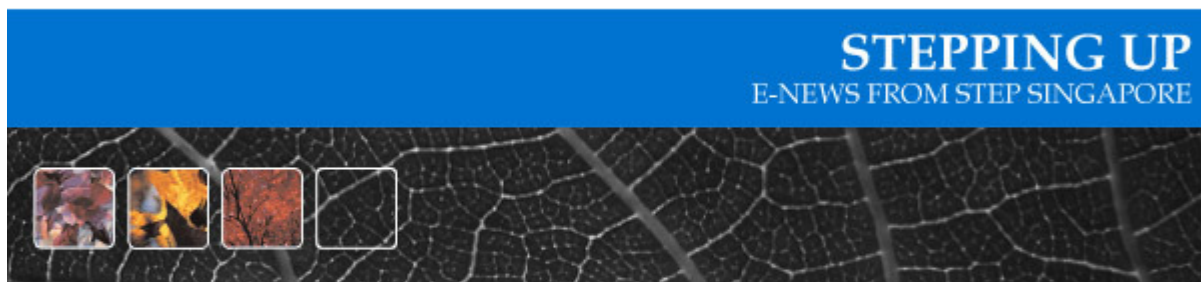


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STEPPING UP - ISSUE 6 (16 JUNE 10)

COMMITTEE NEWS:

President's Message – A Year in Review

Dear Members,

Having served on the STEP Singapore Committee as Chairman for the past year, I have had the pleasure of seeing the following achievements by our branch:

1. Along with Nick Jacob, hosting and organising the STEP Asia 2009 Conference, which was by any account a very successful 2-day event with a near record attendance of some 350 delegates, which included representatives from our other professional industry bodies such as the WMI, STA, MAS, IBF and STEP Hong Kong.
2. During the year we established 4 Sub-committees with the following objectives:
 - a. Constitutional review
Objective: to review, update and align the Constitution with both local and UK requirements
 - b. Education & CPD
Objective: to develop programmes for the continuing professional development of trust & estate practitioners and to look into student interests, communication with and involvement of students
 - c. E-newsletter
Objective: to improve communication within the local branch membership
 - d. Regulatory Affairs
Objective: to liaise with, communicate with and provide feedback to the relevant regulatory bodies
3. Some highlights of the year include:
 - a. On the matter of education, we held our first Singapore graduation ceremony for local graduates of the Diploma programme .Further, my long held view, that that this programme could be improved by the inclusion of local Singapore/Asia content, will soon come to fruition as per the new programme to be introduced in 2011 (details further on in this newsletter)
 - b. In addition, we have also held a record 11 CPD events with an average attendance of 65 per event.
 - c. The 1 day STEP Symposium to be held on 22 June, being another first, is on track for also being another success, with the President of the Singapore Law Society, Michael Hwang, as the Key note speaker and the CEO of STEP Worldwide, David Harvey as our lunch time guest speaker. Both have accepted my personal invitation to attend.



With some \$160,000 in the "coffers", the Branch continues on a solid footing to serve its 400 members.

Thank you for allowing me to have served as Chairman, and for your continuing support.

Angelo Venardos
President, STEP (Singapore Chapter)

Education Update – Singapore

Background

The traditional route to qualification in the international Trust and Estates arena is for professionals to become Trust and Estate Practitioners (TEPs) of the Society of Trust and Estate Practitioners (STEP), the premier global professional body in the trust and estate industry (15,000 members; 85 branches). [www.step.org].

There are various routes to becoming a TEP, including the examination and thesis route. Most TEPs globally will have acquired their TEP status via the examination route and acquisition of the STEP Diploma in International Trust Management. In Singapore there are currently 219 members and 100 student members.

Qualification Structure

The structure of the current qualification is as follows:

- STEP Foundation Certificate in International Trust Management
- Diploma in International Trust Management
 - Trust Creation Law and Practice
 - Company Law and Practice
 - Trust Administration and Accounts
 - Trustee Investment and Financial Appraisal

It normally takes most delegates two and a half years to complete the Foundation Certificate and Diploma programme.

Development and Changes


Following recent consultations (STEP Worldwide; Singapore and Hong Kong branches) it has been decided to develop the STEP Singapore Education Programme in the following ways: [[READ MORE](#)]

Contributed by Bill Howarth, Central Law Training

INDUSTRY NEWS:

"Up Close & Personal" – Interview with a Member from Singapore Branch

This section offers members an opportunity to become better acquainted with a STEP member affiliated with the Singapore branch. Any member interested in being interviewed should contact the STEP (Singapore) Secretariat.

	Name	: Lynn Pang
	Organisation	: Heritage Fiduciary Services Pte Ltd
	Designation	: Senior Manager
	Role in Organisation	: In charge one of the corporate secretarial teams in Singapore and Hong Kong
	Years in Trust Industry	: -

Getting to know Lynn Pang

The books I am currently reading are ... "Grotesque" by Natsuo Kirino. I like thrilling criminal stories and the author who is a Japanese has won the top mystery award for her first book called "Out". Some of her books have also been turned into movies. I came across her books at a book sale and was hooked after finishing her first book "Out". After that, I purchased another 2 of books called "Grotesque" and "Real World".

The person who has been my biggest influence is ... My mother. She was a kind lady with big heart and she taught me a lot of good values which I still remember till today. She was a good cook and it's a pity that I didn't inherit her flair.

What I like most about my job is ... What I like most about my job is I get challenges everyday with all kinds

of questions from clients and staff. My job provides me the opportunity of travelling and the trips that I have made really widened my horizon and taught me things that one can never learn from a book.

My golden rule is ... Life is 10 percent what you make it and 90 percent how you take it. I always believe that in life, we all have choices. If you choose to be happy for the day you will be happy and if you choose to be sad, you will be sad. It's all about choices that one makes.

The business expression I hate most is ... "Something cannot be done..." I like positive attitudes and I believe that everything is possible if you try all means and ways.

I want to be remembered as ... a famous artist or a graphic designer. It's weird I know but since I was a child I have loved to draw and paint. I once told my dad that I did not want to continue with my studies anymore and all I wanted to do was to paint pictures everyday. Of course being a normal parent, my dad lectured me on my foolish decision. Anyway, sometime or someday, perhaps that I will pursue my dream.

Jurisdiction Update – Panama

One of the pioneer jurisdictions in offshore financial services, Panama continues to offer a range of options for estate planning and asset protection tools as well as trading and shipping operations as its strategic location at the heart of the Americas has made it a natural transit hub enabling the transit of goods in world trade.

Panama enjoys price and currency stability of a US Dollarised economy since becoming a Republic in 1903. Without a central bank, or lender-of-last-resort, the country's economy relies on Maritime services (including the Panama Canal) financial services, agricultural/fishing exports, tourism and international trading. The Colon Free Zone, located in the Caribbean Coast, is the largest and busiest free zone in the western hemisphere.

In 2007 Panama [[READ MORE](#)] embarked on the expansion of the Canal, to ensure the waterway remains a competitive world player in maritime trade. The 5 Billion USD Project is expected to conclude in 2014 (100th anniversary of the waterway) and remains on track in spite the 2008 global financial crisis.

Its maritime standing is further supported by its ranking as the number one jurisdiction for registered Merchant Marine vessels. An important network of Consulates and Maritime offices provides support on a 24 hours basis to the shipping and offshore industry around the globe.

A Civil Law Jurisdiction

Part of the Spanish conquest of the Americas, Panama is an independent Civil Law jurisdiction with government made of three branches: Executive, one-chamber Parliament and a Judiciary. Its historic ties and heritage has not prevented Panama from drawing concepts from other legal systems, one example being the Maritime Laws and Court, strongly influenced by common law principles.

Panama offers practitioners a wide range of corporate bodies including Partnerships, Foundations, Corporations and Limited Liability Companies. Its most popular entity by far is the Panama Corporation (Sociedad Anónima) enacted by Law 32 of 1927. Private Foundations (Fundaciones) came to light under Act 25 of 1995 as an additional s tool and have since become a popular alternative for asset planning structures for private clients and families.

Panama was one of the first Civil Law jurisdictions in the Americas to regulate Civil Law Trusts (Fideicomiso). Today, Act 1 of 1984 regulates its trust business, which has become a thriving activity with high supervisory standards enforced by the country's banking watchdog. Finally, its banking industry endowed with an experienced workforce offer private investors and families the opportunity to use Panama as a booking center offering economic and political stability as well as structural alternatives.

Tax Treaties and Compliance

A long time supporter of enforcing KYC policies and identifying beneficial owners, Panama has now opted for Double Taxation Avoidance Agreements with information sharing provisions to meet current OECD standards. It has concluded negotiations with Mexico, Spain, Italy, Holland, Belgium and Barbados, and is scheduled to begin discussion with France, Qatar and probably Japan in the coming months. As it looks to comply with the established threshold, Panama will continue to expand its treaty network in 2010.

Contributed by Alexis Medina

STEP Caribbean Conference in Barbados (24-26 May 2010)

Some 220 delegates from around the Caribbean attended the 2 day conference, which next year will be held in Bermuda.

From inception, Barbados has built its strategy for developing its international business sector on the basis of being a low tax jurisdiction with a network of double taxation agreements (DTAs) and bilateral investment treaties (BITs). The main reasons for adopting this strategy were:

- the need to generate foreign currency earnings from a combination of fees and taxes
- to encourage Barbados to be used to establish international businesses of substance which would in turn lead to the creation of jobs for locals and a transfer of special skills
- a desire to differentiate Barbados from the other jurisdictions in the Caribbean which had adopted a model of zero tax and no DTA's

The success of this strategy is evidenced by the fact that:

- there are over 2000 individuals working in the IB Sector
- the IB sector contributes over 60% of the corporate taxes paid by companies in Barbados
- Barbados has 18 DTAs with 27 countries as well as 9 BITs

Contributed by Angelo Venardos

UPDATES & DEVELOPMENTS:

Upcoming Events

STEP Singapore Symposium on "Singapore Private Wealth Management Update 2010" (22 June 2010, 9.00am-6.00pm, Banquet Suite, M Hotel)

Following on from the great success that we had in hosting the STEP Asia Conference last October, STEP Singapore invites you to join us for our inaugural STEP Singapore Symposium.

At this full day event, you will hear from leading local trust & estate practitioners on a full range of topics pertinent to the Singapore trust industry. Plus, take part in an afternoon panel session that discusses Singapore's value proposition as a wealth protection and preservation jurisdiction. This year, our Keynote Speaker will be Mr. Michael Hwang, the President of the Law Society of Singapore.

We are keeping the registration fees for members and industry practitioners at an affordable level, so that as many as possible can attend.

With more than 120 already registered for the Symposium, don't miss out! Register to secure your place now.

For more details visit www.step.org.sg/symposium2010/.

Angelo Venardos & Alex van der Zwaard, Symposium Organising Committee

Post-Event Updates

Post Event Update: Residence and Citizenship Planning – An Overview for TEPs (13 May 2010, 12-2.15pm, Marina Bay Room, ERCI City Campus)

More than fifty STEP Members and Guests attended the 13 May 2010 STEP seminar on "Residence and Citizenship Planning – An Overview For TEPs" delivered by Mr Christian H. Kalin ("Chris"), Partner, Henley & Partners of Zurich, Switzerland.



Chris' presentation identified and reviewed key factors which influence the decision of wealthy individuals and families to seek relocation from one country to another, such as, desire to achieve enhanced tax planning, personal safety, education opportunities for children, change in life style, political and economic stability and even pleasant weather and cultural environment.

Primary countries identified and reviewed during the presentation included Switzerland, Belgium, Austria, St Kits & Nevis in Caribbean and Singapore. With respect to each identified country Chris reviewed: residency requirements, tax reporting obligations, requirements to obtain citizenship, lifestyle advantages, and business environment.

As an aside, Chris spoke about the many advantages associated with holding more than one passport and reliance on residency documentation to facilitate travel between designated countries in Europe.

With respect to Singapore, Chris led a very interesting discussion on the excellent positioning of Singapore as an ideal jurisdiction for tax compliant individuals to "drop off assets" before immigrating from one high tax jurisdiction to another high tax jurisdiction. In light of favourable and tax neutral treatment of foreign owned financial assets managed in Singapore wealthy individuals and families need not immigrate to Singapore in order to take advantage of its world-class wealth management industry.

The session ended with review of a sample pre-immigration process management framework inclusive of a proposed pre-immigration advisory process. Also presented were suggestions for scope of pre-immigration and personal financial planning practice areas. Chris highlighted the importance of integrating into immigration planning focus on "residency exit or termination planning", impact of change of residency or immigration on spousal rights and marital property, change of domicile, review of decedent's estate administration, confirmation of estate and inheritance planning, and review of possible consequences for families which own or control an active business in a third country.

Contributed by Eli Lenyoun