Development of the AIPM Competency Standards

History of the Standards

In the early 1990s the AIPM developed project management competency standards for the their certification process (RegPM). The AIPM adopted the *PMBOK® Guide* as the knowledge-base for the standards, structured around nine units of knowledge:

1. Integration management
2. Scope management
3. Time management
4. Cost management
5. Quality management
6. Human resources management
7. Communications management
8. Risk management
9. Procurement management

These standards were later incorporated into a number of national Training Packages aligned to the Australian Qualification Framework (AQF) levels 4, 5 and 6 and became the National Competency Standards for Project Management (NCSPM) which was developed by the AIPM in consultation with industry and under the auspices of the now defunct Australian National Training Authority (ANTA) and were first published in 1996.

The NCSPM, was reviewed and updated in the period 2001 to 2003 with ANTA facilitating the review process in conjunction with the *Global Working Group for Standards* (GWGS). After extensive consultation with industry groups and users of the NCSPM and several drafts the up-dates Standards were released in 2003.

From July 22, 2005 ANTA was disbanded and The Department of Education, Science and Training took over the responsibilities of ANTA.

Competency units within the NCSPM are currently established against the Certificate IV, Diploma and Advanced Diploma qualifications levels set out within the Government accredited Australian Qualifications Framework. (see: http://www.aqf.edu.au/aqfqual.htm).

The new AIPM Standards

Since the 2003 review, the project management body of knowledge and industry expectations of project management have increased substantially. As a result industry voiced the need for;

- Upgrading the standards to meet industry needs.
- Higher levels of performance from project managers, particularly those working at the senior management level.

Development of the new Standards

The content of the new Standards has been based on a review and alignment of the following national and international project management standards.

- AIPM project management standards
- International Project Management Association (IPMA) standards
- UK Association of Project Management (APM) standards
- US Project Management Institute (PMI) standards
- Complex Project Managers standards © Commonwealth of Australia

- Innovation and Business Services Australia (IBSA) project management standards (the 'old' AIPM standards).

Development of the Standards included a desk top review of current research in areas of skill gaps in project management, future PM trends and a review of existing international standards such as those mentioned above. From this research, gaps in existing standards and areas where project management practice was falling short were identified. These findings provided the framework for the first draft of the standards.

During the development phase, preliminary reviews were conducted by a network of key practitioners from a range of industry sectors identified by the Technical Standards Committee. Mosaic participated actively in this review process. The Technical Standards Committee was made up of individuals who were primarily project management practitioners. The committee members facilitated feedback from networks that each committee member had access to and as well it was distributed to an Industry Reference Group for feedback.

A draft incorporating feedback was placed on the AIPM website and feedback was sought for a period of four months. The feedback was incorporated and national seminars and teleconferences were held. Project management practitioners and AIPM assessors attended and provided detailed feedback. Any general comments or feedback that was not consistent with other feedback was collected and grouped for discussion and action by a Standards Review Group. Membership of this group included AIPM assessors and project practitioners.

These Standards were developed for AIPM's use in assessing applicants for the RegPM program and the program is now aligned to the June 2008 AIPM Professional Competency Standards for Project Management. The standard is in four parts:

- Part A - Introduction
- Part B - Certified Practising Project Practitioner
- Part C - Certified Practising Project Manager
- Part D - Certified Practising Project Director

Copies of the Standards can be downloaded from: http://www.aipm.com.au/html/pcspm.cfm

The intention is that these Standards will be adjusted to suit the AQF requirement and then submitted to Innovation and Business Skills Australia (IBSA) for consideration as the new National Standards for project management within the Vocational Education and Training sector. AIPM are also considering expanding the range of standards to include 'Senior Project Manager'.

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