



Report on the Alliance for Action on Integration of Foreign Professionals

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Joint Foreword by Co-Chairs



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Minister of State
Ministry of Culture, Community, and Youth
Ministry of Manpower



Mr Marcus Lam

Honorary Treasurer, Singapore National Employers Federation
Deputy Honorary Treasurer, Singapore Business Federation
Executive Chairman, PwC Singapore

Staying open and plugged into the global economy has allowed Singapore to punch above our weight, bringing in crucial investments and good job opportunities to grow our economy and improve Singaporeans' lives.

As we bring in foreign professionals to complement our workforce and support business growth, it is equally important for us to actively onboard and integrate them within our multicultural society. Effective integration allows us to have more productive workplaces, a more harmonious community, and a more competitive economy.

As integration does not happen on its own, deliberate efforts by employers, local employees, and foreign professionals are needed to create an enabling environment. The Alliance for Action on Integration of Foreign Professionals (AfA-IFP) — which consisted of representatives from Trade Associations and Chambers (TACs) and firms across a range of industries — was therefore convened by the Ministry of Culture, Community, and Youth (MCCY), the Singapore Business Federation (SBF), and the Singapore National Employers Federation (SNEF).

On behalf of MCCY, SBF, and SNEF, we would like to thank all members and stakeholders of the AfA-IFP for their feedback and contributions, which have been instrumental in helping us develop five industry-led initiatives to better integrate foreign professionals into our workplaces and communities.

Everyone has a part to play in fostering a harmonious society. We hope for this to be the start of a positive movement involving local and foreign employees, HR professionals, TACs, and firms. Together, we can achieve unity amidst diversity, which is unique to Singapore and critical for our economic success in the long run.

Mr Dinesh Vasu Dash and Mr Marcus Lam

Co-Chairs of the AfA-IFP
10 July 2026

Chapter 1

Picture of Success and Engagement Process



Picture of Success

Effective integration benefits everyone, and we will see the following:



In workplaces, productive work environments underpinned by HR frameworks that support fair and inclusive hiring and employment practices. At the same time, local employees and foreign professionals enjoy strong working relationships grounded in mutual understanding, respect, and trust.



In communities, foreign professionals form strong friendships with locals, developing connections, showing care, and making meaningful contributions.



In Singapore, a cohesive and cosmopolitan society that supports our vision of a “We First” society, while staying globally competitive with productive and thriving businesses.

Insights From Members of AfA-IFP

To understand the challenges that impede effective integration of foreign professionals and identify impactful initiatives, the AfA-IFP held a series of engagements with participants from diverse profiles:



Firm size:

Multinational corporations (MNCs), large local enterprises, and small and medium enterprises (SMEs), including firms that hired foreign professionals.



Background:

Professionals from different regions, including those who were able to compare their experience in Singapore with stints elsewhere.



Role:

Business units and corporate functions.



Seniority:

Junior-, middle-, to senior-manager levels.

Employees from firms of AfA-IFP members also participated in the pilots and provided feedback that helped us refine the initiatives before launch and scale-up.

Engagement Process

The key stages of the engagement process were as follows:



Participants of diverse profiles were engaged through Focus Group Discussions.



AfA-IFP members discussed key insights.



AfA-IFP members refined and endorsed initiatives.



Employees from AfA-IFP member firms piloted and further improved initiatives.

What We Heard

From Employers



- Employers felt that **strong local-foreigner integration was integral to business performance**, because it supported positive employee sentiments and enabled firms to maximise diverse talent.
- Employers accepted that **integration went beyond workplace onboarding** and included helping foreign professionals understand and respect Singapore's social norms.
- Employers acknowledged **the need to address local employees' concerns about job competition and workplace fairness** to build acceptance of foreign colleagues, and that HR professionals and line managers play a critical role.
- While many employers wanted to implement inclusive workplace practices, **some were unsure where to start**. Capacity and capability to do so also varied by firm sizes, resources, internal capabilities, and leadership commitments.

Quote from a participant at the focus group discussion with corporate leaders:

“ Research done by SNEF and Kincentric¹ in 2021 found that a majority of local firms felt that Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) was important because there was a good business case for it. However, over 70% of firms did not have a formal policy or structure for DEI. This is because firms felt it was a sensitive topic or did not have the resources to deal with it. ”

From TACs



TACs were of the view that **they could do more to support member firms**, especially smaller ones, in their efforts to better integrate foreign professionals into their workforces.

Quote from a participant at the focus group discussion with corporate leaders:

“ There is a stark difference between the integration efforts of MNCs and SMEs due to the difference in resources they have access to... one solution is to work with TACs and SBF to provide shared resources to member firms to elevate best practices. ”

From Local Employees



- Local employees **generally had positive working relationships with foreign professionals, but observed that there could be occasional friction** due to different cultural assumptions and working norms.
- Local employees felt that **trust could be undermined by perceived preferential hiring** (e.g. hiring from the same network or region) and by the use of languages in meetings that others could not follow.
- Local employees **expected foreign professionals to respect and adopt local customs and social norms**, which could reduce misunderstandings at work and in social settings.

Quote from participants at the focus group discussion with junior employees and middle management:

“ I myself benefit from having a foreign professional as a boss... I can learn from them. ”

“ Sometimes foreign professionals switch to their own language in meetings, and it is hard to follow. ”

From Foreign Professionals



- Foreign professionals **generally described Singapore as welcoming, but still faced barriers** such as unfamiliarity with Singlish, challenges in navigating cultural differences in a diverse society, and difficulties forming friendships with locals.
- Many foreign professionals **saw integration as part of their obligation to be a “global citizen” and felt a personal responsibility** to be well-integrated in their work and community settings, especially if they intended to settle down in Singapore.
- Foreign professionals **welcomed early practical support, especially from HR, to help them settle down** in Singapore and better integrate with their colleagues and the local community.

Quote from participants at the focus group discussion with junior employees and middle management:

“I agree that it is on us as foreign professionals to integrate, and I think one positive is that the community doesn’t exclude people.”

“I think the firm plays a big part in helping us foreign professionals to integrate because... we spend a lot of time with the firm.”

AfA-IFP members recognised that while some firms implemented inclusive workplace practices, there was a need to scale and systematise them across the entire corporate landscape. Based on the key insights from the AfA-IFP meetings and engagements, five initiatives were identified to:

- Help new foreign professionals understand living and working norms in Singapore; and
- Support firms to effectively implement inclusive local-foreigner integration practices in the workplace.

Chapter 2

Key Initiatives



Initiative #1 | EP Journey

Objective

To address uneven onboarding practices across firms, MCCY has designed a common orientation programme for new foreign professionals (i.e. Employment Pass (EP) holders).

The EP Journey programme will give all new EP holders — regardless of employer — a baseline understanding of Singapore's norms, values, and practical day-to-day expectations. While the primary target audience is new EP holders who have just arrived in Singapore, this can be extended to other EP holders who have been in Singapore for a longer period of time but feel that this will be beneficial for them as well. Firms, TACs, and community stakeholders can then build on this foundation to implement additional workplace and community-based efforts.

Components

MCCY will conduct the EP Journey and work with firms to invite their EP holders to participate in the following components:



A one-hour e-learning segment to equip EP holders with a baseline understanding of Singapore's norms, values, and practical information. The modules will focus on core values and policies in multiracial, multireligious, and multicultural Singapore; customs and cultural norms relating to living, working, and playing in Singapore; as well as useful laws in Singapore to take note of. The online modality also enhances its accessibility for EP holders.



A local visit to selected museums or cultural institutions to enhance participants' understanding of Singapore's multicultural society through immersive experiences and reflection on the shared values underpinning Singapore's social cohesion.



A half-day in-person workplace diversity workshop to enrich EP holders' understanding of multiculturalism in Singapore as well as local social norms in Singapore's workplaces and communities. There will be interactive segments to equip participants with the necessary skills and frameworks to navigate conflict and diversity in their workplaces. There will also be fireside chats with panellists who can share first-hand experiences and practical integration tips with EP holders.

MCCY has commenced the EP Journey pilot from May 2026 and targets to have 600 EP holder participants over six months.



“The EP Journey has been a helpful and practical way to better understand Singapore’s professional landscape, cultural context, and integration experience. The programme created valuable opportunities for EP holders to connect, exchange perspectives, and gain more insight into working and living in Singapore. It also provided a platform to share experiences and contribute to broader discussions on how foreign professionals can integrate more effectively into Singapore’s society. Thank you to the organisers and participants for making this meaningful initiative happen.”

Ms Yue Wang
Manager, Business Consulting, EY



“I appreciated how thoughtfully the workshop was designed. The EP Journey provided practical insights, meaningful discussions, and a strong introduction to the Singapore work environment.”

Mr Maximilien Azorin
Manager, Risk Consulting, EY



Participants at the pilot workplace diversity workshop held in May 2026.

Initiative #2 | TAC-Led Orientation Day

Objective

TACs can play a catalytic role in onboarding foreign professionals in Singapore and helping them meet fellow professionals in local industries. Going the extra mile to onboard and ensure the smooth integration of foreign professionals through a dedicated Orientation Day further enhances Singapore's position as a destination for foreign talent.

Components

The Orientation Day will include the following components:



Panel discussions with local employees, seasoned foreign professionals, HR professionals, and integration advocates, to provide a sectoral perspective while reinforcing the baseline knowledge of social norms imparted through the EP Journey.



Networking sessions to facilitate interactions between local employees and foreign professionals.



Experiential segments to showcase to foreign professionals Singapore's vibrant multicultural landscape.

In the first phase, six TACs have agreed to publicise the availability of AfA-IFP resources to their member firms and foreign professionals, and to pilot the TAC-led Orientation Day from July 2026 onwards.



Participants on an experiential tour of the Asian Civilisations Museum.

The six TACs are the American Chamber of Commerce, SGTech, Singapore Chinese Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Singapore Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Singapore International Chamber of Commerce, and Singapore Semiconductor Industry Association.

We will progressively reach out to more TACs and encourage them to step up their efforts in this area.



“In a globally connected economy, TACs play a critical role in supporting the integration of local and foreign professionals by fostering understanding, building networks, and enabling meaningful collaboration. As Singapore’s longest-standing international business chamber, SICC brings together companies and leaders across global markets and industries and supports initiatives such as the Orientation Day to help foreign professionals integrate more effectively from the outset. These efforts will strengthen workplace cohesion, support the successful integration of global talent, and reinforce Singapore’s position as a globally competitive and inclusive business hub.”

Ms Bitia Seow

CEO, Singapore International Chamber of Commerce



“Relocating to a new city is about much more than just finding a home or navigating a commute: it is a deeply personal challenge of finding one’s place within a new culture, workplace, and community. For many foreign professionals, the transition can be overwhelming and the adjustment takes time. At SBF, we believe integration is a shared responsibility among employers, TACs, and the professionals themselves. As the apex business chamber, we are proud to drive the AfA-IFP to provide a structured, welcoming path that turns a new city into a true home.”

Mr Kok Ping Soon

CEO, SBF

Initiative #3 | Integration Playbook

Objective

To support firms that want to build inclusive workplaces but need help getting started, we have designed an Integration Playbook with practical guidance on implementing local-foreigner integration practices. The Playbook is intended for firms of all sizes, including SMEs.

Components

To facilitate adoption by firms, the Playbook has been designed with the following features in mind:



Modularised, step-by-step toolkits with customisable templates, to allow easy adoption by firms to suit their needs.



Differentiated approach, for firms looking to implement basic practices (e.g. provide practical onboarding information for new foreign professionals) versus those looking to implement more advanced efforts for sustained integration (e.g. to embed inclusivity into their firm's day-to-day organisational systems and culture).



Case studies of firms — including SMEs — with exemplary existing integration initiatives, to showcase real-world examples of the best practices mentioned in the Playbook and inspire firms to work towards them.

In addition to the Playbook, SNEF will also reach out to companies and the HR community to increase awareness of the Playbook, as well as implement workshops and implementation clinics throughout the year.

This is to build the capabilities of HR practitioners and leaders of diverse teams, especially those from SMEs or firms that may require more guidance at the start of their inclusive workplace journeys.

SNEF has developed the Playbook and ran two pilot workshops (i.e. “From Playbook to Practice: Local-Foreigner Integration at Work”) in February and March 2026, with 48 HR professionals and team leaders from 34 firms. The Playbook, workshops, and implementation clinics have been progressively launched from the second quarter of 2026.



Participants at the pilot AfA-IFP Playbook workshop held in February 2026.



Participants engaging in various activities at the pilot AfA-IFP Playbook workshop held in February 2026.



“The AfA-IFP Playbook workshop provided us with practical, actionable insights that will help our team integrate local and foreign colleagues more effectively, fostering a collaborative and inclusive workplace.”

Mr Stephen Pang
Group HR Manager, Far East Flora Holdings Pte. Ltd.

Initiative #4 | Cultural Sensitivity Training Course

Objective

To help key personnel in firms navigate the complexities of diverse workplaces, we developed a cultural sensitivity training course specific to local-foreigner integration issues in Singapore, promoting inclusive leadership at the workplace. The course participants will include HR professionals who are responsible for fostering inclusive workplaces and looking to acquire relevant soft skills, as well as leaders of diverse teams who are looking to improve their communication and management skills when handling cross-cultural frictions.

Components

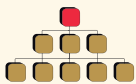
The course will comprise:



Information to deepen participants' understanding of Singapore's multicultural landscape, immigration policies, and fair hiring and progression practices.



Engaging activities to build participants' understanding of unconscious bias and discover one's own biases.



Sharing of established research studies to help participants understand how cultural values can affect how we approach communication and working styles.



Interactive hands-on role-play sessions and discussions on real-life case studies to develop participants' skill sets to navigate uncomfortable cultural tensions, build emotional intelligence, and adhere to Singapore's fair hiring and progressive practices.



Inclusive leadership framework to enable participants to lead diverse teams sensitively and build a culture of inclusivity in their workplaces.

SBF Business Institute held a pilot run of the course (i.e. “Crossing Cultural Bridges: Leading Inclusive Global Teams to Success”) in February 2026 with 21 HR professionals and team leaders from seven firms. The full course has been launched in the second quarter of 2026.



Participants at the pilot Cultural Sensitivity Training Course held in February 2026.



Participants engaging in hands-on activities and discussions at the pilot Cultural Sensitivity Training Course held in February 2026.



“In a diverse market like Singapore, cultural understanding is key to stronger collaboration and effective teamwork — this programme reinforced that clearly.”

Ms R. Vijayalakshmi
Regional Sales Director & Head of Strategy-Growth Markets,
Tata Consultancy Services

Initiative #5 | Central Repository of Resources

Objective

Many companies are doing very good work in integrating foreign professionals and can benefit from learning from one another. We have put together a central repository of resources to help companies who are looking for new ideas to foster cohesive and harmonious workplaces.

Components



The repository will feature resources on social integration in Singapore, life and living in Singapore, and integration with the community.



SBF has consolidated and published an online repository of existing integration resources, which will be updated regularly to ensure relevance. This link is also available on SNEF's OneWorkplace.SG website which provides resources to employers to help them build integrated workplaces, so that employees from diverse backgrounds can work better together.

<https://go.gov.sg/ifp-resources>



Central Repository of Resources homepage on SBF's website.

Chapter 3

Conclusion



The AfA-IFP initiatives are a series of practical starting points to strengthen integration efforts across firms and sectors:

AfA-IFP Initiative	Objective	Target Audience
#1: EP Journey	To address uneven onboarding practices across firms and provide a baseline understanding of Singapore's norms, values, and practical day-to-day expectations.	Foreign professionals
#2: TAC-Led Orientation Day	To reinforce that Singapore's multiracial society should be respected , promote social mixing between local and foreign participants, and encourage and provide foreign professionals with information on how to integrate.	
#3: Integration Playbook	To support firms that want to build inclusive workplaces but need help getting started, by providing practical guidance on implementing local-foreigner integration practices.	HR professionals, and leaders of diverse teams
#4: Cultural Sensitivity Training Course	To equip key employees in firms with the relevant soft skills, to navigate the complexities of diverse workplaces and promote inclusive leadership at the workplace.	
#5: Central Repository of Resources	To consolidate the existing workplace and community integration resources for firms that are interested in disseminating such resources to their employees , or firms that are more advanced in their integration journey and are looking to learn from best practices of others.	Firms, HR professionals, leaders of diverse teams, and foreign professionals

Integration is a shared responsibility. We encourage **firms and TACs** to adopt and scale inclusive workplace practices, **foreign professionals** to make the effort to understand and respect Singapore's norms and culture, and **local employees and communities** to play their part in welcoming foreign professionals and building meaningful connections.

Together, we can create a cohesive and cosmopolitan community while ensuring that we remain economically competitive in today's uncertain world.



“As a global professional services organisation with over 3,500 employees across 40 nationalities based in Singapore, EY recognises the importance of workforce diversity and inclusion and has put in place inclusive workplace practices that support individuals to be more culturally aware and adaptable. This commitment allows us to enhance client outcomes and foster a workplace culture in which all employees feel valued and empowered.”

Mr Liew Nam Soon

Asean and Singapore Managing Partner, EY



“TACs play a critical role in fostering trust and collaboration between local and foreign professionals. As industry convenors, TACs create platforms that help businesses build cohesive teams and strengthen Singapore's globally connected economy.”

Dato' T. Mogan

Director, Singapore Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry

Acknowledgements

AfA-IFP Co-Chairs and Members

Name	Designations
Mr Alvin Tan (Co-Chair, till May 2025)	• Then-Minister of State, Ministry of Culture, Community, and Youth • Minister of State, Ministry of National Development and Ministry of Trade and Industry
Mr Dinesh Vasu Dash (Co-Chair, May 2025 onwards)	• Minister of State, Ministry of Culture, Community, and Youth and Ministry of Manpower
Mr Marcus Lam (Co-Chair)	• Honorary Treasurer, Singapore National Employers Federation • Deputy Honorary Treasurer, Singapore Business Federation • Executive Chairman, PwC Singapore
Ms Aileen Tan	• Group Chief People and Sustainability Officer, Singtel
Ms Ang Fung Fung	• Chairperson, Finance Committee, Singapore Chinese Chamber of Commerce and Industry • Then-Partner, KPMG
Ms Cathy Choi	• Global Trust & Safety Lead HR Business Partner & APAC Regional Committee Chair, ByteDance
Ms Chin Yen Yen	• Singapore Managing Partner, Environmental Resources Management
Ms Elisa Mallis	• Former Chair, American Chamber of Commerce in Singapore • Global Vice President of Research, Innovation and New Content Creation, Center for Creative Leadership
Ms Gunjan Kathuria Kalra	• Managing Director, Citi Commercial Bank, Japan, Asia North and Australia, Asia South
Mr Ian Lee	• Board Member, Institute for Human Resource Professionals • Member, Human Capital Action Committee, Singapore Business Federation • Global President Geographies, The Adecco Group
Mr Jens Rübberdt	• President, European Chamber of Commerce (Singapore)
Ms Kohe Hasan	• Deputy Honorary Secretary, Singapore National Employers Federation • Chief Executive Officer, M Kapital Consulting
Ms Lee Yan Hong	• Group Human Resources Head, DBS Bank
Mr Mohamed Irshad	• Head of Corporate Affairs for ASEAN, Tata Consultancy Services • Founder & President, Roses of Peace
Mr Neil Parekh	• Vice Chairman, Asia Pacific, Sumitomo Banking Group (SMBC) • Group Deputy Chairman, GFTN • Member of Global Board of Directors, PwC • Council Member, Singapore Business Federation
Mr Per Magnusson	• Then-Chairman, Singapore International Chamber of Commerce • Council Member, Singapore National Employers Federation • Group CEO, Jebsen & Jessen Group • Board Member, GMA Garnet Group
Ms Sim Cher Whee	• Vice President, Strategy (AI and Workforce Transformation), Micron
Mr Vineet Kohli	• Chief Executive Officer, Mitsubishi Corporation RtM International Pte. Ltd.

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ByteDance	SAP Asia
China Mobile International (Singapore) Pte. Ltd.	Sensetac Pte. Ltd.
Citibank	SGTech
DBS Bank Ltd.	Singapore Human Resources Institute
DENSO International Asia Pte. Ltd.	Singapore Chinese Chamber of Commerce and Industry
DLE M&E Pte. Ltd.	Singapore Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry
E-Bridge Pre-School Pte. Ltd.	Singapore International Chamber of Commerce
Environmental Resources Management (S) Pte. Ltd.	Singapore Zoological Gardens
ETH Singapore SEC Limited (Singapore-ETH Centre)	SingHealth
European Chamber of Commerce (Singapore)	Singtel
EY	Singapore Malay Chamber of Commerce and Industry
Far East Flora Holdings Pte. Ltd.	Standard Chartered
Farrer Park Hospital Pte. Ltd.	Stella Chemifa Singapore Pte. Ltd.
GME Chemicals (S) Pte. Ltd.	Tata Consultancy Services
Hard Rock Café Pte. Ltd.	The Adecco Group
Hima Asia Pacific Pte. Ltd.	Thomson Medical Pte. Ltd.
IINO Singapore Pte. Ltd.	UBS AG
Institute for Human Resource Professionals	United Overseas Insurance Limited
International SOS	United Overseas Bank Limited (UOB)
Jebsen & Jessen Group	Vanguard International Semiconductor Pte. Ltd.
JPMorgan Chase Bank	Wilmar International Limited
Koufu Pte. Ltd.	
M Kapital Holdings	
Mattress International Pte. Ltd.	
MediaTek Singapore Pte. Ltd.	
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