

## **PM-ZERT**

Certification body of the GPM

## **Guideline IPMA® Level D certification**

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PM-ZERT ist die  
Zertifizierungsstelle der  
GPM Deutsche Gesellschaft  
für Projektmanagement e. V.



Die GPM ist Mitglied der  
IPMA International Project  
Management Association.





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## Applicable documents

The PM-ZERT documents listed in the table below are required either for the preparation for certification or for the application documents to be submitted and are therefore to be understood as applicable documents. Their content also completes the comprehensive information provided in this guideline.

Please familiarize yourself with these documents before submitting your application:

Document		To be completed
No.	Name	Yes/No
	ICB 4, Individual Competence Baseline	No
	ICR 4 public, IPMA Certification Regulation (public version)	No
	Dates and fees	No
	GPM Code of Ethics	No
Z01	General Guideline Certifications	No
R09-1	Taxonomy – Project Management	No
F01	Certification Record (for initial certification, upgrade certification, and renewal of an existing certificate (re-certification)) with self-assessment	Yes
F01REE	Candidate Legal Declaration	Yes
Report template	Report template (according to the requested level)	Yes

Table 1: Required documents

## List of abbreviations

Abbreviation	Explanation
ICB	Individual Competence Baseline
ICR (Public)	IPMA International Certification Regulations (Public)
CE	Competence Element
KCI	Key Competence Indicator
ESR	Executive Summary Report
LA	Lead Assessor
CoA	Co-Assessor
PM-ZERT	PM-ZERT is the certification body of the GPM Deutsche Gesellschaft für Projektmanagement e. V.

Table 2: List of abbreviations

## Change history compared to the previous version

Change	Page/s
Necessary changes due to changes in the GPM / PM-ZERT software landscape	
Various clarifications and formatting changes	
Correction of the legal declaration's name	3;6
Wording process steps	6
Regulations governing the assignment of assessors according to 17024 have been adjusted	9

Table 3: Change history

## Information on "gender-appropriate spelling"

In its publications, GPM attaches significant importance to a differentiated, responsible, non-discriminatory and gender-equitable use of language. Whenever the generic masculine is used, it is intended as a neutral grammatical expression and in no way implies discrimination against the other gender.

## 1. Validity

This document is valid from December 15, 2025, to July 31, 2026. This validity period results from the changes to the examination regulations for Level D, which come into effect on February 1, 2026. During the validity period of both sets of examination regulations, the candidate may choose between the these regulations.

This version incorporates the requirements for the software landscape migration as well as further clarifications, spelling, and formatting. Therefore, all previous versions are invalid.

## 2. The IPMA<sup>®</sup> Level D certification

### Requirements and application for IPMA Level D certification

(originally published in ICR Public)

#### Prerequisites:

- PM experience and professional training are not required for this application
- An IPMA Level D certification requires that the candidate has knowledge in the Competence Elements (CEs) related to project management. As such, they usually have broad project management knowledge and may work in a project team.

## 2.1 Process steps

No.	Process for initial certification	Submission / Dates	Responsible party
<b>1</b>	<b>Authorization</b>		
1.1	Application with choice of certification path for initial certification: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Path 1 with a written examination and report</li> <li>• Path 2 with two written exams Upgrade certification</li> <li>• Upgrade with one written examination</li> </ul>	Upload the documents via  <a href="http://www.pm-zert.de">www.pm-zert.de</a>  at least four weeks prior to exam date	Candidate
1.2	Certification Record F01		
1.3	Candidate Legal Declaration F01REE		
1.3	Decision regarding admission to the assessment	Three weeks prior to the exam date	PM-ZERT
<b>2</b>	<b>Assessment</b>		
2.1	Path 1: Level D report (max. 25 pages with max. 15 pages appendix)	Upload at least two weeks prior to the exam date	Candidate
2.2	Written exam: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Path 1: 90 minutes</li> <li>• Path 2: Two written exams - 180 minutes</li> <li>• Upgrade certification: 90 minutes</li> </ul>		PM-ZERT
2.3	Path: 1: Report feedback (max. 20 minutes)		PM-ZERT
<b>3</b>	<b>Conclusion</b>		
3.1	Audit result	Two weeks after the exam	PM-ZERT
3.2	Certificate dispatch	Four weeks after the exam	PM-ZERT

Table 4: Process steps for IPMA Level D certification

### Note:

- The total duration of the certification process from admission shall not exceed 18 months. If the certification process cannot be completed in this time period, a new application must be made
- Each part of the examination may be attempted twice within a period of twelve months. The total duration of the certification process remains unaffected
- Once admitted to the certification process, the selected path cannot be changed.

## 2.2 Requirement to pass the certification

- A candidate is considered competent after demonstrating sufficient knowledge, skills, and abilities in **23 CE** in the project domain at skill levels required for Level D
- If fewer than 23 CE are assessed as “fulfilled”, PM-ZERT informs the candidate which parts of the test need to be repeated or improved
- Detailed exam results will not be disclosed.

## 2.3 Application and Admission

The provisions of Chapter 2.2.4 from the “General Guideline Certifications” apply to the application.

### Note:

- Once approved, it is no longer possible to switch between Path 1 or Path 2.

### 2.3.1 Certification Record F01

The level and domain-related provisions of Chapter 2.2.5 from the “General Guideline Certifications” apply to the “Certification Record F01”.

### 2.3.2 Admission to the certification scheme

Once your documents have been fully checked by the office, you will receive the admission decision approximately three weeks before the examination date. The certification fee is due upon admission.

### Notes:

- The certification fee is due upon approval
- If discounts according to the fee schedule have not been entered, these cannot be considered subsequently
- If the billing address is entered incorrectly, additional fees will apply.

The candidate will be informed of the names of the assessors assigned to the certification. Any compliance violation that may arise from the assignment must be reported by the candidate to PM-ZERT, stating the reasons. PM-ZERT will decide on the acceptance of the stated reasons.

You will be admitted to each process step on the basis of your demonstrated performance up to that point. This means that there may be interruptions in the certification process if you are unable to immediately fulfil the requirements for the next stage of the process. The continuation of the process is agreed between the candidate and the PM-ZERT following the recommendation of the assessors.

All submitted documents will be treated in accordance with the applicable data protection regulations and will not be passed on to third parties or published without consent (see “General Guideline Certifications”).

## 2.4 Certification

### 2.4.1 Certification steps

Depending on the paths, the certification steps according to Table 4: Procedural steps for IPMA Level D certification must be completed.

### 2.4.2 Creation of a report (path 1) - specifications

With the report, the candidate demonstrates his or her ability to put project management knowledge into practice.

The report is a separate examination part in path 1 of the Level D certification process.

#### Notes:

- All Chapter-No. According to Table 5: Report specifications must be edited!
- Tables and graphics that are listed as a form of presentation in the structure numbers may not be included in the appendix. The appendix serves to demonstrate the evidence and not to process the report specifications according to Table 5.

Further information on the report can be found in the “General Guideline Certifications” and in the associated report template.

1 Management Summary				
Chapter No.	Scope	Presentation	Requirement	Max. Pages
1.1	<b>Project details</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Real / fictitious</li> <li>• completed / ongoing / planned</li> <li>• Is a confidentiality agreement in place and have names been anonymised?</li> <li>• A big picture may also be included as a figure</li> </ul> <b>Notes:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The report may describe classic or hybrid projects. The mixture of classic and agile methods may refer to the entire project or individual phases</li> <li>• Hybrid projects in which traditional methods are combined with Scrum or Kanban can be described in this report</li> <li>• The description of purely agile projects, e.g. according to the Scrum Guide, is not possible due to the Level D product design"</li> </ul>	Text and figures	Formal required	1
1.2	<b>Own project role</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is the scope of your role?</li> <li>• Who assigned this role?</li> </ul>			

Table 5: Report specifications

Report ICB Elements					
Chapter	Scope	Presentation	Competence level	Pass Mark	max. pages
<b>2</b>	<b>Strategy 04.03.01</b>		<b>1</b>		<b>1</b>
2.1	Description of the project business case.	Text or Form		1 of 2 tasks must be assessed as competent	
2.2	Identification of the critical success factors of the project.	Text			
<b>3</b>	<b>Governance, structures and processes 04.03.02</b>		<b>1</b>		<b>1</b>
3.1	Justification of why the activity satisfies the characteristics of a project.	Text		2 of 4 tasks must be assessed as competent	
3.2	Specification and justification of the project type.	Text			
3.3	Specification and justification of the classification of the project from the perspective of the organisation.	Text			
3.4	Specification of the organisational structures to be considered by the project and their influence on the project (e.g. LA, PMO, PO, programme).	Text			
<b>4</b>	<b>Requirements and objectives 04.05.02.</b>		<b>2</b>		<b>2</b>
4.1	Project charter with keyword information on project number, client or customer, content, duration, budget, own role in the project with responsibilities, obstacles / risks and opportunities. Status of the profile: end of the initiation phase (customer perspective).	Form		2 of 3 tasks must be assessed as competent	1
4.2	Presentation of operationalised objectives with social objectives and out-of-scope-objectives: Goals, their classification, measurement criteria Prioritization of goals according to must / should / can unique designation.	Table			0,5
4.3	Identification of a conflict of objectives (competing or mutually exclusive) with presentation of the possible consequences and a resolution proposal.	Text or Table			0,5

Report ICB Elements					
Chapter	Scope	Presentation	Competence level	Pass Mark	max. pages
<b>5</b>	<b>Stakeholder 04.05.12</b>		<b>2</b>		<b>3</b>
5.1	Graphical mapping of the project environment: Identify the relevant influencing factors, broken down according to factual and social aspects and internal and external factors.	Figure		2 of 4 tasks must be assessed as competent	0,5
5.2	Description of at least 2 interfaces between project and project environment: contact person for factual environment factor or impact on other PM methods.	Text or table			0,5
5.3	Description of the project's stakeholder portfolio with suitable mapping and justification of the selected categories, and indication of the selected stakeholder strategies.	Figure and text			1
5.4	Presentation of stakeholder interests (e.g., expectations and fears), evaluation of stakeholder interests (e.g., according to power and conflict potential or attitude and support potential - depending on the type of project) as well as suitable measures for stakeholder management and definition of corresponding strategies.	Table			1
<b>6</b>	<b>Power and interest 04.03.04</b>		<b>1</b>		<b>1</b>
6.1	Evaluate the stakeholders named in report chapter 5 according to their power and justify your evaluation.	Table		1 of 2 tasks must be assessed as competent	
6.2	Name the power promoters for the project and describe their influence on the project.	Text			
<b>7</b>	<b>Risk and opportunity 04.05.11.</b>		<b>2</b>		<b>3</b>
7.1	Identify and describe at least three project risks and their causes, with reference to their impact on objectives / environment / stakeholders. Assessment of the risks and calculation of the risk value.	Table with calculation		2 of 3 tasks must be assessed as competent	1
7.2	Define and evaluate preventive and corrective risk management measures with presentation of the impact on the risk values and a recommendation for the implementation of the measures.	Table with calculation			1
7.3	Identify and define an opportunity for the project, including possible supporting measures and their impact.	Text or table			1

Report ICB Elements					
Chapter	Chapter	Chapter	Chapter	Chapter	Chapter
<b>8</b>	<b>Project design 04.05.01</b>		<b>2</b>		<b>1</b>
8.1	Describe the project success criteria from the customer's/client's perspective and prioritise these criteria according to the triple constraint triangle of performance, deadlines and costs.	Text		1 of 2 tasks must be assessed as competent	0,5
8.2	Define the management approach chosen for the project (classic, hybrid or agile, or sequential, iterative, incremental, etc.) and explain the relationship of the chosen approach to the success of the project.	Text			0,5
<b>9</b>	<b>Organisation, Information and Documentation 04.05.05</b>		<b>2</b>		<b>1,5</b>
9.1	Naming and justification of the project organizational form. Visualization of the project organization taking the main organization into account. Plan-based: organizational chart.  <b>Agile:</b> free visualization.	Text or figure May be classic or agile		2 of 3 tasks must be assessed as competent	0,5
9.2	Identify four roles in the project and describe these roles with task / authority / responsibility.	Text or figure May be classic or agile			0,5
9.3	Provide a communication matrix with at least three stakeholders.	Table			0,5
<b>10</b>	<b>Time 04.05.04. Part 1</b>		<b>2</b>		<b>2</b>
10.1	Graphic depiction of each phase and graphical representation of the phase plan and associated milestones with correct timing and estimated cost per phase.  <b>Alternatively:</b> Graphical depiction of the hybrid phase plan with agile phases. Several variants are possible, e.g. from one agile phase to several agile phases. There must be a start and end phase (minimum 3 phases).	Figure May be classic or agile		2 of 3 tasks (10.1; 10.2; 12.1) must be assessed as competent	1
10.2	Description of each phase: Indicate the name and describe each of the main activities per phase, along with the desired results, expected duration, estimated effort and costs  For hybrid projects in addition: name the phases in which agile work is performed.	Table May be classic or agile			1

Report ICB Elements					
Chapter	Chapter	Chapter	Chapter	Chapter	Chapter
<b>11</b>	<b>Scope 04.05.03</b>		<b>2</b>		<b>2,5</b>
11.1	Representation of an encoded Work Breakdown Structure  <b>Alternatively:</b> Representation of a hybrid coded work breakdown structure. Phase-oriented with agile subtasks for the agile phase(s). Additional representation of an initial product backlog for the agile phase(s) with epics and backlog items / user stories.	Classic: WBS as a figure. Agile: Backlog as a table May be classic or agile		2 of 3 tasks must be assessed as competent	1
11.2	Name and explain the chosen form of organisation at task and sub-task level. <b>Alternatively:</b> Justify the method of prioritisation and provide details for each backlog entry.	Text May be classic or agile			0,5
11.3	Description of a work package.  <b>Alternatively:</b> Describe two user stories with acceptance criteria. Name the Definition of Done that applies to these user stories.	Form with Text May be classic or agile			1
<b>12</b>	<b>Time 04.05.04 Part 2</b>		<b>2</b>		<b>1</b>
12.1	Present a complete flowchart for the entire project as a networked bar chart. Excerpts will only be accepted with justification, e.g., if there is a particularly high number of activities.  <b>Alternatively:</b> Create a hybrid schedule and flowchart. Several variants are possible, depending on the agile phases. If the project is predominantly agile, one task per sprint (estimated number) must be shown, supplemented by one task each for the start and end of the project.	Classic: figure Agile: figure or table May be classic or agile		Reference to Chapter 10	1
<b>13</b>	<b>Resources 04.05.08</b>		<b>2</b>		<b>1,5</b>
13.1	Identify three relevant human resources, including the skills required for the project.	Text or table		2 of 3 tasks must be assessed as competent	0,5
13.2	Identify three relevant material/non-human resources, including their specifications for the project.	Text or table			0,5
13.3	Visualise a resource hydrograph with capacity constraint for one resource (if possible: for a constrained resource).	Figure			0,5

Report ICB Elements					
Chapter	Chapter	Chapter	Chapter	Chapter	Chapter
<b>14</b>	<b>Finance 04.05.07</b>		<b>2</b>		<b>1,5</b>
14.1	Explain the process for determining the effort for the Work Package from 11.3.  <b>Alternatively:</b> Describe the process for estimating the effort for a User Story, e.g. using Story Points with details of one of the reference User Stories from 11.3.	Text or table May be classic or agile		2 of 3 tasks must be assessed as competent	0,5
14.2	Present a cost hydrograph for the whole project or selected work packages. If you selected a hybrid project, the costs for the entire project must be shown based on the hybrid schedule and process planning.	Figure			0,5
14.3	Present a cost s-curve for the cumulative costs throughout the whole project or selected work packages, with the time axis being identical to that of the cost hydrograph for comparison. If you selected a hybrid project, the costs for the entire project must be shown based on the hybrid schedule and process planning.	Figure			0,5
<b>15</b>	<b>Plan and control 04.05.10</b>		<b>2</b>		<b>1</b>
15.1	Prepare a status report on the progress of the work package selected under 11.3, indicating the estimated remaining workload and degree of progress. Reporting date: Approximately halfway through the duration of the work package.  <b>Alternatively:</b> Provide a report on the progress of one of the Epics described in 11.1 according to initial product backlog and which contains the user stories described under 11.3. The report should be addressed to a traditional management of the organization for which the hybrid project is being carried out.	Form May be classic or agile		The whole task must be assessed as competent	
<b>16</b>	<b>Personal communication 04.04.03</b>		<b>2</b>		<b>0,5</b>
16.1	Describe a communication model used in the project (e.g., square, sender-receiver model, iceberg model) with one example from the project. Describe the model from the perspective of the sender and that of the receiver.	Text or figure		The whole task must be assessed as competent	

### 2.4.3 Written examination

In the Level D certification process, one or two written exams (duration 90 minutes each) are carried out to assess the required knowledge, depending on the chosen path.

Before the examination begins, the assessor checks the identity of the candidate. An identification document issued by a government authority must be kept ready, this can be either an ID card, driving license or passport. The identity of the candidate must be clearly deducible from this document.

## 2.5 Upgrade certification from basic to Level D

- The application for upgrade certification is made by the candidate depending on the examination regulations used for the basic certificate issued in order to determine the CE relevant to the examination for the higher certification.
- Upload the documents via: [www.pm-zert.de](http://www.pm-zert.de)
- Admission
- Written exam lasting 90 minutes
- The certification is passed if the candidate was able to demonstrate the skills and abilities required for Level D in **12 CE** out of a total of 14 CE.

### 2.5.1 CE classification for the examination regulations until 30.06.2024

No.	CE	Content
K.1 - Perspective 1	04.03.01.	Strategy
K.2 - Perspective 2	04.03.02.	Governance, structures and processes
K.3 - Perspective 3	04.03.03.	Compliance, standards and regulations
K.4 - Perspective 4	04.03.04.	Power and interest
K.5 - Perspective 5	04.03.05.	Culture and values
S.1 - People 2	04.04.02.	Personal integrity and reliability
S.2 - People 4	04.04.04.	Relationships and engagement
S.3 - People 5	04.04.05.	Leadership
S.4 - People 6	04.04.06.	Teamwork
S.5 - People 7	04.04.07.	Conflict and crisis
S.6 - People 9	04.04.09.	Negotiation
S.7 - People 10	04.04.10.	Results orientation
T.9 - Practice 9	04.05.09.	Procurement
T.13 - Practice 13	04.05.13.	Change and Transformation

Table 6: CE Classification until 30.06.2024

## 2.5.2 CE classification for the examination regulations from 01.01.2024

No.	CE	Content
K.3 - Perspective 3	04.03.03.	Compliance, standards and regulations
K.5 - Perspective 5	04.03.05	Culture and values
S.1 - People 1	04.04.01	Self-reflection and self-management
S.1 - People 2	04.04.02	Personal integrity and reliability
S.2 - People 4	04.04.04.	Relationships and engagement
S.3 - People 5	04.04.05.	Leadership
S.4 - People 6	04.04.06.	Teamwork
S.5 - People 7	04.04.07	Conflict and crisis
S.5 - People 8	04.04.08	Resourcefulness
S.6 - People 9	04.04.09	Negotiation
S.7 - People 10	04.04.10	Results orientation
T.9 - Practice 6	04.05.06.	Quality
T.9 - Practice 9	04.05.09.	Procurement
T.13 - Practice 13	04.05.13.	Change and Transformation

Table 7: CE Classification from 01.01.2024

## 2.6 Granting of a certificate

After a candidate passes all required tests, and after PM-ZERT confirms adherence to the correct process, PM-ZERT will issue a certificate in the candidate's name. The certificate is valid for 5 years.

All certificates are registered with PM-ZERT and published on IPMA's website at [www.ipma.world](http://www.ipma.world) after about three to four months.

The IPMA has introduced digital badges (certification certificates). The procedure is explained at <https://ipma.world/news/do-not-forget-to-claim-your-ipmas-certification-badge/>.

Parts of the examination that have not been passed may be retaken once, against a fee, within 18 months from the date of admission. The fees are published as part of PM-ZERT's official fee schedule.

**Only one resit per assessment element is allowed.**

Dates for resits must be agreed individually with PM-ZERT.

If the certification process cannot be completed successfully, the candidate can re-apply after a period for twelve months.

## 3. Recertification

The recertification process and requirements are described in the "Guideline Level D Recertification".

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