

# Project Excellence Baseline

## for Achieving Excellence in Projects and Programmes



Version 1.0

## IPMA Project Excellence Baseline

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# Foreword

Our society is rapidly moving away from routine tasks and permanent organisations towards more fluid structures where the project form is the most natural way of organising most activities. At the same time, society is having to cope with unprecedented complexity due to factors such as climate change, rapidly changing markets, poverty and financial crisis. Alongside these, there are additional factors such as the trend among stakeholders to promote their interests actively and the way that objectives increasingly tend to change during the lifecycle of projects. For all these reasons, it is important to understand the building blocks of project excellence.

This standard, the IPMA Project Excellence Baseline® (IPMA PEB), is designed to promote excellence in managing projects and programmes, and complements our previous standards for individual competences IPMA Individual Competence Baseline (IPMA ICB®) and organisational competences in managing projects IPMA Organisational Competence Baseline (IPMA OCB®). The main target audiences for the IPMA PEB are senior managers, project, programme and portfolio managers (including Project Management Office (PMO) and project staff) as well as project excellence assessors, consultants, trainers and coaches.

The IPMA PEB is based on many years of practical experience in assessing project excellence for the annual IPMA Global Project Excellence Award. Such assessments have been carried out using the IPMA Project Excellence Model (IPMA PEM), which has enabled the assessment of projects from all kinds of industries and geographical locations.

As part of the project to publish a new IPMA standard for project excellence, we have reviewed and enhanced the IPMA PEM to ensure it takes account of recent developments in project management. In this regard, I am particularly pleased to announce that we now expect every excellent project to consider sustainability and the environment with a long-term perspective, not as an option but rather as the default. In other words, we have moved away from the past practice of allowing each project to decide what is in scope and what is not, to one that makes it clear that consideration of sustainability and impact on the environment are prerequisites for project excellence.

We would like to thank the project team (Ewa Bednarczyk, Michael Boxheimer, Dr. Sonja Ellmann, Mary Koutintcheva, Erik Mansson, Alexey Polkovnikov, Pau Lian Staal-Ong and Grzegorz Szalajko), our energy project experts (Nassereddin Eftekhar, Professor Paul Gardiner, Ivano Ianelli and Gholamreza Safakish) as well as our sounding board (Philippe Brun, Marco Buijnsters, Peter Coesmans, Brian Cracknell, Professor Ronggui Ding, Cedrik Lanz, Mary McKinlay, Frank Menter, Dr. Steve Milner and Peter Milsom) for all their efforts and contributions.

We would also like to thank all the national and international IPMA Global Project Excellence Award assessors and judges for their valuable input in improving the awards process and the IPMA Project Excellence Model.

IPMA PEB is another milestone that will help us move the project management profession forward!

Reinhard Wagner  
IPMA President



# Executive summary

IPMA offers a wide range of beneficial services for individuals, projects and organisations, starting with the Four-Level Certification (4-L-C) in project management for individuals and the Two-Level Certification for PM consultants. In addition, IPMA offers the IPMA Delta® as a service for organisations interested in improving their performance in project management. IPMA Delta is a service to assess and certify organisations in a broad and thorough way. It is offered by independent Certification Bodies (CB) of IPMA Member Associations (MA). Three standards are used during the IPMA Delta assessment – the IPMA Individual Competence Baseline (IPMA ICB®) to assess selected individuals; the IPMA Project Excellence Baseline® (IPMA PEB) and the IPMA Project Excellence Model (IPMA PEM), to assess selected projects and/or programmes; and the IPMA Organisational Competence Baseline (IPMA OCB®) to assess the organisation as a whole. Thus, with the publication of the IPMA PEB 1.0.1, IPMA has now put in place the third and final baseline.

The main purpose of the IPMA PEB is to describe the concept of excellence in managing projects and programmes. It also serves as a guide to organisations in assessing the ability of their projects and programmes to achieve project excellence. As the baseline is derived from Total Quality Management (TQM) and related models (e.g. EFQM), organisations that have already dealt with these concepts will have no problem in applying and using the IPMA PEB. The baseline is designed to be of use in any context and regardless of the specific industry, sector or project management approach.

The IPMA PEB focuses on a project or programme, complementing two other IPMA standards:

- IPMA ICB – designed to assess individual competences of project/programme/portfolio leaders;
- IPMA OCB – designed to assess competences of organisations that run projects.

The six most typical user groups of the IPMA PEB are:

- Senior management;
- Project, programme and portfolio managers, heads/managers of PMOs and PfMOs;
- Knowledge, quality and process managers;
- Researchers and educators (teachers, trainers);
- Project Excellence Award trainers and assessors;
- Consultants.

The IPMA Project Excellence Model (IPMA PEM) is a core element of the IPMA PEB and is designed to provide guidelines for assessing a project or programme.



It is an adaptable and open assessment method designed for various purposes:

- Driving continuous improvement in projects;
- Regular monitoring of a project’s ability to deliver sustainable results on different levels (objectives, customer, employee, stakeholder, environment);
- Assessment and continuous improvement of project management methods;
- Recognition of projects that prove to be excellent based on the IPMA PEM assessment;
- Recognition of projects that are striving for excellence;
- Recognition of excellent leadership and management performance;
- Complementing project audit tools;
- Complementing project management maturity assessment tools.

The three key areas of the model are:



- **People & Purpose** – This area is considered to be the foundation of project excellence. The right people, led and supported by excellent leaders, all sharing a common vision for success, are crucial to drive improvements in a project and help the project achieve more than the established standards.
- **Processes & Resources** – This area represents practices necessary to reinforce excellence through sound processes and adequate resources, used in an efficient and sustainable way. It also serves as a basis for securing the outcome of innovation, turning it into a solid starting point for further waves of improvements.

- **Project Results** – The project management approach can only be excellent if it leads to outstanding, sustainable results for all key stakeholders. This area complements the first two with necessary proof of excellent results as defined by the project stakeholders.



These areas are inspired by and closely related to the EFQM criteria often used for the assessment of organisational excellence. This deliberate link helps organisations that use EFQM to extend their excellence efforts into projects while keeping consistency with their organisation-wide initiatives.

The following project values can be secured by ensuring close interaction between the main areas of the model:

- **Performance;**
- **Effectiveness and efficiency;**
- **Reliability;**
- **Flexibility;**
- **Continuous improvement;**
- **Scalability;**
- **Sustainability.**



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