

## Project Management Update from France <sup>1</sup>



**By Yasmina Khalifi**  
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### INTRODUCTION

In each report, 'I'll try to give you insights about project associations in France and some projects: this month, 'we'll discover PMI France and SMaP.

### PMI FRANCE



PMI France was founded in 1995.

PMI France was founded in 1995 and unified as one chapter in 2013.

With more 5200+ members, PMI France is the 1st Chapter outside of the U.S., 1st in Europe and regularly between the 3rd to the 5th in the world.

PMI France is a unified Chapter with 13 regional-land "branches": each branch can organize events, networking events, conferences, webinars, workshops, networking events, to name a few. To leverage this diversity, every two years, a "Forum of the Regions" is arranged; it is literally a nationwide Tour de France of Congresses: it is a series of local congresses in each land around a same common theme. It is an itinerant forum: kakemonos, and remaining marketing documentations are sent to each region.

This year forum took place on 1st of October and for the first time in a virtual mode.

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- 28 sessions with 5 conferences and 23 breakout sessions
- 9h45 of events !
- 8 partnerships virtual booths

Please navigate to <https://pmi-france.org/> for general information on the PMI France Chapter and its events.

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**Association for the promotion of project management in France (SMaP), one of the 72 Member Associations of IPMA.**

## **Interview with Frédéric d'Arrentières**

SMaP President



**Interviewed by Yasmina Khelifi**

International Correspondent, PM World Journal  
Paris, France

**Frédéric d'Arrentières** is Expert Leader in project management for Renault

With 30 years of experience in automotive project development in France and abroad (Brazil, Korea, Turkey, China, etc.) at different levels for the group, he was more recently responsible of the Fluence international project portfolio and quality director for the C-segment cars. He is now in charge of a strategic domain of expertise to advice, develop & transform the project management within the Renault group, developing for instance skills and leadership within project, and introducing agility at scale in large automotive industrial projects.

Frédéric is also IMPA level A certified and president of SMaP in France (Association for the promotion of project management) an association member of IPMA network.

## Interview

**Q1:** First of all, thank you for accepting an interview request from PMWJ. Could you tell us more about when the SMaP was created, the number of members?

The French association for project management (SMaP) was created in 2006, taking over from AFITEP born in 1982 after financial difficulties. SMaP is an association which now has today around 1000 members , mainly in France.

We have also 5 global companies member of SMaP : Thales, Naval Group, Nexter, Renault & Alstom, 13 companies involved in several SMaP working groups and regular contact with universities or business schools. Our favorite image to describe SMaP is the bridge.



**Website :** <https://www.smap-asso.eu>

**Linkedin :** <https://www.linkedin.com/company/smapasso/>

**Q2:** How does SMaP contribute in France to spread the project management practises and to advance the profession

The purpose of SMaP is to promote, structure and develop project management practices in France. We have 3 poles of activity.

First of all SMaP certification body issues around 600 certifications each year, mainly in the ICR4 repository of IPMA and ICEC related to PM specialties of planning, estimation, cost.

The second pole of the association is focused on bringing working groups into contact with experts or associates within our network wishing to develop specific themes such as AI and project modeling, planning, economic estimation or agility at scale in industrial projects.

Finally, the association organizes thematic conferences or webinars to allow members of the association to develop their knowledge and build their network. For instance, we recently had a conference on 4D scheduling, which combines traditional planning tools with the digital model for construction industry. Last July, we had a webinar by 2 researchers presenting their work on the impact of “remote working” and collaboration in projects, as well as a testimony from a manager of the Total group after a 30 years international career of project manager in more than twenty countries.

**Q3:** How does SMaP collaborate with other French project management associations, like PMI France?

We do not have direct collaboration with the PMI today, mainly for lack of time because we are a voluntary association. I remember having read the PM book, which is a very comprehensive work on project management, SMaP favors the development of its network and links with IPMA, and his focusing on project management skills & practice sharing. It could be an opportunity in the future to join our effort, before that SMaP has to ensure a sustainable position on the long term.

**Q4:** What is the strategy of SMaP in the 5 coming years in France?

We haven't established a 5-year strategic plan because the environment is too disrupted for that. Rather, we try to adapt and evolve by staying focused on our purpose. Last January we established a 2-year strategic plan to accelerate our development because our association is still too modest given the potential in France compared to certain countries such as Germany, Russia or Netherlands.

The ambition of our plan is as follows:

- Develop our network of project professionals, make it better connected for the benefit of all with an adapted offer: monthly webinars, newsletter, afterwork, skill support or exchange of expertise ...
- Expand our portfolio of member companies beyond our historical partners (Thales, Alstom, Nexter, Renault, Naval group) and proposed tailored offers,
- Put SMaP in contact with new players in the project ecosystem such as associations, local authorities, cultural projects, consulting companies, etc.
- Better integrate a panel of schools and universities active in the field of project management and research to prepare for the future by involving the younger generations
- Continue to develop our certification programs by diversifying the offer (IPMA, ACCEI or others),
- Open the scientific society of SMaP to the academic and research world, answer companies needs to help them prepare the future, strengthen connections with

international associations, and provide even more content on project management for our entire network,

- Develop training program IPMA reg accreditation with companies, university, business schools & institutions.

**Q5:** According to you, how will this strategy be affected by the covid19 outbreak?

Our capacity to finance our development is limited and the efforts of the association are mainly based on voluntary activities, so we must prioritize our targets. In its context our plan has not been fundamentally change but we have integrated new remote working condition as everybody. As result the achievement in 2021 is positive but the association is effectively weakened given the limited opportunity for having direct contacts between association members. This is a real risk in the mid term we want to overcome.

**Q6:** How are project management skills and project management certifications perceived in France?

Management and project skills are relatively well-known in France, but on the other hand many “tech companies” put forward technical expertise and digital before managerial skills. Certification is being developed in a number of large companies such as Thales, Alstom, Renault, Naval Group, or Nexter have had global certification programs since several years with SMaP. These companies represents the key pillar of our association. The certification is useful because it guarantees a maturity of the project leaders in charge. In the framework of large companies it helps to develop project career path. For the future I aslo can see some companies looking for more focused “leadership” programs & certification.

**Q8:** Will project management skills be more required in the new normal in France? Why?

Projects are present everywhere, yesterday and today, in small or large companies, in charity associations which are numerous in France, in administrations, in the world of sport and social action. The project mode has been key for a very long time and will remain because it allows a transversal dynamic in organizations. Project is the second leg of the permanent organizations to achieve their goal in the society.

**Q9:** Do you have a last message to PM World Journal readers, please?

Big changes are happening and will happen in the way we conduct projects in the future. One key question for me is to imagine new collaborative spaces of the project organization. Digital, AI, block chain integration in one hand, massive remote working condition on the other hand, the traditional network boundaries of actors involved in project will disappear, stake holder management skills will be key. The space for project collaboration will be upset and new modes of project cooperation will emerge. A good reason to read the advances and new perspectives developed by the PM World Journal.

## About the Author



### **Yasmina Khelifi**

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**Yasmina Khelifi**, PMP, PMI- ACP, PMI-PBA is an experienced project manager in the telecom industry. Along with her 20-year career at [Orange S.A.](#) (the large French multinational telecommunications corporation), she sharpened her global leadership skills, delivering projects with major manufacturers and SIM makers. Yasmina strives for building collaborative bridges between people to make international projects successful. She relies on three pillars: project management skills, the languages she speaks, and a passion for sharing knowledge.

She is a PMP certification holder since 2013, a PMI- ACP and PMI-PBA certification holder since 2020. She is an active volunteer member at PMI France and PMI UAE, and a member of PMI Germany Chapter. French-native, she can speak German, English, Spanish, Italian, Japanese and she is learning Arabic. Yasmina loves sharing her knowledge and experiences at work, in her 'volunteers' activities at PMI, and in projectmanagement.com as a regular blogger. She is also the host and co-founder of the podcast [Global Leaders Talk with Yasmina Khelifi](#) to help people in becoming better international leaders.

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