Profiling Jobs and Competencies using the tekom Competence Framework

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Sissi Closs

University

- Professor at Karlsruhe university since 1997
- Course Director Communication and Media Management (MSc)

Company

- CEO of C-Topic Consulting GmbH
- Head of advisory board FCT AG

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Jürgen Sapara

tekom	• Committee Chairman for qualification counsel at Advisory Board Training & Education
tecteam	• Senior Consultant (focus on organization, process modelling & optimization) • Manager Consulting
before	• Head of Documentation • Internal Consultant • Chief editor at technical magazine

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Why is a competence framework necessary?

Demand of the industry: Specially trained and qualified staff with specific competencies is required, esp. for international companies

- **A constant demand for Technical Communicators (EU figures)**
  - 1.4% of all employees in the industry sector
  - 3.6% of all employees in the software sector
- **Late entrants with background in engineering and translation**

There is a need for a better understanding of the profession and its competence requirements

- The occupational profile and roles are unclear
- The competencies and qualifications for Technical Communicators are unclear

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What is the tekom Competence Framework and who is it for?

Describes the occupational profile and potential job profiles in technical communication

Who is it for?

- **companies of any kind**
- **technical communication employees**
- **people who are interested in entering the profession**
- **institutions of higher education**
- **training institutes**

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Job-related Competencies

Definition of Competencies

"Competencies are identified to clearly define the essential functions of the job."

1. **Job profile: Tasks to perform**
2. **Competencies for a job: Knowledge, skills, abilities, personal characteristics and other "worker-based" factors that are necessary to perform a certain task**
3. **Overall Competencies of persons: Differentiates superior performance from average performance**

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The process of developing information products

Tasks:
What do we have to do to develop information for use and what are the process steps?

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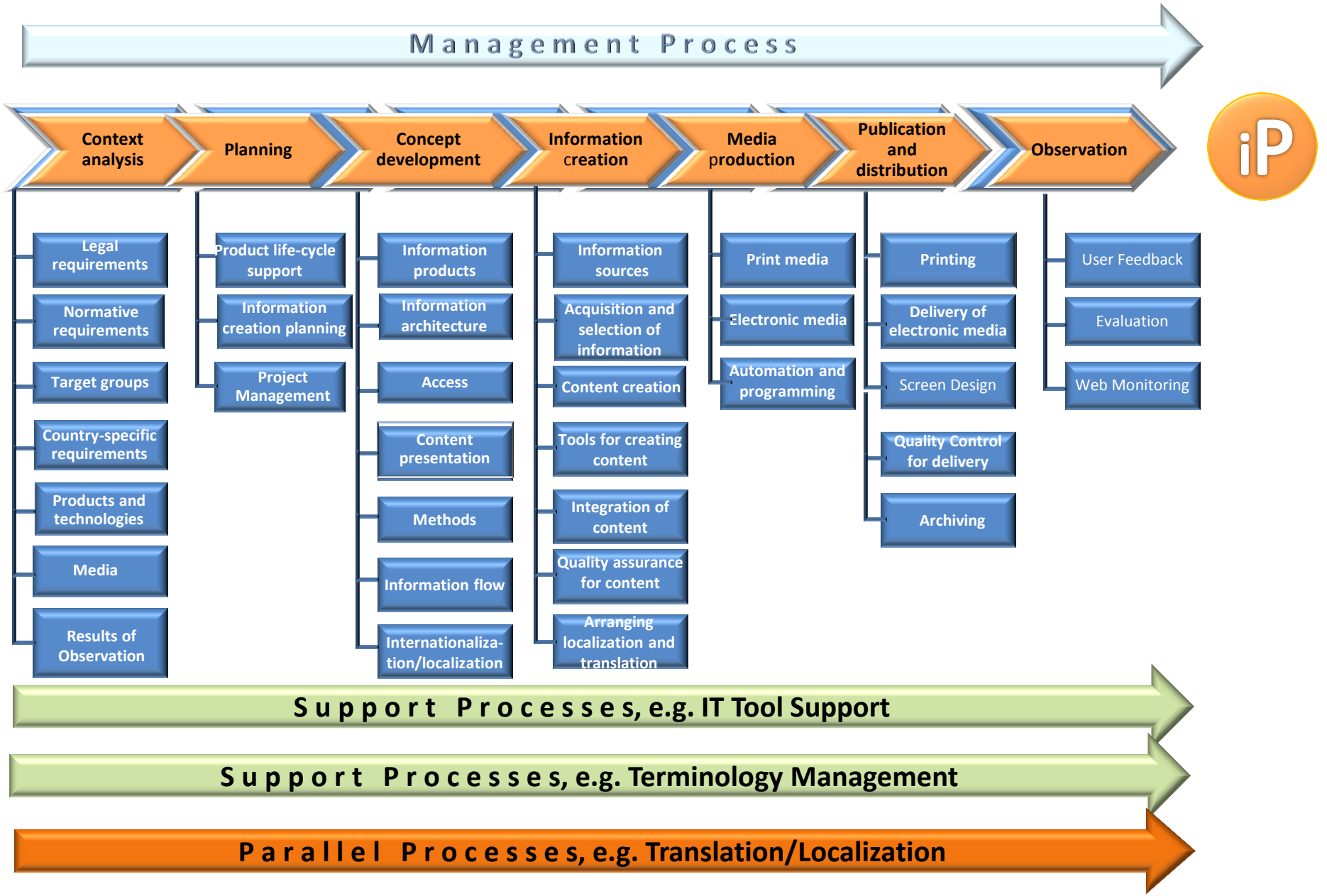
Development of Information Products (iP)



Technical Communicator
Different job profiles

What do these people do and what do they have to do and to know?

Technical Writer

Experience: 2-4 years

- Works with internal teams to obtain an in-depth **understanding of the product and the documentation requirements**
- **Is able to extract technical information** from software design documents
- **Interviews** subject matter experts to extract required information
- **Analyzes existing and potential content**, focusing on reuse and single-sourcing opportunities
- **Writes easy-to-understand user interface text**, online help and developer guides
- **Contributes to technical writing processes and standards for the team**

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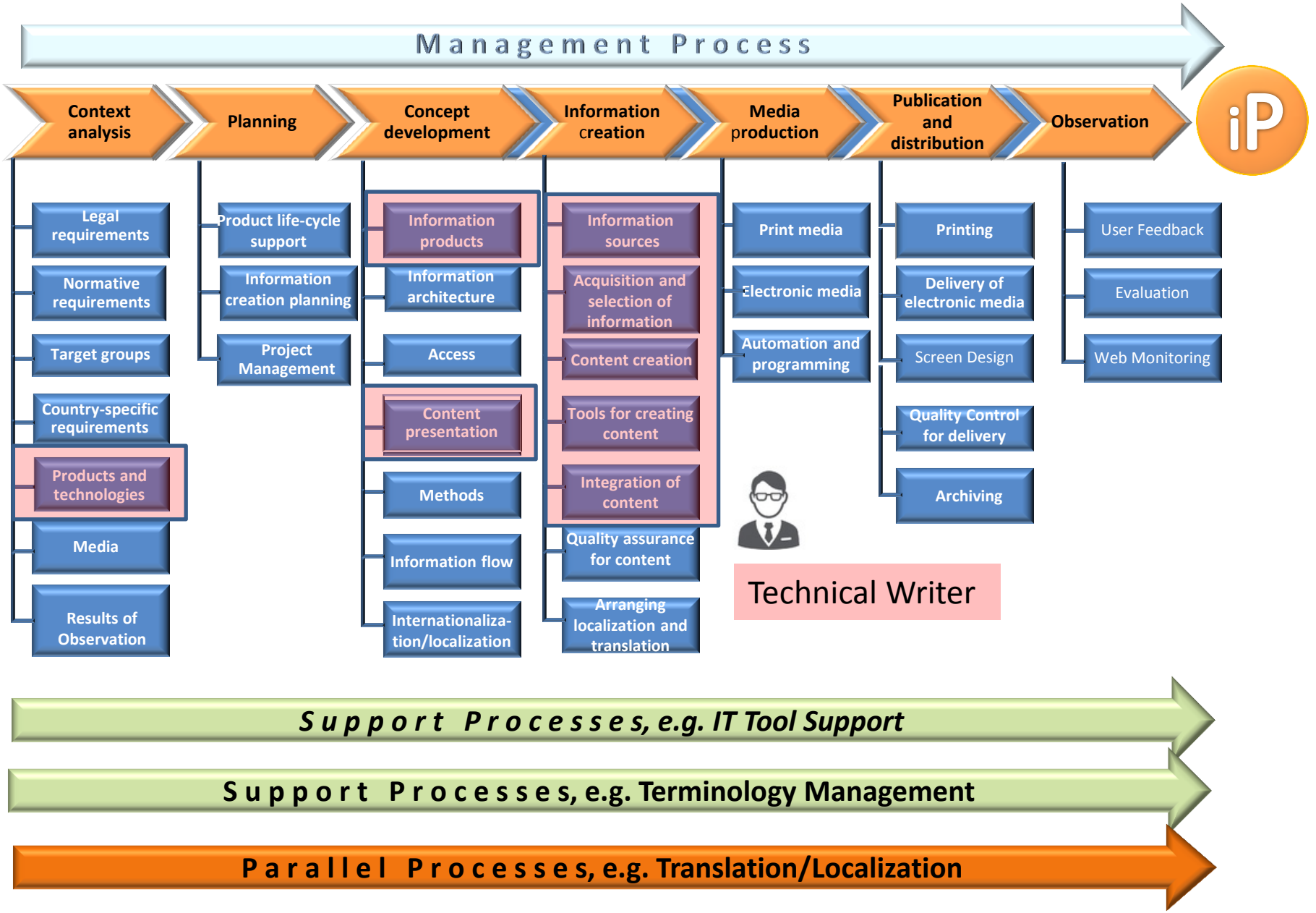
Management Process
Context analysis
Planning
Concept development
Information creation
Media production
Publication and distribution
Observation
iP
Legal requirements
Normative requirements
Target groups
Country-specific requirements
Products and technologies
Media
Results of Observation
Product life-cycle support
Information creation planning
Project Management
Information products
Information architecture
Access
Content presentation
Methods
Information flow
Internationaliza-tion/localization
Information sources
Acquisition and selection of information
Content creation
Tools for creating content
Integration of content
Quality assurance for content
Arranging localization and translation
Print media
Electronic media
Automation and programming
Printing
Delivery of electronic media
Screen Design
Quality Control for delivery
Archiving
User Feedback
Evaluation
Web Monitoring
Technical Writer
Support Processes, e.g. IT Tool Support
Support Processes, e.g. Terminology Management
Parallel Processes, e.g. Translation/Localization

Experienced / Senior Technical Writer

- **Experience: 5-9 years**
  - **Understands customer requirements** and **product specifications** to collect information for writing manuals
  - **Designs and develops written** and/or visual product-related manuals for print, web, and mobile devices
  - **Analyzes existing content** to identify and bridge documentation gaps
  - Identifies and resolves any technical writing/documentation-related **issues**
  - **Drafts Standard Operating Instructions to standardize layout and format**, so that technical descriptions and instructions can be readily understood by the users
  - **Adheres to defined technical writing standards**, best practices, style guides, templates, scripts, style sheets, and graphic libraries
  - **Reviews and tests the product** for consistency with regards to documentation, identifying problems and suggesting revisions
  - Works and acts as liaison with other technical writers, multimedia, technology team and **reviews their work**
  - **Provides input and guidance regarding time estimates for planning and deploying documentation solutions**

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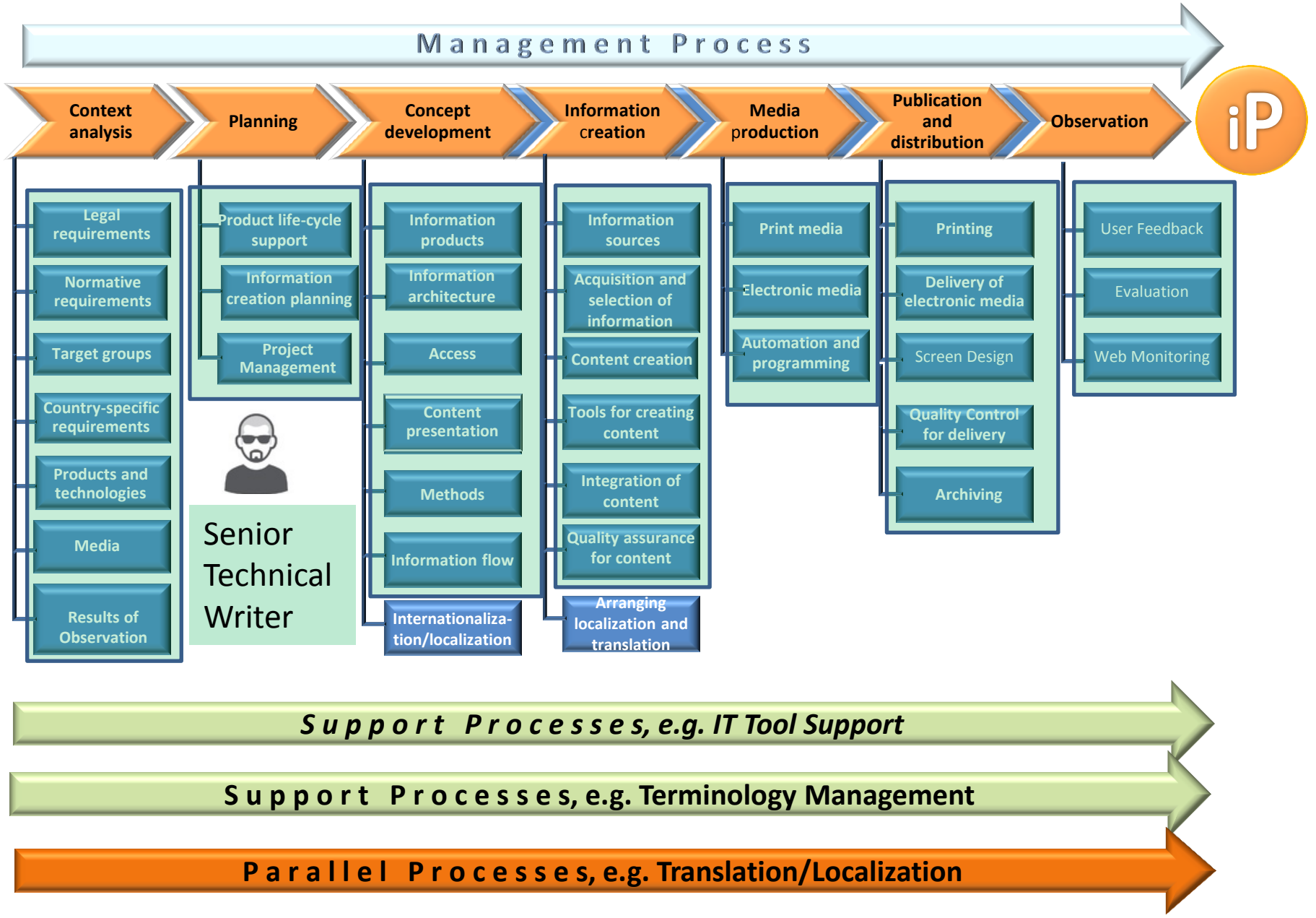
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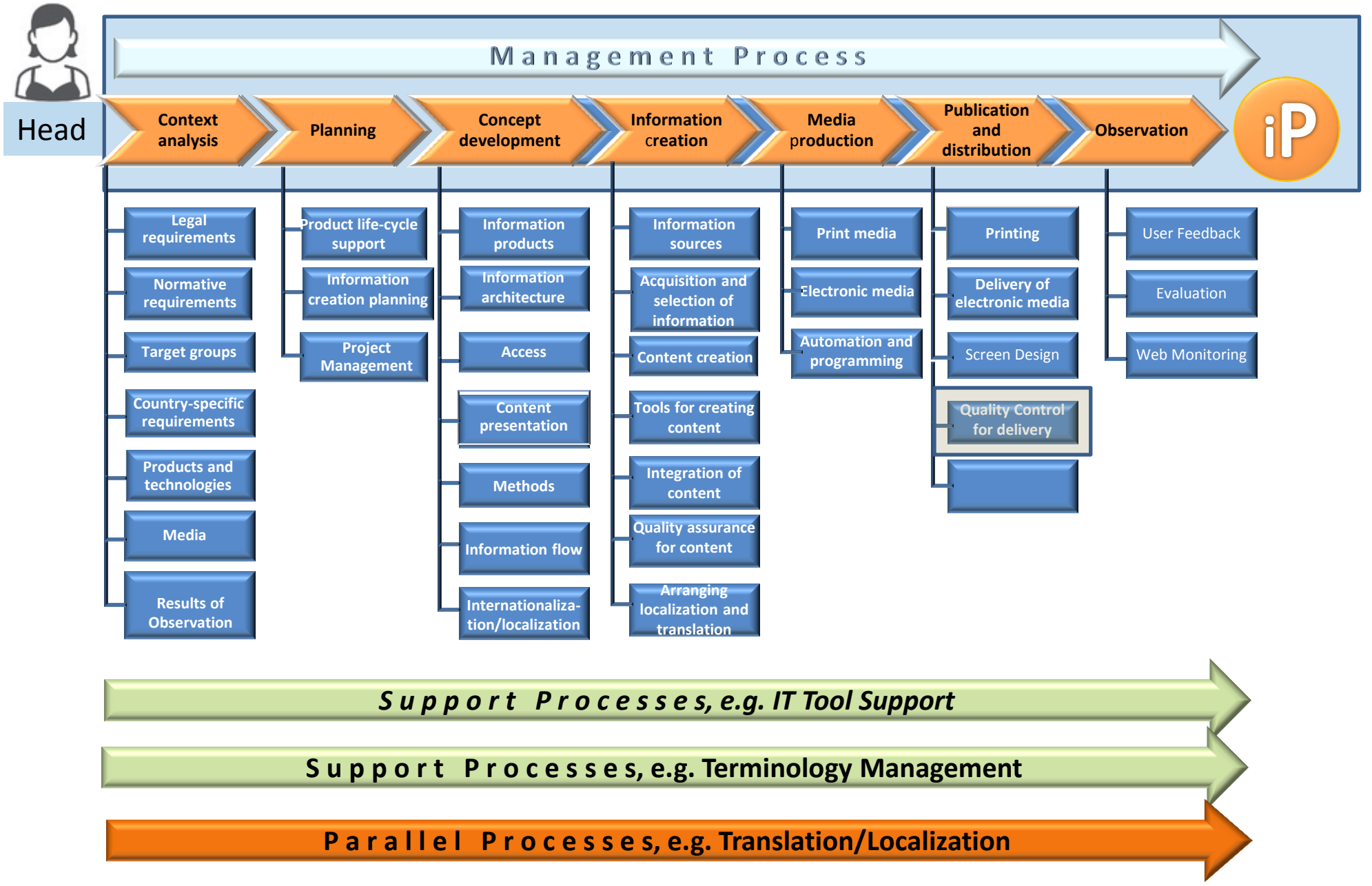
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Parallel Processes, e.g. Translation/Localization

Specialist Proofreading and Quality Assurance

- Performs **editorial tasks** to support technical software documentation
- Achieves the following **quality goals** for **published content:**
  - **High** level of accuracy in grammar, vocabulary, and punctuation
  - Adherence to the **standards of American English**
  - Consistent application of the **editorial standards** of the organization
  - Consistent use of the **terminology standards** of the organization

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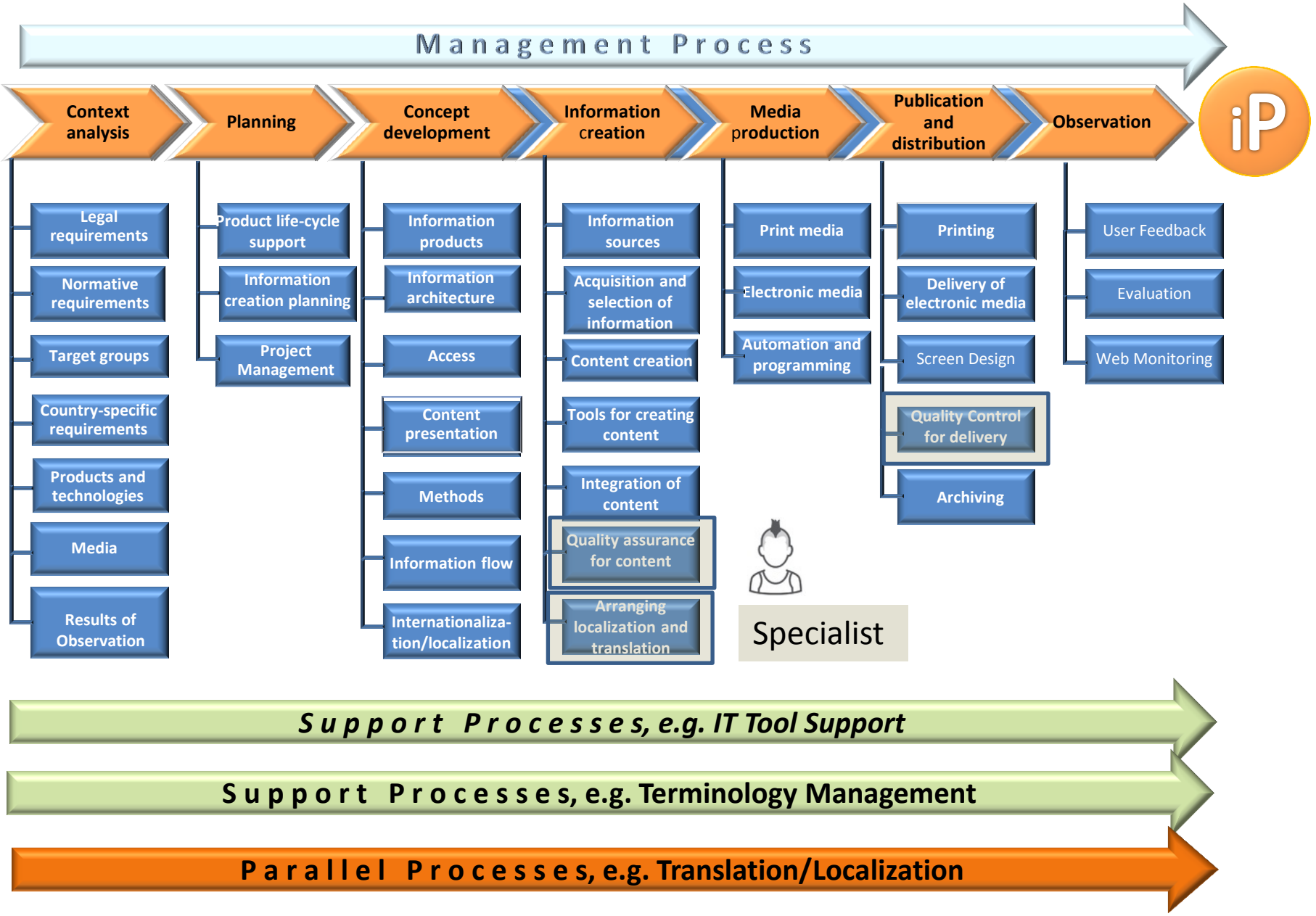
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The Profiling Tool in Practice

Develop your personalized skills profile!

- **By company managers and personnel departments**
  - For drawing up specialist job profiles and roles
  - For targeted personnel recruitment and writing job advertisements
  - For HR development and targeted employee competency development
- **By further education institutes and training providers, including universities**
  - For developing new training offerings and curricula
- **By persons interested in further education**
  - For identifying and defining individual further education content and objectives
  - For developing individual, needs-based further education concepts

For tekom qualification consulting

- For gap analysis and identifying individual further education needs

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Level 1: Areas of competence
Context analysis

1. Context analysis

Before creating an information product, it is necessary to analyze the requirements which it must meet. Context analysis determines the underlying conditions and the requirements that are placed on an information product by its context.

Context analysis is a preparatory process phase. One distinctive feature is the fact that not only internal sources but mainly sources outside the company are evaluated. In doing so, overarching aspects such as legal and normative requirements, markets or target groups are investigated. Context analysis does not have to be performed for every documentation product but does need to be performed regularly at scheduled intervals or when modifications have been announced. The results of observing the information product are evaluated in the context analysis and their consequences for creating information products are deduced from these results. Context analysis and its results are interpreted specifically to the documentation, depending on the nature of the information product and the underlying conditions.

A context analysis examines:

Legal requirements
Normative requirements
Target groups
Country-specific requirements
Products and technologies
Media and information technology
Results of observation of the information product

The results of the context analysis are fed into the concept for an information product and also into aspects such as media development, publication and distribution.

7

Description / Summary of the area of competence

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Level 2: Fields of competence
Country-specific requirements

Describe the professional and workplace requirements for developing information products

27

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Level 3: Thematic blocks

Culturally-specific aspects of the target group

Classify the individual teaching contents

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Level 4: Teaching contents and learning objectives

1.4.2. Culturally-specific aspects of the target group ★ ★

Culturally-specific differences in the way that information is processed (e.g., characters, colors, images, reading direction)	LOR U U
Cultural aspects of pictorial and symbolic language	LOR U U
Culturally-specific differences regarding expected ways in which information is presented	LOR U U
Cultural and country-specific aspects of the target group when using the information product and when using media	LOR U U
Cultural and country-specific aspects of the target group which might impact use of the product	
Culturally-specific methods of working	
Country-specific aspects and requirements (e.g., linguistic, terminological, technical, organizational) that must be taken into account when creating information products for international markets.	

LMR Teaching approach with deliberation

LOR Teaching approach without deliberation

MPV Teaching approach on methods/processes

U Learning objective 'Knowledge' on EQF Level 4 (Junior)

Learning objective 'Practical ability/Application' on EQF Level 4 (Junior)

U Learning objective 'Knowledge/Understanding' on EQF Level 5 (Senior)

Learning objective 'Practical ability/Application' on EQF Level 5 (Senior)

Based on EQF levels

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The Profiling Tool of the tekom Competence Framework

Why not try it yourself?

http://competences.technical-communication.org/

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TecCOMFrame: A joint European Academic Competence Framework and Curricula for the Training of Technical Communicators

- The project aims to develop standard curricula based on a common *academic* qualification and competence framework
- Transparency, recognition, and transferability of the qualification and competencies of Technical Communicators
- Harmonization with EU-standards and approaches (EQF-levels & ECTS-grades)

www.teccom-frame.eu

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TCTrainNet

Online training and online certification for Technical Writers, based on the Competence Framework

http://www.technical-writing-training-and-certification.com/

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Thank you!

Questions?…

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