

Project Management in Italy

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INTRODUCTION

This forth Regional Report includes an updated overview, including some analysis, about the people of Project Management in Italy, and, in its second part, an outline about Certifications in Italy, including an interesting contribution by Vito Introna, Associate Professor at University of Rome Tor Vergata.

THE PEOPLE OF PROJECT MANAGEMENT IN ITALY: AN OVERVIEW

If we consider the number of Certifications in Project Management that have been issued in 2018 as the best objective Key Performance Indicator of Project Management discipline, as may be it is appropriate, all figures confirm the extremely positive trend of last years: indeed, the overall number of certified Project Management practitioners plenty exceeded 20.000¹, and the 2017's trend of about 15% increase, which has been the greatest of all time in Italy, was almost confirmed. Approximately, while project management certifications started to be released in Italy 20 years ago, almost 2/3 of them has been issued in last five years: in particular, about 52% of total 20.000 certifications have been released by Istituto Italiano di Project management, ISIPM in short, 40% by PMI, and 8% by IPMA, respectively. In general, considering the total number of certifications, about 60% are Basic (ISIPM-Base, CAPM, etc.), while 40% are Advanced (PMP, ISIPM-Av, etc.). In 2018, there were more than 2.000 Basic

Certifications (96% ISIPM-Base, 4% CAPM), and almost 1.000 Advanced Certifications (about 70% PMP, 30% ISIPM-Av): it is absolutely remarkable both that ISIPM exceeded significantly the number of 10.000 certifications, and that, in few years, the Certification ISIPM Av succeeded to gain a share of 30% of the market.

From the analytical perspective, 2018 has been characterized by two greatly positive trends: first, a great increase in the number of project management certifications from the Public Administrations, and, second, a significant success of the approach “management by projects”, which uses project management discipline to target higher performances in efficacy and efficiency, not only in managing projects, but in managing operations and/or processes, too.

CERTIFICATIONS IN ITALY: AN OUTLINE

The National Certifications of the Italian independent Istituto Italiano di Project Management (Italian Institute of Project Management, ISIPM for short), i.e. the Basic ISIPM Base and the Advanced ISIPM Av, are both coherent with International Standards, as ISO 21500:2012 and PMBOK® GUIDE Sixth Edition, while ISIPM Av, moreover, conforms to ISO 21500. In general, the major Project Management Associations that operate in Italy are the National ISIPM, the International Project Management Institute, which is structured in three Chapters (PMI Northern Italy Chapter, PMI Central Italy Chapter, PMI Southern Italy Chapter), and also the International Project Management Association (IPMA), which is represented by its Member Association IPMA Italy. Each of these three organizations offers its own certification path in Project management, both at Basic and Advanced Levels: it can be interesting to notice that, in all Europe, in terms of Advanced Certifications, ISIPM, together with the largest National Association, the British APM - Association for Project Management, are the only National Project Management Associations that provide a “National Independent Certification Path”.

In addition, in Italy, since about two years, “Project Manager” was included in the “Certified Professionals”, too: in fact, UNI, the Italian Standardization Body, issued the National Standard “UNI 11648: Project Manager - Definizione dei requisiti di conoscenza, abilità e competenza (Project Manager - Definition of the Requirements in terms of Knowledge, Skills, and Competence)”, so that Project Managers that meet the above mentioned requirements can be certified by proper Accredited third-party Certification Bodies, after passing a written and oral examination (generally, written examination is not needed if the candidate holds an Advanced Certification in Project Management). The lists of Certified Project Managers, who also meet the additional requirements in terms of continuous training, are merged in a Public Consultation Databank, which is managed by ACCREDIA, the Italian Accreditation Body. Presently, these types of “Certified Professional Project Managers” are about 400.

In Italy, the coexistence of diverse certifications became a bit complex, and this generated some lack of clarity: I asked to Vito Introna, PhD, Associate Professor at University of Rome Tor Vergata, Member of ISIPM's both Executive and Scientific Committees, to give us some cues about what he calls "the strange story of Project Management Certifications in Italy":

«The development of Project Management Certification in Italy was not easy, maybe also because it was, at least initially, hindered by a limited cultural attitude with respect to both the planning and the usage of International Standards. Certification started to have a significant trend starting from 2003, especially because of the growth of PMP, and, then, in last ten years, trend increased definitively due to the great success of the Basic Certification ISIPM-Base, which in 2018 exceeded 10.000 units, then getting through also the total number of advanced certifications.

However, in last years there was also a turn of events: the approval of the Law 04/2013, whose purpose was to organize properly all those professions that were not previously included in already regulated professional bodies, encouraged UNI, the Italian Standardization Body, to issue the National Standard "UNI 11648: Project Manager - Definizione dei requisiti di conoscenza, abilità e competenza (Project Manager - Definition of the Requirements in terms of Knowledge, Skills, and Competence)". Based on this Standard, different Third-Party Certification Bodies, which were established based on International Standard ISO 17024, took the opportunity of defining certification schemes for professional project managers.

Above schemes, once they have been approved by ACCREDIA, the Italian Accreditation Body according to the European Community 765/2008, introduced a quite new scenario, also with respect to International environment. Indeed, domain of certifications has split in two, i.e. in certifications "de facto", released by International and National Associations recognized by the market, e.g. PMI, IPMA, and ISIPM, and in certifications "de iure", released by accredited Certification Bodies, e.g. Bureau Veritas, DNV, AICQ SICEV, recognized by ACCREDIA: in fact, above new situation generated a certain confusion, especially with respect to new practitioners. Initially, competition was dominant: on one side, there were the Project Management Associations with their Certifications "de facto", and with their already well developed market, on the other the Certification Bodies, with an even potentially superior role, especially with respect to the Public Administrations, which in these years may become one of the most important markets for the development of project management certifications.

Fortunately, quite soon, the spirit of cooperation among different parties started to prevail, and, today, almost all schemes of "de iure" certifications recognize the validity of the "de facto" advanced certifications, which are generally considered equivalent to the written "de iure" examinations. In this way, in Italy, there is a several-steps-scenario, in which specific paths are necessary to get project management certifications: in general, today, people who approach project management prefer a systematic path, which starts

with a Basic “de-facto” Certification, e.g. ISIPM-Base, CAPM, IPMA D, then continues with an Advanced “de facto” Certification, e.g. PMP, ISIPM-Av, IPMA B or C, and, finally, is completed with a professional “de iure” certification in accordance with UNI 11648 Standard. Actually, the different solutions, each one having its peculiar characteristics, offer to diverse professionals the possibility of configuring their own optimal path, according to their different sectors and levels of experience.

Ultimately, the strange story of the Project Management Certifications in Italy seems to move towards a happy conclusion: in fact, if diverse Certification Bodies and Associations, both “de iure” and “de facto”, will communicate clearly their offer, so allowing to the professionals to select their own specific best certification path, the number of certifications in Italy will grow also more rapidly than what is happening today. »

FOOTNOTES

¹ Data are a courtesy of Biagio Tramontana, ISIPM, and are updated as at December 31, 2018 (data relevant to IPMA Italy are not available anymore).

About the Author



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Massimo Pirozzi, MSc cum laude, Electronic Engineering, University of Rome “La Sapienza”, Principal Consultant, Project Manager, and Educator. He is a Member and the Secretary of the Executive Board, a Member of the Scientific Committee, and an accredited Master Teacher, of the Istituto Italiano di Project Management (Italian Institute of Project Management). He is certified as a Professional Project Manager, as an Information Security Management Systems Lead Auditor, and as an International Mediator. He is a Researcher, a Lecturer, and an Author about Stakeholder Identification and Management, Relationship Management, Complex Projects Management, and Project Management X.0.

Massimo has a wide experience in managing large and complex projects in national and international contexts, and in managing relations with public and private organizations, including multinational companies, small and medium-sized enterprises, research institutes, and non-profit organizations. He worked successfully in several sectors, including Defense, Security, Health, Education, Cultural Heritage, Transport, Gaming, and Services to Citizens. He was also, for many years, a Top Manager in ICT Industry, and an Adjunct Professor in Organizational Psychology. He is registered as an Expert of the European Commission, and as an Expert of the Italian Public Administrations.

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