Certification Regulations

Certified Senior Project Manager (IPMA Level B)

Contents

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Classification	© PMAC-AGPC CB, public
Status	Version 2.1 Released
Electronic file	6120-B-PROC-Certification-Regulations-22

Released by	Last name	Date	Signature
PMAC-AGPC CB management	Selver	December 21, 2012	

Version	Changes	By	Date
2.1	Updated file structure & added IPMA logo	Selver	December 21, 2012
2.2	Updated to ICR4	Selver	June 15, 2018

1. **Introduction**

The guidelines for Certified Senior Project Manager (IPMA Level B) certification explain:

- o the requirements for candidates
- o the certification and recertification process flows

Certification is based upon:

- o the standard ISO/IEC 17024 for certifying persons
- o the IPMA Competence Baseline (ICB), Version 4.0
- o the IPMA Certification Regulations and Guidelines (ICR), Version 4
- o PMAC-AGPC Certification Body (CB) certification guidelines & rules.

These documents are taken into consideration for a proper understanding of the process.

The certification system under the rules of PMAC-AGPC CB is based on the ICB and ICRG.

The present document is intended as a brief introduction to certification for candidates, supervisors, HR managers and other interested parties.

2. **Aim of certification**

The aim of certification is to ensure that the competence necessary for a senior project manager scan be documented by a certificate of achievement. The combination of theoretical knowledge and practical experience enables a certified senior project manager to manage demanding and complex projects competently. Level B is constructed in terms of the leadership of others in complex projects throughout the lifecycle. This also applies to portfolio and programme management roles and life cycles (where applicable). The certificate is issued by the certification body and is internationally recognized.

3. **Previous training and experience**

When applying for certification the candidate must demonstrate the knowledge and experience required to identify, analyze and manage complex networked project situations. The manager is familiar with the management of and collaboration with interdisciplinary project organizations. As senior project manager the candidate works effectively and efficiently with clients at different hierarchical levels on all issues of project management. The candidate's practical work involves managing, planning, controlling and monitoring complex projects.

4. **Registration requirements**

To register for certification at IPMA Level B, all experience must have been obtained within the last 8 years. The evidence time scale can be extended by 4 years with justification. Level B applicants must have, in the last five years, at least three years of project management experience, of which three years were in responsible leadership function of complex projects (entry requirement). The time span of five years can be extended up to nine years with appropriate justification.

The applicant shall be able to manage complex projects (core competence), i.e. the candidate

- o is responsible for all project management aspects of a complex project and all project management competence elements.
- o manages a large project management team and leads managers of sub-projects.
- o uses adequate project management processes, methods, techniques and tools.

The complexity of the assessed projects shall be evaluated against the following criteria:
- Objectives and assessment of results (output-related complexity)
- Processes, methods, tools and techniques (process-related complexity)
- Resources including finance (input-related complexity)
- Risks and opportunities (risk-related complexity)
- Stakeholders and integration (strategy-related complexity)
- Relations with permanent organisations (organisation-related complexity)
- Cultural and social context (socio-cultural complexity)
- Leadership, teamwork and decisions (team-related complexity)
- Degree of innovation and general conditions (innovation-related complexity)
- Demand for coordination (autonomy-related complexity)

The CB should ensure that complexity is measured against that of similar projects, programmes or portfolios for the level applied for in its profile environment. Each complexity indicator shall be scored as follows for a project, programme or portfolio:

- very low complexity – score of 1;
- low complexity – score of 2;
- high complexity – score of 3; or
- very high complexity – score of 4.

The scores shall be added up to obtain an overall complexity score for each project, programme or portfolio.

When more than one project, programme or portfolio is provided by the Candidate, each shall be independently assessed for its complexity to meet the following criteria:

- where there is a requirement for evidence of a complex (Level B) project, programme or portfolio, the Candidate shall provide sufficient evidence to obtain a minimum score of 25 for each project, programme or portfolio in their Executive Summary Report.

The certification body decides on the equivalent nature of other education and professional experience.

The decision to admit a candidate is based on the Application for Certification and candidates are notified in writing accordingly. If a candidate is rejected, the rejection letter will state the reasons why and include instructions for appealing against the decision, naming the appeal body and the deadline for filing appeals.

5. Certification process

5.1. Basis for certification

The frame of reference during the assessment process is the Competence Elements (CE) as defined in the IPMA Individual Competence Baseline (IPMA ICB). It is the IPMA Standard for certification and shall be used for the assessment of Candidates by CBs.

The IPMA ICB has a number of Competence Elements (CEs), each of which has a number of Key Competence Indicators (KCIs). The assessment of a Candidate is undertaken at the CE level using the KCIs to support the assessment.

The IPMA ICB definition of individual competence is "the application of knowledge, skills and abilities in order to achieve the desired results in a work environment." Using this definition:

• The assessment of a B-level Candidate shall be based on the demonstration of the CE applied in a complex project/programme/portfolio environment.

To achieve a Level B, Candidates must demonstrate evidence of 80% of the domain CEs defined in the ICB, in a complex environment

Those interested in certification can obtain the documentation for candidates from the CB administration office in accordance with the fee schedule.

The documentation, including the ICB (in English version), is available free on the CB web site at http://www.pmac-agpc.ca/certification .

If the applicant so wishes, the full current documentation for candidates can be supplied in hard copy against invoice.

Level B exam

Format - The Level B exam will be written
Types of questions - Open answer questions only. The questions asked shall require Candidates to demonstrate application of knowledge at the required level only.
Length of exam - 3 hours for written exam.

5.2. **Overview of the certification process flow**

Certification is a process through which an organization grants recognition to an individual that meets certain established criteria. The IPMA 4-L certification is composed of:

• The Initial Certification Process
• The Recertification Process

Prior to commencement of the certification or recertification, all applicants are to be fully informed about the assessment process. The CB has ensured that the information package provided to applicants and candidates includes all relevant steps in the process. In particular, the information includes the evaluation criteria.

The CB may decide to allow applicants and candidates to temporarily interrupt the process or postpone a part of it for a limited period of time. In such cases the CB may impose additional administrative fees.

The following figure shows the Initial Certification Process flow:

Stage	Activities	Applicant / Candidate	Administration	Assessors	CB Operational Management
			Parties		
	Information Meeting	X	X		
	Registration	From	To		
	Confirmation and Invoice	To	From		To
	Assignment		X		X
	Notification of Assignment	To	From	To	
	Possibility of Rejection	X		X	
1	Application, Self-Assessment and Report Proposal	From	To		
1	Formal Check		X		
1	Application, Full Self-Assessment and Executive Summary Report		From	To	
1	Assessment			X	
1	Recommendation of Assessors		Via	From	To
1	Decision				X
1 *	Notification of Decision	To	Via		From
2	Exam	X			
2	Assessment			X	
2	Recommendation of Assessors		Via	From	To
2	Notification of Decision	To	Via		From
3	Report and Competence Development Plan	From	Via	To	
3	Assessment			X	
3	Feedback from Assessors		Via	From	To
3 *	Notification of Feedback	To	Via		From
3	Report (additional requirements)	From	Via	To	
4	Interview	X		X	
5	Final Evaluation			X	
5	Recommendation of Assessors; with documents for CB archive		Via	From	To

5	Decision				X
5	Notification of Decision and Certificate	To	Via		From
5	Feedback (Appeal)	From	Via		To

Legend:
X = Activity with one or more parties, where "X" indicates which parties participate
From, Via, To = Transmission of documents
(Activity within brackets) = optional step
* = Possible stoppage of the process due to disqualification of the candidate

5.3. The Initial Certification Process

The applicants are assigned to the assessors by the CB Operational Management Board and the Administration. For IPMA Level B, each applicant and candidate shall be assessed by two assessors during the whole certification process. One of the assessors shall be a lead assessor.

According to IPMA regulations, for all IPMA Level B assessments, one of the two assessors must be from the same sector as that of the applicant or candidate. The other assessor must be familiar with another sector.

If no assessors with adequate competence are available, foreign assessors may be assigned. As a last resort, external experts, who are familiar with the certification system of the CB and are qualified to a similar level to the assessors, may assist the assessors providing evidence that all reasonable possibilities having been explored to allocate an appropriate assessor.

The assessor and the applicant or candidate must not have any other kind of relationship; preferably they have never met. If a conflict of interest or risk of unfair treatment is likely, the assessor has the right to reject the applicant or candidate, or the applicant or candidate has the right to reject the assessor.

5.3.1. *Stage 1*

5.3.1.1. *Application for Certification*

The application should include all necessary personal details and the initial certification level applied for. As a minimum it should include:

- Personal details of the candidate (name, address, contact details, etc).
- Career details of the applicant including all relevant project management roles and positions held and when.
- Professional qualifications undertaken and any project management training and education details.
- Details of any project management professional achievements of the applicant such as publications books articles, presentations and awards.
- A detailed summary of any projects the candidate has managed or been involved in to meet IPMA regulations. Sufficient detail needs to be provided by the applicant to enable the assessors to assess suitability of the IPMA level being applied for;

- Deliverables, duration, phases, budgets, interested parties, management complexity of the project
- role, responsibility, extent of engagement of the applicant

The applicant's shall confirm that they agree to abide by the conditions and obligations of the IPMA Certification process including, but not limited to: certification fees, code of conduct, publication of their name (unless they have explicitly expressed a wish not to do so).

5.3.1.2. *Self-Assessment*

Completion of self-assessment is an important part of the Certification process. The candidate's self-assessment score is to be considered in the initial preparation; however, it is not part of the calculation of the final result.
The applicant is required to complete a self-assessment, addressing knowledge and experience areas, for all competence elements of the ICB.

For Level B, the Applicant shall complete a full self-assessment (knowledge, skills and abilities) for all CEs of the ICB. In completing their self-assessment, the Applicant shall also consider the KCIs in their assessment.

As an aid for both the applicant and the assessors, the self-assessment form includes instructions and example of how to fill in the form.

After completing the self-assessment, the applicant should discuss the results with another person who knows them well. The outcome of such a discussion may result in an adjustment of the scores.

5.3.1.3. *Report Proposal*

The applicant should submit a report proposal (1-3 pages plus appendices, which includes an organisation chart and time schedule). The proposal shall describe the complex project that the applicant proposes to use for his / her report and his / her role in this project.

The complexity of the project is evaluated for the following ten criteria:

- Objectives and assessment of results (output-related complexity)
- Processes, methods, tools and techniques (process-related complexity)
- Resources including finance (input-related complexity)
- Risks and opportunities (risk-related complexity)
- Stakeholders and integration (strategy-related complexity)
- Relations with permanent organisations (organisation-related complexity)
- Cultural and social context (socio-cultural complexity)
- Leadership, teamwork and decisions (team-related complexity)
- Degree of innovation and general conditions (innovation-related complexity)
- Demand for coordination (autonomy-related complexity)

5.3.1.4. *Checking Application Documents*

Prior to forwarding to assessors all documents shall be reviewed by the CB Administration.
The CB shall document its decision to accept or reject the applicant to enter the initial certification process and become a candidate.

5.3.2. *Stage 2*

5.3.2.1 Exam

The minimum duration of a written exam shall be 3 hours.

Open answer questions only. The questions asked shall require Candidates to demonstrate application of knowledge required at Level B.

The written exam should be supervised by the CB examiner. All exams are subject to strict quality control criteria and checklists, signed by the examiner, should be used to assess the examination environment.

Grading of the exam shall be completed by at least one assessor. Grading shall be agreed if more than one assessor is involved in the examination process before submitting the final results to the CB operational management.

5.3.3. *Stage 3*

5.3.3.1. *Report*

The candidate should submit a report, if required, describing the application of competence elements in a real project (for a complex project).

The report shall describe the application of their leadership of others in applying the CEs for the appropriate role and level being assessed. The level of complexity described in the report shall correspond to the level applied for.

The report should contain a maximum of 25 pages for the report with an additional maximum of 15 pages for the appendices.

The applicants assess their competence by reflecting on their activities in projects and lessons learned.

Using the STAR principle, and for each competence element, the applicant should describe the:

- Situation.
- Task of the applicant (the challenge/problem).
- Action taken.
- Result of the action, what the applicant learnt and how this learning has been applied in subsequent projects.

As a minimum, reports should address the competences in conjunction with the following:

- Background (type, scope, customer, other important interested parties, resources, complexity, etc.);
- Project objectives;
- Project organization;
- Roles and responsibilities of the candidate;
- Distinctive elements of the project;
- Results of the project.

Candidates shall address the following in more detail:

- Management challenges;
- Their management and leadership challenges with respect to others;
- How these were handled and reflections upon the results;
- Project analysis and lessons learned.

The Report shall be produced with a font size of 11 points. Any appendices used shall be cross referenced to the main body of the report.

5.3.3.2. *Competence Development Plan*

The candidate should prepare a competence development plan for review by the assessors. The assessors will provide feedback on this plan based upon their assessment of the competence of the candidate.

5.3.4. *Stage 4*

5.3.4.1. *Interview*

The interview process serves a number of functions; Assessment of a candidate's strengths and limitations; examination of self-assessment responses; exploration of any perceived gaps; verification of documentation; experience and background.

In the interview the assessors shall ask questions they have previously prepared related to the self-assessment and the report. The questions may include:
- A check of statements in the documentation submitted.
- An exploration of gaps, strengths and weaknesses in the knowledge and experience of the candidate.
- A demonstration of the competence of the candidate related to managing projects.

Both assessors actively participate in the interview process.
The candidate may be asked to make a brief but detailed presentation to the assessors on the outlined report.

The candidate may illustrate their answers by presenting examples or documents in addition to the report (e.g. handbook, status report) during the

interview. The duration of the interview is between 1.5 and 2 hours, due to variances of language, project and style of interaction.

The Assessors shall identify which specific CEs and KCIs shall be assessed for each Candidate, and shall ask questions they have previously prepared related to the materials provided with appropriate follow up questions as necessary.

5.3.5. *Stage 5*

5.3.5.1. *Final evaluation and recommendation*

Upon completion of the interview, the assessors determine if the candidate has satisfactorily met all required criteria for the IPMA Level applied for. Their recommendation with supporting documentation is then forwarded to the CB operational management for decision. Both assessors are required to verify the evaluation report. The self-assessment score is not part of the final evaluation.

5.3.5.2. *Decision and issue of certificate*

On behalf of the CB, the operational management of the CB makes the decision about granting a pass or fail based upon the recommendation of the assessors.

Certificates are issued in English, stating the language of certification process (English or French).

Certificates shall be registered in both CB and IPMA databases. The information is published on the IPMA website as public information unless the applicant has explicitly expressed a wish not to.

The candidate should be aware that the misuse or making of false or misleading statements about their content, validity or duration will result in immediate withdrawal of the certificate by the CB.

5.4. Certification period

The following table is a rough guide to the times required for each stage of the certification process:
The following table is a rough guide to the times required for each stage of the Initial Certification Process:

Stage	Time
1. Application for Certification, Self-Assessment and Report Proposal	Approx. 2 weeks
1. Documents assessment and notification	Approx. 2 weeks
2. Exam	
2. Exam assessment and notification of results	Approx 2 weeks

3. Project Report	Approx. 4 weeks
3. Report assessment and notification	Approx. 2 weeks
4. & 5. Interview, assessment and notification of final results	Approx. 2 weeks
TOTAL	Approx. 14 weeks

5.5. **Recertification**

It is the responsibility of the certificate holder to monitor the expiry date of their certificate and to initiate the recertification process.

The CB should suggest to the certificate holder via the website or by a written notice, that they have reached the mid-point of ca. 2.5 years since their initial certification or their last recertification. As a service to certificate holders, the CB issues invitations for re-certification.

Candidates are encouraged to evaluate their project management activities and their continuing PM education at the mid-point.

The recertification candidate shall be assessed by two assessors. If there is any doubt as to the result, then the assessors shall propose an interview via the CB.

A recommendation is then made regarding renewal. If non-renewal is recommended, supporting documentation shall accompany the recommendation.

The assessors use the documents produced during the previous certification or recertification for reference.

The requirements for the different levels on re-certification are described in the table below:

	Level A	Level B	Level C	Level D
Domain-related experience required by the Applicant	Minimum evidence of 30 months of practical experience over a 5 year period			Not applicable
	Complexity			Not applicable
	Leadership of others		Management of Others	Not applicable
	Minimum of 35 hours' evidence of CPD per annum (175 hours total) since the last (re-)certification			

From ICR4 -Table 10. Re-certification criteria for levels A, B, C and D

If the certificate holder fails to re-apply within the time period a new application will need to be

undertaken under the initial certification process.

The following outcomes are possible as a result of the assessment:
• renewal of the certificate for a further 5 years at the same level without an interview;
• renewal of the certificate at the same level following satisfactory evidence provided from follow-up activity such as interview, referee comments, review of complaints and request to the Applicant for additional information; or
• non-renewal of the certificate following unsatisfactory interview and/or evidence provided from follow-up activity.

If non-renewal is recommended, supporting documentation with explanation shall accompany the recommendation

5.5.1. *Stage 1*

5.5.1.1. *Application*

The Application should include all necessary personal details and the recertification level applied for.
The certificate holder should confirm that he / she agrees to abide by the conditions and obligations of the IPMA recertification process including, but not limited to: recertification fees, code of conduct, publication of his/her name (unless he / she has explicitly expressed a wish not to do so).

The application package should include:
• Application
• CV
• Full Self-Assessment
• Structured Evidence
• Referees

5.5.1.2. *Checking Application Documents*

The same as Initial Certification Process

5.5.2. *Stage 2*

5.5.2.1. *Interview (optional)*

If the assessors, having evaluated the documents, consider it necessary to recommend an interview, the CB shall make the decision as to whether it will take place.
The assessors shall prepare the interview questions in order to clarify whether the recertification candidate still fulfils the requirements for their level.

The candidate shall be entitled to present additional evidence to support their claim of competence, professional development and his / her professional conduct at the interview.

5.5.3. *Stage 3*

5.5.3.1. *Final evaluation and recommendation*

The same as Initial Certification Process

5.5.3.2. *Decision and issue of certificate*

A certificate can be renewed with the recertification by a different CB (i.e. in another country) to the one that delivered the initial certificate or the latest renewal.

5.5.3.3. *Feedback from the candidate*

The recertification candidates should complete a feedback questionnaire form about their experiences concerning the recertification process. The feedback questionnaire is used by the CB in its continuous improvement process.
The completed questionnaire of the candidate shall not be used for the next certification/recertification assessment of that candidate.

5.6. Delays and extensions

If a candidate misses any deadlines set by the CB Administration office for submitting documents (application, self-assessment, report proposal, full report) by more than five business days, he or she will automatically fail. In consultation with the assigned assessors, the CB Operational Management Board may approve a request for an extension, provided this is submitted by the candidate in advance and clearly states the reasons for the request.

5.7. Deferrals

There is no provision for deferring any stage in the process. In the event of a necessary deferral after the stage 1, the same project may be used again for the next certification date, provided it meets the requirements.

5.8. Validity of certification

The certificate is valid for a period of five years. Certified Senior Project Managers are personally responsible for extending the certificate by another five years. They are notified of the requirements for recertification in writing by the CB Administration office three months before the certificate's expiry date. Certified Senior Project Managers are required to notify the office of any change of address.

5.9. Appeals and complaints

The candidate may appeal against the decision of the certification office or file complaints against the staff of the CB office (see Certification Rules, Chapters 10 and 11).

5.10.   Confidentiality

All information and documents submitted by candidates are treated in strict confidence by the CB. The documents are accessible only by authorized individuals at the certification office, the assigned assessors, and the appeals committee (in the event of an appeal), but not by the candidate.