PM-ZERT
Certification Body of the GPM
Guidelines for Level A candidates

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Relevant documents

The PM-ZERT documents listed in the following table are required either for the preparation for certification or are necessary for the application documents to be submitted. Their content also completes the comprehensive information intended by this guide. The sequence of validity of the individual documents is regulated in General Guide Z01.

Please familiarize yourself with the following before submitting your application.

Document		To fill in
No.	**Name**	**Yes/No**
	ICB 4, Individual Competence Baseline	No
	ICR 4 public, IPMA Certification Regulation public version	No
A01	Actual dates and fees	No
F01	Application for certification (initial certification, higher level certification, recertification) with self-assessment (incl. evidence shares), evidence in projects, ESR and determination of complexity	Yes
Z01 General Guide	General Guide	No
R03	Ethics Code of the GPM	No

Table 1: Application documents

List of abbreviations, terms and definitions

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
ESR	Executive Summary Report
LA	Lead Assessor
CoA	Co-Assessor
Applicant	Person who has applied to enter a certification process
Candidate	Person who has satisfied the entry requirement of the certification process

Table 2: List of abbreviations, terms and definitions

GPM attaches great importance to a differentiated responsible, non-discriminatory and gender-equitable use of language in publications. Whenever the generic masculine is used, this is to be understood as a neutral grammatical expression and in no way implies any discrimination against the opposite sex. Further information on the "gender-fair spelling" of GPM can be found at: www.gpm-ipma.de/utilities/impressum_datenschutz.html

1 Validity

This document is valid as of 15.01.2021
The version 8 is valid 14. 08.2021.
All previous versions are invalid.

2 IPMA LEVEL A certification

Level description and requirements (original in ICR Public)

IPMA Level A		
	Requirements	Eligibility
Level: IPMA Level A Domain: Project management	The project management certification according to IPMA Level A requires that the candidate has acted in a very complex project environment or is responsible for a very complex project that has strategic effects on the organization.	Within the last 12 years the candidate must prove the following: At least 5 years experience as a project manager in a responsible management function in very complex projects, of which at least 3 years at a strategic level.

Table 3: Description Level A

The following parameters are taken into account to demonstrate the management competence required for IPMA Level A:

- Variety of type and size of projects
- Complexity of projects
- Evidence of the elements of competence (CE)
- Role of the applicant in the project
- Time spent managing projects
- Number of current projects

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2.1 Target groups

The target groups for IPMA LEVEL A certification are

▌ Leading employees in project-based organizations

▌ Person in charge of projects with considerable influence on the success and strategy of the organisation

▌ Upper management level (management, technical or project career) of project-based organizations Head of a consortium or a project company with the role of project leader

2.2 Process steps

Step No.	Process step	Initial certification	Deadline for submission/ execution	responsible
1	**Approval**			
1.1.	Application for certification (F01)	x	No later than 9 weeks before Interview	Applicant
1.2.	Curriculum vitae (with a brief description of the company)	x		
1.3.	- Executive Summary Report	x		
1.4.	Self-assessment of knowledge and skills (Structured Evidence, F01)	x		
1.5.	References (F01)	x		
1.6.	Decision on admission to assessment	x	Approx. 4 weeks after submission of the registration documents	PM-ZERT
2	**Assessment**			
2.1.	Level A Report	Max. 25 pages / Max. 15 pages appendix	No later than 4 weeks before Interview	Candidate
2.2.	Role Playing	240 min (spread over workshop day)	Appointment	PM-ZERT

Step No.	Process step	Initial certification	Deadline for submission/ execution	responsible
2.3.	Final Interview	90min	Individual agreement	PM-ZERT
3	**Completion**			
3.1	Certificate decision	x	No later than 6 weeks after Interview	PM-ZERT
The total duration of the procedure from the date of admission (1.6) to the last examination step (2.2) shall not exceed 18 months.				
Each examination step may be repeated no more than once. The repetition must take place within 12 months. The total duration of the procedure remains unaffected.				

Table 4: Process steps Level A

2.3 Preparation, content and duration of the certification process

The certification process is described in „*Table 4: Process steps* Level *A*".

2.3.1 Requirements to be met to successfully complete the assessment

- The requirements of 23 CE have to be fulfilled via the full assessment.
- The requirements of a CE are met when the requirements of 50% of the KCI belonging to the respective CE are met.

2.3.2 Approval and admission

Registration, login and upload of documents (application documents, report, etc.) is done via www.pm-zert.de. After the initial registration, you will have the opportunity to register for the desired certification round and subsequently upload the required documents.

2.3.2.1 Application documents

Application documents are:

a. the completed application form (F01A), with which the applicant accepts by signature all regulations of the certification procedures and the rights and obligations associated with the certificate.

b. Executive Summary Report (ESR projects in one file); for details see Z01 General Guide ICB4.

Direct reference to elements of complexity should emerge from the ESR.
The same applies to the explicit answering of the following questions:
- How was the management of the heads of the subprojects regulated in interaction with their disciplinary superiors?
- What powers and responsibilities did you have in various escalation situations?
- What influence did you have on the scope of the individual projects?

- What entrepreneurial responsibility did you have in addition to the points already mentioned?
- How did you identify and allocate the necessary resources in terms of skills?
- Outline how you validated and improved the skills of the sub-project managers allocated to the project?
- How did you set up and validate the overall risk management?
- How did you establish and manage change management?
- How did you deal with socio-cultural diversity?

c. a curriculum vitae (informal) with the following content (if applicable)
- School and professional education
- Education in project management
- Professional career
- Brief description of the company[1]
- Experience in project management (evidence)
- Membership in relevant professional organisations
- Awards and publications related to project management
- Presentation of international PM activities

d. Proof of project management activities: projects and descriptions, complexity[2] (project lists P1 and P2 in document F01A_PM_Application, see also General Guide Z01).

e. Self-assessment on self-assessment sheet (in document F01A_PM_ Application).

f. Three references (in document F01A_PM_Application) [3]

The forms for a., d., e. and f. are included in the download packages available for each certification level at **www.pm-zert.de**.

A list of abbreviations must be enclosed, in which all abbreviations used in the application documents are explained.

Application form F01A is included in the download packages available for each certification level at **www.pm-zert.de**.

Certifications usually take place in German. For certifications in English, please contact the PM-ZERT office.

Hint:

The forms for the activity reports (project lists P1 and P2 in document F01A_PM_Application) are available as electronically supported EXCEL workbooks.
They will be uploaded directly through www.candidate.pm-zert.de. Detailed instructions on how to complete the application can be found in Z01 General Guide.

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[1] A short, self-written text (max. 1 page) about the company in which the candidate works or in which he has gained his essential project experience. The classification of PM in the company and the function and role of the candidate should be recognisable.

[2] In addition to listing the projects (project lists P1 and P2 in document F01A_PM_Application), it is expected that the candidate presents his personal role, when presenting the project management experience, the PM methods and techniques he uses, as well as the project organization and the main project participants in the respective description (project lists P1 and P2 in document F01A_PM_Application).

[3] Nomination of two persons (with company/institution, position/function, telephone number) who can provide information about the applicant's project work.

2.3.2.2 Self-assessment

The assessment of one's own PM competence (PM knowledge and application experience (evidence)) is carried out with the help of the taxonomy according to Bloom (in document **Z01 General Guide**) and via the self-assessment form.
The document is available in the download packages at **www.pm-zert.de**.
The self-assessment form serves the assessors for comparison with the assessments arising in the course of the certification procedure. Conspicuous potential for improvement is discussed in an interview with the applicant.

2.3.2.3 Admission to the certification process

Applicants upload their application documents via www.candidate.pm-zert.de and then receive an email confirming the upload. The upload of the individual application documents can be done at different times, but – if possible – should take place in a single upload process. The documentation is complete when the F01, CV and Executive Summary Report (ESR projects in one file) have been uploaded.

PM-ZERT assigns two assessors to review the documents. The assessors check whether the admission requirements or the PM professional certification requirements are fulfilled. The final recommendation on classification is made by the assessors after evaluation of the submitted documents.

The applicant is informed of the names of the assessors (LA, CoA) who will lead the further process. The applicant can reject an assessor within one week after receipt of the letter of admission, stating the reason in writing. PM-ZERT decides on the rejection request.

An admission meeting will be arranged. In addition to the applicant and the two assessors, the Managing Director and/or the Quality Management Representative of PM-ZERT may also participate. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss and take a binding decision on compliance with the admission requirements. The meeting can also be conducted as a telephone conference.

In the event of a positive decision, the applicant will be admitted to the certification procedure intended by him.

The selection of the project to be used for the report and its suitability for the desired level is the applicant's responsibility. The project must meet the complexity requirements for Level A.

The certification fee (according to the current fee table) will be invoiced with the admission. It becomes due on receipt of the invoice.

In the event of a negative decision within the framework of admission an admission interview can be conducted - in person or by telephone. In a personal admission interview, the PM-ZERT office will agree the date and location with the applicant and the assessors. The purpose of the admission interview is to discuss and verify information from the application documents. After verification of the information from the application documents and the consent of the assessors, the applicant is admitted to the certification procedure.

The applicant can also prove the fulfilment of the required requirements by suitable additions to his application documents, if this has been agreed with the assessor during the admission interview.

If an applicant is not admitted to his desired certification process despite subsequent delivery, he will be informed (in writing) of the reasons for the decision. He may also exercise his right of objections and complaints (see Z01 General Guide).

The certification process Level A is divided into several process steps and components (see „*Table 4: Process steps Level* A"). The applicant is admitted to each procedural step on the basis of the achievements proven up to then. This can result in interruption times in the certification process if a candidate is unable to

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meet the requirements for the next process step immediately. The continuation of the procedure is agreed between the candidate and PM-ZERT office after recommendation of the assessors.

All data made available to PM-ZERT will be treated in accordance with the applicable data protection regulations and will neither be passed on to third parties nor published without the consent of the sender (see Z01 General Guide).

2.4 Certification assessment

2.4.1 General information

Prerequisite for the certification assessment is the admission.

According to Bloom-Taxonomie (in document Z01 General Guide), examination components are levels 5 and 6.

The assessment is passed if the requirements of a total of 23 CE are assessed as "fulfilled".
If less than 23 CE are assessed as "fulfilled", PM-ZERT informs the applicant which parts of the assessment need to be repeated or corrected.

2.4.2 Certification

For a certification, the following steps must be taken:

- ❙ Submission and evaluation of a report based on the Executive Summary Report (ESR, description see Z01 General Guide, chapter "Executive Summary Report")
- ❙ Role Playing (approx. 240 minutes, spread over one working day)
- ❙ Interview 90 minutes

2.4.2.1 Producing a report based on the ESR

2.4.2.1.1   Format specifications for the Report Level A

The report comprises a maximum of 25 text pages in A4 format with a font size of 11 pts and single line spacing (larger line spacing is permitted). A minimum of 2 cm margins of at least 2 cm each are to be maintained on the left, right, top and bottom..
The additional explanatory annexes (forms, plans, etc.) may not exceed 15 pages.
The references to information in the appendix must be indicated in the report by a cross-reference.
The report must be submitted as **one** bookmarked PDF file.
The file name must have the following form: **Report_Name-First_Name_Version.pdf**.

PM-ZERT reserves the right to reject reports after submission which deviate from these formal requirements.

The document must have the common form of a quality document such as bookmarks, page numbering, directories, change history/version. This is very important in the case of any additional requirements/deliveries that may be required by the assessors. Especially when quoting texts, pictures and graphics a reference is required.

Note: To create bookmarks in a PDF document created from a Word file, the headings, tables and graphics in the Word file must be declared as headings, tables and graphics. If the PDF document is then created with "Save As", you must select the creation of bookmarks from the headings in the "Save As" options.
Please make sure that the PDF document is NOT write-protected so that the assessors can enter comments and markers in the report as part of the evaluation.

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At the end of the work, the candidate must provide the following written declaration:

> *"I hereby assure you that I have produced this report independently and without the involvement of third parties."*

The report is stored electronically by **uploading** the PDF file in the protected data area of www.pm-zert.de at PM-ZERT. Only the PM-ZERT office and the assessors in charge of the assessment have access to these files.

The sender automatically receives an e-mail as proof of delivery. After the download by all authorized persons, the file is deleted by the PM-ZERT office, a copy of the report is electronically archived at PM-ZERT.

Timely receipt at PM-ZERT is a prerequisite for admission to the next step in the certification process and thus for successful completion of the certification assessment.

2.4.2.1.2 Structure of the Report

The structure specified in this chapter is a binding specification for the report.
The report is divided into 2 chapters:

Chapter 1:

> Content presentation of the project in the form of a management summary on max. 3 pages. The contents are selected from the CEs defined in chapter "*2.4.2.1.3 Competence Elements (CE)*" (16 required; 6 free). The candidate should note that it is not necessary to edit all CEs in this Management Summary. The candidate is expected to make a suitable selection. Objectives (CE 4.5.2)

Chapter 2:

> Description of the management challenges for all defined CEs (see next chapter) of the desired level that have occurred during the project duration. The report should present the applicant's experience as follows:

- Challenges in the management of the project and its participants
- Dealing with these challenges and the results achieved
- Which results have been achieved with it?
- Reflection of results and derived lessons learned

The STAR method can be used to structure the selected competence elements of the report (situation, task, action, result, see description in **Z01 General Guide** in the chapter "Interview"). The situation can be described at the CE level, the remaining information on task, action and result must be described at the KCI level.

Note that the KCI description must indicate the required Bloom level.

For the description of the KCI it is helpful to use the listed measurement criteria from the ICB4.

2.4.2.1.3 Competence Elements (CE)

The ICB requires evidence based on the following CEs:

- 5 CEs from Perspective (contextual competencies)
- 10 CEs from People (Personal and social skills)

▌ 13 CEs from Practice (Technical competencies)

Information on the Competence Elements can be found in **Z01 General Guide**.
At least 22 Competence Elements must be worked on in the report on the basis of the Bloom level specified for level A (see taxonomy table in the currently valid version of document **Z01 General Guide** with specification of the required Bloom level).
The following CE must be worked on in the report:

▌ 4.3.2 Governance, structures and processes

▌ 4.3.3 Compliance, standards and regulations

▌ 4.3.4 Power and interest

▌ 4.4.5 Leadership

▌ 4.5.1 Project design

▌ 4.5.2 Requirements and objectives

▌ 4.5.3 Scope

▌ 4.5.4 Time

▌ 4.5.5 Organisation and information

▌ 4.5.6 Quality

▌ 4.5.7 Finance

▌ 4.5.8 Resources

▌ 4.5.9 Procurement

▌ 4.5.10 Plan and control

▌ 4.5.11 Risk and opportunity

▌ 4.5.12 Stakeholders

The remaining 6 Competence Elements to be described are freely selectable by the applicant.
Each processed Competence Element is described according to "Management Challenges" and "Dealing with these Challenges" as described in chapter „*2.4.2.1.2 Structure of the Report*" with its associated KCIs and must be identified by the CE number and KCI number according to ICB4.

Tabularly structured, keyword-like versions do not meet the requirements.

2.4.2.1.4 Annex and Attachments

Explanatory and supplementary information on the project such as graphics, forms, plans, evaluations (in extracts, exemplary) serve to evidence the findings made in the text.

2.4.2.2 Evaluation Report Level A

The report is an independent part of the certification process Level A.
The report is evaluated on the basis of the current version of this document.

The CEs are assessed by the decision "fulfilled" or "not fulfilled". A CE is fulfilled if at least 50% of the associated KCIs have been evaluated as fulfilled. The Role Playing is open to anyone who proves that at least 11 of the 22 CEs processed have "fulfilled" the required level (Bloom level) in the report. If the 11 required competence elements are not fulfilled, the assessors decide in which form a revision has to take place. The candidate is informed of the result of the assessment by PM-ZERT.
A report rated as "fulfilled" is the prerequisite for admission to the Role Playing.

2.4.2.3 Role Playing

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The role play serves to **verify self-assessment and evidence** - for the candidates by reflecting on their own PM competence, for the assessors by "experiencing" the candidates while working on the given task in the project team.

In addition to the submitted documents, the assessors gain impressions for the assessment of practical PM skills and social competence from the observation of the candidates and their work results.
The requirements for performance in role-playing are fulfilled if at least 40% of the KCIs observed by the assessors were assessed as "fulfilled".
No own documents (written or electronic notes, laptop) prepared in advance may be used in the role play.
The division into working groups is decided situatively by the assessors.
The assignment of roles within the groups is made by the groups themselves. The assessors provide information on this.
Depending on the variant of the role play, the assessors can carry out a feedback round individually or together with all candidates.
A role play rated as "fulfilled" is the prerequisite for admission to the interview.

2.4.2.4 Interview

The Interview leads to the final assessment of the candidate. In any case, it is the last step of the assessment after completion of all assessment steps required for the level. It is a conversation between the candidate and two assessors. It takes a maximum of 90 minutes. The main contents of the interview are determined by questions prepared and compiled by the assessors and dealt with during the open, individually designed interview. The interview is initiated by a 10-minute (net time) presentation of the candidate's project report. The candidate can prepare this presentation in advance. Prepared flip charts or PowerPoint presentations are permitted as aids. The assessors reserve the right to take on an active role at any time during the presentation with specific questions.

During the entire certification process, the assessors maintained a file that provides information on the coverage of 80% of all competence elements required by the ICR4, as well as on the "fulfilled" or "not fulfilled" with regard to the requirements of the key competence indicators. The evidence required for the desired level is also recorded in this file.

In appropriate situations, more detailed questions are structured according to the STAR method (see description in **Z01 General Guide** in the chapter "Interview").

The candidates receive appreciative feedback on their performance in the certification process and advice for their further development in project management.

2.4.3 Higher-level Certification

Higher-level certification is only possible up to the next higher level. The process is similar for all levels. It is described in its general guidelines in **Z01 General Guide** for all levels.

For a Higher-level certification (in this case from level B to A), the following steps must be carried out, which correspond to the steps of the initial certification:
- Admission to Level A process by an assessor (see 2.3.2.3).
- Submission and evaluation of a report based on the Executive Summary Report (see 2.4.2.1).
- Role Playing (see 2.4.2.3) / Interview (see2.4.2.4).

2.5 Granting of certificate

After successfully passing the certification process and confirmation of the proper execution of the process by the certification body, the candidates are awarded the corresponding certificate.

In the case of unfinished orders, the certificate will not be issued until the subsequent deliveries have been positively assessed by the assessors. All certificates are registered with PM-ZERT and IPMA and published with IPMA (country, name, certificate level, validity dates).

If a certification procedure has not been successfully completed in all parts, the failed examination parts can be repeated for a fee. Repeat fees can be found in the overview of current dates and fees (A01).

Repeat appointments are agreed with the PM-ZERT office. The repetition is only possible once for each part of the examination and can take place at the earliest on the next certification date and after 12 months at the latest.

If a certification process is not passed altogether, the certification can be applied for again after one year.

The certificate holder shall promptly inform PM-ZERT of any matters that may affect their ability to meet the requirements of the certified level.

3 Re-certification

The procedure and requirements for re-certification are described in **Z01 General Guide** for all levels.

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PM-ZERT is certified according to ISO 9001:2015