AGILE LIFE CYCLE APPROACH
GUIDANCE

INTRODUCTION

The *APM Competence Framework 3rd edition* comprises 29 competences covering project, programme and portfolio management and PMO. A series of role profiles has been developed to help users to navigate the framework and understand which competences are required in each role. The competences in the *APM Competence Framework* can be applied to projects, programmes and portfolios that operate across different life cycles and use different delivery methods, including linear (waterfall), iterative (agile) or hybrid. This guidance is designed to assist in highlighting areas of consideration in an iterative (agile) environment and should be used in conjunction with the wider *APM Competence Framework*.

Competence guidance

	Competence	Competence definition
1	**Life cycles**	The ability to structure and organise change initiatives.
	When applying this competence, the manager of a change initiative needs to appreciate that an iterative life cycle might be appropriate when looking for an approach that can be adjusted as you go along to deliver customer value throughout the initiative rather than only at the end.	
2	**Governance arrangements**	The ability to establish and maintain governance structures that define control of deployment for delivery of change initiatives, and that align with organisational practice.
	When applying this competence in an iterative life cycle, the manager of a change initiative needs to appreciate that the governance arrangements must be suitable for an iterative life cycle and agreed by all parties.	
3	**Sustainability**	The ability to balance the environmental, social, economic and administration considerations that will impact a change initiative.
	Expectations in an iterative life cycle are aligned to the competences required in all change initiatives.	
4	**Financial management**	The ability to enable financial resource for delivery and to plan and control the finances of change initiatives, as part of the organisation's overall financial management, to ensure optimisation of the business case.
	When applying this competence in an iterative life cycle, the manager of a change initiative needs to appreciate the different approaches to financial management. Examples of how this may be managed include having an amount of funding approved initially that narrows down as requirements become clearer, having funding approved for a specific iteration or having a fixed budget, which means the scope will need to be flexed.	

5	**Business case**	The ability to prepare, gain approval of, refine and update business cases that justify the initiation, investment and/or continuation of change initiatives in terms of benefits, costs and risks.
	When applying this competence in an iterative life cycle, the manager of a change initiative needs to appreciate that the business case will evolve as the initiative proceeds. It should include the vision for the outcomes and benefits of the project. The business case developed at the beginning of the project is reviewed as increments are completed to determine whether further work is justified or needed.	
6	**Portfolio shaping**	The ability to set up portfolios to ensure efficient delivery of strategic objectives.
	When shaping a portfolio, consideration needs to be given to the fact an iterative approach enables early delivery of value.	
7	**Procurement**	The ability to secure the provision of resources, choosing strategies for obtaining best value from supply chains.
	When applying this competence in an iterative life cycle, the manager of a change initiative needs to appreciate that the supply chain needs to be comfortable working in an iterative way, for example, agreeing that working incrementally may mean the project length is hard to determine, and that suppliers need to be able to adapt to change. Suppliers also need to be onboarded in line with timescales that support delivery in an iterative life cycle.	
8	**Reviews**	The ability to manage progression through the life cycle of a change initiative.
	When applying this competence in an iterative life cycle, the manager of a change initiative needs to appreciate an emphasis on promoting collaborative working, especially with the customer. This includes reviewing the work that has taken place at the end of every iteration to show what has been produced, seeking feedback from customers, and deciding whether what has been produced meets the vision of the initiative.	
9	**Assurance**	The ability to provide confidence to the governance board that a change initiative is on track to deliver the objectives and intended value.
	When applying this competence in an iterative life cycle, the manager of a change initiative needs to appreciate that assurance is provided through engagement with the assurance community on an ongoing basis throughout a change initiative, specifically during reviews.	

10	**Capability development**	The ability to assess organisational maturity in relation to a change initiative and the wider organisation.
	When applying this competence in an iterative life cycle, the manager of a change initiative needs to appreciate that the organisation will need to be able to adapt to frequent change.	

11	**Transition management**	The ability to manage the integration of the outputs of a change initiative into business-as-usual (BAU), ensuring that outputs enable the intended value.
	When applying this competence in an iterative life cycle, the manager of a change initiative needs to appreciate that the delivery of outputs occurs early and frequently when they are deemed acceptable by the product owner. The integration into a BAU environment will therefore be more frequent.	

12	**Benefits management**	The ability to identify and agree the benefits and determine how they will be measured, monitored, and managed throughout a change initiative until they are realised.
	When applying this competence in an iterative life cycle, the manager of a change initiative needs to appreciate that outputs, and therefore benefits, are delivered early and frequently.	

13	**Stakeholder engagement and communication management**	The ability to work with people, both internally and externally, to build support to achieve intended outcomes.
	When applying this competence in an iterative life cycle, the manager of a change initiative needs to appreciate that one of the principles underlying the iterative approach is working collaboratively with the customer. The contact with the customer is therefore more frequent and collaborative.	

14	**Conflict resolution**	The ability to identify, address and resolve differences between individuals and/or interest groups.
	Expectations in an iterative life cycle are aligned to the competences required in all change initiatives.	

15	**Leadership**	The ability to empower and inspire others to deliver successful change initiatives by providing vision, direction, feedback and support so people can do their best work.
	When applying this competence in an iterative life cycle, the manager of a change initiative needs to appreciate that the leadership style is as a 'servant leader', where the manager of a change initiative is there to serve the team and foster leadership in others instead of accruing power and taking control.	

16	**Team management**	The ability to select, develop and manage individuals to create and sustain teams.
	When applying this competence in an iterative life cycle, the manager of a change initiative needs to appreciate that teams are cross functional and are encouraged to be more self-organising and supportive, working together to move the team forward.	

17	**Diversity and inclusion**	The ability to build and maintain an inclusive environment that embraces a diverse culture.
	Expectations in an iterative life cycle are aligned to the competences required in all change initiatives.	

18	**Ethics, compliance, and professionalism**	The ability to embody, promote and maintain a trusted profession and to navigate the cultural, legal and regulatory environment.
	Expectations in an iterative life cycle are aligned to the competences required in all change initiatives.	

19	**Requirements management**	The ability to prepare and maintain definitions of the requirements of change initiatives.
	When applying this competence in an iterative life cycle, the manager of a change initiative needs to appreciate that requirements are commonly captured as 'user stories'; short, simple descriptions told from the perspective of a user or customer. Iterative development provides an environment where the solution is released in increments. Where time is fixed, prioritisation of requirements is needed. It's important to understand the relative importance of the work to be done by understanding user feedback and their emerging requirements.	

20	**Solutions development**	The ability to determine the optimal solution to satisfy agreed requirements.
	When applying this competence in an iterative life cycle, the manager of a change initiative needs to appreciate that more collaboration takes place with the customer in developing the solution. Iterative developments allow for early delivery of value in response to regular stakeholder feedback. The intention is to develop a solution that satisfies the user requirements and is 'good enough', not gold plated.	

21	**Quality management**	The ability to ensure that outputs are delivered in accordance with requirements.
	When applying this competence in an iterative life cycle, the manager of a change initiative needs to appreciate that acceptance criteria are part of the user stories, which embeds quality control and assurance into each iteration.	

22	**Integrated planning**	The ability to take forward the definition of outputs into detailed planning, incorporating multiple areas into the integrated project management plan.
	When applying this competence in an iterative life cycle, the manager of a change initiative needs to appreciate that a baseline plan is still required, but the assumptions underpinning the plan have flexibility and agility built into its development. In an iterative life cycle approach, the baseline resources and schedule are established, but the scope may deviate from the baseline plan as the product owner may have autonomy to re-prioritise and act on new knowledge. Planning is a continual process and takes place in many ways, for example, daily to plan the next 24 hours of work or at the start of every iteration. The product owner keeps the backlog (prioritised list of deliverables) refined to plan for future iterations. Any work not achieved in an iteration is returned to the backlog.	

23	**Schedule management**	The ability to undertake time-based planning with an emphasis on activities and resource.
	When applying this competence in an iterative life cycle, the manager of a change initiative needs to appreciate that a timebox approach is used – a timebox is an iteration with a fixed end date that is not allowed to change. The scope and quality can therefore be adjusted to deliver to time and cost. Timeboxes in projects are often sized between one and four weeks and some frameworks refer to these timeboxes as sprints.	

24	**Resource management**	The ability to acquire and deploy internal and external resources.
	When applying this competence in an iterative life cycle, the manager of a change initiative needs to appreciate that requirements are prioritised and implemented within the pre-allocated resources, varying the scope achieved within the time available, if needed. However, if all the scope is needed to deliver the specified quality, additional time is inevitably needed, so specific features may be scheduled for a subsequent iteration. The team needs to have all the skills necessary for the iteration. The most successful teams are stable over time; their members don't change.	

25	**Resource capacity planning**	The ability to plan resource needs in line with the strategic direction of the organisation to ensure that resource utilisation is maintained at an appropriate level for optimal efficiency.
	Expectations in an iterative life cycle are aligned to the competences required in all change initiatives.	

26	**Budgeting and cost control**	The ability to develop and agree budgets for change initiatives and understanding where costs fall over time.
	Expectations in an iterative life cycle are aligned to the competences required in all change initiatives.	

27	**Contract management**	The ability to monitor and manage supplier performance.
	When applying this competence in an iterative life cycle, a change initiative manager needs to appreciate that an open contract model is most common. Approaches to monitoring and managing supplier performance can take a variety of forms including being involved in sprint planning, backlog refinement, sprint reviews and monitoring burn down charts (a graphical representation of how much work there is left and how much time there is to do it).	

28	**Risk and issue management**	The ability to identify and monitor risks (threats and opportunities); to plan and implement responses to those risks, and respond to issues that affect a change initiative.
	When applying this competence in an iterative life cycle, a change initiative manager needs to appreciate that risks are generally managed through a risk RAID (Risks, Assumptions, Issues and Dependencies) and are discussed and reviewed on a daily basis.	

29	**Change control**	The ability to manage variations and change requests in a controlled way.
	Expectations in an iterative life cycle are aligned to the competences required in all change initiatives.	