Chapter XVIII
Developing a Basis for Global Reciprocity:
Negotiating Between the Many Standards for Project Management

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ABSTRACT

Professional standards are a significant issue for professions such as IT and project management, where certification and licensure are either necessary to practice or to demonstrate individual competence and capability. In many professions there is no basis for international reciprocity of professional standards. This paper documents the development of a standard for global reciprocity between already existing professional standards in the field of project management. Data are based on personal involvement by the authors and interviews with participants. This discussion addresses different approaches to standardisation, how common issues in the standardisation process have been addressed, and how the hindering influence of the professional associations' proprietorial interest was avoided. Significantly different standards of development processes have been used compared to those typical in Project Management standards development, including: an emphasis on negotiation and joint modification rather than market dominance, and an open access approach, rather than one based on exclusion and gate-keeping.

INTRODUCTION

The role of standards in professional licensure and certification has been an important issue for many years. As early as 1953, Carey wrote that the "… medical profession, the dental profession and the

certified public accountants have all used standard examinations for many years and with outstanding success …" (Carey, 1953, p. 36). In 1962 Milton Friedman commented that occupational licensure was then very widespread (Friedman, 1962, p. 139). Researchers have found continuing agitation to extend standardisation to more professions (Leland, 1980, p. 265), and this does not seem to be reducing, with Blind and Thumm (2004, p. 61) recently finding that the number of standards has "… risen tremendously." In the IT industry, certification has been raised from a hiring tool to a screening tool, with high-level certification being necessary for consideration in many jobs (George, 2002, p. 76).

Standards development should be pursued critically and with care, with some industries needing to revisit the role that standards play within the community. For instance, in the IT industry, certification is often viewed as a vital way to indicate competence. However, studies have found that professional IT certification is not a robust predictor of ability (Cegielski, 2004, p. 105). One study found that "… no statistically significant difference exists between the capabilities of certified network professionals and non-certified network professionals …" (Cegielski, et al., 2003, p. 97). IT standards of certification and accreditation may even mask a lack of the very qualities that employers are looking for (Schrage, 2004, p. 1).

Over the last decade, the profession of Project Management has moved from one typified by isolated national standards to one struggling with the process of creating global professional standards for knowledge, education, and workplace performance. The profession has developed from clusters of professionals sharing knowledge at a company or industry level, to commonly accepted national frameworks for Project Management, and is now moving towards globally accepted and transferable qualifications in the profession. This paper examines recent efforts to create a framework for global reciprocity between Project Management standards. This is discussed in relation to professional licensure and certification in general, different approaches to standardisation, and recent failures to create globally applicable standards for Project Management.

Project Management Standards: From Community to Profession

Modern Project Management may be considered to have had its genesis in the international arena when, in the 1950s (Stretton, 1994; Morris, 1994), companies such as Bechtel began to use the term "project manager" in their international work, primarily on remote sites. Before long, local communities of Project Management practice developed, becoming formalized in national Project Management professional associations. The development of standards in Project Management began with recognition of shared interests, resulting in fairly informal community gatherings. Through regular meetings and recognition of shared experience, practitioners began to think of themselves as a community and a profession. This led to attempts to define and delineate that profession in order to make it visible and acceptable to those outside the community (Crawford, 2004b, pp. 1389-90).

Dean (1997) identifies seven building blocks of a profession, characteristics that distinguish it from a community. These are: a store or body of knowledge that is more than ordinarily complex; a theoretical understanding of the area of practice; ability to apply theoretical and complex knowledge to a practice; a desire to add to and improve the body of knowledge; a formal process for transferring the body of knowledge and associated practices; established criteria for admission, legitimate practice, and proper conduct (standards and certification); and an altruistic spirit.

Of these building blocks, bodies of knowledge, standards, and certification programs have been of particular significance to Project Management. Before an industry attains a certain maturity,

standardisation is of little value. It is less likely to have an interest in standards, or to accept them as valuable. For an immature industry, where new ideas and technologies are in the process of being developed, there is little benefit to investing energy in standardisation, due to the rate of change in the industry (Steele, 2004, p. 42). An interest in standards can then be seen as an indicator of a certain level of maturity within the profession.

A variety of benefits have been identified which accrue from standardisation. General benefits which apply to both technological and professional standardisation include encouragement of technological innovation, guaranteeing marketplace choice, competition, and convenience (JEDEC, 2004, p. 11). Standardisation can also be used as a strategy for fostering economic growth via the broad diffusion of technology and technical rules, and shaping foreign markets according to the specification of local technologies and products (Blind & Thumm, 2004).

At a professional level, standardisation delineates clear professional boundaries, and can be seen as a way of increasing the esteem of a profession. For instance, recent arguments have been made for certification and licensure of HR professionals as a way of increasing respect (Brown, 2005, p. 5). Professional standards are also described as being of benefit to organisations, through acting as "… enablers of more efficient and effective use of resources delivering economic sustainable development" (Bredillet, 2003, p. 464). Furthermore, standardisation can be used as a competitive strategy for new entrants opposing the dominance of existing firms (Baskin, Krechmer, & Sherif, 1998, p. 55).

Project Management Standards: From Local to Global Profession

In the early stages of the development of Project Management as a profession, bodies of knowledge, standards, and certification programs were predominantly developed by independent professional associations, usually taking a proprietary view of the products they developed. This resulted in the proliferation of competing Project Management standards and certification programs, the majority of which were largely local in their origin, and limited in their application to a narrow range of project types within a single culture.

However, by the second half of the 1990s, it was becoming clear that Project Management practitioners and application areas were becoming increasingly global. It is now often the case that projects are shared across multiple international organisations. The application of Project Management had extended beyond international projects, managed offshore by nationally-based companies, to use by global corporations through globally distributed operations and projects (Crawford, 2004b, pp. 1390-1).

Further incentive to develop globally applicable Project Management standards came from outside the profession. The North American Free Trade Agreement, 1993 and the World Trade Organization's General Agreement on Trade in Services, 1994, required the "... development of policies that evaluate professional competence based on fair, objective criteria and transparent (publicly known) procedures" (Lenn, 1997, p. 2). These agreements put pressure on established professions and their professional associations to consider mutually acceptable standards in cooperation with other countries and to actively plan for reciprocal recognition at a minimum.

Unlike the majority of IT standards, Project Management standards are not technical documents. IT standards often describe the characteristics of physical artefacts, algorithms, or processes, that although complex, are unambiguous once understood and can easily transcend cultural and language boundaries. By contrast, professional standards, such as those that apply to certification in the IT industry and Project Management, describe human practice, knowledge, and skills. Such concepts are open to considerable interpretation. This is especially true in the context

of an industry that is still defining professional boundaries, and where practitioners from different cultures potentially have inconsistent appreciations of what the profession actually is.

Creating new standards by consensus is a difficult process. Even for technical standards, it "… may not be clear what the best technical solution actually is" (Warner, 2003, p. 7). This ambiguity is exacerbated in the development of Project Management standards, where it is arguable whether there is any such thing as a "best" solution. Rather, standards which reach the marketplace are often the product of lengthy political negotiation and act as accommodated positions between the different professional associations.

Dramatis Personae: Project Management Professional Associations

The Project Management Institute (PMI) is the largest of the Project Management professional associations. PMI originated in North America in 1969, and now has a significant membership. Membership grew at 37.9 percent in 2005, resulting in a total of 212,000 individual members (PMI, 2006). The Institute itself claims that as

…a steward of the project management profession, PMI has the distinction of being one of the fastest growing professional organizations in the world. (PMI, 2005a)

The PMI has developed arguably the most significant Project Management standard, the *PMBOK® Guide* (PMI, 2004), currently in its third edition. The *PMBOK® Guide* is approved as an American National Standard by ANSI and is recognised by the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers as an IEEE standard (PMI, 2005b). However, it has been developed in North America for a predominantly North American audience, and found to describe a form of Project Management that is not culturally suited to some application areas (Muriithi & Crawford, 2003). Nonetheless, the *PMBOK® Guide* has become a de facto international standard for Project Management knowledge.

The Australian Institute of Project Management (AIPM), is the Australian national project management association, and had over 6,000 members distributed over eight state and territory chapters by 2006. The AIPM remained unopposed as the national Project Management association until 1996, when the first of a number of PMI chapters was chartered in Australia. By 2003, there were PMI chapters in most Australian capital cities (PMI, 2003a), with a total membership of 1,500 (PMI, 2003b). Relationships between the AIPM and the Australian PMI chapters varies from friendly cooperation to active competition (Crawford, 2004b, p. 1395).

By contrast, project managers in South Africa were for many years represented by a PMI Chapter, first formed in 1982. The PMI South Africa Chapter continues to exist, but Project Management South Africa (PMSA), a separate national association, was established in 1997 to satisfy local economic and regulatory requirements. Unlike Australia, because PMSA was essentially formed by members of the PMI South Africa Chapter, there is a far closer and more consistently cooperative relationship between PMSA and PMI. Membership of PMSA increased from 400 at formation in 1997 to over 1,200 in 2003.

In the UK, the Association for Project Management (APM) was formed in 1972, and currently has more than 13,500 individual and 300 corporate members (APM, 2005). APM has developed an independent knowledge standard, the *APM Body of Knowledge* (2006), currently in its fifth edition. This document takes a significantly different perspective on project management than that presented by the *PMBOK® Guide* (PMI, 2004) in terms of both what is considered to be of relevance and how this information is conveyed.

The Japan Project Management Forum (JPMF) is a division of the Engineering Advancement As-

sociation (ENAA), which was founded in 1978 as a non-profit organisation based on corporate rather than individual membership. ENAA addresses the needs of industry and corporations, with membership encompassing 250 engineering and project-based companies. JPMF acts as the professional association for individual practitioners. ENAA has published *P2M: A Guidebook of Project & Program Management for Enterprise Innovation* (2002), including an English translation.

Established in 1991 in China, the Project Management Research Council (PMRC) supports over 100 universities and companies and 3,500 active individual members from universities, industries, and government. In 1994 the PMRC initiated, with support from the China Natural Science Fund, the development of a *Chinese Project Management Body of Knowledge* (C-PMBOK), which was published together with the *China-National Competence Baseline* (C-NCB) in 2001.

The International Project Management Association (IPMA), was initiated in 1965 (IPMA 2003; Stretton, 1994). The IPMA has evolved into a network, or federation, comprising 30 national Project Management associations representing approximately 20,000 members, primarily in Europe but also in Africa and Asia (IPMA, 2003). The largest member of the IPMA is the UK APM, which has had considerable influence on the development of the IPMA. An earlier version of the *APM Body of Knowledge* (APM, 2006) was one of the key documents referenced in writing of the *ICB: IPMA Competence Baseline* (IPMA, 1999). So far, the successes of the IPMA has been hampered by its federated structure, by the differing priorities of its national association members, and by lack of funds available for international and global development (Crawford, 2004b, p. 1393).

Blum (2005) divides standards generation processes into public and industrial standardisation. Public standardisation can be managed through national or sector-specific approaches, while industrial standardisation processes can be company based or managed through consortia. In the IT industry "…the competition between public standardization and consortium-based standardization had been won and lost around the turn of the millennium, in favour of the latter …" (Blum, 2005, p. 3).

Nonetheless, in the Project Management community, a variety of public qualifications bodies have ongoing significant influence over the development of Project Management standards. Innovation and Business Skills Australia (IBSA), the South African Qualifications Association (SAQA), and the UK Engineering and Construction Industry Training Board (ECITB) all have their own standards for Project Management qualification, while the New Zealand Qualifications Association has a cooperative agreement with Australia.

Established PM Standards

Project Management standards development has so far relied on a market-based approach. Many of the challenges facing the globalisation of Project Management as a profession and community of practice relate to competition between the various professional associations, which have tended to remain locally focused and exclusionary about the knowledge created by their communities. Qualifications gained under one professional association are not usually recognised for equivalence by other professional associations, although the performance of practitioners qualified by different professional associations may still be equivalent.

There are currently a wide variety of guides and standards, focusing on different aspects of the profession. These have been classified by Duncan (1998) as belonging to one of three categories:

- **Projects:** Focusing on the knowledge and practices for management of individual projects.

Table 1. Project Management standards focusing on people, projects and organisations

People	Projects	Organisations
Engineering Construction Industry Training Board (ECITB)	A Guide to the Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK ® Guide)	Guidebook for Project and Program Management for Enterprise Innovation (P2M)
South African Qualification Authority (SAQA)	International Project Management Association Competence Baseline (ICB)	Organizational Project Management Maturity Model (OPM3)
National Competency Standards for Project Management (NCSPM)	The Association for Project Management Body of Knowledge (APM BoK)	Office of Government Commerce Managing Successful Programmes (OGC MSP)
	British Standards (BS 6079)	Office of Government Commerce Project Management Maturity Model (OGC PMMM)
	International Standards Organization (ISO 10006)	Projects in Controlled Environments (PRINCE 2)

- **Organisations:** Focusing on enterprise project management knowledge and practices.
- **People:** Focusing on the development, assessment, and registration/certification of people.

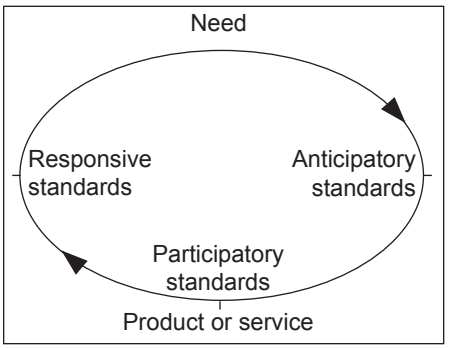
Existing Project Management standards can be grouped according to these categories (see Table 1). Only some of these standards are discussed here. For a comprehensive review, refer to Crawford (2004b).

Most Project Management standards have been developed through industrial coalitions and consortia, many of which later go on to receive Government endorsement. By far the most popular standards in Project Management are those which focus on projects, the most popular of which have been developed by industry consortia. ISO 10006 and BS 6079 occupy relatively small market shares, compared to the PMBOK ® Guide and APM BoK.

Standards focusing on organisations have also been predominantly created by industry consortia, but their emergence is more recent, and are subsequently less prevalent. By contrast, the Project Management standards which focus on people have all been developed publicly, and are generally in the form of performance-based competency standards. The majority of these have been specifically designed for assessment purposes, and provide the basis for the award of qualifications within national qualifications frameworks.

Warner (2003) has distinguished between market-based standards and formal processes for creating standards. "In market-based battles, the standard follows success in the market by definition" (p. 2). The standard is recognised as such because it is the strongest survivor, and success may be based on a pre-existing market or good marketing, rather than inherent value. By contrast, standards created through formal processes are products of negotiation, anticipatory and often pre-competitive. Their development may be the result of a perceived need within the industry, and may have little to do with the existing support, or generation, of a market. This is similar to a distinction made by Baskin, Krechmer, and Sherif (1998, p. 59), who use this approach to categorise standards as either anticipatory, participatory, or

Figure 1. Standards in the product development life cycle (based on Baskin, Krechmer, & Sherif, 1998, p. 59).



responsive (see Figure 1). Project Management standards, whether they focus on projects, people, or organisations, are consistently participatory or responsive standards, describing or helping to define existing practice.

The current distribution of market share has worked as a hindrance to the process of creating global Project Management standards. "Very often, large companies possessing large market shares will try to establish proprietary *de facto* industry standard …" (Blind & Thumm, 2004, p. 69). Although the *PMBOK® Guide* only focuses on projects, not people or organisations, it is often considered a de facto standard for the profession as a whole, based on its overall market dominance.

Despite the global presence of the Project Management Institute, over 70 percent of its membership remain located in North America (PMI, 2006). There is considerable reluctance on the part of Project Management professionals in some countries outside the United States to relinquish their independence and genuinely national representation. Furthermore, practitioners in many countries cannot afford the professional membership fees that are acceptable in the United States. In many cases, such as in South Africa, it has been necessary to establish fully national associations in order to meet the needs of local jurisdictions and/or to provide a more affordable alternative.

Previous authors have identified cultural differences between how standards are created in North America and Europe, which may help to explain the reluctance in some countries to adopt the *PMBOK® Guide* as the standard. Bredillet (2003, p. 465-9) identifies that the American standards development favours a market-based approach, where one standard grows to dominance, excluding others from the market. By contrast, a European approach favours negotiation and joint modification of standards. Krechmer (2004) has identified similar differences in the ways that standards have been developed in North America and Europe, providing an example based on the mobile phone industry. He suggests that in North America, a laissez-faire policy was used in the development of mobile phone technologies, where the commercial organisations did as they wished, and it was expected that market forces would result in a clear de facto standard. This policy has resulted in three competing cellular standards. By contrast, a single unified standard was pursued in Europe. "In Europe two equipment developers, Nokia and Ericsson, pulled far ahead of their largest competitor, Motorola, headquartered in North America" (Krechmer, 2004, p. 50).

Minimum Quality Certification

Project Management standards usually take the form of minimum quality certification, instead of licensure. The distinction between these two forms of professional standards is that in situations where licensure is required, the professional may not legally practice without a license, while in situations where professional certification is used the "…governmental agency may certify that an individual has certain skills but may not prevent, in any way, the practice of an occupation using these skills by people who do not have such a certificate" (Friedman, 1962, p. 144). Standards

of certification can be considered to be minimum quality standards, used to identify those who have met the standard, but not to prohibit those who have not.

One of the most common arguments for professional standardisation relates to the protection of public welfare. However, markets using minimum quality standards tend to be typified by information asymmetry, where sellers know the quality of their goods, but buyers do not (Leland, 1979, p. 1329). Over the last few years, certification has proved particularly popular in the IT industry, as a way for personnel to advertise their capabilities. The public is then, in theory, more informed and, as a consequence, buyers have a greater choice, as "… they can buy low-quality goods if they wish" (Leland, 1980, p. 283).

However, just as buyers have to attempt to identify quality, sellers must also communicate this information to buyers. This latter step may be costly or impossible to achieve in some circumstances (Leland, 1980, p. 283). In the case with Project Management certification, where there are multiple levels of certification offered by competing certification organisations, the differences in certifications may be unclear to buyers of services. What follows is that in many cases, if a consumer does not trust their own ability to differentiate between the quality of certified and uncertified products, certification is often treated in much the same ways that licensure is (Leffler, 1980, p. 290).

In such cases, it could be argued that licensure would be more appropriate than certification, as licensure is government imposed over an industry, and so may enforce a level of consistency that may not emerge if an industry is left to its own competing standards for certification. Licensure of professions also allows for government-enforced requirements to be placed on professions, such as the need for continuing professional education, while competing professional associations offering only certification may not be prepared to enforce this requirement on their members.

However, Friedman (1962) found it difficult to see reasons how any argument for licensure instead of certification could be justified. This is because the usual paternalistic arguments for licensure regarding protecting public welfare are almost entirely satisfied, while certification without licensure provides a good deal of protection against the development of monopolies. The "… elasticity of demand will be fairly large, and the limits within which they can exploit the rest of the public by taking advantage of their special position will be rather narrow" (Friedman, 1962, p. 149). In other words, if certified professionals start charging too much and overly restricting access to certification, then the buying public will simply use uncertified professionals. Certification then seems less open to abuse than does licensure.

Arguments for occupational licensure are often based on issues of public welfare, on the basis of preventing people who are not competent from practicing or on improving the level of competence within the profession. However, many question the assumption of a link between licensure and professional quality (e.g., Clarkson & Muirs, 1980, p. 108). It is not necessarily clear that licensure does raise the standards of professional practice (Friedman, 1962, p. 155), and in many cases "…the considerations taken into account in determining who shall get a license often involve matters that, so far as any layman can see, have no relation whatsoever to professional competence" (Friedman, 1962, p. 141).

It is also not clear whether minimum quality standards maintain the quality within a profession. Sobel (2001) provides an interesting analysis of minimum quality standards for entry into a club, examining the conditions under which standards change over time. He finds that this can be related to variation in judging criteria and the proportion of judges' support necessary to grant entry. Unfortunately, Sobel explicitly makes several assumptions which do not hold for Project Management standards, such as a stable total membership and assessment based on direct comparison between

potential and existing members. However, Sobel's general finding that standards have the potential to drop is interesting. Indeed, research has shown that "'Minimum competency' examinations … fall short of what is needed, as the 'minimum' tends to become the 'maximum,' thus lowering educational standards for all" (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983). Sobel (2001, p. 620) relates dropping quality back to the increase in variety of standards, commenting that "[O]ne is tempted to speculate that the proliferation of new qualifications is a reaction to the degradation of existing qualifications."

If the most common argument for professional standards, namely protection of public welfare, is not met, the question remains why standardisation is so popular. The pressure to regulate professions through licensing or certification usually comes from within the profession to be regulated, instead of consumers of their services (Friedman, 1962, p. 140; Wolfson, Trebilcock, & Tuohy, 1980, p. 182). Indeed, such standards are often written more to protect members of the profession from competition, than to protect the public from incompetent practitioners (Leland, 1980, p. 265). Minimum quality standards in general (Leland, 1979, p. 1329) and professional regulation through licensure, certification, and registration (Friedman, 1962, p. 148) have been linked to the efforts of industry representatives or special producer groups to capture monopoly profits.

Research has also shown that professional incomes can be directly related to degrees of regulations. For instance, it has been found that "… television repair prices are higher in areas (Louisiana) with occupational licensure than in those with mere registration systems (California) or no regulation at all (the District of Colombia)" (Clarkson & Muirs, 1980, p. 108). Furthermore, the bodies which administer admission to the profession tend to accrue rents, which can provide an important impetus for licensure (Benham, 1980, p. 14).

In the case of Project Management, the various Project Management professional associations do have commercial interest in that they accrue rents through the certification of professionals, with maintenance of market share potentially providing a motivator to exclude competitors from the market. However, in many countries, certification is available from more than one professional association, with clear monopolies only occurring in some regions. Certification is also seen by many project managers as a way of overcoming the information asymmetry, by providing a way of advertising their capabilities. Certification clearly provides benefit to those who provide the certifications and to those who gain them, while also providing assurance to employers, who in the face of multiple similar candidates for a position, need some way of making a distinction.

Performance-Based Competency Standards

Glassie (2003, p. 17) argues that conclusions about individual professional competence cannot be reached based on certification status, as certification only measures factors that tend to indicate competence, instead of measuring competence directly. This may be true for some kinds of standards. However, performance-based competency standards are specifically designed for assessment and recognition of current competence. This is assessed independent of how that competence has been achieved. They describe what people can be expected to do in their working roles, as well as the knowledge and understanding of their occupation that is needed to underpin these roles at a specific level of competence. Performance-based inference of competence is concerned with demonstration of the ability to do something at a standard considered acceptable in the workplace, with an emphasis on threshold rather than high performance or differentiating competencies. Threshold competencies are units of behaviour

that are essential to do a job but that are not causally related to superior job performance (Boyatzis, 1982).

Models and standards which are based on performance are concerned with outcomes or results in the workplace, as opposed to potential competence, which might be assessed by tests of attributes. In these models, underlying competence in areas which are not easily observed, such as the ability to solve problems, can readily be inferred through performance and results in the workplace. "Performance based models of competence should specify what people have to be able to do, the level of performance required and the circumstances in which that level of performance is to be demonstrated" (Heywood, et al., 1992, p. 23).

Global Standards for Project Management

Work towards the creation of global standards for Project Management first became an issue in 1994, where, at the annual PMI Symposium in Vancouver, Canada, there was a meeting of representatives of PMI, IPMA, APM, and the AIPM, at which "… formal cooperation on several global issues, including standards, certification and formation of a global project management organisation or confederation' were discussed" (Pells, 1996, p. ix). A series of Global Project Management Forums followed.

However, standards-setting organisations must "…remain vigilant to make sure that all its participants are working in the spirit of collaboration" (JEDEC, 2004, p. 11), as "… standard setting is a conflicted, political process" (van Wegberg, 2004, p. 21). Meaningful cooperation between the Project Management professional associations was far from being realised. Informal participation and lip service to cooperation were possible at the Global Project Management Forums. Real progress in the interests of a unified Project Management profession were hampered by political issues and vested proprietary interests. By the thirteenth Global Project Management Forum in June 2003, little real progress had been achieved.

A lack of progress is not surprising, given the open format and range of topics discussed at the Global Project Management Forums. Lack of a tightly defined purpose and scope increases opportunities for those who would subvert the standards-setting process for personal economic gain. The "…standard-setting process is not perfect nor is it foolproof. It can be subverted by participants intent on bolstering their economic advantage over competitors through manipulation, deception and anticompetitive acts" (JEDEC, 2004, p. 11), as JEDEC would well be aware, given their recent complications with Rambus (Stern, 2001).

As an alternative to the Global Project Management Forums, the Global Performance Based Standards for Project Management Personnel (GPBSPMP) Working Group was initiated. The first meeting was in August 2002, set in the UK, hosted by the South African Government. A great deal of lobbying was initially involved to ensure the attendance of qualifications organisations, professional associations, and industry. At that meeting it was decided that a standards framework would be created that would provide a basis for mutual recognition of Project Management standards and certification. The GPBSPMP chose to take a different approach to standards creation than that taken by the Global Project Management Forums, PMI's market-based approach, or the IPMA's federated structure. It was decided that work on the development of global standards for project management practice "…should remain informal, independent of established professional associations" (Crawford, 2004b, p. 1399).

The typical approach to standards development in Project Management has been based on market dominance. However, as "… involvement in standardisation processes is accompanied by the danger that the other participants could use the disclosed and unprotected technological knowledge for their own purposes, R&D intensive companies

whose knowledge is either insufficiently protected by IPR or extremely valuable may be reluctant to join standardisation processes" (Blind & Thumm, 2004, p. 62).

Companies which want a market lead ahead of competitors are often reluctant to join standardisation processes (Blind & Thumm, 2004, p. 69). Given that a market dominance approach to standards development was common in Project Management, it was necessary that the professional associations not feel that they were contributing to a standard which may compete with their own products.

The focus of the GPBSPMP was carefully selected. The most widely accepted of the Project Management standards focus on projects or organisations, not people (Crawford, 2004a, p. 1152). In the interests of achieving market dominance, the professional associations have had proprietary interest in restricting reciprocity between their standards and similar standards produced by other associations. By contrast, the standards which focus on people are part of national qualification frameworks, and governments, unlike the professional associations, have shown consistent interest in reciprocity between Project Management qualifications.

Project Management associations have proven to be very willing to share information regarding enabling processes and educational standards, while Project Management knowledge has been consistently regarded as more political. The different Project Management associations also tend to take proprietary positions concerning their bodies of knowledge, which are their primary "products." These observations influenced the approach taken by the GPBSPMP. It was decided that standards development would focus on people, rather than projects or organisations, and would focus on practice rather than knowledge. This provided the opportunity to harness national Governments' interest in reciprocity, while not appearing as a direct competitor to any of the products provided by the various professional associations.

Defining a standard and choosing the words with which it is to be described is a particularly significant political act. Defining appropriate categories and names in a situation is a process of "… deciding what will be visible or invisible within the system" (Bowker & Star, 1999, p. 44). In this case, effort was taken to define the GPBSPMP as outside the area of competitive concern of the established professional associations, as not running in the same race. Careful naming can be used as a deliberate tool of forgetting and for delegating attention (Bowker & Star, 1999, p. 280). By focusing on people and practice, the GPBSPMP could be classified as an outsider, and therefore thought of as harmless. As a result, the professional association could participate in the process without it being considered a potential threat.

The GPBSPMP decided to focus on performance-based standards. Standards already existed for the assessment of performance, with the UK, Australian, New Zealand, and South African governments having contributed considerable work to their development since the 1980s. Performance-based competency standards involve more than a test of knowledge. Rather, the Competency standards approach assumes that competence can best be inferred from actual demonstrated performance at a pre-defined acceptable standard (Gonczi, et al., 1993). Such standards are arguably therefore more indicative of practical competence than typical knowledge-based minimum quality standards. Performancebased standards are a way of demonstrating competence gained through practice, such as on-the-job expertise. They provide a way for people who have not had the option to gain qualifications to demonstrate ability and have it formally recognised. As such, this has been a popular approach for governments concerned with equity.

Learning from previous attempts to create global Project Management standards which had been subverted by internal politics, a monetary fee was used as a constraint for entry to

the GPBSPMP. Different fees were applicable to organisations and to individuals. Fees were structured to make participation substantially more costly for individuals not representing a subscribing organisation, and subscribing organisations generally were very careful about whom they would allow to represent them. This helped to create a pool of personnel dedicated to, and experienced in, standards development. Participation fees also provided funding, which meant that the process could remain independent of existing associations.

A series of working sessions was initiated, typically involving from 15 to 20 individuals. Organisations who have subscribed and/or sent representatives, excluding those who have specifically requested not to be mentioned, are summarised in Table 2. Table 2 was composed based on internal documentation, after the eighth working session.

All labour on the project was voluntary, excluding secretarial support. It quickly became clear that most progress was achieved while participants were together, so to maximise this, working sessions typically lasted for three days, occurring at least biannually. The process used by the GPBSPMP was as close as possible to ANSI processes and those of the various participating qualifications bodies, in order to facilitate acceptance. This process started with a complete review of existing project management standards.

Primarily the same groups and individuals were involved throughout the development process. Early on the group established a very strong culture focused on cooperation and work. New people were very quickly absorbed into this culture. Political issues were consciously, vocally, and explicitly put aside. Often there was compromise to make the group happy. The focus was on cooperation and producing a good product. The group would be dedicated to the work for three days at a time, with the social aspect of the meeting providing an important focus for creating a strong culture within the group. As many issues were resolved over the dinner table as at a whiteboard.

One of the few areas of political contention related to nomenclature. This can again be related

Table 2. Organisations which subscribed and/or sent representatives

Standards and qualifications organisations	**Professional associations**	**Academic/training institutions**	Industry
• Innovation and Business Skills Australia • New Zealand Qualifications Authority • Project Management Standards Generating Body • Services SETA	• American Society for the Advancement of Project Management • Association for Project Management • China Project Management Association • International Project Management Association • Japan Project Management Association • Project Management Institute • Project Management South Africa • Society of Project Managers, Singapore	• Athabasca University • Cambridge International Examinations • Cranfield University • ESC Lille • Middlesex University • University of Southern Queensland • University of Technology, Sydney	• American Express • Living Planit • Motorola • Project Performance Group • Project Services Queensland

back to the importance of an awareness of classification, and its effect on perceived boundaries, as mentioned earlier. In the UK, performance-based standards are referred to as occupational standards, but the use of the term "occupation" was thought by some to be lowering the image of the profession to that of a trade. "Competency" was rejected as a possible descriptor, due to the fears of participants from one country that the standards would imply behaviour and provide grounds for litigation. An interim result was "Global Performance Based Standards for Project Management," but it was thought that this would encompass the organisational and project levels, so "Personnel" was added, resulting in the unwieldy acronym which persisted for the majority of the development process.

Two years, and six working sessions after the work by the GPBSPMP was started, a draft standard was released for public review. At this point, the larger professional associations who already had their own standards and qualifications processes started to withdraw from the development process. Common excuses were that they were "Reviewing their strategy," "Did not have sufficient volunteer labour," and were worried that "Participation sent mixed messages to their membership." At about the same time, one of the professional associations raised concerns regarding the last three letters of the GPBSPMP acronym, which were reminiscent of the name of one of their existing products. This provided the opportunity to adopt a simpler and preferable name—GAPPS (Global Alliance for Project Performance Standards).

Over 100 reviews for the draft standard were received from members of the public. Comments were sorted by the various sections to which they pertained. An adjudication panel was convened to review and decide upon actions in response to comments, on the understanding that unanimous agreement by the panel on actions to be taken was necessary. Reviewers were notified of actions taken in response to their comments. A process to handle appeals to actions was initiated, with all public reviewers given a right to appeal decisions.

After three years and eight working sessions the GAPPS Global Project Management Framework has been released, and is currently being piloted by a major global corporation. Standards and qualifications bodies involved are addressing their respective local approval processes, with a view towards general adoption as a basis for reciprocity. Similarly, national or other professional associations who don't have their own standards products are currently in the process of examining its suitability and the possibility of adopting it.

CONCLUSION

Two significant differences stand out when comparing the development of the GAPPS standard with more common Project Management standards. First, the standard has been developed as a process of negotiation and joint modification, as opposed to the usual market dominance approach used in Project Management standards development.

Second, minimum quality standards have often been used as a way of ensuring profits for the standards-setting organisation, which then has the opportunity to act as a gatekeeper to those who wish to obtain the professional certification or licensure. Many of the Project Management professional associations could be accused of trying to use such a position to secure a monopoly. A different approach has been adopted in the creation of the GAPPS standard, which, if anything, has been designed to counter any emerging monopoly by focusing on being a basis for reciprocity between existing Project Management standards.

Permission is granted in the standard for distribution, use, modification, publication, and translation of the standard free of charge, although

copyright is maintained by GAPPS. GAPPS is making no attempt to act as gatekeepers to the standard. The main benefits to those involved in the production process have been access to developing knowledge and potential increase in reputation through association with the project.

The standard can be seen as an attempt to further the profession, by providing opportunities for countries without existing standards to have a basis for creation of their own and by creating a global basis for professional reciprocity. Open source software has so far had a considerable influence on the software development community. Only time will tell what influence the first open access standard for Project Management will have on its community.

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