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Commentary

Reinstating Excellence: The AIPM's Organizational Capability Accreditation
by David Hudson

Reinstating Excellence: The Australian Institute of Project Management's Organizational Capability Accreditation [1]

David Hudson, FAIPM, FIPMA, FIML, ChPP, CPPE

Introduction

In the fast-paced and increasingly complex world of project management, the ability of organizations to consistently deliver successful outcomes is crucial. As global markets become more competitive, the demand for high standards in project management has never been greater. Recognizing this need, the Australian Institute of Project Management (AIPM) has reinstated its organizational certification under the banner of the Registered Project Management Corporation (RegPMC) accreditation. This certification is a hallmark of excellence, signifying an organization's commitment to superior project management practices and its leadership in the field.

Historical Context

The journey towards excellence in organizational project management began with the Australian Institute of Project Management's (AIPM) introduction of the Project Managed Organisation Award in 2002. This award was created in response to the growing need then for organizations to formalize and validate their project management capabilities, setting a benchmark for industry standards. As the field of project management evolved with new methodologies, tools, and practices, AIPM recognized the need to enhance the award to keep pace with these advancements. Consequently, the original program was paused to allow for a comprehensive review and update.

The recent reinstatement of this award, retitled as the Registered Project Management Corporation (RegPMC) accreditation, reflects AIPM's ongoing commitment to providing organizations with a rigorous and contemporary framework for achieving and demonstrating project management excellence. This updated certification not only honors the legacy of the original award but also ensures that organizations are equipped to meet the challenges of today's dynamic project management landscape**.**

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The RegPMC Accreditation: Setting the Standard

The RegPMC accreditation evaluates organizations across ten key categories, ensuring they target and challenge better practices in project management. These categories provide a holistic review of organisations as exemplars in the industry by recognizing their commitment to excellence and continuous improvement, while allowing for practicality and organisational context.

- **Leadership:** The accreditation assesses the effectiveness of an organization's leadership, focusing on how senior management sets a clear vision for project management and demonstrates active engagement. Leadership is evaluated on its ability to communicate and support project teams, ensuring that project management is a strategic priority within the organization.

- **Governance:** Effective governance is key to ensuring oversight, accountability, and alignment with organizational goals. The RegPMC criteria evaluate the clarity of hierarchical structures, the establishment of project governance frameworks such as a Project Management Office (PMO), and the presence of oversight bodies that ensure compliance with governance standards.

- **Strategy:** Strategic alignment of project management with the broader organizational objectives is essential for success. The accreditation examines how project management is integrated into strategic planning, ensuring that programs and projects are selected based on business value. It also looks at the ongoing oversight of project portfolios to maintain alignment with strategic goals.

- **Results Focus:** Delivering measurable outcomes is a core expectation of accredited organizations. This category assesses the application of benefits management across programs and projects, the establishment of clear and measurable objectives, and the analysis of performance against these objectives to ensure continuous improvement.

- **Risk Management:** Proactive risk management is critical for successful project execution. The accreditation examines how organizations align their risk policies with corporate risk appetite, integrate risk reporting across all project levels, and conduct regular reviews to manage and mitigate risks effectively.

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- **Stakeholders:** Understanding and meeting the needs of stakeholders is vital for project success. The RegPMC criteria evaluate the effectiveness of stakeholder engagement strategies, including market understanding, relationship management, and the incorporation of stakeholder feedback into project processes.

- **Standards and Quality:** Adherence to industry standards and a commitment to quality are key components of the accreditation. Organizations are assessed on their integration of regulatory requirements, the establishment of quality assurance processes across portfolios and projects, and their commitment to continuous improvement in quality management.

- **Systems, Information, and Knowledge Management:** Efficient and effective project management relies on robust systems and information management. The accreditation assesses how organizations optimize project reporting, data capture, and knowledge management to support decision-making and enhance project outcomes.

- **People:** Building a capable and motivated project team is essential for success. This category evaluates the organization's approach to resource planning, professional development, and the promotion of a collaborative project management environment. It also looks at how organizations encourage and facilitate continuous learning and improvement among project staff.

- **Project Management Framework:** A well-defined project management framework ensures consistency and effectiveness across all projects. The accreditation evaluates the establishment of approved methodologies, the support and surveillance provided to project teams, and the application of continuous improvement practices within the framework.

The Assessment Process

Achieving RegPMC accreditation is a thorough process that requires organisational commitment to undergo a detailed evaluation, backed by evidentiary proof. The process involves a review of the organization's project management practices across these core criteria. Depending on the organization's size and complexity, an on-site evaluation may also be conducted to gain deeper insights into the practice implementation in real-world scenarios.

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Throughout the assessment, the organisation is provided with feedback on areas of strength as well as opportunities for improvement. Organizations are given the chance to address any identified gaps before a final accreditation decision is made. Once accredited, organizations are granted the right to use the RegPMC badge—a symbol of their commitment to project management excellence.

Recognizing Fit-for-Purpose Practices

The RegPMC accreditation acknowledges organizations that employ innovative and fit-for-purpose approaches to project management. The award celebrates organizations that tailor better practices to their specific needs and contexts. AIPM is particularly interested in how organizations apply creativity and practicality in their project management processes, ensuring that their approach is both effective and sustainable. This focus on context and innovation means that organizations of all sizes and industries can pursue this certification, knowing that it values real-world applicability over idealized standards.

Global Implications and Future Outlook

The reinstatement of the RegPMC accreditation is a significant development not only for Australian organizations but also for the global project management community. As organizations worldwide seek to enhance their project management capabilities, this certification provides a clear benchmark of excellence. It demonstrates an organization's ability to deliver projects that meet the highest standards of quality, efficiency, and sustainability.

Looking ahead, AIPM is committed to ensuring that the RegPMC accreditation remains relevant in a rapidly changing world. As new trends and technologies emerge, the criteria and assessment processes will continue to evolve, providing organizations with the tools and frameworks they need to aspire to project management excellence.

Conclusion

The reinstatement of organisational accreditation by AIPM marks a new chapter in the pursuit of project management excellence. For organizations that achieve this certification, it is more than just a badge of honor—it is a testament to their leadership, innovation, and commitment to delivering outstanding project outcomes. As the business environment continues to evolve, the RegPMC accreditation will play a vital role in shaping the future of project management, both in Australia and around the world.

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About the Author

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David Hudson, FAIPM, FIPMA, FIML, ChPP, CPPE is an Australian based project professional with national and international recognition. Having been a practicing professional for over 25 years, he has made major contributions to the project management community at large. David started professional life as an Infantry officer in the Australian Army, transitioning to project management through a number of challenging and complex projects in the Australian public sector. David describes his transition to project management as partly natural, through the alignment of military planning practices with project management practices. But it was also challenging from a cultural and contextual perspective. His first professional project role was as head of the Lead Agency for Payroll and Human Resource Information Systems across the Queensland State Government with a 300,000 head count. He has since moved to his own consultancy practice advising public and private sector organisations in best practice enterprise project management. He is also a noted trainer at all levels of the practice from project to portfolio management.

David has been National President of the Australian Institute of Project Management (AIPM) and Vice President of the International Project Management Association (IPMA). He is a Fellow of both organisations in addition to being a Fellow of the Australian based Institute of Management and Leadership (IML). David is a Certified Practicing Portfolio Executive with the AIPM and has recently been acknowledged as a Chartered Project Professional by the UK based Association of Project Management. Life-long learning is a mantra for David; finding every consulting and training assignment to provide fresh information on the practice of project management. The most recent area of interest for David is the challenge for the practice of engaging with the 'C-Suite' of organisations to develop effective integration between organisational and project strategy.

David has played a substantial role as Chair of Standards in his national body in developing professional competency standards, and with the IPMA as the original Program Lead for the development of the IPMA Competence Baseline v.4. He champions competency

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frameworks for major organisations; advocating organisations to access the benefits of national and international professional communities in the journey for project management delivery excellence.

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