



Media Release

Construction industry stakeholders appealing to Multi-Ministry Taskforce to bring in foreign workers in a safe and controlled manner

Singapore, 17 May 2021

With the Phase 2 heightened alert issued on 14 May, the Built Environment industry (comprising key stakeholders, namely the Association of Consulting Engineers Singapore (ACES), Institution of Engineers Singapore (IES), Real Estate Developers' Association of Singapore (REDAS), Singapore Contractor Association Ltd (SCAL), Singapore Green Building Council (SGBC), Singapore Institute of Architects (SIA)), Singapore Institute of Building Limited (SIBL), Singapore Institute of Surveyors & Valuers (SISV) and Society of Project Managers (SPM) understands and supports the Government's efforts to curb a resurgence of COVID-19 cases amidst the emergence of new virus variants in Singapore.

However, we have serious concerns about the acute manpower situation for the construction industry. The complexity and nature of construction work necessitates the deployment of workers from various trades, and the current reduced workforce is already working at maximum capacity, increasing the risks of workplace incidents. We are suffering from reduced productivity due to safe management measures at the worksites and many of our migrant workers plan to return home when their work permits expire.

The manpower challenges are seriously exacerbated if borders are shut for a prolonged period. Home buyers waiting for their HDB and private property, which have already been delayed, may have to wait even longer. Public infrastructure projects such as hospitals, MRT and schools and industrial developments which are vital to the nation's economy and people's lives would be badly disrupted. Maintenance projects/works would also be stalled.

The Built Environment sector consists of over 18,000 firms and hires tens of thousands of Singaporeans. These jobs are at stake, if there are further impacts to the sector. The reality is that the industry needs sufficient inflow of migrant workers, both returning and new ones to take over the place of those who have left Singapore for various reasons, in order to sustain the industry and ensure that we can deliver on our projects.

While we need to maintain tight border control measures to protect Singaporeans, we urge the Government to adopt a balanced approach and work with industry to allow the recruitment and inflow of foreign manpower. We are prepared to work with the relevant agencies and stakeholders to establish a viable end-to-end system to bring in migrant workers

in a safe and controlled manner so as to enable work to continue, while keeping Singaporeans safe.

The industry also hopes that the Government will consider additional relief measures to help all the stakeholders in the built environment sector to cope with the increased challenges as a result of the tightened border measures.

Even as we address immediate manpower issues, the industry is committed to achieve our medium to long-term transformation goals through accelerating the adoption of labour-efficient construction technologies such as prefabrication initiatives, embracing technology to achieve higher productivity in the sector, and redesigning business processes and upskilling the workforce to create good jobs for Singaporeans.

Issued by Construction Industry Joint Committee (CIJC)

17 May 2021

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About Construction Industry Joint Committee (CIJC)

CIJC comprises of the following key stakeholders in the construction industry / built environment sector :

- Association of Consulting Engineers Singapore (ACES)
- Institution of Engineers Singapore (IES)
- Real Estate Developers' Association of Singapore (REDAS)
- Singapore Contractors Association Ltd (SCAL)
- Singapore Green Building Council (SGBC)
- Singapore Institute of Architects (SIA)
- Singapore Institute of Building Limited (SIBL)
- Singapore Institute of Surveyors and Valuers (SISV)
- Society of Project Managers Singapore (SPM)

Served as a platform to unite all key players in the construction industry / built environment sector, CIJC co-ordinates their joint efforts to play a key role in the built environment sector and our economy and provides quality feedback to the government on policies affecting the industry and problems facing the sector.