

## **MARITIME AND PORT AUTHORITY OF SINGAPORE STEAMS AHEAD IN PRO-ENTERPRISE RANKING (PER) SURVEY**

The Pro-Enterprise Panel and SBF have come together for the first time this year to organise a dedicated event to recognise public agencies which have been exceptionally pro-enterprise. Named the Pro-Enterprise Panel – Singapore Business Federation Awards 2012 (PEP-SBF Awards), the awards also recognise businesses and individuals who have contributed suggestions that resulted in positive regulation change. The event serves as a platform to encourage greater private-public partnership to foster smarter business regulations in Singapore.

Four major awards are given out at this event, including the PEP-SBF Pro-Enterprise Award; the PEP Awards: Best Suggestion; the PEP Awards: Best Suggestion (Supporting Agency); and the PEP Awards: Public Sector Pro-Enterprise Initiative.

The PEP-SBF Pro-Enterprise Award is given to the top 5 agencies and the agency which made the most improvement in the Pro-Enterprise Ranking survey. Conducted annually since 2004, the survey assesses government agencies with regulatory functions on how business-friendly they are. This year, the average Pro-Enterprise Index (PEI) of the 26 agencies surveyed has dropped from 74.8 in 2011 to 71.7 in 2012. While agencies have done well in certain areas such as the clarity of rules and regulations and the accessibility of e-government platforms, there are areas for improvement such as in inter-agency cooperation and customer communications.

Addressing the results of the PER survey, Minister of State for Trade and Industry, Mr Teo Ser Luck, said: "The Government is committed to creating a conducive pro-business environment. We recognise that the business climate is now more challenging, and expectations from businesses are higher for government agencies to be responsive and helpful. We will review and address the feedback from the survey so that we can continue to improve to serve businesses' needs. The Pro-Enterprise Panel, as the bridge between the business community and the public agencies, will have an important role to play in this."

Commenting on the PEP-SBF Awards, Chief Executive Officer of the Singapore Business Federation, Mr Ho Meng Kit said: "As the Federation works towards creating a pro-business environment for the Singapore business community, we must acknowledge that this cannot be tackled single-handedly and requires the concerted effort of private and public sectors. This event not only acknowledges the commitment public agencies have towards businesses but also assures Singapore companies that their voices are heard and their interests are considered in business regulations."

Notwithstanding the drop in score, some of the agencies have done well in the survey. For example, Maritime and Port Authority (MPA) achieved its best ever individual PER score of 93.9 in the history of its participation in the PER survey.

Responding to its excellent showing this year, MPA's Chief Executive, Lam Yi Young said: "MPA's close partnership with the industry and other partners is key in our efforts to develop and promote Singapore as a global hub port and international maritime centre. We are honoured to be ranked among the top pro-enterprise agencies over the years. We will continue to strengthen our ties and deepen collaboration with the industry and partners to ensure we offer a business-friendly environment to all maritime businesses."

Notable improvements in individual scores were also made by Singapore Civil Defence Force, Singapore Customs and the Accounting and Corporate Regulatory Authority (ACRA). Singapore Customs moved up from 11<sup>th</sup> position to 2<sup>nd</sup> position while ACRA moved from 22<sup>nd</sup> position to 8<sup>th</sup> position.

Commenting on Singapore Custom's improvement, its Director-General, Fong Yong Kian said, "Though we are a regulatory agency, we also adopt a pro-enterprise mindset to partner the companies. We have designated relationship and account managers who work closely with our key customers from the trading community. This allows us to understand their business needs better, and for them to see us as their business partners".

Reflecting on ACRA's improvement, its Chief Executive Juthika Ramanathan said, "The results are a great encouragement for us. We will continue to work closely with our partners and stakeholders to ensure that our corporate regulatory frameworks and programmes are not only effective from a regulatory standpoint, but also transparent, relevant and responsive to the needs of our customers, the business community."

In addition, four individuals will receive the "PEP Awards - Best Suggestion". Launched in 2008, this award recognises private sector individuals and businesses who have given excellent suggestions on how to cut red tape and foster a business-friendly environment in Singapore. Their suggestions not only benefitted their own businesses but also their relevant industries as a whole. The agencies that have implemented these winning PEP suggestions will also win the PEP Awards - Best Suggestion (Supporting Agency). This is recognition of their support for positive rules and regulatory change.

### Top 12 agencies in 2012, ranked by their Pro-Enterprise Score

Position	Agency
1	Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore (MPA)
2	Singapore Customs (SC)
3	Central Provident Fund Board (CPF Board)
4	Singapore Land Authority (SLA)
5	Monetary Authority of Singapore (MAS)
6	Housing Development Board (HDB)
7	Media Development Authority (MDA)
8	Accounting and Corporate Regulatory Authority (ACRA)
9	Infocomm Development Authority of Singapore (IDA)
10	Civil Aviation Authority of Singapore (CAAS)
11	National Environment Agency (NEA)
12	Energy Market Authority (EMA)

The top five agencies and the most improved agency, ACRA, will receive their awards from Minister of State for Trade and Industry Mr Teo Ser Luck at the PEP-SBF Awards, to be held at Orchard Hotel on 28<sup>th</sup> November 2012.

**MINISTRY OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY AND SINGAPORE BUSINESS  
FEDERATION  
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## Annex A

### List of Participating Agencies in 2012 Pro-Enterprise Ranking Survey (in alphabetical order)

No.	Agency
1	Accounting and Corporate Regulatory Authority (ACRA)
2	Agri-Food & Veterinary Authority of Singapore (AVA)
3	Building and Construction Authority (BCA)
4	Central Provident Fund Board (CPF Board)
5	Civil Aviation Authority of Singapore (CAAS)
6	Energy Market Authority (EMA)
7	Health Sciences Authority (HSA)
8	Housing and Development Board (HDB)
9	Immigration & Checkpoints Authority (ICA)
10	Infocomm Development Authority of Singapore (IDA)
11	Inland Revenue Authority of Singapore (IRAS)
12	Insolvency & Public Trustee's Office (IPTO)
13	International Enterprise Singapore (IES)
14	JTC Corporation (JTC)
15	Land Transport Authority (LTA)
16	Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore (MPA)
17	Media Development Authority (MDA)
18	Ministry of Manpower (MOM)
19	Monetary Authority of Singapore (MAS)
20	National Environment Agency (NEA)
21	Public Utilities Board (PUB)
22	Singapore Civil Defence Force (SCDF)
23	Singapore Customs (SC)
24	Singapore Land Authority (SLA)
25	Singapore Tourism Board (STB)
26	Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA)

## **Annex B**

### **Background of Awards to be given out at the PEP-SBF Awards**

#### **PEP-SBF Pro-Enterprise Award**

The PEP-SBF Pro-Enterprise Award is based on the results of the Pro-Enterprise Ranking survey conducted since 2004 to assess the pro-enterprise orientation of government agencies. The survey was conducted by Frost and Sullivan (Singapore) Pte Ltd.

This year's survey, conducted from April to June 2012, assessed 26 government agencies (Annex A) by surveying the perceptions and expectations of businesses that had interacted with these agencies. For agencies with multiple roles (e.g. regulatory and industry promotion), the survey covered only their regulatory activities.

More than 4,000 telephone interviews were conducted with businesses which had interacted at least once with the agency in the past 12 months. The Pro-Enterprise Index was then computed based on the aggregated scores of an agency's performance in each of the five components (Compliance Cost; Review of Rules and Regulations; Transparency; Customer Responsiveness; and Pro-enterprise Orientation), which were all given equal weightage.

There are five awards to be given out to the top five agencies and one award to be given out to the agency which shows the greatest improvement.

#### **PEP Awards – Best Suggestion**

The PEP Awards - Best Suggestion (formerly known as Best Pro-Enterprise Suggestions) was launched in 2008 to recognise private sector individuals and businesses who have given excellent suggestions to the PEP to cut red tape and create an even more business-friendly environment in Singapore. As of September 2012, PEP has received more than 1,800 suggestions from businesses and about 1,000 suggestions have been accepted after careful review.

This year, there are four awards to be given out to the top four PEP suggestions supported by the government agencies.

Details of the winning suggestions are:

- 1) **Allow companies to apply for monthly reimbursement for maternity leave**

Mr Elango Subramanian of Raffles Corporate Consultants Pte Ltd wrote in to the PEP to suggest allowing employers to claim reimbursement for their employees' last 8 weeks of maternity leave on a monthly basis. Before, employers can only make 2 government paid maternity leave (GPML) claims per employee within the first year from the child's birth. The first claim can be made any time after the first 8 weeks of maternity leave. The second claim can only be made after the mother has consumed her full entitlement. For mothers who choose to take the maternity leave flexibly, employers may have to wait up to the end of the 12 month period to make the second claim for the remaining GPML portion.

The Ministry of Social & Family Development (MSF) accepted the suggestion and from 2 August 2012, employers and self-employed women have been able to make monthly reimbursement claims for GPML.

## 2) **Review of contract administration requirements for private education institutions**

The Singapore International Chamber of Commerce (SICC) provided consolidated feedback from its Education Committee members on the requirements under the EduTrust Certification Scheme administered by the Council for Private Education (CPE).

The feedback highlighted some issues faced by its members operating as private education institutions (PEIs), particularly in the administration and storage of PEI-Student contracts. SICC made the following suggestions:

- PEIs be allowed to keep softcopy records of the contracts, so that PEIs do not need to devote massive storage spaces to store hardcopy contracts;
- Review the resource intensive requirement for PEIs to explain the contractual terms (in native language, if necessary) to the parents of each student who is a minor, before the PEI-Student contract can be signed;
- For Foreign System Schools, remove the need for a new contract to be signed each year (when students progress to the next grade).

CPE welcomed feedback and suggestions that could reduce the administrative workload of the PEIs without compromising the interest of the students. After reviewing SICC's suggestions from a risk management perspective, CPE allowed for alternative contract administration arrangements that are within the confines of contractual laws

## 3) **Register used imported mini bus as Excursion Bus**



Mr Lim Tze Yong of Bestlink Auto Pte Ltd suggested allowing used mini-buses that are less than 3 years old to be imported into Singapore and be registered as excursion buses.

LTA embarked on a review, in consultation with other relevant agencies, and lifted the requirement for excursion buses to be registered new from

28 November 2011. With the removal of this requirement, tour operators and transport companies will have additional avenues to buy used buses for registration or conversion to excursion buses. About 200 bus owners have benefited from this.

#### **4) Streamline data submissions for agencies' survey forms**

Mr Dronn Ong of Eltek Power Pte Ltd suggested that the survey forms could be streamlined to reduce the time and resources to provide data to the Department of Statistics (DOS) and Economic Development Board (EDB) about its international trade in services and manufacturing activities respectively.

DOS and EDB supported the suggestion. DOS has shortened the International Trade in Service Survey (TIS) form from 13 to 7 pages for smaller manufacturing firms. EDB has shortened the Annual Census of Manufacturing Activities survey form for smaller manufacturing firms (CMA SI form) from 12 to 10 pages while the Monthly Survey of Manufacturing Activities (MMA form) also cut down the number of cost items collected.

#### **PEP Awards - Best Suggestion (Supporting Agency)**

The PEP Awards - Best Suggestion (Supporting Agency) is a new award introduced this year to recognise government agencies which supported the winning suggestions under the "PEP Awards – Best Suggestion" category. This is recognition of their support for positive rules and regulatory change.

#### **PEP Awards – Public Sector Pro-Enterprise Initiative**

The PEP Awards – Public Sector Pro-Enterprise Initiative (formerly known as Best Pro-Enterprise Idea) was launched in 2008 to recognise the work of officers and agencies that have contributed useful ideas or initiatives which can serve businesses better.

As of October 2012, PEP received more than 160 nominations from various agencies. All these nominations have been successfully implemented and have benefited both businesses and the agencies, through costs and time



savings. They also help to foster a better relationship between the agencies and their business customers.

Three awards (Gold, Silver and Bronze) to be presented to agencies which are proactive in initiating pro-enterprise changes in the public sector. The 2012 winners are Singapore Customs (SC), Accounting and Corporate Regulatory Authority (ACRA) and Agri-food & Veterinary Authority of Singapore (AVA).

Details of the winning ideas and initiatives are:

**1) Facilitation of the movement of containers between mainland Singapore and offshore Jurong Island via barges instead of via road - Singapore Customs**

In support of the expected growth in the chemical industry in JI, it is vital that the logistics and transportation infrastructure is robust enough to handle the demands of the growth. Given Singapore's scarce road space, there is a need to explore other viable alternatives to our current transportation modus operandi. Together with the Port of Singapore Authority (PSA), a multi-government agency team therefore proposed, and successfully implemented, a new sea-based transportation mode for the movement of hazardous containers to and fro mainland Singapore and JI. PSA, Immigration and Checkpoints Authority (ICA) and Singapore Customs (SC) further collaborated in the maintenance of our border security and control.

With the new transportation mode, a dedicated terminal, JI Terminal, was constructed and began its first operations on 25 June 2012. Apart from managing road traffic situation and mitigating public safety and health risks, JI Terminal also aims to reduce business cost and promote operational efficiency as different shipments of containers can be consolidated before they are transported to and fro PSA terminal and JI, thereby reducing the need for multiple trips between the locations. PSA, ICA and SC further collaborated in the maintenance of our border security and control.

**2) Directors Proficiency Programme (DPP) to educate Directors-ACRA**

ACRA sets to achieve optimum compliance with regulatory requirements through a balanced approach, rather than focusing on punitive measures against companies and their directors in default. One of the initiatives undertaken is the development of training for directors and in the initial phase, the Directors Proficiency Programme (DPP) was developed targeting at directors of defaulting companies. The inaugural training was rolled out on 25 September 2012 and will be conducted every quarter in 2013.

The training is angled from a Regulator's perspective based on ACRA's experience, and designed to customize to the needs of company directors, e.g. showcasing the various cases of companies in default and how to avoid similar pitfalls. ACRA collaborated with Institute of Certified Public Accountants of Singapore (ICPAS), Singapore Association of the Institute of Chartered Secretaries and Administrators (SAICSA) and Singapore Institute of Directors (SID), which supported in the programme development and provided trainers on a pro-bono basis as part of Corporate Social Responsibility. ACRA will be developing the other phases of the directors training in the near future, which include a separate programme for new and aspiring directors and an e-training platform for better outreach.

**3) Removal of licensing requirements for use of artificial sweetening agents - AVA**

A review was conducted to amend the Food Regulations to remove the licensing requirements for artificial sweetening agents. The term "artificial sweetening agent" was replaced with "sweetening agents" to better reflect the nature of sweetening agents permitted under the Food Regulations. A revised Regulation 18, together with a new Thirteenth Schedule was introduced, to provide clear and transparent information to the industry on the types of sweetening agents permitted, the food categories permitted for their use, and the maximum permitted levels of use.

The initiative is trade-facilitating, as traders no longer need to apply for a licence and pay a fee for the import/sale/manufacture/use of sweetening agents. It encourages traders to take the responsibility to ensure that their products are formulated correctly to adhere to the maximum levels permitted under the Food Regulations. The initiative has enabled AVA to refocus its efforts to provide greater industry assistance in more technical and complex issues.