

## Breaking News

# GAPPS Set to Become the “Linux of Project/Program Management”

## Update from the Global Alliance for Project Performance Standards (GAPPS) Meeting in Den Haag, Netherlands, May 2-4, 2007.

*Reported by Paul Giammalvo from Jakarta, Indonesia*

“GAPPS has been positioned to become the Linux of project/program management competency development”. So stated Dr. Lynn Crawford at the recent GAPPS Working Session #11, held at Shell International BV, The Hague, Netherlands, sponsored by Shell Project Academy <http://swwww.gs.shell.com/projectacademy/> and hosted by Peter Zimmerman, Institute Alliance Manager, May 2-4, 2007.

For new readers to the PM Forum, to recap briefly, GAPPS is an INDEPENDENT competency standard (not aligned with any specific Body of Knowledge or Methodology) which anyone can use to benchmark their internal or external certifications for the purposes of continuous improvement, transferability and reciprocity.

Contrary to some misperceptions, GAPPS is NOT merely another competitor to PMI, AACE, PRINCE2, IPMA, AIPM or any other organization or institution. The GAPPS competency standard, which has been put in the “public domain” under “GNU” or “Copyleft Licensing”, has been designed to enable governments, professional organizations or companies to compare the plethora of certifications in project/program management against an independent, non-aligned standard. This approach is designed to enable transferability and reciprocal recognition of credentials around the world.

As she introduced GAPPS to new and old participants attending the meeting in Den Hague, Dr. Lynn Crawford characterized the organization as “the Linux of project/program management competency development”. To continue the analogy so effectively expressed by Dr. Crawford, GAPPS participants ask others to consider: Is it better in the long term for a standard to be created in the “public domain” (e.g. Linux or Wikipedia) or is it preferable for a single or commercial, for profit entity to establish the defacto standard? For a multitude of reasons, many in the project/program community of practice believe that an independent standard is the more sustainable approach, especially so for the developing nations to support achieving the UN's 2015 targeted Millennium Development Goals (MDG) <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/> .

As Project and Program Management forms an integral part of achieving the MDG's, a growing group of leading practitioners, academics, companies, institutions and government agencies believe that taking an “open source” approach is essential to getting the most value out of project/program management as a delivery system, as it enables developing countries and multi-national organizations working in those countries to foster culturally sensitive approaches by focusing on the outcomes and benchmarking the development of their internal methodologies or systems to best

achieve these outcomes, ("the ends") as opposed to focusing on the how or "the means".

With the completion of the Project Management Competency Standards back in 2006, during the most recent meeting in Den Hague, focus was on performing a functional analysis of program managers preparatory to defining those competencies which are unique to program management. This focus will continue for the upcoming meetings.

Also at this meeting, Ivor Blumenthal, CEO, Sector Education & Training Authority, (SETA) South Africa, <http://www.serviceseta.org.za/> spoke to the group and presented a governmental perspective of why a global, independent standard was desirable. Key points in his presentation were the principles of "subsidiarity", whereby a global standard has been created, but local organizations are free to determine how to best meet or achieve that standard in the context of local socio-economic considerations, and "reciprocity" where countries or organizations agree to mutually recognize each other's credentials, provided they meet or exceed the agreed to common standard. One of the best illustrations of the importance of subsidiarity and reciprocity come from the world of international commercial aircraft piloting.

Because of the global nature of commercial air transportation, a common standard of practice must exist, otherwise, chaos would ensue. Pilots landing their plane in Moscow or New York or New Delhi all have to share a common language and procedures, along with some minimum competencies. The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) [http://www.icao.int/cgi/goto\\_m.pl?icao/en/hist/history02.htm](http://www.icao.int/cgi/goto_m.pl?icao/en/hist/history02.htm) was formed back in 1944 to address these issues, and has done so quite effectively, evidenced by the relative safety of air travel, even in the developing nations. Likewise, in order for a pilot from Moscow to land his plane in New York, (and vice-versa) both governments need to recognize the validity of his/her pilots license (implicitly validating the process to qualify them as pilots) To complicate matters even more, as pilots fly through many different airspaces, not only do the destination countries have to recognize these qualifications, but so do countries whose airspace a pilot may have to traverse en route from point A to point B.

Because project and program management, like civil aviation, is global in nature, and affects so many people directly or indirectly, the GAPPS leadership sees a need for an independent benchmark and is attempting to adapt/adopt an approach somewhat comparable to that taken by the International Civil Aviation Organization. Taken in the appropriate context, this is to create a standard which will serve many of the same or comparable purposes and objectives in support of the global project management community that ICAO provides to the global civil aviation community.

[http://www.icao.int/cgi/goto\\_m.pl?icao/en/anb/mais/index.html](http://www.icao.int/cgi/goto_m.pl?icao/en/anb/mais/index.html).

Membership in GAPPS is for organizations only. It is not designed for individual members. Membership is open to any organization, whether from Government, Industry, Academia or other Project/Program Management organizations, with the objectives as outlined above..

Current GAPP members include:

### **Standards and Qualification Organisations**

[Services SETA](#)

[Innovation and Business Skills Australia](#) \*

[New Zealand Qualifications Authority](#)

### **Project Management Professional Associations**

[American Society for the Advancement of Project Management \(asapm\)](#) \*

[Association for Project Management \(APM\)](#)

[Association for the Advancement of Cost Engineering \(AACEI\)](#)

[Greater-China Project Management Association \(GPMA\)](#)

[Project Management Association of Japan \(PMAJ\)](#) \*

[Project Management South Africa \(PMSA\)](#) \*

[Society for Project Managers \(SPM\)](#) \*

### **Academic/Training Institutions**

[APM Group Limited](#) \*

[Cambridge International Examinations](#)

[Athabasca University](#) \*

[ESC Lille](#) \*

[University of Technology, Sydney](#)

[Middlesex University](#) \*

[Bond University](#)

### **Industry**

[Project Performance Group](#) \*

[Project Services, Queensland](#) \*

[Motorola](#) \*

[American Express](#)

[PSM Consulting](#)

[LivingPlanit](#) \*

[Shell International](#)

[PTMC/APMX](#) \*

[Interlink Technology Pty Ltd](#)

\*Indicates Founding Members

For those interested in becoming involved, the next working groups will be meeting at convenient locations around the world:

### **Working Session 12**

1-3 September 2007

Bond University

Gold Coast, Australia

Associated with: PMOZ Conference, 29th – 31st August

### **Working Session 13**

12-14 March 2008

PMAJ

Tokyo, Japan

Associated with: PMAJ International Project and Program Management Symposium,  
Tokyo, 10-11 March 2008

For more information about joining GAPPS, Email: Zoe Whittaker at [secretariat@globalpmstandards.org](mailto:secretariat@globalpmstandards.org) or visit [www.globalpmstandards.org](http://www.globalpmstandards.org).



First Row- from left to right: "Ishi" Ishikawa; Jane Carnegie; Bill Duncan; Zoe Whittaker; Dr. Lynn Crawford; Bernard Ho; Mary McKinley;  
Back row- from left to right: Harry Jarnagan; Robert Best; Roy Sargent, Darren Tuohy; Paul Giammalvo (hidden); Peter Zimmerman



First row- from left to right: Robert Best; Peter Zimmerman, Darren Tuohy; Bill Duncan; Paul Giammalvo (kneeling); "Ishi" Ishikawa. Second row - from left to right: Zoe Whittaker; Jane Carnegie; Harry Jarnagan; Mary McKinley. Back Row - from left to right: Dr. Lynn Crawford; Roy Sargent; Alicia Aitken; Bernard Ho; Other attendees missing from the photos included: Jan Alkemade, Rod Baker, Lesley Bentley, Leslie Rider and Brigitte Shaden.