CHALMERS
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Standardised project management methods

Factors for a successful implementation in an internal consultant department

Master's Thesis in the Master's Programme International Project Management

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ABSTRACT

The use of consultants is common in business today, both external and internal. Especially the use consultants as project managers can cause perplexity when leading a project. Therefore there might be an advantage of having a common method to follow in the company, or have a common framework used by established organisations such as PMI or APM.

The objective of this research is to study a number of standards and methods usable for project managers and whether or not a certification is useful in an organisation. What possible advantages or disadvantages are perceived by a team of internal consultants is to be studied.

Unstructured interviews have been conducted with five members of the internal project management consultants. The interviews lasted approximately 30 minutes and were audio-taped and then summarised and sent to the interviewees in order to confirm what has been said.

The interviewees did see many advantages of having a common method, such as a common language, templates that look the same and where managers from several levels can interpret, and also synergy effects after using it a few times. There were also disadvantages of having a common model as it could make the department static, a common method that is developed internally will also cause learning time for new employees, or external consultants for that sake.

The use of a common method has many advantages, but the most important is to choose a way to work, follow it closely and keep it simple and flexible. The use of certifications within a company in order to keep track of knowledge within the group is not recommended as it requires time and effort from the members, and also it will be a burden for the company economically.

Key words: Project management, standards, methods, project management tools, certifications

Contents

Preface

For their contributions to this dissertation, I would like to offer my sincere gratitude to my supervisor Max Rapp Ricciardi for feedback on the content and on the linguistic parts of the dissertation; Leif Boman, acting as my external supervisor at Volvo Car Company, for inviting me to presentations of methods and introducing me to his team of internal consultants; to the consultants that participated in the interviews; and finally Max Kolb, Gustaf Samuelsson and Helene Borefjord for their feedback as peer-reviewers.

Gothenburg, August 2015

Henrik Granroth

1 Introduction

Today, it is common to use the term "project" and to "work with projects" when doing business in various types of organisations. This is referred to as "the projectification of the firms" which was coined by Midler (1995). In the past, project management was more common in the IT and construction industry. When executives and senior project managers have sufficient knowledge about processes, they also increase the potential of taking appropriate decisions. But not only is it important in everyday business, strategic decisions will also benefit from leaders that have knowledge about operational concerns (Czuchry & Yasin, 2003).

In the pocket guide for ISO 21500, Zandhuis and Stellingwerf (2013) writes that more than $12 trillion will be spent in projects during the time period 2010-2020. Expressed in the world's total GDP, that sum counts to one fifth. Therefore, there is a possible benefit for project managers to have a common framework in order for them to deliver successful projects.

As project management is a profession that is growing, with universities and formal bodies offering education, it is of great value to create an understanding of the possibilities of using project management frameworks and/or methods. Project management standards and methods are made generic and with minor adjustments they can be used in many different industries. Even though this is true, project management contain many more important features, but a standard/method that the mangers are familiar with can possibly help them perform better as project managers. The chosen standard can also feature many of the different parts of the manager's job.

Many organisations have developed methods and tools of different kinds, also companies develop methods to run projects when they realise that it is necessary to deliver successful projects. The development of a method or tool is a time consuming activity, therefore it is beneficial to adapt one's activities to an already existing method or tool. However, to start using a method or tool can be challenging and people might resist change. Therefore this research will describe different standards and one method, collect data from a department at a company who are in middle of choosing a method and ask what motivates them to use one chosen method and what possible positive versus negative aspects that might have.

1.1 History of Project Management

Ever since the first home was built or first road constructed there has been someone leading the task, a project manager. But the definition and recognition of project management began in 1950s in the US, particularly in military projects. In the 60's International Project Management Association and the Project Management Institute was founded, while, what today is more known as the British organisation Association for Project Management was founded in the 70s. The first generation project management ended in the 80s when project management became interesting when managing major engineering and construction projects (Maylor, 2010; Morris, Jamieson, & Shepherd, 2006).

The second generation of project management, according to Maylor (2010), started in the 90s when standards and Bodies of Knowledge were written and it became common to work with "projects" in companies not only in engineering or construction industry.

Today, in the beginning of the 21st century, the project management are working with the third generation of project management. Project management has become an accepted profession and it is constantly developed. Not only is the traditional tools and standards used, other techniques and approaches are becoming common in the project managers toolbox (Maylor, 2010).

The Association for Project Management list five factors that are important in projects and for the project to be successful.

- *"defining clear goals and objectives;*
- *maintaining a focus on business value;*
- *implementing a proper governance structure;*
- *ensuring senior management commitment;*
- providing timely and clear communication."*(APM, 2012)*

All these should be adapted in an organisation in order for them to succeed in projects.

1.2 The studied organisation

The studied organisation is a manufacturer of cars with a total of 15 000 employees, out of these approximately 1000 have the title project manager. This should imply that they are guaranteed to possess a great deal of formal managerial skills and competencies, however in reality many of these project managers have been promoted to their position and they lack in formal project management education. On top of that, -there is no common framework used widely within the organisation. Each department tries their best using the skills and knowledge they generated through experience. Unfortunately this is not enough and there has been a great deal of miscommunication between the departments. There has been a not so very successful attempt on implementing a common framework called Operational Governance Development Framework (ODGF), which will be described in chapter 4.2.1.

The company where the study has been conducted has generally very loyal employees, once one get employed it is very rare to change employer. Most employees leave the company as a result of reduced head count. But, when people leave they also bring their knowledge with them. This fact resulted in the founding of a new department in 2014 called Resource and Competence Center (RCC), which is an internal consultancy department. The employees come from different parts of the organisation, where they have worked as external consultants or as managers. They are experienced managers and know the organisation well. The idea of the department is to use less external consultants in order to reduce costs and to keep the generated experience "in-house".

The idea of the Resource and Competence Center is to give the employee a chance to work in different departments and learn from others, but also contribute with their knowledge. By working with projects at different departments they will also build a valuable network that can be useful for the employee's future career.

During their time at RCC, the employees can replace external consultants in projects, fill vacancies in case an opportunity shows up, or they can fill in for colleagues on

parental leave or if there is a peak in workload. The internal consultancy department serves other departments as an internal partner.

This particular department has also been initiated because there are many external consultants that are hired for such long periods; some have been at the location for several years. As a result of this senior managers decided that instead of hiring them from consultancy companies, they would rather have them as employees and let them grow within the company. They believe that it will benefit the company to keep the knowledge "in-house", and at the same time cut the company's expenses. But since the RCC department employ managers internally they do also act as a buffer at times when they need to reduce headcount at other departments.

The different departments use different methods in projects, and there is a suspicious attitude towards other departments and their methods which impairs cross-functional learning and exchange. The company needs to find a good method that will be recognised and accepted within the company.

The internal consultancy department is a rather new group within the organisation. The department is divided into three different main parts: Business, Technical, and Project Management. As the PM group have employees with different backgrounds and have widespread experience, it will be beneficial to find a project method that is useful for their setting.

1.3 Research aim

There are a number of different project models and project methods to be used, e.g. PRINCE2, IPMA, and PMI to mention a few. The aim of this research is to analyse the most common methods and present an appropriate for an internal consultancy department with focus on Project Management, and then recommend guidelines to the department what model and/or standard to use within the internal consultancy department when managing engineering projects.

Furthermore, the study intend to describe different approaches for the department in order for them to have a base for discussion and to decide what they consider to align one that suits them best. At the moment the company lack a proper method/standard and therefore a common vocabulary in the project management team.

Also, the research aims to analyse the potential benefits of having a common project management method in the organisation. At the moment there is no method that is used widely in the organisation.

1.4 Research questions

The topic was developed together with the target organisation, based on their wish of finding a project method/standard to use for their project management team within the internal consultancy department. The organisation contacted the researcher's supervisor with the particular issue, who then contacted the researcher on order to get help dealing with the issue.

Other than analysing methods and standards the research wishes to answer the following research questions:

1. **What happens when a department within a company lacks a proper project management method or project management standard to follow?**
2. **What are the main arguments to use a common method/standard in an organisation? (E.g. what motivates the employees to use a common framework/method)**

These are interesting for many organisations struggling with different project management methods and lack one common method.

The research objectives are as follows:

1. Compare project methods for project management and in collaboration with the target organisation find what methods are preferred
2. Recommend how to continue the pursuit of choosing a method

1.5 Scope and limitation

The scope of the research aims to describe the most common standards and methods that are used in project management, also find counter arguments to possible drawbacks of having a method that is blindly followed. The research would be described as deductive by Bryman (2012) as the researcher begin with hypotheses and then conduct interviews and then review the first assumptions.

The interviewees for the research come from the target company, which is based in Gothenburg, Sweden. They will be provided by the organisation where the research is done. The limited number of employees in the department leaves little room for random sampling and therefore the sampling will be a so called convenience sample. In total five interviews have been conducted, out of six managers that was presented to the researcher. Also, the researcher has attended presentations held by departments at the company, presenting methods that the department use (Bryman, 2012).

Sufficient time has been planned for both interviews and for summarising the interviews. Also, enough advance notice has been offered in order to give the participants an opportunity to choose an appropriate time for the interview. The employees are busy and not always willing to participate.

Prior to the interviews the participants have been informed about the research and how the data will be used, then an "Informed consent"-form have been completed, which means that the interviewees will be given information about what is expected of them and that he or she can withdraw from the interview at any point in time. The interviews will be recorded, but only parts that are deemed to be of value for the research will be transcribed. In order to establish trustworthiness, the interviewees will get the chance to read relevant parts of the research conclusions and confirm that everything is understood correctly (Bryman, 2012; Khanlou & Peter, 2005).

1.6 Parameters

The research has been limited to the internal consultancy department and the project management team in particular. The sample size has therefore been very small and transferability will be limited. Even so, it is possible that the research findings can be used in other companies of the same size and in the same setting, with minor changes. The research will not interview employees in other departments at the target company.

1.7 Method

The data for this research has been collected through searches in databases and though unstructured interviews with employees at the company where the research is done. The data will then be interpreted and woven together with the theory that has been collected.

1.8 Practice based rationale

By conducting this research the researcher intends to be able to suggest a method for a team of project managers who then can use it in project within the target organisation. Furthermore, the research aims to help the department to be useful in many kinds of projects with the suggested method, and be more useful in many different settings. The idea is to have an easy way of allocating the resources to projects within the organisation, depending on what earlier experience or education the employee has.

Furthermore, the researcher wishes to suggest what a method should bring to the department after implementation, such as possible improvements and other benefits. But also, mention possible negative sides of focusing on one particular method.

The researcher also intends to describe the different standards and compare possible differences, then add how professionals see them and use standards and methods.

1.9 Structure of the thesis

This master dissertation is structured as following:

Chapter 1: Introduces the organisation, history of project management, the reason to the research with method and limitations and research questions.

Chapter 2: Literature review and theoretical rationale describing different standards and a method, the role of the project manager and pros and cons with standards and methods.

Chapter 3: The research method further described with ethical considerations, how the data was collected and organised.

Chapter 4: This chapter presents the results of the study of the organisation and their current project management method, describing the method and what the project managers do. Furthermore the current state at the studied organisation is presented.

Chapter 5: The analysis of the literature review and interviews are presented in this chapter.

Chapter 6: In this final chapter a brief discussion of the study will be presented. And in conclusion a proposal for further research within the topic is presented.

2 Literature review

Project management is a complex profession and the project manager need a number of skills. As mentioned in the introduction the APM listed five skills that a PM needs in order to succeed in a project.

2.1 Standards and methods

A number of different project management methods or standards are described in the literature which can be used. They have some differences, but also many similarities. In each standard or method one can find one or another point from the list APM presented, as seen below:

- *"defining clear goals and objectives;*
- *maintaining a focus on business value;*
- *implementing a proper governance structure;*
- *ensuring senior management commitment;*
- *providing timely and clear communication" (APM, 2012)*

Sometimes they are considered a standard and sometimes a method that is supposed to be interpreted in order to be useful. In the following paragraphs the difference will be described. Also, different types of certifications will be explained regarding requirements and what is expected of the project management candidate.

A standard can be a text describing best practices, processes, methods etc. It is an agreement between stakeholders regarding a project, process or service, but it is optional to follow and can be customised to the requirements of the project, process or service.

There are different kinds of standards, the descriptive and the prescriptive. The descriptive is of informative nature, often called a guideline, and describes possible actions. The prescriptive, on the other hand, describes more specifically what and how to do certain parts of a project (Zandhuis & Stellingwerf, 2013).

Furthermore, a method such as PRINCE2 that will be presented in 2.5.3., is a detailed instruction on how to run a project. There can be a number steps that need to be taken, certain documents that need to be completed, and roles that need to be allocated. Unlike a prescriptive standard, when using a method it is strongly recommended to follow the given steps.

2.2 Project maturity

Project maturity is how well a company knows how to run projects, i.e. they are used to work with projects and have sufficient knowledge about projects and what steps a project usually follows. In order to deliver successful projects the organisation need to have at least some project maturity, meaning that they know what a project is and how they are run. An organisation with a weak project maturity will probably fail good project management because they focus on the wrong things (Rapp Ricciardi, 2001).

In the fifth edition of the PMI PMBoK Guide they write that project management "is the application of knowledge, skills, tools, and techniques to project activities to meet the project requirements" (PMI, 2013). It is therefore important to know that the project managers possess the right knowledge and have appropriate tools to use in projects. It is possible to measure the maturity of an organisation with a project management maturity model. There is a broad opinion that companies with high level maturity in project management will deliver better results (Rapp Ricciardi, 2001).

2.3 Internal consultant

Compared to an external consultant, who is more common, an internal consultant has a precarious situation in the company. An internal consultant is a person that works at a company and can be hired to projects within the company. Compared to an external consultant the role can be quite ambiguous, since he/she need to consider what advice to give, unpopular advice could mean that their employment could be questioned, on the other hand, their knowledge in the company can be useful and result in faster and more complete results, since the consultant already knows the organisation and its systems. While an external consultant is hired and might need some initial learning before he or she can perform. An external consultant, though, is more likely to give advice that can be sensitive as he or she comes from the outside and sees the company and its processes from another view (Miller & Subbiah, 2012).

Other positive aspects of having an internal consultant is that the knowledge they gain during projects will stay in the company and are also cheaper to use, while, naturally knowledge an external consultant gains during the project does not stay "in-house", unless the consultant manage to express the knowledge in text that stays for future use in the company (Miller & Subbiah, 2012).

2.4 The project manager

The project manager (PM) has an important role in a project. A PM is sometimes expected to have supernatural abilities, able to be at many places at the same time, have expert knowledge in many areas, a good listener, inspirational and be good leaders, just to name a few (Edmonds, 2010). Furthermore, the project manager acts as a buffer between the project team and top management, or stakeholders and the project team, meaning that he or she should make sure the communication between them are satisfactory (Rapp Ricciardi, 2001). The project manager also needs to involve stakeholders in the project (e.g. customers or sponsors), calling them to meetings, but take care not to summon to meetings for the sake of it, and involve them when appropriate (Edmonds, 2010).

Depending on how the organisation is structured, the project manager can have more or less power. As the project managers in this study act as internal consultants, they will be allocated to projects and manage the already existing resources. But as they work with many different departments it is of high importance that they know the language, and therefore a common standard within the company would be beneficial (Edmonds, 2010).

2.5 The most common methodologies and standards

The following text will explain the features of the most common standards and methodologies used for project management. Other than the usual definition of a project, (i.e. beginning and an end, done within a timeframe, uniqueness, and temporary organisation) the different methodologies approach the project management in different ways. The four chosen standards and one method, seen in ***Figure 1***, are based on what are most common when searching for literature about the topic, therefore the list is not exhaustive.

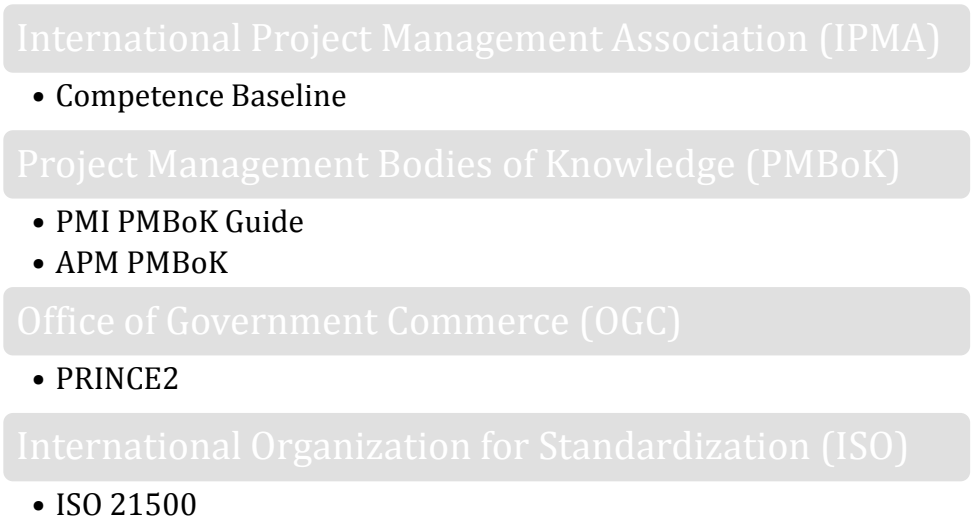

Figure 1 – Standards and a method

2.5.1 International Project Management Association

An international federation with more than 55 member associations, examples of associations that are members of IPMA are: the Associations for Project Management (APM), the Spanish Association for Project Engineering (AEIPRO) and Australian Institute of Project Management (AIPM) (Drob & Zichil, 2013). One of the member associations, APM, has their own body of knowledge, APMBOK, which will be described further in 2.5.2.3.

2.5.1.1 IPMA Competence Baseline

At the moment the third edition of the IPMA Competence Baseline (ICB) is in use. The baseline is a framework for member associations to use in projects. It is called a framework, but it is in many ways a standard. The baseline is generic and can therefore be used in many different sectors and industries. The baseline is a mix of the BoKs from PMI and APM. Together with the baseline there are proposals in order for the two national standards to be better used together. The ICB is used in the four level certification programme IPMA offers (Morris et al., 2006). The fourth edition of the ICB framework was supposed to be launched in late 2014, but it has been postponed until further notice.

The ICB consists of three main parts: the technical competence, the behavioural competence, and the contextual competence. These three are called ”the eye of competence” , see ***Figure 2*** below, which is supposed to be a metaphor for the competence a project manager needs to assess a situation and take appropriate action (Van Bon, 2006). In the third edition, a total of 46 competences were listed, they are divided into three different competencies, see ***Figure 3***: 11 contextual, 15 behavioural, and 20 technical. The competencies are what a project manager use and need in order to manage projects successfully (Ghosh, Forrest, DiNetta, Wolfe, & Lambert, 2012).

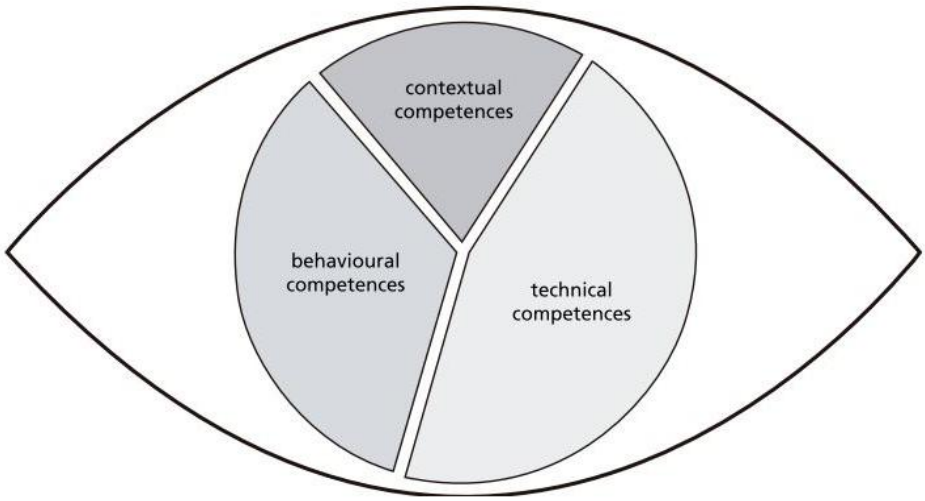

Figure 2 - The eye of competence (Van Bon, 2006)

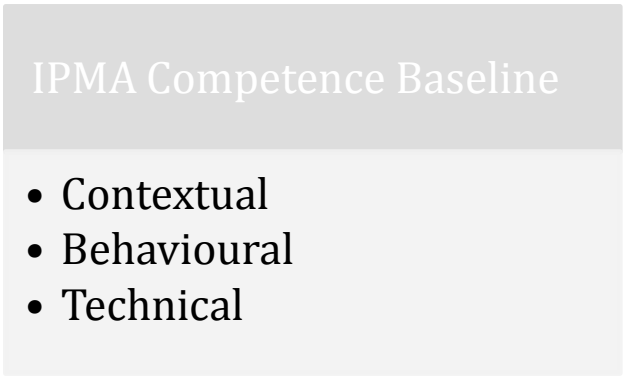

Figure 3 - IPMA ICB project management competences

2.5.1.2 The four levels of certification

IPMA provides certification in project management in four levels (A-D) and the ICB is used by assessors when assessing candidates. The baseline is not a textbook as such, instead it provides guidelines for competences a project manager needs. The certification has focus on experience, behaviour and reflection and the candidate needs spend time on filling in forms and reflecting on his or her behaviour. The necessary knowledge a candidate need, can be searched and found from any source, as long as the competency requirements are met (Wenell, 2015).

All candidates hands in a curriculum vitae for the assessor to review, a self assessment with positive sides and negative sides and plan for how these can be improved.

Beginning from the lowest level of certification, level D, there is no requirement of work experience for the candidate, basic knowledge in project management is sufficient. The candidate completes a self evaluation based on the three competencies mentioned above. The candidate is also required to pass an exam in order to get a certification valid for five years. Level C requires the candidate to have some experience in using competence elements from the baseline in projects of limited complexity, at least 33 months of working experience of leading projects is needed. At level B the candidate need at least 55 months of working experience leading complex projects. The highest level, level A, requires the candidate at least 60 months of leading projects and/or programmes of complex projects. When being assessed on levels A-C the candidates also need to attend workshops working with a case (Van Bon, 2006; Wenell, 2015).

2.5.2 Project Management Bodies of Knowledge

A Body of Knowledge (BoK) is often a standard with descriptions of how a project manager should work; it can be seen as a collection of best practices. As Stretton (2006) express it *"The most compelling argument for having a body of knowledge for project management is to help overcome the 'reinventing-the-wheel' problem. A good body of knowledge should help practitioners do their job better, by both direct referencing and by use in more formal educational processes"* (Stretton, 2006, p. 14).

The two bodies of knowledge, APMBoK and PMIBoK, are standards and are therefore considered descriptive, which means that they explain in detail how projects are done (Matos & Lopes, 2013).

There are several organisations offering their Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBoK). But there are two major organisations that are popular, it is the Project Management Institute (PMI) which is an American organisation founded in 1969, and then there is the British equivalent; Association for Project Management (APM) founded in 1970s (Ghosh et al., 2012). The BoKs are similar, but some main differences will be mentioned and explained in the next two headlines.

2.5.2.1 PMI PMBoK Guide

The PMI Project Management Body of Knowledge Guide (PMI PMBoK Guide) is a standard that is mainly used in the United States since it has been approved by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) as a standard for project management (Macek, 2010).

The standard is based on descriptions and best practises collected from professional project managers. PMI, however, makes it clear that they collect the information, but does not test it; it is up to each project manager to evaluate and judge how to best use the body of knowledge. The guide gives guidelines for how to run projects, which means that they are generic. The purpose of the guide is to create a common language and describe a good practice (PMI, 2013). The different parts of the PMBoK Guide are solutions collected by the members of Project Management Institute (PMI). The different solutions are tested and should something not be working it is possible to improve that phase for the next edition of the PMBoK Guide (Macek, 2010).

The body of knowledge defines five groups of processes, which are:

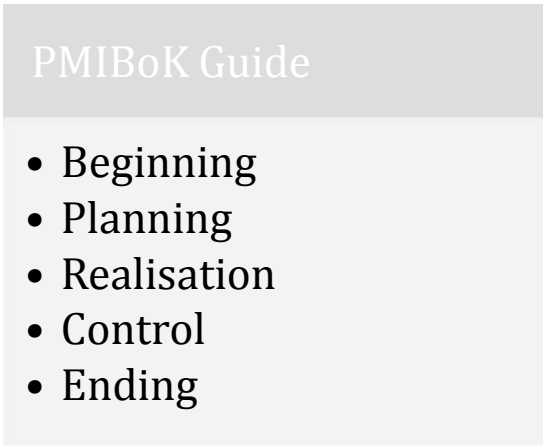

Figure 4 – PMI PMBoK Guide groups of processes (Macek, 2010; Matos & Lopes, 2013)

2.5.2.2 PMI Certifications

It is possible to be certified by PMI, which is an internationally recognised certification. In order to get the certification the PM needs to pass the requirements which are enough working experience and education within project management and also passing the examination. When fulfilling these requirements the PM gets a certification and can call himself or herself a Project Management Professional (PMP) (Wenell, 2015).

The Project Management Institute offers eight different certifications, for project management the ”Project Management Professional” (PMP) and ”Certified Associate in Project Management” (CAPM) are the two that focuses on project management. So far, there are almost half a million certified Project Management Professionals worldwide, which makes it one of the biggest certifications in project management (Wenell, 2015).

In order to be eligible for a PMP certification the candidate need earlier experience working as a project manager of at least three years and a college degree or five years of experience with a degree from upper secondary school. On top of that the candidate need at least 35 hours of project management training that is approved by PMI, called PDU-credits (Professional Development Units) (Wenell, 2015).

The Certified Associate in Project Management (CAPM) does not have any requirements on earlier experience of project management, other than at least 23 PDU-credits or 1500 hours of project management experience if the candidate lacks project management education.

2.5.2.3 APM PMBoK

The Association for Project Management (APM) decided to write an own Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBoK) and launched it in 1991 because they felt that the PMI PMBoK Guide was missing important parts regarding interpersonal skills and stakeholder management (Ghosh et al., 2012; Morris et al., 2006). The Association for Project Management launched the sixth edition of their body of knowledge in 2012. The APMBoK is created, the same way as the PMI PMBoK Guide, with contributions from professional project managers, academics and trainers in the area (Morris et al., 2006).

The sixth edition of the APM PMBoK is divided into four sections with a total of 53 components as seen in ***Figure 5*** (Stretton, 2006).

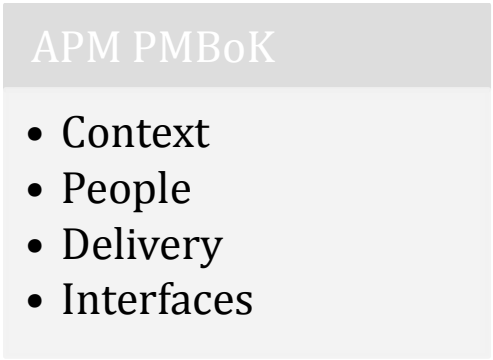

Figure 5 - APMBoK Competence groups

2.5.2.4 Certification

It is possible to become a certified project manager with and according to the APM PMBoK. They offer a certification that is similar to the IMPA certification, but they also have an own specific certification that makes the project manager an ”APM Registered Project Professional”, which very much reminds the one that PMI offers (Ghosh et al., 2012). In 2006, there was approximately 10 000 certified members in APM, according to Morris et al. (2006).

2.5.3 PRINCE2

The name stands for ”**PR**ojects **IN** a **C**ontrolled **E**nvironment” and is a thorough method for project management based on experience of project managers (Macek, 2010). In 1989 the method was developed by Central Computer and Telecommunications Agency (CCTA) and has since then gained popularity and is today the standard for project management in England. The first edition ”PRINCE” was created to be helpful in IT projects and unfortunately not suitable for other industries. But, in 1996 PRINCE2 was launched which was more generic and suitable for all environments, projects of different size, and in public and private sector. The PRINCE2 method is owned by the British “Office of Government Commerce” (OGC) (Bradley’s, 1997; Ghosh et al., 2012; Hedeman, van Heemst, & Fredriksz, 2004).

2.5.3.1 The method

The PRINCE2 method has a focus on the business case, planning of projects has a clear orientation towards the final product and breakdown of phases. The method provides a number of steps for the team to meet objectives and also review them (Kruger & Rudman, 2013; Matos & Lopes, 2013).

Since the method first was launched in 1996, there have been several updates, in 2002, 2005 and 2009. The latest version has seven groups of processes that are the following:

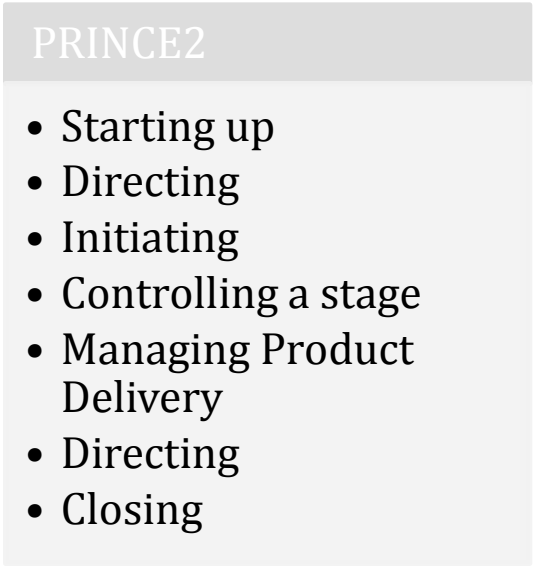

Figure 6 - Groups of processes in PRINCE2 (Matos & Lopes, 2013)

PRINCE2 is a method that is prescriptive, meaning that it has clear steps for the PM to follow and documents to fill in (Matos & Lopes, 2013). In PRINCE2 the project manager has a great responsibility in projects; he or she is accountable for successfully delivering the product according to the initial plan (Macek, 2010). Also, the method tells what, when and how something should be done (Drob & Zichil, 2013).

The method is developed together with the users and their experience, such as project managers, project teams, and academics. They contribute with their knowledge in their specific area. The first publication of the methodology was PRINCE and was launched in 1996 and was done together with 150 European organisations. Since then a new version has been launched, PRINCE2, which tries to have a more generic approach to project management (Matos & Lopes, 2013).

2.5.3.2 Certification

There is a possibility to become certified in the PRINCE2 methodology, at the moment they offer two levels of certification, a "Foundation" level and "Practitioner" level. Both exams are based on the "Managing Successful Projects with PRINCE2 – 2009 Edition", but they are different in that the "Foundation" level consists of a one hour multiple choice test, and the "Practitioner" of a 2.5 hour test. When passing the test, the "Foundation" level manager can have a role in a project management team as an informed member. The "Practitioner" level manager is able to apply the method in a non-complex project. Though, the "Practitioner" manager has to renew the certification every five years. In 2008, there were over 250,000 PRINCE2 certified project managers worldwide (Pincemaille, 2008).

The "foundation" level needs to be completed in order for the project manager to proceed to the "practitioner" level certification.

2.5.4 ISO standards

International Organization for Standardization (ISO) is a worldwide federation working with standardisation of units. The federation provides guidelines in a number of different subjects, such as Environment ISO14001, but it is "ISO10006 – Guidelines for quality management in projects" and "ISO 21500 – Guidance on project management" that has more focus on projects and project management (Drob & Zichil, 2013; Macek, 2010).

2.5.4.1 ISO 21500 Project management

In 2007 the International Organization for Standardization recognised that there was a need for an internationally accepted standardisation for project management, therefore they initiated the work of writing the ISO 21500 standard, a project that lasted for five years (Zandhuis & Stellingwerf, 2013). However, they did not start from scratch; instead they got valuable input from already recognised organisations such as IPMA and PMI. The standard is to a large part based on the PMI PMBoK Guide with five different project processes (Drob & Zichil, 2013; Zandhuis & Stellingwerf, 2013).

In a study by Kristinsdóttr and Möller (2014) they interviewed a company that intended to implement ISO21500 in their organisation. They present four potential

benefits an implementation could have, even though the employees were sceptical to the change. The four potential benefits according to Kristinsdóttr and Möller (2014) were the following:

- Common process for employees to follow and synchronise their work and minimise shortcomings
- Better communication and documentation handled with more care
- Create better team work as it roles and responsibilities are defined
- Quality of work will be improves as the company need to evaluate procedures and how to implement it

Other standards in the ISO family are being audited in order to make sure that the main processes are being followed. But with ISO21500 there is no such requirement, which leads to the conclusion that a company can buy the standard and then state that they use ISO 21500. As a result of this, the credibility of the standard can be questioned (Kristinsdóttr & Möller, 2014).

Just like the methodologies and standards earlier described, the ISO21500 also have defined processes. As the standard is based on PMIBoK Guide, it also has the five processes, but with minor changes in the terminology. The processes are:

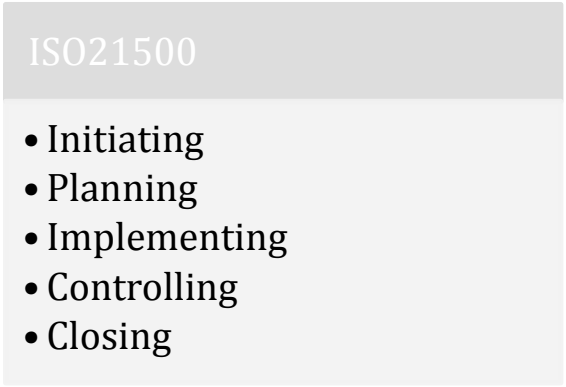

Figure 7 - ISO21500 processes (Drob & Zichil, 2013)

2.5.4.2 Certification

The ISO 21500 is an ”Informative standard” meaning that it is not possible to get a certification according to it. But if the market shows an interest the ISO 21500 could become a ”normative standard” which means that it organisation could become ISO certified (Zandhuis & Stellingwerf, 2013).

Regarding individual certification, it will not be possible to gain an ISO 21500 certified project management certification. The reason for that is because the ISO 21500 is an organisational standard not aiming at individuals (Zandhuis & Stellingwerf, 2013). However, the type of individual certifications that PMI and IPMA offer, can be considered if an individual certification is of interest. The ISO 21500 has high resemblance with the PMI PMBoK meaning that a Project Management Professional (PMP) will understand the processes and concepts. The IPMA certification programme has three competence areas, as described earlier, but

also possible process steps. These steps can be related to the ISO 21500 process steps and concepts (Zandhuis & Stellingwerf, 2013).

2.6 Summary

The five standards and methods that are mentioned above have their own focus on project management, certification and requirements, processes, certified members, and tools. In order to make it more clear all of the similarities and differences have been summarised in ***Figure 8*** below.

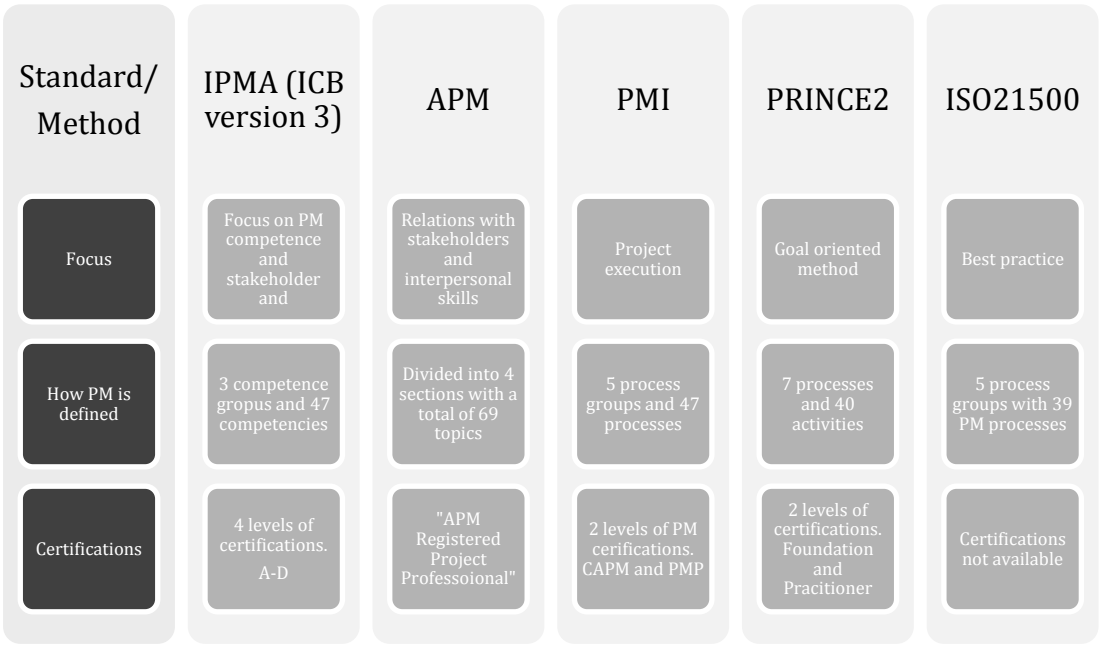

Figure 8 - Summary of the standards and method

As seen in the "How PM is defined"-row, there are similarities in how the different standards and methods divide the project management profession. There are competence groups, sections, process groups or just processes, which then are divided into smaller manageable pieces, e.g. processes, topics, activities or project management processes.

Most of the organisations behind the standards and methods offer certifications with different requirements and several levels, as seen in the table above. As they have their main market in different countries the currency changes, but nonetheless they can be quite pricey. With a re-certification every 3-5 years makes it even more expensive.

The different standards have different main focus areas, and can therefore be separated. The IPMA and APM, which are in many ways similar, have a stronger focus on the people skills, e.g. leadership and communication. While the PMI have more focus on project execution of projects. The PRINCE2 method does also focus on projects, but has a strong goal-oriented focus. The ISO21500 has collected the most common standards and methods into one best practice.

2.7 Positive Outcomes of having a common framework

There have been studies in project management frameworks and their outcomes in organisations. In a study made by Eskerod and Riis (2009) they compare four different organisations of varying size and industry. In the report they find that it was beneficial for the organisations to have mandatory project management training and to follow a decided upon project management framework. In the same study, one organisation decided to make it mandatory to use a common project management model, go through project management or leadership training, examination/certification of project managers and having formal project management knowledge sharing, that particular organisation did so well that they were planning on starting a project management department in order to sell project management knowledge. Also, the project managers developed a higher self esteem after successful project deliveries.

What's more, the use of resources was more efficient and use of standard templates and vocabulary made it easier for the project sponsor and/or top management to follow the project progress.

2.8 Criticism to blindly follow standards/methods

In the meantime, there are also academics that are critical to an increased use of standards and methods. One example is Hodgson and Cicmil (2006) that have a chapter in their book discussing projects and project management bodies of knowledge, the Project Management Institute is in focus, but, it is safe to say that most of the current common standards, i.e. those discussed earlier, that they are similar in many ways, they are critical to institutions in general.

In the second chapter of the book "Making projects critical" Hodgson and Cicmil (2006) discuss "the danger of invisibility" where they imply that PM institutions create a body of knowledge that is seen as the only one that is valid regarding project management knowledge, and the more the project management community believe that, the less they will question what it says. But their critic is mainly towards the institutions trying to force their standard on practitioners through certifications and other membership. Furthermore, they argue that the ethical and moral questions can be suffering if one standard with a number of tools become too strong, as universal knowledge would make practitioners fail to reflect on and lack rationality in decisions (Hodgson & Cicmil, 2006, p. 47).

3 Research method

The data for this research has been gathered through interviews. The conducted interviews were semi-structured with the researcher having a number of questions to be asked, but depending on the answer from the interviewee, follow-up questions could be added and the questions to be presented in any order. The interviews were held in Swedish and questions are found in Appendix 1 in Swedish and English.

All the participants came from the same organisation in Gothenburg, Sweden, and a number of participants were provided from a department of the organisation that had relevant experience and knowledge of the organisation from one or more departments. The head of the department did also act as an external supervisor, giving feedback and information that could be of use in the research.

As the research focus on what method that is appropriate to use in the internal consultancy department the interviewees were chosen from there. However, the sampling can be described as a convenience or purposive sample by Bryman (2012), since they were, more or less, provided to the researcher. Another type of sample, such as a random sample or a stratified sample, was hard to achieve since the number of employees at the department were limited. Therefore, the convenience sample was the most useful alternative. The information available at the department was too good to not use.

With the interviews as primary data the research is qualitative, meaning that the information must be interpreted depending on the context and what is actually said. Lincoln and Guba (2013, pp. 104-105) present four points for classifying a report; these are Credibility, Transferability, Dependability, and Confirmability.

The Credibility for this research is believable due to the interviews being recorded and afterwards summarised and used in the analysis.

It is possible to transfer the results to other industries and departments, as they are generic and reflects on how project managers should act as leaders in projects.

The dependability of the research will probably be different if the same managers are interviewed at a later time. This is because they were in the middle of implementing a method, therefore the questions asked for this research should be revised.

Last, but not least, Confirmability means that is the results free of bias of the researcher. For this research, the researcher does not have any interest in interpreting the result in any way, but still there is a risk that the researcher unknowingly interprets the results according to earlier experience.

In order to get data to the research, five interviews were conducted with topics of discussion about standards, tools, methods, and what motivates the employees to use them. The answers from the interviews have been summarised, in chapter 4, in order to understand the current situation in the studied department.

The interviews that have been conducted have been semi-structured, since that would be the most appropriate way of gathering information in this case. When conducting a semi-structured interview, the interviewer has a number of topics that he or she wants to discuss. The topics can be brought up in any order and in any way. A semi-structured interview gives the interviewee more freedom to express their opinions about the topic (Bryman, 2012).

3.1 Research procedure

During the autumn 2014 a research proposal was written in order to prepare the research. The topic was chosen and then the research has been further developed together with the department at the studied company. They had an explicit wish to study project methods and the possibility to certificate the project managers. A number of standards and methods were studied. Parallel with the literature study the researcher attended meeting the department had and listened to methods that already exist at the company.

Following the literature review, interviews was conducted in order to see what was important for the project managers when picking a method to follow and also give the possibility for the researcher to give recommendations to the company.

3.2 Literature review

The literature has been carefully chosen from a number of different sources in order to present a review with relevant information to the research and to develop a base for the conclusions together with the interviews.

The theory has been gathered from databases provided by Chalmers University of Technology and Northumbria University. Other data will also be provided by the company where the research is being conducted. Keywords will be collected and used for searches in the databases. The initial keywords have been revised as the review progressed. The texts, e.g. articles, research papers etc., has then been skimmed through in order to decide whether to use it or not.

3.3 Ethical considerations

Each interviewee has been informed about the research and has been given the opportunity to consider the possibility of anonymity, been given the choice of approve or neglect to be audio taped, and then asked to fill in an informed consent form. None of the interviewed project managers will be mentioned by name in this paper.

3.4 How the collected data is organised

The collected research reports used for the theoretical chapter have been added into an EndNote library in order to organise and make notes when reading them.

The researcher took notes during the interviews and also audio taped them, in case an interesting topic was discussed further during the session. The interviews have then been summarised in order to be able to analyse them.

4 Result

By conducting interviews it will become clear how projects are done today and what possible standard and/or method that is preferred. Furthermore, the interviews will give an insight in what kind of projects the internal consultancy might come face and if there is a possibility and will to become certified as a project manager.

The internal consultancy department are interested in having a method for them to internally decide what knowledge each consultant possess and what kind of project he/she could be able to work with. An example could be the four different levels IPMA provides for certification.

Based on the questionnaires and interviews, found in appendix 1, the following have been found.

4.1 Project management

In the studied organisation, the most common to work with projects is to follow the PMIBoK, a reason for that is because the model that the organisation developed is based largely on PMI's PMBoK Guide.

At studied organisation there are approximately 1000 employees with the title "Project Manager", which means that a standard or method that everyone uses would be very beneficial. A common career path to a PM is starting as an engineer and then become promoted. As a result of promoting skilled subject area experts into project managers is that there is a risk that they lack proper project management training. The way projects are run are probably by using the tacit knowledge transferred from their manager, see Nonaka (1991) for tacit and explicit knowledge transfer. An evident risk is that projects are run "as they always have", which also means that the same mistakes are likely to be repeated over and over again and possible improvements might be neglected.

There is an expressed ambition from the top management to use internal resources at a higher extent which also means that the internal consultancy department should be utilised more. This would provide an advantage, as they already are familiar with the organisation and its' challenges. It has been estimated that an increased use of internal consultants could save a considerable amount of time and money in projects. For instance, internal consultants are not only on the location, they are familiar with the systems that are in use. Furthermore, the knowledge acquired during the lifespan of the projects will remain within the company. However, for the projects to become successful and for the consultants to gain knowledge, there is a need to have a proper and widespread project management method within the organisation.

4.1.1 The knowledge of the project managers

During discussions together with the consultants it has become clear that they lack a common model or tool to use in their department. But as they are consultants they need to follow the instructions that the hiring department have, as a result of this they sometimes need to use an unfamiliar method which they need to learn to use. But there is also times when they are free to use a method of their choice, but since they

do not have a common method to use, they develop a method that is appropriate to the project, which can cause them to waste valuable time.

Regarding the use of one single method/tool to use in their project management team there are a majority of positive aspects, but also a few negative, ***Figure 9*** consists of points that were mentioned during the interviews with consultants from the PM team at RCC.

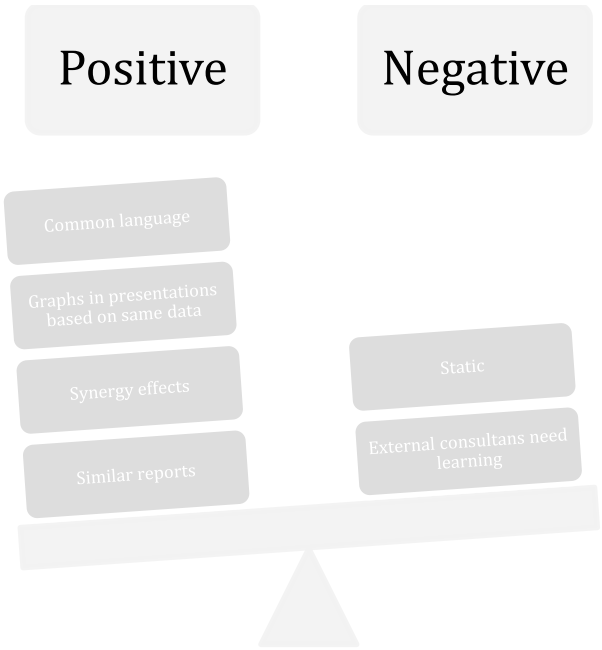

Figure 9 - Positive and negative sides of a common method/tool.

Even though there are some negative sides of sharing a common method/tool the employees seem to see more positive aspects. The negative sides are of such kind that they can be solved by using an already acknowledge standard as a base. Out of the two methods that were presented in this report, the ODGF method is the only that has been based on PMI, which is positive out of the aspect that it should be better known and therefore reduce the learning for external employees.

The project managers that have been transferred to the internal consultancy department all have academic education and some leadership courses from the studied company. However, they lack knowledge of standards and methods/tools, they have used the methods/tools that were developed by their earlier department, and therefore have different views of what a good method/tool is.

As the consultants in the studied company work as internal consultants they have a precarious situation as they need to adapt to the department that hire them and might have requirements regarding the project management. But for some projects the hiring department wish to get help from the internal consultants to manage a project, they have a golden opportunity to show that the method/tool that they use is powerful and there is a chance that it will become widely used for project management.

What seems to be a common understanding with all of the interviewed, is that in order for the company as a whole to have one method/tool to use, is that the top management need to decide which to use and then let a central department implement it into all departments. For that to become reality the method/tool need to be generic and it should be able to adjust to the need of each department. A not so easy task, as

each department will require it to be fully functional to their needs. But a start could be that all departments use same templates for reports, in that way managers from many levels can interpret the data the same way and with similar reports they know what to expect and save time reading them.

During one of the interviews one project manager did not recognise any immediate positive aspects of sharing a common method. The reason for that was that projects are unique by definition and should therefore be handled as such. Each project needs a set of tools and methods that is appropriate for the setting where the project is run. After some discussion the project manager did admit that some steps of a project can be similar and could be beneficial to share.

As the department has started discussing how to proceed with the project management method/tool, they have collected different already existing methods and tools from departments at the company. Then evaluated and commented on them. All members of the project management consultant team are able to see the tools and templates and also try and comment on them. This is just the beginning of the implementation of a common framework, as it became clear during the interviews that there is no framework or method/tool in use, neither for the internal project management consultants, nor the company as a whole.

What's more, the interviewed managers seemed to have little or no knowledge about project management standards and methods such as PMI BoK Guide, APM BoK, or PRINCE2. They are either self-taught or have got some leadership courses from the company. There is also a possibility to complete e-learning courses. The e-learning courses are optional to complete, but one of the interviewed finished one of the courses prior to a project and did use the knowledge for project management purposes and thought that it was useful.

Regarding methods that are present within the company, there was one that was mentioned several times and seems not to be received well. The method is called DITS and is developed for IT projects. DITS is based on ODGF, which in turn is based on the standard published by PMI. One reason for its unpopularity is that it is very administrative, with many steps and templates to complete. But it seems like the two methods are mistaken as the same. Still, both are based on the same standard, but DITS is, as mentioned earlier, developed for IT-projects, while ODGF is meant to be generic and used for all kinds of projects.

As the company have many different methods it can be challenging to use similar vocabulary. Many methods use some kind of "Stage-gate"-system, but one developed and used within the main area of the company have their most important gates at "Gate 4" and to start using another method using "Gates" could cause confusion and miscommunication.

The one main argument of sharing a method is that they would use the same language. This could imply that the communication is something that needs more attention. With a shared method the communication would be improved, but still, the managers have different experience and also need to handle project members using their own terminology. What's being said is that a common language within the department does not mean that the communication overall would improve. The manager's responsibility is to make sure that all project members understand each other, even if they are not using the shared method.

Other positive effect of sharing a model is that the department would gain synergy effects. Meaning that when the managers have used it for some time, they would gain an understanding and also save time when they know what is expected at each step. Also, if all managers follow the same steps they can help each other if problems arise or if the responsible manager would need help for one reason or another.

Project maturity came up in several of the interviews. The interviewees thought that the project maturity overall was good, even though there was a need to clarify to the hiring department what was expected of them. In these cases the maturity was recognised by the manager and treated accordingly by explaining the reason for the project.

4.2 What standard or method is used today?

At the moment there is no standard or method that the project managers use. It seems like each department has their own method for running projects, as an example the IT department use a method called ODGF. The HR department use another method in the project they run called HR Project Manager.

4.2.1 Operational Development Governance Framework

The Operational Development Governance Framework (ODGF) has been developed by the organisation and was meant to be used within the whole organisation for all departments, but when managers changed positions or left the company, further implementation was no longer prioritised. Then, the IT department continued the development and was supposed to continue implementation to other departments, but instead they took ownership of it and developed it based on criteria that the IT department asked for, which then led to only them using it. At this day IT own ODGF, but a common opinion is that it should be more central in order to become recognised throughout the organisation.

The ODGF, however, is a very generic project management model largely based on the PMI PMBoK version 4 and is divided into governance and project management. It has seven gates, whereas one is a checkpoint. At each of these gates there are decisions and actions that need to be accomplished and decided upon. Up until gate 4 the project is doing research and does not cost, but after a decision at gate 4, the project gets the funding and can start.

When all gates have been passed, there is one last gate, called Final Status Report, which is intended to provide evidence that the business case was realised. The project sponsor is responsible to finish this gate as the project organisation has been disbanded.

The Project Sponsor is ultimately responsible for the project, a fact that sometimes seems to be forgotten when running projects. However, the Project Sponsor is supposed to complete a project charter which then is interpreted by the project manager who then writes a project management plan. The project sponsor is also providing resources for a project and takes decisions at gates together with the steering committee.

The steering committee support the project sponsor and participate in decisions at project gates, furthermore they receive reports regarding the project.

The project manager is responsible to deliver the project according to the project charter that the project sponsor has authored together with the steering committee. The project manager reports to the project sponsor and is expected to inform the sponsor and steering committee about risks without hesitation.

During interviews with managers with experience of ODGF, the method is very generic, but not as developed as DITS, which is a developed method the IT department use. A reason why DITS is considered more developed can be because it is based on ODGF and further developed by the IT department.

Furthermore, the ODGF have a number of templates that can be used that are provided by Business Management Systems (BMS). Examples are: Project Charter, Project Management Plan, Stakeholder register.

During one session, a project manager with some experience of ODGF, IT and business projects, criticized that there was a strong focus on finishing tasks in order to pass the gate, instead of actually completing the tasks with good quality. Also, when the model/method actually was used the different departments focused on their tasks, i.e. IT did their programming and economy filled in spreadsheets, which made him question ODGF method. Instead he wanted more collaboration between the departments and more focus on quality, rather than completing gates for the sake of it.

4.2.2 HR Project manager

The Human Resource (HR) department have their own project management tool, which they have developed according to their needs. The idea is to have a tool that is simple enough to use in many different projects and also understandable by all employees within the department. The tool is coded in Excel and contains a lot of macros that the HR department use for their portfolio management. The tool is divided into different tabs in excel where the user fills in template with necessary information according to what he or she think is appropriate to the project. In order to keep the tool simple, the team has put much effort into breaking down necessary parts of project management, i.e. steps and what information that is necessary to provide.

The tool follows a procedure of four steps, **D1** to **D4**, where "D" stands for decision. At each decision a number of steps needs to be finished in order to decide if to continue. **D1** is the initiation decision where the project is defined and resources estimated. The next step **D2** is when the project is confirmed and the project budget is decided and a time plan developed, among other deliverables. The third decision **D3** "Implementation" where the project is assessed whether it is ready to roll-out. The last decision is **D4** "Closure/Hand-over" where a closure report is completed by the project manager summarising the project deliverables, achievements and lessons learned. At each decision there is a list of deliverables that should be prepared before the decision is taken. It is possible to revise the templates prior to decisions, and that is one of the main arguments why the tool is regarded useful and dynamic. On the other hand, the easiness to revise makes it hard to follow up who changed it and possible liability issues can cause arguments.

The project tool has 14 tools in its toolbox. For each of the decisions there are a number of templates that can be used, such as a stakeholder assessment, communication plan, a risk log and possible issues.

At the moment the toolbox is designed by and for the HR department and therefore the focus is on training and implementation of resources, rather than projects of the kind that the internal consultants would find appropriate. But the overall idea and tools are easy to use and is based on steps that projects most often take. A pure toolbox for project management is planned and will probably provide a better tool to the project managers.

5 Analysis

This chapter will analyse the theory and the result of the interviews and questionnaires in order to gain a deeper understanding of the current state in the organisation and to have a base for the discussion in the next chapter.

Internal consultants have a precarious situation within the organisation as mentioned in chapter 2.3. The consultants can face difficulties if they draw attention to a sensitive problem, while external consultants are hired in order to do the same.

It is clear that there are a number of different methods and standards that are common and can be used in many different organisations. They are similar in many ways and at the moment the ISO21500 has captured the best practices of the many standards/methods. This is because the organisation behind ISO worked closely with mainly PMI, but also with APM and OGC that developed PRINCE2 method.

Furthermore, when deciding what method or standard to use there might be different requests, e.g. price, time, certification, focus etc. The five different methods/standards that have been described have all different focus areas.

Most of the common methods/standards offer one or more certifications. There can be different reasons why project managers should have or need a certification. Firstly, an argument can be that a certification is a proof of what competence the project manager possesses and can be used when attracting customers. After a completed certification the project manager gets a proof of certification. Secondly, a certified manager will, depending on what certifications program he or she completes, gain more knowledge in project management, e.g. project management theory, methods, tools, or about his or her soft skills such as leadership etc.

However, most certifications demand re-certifications every third (PMP) to fifth year (IPMA), which cause an economic expense for the organisation, on top of the initial cost of the certification. Further, each certification will demand time and energy from the candidate. As mentioned earlier, when comparing the different standards/methods, there are requirements that need to be fulfilled i.e. self-assessment, theoretical test, and registered earlier experience.

As the project management profession grows, it becomes more common to become a certified project manager. The different certifications are very popular and that can be a reason to why choose one or the other. Of course it depends on where the organisation is located, but at the moment the PMP certification have the most certified members with a total of 500,000 certified managers, while the IPMA have almost 200,000 certified managers. The more certified managers a certification have, the bigger the knowledge base, meaning that there are more potential contributors to the standard/method. Besides, a certification with many certified managers, such as the PMP, will be recognised on more places than a certification with less certified managers.

And then, organisations might have different challenges in projects, some organisations might have high project maturity, meaning that they already have a well-developed method for projects. While other organisations first need a proper method for running projects. Therefore it is important to pick the right standard/method. The PMP has more focus on big projects and describe projects, while the IPMA certification focus more on soft skills such as leadership and management.

A reason to use a method, or standard for that matter, is that the organisation has a common vocabulary when working with projects. If project managers work as usual and use terminology within their project it will cause a boundary when communicating with other departments or project teams. A comment during the research was that it does not really matter what method or standard an organisation use, as long as there is one. Thus, a common vocabulary through a method/standard will improve the communication between departments. In chapter 2.7 an example was given from a company that implemented one single method which ended with the department of that company to be very successful project managers. This concludes, a method in order to use the same language is an important argument. The interviews showed that the communication is an important reason why a shared method should be used, just as earlier studies showed.

The standards/methods mentioned in the theory chapter all spring out from different industries, and can therefore be better adapted to that specific industry. Though, the different bodies have revised the standard/method in order to be more generic.

As the Resource and Competence Center is an internal partner where the employees are supposed to gain experience and expand their network, it is important that they learn from other departments. However, if there is a shared method/tool that RCC and its employees develop there is a chance that the company as a whole can come together and decide upon one single method/tool to use. The internal consultants do play an important role in the implementation of a possible shared method, since they will be working at many different departments and can lobby the use of their preferred method. Furthermore, they could wish to use their method in order to accept a project.

The possibility to complete e-learning courses is very useful, since the employees have the opportunity to finish them in a pace and time that they find appropriate. Though, the courses are optional to finish and as a result of this the number of completed courses vary within the department, or the company for that sake. As one of the interviewed completed one of the courses prior to a major project, shows that there is potential to gain valuable knowledge by finishing the e-learning courses. Therefore at least some of the courses should be mandatory to complete when the employee is transferred to RCC.

In the end of chapter 2, there was presented different views regarding the use of an acknowledged standard. The managers in the studied department did not have too much knowledge about the standards and the method that have been described. Out of the described standards, PMI was the one that many of them recognised, mainly because one of the developed methods is based on it. However, the fact that so few had explicit knowledge about the standards could indicate that a certification could be useful. But, on the other hand, the project managers might need tools and methods rather than a certification that require resources, both time and money. A paper written for IPMA regarding certifications conclude that a "PM certifications do not improve your knowledge or competence, they only recognize it" (Goff, 2013). From the company's view, a certification will benefit them only if they would have external customers, but as the department works as an internal partner, a certification would cost more than the potential benefits of positive feedback from customers.

The methods and models that are present at in the company today have been developed over time and are specific to each department that use them. But some of them have tried to develop a method that is generic enough for everyone at the department to use it in many different projects. The ODGF that have been described is

one of the most generic and most developed, but employees experience it as complex and contain too many templates etcetera to finish.

Second, the HR Project Tool is made as simple as possible with less templates and straight forward steps. It also contains a stakeholder management and risk management part, which was welcomed by the employees during a presentation of the tool. As mentioned earlier, the HR Project Tool is developed for the HR department and what they focus on. But, a project has started in order to re-work the content into a more project management focus.

6 Discussion and conclusion

This last chapter will discuss what the research has found and answer the research questions. Finally, the researcher gives his thoughts about the research and possible further research questions.

As there is a plethora of different methods and standards it can seem hard to decide what to use and follow. But, the most important is that there is one that is used within an organisation. The different standards and methods are generic and can be used in many different industries. Examples of differences can be that they focus on different things, one focus on the goal and product and/or big projects, while another on soft skills of a project manager such as leadership.

There is no need to develop new standards or methods, rather organisation should choose one that they find appropriate, and then customise it according to their needs. In one way it is to develop a new standard/method, but still, they do not start from scratch.

Furthermore, in order to create a common understanding of a standard/method it is of high importance to involve as many departments as possible. As seen in the studied organisation the IT department got responsibility of the development of a method, as a consequence it was then considered their method.

As mentioned earlier, certification of employees can be expensive, both the first certification and also possible re-certifications. Instead of building a business case on how many certified project managers the department have, it would be beneficial for the department to become known as project management professionals that develop their own method. Organisations that rely on certifications outside the organisation in order to attract customers will spend time and financial effort on certifications and re-certifications. At the same time, to develop a method takes much time and effort, therefore a body of knowledge can act as a base for the project managers in order to create a common vocabulary. As the interviews show, a common vocabulary is something that is missing in the studied department at the time of this research.

Another interesting fact, found during the interviews, was that the project managers at RCC did not have much experience of leading projects. Out of the five managers two project managers had some experience of leading projects and all the interviewees had been members of project teams before joining RCC. But as they come from different departments they also bring experience from different types of projects. This could imply that the project maturity can be well developed, whilst the project management maturity could be less developed.

The research questions then, during the interviews it has become clear that there are many positive aspects of sharing a common method and the studied department should decide on using one, simple, method to follow when possible. It needs to be easy to understand and have templates that are easy to use. Otherwise there is an immediate risk that it will be ignored and the use the project managers continue to use tools and methods that they have developed by themselves, causing the same situation that is present.

1. ***What happens when a company lacks a proper project management method or project management standard to follow?***

It is clear that there is a common understanding that there are positive aspects of sharing a method that is based on an acknowledged standard. However, as projects are by definition unique, the method needs to be very generic and possible to adapt to different departments and projects. In order for a method to be adaptable it should be:

- Easy to use with few generic steps
- Have an overall view of projects
- Have senior management approval and decision to use

It is possible to add more points, but that would result in the method being seen as too complicated and, yet again, become a method that is not used.

2. What are the main arguments or the business case to use a common method/standard in an organisation?

During the interviews a few comments about a common method was discussed. In chapter 3 these have been mentioned, and in chapter 2 an example was given from an earlier study showing that a decision from top management resulted in a project management department becoming very successful project managers. Therefore, there should be more effort put into sharing a method, not only does the knowledge transfer improve, managers on the same level and different levels use the same language which reduces the risk on misunderstandings.

The department was initially interested in certifying the project managers in order to know what competence they possess. But instead of putting effort and resources into different certifying programmes it is recommended to decide how to run projects and compare what knowledge they have in that way. Even if a certification would give the employee a proof of what knowledge he/she possesses it does improve the chance of getting a job any more than having the right experience would have.

Something that is concerning is that the use of only one method have an apparent risk of creating a community where new ideas are ignored and possible innovations would be lost. Instead the chosen method should be as generic as possible with some possibilities to adjust according to the project where it is used. Also, new ideas should be encouraged and implemented into the method. It should be dynamic as a method, and for that to be possible the members using it should have an open mind and have the opportunity to discuss and argue about changes as much as possible.

Perhaps, when accepting a dynamic method, that is possible to change when needed and where gained knowledge is shared, the method might end up being successful, leading it to become the method that the company are most known for.

However, in the end, the role of the project manager is to manage projects. If all projects would run without incidents there would be no assignments for the project managers. The PM needs to know how to handle people, communicate with them and make them work together to achieve the intended goal.

6.1 Method critique

The chosen method for the research could have been further developed by sending out an initial questionnaire in order to see what competence the project managers

possessed at the moment. This was a reflection that the researcher came to understand during the interviews. Furthermore, the interviews should have been made to a wider population since the studied department employed 10-15 persons at the moment the research was done.

6.2 Further research

As for further research on this topic it would be very interesting to find what a certification is worth for an organisation. Even though there are costs when acquiring the certification and possible re-certifications there might be a value in the certification such as less time and economic overruns in projects or better employee satisfaction.

Find other standards and methods and review, this report handled standards and methods that were familiar to the researcher.

The internal consultancy department is rather new and the project managers did lack actual project management experience as internal consultants. Therefore it would be very interesting to continue this research when the project managers have worked in projects, and also when the department have worked with a common method/tool.

Further, a case study where the different methods use in the company and shortly described in this research would be very interesting to see. The methods have potential to be useful and are both described as generic and possible to fit into any kind of project. The studied department are in the choosing one of them and their knowledge in a couple of years might be useful.

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Appendix 1 – Interview questions

These are the questions that were acting as a base for the interviews; the questions could be formulated in a different way or be left out.

As the interviews were held in Swedish, the questions are presented in both English and Swedish below.

Questions:

1. **What education do you have? (Both academic and from the company?)**

   Vad har du för utbildning? (Både akademisk och från företaget?)

2. **What earlier working assignments do you have?**
   a. **What did you do then?**

   Vad har du för tidigare arbetsuppgifter?

   Vad gjorde du då?

3. **How many years of experience do you have with Project Management?**

   Hur många års erfarenhet av projektledning har du?

4. **What methods and/or standards have you used?**

   Vilka metoder och/eller standarder har du arbetat med?

   a. **Which one do you prefer?**

   Vilken/vilka föredrar du?

5. **What kind of projects do you manage today?**

   Vad för slags projekt leder du i dagsläget?

6. **Today, what is missing when you are leading projects?**

   Idag, vad saknas när du leder projekt? Ex. verktyg, standard, metod.

7. **How does a typical project look like? [sketch phases etc]**
   a. **In which of these does most problem occur?**
   b. **Which phase works best?**

   Hur ser ett typsikt projekt ut? [Rita upp faser osv]

   Vilken av dessa är det mest problem i?

   Vilken fungerar bäst?

8. **The model that is present today, why is it not used more?**
   a. **How can it be used more?**

   Den modell som finns idag, varför används inte den i större utsträckning?

   Hur kan den användas mer?

9. **Can you see any benefits of sharing a common model?**

Kan du se några fördelar med att använda en gemensam modell?

10. **Any drawbacks of sharing a model?**

    Nackdelar med att ha en gemensam modell?

11. **Is there anything you want to add?**

    Är det något som du vill tillägga?