

It's time for project management!

Interview with Peter Thuy

President of GPM
German Project Management Association
Nuremberg, Germany



Interviewed by Yasmina Khelifi

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Introduction to the interviewee

Peter Thuy is President of GPM – Deutsche Gesellschaft für Projektmanagement e.V., Germany's biggest independent project management association and Vice-President for Membership for the International Project Management Association (IPMA). Before he studied business administration and received his doctoral degree as well as his professorial qualification (Habilitation) from the university of Bayreuth. After jobs in assurance and at the university, he served for more than 20 years as rector and managing director for IU International University, a private university which he helped to develop from 23 to more than 77,000 students into Germany's biggest university. Before being elected President of GPM, Peter worked as an independent investor and advisor. You can reach Peter via email p.thuy@gpm-ipma.de or via LinkedIn at <https://www.linkedin.com/in/peter-thuy-a5000410/>

Interview

Q1: First, thank you for accepting an interview request from PMWJ. Could you remind us of some facts about GPM: mission, history, numbers of members?

Peter Thuy (Thuy): As a non-profit organisation we have a large network of project managers from economy, academy and public sector. Since 1979 our mission is to promote efficient and sustainable project management for small, middle and large projects. With 5000 members, nearly 80 regional and special interest groups we are one of the largest country organizations within International Project Management Association (IPMA). Our organisation contributes professionalization and advancement of project management in Germany and offers extensive opportunities for training, further education and certification in project management. For over 40 years we have certificated experts at different levels according to IPMA standard. We are convinced: It is time for project management! Nowadays more than ever.

Q2: How is GPM organized and governed?

Thuy: The GPM is based in Nuremberg and Berlin. The tasks of our 60 employees include among other things certification, mentoring of our members, marketing, product and event management. As the president it is my job to lead this non-profit organisation, to develop and implement strategies and concepts für products and services. I am also supported by many volunteers who are engaged in different committees with the tasks of monitoring, budgeting, elections and concrete decisions on what actions to take.

Q3: What are GPM's main activities and events each year?

Thuy: The GPM provides different certifications to many experts based on IPMA standard through authorized partner. We are also engaged in research and development activities like publishing of books, studies and presenting awards in project management. Every year the GPM organizes over 250 events, including workshops, networking opportunities and thematic presentations for further education. The "PM Forum" is our largest event where project manager come together for upper-level training and networking. For 2025 we organize a very special event – we will bring the 34. IPMA World Congress to Berlin! For this highlight-event we expect 1000 advanced experts, decision-makers and innovators from up to 80 nations from all over the world to celebrate IPMA's 60th birthday. Within two days we offer international keynotes, special presentations, practical workshops and best practises for trendsetting topics in project management.

Q4: What are the main characteristics of the project world in Germany and how is it going to evolve according to you?

Thuy: Our project world in Germany is becoming more and more complex, interconnected and dynamic. Because over 30 % of Germanys GDP is generated through projects, we are focussed on addressing structure, professional execution and increase in efficiency.

Future tasks of GPM include ongoing efforts to make the benefits of professional project management more visible and further development of methods and standards – nationally and internationally.

Q5: How is a project management organization like GPM contributing to society?

Thuy: Besides the qualification and accreditation GPM has a strong voluntary network, organized in regional and special interest groups. Besides that, GPM is actively working with non-profit organizations, helping them to be more efficient and better organized.

Q6: GPM is a member association in IPMA; how does that relationship work and how does it benefit GPM or its members?

Thuy: GPM is one of the largest member associations of IPMA and is actively contributing to a lot of activities, like product and standards development. GPM members serve as Vice President, Member of the CVMB, Head of Standard Development Committee and in various other groups and committees.

Q7: In addition to IPMA, does GPM actively cooperate with other organizations, for example the PMI Germany chapter, PM Austria or IAPM? Or others in Germany, Austria or Switzerland, due to common language?

Thuy: GPM has an active and strong cooperation with PM Austria and SPM, the Swiss project management association. We do conferences and workshops together, cooperate in accreditation issues and both associations distribute our journal PM AKTUELL amongst their membership base.

With PMI we do have occasional talks about the market and activities both associations undertake.

Q8: What do you envision for GPM in the two coming years?

Thuy: There are three major things we want to improve in the next two years. First of all, our members and partners will constantly work on answers, project management can provide to get along with the two big questions the global society has to find answers for: sustainability and digital transformation. Secondly GPM is aiming at improving its own position as one of the leading qualification and certification networks

for PM in Germany. In that respect we are on the way to improve our materials and find answers for the challenges that new technologies and a changing learning habit of individuals provides to us. And last but not least we will continue to improve our internal organisation and processes, giving answer to expectations of our members and taking opportunities of digitization.

Q9: You have a long experience in the academic and educational world; how did you come to project management?

Thuy: To be honest, my major experience with project management before I was elected president of GPM was in the role of a sponsor, who was supported by a PMO. But I experienced project management and especially agile project management as a very efficient tool to develop an organization and to improve the performance of an institution.

Q10: What was your most challenging project? How did you manage it?

Thuy: The most challenging project I am managing presently is the digitization of GPM because there are so many factors and stakeholder interests to consider. Besides that, GPM internalizes a lot of IT-services we got from the market up to now. In order to manage this project, GPM uses its own PMO, that coordinates separate project managers for every string of the project. Within the subproject we make use of an agile project management setup. In my university career it was for sure the institutional accreditation of the university, led by the German Council of Science.

Q11: Do you have a last message to PWJ readers, please?

Thuy: During my short time at GPM I have experienced even more than before that project management is a tool and a philosophy that can enormously contribute to improving entrepreneurial activities and to making the economy more successful. But at the same time, PM can contribute to progress in society and help to make the world a better place. Both factors justify the effort of GPM and all the other PM organisations to advocate for project management. It's time for project management!

About the Interviewer



Yasmina Khelifi

Paris, France



Yasmina Khelifi, PMP, PMI- ACP, PMI-PBA is an experienced project manager in the telecom industry. Along with her 20-year career at [Orange SA](#) (the large French multinational telecommunications corporation), she sharpened her global leadership skills, delivering projects with significant 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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