

## Competence profiles, Certification levels and Functions in the Project management and Project support field

### Based on ICB version 3

2nd revised Edition



	Project				Portfolio	Programs			
	Simple	Average	Complex	Very complex		Complex	Average	Simple	
A				Project Director	Portfolio director	Senior programme manager			
B		Senior project manager	Head project office	PM consultant	Head of PMO	Head programme office	Programme manager		
C		Project manager	Head project office	Senior PMO officer	PM specialist	Senior PMO Officer	Senior PMO Officer	Head programme office	Program manager
D	Junior project manager	PMO Officer	PMO Officer	PMO Officer	PMO Officer	PMO Officer	PMO Officer	PMO Officer	PMO Officer
E	PMO assistant	PMO assistant	PMO assistant	PMO assistant	PMO assistant	PMO assistant	PMO assistant	PMO assistant	PMO assistant



Jan Willem Donselaar

Bert Houtman  
Henry Fortuin

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# Competence profiles, Certification Levels and Functions in the Project Management and Project Support Environment

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# **Competence profiles, Certification Levels and Functions in the Project Management and Project Support Environment**

**The question is not “will our projects run into problems?”, but “how can we create competent employees that are able to cope with project problems, and that are able to help troubled projects recoup effectively?”**

**Jan Willem Donselaar  
Bert Hedeman  
Henny Portman**

**on behalf of IPMA Netherlands**



# Colophon

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# Preface

Developments in the project management field are ongoing. This professional field continuously broadens and becomes profounder. Therefore, IPMA has extended its attention from project management to program management, portfolio management and project support (PMO).

This has made manifest the need for a reference model in which the various functions and corresponding competences and the relations between them are presented. Not only for HR managers, but also for project and program managers and PMO heads.

The second edition of this book does justice to PMO professionals' needs for recognition and appreciation of their added value for projects, programs and portfolios. I hope and also presume that with this publication, the PMO professional field will find its place in the IPMA certification system.

In the first edition of this book, attention was given to the regular functions in the project management field, as they are applied in the IPMA 4-level system. With the publication of this second edition, the wish has been realized to make a complete function building for the project management field available. I do not have the illusion, however, that this will last for eternity: *panta rhei*.

Considering the culture that characterizes IPMA, I would encourage "fierce" discussions and debates on the present publication. Only then will our beautiful profession continue developing.

Furthermore, it is not insignificant to mention that the templates of the function profiles included in this book are freely available on the PMwiki of IPMA Netherlands. The templates can easily be adapted to your own organization.

I hope that many organizations will use these templates and that they will share their experiences and expertise, to further advance the field.

Finally, I would like to thank Jan Willem Donselaar, Bert Hedeman and Henny Portman, who were willing to contribute their knowledge and experience to the writing of this IPMA Netherlands publication.

Ir. John Verstrepen  
Director IPMA-NL



# About the realization of this book

Within IPMA much attention has been given to the further professionalization of project managers. In this respect, an expert study group was formed by IPMA-NL in early 2008, which set out to contribute to the further professionalization and acceptance of the concept of competences in the project management environment.

One of the reasons was the observation that in the field of human resource management there appeared to be a great need to clarify the connection between competences as defined in the ICB version 3 and the functions / function descriptions for project management already existing in the work field.

In 2009, the Dutch version, and in 2010, the English version of the results were published in the first edition of this book: *Competence profiles, Certification levels and Functions in the project management environment*.

In 2010, IPMA-NL requested the authors of this publication to extend the above study to include the project support competences and to integrate these results with the results of the project management competences study.

The result of our efforts is laid down in this second edition of the publication. This publication offers:

- an overview of the different functions and roles within the field of project management;
- competence profiles of these functions and roles based on existing competence descriptions in the work field;
- a reference of these roles and functions to the various IPMA certification levels, including a proposal to extend the current levels with one new level E.

We expressly point out that it is not the intention to establish a set of (standard) function descriptions in this publication. Reporting lines are also not in the scope of this publication.

With this publication the authors intend to offer a guideline for the assessment of an individual project manager's and project support officer's competence level. In addition, this publication may serve as the basis for the assessment of a project manager's and project support officer's need for education in order to attain a higher level. This publication may also serve as a frame of reference for teachers and trainers that are actively setting up training schemes for project management and project support courses, training, etc.

We believe the end result is a strong tool to describe the project management and project support competences, roles and functions. We and IPMA-NL believe that this publication can also make a valuable contribution to the development of description



of project management and project support competences and the development of the IPMA Competence Baseline.

We are very grateful for the fact that GITP International made their ideas on the thinking in terms of competences available in an exceptionally unrestrained way, including the GITP Competence Model, which will be mentioned further on in this publication.

We like to thank the following experts in the field of project management and project support, because they were so kind to review the text of this publication:

- Ruurd Dijkman (GITP)
- John Verstrepen (IPMA-NL)
- Paul Hesselman (Ordina)
- Otto ten Dam (Intermedius)
- Harrie Loring (Philips)

We invite everyone to give IPMA/ IPMA Netherlands a response to the content of this publication, or to share their experiences with the application of its content with IPMA.

The email address [info@ipma-nl.nl](mailto:info@ipma-nl.nl) can be used to contribute.

Autumn 2011,

Jan Willem Donselaar  
Bert Hedeman  
Henny Portman

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# 1 Introduction

This publication describes the competence profiles, certification levels and roles and functions for the complete project environment, containing the management as well as the support roles and functions.

In this, the project and program manager and the projects director are considered as the management roles and functions.

Additionally, the support officer, the project specialist, the project consultant and the portfolio manager/head of PMO are considered as support roles and functions, whereby the noun 'PMO' stands for 'Project, Program or Portfolio Management Office'. In principle, the PMO contains a whole range of responsibilities or can be limited to single tasks and activities.

This publication is meant for project professionals, managers, employees of functional departments, HRM managers in the field of project management and everyone who is interested in the subject of project management and project support.

Also this second edition was written on behalf of IPMA Netherlands. This second edition is based on the same structure and the same competence model as the 1<sup>st</sup> edition of this publication.

In chapter 2 the project, program and portfolio framework is described. In chapter 3 the PMO framework is described. In chapter 4 the reference competence model is described, after which in chapter 5 a generic PM Competence Model is described. In chapter 6 the competences of the individual roles and functions are defined. In chapter 7 we summarize our conclusions. Finally in chapter 8 we present some recommendations. In Annex A we describe the different domain competences. In Annex B we describe the respective competence profiles.



## 2 Project, program and portfolio framework

In the work field of project management a consistent set of terms is missing. Moreover, the definitions for these terms are used ambiguously. Different titles are used for the same role or function and the same title is used for different roles and functions. In this book we use a consistent list of terms and definitions. To avoid misunderstanding and to define clearly the different roles and functions within the project, program and portfolio framework, see Table 1. These terms and definitions are derived from the terms and definitions in the ICB version 3.

- *Project* - A temporary organization created to deliver a pre-defined result within specified conditions.
- *Program* - A temporary organization created to coordinate, direct and oversee the implementation of a set of related projects and activities in order to deliver results and benefits related to the organization's strategic objectives.
- *Multi-project* - A set of unrelated projects, of which the resources must be managed effectively.
- *Portfolio* - A set of existing - and future - projects and programs, to optimize company objectives using available resources.

Table 1 The Project, program and portfolio framework

Features	Project	Program	Multi project	Portfolio
<b>Responsibility</b>	Delivering products and services	Realizing outcomes & benefits	Manage resources to optimize project outputs	Optimize realization strategic objectives organization
<b>Scope</b>	Project activities	Projects & business activities	Projects	Projects & programs
<b>Lifecycle</b>	Limited (shorter)	Limited (longer)	Permanent	Permanent
<b>Organization</b>	Own organization	Own organization	Supplier organization	Client organization

For convenience, the terms 'multi-project' and 'portfolio' are combined in this book. Where the term 'portfolio' is used, the term 'multi-project' can also be used.

### 2.1 Primary roles and functions

Within the project management field several primary roles and functions can be defined, where roles and functions are defined as:

- A *role* is set of connected behaviors, rights and obligations in a social situation, for example an organization, for which a person is temporarily responsible.
- A *function* is a general description or category of operations performed routinely to carry out an organization's mission, for which a person is responsible.

As primary roles within the project management field the roles of project manager, process/change manager and program manager can be defined as follows:

- *Project manager* - the person whom is given the authority and responsibility to manage a project on a day-to-day basis to deliver the required products within the constraints agreed with the project executive/ project board.
- *Process/change manager* - the person whom is given the authority and responsibility to implement change on a day-to-day basis to deliver outcomes and benefits within a designated organizational unit agreed with the program executive/ program board and the respective organization unit manager.
- *Program manager* - the person whom is given the authority and responsibility to manage a program on a day-to-day basis to deliver the outcomes and benefits agreed with the program executive /program board.

As primary function within the project management field the function of portfolio director can be defined as follows:

- *Portfolio director* - the person whom is given the authority and responsibility to direct a portfolio of projects and programs, with the corresponding resources, methodology and tools to deliver company strategies and objectives.

A senior project manager for an extraordinary complex project is often called project director.

## **3 The PMO framework**

### **3.1 Combining project management and project support offers the key to project success**

The importance of having proper project governance has been highlighted by numerous researches. According to Gartner Research, a world's leading information technology research and advisory company, organizations that establish enterprise standards for project management, including a project office with suitable governance, will experience half the major project cost overruns, delays and cancellations of those that fail to do so. In other words, project management and project support offer the key to project success.

### **3.2 Why projects fail**

Project managers whom are asked to manage a project without using a methodology, a standardized approach, or a process to support them will be challenged to keep that project under control. When individual project managers do succeed, this is often the result of heroic individual efforts — not something the organization is able to repeat. Some reasons for failure upon which establishing a PMO can have a direct impact include:

- Project managers who lack organization-wide multi-project planning and control skills and tools often find it impossible to comprehend the big picture. Thus projects get worked on individually, but overall company priorities are not necessarily supported.
- Projects are not actively and realistically tracked and managed throughout execution. Thus change, kill, or recover decisions are not made early enough.
- Executive support for/understanding of projects is lacking in many organizations, and there is a high correlation between lack of strong project sponsorship and failure.

### **3.3 What we can do about it**

Interestingly, many of the best practices for preventing failures are also directly related to PMOs:

- A PMO is a repository for best practices in planning, estimating, risk assessment, scope containment, skills tracking, and time and project reporting. It maintains and supports best practices for the project manager, providing the organization consistency in project performance.
- Project managers must be competent: able to define requirements, estimate resources and schedule their delivery, budget and manage costs, motivate teams,



resolve conflicts, negotiate external resources, manage contracts, assess and reduce risks, and adhere to a standard methodology and quality processes. Such project managers are grown in an environment that trains, mentors, and rewards them based on performance in projects — an environment best created under the oversight of a PMO.

- Project metrics and milestones must be defined, measured, and reported in a consistent manner. Setting up such processes is a core activity of a PMO.
- Critical dates must be monitored via time tracking software. This is a necessity for larger projects, multi-project environments, and dispersed project teams. Organization-wide software implementation and multi-project oversight can only be well managed by a PMO.
- Project portfolio management - the systematic selection, prioritization, and evaluation of projects across the organization - can only be deployed effectively through a centralized infrastructure facilitated by the PMO.
- Projects must be carried out in a standard, published way, with a project methodology that sets planning and control standards, review points, the nature and frequency of project management meetings and change control procedures.
- Organizations should harvest best practices and lessons learned, and identify reuse opportunities in order to lay the groundwork for future success.

### **3.4 What is a PMO?**

PMO is an acronym, that is used to describe a Project, Program or Portfolio Management Office, or the overall model that consists of all three. A PMO is a centralized office, an operation centre, that strives to bring economies of repetition and that manages the running of multiple projects and programs at the same time from initiation to completion and that has the aim of achieving an optimum performance for the whole organization. A modern-day organization is challenged to be constantly on the move, in transition and to be proactive against the changes in the business environment or society. At the same time the organization has to run multiple projects and programs, each responding to a different challenge. Although the existence of a PMO is based largely on project management, its influence goes beyond the project environment. In the business or professional environment, a PMO is the liaison between the business and professional and project participants. A PMO is a strategic driver for organizational excellence and seeks to enhance the practices of execution management, organizational governance, and strategic change leadership. The PMO may consist of a single employee, but can also consist of dozen of employees, be centralized or decentralized, physical or virtual.

### 3.5 What kind of service does a PMO provide?

Depending on the project maturity of an organization a PMO could provide services like:

- *Industry Standards* - A PMO will ensure that the project management methodology used within the organization follows best practice, for example an industry standard such as PMBOK or PRINCE2 or their own company standard. The PMO also provides a mechanism to ensure that every project is run in accordance with any compliance obligations which must be met, such as Sarbanes-Oxley or Basel III and Solvency II.
- *Templates* - The PMO will provide standardized documents to all projects, such as Risk Logs and Issue Logs etc, freeing the project managers from creating these and allowing them to get on with the business of running their projects.
- *Metrics* - Over time, PMOs can establish objective metrics that provide an independent view as to how a project is progressing, provided in addition to the project manager's status report. For example, as an executive you might want to know that, despite the project manager being confident the project can be delivered on time, a project with this many defects and at this stage, typically takes 2 months longer to be delivered than the current projection.
- *Knowledge Base* - The PMO can build, maintain, and share a knowledge base of lessons learned and best practices from previous projects.
- *Process* - The PMO can ensure that standardized ways of managing risks, planning schedules, and managing communications are in place. Essentially we want the entire business to be on the same page, and to speak the same language when it comes to projects.
- *Resource Pool* - Some PMOs maintain a resource pool of project managers. This is useful for obtaining project managers who are project management professionals, 100% dedicated to managing projects. This might be the right choice for you if you have identified that your projects fail because your project managers are trying to fulfill more than one role, for example, business analysis and project management.
- *Tools* - The PMO ensures and promotes the use of the same project management tools throughout the organization, rolling out new tools in a controlled manner to meet the needs of the organization.

### 3.6 How does a PMO add value?

The benefits of a PMO can best be explained by answering the 4 basic questions on all change governance within an organization:

#### **Are we doing the right things?**

This is the question about the change strategy. It reflects the need to ensure that investment is spent to meet the demands and expectations of the business or social environment: validation. Each project or program needs to be assessed by its value and adherence to the strategy of the organization: validation.

It is not an easy task to determine the best projects for meeting the demands and expectations of the business or social environment.

The answering of this question is supported mainly by a portfolio management office.

### **Are we doing the things right?**

This is the question about change design. It reflects the need to deliver projects and programs consistently and well: verification.

The answering of this question is supported mainly by the centre of excellence

### **Are the results delivered as agreed?**

This is the question about change delivery. It reflects the need to deliver projects and programs consistently and well: verification.

The answering of this question is supported mainly by the project, program and portfolio management office.

### **Are the expected benefits realized?**

This is the question about change value. It reflects the need to ensure that investment is spent to meet the demands and expectations of the business or social environment: validation.

The answering of this question is supported mainly by the program and portfolio management office.



Figure 1 The four basic questions

## **3.7 PMO types**

Depending on specific conditions, such as importance of the desired change, impact on the existing organization, complexity, size, budget, expert availability, interdependencies with other projects and programs, a PMO can exist in different ways:

- A centralized office with or without satellite offices (hubs) in other departments and/or countries or a set of autonomous offices.
- A temporary office or a permanent office.
- A virtual office or a real office.
- A limited service offer or an extended service offer.
- One employee or numerous people.

Therefore the services undertaken by the PMO can strongly vary and thus also the tasks of the individual PMO employees.

- Organization portfolio office
  - Single central office focused on strategic support and center of excellence
  - Temporary program and project offices set up for new initiatives
- Central portfolio office with hubs
  - To be used in large organizations
  - One or more decentralized portfolio offices
- Temporary project and program support offices
  - Temporary PMO or individuals with support skills
  - Set up for new initiatives
- Virtual model
  - No physical central office
  - Functions carried out by business or functional units
- Small organization model
  - Very small office or single individual
  - Usually focused on consistency of methods training

Figure 2 PMO types

### 3.8 The PMO reference model

For the detailing of the different roles and functions within a PMO environment the following example of a PMO model will be used as reference in this publication, see Figure 3. The model exists of a permanent portfolio management office and a permanent centre of excellence, a temporary project office and a temporary program office, to support a specific initiative.

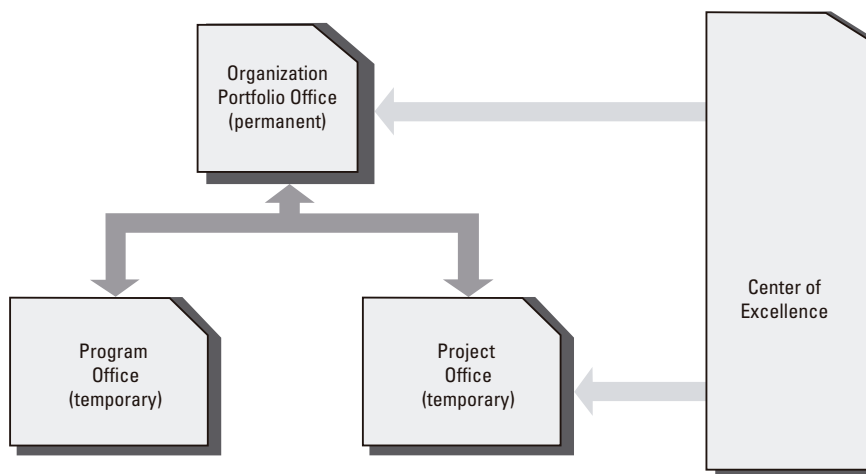


Figure 3 PMO services

Within a PMO generic, specialist and facilitating services can be distinguished (see Figure 4):

- *Process oriented services* - support and assurance of planning & control. These are generic services, focused on support and assurance of projects, programs and portfolios in general.
- *Content oriented services* - develop the individual best practices for project, program and portfolio management, including delivery of specialist support. This category includes the counter function for projects and programs in respect of corporate policies and strategies.
- *Pool services* - allocation of PMO employees and/or project and program manager to specific initiatives. A responsibility as a resource manager of the individual employees.

PMO services			
Process	Planning & control	Planning & control at portfolio level	Permanent
		Planning & control at program level	Temporary
		Planning & control at project level	Temporary
Pool	Pool	Managing of a pool of project and program managers	Permanent
		Managing of a pool of project and program support officers	
Content	Specialists / consultants	Content responsible for best practices for project, program and portfolio management	Permanent
		Contact point for staff services and corporate policies and strategies (counter function)	Permanent
		Delivery of temporary support and advice as specialist or consultant	Ad hoc, on request

Figure 4 PMO services

The description of the competence profiles in this publication will be limited to the process and content oriented services. The managerial competences of the head of the PMO as the resource manager of his employees remain outside the scope of this publication, because the required managerial competences for this function are identical to the competences of the other resource managers within the same organization.

### 3.9 PMO roles and functions

Within the context of this publication the following PMO roles and functions are defined as follows (see Table 2):

- *Head PMO* - the person who establishes and manages the PMO and as a portfolio manager supports the prioritizing of the projects and programs by the senior management of the organization.
- *PMO officer* - the person who can independently carry out PMO services.
- *PMO assistant* - the person who can carry out specific PMO tasks under supervision.
- *PM specialist* - the person who, based on functional expertise - e.g. finance, risk & quality management, planning - develops, promotes, implements and continuously improves one or more specific best practices for project, program and/or portfolio management and supports the project, program and/or portfolio management teams in respect of these best practices.
- *PM consultant* - the person who, based on general management and governance expertise in the project management field, develops, promotes, implements and continuously improves one or more specific best practices for project, program and/or portfolio management and supports the project, program and/or portfolio management teams in respect of these best practices.

Table 2 PMO roles and functions

<p><u>Permanent PMO functions:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Head of PMO</li> <li>• (senior) PMO officer</li> <li>• PMO assistant</li> <li>• PM specialist</li> <li>• PM consultant</li> </ul>	<p><u>Temporary PMO roles:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Head program office</li> <li>• Head project office</li> </ul>
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- *Head project office* - the person who establishes and manages the Project Office and supports the project management team in directing and managing the project.
- *Head program office* - the person who establishes and manages the Program Office and supports the program management team in directing and managing the program.

