

Mr Bjorn Low (left) and Mr Robert Pearce, founders of Edible Garden City, which worked with Marina Bay Sands to transform an unused outdoor area into a herb and vegetable garden — and reaped its own rewards. PHOTO: TODAY FILE PHOTO

Better S'pore productivity 'requires more collaboration between large, small firms'

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SINGAPORE – More collaboration between large multinational corporations (MNCs) and homegrown small and medium enterprises (SMEs) is needed as Singapore seeks greater productivity improvement in the coming years, said Singapore International Chamber of Commerce (SICC) chief executive Victor Mills.

Mr Mills' comments came as Singapore recorded a 0.5 per cent gain in value added per worker — a measure of labour productivity — in the fourth quarter of 2015. This is the first improvement since the first quarter of 2014. "As we look at the world of business and how it's evolving and all the sort of technological changes that will impact all of our lives, we think a collaborative approach is the best. This is something that Singapore has done very well between Government, academia and business. Our argument is we need to ramp it up further because that's the way to achieve innovation and create new value for businesses," he told TODAY.

He added that it is in the MNCs' interests to uplift their SME partners in order for their entire supply chain to run more efficiently. Besides that, teaming up with more capable partners also allows for better ideas and innovation in product or service development.

To encourage more of such collaboration, the chamber is holding an inaugural event, the SICC Awards: Innovations in Productivity, today to recognise MNCs and SMEs who have benefitted from

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CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF THE SINGAPORE
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working together through the Partnerships for Capability Transformation (PACT) scheme.

The scheme, introduced in 2013, facilitates tie-ups between large organisations and SMEs with the aim of helping the smaller party gain new capabilities through knowledge and technology transfer.

Since its inception, SPRING has supported 734 SMEs through 117 PACT projects.

One such SME is urban farmer Edible Garden City, which worked with Marina Bay Sands to transform an unused outdoor area into a herb and vegetable garden. The project allowed the integrated resort to grow culinary herbs within proximity of its restaurants and increase its sustainability footprint.

"The opportunity to work with Marina Bay Sands has certainly lent credibility to the work that Edible Garden City does ... We estimate that as a result of our project with the integrated resort, our revenues have doubled," said Mr Bjorn Low, co-founder of the SME.

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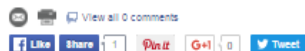
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