



Singapore has in recent years seen larger and more complex building and infrastructure projects. The delivery of development projects no longer involved just a handful of parties. Modern construction project development involves specialisation of work and disciplines. Project delivery has multiple development stages from concept design to construction and completion, involving various modes of procurement. Integration of the inputs of the various parties and disciplines, between and over several stages, has become ever more critical. Professional project management is key to delivering successful projects in providing the integration and leadership.

In January 2016, the Building and Construction Authority, BCA, forecast construction contracts to be awarded in the year would be in the region of S\$27 billion to S\$37 billion in the next four years, at an annual average of S\$30 billion. Do we have sufficient qualified and professional project managers in our midst to handle these multi-million dollar projects? And we are increasingly seeing projects in billions of dollars as well!! Can we identify such project managers easily?

## Complexity and Challenges

Projects typically involve multiple stakeholders. They bring into the project varied, and sometimes even conflicting, views and expectations. Agreement and alignment to common project objectives is critical to successful project delivery.

Specialisation of work has increased in project delivery. Large complex projects involve even more professional disciplines and specialists. We have the architects, urban planners, master planners, landscape architects, interior designers, environmental sustainability design consultants, geo-technical engineers, structural engineers, mechanical engineers, electrical engineers, traffic engineers, façade engineers, acoustics engineers, blast and security engineers, environmental engineers, health and safety specialists, info-com and tech specialists, project type specialists, and the list can go on. With greater specialisation, there is a tendency for the individual disciplines to work independently and in silos. However, projects need the various disciplines to work inter-dependently. Their individual contributions have to be well coordinated, and integrated.

## Integration

*Projects require well-coordinated, inter-disciplinary efforts to succeed.*

Under the prevailing government policies and regulations in construction industry – like Building Information Modeling (BIM), procurement approach – early contractor involvement (ECI), design for safety (DfS), environmental sustainability design (ESD) or Green Mark requirements, buildability and constructability, construction quality (CONQUAS) and productivity – projects require well-coordinated, inter-disciplinary efforts to succeed.

Development of a project and the resultant built asset is no longer just purely a capital cost consideration. With the concern for sustainability, both environmental and economic, the consideration of future operation cost and future relevance has become increasingly prominent. Whole life value of the built asset has to be optimised. Integration of both capital and operation costs is imperative.

We need to recognise the fragmented nature and the need for inter-dependency, and to ensure there is good communication channels to manage the integration of inputs of various parties and to manage any conflicts. A good and effective Project Manager (PM) is expected to have sufficient knowledge and understanding of the work each discipline that he is managing to enable him to interact intelligently with these consultants. The PM is expected to have the ability to integrate the inputs of the various and varied consultants (or trades of sub-contractors, in the case of a contractor's PM) in his project team with astute leadership and management skills. This a unique role.

## Good and professional Project Management

*will certainly contribute to lifting the standard of our Built Environment/Construction Industry in terms of project delivery, productivity, environmental sustainability and health and safety.*

## Raising Quality of Project Management Practice

Project Managers in the building and construction industry must rise up to this unique role and meet the challenge.

Unlike other developed economies, like United States, United Kingdom, European Union, Australia, and Japan, we do not have a set of project management practice standards to guide the construction and built environment industry in Singapore. Without standards, the project management practice is rather disparate and fragmented. Currently, anyone can call himself a "Project Manager" and claim that he can do project management. There is lack of clear and more formalised criteria to qualify a person to be a competent Project Manager.

Project Management exists in project delivery in many quarters – in the developers' setup (as either in-house PM or independent outsourced PM); in consultants' setup (as coordinator and integrator of technical matters) and in contractors' setup (as coordinator and manager of sub-contractors, and even consultants in design and build projects).

Developers and consumers of Project Management (PMgt) service find the quality and standard of PMgt service vary widely. Some developers have questioned why their consultants or contractors claimed that their design and supervision service included project management and yet found that their projects ran into delays, with cost overrun or laden with poor quality or defective work.

For a client or an employer, it is hard to ascertain the quality and competence standard of a person who calls himself a "Project Manager". The verification process to ascertain the quality of a potential PMgt service provider or an employee can be

## The Unique Role of the Project Manager

*He is expected to have the ability to integrate the contributions and inputs of the various and varied consultants and contractors in his project team with astute leadership and management skills.*

# PROJECT MANAGERS

## *Raising the Bar*

tedious. Generally, one would need to go through his resume, check his education qualification, his project experience, the nature and complexity of the projects he has managed, job scope of PM work, etc. It will also invariably include interviews. This all is time consuming. How can we cut through and speed up this process?

### Accreditation of Project Managers

To handle the project challenges and manage the complexity, we need to increase of quality of PMgt practice. We need to raise the bar for PMgt practice; we need to have a set of industry PMgt standards as the benchmark.

The Society of Project Managers (SPM) is leading the way in developing an accreditation scheme to assess and certify qualified practitioners in Project Management. The Accreditation of Project Managers (APM) scheme will pave the way for consumers of PMgt services to sieve out and differentiate the good and competent project managers from the mediocre ones, and to help identify the capable and experienced project managers to manage larger and more complex projects. The GAPPS Project Manager Standards will be used as a reference standards.

[See also SPM APM Scheme article on Page 3]

- b. Clear path for skills and career upgrading
- c. Better recognition of the PMgt profession and PM service
- d. Better employability for the accredited PMs
- e. Exportable service, beyond Singapore shores

ii. For the consumers in the market place

- a. Clearer distinction of service providers
- b. Better assurance of quality service standard
- c. Higher level of PMgt service (with clear PM practice benchmark)
- d. Better project outcomes
- e. For employers, easier recruitment assessment of candidates with PM accreditation.

### Summary

The challenges brought about by increasing scale and complexity of building and infrastructure projects are evident. The Project Manager plays a key role in providing leadership, management and facilitation of integration.

The benefits of having an APM scheme are clear. It is not a licensing scheme or one to be empowered by legislation. PM Accreditation will encourage construction professionals who are

a positive impact on implementation and delivery of projects, affecting all players and stakeholders – developers, consultants and contractors. This will certainly contribute to lifting the standard of our Built Environment/ Construction Industry in terms of project delivery – timeliness, within budget and good quality – productivity, environmental sustainability and health and safety.

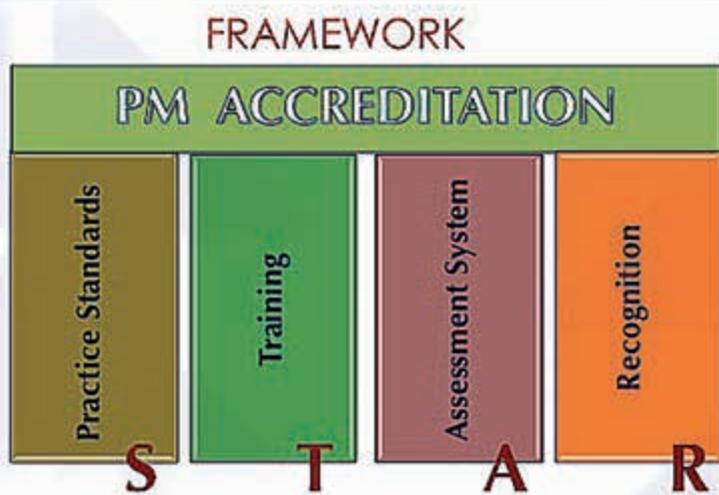
The standard of Project Management practice has to be raised to meet the challenges and needs of the industry. Accreditation of project managers is the way forward.

Written by:

**Yip Kim Seng**

*2nd Vice President, SPM  
Chair of APM Committee*

## APM Scheme



### Benefits of the APM Scheme

The APM scheme will provide benefits to the individual PMgt practitioners and service providers as well as consumers. These benefits are:

- i. For the individual PM practitioners/PM service providers
  - a. Clear PM practice benchmark

serious in practicing and providing good quality PM service to upgrade to the required standard expected by the consumers in the Built Environment/ Construction Industry. It will assure the market a minimum standard for good PM practice. Good and professional Project Management will certainly have

## Acknowledgement



**Yip Kim Seng**

*2nd Vice-President of the Society of Project Managers (SPM),  
Board Member of the Global Alliance of Project Performance Standards (GAPPS)*

Kim Seng is passionate in advancing Project Management competency, and sharing knowledge and experience in Project Management. He is a registered Architect and has more than 25 years of PM experience in the Built Environment Industry. As MD of PM Link from 2006 to 2011, he oversaw many other large infrastructure projects, both local and overseas. He has personally led and managed the following projects: the Singapore Management University, Woodlands Checkpoint, Changi Airport Terminal 4, National Museum of Singapore, MOE HQ Building and St. Andrew's Village. Kim Seng is the 2nd Vice-President of the Society of Project Managers (SPM) and is a board member of the Global Alliance of Project Performance Standards (GAPPS). As an Associate Faculty of SIM University, he teaches in the Building & Project Management program. Kim Seng is currently in private practice providing consultancy and training in Project Management.