ANNEX C: SKILLS FRAMEWORK FOR DESIGN

About the Skills Framework

1. The Skills Framework for Design supports the manpower strategies by identifying pivotal jobs in the Design sector, outlining possible career pathways for talent attraction and retention, as well as articulating existing and emerging skills to support the growth and transformation of the sector.

2. While designers are increasingly employed beyond design services, there is a lack of awareness among Singaporeans on the expanded roles that designers play in the economy. The Skills Framework for Design provides information to align stakeholders in human resources, design education and the general public and empower them to leverage opportunities within a shifting employment landscape.

3. Developed by the DesignSingapore Council (Dsg), SkillsFuture Singapore (SSG) and Workforce Singapore (WSG), together with employers, industry associations, union, and education and training providers, the Skills Framework for Design contains four tracks, 25 key job roles, as well as 48 technical and 18 generic skills and competencies. The Skills Framework will enable individuals to make informed decisions on education, training and career development in design. It will provide HR practitioners and employers a common skills language for developing new design talent capabilities, formalising job profiles of existing design employees and retaining top design talent. It will also help training providers update their programmes to suit the needs of the industry.

4. The Skills Framework for Design aims to accelerate the pipeline of design talent ready to meet the demand for new types of roles in the future economy. It is aligned to and supports Dsg’s Design Industry Manpower Plan, which charts strategic directions, initiatives and programmes to support talent development from the young in schools to professionals in the workforce. The twinned goals of the Design Industry Manpower Plan are to nurture:

(a) **Design talents with transdisciplinary skillsets**: These designers have specialist design domains as well as skillsets in non-design disciplines such as business and technology. They can integrate these skills to create new products and services that meet industry needs; and
(b) A workforce with design sensibilities: This design-empowered workforce can apply design-led approaches to solve complex issues, drive business transformation and co-create better living environments.

5. Some of the emerging skills covered in the Skills Framework for Design include:
   (a) Business Model Innovation – Identify and capitalise on untapped areas of business opportunities by proposing and instituting innovative changes to existing business models;
   (b) Content Development and Strategy – Brainstorm, ideate and utilise writing strategies and plans to maximise user engagement;
   (c) Creative Entrepreneurship – Develop and inspire the creation of creative or intellectual capital to generate activities for business success
   (d) Design Sustainability and Ethics Management – Create designs that consider the limitations, regulations and guidelines on intellectual property, sustainability, diversity, inclusivity and accessibility, in line with behaviours and actions which are generally accepted in the profession;
   (e) Interaction Design Practice – Develop digital and/or physical interactions across technology, products, space and services media to enhance relationships and engagement with users; and
   (f) Systems Thinking – Identify, analyse and evaluate relationships among systems’ parts, with the use of simulation tools and systems thinking techniques and frameworks to understand situations and drive change for improvements

6. To help aspiring individuals and in-service employees acquire skills necessary for various job roles, the Skills Framework for Design also provides information on training programmes for skills acquisition and upgrading.

7. SSG encourages enterprises that are keen to learn how the Skills Framework for Design can be adopted to enhance their Human Resource (HR) practices to register for the following:
   (a) Workshops for HR practitioners, line managers and leaders to understand the intent and purpose of the Skills Framework for Design, comprehend its components, and determine how it can be used to improve HR practices and support better business outcomes. Interested enterprises may sign up at https://tinyurl.com/SkillsFrameworkWorkshop; and
(b) **Clinics** educating participants on how to use the Skills Framework for Design to address real-life HR issues.

8. In addition, there are other support available such as grants and downloadable HR templates.

**Rolling out the Skills Framework**

9. For a start, seven organisations have committed to adopt the Skills Framework for Design. They include global companies, small and medium-sized enterprises, a public service agency, a corporate training provider as well as an IHL. These early adopters are Aleph, Dsg, Foolproof, METHODOLOGY, Ngee Ann Polytechnic, PALO IT and STUCK. These seven organisations have sought to improve their current HR practices and programmes by referring to the Skills Framework for Design. They aim to achieve the following objectives:
   
   (a) **Hire and attract the right design talent** – Refine job descriptions and hiring processes to better align talent acquisition with business requirements;

   (b) **Create or update programmes to instil critical design skills in existing staff** – Revamp internal training and development programmes to ensure employees are equipped with essential design skills and competencies; and

   (c) **Integrate design as part of their organisational culture** – Create a conducive work environment that encourages employees to actively update and apply their design-related skills in the organisation. In so doing, develop more user-centred and desirable products, services and experiences.

10. More details about the early adopters are as follows:
   
   (a) **Aleph** is a creative technology company specialising in research, strategy, design, and communications. Founded in Singapore in 2016, Aleph is now made up of more than 450 craftspeople of diverse backgrounds. Aleph maintains its boutique culture – working closely with client partners to understand a challenge and to deliver iconic and transformative solutions around humanised insights, experience design, and technology solutions for future-oriented clients.

   “Ever since we were introduced to the Skills Framework for Design, it has been our inspiration to attract candidates and future-proof our design team.
With the macroeconomic context as its backbone, the Skills Framework will help us generate job descriptions with clearer candidate expectations and create better structured career maps for new and existing staff,” said Mr Poon Wen Ang, Design Director/Chief Opportunity Officer, Aleph.

(b) The vision of the **DesignSingapore Council** (Dsg) is for Singapore to be an innovation-driven economy and a loveable city through design by 2025. As the national agency that promotes design, its mission is to develop the design sector, help Singapore use design for innovation and growth, and make life better in this UNESCO Creative City of Design. The Dsg is a subsidiary of the Singapore Economic Development Board.

“The DesignSingapore Council hopes to show how a public service agency can use the Skills Framework for Design to enhance staff development while shaping organisational culture. This first-hand experience will give us useful insights for improving the Skills Framework, allowing us to walk our talk as a Council. We hope our adoption will encourage other public service agencies to explore how the Skills Framework could positively influence their culture and talent development strategy,” said Ms Emily Ong, Deputy Executive Director, DesignSingapore Council.

(c) **Foolproof** is an experience design company started with the goal of better representing customers in the design of digital products and services. The company supports partners across the design lifecycle, from shaping product and service ideas to designing and deploying digital experiences to tuning commercial performance in the long-term. Foolproof is part of the Zensar group, which is a global digital and technology services provider, and works across over 40 markets with offices in Singapore and the United Kingdom.

“For a specialist experience design company like Foolproof, talent development is critical to remain on the cutting edge of design thought and capability. The Skills Framework for Design allows us to have a shared language with the design industry and will improve our ability to attract and develop world-leading design talent. We will start with aligning our job descriptions to include the critical work functions, skills and competencies outlined in the Skills Framework,” said Ms Katherine Reyes, Managing Director, Foolproof.
(d) **METHODOLOGY** is a design education company that believes that design can make a positive difference to the world. The team seeks to curate and share the world’s best creative ideas and design processes by collaborating with global leaders at the forefront of design, craft and innovation to develop education programs, workshops, conferences and media.

WSG, METHODOLOGY and Dsg had recently launched the Professional Conversion Programme (PCP) for User Experience (UX)/User Interface (UI) Digital Design and UX/UI Spatial Design Professionals which is referenced from the Skills Framework. Launched in June 2019, the PCP for UX/UI allows mid-career professionals to develop industry-validated skills and gain entry into the industry as UX/UI designers.

The Skills Framework for Design will help us have stronger discussions with clients on how to position design talent within Singapore’s economic landscape. METHODOLOGY has aligned its new Professional Conversion Programme for UX/UI Digital and Spatial designers with the Skills Framework. Participants in the programme can therefore evolve their design careers to meet industry demands,” said Mr Brian Ling and Mr Jackson Tan, Co-Founders and Directors, METHODOLOGY.

(e) **Ngee Ann Polytechnic** (NP) was established in 1963 and is today one of Singapore’s leading institutions of higher learning with more than 13,000 students enrolled in over 40 courses across nine academic schools, including the School of Design & Environment. It seeks to develop students with a passion for learning, values for life and competencies to thrive in a global workplace.

"Ngee Ann Polytechnic’s School of Design & Environment used the Skills Framework for Design as a guide to develop our new Diploma in Design. As we begin rolling out the curriculum for the Diploma, the Skills Framework will keep us focused on the essential skills we want to impart to our students and ensure that the curriculum is relevant to industry needs,” said Mrs Pang-Eng Peck Hong, Director, School of Design & Environment, Ngee Ann Polytechnic.
f) Established in 2009, **PALO IT** is a fast-growing consultancy of Agile Software builders with offices in Singapore, Hong Kong, France, Australia and Mexico. The firm is an expert in enabling innovation and digital transformation through agile methodologies and design thinking. The PALO IT team consists of Full Stack Developers, Designers, Scrum Masters, Agile Coaches, DevOps Engineers and specialist roles such as Data Scientists and Blockchain Experts.

“PALO IT’s business – with its focus on Innovation and Transformation – is uniquely aligned with the Skills Framework for Design. We will use it to enhance our talent and development roadmap, incorporating relevant skillsets required by the market to create customised training programmes for our consultants to succeed,” said Mr Eugene Yang, Business Innovation Director, PALO IT.

(g) **STUCK** is a multi-disciplinary design studio that fluidly bridges physical products, digital interaction and user experiences. Since its founding in 2010, STUCK has helped define market-shifting innovations across strategy, industrial design and UI/UX for bold start-ups and forward-thinking brands around the world. The studio’s progressive work has garnered over 30 international awards, including the Red Dot, iF, IDSA and the prestigious President*s Design Award.

“As a design-centric company, STUCK is using the Skills Framework for Design as a guide to catalyse company-wide discussions about common goal setting and career growth. We are aligning our internal skills assessment and development mapping with our designers using the Skills Framework,” said Mr Yong Jieryu, Co-Founder/Director, STUCK.

For more information on the Skills Framework for Design, please visit: [https://www.skillsfuture.sg/skills-framework/design](https://www.skillsfuture.sg/skills-framework/design)