

# Building industry to get \$72m boost

Training fund will help it move away from labour-intensive methods

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A \$72 million training fund has been set up to help the building industry move away from labour-intensive methods to more “smart” processes.

The funds, which have been earmarked from June last year to May 2020, will go towards boosting skills in the sector, including financing existing scholarship and sponsorship programmes for students and adults, said National Development Minister Lawrence Wong yesterday.

The 118,000 Singaporeans working in the construction industry, as well as architects and facility managers, will benefit from the training fund.

“The construction industry is rapidly changing, and it is changing all over the world, including in Singapore,” said Mr Wong who, however, added that the changes in the industry were lagging behind those in other sectors such as transport and finance.

He noted that venture funding in building technology was growing and traditional firms were starting to do more to transform how they build, picking up new capabilities in automation, prefabrication, and digital building and design methods.

“To make all these happen, our people are at the heart of this transformation journey. How far we go depends on the quality of the people we have,” said Mr Wong, who was speaking at an



Singaporeans working in the industry will benefit from the training fund. TNP FILE PHOTO

iBuildSG scholarship ceremony at the National University of Singapore.

The \$72 million fund will support an enhanced iBuildSG Scholarship and Sponsorship programme for those seeking academic qualifications on a full-time undergraduate, diploma or Institute of Technical Education (ITE) track.

There were 448 scholarships and sponsorships awarded to polytechnic and ITE students, university graduates and post-graduates yesterday.

The programme partners these students with industry firms so they will have a job in the sponsoring company on graduation.

The firm will also provide on-the-job training programmes and part-time upgrading courses. Previously, this sponsor-

ship programme was open only to polytechnic and ITE graduates.

All those awarded scholarships and sponsorships will receive a \$3,000 training grant to boost their skills and competencies through courses. They will also be encouraged to stay on in the industry with a \$7,000 retention incentive one year after their bond with their sponsoring firm ends.

The existing Building Specialist Sponsorship programme, which supports the training of technical personnel, will also be extended from two to three years. This allows students to attend longer courses, such as part-time Nitec, higher Nitec and post-ITE development courses, said Mr Wong.

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