20 August 2021

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE TRIPARTITE CLUSTER FOR LANDSCAPE INDUSTRY ON THE REVIEW OF THE PROGRESSIVE WAGE MODEL FOR THE LANDSCAPE MAINTENANCE SUB-SECTOR

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1. OBJECTIVE

1.1 This report sets out the recommendations of the Tripartite Cluster for Landscape Industry (TCL) on its review of the Progressive Wage Model (PWM) for the landscape maintenance sub-sector.

1.2 The members of the TCL are listed in Annex A.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 The TCL released its first set of recommendations in April 2015 to introduce PWM for the landscape industry. In June 2016, the PWM was incorporated as one of the mandatory requirements for landscape companies looking to register under the Landscape Company Register[1] (LCR).

2.2 On 30 November 2018, TCL recommended a six-year schedule of wage increases which comprised (a) fixed dollar quantum adjustments to each PWM[2] basic wage level from 2020 to 2022; (b) a minimum 3% annual increase to PWM baseline wages from 2023 to 2025, which was subject to review and (c) the introduction of a mandatory PWM Bonus for eligible landscape maintenance employees from 2020.

2.3 In January 2021, the TCL recommended enhancements to the PWM Career Ladder by introducing two new job roles, namely Landscape Specialist and Senior Landscape Specialist, to provide an additional progression pathway to attract younger entrants to the sector. In addition, the PWM Skills Ladder was enhanced to give the industry greater flexibility to select from a wider range of Workforce Skills Qualification (WSQ) modules for their landscape maintenance employees. These modules are aligned to the Skills Framework (SFw) for Landscape which maps out the Technical Skills and Competencies (TSC) for the various job roles.

2.4 The full details of the previous TCL recommendations, which were accepted by the Government, could be found at www.ntuc.org.sg/tripartiteguidelines.

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[1] Administered by National Parks Board (NParks), the Landscape Company Register (LCR) provides recognition that a company is a genuine service provider with trained landscape employees. With effect from 1 January 2019, suppliers of landscape services are required to have two consecutive years of LCR status in order to be awarded government contracts or to qualify for renewal. Companies with LCR status may also apply for NParks' Landscape Productivity Grant.

[2] PWM is applicable to Singapore Citizens/Permanent Residents. For migrant workers, employers are encouraged to adopt the key principles of progressive wages in their wage structure, considering other cost components such as Government levies, full medical treatment incurred and acceptable accommodation for these workers.

2.5 In May 2019, the National Parks Board with the support of the industry and tripartite partners, launched the Landscape Sector Transformation Plan (LSTP) to further grow and elevate the landscape sector through digitalisation, mechanisation and professionalisation. The LSTP will equip the landscape workforce with the higher value skills necessary for greenery and landscape management as Singapore evolves into a biophilic City in Nature.

2.6 One of the key thrusts of the LSTP is talent development, and the SFw for Landscape is an important resource guide to help companies ensure that their employees are equipped with the necessary knowledge and ability to carry out landscape maintenance work. The PWM Skills Ladder is closely aligned to the SFw for Landscape in setting out the training requirements as part of LCR eligibility criteria.

3. REVIEW OF THE PROGRESSIVE WAGE MODEL

3.1 As of 1 January 2021, there are 358 LCR companies which employ more than 3,000 resident landscape maintenance employees.

3.2 The COVID-19 pandemic has severely impacted the landscape industry, especially due to the lock-down of borders and movement restrictions in migrant workers' dormitories. While the industry navigates to a new normal and puts in place various measures to mitigate the impact brought on by the pandemic, it continues to face the challenge of attracting new and younger entrants to the sector.

3.3 In October 2020, the Tripartite Workgroup on Lower-Wage Workers (TWG-LWW) was formed to explore measures to further uplift the wages and well-being of lower-wage workers. This included ensuring that wage growth in mandatory PWM sectors will continue to outpace median wage growth.

3.4 To support the industry's transformation and ensure that the landscape maintenance industry continues to be vibrant and have a strong Singapore Core workforce, the TCL sought the views of many stakeholders including industry associations, service providers, service buyers, institutes of higher learning (IHL), government agencies, unions and the workers. The feedback and inputs gathered through several focus group discussions and dialogues were deliberated at TCL meetings and culminated in a set of recommendations which had also taken in the guidance from the TWG-LWW.

3.5 The TCL's key recommendations are summarised as follows:

(a) Following a review of the minimum 3% annual increase announced previously, TCL recommended a six-year wage increases of PWM baseline wages for each of the PWM job roles from 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2029 to allow greater certainty to the industry due to the outsourced nature of landscape maintenance contracts. TCL will further review the wage schedule in 2025;

(b) Proposed the mapping of IHL qualifications for the new job roles of Landscape Specialist and Senior Landscape Specialist to take effect from 1 July 2023;

(c) Enhanced the PWM Skills Ladder by equalising the number of WSQ modules across all job roles effective from 1 July 2023.

3.6 The full details of TCL's recommendations are elaborated in the following sections.

4. ENHANCED PWM WAGE LADDER FROM 1 JULY 2023 TO 30 JUNE 2029

4.1 Following up on its 2018 recommendations to review the minimum 3% annual increase from 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2026, the TCL have consulted widely with the various industry stakeholders and reviewed these wages. The review ensures the wage growth of landscape maintenance employees (i) outpaces the median resident worker, in line with the guidance given by the TWG-LWW, and (ii) supports the transformation of the landscape sector and uplifts the employment outcomes of landscape maintenance employees.

4.2 The TCL recommends setting a dollar quantum for each of the PWM job roles from 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2029, with a mid-point review in 2025. The 6-year wage schedule will provide certainty of PWM wage increases to both service providers and service buyers, given that outsourced landscape maintenance contracts are typically multi-year agreements. Both service providers and service buyers will be able to factor in the increase in labour costs in their contract pricing and budgets respectively.

4.3 In order to better recognise the value and job worth of our landscape maintenance employees as they continue to work in the frontline to upkeep the greenery and green spaces (e.g. nature parks, gardens, park connectors, reservoirs, etc.) that Singaporeans and residents have come to enjoy, the TCL recommends that the annual wage growth for these essential services workers must better reflect the skillsets and technical knowledge required of these workers.

4.4 The TCL had previously proposed a min-max ratio of 1.3 for the PWM job roles. In view of the introduction of the Specialist Track and to take into consideration the complexity and responsibilities of the Specialist and Supervisory job roles, the TCL proposes a higher min-max ratio of 1.5 for the four higher PWM job levels.

4.5 The table below summarises the recommended PWM Baseline Wages for the period from 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2029. The PWM Baseline Wages refer to monthly basic wage paid to a full-time resident employee and excludes overtime pay and other payments[3]. The TCL will further review the wage schedule in 2025.

[3] The monthly gross wages of resident landscape maintenance employees are marginally higher than their PWM Baseline Wages, as they typically work few overtime hours.

PWM Job Level	Year	PWM Baseline Wages effective from 1 July of each year							CAGR*	Min-Max Ratio
		2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028		
Landscape Worker		$1,650	$1,750	$1,850	$1,950	$2,095	$2,240	$2,385	6.3%	1.3
		$ inc >	100	100	100	145	145	145		
		% inc >	6.1%	5.7%	5.4%	7.4%	6.9%	6.5%		
Landscape Technician		$1,850	$2,010	$2,170	$2,330	$2,490	$2,650	$2,810	7.2%	1.3
		$ inc >	160	160	160	160	160	160		
		% inc >	8.6%	8.0%	7.4%	6.9%	6.4%	6.0%		
Assistant Landscape Supervisor		$2,050	$2,215	$2,380	$2,545	$2,685	$2,825	$2,965	6.3%	1.5
+Landscape Specialist (from July 2023)		$ inc >	165	165	165	140	140	140		
		% inc >	8.0%	7.4%	6.9%	5.5%	5.2%	5.0%		
Landscape Supervisor		$2,450	$2,600	$2,750	$2,900	$3,060	$3,220	$3,380	5.5%	1.5
+Senior Landscape Specialist (from July 2023)		$ inc >	150	150	150	160	160	160		
		% inc >	6.1%	5.8%	5.5%	5.5%	5.2%	5.0%		

Compound Annual Growth Rate

Note: Landscape maintenance companies that engage part-timers are required to pro-rate the workers' wage against a full-timer in accordance with the prevailing PWM wage schedule.

4.6 Please refer to Annex B for a graphical illustration of the PWM Wage Ladder.

5. IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE OF ENHANCED PWM CAREER LADDER – SPECIALIST TRACK

5.1 In January 2021, the Government had accepted the TCL recommendations to introduce a *Specialist Track* under the PWM Career Ladder as part of its ongoing efforts to professionalise the sector and to attract new and younger entrants to the industry. Two new job roles, namely (a) Landscape Specialist and (b) Senior Landscape Specialist were introduced to encourage younger Singaporeans and PRs to consider joining the landscape industry as a viable and attractive career choice, which will in turn help strengthen the Singapore Core workforce.

5.2 For students pursuing or considering pursuing ITE Nitec courses in landscape services, the Specialist Track would provide a clear progression pathway and a wage ladder commensurate with their skillsets and productivity. ITE Nitec graduates can look forward to even better work prospects as they further enhance their competencies by attaining diploma qualifications offered by ITE or Ngee Ann Polytechnic.

5.3 The job scope and responsibilities for Landscape Specialist and Senior Landscape Specialist are detailed in Annex C.

5.4 Students who graduate with the necessary IHL qualifications may be emplaced on the Specialist Track when they are employed by landscape companies, provided that they had been assessed to have met other employment conditions (e.g. medically and physically fit), which will take effect from 1 July 2023.

IHL Qualification	Offered By	Corresponding PWM Job Level^
Nitec in Urban Greenery & Landscape	ITE	Landscape Specialist
Higher Nitec in Landscape Management & Design		
Work-Study Diploma in Arboriculture & Horticulture		Senior Landscape Specialist
Diploma in Landscape Design & Horticulture	Ngee Ann Polytechnic	

^Employers may emplace newly graduated entrants at a preceding job level for on-the-job familiarisation before promoting them to the recommended job level after the new entrants have gained adequate ground experience and demonstrated their technical expertise.

6. ENHANCED PWM SKILLS LADDER – TRAINING REQUIREMENTS FROM 2023

6.1 As part of its ongoing review to ensure PWM remains relevant to the industry, the TCL had introduced and endorsed a wider menu of WSQ courses to meet the training and upskilling needs of landscape maintenance employees.

6.2 The list of approved WSQ modules is aligned to the SFw for Landscape and validated by industry players to ensure landscape maintenance employees are well trained to undertake the tasks assigned to them. Based on industry feedback, the TCL has further reviewed the PWM training requirements and recommends the same number of mandatory WSQ modules required for each PWM job role with effect from 1 July 2023.

6.3 The new training requirements as detailed below will be applicable for new entrants to ensure adequate training at each job level is maintained. Existing landscape maintenance employees would have met these training requirements as they were required to meet the minimum training requirements as previously stipulated. Employers are also encouraged to send their employees for additional training beyond the mandatory modules to promote lifelong learning and a highly skilled workforce.

PWM Job Role	No. of Mandatory WSQ Modules with effect from 1 July 2023	Cumulative No. of WSQ Modules to be Attained
Landscape Worker	3	3
Landscape Technician	3	6
Assistant Landscape Supervisor	3	9
Landscape Supervisor	3	12

6.4 As landscape maintenance often involves the use of pesticides and mechanised tools such as electric hedge trimmers and mowers, it is therefore important for workers to observe and maintain a high level of workplace safety awareness and practices when carrying out their work. As such, all WSQ modules at the landscape

worker level would also cover hazards and prevention measures, specific to the training scope, within the course (i.e. targeted/specific to the job functions).

6.5 Landscape technicians and supervisors are also required to identify potential hazards and control risks to minimise any possible workplace injury. To ensure workplace safety remains a high priority and not be compromised, the TCL recommends for all landscape technicians and above job roles to attain the WSQ module on "Hazards and Risk Control, and Policy Management" at the appropriate proficiency level which is mapped against the SFw for Landscape.

6.6 Please refer to Annex D for the list of approved WSQ modules endorsed by TCL.

7. CLOSE COLLABORATION AND COMMITMENT NEEDED FROM ALL STAKEHOLDERS

7.1 The lush urban greenery enjoyed by everyone is the result of sheer hard work by our landscape maintenance workforce who toil quietly behind the scenes. It is thus important that their contribution be well recognised and valued.

7.2 The TCL would like to call upon all stakeholders to play their part in ensuring our essential services workers such as those from the landscape industry can work with dignity and their lives be uplifted.

7.3 Government

(a) The TCL is cognisant that there could be existing landscape maintenance contracts which have been committed prior to this latest announcement of wage review. Hence, the industry seeks the support from the Government to consider providing transitional wage support to help them mitigate the spike in manpower costs should they be unable to re-negotiate their existing contract prices with their clients.

(b) Due to the various border restrictions and heightened measures brought on by COVID-19, the industry would like to appeal to the Government to adopt a more empathetic approach by deferring any further adjustments to the Dependency Ratio Ceiling (DRC) during this challenging period. This would allow the industry to better manage its operational requirements and manpower deployment.

7.4 Service Providers

(a) The TCL encourages landscape companies to proactively identify the training needs of their maintenance workforce and to take advantage of the available training grants/schemes to upskill their workers. For workers who have shown strong desire to upgrade themselves to improve their productivity, the TCL urges employers to reward these workers appropriately as companies would stand to benefit from a better skilled workforce in the long run.

(b) With the impending PWM wage increases, the TCL advises service providers to be transparent and explain to their service buyers on any contract price

increases. This will help engender closer working relationship and avoid the perception of profiteering by the landscape companies.

7.5 Service Buyers

(a) The TCL seeks the Service Buyers' support to exercise reasonableness when negotiating their landscape maintenance contracts should there be adjustments to their service requirements. For service providers to achieve a higher rate of mechanisation and improve service standards, higher costs are anticipated. By adopting a more collaborative approach, there can be a positive outcome for both service providers and service buyers.

(b) The TCL recommends for Service Buyers to recognise the skillsets of higher-level job roles so as to encourage service providers to deploy higher skilled maintenance employees when bidding for contracts. Service Buyers are highly encouraged to specify the skills requirement and higher job roles in their tender specification and place higher weightage in their tender evaluation criteria.

(c) Service Buyers are also encouraged to support their Service Providers who wish to send their landscape maintenance employees for upskilling during non-peak working hours and should not insist on replacement headcounts. Service buyers would stand to benefit from better skilled workers who would then be more productive and able to provide higher service standards. TCL also encourages Service Buyers to work with their service providers to adopt Outcome-Based Contracting and move away from headcount-based contracts; as well as to leverage technology to improve labour productivity.

7.6 Landscape Maintenance Employees

(a) To continue to stay relevant and productive, the TCL urges all landscape maintenance employees to embrace lifelong learning and adopt a positive mindset towards learning new methods in carrying out their work. The TCL encourages them to proactively reach out to their supervisors or company's HR personnel to discuss their training needs.

(b) Landscape maintenance employees must believe in the important role that they play in upkeeping Singapore's lush greenery and providing a conducive environment for all to live, work and play in. By instilling a sense of pride in their work, the TCL believes that the landscape industry is poised to be recognised as one that is progressive, dynamic and professional.

7.7 End-Users / General Public

(a) With the expansion of nature parks and a large interlinking network of park connectors spanning almost 360 kilometres in length, Singaporeans and residents alike get to enjoy a myriad of recreational activities amidst a natural and picturesque ecosystem. The TCL would like to encourage end users and the general public to play their part when making use of green spaces, and also to

have greater appreciation of the work done by the landscape maintenance workforce.

(b) Landscape maintenance services in most commercial and residential premises are largely outsourced. Hence, the TCL believes that the most tangible way to support our landscape maintenance employees is for end-consumers to be prepared to bear higher service fees as it takes a whole-of-society effort to uplift our essential services workers.

8. CONCLUSION

8.1 For Singapore to be a City in Nature, it is not the job of just a few but everyone has a stake to make this vision real and achievable. Behind this ambitious goal, the contribution by our landscape maintenance workforce should be duly recognised.

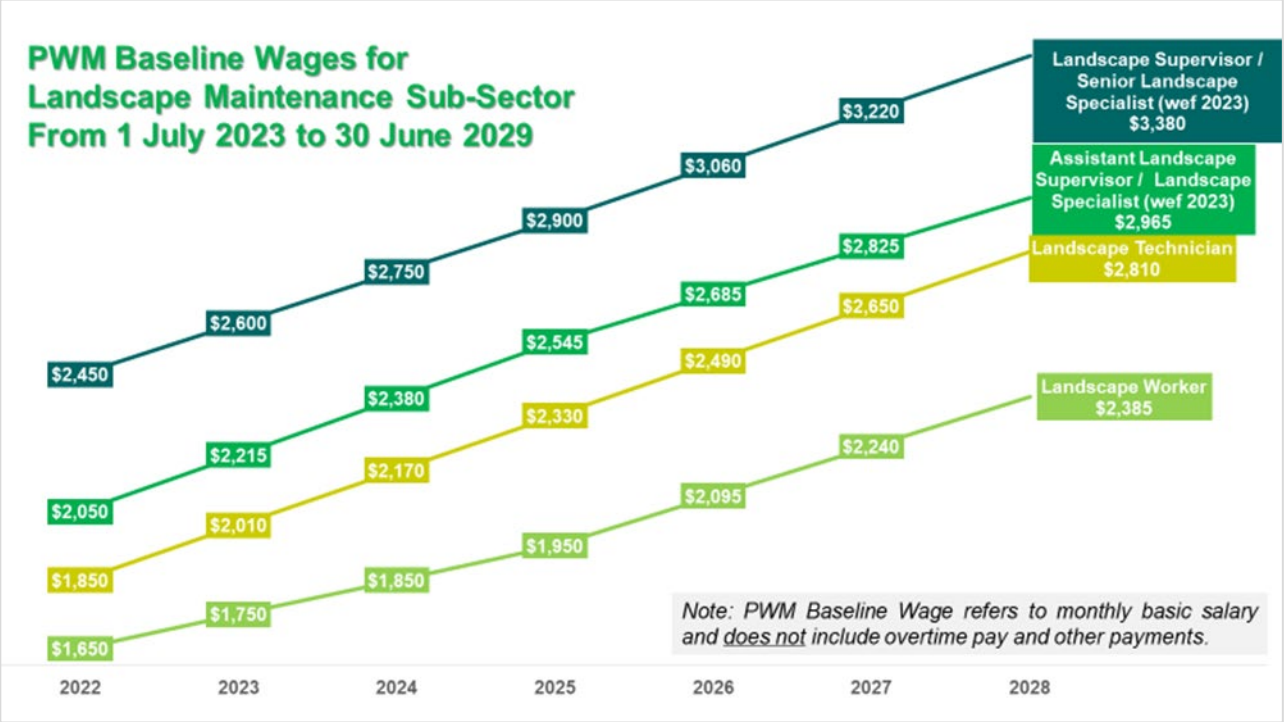
8.2 Uplifting the lives of our essential services workers will remain a work in progress. With the close collaboration and commitment of all stakeholders, it is possible to bring about positive change and for our workers to enjoy Better Wages, Better Welfare and Better Work Prospects for many years to come.

~ End ~

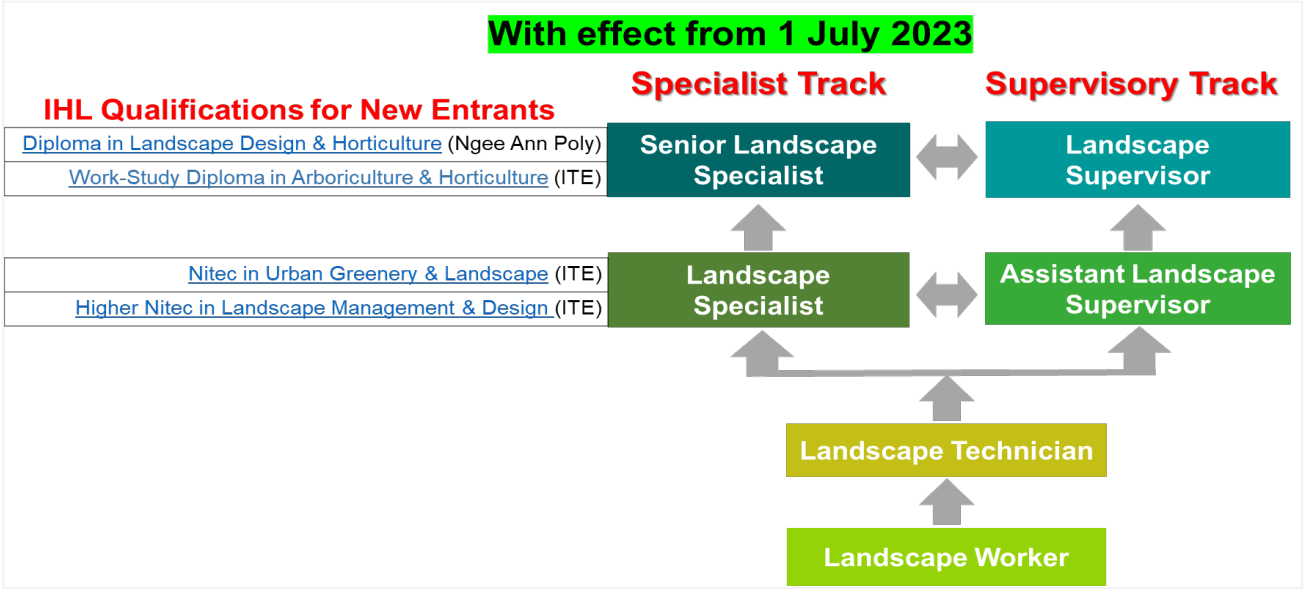
ANNEX A: TRIPARTITE CLUSTER FOR LANDSCAPE INDUSTRY (TCL) FOR THE TERM OF OFFICE FROM MARCH 2019 TO MARCH 2022

Description	Organisation	Representative
Chair	National Trades Union Congress (NTUC)	Mr. Zainal Sapari, Assistant Director-General and Director, U Care Centre
Co-Chair	Singapore National Employers Federation (SNEF)	Mr Felix Loh SNEF Deputy Honorary Secretary *concurrently CEO, Gardens by the Bay*
Industry Association	Landscape Industry Association Singapore (LIAS)	Mr Goh Eng Lam Chairman
		Ms Jacqueline Allan 1st Vice-Chairman
		Mr Jeverss Choo Treasurer
		Ms Joeann Chua Executive Council Member
Service Buyers	Singapore International Facility Management Association (SIFMA)	Mr Tony Khoo President
	Mapletree Investments Pte Ltd	Mr Li Lit Siew Head, Group Property Department
	Town Councils	Mr Tan Liang Gim General Manager/Secretary, Marine Parade Town Council
Labour Movement	Building Construction and Timber Industries Employees' Union (BATU)	Ms. Noor Irdawaty General Secretary
	Singapore Manual & Mercantile Workers' Union (SMMWU)	Mr Surash R Mukundan Deputy Director
	Employment and Employability Institute (e2i)	Mr. Gilbert Tan CEO
Government	Ministry of Manpower (MOM)	Mr Lee Chung Wei Divisional Director, Workplace Policy and Strategy Division
	National Parks Board	Dr Yap Him Hoo Deputy Chief Executive Officer and Director-General
	Workforce Singapore (WSG)	Ms Safrah Eusoof Director, Healthcare, Social and Business Services Division
	SkillsFuture Singapore (SSG)	Ms Loh Gek Khim Director, Industry Development Division 1
	Institute of Technical Education	Mr Alfred Tan Wee Hiong Director, School of Engineering, ITE College East

ANNEX B: PWM WAGE LADDER FOR LANDSCAPE MAINTENANCE SUB-SECTOR



ANNEX C: ENHANCED PWM CAREER LADDER – SPECIALIST TRACK'S JOB SCOPE AND RESPONSIBILITIES



Job Role	Landscape Specialist	Senior Landscape Specialist
Job Scope	To ensure proper landscape maintenance practices in residential and commercial developments, parks, golf courses, streetscapes and nurseries are applied including use of proper equipment under their care to set standards and outcomes.	To determine feasibility and frequency of maintenance in residential and commercial developments, parks, golf courses, streetscapes and nurseries are applied including use of proper equipment under their care to set standards and outcomes.
Responsibilities	Performance & Control Duties: • Diagnose, prescribe and perform - pruning and trimming requirements for turf, groundcovers, shrubs, aquatic plants, palms and trees. - preventive and corrective measures for pest and diseases, nutrient management and soil management - propagation, transplanting and planting works. • Ensure proper handling, usage & application of fertilisers / pesticides. • Perform preventive maintenance and minor repairs on equipment. • Diagnose and perform basic maintenance and repair of irrigation system & simple water management requirements. Administrative Duties: • Submit reports on work done. • Maintain records of inventory and usage of chemical and fertiliser, tools and equipment.	Performance & Control Duties: • Plan and prescribe - frequency of maintenance task for turf, groundcovers, shrubs, aquatic plants, palms and trees to deliver desired outcomes. - suitable tools and equipment to achieve desired productivity. • Diagnose, prescribe and perform - preventive and corrective measures for pest and diseases, nutrient management, soil management. - propagation, transplanting and planting works. • Ensure proper handling, usage & application of fertilisers / pesticides. • Perform preventive maintenance and minor repairs on equipment. • Diagnose and perform basic maintenance and repair of irrigation system & simple water management requirements. Administrative Duties: • Submit monthly planned schedules and reports on work done. • Maintain records of inventory and usage of chemical and fertiliser, tools and equipment.

ANNEX D: LIST OF APPROVED WSQ MODULES ENDORSED BY TCL WITH EFFECT FROM 1 JULY 2023

Technical Skills & Competencies (TSC) Title	Proficiency Level	TSC Code	PWM Requirements
Landscape Worker – Total 3 WSQ Modules			
Plant Health Management and Disease Control	1	LNS-GNM-1014-1.1	Choose any 3 TSC
Plant Identification		LNS-GNM-1015-1.1	
Plant Pruning		LNS-GNM-1016-1.1	
Turf Maintenance		LNS-GNM-1018-1.1	
Vegetation Planting		LNS-GNM-1019-1.1	
Landscape Technician – Total 3 WSQ Modules (Cumulatively 6 Modules)			
Hazards and Risk Control, and Policy Management	2	LNS-WSH-2087-1.1	Mandatory
Horticultural Chemical Usage		LNS-GNM-2011-1.1	+ Choose any 2 TSC
Plant Health Management and Disease Control		LNS-GNM-2014-1.1	
Plant Identification		LNS-GNM-2015-1.1	
Plant Pruning		LNS-GNM-2016-1.1	
Soil and Media Assessment and Remediation		LNS-GNM-2017-1.1	
Assistant Landscape Supervisor – Total 3 WSQ Modules (Cumulatively 9 Modules)			
Hazards and Risk Control, and Policy Management	3	LNS-WSH-3087-1.1	Mandatory
Horticultural Chemical Usage	2	LNS-GNM-2011-1.1	+ Choose any 2 other TSC excluding those already attained at Landscape Technician level
Plant Health Management and Disease Control		LNS-GNM-2014-1.1	
Plant Identification		LNS-GNM-2015-1.1	
Plant Pruning		LNS-GNM-2016-1.1	
Soil and Media Assessment and Remediation		LNS-GNM-2017-1.1	
Landscape Supervisor (Cumulatively 12 Modules)			
Plant Health Management and Disease Control	3	LNS-GNM-3014-1.1	Mandatory for all 3 TSC
Plant Identification		LNS-GNM-3015-1.1	
Soil and Media Assessment and Remediation		LNS-GNM-3017-1.1	

Note: All landscape maintenance employees must attain the required WSQ modules at the preceding level before they move to the next PWM job level.