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Drafting A Research Roadmap

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Abstract

The role of IPMA's Research Management Board (RMB) is to provide the link between the research community and IPMA members. The mission of RMB is to enable the development and application of research in the field of Project, Programme and Portfolio (PP&P) Management worldwide. The vision of RMB is improved PP&P practice through effective research.

A new RMB was appointed for the term 2013 - 2015 and the Board has drafted a roadmap for research and development for the near future. This roadmap will be used as a reference for how RMB achieves its objectives. This includes the support of specialist conferences (including its own research conference) specialized publications, organizing Expert Research Seminars and Workshops, recognizing research excellence through a programme of Research Awards, and promoting Festivals of Knowledge with IPMA member associations. The paper presents the new roadmap of the RMB, its main themes and elements. It is presented as a conceptual barometer, giving clear signals regarding where professional project management associations will be heading in the future.

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1. Introduction

The Research & Development Management Board (RMB) has the role to support research and development activities, R&D services and ongoing research development of IPMA. Its vision is to share values, standards and knowledge to improve the practice of Project, Programme and Portfolio Management for IPMA's Member

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Associations through effective management of R&D activities. Its mission is to enable, promote and coordinate the development and application of research in the field of Project, Programme and Portfolio Management with our Member Associations for the benefit of the global project management community.

For this to happen, the most important stakeholders for the work of RMB are the member associations and the boards within IPMA and their different ongoing projects. IPMA helps its Member Associations to succeed and RMB provides a link between the research community and the Member Associations. RMB achieves this overall objective by supporting the development of products and services that enhance performance throughout the global project management community.

RMB participates in a variety of research-oriented events such as specialist conferences, through promoting Festivals of Knowledge and by organising Expert Research Seminars and Workshops. Research excellence is recognised through a programme of Research Awards and researchers are encouraged by providing prizes for research papers at conferences.

The vision of RMB is reached by promoting and supporting advances through focused efforts in three areas, standards, R&D and awards.

- Through standards, IPMA is the reference for worldwide, cross-cultural competent and performing Project, Programme and Portfolio Management (PPPM).
- Through R&D activities, IPMA's differentiating strengths are clear to all interested parties, from PPPM practitioners, to managers and executives, to nations, to society and IPMA is the reference for worldwide, cross-cultural competent and performing PPPM.
- Through awards, IPMA's visibility is widespread and the brand value of IPMA is verifiably clear, especially in the area of our top product "IPMA Project Excellence Award".

The new RMB held its first face-to-face meeting in Beijing in beginning of April 2013. This was a 3 days seminar where a number of topics were discussed, among others the development of an IPMA R&D Roadmap 2020. This roadmap is seen as a necessary reference for the new RMB on how achieves its objectives and generally how RMB lives up to its vision.

In general, RMB achieves its objectives through its own work, by supporting specialist conferences, by planning and executing its own research conference, by organising Expert Research Seminars and Workshops, by recognizing research excellence through a programme of Research Awards and through promoting Festivals of Knowledge with IPMA member associations. This paper specifically presents the outlines of the research roadmap that was drafted by RMB during its meeting in Beijing in April 2013.

2. Theory

The role of professional associations has been given attention in recent year as it relates to defining project management as a profession. Crawford (2004) pointed out that the project management professional associations as we know them today began in this way as informal gatherings and forums for networking, exchange of ideas and information. She further explained that two key organizations have attempted to achieve a more unified and global approach, namely the International Project Management Association and the Project Management Institute. A lot of energy is consumed in the competition between those associations and to a large extent this has merely increased the dilemma of choice for individuals and organizations. A common dilemma for project management associations is that recognition of project management as an occupation is vulnerable as many see it merely as an aspect of general management. Furthermore, a challenge that professional associations are likely to face is the increasing involvement of government in defining practice standards for project management. Unless project management professional associations take the lead, global corporations will do so in order to satisfy their own needs (Crawford, 2004).

Thomas & Zweman (2010) concluded that for project management to become a "profession," it requires the concerted effort of its practitioners and professional associations in pursuing this objective. An action list is given to reach this status and some of the action items are to elaborate significant independent academic educational programs with an associated set of research programs, and to create and enforce a code of ethics for all

practitioners using the title Project Manager. Winning political, social, and legal recognition of the value of regulating project management for the good of society.

The most significant challenge facing the professionalization effort is gaining recognition and acceptance of the changes required of both professional associations and practitioners (Thomas & Zweman 2010). For project management to become a "profession" one of the key topics is to reconcile significant academic educational programs, with an associated set of research programs. The importance of research in context with the development of a profession is demonstrated by Crawford (2004) who defined building blocks of a profession as a 5 level system. The foundation of this system is *Research*, on which a *Body of knowledge* and *standards* are based. The building block above standards is *Education/Training* and the top level building block is *Qualifications*, based on the standards. On a more sceptical note, Morris et.al. (2006) concluded that there may be a danger of getting into self-fulfilling prophecies if the field relies on the project management associations to tell the academics what to think and teach.

A number of researchers have reported on their work on assessing where the future of project management. Kwak, Hoon and Anbari (2009) analysed perspectives regarding project management research from top management journals and concluded that the most researched fields were strategy and portfolio management, operation research and decision science, organizational behaviour and human resource management. Similar results were reported by Ingason and Jonasson (2009) who concluded that the field focuses more and more on interpersonal competences, relationship management, resource management and strategic alignment.

Pollack (2007) reported on the changing paradigms of project management and based on a critical reading of the literature concluded a growing acceptance of a soft paradigm in project management, while the prevailing link is between a hard paradigm and project management. Morris (2010) points out that the efforts of project management researchers should be focused on outcomes and helping project management practitioners to deliver projects efficiently and effectively. A UK government funded research network in 2003 presented five directions aimed at developing the field of project management intellectually. More focus should be put on project complexity, on projects as social processes, on value creation and broader conceptualization of projects and on practitioners as being more reflective (Winter, 2006).

3. Roadmap

A general representation of the research roadmap drafted by the RMB at its meeting in Beijing in April 2013 is shown as a mind map in the following figure.

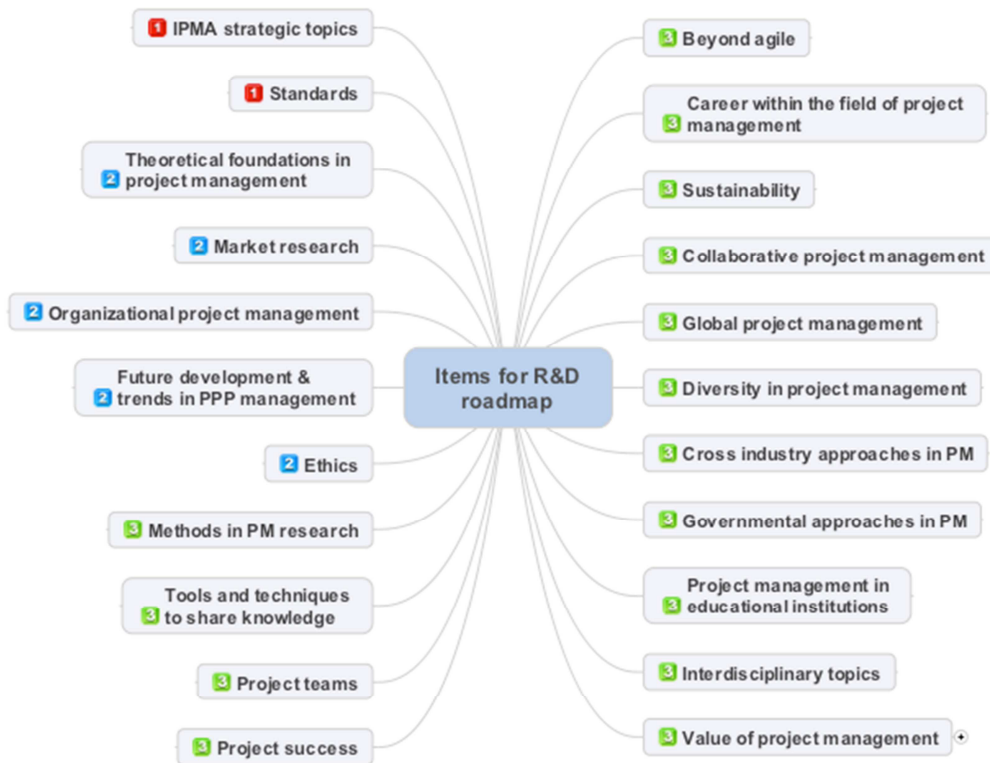


Fig. 1 Research roadmap 2020 for IPMA Research Management Board.

The mind map shows a general list of topics raised by the RMB board members, discussed at the meeting and documented. For practical purposes, the board made a list of priorities for the topic that should be in focus for the term of this RMB. The priorities can be seen in Fig. 1 marked with numbers 1, 2 and 3.

- 1 Topics that score highest on the roadmap for RMB 2013-2013
 - Some topics have been identified by the Executive Board of IPMA as strategic topic for IPMA in terms of research, and RMB has the obligation to put focus on those specific topics. Examples of such topics are scenario-planning (the use of scenarios to gather information on the future business environment, for IPMA to be able to more effectively manage its strategic planning).
 - Standards are another strategic research topic for IPMA. This includes the identification of potential IPMA standards and the development of such standards.
- 2 Other topics that RMB will focus on during its 2013-2015 term
 - Research into the theoretical foundations of project management is a continuous subject for RMB. This will include such concepts as complexity, chaos theory, temporary organizations, agile project management, uncertainty management, communication, sociology and images of projects.
 - A related topic is future development and trends in PPP management.
 - Market research will be in focus for RMB, getting and analysing various data - e.g. regarding the certification of individuals in different member countries of IPMA.
 - Organizational project management will be studied by RMB, including governance issues, project management offices, strategic alignment and organizational maturity.
 - Ethics will be a focus subject for RMB. RMB believes that comprehensive *Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct* stating the core obligation of the professional lies at the heart of the responsibility of professional associations. RMB will write its own internal Code of Ethics and Conduct. Also, RMB

will prepare an initiative for IPMA to define IPMA Code of Ethics and Professional Conducts and make it visible and attainable for all member associations.

3 Important topics where RMB intends to encourage and support researchers and research institutions to pursue their own research. Examples (and their rationales) include:

- Diversity in project management: what insights can be found in the examination of project management from regional, cultural and gender diversity?
- Cross-industry: the sharing of best practices is a never-ending need, but how does it happen? Can it be done better?
- Governmental approaches: In projects where the government is 'the executive,' benefits realization, requirements management and stakeholder analysis can become especially significant.
- Project management in educational institutions: the provision and research of project management is increasing across mainstream, professional and specialized educational programs. The effectiveness of teaching and learning strategies needs examination – is the project management practitioner receiving the most appropriate skills and knowledge? Are they being suitably delivered? How can research into the practice contribute to the growing body of scholarship in both project management and general management studies?

4. Conclusion

Supporting and enhancing relevant research is a core priority for a profession to become fully accepted (Crawford, 2004), (Thomas & Zweman, 2010). A new RMB was appointed in the end of 2012 for the term 2013-2015. RMB has defined a clear vision and mission statement and formulated a strategy to fulfil its role. A core theme for the new RMB is enable, promote and coordinate the development and application of research in the field of PP&P management. Special emphasis is put on supporting the development of products and services that enhance performance throughout the global project management community. This emphasis is reflected in the mind map (Figure 1) and the priorities that the newly appointed RMB has defined. Furthermore, the top priority subjects on the list of the RMB are consistent with the findings of some of the researchers referred to in the theory section.

Last but not least it should be noted that the RMB consists of people that are instruments of the association and, by extension, implementers of the priorities of IPMA and reflect where the PM community is at present. The board consists of the following members:

- Reinhard Wagner (Germany) is the vice president of research and development for IPMA. His professional background is electrical engineering and business and he looks back to more than 27 years of project related work and leadership experience.
- Prof. Dr. Anbang Qi (China), chairman of RMB. Deputy President of PMR China, professor and director of PM Research Centre and Master of PM programs of Nankai University. Prof. Anbang is the IPMA Research Award Winner in 2009, winner of China National Excellent Bilingual Course of PM 2008 and winner of China National Excellent Course of PM in 2005.
- Dr. Helgi Thor Ingason (Iceland), associate professor and head of MPM program at the University of Reykjavik. Dr. Ingason is the author of a number of conference and journal papers on project management, quality management, process metallurgy and in other fields. He is the co-author of 6 books in the Icelandic language on project management, strategic planning, leadership skills, communication skills, quality management and product development. He is also the co-author of a textbook on Project ethics, published by Gower.
- Dr. Beverly Pasian (Netherlands), Chair of the Dutch National Research Group and founding President of the Project Management Association of Canada. At present an Associate Professor at the Utrecht University of Applied Sciences in the Netherlands. She is an active project management researcher. Her research partners are in China, Australia, France, the United Kingdom and the USA, examining project management from

varied perspectives: maturity, maturity models, gender, e-Learning, construction and cultural diversity. Immediate and future publishing plans include several pioneering and international efforts – the first-ever book on methods specific to project management research: *Designs, Methods & Practices for Research of Project Management* (Gower Publishing - 2014).

- Mr. Miles Shepherd (United Kingdom), a visiting Fellow at Bournemouth University, a Teaching Fellow at the University of Manchester and the University of Leeds. Served as the president for IPMA for two terms and is presently the vice president of APM. He is a well-known international speaker and has reported on his research at conferences around the world and has contributed chapters to several books on project, programme and portfolio management. He is an active Research Supervisor with a number of British and overseas Universities where his teaching covers all aspects of project, programme and portfolio management.
- Dr. Les Squires (USA), expert in curriculum and instruction, a believer in that collaboration is the most important assets for an organization, has been field-testing social networking approaches for IPMA in several countries in all continents. He regularly presents hands-on training sessions at international conferences promoting the use of social networking in the 60 member countries of the IPMA, corporations and other organizations.
- Mr. Michael Young (Australia) an award-winning project, program and portfolio manager and is also Managing Director of a consulting and education organisation in Australia. Presently completing his PhD to supplement his MBA and BSc degrees. Michael has published papers and presented new project management concepts at conferences internationally. He is currently co-editing two books on project management research in the Asia Pacific.

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