

GAPPS CIFTER

Crawford Ishikura Factor Table for Evaluating Roles

Differentiating Project Manager Roles

Project managers are expected to produce essentially the same results — outputs and outcomes that are acceptable to relevant stakeholders. However, the context in which these results are produced may differ: some projects are inherently harder to manage than others. A project manager who is competent to manage an easier, less complex project may not be competent to manage a harder, more complex project.

GAPPS has developed an approach to categorising projects based on their management complexity. The GAPPS framework uses a tool called the Crawford-Ishikura Factor Table for Evaluating Roles, or CIFTER. The tool, named after two major contributors to GAPPS, is used to differentiate project manager roles based on the complexity of the projects managed.

The CIFTER factors identify the causes of project management complexity. For example, in some application areas, a project manager's ability to control project costs is considered to be the primary factor in determining competence. The CIFTER provides a mechanism for matching competence to need by identifying the factors that affect the project manager's ability to control costs.

The CIFTER identifies seven factors that affect the management complexity of a project. Each factor is rated from 1 to 4 using a qualitative point scale, and the factors are totalled to produce a management complexity rating for the project. The use of the CIFTER is described in more detail in the remainder of this section.

The CIFTER Factors

There are seven CIFTER factors that together define a project's management complexity. Each of the seven factors is given equal weight when evaluating the management complexity of a project. Since the characteristics of a project may change over time, the CIFTER factors may change over time as well.

1. ***Stability of the overall project context.*** The project context includes the project life-cycle, the stakeholders, the degree to which the applicable methods and approaches are known, and the wider socioeconomic environment. When the project context is unstable — phase deliverables are poorly defined, scope changes are frequent and significant, team members are coming and going, applicable laws and regulations are being modified — the project management challenge increases.

Note: some aspects of “technical complexity” such as dealing with unproven concepts would be considered here. Uncertainty in the economic or political environment would be considered here.

2. ***Number of distinct disciplines, methods, or approaches involved in performing the project.*** Most projects involve more than one management or technical discipline; some projects involve a large number of different disciplines. For example, a project to develop a new drug could include medical researchers, marketing staff, manufacturing experts, lawyers, and others. Since each discipline tends to approach its part of the project in a different way, more disciplines means a project that is relatively more difficult to manage.

Note: some aspects of “technical complexity” such as dealing with a product with many interacting elements would be considered here.

3. ***Magnitude of legal, social, or environmental implications from performing the project.*** This factor addresses the potential *external* impact of the project. For example, the potential for catastrophic failure means that the implications of constructing a nuclear power plant close to a major urban centre will likely be much greater than those of constructing an identical plant in a remote area. The management complexity of the urban project will be higher due to the need to deal with a larger number of stakeholders and a more diverse stakeholder population.

Note: “external impact” refers to the effect on individuals and organizations outside the performing organization. Financial considerations related to actual or potential legal liability for the performing organization would be considered in factor 4.

4. ***Overall expected financial impact (positive or negative) on the project's stakeholders.*** This factor accounts for one aspect of the traditional measure of “size,” but does so in relative terms. For example, a project manager in a consumer electronics start-up is subject to more scrutiny than a project manager doing a similarly sized project for a computer manufacturer with operations around the globe, and increased scrutiny generally means more management complexity. A subproject whose output is a *necessary* component of the parent project would generally receive a rating on this factor close to or equal to that of the parent project.

Note: where the impact on different stakeholders is different, this factor should be rated according to the impact on the primary stakeholders. Financial considerations related to actual or potential legal liability incurred by the performing organization would be considered here.

5. ***Strategic importance of the project to the organisation or organisations involved.*** This factor addresses yet another aspect of “size,” and again deals with it in relative rather than absolute terms. While every project should be aligned with the organisation’s strategic direction, not every project can be of equal importance to the organisation or organisations involved. A subproject whose output is a *necessary* component of the parent project would generally receive a rating on this factor close to or equal to that of the parent project.

Note: as with financial impact, if the strategic importance for different stakeholders is different, this factor should be rated according to the strategic importance for the primary stakeholders.

6. *Stakeholder cohesion regarding the characteristics of the product of the project.* When all or most stakeholders are in agreement about the characteristics of the product of the project, they tend to be in agreement about the expected outcomes as well. When they are not in agreement, or when the benefits of a product with a particular set of characteristics are unknown or uncertain, the project management challenge is increased.
7. *Number and variety of interfaces between the project and other organisational entities.* In the same way that a large number of different disciplines on a project can create a management challenge, a large number of different organisations can as well.

Note: issues of culture and language would be addressed here. A large team could have a relatively small number of interfaces if most team member have the same employer. On the other hand, shift work might increase the rating here even though the additional shifts are technically part of the project.

The CIFTER Ratings

Each of the seven factors in the CIFTER has been rated on a point scale of 1 -4 with the total number of points across the seven factors determining whether a project is Global 1, Global 2 or neither.

The point ratings for the CIFTER were established in an iterative fashion. An initial set of factors and values were identified, and several projects rated. While the CIFTER development team recognised that most projects could benefit from a higher level of skill, each iteration was assessed as follows:

- Was a project that rated *below* Level 1 *unlikely* to require the skills of a competent Global Level 1 project manager?
- Was a project that rated *at* Level 1 *likely* to require the skills of a competent Global Level 1 project manager?
- Was a project that rated *at* Level 2 *likely* to require the skills of a competent Global Level 2 project manager?

Both factors and ratings were adjusted until the results met the criteria above. With the final set of seven factors and a point scale of 1 to 4, the following ranges were set:

- 11 points or less: this project *cannot* be used to provide evidence for a GAPPS compliant performance assessment.
- 12 points or more: this project *can* be used to provide evidence for a GAPPS compliant performance assessment at Global Level 1.
- 19 points or more: this project *can* be used to provide evidence for a GAPPS compliant performance assessment at Global Level 2.

The project being rated should be defined in terms of the responsibilities of the project manager. For example, on a construction project:

- The owner’s project manager may have an unstable project context while the contractor’s project manager has a stable one.
- The financial impact on the owner’s organisation could be slight while the impact on the contractor’s organisation could be huge.

Crawford-Ishikura Factor Table for Evaluating Roles (CIFTER)

Project Management Complexity Factor	Descriptor and Points			
1. Stability of the overall project context	Very high (1)	High (2)	Moderate (3)	Low or very low (4)
2. Number of distinct disciplines, methods, or approaches involved in performing the project	Low or very low (1)	Moderate (2)	High (3)	Very high (4)
3. Magnitude of legal, social, or environmental implications from performing the project	Low or very low (1)	Moderate (2)	High (3)	Very high (4)
4. Overall expected financial impact (positive or negative) on the project’s stakeholders	Low or very low (1)	Moderate (2)	High (3)	Very high (4)
5. Strategic importance of the project to the organisation or organisations involved	Very low (1)	Low (2)	Moderate (3)	High or very high (4)
6. Stakeholder cohesion regarding the characteristics of the product of the project	High or very high (1)	Moderate (2)	Low (3)	Very low (4)
7. Number and variety of interfaces between the project and other organisational entities	Very low (1)	Low (2)	Moderate (3)	High or very high (4)

(sample project ratings on next page)

In order to illustrate the use of the CIFTER, nine sample projects from three different application areas were selected and rated:

- A. Social/public services project: develop a three-hour employee orientation program for a municipal department.
- B. Social/public services project: develop and implement an in-house training program on a new, computerised point-of-sale system for the automobile driver licensing unit of a state or province.
- C. Social/public services project: develop and implement a new science curriculum for the final, pre-university year in all schools in a state or province.
- D. Information Technology project: implement a software package upgrade in a single business functional area.
- E. Information Technology project: design a new corporate website for a multi-national manufacturing company.
- F. Information Technology project: implement an Enterprise Resource Planning application across business areas in an environment where the success or failure of the implementation has significant legal implications.
- G. Engineering and Construction project: construction management for a small addition to a local school done mostly during summer vacation.
- H. Engineering and Construction project: construction management of the renovation of a small, suburban office building.
- I. Engineering and Construction project: construction management of the renovation of a 30 storey hotel for an international hotel chain.

As illustrated in the table below, Projects A, D, and G could not be used to provide evidence of competency in a GAPPS compliant assessment. Projects B, C, E, F, H, and I could all be used to provide evidence for a Global Level 1 assessment. Projects C, F, and I could all be used to provide evidence for a Global Level 2 assessment. Appendix E contains more detail about the CIFTER sample ratings.

Sample Project	Project Management Complexity Factor							Total Score
	1. Stability	2. No. of Methods	3. Implications	4. Financial Impact	5. Strategic Importance	6. Stakeholder Cohesion	7. Project Interfaces	
A	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	7
B	2	2	2	2	3	2	2	15
C	3	2	3	2	4	3	3	20
D	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	7
E	2	2	1	2	2	2	2	13
F	4	2	4	3	3	3	3	22
G	1	1	1	2	2	1	1	9
H	2	1	2	2	2	2	2	13
I	3	3	2	2	3	4	3	20

Limitations of the CIFTER

The CIFTER does not accommodate individuals managing multiple projects since ratings for multiple projects cannot be summed. However, an assessment process could allow evidence from more than one project as long as each individual project meets the requirements for the level being assessed.

In some application areas, multiple project managers may share overall responsibility for the project. These projects cannot be used for assessment since it would not be clear which project manager was responsible for which results.

Ratings on individual factors will often vary for the same project. For example, one person might consider the stability of the overall project context to be “high” while another views it as “moderate.” However, experience has shown that such differences balance out and that the project totals are quite consistent.

The CIFTER and Career Development

Although the primary purpose of the CIFTER is to differentiate levels of management complexity in order to define project manager roles for assessment, it can also be used to guide career development. For example, a Global Level 1 project manager might seek opportunities to manage projects with higher scores on certain factors in order to move toward Global Level 2 assessment.