

Certification Guidelines IPMA Level A

CONTENTS

1.	Introduction	3
2.	Admission to the certification	3
2.1.	Role description and admission criteria	3
2.2.	Awarding of the certificate	4
3.	Certification process	4
3.1.	Overview of the certification stages	4
3.2.	Application to obtain the certificate	4
3.2.1.	Submissions	4
3.2.2.	Submission of the Executive Summary Report	5
3.2.3.	Criteria for the reference project.....	5
3.3.	Report	6
3.4.	Interview	6
3.5.	Completion of the certification process.....	7

ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

The documents listed in the following table also help to prepare for the certification.

No.	Document	Designation
1	ICB4	Individual Competence Baseline, Version 4.0
2	Certification Guidelines	Certification Guidelines
3	Certification application IPMA Level A	Application for initial certification IPMA Level A
4	Executive Summary Report	Template for the Executive Summary
5	Report (template)	Template for report

KEY ABBREVIATIONS

IPMA	International Project Management Association
PM	Project management
PMI-Cert	PMI Certification
ICB4	Individual Competence Baseline, Version 4.0

1. INTRODUCTION

This document explains the process of acquiring IPMA Level A certification in the domain of Project Management and the resulting award of the certificate IPMA Level A – Certified Project Director.

The certification process requires the candidate to demonstrate that they have the necessary competencies. The certificate is valid for a period of 5 years.

2. ADMISSION TO THE CERTIFICATION

2.1. ROLE DESCRIPTION AND ADMISSION CRITERIA

Holders of an IPMA Level A certificate act at a strategic level in a very complex environment and are responsible for the project within the organisation.

Together with the certification application, you demonstrate that you fulfil the respective admission criteria.

Over the past 12 years, at least 5 years' experience as a project manager in a responsible leadership function in very complex projects, of which at least 3 years at a strategic level.

2.2. AWARDING OF THE CERTIFICATE

The IPMA Level A certificate shall be awarded to you if you are able to demonstrate at least 80% of the 28 ICB4 competencies in a very complex environment and wholly or partially at a strategic level.

This corresponds to 22 competencies in the domain of project management. An individual competence is deemed to have been demonstrated if 50% of the corresponding key competence indicators are demonstrated. The competencies are demonstrated throughout the certification Report and interview processes.

3. CERTIFICATION PROCESS

3.1. OVERVIEW OF THE CERTIFICATION STAGES

As a rule, the certification process takes three to four months to complete. The following table shows the individual certification stages together with their approximate durations.

Stage	Activity	Execution by	Approximate duration
1	Application to obtain the certificate		
	Submit Expression of Interest via email and follow up with comprehensive CV.	Candidate	Registration deadline
	Check CV by assessor to indicate, without any guarantees, if the level sought is attainable.	PMI-Cert	2-3 weeks
	Prepare application and pay fee.	Candidate	2 weeks
2	Submissions		
	Submit Self assessment, Executive Summary Report and Project Report.	Candidate	6-8 weeks
3	Interview		
	Complete interview.	Candidate	Interview date
	Conduct definitive assessment of the certification and announced result.	PMI-Cert	1-2 weeks

Table 1: Certification stages

The decision on the awarding of the certificate will be communicated 1-2 weeks after interview.

3.2. APPLICATION TO OBTAIN THE CERTIFICATE

It is important to us to ensure that you do not have to complete any unnecessary work and are not obliged to bear any unnecessary costs. **That is why we initially request the candidate to submit an Expression of Interest via email and follow up with comprehensive CV.**

We use this information to filter the applicant's potential to achieve the desired level requested. This is done, without prejudice, and an assessor notifies the candidate of their initial impression. The candidate is under no obligation to accept the advice from the assessor. If they wish to continue, they are requested to prepare the formal application document and submit the fee.

Consent in the application gives us, inter alia, the right to contact the reference individuals listed in the application, without first being required to inform you. We may make use of this right by taking random samples.

3.2.1. SUBMISSIONS

Enclose the requested supporting documents:

- Self-assessment
- Executive Summary Report
- Project Report

The **self-assessment** that you complete is based on ICB4 and will be referenced to judge your suitability for the certification.

3.2.2. SUBMISSION OF THE EXECUTIVE SUMMARY REPORT

During the course of the certification process you need to demonstrate your competencies by citing specific situations from your reference project. This is only possible, however, if the reference project as well as your role in this meets the criteria for IPMA Level A certification.

In the Executive Summary Report, you describe the reference project proposed for the certification. In the 'project management' domain you must also describe two further important projects from the list of the certification application.

The goal is to describe the challenges of the respective starting situations as well as their complexity drivers in a verifiable manner. Please note that your competencies in the field of project management will be assessed in the certification.

This consequently means that in the Executive Summary Report you need to address the challenges from the perspective of the management of your project, and not the complexity of the solutions that are to be realised.

The manner in which you handle the relevant complexity is an aspect of the report and interview. The Executive Summary Report will be referenced by the assessors when preparing the interview.

3.2.3. CRITERIA FOR THE REFERENCE PROJECT

Here we describe the criteria required for reference project.

These criteria are applicable to prove the experience of the management of projects in accordance with the required level.

You will have demonstrated sufficient experience in a calendar month if you have worked on at least 75 hours of management tasks in projects that correspond to IPMA Level A.

When meeting the requirement to demonstrate 75 monthly hours, you may undergo this certification if you manage projects amounting to at least 50% of a full workload. This enables us to also take account of the needs of persons who work part-time or who perform other tasks alongside their principal responsibilities.

PROJECT MANAGEMENT

In the complexity assessment, your reference project should reach a figure of at least 32, and should meet the following minimum criteria:

- The project has been completed. If you are unable to present a completed project as your reference project, you may submit a request to us if you have headed an uncompleted project for at least two years that meets the required criteria by the date of the certification application. We need the following information from you: completed table from the application, project schedule and project's organisation chart.
- The project is of strategic importance for the project client.
- You exercised your role in the project for at least 18 months.
- The final month in which you exercised your role in the project was a maximum of 4 years ago, calculated from the date of the application.

3.3. REPORT

In the report you must describe at least 22 of the ICB4 competencies of your choice. There are no obligatory competencies, and also no definition of how many competencies you need to address from a specific area of competence – Perspective, People and Practice.

You must describe the competencies on the basis of specific situations from your reference project. Further information is provided in the following section of these guidelines that describe the STAR methodology (see *STAR methodology in Chapter 3.4 Interview*).

3.4. INTERVIEW

An interview appointment with you by the Certification Body. The interview takes at most 2 hours and leads to the definitive assessment of your competencies. The assessors will conduct an expert discussion with you, based on your results to date arising out of the certification process as well as on the STAR methodology (see below).

The report is a key input for the interview by the assessors. If it shows insufficient substance or complexity in a competence, then you have the opportunity to cite situations from the two other projects described in the Executive Summary Report.

In the interview about 24 competence indicators are addressed, of which at least 6 in each of the 3 competence areas 'perspective', 'people' and 'practices'. There are 4 obligatory competencies, and each of these must be addressed at least once in the report or interview. These are:

Project Management	Chapter in ICB4
2.05 Leadership	4.4.5
3.02 Requirements and objectives	4.5.2
3.10 Plan and control	4.5.10
3.12 Stakeholders	4.5.12

Table 2: Competence Indicators

STAR METHODOLOGY

Knowledge about your earlier response to a specific situation enables one to estimate future behaviour in a later, comparable situation.

As a result, it is necessary for assessors to have an understanding of the context of your actions at the time, as well as the results.

Each example of your past behaviour or your past achievements therefore need to provide information about the three aspects set out below:

- situation as the starting point for your activities
- approach, i.e. your specific actions or measures
- results or changes achieved by this approach

Only information that contains these three elements constitute genuine and complete examples of behaviour:

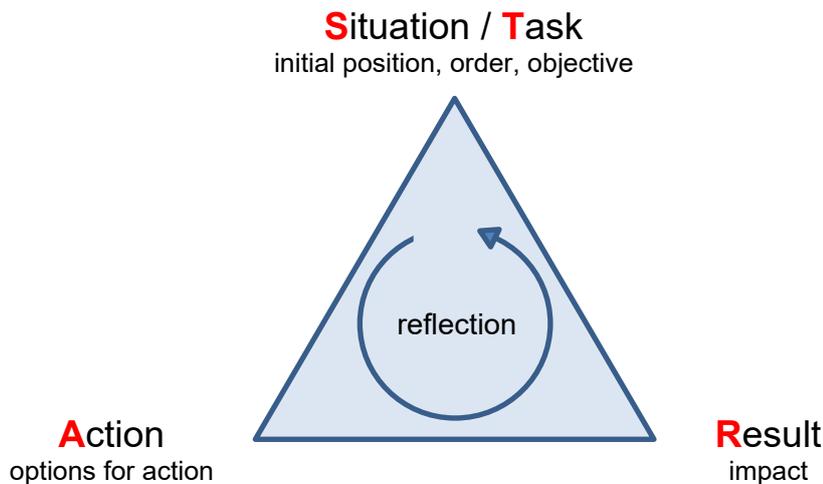


Fig. 1: Behavioural triangle

The questions are based on the specification criteria pursuant to ICB4. This methodology can be applied to all competencies of the three competence areas of Perspective, People and Practice.

3.5. COMPLETION OF THE CERTIFICATION PROCESS

You can demonstrate the competence indicators at each certification stage. The evaluation of the competence indicators at the individual certification stages flow into the overall evaluation. In this conjunction it is important to note that the interview is weighted more heavily than the report. This means that an evaluation of a competence indicator in the interview overrides the evaluation arising out of the report.

You will be awarded the certificate if you:

- have demonstrated at least 80% of the competencies, with at least 50% of the competence indicators in each case, throughout the entire certification process,
- have demonstrated at least 3 competencies in the area 'perspective', 6 of which from the area 'people' as well as 9 of which from the area 'practice'.

If these criteria have been comprehensively fulfilled, the assessors request the issue of the certificate. The decision shall be taken by the responsible individual of the Certification Body.

If you have successfully completed the certification process and have paid all certification fees, you will be awarded the certificate. The certification process is completed by the handing over of the certificate.

If you have not successfully passed the certification process, we shall inform you about this in writing, together with grounds. You then have the opportunity to re-submit the Project Report and repeat the interview at most once. Two new assessors will be assigned.

If you are awarded the certificate, this is internationally recognised and is valid for five years. This will entitle you to use the acquired title throughout the period of validity of the certificate:

- Certified Project Director (IPMA Level A)