



<i>Project Title:</i>	Feasibility and Implementation Strategy of “No-Saturday-Site-Work” in the Hong Kong Construction Industry
<i>Principal Investigator:</i>	Prof. Y. H. CHIANG
<i>Project ID:</i>	CICR/07/14
<i>Research Institution:</i>	The Hong Kong Polytechnic University
<i>Subject Area:</i>	Construction Procurement

## Objective

The initiative of “No-Saturday-Site-Work” (initiative) was proposed by the Hong Kong Construction Association (HKCA) to attract more young blood into the industry, and to improve the work-life balance of construction workers. The objective of this feasibility study is to evaluate the desirability and feasibility of implementing this initiative in the local construction industry.

## Background

Contractors are often required to complete construction works within a tight schedule. During the construction boom in 2014, contractors found it difficult to recruit workers. This problem has become more serious when the young generation, who is generally more educated and thus aspiring for getting more job satisfaction, is unwilling to work on construction sites. With labour shortage, ageing of workers and the nature of work in the construction industry remaining unchanged, the contractors are finding it even harder to attract more young blood into the industry. To address the issue, the HKCA proposes “No-Saturday-Site-Work”.

## Data and Methodology

1. In-depth interviews were conducted from August to September 2014 to gauge the understanding of the industry, from representatives of Development Bureau (DEVB) of the HKSAR Government, Construction Industry Council, MTR Corporation, Real Estate Developers Association (REDA), the Hong Kong Institute of Architects (HKIA), the Hong Kong Institution of Engineers (HKIE), etc., and the workers, and to initially evaluate the desirability and feasibility of implementing the initiative in the local construction industry.
2. Focus group meetings were held from November to December 2014, with representatives of different stakeholders from the Hong Kong Construction Sub-Contractors Association, Hong Kong Construction Association, trade unions, DEVB, HKIE, HKIS, CIOB and REDA to verify the preliminary findings, and to explore the concerns from different trades on implementing the initiative.
3. Questionnaire surveys, which were conducted from January to February 2015, were designed for construction workers, construction trainees and high-school students to obtain the socio-demographic profile of the respondents, and to investigate their employment status, working hours, working satisfaction, career development plan, and concerns and suggestions regarding the implementation of the initiative.
4. A consultation forum was conducted on 26 March 2015 to verify the findings and about 70% of the participants were executive level or above in contractors, consultants, developers and the public sectors.

## Results and Findings

According to the findings, developers, sub-contractors, trade unions and professional institutions opposed implementing this initiative or had big concerns. Government and statutory bodies generally held a neutral position. The stakeholders’ attitudes were listed in the table below.

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Stakeholders	Attitude	Top reasons
<b>Government</b>	Neutral	Depend on project duration and public welfare.
<b>Statutory Bodies</b>	Neutral	Depend on the volume of construction projects.
<b>Property developers</b>	No	1) Exacerbate manpower shortage. 2) Lead to cycle convergence problem, project delay, and inadequate housing supply. 3) The society may not want to bear the cost.
<b>Professional institutions</b>	No	1) Concern with working flexibility, work cycle, income reduction, project delay and increasing costs. 2) “Saturday-Site-Work” is required by certain trades. 3) The society may not want to bear the cost.
<b>Trade unions</b>	No	1) Not a good timing (labour shortage, ageing problem and decreasing productivity). 2) Income reduction and working flexibility issues. 3) Certain trades need to work during weekends.
<b>HKCA</b>	Yes	1) Progress of the society. 2) The income of construction workers is market-driven and will not be affected. 3) The construction industry plays an important role in Hong Kong.
<b>Subcontractors</b>	No	1) Concern with working flexibility, work cycle and income reduction. 2) Not a good timing in terms of time, cost and profession. 3) The society may not want to bear the cost.
<b>Young generation</b>	Yes	1) Increase working efficiency. 2) Reduce noise on Saturdays. 3) Better work-life balance.
	No	1) Income reduction. 2) Reduce the flexibility of current working scheme. 3) Project delay.

## Recommendations

### Short-term strategies

The introduction of “No-Saturday-Site-Work” can be implemented on a voluntary basis. Pilot projects should be identified and implemented with complementary measures, including: 1) cooperation among various stakeholders, such as contractors, sub-contractors and workers; 2) more direct labour employment; 3) adjusted project schedule and working hours; and 4) alternate Saturday-off or half-day-off on Saturdays can be implemented as a start.

### Medium-term strategies

The initiative can be implemented during off-season periods and as a reward for good performing employees. It can be adopted in projects with alternative Saturday delivery arrangement, which emphasizes the collaborative nature with risk sharing.

### Long-term strategies

In the long term, the initiative may be put forward through collective agreement or legislation provided that the following have been resolved satisfactorily : labour shortage, supply chain on compressed working week, workers’ wages and project duration.

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