Individual Competence Baseline
for Programme Management

IPMA GLOBAL STANDARD

Version 4.0

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Foreword

The profession of project management is changing rapidly. Organisations have evolved their ability to define and implement new areas of work, with more integration across projects and more focus on the long-term benefits. Therefore, project management is established as the preeminent method for implementing change in the world and project, programme and portfolio managers are leading the way. The professionals of tomorrow will work in distributed environments with overlapping and often conflicting stakeholder interests. They will be shaped by real-time data and performance management tools, challenged with too much information and not enough communication and judged by their ability to deliver products or services that align with short and long-term strategies, to deliver benefits. It is into these increasingly demanding challenges that the IPMA Individual Competence Baseline, Version 4.0 (IPMA ICB®) is introduced.

The IPMA ICB is a global standard that defines the competences required by individuals working in the fields of project, programme and portfolio management. The IPMA ICB builds upon the prior editions and presents new insights and directions for a wider range of purposes. It serves a broad range of audiences, including educators, trainers, practitioners, human resource (HR) professionals and assessors. Within the IPMA 4-Level-Certification system, the IPMA ICB serves also as the baseline for assessments.

The IPMA ICB represents a major advancement for successful and modern project, programme and portfolio management. This version describes three domains of expertise extant in business today - project management, programme management and portfolio management. The IPMA ICB describes individuals who work in these domains, while avoiding role-specific terminology because although a role name may change, the underlying concept remains valid.

The IPMA ICB takes the IPMA Eye of Competence (chapter 3, page 25) into the next generation, with a redefinition of the competence elements (CEs) required by the modern project manager.

29 CEs are organised in three competence areas:
- **People.** People CEs define the personal and interpersonal competences required to succeed in projects, programmes and portfolios;
- **Practice.** Practice CEs define the technical aspects of managing projects, programmes and portfolios;
- **Perspective.** Perspective CEs define the contextual competences that must be navigated within and across the broader environment.

The profession of project management has become a global profession. Organisations frequently engage in projects, programmes and portfolios that cross organisational, regional, national and international borders.

The modern manager must work with a wide range of partners outside of their organisation and with a broad array of factors including industry, culture, language, socio-economic status and organisation types. Project management has to be applied taking these contextual facets into consideration and often these broader contexts are seen as the most critical success factor. The IPMA ICB emphasises these challenges.

It took three years to produce this revised version, from defining the business needs, through architectural design, developing the content in a multi-dimensional manner to editing and layout. Four face-to-face workshops a year and a lot of homework took us where we are today. With the IPMA ICB, a new standard is available. But this is far from the end of the journey; in fact it is just the start. The project management community is invited to work with it and provide regular feedback to IPMA so that it can continuously be improved.

We want to thank the project team (Peter Coesmans (The Netherlands), Marco Fuster (Switzerland), Jesper Garde Schreiner (Denmark), Margarida Gonçalves (Portugal), Sven Huynink (The Netherlands), Tim Jaques (United States of America), Vytautas Pugacevskis (Lithuania), Dr. David Thyssen (Germany), Alexander Tovb (Russia), Dr. Mladen Vukomanovic (Croatia), Michael Young (Australia)) and more than 150 experts around the globe – researchers, educators, trainers, HR professionals, certification bodies and many practitioners – who provided valuable feedback during the development, the sounding or the review rounds. To work together across huge distances and multiple time zones – and all on a voluntary basis in addition to individuals' professional and personal lives – is quite an achievement. We are indebted to the effort that all contributors have put into the project and into IPMA.

Thanks, too, for the deep friendship created through our deep debates.

The IPMA ICB will help us to achieve a world in which all projects succeed.

Reinhard Wagner   Martin Sedlmayer
IPMA President   IPMA ICB Project Manager

Table of Contents

1. Introduction

1. Introduction

The IPMA Individual Competence Baseline (IPMA ICB®) is the global standard for individual competence in project, programme and portfolio management.

The IPMA ICB supports the development of individual competence through the presentation of a complete inventory of competence elements across projects, programmes and portfolios.

IPMA's goals with IPMA ICB are simple – to enrich and improve the individual's competence in project, portfolio and programme management and to provide an inventory of competences that, if fully realised, represent complete mastery of these management domains. Projects, programmes and portfolios are at the forefront of change in the world today. Projects drive the development of new products and services, investments and expansion, capabilities, the implementation of new strategies and a new generation of infrastructure. We recognise that projects begin and end with people and that competent execution is at the heart of every successful project.

The burden has never been higher for project, programme and portfolio managers to produce measurable results on time, on budget, within scope and while meeting the quality criteria. The IPMA ICB competence standard is intended to support the growth of individuals and also of organisations as they grapple with increasingly competitive project environments. The IPMA ICB describes a comprehensive inventory of competences that an individual needs to have or to develop to successfully master the work package, the project, the programme or the portfolio that the individual is tasked to manage.

However, the IPMA ICB is not a 'how to' guide or a cookbook for managing projects, programmes or portfolios. Therefore, it does not describe the processes or steps involved in project, programme or portfolio management. While it offers more in competence development of individuals involved in project, programme and portfolio management, it can be used alongside other global process-oriented standards.

To everyone who uses the IPMA ICB, we wish you a successful journey!

2. Purposes and intended users
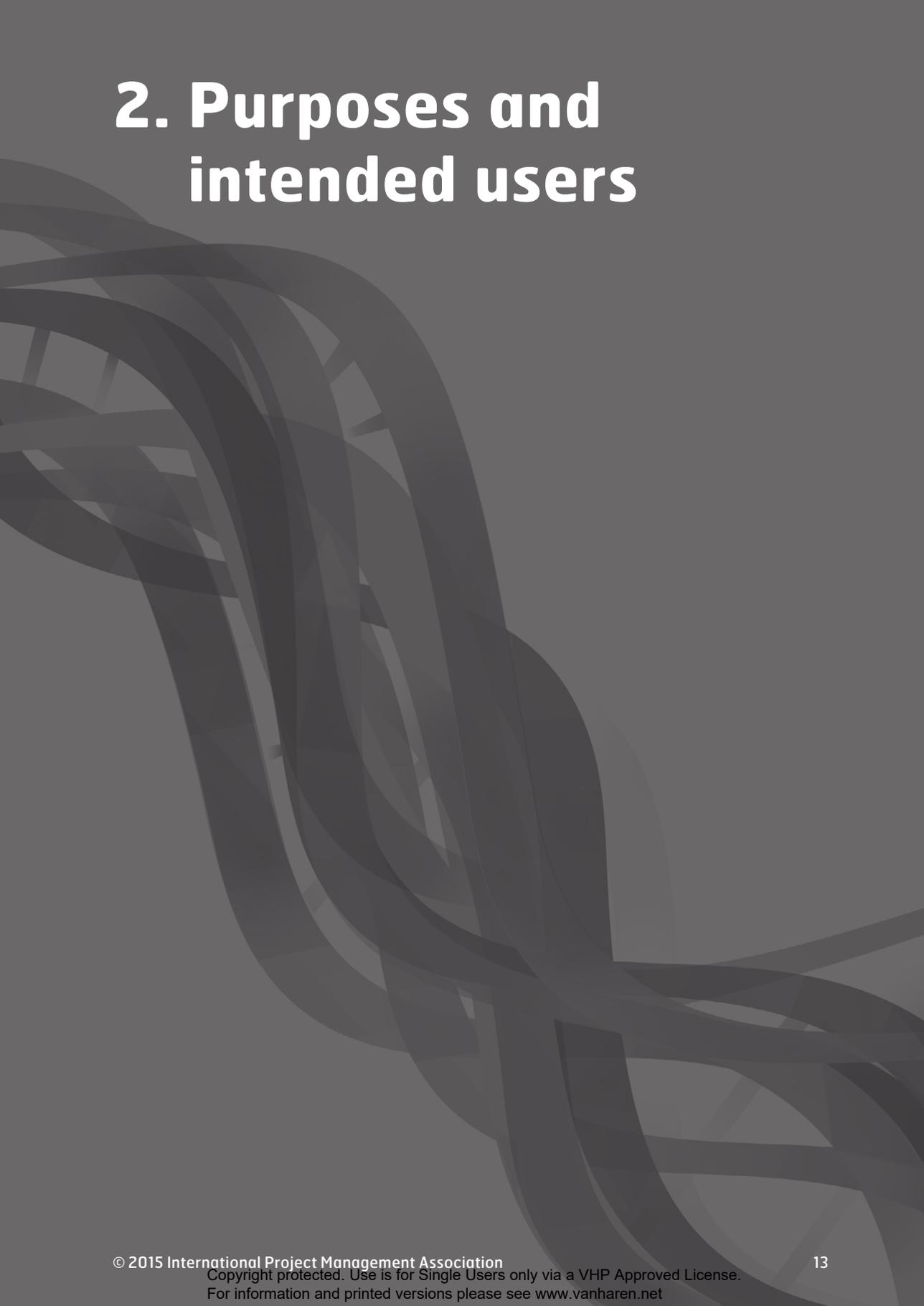
2. Purposes and intended users

2.1. Definition of competence

There are many definitions of the term 'competence' around the world. The IPMA Individual Competence Baseline (IPMA ICB®) presents a plain English definition that is widely accepted by professionals and is intended to be recognisable and readily understood. This definition is not intended to minimise or supersede any other definition, but rather to provide guidance to the individual seeking improvement.

Individual competence is the application of knowledge, skills and abilities in order to achieve the desired results.

- **Knowledge** is the collection of information and experience that an individual possesses. For example, understanding the concept of a Gantt chart might be considered knowledge.
- **Skills** are specific technical capabilities that enable an individual to perform a task. For example, being able to build a Gantt chart might be considered a skill.
- **Ability** is the effective delivery of knowledge and skills in a given context. For example, being able to devise and successfully manage a project schedule might be considered ability.

These three terms are related in that having a skill presupposes some relevant knowledge. Having ability presupposes relevant skills and knowledge, but adds to that the use of these in practice, in the right manner and at the right time.