

PM-ZERT

Certification body of the GPM

Guide to IPMA® Level D certification

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Required documents

The table below lists all the documents you will need to apply and prepare for your certification.

Please familiarize yourself with these documents before submitting your application:

Document		To be filled in
No.	Name	Yes/No
	ICB 4, Individual Competence Baseline	no
	ICR 4 public, IPMA Certification Regulation public version	no
	Dates and fees	no
Z01	General guide	no
F01	Certification record (for initial certification, upgrade certification, and renewal of an existing certificate (re-certification)) with self-assessment	Yes
R03	GPM Code of Ethics	no
R09-1	Taxonomy – Project Management	No

Table 1: Required documents

List of abbreviations

Abbreviation	Explanation
ICB	Individual Competence Baseline
ICR	IPMA Certification Regulation (internal document for certification bodies)
ICR Public	IPMA International Certification Regulations (Public)
CE	Competence Element
KCI	Key Competence Indicator
LA	Lead Assessor
CoA	Co-Assessor

Table 2 List of abbreviations

Change history

Date	Amendment	Page/s
31.03.2023	Adaptation to new examination regulations	all
13.06.2023	Table 4: Upgrade certification added Wording / competence level for upgrade certification	5 7
18.03.2024	Adjustments <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ References to required documents■ Gender-appropriate spelling■ Report specifications	
22.04.2024	Adjustments <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Adaptation of new version numbering system■ Inclusion of the management summary■ Revision of the Level D report template structure	5 9 10 / following

Table 3: Change history

Information on "gender-appropriate spelling"

In its publications, GPM attaches great 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 01 May 2024.

Versions V16 and V17 are valid until 31 August 2024

All previous versions are invalid.

2. The IPMA® 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.

Requirements: 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

	Process for initial certification	Submission / Dates	Person responsible
1	Authorization		
1.1	Application with choice of certification path for initial certification: Path 1 with a written examination and report Path 2 with two written exams Upgrade certification with one written examination	Submission through upload no later than four weeks before the examination date	Candidate
1.2	Self-assessment		
1.3	Decision regarding admission to the assessment	Three weeks before the exam date	PM-ZERT
2	Assessment		
2.1	Level D report (max. 25 pages with max. 15 pages appendix)	Upload at least two weeks before the exam	Candidate
2.2	Path 1: Written exam - 90 minutes	Certification day	PM-ZERT
2.2.1	Path 2: Two written exams - 180 minutes	Certification day	PM-ZERT
2.2.2	Upgrade certification: Written exam - 90 minutes	Certification day	PM-ZERT
2.3	Report feedback (max. 20 minutes)	Certification day	PM-ZERT
3	Conclusion		
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

The total duration of the certification process from admission (1.3) 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.
- Detailed exam results will not be disclosed.

2.2.1 Application and Admission

To register, please go to our Certification Portal at: www.candidate.pm-zert.de

Enter the exam number manually. Example: Z 22-123 (Zblank22-123)

If there is a system error, please try again later.

A list of abbreviations must be attached explaining all abbreviations used in the application documents.

Certificates may be issued in either English or German. German is the standard language. For English language certifications please contact the PM-ZERT office.

Certifications may be held in German and English. The standard language is German. For English-language certifications, please contact the PM-ZERT office.

2.2.1.1 Application and self-assessment

- **Application:** By applying, the applicant accepts all rules, rights and obligations associated with the certification scheme.
- **Self-assessment:** Assessment of the candidate's own PM competence (knowledge, skills, and experience). The form is available as a spreadsheet in the certification record F01.

2.2.1.2 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.**

You will be informed of the name of the assessor assigned to your certification. Should you wish to object to the assessor assignment, you may do so in writing within one week, stating the reasons for your objection. PM-ZERT reserves the right to accept or reject your objection.

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 fulfill the requirements for the next stage of the process. The continuation of the process is agreed between the candidate and the PM-ZERT office 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 Guidelines).

2.3 Certification

2.3.1 Initial certification

- Upload of the application documents
- Admission

- Creation and submission of the report (path 1)
- Report evaluation (path 1)
- Written examination
- Report Feedback

Path 1:

- 90 minutes written test (at competence level 1, mainly from Perspective and People CEs)
- Submission and evaluation of a report (competence levels 1 and 2, mainly from Practice CEs)

Path 2:

- 90 minutes written test (competence level 1, mainly from Perspective and People CEs)
- 90 minutes written examination (competence levels 1 and 2, mainly from Practice CEs).

2.3.1.1 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.

Further information on the report can be found in the "General guide" and in the associated report template.

Report Level D				
Chapter	Scope	Presentation	Requirement	max. pages
1	Management Zusammenfassung			
1.1	<p>Project Details</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - real / not real - completed / ongoing / planned - Is a confidentiality agreement in place and have names been anonymised? - A big picture may also be included as a figure <p>Notes: The report may describe classic or hybrid projects. The mixture of classic and agile methods may refer to the entire project or individual phases.</p> <p>Hybrid projects in which traditional methods are combined with Scrum or Kanban can be described in this report.</p> <p>The description of purely agile projects, e.g. according to the Scrum Guide, is not possible due to the hybrid approach."</p>	Text and figures	required	1
1.2	<p>Own Role</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What is the scope of your role? - Who assigned this role? 	Text		

Table 5: Report specifications

Path 1 - Report ICB Elements					
Chapter	Scope	Presentation	Competence level	Pass Mark	max. pages
2	Strategy 04.03.01		1		1
2.1	Description of the project business case	Text	1	1 of 2 tasks must be assessed as competent	
2.2	Identification of the critical success factors of the project	Text	1		
3	Governance, structures and processes 04.03.02		1		1
3.1	Justification of why the activity satisfies the characteristics of a project	Text	1	2 of 4 tasks must be assessed as competent	
3.2	Specification and justification of the project type	Text	1		
3.3	Specification and justification of the classification of the project from the perspective of the organisation	Text	1		
3.4	Specification of the organisational structures to be taken into account by the project and their influence on the project (e.g. LA, PMO, PO, programme)	Text	1		
4	Requirements and objectives 04.05.02.		2		2
4.1	Project Brief 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)Stand des Steckbriefs: Ende der Initiierungsphase (Kundensicht)	Form	2	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, categorisation and sorting of goals according to shall / should / can, prioritisation, unique designation.	Table	2		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	2		0.5
5	Stakeholder 04.05.12.		2		3
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	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	2		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	2	2 of 4 tasks must be assessed as competent	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	2		1

6	Power and interest 04.03.04		1		1
6.1	Evaluate the stakeholders named in report chapter 5 according to their power and justify your evaluation	Table	1	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	1		
7	Risk and opportunity 04.05.11.		2		3
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	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	2		1
7.3	Identify and define an opportunity for the project, including possible supporting measures and their impact.	Text or table	2		1
8	Project design 04.05.01.		2		1.0
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	2	1 of 2 tasks must be assessed as competent	
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	2		
9	Organisation and information 04.05.05.		2		1.5
9.1	Benennung und Begründung der Projektorganisationsform . Visualisierung der Projektorganisation unter Berücksichtigung der Stammorganisation. Planbasiert: Organigramm Agil: freie Visualisierung	Text or figure May be classic agile.	2	2 of 3 tasks must be assessed as competent	0.5
9.2	Identify a maximum of four roles in the project and describe these roles with task/authority/responsibility .	Table May be classic agile.	2		0.5
9.3	Provide a communication matrix with at least three stakeholders.	Table	2		0.5

10	Time 04.05.04. Part 1		2		2
10.1	Description of each phase and graphical representation of the phase plan and associated milestones with correct timing and estimated cost per phase. Alternatively: Graphical representation 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).	Text or figure May be classic agile.	2	2 of 3 tasks (10.1.;10.2; 13.1) 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, also name the phases in which agile work is performed.	Table May be classic agile.	2		1
11	Scope 04.05.03.		2		2.5
11.1	Representation of an encoded Work Breakdown Structure Alternatively: Presentation of a product backlog	Classic: WBS as a figure. Agile: Backlog as a table May be classic or agile	2	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. Alternatively: Justify the method of prioritisation and provide details for each backlog entry.	Text May be classic agile.	2	2 of 3 tasks must be assessed as competent	0.5
11.3	Describe a work package . Alternatively: Describe two user stories with acceptance criteria. Name the Definition of Done that applies to these user stories.	Text May be classic agile.	2		1
12	Time 04.05.04. Part 2		2		1
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. Alternatively: 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 agile.	2	2 of 3 tasks (10.1.;10.2; 13.1) must be assessed as competent	1

13	Resources 04.05.08.		2		1.5
13.1	Identify three relevant human resources , including the skills required for the project.	Text or table	2	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	2		0.5
13.3	Visualise a resource hydrograph with capacity constraint for one resource (if possible: for a constrained resource).	Figure	2		0.5
14	Finance 04.05.07.		2		1.5
14.1	Explain the process for determining the effort for the Work Package / User Stories from 11.3. 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.	Text or table May be classic agile.	2	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	2		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	2		0.5
15	Plan and control 04.05.10.		2		1.0
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 half way through the duration of the work package. Alternatively: Provide a report on the progress of one of the user stories described in 11.3, including estimated remaining effort. Reporting Time: At an appropriate time during the Sprint.	Text or table May be classic agile.	2	The whole task must be assessed as competent	1
16	Personal kommunikation 04.04.03		2		0.5
16.1	Describe a communication model used in the project (e.g., square, sender-receiver model, iceberg model) with two examples from the project. Describe the model from the perspective of the sender and that of the receiver.	Text or figure	2	The whole task must be assessed as competent	0.5

2.3.1.2 Written examination

The purpose of the written examination is to assess the required knowledge.

Path 1:

- Written exam 90 minutes

Path 2:

- Written exam part I - 90 minutes
- Written exam part II - 90 minutes

Before the examination begins, the assessor will check the identity of the candidates. Please have a government-issued photo ID (e.g., passport, drivers license, ID card) to hand at the day of your exam.

2.3.1.3 Pass mark

- The certification is passed if the candidate can demonstrate the required knowledge, skills and abilities required for Level D against **23 CE** in the project domain.
- If fewer than 23 CE are assessed as "competent", PM-ZERT will inform the candidate about which part(s) of the certification process must be retaken.
- Detailed results will not be disclosed.

2.3.2 Upgrade certification

An upgrade certification process to level D is available for Basic certificate holders.

It requires:

- Uploading the documents
- Admission
- Written examination lasting 90 minutes (competence levels 1 and 2, mainly from the areas of Perspective and People)

Pass mark:

- The certification is passed if the certificate holder was able to demonstrate the skills and abilities required for Level D in **12 CE** out of a total of 28 CE.
- Detailed results will not be disclosed.

2.3.3 The certificate

After the 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 after about three to four months.

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 repetition is possible per examination part.

Dates for retakes 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 "Recertification for Level D" guidelines.



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