

## COMPLEX PROJECT MANAGER STANDARDS REVIEW

### Progress Report: October 2018

An MOU for collaboration has been signed by GAPPS and the International Centre for Complex Project Management (ICCPM). ICCPM is the review, update and authorisation authority for the Complex Project Managers Competency Standards (Version 4.1 May 2012) for which the copyright is held by the Commonwealth of Australia (Department of Defence). ICCPM wishes to review these standards and GAPPS and The University of Sydney have agreed to work with ICCPM, facilitating the review process which will include specific standalone workshops and review sessions held as part of the GAPPS TLF sessions to provide global input to the review.

### Feedback from First Review Session

The first review session was held in Sydney on 15<sup>th</sup> February 2018, hosted by The University of Sydney at their city campus. The overall recommendations from this session were that:

- The standards should be shorter / more concise.
- They should address leadership rather than management.
- They should be capable of application at a number of levels from team member to Project Leader (Director)

The following additional points were raised in discussion:

- ICCPM has developed a Cert IV generally mapped to the Complex Project Manager Standards
- The standard should relate to AQF levels of competence
- What are the characteristics of a complex project?
  - Changing goals introduces complexity
  - Complexity is characterised by uncertainty and ambiguity
  - Trust is essential in complexity
- What are the characteristics of the resource we will apply to achieve outcomes?
- How effectively can we use these standards to find good employees?
- What do you need to deliver the outcome at the level at which you are operating?
- Standards should be promulgated through large public agencies to change attitudes and agendas
- How can the standards be popularised amongst practitioners?

Feedback on the current document and revision:

- The current document:
  - has two sections, the first being theoretical and the second containing the standards
  - is not practitioner friendly in its current form
- The revised standards
  - need to be well founded
  - must be relevant for any and all project types
  - should allow application across a developmental range of project roles
  - should allow for grading of performance against the competency standards
  - could potentially address the current demand for greater flexibility, adaptability and responsiveness
  - has potential to change attitudes to risk and failure – fast to fail

## Feedback from GAPPS TLF#40

The Complex Project Manager Standards were discussed at GAPPS TLF#40 held in Vienna on 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> February 2018. Feedback from GAPPS TLF#40 includes general comments and specific comments relating to the current content. Thirteen people contributed to the discussion. They represented 6 countries (Austria, Australia, Indonesia, South Africa, UAE, UK), are primarily experienced practitioners, and are involved in a number of project management professional associations including AIPM, APM, IPMA, PMI, PMSA, Projekt Management Austria).

### General comments

- Needs to be re-written to align more with AQF and current thinking
- Completely re-write Section 1
- Standards need to be re-drafted to provide a suitable basis for assessment
- Language used should be simplified
- Remove reference to specific techniques and tools. This could become part of Range Statements or Underpinning Knowledge.
- Address levels by using an instrument for assessment of level of complexity such as the CIFTER. Suggest a collaborative review of the CIFTER as a starting point.
- Content - red to be deleted; green should be included in some form.
- No suggestions at this point as to what is missing.

### Suggested further action

- Define the role further
  - Addition to existing standards / roles to support people dealing with increasing levels of complexity / emergence
- Start from scratch
- Proposal for positioning
  - As guideline for anyone dealing with any endeavour and experiencing complexity
  - Guide for dealing with different aspects of complexity
- Proposal for further review
  - Redefine the **purpose and scope** of the standards
  - Take all 'Actions in the Workplace' and make into post-it notes.
  - Gather group of SMEs and get them to cluster 'Actions'
    - discard any that are no longer relevant in relation to **purpose and scope**
    - then identify themes / units of competence.
  - Consider looking at CIFTER and what might be required in relation to these dimensions or characteristics of complexity
  - Remove references to 'project'
  - Scan Action Items to see if there are any concepts that should be retained

### Assumptions

- That to deal with complexity you need leadership
- Direct correlation between complexity and need for leadership
- Not limited to projects but applicable to all endeavours

## Proposition

- That we need a unit or units which are purely about understanding and dealing with complexity and that everything else (ethics, governance, communication, probity, change, risk, culture, PM) is defined as competency in other fields
- For this to be acceptable as a standard it needs to be written to facilitate assessment

## Notes on Content and Intent

- Remove / re-write Section 1 - considered too academic
  - Section 1 should more simply re-state and set the context. Should be similar to the preamble usual in other standards on the Australian Register / AQF
- Remove reference to Traditional Project Management
- Should these standards be an add-on to other PM Competency Standards (additional Units) or exist in their own right
- Remove reference to other standards eg IPMA
- As currently written addresses only a small subset of people who might be 'certified'
- Re-name – suggestions:
  - Complex Project Competency Standards
  - Competency Standards for Leadership in Complexity
- Remove 19-20, 24, revise definitions and terminology
- Change terminology and definitions to be consistent with AQF
- 'Views' should be re-named 'Units' as is usual in competency standards in for instance, Australia, the UK, South Africa and New Zealand.

## Feedback on Specific 'Views'

The following 'Views' should be removed

### **2. Strategy and Project Management**

- Assumed to be part of other PM standards

### **3. Business Planning, Lifecycle Management, Reporting and Performance Management**

- Assumed to be part of other standards, including PM

### **6. Organisational Architecture**

### **9. Probity and Governance**

The following 'Views' should be retained in some way

### **1. Systems Thinking and Integration**

- Systems thinking should stay but not in this form.
- Apply Systems Thinking - remove reference to integration.

### **4. Change and Journey**

- Look at descriptor of the view which is generally relevant.  
Refer to Change Management standards.

### **5. Innovation, Creativity and Working Smarter**

- Need to be open to new ideas. Need to be adaptive.
- Create an environment as a part of leadership that enables creativity. Encourage innovation.

- Overall the way it is expressed here doesn't really support this view.
- Creativity is required.
- Working smarter, flexible working may also be required.

### 7. Leadership and Communication

### 8. Culture and Being Human

- Culture will need to be considered.
- Delete 'Being Human'

### 10. Special Attributes

- There are attributes that are of value in leading in complexity but the focus here needs to be on what are the most important of these attributes, what is the basis for their selection, and how can they be assessed.

## Feedback from GAPPS TLF#41

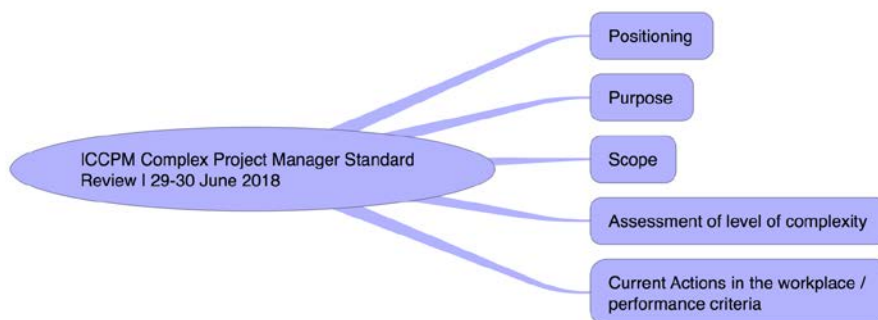
The Complex Project Manager Standards Review was the primary focus for GAPPS TLF#41. It was particularly helpful to have input from Collin Smith, CEO of ICCPM, and also Dr Marian Bosch-Rekveltd, who has conducted research and published on the topic of project complexity.

As proposed at TLF#40, the following process was used for review at TLF#41:

- Redefining the **purpose and scope** of the standards
- Taking all 'Actions in the Workplace' and printing out on separate sheets (similar to use of post-it notes)
- The gathered group of SMEs reviewed each 'Action' and clustered 'Actions'
  - discarding any considered no longer relevant in relation to **purpose and scope**
  - from those remaining, identifying themes / units of competence

## Purpose and Scope

With Collin Smith providing input from the ICCPM perspective in terms of their needs and constraints, the **purpose and scope** were redefined as follows:



## Positioning

- Guideline for anyone dealing with any endeavour and experiencing complexity
- Complement to existing standards / roles to support people dealing with increasing levels of complexity / emergence (in projects)
- Guide for dealing with different aspects of complexity

## Purpose

- The original document was developed initially for the defence industry – the intent is to achieve a result that is more appealing to and relevant across project types and contexts

## Scope

- Revised / new standards should
  - be as concise as possible
  - use terminology, definitions and format consistent with AQF and other global competency standards and frameworks
  - be applicable to any and all project types and contexts
  - allow for application across a developmental range of project roles
  - be applicable at a number of levels from team member to Project Leader (Director)
  - be suitable as a basis for assessment
    - Note that NETLIPSE has a framework for assessment of large infrastructure projects in Europe
  - be globally applicable in keeping with an ‘international’ standard
  - address leadership rather than management
  - address current demand for greater adaptability and responsiveness
  - be available as a standalone standard and as add-on to other competency standards (additional units) (incl. PM)

## Possibilities / questions

- in so far as competency standards are concerned, what have we missed?
- The following points have been highlighted in the current ICCPM Thought Leadership Series:
  - development of business acumen
  - more focus on special attributes
  - better development of critical thinking skills
  - ability to communicate complex issues with clarity and brevity for lay audiences
  - ability to drive creativity and innovation despite hostile risk avoidance and process based organisational cultures eg encouragement and protection of entrepreneurship
  - more focus on drive, enthusiasm
  - plentiful availability of simulations to drive leadership development eg JGC
  - JGC identification of 5 issues for leadership development

## Assessment of level of complexity

- Refer Pages 8-10 of current document
- Review CIFTER as basis for assessing level of ‘management complexity’
- Consider PCAT categorization
- What is the origin of this section?

## Current Actions in the workplace / performance criteria

- Aim for reduced number of Actions in the Workplace’ / Performance Criteria
- ICCPM Complex Project Manager Standard has 321 ‘Actions in the Workplace’ / Performance Criteria
- Compared with
  - GAPPS Program Manager Framework – ~109
  - GAPPS Project Manager Framework - ~ 66
  - GAPPS Project Sponsor Framework - ~ 34

## Review of 'Actions in the Workplace'

From the SME review of 321 'Actions in the Workplace', 21 themes were identified and 266 Actions were retained. Of those that were retained a number were considered to be saying the same thing. These are included in **Appendix A** of this report. The next step is to merge Actions saying much the same thing and then to identify other sources to draw on to identify key competencies for leading in complexity in project contexts.

## Additional Notes and Actions from this session

- ICCPM and GAPPS will organise further review meetings between now and the next TLF
- Collin Smith will organise a review meeting in UK with key stakeholders
- To provide continuity:
  - Omar Castillo and Roy Sargent should be invited to attend additional review meetings held in Australia
  - Lesley Rider should be invited to any review meetings held in the UK
- It was suggested that a student Capstone team should be asked to identify additional sources relating to competence in complexity
- Thanks to Omar Castillo who entered results from this part of the review process into iThoughtsX as a basis for future work
- It was proposed that output from this TLF should be checked against other standards - PM, ProgM, Procurement, Change etc to remove anything covered in these other standards on the basis that the content of the ICCPM Project Complexity standards should not duplicate what is available and relevant elsewhere. These other standards should be clearly identified in the final document.

## APPENDIX A

Results of review and categorization of Actions in the Workplace are recorded in an Excel Spreadsheet available on request. Results of categorization are summarised in the table below.

In summary:

Category	Actions in the Workplace
Strategy - 7	7
Governance - 18	18
Ethics - 4	4
Review / Audit - 7	7
Resources - 5	5
Adaptive Planning - 12	12
Controls - 16	16
Communication - 13	13
Culture - 17	17
Change - 12	12
Procurement & Contracts - 16	16
Teams & Teamwork - 17	17
Self-awareness - 9	9
Awareness of others - 10	10
Innovation & Creativity - 6	6
Appreciation of complexity - 6	6
Sensitivity to environment - 5	5
Systems Thinking - 26	26
Stakeholder engagement - 6	6
Proactive Response - 5	5
Behaviours - 49	49
<b>Total retained</b>	<b>266</b>
<b>Total not considered relevant*</b>	<b>213</b>

\*Relevance relates to whether the action is specific to leadership in complexity or is addressed elsewhere eg in standards for project management, change management, procurement management etc.

**Note** that any discrepancy between number of Actions in the Workplace in the current Standard and the number indicated in the table above will be due to double counting during the categorization process and will be resolved during ongoing review.