

Project Management Update from Turkey



By **İpek Sahra Özgüler**
International Correspondent
Istanbul, Turkey

İpek Sahra Özgüler has reported the latest news about project management from Turkey. This report is a contact point between Turkey and the world.

Today, I have a special guest. I'm sure most of you had heard this name before. **Dr. Al Zeitoun**. He serves as Director at the 2015 PMI Board. His curriculum vitae in the PMI web page is as follows:

“In his current role as the Corporate PMO Executive Director for Emirates Nuclear Energy Corporation (ENEC), Dr. Zeitoun's impact includes creating the structure and discipline necessary for delivering on one of the largest projects in the Middle East, while building an enterprise portfolio and program management culture.

In 2007 Dr. Zeitoun was appointed by the PMI Board as a director-at-large. He chaired the Board nominating committee and volunteer appointment committee. He was past board member of the Accreditation Center, founder and past chair of PMI IDSIG, founder of the PMI Wichita, Kansas and MENA Chapters, as well as the chair of the PMI Central Indiana Chapter. Dr. Zeitoun was a keynote speaker at the 2014 PMI Turkey congress, the 2010 PMI® Global Congress in Brazil and at PMI Benelux Day in 2007. He continues to contribute to PMI standards.

Acting formerly as Booz Allen Hamilton's representative on PMI's Global Executive Council, Dr. Zeitoun led the firm's Middle East North Africa Portfolio Management Solutions. In that role, he strategically envisioned Booz Allen

Hamilton’s advisory necessary for customizing EPMO playbooks and mapping the relevant capability development.

Previously, as a Chief Projects Officer for International Institute for Learning, Inc. (IIL), Dr. Zeitoun was responsible for thought leadership and executing project management methodology. He was a key contributor to IIL’s 12-fold increase in global business size, and screened qualified IIL instructors to create a strong presence for the organization within global C-suites. He also has previous experiences in IT, manufacturing, construction and engineering.

Dr. Zeitoun holds PhD, MSc and BSc degrees in civil engineering; in addition, he received a diploma in project management from the University of Bremen.

In addition to his work with ENEC, Dr. Zeitoun continues to educate, such as his work at the University of Maryland. He enjoys spending time with family, traveling, tennis, reading and contributing to various transformation efforts. “ (1)



INTERVIEW WITH DR. AL ZEITOUN

➤ Could you introduce yourself to *PM World Journal* readers, please?

I am a passionate global program and project management practitioner who has dedicated his 30+ years career to growing the profession of project and program management on the practical side and the volunteer side. Having been a member of PMI and a continual volunteer since 1991, I have learned a lot through contributing to the strategic dialogue and initiatives in project

management around the globe. I am a strong believer that by stretching organizational muscles and strengthening the understanding of project management potential, there will be opportunities for improved business outcomes and more creative job opportunities around the world.

➤ We know that you are the Corporate PMO Executive Director for Emirates Nuclear Energy Corporation (ENEC) and a member of the 2015 PMI Board of Directors. Could you give a brief background of your project management experience?

I am a civil engineer by training who managed to have project management as a core element of his career from the very beginning. Having been exposed to IPMA and project management practices in Germany in the early part of my career, I was then introduced to PMI's standards in the late '80s and built on that with years of experience in the U.S. and parts of Europe, Asia, and the Middle East. The best career moves I made were when I stretched myself and shifted from the pure engineering roles into PMO roles in the manufacturing industry and then followed that with closely being involved in designing and building project management methodologies and talent management strategies in various industries and across diverse parts of the world. My current leadership role with ENEC is an example of the need to advance project management practices across a maturing organization that has a very important mission ahead of it -- changing the dynamics of the energy sources in the UAE.

➤ In your opinion, how can a project manager be successful?

It's important to move one's career across different disciplines to learn multiple sides of the business and continuously find alternate ways of approaching projects and dealing with complex challenges. The PMs should always stretch their skills by asking for responsibilities that seem outside the realistic realm. Utilizing the standards of PMI in a smart and innovative way shows a dynamic view and a systematic mindset. In today's emerging business landscape, the need for formalized project management is no longer confined to

IT, construction, or other traditional project-focused sectors. It's the foundation for sound business strategy in any industry, in any part of the world.

- What will be the future trends in project management?

A much higher degree of collaboration will continue to develop in projects, driving a stronger network amongst practitioners. Greater focus on growing and retaining project management talent will become an organizational norm, and project management skills will have a much closer interface with leadership competencies. The utilization of data, simulations, and integrated tools will strengthen decision making and increase the value proposition for investing in project management. Project management will become a mainstream language in industries that have traditionally not been a usual target of its benefits. The strong academic focus on project management and the cascading of that to schools will allow the profession to be much more exposed to career candidates.

- How do you see future trends of program management and portfolio management?

A true understanding of projects as the vehicles for implementing strategy could change the game for program and portfolio management. The gap that currently exists in the mind of executives around the strategic value of this discipline is likely to begin to close over the next 5 to 7 years. With the complex portfolios associated with global events, there is an increased use of program and portfolio management practices as the foundation for seamless integration between investment decisions and the execution of the strategic initiatives that they represent.

- As we know, you were a keynote speaker at the PMI Summit 2014 which was held in Turkey. How would you evaluate the event?

This was an outstanding event, with a very high number of attendees, a rich representation of industries, and many meaningful dialogues around key innovative topics and in networking activities. The level of passion and

engagement in the PM professionals was outstanding, and the signs for a maturing Turkish PM market were obvious in every aspect of the event and in the selection of event themes.

➤ What advice do you have for project management professionals?

The key for success in the project management field centers around being a dynamic professional, having a huge appetite for learning and experimenting. Professionals in this maturing field know the advantage of using projects as a vehicle for innovating how we tackle growing complexities and the multitude of stakeholders who have varying views on what to expect from project managers and project work. Professionals need to enhance their decision-making power with the utilization of strong data analytics and a thorough understanding of trends and simulations to achieve higher levels of efficiency. Successful professionals will know the power of using project management as the lab for transforming organizations of the future.

(1) <http://www.pmi.org/About-Us/Board-of-Directors/Dr-Al-Zeitoun.aspx>

About the Author



İpek Sahra Özgüler

Istanbul, Turkey



İpek Sahra Özgüler graduated from the Istanbul University with the Bachelor of Science degree in Computer Engineering and from Middle East Technical University with an MSc degree in Software Management. She became a certified PMP in January, 2012 and a certified SCRUM Master in 2014. İpek works as project portfolio manager at TAV IT Project Management Office. TAV IT is a core technology provider and systems integration company specialising in aviation. It delivers turn-key airport systems and infrastructure solutions for various parties at airports, including airport authorities, airlines and ground handling companies. Her main responsibility is to move the organization to the future by executing the organization's strategy through portfolio management. Before joining TAV IT, she worked for global multinational companies and leading local companies such as Coca Cola, Deloitte, Turkcell Superonline and Havelsan. Over the years, she has gained extensive experience in managing various medium and large scale projects, programs and portfolios.

Her article named "When I Decided to Develop Multi Processing Project Manager's System" published in the book "*A Day in the Life of a Project Manager*". She has published several articles in the *PM World Journal* and one in PMI's *PM Network* magazine. İpek is actively involved in sailing, writing and discovering new cultures. She can be contacted at ipeksahra@gmail.com.