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Headline: Singapore looks to rely less on foreign workers after pandemic

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Migrant workers in essential services wearing safety vests cross a street at Orchard Road, amid the coronavirus disease (Covid-19) outbreak in Singapore, May 27, 2020. (Reuters photo)

Singapore will have to find ways to rely less on foreign workers and accelerate automation of some tasks in its post-pandemic economy, Second Minister for Finance Indranee Rajah told reporters Monday.

“It should be less and less repetitive manual operation and those should be replaced by automation, and the local population can do more on higher value-added activities,” said Rajah. “But this has to be done in stages with cautions because we can not just take out all the manual power all of a sudden.”

The city-state will redesign the infrastructure system, with investment focused on partnerships across the clean energy, public health, information & communications technology sectors, while promoting a “friendly regulatory environment”, she said in the briefing.

Rajah also further outlined a previously announced programme with the World Bank Group and Singapore Management University to train senior and mid-level regional government officials involved in project preparation.

Despite the impact of the pandemic, international financial sources remain available and very keen to support clean energy projects, said Rajah, who is also minister in the prime minister’s office.