

FACT SHEET

30 March 2019

MUIS WORK PLAN SEMINAR 2019

“Stronger Together: Towards a Better Future”

1 The Muis Work Plan Seminar (WPS) is an annual platform to share with the Singapore Muslim community on the work that was accomplished in the preceding year, and engage with key stakeholders on Muis’ current and future initiatives.

2 This year’s Seminar coincides with the end of Muis’ 5th three-year planning cycle, and marks the start of the 6th, which spans from 2019 to 2021. The theme for this year’s WPS is - “**Stronger Together: Towards a Better Future**”. It highlights Muis’ long-standing aim to collaborate and serve the community better, and recognise the importance of our partners’ role in guiding the community’s socio-religious life.

3 A book will also be launched at WPS by Minister for Environment and Water Resources, and Minister-in-charge of Muslim Affairs, Mr Masagos Zulkifli Mohamad. The book, entitled, “*Striving with Confidence, Serving with Compassion*,” shares the significant contributions of key individuals in charting Muis’ growth to serve the Muslim community, and features voices of our beneficiaries over the last 50 years.

5TH MUIS’ 3-YEAR PLAN (5M3YP : 2016-2018)

4 Guided by Muis’ vision for ‘**A Gracious Muslim Community of Excellence that Inspires and Radiates Blessings to All**’, the progress made in 5M3YP are categorised into the following areas:

- Enhancing Community’s Religious Life
- Quality Islamic Education
- Strengthening Madrasah Education
- Harnessing Potential of Mosques in Community Building
- Enhancing Help for Zakat Beneficiaries
- Nurturing Relations and Partnerships
- Asset Governance
- Organisational Excellence

5 Please refer to the 5M3YP Report Card Booklet for details on the key achievements in 5M3YP. Link: <http://bit.ly/Muis5M3YP>

6th MUIS' 3-YEAR PLAN (6M3YP : 2019-2021)

6 As part of the planning process, Muis undertook a scanning exercise of both its internal and external operating environment. Three broad areas of strategic concerns were identified namely i) Capability and Coordination Gaps (within the Religious Sector), ii) Challenges of Diversity and iii) Meeting the needs of under-served segments within the community. Refer to **Annex A** for details of these strategic concerns.

7 To address the above concerns, the 6M3YP was formulated along three principles of ***Continuity*** – to build on the work done in the previous three-year plan; ***Collaboration*** – to work closer with the community and key partners; and ***Transformational*** – to embark on new approaches to address emerging issues. As part of the planning process, inputs were sought from stakeholders through various platforms including the Muis50 Conversations and the Mosque Convention 2018. These consultations gave rise to the following four primary focus areas within 6M3YP:

- **Strengthening Support and Development of Asatizah**
- **Strengthening Social Cohesion**
- **Rallying Support to the Under-served in the Community**
- **Strengthening Our Religious Institutions**

Focus Area 1: Preparing Our Future Religious Leaders

8 Given the global trend of rising religiosity and concerns on exclusivism and radicalisation coupled with the challenge of applying progressive religious thinking to contemporary issues, our asatizah needs greater support to continue to play their critical role of shaping the community's religious life. To prepare them for this, Muis' initiatives can be broadly categorised into two areas – i) Future Ready and Professional Asatizah and ii) Strengthening the Madrasah.

Future Ready and Professional Asatizah

9 Muis will review the future role of the asatizah and help them to develop the required competencies for re-designed and new jobs within the religious sector. Thus, Muis will embark on the following initiatives:

- The Committee on Future Asatizah (COFA)** – Muis will engage key community stakeholders ranging from current asatizah, past Madrasah graduates and parents, current and potential employers to understand better

the future role of the asatizah.¹ The feedback gathered will also support the development of strategies to support our asatizah.

- ii. **Strengthening Support and Development of Asatizah** – Muis will continue to invest in asatizah development through the ARS Continuing Professional Education (ARS-CPE) programmes, scholarships and internship programmes offered via the Muis Academy and overseas student engagement programmes offered by the Student Careers and Welfare Office.
- iii. **The Postgraduate Certificate in Islam in Contemporary Societies** – this aims to equip all returning graduates from overseas Islamic institutions with contextualised understanding of Islam and relevant employability skills to better serve the Muslim community in a multi-cultural society like Singapore. It will begin in 2020.

Strengthening Madrasah

10 As part of upstream interventions to develop our future religious leaders and practitioners, key initiatives to strengthen the madrasah sector include:

- i. **Enhancing Primary Level Madrasah Curriculum** - Muis will review the quality and delivery of madrasah curriculum at the primary level to ensure that students have a strong foundation in religious education which is attuned to Singapore's unique context. All Madrasahs offering primary school curriculum (Madrasah Irsyad Zuhri, Wak-Tanjong, Al-Ma'arif, and Alsagoff) will participate in the review. The review will be done progressively starting this year to be completed in 2025. This follows the completion of the review of the Secondary curriculum for Islamic subjects at Madrasah Aljunied and Madrasah Al-Arabiah last year and the Pre-University curriculum for Madrasah Aljunied by the end of this year.
- ii. **Comprehensive Assistance Package (CAP) for Madrasah Wak Tanjong Al-Islamiah** – MWTI had accepted the CAP in April 2018. The CAP included funding for a 30-year lease for MWTI's existing premises at 589 Sims Avenue. As part of the CAP, Muis will be providing resources for MWTI to step up efforts in teachers' professional development and improve governance. Muis will continue to assist MWTI to review key processes and implement appropriate improvement actions.

¹ COFA serves to i) spearhead the engagement of community stakeholders on the vision of "Asatizah of the Future" and the plans for achieving this; ii) perform the role of an advisory committee for the development of the Singapore Islamic College; and iii) provide inputs to the design and implementation of programmes to prepare returning religious graduates for the workforce.

- iii. **New Premises for Madrasah Al-Arabiah** – the development of the new campus is on track and is expected to be completed by end 2019 and will be ready for the new school term in 2020. This will significantly enhance the learning environment for the students, and will be a important milestone in the Madrasah's development.

Focus Area 2: Strengthening Social Cohesion

11 Strong socio-religious networks are critical in realising the goal of living harmoniously in a secular state and diverse society like Singapore. Two key areas which contribute significantly towards greater social cohesion are i) Enhancing Islamic Education especially for the Young and ii) Strengthening the Singapore Muslim Identity.

Enhancing Islamic Education

12 To ensure that society especially our youths receive a good foundation in their religious values, Muis together with aLIVE centres (at mosques) and Islamic Education Centres and Providers (IECPs) will work towards:

- i. **Better Quality and Delivery of IE Content** – greater emphasis will be given to teacher development and more customised programmes will be developed to cater to diverse student groups and increase overall outreach.
- ii. **Sharing Curriculum Standards, Best Practices and Training Materials** – this approach will help optimise the resources within the IE sector while fostering greater collaboration among IE practitioners.

Strengthening the Singapore Muslim Identity (SMI)

13 The SMI values of Religiously Resilient, Inclusive, Contributive, Adaptive and Progressive (RICAP) will continue to form the basis of Muis' socio-religious programmes. Work will continue in the following areas:

- i. **Guiding the Community to be Confident Muslims in a Multi-Cultural Society** – Muis will continue to apply a progressive approach in formulating fatwa and religious guidance. The Harmony Centre and the Rahmatan lil Alamin Foundation (RLAF) will continue to play proactive roles in furthering inter-faith understanding and mobilising the community to contribute through annual platforms like the Building Bridges programme, the Sentuhan Ramadan campaign and the RLAF Month.
- ii. **Building Capabilities to Better Embrace Diversity** – Muis will develop resources and content to equip community leaders, asatizah and

madrasah students with the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively deal with contemporary inter-faith and intra-faith diversity. These materials will be shared at various platforms in different formats e.g. aLIVE and madrasah curriculum, Muslim.SG portal, ARS-CPE courses, khutbah etc.

Focus Area 3: Rallying Support to the Under-served in the Community

14 Muis will give greater attention to four community segments over the next three years. These are the low income, the incarcerated and their families, the youth and the elderly.

Rallying Support for Low-income Families and the Incarcerated

15 **Enhanced Empowerment Partnership Scheme (EPS)** – this scheme will be improved to provide for more customised assistance for zakat beneficiaries by leveraging on the potential of community networks. A pilot run of the enhanced scheme is scheduled to start in Q2 2019.

16 **Stronger In-Care and After Care Support for the Incarcerated and Their Families** – Muis will work with MHA on this initiative. Details to be given in due course.

17 **Leveraging M³@Towns for Greater Outreach** – Muis has set up a dedicated Community Engagement Unit to provide greater support for the M³ initiative. Five more M³@Towns² will be established by end 2019 to mobilise greater community support for outreach efforts. By developing a map of potential community assets and beneficiaries within their immediate vicinity, each M³@Town office will be able to provide increased and targeted outreach, and strengthen last mile service delivery to families in need of community services and educational programmes.

Harnessing Potential of Youth and Elderly Groups

18 **Supporting the Socio-Religious Needs of the Elderly** – Given an ageing population, Muis will study the socio-religious needs of the elderly within the Muslim community and identify underserved needs. Potential areas are the provision of customised religious content for the elderly, education on estate planning matters and harnessing the expertise and skills of seniors in community development. The current Mosque Befriending scheme is a good example where some seniors are actively deployed as befrienders to expand the social support circle of zakat beneficiaries.

² M³ is a collaborative effort between three key community agencies, namely Muis, MENDAKI and MESRA, to leverage each other's strengths and enhance their services to the Muslim community. Thus far, three M³@Towns have been established at Tampines, Pasir-Ris Punggol and Nee Soon. Five more will be established in 2019.

19 **Partnering Agencies for Youths and Elderly Contribution** - Muis will partner agencies to enable the elderly and youth groups to leverage their expertise and potential to participate in community development events or programmes.

Focus Area 4: Strengthening Our Religious Institutions

20 Muis will work with the mosque sector on the following initiatives:

One Mosque Sector & Collaborative Leadership³

- i. **Leadership and Talent Development** - a leadership development framework will be developed to ensure a ready succession of mosque leaders who are better equipped to lead and collaborate effectively within the sector and with partners from other sectors.
- ii. **Enhancing Financial Governance and Service Standards** – financial audit cycles will be maintained and service standards at mosques will be further enhanced.
- iii **Optimising Support Services** - HR & IT services will be better coordinated across the sector to reap economies of scale and allow mosque staff to focus on their core work.

Digitalisation

21 Muis will continue to leverage on digitalisation to enhance service delivery. The current Muslim.SG app which currently enables the individual to access religious information (e.g. Friday sermons, FAQs to religious enquiries, prayer times and online donations) on the go, will be enhanced with additional services.

22 Muis will also offer new e-payment options for Zakat and online donations. This includes NETSPay, DBS PayLah!, OCBC's Pay Anyone and UOB's Mighty apps, accessible via QR codes. This will supplement existing options, i.e. DBS iBanking, DBS mBanking, DBS ATM, OCBC Al-Wadiah accounts, CIMB Clicks, AXS stations, tele-poll, online payments, GIRO and the widely available NETS payment mode.

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³ These are two of the three strategic thrusts developed through Mosque Convention 2018.

Strategic Concerns for 6M3YP

Capability and Coordination Gaps

- i. Strengthening of career opportunities for asatizah in the religious sector
- ii. Quality community engagement especially in the online space
- iii. Strengthening service capabilities and offerings

Challenges of Diversity

- i. Impact of Religious Exclusivism & Extremism
- ii. Rising religiosity and challenges to social cohesion

Under-served Community Segments

- i. Improving Youth Outreach & Engagement
- ii. Meeting the Needs of the Elderly
- iii. Meeting the Needs of the Low-income group, the incarcerated and their families

About ‘Striving with Confidence, Serving with Compassion’ Book

The Muis50 commemorative publication entitled “Striving with Confidence, Serving with Compassion’ which is also the theme of the Muis 50th Anniversary celebrations, documents the history and work that Muis had undertaken over the last five decades to serve the socio-religious needs of the community and the well-being of the nation.

The book features strong visuals, articles, personal accounts of Muis makers which include former and current staff, partners and volunteers on stories of its humble beginnings to the current plethora of services on offer for the Singapore Muslim community. The book also highlights the growth of each major Muis sector, namely our mosques, madrasah, zakat, wakaf, halal, haj and social development programmes which is captured in a 50 milestones of Muis.

As we progress forward beyond 50 years, a portion of the book addresses the rising expectations and growing needs and challenges of a more diverse community brought about by the advent of new technologies, communication platforms, shifting values and lifestyles, as well as evolving socio-political realities. The book also honours all contributors to the Muis journey and records appreciation to all parties that have contributed to the progress of Muis and the Singapore Muslim community.



Dr Nazirudin Mohd Nasir is currently the Senior Director, Religious and Policy Development of the Majlis Ugama Islam Singapura (Muis) or the Singapore Islamic Religious Council, a statutory board overseeing the administration and religious affairs of the Singapore Muslim community.

As Senior Director of Religious and Policy Development, Dr Nazirudin is responsible for development of initiatives and policies, as well as religious content that provide guidance for the Singapore Muslim community's religious life. Dr Nazirudin has presented numerous papers and participated in several conferences in Singapore and abroad. He is an Associate Member of the Fatwa Committee. He was also a member of the Singapore Bioethics Advisory Committee.

Dr Nazirudin completed his Doctor of Philosophy at St Cross College, University of Oxford, in the comparative study of the Abrahamic religions. He did postgraduate work in International and Comparative Legal Studies at the School of Oriental and African Studies (MA), and the Study of Religion at Oxford (MSt). Prior to that, he graduated with a Bachelors in Islamic Law from Al-Azhar University, Cairo, in 2002.