

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MANAGEMENT LEVEL TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT PLAN: AN EXAMINATION OF TRAINING REQUIREMENTS, TRAINING AVAILABILITY AND OF THE NMP'S ROLE

I. BACKGROUND

1. The worldwide supply and demand scenario reflects a critical shortage of merchant marine officers and a surplus of ratings. The Philippines is the leading supplier of maritime manpower, with the computed number of Filipino officers and ratings serving at any one time placed at 179,994, representing a good 28.5% of the world's seafarers' population at sea (SIRC, 2002). Of this figure, 11% are senior officers, 24% are junior officers and 65% are ratings.
2. With the aim of determining the expected role of the maritime training sector and of the NMP in particular, the study recommends for the "right mix" of training services in the context of the dearth of management level officers. It takes into consideration the Management Level Training and Development Plan (MLTDP), which lays out the provision of two broad groups of management level training programs- the mandatory Management Level Course and Training Courses for Value-Added Qualifications. Towards achieving these objectives, the study looked into the level of availability of the MLC, identified the training courses for value-added qualifications needed by current and future management level officers, as well as identified the level of availability of these courses in the current market.
3. The methodology employed included:
 - Document analysis
 - In-depth interviews with representatives of the employers' sector
 - Administration of two (2) sets of questionnaires to shipping/ manning companies and training centers

II. FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

Following the examination of training requirements and availability of both the Management Level Courses and training courses for value-added qualifications, the main issues concluded from the study could be summarized as follows:

1. Availability of Maritime Training Providers
 - ✚ Majority of training centers plan to offer the mandatory Management Level Course for both the Deck and Engine Programs after February 2006 but not later than December 2006. Generally, there is diversity in the geographical distribution of training centers planning to offer the MLC. However, their major concentration is at the NCR.

- ✦ Offering of the MLC, although mandatory in nature, is constrained by a number of economic limitations. Training centers that chose not to offer the MLC cited lack of required equipment/ facilities, capital/ financial constraints, and unattractive return on investment. Because training centers are privately owned, foremost among the considerations in offering the MLC pertains to economic viability.
 - ✦ Majority of training centers have articulated the offering or the plan of offering trainings for value-added qualifications. Like the MLC, geographical distribution of those currently offering and planning to offer these training courses has major concentration at the NCR.
 - ✦ Training providers are generally not offering employer-required training courses. Currently, their course offerings are primarily concentrated on mandatory trainings.
 - ✦ Training needs identified by employers could not be adequately met locally. The number of Philippine-based training providers that offer value-added trainings is inadequate, thus the need for shipping/ manning companies to contact foreign training providers for the training needs of their crew.
 - ✦ While in-house trainings can be seen as a pragmatic solution to changing and diverse sets of needs, these solutions are reactive in nature.
2. Number of Officers to be Trained
- ✦ For the Deck Program, the following are the estimated number of operational level officers to be trained by geographical distribution: 3,764 from Luzon; 5,506 from Visayas; 1,752 from Mindanao, and 167 from the NCR.
 - ✦ For the Engine Program, the following are estimates of the number of officers to be trained by geographical distribution: 3,728 from Luzon; 5,453 from Visayas; 3,470 from Mindanao and 184 from NCR.
3. Training Courses for Value-Added Qualifications
- ✦ In analyzing the availability of value-added trainings and the number of management and operational officers to be trained, the highest numbers of officers to be trained fall on these courses: 10,948 for Commercial Aspect of Shipping; 10,948 for Cultural Awareness, 9,854 for Technical Report Writing; 9,854 for Professional Ethics and 8,957 for Marine Electrical System.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

The research came up with the following recommendations in terms of the maritime training sectors' role, particularly of the NMP, given the context of the critical shortage of management level officers:

1. To ensure accessibility of the MLC to potential management level officers, taking into consideration current availability of the said course vis-à-vis distribution of operational level officers by region of domicile, special consideration should be placed on offering the MLC for both deck and engine programs by training centers located in Visayas and Mindanao.
2. Course offerings, especially of the NMP, which are primarily focused on mandatory trainings, should be widened to include more “generic” skills needs that would add value to the Filipino seafarer.
3. Training centers should continue or consider developing and offering training programs to address the identified skills gaps of MLOs, more particularly the top five training programs with the highest number of officers to be trained, to include the following:
 - ✦ Commercial/ Business Aspect of Shipping
 - ✦ Cultural Awareness
 - ✦ Technical Report Writing
 - ✦ Professional Ethics
 - ✦ Marine Electrical System
4. Special consideration should likewise be placed on developing training courses tailor-fitted to address company or industry-specific skills requirements. An element of flexibility in terms of training site, schedule and modes of delivery should also be incorporated in the provision of trainings.
5. Training centers should likewise be continuously guided by emerging trends in the maritime industry and their consequent implications to training. Drivers to training activity include introduction of new technology onboard vessel, international and national regulatory requirements, development of new products in the market, and changes in ship design, structure and crew size.
6. Shipping/ manning managers raised the concern that principals themselves require training courses when their course outlines are found to be relevant and well-disseminated. It is therefore recommended that there should be strengthened marketing of value-added training courses.