



WDA Unveils Specialised Training Pathway for the Food Manufacturing Industry

Singapore, 25 September 2012 – The Singapore Workforce Development Agency (WDA) today unveiled a new specialised training pathway to equip workers in the food manufacturing industry with critical skills for raising safety standards and boosting workplace productivity.

The Singapore Workforce Skills Qualifications (WSQ) Food Manufacturing specialisation is an initiative which offers a customised range of skills upgrading opportunities based on the WSQ framework for Generic Manufacturing. It aims to upgrade workers' competencies in three important areas – food safety and hygiene, food packaging and general workplace productivity.

Developed in collaboration with industry players such as food manufacturers, trade associations and food safety experts, the specialised training pathway offers two qualification levels:

- WSQ Certificate in Food Manufacturing, for rank-and-file employees such as production-line workers, food packers and food handlers
- WSQ Advanced Certificate in Food Manufacturing, for supervisory-level staff such as food technologists, quality assurance personnel and packaging specialists

WDA has set aside \$1 million for the WSQ Food Manufacturing specialisation in course fee funding and absentee payroll support for companies. The initiative is expected to benefit approximately 1,000 workers in the food manufacturing industry over the next two years.

The WSQ Food Manufacturing specialisation was rolled out in December 2011, with Singapore Food Industries (SFI), a wholly-owned subsidiary of SATS, as the first WDA-accredited Approved Training Organisation (ATO) for in-house training. As of today, the company has trained 104 employees in various modules under the Certificate level. The company plans to send an additional 300 workers, comprising rank-and-file employees and

supervisory-level staff, for training under the WSQ Food Manufacturing specialisation over the next two years.

“SFI has been an in-house ATO under the WSQ Generic Manufacturing Skills framework since 2010. To date, we have trained close to 470 staff under the framework, including those who have been trained under the WSQ Food Manufacturing specialisation. The specialised training pathway provides us another avenue to ensure our people continually develop and upgrade their skills which will contribute towards improved workplace productivity,” said Mr Philip Lim, Chief Operating Officer of SFI.

Other industry players that have indicated their support for the specialised training pathway include the Singapore Food Manufacturers’ Association, Chinatown Food Corp, Yue Yan Delicacies, Pure Eddiction and Yee Lee Oils & Foodstuffs.

The local food manufacturing industry comprises about 850 companies, of which an estimated 96 per cent are small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). The industry employs over 25,000 workers, of which approximately 70 per cent possess primary or secondary school qualifications. Anecdotal evidence also suggests that a large proportion of the rank-and-file employees in the industry are mature workers aged 40 and above. It is therefore imperative to raise the capabilities of food manufacturers that typically operate with modest resources, and boost the job-readiness of the industry’s mature low-wage workers.

Mr Wong Hong Kuan, Chief Executive of WDA, said: “WDA is pleased to roll out the WSQ Food Manufacturing specialisation to raise the overall capabilities of the industry and its workforce. From a macro perspective, the initiative will enhance Singapore’s reputation as a high-quality producer of manufactured food products. This will help to attract foreign investments which will accelerate the industry’s growth, and improve the capabilities of food manufacturers which will facilitate their business expansion. From a micro perspective, the initiative will enable the industry’s mature low-wage workers to obtain full WSQ qualifications at the Certificate or Advanced Certificate level. This will help to ensure their job-readiness, upgrade their skill sets and extend their working lives.”

The new WSQ Food Manufacturing specialisation was announced today by Mr Hawazi Daipi, Senior Parliamentary Secretary (SPS) for Manpower and Education, during a graduation ceremony for 20 SFI employees. The graduands, who work at SFI-operated cookhouses in SAF army camps, have completed training modules under the WSQ Food Manufacturing

specialisation such as WSQ Apply 5S Techniques and WSQ Apply Hygiene & Safety Practices in Food Manufacturing.

In addition to the WSQ Food Manufacturing specialisation, WDA intends to roll out a new Place and Train programme to build a pipeline of local workers for the food manufacturing industry. Under this initiative, WDA will provide training allowances for companies who send their new hires for WSQ Food Manufacturing courses. Companies will be required to send their new hires for at least two WSQ Food Manufacturing courses, and give these workers a salary increment upon completion of training. WDA plans to roll out the new Place and Train programme out in October, and the initiative is expected to benefit 300 local workers over the next two years

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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 www.wda.gov.sg.

About SFI

SFI, a wholly-owned subsidiary of SATS, is Singapore's only integrated catering and food logistics service provider.

Established since 1973, SFI's businesses are focused in three key areas, namely institutional catering for armed forces, large-scale events, hospitals and remote sites; food distribution, manufacturing and processing; and abattoir operations and hog auctioning. Growing its regional footprint, SFI has extended its operations to China and Australia.

About SATS

With over 60 years of operating experience and a growing regional presence, SATS is Singapore's leading provider of gateway services and food solutions.

Our comprehensive scope of *gateway services* encompasses airfreight handling, passenger services, ramp handling, baggage handling, security services, aircraft interior and exterior cleaning as well as cruise handling and terminal management. Our *food solutions* business comprises airline catering, institutional catering, and food distribution and logistics.

Today, SATS handles about 80% of the scheduled flights and serves close to 60 scheduled airlines at Singapore Changi Airport. We are present in 36 airports in 10 countries and through our non-aviation food business, we have also established our presence in Australia and China.

SATS has been listed on the Singapore Exchange since May 2000. For more information, please visit www.sats.com.sg.