

MOM scheme boosts expertise of local staff



Ichi Seiki application engineer Chui Kher Ning has trained fellow application engineer Krishnan Thiagarajan to use the company's new precision engineering machines, after she was trained by German specialists last year. PHOTO: LIANHE ZAOLBAO

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Standing in front of a whirring machine, application engineer Chui Kher Ning, 27, watches it execute her commands to cut out an aluminium mould for a drone part.

The high speed computerised numerical control milling machine is about 50 per cent faster than machines she has worked with, and can cut more complicated shapes.

"The new machines are fun to use and they're different from what I used in school and at my previous job," said Ms Chui, who works at local precision engineering machine supplier Ichi Seiki.

In-depth training for Ms Chui and her colleagues to learn to use the new machines would have been too costly for a small business like Ichi Seiki, which employs 30 staff. But in October, through the Manpower Ministry's Capability Transfer Programme (CTP), it brought in two trainers from Germany to run a three-week intensive course for 11

engineers. The trainers also provide remote support over a 15-month period.

Mr Philip Kia, Ichi Seiki's managing director, said the programme has allowed his firm to provide more thorough training for staff. His engineers now also train staff at local firms to use the new machines.

The CTP, which has been running as a pilot scheme since last October, helps companies bring in foreign specialists to train workers in areas where local expertise is lacking.

It supports 30 per cent to 70 per cent of the training costs - including salaries of expert trainers, living allowance and training equipment - capped at \$300,000 per project.

Other industries using the scheme include pharmaceutical transportation and lift maintenance, said Manpower Minister Lim Swee Say yesterday.

Overseas specialists will teach lift technicians here how to use data analytics in preventive and predictive lift maintenance. Local trainers will also be sent overseas.

Mr Lim also said the ministry can consider funding support of up to 90 per cent, and extending the cap, in exceptional cases where training costs are high and it is crucial to build local expertise.

Mr Low Thia Khiang (Aljunied GRC) asked how outcomes will be measured to ensure the money is well spent. To this, Mr Lim said the ministry will consult sector agencies and industry transformation maps when evaluating the outcomes of projects.

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