

FACTSHEET ON THE WORKPLACE SAFETY AND HEALTH INSTITUTE

INTRODUCTION

Singapore has made significant progress on the workplace safety and health (WSH) front in recent years. This is the result of regulatory reforms through the enactment of the WSH Act as well as greater industry ownership of WSH outcomes. To ensure the improvements in WSH are sustained, the strategies embedded in these reforms have to stay relevant as circumstances change. Monitoring for such changes and understanding how they affect WSH outcomes is crucial to ensuring the reforms stay relevant. The change can come from any quarter and this includes the economy and the impact this has on current and emerging work environments, work processes and behaviour.

To steer this effort, the Ministry of Manpower (MOM), in partnership with the WSH Council has set up the WSH Institute in 2011. The Institute will monitor the WSH landscape and provide assessments to the WSH 2018 national strategy. This will help MOM and WSH Council recalibrate and ensure policies and programmes continue to stay relevant and effective. Businesses in Singapore can look to the WSH Institute for strategies and solutions to help them address WSH issues. In addition, the Institute will also work with the WSH Council to equip business leaders and WSH professionals with the competencies to better manage safety and health at their workplaces.

VISION AND MISSION

Vision: A Leading Institute for WSH Knowledge and Innovations

Mission: Enhancing WSH through Knowledge, Innovations and Solutions

ROLES AND FUNCTIONS

Research & Solutions

- Scan international best practices for existing and emerging WSH issues
- Develop new solutions or adapt existing solutions and translate them into practices to address WSH issues
- Provide timely and reliable WSH information to facilitate and inform MOM/WSHC in policy and strategy development
- Conduct evaluation services to enhance existing WSH initiatives
- Translate research into policy/strategy guidance for WSHC/MOM and into practical solutions for industry
- Provide research support for WSH accident investigation

Consultancy, Advisory and Information Services

- Provide research-based consultancy
- Provide specialised WSH advice
- Serve as WSH information resource for industry

Leadership and Professional Development

- Develop and deliver leadership development programmes to strengthen WSH awareness, competency and commitment among business leaders
- Develop and deliver advanced/ specialised courses for WSH professionals, specialists and trainers

GOVERNANCE

The WSH Institute is governed by a Steering Committee chaired by MOM, with members from the industry, the labour movement and institutions of higher learning. This ensures that its work is relevant to industry, benefits workers and can tap on the expertise distributed across organisations with capabilities in research, WSH leadership and professional development. It also taps on the advice of MOM's International Advisory Panel (IAP), which represents several countries with similar but more mature set-ups. These include Finland, Germany, Korea, the United Kingdom and the United States.

UPCOMING INITIATIVES

a) Implementation of National WSH Research Agenda

The National WSH Research Agenda 2011-2016, finalised after extensive consultation with industry stakeholders and WSH experts, serves to provide researchers a guided and focused approach to develop solutions that address local WSH needs.

The next critical phase is the execution. Through the implementation of the research agenda over the next 5 years, the WSH Institute will provide MOM and WSHC with greater insights on WSH challenges in the industry to enable them to tailor their approach to tackle these challenges. One of WSH Institute's first research projects involves linking WSH to business productivity and profits in the local context. The findings will enable MOM and WSHC to foster greater management interest and leadership in WSH. In addition, WSH Institute will also develop solutions that will directly influence how businesses manage WSH. Key to this would be the Institute's focus on research in designing for safety and health and an immediate area of work under this effort would be the redesign of construction work processes to minimise hazards of falling from heights.

For more details on the National WSH research Agenda and its research priorities, please refer to Annex A.

b) Roll-out of Leadership and WSH Professional Development Programmes

As part of WSH Institute's efforts in ensuring WSH competencies among our business leaders and WSH professionals, customised programmes will be developed to influence and empower them to better manage WSH. First amidst these is the Train-The-Trainers (T³) programme, a continuous education programme targeted at WSH training providers, trainers and curriculum developers, the primary nodes in our WSH training landscape to impart WSH skills and knowledge. The WSH Institute and Ngee Ann Polytechnic has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to jointly develop this programme which will incorporate aspects of safety in adult learning theories and approaches for adult learning, together with specialised and customised technical WSH knowledge. The first T³ seminar, which focused on work at height training, was held recently on 20 July 2011.

For more details on the Train-the-Trainer programme, please refer to Annex B.

c) Development of research capabilities through international collaborations

To develop Singapore's WSH research capabilities, WSH Institute has forged strong institutional partnerships with renowned WSH international centres including the Institute for Occupational Safety and Health of German Social Accident Insurance, Korea Occupational

Safety and Health Agency, Finnish Institute of Occupational Health and Health and Safety Laboratory of *UK*. WSH Institute will leverage on these partnerships to embark on joint research activities as well as facilitate multi-party research collaborations involving local Institutes of Higher Learning (IHLs). WSH Institute will also share and exchange WSH information resources with overseas partners and broaden our network of WSH researchers and educators.

ANNEX A

National WSH Research Agenda

(More info is available at WSH Institute website - <http://www.wshi.gov.sg>)

Objectives and Goals

The objectives of the research agenda are to:

- provide appropriate research focus on issues with immediate and/or significant impact to Singapore's WSH outlook
- enhance local and international collaborations between research institutions and researchers on WSH-related areas
- foster an awareness and need for WSH research

Through this research agenda, the WSH Institute will strive to achieve the following goals:

- provide solutions that address local WSH needs
- raise WSH standards and capabilities in Singapore
- provide a systematic approach to deal with emerging WSH issues
- reduce WSH costs and increase productivity

Development of National WSH Research Agenda 2011-2016

More than 1,300 industry stakeholders spanning across various industries and job positions were consulted in the development of the research agenda. The agenda was further refined through a series of focus group discussions with selected industry stakeholders and WSH experts, followed by a month long public consultation. This ensures that the research agenda would fully encapsulate the WSH research priorities of Singapore for the next 5 years.

WSH Research Priorities

The identified research priorities have been grouped under 2 distinct research themes – (i) *Business and organisational aspects of WSH* and (ii) *WSH risks and solutions*.

Research on business and organisational aspects of WSH

- Enhancing WSH Leadership and Culture
- Linking WSH to Business
- Measuring WSH Performance

Research on WSH risks and solutions

- Addressing Imminent WSH Concerns
- Designing for Safety and Health
- Managing Workplace Health Hazards

This encompasses a combination of top down and bottom up approaches to tackle WSH issues faced by the industry. Research conducted will be practice-oriented, with a focus on generating practical solutions to address the industry's WSH problems and to elevate its WSH standards. Where relevant, the research will be contextualised for the local or Asian workforce.

This WSH Research Agenda document will be thoroughly reviewed in 2016, towards the end of its 5 year duration.

ANNEX B

Train-the-Trainers (T³) Programme

(More info is available at WSH Institute website - <http://www.wshi.gov.sg>)

The T³ programme, jointly developed by the WSH Institute and Ngee Ann Polytechnic, comprises 3 key components:

- a) *Broad-based modules that focus on soft skills*
The modules revisit principles of adult learning theories and approaches for adult learning applicable to WSH courses, with the focus on WSH training methodologies, WSH training aides and development of evaluation tools. This will ensure effective delivery of WSH knowledge to various workforces.
- b) *Specialised technical knowledge-based modules for trainers teaching workforces from different industries*
The modules will provide WSH trainers and curriculum developers with the latest updates on local regulations and new industrial practices. Case studies based on the actual incidences will be used to demonstrate and reinforce the training theories.
- c) *Trainer competency analysis*
This analysis enables every trainer and curriculum developer to develop their own customised training plan based on an assessment of their strengths and areas for improvement

The T³ programme aims to incorporate aspects of safety in the adult learning theories and approaches for adult learning, together with specialised and customised technical WSH knowledge. This will enhance both trainers' as well as curriculum developers' skills in effective delivery and communication of up-to-date WSH knowledge to the workforce.

Prerequisites

Entry requirements to workshops are as follows:-

- a) Attained at least 4 Competency Units (CUs) from the Advanced Certificate in Training and Assessment (ACTA) courses
- b) Minimum qualification of Advance Certificate in WSH (Level B courses) or passed Safety Coordinators Training Course (SCTC)
- c) Able to listen and speak English at a proficiency level equivalent to Employability Skills System (ESS) Level 8
- d) Able to read and write English at a proficiency level equivalent to Employability Skills System (ESS) Level 8

Requirements

The training hours clocked under this T³ programme will be incorporated as new continuous education criteria for WSH trainers and curriculum developers. More details on this new requirement will be announced in the upcoming months.

Available Modules from 2011 to 2014

Available modules under the T³ programme that are available from 2011 to 2014 are listed in Table 1 below.

Period	Programmes	Delivery method
Broad-based soft skills modules		
Oct 2011 – Sep 2012	Designing Interactive Powerpoint presentations and Facilitation Questioning and Facilitation Techniques	Workshop
		Workshop
		Workshop
Specialised technical knowledge based modules		
Oct 2011 – Mar 2012	Managing Work at Height (20 July 2011)	Workshop/Seminar
Apr 2012 - Sep 2012	Managing Confined Space Work	Workshop/Seminar
Oct 2012 - Sep 2013	Managing Chemical and Hazardous Substances at Work Workplace Hazards and Control	Workshop/Seminar
Oct 2013 - Sep 2014	Safety Principles for Lifting Operation Risk Management for WSH Professionals	Workshop/Seminar

Table 1: Train-the-Trainer programme structure.