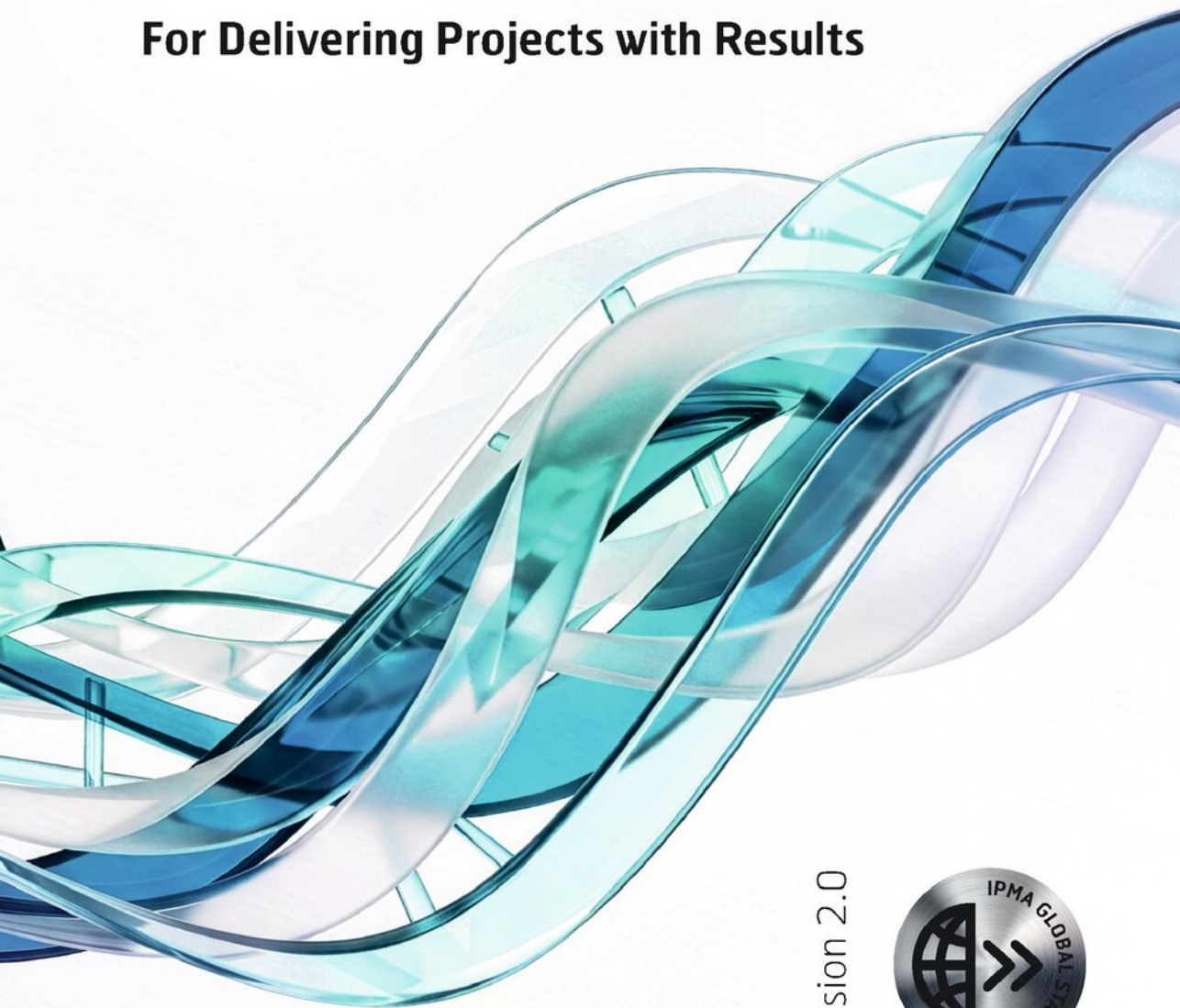


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ORGANIZATIONAL COMPETENCE BASELINE

For Delivering Projects with Results



version 2.0



publication

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Foreword by IPMA President

Organizations today operate in an environment shaped by complexity, uncertainty, acceleration, and continuous transformation. Strategic ambitions are increasingly realized through projects, programs, and portfolios that translate intent into innovation, change, resilience, and lasting value. This creates a clear responsibility for senior executives and all those who direct project-related activities. It depends equally on the organizational conditions in which they work, the governance that guides them, the culture that supports them, the resources made available to them, and the competences that enable consistent and responsible delivery.

It is in this context that IPMA is proud to present the **IPMA Organizational Competence Baseline 2.0 (OCB2)**, the global IPMA standard for organizational competence in delivering projects with results.

The IPMA OCB 2.0 marks an important step in the continuing development of organizational project management. Since the first IPMA Organizational Competence Baseline was published in 2013, projects have become more numerous, more important, and more central to the way organizations implement strategy and accomplish change. Projects and project-oriented work represent a substantial part of the global economy, with available research placing project work at approximately one-third of economic activity in advanced economies. This continuing increase in *projectification* has created new demands on organizational structures, governance, culture, leadership, competence, and the relationship between the permanent organization and the temporary structures established to deliver projects and programs.

This standard therefore responds to these demands by defining the competences an organization should have available to govern, manage, support, and deliver projects, programs, and portfolios in line with its strategic ambitions. Results are understood in their broadest sense - not only as project outputs, but also as outcomes, benefits, organizational value, and lasting impact. The standard therefore encourages organizations to look beyond the successful completion of individual initiatives and to consider

whether their overall organizational system enables projects to contribute meaningfully, consistently, and sustainably to strategic success.

At the heart of the standard is the concept of **Organizational Competence for Delivering Projects with Results**. The OCB 2.0 brings together ten interrelated areas of organizational competence, covering strategy; project, program, and portfolio governance; project, program, and portfolio management; management and governance support; results assurance; functional and enabling competences; and organizational alignment. These areas are not intended to operate independently. Together, they form an integrated organizational system through which strategic intent relates to governance decisions, delivery execution, organizational learning, and measurable results.

A central message of the OCB 2.0 is that temporary and permanent organizations must be understood and developed together. Projects and programs are temporary structures created to deliver change, innovation, and transformation. The permanent organization provides continuity, strategic direction, governance, functional expertise, resources, institutional knowledge, and the environment in which the outcomes of projects and programs are ultimately absorbed and sustained. As *projectification* increases, the boundary between these two forms of organization becomes less distinct, making their alignment increasingly important.

Within this relationship, the **Project Management Office (PMO)** has a particularly important role as part of the permanent organization and as an essential organizational capability. It is not simply an administrative function but preserves knowledge, promotes common standards, enables learning, supports governance, and helps to ensure that experience strengthens the organization's ability to deliver future projects. PMOs may operate at different levels and with different mandates. **Strategic PMOs** support organization-wide and portfolio-level governance by strengthening transparency, consistency, prioritization, and alignment with strategic objectives. **Operational PMOs** support the practical application of governance and management practices at project and program levels. Together, they connect senior decision-making with delivery realities.

The OCB 2.0 also has a fundamental role within the **IPMA Delta® Assessment** of project-oriented organizations as the underlying organizational competence baseline. The competences, Key Competence Indicators, measures, and competence classes defined in the OCB establish the reference

against which an organization's competence for delivering projects with results can be assessed and developed.

The OCB 2.0 remains deliberately non-prescriptive and does not prescribe a single organizational structure, PMO model, governance arrangement, or tools. Organizations differ in purpose, size, sector, strategy, culture, maturity, and operating environment. A PMO in a global project-based enterprise will not necessarily have the same mandate as a PMO in a public administration or an organization undertaking a major transformation.

This edition also reflects the wider responsibilities facing contemporary organizations. Sustainability, adaptability, agility, resilience, and digital capability are not treated as isolated project-level topics. The OCB 2.0 therefore encourages leaders to view organizational competence as a dynamic capability.

The IPMA OCB 2.0 forms an essential part of the wider **IPMA Standards Framework**. Together with the Individual Competence Baseline, the Project Excellence Baseline, and the Research Excellence Baseline, it connects competent individuals, excellent projects and programs, capable organizations, and the continuous advancement of professional knowledge. Each standard has a distinct purpose, but their greatest value is realized when they are applied together to turn strategy into results, create sustainable value, and generate lasting positive impact.

Organizational competence is ultimately a leadership responsibility. It concerns priorities, governance, structures, accountability, investment, assurance, benefits realization, culture, and learning. Therefore, I invite executives, governance bodies, portfolio leaders, PMO leaders, program directors, project professionals, consultants, assessors, educators, and researchers to actively use this standard. Use it as the foundation for organizational reflection and development, as the baseline for preparing for an **IPMA Delta® Assessment**, and as a means of strengthening the strategic role of the **PMO** within the permanent organization. Use it to assess your organization honestly, improve the connection between strategy and delivery, and create an environment in which people can perform, projects can succeed, and intended results can be achieved sustainably.

A standard of this significance can only be created through collective effort. On behalf of IPMA, I extend my sincere gratitude to our **Member Associations** and to the practitioners, executives, researchers, assessors, educators, and other experts they nominated and supported throughout its development. My

special appreciation goes to **A/Prof. Dr. Reinhard Wagner, Project Lead**, for his vision, leadership, perseverance, and commitment throughout this demanding undertaking. I also thank the members of the **core team and review team with Peter Pürckhauer**, the IPMA coordination colleagues, and everyone who supported the drafting, consultation, and review process. I offer my deep appreciation to **Mary Koutintcheva, Vice President for Standards and Qualification and sponsor of the project**, for her vision, confidence, and constant support.

To our Member Associations, Reinhard, the core and review teams, Mary, and every person who contributed to this journey: this standard is a testament to your professionalism, collaboration, and commitment to strengthening organizations through projects. On behalf of the entire IPMA community, you have our heartfelt thanks.



Prof. Dr. Mladen Vukomanović

President, International Project Management Association (IPMA)

IPMA Standards Framework

Purpose of the Framework

Professional project management continues to evolve in response to changing organizational needs, growing complexity, technological advancement, and evolving societal expectations. Organizations increasingly rely on projects, programs, and portfolios to implement strategy, enable transformation, realize benefits, and create sustainable value. At the same time, expectations of project professionals and organizations have expanded beyond successful project delivery to include responsible leadership, organizational excellence, evidence-informed practice, and lasting positive impact.

These developments demonstrate that no single perspective can fully describe the project management profession. Sustainable success is achieved through the interaction of individual competence, project excellence, organizational capability, and the continuous advancement of professional knowledge through research.

For this reason, IPMA has developed the **IPMA Standards Framework** as an integrated system comprising four complementary baseline standards. Their relationship is illustrated through **the House of IPMA Standards** (Figure 1), which visually represents the framework and demonstrates how the standards operate as an integrated system to support sustainable value creation.

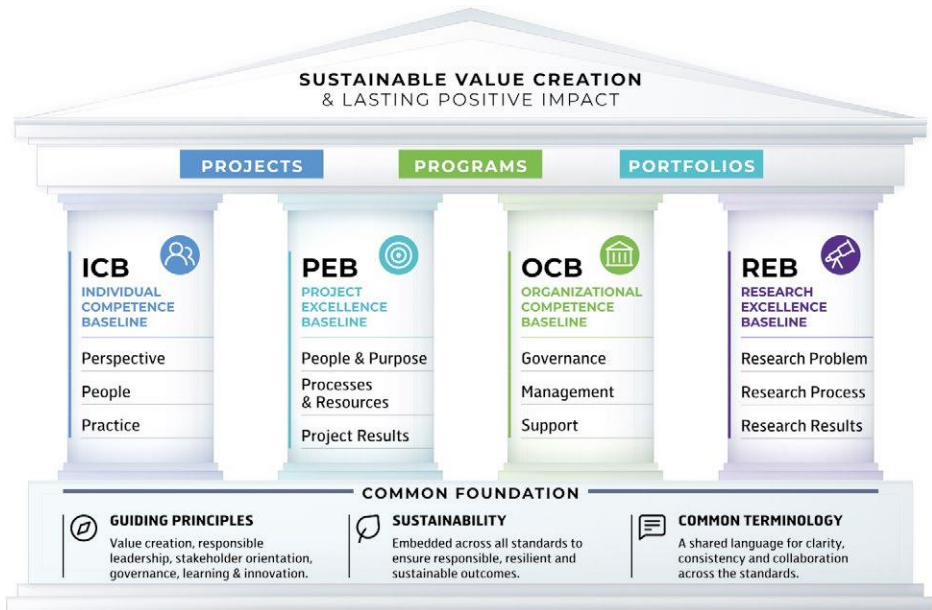


Figure 1: The House of IPMA Standards

The four baseline standards share a common foundation of guiding principles, harmonized terminology, sustainability, ethical behavior, stakeholder orientation, effective governance, and continuous learning. This common foundation ensures consistency across the framework while allowing each baseline to address a distinct perspective of professional project management.

The **IPMA Standards Framework** comprises four complementary baseline standards:

- **IPMA ICB** defines the competences required by individuals to successfully lead and contribute to projects, programs, and portfolios.
- **IPMA PEB** defines the characteristics of project and program excellence and provides a framework for assessing, recognizing, and continuously improving project performance.
- **IPMA OCB** defines the organizational capabilities required to consistently enable projects, programs, and portfolios to deliver intended results and contribute to strategic objectives.
- **IPMA REB** defines the criteria and approach for evaluating research excellence and provides a framework for assessing research quality, impact, and contribution to the advancement of the profession.

Together, these complementary baseline standards provide an integrated framework for developing competent individuals, achieving project excellence, strengthening organizational capability, and advancing professional knowledge through research. They support organizations and professionals in delivering projects, programs, and portfolios that achieve intended results, contribute to strategic objectives, create sustainable value, and generate lasting positive impact.

Although each standard serves a distinct purpose and may be applied independently, their greatest value is realized when they are applied together.

Relationship between the Standards

The **IPMA Standards Framework** recognizes that sustainable value is created through the combined contribution of competent individuals, excellent projects and programs, capable organizations, and the continuous advancement of professional knowledge.

Projects, programs, and portfolios are the primary mechanisms through which organizations implement strategy, enable transformation, and achieve intended results. This is realized through a progression in which **deliverables** become **outputs**, outputs enable **outcomes**, outcomes generate **benefits**, benefits create organizational **value**, and value delivers lasting organizational and societal **impact** (Figure 2).

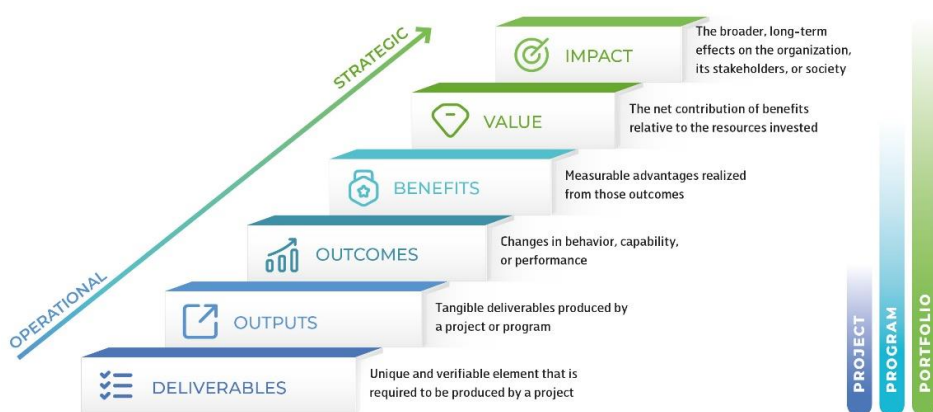


Figure 2: The IPMA Results Amplifier

Achieving all these results is a continuous and interconnected process. Competent individuals lead and contribute to successful projects and programs within organizations that provide the governance, leadership, culture, and support required for consistent delivery and the delivery of intended outcomes. Experience gained from practice strengthens organizational capability, while research continuously advances professional practice, education, and the future evolution of the framework.

These interactions create a continuous improvement cycle in which professional practice, organizational capability, and research reinforce one another, enabling organizations to continuously enhance the results created through projects, programs, and portfolios.

Common Foundation

Although each standard has a distinct purpose and intended users, they share a common conceptual foundation that establishes the principles, concepts, and terminology supporting the consistent interpretation and application of all baseline standards.

Guiding Principles

The IPMA Standards Framework is supported by a common set of guiding principles that underpin all baseline standards.

Collectively, the guiding principles promote:

- turning strategy into results;
- stakeholder orientation, collaboration, and ethical behavior;
- effective governance, accountability, and transparency; and
- sustainability and responsible leadership;
- continuous learning, research, innovation, adaptability, and improvement.

These principles should be applied according to the organization's context, objectives, governance environment, and the complexity of its projects, programs, and portfolios.

Sustainability Principle

Sustainability is a fundamental consideration across the IPMA Standards Framework. Sustainable project management integrates environmental, social, governance (ESG) and economic considerations into governance, leadership, decision-making, project delivery, and organizational development.

The framework recognizes two complementary perspectives.

- **Sustainability of the project** focuses on ensuring that projects are governed and delivered responsibly, ethically, and with appropriate consideration of resources and ESG factors throughout the project life cycle.
- **Sustainability by the project** focuses on the lasting impact created through the project's outcomes, benefits, capabilities, and value delivered to organizations, stakeholders, society, and the environment.

Sustainability also requires sustainable leaders. Sustainable leadership integrates sustainability into organizational strategy, governance, culture, and project delivery. It promotes innovation, stakeholder engagement, and responsible decision-making in support of sustainable development.

Further guidance is provided in the IPMA Guide on Sustainable Project Management.

Common Terminology

Consistency across the IPMA Standards Framework is supported through the **IPMA Common Glossary**, which provides harmonized definitions of the terminology used throughout the standards. The glossary establishes a common language for practitioners, organizations, educators, researchers, assessors, certification bodies, and other stakeholders, enabling consistent interpretation and application of the standards across industries, sectors, cultures, and professional contexts.

Continuous Development of the Framework

The IPMA Standards Framework provides a stable international baseline for professional project management while recognizing that organizations, projects, and professional practice continue to evolve.

The standards focus on enduring competences, excellence characteristics, organizational capabilities, and guiding principles that remain relevant across industries, organizational contexts, cultures, and delivery approaches, while allowing the framework to evolve in response to significant developments in practice, research, technology, and society.

The framework is continuously informed by collaboration among practitioners, organizations, researchers, educators, Member Associations, certification bodies, and other stakeholders. This collaborative approach ensures that future editions continue to reflect internationally recognized good practice while responding to the evolving needs of the profession.

Future editions may incorporate developments arising from research, professional practice, organizational experience, and emerging technologies. Complementary publications, including Practice Guides, Reference Guides, implementation guidance, assessment guidance, and other supporting materials, provide practical guidance while remaining fully aligned with the baseline standards.



Mary Koutintcheva

Vice President for Standards and Qualification