Certification Guidelines
IPMA Level C

CONTENTS

OTHER VALID DOCUMENTS

You need the documents listed in the following table to prepare and settle the certification. For this reason, they constitute other valid documents. Together with these Guidelines, you have the information required for the certification at your disposal.

No.	Document	Designation
1	ICB4	Individual Competence Baseline
2	Certification Regulations	Certification Regulations
3	Fee schedule	Fee schedule
4	Certification application IPMA Level A-C	Application for initial certification IPMA Level A, B and C
5	Executive summary report (template)	Template for the Executive Summary Report
6	Report (template)	Template for report

KEY ABBREVIATIONS

IPMA	International Project Management Association
PM	Project management
spm	Swiss Project Management Association
ICB4	Individual Competence Baseline
VZPM	Association for the Certification for Persons in Management

1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the certification is …

- to provide employees in the private or public sectors as well as self-employed entrepreneurs who have acquired practical as well as theoretical competencies in the fields of project management with documentary proof of these competencies.
- to help businesses and the public sector recruit successful, trustworthy individuals to manage projects.

The present document explains the process of acquiring IPMA Level C certification, including the applicable context as well as the requirements. The below-listed certificate may be awarded:

- Certified Project Manager (IPMA Level C)

In addition to the present document, you also require the following documents in order to obtain a full picture as well as the necessary understanding of the certification:

- Individual Competence Baseline (ICB4)
- Certification Regulations IPMA Level A, B, C and D

All of the documents you require for the certification may be downloaded free of charge from the VZPM website (www.vzpm.ch) or from the spm bookshop (shop.spm.ch). The provided templates must be used.

The certification process requires you to demonstrate that you have the necessary competencies. Your certificate will be renewed at regular intervals within the context of a re-certification, insofar as you are able to demonstrate sufficient practical experience and further training in the field of project management during the period since the initial certification or the last re-certification.

2. ADMISSION TO THE CERTIFICATION

2.1. ROLE DESCRIPTION AND ADMISSION CRITERIA

Holders of a certificate IPMA Level C act within a moderate complex environment and assume responsibility in a project management role within the organisation.

Together with the certification application, you demonstrate that you fulfil the respective admission criteria in the field of project management:

- Over the past 6 years, at least 3 years' experience as a project manager in moderate complex projects _or_ in a responsible project management role as a project manager assistant - only the roles of 'deputy project manager' and 'sub-project manager' are accepted - in complex projects.

In well-founded cases (_see certification application_) the experience period may be extended to a maximum of 10 years.

2.2. AWARDING OF THE CERTIFICATE

The IPMA Level C certificate shall be awarded to you if you are able to demonstrate at least 80% of the competencies in a moderate complex environment. This corresponds to 23 competencies in the domain of 'project management'. An individual competence is deemed to have been demonstrated if 50% of the corresponding competence indicators are demonstrated. The competencies are demonstrated throughout the entire certification process: written exam, report and interview. You must successfully pass each individual certification stage. The required assessment scores are set out in the certification stages described below in these guidelines.

3. CERTIFICATION PROCESS

3.1. OVERVIEW OF THE CERTIFICATION STAGES

As a rule, the certification process takes eight to nine months to complete. The following table shows the individual certification stages together with their approximate durations (*see internet for specific deadlines*):

Stage	Activity	Execution by	Approximate duration
1	**Application to obtain the certificate**		
	Submit application together with details of professional career, project list, references and self-assessment	Candidate	Registration deadline
	Check application and announce admission ruling, if positive then demand Executive Summary Report	VZPM	2-3 weeks
	Prepare and submit Executive Summary Report	Candidate	1 month
	Assess Executive Summary Report and announce definitive admission to the certification	VZPM	3-4 weeks
2	**Written exam**		
	Complete written exam	Candidate	Examination date
	Evaluate exam and announce exam result	VZPM	4-5 weeks
3	**Report**		
	Prepare and submit report	Candidate	6-8 weeks
	Assess report and announce result of assessment	VZPM	1 month
4	**Interview**		
	Complete interview	Candidate	Interview date
	Conduct definitive assessment of the certification and announced result	VZPM	2-3 weeks

Table 1: Certification stages

Depending upon the particular certification stage, our decision will be reported to you in writing. The decision after the first three certification stages may be an admission or a rejection for the next certification stage. After the first and third certification stages, conditions may be formulated, if necessary. Following the interview, the decision on the awarding of the certificate will be communicated to you.

The certification process must be completed within 18 months. The relevant date is the day on which you were admitted for certification.

3.2. APPLICATION TO OBTAIN THE CERTIFICATE

It is important to us to ensure that you do not have to complete any unnecessary work and are not obliged to bear any unnecessary costs. For this reason, the application stage involves two steps:

1) Submission of the certification application
2) Submission of the Executive Summary Report

3.2.1. SUBMISSION OF THE CERTIFICATION APPLICATION

By submitting the application, you officially register for the certification process. We use the information set out in the <u>certification application</u> to check the admission criteria. You submit the following documents:

- comprehensively completed application for initial certification, including your self-assessment
- separate file with any required supporting documents, including a copy of your ID card or passport

The necessary information about completing and submitting the certification application is set out in the certification application, in particular the tabular sheet 'Tips'.

Enclose only the requested <u>supporting documents</u> as well as a copy of your ID card or passport with the certification application. Describe your professional career as well as your training and further training comprehensively in the tabular sheets provided. Do not send us a CV that you have prepared yourself.

The self-assessment that you complete yourself will be referenced to judge your suitability for the certification, but will not flow into the assessment of your competencies.

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

If you fulfil the admission criteria to this point, you will be asked to submit the Executive Summary Report.

3.2.2. SUBMISSION OF THE EXECUTIVE SUMMARY REPORT

During the course of the certification process you need to demonstrate your competencies by citing specific situations from your reference project. This is only possible, however, if the reference project as well as your role in this meets the criteria for IPMA Level C certification. On the basis of the Executive Summary Report, an assessor will check the suitability of the project you have proposed.

In the Executive Summary Report, you describe the reference project proposed for the certification. The goal is to describe the challenges of the respective starting situations as well as their complexity drivers in a verifiable manner. Please note that your competencies in the field of project management will be assessed in the certification. This consequently means that in the Executive Summary Report you need to address the challenges from the perspective of the management of your project, and not the complexity of the solutions that are to be realised. The manner in which you handle the relevant complexity is an aspect of the report and interview. The Executive Summary Report will be referenced by the assessors when preparing the interview.

Detailed information about the required content as well as the formal criteria of the Executive Summary Report are set out in the corresponding template, while relevant information about the indicators and the criteria used to assess the complexity of your project are set out in the certification application.

3.2.3. REFERENCE PROJECT CRITERIA

In the following we describe the criteria imposed upon your reference project. You can check this on the basis of the certification application by completing the relevant tables for the reference project. The result will be shown to you in these. These criteria are essentially also applicable to proof of the experience of the management of the further projects in accordance with the required level. To check the experience demonstrated by you, please complete the certification application. The result will be set out in the tabular sheet 'Summary' (sum).

You will have demonstrated sufficient experience in a calendar month if you have worked on at least 75 hours of management tasks in projects that correspond to IPMA Level C. In respect of 2 of the 3 years of experience of moderate complex projects demanded by the respective admission criteria, these 75 hours must be demonstrated within the domain of 'project management'. The further year of demonstrable experience may be demonstrated in an interdisciplinary manner, i.e. including in the domains of programme and/or portfolio management.

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

In the complexity assessment, your reference project should reach a figure of at least 16, and should meet the following minimum criteria:

- The project has been completed. If you are unable to present a completed project as your reference project, you may submit a request to us if you have headed an uncompleted project for at least two years that meets the required criteria by the date of the certification application. We need the following information from you: completed table from the application, project schedule and project's organisation chart.
- You exercised your role in the project for at least 6 months. A month will be credited if you can provide proof of at least 30 hours during this period.
- The final month in which you exercised your role in the project was a maximum of 4 years ago, calculated from the date of the application.

The three criteria set out below should not be seen as absolute, but may instead offset each other:

- Total of 250 man days for which you were responsible in your role, without including your own workload.
- Your own workload of 200 hours in the role of project manager, deputy project manager, co-project manager or sub-project manager
- Direct and indirect management of 5 persons

3.2.4. COMPLETION OF THE CERTIFICATION STAGE

The certification application submitted by you will be checked by us to ensure that it is complete, meets the admission criteria and the complexity criteria of your reference project. If you successfully complete this certification stage, you will be admitted to the second certification stage, the written exam. We will confirm the admission to you in writing, and will invite you to the written exam. The admission may be issued with or without conditions. You must fulfil any possible condition during the third certification stage, the report.

If you are not admitted to the next certification stage, we shall inform you about this in writing, together with grounds as well as information about legal remedies. Should it transpire that you have described the challenges of your reference project inadequately, or that another of your projects is more suitable for the certification, then you will be given the opportunity to submit a second version of the Executive Summary Report.

3.3. WRITTEN EXAM

You will be admitted to the written exam only if you have successfully completed the previous certification stage, the certification application. The written exam is conducted under the supervision of a VZPM representative. The exams are conducted in the form of open book exams. You may take all forms of printed documents as well as a pocket calculator into the exam. Resources that allow communication beyond the exam hall are prohibited.

The exam lasts 2 hours and is based on a number of mini-cases. A number of questions need to be answered for each mini-case. The questions may relate to all ICB4 competencies. The

maximum number of points is shown for each task. You will have successfully passed the exam if you have achieved at least 50% of the possible total number of points.

COMPLETION OF THE CERTIFICATION STAGE

An assessor shall evaluate your exam performance. If you lack up to 8% of the points required to pass, your exam will be additionally evaluated by a second assessor. Following the evaluation, the assessor will issue the recommendation "Exam successfully passed" or "Exam not successfully passed". The decision shall be taken by the responsible individual of the VZPM.

If you have successfully passed the exam, then you will be admitted to the third certification stage, the report. You will then receive written confirmation of the admission from us, and will be asked to submit your report by a specific date.

If you have not successfully passed the exam, we shall inform you about this in writing, together with grounds as well as information about legal remedies. You then have the opportunity to repeat the exam at most once.

3.4. REPORT

In the report you must describe at least 23 competencies of your choice. There are no obligatory competencies, and also no definition of how many competencies you need to address from a specific area of competence - perspective, people and practice. There is also no definition of how many competence indicators you need to address. We recommend, however, that you describe the competencies in as much detail as possible, using the space provided, in accordance with the rules governing the manner in which the competencies are to be documented (*see Chapter 2.2 Awarding of the certificate*).

Detailed information about the required content as well as the formal report specifications are set out in the corresponding templates. You must describe the competencies on the basis of specific situations from your reference project. Further information is provided in the following section of these guidelines that describe the STAR methodology (*see STAR methodology in Chapter 3.5 Interview*).

COMPLETION OF THE CERTIFICATION STAGE

Following the evaluation, the assessors either issue the recommendation "Admission to the interview without conditions", "Admission to the interview with conditions" or "No admission to the interview". You must fulfil any possible condition during the fourth certification stage, the interview. The decision shall be taken by the responsible individual of the VZPM.

You have successfully completed this certification stage if at least 60% of the competencies selected by you are rated satisfactory by the two assessors – i.e. in the event of 23 competencies, if 14 are rated satisfactory.

If your report is rated unsatisfactory by the assessors, then we shall inform you about this in writing, together with grounds and information about legal remedies. You then have the opportunity to prepare and submit a second version of your report. This version will be evaluated by the same assessors as the first.

3.5. INTERVIEW

Once it has been announced that you have been admitted to the interview, the assessors will arrange an interview appointment with you. The interview takes at most 90 minutes, and leads to the definitive assessment of your competencies. The assessors will conduct an expert discussion with you, based on your results to date arising out of the certification process as well as on the STAR methodology (*see below*).

As with the report, the basis for the interview is your reference project. The situation described by you should derive from your reference project. If this shows insufficient substance or complexity in a competence, then you have the opportunity to cite situations from other projects listed in the certification application.

In the Interview about 18 competence indicators are addressed, of which at least 4 in each of the 3 competence areas 'perspective', 'people' and 'practice'. There are 4 obligatory competencies in the 'project management' domain, and each of these must be addressed at least once in the report or interview:
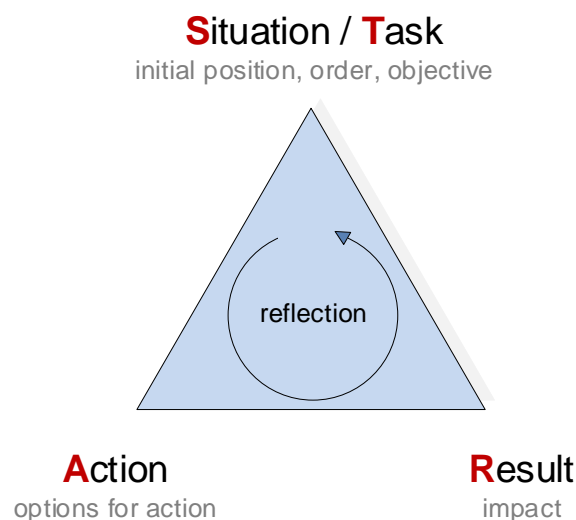
	Chapter in ICB4
▪ 2.05 Leadership	4.4.5
▪ 3.02 Requirements and objectives	4.5.2
▪ 3.10 Plan and control	4.5.10
▪ 3.12 Stakeholders	4.5.12

STAR METHODOLOGY

Knowledge about your earlier response to a specific situation enables us to estimate your future behaviour in a later, comparable situation with a high degree of probability. For this purpose, it is necessary for us to have an understanding of the context of your actions at the time, as well as the results. Each example of your past behaviour or your past achievements therefore need to provide information about the three aspects set out below:

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

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

Situation / Task
initial position, order, objective

reflection

Action
options for action

Result
impact

Fig. 1: Behavioural triangle

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

COMPLETION OF THE CERTIFICATION STAGE

The assessors evaluate the performances you introduce into the interview, and issue the recommendation "Interview successfully passed" or "Interview not successfully passed". The decision shall be taken by the responsible individual of the VZPM.

You have <u>successfully passed</u> the interview if the assessors have rated at least 60% of the addressed competence indicators as satisfactory, i.e. 11 out of the 18 addressed competence indicators.

If you have <u>not successfully passed</u> the interview, we shall inform you about this in writing, together with grounds as well as information about legal remedies. You then have the opportunity to repeat the interview at most once. If you repeat the interview, we shall assign two new assessors to you.

3.6. COMPLETION OF THE CERTIFICATION PROCESS

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

You will be awarded the certificate if you …

- have demonstrated at least 80% of the competencies, with at least 50% of the competence indicators in each case, throughout the entire certification process,
- have individually passed the three certification stages 'written exam', 'report' and 'interview', and
- have demonstrated at least 2 competencies in the area 'perspective', 5 of which from the area 'people' as well as 8 of which from the area 'practice'.

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

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

If you have <u>not successfully passed</u> the certification process, we shall inform you about this in writing, together with grounds as well as information about legal remedies. You then have the opportunity to repeat the interview at most once. If you repeat the interview, we shall assign two new assessors to you.

If you are awarded the certificate, this is internationally recognised and is valid for five years. It entitles you to use the acquired title '**Certified Project Manager (IPMA Level C)**' throughout the period of validity of the certificate.

3.7. CHANGE OF CERTIFICATION LEVEL

If, during the certification process IPMA Level C, you are no longer allowed to proceed to the next step, or do not receive the certificate at the end of the process, you still have the option to obtain an IPMA Level D certificate. You would need to complete and submit the IPMA Level D certification application and pass the written exam. The normal costs according to the document 'Fee schedule' will apply.

ADMINISTRATIVE METHODOLOGY

Document author	Jean-Pierre Widmann
Classification	VZPM, public
Issue and validity	May 2019, valid for certifications from 1 September 2017
Version	7.4
Replaces document	VZPM_PMLC_Leitfaden_V7.3_EN
File name	VZPM_PMLC_Leitfaden_V7.4_EN

CHECKS AND APPROVALS

Function	Date	Role	Surname	Remarks
checked	23/10/2018	Q Head	Dr Laurens de Bever	
approved	16/05/2019	Managing Director	Jean-Pierre Widmann	

CHANGE HISTORY

Date	Version	Author	Changes performed
16/05/2019	7.4	Jean-Pierre Widmann	Adjustments due to online registration
28/12/2018	7.3	Jean-Pierre Widmann	Integration of domain change and adaption of inter-view conditions
07/06/2018	7.2	Jean-Pierre Widmann	Behavioural triangle, completion
10/08/2017	7.1	Jean-Pierre Widmann	Number of hours to be worked in the reference plan
16/07/2017	7.0	Jean-Pierre Widmann	Bringing into line with ICR4 and ICB4