



APM Body of Knowledge
7th edition
Consultation report

June 2018

THE CHARTERED BODY FOR THE PROJECT PROFESSION

Contents

Page 2	Introduction
Page 3	Welcome: Editor's note
Page 4	Background
Page 5	How we consulted: Method
Page 6	Who took part?
Page 7	What we found: Quantitative results
Page 8	What we found: Qualitative results
Page 9	Conclusions and recommendations

Introduction

The APM *Body of Knowledge* benefits hugely from the input of the profession. The diversity of views and challenge helps improve what is produced.

To provide access to everyone and ensure a broad range of views fairly, APM ran an eight-week online consultation, from 26 February to 20 April.

Participants were invited to rate the proposed structure, as well as make suggestions on the range of topics covered.

The results from the consultation are shared in this report, together with the thoughts of APM *Body of Knowledge* editor Dr Ruth Murray-Webster.

The seventh edition proposes to continue in the spirit of previous editions, collaborating with the project community to create a foundation for the successful delivery of projects, programmes and portfolios.

Association for Project Management
June 2018

Welcome: Editor's note



We are pleased that the *APM Body of Knowledge* consultation process has been conducted professionally and fairly and that we have heard from a wide group of interested parties, not just those who have a passion for a specific aspect of the profession. As we move forward to commence writing, we have looked at the detail from all submissions, including any partially completed submissions recognising that they may not fully reflect individuals' views.

None of the findings and suggestions that we have read so far come as a surprise to us. There are a few areas where what is being asked for by you is what we intended and already had in mind. For example, engaging and influencing stakeholders not just analysing them; dealing with the interpersonal skills required by project professionals and an appropriate focus on benefits (identification through to realisation).

By far, the most problematic aspect of *APM Body of Knowledge 7th edition* will be how we resolve the 'agile' matter. We are adamant that any binary 'waterfall vs agile' language is counter-productive and we are working hard to find the right language but it is good that the inclusion of this language in the proposed structure has brought forward creative ideas from the profession. We have many balanced views about how to achieve the benefits of an iterative approach where scope and quality is the variable without denouncing approaches that prioritise trading time and cost to complete scope to the right quality. We already have ideas how to move forward and we have selected practitioners who use agile approaches in their work to be part of our writing team.

We have selected a writing team that covers the breadth of the profession and whose experience broadens our personal specialisms: my doctoral research and experience in organisational change, risk and decision-making experience, and recent practitioner experience as director of the change portfolio for Associated British Ports, and academic adviser Professor Darren Dalcher's credentials and successful track record in practitioner development. This team, as well as the editorial team, will be announced to you shortly.

In summary, we have good insight from the consultation and nothing we have seen so far gives us major cause for concern, although we have paid close attention to how we might improve the structure and address the concerns raised during the consultation. We have a writing schedule that provides opportunities for early engagement and feedback and we are confident that if we hold to the process and provided that no major issues emerge from the detailed feedback, then we will be able to deliver a high-quality *APM Body of Knowledge 7th edition* by spring 2019.

Dr Ruth Murray-Webster

Editor, APM Body of Knowledge 7th edition

The *APM Body of Knowledge* content aims to be useful to 'most people, most of the time' and will therefore be sector neutral and practitioner focused.

Background

The *APM Body of Knowledge* is the Association for Project Management's (APM) foundational resource for project, programme and portfolio management.

Historically published in print, and now digitally, the *APM Body of Knowledge* has played a pivotal role in raising professional standards, providing the basis for the syllabuses of APM's high-volume qualifications: the APM Project Fundamentals Qualification and the APM Project Management Qualification, and establishing a common language that strengthens the concept of a progressive career path for project professionals through APM's qualification structure.

The addition of an online resource such as *APM Body of Knowledge* online, and its predecessor BoK+, has seen extraordinary growth in website traffic, with pages containing Body of Knowledge content generating over 50 per cent of all site visits to apm.org.uk from Google.

In short, the widespread appeal of the *APM Body of Knowledge* has helped to position APM as a leading authority in the project profession.

By the profession, for the profession

The *APM Body of Knowledge* has traditionally been developed using input from various APM networks, in particular APM Specific Interest Groups. The *APM Body of Knowledge 7th edition* provides an opportunity to re-confirm and update this highly influential publication.

The *APM Body of Knowledge* content aims to be useful to 'most people, most of the time' and will therefore be sector neutral and practitioner focused. Its primary purpose is to define the components that make up the project profession.

The *APM Body of Knowledge 7th edition* will be written by a team of project management experts led by editor Dr Ruth Murray-Webster and co-editor and academic advisor Professor Darren Dalcher. It will be informed by input and feedback from the project management profession on a regular basis via an online consultation tool.

The initial consultation, in response to a proposed structure for the next edition, was held between February and April 2018. This report aims to reflect the rich and varied feedback received through the consultation and summarises the impact it will have on next edition's structure and content.

How we consulted: Method

The *APM Body of Knowledge* consultation was conducted via a dedicated online platform. We asked the whole profession to comment on the proposed structure, below, which comprised three chapters, 12 sections and 69 topics. The structure was submitted as a working draft and is subject to further feedback and development.

The consultation was open for eight weeks, closing on the 20 April 2018.

Each section had an objective; respondents were asked to rate the degree to which they felt the topics reflected the objective (Fully, Mostly, Partially or Not at all). They were asked to suggest changes to the topics and any specific points that needed to be covered in the content supporting

Promotion encouraging participation was included in APM branch and SIG communications throughout the process.

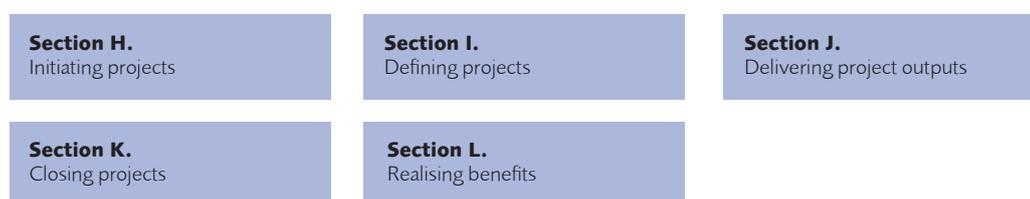
APM Body of Knowledge 7th edition – structure proposed in the consultation



Chapter 2: People



Chapter 3: Delivery



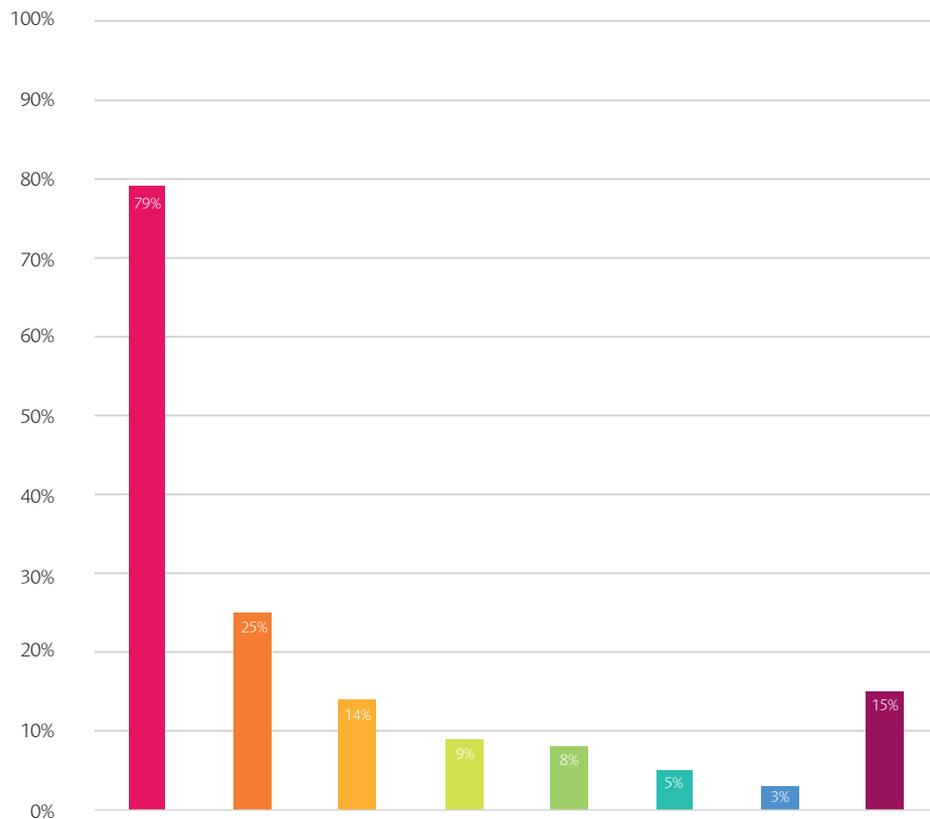
Supporting campaign

There was a comprehensive promotional campaign supporting the consultation including three dedicated emails to APM's entire database of 86,000 addresses, homepage coverage on the APM website, social media promotion, four dedicated blogs focused on areas of the proposed structure and two webinars for APM Specific Interest Group (SIG) members.

Promotion encouraging participation was included in APM branch and SIG communications throughout the process. In addition, a dedicated email address was maintained for related questions. Several SIGs were consulted via this channel, helping to co-ordinate responses.

Who took part?

We received over 400 responses to the consultation (134 completed responses with a further 290 'saved' responses¹). Respondents were asked to tick boxes to reflect their relationship with APM, they could tick more than one category. The profile of respondents was:



- APM members
- APM SIG or branch members
- APM corporate partners/affiliates
- Academic institutions
- APM accredited providers
- Students
- Government institutions
- Other (featuring mostly job titles or areas of expertise)

1. The consultation was easy-to-use and intuitive, although it took some time to complete. A significant number of people saved their responses but did not complete it.

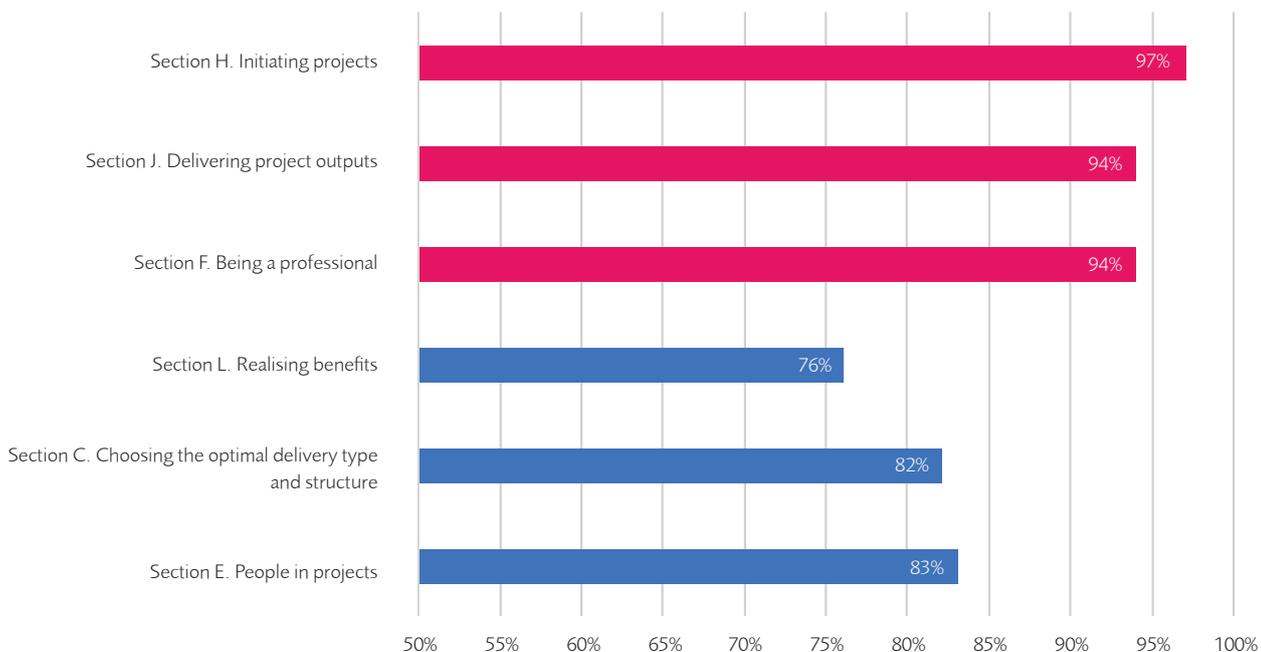
What we found: Quantitative results

There was a very high positive response to the proposed structure. On average, 89 per cent² of respondents rated the proposed structure to be 'Fully' or 'Mostly' aligned to the objective in each section.

The sections receiving the highest response were Section H – Initiating projects (97 per cent), Section J – Delivering project outputs and Section F – Being a professional (94 per cent each) and Section I – Defining projects (93 per cent). Lowest responses were for Section L – Realising benefits (76 per cent), Section C – Choosing the optimal delivery type and structure (82 per cent), and Section E – People in projects (83 per cent).

Twelve out of 15 APM SIG chairs responded³. In total SIGs have approximately 29,000 subscribers (individuals may subscribe to more than one SIG). SIG responses represent the equivalent of 22,000 (69 per cent) all SIG subscriptions. On average those identifying themselves as a member of a branch or SIG rated the structure 77 per cent positively. Highest rated were Section H – Initiating projects (93 per cent), Section J – Delivering project outputs (90 per cent) and Section G – Managing people (89 per cent). Lowest rated were Section L – Realising benefits, Section C – Choosing the optimal delivery type and structure (both 58 per cent) and Section E – People in projects (66 per cent).

The highest and the lowest responses to sections



2. Excluding those who didn't answer. Including 'Not answered' – 74 per cent rated the structure positively.

3. In addition, a dialogue is open with the Programme Management SIG and prominent members of Women in Project Management SIG also took part.

What we found: Qualitative results

The respondents were asked to complete up to two qualitative questions across the 12 sections. They could respond to as many or as few as they wanted. Over 1,530 comments were received with 46 supporting documents uploaded.

Comments were constructive and varied – an approximate measure of sentiment suggests that there were five times more positive comments than negative. The feedback offered 364 topics and alternatives, nearly half of which were mentioned by one person and over 85 per cent mentioned by less than 10.

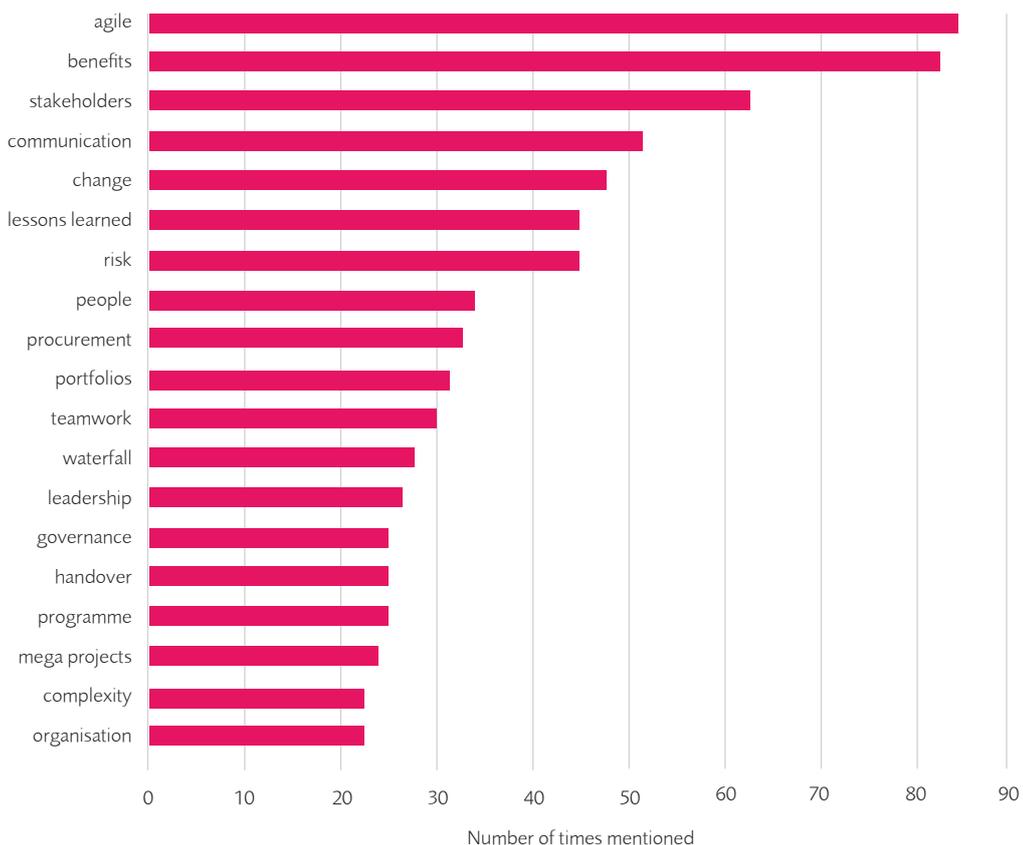
Popular themes

The most popular themes were how the *APM Body of Knowledge 7th edition* accommodates agile, benefits, stakeholders and communication. 'Change' was also a common theme, as was lessons learned.

Traditional areas such as risk, procurement and governance were recurring themes and people-related issues such as teamwork and leadership were also regularly mentioned.

Of the popular themes, recurring comments were around the distinction between working to an agile method and working with 'agility', the position and mechanics of how benefits were defined, tracked and realised, the process of analysing and engaging with stakeholders and the importance of communication throughout the project life cycle.

References by topic mentions (10+)



Conclusions and recommendations

- The consultation was successful, providing broad access to the process for the profession over the eight-week period.
- Promotion in support of the consultation was sustained and broad.
- Responses received were sufficiently constructive, detailed and offered in the right spirit.
- We can have high confidence that the proposed structure sufficiently reflects the profession – and embraces projects, programmes and portfolios.
- There are several additional areas for the editorial team to consider, although it should be recognised that breadth of opinion demonstrates that finding universal consensus is extremely unlikely.
- The editorial team expect to make some changes to the structure in response to feedback but this cannot be confirmed until they have processed all the comments and submissions.

For further information on the development of the *APM Body of Knowledge 7th edition* visit apm.org.uk/body-of-knowledge/apm-body-of-knowledge-consultation

Association for Project Management

Ibis House, Regent Park,
Summerleys Road,
Princes Risborough,
Buckinghamshire HP27 9LE

Tel (UK) 0845 458 1944
Tel (Int) +44 1844 271 640
Email info@apm.org.uk
Web apm.org.uk

