

DEVB and works departments win nine Martin Barnes Awards in UK (with photos)

Hong Kong's excellence in delivering public works projects received international recognition. The Development Bureau (DEVB) and works departments shone at the 2025 Martin Barnes Awards Ceremony in London, the United Kingdom, on June 16 (London time), winning nine awards from the 27 awards in eight categories (see Annex), including two prestigious winner awards, among 80 entries worldwide.

A prestigious honour in the industry, the Martin Barnes Awards are presented by the New Engineering Contract (NEC) Users' Group under the Institution of Civil Engineers of the United Kingdom. The awards recognise construction projects, organisations and individuals worldwide that have demonstrated excellence in project delivery through collaborative partnership.

The two winner awards are as follows:

1. The winner award for the Climate Change Initiative category was received by the Water Supplies Department (WSD) for the implementation of Shek Wu Hui Water Reclamation Plant. In the construction and operation of Hong Kong's first large-scale regional water reclamation plant, the WSD worked with the contractor through the NEC mechanism to develop an innovative and cost-effective fully automated reclaimed water production solution that saves energy and helps reduce carbon emissions. The facility supplies water for non-potable uses in Northern District and nearby new development areas. With the production process remaining unaffected by extreme weather, it not only conserves precious water resources but also enhances the resilience of Hong Kong's water resources portfolio, thus further improving the stability of the city's water resources.
2. The winner award for Distinguished Contribution category was received by Deputy Secretary for Development (Works) Mr Tony Ho, in recognition of his outstanding performance in promoting and deepening the application of the NEC in construction projects over the years, which has contributed to the development of a collaborative culture in the industry. His proactive promotion of the adoption of advanced technologies has also enhanced the overall performance of construction projects.

In addition to the above two winner awards, the DEVB, the Civil Engineering and Development Department, the Drainage Services Department, the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department, and the Highways Department also received various awards for several notable NEC entries.

The Secretary for Development, Ms Bernadette Linn, extended her

congratulations to the project teams on their impressive achievements. She said, "The DEVB and works departments have been committed to promoting collaborative partnerships in the delivery of public works projects through the adoption of the NEC form, enhancing mutual trust and co-operation among different industry stakeholders. Such collaborative partnerships help accomplish the primary goals of project management and enhance management efficiency and cost-effectiveness of projects. The awards fully demonstrate that their efforts and accomplishments have been recognised internationally."

The NEC Users' Group also held its 2025 Annual Conference on the same day. The Director of Electrical and Mechanical Services, Mr Poon Kwok-ying, was invited to attend the plenary session to exchange ideas with a group of international experts on how to lead the industry in applying innovative technologies and integrating the use of the NEC form to enhance the effectiveness of implementing infrastructure projects.

Since the DEVB introduced the NEC form for public works projects in Hong Kong in 2009, it has become a key driver in transforming the construction industry. The NEC embraces a collaborative partnership between clients and contractors, thereby enhancing project performance. While the conventional form of contracts focused more on specifying contractual obligations and responsibilities of both parties, the NEC introduces a comprehensive project management system into its contractual provisions, including an early warning mechanism, a compensation mechanism between contractual parties and action plans. It advocates for contractual parties to work together to resolve contractual problems in a proactive and collaborative manner under this management system, thereby achieving win-win situations. As of today, more than 760 public works contracts, with a total value of over HK\$510 billion, have adopted the NEC form.



