

A Developmental Overview of The Singapore Chapter of The International Society of Financial Analysts (ISFA)

The Singapore Chapter of the International Society of Financial Analysts (ISFA) was registered in September 1987. It serves as a forum for fund management professionals to exchange views on developments in the industry. One of its key objectives is to raise the professionalism of local financial analysts and fund managers. Another important goal is to improve standards of corporate reporting in the region and to facilitate a free flow of information to investors and shareholders.

The Singapore Chapter of ISFA is affiliated to the Association of Investment Management and Research (AIMR), an organisation headquartered in Charlottesville, Virginia, USA. AIMR combines the activities of the Institute of Chartered Financial Analysts (ICFA) and the Financial Analysts Federation (FAF).

The primary mission of the ICFA, established in 1962, is to enhance professional and ethical standards of those involved in the investment decision-making process through the adoption of a programme of studies leading to the Chartered Financial Analyst (CFA) designation. The FAF, founded in 1947, is the professional

organisation for security analysts, portfolio managers, investment counsellors and managers of pension, endowment and other funds and related groups.

The CFA programme is a self-study course with three levels of examination conducted yearly. For each of the three levels, seven subjects are covered: ethics and securities law, financial accounting, quantitative analysis, economics, techniques of fixed income and equity analysis, and portfolio management.

For the past three years, Singapore has had the distinction of being the largest overseas CFA examination centre. In 1987, 94 candidates enrolled for the three levels of examination, while in 1989 the total number registered was 322. The expanded pool of candidates sitting for the CFA examination augurs well for Singapore as a major fund management centre.

The Singapore Chapter currently has 168 members in three categories of membership: Regular, Associate and Affiliate. Regular members comprise the CFAs or those who hold senior positions in their profession, have substantial experience in

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the field of investments or fund management and have contributed significantly to the industry. Present membership stands at 101. Of these, 40 are CFAs, a significant increase from only nine in 1987. This number is expected to increase significantly over the next few years with the increasing number of candidates registered for the CFA examinations.

Candidates attempting any of the three levels of the CFA examination qualify for the Associate Membership. Associates are persons employed in the investment industry and are required to pass their CFA examination to become Regular Members. There are at present 55 Associate Members.

The Affiliate Membership category is for those working in fields closely related to investment analysis but who may not devote full time to the profession of financial analysis. There are currently 12 Affiliate Members.

To help promote the CFA study programme, the Singapore Chapter organises forums and conducts tutorial and revision classes to assist candidates in preparing for the examinations.

Other activities include organising seminars on global financial markets outlook, and workshops on regional stockmarkets to keep members and the investing community abreast of market developments.

To facilitate a free flow of information to investors, the Chapter organises company

briefings and luncheon presentations by corporations on financial performance, investment strategy and growth prospects.

Management of the Singapore Chapter is vested in a council of 10 elected Regular Members. Five committees assist the council in discharging its various functions.

- Disciplinary Committee — oversees the professional conduct of members. The Singapore Chapter adopts the code of Ethics and Standards of Professional Conduct of the ICFA and the FAF.
- Membership Committee — reviews and approves applications for membership.
- Education Committee — is responsible for the educational development of members and assists members enrolled in the CFA study programme.
- Programmes Committee — organises activities which enhance professionalism and promote social interaction among members.
- Public Relations Committee — promotes the corporate identity of the Singapore Chapter as a professional body of financial analysts and liaises with the media. It also encourages non-member financial analysts to join the Singapore Chapter. ■

The Singapore Chapter of the International Society of Financial Analysts