

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.