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Global Alliance for the Project Professions

A Guiding Framework for Organisational Project Management Capability

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Foreword

Considerable attention has been given to the development of standards and guides for managing projects, programs, and portfolios, as well as to the competencies required of those leading these endeavours. By contrast, less emphasis has been placed on the organisational capabilities needed to consistently and effectively deliver multiple initiatives.

Organisations seeking to deliver projects, programs, and portfolios that align with strategic objectives and realise intended short- and long-term benefits should move beyond a purely competency-based assessment of individuals. Instead, they should define, develop, and sustain the organisational capabilities required to achieve reliable, repeatable delivery of outcomes and consistently meet or exceed stakeholder expectations.

Where organisational project management capability has been addressed, it has most often been through maturity or excellence models. While valuable, many of these approaches are either not readily suited to independent self-assessment or are proprietary in nature, requiring organisations to purchase materials or engage external consultants. In response, the Global Alliance for the Project Professions (GAPPS) has developed this Guiding Framework for Organisational Project Management Capability (OPMC) as a non-proprietary, assessment-oriented resource that is freely available, consistent with GAPPS' commitment to accessibility, transparency, and mutual recognition. The framework is not a maturity model: it is intended to help an organisation judge whether its capability is sufficient, rather than to place it on a scale.

This framework is intended as a practical tool to help organisations identify strengths and opportunities for improvement, and to inform organisational development, transformation, and capability uplift initiatives. Organisations that have already adopted project management standards can use the GAPPS framework to strengthen organisational capabilities and improve overall performance.

As responsibility for organisational capability development typically resides at the executive level, the framework is designed to support informed judgement, prioritisation, and decision-making regarding the capabilities needed to deliver strategic outcomes.

GAPPS is a volunteer, not-for-profit organisation that brings together experienced practitioners and thought leaders from around the world to develop performance-based frameworks for the project profession. Its frameworks are created collaboratively, drawing on diverse industries, organisational contexts, and cultural perspectives. They focus on what organisations need to do to achieve effective performance, emphasising observable practices and outcomes rather than prescribing specific methodologies, structures, or tools.

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GAPPS frameworks support the development and recognition of local standards while enabling the mutual recognition and transferability of project, program, and related qualifications. They are intended for use by organisations, academic institutions, training providers, professional associations, and government bodies worldwide. Frameworks may be adopted as presented or adapted to suit local contexts.

This document represents the eighth framework produced by GAPPS. Previous publications include frameworks for project managers (2006), program managers (2011; second edition 2025), project sponsors (2015), project controls (2019), leadership in complexity (2021), governance of temporary endeavours (2022), and productivity principles (2023). Future work will continue to address emerging roles and challenges associated with projects, programs, and other forms of temporary organisation.

GAPPS welcomes feedback on use of their Guiding Frameworks in practice. This feedback can be submitted via the feedback form on our website https://www.pmprofessions.org where you can find further information and copies of GAPPS frameworks.

Version	Date	Summary of Changes
1.02	1 May 2026	Explanatory text and appendices added to Detail of Domains, Elements, and Indicators as finalised at TLF64.
1.03	14 May 2026	Edits and revisions made in response to quick response feedback prior to release for review at TLF66. Formatting of footer and other text related to outdated email and website address for GAPPS.
1.04	9 June 2026	Further edits to prepare for TLF66.
1.05	10 June 2026	Feedback from Expert Review addressed and edits from discussion at GAPPS TLF66.
1.06	16 July 2026	Edit and clean following review at GAPPS TLF66.
1.07	19 October 2026	Edit to reflect changes agreed at GAPPS TLF67 in response to Public Review, general editing and formatting ready for publication.
1.07a	12 November 2026	Inserted Public Review responders in list of contributors.

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A Guiding Framework for Organisational Project Management Capability

1. Scope

This Guiding Framework describes organisational capability in terms of observable practices, structures and behaviours that enable an organisation to effectively and consistently deliver projects, programs and portfolios. It is intended to support assessment of organisational capability at a threshold level—that is, the level of capability considered acceptable to support reliable delivery of intended outcomes.

The framework is performance-based in intent and focuses on what capable organisations do, rather than prescribing how outcomes are achieved.

The scope of the framework encompasses the governance arrangements, culture, resources, interfaces, approaches to uncertainty and technology that collectively support project, program and portfolio activity. It applies to organisations that undertake projects of any type or level of complexity whether they are undertaken occasionally or constitute a significant component of organisational strategy and value delivery.

This Guiding Framework may be used:

- as a basis for independent or self-assessment of organisational project management capability;
- to support diagnosis of strengths and opportunities for improvement;
- to inform organisational development, transformation and capability improvement initiatives; and
- as a reference point for mapping or benchmarking against other standards, models or frameworks.

The framework is intended to complement, not replace, existing standards, guides, competency frameworks, maturity models and excellence models relating to project, program and portfolio management and capability frameworks for other aspects of organisational performance.

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Throughout this Guiding Framework, the terms 'project' and 'project activities' encompass projects, programs, portfolios, and associated activities, as applicable to context.

2. Process

This Guiding Framework for Organisational Project Management Capability (OPMC) was developed through an iterative, practitioner-led process conducted at a series of GAPPS Thought Leadership Forums. The work was initiated to address a recognised need for a simple, practical and non-proprietary framework to support assessment and improvement of organisational project management capability, particularly for organisations at earlier stages of maturity.

Development of the framework drew on review and synthesis of existing standards, models, research and industry reports relating to organisational project management and organisational performance. These inputs were progressively analysed, grouped and rationalised through facilitated discussion among globally representative and experienced project professionals.

The framework was refined over multiple forums to align with GAPPS principles and the established format of other GAPPS guiding frameworks. Through this process, concepts were consolidated into a coherent structure of Domains, Elements and Indicators that describe observable organisational practices and outcomes indicative of acceptable organisational project management capability.

Further detail on the development process, including the evolution of concepts, structure and assessment approach, is provided in **Appendices A to E.**

3. Context

Organisations increasingly rely on projects, programs and portfolios to deliver strategic change, realise benefits and create long-term value. The effectiveness with which these temporary endeavours are delivered is influenced not only by the competencies of individuals, but by the organisational capability that supports, governs and integrates project activity across the enterprise and its wider ecosystem.

Organisational project management capability is multi-dimensional. It encompasses the:

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- arrangements an organisation has in place to guide and support project activity
- extent to which those arrangements are consistently applied in practice
- capacity of the organisation and its supply chain to deliver current and future initiatives
- effectiveness with which capability and capacity are translated into sustainable outcomes and benefits.

Capability should be fit for purpose. Organisations may seek to understand whether projects are delivered efficiently and effectively, contributing to organisational objectives and realising intended short- and long-term benefits. This includes consideration of how benefits are defined, measured and sustained after project completion, and whether the overall value generated justifies the ongoing investment in organisational project management capability.

Cultural, ethical and collaborative dimensions further shape organisational capability. Organisational culture, behaviours and attitudes influence how project practices are adopted and sustained. Collaboration within the organisation and across external partners, clients and the supply chain affect the organisation's ability to deliver outcomes across organisational and contractual boundaries. Capability therefore extends beyond individual projects to the organisation's role within a broader delivery ecosystem.

This Guiding Framework is intended to be applied across organisations with varying levels of maturity. It is particularly suited to organisations seeking to understand their current capability baseline and identify priorities for improvement. The framework is iterative in nature, recognising that organisational project management capability develops over time and must remain adaptable and resilient in response to changing strategy, operating environments and external conditions.

4. Performance Based Capability Frameworks

4.1 Overview

This section provides an overview of the concepts and terminology used in this Guiding Framework for Organisational Project Management Capability (OPMC).

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Unlike individual competency frameworks, which focus on the performance of people in defined roles, organisational capability frameworks focus on the practices, structures, behaviours and outcomes that enable organisations to consistently and effectively deliver projects, programs and portfolios. Capability is inferred from observable organisational arrangements and outcomes, rather than from compliance with prescribed methods or maturity levels.

Broadly, organisational capability may be considered through different lenses, including:

- the *approach* an organisation adopts (what is intended or designed);
- the *deployment* of that approach (what is actually done in practice); and
- the *outcomes* achieved as a result, including effectiveness and sustainability over time.

This Guiding Framework adopts a performance-oriented view of organisational capability. It provides a basis for assessment of both approach to and deployment of capability. It does not provide a basis for measuring outcomes or benefits directly, although such evidence may inform a judgement about whether arrangements are working as intended.

4.2 Design of the GAPPS OPMC Framework

The GAPPS OPMC framework is structured using a hierarchy of **Domains**, **Elements** and **Indicators**, adapted from performance-based approaches commonly used in occupational and organisational assessment, but applied here at an organisational level.

Domains

A Domain defines a broad area of organisational project management capability that is meaningful to practitioners and observable in the organisation's governance, culture, systems, practices and behaviours. Each Domain represents a major dimension of capability that contributes to effective delivery of projects, programs and portfolios.

Elements

Elements describe the key components of capability within a Domain. They articulate *what* an organisation does or has in place to demonstrate capability in that area, without prescribing *how* those outcomes are

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