

Reinhard Wagner
Mladen Vukomanović
Laurent Kummer

Supporting the management of public sector projects through the partnership between IPMA and the PM² Group making use of the European PM² methodology and more

WHITEPAPER

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Publisher and owner of the IPMA Publications: *Supporting the management of public sector projects through the partnership between IPMA and the PM⁺ Group making use of the European PM⁺ methodology and more*

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Author:

Reinhard Wagner, Mladen Vukomanović, Laurent Kummer

IPMA's Legal Address:

International Project Management Association (IPMA)
c/o Advokaturbüro Maurer and Stäger
Fraumünsterstrasse 17
Postfach 2018
CH-8022 Zurich
Switzerland

www.ipma.world

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MANAGEMENT SUMMARY

In view of the increasing number and complexity of societal challenges, public administration is coming under significant pressure to professionally implement necessary projects. Due to the different nature of previous work in administration, projects and its management are still unique and require a systematic competence development. Therefore, IPMA and PM² Group have formed a partnership to support the public administration in building up this competence. In doing so, the PM² methodology of the European Commission is being used, along with other assets of the partners for the benefit of the public administration. After introductory remarks, the strategic advantages of the partnership for the various target groups are outlined, as well as the synergies between the product and service portfolios of the two organizations and how these advantages can be exploited in practice. After a conclusion, an outlook into the future is also ventured as to what could result from the partnership.

INTRODUCTION

The projectification of society is progressing. Studies in some European countries have shown that, on average, more than a third of all working time is already spent on projects. The trend is increasing (Schoper, 2018). However, results vary from country to country due to different levels of development, economic and governance structures, and also cultural differences. What is also striking is that projectification in the public sector is sometimes significantly behind projectification in the business sector, which can lead to serious problems during execution (Wagner and

Radujkovic, 2022). The rationale for the difference is often that in business, due to competitive pressures, more has been invested in project management over the last years, and projects are now a standard way to achieve innovation as well as efficient performance. The culture in public administration, on the other hand, is geared towards stability, routine, and conformity to regulations, which means that projects today are still seen as the exception rather than the norm.

In times of multiple challenges in our society, however, the public sector is just as challenged to prove its efficiency in processing (Hodgson et al., 2019). Be it in

the context of digitalization, dealing with the energy, health and refugee crises or transforming the economy. The European Union has also handed out far-reaching financial contributions to member states, which are now being implemented in the form of projects at regional, national, and local level. The public administration is therefore not only required to be efficient in the implementation of projects itself, but also to monitor and control the efficient implementation of projects by its contractors. This requires project-oriented competence at all levels of the administration, appropriate methods, and tools for managing projects, together with the executing roles and organizational structures as well as a project-friendly culture. To this end, the European Union recognizes many of IPMA promoted competences as well as the PM² Methodology as an essential knowledge for project managers in its ESCO database (European Skills, Competences, Qualifications and Occupations).

International standards such as ISO standards for the management of projects, programs and project portfolios or the competence-based standards of the IPMA can certainly serve as a basis here. However, with the publication of the PM² standard a few years ago, the European Commission made a standard openly available that is specifically tailored to work in public administration. This standard can be used for the introduction and professionalization of project, program, and project portfolio management as well as for the qualification and certification of the people involved. In a few cases, PM² has already been adopted by the nationally responsible bodies for public administration (e.g., Germany), but further efforts are necessary for its wider dissemination, which the PM² Group and IPMA want to take care of in partnership.

WHICH STRATEGIC BENEFITS DOES THE PARTNERSHIP OF IPMA AND PM² GROUP YIELD?

The International Project Management Association (IPMA) is a federation of about 70 Member Associations (MAs), spreading since its inception in the year 1965 from Europe to Asia, Africa, the Middle East, Australia, North and South America. The MAs develop project

management competences in their geographic areas of influence, interacting with thousands of practitioners and developing relationships with corporations, government agencies, universities, and colleges, as well as training organizations and consulting companies. Based on its vision, IPMA is orchestrating the project profession for a better world and aiding the development of relevant competences supported by a comprehensive portfolio of products and services. The IPMA global network provides unique opportunities for project management practitioners from all cultures and all parts of the world to network, share ideas, and move the project profession forward through effective collaboration and cooperation. IPMA establishes targeted partnerships to achieve its vision and mission together with selected regional as well as international partners.

The PM² group has been formed to support the European Commission's ambition to disseminate the Project Management Methodology PM² in European Union Institutions, European Agencies, Service Providers, Public Administrations in the Member States, and the European private sector. It is a not-for-profit membership organization. The group's members are project management consultancy and training organizations, PM² user organizations, and also include the examination and certification institute that created the public PM² group certification program. PM² group's goal is to facilitate the implementation of the PM² Project Management Methodology in public and private projects as intended by the Center of Excellence in PM² of the European Commission. The PM² group has set out three main activity areas to achieve this goal: 1. Auditing the supported public certification and trainer accreditation program, based on the EU commission's guidelines, 2. Promoting the adoption of PM² in European public and private organizations, and 3. Facilitating access to PM² learning materials and certification for individuals who want to increase their employability.

The audience of the partnership of IPMA and PM² Group refers to all professionals involved in project management within public administration of the European Union and beyond, as well as anyone involved in the management of publicly or semi-publicly funded

projects. This includes senior leadership and civil servants at the various levels of public administration, along with private companies, service providers, research institutes, and educational providers involved in public projects in some way. Finally, this also concerns project management associations at the national level, such as the IPMA MAs, which aim to support public administration in their work at the local level, either directly or indirectly through their associate members.

Partnerships always seek to achieve strategic benefits for their target audience. These benefits include, but are not limited to the following ten listed here:

- I. As not-for-profit organisation and oldest international project management association, IPMA brings its credibility and extensive experience in project management to the partnership. Some of the European IPMA MAs have also been in existence for several decades and are well-established in their local context.
- II. IPMA is represented by an MA in almost every European country, thus creating a bridge between its global reach and its local presence. In some parts of Europe there are also IPMA regional networks (e.g., Nordnet in Scandinavia) in which there is close cooperation between the MAs for the benefit of respective stakeholders.
- III. IPMA with its MAs is dedicated to the whole of society, with all relevant sectors, from business, to public administration, to civic society and not-for-profit organizations. This enables mutually beneficial synergies between sectors and thereby societal development.
- IV. The competence-based project management standards IPMA Individual Competence Baseline (ICB) and IPMA Organisational Competence Baseline (OCB) as well as the Project Excellence Baseline (PEB) of IPMA (see IPMA, 2015; IPMA 2016) ideally complement other, principle-, process- or method-based project management standards, such as PM².
- V. For more than 25 years, IPMA has been very successfully operating qualification and certification according to the '4-Level-System' (Level D to A). In each MA there is an accredited certification body for this, which tests candidates according to recognized standards and issues an internationally valid certificate.
- VI. The PM² Group is closely aligned with and supports through its activities the Center of Excellence in PM² of the European Commission in the dissemination and adoption of the PM² Methodology for managing (agile) projects, programs, and project portfolios across Europe and beyond.
- VII. The PM² methodology is a strong yet lightweight methodology for managing projects suitable for medium to large projects in public service organisations across Europe. One of the distinguishing traits of PM² is – besides the processes, methods, and artefacts – the emphasis on the necessary mindset for successfully managing projects.
- VIII. PM² Group has established an efficient network of accredited training institutes, which carries out high quality training and supports public certification based on the guidelines set by the EU Commission for those individuals who want to increase their employability in the context of public and private organisations.
- IX. The PM² Group is supported by Vanharen Learning Solutions, an established publisher that offers a wide range of project management publications as well as a learning platform with all learning materials and services required for qualifying in PM², including an electronic certification process for the 'PM² Foundation'.
- X. The qualification and certification according to the guidelines set by the European Commission is currently offered by the PM² Group in five European languages and will be expanded in the future to accommodate additional languages in close cooperation with the IPMA and its MAs.

XI. The PM² Group proposes a “Project Manager of the Future” program where unemployed people that meet the criteria of the program receive a grant covering 75% of the certification costs.

presented and discussed on a recurrent basis. The PM² Group also organizes regular conferences at which reports are presented on the introduction and application of the PM² methodology. There are multiple synergies available through networking and knowledge sharing on various aspects of project management in the public sector. The ‘Engagement’ section of the IPMA Ecosystem also invites professionals to get involved in activities. For example, it is planned to establish a joint SIG for projects in the public sector with the participation of IPMA, MAs and PM² Group to discuss specific aspects of the management of projects, programs, and portfolios in this particular sector. The results of the SIG work can in turn be shared at events or made available to a wider audience in the form of publications, for example through Vanharen Publishing

SYNERGIES BETWEEN THE PRODUCT & SERVICE PORTFOLIOS OF IPMA AND PM² GROUP

IPMA has summarized its portfolio of activities, products, and services in the ‘IPMA Ecosystem’ (see Figure 1), which is based on the vision and mission of IPMA and subdivided into the four areas of ‘Involvement’, ‘Engagement’, ‘Improvement’ and ‘Recognition’.

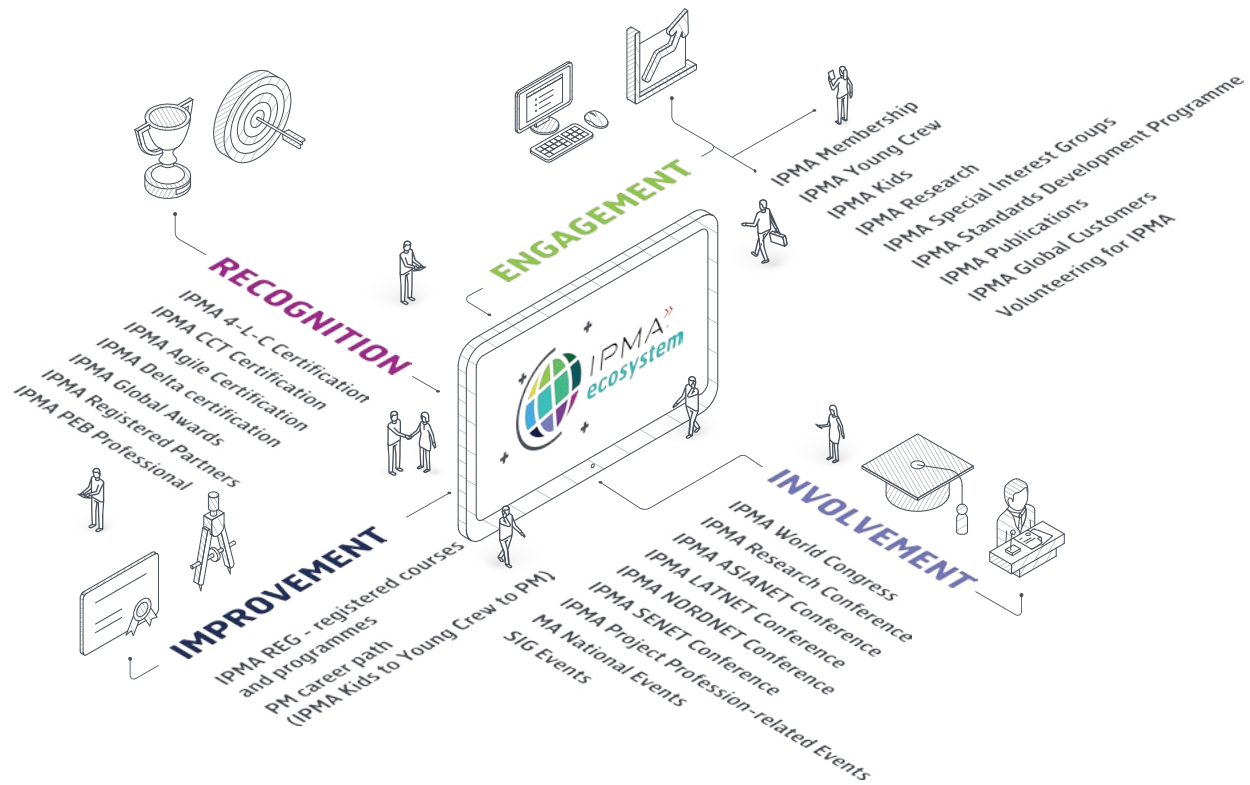


Figure 1: IPMA Ecosystem

Starting with the area ‘Involvement’, we are mainly talking about events, virtual and face-to-face, which are organized by IPMA, one of its MAs or a Special Interest Groups (SIGs) on an international, regional, and national level. Here, public service projects are

or the IPMA Publications remit. Ultimately, researchers can also engage in the field of public projects, e.g., highlighting specific framework conditions, the current state of affairs, and emerging trends.

The 'Improvement' area of the IPMA Ecosystem is focused on the volunteer activities of educating kids and adolescents ('IPMA Kids') as well as supporting charity initiatives in their project-related work ('IPMA Coaching-4-Development (C4D)'). The 'IPMA Registration (REG)' System is for education and training courses and programs and helps IPMA to assure quality and relevance of courses and programs in their context. Together with the PM² Group, IPMA can use this system to register trainers or training institutes that offer training courses for customers in their context according to predefined criteria, quality-assured materials, and the guidelines of the European Commission's Centre of Excellence. As many MAs of IPMA have access to accredited training institutes themselves, the partnership with PM² Group expands the potential trainer base and allows customers to access accredited trainers and related materials in their home language in nearly every European country. This also applies to consulting firms specializing in project management for the public sector. Both the PM² Group accredited consulting firms and the consultants working in the environment of the IPMA MAs as well as the 'IPMA PEB Professionals' that have been trained on the basis of the PEB can be deployed here.

In the last but probably most important area of 'Recognition', both partners, IPMA and PM² Group, bring their strengths to bear. The PM² Group offers services for qualification and certification in the PM² methodology based on the guidelines of the EU Commission. These are complemented by the services of IPMA and its national MAs in the area of qualification and certification according to the 'IPMA 4-Level-Certification (4-L-C) System'. Thus, candidates who have completed their certification in PM² can pursue further certification with IPMA to advance their project-related competences. IPMA also offers certification of an organization's project management ('IPMA Delta') based on IPMA's global standard OCB. This is particularly interesting for public administration entities that want to assess how far professionalization has progressed in their organization and which improvement activities are yet necessary. Finally, IPMA offers a number of awards at national, regional, and global levels that highlight excellent achievements by individuals or projects.

LEVERAGING THE POTENTIALS OF THE PARTNERSHIP IN YOUR CONTEXT – A PRAGMATIC WAY FORWARD

Benefits, of course, do not realize themselves. They require engagement on the part of the beneficiaries. In the following, we outline a pragmatic way forward for the target audiences that enable them to harness the benefits for themselves.

Senior leaders of public and private organisations engaged in public projects:

All those in senior leadership positions can get support for professionalizing project management in their organization. Through IPMA and the PM² Group, they will receive professional advice on how to set up or further develop a suitable management system for projects, programs, and portfolios in their organization. Accredited consultants and trainers, registered training programs and other services will support them on their way to building the required individual as well as organizational competences for successfully implementing public projects. Training can take place in-house or also in external educational institutions and can comprise stand-alone courses or comprehensive curricula. They may exchange ideas with like-minded people in the IPMA and PM² Group network and share their experiences at the relevant networking events. All these leaders need to do is contact either the IPMA, one of its national member associations or the PM² Group via their website.

Civil servants:

Individuals from the public sector can get involved in a national, regional, or even international network (e.g., SIG or network event) of the IPMA and its MAs or in corresponding events of the PM² Group, where they can discuss important topics related to project management and share their experiences. This can potentially spark interest in volunteering with associations to further network. Of course, it is also possible to take advantage of one of the offerings for qualification and certification in order to further develop competence in project

management. This can refer to the PM² methodology or, beyond that, more advanced educational offerings. To do so, it is simply necessary to contact either the IPMA, one of its national member associations or the PM² Group via their website and refer to this partnership.

Service providers:

On the one hand, service providers who are themselves involved in public projects can complete a PM² qualification and certification through the PM² Group and also receive general training in project management through one of the IPMA MAs. Also, the engagement in the SIG for public administration, the participation in or even contribution to one of the specific events of IPMA and PM² can be beneficial for those service providers. On the other hand, service providers such as consulting or training institutes can seek to qualify as a registered or accredited service provider with the PM² Group, IPMA or one of its MAs. Just contact either the IPMA, one of its national member associations or the PM² Group via their website and refer to this partnership.

Research institutes:

Engage in the international research community associated with IPMA and its MAs to explore the framework conditions, the current state of affairs, and emerging trends of project-related work in the public sector through firsthand dialogue with relevant stakeholders and networks. Publish your research findings concerning public projects in high impact journals of IPMA (International Journal of Project Management and Project Leadership and Society) or other publication outlets, such as Vanharen Publishing.

Educational providers:

For educational institutions it can be interesting to include the PM² methodology in their educational offering and to have corresponding courses registered and hence recognized by IPMA or the PM² Group. This can include vocational, university or other educational offerings. In addition, educational institutions can also offer educational pathways ranging from individual aspects of project management to advanced modules or curricula. IPMA and PM² Group have a long-term

experience in the development of such offerings and also enable a peer-to-peer exchange with other education providers.

Project management associations:

IPMA MAs have direct access to this partnership through their affiliation with IPMA and can participate in any activities for the benefit of their national membership, clients, or other interested parties. PM² Group and IPMA can also deliver information sessions and materials as needed and organize 'Train-the-Trainer (TtT)' courses for educators, trainers or consultants who wish to disseminate PM² in public administration. Project management associations may also be interested in offering research findings, learning materials, publications, and other types of information to their members in a national language. Associations that are not yet affiliated with IPMA or PM² Group are welcome to enter into discussions with their leadership to discuss opportunities for leveraging the partnership.

CONCLUSION AND A GLANCE INTO THE FUTURE

The trend of projectification continues to advance in our society and requires all sectors to prepare themselves to effectively implement more and more projects of increasing importance. Some authors are already drawing the picture of a project society (Jensen, 2023), in which projects are part of the everyday routine and everyone implements projects with others in new constellations at any time. In the face of ever-increasing challenges, society will only be able to meet them if public administration is equipped with the skills required to implement projects. These must be consistently developed and expanded. This is the goal of the partnership between IPMA and PM² Group. The initial focus is on the professionalization of public administration in Europe with the help of the PM² methodology, but it should not stop there. Through worldwide networking and experience exchange, public administration in general is to be put in a stronger position to carry out effective project management, serving the people. Doing the right projects right, with

minimum resources and maximum impact helps tackle the big challenges of our time.

IPMA and PM² Group have set out to establish networks between the local, state, national, regional, and international levels in public administration in order to promote professionalization at all these levels through the exchange of experience and shared learning. This is done on the one hand through specific SIGs, virtual and face-to-face events, publications, and other formats. On the other hand, the core intention is to increase competences in public administration. This can only be achieved if a lifelong learning process is set in motion, which begins, for example, with qualification and

certification in the PM² methodology and culminates via the various levels of the IPMA 4 level system as a Certified Project Director (IPMA Level A) in one of the domains of project, program, or portfolio management. Experts from both organizations, IPMA and PM² Group will use their long-term expertise to develop a learning path for civil servants that enables a systematic competence development. Ideally on the basis of an international competence standard. This should all be supported by international researchers and research institutions associated with IPMA to ensure that the professionalization of the public administration occurs in a sustainable and impactful manner.

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Authors

REINHARD WAGNER



Dr. Reinhard Wagner has been active for more than 35 years in project-related leadership in such diverse sectors as Automotive, Engineering, and Consultancy, as well as various not-for-profit organizations. As Managing Director of Tiba Group Services GmbH, a leading PM Consultancy in Germany, he supports executives of industrial clients in transforming their companies towards a project-oriented, adaptive, and sustainably successful organization. Reinhard Wagner has published 40 books, several hundred articles, and blog posts in project, program, and project portfolio management. In more than 25 years of voluntary engagement, he served the German Project Management Association (GPM) as well as the International Project Management Association (IPMA) in a range of leadership roles (including President and Chairman) and was granted for his international commitment with the Honorary Fellowship of IPMA and several of its Member Associations. Reinhard is Assistant Professor at the European University Alma Mater Europaea and Extraordinary Associate Professor at the Stellenbosch University and teaches project, program, and portfolio management. He can be contacted via reinhard.wagner@tiba.de.

MLADEN VUKOMANOVIĆ



Prof. Dr. Mladen Vukomanović has been active for more than 20 years in different leadership and consultancy roles across various industries, including: AEC, Oil & Gas and the 3rd sector. As a Project Professional, Mladen works diligently on facilitating sustainable social change, developing project profession, and applying project management in real life. Mladen is an experienced professor with a specialty in construction and civil engineering and is currently teaching at the University of Zagreb. In more than 20 years of his voluntary engagement, Mladen has served various NGOs and Charities, including Croatian Association for Project Management - IPMA Croatia as well as the International Project Management Association (IPMA) in a range of different leadership roles (including President, Vice President, Chairman etc.). He is widely respected in the project management discipline and has several prestigious certifications and awards. He can be contacted via mvukoman@grad.hr

LAURENT KUMMER



Laurent Kummer has an engineering degree in IT from Bordeaux IT school and a management degree from CNAM, Paris.

He has got a track record of successful delivery of financial and industrial projects for General Electric as Director of Infrastructure for Eastern Europe and Middle East until 2014. As consultant, he helped the European Commission articulate its project management methodology, PM², for its public release in 2016 and was editor in chief of PM² v3 in 2018. He has been teaching PM² to thousands of project managers both from European Institutions and outside public and private organizations. Using the method on a daily basis to deliver flagship digital transformation projects for the European Commission, he is also involved in its dissemination and is a founding member of the PM² Group which militates for a wide adoption of PM² across all sectors and organises the PM² Certification outside EU Institutions according to the European Commission guidelines.

IPMA World Map

ALGERIA
ARGENTINA
AUSTRIA
AZERBAIJAN
BOLIVIA
BOSNIA AND
HERZEGOVINA
BRAZIL
BULGARIA
CANADA
CHILE
CHINA
COLOMBIA
COSTA RICA
CROATIA

CZECH REPUBLIC
DENMARK
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
ECUADOR
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CONTACT INFORMATION

International Project Management Association (IPMA)
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