

A day in the life of an NEC accredited Project Manager

Simon Ng
Director
Mannings (Asia) Consultants Ltd



Please introduce yourself including your background, role and company.

My name is Simon Ng and I have worked in the consultancy industry for 23 years. I am the Director of Mannings (Asia) Consultants Ltd, which is a multi-disciplinary engineering consultant firm based in Hong Kong mainly serving infrastructure and building projects. I am currently working with 15 NEC contracts on-hand, as the Supervisor delegate or NEC advisor.

What does your role involve?

My key role is to oversee our NEC projects and provide advice on the implementation of NEC contracts from the tender strategy to the completion of construction. Moreover, I will regularly share NEC experience and observations with the Mannings' team and concerned stakeholders within the industry.

What does a typical day look like to you?

There are a lot of challenges and requests to address each working day. On any given day, various issues can come up concurrently via emails, phones, messages, meetings, etc. Issues such as ad-hoc client requests, projects management challenges, internal operation and resource management problems, new opportunities as well as NEC queries. Part of my day involves managing my time effectively in order to cope with the substantial amount of daily queries and requests.

What do you enjoy the most about your job?

Job satisfaction is one of the key motivations in our work. For instance, when starting a new project, I have to work with our teams to prudently arrange the staff

that have the necessary calibre for the effective delivery of the required tasks. Teamwork is an important aspect of every project and part of my role is to drive that collaboration within the team. Once we have completed the project and the client shows their appreciation, this is what the whole team enjoys the most.

How many NEC procured projects have you worked on?

I have been involved in over 18 NEC projects as a Supervisor delegate or in an NEC advisory role of our company. They include Engineering and Construction Contract Option A, B, C and D. From my observation of the industry recently, half of the infrastructure projects that are running use Priced contracts and the other half use Target contracts.

At what point in your career did you (or your organisation) decide to take the NEC accreditation course?

I took the NEC3: ECC Project Manager Accreditation (PMA) course in 2015 and subsequently topped-up to NEC4 in 2019. Over the years, I have assisted our company and other companies in organising PMA courses either in our offices or other venues.

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What was the one takeaway from the course that you are using every day?

I think to act in a spirit of mutual trust and co-operation is the key takeaway from the PMA course. Over the years, I always remind myself and the teams how we should collaborate and adopt a wider partnering approach within the parties, as stated in the contract.

What was the first NEC procured project that you worked on?

My first NEC project was under Highways Department (HyD) “Retrofitting of Noise Barriers on Tai Po Tai Wo Road near Po Nga Court” using NEC3 Option C with a value of HK\$87.2m, from 2012 to 2014. This was one of the pilot projects in Hong Kong. We were tasked to manage the contract with gain sharing between the Employer and the Contractor. This NEC contract also formed the foundation for our subsequent HyD’s and Civil Engineering Development Department’s NEC contracts.

What was the most memorable NEC procured project that you worked on and why?

The most memorable NEC projects were Tuen Mun Road (Town Centre) noise barrier contract using Option A with a value of HK\$585m, started in 2015 and Lam

Tin Tunnel which involved four contracts (ECC Option A, B, C & D) with a total value over HK\$3.5b, started in 2016. With Tuen Mun Road (Town Centre) noise barrier, I modified the ECC Option A, adding a cost centre to improve the cashflow for the Contractor. This contract will complete construction this year. On the contrary, I have also managed another project of a similar nature and value, the Tuen Mun Road (Fu Tei) noise barrier contract using the conventional Government Conditions of Contract (GCC) during the same period. Comparison of NEC and GCC is underway with these noise barrier contracts for the stakeholders’ interest, including recommendation of how to better implement future NEC projects in Hong Kong.

What advice would you give somebody pursuing engineering as a career?

Given the diversified opinions from the public on the implementation of infrastructure projects in Hong Kong, I think as an engineer in Hong Kong we should equip ourselves on an all-round basis with different skills spanning from technical to contractual knowledge. To maintain harmonised stakeholders and public relations is another key part for engineers to learn. We should not only focus on what we are tasked to do, but we should also be open-minded to learn from others via various communication channels, forums, seminars, NEC conferences, etc.

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