

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **BUILT ENVIRONMENT SECTOR CALLS FOR MORE LOCAL TALENT**

*- Better work environments and the adoption of good human resource practices are among key initiatives to transform the built environment sector*

**22 May 2014** – A five-year rebranding roadmap has been rolled out to attract and retain more local talent in the built environment sector. This comes amid a strong pipeline of construction projects, where a sustained pool of locals is needed to drive Singapore’s urban development.

The roadmap was formulated by the Ministry of National Development (MND) and the Building and Construction Authority (BCA), in consultation with industry associations and institutes of higher learning (IHLs) in Singapore.

To transform the built environment sector, the roadmap looks at improving the work environment and enhancing human resource practices in firms. In addition, targeted outreach to females, teachers and students are aimed at generating greater awareness of built environment careers and attraction to the sector.

These new initiatives are on top of BCA’s existing efforts to attract local talent, which include student competitions and career fairs, scholarship, sponsorship and apprenticeship programmes for students and job seekers.

At the BCA Awards ceremony today, the BCA and the Construction Industry Joint Committee (CIJC) comprising key industry representatives had signed a Memorandum of Understanding to show the industry’s commitment towards transforming the built environment sector into a workplace of choice.

Under a voluntary pledge signing initiative, built environment firms including developers, architecture and engineering consultancies and builders who sign the pledge, will commit to adopting good human resource practices. These include the adoption of proper performance management and training programmes as well as enhanced staff benefits, performance-based remuneration and a formal awards programme to recognise individual or group efforts at work (please refer to Annex A for the full HR pledge checklist).

The BCA will also develop a good practice guide to assist built environment firms in improving their human resource practices. The guide will feature best practices adopted by industry stakeholders as well as available assistance schemes for firms to tap on for the development of their human resource competencies.

“There is a need to fundamentally change the way the built environment sector and its firms work in order to offer better work environment, good human resource practices and meaningful careers. This will help raise the profile of the sector to attract and retain more locals”, said Mr Neo Choon Keong, Group Director of Manpower and Strategic Policy, BCA.

Creating a conducive work environment, especially in the area of pro-family arrangements, also plays a key role in attracting and retaining females in the sector.

“We want to attract more females to work in the built environment sector because they represent a relatively untapped source of local manpower. It is important for the built environment sector to gain a fair share of talents amid today’s tight labour market”, Mr Neo added.

Currently, females make up about 25% of the local workforce in the built environment sector.

The BCA will also implement a Teachers’ Attachment Programme (TAP) to help teachers keep abreast with the latest developments in the built environment sector, to provide better career guidance to students.

Teachers will be exposed through attachments to built environment firms, site visits and networking opportunities with industry stakeholders. The TAP will also be customised to the teachers' areas of discipline.

The pilot phase of the TAP will be conducted for Institutes of Technical Education (ITE) lecturers teaching built environment courses starting this year. It will be rolled out gradually, for teachers at polytechnics and Junior Colleges.

Lastly, to enhance students' learning and help students gain a better understanding of built environment careers, structured internships will be introduced for polytechnic and university students in built environment courses.

The BCA will be developing guidelines for firms to enhance the learning value of internships for students, in consultation with industry stakeholders and tertiary institutions. Such guidelines will help firms focus on delivering the desired learning outcomes, as well as establish a recommended internship allowance and incorporate value-adding training as part of the students' internship.

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#### **About BCA**

The Building and Construction Authority (BCA) of Singapore champions the development of an excellent built environment for Singapore. BCA's mission is to shape a safe, high quality, sustainable and friendly built environment, as these are four key elements where BCA has a significant influence. In doing so, it aims to differentiate Singapore's built environment from those of other cities and contribute to a better quality of life for everyone in Singapore. Hence, its vision is to have "a future-ready built environment for Singapore". Together with its education arm, the BCA Academy of the Built Environment, BCA works closely with its industry partners to develop skills and expertise that help shape a future-ready built environment for Singapore. For more information, visit [www.bca.gov.sg](http://www.bca.gov.sg).

## ANNEX A

### About the HR Pledge

The BCA and the Construction Industry Joint Committee (CIJC) seek to transform the built environment sector into a workplace of choice led by professional and progressive firms with good HR practices. The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signing between BCA with the CIJC marks a significant milestone as it is the first stride towards achieving the shared vision.

Through the pledge signing, the senior management of built environment firms commits to the adoption of good human resource practices based on the following key HR principles:-

- Performance management
- Recruitment & on-boarding
- Staff engagement
- Remuneration, rewards & benefits
- Wellness & support

Pledge signers will have to complete a list of actionable items (in the below table) based on the identified HR principles, which was developed in consultation with the CIJC. The checklist can be expanded over time.

A. Performance management & training	
1	Create & communicate clear progression path for employees
2	Monitor and develop performance of employees
3	Conduct formal appraisals for employees
4	Annual review of employees' training & development needs
5	Annual budget for employees' development and training needs
6	Organise in-house and on-the-job training
B. Recruitment & on-boarding	
7	Organise induction / orientation for new employees
8	Implement buddy system for assimilation of new employees
C. Communications	
9	Issue employee handbook to clearly communicate corporate mission & vision, HR policies and work procedures to all employees
10	Provide 2-way communication channels to address employees' concerns, feedback/ ideas e.g. dialogue sessions
D. Rewards and compensation	
11	Implement salary structure/ Job grading system

12	Implement performance-based remuneration
13	Implement formal awards programme to recognize individual/ group efforts
14	Provide enhanced employee benefits (non-mandatory) e.g. leave, health and work-related allowances

### E. Wellness & support schemes

15	Introduce flexible work arrangement schemes e.g. Flexi-work, Flexi-place, Compressed Work Week or Part-Time work options
16	Introduce employee support schemes e.g. Childcare/ Eldercare subsidies or Financial Support (bursary, education loans, scholarship, financial assistance)
17	Introduce health & wellness programs to enhance employee well-being

Pledge signers will be listed on an online pledge registry on BCA’s Building Careers Portal (<http://www.buildingcareers.sg/>) and could also feature the pledge logo in their marketing collaterals and recruitment initiatives, differentiating them as progressive firms on the HR front.



*HR Pledge logo*

In time to come, pledge signers can gain convenient access to HR-related resources, including good practice guides, to help advance their HR practices.

After the MOU signing, BCA and the CIJC will be working closely to champion and sustain the adoption of good HR practices in the member firms of the CIJC. Firms include developers, architecture consultancies, engineering consultancies, builders and other built environment firms. Firms outside the CIJC can also participate in signing the HR pledge.

With close collaboration with the CIJC, BCA targets to have at least 500 built environment firms pledging their commitment by 2020.