

The View of Construction Industry Training Authority on Construction Workers Registration Bill

1. The trade tests conducted by Construction Industry Training Authority

1.1 Since 1990, CITA has started to conduct trade tests for 6 major trades of the Construction Industry and the trade testing scheme has continued to expand to cover more and more trades over the past years. Presently, besides trade tests for construction craftsmen, CITA has also conducted trade tests for a wide range of plant operatives. The objectives of the trade testing scheme are as follows:-

- (a) to set standards for skilled construction workers,
- (b) to help construction industry in the selection of workers for skilled jobs,
- (c) to facilitate the acquisition of recognised qualifications and enhance the status of skilled workers, and
- (d) to facilitate the establishment of skill hierarchy for career advancement of skilled workers.

1.2 The trade testing scheme can be classified into 2 major categories. The first category is voluntary trade test. This voluntary trade test has 2 skill levels, i.e. Trade Test for skilled workers and Intermediate Trade Test for semi-skilled workers. According to current Government construction contracts, contractors are required to employ certain percentage of trade tested workers in their construction sites. Therefore, construction workers are quite keen to apply for relevant skill tests in order to secure a job in these projects.

In order to cope with the proposed Construction Workers Registration, CITA has already expanded its trade testing scheme from 14 Trade tests in 1996 to existing 42 Trade Tests and 20 Intermediate Trade Tests. There are also 12 more trade tests under preparation and will be open for trade test application in the coming few months. Up to 31st May, 2003, 26,972 and 24,229 workers has passed the Trade Tests and Intermediate Trade Tests respectively.

1.3 The second category of the trade testing scheme is mandatory trade test, i.e. workers are statutory required to pass this trade test before they can carry out the prescribed works. Currently, CITA conducts 12 types of mandatory operative tests for various plant machineries, including operative skill test for gondolas under the Factories and Industrial Undertakings (Suspended Working Platforms) Regulation, operative skill test for Builders' lift under the Builders' Lifts and Tower Working Platforms (Safety) Ordinance, operative skill test for cranes under the Factories and Industrial Undertakings (Lifting Appliances and Lifting Gear)(Amendment) Regulation and operative skill tests for loadshifting machineries under the Factories and Industrial Undertakings (Loadshifting Machinery) Regulation. Up to 31st May, 2003, 32,168 operatives has passed respective mandatory skill tests.

1.4 At the end of May this year, there are a total of 83,369 workers passed the voluntary and mandatory trade tests conducted by CITA.

1.5 On the whole, CITA has already prepared for the workers' registration implementation and is able to handle the upsurge of trade test applications due to the enactment of the registration requirement.

2. Promise of CITA for the Construction Workers Registration.

2.1 To maintain the professional status of Construction Workers, CITA strongly supports the implementation of such construction workers registration scheme. CITA also agreed to carry out the respective registration work for construction workers.

2.2 On the other hand, VTC has currently been conducting Trade Tests & Intermediate Trade Tests for only a few Electrical & Mechanical trades. Therefore, CITA will work closely with the Electrical & Mechanical industry to implement a more comprehensive trade test scheme so that construction workers of these trades can also obtain recognised qualifications for registration.