



The Work-Life Works! (WoW!) Fund



MINISTRY OF
MANPOWER

A Resource Booklet for Employers

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The Importance of **Work-Life Harmony**

In today's competitive economy, a company's performance is increasingly intertwined with the well-being of its employees. Employees with less worry in their personal lives are more likely to be committed and engaged at the workplace, thus enhancing the company's business performance.

The implementation of a Work-Life Strategy is key to achieving such a win-win situation for both employers and employees. It also plays an important part in attracting and retaining talent.

Work-Life programmes can be divided into three broad categories

- **Flexible Work Arrangements**
These are programmes that allow employees to work flexibly as alternatives to standard 9-to-5 schedules, but yet be equally effective. They include part-time work, telecommuting and staggered hours.
- **Leave Arrangements**
These are leave benefits above statutory norms that help your employees manage personal exigencies, such as family care leave, marriage leave, paternity leave etc.
- **Employee Support Schemes**
These are schemes that help your employees better manage personal and work demands, so that they are more effective at work.

Why should businesses care about Work-Life Harmony?

Research has shown that savings and profits increase for businesses that implement Work-Life programmes. A study of 11 Singapore-based businesses by the Singapore National Employers Federation (SNEF) has shown that for **every dollar invested in Work-Life programmes, organisations reaped an average return of \$1.68**. Another research by Nanyang Technological University (NTU) found that Work-Life programmes lead to better employee engagement and customer service. By implementing Work-Life in your company, you can expect to reap the following business benefits:

- More motivated, satisfied and engaged workforce
- Improved staff recruitment and retention
- Increased productivity & competitiveness
- Improved customer experience
- Lower absenteeism rates and related costs

Work-Life Works! (WoW!) Fund

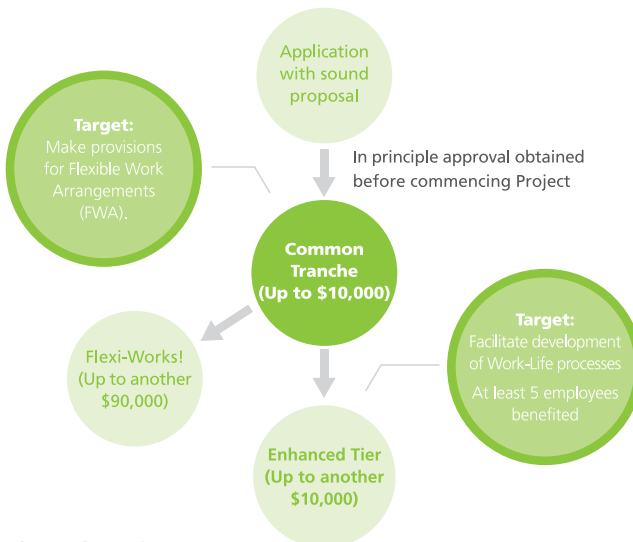
The Work-Life Works! (WoW!) Fund is a Government grant given to businesses to encourage employers to introduce Work-Life measures at the workplace. The WoW! Fund helps to defray costs incurred by companies while introducing Work-Life measures. An approved project can be co-funded up to a maximum of \$20,000.

Since its introduction in 2004, response to the WoW! Fund has been good - the first \$10 million was fully committed by April 2007. The Government has decided to introduce an enhanced tier of up to \$10,000, to provide more support for applicant companies that provide evidence they were able to achieve more in terms of better Work-Life processes, and had more employees benefiting from Work-Life Harmony as a result of the programmes

Key Features

Eligibility

- All organisations (including private-sector, non-profit and public-sector organisations) can apply for the grant
- Organisations operating as a group of closely related subsidiaries should submit only one application
- Organisations must be able to show proof of at least 5 paid employees



Disbursement

- Up to 80% of approved project costs, up to a maximum of \$20,000 per organisation
- Funding of up to \$10,000 under the Common Tranche
- Additional funding of up to \$10,000 under the Enhanced Tier

Categories of subsidised items

The WoW! Fund covers

a Training of HR managers and line supervisors to facilitate or implement Work-Life Strategies. Training includes compulsory training for project leaders, and optional courses for line managers and/or affected staff. Only training courses approved by the Ministry of Manpower (MOM) will be funded.

b Engaging a qualified Work-Life consultant. Organisations may use the WoW! Fund to engage an external third party to provide assistance and advice on Work-Life issues. **It is not compulsory to engage a consultant.** The MOM website has a list of qualified Work-Life consultants.

c Cost of physical or IT infrastructure that facilitates the development of Flexible Work Arrangements, e.g. remote access hardware/software, clocking infrastructure.

d Infrastructure and programmes that support selected Employee Support Schemes (ESS), e.g. Personal Work-Life Effectiveness (PWLE) Workplace Programmes; lactation or family rooms.

Categories of non-subsidised items

The WoW! Fund **does not** cover:

X Projects that fit better into other funding programmes e.g., items related to wellness (HPB)

X Recurrent costs beyond project timeframe e.g. maintenance of lactation rooms or IT equipment, salaries

X GST. The amount reimbursed is based on the principal sum.

X Projects that would be seen as frivolous or not prudent use of public funds e.g. family day, dinner-and-dance

Common Tranche for the WoW! Fund and Flexi-Works!

1. A common tranche for the WoW! Fund and Flexi-Works! programmes was introduced in 1 Mar 2009. This streamlining will facilitate the provision of flexible work arrangements (FWA) in applicant companies.
2. The common tranche will subsidise up to 80% of approved project costs, up to a maximum of \$10,000 per organisation.
3. Each applicant can only tap on the common tranche once, either under the WoW! Fund or Flexi-Works! programmes. Subsequently, they could proceed to tap on the WoW! Fund for additional funding of up to \$10,000 in the enhanced tier to develop Work-Life processes; and/or proceed with Flexi-Works! for additional funding up to \$90,000 to employ the economically inactive. Each applicant could potentially receive up to \$110,000 in total funding from the two programmes.
4. Applicants can claim reimbursement for up to \$10,000 under the common tranche when they have achieved the following:
 - a) **The Project Leader has completed MOM-Approved Work-Life training.** Training certificates issued by Work-Life consultant must be submitted.
 - b) **Provisions have been made for FWA in their HR policies.** HR policies or equivalents showing the availability of FWA must be provided. Applicants should document the eligibility criteria and the application processes for employees embarking on FWA. Applicants must provide **at least two of the five broad categories of FWA below:**

i **Part-Time Work** - Under this arrangement, employees normally work for **less than 35 hours in a week**. This includes those who work half-days or only some days per week, but excludes those who work 'on and off', employees on short work-weeks and temporary employees who work the normal hours.

ii **Staggered Hours** - This is a work arrangement in which employees can vary their start and finish times within prescribed limits.

Flexi-time - This is an arrangement in which employees can vary daily start and end times to suit their work and personal commitments so long as they work the total hours agreed for an accounting period--usually a week or month--in the office.

To qualify for funding, employee must be allowed **flexibility of at least two-hour band**, e.g. start between 7am to 9am, and end accordingly

iii **Job Sharing** - Under this arrangement, the workload of a full-time job is split between two or more people in the office. The jobsharers work at different times, although there may be a time overlap to maintain continuity. They may each work part of the day or week, or alternate weeks depending on the arrangement agreed on by employer and employee. The pay, holidays and other benefits are usually divided in proportion to the number of hours they each work.

iv **Flexi-place** - This is an arrangement in which employees perform work in places other than the office. The flexi-place worker may be required to spend certain 'core' times or days in the office to stay in touch with developments in the establishment.

Telecommuting - This refers to a variant of flexi-place made possible by information and communication technologies, e.g. personal computers, modems, and complex electronic facilities set up for the purpose of networking. For example, employees with frequent business trips would send their completed work back to their office by electronic means.

To qualify for funding, employee must be allowed the **flexibility to work away from office for at least two working days per month**.

v **Alternative Work Schedules** - This refers to arrangements where shifts are redesigned in innovative manners to help employees manage their personal commitments, e.g. compressed workweek, split shifts. To qualify for enhanced funding, the redesign of shift schedules must be significant and useful to employees involved.

c) **HR policies are communicated to staff** – emails or circulars on the communication should be produced

5. To claim for the common tranche of up to \$10,000, applicants are required to complete the Common Tranche Claim Form, with supporting documents

Enhanced Tier for the WoW! Fund

1. An enhanced tier for the WoW! Fund was introduced in 1 Mar 2009. The enhanced tier is intended to facilitate the development of Work-Life processes for applicant companies who wish and can do more for Work-Life development in their companies.
2. The enhanced tier will subsidise 80% of approved project costs, up to a maximum of \$10,000 per organisation.
3. Applicants may undertake the WoW! Fund Enhanced Tier and Flexi-Works! programmes concurrently.
4. Applicants can claim reimbursement for the \$10,000 enhanced tier once they have achieved the following:
 - a) **Developed a Work-Life strategy to address these issues** – A summary of other Work-Life or HR programmes that contribute to the success of Work-Life Harmony in the applicant company should be provided, even if the component is not specifically funded under the WoW! Fund programme. This is to facilitate a better understanding on the context of Work-Life Harmony in the applicant company;
 - b) **Completed an employees needs assessment** to assess whether the project had met employee needs
 - c) **Tracked how applicant companies are impacted by the Work-Life programmes** e.g. turnover, absenteeism, overheads, etc. Prescribed key indicators must be **tracked for at least 3 months**
 - d) **Provide proof of outcomes achieved for employees who are placed on Flexible Work Arrangements (FWAs)**, which were declared in the common tranche. Applicants who have declared higher employee targets or innovative programmes will receive priority in approval.

To be considered as an employee target, the employee who had benefited from the programmes must complete a declaration form.

5. To claim for the enhanced tier of up to \$10,000, applicants are required to complete an Enhanced Tier Claim Form and a report that details:

- The project's objectives and what it sets out to do
- Work-Life practices that improved
- Lessons learnt on Work-Life
- Summary showing **pre and post implementation employee needs assessment**
- Prescribed key indicators that applicant has tracked for **at least 3 months**
- **At least five declaration forms from employees** who benefited
- Itemised expenditure and receipts
- Pictures of items purchased



Terms and Conditions

1. The grant awarded is at the discretion of the Ministry of Manpower (MOM) and may be withdrawn at any time prior to its disbursement. The grant may also be reduced if there are downward variations in actual expenditure for which the grant was based.
2. Prior approval for the project has to be received before incurring any costs (except for project leader training) related to the project.
3. The grant will be disbursed in two phases:
 - a) Disbursement of up to \$10,000 for meeting the targets listed under the Common Tranche; and
 - b) Additional disbursement of up to \$10,000 upon completion of project and meeting the targets listed under the Enhanced Tier. Disbursement would occur after successful acceptance of the final report, proof of payment and successful audit.
4. Approval of project proposal does not equate to confirmed disbursements. Disbursements will only be made to applicants upon the successful achievement of outcomes listed in the Common Tranche and Enhanced Tier.
5. The application will be assessed in relation to other applications. Hence, it is possible for applications to be rejected even though they meet all the criteria. Only the best applications will be considered for funding under the WoW! Fund. The Ministry of Manpower reserves the right not to entertain unsuccessful applicants on details of their rejection.
6. Successful applicants are encouraged to vie for the next round of the Work-Life Excellence Award or its equivalent as specified by MOM and must also consent to share their knowledge and best practices in other platforms.
7. The applicant shall implement the project as indicated at the point of application, and cannot vary or alter any part of the proposal without first obtaining the written approval of MOM. The disbursement of the grant may also be reduced, withheld or withdrawn in the event of the failure of the applicant to carry out the approved project to the satisfaction of MOM.

8. The grant may be withdrawn or cancelled, in full or in part by MOM at any time in the event of any breach of terms and conditions, misrepresentation or the giving of false or misleading statements by or on behalf of the applicant, or the commencement of proceedings relating to liquidation, insolvency, bankruptcy, receivership, winding up or judicial management (where applicable) of the applicant and the applicant shall upon demand, forthwith refund and repay to MOM all monies which have been disbursed or paid to the applicant by way of the grant.

Applicants and consultants should be aware that if they obtained the grant by false or misleading statements, they may be prosecuted under the Penal Code.

9. The grant shall be subject to the terms and conditions set out in the letter of offer and the application form which may be modified or amended at the discretion of MOM.

Project Duration

10. Projects must be completed within one year (effective from the date of approval). Applicants must also submit an interim update at the six-month mark of the project, if the project is not completed by then.

Consultant

11. Only Work-Life consultants approved by MOM may be engaged for funded consultancy or training.

Claim for Disbursement of Grant

12. The official claim forms together with all claims for disbursements for all expenditure (including invoices and receipts) pertaining to the project must be received by MOM by the date specified in your Grant package. This is typically 1 year from date of approval. Otherwise, the offer of the grant shall automatically lapse.
13. As all payments will be made via GIRO, a duly completed application form for Interbank GIRO must be submitted.
14. The Ministry of Manpower reserves the right to audit successful applicants at random to ensure that the disbursed WoW! Fund is used appropriately. Applicants should retain receipts, proof of purchases, as well as other documentary proof related to the project for at least 3 years.

Application

Proposals with sound Work-Life intention and prudent requests will generally be considered for approval. Applications which are unable to establish the Work-Life intention, or which are unable to show that the organisation has the capacity to undertake the project, will be rejected.

Before the project starts, project leaders are advised to attend MOM-approved Work-Life training. Some Work-Life knowledge is necessary to develop a proposal grounded in sound Work-Life intention. Having a sound proposal will increase the chance of the application being approved. Successful applicants can list these costs incurred before the project as part of their WoW! Fund budget request. **Applicants bear the risk of incurring this cost if their application is subsequently rejected.**

How to apply

To apply for the Work-Life Works! (WoW!) Fund, employers should submit:

- WoW! Fund Application Form; and
- A Work-Life project proposal

Interim Update

At the six-month mark of the project, the applicant is required to submit an interim update to MOM that the project is progressing smoothly. The update must include the following information:

- Infrastructure and programmes that have already been purchased or implemented;
- Details of project staff who have attended Work-Life training;
- Brief details of implemented projects or pilots, e.g. names of staff already on programme; and
- Initial response from staff on the project

This update can be submitted via email. Applicants do not need to submit the interim update if the project is completed in less than 6 months.

Prior approval for the project has to be received before incurring any costs (except for project leader training) related to the project.

If you need help – Forms and Samples

You may wish to refer to the MOM website for the following samples to assist you in the project process:

During Application

- Application Form
- Sample of Work-Life Proposal

Claiming for first \$10,000 under Common Tranche

- Claim Form (Common Tranche)
- Sample of Common Tranche Report

Claiming for additional \$10,000 under Enhanced Tier

- Claim Form (Enhanced Tier)
- Employee Declaration Form
- Sample of Enhanced Tier Report



If you need help – Consultants

A list of Work-Life consultants whose services are eligible for subsidy under the WoW! Fund and Flexi-Works! programme is published on our website, <http://www.mom.gov.sg/work-life>

Closing Date

There is no closing date. Applications are accepted throughout the year.

For more
Information

Information sessions

The Ministry of Manpower (MOM) holds regular information sessions for employers and HR practitioners who would like to find out more about the WoW! Fund. These sessions are held on the first working Monday of every month.

Time: 4pm to 5pm

Venue: MOM, 18 Havelock Road, Level 2 (Meeting@MOM)

If you are interested in attending any of the sessions, please register by sending your name, designation, organisation and contact information, and indicate the date of the session you are attending, to **MOM_worklife@mom.gov.sg**

Website / Email

For more details, please access **www.mom.gov.sg/work-life**
or email your queries to us at **MOM_worklife@mom.gov.sg**

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