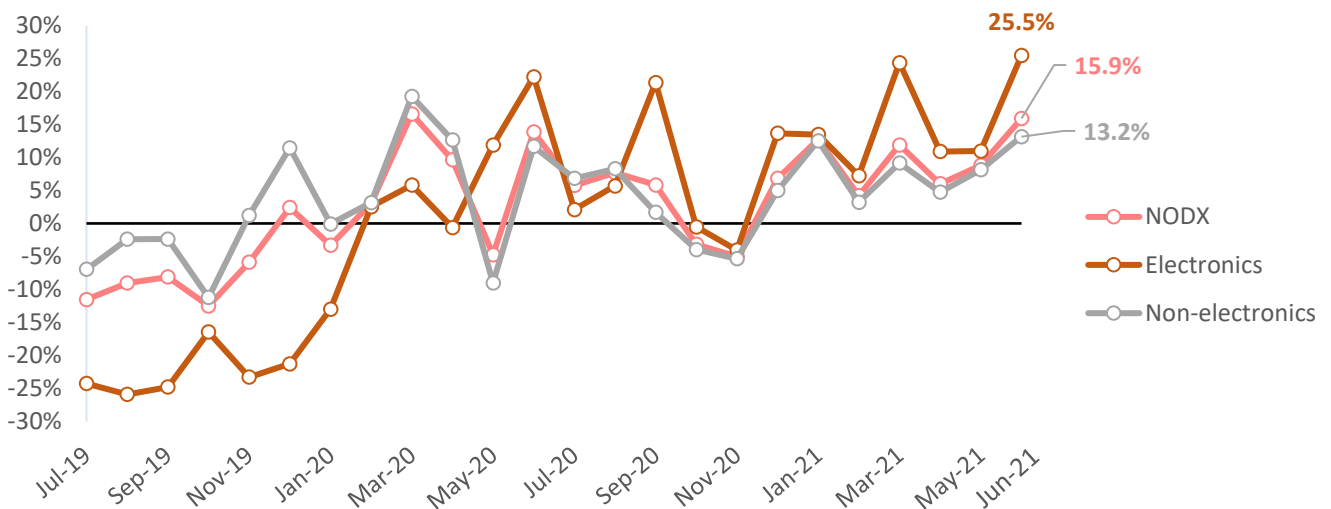


JUN 2021

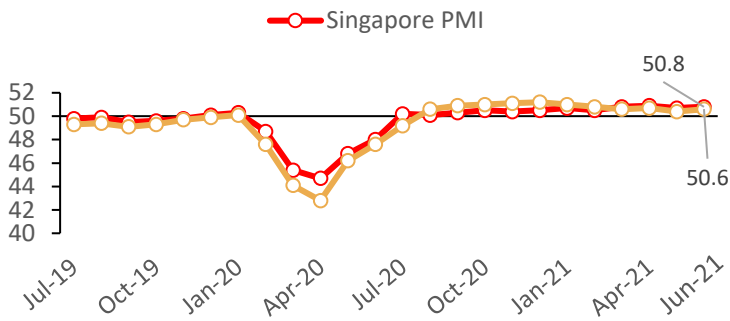
In June, Singapore strengthened its international connections by advancing and completing agreements with the Pacific Alliance, Britain, Vietnam, and the European Union in the areas of trade, digital economy, and aviation. Singapore also proves itself to be at the global top in international arbitration and education and continues to strive for leadership in digital banking, advanced manufacturing, and sustainable development.

Non-Oil Domestic Export (NODX)



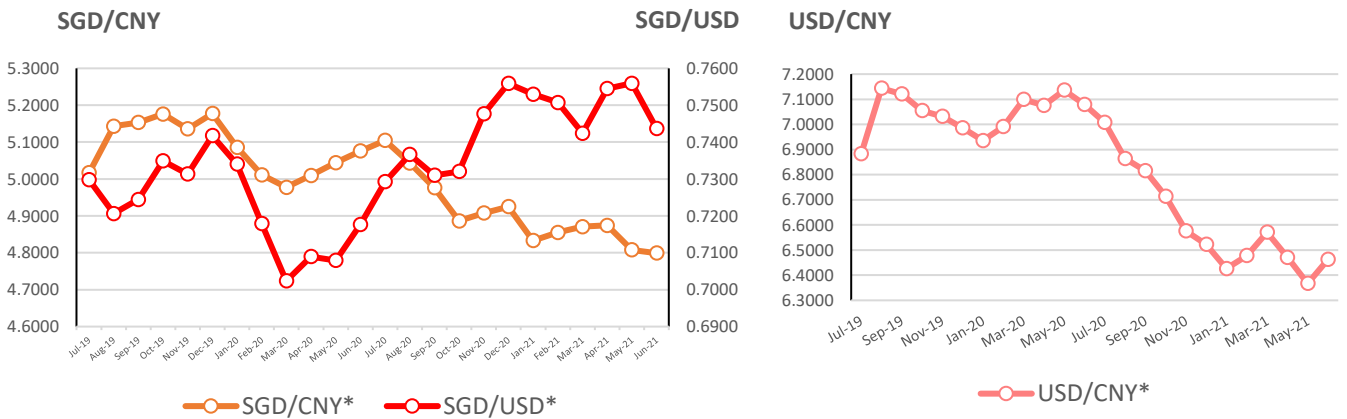
- Trend:** Overall NODX, electronics and non-electronics exports all increased in Jun 21, continuing the increasing trend since Apr 21. Growth rates of all 3 categories were significantly higher in Jun 21 compared to May 21:
 - NODX rose by 15.9%, higher than the 8.8% in May
 - Electronics rose by 25.5%, higher than the 11.0% in May
 - Non-electronics rose by 13.2%, higher than the 8.1% in May
- Main contributors to growth (electronics):** PCs, ICs and diodes & transistors, which expanded by 130.2%, 14.9% and 32.2% respectively
- Main contributors to growth (non-electronics):** Specialised machinery, petrochemicals and jewellery, the first two expanded by 43.2%, 51.2% respectively
- Going forward:** Global demand for semiconductor chips and electronics products remains strong. NODX to China (up 27.6%) and Taiwan (up 41.4%) contributed significantly to the overall rise in NODX, suggesting that the recovery of Singapore's trade with key partners in Asia continues even amidst recent surges in COVID-19 infections. Both factors lead to a more optimistic NODX outlook for 2021 overall.

Purchasing Managers Index (PMI)



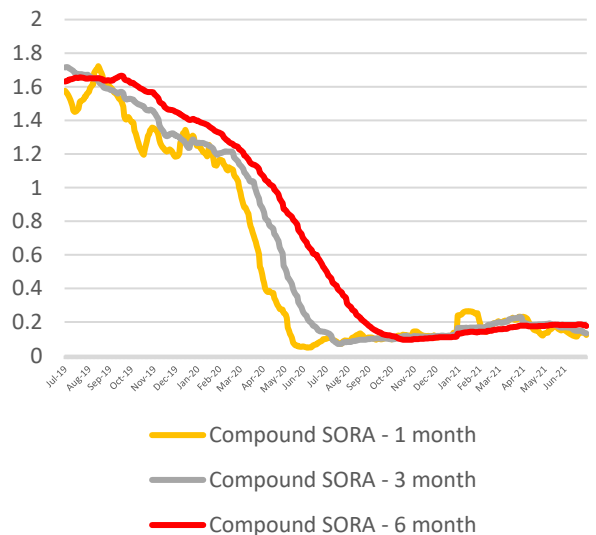
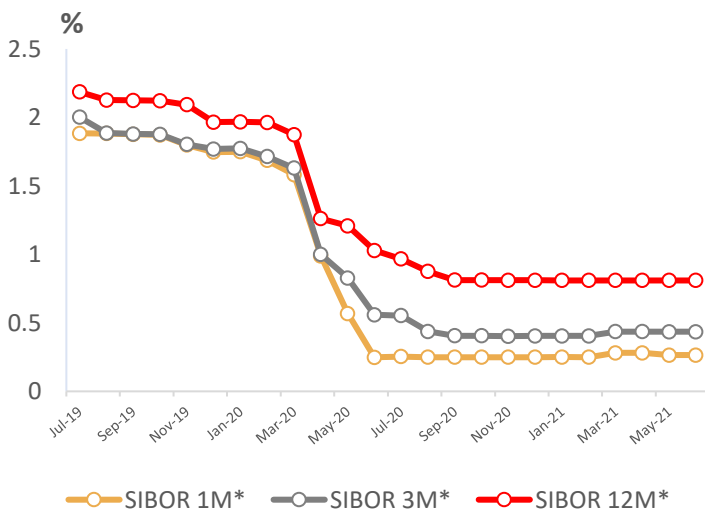
- **Trend:** PMI remains stable above the 50-point mark in Jun 21, with Singapore PMI increasing slightly from 50.7 in May to 50.8 in June and electronics PMI increasing from May's 50.4 to June's 50.6.
- **Going forward:** A net weighted balance of 38% of manufacturing firms anticipate a favourable business situation to continue for the remainder of 2021.

Foreign Exchange Rates (FX)



- **SGD/USD:** SGD depreciated against USD in June 21 (at a rate of 0.7437).
- **SGD/CNY:** SGD depreciated against CNY in June 21 (at a rate of 4.7992).
- **USD/CNY:** USD appreciated against CNY in June 21 (at a rate of 6.4631).

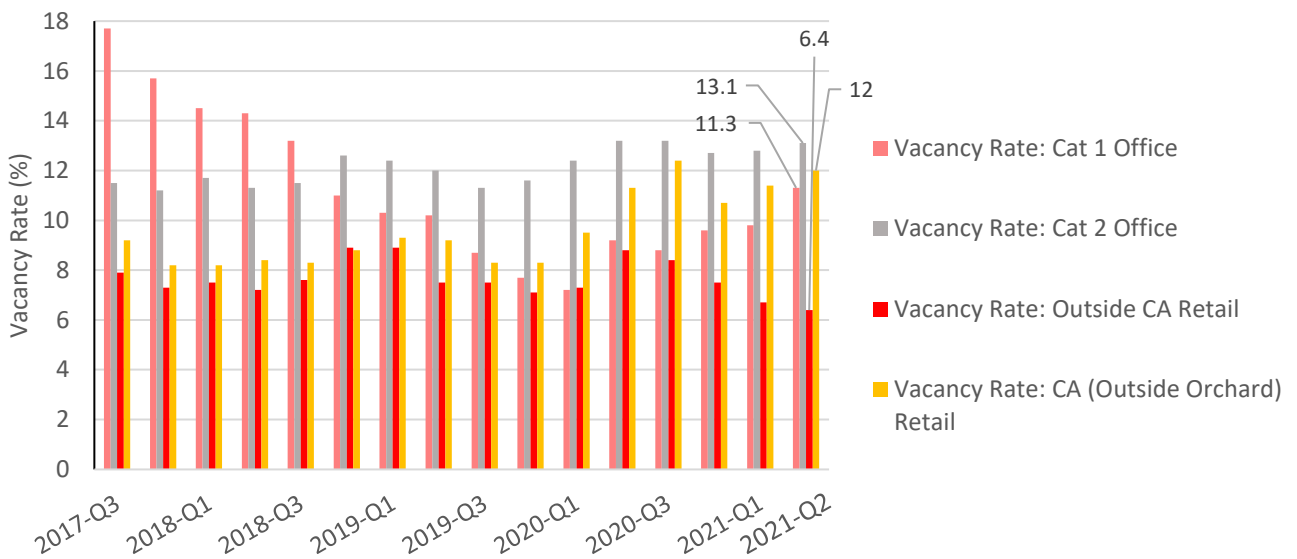
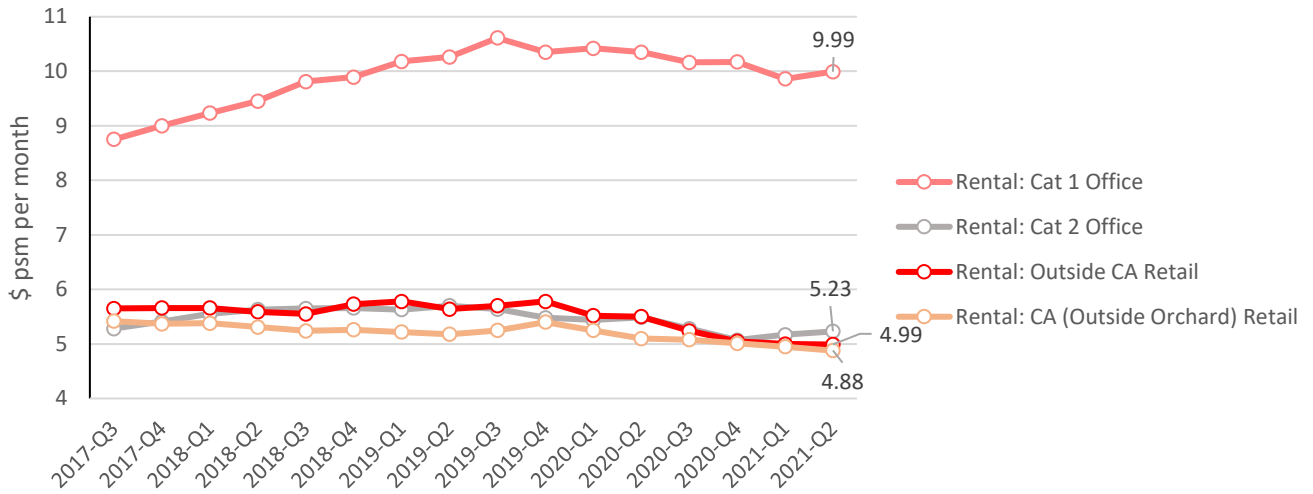
Singapore Interbank Offered Rate (SIBOR) Singapore Overnight Rate Average (SORA)



- **SIBOR Trend:** The 1-month SIBOR, 3-months SIBOR, and the 12-months SIBOR remain stable at 0.265, 0.436, and 0.811 respectively.
- **SORA Trend:** All three compounded SORA rates have stabilised to the 0.2 range.

Median Rentals and Vacancy Rates

for Offices and Retails



- **Median rental:** Median rental of Cat 1 offices (located in core business areas in Downtown Core and Orchard Planning Area) and Cat 2 offices (localities not included in Cat 1) both increased in Q2. Median rental of retail space in Outside Central Area (CA) and retail space in CA (outside Orchard) median rental both decreased in Q2.
- **Vacancy rate:** The vacancy rate of Cat 1 offices, Cat 2 offices, and CA (Outside Orchard) Retail all increased in Q2. The vacancy rate of Outside CA Retail decreased in Q2.
- **Analysis:** The increasing trend in median rental for office spaces is due to the increase in demand for offices, primarily from technology firms, financial institutions, and investment funds. By taking up spaces vacated by banks now, these firms were able to secure lower rents during the pandemic to expand operations at higher quality office spaces. This flight to quality explains the relatively larger increase in median rental for Cat 1 offices than Cat 2 offices. In addition, economic recovery combined with a steady vaccination roll-out contributes to a return to in-person work. The simultaneous increase in vacancy rates for offices may be due to an increase in supply. Occupied office space shrank by 23,000 sq m net lettable area (NLA) while the stock of office space grew by 34,000 sq m NLA. Cushman & Wakefield expects rents to increase by 1% to 3% in the second half of 2021.
- The general decrease in median rental and increase in the vacancy rate of retail spaces is due to reduced demand for physical retail spaces amidst the crowd restrictions during phase 2 (heightened alert). The shift to online shopping combined with continued COVID-19 restrictions may further extend this decreasing trend in median rental and increase in retail space vacancy rate in the rest of 2021. The slight decrease in the vacancy rate of Outside CA retail (from 6.7% to 6.4%) may be due to the shift in physical shopping from CA to heartland malls.

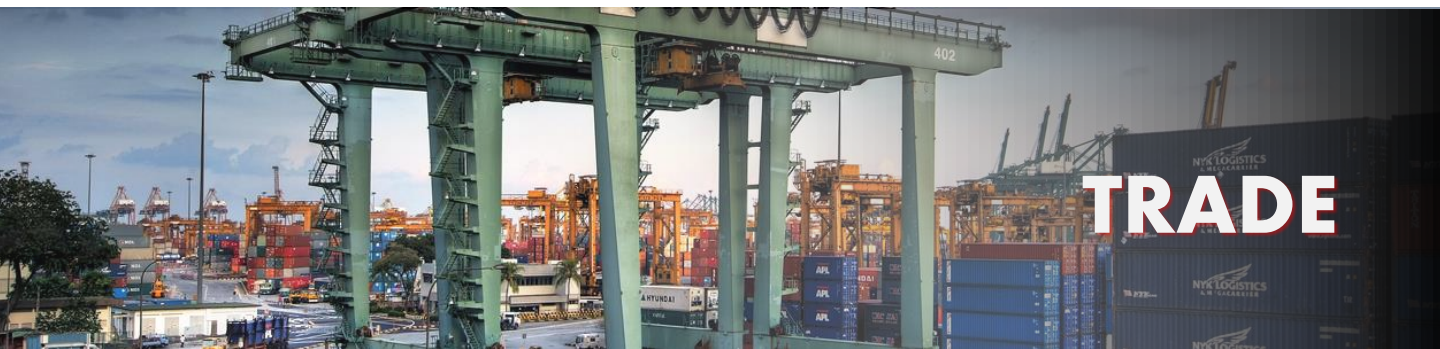
KEY POLICY UPDATES

- **Extension of Jobs Support Scheme (JSS), Covid-19 Recovery Grant (Temporary), hawkers' subsidies, and Food Delivery Booster Package:** The Jobs Support Scheme (JSS) has been extended to cover 16 May to 25 July. This table summarises the updates:

Sectors with JSS enhancement	JSS Support for Phases 2 and 3 (Heightened Alert) 16 May – 20 June	Proposed new JSS Support	
		3 weeks from 21 June – 11 July	2 weeks from 12 – 25 July
Closed sectors or sectors¹ with enhanced safe management measures <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Food and Beverage (F&B) - Gyms and fitness studios - Performing Arts & Arts Education 	50%	50%	10%
Significantly affected sectors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Retail - Cinemas - Museums, art galleries, historical sites - Family entertainment - Affected personal care² 	30%	30%	

Source: IRAS JSS Webpage

For more details on the JSS: <https://tinyurl.com/JSS-Details>



- **Formal signing of the Pacific Alliance-Singapore Free Trade Agreement (PASFTA) by end-2021:** The Pacific Alliance-Singapore Free Trade Agreement (PASFTA) will be formally signed by Singapore by the end of 2021. The Pacific Alliance (PA) is an economic bloc of four Latin American countries—Chile, Colombia, Mexico, and Peru which form the 7th largest exporter globally. In 2019, Singapore's trade in goods and services with PA was 33.2% (\$6.1 billion) and 28.2% (\$2.6 billion) of the total trade in goods and services respectively with Latin America. In 2020, Singapore's commercial activity with the PA grew despite global trade disruption.

The agreement will benefit cooperation in e-commerce, customs, trade facilitation, and maritime services among others. Singapore currently has separate trade agreements with Chile and Peru and a digital economy partnership with Chile. Through the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP), Singapore also has an existing trade pact with Chile, Mexico, and Peru. The PASFTA is expected to unlock greater market access benefits from Colombia while improving engagement with the other three countries. It also signals that Singapore remains strongly supportive of multilateralism.

- **Britain to be inducted into the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP):** The members of the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) have agreed to the inclusion of Britain into the pact. Singapore will act as a vice-chair, along with Australia, as part of a working group chaired by Japan to oversee the induction. Britain's exports to CPTPP member countries is expected to increase by 65% to around \$68 billion by 2030. Both Britain and Singapore are expected to work closely together in the digital economy and green finance due to the country's expertise in these sectors.

- **Mini Report — CPTPP:** The CPTPP is an agreement between 11 countries—Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore, and Vietnam. It has been ratified by all member countries except Brunei, Chile, Peru, and Malaysia. The pact's key benefits include:


- Elimination of tariffs for 94% of Singapore's exports to CPTPP markets
- Allows for regional cumulation and has alternative origin criteria for most products
- Member countries' markets will be fully open to foreign service suppliers unless exceptions were specially set up
- Investment protection and guarantees, as well as government procurement opportunities

The CPTPP will focus on supporting trade in new sectors of intellectual property and e-commerce. IP concerns, searching, registering, and protecting trademarks and patents will be easier with the implementation of the agreement. CPTPP countries will be committed to consumer protection laws and will no longer require companies to set up local data servers before allowing market access. Cross-border data flows will also be protected.

CPTPP will be geared towards supporting Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs). They will enjoy lower business costs and will be able to integrate into Pacific Rim supply chains. Each CPTPP country will also set up SME-friendly websites to make information on cross-border standards and regulations accessible.

For more information on the CPTPP: <https://tinyurl.com/CPTPP-Details>

- **Singapore's maritime trade regains momentum:** Container throughput grew by 4.6% (year-on-year) from January to May in 2021. It had fallen by 0.9% (year-on-year) in 2020. Nonetheless, 11 shipping groups had established business in Singapore while eight maritime companies expanded their business in 2020—demonstrating that investment in the sector remained resilient during the pandemic. Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore (MPA) continues to build Singapore's maritime capabilities. This includes the digitalisation of existing port operations (e.g. digitalPORT@SG) and providing an avenue for technological innovation in the sector through Smart Port Challenge. The challenge is organised as part of a collaboration between MPA and NUS Enterprise and issues problem statements to technology start-ups and awards \$50,000 to select finalists for piloting their projects. Under the Mint-Startup grant, MPA will also utilise a total of \$10 million to invest in marine tech companies. In addition, \$50 million in co-investment funds will be available for start-ups through partnerships between MPA and venture capital firms. MPA will also nurture maritime human capital by attracting more local talent into the sector, upskilling existing workers and improving digitalisation through partnerships with employers, the Singapore Shipping Association, trade unions, and the Singapore Maritime Officers' Union.



BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT

- **Singapore increasingly a key arbitration centre:** Singapore tied with London as the most preferred seat of arbitration in the world in the 2021 International Arbitration Survey by Queen Mary University and law firm White & Case. The Ministry of Law (MinLaw) noted that arbitration is increasingly chosen for cross-border dispute resolution and reported that Singapore International Arbitration Centre (SIAC) received a total of 674 unrelated cases in 2020. This is significantly higher than the 479 cases in 2019. A dispute involving technology giant Amazon and Indian billionaire Mukesh Ambani over a US\$3.4 billion deal is one of the cases registered with SIAC, demonstrating the parties' confidence in SIAC to handle significant cases. However, MinLaw also expects caseloads to reduce as the increase in cases was in part due to COVID-19-related disputes. Nonetheless, the courts have set the foundation to support supervision and efficient enforcement of awards in Singapore. This will help cement Singapore's continued leadership as an arbitration centre.



LABOUR MARKET

- **Singapore's population size continues to shrink, but is more well-educated:** The Census of Population 2020 reports that Singapore's population grew by 1.1% per year over the last decade. This is the lowest growth rate since Singapore's independence. People aged 65 years and above increased from 9% to 15.2% of the resident population across the decade from 2010 to 2020. However, the number of residents aged 25 years and above who possessed post-secondary or higher qualifications increased by around 12% from 46.5% in 2010 to 58.3% in 2020.
- **Local universities achieve highs in global rankings:** Among Asia's top universities, Nanyang Technological University (NTU) and National University of Singapore (NUS) ranked fifth and third respectively in the rankings by Times Higher Education while they ranked as Asia's best universities in the Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) rankings. NTU is also first in the global ranking of young universities by Times Higher Education. In the global QS rankings, NTU and NUS are ranked 12th and 11th respectively. For all the rankings, NUS has retained its high position, while NTU has persistently moved up its position. In QS's global ranking by specific subjects, NTU's materials science programme and NUS's petroleum engineering programme ranked first. Both universities credit their strong showing to a strong learning environment, high levels of research impact and industry interactions, and an international faculty. Both have also committed to strengthening interdisciplinary learning in the future.
- **Priming the workforce for the needs of the tech industry:** Cloud computing services provider Amazon Web Services (AWS) concluded in a study that Singapore will need 1.2 million (i.e. 55% more) workers with digital skills in 2025 compared to this year. The skillsets in-demand include cloud architecture design, cyber security, software operations support, large-scale data modelling, and web, software and game development. Singapore currently has a foundation to nurture digital talent, as evidenced by the local computer science cohort tripling in size over the past five to 10 years. Tech companies are also building on this by committing to around 10,000 training and job placements meant to develop digital skills in the local population. Facebook, Dell, IBM, and AWS are some of the companies that agreed to support the skills development. AWS has implemented a three to 12 months long training programme for polytechnic and university graduates. Last year, it also collaborated with DBS bank to create the DBS x AWS DeepRacer League programme, which trained 3000 employees in artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning skills that were used to programme autonomous race cars. In addition, AWS created a cloud computing curriculum for Montfort Secondary School and Regent Secondary School in 2020, which is now offered to all secondary schools. With the combination of a mature digital talent pool and Singapore's connectivity and stability, the country is positioned to be a key launchpad for leading tech companies into South-east Asia.

- **Remuneration trends in local start-ups:** A survey conducted by Aon and SGInnovate compared the remuneration trends of Singapore-based start-ups with US-based ones. It was found that local start-ups pay a lower base salary. Professionals and managers are respectively paid 32% and 12% lower than US employees. However, the base pay for professionals is higher than non-start-ups in Singapore. It was highlighted by Aon that the Singapore-US pay gap is likely to persist for five to six more years as the lower talent cost remains key for Singapore start-ups to attract investment from VCs.

In contrast, local start-ups tend to award higher performance bonuses and cash-based incentives while US start-ups prefer equity compensation. To promote an ownership culture and conserve cash reserves, local start-ups however have also begun shifting to equity compensation. While only 6% of start-ups with less than \$33.2 million of invested capital currently have structured equity plans, equity ownership is gradually being offered for staff below managerial roles in the company hierarchy.

- **More accessible primary healthcare system for migrant workers:** 13 semi-permanent medical centres were set up after the COVID-19 outbreak in migrant worker dorms last year. The Ministry of Manpower (MOM) will formalise these centres into a “hub-and-spoke” network at six geographical sectors (see Fig 1), each equipped with a regional centre, at least two mobile clinical teams, and telemedicine and medical transport services. There will also be three on-site centres at PPT Lodge 1B, Sungei Tengah Lodge and Tuas View Dormitory. The medical centres will be first-line outpatient facilities and be capable of testing and isolation. Healthcare providers may submit proposals to run one or more of the nine medical centres for up to five years. Providers should ensure accessibility to migrant workers, such as by having translation services and doctors from the workers’ home countries, and minimise workers’ self-funded medical expenses. MOM is also reviewing migrant workers’ medical insurance coverage and will test out philanthropy financing for one of the regional medical centres.

Healthcare by geographical sectors

A new primary healthcare system is being developed to enhance migrant workers’ access to healthcare and reduce the risks of future outbreaks. Each geographical sector will have at least one medical centre. Here are the current and tentative future locations of the medical centres.

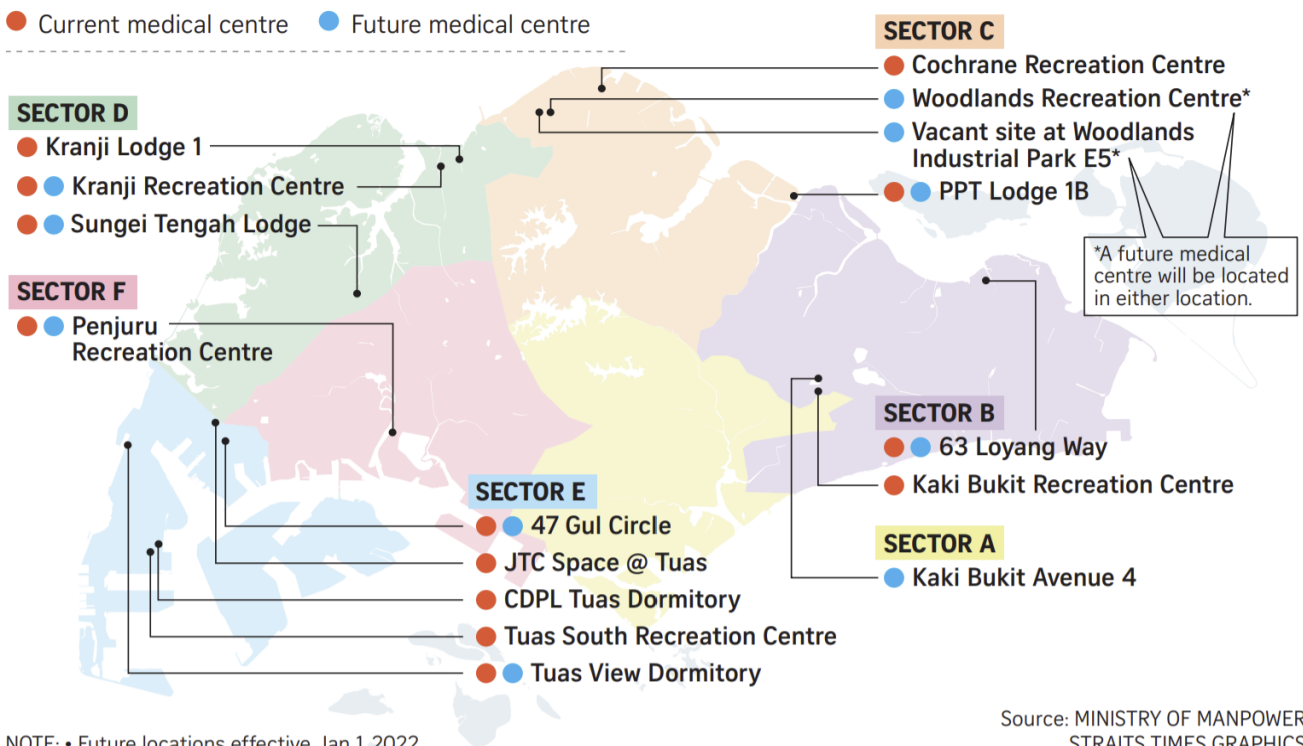


Fig 1: Map of New Primary Healthcare System

Source: Straits Times



FINANCE

- **Singapore Exchange Regulation (SGX RegCo) expands its enforcement powers :** From August 1, Singapore Exchange Regulation (SGX RegCo) will have additional powers to*:
 - Issue a public reprimand and require an issuer to comply with specified conditions. These actions are **non-appealable**.
 - Prohibit an issuer from accessing the facilities of the market for a specified period or until the fulfilment of specified conditions. This is **appealable** before the Listings Appeals Committee.
 - Prohibit any issuer from appointing or reappointing a director or an executive officer (exercisable when the director or executive officer is being investigated or subject of proceedings for contraventions) for up to 3 years, and require a director or an executive officer to resign. This is **appealable** before the Listings Appeals Committee.
 - Mandate all issuers to establish and maintain a whistleblowing protection and anonymity policy. The **policy must be in effect from January 1 2021** and details on how this policy has been **complied with must be included in annual reports published from January 1 2022**.

*Bullet points below are quoted from <https://tinyurl.com/RegCo-Expands>

- **HSBC pivots wealth businesses to Asia, with Singapore as focus:** HSBC stated recently that it was pivoting from its American retail banking market to the Asian market. As its total wealth balances in Singapore has grown at double-digits per year since 2018, and Singapore continues to attract investors from South-east Asia, Hong Kong, mainland China, India, and the Middle East, the bank affirms Singapore as an international wealth hub central to its wealth business expansion in Asia. HSBC plans to hire about 5,000 customer-facing staff in Singapore, Hong Kong, and mainland China over the next five years. HSBC also aims to increase its digital capabilities to support a human-digital hybrid client servicing model as clients increasingly want to independently manage their investments.

- **DBS joins UOB and HSBC in digitalisation of bond issuance and trading:** In April, HSBC completed a digital bond issuance on digital asset exchange Marketnode, together with a \$1 billion perpetual securities issue by Singtel. UOB also completed the issuance of \$600 million in perpetual capital securities through Marketnode in June. By pricing DBS Digital Exchange's first security token offering and launching its digital bond issuance platform, DBS joins the two banks in digital bond issuance and trading.

In May, DBS first priced the \$15 million DBS Digital Bond that will be traded in board lots of \$10,000 with a six-month tenor and a 0.6% per year coupon rate. It was offered by private placement on DBS Digital Exchange. In June, DBS launched its fully automated fixed income execution (FIX) platform, FIX Marketplace. This platform enables issuers to choose between directly issuing their bonds or go through dealers to generate transactions for listing and trading on DBS Digital Exchange. The platform will also facilitate subscription and allocation on primary market issuances for investors. Keppel Corporation and Phillip Securities were among the first issuers to use this platform to issue bonds.

- **Electronic signature solutions offered by banks:** DBS launched its DBS DigiSign electronic signatures function for international customers in 2020 and has integrated its retail products closely with Singpass, Singapore's digital identity system for authentication. OCBC's retail and corporate banking customers digital signatures have also been allowed for transactions since last year. The bank will also implement authentication ability for cross-border transactions with Singpass this year. Standard Chartered has also started offering digital token-based authentication for retail servicing transactions in 2020 and has developed its own electronic signature solution, Standard Chartered eSign. With the launch of a year-long trial for select retail and corporate clients to use Singpass to confirm transactions and applications, UOB joins in on the effort to digitalise identity validation in banking operations. The bank also plans to offer electronic signature capability for its regional services from 2022 by using Singpass equivalents of other countries and utilising systems like two-factor authentication where national digital identity systems are unavailable.

- **Singapore takes fourth place in the 2021 Global Fintech Rankings:** In the recent 2021 Global Fintech ranking compiled by Findexable and Mambu, Singapore dropped by one place and six places in the global and city rankings respectively to the 4th and 10th position. However, Singapore remains top among the Asia-Pacific countries and retains its strong growth factors for fintech. Fintech start-ups generally face the challenge of fundraising in comparison to established fintech firms during the pandemic. Therefore, these fintech start-ups are seeking venture capital funding at established financial hubs, such as Singapore. Singapore also facilitates safe test piloting by limiting the scale of innovation releases by fintech companies in exchange for less stringent licensing rules. The local fintech talent pool is well established as the fintech industry in Singapore began in the mid-2010s in which initial funding was provided by the government to develop innovation labs in Singapore.



- **Omni-Plus System (OPS) leverages Singapore's connections and government programmes to achieve strong growth :** Omni-Plus System (OPS), a local raw polymer materials designer and seller, made its initial public offering (IPO) on the Tokyo Stock Exchange in June. The firm sells to Dyson, Braun, and Nokia, and projects a 42% continued growth in sales to US\$355.2 million this fiscal year. OPS attributes its success to the global partnerships that a Singapore-based firm can secure as many international companies are drawn by Singapore's robust intellectual property system and the workforce's English proficiency to base their research and development (R&D) here. As many Japanese plastics manufacturers lack this global connection, OPS hopes to be a bridge between the East-West markets. It also benefitted from its partnership with the government to build its Engineering Centre in 2018 and Enterprise Singapore's Scale-up SG programme to expand its market. The Engineering Centre has enabled OPS to quickly formulate and test materials in-house and improves its responsiveness to client needs. For more on the Scale-up SG programme: <https://tinyurl.com/Scale-Up-Details>
- **Indonesia's technological park gains special economic zone status:** Nongsa Digital Park has been granted special economic zone (SEZ) status to facilitate investments and job creation. The park was meant to help develop Batam into a digital bridge between Singapore and Indonesia. The majority of its 100 plus companies are based in Singapore and provides Singapore's tech sector with access to Indonesia's youthful and sizeable workforce.
- **New digital manufacturing lab set up:** An \$18 million digital manufacturing laboratory has been jointly set up by Agency for Science, Technology and Research (A*Star) and manufacturing software company Arcstone. The lab will develop technologies that improve factory productivity and efficiency. This partnership aims to develop technologies to automate the monitoring of the manufacturing processes across supply chains. Information collected on carbon footprint and quality assurance will be able to benefit consumers and companies respectively. The lab will also focus on creating intuitive user-interfaces so that other local small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) may easily adopt digital manufacturing in their production process. This is one of the initiatives that is expected to contribute to Singapore's overarching ambition to shift towards higher-value manufacturing.
- **New Jurong Island Bio-factory improves Singapore's green manufacturing capabilities:** A 10ha manufacturing plant by specialty chemicals and advanced materials company Arkema has entered its final construction phase. The plant will use castor beans to produce polyamide 11, which can then be used for 3d printing, electronics etc. The factory is expected to create up to 200 new job positions in business, software, and manufacturing-related roles as well as further develop the Singapore workforce's green manufacturing skillsets.
- **Semiconductor firms increase capacity to meet chip shortages:** Global Foundries Singapore has doubled its annual capital investment to expand its production capacity. It has invested together with the Economic Development Board (EDB) and customers a total of \$5.4 billion to build a new manufacturing facility that is expected to reach full capacity by 2024. The new facility will bring the firm's Singapore production capacity to 1.5 million wafers per year and is expected to create 1000 new jobs. The facility will support GlobalFoundries's clients in the automotive, 5G mobility, and secure device sectors.

Semiconductor wafer equipment manufacturer NexGen Wafer Systems is similarly upgrading its facilities to increase production by 25% and increase hiring in roles like software development, electrical and mechanical engineering. Equipment maker Component Technology has also placed orders to increase its components stock. However, these manufacturers note that capacity building would require time in which GlobalFoundries forecast 12 to 18 months to address existing demands. In addition, an insufficiently skilled workforce to operate the additional machinery poses a challenge in increasing capacity. However, it is crucial for manufacturers to invest in capacity building to avoid being reconfigured out of the supply chain should electronics makers seek alternative fabricators to meet demand.



- **Singapore and Vietnam agree to speed up the development of digital economy agreement:** Singapore and Vietnam will set up joint working groups to facilitate the development of a digital economy agreement. The two countries have also agreed to expand cooperation to cyber security and other sustainable economy areas. Both will also mutually recognise health certificates to ensure the travel resumption process may be smooth.
- **\$3.8 billion invested in public sector digitalisation:** Government Technology Agency (GovTech) announced that \$3.8 billion, a near 10% increase in funding compared to the previous financial year, has been designated for information technology (ICT) procurement in FY2021. \$500 million will be dedicated to artificial intelligence (AI) projects, including the development of an AI marking system that will be used to check language errors for non-examination assessments at the upper primary and secondary levels. By 2030, the system may be expanded to other subjects. Meanwhile \$2.7 billion will be for the 250 projects on upgrading digital services. 70% of eligible systems are planned to be brought online by March 31, 2024. Overall, 83% of the ICT contracts will be open to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs); SMEs with lower financial grading can bid for projects involving smaller systems.
- **Local firms fined for personal data lapses:** Companies handling personal data should consider implementing reasonable security measures to protect the data and minimise risk factors (such as avoid password sharing across staff, randomising passwords, two-factor authentication). For failure to protect personal data, the following companies were fined by the Personal Data Protection Commission (PDPC):
 - **HMI Institute of Health Sciences:** \$35,000 for knowingly leaving a vulnerability open that resulted in a ransomware attack affecting the data of 98,000 Ministry of Defence staff and Singapore Armed Forces servicemen
 - **Webcada:** \$25,000 for a ransomware attack affecting the data of 520,000 customers of its clients' shopping websites
 - **ST Logistics:** \$8000 for a potential data breach of 2,400 Mindef and SAF staff
 - **Larsen and Toubro Infotech's Singapore branch:** \$7000 for disclosing 13 past job applicants' details through emails



TRANSPORTATION

- **Cars: on electric vehicles, driverless vehicles and used cars:** SMRT Strides, a subsidiary of SMRT has signed a memorandum of understanding with China's DST Electric Vehicle Rental. The latter will supply electric vehicles (EVs) for Strides Transportation's leasing business. Bain & Company points out that though ASEAN countries have a relatively slow EV adoption, annual investment in passenger EVs is expected to reach \$7.9 billion by 2030. Singapore is one of the countries highlighted as the leader of this movement due to the higher fuel cost faced by drivers here.

Autonomous vehicle (AV) start-up MooVita has received a multimillion investment from SMRT's corporate venture arm, SMRT Ventures, and Malaysia's energy infrastructure and technology firm Yinson Holdings. MooVita will use the funds to advance its technologies, including software that can transform different vehicle types into AVs, producing driverless shuttle buses, and readying its driverless public transport solutions for deployment.

Carro, a Singapore-headquartered used-car marketplace start-up, achieved unicorn status after receiving investments from SoftBank Vision Fund 2, MSIG, and EV Growth. The firm has plans to capitalise on its familiarity with South-east Asia to expand to new markets like the Philippines and Vietnam.

- **Aviation: upskilling and cross-regional agreement :** ASEAN and the European Union (EU) have finalised the ASEAN-EU Comprehensive Air Transport Agreement, which allows airlines from the two region's member countries to fly any number of services across the regions and up to 14 weekly passenger services and unlimited cargo flights through and to any third country. More direct connections between Singapore and European hubs are expected, which will result in increased competition with existing airlines (e.g. Middle East carriers) flying these routes and potentially cheaper fares. Economic development and cooperation in aviation-related activities are also expected to be fostered through the agreement.

To preserve Singapore's core capabilities in the aviation sector in preparation for travel resumption, the \$3 million Singapore One Aviation Reskilling (Soar) grant has been created to fund training programmes for Singapore citizens and permanent residents who are lower-skilled or older air transport workers. Soar will reimburse \$100 per day of training for each participant, this can be topped up by \$50 per day (maximum of 5 days) per worker with the NTUC Education and Training Fund.



SUSTAINABILITY

- **\$3.8 million awarded to research projects on rising sea levels:** Under the National Sea Level Programme administered by the Meteorological Service Singapore (MSS), three new research projects have been awarded a total of \$3.8 million. Two of the three projects will use observational data such as satellite data, tide gauge data, and regional ocean models to understand the speed of land sinkage in South-east Asian coastal cities and to examine past changes in regional sea levels). The third project studies extreme catastrophes (e.g. severe weather patterns and flooding) caused by global warming. Public Utilities Board (PUB) announced it will design flexible coastal protection plans based on the latest findings, which these projects would contribute to.
 - **E-waste collection bins scheme begins:** 300 electronic waste (e-waste) collection bins have been placed at easily accessible residential locations around Singapore for consumers to recycle their e-waste such as large household appliances, electronic devices and components. The scheme aims to consolidate the various existing e-waste recycling programmes run by industry organisations under the government. Collection services will be run by international waste management company Alba Group's subdivision Alba E-Waste Smart Recycling until 2026. Besides increasing convenience for recycling by consumers, the network of bins complements the Extended Producer Responsibility scheme, which assigns responsibility to producers for designing and bearing the cost of an end-of-life collection and treatment solution. The scheme aims to collect one-third of the 60,000 tonnes of e-waste generated annually. Less than a month after the soft launch, more than 1000 kg of e-waste has already been collected.
 - **Stricter energy-saving standards for home appliances from January 2022:** National Environment Agency (NEA) updated the Mandatory Energy Labelling Scheme (Mels) to reflect the power efficiency capabilities of newer home appliances. Mels will accord more ticks on higher efficiency energy-saving appliances as well increasing the requirements for certain home appliances. The changes include:
 - i. Casement and window air-conditioners, clothes dryers, and refrigerators must minimally have two ticks
 - ii. Split-type air-conditioners have to be 7% more efficient to qualify for its minimum standard of two ticks; limits for standby power of these conditioners will also be lowered
- These updates are expected to cut down on energy costs by \$1.2 million annually and reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 2,000 tonnes.
- **Public-private partnership plans for an offshore solar farm on Semakau Island:** Shell has signed a non-binding memorandum of understanding with JTC Corporation to build a solar farm of 112 football fields big on Semakau Island, which currently serves as Singapore's last operational landfill. Energy Market Authority (EMA) and the National Environment Agency (NEA) will support the project. The farm is expected to have a capacity of 72 MWp, produce energy for up to 17,500 households, and reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 37,000 tonnes annually. Both the government and Shell will benefit from the project as the farm will help support Singapore's goal of 2% solar energy capacity by 2025 while Shell will be able to integrate solar energy into its operations at its nearby Pulau Bukom energy and chemicals park. This will support Shell's commitment to being a net-zero emissions energy business by 2050.

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