

The *vision* to succeed

An overview of P3M3® Version 3

Rod Sowden. P3M3® Lead Author

The new version of P3M3® (Portfolio, Programme and Project Management Maturity Model) was released in May 2015 by AXELOS and provides a step change in the breadth and depth of the model. AXELOS are the accreditation body that now oversees what was historically the OGC product set.

P3M3® is designed to be agnostic, so it is independent of bodies of knowledge, which is why it has been so popular. It doesn't measure APM, IPM, PMI or AXELOS compliance, it is assessing the effectiveness of the outcomes.

P3M3® is based on the internationally recognised CMMI¹ 5 levels of maturity, it was first released in 2005 and focused largely on process management, and it assumed that to be good at programme management you had to be good at project management first; in practice this has not proved to be the case.

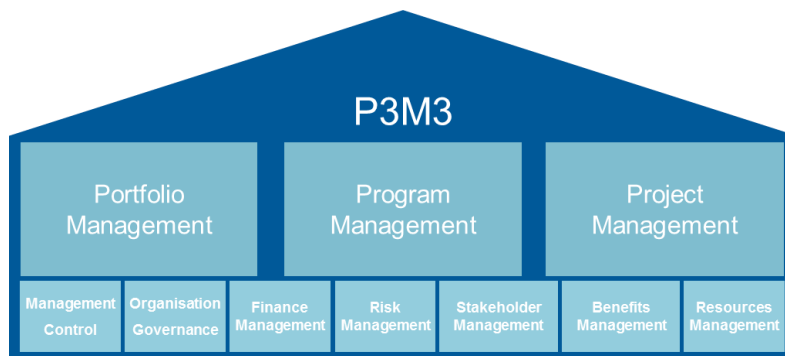
In 2008 Version 2 was released, this provided a fundamental change in design by enabling organisations to assess portfolio, programme and project management independently of each other and there was a greater focus on the people elements. Within the P3M world, depending on your definition of the term,

there are numerous processes, ISO21500 claims 39, within P3M3® version 2 we worked on around 25. Rather than measure each process individually, P3M3® version 2 introduced Perspectives; these aggregated the processes into 7 core groups that were used for reporting.

Since P3M3® version 2 was released in 2008 over 500 assessments have been undertaken with hundreds more using the self-assessment tools. In

Australia and New Zealand the governments mandated their departments to have capability assessments using P3M3®, in the UK it was a softer approach, but most central government departments, and many local governments, have benefited from an assessment. The evidence of the benefits was highlighted by Transport for London, who claimed savings of £1bn from improving their maturity.

We are also now seeing more sophisticated use of the model, with companies accrediting their supply chain to support greater consistency with themselves and using it as an independent measure of contract success. It is also providing the foundation for establishing integrated assurance, an organisation's



¹ Carnegie Melon Management Institute

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maturity is a critical factor in the predictability of success for individual programmes and projects, so an important element of that mix.

P3M3® version 3 incorporates what we have learned about how the maturity assessments should function, what to measure and greater insight into high maturity organisations. This has been achieved by including a concept called Threads; these are applied to all 7 perspectives. The Threads have provided a more structured way to review and diagnose the areas that are enabling or inhibiting performance.

In the new model, there is also the recognition that not all project based organisations actually deliver projects, there are many that commission specialist companies to do it (particularly in construction and heavy engineering), this requires different strengths in terms of procurement, contract and asset management which are now included as optional threads. The flip side of that are organisations that deliver projects to a specification. Again, their focus is different so there are optional threads in the model which apply specifically to that scenario, so that their strengths can be reflected in a review.

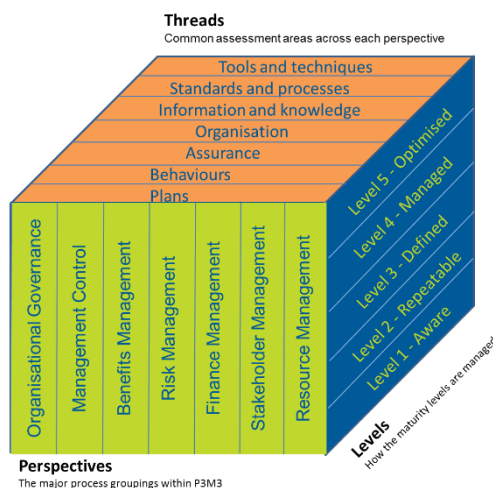
A big lesson from the work since 2008 has been the time needed to improve

performance. Most organisations implementing an improvement programme significantly underestimate the level of business change that is needed, and for level 1 organisation aspiring to level 3, they may even be looking at a generation change. We now have plenty of evidence that it takes at least a year to move up one level.

The new model brings more support for organisations in terms of an Introduction Guide that explains the model in detail and how organisations can plan to use it and the various support options available. This can be downloaded from <https://www.axelos.com/> as a PDF. There are also much tighter controls on the processes for the accreditation of consultancies that are certified to undertake assessments.

The key changes in the new model are:

1. Greater alignment to the main bodies of knowledge
2. A Introduction Guide as a more sophisticated reference for users
3. Better coverage of procurement, contract and asset management
4. Greater diagnostic analysis includes focus on areas such as behaviours, tools & techniques and knowledge management.
5. Better coverage of Level 4 and 5 maturity now that we have a better





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- understanding and access to the high performing organisations
- 6. Portfolio model improved to reflect the evolving best practice in this discipline
- 7. A revised self-assessment tool provided as an online service via the AXELOS website

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Aspire Europe Ltd and Outperform UK Ltd were commissioned to develop P3M3® version, which was led by Rod Sowden and Andy Murray.

Andy Murray was lead author for PRINCE2® 2009 and the PRINCE2® maturity guide.

Rod was the lead author for P3M3 Version 2, he was also the lead author for MSP® 2007 and 2011. He has published a number of other books including the MSP® Survival Guide series and the Easy Guide to Project Planning.