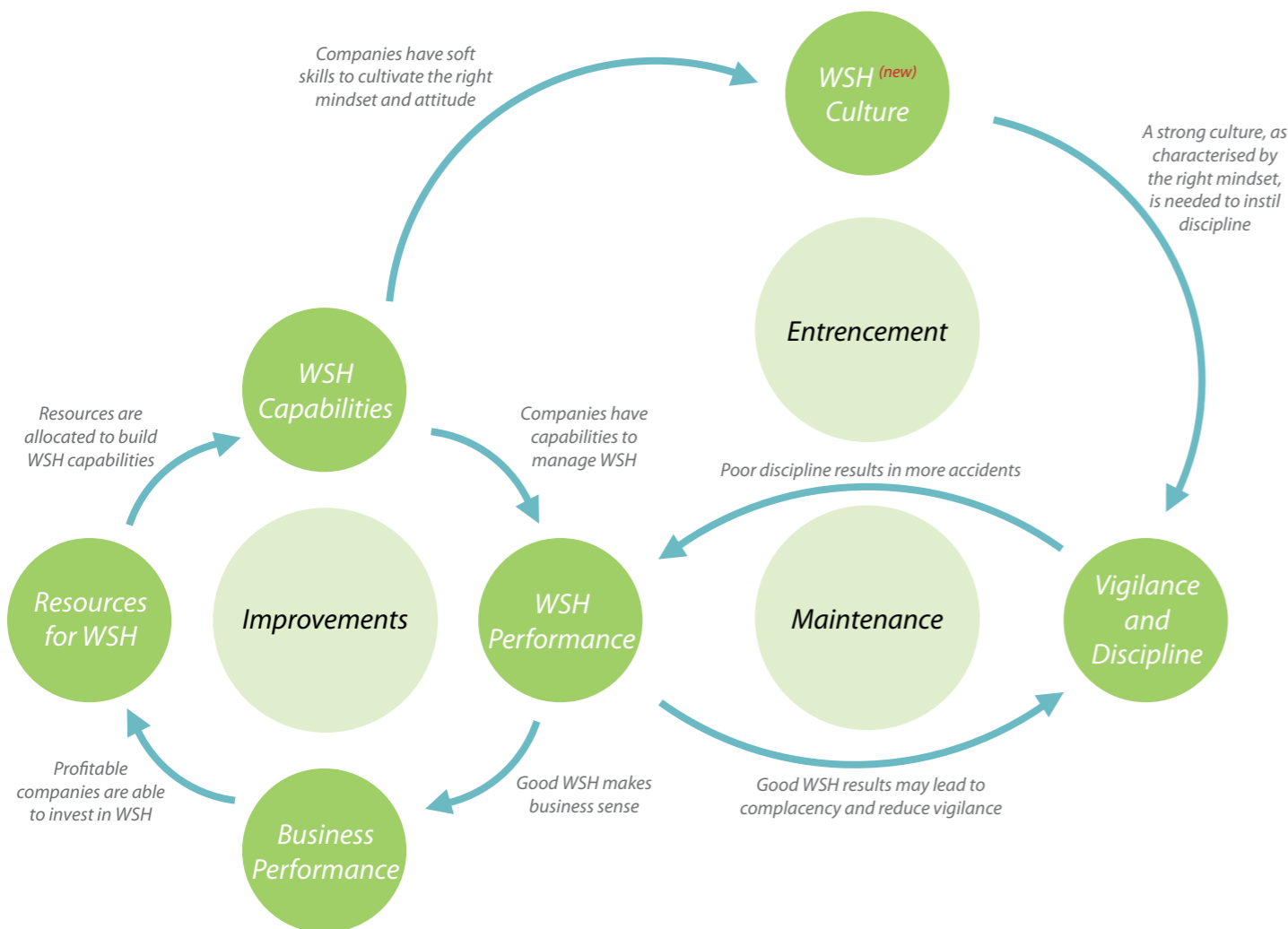
In view of the new target, MOM and the WSH Council reviewed WSH 2015, identifying areas for enhancement and new areas of work. The review culminated in an updated national strategy known as WSH 2018. MOM also consulted members of the International Advisory Panel (IAP) on WSH – a group of renowned experts appointed by MOM to advise Singapore on our WSH strategies – on WSH 2018. Their recommendations on WSH 2018 (details of which can be found in the IAP's report at Appendix 1) have been incorporated into the strategy document.

## 09 About WSH 2018

Since 2005, we have witnessed an improvement in our WSH performance through our capability and partnership building efforts, enhancements to our regulatory framework, and outreach efforts to industry and other stakeholders. The heightened state of awareness and attention towards WSH in particular, has been a key contributing factor to our improved performance. If we are to realise our goal of having one of the best safety records in the world, the right mindset and attitude are needed at the workplace to reinforce the importance of WSH. Accordingly, WSH 2018 makes explicit the need to establish a progressive and pervasive safety and health culture.

10 **The Importance of a Safety and Health Culture in Raising WSH Performance**

The diagram below illustrates how the establishment of a progressive and pervasive WSH culture is critical to achieving sustained improvements in WSH outcomes. The improvement cycle illustrates the relationship between WSH and business performance – improvements in capabilities to manage WSH by devoting adequate resources for WSH can have a positive impact on business performance. However, the maintenance cycle shows that this relationship can be compromised by a sense of complacency and a lapse in vigilance. Expanding WSH capability building efforts beyond WSH infrastructure and competencies, to include cultivating the right mindset and attitude towards WSH, can help arrest this lapse into complacency, as illustrated by the entrenchment cycle. This will help ensure that our gains in WSH outcomes are sustained.



The strategies developed in WSH 2015 remain relevant. In WSH 2018, the detailed areas of work and initiatives under these strategies have been enhanced, to take into account insights gleaned since the introduction of the new WSH framework in 2005. In the implementation of WSH 2018, we will also make a concerted effort to:

• **Adopt Differentiated Approaches**

We have done well in implementing the various strategies to date, by putting in place broad-based capability building efforts and outreach mechanisms to reach out to as large a pool of stakeholders as possible. These include initiatives such as bizSAFE, the Risk Management Assistance Fund and electronic WSH bulletins. Moving forward, we can enhance the effectiveness of our efforts by developing sector-specific approaches that take into account the distinct nature, challenges and WSH landscape of each industry sector. This will ensure that our programmes and initiatives target the specific needs of the industry, and that our interventions are deployed through the right channels.

Apart from sector-specific approaches, we also recognise that the challenges posed by the uniqueness of workplace health hazards require the adoption of a modified approach from that used to manage safety hazards. For instance, while the consequences of failures in workplace safety are immediately obvious and manifested as injuries or fatalities, the consequences of failures in workplace health management may only become apparent many years later. This may make it difficult for employers to recognise the need for good workplace health management and to identify appropriate measures to mitigate the risks to workers.

• **Raise the Stature and Professionalism of WSH**

WSH professionals play an important role in supporting WSH improvements at the workplace, by assisting employers in monitoring and enhancing safety management. To support the efforts under WSH 2018, MOM has projected that we need to grow the size of the local pool of WSH professionals to 19,000-strong by 2018. To do so, we will need to step up efforts to attract more people into the WSH profession. Raising the stature of the profession is an important aspect of these efforts. We must also ensure that WSH professionals are equipped with the right skills and competencies, to enable them to meet the responsibilities and demands placed on them.

• **Make Safety and Health a Way of Life**

We have made great strides in engendering collective industry ownership of WSH outcomes. As a next step, we need to strengthen personal ownership of WSH, where individuals see WSH as a matter of course, taking responsibility for their personal safety and that of those around them. This can only be done when people start to view safety and health as a way of life, rather than as a set of safety rules and procedures to be adhered to, with penalties imposed for non-compliance. One way of cultivating this attitude is by instilling the value of safety and health at an early stage.

• **Extend Reach and Depth**

To sustain our improvements in WSH outcomes, we need to extend the reach and depth of our outreach, capability building and enforcement efforts. Our WSH messages must reach down to the

last worker on the ground and be spread to all workplaces, especially the smaller ones. This is especially critical with the eventual extension of the WSH Act to all workplaces. Developing new channels of engagement, new partnerships and new networks will help on this front.

### **A Strategy for Better WSH Outcomes**

The WSH 2018 Strategy will lead to better WSH outcomes, by setting out to create a good WSH regime that is characterised by fewer risks. This will reduce disruptions to production and service capacities, as well as enhance business profitability. This will, in turn, help position Singapore as a stable and reliable operating environment for businesses and an attractive investment destination.

WSH 2018 will also put Singapore in good stead to become a trusted reference for WSH. In so doing, Singapore will be in a position to export its WSH services, such as consultancy and education services, to the region and beyond.





# THE WSH LANDSCAPE IN 2018

## Vision

*A safe and healthy workplace for everyone; and a country renowned for best practices in workplace safety and health.*

Our vision is for a safe and healthy workplace for everyone. Programmes and initiatives will be established to build capabilities to manage WSH. An effective regulatory framework will also be put in place to support ongoing WSH reforms.

Through these measures, and with the collective efforts and support of our local and international partners, Singapore will set a benchmark for high WSH standards and develop its reputation as an Asian leader and global player in building a progressive and pervasive safety and health culture.

## Role of Stakeholders

To realise our vision for WSH 2018, all stakeholders have to play their part. While the institutional design of the WSH framework is rightly the responsibility of the Government, a strong safety and health culture is only possible if all stakeholders take responsibility for WSH outcomes.

### Government

The Government's primary role is to oversee the general direction of WSH, as well as to regulate and ensure compliance on the ground. Being the largest single employer in Singapore, the Government must lead by example, by creating a strong safety and health culture at its own workplaces. As a significant procurer of goods and services, the Government should also seek to influence the WSH standards of its contractors and suppliers through its procurement contracts.

### Workplace Safety and Health Council and Other Industry Stakeholders

Industry has a key role to play in ensuring WSH outcomes. Given its intimate knowledge and experience of the environment and processes at the workplace, industry is best-placed to identify and develop the appropriate WSH standards and practices to be adopted.

The WSH Council represents the voice of industry on WSH issues. An industry-led statutory body, supported by the tripartite partners, it serves as the industry champion for promoting WSH, through the setting of standards for WSH, strengthening of WSH capabilities and the building of a strong safety and health culture.

Although the WSH Council represents the collective voice of industry on WSH, there is a diverse range of other industry bodies that also play a role in promoting WSH. This includes business and employer associations such as the Singapore Business Federation (SBF), the Singapore National Employers Federation (SNEF) and the Association of Small and Medium Enterprises (ASME), and trade associations such as the Singapore Contractors Association Limited (SCAL) and the Association of Singapore Marine Industries (ASMI).

### Unions

Trade and labour unions represent the interests of workers, and they are well-placed to proactively promote WSH awareness, WSH training initiatives and a safety and health culture among workers. Together with industry, unions play a critical role in jointly creating an environment that emphasises and rewards WSH excellence.

### Employers

Employers, in particular the senior management, play an influential role in raising WSH capabilities within individual companies. They provide the framework at the workplace within which WSH can thrive, for instance by providing employees with adequate training on WSH and allocating resources to WSH. It is senior management that sets the tone for the safety and health culture of the company, decides on the importance of WSH outcomes relative to other business outcomes and establishes clear performance indicators for WSH.

### Workers

Workers are often the ones who are most exposed to WSH risks and their active participation in safety and health matters at the workplace is therefore critical. While employers have a duty to provide their employees with adequate training and protection against WSH hazards, workers themselves must take responsibility for their own safety, if not that of those around them as well. To do so, they must see the value and relevance of WSH. They should ensure that they understand the WSH risks that their work entails, are properly equipped to manage these risks in their work and abide by the proper safety and health procedures.

**WSH Professionals and Specialists**

16 WSH professionals and specialists provide assistance to employers in monitoring and improving WSH management at the workplace. Supervisors and workers look to them for help in addressing day-to-day WSH concerns. They can drive capability and culture building efforts in organisations, by identifying WSH gaps and recommending cost-effective solutions. They can also help drive WSH improvements beyond mere compliance with legislative requirements. WSH professionals include WSH auditors, officers and coordinators, while WSH specialists include diverse occupations ranging from industrial hygienists to noise control officers.

**Professional and Educational Institutions and Service Providers**

Professional institutions play a key role in promoting and raising the stature of the WSH profession by setting professional standards and creating a sense of community among fellow professionals. They also raise the professionalism of WSH practice by providing continuing education and training to their members.

Meanwhile, educational institutions help sow the seeds of a strong safety and health culture, by instilling the value of safety and health in students. Educational institutions should work closely with industry to integrate WSH concepts into the curriculum of relevant courses.

Training providers build up the competencies of the workforce through the provision of quality training, while other service providers such as WSH consultancies provide expert advice to companies on raising WSH standards.



# 18 STRATEGIC OUTCOMES

*To achieve our desired WSH 2018 vision, we have identified four strategic outcomes. These outcomes set out our national targets to achieve one of the best WSH records in the world, articulate the characteristics that Singapore must demonstrate to become a Centre of Excellence for WSH, and describe the behaviours that stakeholders must possess for safety and health to be a way of life.*

## **Strategic Outcome 1: Reduction in WSH Incident Rates**

Our long-term goal is to have safe and healthy workplaces where no lives are lost and no injuries are suffered. Our intermediate goals for 2018 are to achieve:

- A workplace fatality rate of less than 1.8 fatalities per 100,000 workers; and
- A workplace injury rate of less than 280 injuries per 100,000 workers.

## **Strategic Outcome 2: Safety and Health is an Integral Part of Business**

Safety and health is seen as an integral part of business. Companies see the value of good WSH practices in enhancing business competitiveness, productivity and profitability. There is proactive assessment and control of risks at all levels during business operations. WSH performance is seen as an important dimension of company performance, alongside established business outcomes such as revenue and profit.

## **Strategic Outcome 3: Singapore is Renowned as a Centre of Excellence for WSH**

Singapore is renowned as a Centre of Excellence for WSH that provides a safe and healthy workplace for everyone. Singapore is recognised for its high WSH standards and is seen as being at the forefront of building a progressive and pervasive safety and health culture. Employers, workers and other stakeholders possess the right skills and capabilities to manage WSH. Our workers and WSH professionals are therefore highly regarded by other countries for their competencies. There are also strong institutions such as professional bodies, industry associations and training providers supporting the WSH framework in Singapore. These enable Singapore to serve as a regional centre for WSH ideas, practices and expertise.

## **Strategic Outcome 4: A Progressive and Pervasive Safety and Health Culture**

Employers, workers and other stakeholders view WSH as a personal responsibility and share the belief that workplace accidents are preventable and therefore unacceptable. This mindset is manifested in concrete behavioural terms: management proactively addresses safety concerns, while workers take precautionary steps to complete a task in a safe manner and look out not only for their own safety, but that of those around them as well.

# STRATEGIES





## 20 STRATEGIES

*A multi-pronged approach is needed to achieve our four strategic outcomes. Our strategies must be geared towards engaging and securing the commitment of stakeholders across all levels, and be wide-ranging in their scope or nature of intervention.*

In the next section, we will map out the four strategies that have been identified to strengthen WSH improvements and drive the process towards safer and healthier workplaces. These four strategies are:

1. Build strong capabilities to better manage WSH;
2. Implement an effective regulatory framework;
3. Promote the benefits of WSH and recognise best practices; and
4. Develop strong partnerships locally and internationally.

A summary of the WSH 2018 strategy map can be found in Appendix 2

### Strategy 1: Build Strong Capabilities to Better Manage WSH

Employers and relevant stakeholders must be able to manage WSH issues before they can effectively drive WSH reforms and raise WSH standards. Therefore, it is critical that stakeholders – WSH professionals, management, line supervisors and workers – be equipped with the relevant skills and competencies to better comprehend, control and deal with WSH risks. These competencies go beyond technical knowledge of WSH matters and include the skills and behaviour that stakeholders must demonstrate or acquire.

To facilitate the building of strong capabilities, we also need to ensure that the necessary supports are in place. There must be strong supporting institutions, including quality training providers, to guide the identification and development of WSH competencies. The provision of supporting resources – from financial assistance for small and medium enterprises (SMEs) to guidance materials – is another key pillar.

To realise this key strategy, we will focus on a number of areas:

- **Risk Management**

Risk management is an area where we have made good progress in recent years. Where before, risk management was a relatively new and unfamiliar concept to companies, particularly SMEs, most companies now have a good understanding of what risk management entails. Going forward, we hope to see improvements on two fronts; first, extending the reach of risk management implementation, as many SMEs still do not conduct risk management as part of their work processes. Second, to see improvements in the quality of risk management among companies that do practise it. On the former, we will continue to provide SMEs with financial assistance, guidance materials and other forms of support such as the availability of competent risk management consultants and affordable risk management courses. We will also leverage on the bizSAFE programme, encouraging more organisations to sign on as bizSAFE partners and influence their contractors to commit to implementing proper risk management processes. On the latter, enhancing the quality of WSH audits can help raise the level of risk management.

## 21

- **WSH Culture**

WSH culture is a new concept for the majority of companies in Singapore. To provide a tangible target and outcome for the industry to aim for in terms of a WSH culture index to measure the state of WSH culture in both individual companies and industry sectors. Companies must be enabled to inculcate the right attitude and mindset towards WSH in every employee – from top management down to the last worker, and to have this attitude manifested through concrete behaviours. To do so, we will develop a structured WSH culture-building programme to guide companies through the process. We will also provide companies with financial assistance to offset the initial project costs, develop guidance materials on WSH culture and provide other forms of support such as making available a pool of competent WSH culture building consultants as well as affordable WSH culture-building courses.

We will also work towards educating individuals on safety and health even before they join the workforce, by incorporating WSH into the pre-employment training (PET) framework. By encouraging students to view safety and health as part and parcel of their daily life at an early stage, this will set the stage for the creation of a strong safety and health culture at the workplace subsequently.



### • **Competency Development**

The development of the WSH Professionals Workforce Skills Qualifications (WSQ) framework is a key initiative that will raise the level of WSH practice in Singapore. It provides a structured framework for training WSH professionals, strengthening their capabilities in identifying and managing risks and hazards. The clear pathway the framework provides for career progression and upgrading will raise the stature and professionalism of WSH practice, thereby supporting our efforts to attract more people into the WSH profession. To help bring more people into the profession, and to help raise the competencies of existing professionals, we will provide funding support for new entrants to the profession – such as scholarships – and to companies sending their workers for training under the WSH Professionals WSQ framework. We will work closely with WDA and other partners to increase our training capacity for WSH professionals. We will also be adding greater depth to the framework, by developing trade-specific WSH competencies for various industries under the WSQ umbrella.

However, for industry to effectively manage risks and hazards as well as build a safety culture, our WSH competency framework should go beyond WSH professionals and include members of the general workforce as well. Employees should be trained and equipped with the relevant broad-based and trade-specific WSH competencies that will enable them to effectively implement WSH systems and processes. These competencies must be tailored to their respective roles within the company. Senior managers, line managers and supervisors, for instance, should be equipped with the relevant soft skills and tools like management audits, to enable them to promote WSH on the ground. We can also explore providing WSH training for foreign workers in the workers' home countries before arrival in Singapore.

### • **Competency Delivery**

The quality of training providers and the integrity of the training framework are paramount to the effectiveness of competency delivery. We will continue to identify and develop world-class service providers to cater to the training needs of stakeholders. This includes ensuring that the trainers are adequately equipped with the right training and assessment competencies and are up to date on the latest WSH developments.

### • **Practical Assistance**

To date, we have put together an array of resources to help businesses and stakeholders implement the initiatives under the WSH framework. These include codes of practice and guidance materials such as checklists and technical advisories. As a next step, we will explore expanding the range of our guidance materials as well as enhancements to their user-friendliness and practicality. This will encourage their use by SMEs and workers on the ground. We will also conduct research to enhance the quality of WSH management systems and practices. Another form of assistance we will explore is the use of safety assistance visits to companies to help them assess their level of WSH performance.

### • **Broadened Base of WSH Statistics**

We have also made good progress in broadening the base of our WSH statistics in recent years. In 2006, the WSH (Incident Reporting) Regulations were introduced, extending the requirement to report workplace fatalities, injuries, occupational diseases and dangerous occurrences to all workplaces. Previously, this requirement applied only to certain classes of workplaces. But there is more that can be done.

Under-reporting is an issue confronting many countries, including Singapore. Moving forward, we will explore mechanisms to enhance reporting rates. This will ensure that reported statistics reflect the actual situation and risks on the ground and ensure the effectiveness of our interventions. We will also work to broaden the base of WSH statistics further, particularly in terms of leading indicators for WSH such as exposure data and near misses. This will entail enhancements to our monitoring framework for workplaces where exposure to noise and chemicals is a problem. We will also explore developing a more holistic picture of safety and health conditions at the workplace, through the development of new indicators and measures, such as the WSH culture index. We can also explore data exchanges with other enforcement agencies such as the Singapore Civil Defence Force (SCDF) and the National Environment Agency (NEA), as well as the Ministry of Health (MOH), to develop a more comprehensive picture of workplace risks.

#### • Incident Investigation

One of the key pillars of driving WSH improvements is learning from past experiences. We will continue to develop the capabilities of businesses to draw useful lessons from near misses and internal accident investigations in order to identify shortcomings and prevent similar incidents from happening again. In the long term, businesses should be able to use the findings from these internal investigations to establish and improve their systems. The WSH Council can also play an active role to better understand the causes of these incidents and share the learning points with industry.

#### • WSH Institute

As part of our endeavour to establish Singapore as a Centre of Excellence for WSH, we will develop an institute dedicated to WSH that will provide advanced education, knowledge, solutions and consultancy services, and conduct applied research. This could include research on new and emerging WSH hazards unique to Asia, as well as the adaptation of international best practices on WSH to the Asian context. The Institute will tap on the expertise of other local organisations and international WSH institutions to achieve its objectives.

### Strategy 2: Implement an Effective Regulatory Framework

Beyond capability building, we need to establish and maintain an effective regulatory framework to implement the WSH Act. Under this strategy, targeted interventions and enforcement actions will be developed based on a comprehensive analysis of industry trends and developments. We will also review existing WSH legislation to ensure that they remain relevant to industry trends. More emphasis will also be placed on creating a self-regulatory framework in order to promote greater industry ownership.

A few priority areas have been identified to support this strategy:

#### • Strategic Intervention

To prioritise efforts and focus on areas that matter most, resources have to be deployed strategically. Targeted interventions such as the Programme-Based Engagement (ProBE) initiative and the Business Under Surveillance (BUS) programme ensure that priority areas are addressed. Looking ahead, we will develop diagnostic tools to identify strengths and areas for improvement at the industry level. Sectoral strategies will also be developed for sectors with high accident rates. Under these strategies, intervention measures such as engagement and enforcement actions will be tailored to meet the specific needs of each industry sector.

#### • Resolution of Systemic Lapses

We need to move beyond rectifying physical risks or violations to identifying systemic lapses that can potentially cause more accidents in the future at both the industry and company level. Through the continual and active sharing of such information, businesses exposed to similar risks will be aware of the dangers and can adopt precautionary measures.

#### • Extended Enforcement Reach

To ensure that MOM's enforcement resources are utilised strategically, we can explore other avenues to complement our enforcement efforts. This can include the active engagement of the public to spot and report unsafe acts and conditions.

#### • Differentiated Regulatory Approach for Workplace Health

While our overall regulatory framework for WSH is a performance-based regime rather than a prescriptive one, it may be necessary for our workplace health framework to provide stakeholders with more specific guidance on their obligations to ensure workplace health outcomes. Given the long latency period of many occupational diseases, it may not be easy to establish at the point of their manifestation – based on the existing requirements under the WSH Act – whether an employer had taken appropriate measures to minimise the

risk of exposure to the health hazard that caused the disease. In the case of workplace health therefore, we may need to make an exception and adopt a compliance-based regulatory framework in order to ensure workplace health outcomes.

#### • Self-regulation

To be responsive to WSH needs and trends, effective industry self-regulation is required. We will continue to encourage greater involvement by industry and trade associations in setting norms for WSH practices and raising WSH standards. Proactive WSH chapters can also be established in each of these associations to coordinate these efforts. Meanwhile, the professional associations could explore new avenues to raise the quality of their membership and ensure that the competencies of their members remain relevant and up-to-date.

#### • Legislative Review

The Government will review WSH legislation regularly to ensure that our WSH regime remains robust and continues to be relevant to current operating conditions. Where feasible, the Government will explore streamlining administrative rules, while ensuring that industry focus on managing safety and health at the workplace remains.

### Strategy 3: Promote the Benefits of WSH and Recognise Best Practices

To encourage businesses to adopt good WSH practices, it is important that they recognise that good WSH practices will enhance business competitiveness. Businesses should be made aware that good WSH practices can bring benefits such as a good corporate image, cost savings in terms of higher productivity and fewer disruptions to work due to accidents. It is also necessary to reach out to the workforce and encourage workers to adopt good WSH practices.

In addition, we should continue to recognise employers and workers who demonstrate good WSH practices and behaviours, and share their experiences with industry. Such sharing of best practices will further encourage cross-learning and facilitate an environment of continuous improvement. This will help build a strong safety and health culture and eventually elevate Singapore's state of WSH development.

To effect this strategy, our work will focus on the following areas:

- **Outreach and Education**

In recent years, we have made great strides in taking the WSH message beyond traditional audiences such as workers in riskier industries, and bringing it to the general workforce and the public. This has been accomplished through initiatives such as the National WSH Campaign, which began as a week-long event but was extended to a one-month campaign in 2008. Going forward, we want to enhance our outreach efforts and mechanisms, to

allow us to reach out to all levels of the workforce, from the chief executive officer to the last worker on the ground. To do so, we will need to identify new networks and touch points to reach these employees. For instance, supervisors are one touch point which we can tap on more actively to reach out to workers on the ground. Our outreach efforts should be sensitive to the different educational and cultural backgrounds of workers to ensure that our WSH messages are taken on board.

As part of our culture building efforts, outreach programmes will also be extended to schools and educational institutes at all levels to inculcate an appreciation of safety and health values from young. At the company level, SMEs will continue to be an important target audience. With the eventual extension of the WSH Act to cover all workplaces, we will need to identify platforms through which we can reach out to companies and workers in the new sectors.

- **Recognition**

We will continue to refine the WSH recognition framework to encourage widespread participation and improvement in WSH standards. This framework must be attractive to SMEs, and ensure that their efforts and improvements in WSH are not overshadowed by bigger and better-resourced companies. Early adopters and individuals with significant WSH contributions should also be recognised for their safe behaviours and related efforts.

- **Information Dissemination and Hazards Communication**

The WSH Council has created a variety of platforms and tools to date to alert and inform industry of key WSH issues of interest such as accident statistics and trends at the national and industry levels, and WSH best practices locally and abroad. These include electronic WSH bulletins and the use of creative collaterals such as mobile exhibits. As a next step, we can explore establishing communication platforms tailored to specific sectors. In terms of content, we will go beyond the dissemination of information on proper safety procedures and WSH best practices. To encourage individuals to be proactive in taking responsibility for their safety and health at work, we need to go one step further and focus on helping workers understand the rationale for the safety procedures and the risks of exposure to workplace hazards.

- **Driving Improvements through Large Organisations**

Large companies can make a big impact in creating a strong safety and health culture in the industry sectors they are in. Such companies can serve as role models and mentor other companies in implementing best WSH practices and systems. They can also use their commercial influence to shape the WSH culture of their suppliers and sub-contractors along the value chain. This will create strong business incentives for the smaller companies to raise their WSH standards. The bizSAFE initiative has seen some success in engaging larger companies to sign on as bizSAFE partners and mentors, to provide WSH leadership to other companies in their respective industries. Moving forward, we will continue to encourage greater participation in bizSAFE. Meanwhile, as the largest single employer in Singapore and as a large procurer of goods and services, the Government will

continue to explore ways of enhancing WSH outcomes both within the Government and among its suppliers and contractors.

- **Business Case and Accident Cost Measurement**

Being able to understand the business case for WSH, and estimate the true cost of accidents will better motivate employers to achieve good WSH outcomes. We will continue to conduct research on accident costs and establish tools to measure such costs. Such tools can be used to help companies assess the usefulness of WSH control measures and allow them to make better informed business decisions. We will also continue to explore means of strengthening the business case for WSH, such as creating a stronger linkage between insurance premiums and WSH performance.

- **Grading of Safety and Health Management Systems**

A grading scheme for safety and health management systems can help companies better identify areas for improvement in their WSH management. We have made some progress on this front with the development of the Construction Safety Audit Scoring System (ConSASS), a checklist to help auditors assess the quality and effectiveness of the WSH management systems in the construction industry. Next, we will encourage a more widespread adoption of ConSASS, by urging developers to factor in the ConSASS results in their selection of contractors. We will also develop similar checklists for other industries. Insurance companies can also use these audit checklists to price insurance premiums according to the WSH standards of companies.

## 28 Strategy 4: Develop Strong Partnerships Locally and Internationally

Improving WSH standards and developing a vibrant WSH culture is not something that the Government, nor the WSH Council, can achieve by itself. It requires the collective effort and cooperation of all key stakeholders. Close working relationships among the various stakeholders are useful as they can leverage on one another's strengths to refine and implement the WSH framework.

Key areas of work under this strategy include:

- Inter-agency and Inter-industry Collaboration**  
 We will continue to develop close collaboration among various stakeholders such as the Government, unions, trade associations, developers, insurance companies, financial institutions, embassies, media, local non-governmental organisations and the community to better achieve the WSH strategic outcomes. These collaborations can focus on key areas such as the setting and benchmarking of WSH standards, inter-industry sharing of best practices, safety and health outreach, the building of WSH capabilities, and efforts to demonstrate how WSH is integral to business.
- International Advisory Panel**  
 We will continue to convene regular meetings of the Panel to learn from the experiences of the international community and tap on the expertise of the panel of WSH advisors to critique our strategies.
- International Collaboration**  
 Strong networks in WSH in the international arena will help Singapore keep abreast of the latest developments in WSH and be informed of new WSH hazards and risks that have been identified in other countries. Singapore is an active participant in the activities of the International Labour Organization and the World Health Organization on the WSH front. Looking forward, Singapore can enhance its collaboration with other ASEAN countries on the WSH front, to explore avenues of raising WSH standards across the region. Other initiatives Singapore can also explore include collaborations with foreign research institutions in the area of applied research, and organising conferences bringing together international WSH experts. These can help raise the level of WSH discourse and practice in Singapore and the region.

# IMPLEMENTATION AND REVIEW CONCLUSION





## IMPLEMENTATION AND REVIEW

We have charted out an Action Plan to implement the areas of work identified under the four key strategies. The details of this Action Plan can be found in Appendix 3. MOM and the WSH Council will monitor the implementation of the Action Plan and formulate successive action plans based on feedback from industry and other key stakeholders to better reflect the changes in the operating environment and market sentiments.

## CONCLUSION

This document is Singapore's National Strategy for WSH. It sets out the national vision, strategic outcomes and strategies for WSH for the next ten years. WSH 2018 was developed through extensive consultation with industry stakeholders, and the efforts and commitment of all stakeholders will drive this strategy forward. With this strategy fully implemented, we will realise our vision of having a safe and healthy workplace for everyone, one of the best workplace safety records in the world and a country renowned for best practices in WSH.



# APPENDIX 1

## REPORT OF THE SECOND MEETING OF THE INTERNATIONAL ADVISORY PANEL FOR WORKPLACE SAFETY AND HEALTH 30 TO 31 OCTOBER 2008

### Introduction

In 2006, the Minister for Manpower appointed a panel of international experts to sit on a new International Advisory Panel (IAP) for Workplace Safety and Health (WSH), as part of Singapore’s initiatives to reform the WSH framework and improve WSH standards and safety outcomes for Singapore. The terms of reference of the IAP are to:

- Advise on significant trends and developments in industrial practices that would impact on WSH in Singapore;
- Share approaches to WSH challenges in other countries that might guide Singapore’s WSH developments; and
- Critique WSH standards, practices and the regulatory regime in Singapore and provide advice on possible improvements to bring WSH standards in Singapore to the level of leading edge country leaders.

The IAP held its inaugural meeting from 31 October to 2 November 2006. At the meeting, the IAP discussed the two WSH roadmaps that were jointly developed by the Ministry of Manpower (MOM) and the then WSH Advisory Committee – WSH 2015: A Strategy for WSH in Singapore and Implementing WSH 2015 for the Construction Industry. The IAP endorsed Singapore’s new WSH framework as outlined in WSH 2015, and supported the vision and strategic outcomes set out in the two roadmaps. The IAP also offered ten recommendations on the roadmaps for the Government’s consideration.

### The Second IAP Meeting

The second meeting of the IAP for WSH was convened from 30 to 31 October 2008. The IAP was updated on WSH developments in Singapore since its inaugural meeting and discussed two strategy papers that were jointly developed by MOM and the WSH Council:

- **“Building WSH Competencies in Singapore”**  
The paper lays out proposals to train and equip all levels of the Singapore workforce with the appropriate WSH skills and capabilities, and to develop the institutions required to support the provision of such training.
- **“Improving Workplace Health Management in Singapore”**  
The paper reviews Singapore’s management of workplace health issues and proposes various strategies to tackle different types of workplace health hazards and improve workplace health outcomes.

The two-day meeting provided the IAP with an opportunity to engage representatives from industry, employers, unions and professional bodies in Singapore in a frank and open discussion on the state of WSH in Singapore. As part of its programme, the IAP also visited a local training institute and two manufacturing companies, to get a better sense of the business environment and operating conditions on the ground.

### Key Recommendations

In its deliberations, the IAP commended Singapore for the great strides made in improving WSH outcomes since the Panel’s inaugural meeting in 2006 and praised Singapore’s move to set a more ambitious goal to lower the workplace fatality rate to 1.8 per 100,000 workers by 2018. The IAP also welcomed the elevation of the former WSH Advisory Committee into the WSH Council and the extension of the WSH Act to eventually cover all workplaces. It reaffirmed the important role the WSH Council plays in strengthening industry participation and ownership of WSH outcomes. Nevertheless, the IAP reiterated that the issue of under-reporting, particularly of occupational diseases (ODs), would continue to pose challenges in improving WSH performance in Singapore. The IAP also noted that Singapore should continue to explore avenues to leverage on the value chain to shape the safety and health culture of suppliers and sub-contractors, as well as help small and medium enterprises (SMEs) improve their WSH performance.

The IAP welcomed WSH 2018 – the new national WSH plan to bring Singapore’s workplace fatality rate down to 1.8 per 100,000 workers within a decade, on par with leading edge country leaders in WSH. The IAP strongly supported the inclusion of a new strategic outcome to develop a “Progressive and Pervasive Safety and Health Culture” under WSH 2018 and the enhanced and new areas of work identified. The IAP agreed that improving WSH competencies and workplace health management in Singapore are important parts of the strategy. The IAP offered the following recommendations for consideration:

### WSH 2018

*Recommendation 1: Establishing Singapore as an Asian leader and global player in building a progressive and pervasive safety and health culture*

Welcoming Singapore’s move to build a progressive and pervasive safety and health culture as a milestone effort, the IAP suggested that Singapore had the potential to serve as a regional centre for WSH ideas and expertise. While the European and American experience could provide useful learning points on WSH frameworks, their efforts in developing a safety and health culture would need to be contextualised for application to Singapore and other Asian countries, given the different cultural settings. Singapore could therefore spearhead efforts in the area of applied research and the adaptation of international best WSH practices to the Asian context. Singapore could also organise networking platforms such as international conferences to bring together WSH experts from around the world to share and advance WSH culture.

*Recommendation 2: Developing a world-class WSH Institute*

The IAP endorsed Singapore’s proposal to develop an institution dedicated to WSH that would, among other things, provide world-class training, knowledge and solutions, consultancy services and conduct applied research. The Institute should leverage on the expertise and capabilities of other local organisations and actively link up with international WSH institutions to achieve its objectives. The IAP highlighted that this would pave the way to establish Singapore as a Centre of Excellence for WSH. The IAP further recommended that Singapore could consider sharing her WSH training framework and expertise with other countries through this Institute. However, the IAP noted that the sharing of Singapore’s training expertise was likely to be a longer-term initiative, given that her priority was on building up the WSH capabilities of the workforce in Singapore. In addition, the IAP suggested that the Institute could establish a link with global risk observatories and share research findings on new and emerging WSH hazards unique to Asia.



### 34 **Recommendation 3: Strengthening workplace hazards communication**

The IAP highlighted that effective hazard communication was essential to encourage individuals to be proactive in taking responsibility for their safety and health at work. The IAP commented that Singapore should go beyond merely telling workers the sort of protective measures they should take. Instead, the focus should be on helping workers understand the rationale for these measures and the risks of exposure to a particular workplace hazard. The appropriate medium of communication should be used – for example using a language understood by the target audience. Companies should also make clear to any person entering their workplace, the hazards they were exposed to and the measures required to mitigate these hazards.

#### **Building WSH Competencies in Singapore**

##### **Recommendation 4: Leveraging on Pre-Employment Training (PET)**

The IAP agreed that introducing WSH modules in the PET framework was critical in contributing to the creation of a strong safety and health culture. The IAP recommended that Singapore consider creating specific WSH programmes at the tertiary institutes to cater to those wanting to specialise in WSH. The IAP also highlighted the importance of imbuing in students the value of safety and health as a way of life.

### **Recommendation 5: Refining the WSH training framework for foreign workers**

Observing that WSH training was currently mandated for workers in the higher-risk sectors and that a large proportion of the workforce in these sectors was foreign, the IAP suggested that stakeholders consider providing WSH training in the workers' home countries. This would ensure that workers would have a strong grasp of WSH issues before their arrival in Singapore. It could also prove to be more cost-effective for employers. The IAP also highlighted that Singapore should continue to upgrade the WSH competencies of workers in Singapore, for example through the provision of trade-specific training.

##### **Recommendation 6: Strengthening the role of industry in enhancing the WSH profession**

The IAP agreed that industry, spearheaded by the WSH Council and including the professional associations, plays a key role in promoting the WSH profession and advancing the science and application of hazard reduction. The IAP noted that industry was best equipped to assess how WSH professionals could drive WSH improvements beyond compliance with legislative standards. Accordingly, the IAP recommended that as a start, the WSH Council, together with the professional associations, take the lead in the certification of WSH professionals and provide avenues for the continual enhancement of their competencies, such as conferences or training programmes.

### **Improving Workplace Health Management in Singapore**

##### **Recommendation 7: Developing appropriate indicators and targets for workplace health**

The IAP supported establishing the baseline, indicators and time-bound targets for workplace health as a means to focus and galvanise the efforts of industry to improve their management of workplace health hazards. Notwithstanding, the IAP cautioned that the indicators and targets had to be chosen carefully. Trailing indicators could distract stakeholders from focusing on the underlying objective of reducing exposure to workplace health hazards. Meanwhile, it is important to take into account the unique challenges posed by the nature of workplace health hazards, such as the difficulty of establishing a link between occupational disease (OD) incidence and conditions at the workplace, given the long latency period of many ODs; this would help secure industry ownership for the targets. The IAP agreed that a workplace health target based on a select basket of relevant ODs with a direct causal link to work and short latency period could serve as a useful preliminary target.

In addition, the IAP supported Singapore's approach to place a greater emphasis on reducing exposure to workplace health hazards. Accordingly, the IAP also recommended that Singapore establish targets based on exposure levels to workplace health hazards. Specifically, the IAP suggested that industry should aim to achieve a higher standard than the established permissible exposure levels (PELs).

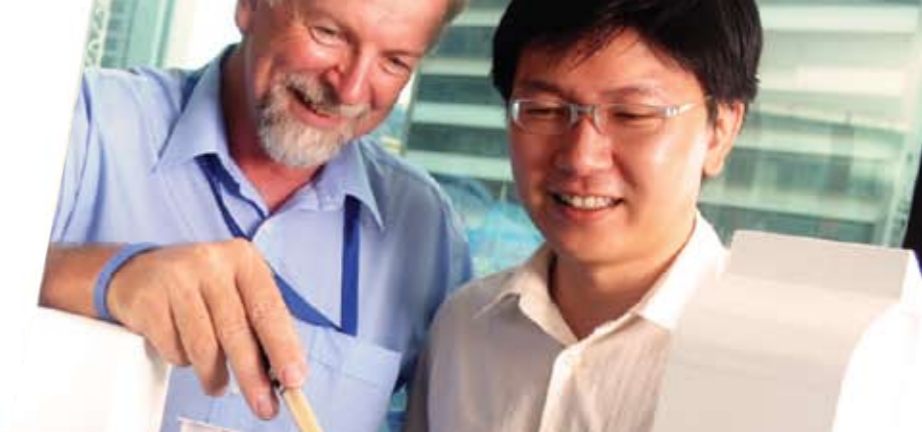
### 35 **Recommendation 8: A broader approach to achieve better workplace health outcomes**

The IAP highlighted that greater industry involvement in setting workplace health standards was critical. The IAP suggested that for hazardous agents where PELs had yet to be established, industry could take the lead in identifying appropriate PELs and/or effective control measures, given their understanding of the work processes and exposure situations involved.

The IAP also commented that companies should take a broader approach to help workers stay fit and healthy and maintain their ability to work. This could be achieved by integrating companies' wellness and workplace health programmes. This could help influence the mindset of workers, encouraging them to take personal responsibility for their health, both in and outside of the workplace. The IAP noted that this would benefit employers in the longer term, given its positive impact on workers' health and productivity. This would lead to reductions in business cost and lower absenteeism from work.

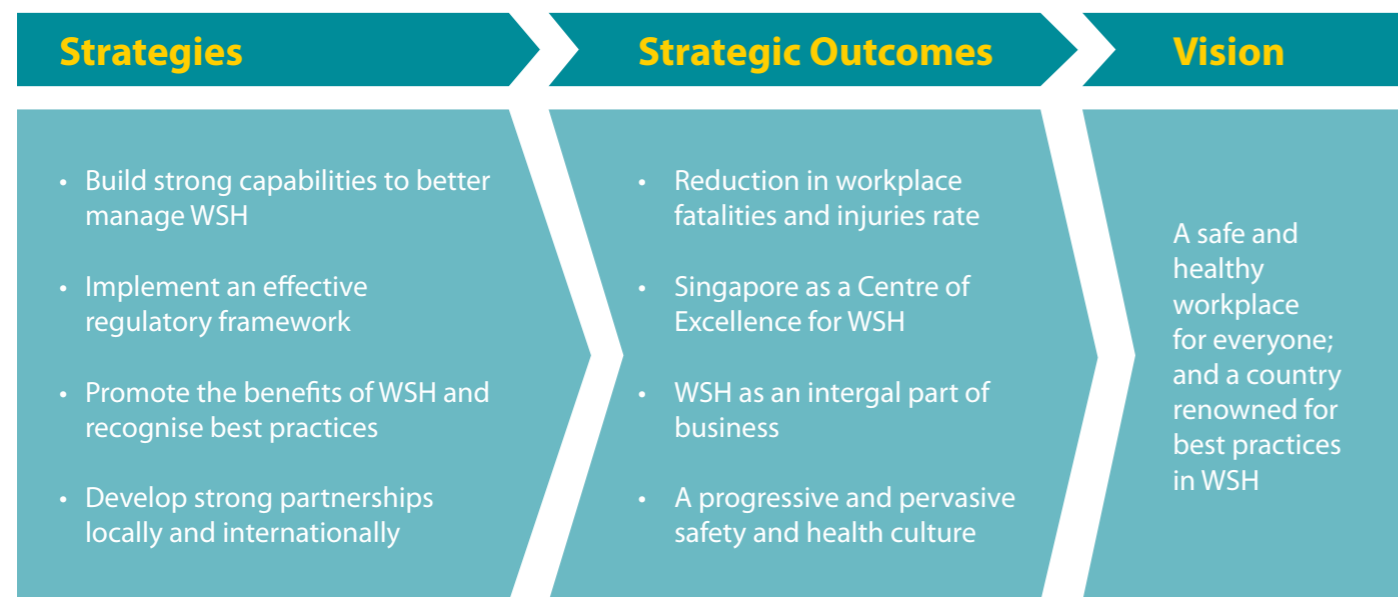
## **Conclusion**

The commitment and involvement of all stakeholders has contributed to the strong WSH progress made by Singapore. The IAP believes the support of stakeholders will enable Singapore to achieve world-class WSH standards by 2018. This report is the outcome of the IAP's deliberations at its second meeting, and proposes a set of recommendations to further improve and sustain Singapore's WSH performance. The IAP looks forward to the adoption of its recommendations by the Singapore Government and their implementation by all stakeholders.



# APPENDIX 2

## WSH 2018 STRATEGY MAP



# APPENDIX 3

## DETAILED ACTION PLAN

### Strategy 1: Build Strong Capabilities to Better Manage Workplace WSH

#### Risk Management

- Encourage the uptake of the Risk Management Assistance Fund and review the scope of activities funded under its ambit, so that small and medium enterprises (SMEs) can effectively offset the initial costs of integrating WSH management and risk assessment systems into their business processes.
- Develop and expand the pool of competent risk management consultants to advise industry on risk management measures.
- Customise risk management courses to cater to the needs of different industries and company sizes.

- Expand the scope of the online Trade-specific Risk Compendium to include new sectors that are covered under the WSH Act. The Compendium serves as a guide in identifying common WSH risks and possible control measures to mitigate such risks.
- Establish industry standards on the quality of risk management and enhance the quality of risk management audits based on these standards.
- Expand participation in bizSAFE, particularly in the bizSAFE partner category as a means of improving the reach of bizSAFE.



### WSH Culture

- Develop a WSH culture index which can be used to measure and monitor the state of WSH culture in an industry sector or organisation. The index can be used to set the national benchmark for WSH and to recognise organisations with a strong WSH culture.
- Develop a structured programme to help companies build a WSH culture within their organisation. The effectiveness of the programme should be measurable by an improvement to the WSH culture index of the company.
- Develop a pool of competent WSH culture building consultants to advise industry on WSH culture building measures.
- Provide financial assistance to help companies offset the initial costs of integrating WSH culture building initiatives into their business processes.

### Competency Development:

#### General Workforce

- Regularly review the training needs of industry and develop WSH courses to address gaps and areas in which competencies need to be enhanced, taking into consideration the diverse educational and cultural background of the workforce in Singapore.
- Introduce a range of short WSH courses and seminars to facilitate greater participation by the general workforce in WSH training. These courses and seminars can touch on general interest topics such as how WSH can improve productivity and profitability.
- Review current training incentive schemes to encourage skills upgrading by experienced workers.
- Review WSH training courses to cover human factors, such as fatigue as well as the soft skills needed to inculcate WSH values and effectively implement WSH systems and processes.
- Develop WSH management courses to improve the capability of senior and line management.
- Equip managers and supervisors with the right tools to visibly demonstrate their commitment to WSH and integrate their WSH responsibilities, such as conduct of management audits on WSH, into routine work.
- Refine the WSH training framework for foreign workers such that companies provide WSH training for their workers in the workers' home countries.

### WSH Professionals

- Market WSH profession as a choice career to increase the pool of WSH professionals.
- Enhance Continuing Professional Development programmes to cater to the needs of existing WSH professionals e.g. introduce bridging courses to enable existing professionals to handle the increased demands placed upon them.
- Encourage WSH professionals to actively upgrade and strengthen their WSH capabilities through the Continuing Professional Development programmes.
- Work with the relevant professional bodies to gradually expand the competency framework to address the professional development of not only WSH Auditors, Officers, Coordinators and Representatives, but also WSH consultants and specialists such as industrial hygienists and competent persons involved in the assessment and control of WSH risks (for example, noise and chemical monitoring and control officers).
- Enhance the professionalism of WSH professionals by setting and ensuring standards in areas such as qualifications, training and codes of conduct.

### Pre-employment Framework

- Introduce WSH into the pre-employment training (PET) framework by working with tertiary institutions to incorporate or expand the existing WSH modules in the academic syllabus of relevant professional courses such as engineering, architecture, medicine, and business administration and management.

### Competency Delivery

- Review the training landscape to assess the current standards of training providers, so that gaps such as adequacy of training providers and quality of trainers can be identified and addressed.
- Maintain the integrity of the training framework by encouraging training providers to improve their systems and through audit checks.
- Train and upgrade the trainers to ensure that they are equipped with the right training and assessment competencies and are kept up to date on the latest WSH developments.
- Produce a registry of local and international WSH training providers that are of good standing.
- Collaborate with reputable overseas training institutes to further develop our training landscape and enhance the standard and quality of training providers.

### Practical Assistance

- Work with industry associations to develop and review codes of practice and guidance materials as well as relevant legislation to help industry, especially the SMEs.
- Improve the quality of guidance materials to ensure that they are more user-friendly and practical.
- Develop referral schemes in collaboration with the industry associations to help identify companies who lack WSH resources and capabilities.
- Introduce schemes to offer direct assistance to help companies, especially those lacking the resources and capabilities, to effectively implement WSH management systems. For example, WSH Council can set up an internal team or work with industry players to offer on-site coaching or assistance. Safety assistance visits to companies to help them assess their level of WSH performance can be arranged.
- Develop self-surveillance or reporting programmes to ensure sustained improvements in companies that have exited from MOM's Business Under Surveillance programme.
- Conduct research to enhance the practical adoption of WSH management systems and practices.
- Collaborate with industry associations to evaluate the extent of the adoption of WSH management systems, practices, guidance materials, capability building initiatives etc. Possible mechanisms include surveys and focus group discussions.
- Organise regular dialogues to gather industry feedback to improve existing programmes and initiatives, and further develop new ones.

### WSH Statistics

- Expand the use of leading indicators (e.g. near miss data and exposure levels) to assess the state of WSH.
- Study and identify other suitable leading and lagging indicators for monitoring WSH performance holistically.
- Reduce the extent of under-reporting through increasing awareness of the reporting requirements under the WSH (Incident Reporting) Regulations
- Develop ways to accurately capture workplace health information e.g. by expanding the range of workplace health hazards and workplaces covered by MOM's exposure monitoring programmes
- Improve the range and quality of the data collected by improving data exchanges with other agencies.
- Assess the use of surveys to better understand the driving forces behind occupational disease trends and gain insights into emerging workplace health hazards.

### Incident Investigation

- Develop simple toolkits to enable companies to monitor accidents, near-misses, as well as unsafe work conditions and behaviours.
- Develop an online database of accident cases to share the learning from the accidents.
- Develop more in-depth analysis into selected accident cases to extract higher learning value.
- Develop the incident investigation competencies of WSH professionals.
- Learn from other organisations both locally and internationally to deepen our knowledge, skills and experience in incident investigation.

### WSH Institute

- Set up a dedicated WSH Institute with the core functions of providing advanced education, knowledge, solutions, and consultancy services, and conducting applied research.
- Tap on the expertise and capabilities of other local organisations and actively link up with international WSH Institutions in setting up the WSH Institute.
- Attract international WSH experts to assist in the set up of the WSH Institute and build up its standing.
- Link up with global risk observatories and share research findings on new and emerging WSH hazards unique to Asia.
- Regularly review the scope of the Institute's work after its formation to support industry needs and the national strategy for WSH.

## 42 Strategy 2: Implement an Effective Regulatory Framework

### Strategic Intervention

- Identify and focus capability building and enforcement efforts in the most problematic areas.
- Monitor and help poor performing businesses to improve their WSH standards.
- Closely monitor workplaces that have the potential for catastrophic accidents.
- Develop sectoral strategies for sectors with high accident rates. These strategies should include sectoral targets, key milestones and outcomes, dedicated programmes and initiatives specific to that sector.
- Develop diagnostic tools to identify strengths and areas of improvement at the industry level so that intervention measures can be tailored to meet the specific needs of each industry sector.

### Resolution of Systemic Lapses

- Enhance the capabilities of MOM's inspectors and investigators to identify systemic weaknesses.
- Develop industry capabilities to identify systemic lapses in their respective workplaces.
- Share with industry the learning points from the systemic lapses identified.

### Extended Enforcement Reach

- Encourage the public to actively spot and report unsafe acts and conditions. The existing reporting platforms can also be enhanced to support this.
- Leverage on the private sector capabilities where appropriate to supplement enforcement efforts.

### Differentiated Regulatory Approach for Workplace Health

- Establish the baselines, indicators and time-bound targets for workplace health to focus and galvanise the efforts of industry towards improving the management of workplace health hazards.
- Prescribe specific permissible exposure levels for workplace health hazards.
- Identify measures to eliminate or reduce exposure to workplace health hazards to below permissible levels.
- Provide more specific guidance to stakeholders on their obligations and measures they can take to manage workplace health hazards.

### Self-regulation

- Encourage the public to actively spot and report unsafe acts and conditions. The existing reporting platforms can also be enhanced to support this.
- Leverage on the private sector capabilities where appropriate to supplement enforcement efforts.

### Legislation Review

- Seek, on a regular basis, industry feedback on areas of concern and the impact of legislation so that policies and requirements remain relevant to prevailing conditions.
- Review administrative rules relating to WSH and streamline the processes involved where appropriate to ensure that industry efforts to manage WSH are efficient and effective.
- Extend the coverage of the WSH Act to protect workers in all workplaces.



### 44 **Strategy 3: Promote the Benefits of WSH and Recognise Best Practices**

#### Outreach

- Share information and conduct dialogue sessions with the senior management of companies to facilitate exchange of innovative WSH ideas and best practices, through platforms such as CEO roundtable sessions.
- Tap on large organisations, associations and unions for each sector in order to reach out to SMEs to raise the awareness of the importance of WSH, enhance the understanding of prevailing WSH trends and practices, and promote the benefits of WSH.
- Support the development of safe communities towards developing holistic safety and health awareness.

- Hold the annual National WSH Campaign, seminars, workshops, conferences or exhibitions to promote WSH.
- Develop collaterals in different languages to reach out to workers, taking into account their different educational and cultural backgrounds. Use magazines and the media where appropriate.
- Encourage the general public to embrace safety and health as a way of life. For example, safety and health messages can be disseminated to the families of workers through media such as television and radio programmes.
- Engender a safety and health culture from young through schools and educational institutions. For example, stories based on past WSH accidents can be incorporated into school lessons and school children can be sent for safety and health training as part of their co-curricular activities.

#### Recognition

- Give WSH Awards to organisations with strong WSH cultures and performances, as well as those that make significant improvements in WSH.
- Recognise individuals who demonstrate exemplary WSH behaviours or make significant contribution to safety and health in their organisations, in particular those at the supervisory and worker level.
- Award early adopters of WSH best practices.
- Acknowledge organisations that influence or assist their business partners such as suppliers or contractors to improve their WSH standards.
- Give special mention to organisations that reach out to the community to communicate the importance of embracing safety and health as a way of life.
- Encourage organisers of business awards to include WSH as part of the award criteria.

#### Information Dissemination and Hazards Communication

- Disseminate useful and timely WSH information to all stakeholders through mediums such as the internet, publications, seminars, workshops and dialogue sessions. Such information can include new and emerging WSH risks as well as WSH best practices locally and abroad.
- Publish periodic reports on the state of WSH performance in Singapore, including WSH performance in areas presently not covered under the WSH Act.
- Enhance accessibility of MOM's WSH statistics to the public so that they can use the statistics to understand trends and improve.
- Develop a network of supervisors so that they can be relied on to disseminate WSH information direct to the workers.
- Develop an online WSH forum to allow professionals and interested stakeholders to discuss and share WSH information.

- Work with the Ministry of Health and the healthcare profession to enhance doctors' awareness and knowledge of work-related diseases in order to facilitate accurate diagnosis.
- Disseminate training materials to companies to facilitate in-house and continual training of workers.
- Help workers understand the rationale for WSH control measures and the risks of exposure to workplace hazards when reaching out to them. Take into account their different educational and cultural backgrounds to ensure the effectiveness of these communications.

#### Driving Improvements through Large Organisations

- Encourage larger companies to mentor other companies in improving WSH standards.
- Encourage large companies to place emphasis on the WSH performance of their suppliers and sub-contractors.
- Government to set the example for the industry by, for example, taking the lead in implementing WSH best practices.
- Engage and influence companies to consider WSH performance as a criterion in evaluating contracts. The government can lead by integrating the assessment of WSH performance into its contract evaluation process.
- Encourage companies to integrate their wellness and workplace health programmes.

#### Business Case and Accident Cost Measurement

- Create an electronic system to facilitate the calculation of accident costs.
- Conduct research into accidents and case studies, and publish findings to promote a business case for good WSH management.
- Develop tools to help businesses understand how to integrate WSH into existing work processes so that higher productivity can be achieved.
- Link insurance premiums to the state of WSH culture and performance of companies.
- Encourage industry to include WSH-related information in annual reports of companies.

#### Grading of Safety and Health Management Systems

- Develop grading scheme, similar to ConSASS, in other industries so that companies of different sizes and in different industries can leverage on such tools to measure the effectiveness of their WSH management systems.
- Expand the usage of ConSASS by encouraging insurance companies to use the grading scheme to determine insurance premiums and incorporating ConSASS audits into existing recognition schemes.
- The Government to take the lead in using the grading scheme as part of the criteria to select vendors.

## 48 Strategy 4: Develop Strong Partnerships Locally and Internationally

### Inter-agency and Inter-industry Collaboration

- Engage local non-governmental organisations, trade associations and unions to drive WSH promotion and capability building efforts.
- Work with our partners through dialogues and seminars to foster a clearer understanding of WSH and mutual roles in helping to build a vibrant safety and health culture.
- Expand the collaborations with the industry by developing industry-community cooperative programmes to enhance WSH awareness or establish WSH standards.
- Share experiences and benchmark standards through cross-industry conferences and visits.
- Share intelligence and information among government agencies and establish inter-ministry training, secondment and partnerships to improve WSH practices e.g. through joint visits or inspections of premises.
- Identify and address nation-wide safety and health issues that cut across different government agencies and industry bodies.

### International Advisory Panel

- Keep a continual lookout for prominent overseas WSH experts and invite them onto the International Advisory Panel, which will meet periodically, to provide guidance and critique on the development of WSH strategies and standards as well as propose recommendations to improve WSH standards in Singapore.

### International Collaborations

- Promote regional cooperation on WSH-related projects through the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and ASEAN Occupational Safety and Health Network (ASEAN OSHNET). Such projects can include assisting the development and implementation of national WSH frameworks and systems.
- Participate in international projects and activities under the framework of international organisations such as the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and World Health Organisation.
- Consider ratifying relevant ILO conventions on WSH.
- Establish links between the WSH Council and relevant international organisations on WSH.
- Work with established WSH nations to spearhead efforts in the area of applied WSH research and adapt international best WSH practices to the Asian context.
- Organise regional or international WSH conferences in Singapore to bring together international WSH experts to share and advance WSH culture.

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