

Speech for Minister for Manpower and Second Minister for Trade and Industry

Dr Tan See Leng for launch of Food Manufacturing ITM 2025 and JTM

on 14 December 2022

1. Today we are launching both the Industry Transformation Map (ITM) 2025 and Jobs Transformation Map (JTM) for the Food Manufacturing sector, a growing one that offers many exciting business opportunities and jobs¹.

The joint launch also signifies the close synergies between business, jobs and workers.

a. The ITM 2025 sets out the growth strategies for the food manufacturing sector with the aim to establish **Singapore as a trusted food and nutrition leader, and the preferred launchpad into Asia for quality brands.**

b. The JTM identifies the impact of emerging trends and technologies on job roles in the Food Manufacturing sector, and the pathways for employers to transform jobs

¹ Singapore's Food Manufacturing sector comprises more than 1,000 companies, ranging from traditional manufacturers to emerging food tech startups. In 2020, the sector contributed about \$4 billion to Singapore's economy and employed about 51,000 workers. Over the years, the sector has built up a strong reputation for producing high quality and safe food, with about 60% of the output exported to more than 120 markets.

and for workers to acquire critical skillsets as existing job roles evolve and new ones emerge.

2. Business and workforce transformation must go hand-in-hand.

Businesses cannot transform unless their workers are capable of supporting the new business models and job roles. Having skilled workers is what enables a business to transform.

At the same time, when businesses transform, workers will be more motivated to go for reskilling to seize new opportunities.

There are four key strategies under the Food Manufacturing ITM:

3. First, internationalisation and continuous innovation will remain as key strategies to drive growth.

Internationalisation

a. Given Singapore's small geographic size, food manufacturing companies need to look beyond our shores to grow their business and expand revenue streams.

I encourage food manufacturers to consider entering new markets and drive regional expansion.

Enterprise Singapore (EnterpriseSG) will continue to support our food manufacturers to scale exports through market access initiatives and contract manufacturing.

Innovation

b. Product innovation goes hand in hand with our internationalisation efforts. Companies need to push out new products to meet consumer demand and remain competitive in the global marketplace.

Products will also need to be reformulated to meet consumer tastes and preferences of different markets.

- i. To support companies in their innovation efforts, we will expand the network of partners, both locally and internationally.

Partners can help companies to strengthen R&D and innovation capabilities, differentiate their products and capture opportunities in new business segments, such as alternative proteins and elderly nutrition.

- ii. We will continue to build a robust innovation ecosystem to grow quality food tech startups with transformative technologies.

- c. During my visit to Sin Mui Heng today, I am glad to hear that the company has been actively expanding their business overseas through distributors.

They are also constantly pursuing innovation to expand their product offerings, with the alternative protein products being one of its latest ventures.

4. Second, we seek to increase the attractiveness of Singapore as a regional food hub.

a. We will continue to strengthen our R&D capabilities and build cross-border partnerships to attract global investments in high value activities and build capacity to scale manufacturing of novel food products through advanced technologies and Industry 4.0.

For example, Eat Just chose Singapore as its regional HQ and invested in production facilities here to become Asia's largest alternative protein manufacturer.

b. EnterpriseSG will continue to work with partners to help our companies build deeper regional consumer insights

to support development of food products that are relevant for Asia.

Through this, Singapore can also be the launchpad for global brands who are keen to enter the Asia market.

5. Third, we will build resilient and sustainable companies by future proofing our supply chains and pursuing sustainable goals for the future.

Build resilience

- a. With the pandemic, supply chain disruptions and energy crisis, Singapore has seen an increase in vulnerability because of the fluctuations in food supply and prices.

We want to encourage our companies to enhance their supply chain resilience through source diversification, stockpiling of key ingredients upstream integration, and enhancing of production capabilities.

Sustainability

b. With the growing focus on sustainability globally, we will work with the trade associations and chambers (TACs) to encourage companies to take on green manufacturing practices across the food value chain, such as adoption of resource efficient technologies, food waste reduction and upcycling and the use of sustainable packaging.

A sustainability roadmap would be developed by the Singapore Food Alliance ² with support from EnterpriseSG.

6. Last but definitely not least, both businesses and workers must continue to pursue job redesign and upskilling as well as reskilling, to seize opportunities and tackle challenges as the sector continues to transform. Businesses can tap on the Jobs Transformation Map for the Food Manufacturing sector, which recommends strategies that business can adopt to enhance the

² Singapore Food Alliance is made up of 8 food-related trade associations namely Singapore Food Manufacturers' Association, Bedok Industrial Association, Meat Traders' Association, Seafood Industries Association Singapore, Singapore Bakery and Confectionary Trade Association, Singapore Noodles Manufacturer Association, Singapore Toys and Confectionary Dealers' Association and Woodlands East Industrial & Commercial Association.

competitiveness and capabilities of employees in these areas:

a. New roles in areas like data analysis, novel foods, sustainability and digitalisation and automation, will emerge.

i. In the JTM report, we have included some of the key tasks and examples of skill sets required of workers in these roles.

ii. These emerging roles are opportunities with bright prospects, and workers can refer to the skillsets needed for such roles when planning their training road map.

b. Existing roles will also change, and more workers will be expected to make use of technology to perform their jobs.

i. With these shifts, companies are also increasingly looking for employees with technology and business skillsets.

ii. For example, with technology solutions like manufacturing execution systems, Production Operators will now have to operate and monitor equipment across more production lines, and even perform basic quality checks and machine troubleshooting.

At the same time, they must still possess knowledge management skills and be adaptable to carry out their jobs.

c. I encourage employers to also redesign jobs to increase the attractiveness of the role to new and existing talent. This will also help raise productivity and enable workers to deliver greater value for the business with more value-added tasks.

d. At the same time, this will have to be complemented by a workforce equipped with the skillsets to take on these roles.

Upskilling and reskilling must be a sustained and continuous effort for both older and younger workers in Food Manufacturing as job roles continue to transform. For instance, employers can tap on Workforce Singapore (WSG)'s Career Conversion Programme to reskill newly hired individuals and existing employees to move into new, redesigned, or emerging roles especially in areas such as food innovation and operating new machineries. This can also be supplemented with SkillsFuture Series courses and Work Study Programmes.

Conclusion

7. The Food Manufacturing sector is fast-changing, and these are exciting times.

I would therefore like to encourage companies and workers to make use of the resources in the ITM and JTM to prepare for the future.

The Government will work closely with TACs and unions to provide support to both businesses and workers as they embark on their transformation journey.
