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**New one-stop resource centre to promote manpower-lean practices**

By Alice Chia | Posted: 10 Mar 2016 12:34 | Updated: 10 Mar 2016 23:56

The Lean Transformation Innovation Centre will work with local companies to identify and address performance gaps and develop solutions for productivity gains.

SINGAPORE: The Singapore Institute of Technology (SIT), the Singapore Workforce Development Agency (WDA) and Lean Enterprise Institute signed an agreement on Thursday (Mar 10) to establish a new one-stop resource centre to help local companies learn and adopt manpower-lean practices.

The Lean Transformation Innovation Centre will work with companies to identify and address performance gaps and develop solutions for productivity gains.

It has established partnerships with various organisations to do this. For example, it will tap on the US-based Lean Enterprise Institute's global network of subject matter experts to transfer knowledge of lean solutions to Singapore companies.

Said Manpower Minister Lim Swee Say: "If we are able to expand and grow in a more manpower-lean way, rather than manpower-led way, our businesses will be driven by a healthy Singaporean core in every major sector of our economy and society, and complemented by a moderated growth of foreign manpower."

The centre will also provide assistance for small and medium enterprises (SMEs) to apply for the Lean Enterprise Development Scheme, which was rolled out by the Government in 2015 to help firms be more manpower-lean, develop a Singaporean core and improve productivity.

Companies send their employees for training on lean capability development at the centre, through programmes such as conferences, masterclasses, seminars and workshops.

Mr Kelvin Goh, general manager of security solutions company Soverus, said: "I'm looking forward to the centre helping us get consultancy services at much more affordable prices for SMEs, (as) cost is a big issue for us.

"However, if the Government can help us look at having grants for such consultancy services, I think that would help many companies jump on the bandwagon."

The firm added that it would also like to learn more about lean measures that have been rolled out in other industries.

WDA will also provide funding for Singaporeans to go for these initiatives to deepen their skills. Mr Ng Cher Pong, chief executive of WDA, said: "This centre can play a useful role as a multiplier for the (Lean Enterprise Development) scheme, but we also believe that a lot of SMEs will require assistance. So the centre will provide some consultancy and advice support to SMEs in making the lean transformation."

The centre will be located in the SIT in Dover and is scheduled to be operational by the second quarter of 2016.

Professor Tan Thiam Soon, president of Singapore Institute of Technology, said: "We will work with the Lean Enterprise Institute, in terms of building up capabilities to help the companies come up with new ways of thinking about how to improve their whole process by creating value, while reducing the needs on resources of all kind."

Faculty and students of the SIT will also benefit. They will have the opportunity to work with local companies to roll out some of the proposed solutions, especially if they involve technological innovations.