

## **Annex B1**

### **Executive Summary of Implementing WSH 2018 for Construction Sector**

#### **Introduction**

The national Workplace Safety and Health (WSH) strategy WSH 2018 highlights a differentiated sector-specific approach<sup>1</sup> as a key strategy to bring down the workplace fatality rate to below 1.8 per 100,000 workers by the year 2018. At the launch of the National WSH Campaign on 28 April 2009, Minister for Manpower, Mr Gan Kim Yong, announced the intention to develop two sectoral strategies for the construction and marine sectors. These two sectors account for more than half of total workplace fatalities<sup>2</sup>.

2 The construction sector has finalised its sectoral plan after incorporating inputs and feedback from the public consultation conducted from mid Feb to mid March 2010. Better WSH standards in the construction sector will benefit more than 360,000 workers currently employed in the sector. The plan provides a comprehensive guide for the collective efforts of the construction sector. It outlines initiatives to help the sector develop a progressive and pervasive WSH culture and to ensure sustainable continuous improvement in WSH.

#### **Key stakeholders in the construction sector**

3 The plan outlines the key stakeholder groups in the construction sector that play important roles on influencing overall WSH standards. They include:

- The Developers who are financiers of construction projects. Developers have a big influence over the behaviour of downstream stakeholders and can play a critical role in influencing their WSH performance.
- The Architects (including the designers) need to work closely with contractors and other stakeholders to identify potential construction and maintenance hazards, and mitigate risks at the design stage.

---

<sup>1</sup> The key rationale for this approach is the understanding that each sector has different WSH challenges and would require tailored solutions to address them.

<sup>2</sup> Based on the WSH National Statistics, the construction and marine sectors accounted for a total of 35 out of 63 fatalities in 2007. In 2008, the 2 sectors accounted for a total of 38 out of 67 fatalities.

- The Contractors (main and sub-contractors) have to allocate sufficient resources for WSH and should seek continuous improvements in WSH management systems to achieve high WSH standards.
- The WSH Professionals need to be cognisant of the risks present in the various construction processes, and help companies continuously improve their WSH performance. In-house WSH personnel should ensure proper implementation of risk management measures, drive various WSH initiatives, including monitoring key WSH performance indicators, as well as provide regular feedback on improvements.
- The Project Managers, Resident Engineers, Clerks of Works, Supervisors and Workers, as personnel on the ground, play an important role in workplace safety and health management, by being vigilant about WSH risks and managing hazards and WSH risks at an individual level.
- The Construction Sector Associations, Professionals Bodies and Unions represent the diverse interests of the construction sector and serve as important platforms to reach out to industry stakeholders. They can also help to coordinate and drive self-regulation within the sector.

### **Construction sectoral targets**

4 While the sector ultimately aims to achieve safe and healthy workplaces without any injuries, it has set intermediate goals. It aims to reduce the workplace fatality rate to less than 3.4 fatalities per 100,000 workers by 2013 and to less than 1.8 by 2018. For workplace injuries, it aims to reduce the workplace injury rate to less than 390 injuries per 100,000 workers by 2013 and less than 200 by 2018.

### **Four strategies**

5 To realise these goals, four strategies have been identified under the sectoral plan:

- (i) Building strong capabilities to better manage WSH
  - Individual level – At the individual level, the plan focuses on four groups of stakeholders, namely management, workers and supervisor, WSH professionals as well as designers and architects. For management, the thrust will be on building WSH competencies to

increase their WSH awareness and capabilities, with greater emphasis on risk management and soft skills such as communication and supervisory skills. For workers and supervisors, the plan aims to develop trade specific WSQ courses, conduct safety orientation courses at source countries of foreign workers to shorten learning curve of workers, and enhancing the training syllabus of high risk works – all these will enable workers to better manage WSH risks in their work. For WSH professionals, the WSQ framework for professionals will continue to be a key lever for raising their competencies. The number of WSH professionals will also be increased to support the construction sector. The plan also outlines training for designers and architect through incorporation of the Design for Safety concept into the syllabus of pre-employment professional courses in architecture and civil engineering, as well as specialized professional courses for existing designers and architects.

- Corporate level – At the corporate level, improving companies' capabilities for self investigation of past incident cases will be one of the key thrusts. This allows companies to draw lessons from past incidents. The other key thrust will be to improve the management of contractors and sub-contractors by developing tools to better track the WSH performance of contractors.
- Industry level – The two key thrusts at industry level are to enhance risk management capabilities and to cultivate a WSH culture. Risk management is one of the key tools for controlling risks in construction work and its enhancement will further improve the WSH performance of the sector. The other key area is cultivating a progressive and pervasive WSH culture through diagnostic studies and the development of strategic programmes tailored to improve the WSH culture in the construction sector.

(ii) Developing a performance based regime

- The four key areas which will be undertaken under this strategy are including designers and developers into the regulatory framework,

improved management of workplace health, self regulation and setting industry standards.

- Including designers and developers into the regulatory framework – The two key players who have most influence on the WSH behaviour of other downstream stakeholders have yet to be fully incorporated into the WSH framework. The plan aims to include both key players into the framework as well as develop a Design for Safety recognition scheme to assure home buyers of the good WSH performance during the building phase and provide incentives to developers and designers to improve the WSH performance of their projects.
- Improved management of workplace health – workplace health continues to be a key issue in the construction sector as many occupational diseases have long latency periods and establishing causal links is difficult. The plan aims to improve workplace health awareness through enhanced outreach as well as broadening the extent of pre-employment health checks and introduce periodic health checks to monitor the health of workers.
- Self regulation – To achieve self regulation within the sector, the plan sets out to work with the sector, as well as its trade associations and unions, to strengthen the sector's focus on WSH and improve the work coordination between the different parties.
- Setting industry standards - WSH standards form a key pillar in driving WSH performance in the sector by helping companies benchmark themselves and progressively improving their WSH practices. To set industry standards, the WSH Council, through the WSH (Construction and Landscape) Committee, will continue to play a proactive role in engaging the relevant stakeholders to develop and progressively review codes of practice and guidelines for the construction sector.

(iii) Promoting the benefits of WSH and integrating WSH into business

- The three key thrusts under this strategy are driving improvements through large organizations, assessment of safety and health management systems as well as creating a business case for WSH.

- Driving improvements through large organizations – Large organizations can play a key role in influencing downstream suppliers and sub-contractors to enhance their WSH management. In view of this, large companies will be encouraged to join as a bizSAFE partner or mentor to influence their contractors to improve on WSH standards. Large companies will also be encouraged to participate in the Pledge for Zero initiative to show their commitment to WSH – through committing to put in place concrete measures to reduce injuries to zero. All this will positively influence downstream contractors and their WSH behaviour.
- Assessment of safety and health management systems – It is important that the safety and health management systems at sites are robust to ensure good WSH performance. To assess the quality of WSH management systems, the Construction Safety Audit Scoring System (ConSASS) will be an important tool. The plan aims to continue to encourage the use of ConSASS and to leverage on developers to factor in ConSASS results in their selection of contractors.
- Business case – A business case for WSH will shape the behaviour of stakeholders towards proactively driving WSH. The plan outlines continued outreach to establish a business case for WSH in the construction sector as well as establishing platforms for regular sharing on WSH improvements for business profitability.

(iv) Creating and building partnerships

- The formation of partnerships through intra-industry and cross-industry taskforces allows the construction sector to derive good WSH practices from other sectors for application. Key thrusts include coordination of work and forming industry led taskforces.
- Coordination of work – To better coordinate work within the construction sector, platforms such as the Construction Industry Joint Committee to discuss WSH faced by the various stakeholders in the construction process will be leveraged on to facilitate greater synergy

in managing WSH risks. This allows more effective and cross-cutting measures to be implemented.

- Industry led taskforces – Taskforce partnerships allow better optimization of resources and better synergy. For a start, both the Crane taskforce as well as the Work at Height taskforce will be leveraged on to improve the WSH performance of the construction sector.

6 The sectoral plan also details an Action Plan to implement the identified strategies to achieve the sectoral targets. Together with the commitment of the WSH Council (Construction and Landscape) Committee, WSH Council and Ministry of Manpower, the full implementation of this plan will mark a major milestone in driving the construction sector towards a safer and healthier workplace for all.