

Launch of S\$1.2million Tripartite Marine Engineering Training Initiative

1. Minister for Manpower, Lim Swee Say launched the S\$1.2 million Tripartite Engineering Training Award (TETA) Programme (劳资政航海机械培训奖计划) to train more Singaporeans to be marine engineers on board commercial ships on 3 May at the Devan Nair Institute for Employment and Employability during the Investiture Ceremony for TETA.
2. The Manpower Minister was at the 10th Anniversary celebration of the Singapore Maritime Training Fund (SMTF) where he personally put on the epaulets for the TETA cadets.
3. The TETA is a joint initiative by Singapore Maritime Officers' Union (SMOU), Singapore Workforce Development Agency (WDA), National Trades Union Congress' (NTUC) e2i (Employment and Employability Institute) and is supported by the Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore (MPA), Singapore Shipping Association (SSA) and shipping companies.
4. This pilot programme is launched to address the acute shortage of marine engineers faced by the maritime industry and after gathering feedback from the shipping companies. An entry-level 5th or 4th marine engineer can earn an average of S\$4,000 per month while a Chief Engineer can earn close to S\$10,000 per month. It is a good career with an excellent progressive wage model.
5. The pilot programme is conducted by SMOU's training arm, Wavelink Maritime Institute (WMI). Cadets are offered training berths by a shipping company even before they embark on their training, receiving between S\$1,200 - S\$1,400 training allowances during the approximate 31-month programme.
6. This CET (Continuous Education and Training) route is good for those who have completed their National Service with engineering background from ITE Higher Nitec who are looking for a career switch to have better job progression and better pay.
7. This programme is one of the latest manpower initiatives in recent years that shows the government's support to help the Singapore maritime sector that is currently facing many challenges.

8. SMOU General Secretary, Ms Mary Liew said, “Over the years, we have noticed the manpower issues, in particular the dwindling number of Singaporean seafaring officers and marine engineers willing to embark on this career. Therefore, we initiated various programmes with the help of our tripartite partners that adopt the CET route, to give Singaporeans a second opportunity to choose seafaring as a career. It has not been an easy path because our selection process is stringent but seeing lives being changed for the better has been highly encouraging for all of us involved.”
9. Mr Gilbert Tan, Chief Executive Officer of e2i, said: “As the bridge connecting workers, employers and training providers, e2i is always close to the ground and responding to market changes. The Maritime employers are constantly in-search of skilled Marine Engineers, hence, with changes made to the curriculum coupled with the introduction of simulation training for applied learning; more Singaporeans can enjoy a shorter training period and still gain the necessary certification to join the industry. e2i will continue to work with industry partners to develop and grow the Singapore Maritime workforce, making it an attractive sector to join.”
10. Mr Ang Chai Soon, Director of the Manufacturing Division at WDA, said: “WDA has collaborated with the Singapore Maritime Officers’ Union and Employment and Employability Institute to roll out the Tripartite Engineering Training Award. This initiative aims to provide a training and career progression pathway for Singaporeans who are keen to embark on a fulfilling career as seafaring marine engineers. The initiative will also help local marine engineers to deepen their skills and strive towards skills mastery, in line with the national SkillsFuture movement.”
11. In today’s context, the process of acquiring seafaring skills has shortened. The cadets in the programmes are given hours of hands-on experience in the state-of-the-art maritime simulation centre that is integrated with Engine Room Simulator, 240 degree Full Mission Bridge Simulator, Electronic Chart Display and Information System (ECDIS) and Liquid Cargo Handling Simulator (LCHS) as part of the continual and collective efforts to develop the Singapore Maritime Core to support the local maritime industry.
12. Traditionally, seafaring skills are very much time-based learning, that is, the longer they work on-board a ship, the better skills they have. But now with simulation training, the marine engineering cadets’ skills are accelerated with real-time feedback in a risk-free environment. Thus, they become better marine engineers, have better jobs and better lives. It is a win-win situation for them as well as the shipping companies.

13. “I was a part-time bus driver for my family-run private bus company for 1.5 years after being retrenched as a Personnel and Logistics Coordinator. I feel privileged to be selected for this Programme as this is an integration of my passion as an engineer and a seafarer. Moreover, we are given training berths even before we embark on the training,” said TETA Cadet, 31 year-old Manogaran Harishankaran.
14. The official launch of the TETA initiative also coincided with the investiture of the 11th Cohort of the Tripartite Nautical Training Award (TNTA) Programme who will be embarking on their 31-month training. TNTA trains Singaporeans to become seafaring officers. Cadets from TNTA Cohort 10 were also presented with their pre-sea certificates after having completed their 6 months of classroom training where they will now start their 18 months of sea-time training.

PROGRESSIVE WAGE OF MARINE ENGINEERING OFFICERS

TETA Cadet	5th / 4th Engineer	3rd Engineer	2nd Engineer	Chief Engineer
	(CoC Class 5)	(CoC Class 5)	(CoC Class 2)	(CoC Class 1)
US\$ 668	US\$ 3,000	US\$ 3,500	US\$ 6,000	US\$ 7,000

This is based on average wage. Exchange rate:1.35

15. Today, Singapore is home to more than 5,000 maritime establishments employing over 170,000 people. Against such a backdrop, the demand for maritime professionals will only continue to grow exponentially and with the Maritime Labour Convention (MLC 2006) taking effect to help improve seafarers’ rights, the maritime manpower landscape looks poised to grow at a rapid rate.
16. Singapore is among the world’s top 10 largest ship registries but out of more than 20,000 officers on board more than 4,700 Singapore-flagged ships, only 1,605 are Singaporeans.
17. SMOU has been active in promoting the seafaring career to Singaporeans as it is a well-paying job with excellent career progression. Besides initiating CET programmes for Singaporeans to embark on a seafaring career, the Union was also the first to invest in a state-of-the-art simulation centre that costs approximately S\$4 million.
18. With hours of training in the engine room simulator, the quality and efficiency of those undergoing training to work on board commercial ships as seafaring marine engineers can be further improved

as the various realistic scenarios help bridge the gap between theory and practical, thus reinforcing their learning. The trainer can also assess the users' response to various scenarios and provide immediate feedback to the users, thereby accelerating the learning and training effectiveness.

Employment Enhancement Programme (EEP)

19. Intended to give Singaporeans a head start in their seafaring careers through a structured OJT and mentorship at sea. The programme will assist local junior officers with either a foreign-going Certificate of Competency Class 3 (*CoC Class 3*) for deck officers or Class 5 (*CoC Class 5*) for marine engineers to deepen his/her skills through a sea attachment (in accordance with the STCW code). This will allow the junior officers to be better prepared to attain their CoC Class 2 and CoC Class 1 qualifications, with a view to take up senior shipboard positions.

20. Each junior officer who embarks on the programme will benefit from a structured OJT and mentorship at sea, as well as an incentive of up to S\$5,000 for the successful completion of the programme. Employers will be eligible for a grant of up to S\$15,000 per trainee.

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Tripartite Nautical Training Award (TNTA) Programme

In 2010, the Tripartite Nautical Training Award (TNTA) was a ground-breaking programme that is jointly initiated by SMOU, Singapore Workforce Development Agency (WDA), and NTUC's e2i to train Singaporeans for the Certificate of Competency (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. This programme is supported by MPA, Singapore Shipping Association (SSA) and various shipping companies. Thus far, more than S\$28.6 million have been invested in this initiative.

The programme has close to more than 250 Singaporeans being awarded and involves some 13 shipping companies which offer the cadets shipboard placements, training allowances and long-term jobs.

It has seen Singaporeans from all walks of life being given a second chance to pursue a seafaring career that they would otherwise be unable to achieve since 90% of the course fees are sponsored by WDA, e2i and SMOU. The cadets pay only 10% of the course fees. During the course of training, cadets are given a monthly allowance of up to S\$1,400 each during the 3-year training course.

The entire TNTA programme takes 3 years and SMOU is proud to have more than 10 cadets who graduated with Certificate of Competency (CoC3) officers as of November 2013 and more are expected to graduate. When a TNTA cadet graduates as an entry-level seafaring officer, he can earn wages from US\$2,500 and increase progressively to US\$7,000 monthly as a Captain. If he becomes Captain of a specialised ship, he can command between a US\$7,000 to US\$20,000. It is a promising career with good progressive wages.

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 29,000 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 government 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\$19 million of unpaid wages. SMOU is an affiliate of NTUC and the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF). Visit www.smou.org.sg for more information.

Singapore Maritime Training Fund (SMTF)

The SMTF was launched in 2006 by the Singapore Maritime Officers' Union in collaboration with shipping employers. It aims to help members serving on-board commercial vessels covered by the SMOU Collective Agreement, to upgrade their competencies whilst steering new entrants into the maritime industry.

Providing maritime-related skills upgrading for SMOU members, the SMTF presents an excellent opportunity for SMOU and the shipping industry to develop joint programmes to promote seafaring as a rewarding career. It provides collective and cost-effective training, education and skills upgrading for seafaring officers thereby enhancing their employability and also the competitive edge of their shipping employers.



MEDIA RELEASE

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With a continual emphasis on nurturing and developing our members, some **S\$6.8 million** have been spent on training more than **8,000** cadets, officers, and members, through a range of programmes organised locally and internationally.

SMTF plays a pivotal role in helping the shipping industry to better equip the seafarers of today to face the challenges and opportunities of tomorrow.

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 400,000 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 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 especially companies with Collective Agreement (CA) with SMOU. 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 aspires to be the centre of excellence for applied learning.