



## JOINT MEDIA RELEASE

Singapore, 24 March 2025 | **For Immediate Reporting**

### **Increased Allowance and Shorter Training Duration to Make Seafaring a More Attractive and Meaningful Career for Mid-Careerists**

The Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore (MPA), in partnership with the Singapore Maritime Officers' Union (SMOU), NTUC's Employment and Employability Institute (e2i), SkillsFuture Singapore (SSG), and supported by the Singapore Shipping Association, has launched the enhanced Tripartite Maritime Training Award (TMTA).

#### **Shorter Training Duration with Stronger Training Outcomes**

2. First established in 2009 by SMOU, the TMTA supports mid-career individuals to acquire the skills and certifications needed to serve as 3<sup>rd</sup> Officers<sup>1</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Engineers<sup>2</sup>. Under the enhanced TMTA, the training duration will be reduced from 31 months to 22 months. High training standards will be maintained through a more streamlined curriculum that strengthens core maritime competencies, incorporates greater use of advanced ship simulators for both navigational and engineering training, and optimises onboard training to accelerate skills development.

3. To provide better financial support during the training phase, monthly training allowances will be increased from S\$1,200 to S\$2,200, with co-funding by MPA, e2i, and SMOU.

4. Applications for the TMTA will open in April 2025. Interested applicants can find out more details about the programme at <https://www.smou.org.sg/resources/tmta>.

#### **Stronger Mentorship and Industry Support**

5. As part of the enhanced TMTA, a structured mentorship programme will be introduced to support cadets in their transition to a seafaring career. Experienced seafarers will provide personalised guidance to help cadets navigate both classroom learning and real-world

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<sup>1</sup> A 3<sup>rd</sup> officer is a junior sea-going deck officer responsible for navigational watchkeeping, upkeep of life-saving safety equipment and assisting with cargo operations.

<https://www.myskillsfuture.gov.sg/content/student/en/preu/world-of-work/occupation/occupation-detail.2nd-3rd-4th%20Mate-80901.html>

<sup>2</sup> A 5<sup>th</sup> engineer is a junior sea-going engineer officer responsible for engine room operations, machinery maintenance, and routine inspections.

<https://www.myskillsfuture.gov.sg/content/student/en/preu/world-of-work/occupation/occupation-detail.3rd-4th-5th-Engineer-80903.html>

challenges at sea. MPA and the Young SMOU committee will facilitate these mentorship arrangements, ensuring that cadets receive practical advice, career insights, and support throughout their training and into their early career.

### **Commitment to Workforce Development**

6. A Memorandum of Understanding to enhance the TMTA will be signed on 25 March 2025 with SMOU, e2i, and SSG. The signing will be witnessed by Mr Stephen Cotton, International Transport Workers' Federation General Secretary, Ms Caroline Yang, Singapore Shipping Association President, and Mr Thomas Tay, Wavelink Co-operative Ltd Chairman. As part of the collaboration, government agencies, SMOU, and industry will commit S\$8.5 million over the next three years to support the TMTA's enhanced training programme.

7. Mr Teo Eng Dih, Chief Executive of MPA, said, "A career in seafaring is meaningful and rewarding. Seafarers enable seaborne trade which is integral to the growth of economies. We are committed to working with our partners to grow a strong local seafaring workforce. The enhanced Tripartite Maritime Training Award provides mid-career individuals with the skills and financial support to make a successful transition into a rewarding maritime career at sea, which will thereafter also open many pathways to careers ashore."

8. Ms Mary Liew, General Secretary of SMOU, said, "Seafaring is a demanding yet rewarding profession that plays a vital role in global trade. The enhanced TMTA is a strong example of tripartism at work—where unions, industry, and government come together to equip mid-career individuals with the skills they need for a meaningful and sustainable career at sea. It also provides a second chance for individuals looking to pivot into a new and fulfilling profession. Through close collaboration with our tripartite partners, we continue to strengthen the maritime workforce and ensure that seafaring remains an attractive career choice. SMOU remains committed to nurturing and upskilling seafarers, ensuring they are well-prepared for the challenges and opportunities that come with a life at sea, while building a strong Singapore Core in the maritime industry."

9. Ms Caryn Lim, Chief Executive Officer of e2i, added, "Seafaring is a vital profession that keeps Singapore's maritime trade moving and our economy connected to the world. The enhanced TMTA programme opens doors for mid-career individuals to embark on this meaningful path, equipping them with the skills and support to succeed. At NTUC's e2i, we believe that every worker should have access to good jobs with strong career prospects, and we are proud to support this effort through tripartite collaboration to build a resilient and skilled local maritime workforce."

10. Mr Tan Kok Yam, Chief Executive of SSG, said, "With a shorter and more streamlined training curriculum, aspiring seafarers can now look forward to an accelerated and well-supported career pathway in the maritime industry. SSG is committed in providing our fullest support to this enhanced TMTA programme, and will continue to work closely with MPA and our other partners to build talent pipeline and a resilient Singapore maritime workforce."

<End of Release>

## **About the Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore (MPA)**

MPA was established on 2 February 1996 with the mission to develop Singapore as a premier global hub port and international maritime centre, and to advance and safeguard Singapore's strategic maritime interests. MPA is the driving force behind Singapore's maritime and port development, taking on the roles of maritime and port regulator and planner, international maritime centre champion, national maritime representative, and a champion of digitalisation and decarbonisation efforts at regional and international fora such as at the International Maritime Organization and the International Organization for Marine Aids to Navigation. MPA partners industry, research community and other agencies to enhance safety, security, and environmental protection, facilitate maritime and port operations and growth, expand multi-domain capabilities, and support the cluster of maritime ancillary services and manpower development. MPA is responsible for the overall development and growth of the maritime multi-domain and the Port of Singapore.

For more information, please visit [www.mpa.gov.sg/](http://www.mpa.gov.sg/)

## **About Singapore Maritime Officers' Union**

SMOU was established in 1951. The union has grown from a membership base of about 400 in the 1970s to more than 30,000 members. SMOU is pivotal in promoting good industrial relations between seafarers (members) and their employers, the ship owners and ship-management companies, and the governments 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\$20 million in unpaid wages. SMOU is an affiliate of NTUC and the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF). Visit [www.smou.org.sg](http://www.smou.org.sg)

## **About e2i (Employment and Employability Institute)**

e2i is the empowering network for workers and employers seeking employment and employability solutions. e2i serves as a bridge between workers and employers, connecting with workers to offer job security through job-matching, career guidance and skills upgrading services, and partnering employers to address their manpower needs through recruitment, training and job redesign solutions. e2i is a tripartite initiative of the National Trades Union Congress set up to support nation-wide manpower and skills upgrading initiatives. For more information, please visit [www.e2i.com.sg](http://www.e2i.com.sg).

## **About SkillsFuture Singapore**

SkillsFuture Singapore (SSG) drives and coordinates the implementation of the national SkillsFuture movement, promotes a culture of lifelong learning and strengthens the ecosystem of training and adult education in Singapore. Through a holistic suite of national SkillsFuture initiatives, SSG enables Singaporeans to take charge of their learning journey in their pursuit of skills mastery. SSG also works with key stakeholders to ensure that students and adults have access to high quality and industry-relevant training that meet the demands of different

sectors of the economy for an innovative and productive workforce. For more information, visit [www.skillsfuture.gov.sg](http://www.skillsfuture.gov.sg).

### **About Singapore Maritime Week 2025**

SMW is an annual gathering of the international maritime community to advance key industry issues and exchange ideas to bring the sector forward. Driven by MPA, in collaboration with industry stakeholders and research and educational institutions, SMW brings together key opinion leaders and industry leaders through conferences, dialogues and forums.

The range of activities and events organised by MPA, industry stakeholders and research and educational institutions, as well as the cosmopolitan profile of participants, reflect the vibrancy and diversity of Singapore as a global hub port and leading international maritime centre.

#### **For media queries, please contact:**

Serene Liu

Corporate Communications, Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore

Email: [media\\_enquiries@mpa.gov.sg](mailto:media_enquiries@mpa.gov.sg)

Elizabeth Yeo

Corporate Communications, Singapore Maritime Officers' Union

Email : [elizabeth.yeo@smou.org.sg](mailto:elizabeth.yeo@smou.org.sg)

Darryll Chua

Marketing & Communications, Employment and Employability Institute

Email : [darryll\\_chua@e2i.com.sg](mailto:darryll_chua@e2i.com.sg)

Sufiyan Samsuri

Corporate Marketing and Communications Division

SkillsFuture Singapore

Email : [sufiyan\\_samsuri@ssg.gov.sg](mailto:sufiyan_samsuri@ssg.gov.sg)

#### **APRW for Singapore Maritime Week 2025**

Stephanie Gan

APRW

Mobile: 9652 9879

Email: [stephanie@aprw.asia](mailto:stephanie@aprw.asia)

Shermin Ng

APRW

Mobile: 8418 8297

Email: [shermin@aprw.asia](mailto:shermin@aprw.asia)