

## ***Key Industry Players to Pump S\$22 million into Training 400 Singaporean Maritime Officers***

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In a continual effort to develop local manpower to support the Maritime industry, the Singapore Workforce Development Agency (WDA), NTUC's Employment & Employability Institute (e2i) and the Singapore Maritime Officers' Union (SMOU) have committed a further \$22 million over a five-year period to support Singaporeans/permanent residents who wish to pursue a maritime career via the Tripartite Nautical Training Award (TNTA) programme that was started in 2009. The TNTA programme has been awarded to 130 Singaporeans/permanent residents thus far and is conducted by Singapore Maritime Officers' Union's (SMOU) training arm, Wavelink Maritime Institute (WMI).

The funding support from WDA and e2i will cover the training fees and a monthly allowance of up to S\$1,400 per cadet during the 31-month training course.

"WDA is pleased to provide continued support for the TNTA programme. Singapore's maritime industry is a key pillar supporting our economic development. The TNTA programme will enable Singapore to build up a pipeline of local talent to meet the industry's manpower needs," said Mr Ng Cher Pong, Chief Executive of WDA.

As a small country that is highly dependent on international trade, the maritime industry is a core pillar for Singapore's economic development. It contributes 7% of Singapore's GDP and provides 170,000 jobs. But, out of some 20,000 officers in more than 4,200 Singapore-flagged ships, only 1,605 are Singaporeans. The TNTA programme was first initiated by Singapore Maritime Officers' Union (SMOU) to address this lack of Singaporeans in the seafaring industry.

"We are extremely thrilled to have garnered the strong support from WDA and e2i for this programme. This really goes to show the Government's commitment to boost the number of Singaporean seafarers so as to give them an alternate career where they can have a better job, better pay and better lives. These well paying jobs should go to the locals in order that our maritime industry can remain vibrant for years to come. All these are only possible with the ardent support of WDA, e2i, Singapore Shipping Association (SSA) and the various shipping companies," said SMOU General Secretary, Ms Mary Liew.

'We have partnered SMOU and the Maritime Industry over 6 batches of recruitment, selection and training to produce cadets that displayed resilience and caliber as Seafaring Officers. The outcomes demonstrate that the TNTA is a great pathway for aspiring cadets to develop their competencies and hone their skills to match their passion. With support for the next 5 years, we believe more Singaporeans will now have the opportunity to secure career in the Maritime Industry,' said e2i's Chief Executive Officer, Mr Gilbert Tan.

Currently in its 6<sup>th</sup> intake, the TNTA programme was started in 2009 and is a 2½-3 years programme that is funded by WDA, e2i and SMOU, and supported by SSA and various shipping companies to train local seafaring officers. When a TNTA cadet graduates as

an entry-level Seafaring Officer, he can earn wages from approximately S\$2,800 to possibly S\$25,000 monthly as a captain of a specialised ship as he progresses in rank. The TNTA programme therefore enables Singaporeans with the interest to embark on a promising career with good wages.

“My previous jobs as waiter, marketing assistant, barista, etc are all easily replaceable but the TNTA programme equipped me with a specialised skill set that is not easily replaceable. I can’t tell you how grateful I am and how privileged I feel to be selected for this course,” said 30 year-old Mr Mohammad Idris, TNTA cadet in the current 6<sup>th</sup> intake. Thus far, more than S\$6 million have been invested in this initiative.

### **Tripartite Nautical Training Award (TNTA)**

TNTA is essentially a place-and-train program that aims to train young Singaporeans for the Singapore CoC Class 3 qualifications issued by Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore (MPA), thereby allowing the trainees to pursue a nautical career at sea as nautical deck officers once they have attained their CoC Class 3. The distinction between both programs offered under the TNTA and by Singapore Maritime Academy (SMA), would be that SMA provides pre-employment training to ‘O’ level Singaporeans and TNTA is a continuing education that is opened to those seeking professional conversions into the maritime industry and a stronger emphasis on practical hands-on training through longer sea-time.

Some 13 shipping employers have participated in the program by offering shipboard placements, training allowances and long-term jobs for the successful Singaporeans enrolled under the TNTA programme.

### **Singapore Maritime Officers’ Union (SMOU)**

SMOU was established in 1951. The union has grown from a membership base of about 400 in the 1970s to more than 26,000 members. SMOU plays a pivotal role in promoting good industrial relations between seafarers (members) and their employers, the ship-owners and ship-management companies, and the governments through its strong tripartite relationships with the local, regional and international maritime community. It seeks to improve the wages and working conditions of members in the maritime industry through collective bargaining agreements with shipping companies which employ them.

Since 1993, SMOU has helped distressed seafarers claim more than US\$15 million of unpaid wages. SMOU is an affiliate of NTUC and the International Transport Workers’ Federation (ITF). Visit [www.smou.org.sg](http://www.smou.org.sg)

### **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 [www.wda.gov.sg](http://www.wda.gov.sg).

### **e2i (Employment and Employability Institute)**

As THE leading organisation to create solutions for better employment and employability, e2i exists to create better jobs and better lives for workers. Since 2008, we have helped 200,000 workers through providing better jobs, developing better skills through professional development, and improving productivity for companies. An initiative of the National Trades Union Congress (NTUC), supported by the Workforce Development Agency (WDA), the Singapore Labour Foundation (SLF), and the Singapore National Employers' Federation (SNEF), e2i serves all segments of workers, from rank-and-file to professionals, managers and executives. Visit [www.e2i.com.sg](http://www.e2i.com.sg) for more information.

### **Wavelink Maritime Institute (WMI)**

WMI was formed in 2007 and is dedicated to providing quality maritime education, training and consultancy services for both local and international maritime community. WMI's commitment to training is based on its capability and resources to provide quality education and training for the maritime industry, as well as for the regional maritime shipping companies. WMI provides training services to better enhance and further strengthen the competencies of seafaring officers to meet the demands and challenges of the international maritime environment. WMI has been providing the training for 6 intakes of TNTA cadets.