



## MEDIA RELEASE

### **NEA TO CONTINUE CHAMPIONING INITIATIVES TO TRANSFORM ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES INDUSTRY BY RAISING PROFESSIONALISM AND PRODUCTIVITY, AND ENHANCING JOBS**

*Outcome-based contracting guide for the cleaning sector will be refreshed, talent attraction strengthened, and roadmap for pest management sector enhanced for better skills development and service standards*

**Singapore, 4 March 2021** – The National Environment Agency (NEA) has been leading efforts to transform the Environmental Services (ES) industry since the launch of the ES Industry Transformation Map in December 2017. To ensure that the industry is well-equipped to continue providing essential services in cleaning, waste management and pest management, NEA will continue to support the ES industry to continually raise professionalism, productivity and standards by championing initiatives such as technological adoption and innovation, digitalisation and adoption of better procurement practices.

#### **Promoting Outcome-based Contracting**

2 A key initiative that will benefit both the ES industry and buyers of ES services is outcome-based contracting (OBC), where a service buyer prescribes performance outcomes instead of headcount requirements. This can help encourage service providers to continually innovate in service delivery, whether through technological adoption or process improvement, which can also benefit service providers by alleviating their manpower constraints and potentially reaping cost savings in the longer term. This can also benefit ES industry workers by raising their productivity, improving their job scope and wages.

3 Since NEA started to actively promote the adoption of OBC for cleaning contracts in 2017, more than 110 organisations have come on board. From 1 May 2020, all government service buyers were required to adopt OBC when procuring cleaning services through new tenders/quotations. To ensure that cleaning procurement practices continue to remain relevant and useful to service buyers, NEA will refresh the OBC guide for cleaning services in 1Q2021. New features include an easier method for service buyers to measure service outcomes and clauses that will better prepare the cleaning companies and service buyers in dealing with additional cleaning and disinfection work, when required.

4 Many service buyers which have adopted OBC for cleaning services reported improved cleaning quality as cleaning companies were more open to proposing the best and innovative cleaning solutions, which often include the use of technology, to meet buyers' expectations. OBC has also helped some service buyers to manage cleaning costs, as service providers focused on achieving the performance-based cleaning outcomes with more optimal deployment of manpower.

5 To further promote the adoption of OBC for ES services, NEA will be consulting the pest management sector and facility management companies to develop a set of OBC

guidelines for pest management contracts. Currently, many pest management contracts are task and frequency-based contracts, e.g. fog premises once a week. An OBC guide for the pest management sector will ensure pest management outcomes for the service buyers and at the same time encourages skill upgrading of pest management workers and deployment of technologies to raise productivity. The OBC guide for the pest management sector is targeted to be ready by end 2021.

## **Technological Adoption, Innovation and Digitalisation**

6 The Productivity Solutions Grant (PSG) for the ES industry, which is applicable to the cleaning, waste and pest management sectors, is a key enabler in allowing companies to adopt ready-to-go solutions to increase operational efficiency and productivity, as well as to enhance jobs and upskill the workforce. Companies can be supported with up to 80 per cent of the qualifying cost, capped at S\$350,000, until 30 September 2021.<sup>1</sup> As at 17 February 2021, 1,290 applications have been approved for 458 companies and about S\$28 million of the PSG has been committed. In addition, the Environmental Services Industry Digital Plan will be refreshed to include the pest management sector. More details will be made available when ready.

7 NEA continues to work closely with the industry and key stakeholders to push for wider technology adoption through the INCUBATE programme.<sup>2</sup> For example, we have collaborated with more than 20 INCUBATE partners to develop prototypes of environmental solutions, trialing of available solutions and deploying them within the INCUBATE partners' premises. To date, we have trialed and implemented over 46 solutions within the partners' premises. (Refer to **Annex A** for examples of projects.) This process of innovation, research and development is critical to ensure that the ES industry remains professional and vibrant, as technology providers design new solutions to make processes easier, safer and smarter for the workforce.

8 NEA and Enterprise Singapore (ESG) also conduct regular grant calls for solutions to solve environmental challenges. We have recently closed a joint grant call to seek solutions for a digital platform that leverages Internet of Things (IoT) to integrate data and management of environmental services (cleaning, waste and pest management) within a premises.<sup>3</sup> The grant call was conducted together with four premises owners, of which three are our INCUBATE partners, and we are currently evaluating the proposals.

## **Career Progression and Talent Attraction**

9 The Skills Framework for Environmental Services was refreshed in 2019 to include the pest management sector. It provides a good reference tool for employers as well as current and potential employees to keep abreast of the relevant skillsets required to strengthen professionalism, and chart career pathways beyond their current occupations. To complement the skills framework for the pest management industry, NEA introduced a Code of Practice for Vector Control Operators, Technicians and Workers in October 2020, to define

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<sup>1</sup> Under the Productivity Solutions Grant for Environmental Services, there are 46 equipment and solutions in the supportable list.

<sup>2</sup> The **IN**novating and **CU**rating **B**etter **A**utomation and **T**echnologies for **E**nvironmental Services (INCUBATE) programme embodies the partnership between the technology providers and services providers, premises owners, and the Government, to collectively innovate and curate better technologies, solutions and innovations for the environmental services industry. Partners under the INCUBATE programme include private and public entities, as well as Institutes of Higher Learning.

<sup>3</sup> For more information on the grant call, visit this link:

<https://www.nea.gov.sg/programmes-grants/grants-and-awards/call-for-data-driven-environmental-services-operations>.

best practices for professional vector control works to guide the industry to achieve better service standards.

10 Recently, NEA also awarded scholarships to the first batch of scholars under the NEA-Industry Scholarship programme. Upon graduation, these scholars will take on jobs with cleaning and waste management companies that are co-sponsoring them. This year, NEA will also further strengthen skillsets and professionalism of the workforce by developing new Continuing Education and Training (CET) courses and curating Pre-Employment Training (PET) curriculum with Institutes of Higher Learning to upskill pest management workers. For example, NEA is reviewing joint ITE-NEA certification courses for pest management and pest control to ensure continued relevance to the industry. The review is expected to be completed by 2H2021.

11 NEA will continue to work with partner agencies to champion initiatives to attract and retain local talent, upskill the workforce and accelerate technology adoption. Together with the support of the trade associations, we will continue to build stronger businesses and enhance jobs in the ES industry. For more information on the various programmes and courses available, please visit: [https://www.nea.gov.sg/industry-transformation-map/continuing-education-and-training-\(cet\)-courses-for-environmental-services-\(es\)-industry](https://www.nea.gov.sg/industry-transformation-map/continuing-education-and-training-(cet)-courses-for-environmental-services-(es)-industry).

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## INCUBATE Projects

1 The **IN**novating and **CU**rating **B**etter **A**utomation and **T**echnologies for **E**nvironmental Services (INCUBATE) programme embodies the partnership between the technology providers and services providers, premises owners, and the Government, to collectively innovate and curate better technologies, solutions and innovations for the environmental services industry.

2 Partners under the INCUBATE programme include private and public entities, as well as Institutes of Higher Learning:

1. CapitaLand
2. Changi Airport Group
3. CHART@Changi General Hospital
4. City Developments Limited
5. Esplanade
6. Institute of Technical Education College Central
7. Keppel Land
8. Lendlease
9. Marina Bay Sands
10. Nanyang Polytechnic
11. Nanyang Technological University
12. National University of Singapore
13. Ngee Ann Polytechnic
14. NTUC Club
15. Pan Pacific Hotels Group
16. People's Association
17. Republic Polytechnic
18. Resorts World Sentosa
19. Singapore Institute of Technology
20. Sports Hub
21. Wildlife Reserves Singapore

3 Some of the key projects that have been successfully deployed and implemented in mid-2020 within the partners' premises include:

Name of INCUBATE Partner	Description of Solution Implemented
Office of Facilities Management, National University of Singapore	Integrated platform for tracking of workers' attendance, user feedback and audit monitoring of cleaning services
	Cleaning robots with self-charging and reporting functions
City Developments Limited	Deployment of anti-stain vortex flushing water closets in City Square Mall

4 There are also ongoing developments and upcoming trials for the following projects:

Name of INCUBATE Partner	Description of Solution	Project Timeline
Heartbeat@Bedok	2-in-1 robot with built-in cleaning and video analytics functions to clean and conduct security surveillance within the premises	Trial has been ongoing since August 2020 and is expected to end in May 2021.

Pan Pacific Hotels Group	Food waste reduction app that can process and analyse images of cooked food leftovers to allow restaurants to redesign menus, thereby reducing food wastage	Trial is estimated to start in Q3 2021.