

FACT SHEET (March 2013)

Encouraging New Ways of Work in Singapore

The enhancement in infocomm infrastructure and ensuing services, as well as the widespread use of computers and broadband¹ are now making the possibility of flexible work arrangements more viable than before. The deployment of Next Generation Nationwide Broadband Network (Next Gen NBN) also makes implementing Home-Based Work and Smart Work Centres more attractive as the network offers pervasive, affordable broadband connection that supports major office functions such as high quality video-conferencing and cloud computing.

By suitably digitising work processes, employers can leverage on technology to enable their employees to have more flexibility in when and where they work. These **New Ways of Work** go beyond occasional flexible work arrangements (such as telecommuting) to enable employees to work from home (i.e. Home-Based Work²) or a location near home (e.g. Smart Work Centres³) on a longer-term basis.

Call-for-Collaboration (CFC) to Conduct Pilots

In a move towards encouraging employers to adopt *New Ways of Work* through the use of infocomm technology, IDA launched a Call-for-Collaboration (CFC) in April 2012 to invite industry players to collaborate and conduct pilots on new work practices.

Comprising two tracks, Home-Based Work and Smart Work Centres (SWC), the CFC was launched in consultation with then-Ministry of Community, Youth and Sports (MCYS), Ministry of Manpower (MOM), Employer Alliance, National Trades Union Congress (NTUC)-Women's Development Secretariat, and the Singapore National Employers Federation (SNEF).

The CFC arises from one of the key recommendations by the Tripartite Workgroup on ICT-enabled Home-Based Jobs – comprising representatives from IDA, MOM and the industry – to set up a dedicated workspace at home to ensure that home-based employees have a professional work environment to be productive. An alternative option is to enable employees to work at Smart Work Centres (SWCs) near their homes if a dedicated workspace is not available or viable at home.

Award of CFC for Home-Based Work

¹ According to IDA's 2011 Annual Survey on Infocomm Usage in Households and by Individuals, 86% of households have access to at least one computer at home while 85% have access to broadband.

² In Home-Based Work, an employee's home is the primary location of work, and returning to office is required occasionally only. This arrangement is different from telecommuting where the office remains the primary work location.

³ Smart Work Centres (SWCs) provide professional working spaces close to residential areas, and are accessible to employees from different employers.

The CFC garnered strong interest from the industry and at the close of the CFC in June 2012, 14 proposals were received. After extensive evaluation, two proposals to pilot Home-Based Work were awarded in January 2013.

Pilots will be carried out in a variety of industries such as telecommunications, healthcare and education, and will involve job functions including business consultants, designers, call-centre agents and tutors. The pilots, running for six months to a year, are enabled by ICT services developed specifically for the respective pilots. Productivity and employee satisfaction will be used as proxy measures for the success of these pilots (please see **Annex A** for more details).

No Award of CFC for Smart Work Centres (SWCs)

The proposals from the earlier CFC provided valuable insights on the various commercial and operational aspects for SWC models in Singapore. While no award was made in this round, IDA will call for another collaboration to pilot SWCs in FY2013

In the meantime, IDA will be exploring the possibility of leveraging existing infrastructure to pilot SWCs, with other government agencies such as the National Library Board (NLB).

About Infocomm Development Authority of Singapore

The Infocomm Development Authority of Singapore (IDA) is committed to growing Singapore into a dynamic global infocomm hub. IDA uses an integrated approach to developing infocomm in Singapore. This involves nurturing a competitive telecoms market as well as a conducive business environment with programmes and schemes for both local and international companies. For more news and information, visit www.ida.gov.sg.

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