

# **RIKVIN** **CONNECT**



## **The Population Issue**

**RIKVIN PTE LTD**

20 Cecil Street, #14-01 Equity Plaza  
Singapore 049705  
*(Next to Republic Plaza and Raffles Place MRT)*

Phone: (+65) 6320 1888  
Fax: (+65) 6438 2436

Email: [info@rikvin.com](mailto:info@rikvin.com)  
Website: [www.rikvin.com](http://www.rikvin.com)

# Foreword: Roadmap for the Future

*February has been an exciting month for Singapore as we are presented with the government's roadmap for the country over the next two decades or so.*

Many citizens, workers and businesses alike are compelled to discuss the recommendations in the White Paper on Population and how they will affect our collective livelihood. Some say there's trouble in paradise.

Business associations, chambers of commerce and industry and contending political parties have raised questions on the soundness and timeliness of some of the policies, as have citizens and residents. Some recommended their alternative roadmaps. Some others threatened to leave. Just last weekend, thousands of people have converged at Hong Lim Park to stage a peaceful protest against the Paper, signalling that after close to 50 years of strict governance, the people are unafraid to step up and voice their concerns as stakeholders of their country and future.

I'm sure many of you are concerned about whether it still makes sense to have a presence here. Will the government close the tap on foreign talent completely? We think not and we think it is not prudent to do so. However, businesses must justify their presence and are urged to enhance the economic pie for Singaporeans too.

Yet, we are aware that business costs are rising, and the government has pledged to help firms better cope with aligning themselves to the national productivity drive. At the same time, the onus is on policymakers to win back the trust of citizens who say that instead of reaping the fruits of the nation's progress, they are facing real day-to-day pain points such as very high public housing prices, congested public transportation and wages that barely meet increasing costs of living and education.

The population issue is no doubt a contentious and delicate one, but it is not something we should be silent about. As stakeholders and members of this society, we need to think about our contributions to this issue and what we can do to make Singapore a prosperous and harmonious place for all who contribute to its fabric.

Yours sincerely,

**Chris Lim**

General Manager, Rikvin

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for more information.

# The White Paper on Population

The Singapore parliament has endorsed the Population White Paper with a resounding 77 - 13 vote on 8 February.

The paper outlined three key strategic thrusts i.e 1) sustaining a core Singaporean population, 2) creating good opportunities for Singaporeans and 3) ensuring a high quality living environment for Singaporeans.

According to the paper, in a span of 17 years, Singapore will grow its population by approximately 30% – from the current level (5.3 million) to 6.5 – 6.9 million. The resident population (4.2 – 4.4 million) – consisting of citizens (3.6 – 3.8 million) and Singapore permanent residents (PRs) – will still form the core of Singapore’s population.

To grow its resident population, Singapore will grant PR status to 30,000 eligible candidates annually. It will also grant between 15,000 and 25,000 citizenships per annum to prevent its citizen population from dwindling.

Following the announcement that it is set to house approximately 1.6 million more inhabitants by 2030, the Singapore government then unveiled its blueprint for achieving so.

The plan involves intensifying its land use, developing reserve land and recycling low utility areas such as golf courses and old industrial sites. Singapore currently has



5.3 million inhabitants living on 71,400 hectares (ha) of land. By 2030, about 5,200 ha of land area will be made available, led by reclamation projects in Pulau Tekong (2,000 ha), Tuas Port (1,700 ha) and Jurong Island (600 ha).

“We hope, however, that these projects are sustainable and do not take a toll on our environment. It would be good to reserve some natural green spaces and heritage areas as we work towards building a more dynamic Singapore and making a home that still has a deep connection to its history and its roots,” affirmed Ms. Christine Lim, General Manager of Rikvin.

For more information on the tool, please visit:

[www.rikvin.com/press-releases/singapore-grow-sustainable-population-issues/](http://www.rikvin.com/press-releases/singapore-grow-sustainable-population-issues/)

[www.rikvin.com/press-releases/singapores-blueprint-living-business-spaces/](http://www.rikvin.com/press-releases/singapores-blueprint-living-business-spaces/)

## New Year Promotion Ending soon!

*Rikvin’s 2013 New Year Promotion Draw is ending soon!*



**2013 NEW YEAR  
PROMOTION DRAW**  
*Win an iPad Mini!*

Rikvin’s **2013 New Year Promotion Draw** is ending soon!

In case you missed it, Rikvin is giving away a brand new Apple iPad mini to a lucky client. To qualify, all you need to do is purchase any of our selected Incorporation Packages from 8 January to 28 February 2013. All eligible clients will be included in the draw and on 8 March, a winner will be picked, so stay tuned for further announcements. Terms and conditions apply.

To learn more, please visit:

[www.rikvin.com/2013-dragon-year-promotion-draw/](http://www.rikvin.com/2013-dragon-year-promotion-draw/)

## Singapore's Recent Rankings Highlight Effects of Manpower Strategies

Singapore's rankings have taken a hit in recently released ranking surveys by Bloomberg and Ernst and Young, in part due to the manpower policies it effected last year. Ms. Christine Lim, General Manager of Rikvin, offers her views.

"Since the 2011 watershed elections, it has faced a divided country that is increasingly impatient for change. Freezing the inflow of foreign workers may not be suitable for certain industry sectors whose processes face limits when it comes to automation. There has to be some degree of openness in any case so that the economy still creates good opportunities for Singapore and a larger global community in the future."

"The issue Singapore is facing now, is that many citizens, especially those in the lower to mid income bracket or those who are less mobile, feel that they are facing the brunt of the pain points. If we truly want to become a



more inclusive and harmonious society and promote fairer workplaces, then measures must be taken to address the real needs of Singaporeans," she affirmed.

For more information, please visit:

[rikvin.com/press-releases/singapores-top-2-ey-globalisation-index](http://rikvin.com/press-releases/singapores-top-2-ey-globalisation-index)  
[rikvin.com/press-releases/singapore-bloomberg-business-survey](http://rikvin.com/press-releases/singapore-bloomberg-business-survey)

## Singapore Bumps Up Marriage & Parenthood Package

A fundamental component of the White Paper on population is Singapore's enhanced Marriage and Parenthood Package scheme, which aims to encourage more Singaporeans to marry and have more children. Valued at \$2bn per annum, the core goal of the enhanced package is to reverse the city-state's persistently low birth rate and ageing population, targeting an increased fertility rate of 1.4 to 1.5 in succeeding years. Proposed measures are as follows:



**Priority status for housing:** This includes the "Parenthood Priority Scheme", which allocates 30% of new HDB flats to married couples with children under 16 years old, plus the "Parenthood Provisional Housing Scheme", which allows

families to rent HDB flats at reasonable rates while their own flats are under construction.

**Financial aid for conception and delivery:** For couples who have difficulty conceiving, the government will co-fund Assisted Reproduction Technology (ART) treatments by 75%. In addition, Medisave can be used to pay for delivery costs as well as pre-delivery costs for assisted conception methods.

**Funding for child care costs:** The baby bonus will be increased by S\$2,000 more up to the fourth child. All newborns will receive a Medisave account with a grant of S\$3,000. In addition, subsidies for infant and child care will be increased, and parents are entitled to paid maternity and paternity leave.

**Support for working parents:** Maternity protection will be extended to protect working women against unfair dismissal by their employers throughout their full term of pregnancy. Moreover, parents with children ages 7-12 will be granted 2 days of childcare leave per child per annum.

For more information, please read:

[rikvin.com/blog/singapore-2bn-package-marriage-baby](http://rikvin.com/blog/singapore-2bn-package-marriage-baby)

## In the Spotlight: New & Improved Singapore Company Name Check Tool

We're happy to announce that we have launched the new and improved Singapore Company Name Check Tool in the Rikvin app.

The tool not only serves as a directory for available names for registration but incorporates the company name guidelines specified by ACRA. For example, the Tool would inform you that the registration of a Singapore company name that is 1) undesirable or obscene, 2) identical to the names of existing enterprises or 3) identical to names

reserved in its register will not be possible, even before you decide to reserve the name. This then saves you valuable time, which in turn speeds up your company registration process.



To use the Tool online:

[rikvin.com/incorporation/singapore-company-name-check](http://rikvin.com/incorporation/singapore-company-name-check)

## Design Your Child's Future with Destination Imagination

In line with the population issue, we are happy to feature Destination Imagination as our client for the month.

Destination Imagination is a non-profit organization that helps children around the world discover their creativity and develop lifelong critical thinking skills. The organization, which is headquartered in New Jersey, has a presence in 48 states in the United States and more than 30 countries including Korea, China, India, Great Britain, Canada and Brazil. Last year, it set up base in Singapore.

Through its Challenge-based learning program, students from the kindergarten to university level develop important creative and critical thinking skills including time management, collaboration and conflict resolution. Participants in turn build lifelong confidence whilst in working in teams to solve any challenge.

Apart from the Challenge Program, Destination Imagination offers Early Learning programs as well as Creative Initiatives. Its Early Learning program is designed to prepare 3-6 year olds with a jump start in literacy as well as Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) concepts, as well as critical and creative thinking skills. Through its Creative Initiatives, it has offered students with the opportunity to collaborate with organizations such as 3M, NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center, Motorola Mobility Foundation, IBM and Casio.



*"We look forward to Destination Imagination's continued success in Asia."*

Education has been pivotal in the development of Singapore since it gained independence in 1965. Now that Singapore has transitioned to a knowledge-based economy, having people who are equipped with creative and critical thinking skills as well as soft skills such as persistence, respect for others and their ideas, ethics and patience are important as well.

"In a knowledge-based economy, it is not enough to have the smarts. One must also have the soft skills to become good leaders and community members. We look forward to Destination Imagination's continued success in Asia, and are confident that parents and schools will find their programs meaningful for the development of well-rounded people," affirmed Ms. Christine Lim, General Manager of Rikvin.

For more information, please visit:

[rikvin.com/testimonials/destination-imagination-ltd](http://rikvin.com/testimonials/destination-imagination-ltd)