

# Towards a Global Body of Project Management Knowledge

## Summary

The **aim** of this project is the development of a globally agreed body of Project Management knowledge as the basis for genuinely global and transferable Project Management standards, certification and accreditation programs.

The **approach** taken by this project is to gather together a globally representative group of opinion leaders and major corporate users of project management to work together to develop global agreement on what they believe constitutes the body of Project Management knowledge. A list of participants in the four workshops that have been held to date (October 1998, June 1999, June 2000, July 2001) is included as **Appendix 1**.

The **philosophy** is that the work of the group draws **credibility** from the voluntary participation of recognised opinion leaders in project management, contributing on the basis that all outputs of the group will be in the **public domain**. This group is working together in the interests of development of project management as a profession and a discipline.

**Progress to date** can be summarised by the aims and outputs of three meetings held since 1998:

Meeting	Location	Date	Aim and Output
Sub-Committee meeting of PMI Standards Committee	Long Beach, California, USA	October 1998	To bring together those working on PM Body of Knowledge documents – PMI, IPMA, APM (UMIST)
Workshop of recognised opinion leaders in PM - hosted by NASA	Norfolk, Virginia, USA	June 1999	To develop global agreement on what constitutes the body of PM knowledge
Workshop of recognised opinion leaders and major users of PM – hosted by Telenor	Haugesund, Norway	June 2000	To agree on ways of structuring the global body of PM knowledge; agreement to develop an interactive web based Global Body of PM Knowledge portal and repository, in the public domain.
Workshop of recognised opinion leaders and major users of PM – hosted by ESC Lille	Lille, France	July 2001	To agree on a proposal for a web based Global Body of PM Knowledge repository and develop initial content.

This project has reached a critical point at which resources are essential to reap the benefit of global cooperation, goodwill and progress achieved to date. The project has potential to deliver a valuable resource that satisfies needs of individual, government, community and corporate practitioners and users of project management, worldwide, by providing access to a responsive Global Body of PM Knowledge repository, developed and audited by globally representative leaders in the development of project management knowledge and practice.

Immediate **opportunities** for ensuring that this important project proceeds are:

- To join NASA, Telenor and ESC Lille in supporting this project by hosting a further workshop of recognised opinion leaders and major users of PM that is required to ensure the continuation and global acceptance and credibility of the project. The preferred location is Asia, to follow meetings held to date in USA and Europe.
- Fund or assist in funding development of a web based global repository of PM knowledge, in the public domain. The content of the repository will maintain credibility through the ongoing support of this highly respected global reference group. The intention is to provide ready access to a globally

agreed and accepted body of PM knowledge as a basis for development of global standards and certification programs, to guide education and training and support project management practitioners.

All material produced through this project is in the public domain and can be accessed at <http://www.aipm.com/OLC>.

## **Background**

In recent years there has been considerable discussion and interest in development of global standards for project management. A first step in development of such standards is global agreement on what constitutes the project management body of knowledge. In October 1998, people directly involved in development and review of existing guides to the bodies of knowledge for project management took the initiative of holding an exploratory meeting to discuss ways in which they might work together in the interests of global cooperation.

Included in the October 1998 meeting were members of the PMI Standards Committee which had been responsible for development of the 1996 edition of the PMBOK® Guide; Olaf Pannenbaecker, who had been involved in bringing together 4 PM Body of Knowledge Guides, in three languages, in the IPMA Competency Baseline (ICB); and Professor Peter Morris, of UMIST, responsible for a research project, commissioned by APM with the support of industry, aimed at updating the APM Body of Knowledge. Also in attendance were Dr Ed Hoffman of NASA, and Terry Cooke-Davies, of Human Systems Limited based in the United Kingdom, who facilitated the meeting.

The meeting was extremely successful. A strong spirit of cooperation was generated and has been subsequently maintained. Those present, representing strong vested interests in existing PM body of knowledge guides, agreed to put aside those interests and work together to develop a global framework for PM knowledge.

The workshop held in Norfolk, Virginia, and hosted by NASA, was agreed as the next step in this process. The aim of the Norfolk Virginia Workshop was for those involved in development of existing guides to project management bodies of knowledge to work with other thought leaders in project management from around the world to map the content and structure(s) for a globally applicable body of knowledge for project management.

In order to maintain independence, this initiative is not officially aligned with any particular project management professional association and it is intended that the results of the workshop will be openly available to academics and practitioners throughout the world. Members of PMI, IPMA and other PM professional associations are, however, involved in this initiative.

The working meeting was intended to be a creative and unbiased session using open and innovative approaches to consider the diversity of the evolution of project management in various cultures, world-wide. Participants were asked to put aside secondary interests and be willing to both develop and accept new ways of understanding and structuring what constitutes project management knowledge.

Considerable care was given to organization and conduct of this workshop to ensure the value of the process and outcomes. Participants were provided with preparatory material generated at the October 1998 meeting and from subsequent research. The Norfolk Virginia Workshop was facilitated by Terry Cooke-Davies and included a range of techniques such as metaplan for visualizing, and electronic group decision making tools.

The composition of the group that met in Norfolk Virginia was globally representative, although some of those invited were unfortunately unable to attend on this occasion. Of those in attendance, English was a first language for two thirds, half of whom were based in the United States and half of whom were from other parts of the world. English was not the first language for one third of the participants.

The Norfolk Virginia Workshop was extremely successful. From the start there was a strong spirit of cooperation and willingness to work together as participants shared their viewpoints on the knowledge and skills that constitute the theory and practice of project management. Considerable progress was made towards shared understanding and there was general agreement on the overall scope of a global body of project management knowledge.

Telenor, the Norwegian telecommunications organisation, agreed to sponsor the next Global Body of Project Management Workshop and this was held in Haugesund, Norway, in June 2000.

Having reached general agreement on the broad content of a global body of project management knowledge, the focus of the June 2000 Workshop was on ways of structuring the body of knowledge to make it meaningful and useful to multiple stakeholders. The key outcome of the Haugesund Workshop was agreement that a global body of project management knowledge should not have one structure but should be capable of being structured in many different ways to meet a wide variety of needs (eg CEO / novice PM / Program Manager / PM Educator; Telecommunications PM / Construction PM / Organisational Change PM; Manager of large single project / Manager of multiple small projects).

It was decided that this could best be delivered through a web based public domain repository of project management knowledge with capability for structuring the knowledge in different ways to satisfy different needs. To achieve this requires resources. At the Global Body of Project Management Workshop held in Lille, France, in July 2001, specific proposals for structuring of the group and securing financial support for the endeavour were presented and discussed. The group also identified areas they considered should be addressed directly by the web based Global Body of PM Knowledge web site and began developing content for these areas. The six areas identified for initial attention are:

- From strategy to projects
- Project portfolio management
- Steering committee and project sponsors
- Project office
- Program office
- Lessons learned

This project remains totally unaligned with any project management professional association. The project at present has no ongoing funding and all work is undertaken on a volunteer basis with the aim of developing project management as a profession. All volunteer involvement is made on the basis that outputs will be in the public domain.

Key points of contact are:

Program Manager:	Lynn Crawford	<a href="mailto:lynn@aipm.com">lynn@aipm.com</a>
Program Coordinator:	Diana Papas	<a href="mailto:DianaPapas@aol.com">DianaPapas@aol.com</a>

### ***Important Note:***

The acronyms OLC or OLCI are often used to refer to this project. This relates back to the first meeting held in Long Beach, California, as a sub-committee meeting of the Project Management Institute. The sub-committee, largely for humorous reasons, was officially called, the Operational Level Coordination committee – or OLC. It is an aspect of the strong spirit of the project that the group has adopted this acronym. The project is therefore referred to, within the group, as the OLC or OLCI (OLC Initiative).

**APPENDIX 1:  
LIST OF ATTENDEES AT GLOBAL BODY OF PM KNOWLEDGE WORKSHOPS:  
JUNE 1999, JUNE 2000 AND JULY 2001**

Name		Organisation	Country
Alicia	Aitken	Project Performance Group	Australia
Jean	Amiot	MKS Compu-Group	Canada
Marko	Arenius	Helsinki University of Technology	Finland
Karlos	Artto	Helsinki University of Technology	Finland
Kjell	Austeng	Norwegian University of Science and Technology	Norway
Mark	Austin	World Bank	USA
Cindy	Berg	Medtronic and PMI Standards MAG	Arizona, USA
Inger	Bergman	Ericsson	Sweden
Christophe	Bredillet	Lille Business School	France
Sergey	Bushuyev	Ukrainian Project Management Association & Professor, University of Kiev	Ukraine
Gilles	Caupin	IPMA and AFITEP	France
David	Cleland	University of Pittsburgh (Author)	PA, USA
Terry	Cooke-Davies	Human Systems Limited	UK
Lynn	Crawford	University of Technology, Sydney	Australia
Paul	Dinsmore	Dinsmore Associates (Author)	Brazil
Bill	Duncan	PM Partners (Author / editor of 1996 Edition of PMBOK® Guide)	MA, USA
Randy	Englund	Strategic Management Group (formerly Hewlett Packard) (Author)	CA, USA
Morten	Fangel	Fangel Group	Denmark
Donna	Fitzgerald	Pacific Edge	USA
Kevin	Forsberg	Centre for Systems Management (Author)	USA
David	Frame	Yankee Clipper Group and University of Management and Technology (Author)	USA
Lew	Gedansky	PMI, Research Manager and formerly Manager, Standards and Research	USA
Kristoffer	Grude	Coopers and Lybrand (Author)	Norway
John	Gulbis	Cable and Wireless Optus	Australia
Bert	Hamilton	Kent Professor of Project Management University of Limerick (Author)	Ireland
Per Willy	Hetland	Chief Consultant, Statoil, Professor Norwegian School of Management	Norway
Brian	Hobbs	University of Quebec at Montreal	Canada
Jon-Erik	Hogberg	Telenor	Norway
Ed	Hoffman	NASA, Director of the NASA Academy of Program and Project Management	USA
Lew	Ireland	Low Ireland & Associates, Inc. (former President of PMI)	USA
Adesh	Jain	Center for Excellence in Project Management	India
Mike	Katagiri	Center for Project Excellence	USA
Dave	Knutson	Pacific Northwest National Laboratory; PMI Technical Activities Centre	USA
Yukihide	Kosaka	IBM	Japan

Name		Organisation	Country
Ralph	Levene	Cranfield University	UK
Hal	Mooz	Centre for Systems Management (Author)	USA
Peter	Morris	INDECO and UMIST (Author)	UK
Ralph	Mueller	NCR	Denmark
Jean-Louis	Muller	CEGOS – Unité (Author)	France
Debbie	O'Bray	PM Consultant	Canada
Olaf	Pannenbaecker	Siemens	Germany
Diana	Papas	University of Technology, Sydney	Australia
Mary-Lou	Raybould	Hewlett Packard	Australia
Bruce	Rodrigues	BRP Consulting	South Africa
Andrew	Robertston	United Nations	Malaysia
Asbjorn	Rolstadas	Norwegian University of Science and Technology	Norway
John	Schlichter	Weather Channel	USA
Rolf	Schroeder	Telekom	Denmark
Suhrita	Sen	Nirh, New Delhi	India
Greg	Skulmoski	University of Calgary	Canada
Larry	Suda	Management Worlds	USA
Rodney	Turner	Europrojex and Erasmus University, Rotterdam (Author)	UK and Netherlands
Andreas	Unger-Soljeim		Switzerland
Jaap	van der Deijl	Intercert	Netherlands
Max	Wideman		Canada
Khim-Teck	Yeo	NTU, Singapore	Singapore
Bob	Youker	World Bank (retired)	USA