

A day in the life of an NEC accredited Project Manager

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Please introduce yourself including your background, role and company.

My name is Albert Yeu and I am a senior resident engineer at AECOM Asia Company Limited (AECOM). I am also a qualified arbitrator and tribunal secretary at the Hong Kong International Arbitration Centre, one of the leading dispute resolution organisations that specialises in arbitration, mediation and adjudication. I have over 20 years' experience in the civil engineering, construction and dispute resolution profession.

What does your role involve?

The first 10 years of my career were in the design and procurement of civil engineering projects. Since then I have moved into a construction supervision and dispute management role. My current role involves the management of construction contracts and the dispute resolution process in major infrastructure projects in Hong Kong.

What does a typical day look like to you?

There are new challenges arising every day. In the recent years, I have worked on many different sites and managed a variety of construction contracts, including the NEC3 contract form. I am fortunate enough to work with project teams of different cultures and diversity. In the current contract, I

provide support in the NEC setting and manage the expectations of all stakeholders. The NEC management tools of early warning system, risk reduction meetings and compensation event procedures provide clear and handy resolutions in performing my daily tasks.

What do you enjoy the most about your job?

I enjoy a variety of elements of my job. This includes the collaborative working environment, creative and lateral thinking, mutual trust and co-operation spirit, knowledge sharing, feedback and continuing professional improvement.

How many NEC procured projects have you worked on?

I am currently working on my first NEC project, which is one of the public sector projects for the Kai Tak Development in Hong Kong procured under NEC3: ECC Option A. I am also regularly

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asked to advise on the use of NEC4: ECC and PSC frameworks.

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

I was intrigued when the HKSAR Government endorsed the NEC4 suite of contracts at the NEC Asia-Pacific Users’ Group Conference in September 2017 and a progressive transition from NEC3 to NEC4 in public works contracts. I see that the only way to save costs and time whilst minimising wastage in construction in the next 10 years is an industry transformation into collaborative construction and adopting those best practices. This is by no means achievable by any single player in the supply chain. The conventional mindset of the industry and having an adversarial playing field is no longer sustainable.

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

The three pillars of NEC: Accepted Programme – Compensation Event – Early Warning System provide a very effective project management tool in respect of risk management and cost management with a compensatory principle that is fair to both the Employer and the Contractor. If anyone thinks disputes are unavoidable, I strongly recommend the Hong Kong construction industry to adopt the NEC option W1 contractual adjudication regime that provides an effective, quick and cheap dispute resolution process.

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

My current project is the first NEC project I am working on after acquiring the NEC3 Accreditation in 2018 and then NEC4 Accreditation in 2019. It

is one of the public sector projects for the Kai Tak Development in Hong Kong (located at the old Hong Kong airport runway) worth multi-million dollars procured under the Engineering and Construction Contract (ECC).

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

It is the current project that I am working on for AECOM, which is a design and build project providing better transport connectivity between the Kai Tak Cruise Terminal and central Kowloon areas. Our project alliances are instrumental in applying the NEC spirit to deliver high quality work on time and within budget during the global pandemic turbulence. I am looking forward to seeing the success of this project in terms of meeting social demand and improving district transport network for land development.

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

No matter which engineering field you are starting as a young graduate, choose a good mentor for the first five years of your career who can set a good example of professional ethics and integrity. From then on, you will either become a jack of all trades or an expert, or a bit of both depends on your passion. Lifelong learning and being abreast of the latest industry development is always the key to success.

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