



JOINT MEDIA RELEASE

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124,500 WORKERS SIGN UP FOR SPUR IN JUST SIX MONTHS

The Ministry of Manpower (MOM) and Singapore Workforce Development Agency (WDA) announced that in just six months since its launch, 124,500 workers have signed up for the Skills Programme for Upgrading and Resilience (SPUR). This includes 83,500 (67%) workers sent by 1,800 companies, many of which are using SPUR to manage their excess manpower. Another 40,600 (33%) individuals have signed up to upgrade their skills, with 36,200 at the Continuing Education and Training (CET) Centres and 4,400 in courses at our polytechnics and Institutes for Technical Education (ITE). More than 19,000 job seekers have also found jobs through SPUR.

2. Two-thirds of SPUR trainees are rank-and-file workers, while about one-third are Professionals, Managers, Executives and Technicians (PMETs). Many are taking up Workforce Skills Qualifications (WSQ) or Employability Skills System (ESS¹) courses. Close to 60% of the workers (or 67,000) have already commenced or completed their training. About \$210 million has been committed thus far.

SAVING JOBS WITH SPUR

¹ The ESS comprises 10 essential foundation skills portable across all industries and especially relevant to low-skilled workers. The skills include workplace literacy, workplace numeracy, infocomm skills, communications, workplace safety and health, etc.

3. Companies have responded positively to SPUR, particularly those from sectors more affected by the downturn.

4. Small- and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs) too are tapping on the programme. Of the 1,800 companies participating in SPUR, almost two-thirds are smaller companies with less than 200 employees.

FINDING JOBS WITH SPUR

5. During the six-month period from 1 December 2008 to 31 May 2009, more than 19,000 job seekers have found jobs through the effort of WDA, NTUC's Employment and Employability Institute (e2i), the Community Development Councils (CDCs) and CET Centres. This is a significant increase, compared to the 13,000 job seekers placed² for the whole of 2008.

6. About 60% of the job seekers placed into employment were aged 40 years and above. 75% of the job seekers placed were lower-skilled workers with secondary or less education. Some of the successful job seekers had undergone SPUR training before their re-employment. In a survey conducted by WDA, six in ten of these jobseekers indicated that the training was useful in helping them secure the jobs. Nine in ten agreed that the training helped improve their skills for better job performance.

7. Examples of successful jobseekers and companies tapping on SPUR are provided at [Annex A](#).

BUILDING CAPABILITIES WITH SPUR

8. SPUR courses are selected to ensure relevance to industries after the downturn. Active effort is also being made to build capabilities for the future through SPUR. For example, relevant SPUR courses are being promoted and used as part of a larger effort to improve service levels in Singapore. This includes the introduction of "on-site-bite-size" service and retail courses for tenants at shopping malls. New skills standards and courses are developed and

² Figure refers to those placed by the CDCs

included for emerging sectors. Conversion programmes and traineeships are also carefully selected to ensure that we build manpower capabilities in growth sectors and occupations.

RECENT REFINEMENTS

9. As more PMETs have been affected in this downturn compared to past recessions, the absentee payroll cap has been recently raised from \$6.00/\$6.80 per hour to \$10.00 per hour to encourage more employers to send their PMET employees for SPUR training. Targeted programmes have also been introduced under SPUR to assist PMETs. These include skills conversion programmes which have been doubled to more than 40.

10. In May 2009, the Professional Skills Programme Traineeship (PSPT) was launched under SPUR. The scheme has met with significant interest from employers and potential trainees. There are some 1,200 traineeships now available from more than 100 companies across sectors such as electronics, finance and infocomm. The number of PSP Traineeship positions has since been increased from 2,500 to 3,000 over two years.

11. The SPUR-JOBS scheme, also launched in May, further encourages the recruitment and retention of trainees of SPUR and other CET programmes. To date, 50 companies have sent in their applications to recruit 1,200 local workers. Both programmes are expected to benefit many more companies and jobseekers, including PMETs, in the months ahead.

LOOKING AHEAD

12. Launched as part of the national response to the economic downturn, SPUR helps companies to save jobs, workers to find jobs and industries to build capabilities for the future. The investments made in recent years in building up the CET System and the strong partnership among the tripartite partners has been instrumental in the quick and timely implementation of SPUR.

13. By tapping on these assets and making refinements in response to feedback, SPUR has shown significant impact in its first six months. The tripartite partners will continue to focus on making SPUR more effective in helping companies and workers tackle the downturn while enhancing the long-term employability and competitiveness of our workforce.

About Ministry of Manpower

The Ministry of Manpower (MOM) aspires to develop a globally competitive workforce and a great workplace, for a cohesive society and a secure economic future for all Singaporeans. For more information, please visit www.mom.gov.sg.

About Singapore Workforce Development Agency

The Singapore Workforce Development Agency (WDA) enhances the competitiveness of our workforce by encouraging workers to learn for life and advance with skills. In today's economy, most jobs require not just knowledge, but also skills. WDA collaborates with employers, industry associations, the Union and training organisations, to develop and strengthen the Continuing Education and Training system that is skills-based, open and accessible, as a mainstream pathway for all workers - young and older, from rank and file to professionals and executives - to upgrade and advance in their careers and lives.

For more information, please visit <http://www.wda.gov.sg>

National Archives of Singapore

Annex A

EXAMPLES OF COMPANIES TAPPING ON SPUR

(i) **ComfortDelgro Engineering Pte Ltd** - ComfortDelgro Engineering Pte Ltd specialises in Automotive Engineering and has sent 75 workers for the WSQ Certified Operations Specialist (COS) training programme since early 2009. ComfortDelgro plans to send more staff for this programme in the later half of this year. Through SPUR, the company was able to benefit from the enhanced absentee payroll funding which helps to moderate their manpower costs and at the same time, continues to offer more training opportunities for its staff.

(ii) **Kinergy Ltd** - Kinergy Ltd is a high-tech equipment contract manufacturer which employs about 150 workers. To cope with drastic sales order reduction, it had implemented cost-cutting measures, including the redeployment of staff, and implementation of shorter work weeks and periodic plant shut-downs. In managing the excess manpower, it is sending 120 workers for SPUR courses such as the WSQ Generic Manufacturing Skill training and ESS programmes as well as other in house programmes. "By sending our workers for training under SPUR, we were able to improve the operational efficiency across the production processes and increase customer satisfaction with better delivery capabilities. The company also benefited from the enhanced absentee payroll funding which helped to moderate our manpower costs. SPUR is indeed a win-win option for the company, our workers and our customers," said Mr David Loh, Vice President.

(iii) **Ritz-Carlton** - The Ritz-Carlton Millenia Singapore is another organisation that has taken full advantage of SPUR. In April 2009, Ritz Carlton was accredited as an in-house WSQ approved training organisation (ATO). About 100 of its staff will receive training through in-house SPUR funded WSQ courses over the next one year. In addition, the hotel has tapped on CET Centres such as At-Sunrice GlobalChef Academy to send more than 40 staff for culinary training.

EXAMPLES OF SUCCESSFUL JOBSEEKERS

(i) **Mdm Tan Ming Hong** - Mdm Tan Ming Hong, aged 40, sought employment assistance at the career centre at South West CDC after being retrenched from a manufacturing firm. In May 2009, she managed to secure a job as a cashier with Metro Pte Ltd and was enrolled in the 'Certificate in Retail Operations' training programme. Having switched from a different sector, Mdm Tan had anxiety about dealing with customers. However, the training has raised her confidence. She is coping well, and now eagerly looking forward to her next training session.

(ii) **Mr Aaron Ho** - Mr Aaron Ho, aged 54, was a Sales Competency and Training Manager with a company in the Financial Sector but resigned in 2006 to take care of his ailing father. When he wanted to return to the workforce, he faced difficulties in attaining full-time employment and worked in various part-time jobs before enrolling himself for the 6-week Certificate in Real Estate Management and Maintenance at a CET Centre, the Real Estate and Construction Centre (RECC), in 2009. Through re-skilling and assistance from RECC, he has managed to switch into the real estate management and maintenance industry after securing employment as a Senior Technical Executive with CPG Facilities Management Pte Ltd.

(iii) **Mr Mohamad Farid Bin Jaafar** - Mr Farid, aged 34, was looking for a different career pathway after working as a technical support officer at a local Polytechnic. In February 2009, he successfully enrolled for the Professional Conversion Programme for Workplace Safety and Health. He found the course relevant for individuals who wish to learn the ropes of the workplace safety and health industry. Through the programme, he was able to secure a job as an Assistant Health, Safety & Environment (HSE) Officer with Keppel Shipyard. He is doing well in his job and hopes to upgrade himself further in the future.