

Building a Fair, Skilled, Agile Workforce fit for Growth



Since its United Kingdom launch in 1999 the Association of Professional Staffing Companies (APSCo) has sought to differentiate the professional recruitment market from labour hire agencies by raising standards and delivering expert support and market intelligence to all its members. The economic importance of flexible, agile contracting to highly skilled and evolved labour markets, all of which are keen to capitalise on the opportunities of the AI era, remains a key message today across all APSCo entities.

It has evolved from UK beginnings into APSCo Global, an international trade body offering global services with local delivery to the international recruitment and outsourcing sectors through its entities APSCo Asia, APSCo Australia, APSCo Deutschland, APSCo United Kingdom and APSCo OutSource, the trade body for the RPO and MSP sectors. Our members and Trusted Partners range from SMEs to the largest global, listed recruiters and outsourcers including Robert Walters Plc, Phaidon International, Xcede Group, Rajah and Tann and LinkedIn. Members recruit professionals into permanent and contract roles with multi-national and local firms across STEM, accountancy, legal, finance, marketing, and media in addition to highly regulated sectors such as qualified social work, teaching, and clinical healthcare.

To provide end clients and candidates with a meaningful badge of accreditation, APSCo membership is available only to quality organisations committed to providing multiple references and adherence to a strict [Code of Conduct](#).

APSCo Singapore was established in 2013 and became APSCo Asia in 2022, reflecting the ever-growing importance of the APAC region to our members. As the only recruitment body with an international footprint, APSCo has a unique position and insight into international labour markets and how Singapore and the wider Asian market compare.

As an economic powerhouse, with its business-friendly environment, it is essential that the Singapore government continues to look at all options which will ensure Singapore has a labour market fit for the future and its aspirations to become a technical, fin-tech global centre of excellence. Such options must include, in addition to the valuable upskilling of the local labour market, the recognition of flexible, agile, highly skilled contracting and access to international, high-skilled, independent workers, through the COMPASS system. This will continue to help fill current local skills gaps across the economy, as domestic skills and talents are nurtured with initiatives such as the SkillsFuture Level-Up Programme targeting mid-career Singaporeans aged 40 years and above to pursue a



substantive skills reboot. Our members are actively involved finding roles for such upskilled individuals and prioritising Singaporeans through the MyCareersFuture portal.

Singapore and the UK benefit from a close international trade relationship, with both economies focusing on growing advanced economies leveraging existing strengths in technology and advanced manufacturing. We are keen to see further integration across AI assurance, flexibility in movement of people, and mutual recognition of qualifications and standards.

Staffing is highly regulated by the Ministry of Manpower, and we are proud to have a long-standing relationship of mutual respect with them. Supporting and promoting regulatory compliance is without doubt the primary reason for businesses to join APSCo. Working with APSCo members, with their commitment to compliance and “badge of quality” manages risk, not only in taxation but also employment and privacy laws. Government and business can be assured that all appropriate licences and insurances are held, and background checks undertaken.

APSCo Asia members, many with global experience and expertise have prepared the following recommendations for government and policy makers:

Recognise the value of the permanent and contracting recruitment profession and its importance in supporting the implementation of the Workplace Fairness legislation

- The Ministry of Manpower (MOM) already seeks our members’ input into its workforce planning and employment law changes. We consider that there could be significant efficiencies and societal benefits from a closer working relationship with APSCo and its members embedding fair recruitment practices throughout the professional labour market.
- Different treatment in employment law, health and safety regulation and workers’ compensation for highly skilled “white collar” workers, and technically skilled, entrepreneurial contractors. These should be recognised as separate to our members’ headcounts for the purpose of COMPASS.

Facilitate a flexible labour market which can mature and respond to economic challenges and support Singapore’s long term digital and technical strategies

- APSCo can assist with policies and strategies to improve the skills and talent opportunities for Singaporeans, drawing on our members’ global expertise and experience. We can advise on the incentivisations, both personal and corporate that drive behaviours and encourage entrepreneurship and innovation.
- Our members work in partnership with its global client base and local world-class academic institutions and can do so in greater partnership with EDB Singapore, SkillsFuture and Ministry of Manpower to help achieve their objectives.
- COMPASS has increased transparency of Singapore’s immigration system and is leading to an increased focus on higher skilled immigration. However, there are administrative issues for the sector around for example, the verification of candidates’ skills and experience and maintenance of the required local/international headcount ratio. To support Singapore’s long term growth aspirations, the visa system must be attractive to global candidates with a choice of location.

