

CERTIFIED SENIOR PROJECT MANAGER IPMA LEVEL B[®]

WRITTEN EXAMINATION EXAMPLE MINICASE

Note	Please write your name on the title page. Please check the number of pages in the footer to make sure that you have the complete exam paper.	
Resources	You may use all forms of printed documents as well as personal notes. Resources that allow communication beyond the exam hall <u>are prohibited</u> .	
Length of examination	Minicases are structured in such a way that each of the minicases require broadly the same amount of time to process.	180 minutes
Score	Maximum number of points	180 points

Date	First name	Surname	Points achieved

OVERVIEW OF THE MINI CASES

Minicase	Contents	Question	Points	
Cantonal-Office	Correlation of Strategic corporate development	1.1 Evaluating the strategy match	15	45
		1.2 Situation analysis, key factors and planning of reporting	15	
		1.3 Success factors, lessons learned and complexity drivers	15	
		2.1	15	45
		2.2	15	
		2.3	15	
		3.1	15	45
		3.2	15	
		3.3	15	
		4.1	15	45
		4.2	15	
		4.3	15	
			Total number of points	180

MINICASE 1 - CANTONAL-OFFICE

Role	<p>You are a project manager in a major Cantonal-Office¹. You know that successful organisation is characterised, among other things, by the fact that most employees share a common vision of the future, and orient their actions based on vision, mission and defined strategy.</p>
Context	<p>Due to a reorganisation that resulted in almost all senior managers being changed, the Cantonal-Office initially failed to restore its original performance.</p> <p>It was important for the relatively new senior management team - within the context of the overall guidelines (personnel policy guidelines, head office objectives, performance agreement, legislative goals) - to revise and update the long-term policy framework of the Cantonal-Office (Cantonal-Office strategy), in order to achieve the mission while taking account of the vision. In its vision and guiding principles, it has reformulated the purpose of the Cantonal-Office and its guiding principles. In the environmental analysis, it has shifted into the future and tried to anticipate future impacts. It has also come up with new or changed customer needs. The services portfolio was reviewed in respect to the services that need to be built up, outsourced or reduced, and future successful products were described. In the interim, the management has formulated and approved the revised official strategy. While the vision and the strategy provide the basis for coordinating the portfolio, they are not currently monitored within this.</p> <p>Knowledge and experience regarding project management (PM) is - up to and including the senior management team - very poorly developed in the Cantonal-Office. Neither standard PM instruments, nor defined PM processes or portfolio management exist. The management has not yet given priority to a standard PM concept. It is aware, however, that all projects in the Cantonal-Office need to match the strategy and that the targeted project results need to make a positive contribution to this.</p>
Situation	<p>In your capacity as an experienced project manager, you are increasingly disturbed by the previous lack of project orientation in the Cantonal-Office. For this reason you are pleased that the management has now commissioned you to assess whether the goals and benefits of the current projects for which you are responsible match the mission, vision and revised strategy.</p> <p>How do you proceed if you have to reassess your current ongoing projects under these changed operating conditions, and need to check their suitability?</p>

¹ A Cantonal-Office (kantonaales Amt) is the governing body of a Swiss Canton and contains the various departments responsible for Finance, Security, Health, Education etc. In this document, it is referred to as the Cantonal-Office.

ASSIGNMENT 1.1 - EVALUATION OF THE STRATEGY MATCH

Maximum points possible	15 points	Points achieved	
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Introduction	<p>It is a matter of concern to the senior management that the benefits of all projects in the Cantonal-Office – measured against the revised office strategy – can be demonstrated. It is necessary to ascertain which projects make the biggest direct or indirect contribution towards achieving the strategy. By consequentially evaluating all projects, the basis for prioritising the projects in the Cantonal-Office is to be established (tactical implementation). The management of the Cantonal-Office then wants to decide whether projects will be carried out at all, when, and furnished with which resources.</p>
Assignment	<p>Show how you would specifically proceed to assess whether your current on-going projects in the Cantonal-Office still remain necessary in terms of vision, mission and the amended strategy. (Competence 4.3.1)</p>
Description	<p>Approach this assignment as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Name 5 classic project evaluation dimensions, and in respect of each dimension formulate a specific, concrete question that is of relevance to the evaluation of your current ongoing projects in the described Cantonal-Office. (maximum 5 points, competence indicator 4.3.1.1) b) In keywords, suggest 4 concrete options that you as project manager have for influencing the strategy after having discovered opportunities both for individual projects or for the whole Cantonal-Office with regard to the revised strategic guidelines. (maximum 4 points, competence indicator 4.3.1.2) c) Using 1-2 sentences, formulate 6 preconditions that you should be able to individually demonstrate for each of your projects, in order to enable you to justify their continuation under the new vision, mission and amended strategy. (maximum 6 points, competence indicator 4.3.1.3)

ASSIGNMENT 1.1 - SAMPLE SOLUTION

a) Dimensions of the project evaluation

	Project evaluation in accordance with	Relevant questions
1	Strategy contribution	How significant is the contribution made by the respective project towards achieving the strategic Cantonal-Office goals? How significant is the contribution made towards achieving the higher ranking guidelines (personnel policy principles, management goals, service/performance agreement, legislative objectives, ...)?
2	Benefits	Which monetary and non-monetary benefits does the project deliver for the Cantonal-Office?
3	Risk of non-implementation	Which negative effects, in relation to the project results, could the implementation or non-implementation of the project have for the Cantonal-Office or for the senior management?
4	Urgency	How urgent is the timetable for implementation in the Cantonal-Office?
5	Resources (internal/external)	With what time constraints, personnel workload and financial costs (internal in the Cantonal-Office / at management level / or in other management teams as well as external) need to be anticipated to achieve the project goals?

For each correctly named dimension, ½ point, for each correctly formulated question per dimension, ½ point. Maximum 5 points.

b) Possibilities for influencing the strategy

1	Provide information or submit a request for follow-up projects
2	Submit applications to extend the scope of individual projects
3	Deliberately lobby and nurture good relations with the members of the senior management or other relevant parties in the Cantonal-Office
4	Submit applications to extend existing results, such as the business case, project contract, etc.

For each correctly identified possibility, 1 point. Maximum 4 points.

c) Preconditions for continuing the projects with the revised strategy

1	The project goals of the respective project must remain achievable under the new framework conditions.
2	The reasons set out for the respective project (for example in the business case), including the intended benefits for the Cantonal-Office, must continue to exist, even under the revised strategy.
3	For the respective project, despite the changed overall configuration in the Cantonal-Office, it is not possible to forego the early termination of the project. Certain projects may be stopped immediately because of the new strategy, others may change the scope of services, and potentially new projects may also be launched. Configuration management is responsible for the whole and the relationship between its elements.
4	If business / economic reasons triggered the respective project, these continue to exist.
5	If organisational reasons triggered the respective project, these continue to exist.
6	The functionality of the project organisation also corresponds to the view of the relatively new senior management.

For each correctly described precondition, 1 point. Maximum 6 points.

ASSIGNMENT 1.2 - SITUATION ANALYSIS, KEY FACTORS AND PLANNING THE REPORTING

Maximum points possible	15 points	Points achieved	
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Introduction	<p>You, and all 12 other project managers in the Cantonal-Office, who work at different locations, plan, monitor and control the projects in their own particular ways. The approximately 350 project staff repeatedly have to adapt to different project processes. No defined project management processes exist to date. The understanding of roles differs greatly. The resources are rarely secured both quantitatively and qualitatively and the planning is often imprecise. Many projects are cancelled before they have been completed. Resistance often comes from the end users of the project's results.</p> <p>In your capacity as an experienced project manager, you would like to contribute to increasing the project orientation in the Cantonal-Office and therefore make a proposal for a respective project to be started. You are convinced that the project makes good sense, because an initial project 'Increasing project orientation in the Cantonal-Office' and a follow-up project 'Introduction of a portfolio management system in the Cantonal-Office' can certainly make a significant contribution towards increasing the performance capacity of the Cantonal-Office.</p>
Assignment	<p>Draw up a situation analysis, setting out the arguments with which you wish to persuade the management in a first step towards the introduction of the project 'Increasing project orientation in the Cantonal-Office'. Identify the key factors and key performance indicators for the follow-up project 'Introduction of a project portfolio management system in the Cantonal-Office' and then plan the reporting as the basis for efficient decision-making. (<i>Competence 4.3.2</i>)</p>
Description	<p>Approach this assignment as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) For each of the 4 target categories defined in the solution table, identify 1 weakness/risk of the current status as well as 2 strengths/opportunities of the target status: 'Cantonal-Office with high project orientation thanks to the introduction and implementation of a project management system'. (maximum 6 points, competence indicator 4.3.2.1) b) Identify 5 critical success factors (CSF) for the follow-up project 'Introduction of a project portfolio management system in the Cantonal-Office' and in respect of each CSF determine 1 key performance indicator (KPI) that makes the project success measurable. (maximum 5 points, competence indicator 4.3.2.3) c) Use a one-month timeline to show the reporting requirements of all the projects of the Cantonal-Office. Your solution should identify at least 4 milestones together with the associated deadlines. As soon as the project portfolio management system has been introduced, the flow of information from the projects should support an efficient decision-making process. (maximum 4 points, competence indicator 4.3.2.5)

ASSIGNMENT 1.2 - SAMPLE SOLUTION

a) Situation analysis as argument to convince the management

		Weaknesses/risks of the current status	Strengths/opportunities of the target status
1	Performance objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ No PM document templates (instruments, checklists), meaning that different tools (organisational tools and resources) are being used ▪ No guidelines for project documentation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Promote a more consistent/standard understanding of project management thanks to PM guidelines that summarise the overall organisational rules that apply for the execution of the project. ▪ Supporting the project work by means of a streamlined toolbox containing mandatory and optional tools ▪ In-depth treatment of the project management competences in training courses ▪ Accelerating the start phase in projects, as certain templates and specifications already exist. ▪ Planning and implementing of timely ongoing information flows ▪ Drawing up project documentation of the specified quality
2	Personnel objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Competence disputes due to inadequately regulated tasks, competences and responsibilities (roles). ▪ No secured resources because resources have not been firmly allocated to the project. ▪ Inaccurate planning of work assignments: Neither schedule, spatial, quantitative nor qualitative planning is available. ▪ Mutual deputising difficult to realise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Avoiding misunderstandings through clear description of the roles in the project management guidelines, in each case together with tasks, competences and responsibilities. ▪ Nature and manner of the cooperation in the project is defined and coordinated in structural as well as in cultural terms. ▪ Availability and scope of the work assignments are defined. Project planning data is available. ▪ Interdisciplinary co-operation and team focus ▪ Established deputising arrangements ▪ More attractive tasks for project managers thanks to project assignments as well as promoted and defined career path

		Weaknesses/risks of the current status	Strengths/opportunities of the target status
3	Procedural objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ No standard project procedures ▪ No standard planning, monitoring and control ▪ Low acceptance of the project results amongst users (notified too late, no involvement, ...) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Good planning and control principles thanks to systematic product management with the Cantonal-Office-wide standards ▪ Higher acceptance of project results through appropriate participation of the users ▪ Identification and adoption of the lessons learned from earlier projects ▪ Interdisciplinary cooperation and team orientation. ▪ Improved image for project work ▪ Intensive communication and feedback culture ▪ Comprehensive coordination with the client
4	Economic goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Insufficiently consistent prioritising of the resources ▪ Many cancelled projects, as well as project failures ▪ Inadequate return on investment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Project oriented financial management ▪ Lower project costs ▪ Optimal use of available resources is important for a Cantonal-Office that is in public focus. ▪ Fewer project failures ▪ Shorter project duration ▪ Client and result orientation with quantitative verification ▪ Return on investment

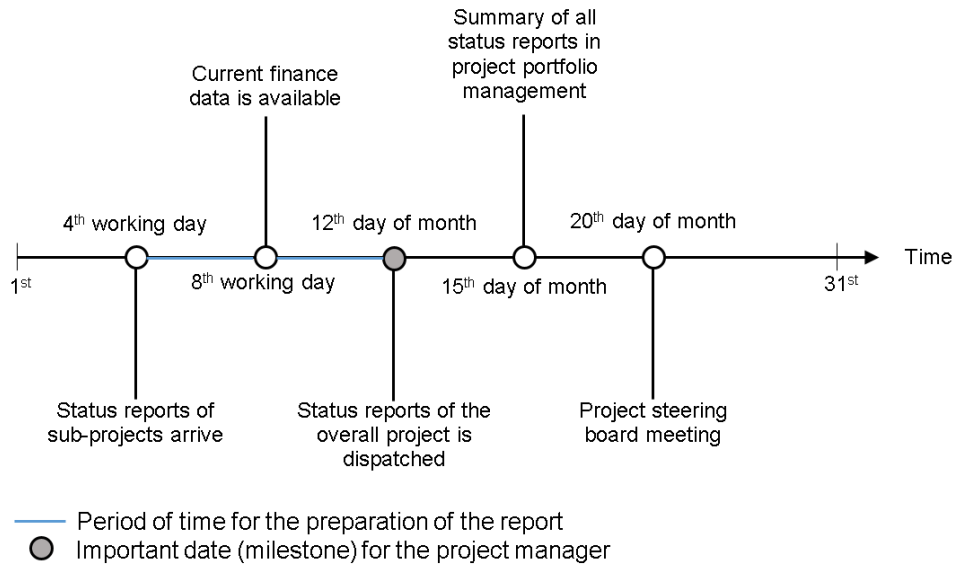
For each correctly described weakness/risk or strength/opportunity for each target category, ½ point. Maximum 6 points.

b) critical success factors (CSF) and their key performance indicators (KPI)

	CSF	KPI
1	<p>Management/Leadership</p> <p>Senior management of the Cantonal-Office, but also all department managers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Management urgently wants to introduce a portfolio management system. ▪ Senior management constitutes the project portfolio board or has established a body of this nature. ▪ All management levels recognise the benefits of the project portfolio management system, and have been properly informed. ▪ The strategic planning process is aligned with the amended Cantonal-Office strategy, and the guidelines are known. ▪ Project implementation decisions are taken on the basis of the project evaluation and project prioritisation.
2	Processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Evaluation system (costs, throughput times, periodicity, ...) is introduced. ▪ Prioritisation system is introduced. ▪ Processes are defined. ▪ Processes generate as little additional workload as possible for projects ▪ Processes are lived. ▪ Continuous improvement process is defined. ▪ Roles with responsibilities and competences clearly defined. ▪ Information and data flows between projects/PM and Cantonal-Office portfolio are defined.
3	Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Resources for defining and introducing the project portfolio management system are available.
4	Completeness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Evaluation system encompasses all Cantonal-Office projects and any possible programmes.
5	Information about newly-introduced project portfolio management in the Cantonal-Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Central, in particular, internal Cantonal administration stakeholders as well as critical external stakeholders are informed about the introduction of the project portfolio management system, and are familiar with the process definitions.

For each correctly named CSF, ½ point, for each correctly named KPI ½ point. Maximum 5 points.

c) Reporting structure



For each correct milestone, ½ point, for each effective time targets for efficient decision-making, ½ point. Maximum 4 points.

ASSIGNMENT 1.3 - SUCCESS FACTORS, LESSONS LEARNED AND COMPLEXITY DRIVERS

Maximum points possible	15 points	Points achieved	
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Introduction	<p>You are considering which success factors must be completely fulfilled in your project 'Increasing project orientation in the Cantonal-Office' to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the project work.</p> <p>You know that mistakes often occur in project work. In order to ensure that the same mistakes are not repeated in every project, you want to institutionalise the project analysis review process and to put this into practice. You therefore promote the systematic evaluation of the findings from lessons learned in the projects of the Cantonal-Office. As the project manager of the project 'Increasing project orientation in the Cantonal-Office' you want to evaluate the lessons learned from this project in a structured manner, so that all subsequent Cantonal-Office projects can be subjected to a similar systematic evaluation. New knowledge acquired through experience is to be made systematically available for future projects, and the existing Cantonal-Office methods should be amended, extended or supplemented by templates and tools. You are firmly convinced that this will increase project management know-how, and that the project orientation in the Cantonal-Office will grow sustainably.</p> <p>You know that projects fail if crucial relationships are not seen at all, or if their dynamics are underestimated, that is to say, if the project managers overly simplify their view of a complex project. For this reason, you are always deliberately looking for complexity-driving factors in your projects.</p>
Assignment	Describe which criteria are used to assess the success of the project 'Increasing project orientation in the Cantonal-Office', and how you go about determining the lessons learned. Also identify the impact of certain operating conditions on the complexity. (Competence 4.5.1)
Description	<p>Approach this assignment as follows:</p> <p>a) List the 5 central success factors for the project 'Increasing project orientation in the Cantonal-Office', and in respect of each success factor describe in 1-2 sentences what is specifically expected in order to enable this to be evaluated as a success. (5 points, competence indicator 4.5.1.1)</p> <p>b) Develop an appropriate questionnaire to capture the lessons learned. This is to be used for the first time within the context of the project 'Increasing project orientation in the Cantonal-Office'. Formulate 6 important perspectives for the evaluation, and for each perspective formulate 1 specific, fully formulated question that should be answered. (6 points, competence indicator 4.5.1.2)</p> <p>c) For each of the dimensions listed in the solution table, use key words to describe 2 complexity drivers for the project 'Increasing project orientation in the Cantonal-Office'. (4 points, competence indicator 4.5.1.3)</p>

ASSIGNMENT 1.3 - SAMPLE SOLUTION

a) Central success criteria and concrete expectations

	Success factors	Expectations
1	Compatibility with the amended Cantonal-Office strategy	All current projects ongoing in the Cantonal-Office are evaluated and approved with regard to their strategic contribution and overall economic benefit.
2	Definition of objectives	Objective definitions will be based on SMART formulations, (specific, measurable, achievable, results-oriented and with time deadlines). In addition, the objectives will be checked for completeness, free from contradictions, solution neutrality and redundancy. Measures should not be 'promoted' as objectives.
3	Handling changes	In the event of objective or plan changes, the consequences in terms of benefits, timetable and costs are examined and included in the decision.
4	Support of the Cantonal-Office's senior management	Decision-making channels and competences are understandably regulated. This ensures that decisions can be taken transparently and punctually.
5	Stakeholder management	All Cantonal- Office internal and external persons and groups affected by the project have been identified and will be appropriately involved in the project according to their particular concerns.
6	Human resources	All necessary resources are available at the right time.
7	Project management methodology	Project management guidelines in the Cantonal-Office summarises the valid, high-level rules that apply to the project execution (including tools, i.e. organisational tools and resources).
8	Project management qualification	All project participants are trained in project management methodology according to their tasks.
9	Knowledge management	It is ensured that the results developed by the project (project management guidelines, tools, role descriptions, ...) are applied. The transfer is transparent and verifiable.
10	Project controlling	Project managers in the Cantonal-Office control the projects based on current data pertaining to benefits, costs, material and time progress. The forecasts regarding target achievement are well-founded.
11	Integration of Cantonal-Office external project participants	The performance of external participants will be evaluated after the project has ended. The evaluation will be communicated in the Cantonal-Office.
12	Acceptance of the project work	High potential Cantonal-Office employees (for example for future management functions) see the project work as an attractive career opportunity. If necessary, a professional career in project management will be introduced.

In respect of each correctly named CSF and each correctly formulated expectation, ½ point. Maximum 5 points.

b) Perspectives and questions to determine the lessons learned in the project

	Perspectives	Specific questions
1	General course of the project 'Increasing project orientation in the Cantonal-Office'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What did not go well in the project? ▪ What precisely can be optimised? ▪ What should be considered when introducing the follow-up project 'Introduction of the portfolio management system in the Cantonal-Office'? ▪ Which factors and conditions promoted the project, and how were these used in the project? ▪ At what point in time did difficulties and problems arise, and how were these solved? ▪ What should others consider when dealing with similar projects?
2	Objectives of the project 'Increasing project orientation in the Cantonal-Office'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Has the objective of the project 'Increasing project orientation in the Cantonal-Office' been achieved? How can this be verified? ▪ Were the client and the management satisfied with the result? ▪ Was the budget adhered to? ▪ Were the deadlines adhered to? ▪ Was the initially agreed scope of services delivered? ▪ Which insights need to be obtained to enable these to be considered for the follow-up project 'Introduction of the project portfolio management system in the Cantonal-Office' – in respect of the formulation of its goals?
3	Professional, methodical and personal (social) competences of the project team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Did the project team have the necessary professional, methodological and personal (social) competences? ▪ Which technical/professional competences were lacking? ▪ Which methodological competences were lacking? ▪ Which personnel competences were lacking? ▪ Were the project staff good team-players? ▪ Were the communication skills of the team members sufficient? ▪ How were lacking skills/competences obtained in the project? ▪ Which qualification opportunities were used in the project?
4	Approach and project management methods in the project 'Increasing project orientation'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Was the approach suitable for the assigned task (strategic compatibility check)? ▪ In retrospect, which approach would have been more effective and/or more efficient? ▪ How have the implemented project management methods proven themselves, and which changes or extensions to the methods are to be proposed (for follow-up projects)?

	Perspectives	Specific questions
5	Information/communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Have all stakeholders (Cantonal-Office staff and external stakeholders) been informed about the project 'Increasing project orientation in the Cantonal-Office' as well as about the planned follow-up project 'Introduction of a project portfolio management system in the Cantonal-Office', and are they informed of the process guidelines? ▪ How were the stakeholders involved? Which aspect of this proved successful? What could have been done better? ▪ Can 'good practices' be derived from stakeholder communications, especially for the follow-up project? ▪ What experience was made through communications with sponsors, customers and from those affected by the project result? ▪ Which mistakes should not be repeated in terms of stakeholder management?
6	Scope for decision-making and authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Did the project manager have the necessary authority and scope for decision-making? ▪ What decision-making authority did sub-project managers or project staff have, and how were these used? ▪ How were decisions taken, and what aspect of this proved effective? ▪ How were problems and decisions escalated? ▪ Did the project manager secure his authority in the project order?
7	Mistakes/pitfalls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Which mistakes were made in the project 'Increasing project orientation in the Cantonal-Office'? What were the causes of this? How could these have been avoided? What can be learned from this? ▪ What were the biggest challenges and stumbling blocks? ▪ At which critical first warning signs do you have to become alert? ▪ How can these mistakes be avoided in future - and specifically in respect of the follow-up project 'Introduction of the project portfolio management system in the Cantonal-Office'?
8	Problems and risks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Which problems arose in the project 'Increasing project orientation in the Cantonal-Office'? ▪ How was the risk management conducted? ▪ What measures were taken to handle risks? ▪ Which risks occurred, and what was the response to these? ▪ Which opportunities arose in the project, and how were these exploited?

	Perspectives	Specific questions
9	Optimising fields and best practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What generally went so well that it can definitely be deployed, used or performed once again? ▪ What went wrong? ▪ What should not be repeated in another project? ▪ What can be improved and what can be deployed in another project in an amended form? ▪ How are the findings recorded for the 'post-project world'?

For each correctly named perspective, ½ point, for each correctly formulated question, ½ point. Maximum 6 points.

c) Complexity drivers in the project

Project objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Numerous stakeholders with opposing objectives, such as for example long-standing project managers or project staff who want to stick with their procedures and instruments, and who do not see the added value for the project 'Increasing project orientation in the Cantonal-Office'. ▪ Unclear project goals, because knowledge and experience about project management – all the way up to the senior management – is very weak in the Cantonal-Office itself. ▪ Undetected, unrealistic expectations that become apparent only at a later stage in the project. ▪ Under certain circumstances, dynamic project goals (moving targets)
Project risks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Numerous risks in different risk classes and with high risk potential ▪ Numerous risks with impacts on different dimensions, such as for example costs, time, quality, resources and goals. ▪ Project with many sub-projects in different phases
Project team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Around 13 project managers, 350 project staff as well as the new senior management form a large culturally and ethnically mixed group, and the project teams are correspondingly mixed. ▪ Large teams ▪ Geographically dispersed teams spread throughout the entire Canton. ▪ Bilingual teams, because of the bilingual Canton in which the office operates at various locations.
Project environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Instability: The strategy of the Cantonal-Office was only recently revised and approved, the senior management team is relatively new and its knowledge and experience of project management is weak to date. ▪ Numerous internal and external stakeholder groups, because this is a large Cantonal-Office that is distributed throughout the bilingual canton (directorate, overall cantonal administration, external clients, politics, the public, media, ...) ▪ Partially unclear, unanalysed, fast-changing project environment, politically controlled and in the public eye (taxpayers).

For each correctly described complexity driver, ½ point. Maximum, 1 point per dimension. Total maximum of 4 points.