

Reference guide ICB4 in an agile world

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A changing world needs a new kind of leadership

Because the world is rapidly transforming, a new breed of leader is required. Individuals that are competent of responding swiftly to technological innovation, changing social relations, new divisions of labour and new ways of working that are developed. The challenges we face are more complex than ever before organisations need to absorb and adapt to change quickly. The tried and tested application of best practices is therefore no longer the way forward and that a more agile approach is required. Not as a goal in itself, but as a means to an end. It is about focusing on what is valuable to customers.

The complexity and uncertainty also call for a different form of control. Responsibilities will now be found on lower levels within the organisation. The decision-makers increasingly entrust the responsibility to the experts and we see a shift from pure management to leadership at all levels of the organisation.

Working both lean and agile

One of the answers to these challenges is lean-agile working, an essential part of the way we organise. Organisations learn to make a distinction between what is valuable and what is irrelevant – a development that has been going on for decades in a row. Many organisations have taken the first, sometimes bold, steps in the much-needed lean/agile transition to become more adaptive to their environments. Of the remaining organisations, almost none can be found that is not considering going agile.

Organisations that already have experience working with agile know that it takes more than just sending people to a training course in a certain agile framework. They realise that agile working is easier to understand than it is to do! People are needed who lead the way in a common learning process and who inspire the employees in their organisation to adopt an *agile mindset*.

The need for agile leaders

As a result, there is a great need for competent Agile Leaders. Not in a new formal role, but rather in an informal one. Someone can be release train engineer, tribe lead, agile coach, scrum master, product owner, or agile pm, but one is only a true Agile Leader when he or she is able to inspire others to put the agile mindset into practice. This enables the organisation to deliver valuable results to both their customers and their society. In doing this the Agile Leader makes an impact on the agility and responsiveness to change.

Leaders that make an impact by bridging the gap between aspiration and reality are true Agile Leaders. The Agile Leader is more of a phenomenon than a role. As a responsible decision-maker, how do you know that you are working with a competent Agile Leader? How does someone demonstrate good leadership?

This documents describes how the different competent elements need to be interpreted in an agile environment. Each element describes the agile mindset and how this is translated into observable competent behaviour.

Perspective

Perspective 1: Strategy

Description

The leaders within agile organisations embrace change, and that has consequences for the strategy they use to achieve their vision. The vision is rather a 'blur' on the horizon' than a 'dot'. Through an agile *strategy* the organisation is able to grab opportunities and duck away from threats. Agile leaders understand that such a strategy is not set in stone, but is a learning process, an instrument for giving meaning to the work an organisation carries out.

Knowledge

Affordable loss; Agile performance management; Canvas business model; Core values; Economic viewpoint; Impediments; Lightweight business case; Mission; Strategy; SWOT; Vision.

Skills and abilities

Contextual awareness; Entrepreneurship; Mission and vision; Reflection on organisational goals; Strategic thinking.

Key Competence Indicators

IPMA Agile Leader	
Perspective 1.1	Align agile teams with organisational mission and vision
Perspective 1.2	Identify and exploit opportunities to influence organizational strategy
Perspective 1.3	Develop and ensure the ongoing validity of the business/organizational justification for the agile approach
Perspective 1.4	Determine, assess and review critical success factors
Perspective 1.5	Determine, assess and review key performance indicators

Perspective 2: Governance, Structures and Processes

Description

The increasingly more complex world and an uncertain future present organisations with huge challenges. On the one hand they have to combat waste as much as possible (*lean philosophy*), and at the same time they have to become more *agile*. The latter is only possible if the individuals are also versatile.

We see new ways of working developing, whereby decision making takes place as close as possible to the execution, and as late as possible as is justifiable.

The control is oriented to customer value instead of the plan thought up at the start. Work is carried out in short cycles instead of the waterfall approach, and there is continuous attention paid to development and quality.

Although there are frameworks which provide some direction, every organisation has its own interpretation of agile working. Agile working is a philosophy and there are frameworks that support this philosophy. Instead of implementing agile, people become agile and this requires a fundamental change in thinking. It is therefore that even plan driven projects can benefit from agility as well.

The way in which organisations structure themselves has evolved greatly, and each form has its own frame of reference or paradigm. Modern organisations no longer share the power top-down, but link it to certain roles in such a way that a significant level of self-correction exists. However it is often difficult for people from different paradigms to exchange ideas with each other. An agile leader must be able to move freely between these.

Knowledge

Agile frameworks; Agile manifesto and principles; AgilePM; Circle Structure; Developmental stages of an organisation; Kanban; Lean concepts and principles; Lean Start-up; Organisational Configurations (Mintzberg); Power of attorney; Segregation of duties; Self-steering concepts; Systems Approach/thinking; Time-boxing; Tribal organisation; Value Stream.

Skills and abilities

Agile mindset; Design Thinking; Inspiring to work agile; Lean attitude; Servant leadership; Understanding for decision making; Understanding value streams; Vision on waste reduction.

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Key Competence Indicators

IPMA Agile Leader	
Perspective 2.1	Know the principles of agile work and the way they are applied.
Perspective 2.2	Know the principles of agile programme management and the way they are deployed.
Perspective 2.3	Know the principles of agile portfolio management and the way they are deployed.
Perspective 2.4	Align the agile work with supporting function
Perspective 2.5	Align the agile work with the organisation's decision making and reporting structures and quality requirements
Perspective 2.6	Align the agile work with human resource processes and functions
Perspective 2.7	Align the agile work with finance and control processes and functions
Perspective 2.8	Bridges the principles of plan driven management and agile work.

Perspective 3: Compliance, Standards and Regulations

Description

Prevention of wastage and the creation of value do not stop at the boundaries of the team or the organisation. Agile leaders are aware of the bigger context in which they function. Complying with the laws and regulations is, therefore, the least that they do. As well as complying with what is mandatory, they also keep sight of the interests of society and the planet.

In their teams, they facilitate a culture in which the members make agreements with each other on how they are going to work with each other. They encourage the individual members to comply with this, and not always let their own personal interests prevail.

Knowledge

Offer, acceptance and consensus; Data Protection Regulations; Working Conditions Legislation; Economic capital; Corporate Social Responsibility; Natural capital; Norm; Agreement; Social capital; Standard; Triple Bottom Line; Regulation.

Skills and abilities

Adopting frameworks and standards; Benchmarking; Communicating frameworks and standards; Critical thinking; Leading by example.

Key Competence Indicators

IPMA Agile Leader	
Perspective 3.1	Identify, and ensure that the agile work complies with all relevant legislation
Perspective 3.2	Identify, and ensure that the agile work with all relevant health, safety, security and environmental regulations (HSSE)
Perspective 3.3	Identify, and ensure that the agile work complies with all relevant codes of conduct and professional regulation
Perspective 3.4	Identify, and ensure that the agile work complies with relevant sustainability principles and goals
Perspective 3.5	Assess, use and develop professional standards and tools for the agile work
Perspective 3.6	Assess, benchmark and improve the organisational agile competence

Perspective 4: Power and Interest

Description

Influence without force is the backbone of agile leadership. If force is used, it is with great care. If there is such a thing as power, then it exists to serve the various interested parties in the organisation's activities. Which, by the way, does not mean that the agile leader allows himself to be sent in all directions; on the contrary, he should provide influential and inspiring leadership.

The different influences and interests ultimately result in an equilibrium, and the agile leader brings people together rather than dividing them. This can only happen when he demonstrates a genuine and honest interest towards the various interested parties. The leader approaches differences with curiosity and in this way, develops the necessary sensitivity to take those parties involved along with him in the agile mindset.

Knowledge

Authority; Formal vs. Informal Power; Influencing; Lateral leadership; PESTLE; Sources of power; Politics.

Skills and abilities

Diplomacy; Discovering values; Observing and analysing psychological processes; Personal power; Revealing stakeholders' interests; Sensitivity; Team focus; Use influence over power.

Key Competence Indicators

IPMA Agile Leader	
Perspective 4.1	Assess the personal ambitions and interests of others and the potential impact of these on the agile work
Perspective 4.2	Assess the informal influence of agile teams and its potential impact on the project work
Perspective 4.3	Assess the personalities and working styles of others and employ them to the benefit of the agile work

Perspective 5: Culture and Values

Description

Culture is the result of the lessons learned by an organisation during its life cycle. It is the way in which it safeguards its core values. This organisational culture, which is embedded in one (or sometimes several) national culture (s), protects the organisation from threats, and ensures stability. It is the culture that often makes a change, and thus also an agile transition, difficult.

Change is therefore almost always slow, even when one chooses a big-bang approach. The leader, putting the agile culture (change) above processes and frameworks, is by nature of his/her exemplary role one of the guardians of that culture. The various agile frameworks also refer to values such as commitment, courage, focus, openness and respect. The underlying, often unconscious, basic assumptions within an organisation do not always strengthen each other. Culture changes gradually. It is not self-evident that everyone feels comfortable with this. People will leave the organisation and new members will join. Every agile leader takes this into account.

Knowledge

Culture; Dimensions of national culture; Dimensions of organisational culture; Dominant culture; Empirical work

Skills and abilities

Bridging different cultures; Cultural Awareness; Respect for other cultures and values; Value awareness.

Key Competence Indicators

IPMA Agile Leader	
Perspective 5.1	Assess the culture and values of the society and their implications for the agile activities.
Perspective 5.2	Bridges the agile activities with the formal culture and corporate values of the organisation
Perspective 5.3	Assess the informal culture and values of the organisation and their implications for the agile activities

People

People 1: Self-reflection and Self-management

Description

Personality evolves during the interaction between people. Someone gets to know oneself in relation to others. By reflecting, we learn the impact of our behaviour on others. The tension that sometimes emerges can motivate us to adapt, that is the value of self-management. This competence element is therefore the foundation on which a person develops individual agility.

The agile leader has a growth mindset (the conviction that one can develop further through commitment) and promotes this within the organisation. This mentality is the responsibility of the individual, who needs to act from a place of inherent motivation rather than outside pressure. There is a focus on the personal development of each individual. In fact, there is an expectation that everyone will adopt this attitude. This is why we ensure that there are workable stress levels and that work is an important source of happiness.

Knowledge

Big-V; Core Quadrants; Covey (Seven Habits); Growth mindset; Happiness, steps to; Learning Goals; Personal Kanban; Prioritisation techniques; Relaxation techniques; Relaxation techniques; RET - Rational Emotive Therapy; Self-management Techniques; Stress and burn-out management; Time management.

Skills and abilities

Awareness of instances that lead to personal distractions; Emotional intelligence; Limits the amount of personal work in progress; Pace of work; Promotes self-management; Self-reflection and self-analysis; Sets meaningful, authentic and challenging goals; Willingness to learn.

Key Competence Indicators

IPMA Agile Leader	
People 1.1	Identify, and reflect on the ways in which own values and experiences affect the work
People 1.2	Build self-confidence on the basis of personal strengths and weaknesses
People 1.3	Identify, and reflect on, personal motivations to set personal goals and keep focus
People 1.4	Organise personal work depending on the situation and own resources
People 1.5	Take responsibility for personal learning and development

People 2: Personal Integrity and Reliability

Description

We expect the agile leader to act in line with his inner motives, in this way he preserves his personal integrity. Allowing team members to do the same (act in line with inner motives), makes him credible and inspiring. Nothing is more frustrating than a leader who imposes agile, but who does not work according to agile principles himself. Not only does one 'do' agile, one should BE agile.

The professional values of the agile leader have their roots in the agile mindset. Ethical behaviour is therefore also acting according to the agile principles. The choice of agile means, that the management will accept its employees as who they are unconditionally! After this choice, managers must show agile leadership. This means that people in the team are given the resources to do their work. Furthermore the common interest must take precedence over individual interests. Only then leadership will be credible and trustworthy.

Knowledge

Code of ethics/practice; Ethics; Moral standards; Personal values; Social equality; Sustainability (principles of); Sustainability principles; Universal rights.

Skill and abilities

Ethical; Individual agility; Resilience under pressure; Respectful; Role model of agility; Transparent.

Key Competence Indicators

IPMA Agile Leader	
People 2.1	Acknowledge and apply ethical values to all decisions and actions
People 2.2	Promote the sustainability of outputs and outcomes
People 2.3	Take responsibility for own decisions and actions
People 2.4	Act, take decisions and communicate in a consistent way
People 2.5	Complete tasks thoroughly in order to build confidence with others

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People 3: Personal Communication

Description

One of the principles of agile work is co-creating, therefore face-to-face communication is the most efficient and effective way to share information with and within a team. This makes the conversation the most important form of communication. The agile leader does not represent, but supports the group and creates a social network in which people meet and talk with each other. It is one of the core tasks of an Agile Leader. This requires everyone to have an active presence in the conversation, as a result of which we limit miscommunication and make it discussable. Leaders set the example. Because this is not self-evident, we do not take it for granted, but we give feedback to each other in a non-violent way about the effect of certain behaviour. This creates an open space in which every person involved can and may be present.

Knowledge

Active listening; Aspects of a communication; Communication; Communication model; Elevator Pitch; Feedback; Conversation; Non-Violent Communication; Information; Presentation techniques; Verbal / Non-verbal; Feedback;

Skills and abilities

Authenticity; Body language; Communication skills; Conciseness; Empathy; Non-steering feedback.

Key Competence Indicators

IPMA Agile Leader	
People 3.1	Provide clear and structured information to others and verify their understanding
People 3.2	Facilitate and promote open communication
People 3.3	Choose communication styles and channels to meet the needs of the audience, situation and management level
People 3.4	Communicate effectively with and within virtual teams
People 3.5	Employ humour and sense of perspective when appropriate

People 4: Relations and Engagement

Description

An open attitude towards people and events makes that information can flow freely within an organisation and that relationships between individuals can flourish. This is necessary to enable self-determination and agility. Everyone within the organisation must have the right information at the right time, to be able to make a (empirically well-founded) decision.

Openness is about the clarity and transparency of the organisational goals to be achieved, the results and progress. It is about the mutual cooperation and agreements, but also about the beliefs and fears of individuals that affect relationships. Openness means giving transparency and asking questions, while postponing judgment. This builds trust and confidentiality. Agile leaders are an example to follow. The self-knowledge enables them not to let their egoic needs dominate the relationship with others. The servant and the governance aspect in a relationship are in balance.

Self-steering is effective when we are able to tap into the intrinsic motivation of people. This includes ensuring good organisational hygiene, removing obstacles and facilitating work. When people experience autonomy, mastery and purpose, they can give most of themselves. The unlocking of that potential is an important success factor for agile leadership.

An agile organisation is a social network, which in a way leads its own self-directed existence. The composition of this network is dynamic, but the individuals make clear agreements about how they work together. Agile leaders give direction to (part of) the network, but as a servant and not as ruler. They build so-called helping relationships, in which the other builds up an understanding of what is happening around him in order to make his own functioning in the network more valuable. This increases the social capital of the agile organisation.

Knowledge

Competence; Confidentiality; Drivers; Empathy; Johari window; Mastery; Model - I and - II (organisational learning); Motivation Continuum; Motive; Openness; Process Consultation; Purpose; Relationship; Self-determination theory; Social capital; Social network; Trust; Type X-I Behaviour; Weak/strong ties.

Skills and abilities

Deployment of social capital; Developing a helping relationship; Give and receive feedback; Knowledge sharing; Non-violent communication; Respecting others.

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Key Competence Indicators

IPMA Agile Leader	
People 4.1	Initiate and develop personal and professional relations.
People 4.2	Build, facilitate and contribute to social networks
People 4.3	Demonstrate empathy through listening, understanding and support for change.
People 4.4	Show confidence and respect by encouraging others to give feedback and to share their opinions or concerns.
People 4.5	Share own vision and goals in order to gain the engagements and commitment of others.
People 4.6	Uses the social capital that is present in the network and stimulates its increase.

People 5: Leadership

Description

There is a difference between a manager and a leader, a manager has a hierarchical position, a leader has certain skills to motivate people and - moreover - to set things in motion. In this competence element, we describe leadership as a characteristic and not as a managerial function. Many people are able to show leadership but only some of them are managers.

Agile is based on equality, autonomy and self-determination. Personal leadership of people in such an environment is crucial to choose direction, motivate and facilitate people so that they can achieve desired organizational goals. A leader has the attitude of a servant, whereby the interests of the group or organisation are central.

A leader does this primarily by setting the example and by help building relationships with the people he leads or he is working with. The degree of self-determination that a team gets, depends on their skills and abilities. The quality of leadership is determined by the level of integration of the specific team members. But also the agile leader is one that (proactively) removes impediments and enables teams to deliver value.

Knowledge

Agile Coaching; Circle of influence or involvement; Coaching; Empowerment; Golden Circle; L5 - Leadership; Levels of delegation (situational leadership); Management; Servant leadership.

Skills and abilities

Agile role model; Capacity to express a set of values; Coaching techniques; Creating a team spirit; Discussion skills; Personal humility and professional will (Level-5 Leadership); Wisdom.

Key Competence Indicators

IPMA Agile Leader	
People 5.1	Initiate actions and proactively offer help and advice
People 5.2	Take ownership and show commitment
People 5.3	Provide direction, coaching and mentoring to guide and improve the work of individuals and teams
People 5.4	Exert appropriate power and influence over others to achieve the goals
People 5.5	Facilitate, enforce and review decisions

People 6: Teamwork

Description

Within an agile organisation, we focus on collaboration, both between individuals, teams and customers. Team members are associates as opposed to employees. Self-steering teams play a crucial role in the agile organisation. Each team has its own purpose, but its priorities lie in always delivering value to the organisation and its customers. This is manifested in trust, conflict skills, commitment, accountability and common goals. But also in the willingness of the individual team members to work agile. Without being imposed from above, they share these goals and make continuous agreements about how they work with one another. This does not prevent the agile leader from challenging the team to continuously improve.

The team members together have all the expertise and skills to achieve the team purpose. Preferably, the individual members are interdisciplinary, so that teams are more independent, not too large and therefore more agile and responsive. They challenge each other, exchange knowledge and coach each other, which makes them more broadly deployable and flexible. For an optimal collaboration within a team, diversity, and thus also the different characters of the team members, is an important factor.

The agile leader takes care for a supportive working environment, and that the right types of ceremonies are conducted. During these, whether they are stand-ups, workshop, large scale interventions, etc. s/he adopts a neutral position during the facilitation.

Knowledge

Action Learning; Agile team; Assumptions about mutual cooperation; Common goal; Daily Scrum; Diversity; Dysfunctions of a team; Frustrations of teamwork; Group development stages; Intervention techniques; Large Scale intervention; Open Space; Purpose; Self-selection; The Circle Way; Virtual team; Working conferences; Workshop.

Skills and abilities

Aligning multiple teams; Building and maintaining relationships; Competence development; Facilitation skills; Fosters a feedback culture; Neutrality; Team assessment; Team coaching; Team facilitator; Training development.

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Key Competence Indicators

IPMA Agile Leader	
People 6.1	Facilitates the selection and building of the team
People 6.2	Promote cooperation and networking between team members
People 6.3	Support, facilitate and review the development of the team and its members
People 6.4	Empower teams to determine tasks and responsibilities
People 6.5	Recognise opportunities to facilitate learning and inspires the team to continuously improve

People 7: Conflict and Crisis

Description

Conflicts arise within the team, but also in cooperation with other teams and stakeholders. Where people work together for a longer period of time, conflict is a means of strengthening ties. We accept the inevitability of this and see this as an opportunity to learn.

In order to turn conflicts into constructive behaviour, the agile leader, provides the environment within which conflicts can be used to the benefit of the team. That is to say, agreements in advance about how we bridge disagreements when they arise. Sometimes agile principles and the way they are used during daily practice become a source for conflict. The agile leader stimulates those involved to find common ground. As a result, the team develops its own skills to solve a conflict.

Irrespective of all preventive measures, it is sometimes impossible to avoid a crisis. Every crisis is a situation which requires optimal agility. A team that looks back on their collaboration from iteration to iteration will also be well-prepared for the next crisis. However, this is not enough; the threat of a crisis requires a well-thought-out crisis plan. At the end of the crisis, there will be retrospective necessary.

Knowledge

Arbitration; Conflict coach; Conflict styles; Conflict; Crisis management; Crisis; De-escalation; Proactive conflict management; Stages of conflict;

Skills and abilities

Bridges contradictions; Calmness; Conflict intervention; Crisis management; Proactive; Style flexibility.

Key Competence Indicators

IPMA Agile Leader	
People 7.1	Anticipate and possibly prevent conflicts and crises, be open for and allow new ideas
People 7.2	Analyse the causes and consequences of conflicts and crises and select appropriate response(s)
People 7.3	Mediate and resolve conflicts and crises and/or their impact
People 7.4	Identify and share learning from conflicts and crises in order to improve future practice all over the teams

People 8: Resourcefulness

Description

The resourcefulness in agile works is expressed in delivering results with the scarce resources available. The phrase 'resourcefulness, not resources' is an excellent expression of this. Individuals and teams initially look for the solutions or resources they need, without expecting this from others (such as senior management).

The agile leader stimulates in developing creativity. For example, he does this by working on a safe environment where people can experiment, in addition to providing techniques. He also gives way to people with different views who disrupt existing patterns in order to prevent group blindness.

Knowledge

Brainstorming techniques; Cause and effect diagram/Fishbone/Ishikawa; Decision-making; Design Thinking; Lateral thinking; Mood board; Multicriteria analysis; Problem solving; Right and Left column; Root Cause analysis; Silent Language; Solutions focussed language; Sounding board; SWOT (team level); Thinking hats.

Skills and abilities

Facilitates problem solving; Identifying and seeing different perspectives; Out-of-the box thinking.

Key Competence Indicators

IPMA Agile Leader	
People 8.1	Stimulate and support an open and creative environment
People 8.2	Apply conceptual thinking to define situations and strategies
People 8.3	Apply analytic techniques to analysing situations, financial and organisational data and trends
People 8.4	Promote and apply creative techniques to find alternatives and solutions
People 8.5	Promote a holistic view of the project and its context to improve decision-making

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People 9: Negotiation

Description

Especially a self-steering organisation, we expect individuals and teams to agree on a solution when there are different opinions. This requires negotiation skills. The agile leader facilitates this process. The negotiations are also aimed at achieving maximum value for all parties involved. It is important to remind the various parties of this over and over again.

In an agile environment, people have to negotiate on various issues. Initially, there are different insights within the organisation about what 'agile work' is. Where the agile leader plays a facilitating role, he should negotiate continuously how to do so in this specific situation. The collaborating style is preferable to the forcing style. There is no one-size-fits-all approach, but a tailor-made response has to be developed for every new challenge. This is done by negotiation. The solutions found determine the new agile culture.

Knowledge

Harvard-Method; Mediation; Thomas and Kilmann; Uses of argument; Win-win strategy.

Skills and abilities

Discussion techniques; Diversity of opinions; Establishing and maintaining trust and positive working relationships; Mediator; Negotiations skills.

Key Competence Indicators

IPMA Agile Leader	
People 9.1	Identify and analyse the interests of all parties involved in the negotiation
People 9.2	Develop and evaluate options and alternatives with the potential to meet the needs of all parties
People 9.3	Define a negotiation strategy in line with own objectives that is acceptable to all parties involved
People 9.4	Reach negotiated agreements with other parties that are in line with own objectives
People 9.5	Detect and exploit additional selling and acquisition possibilities

People10: Results orientation

Description

Result orientation is obvious, because an agile organisation works cyclically for a short period of time (iteration) and needs to deliver results at a continuous pace. The context in which the organisation operates determines in several ways to what extent this can be manifested. Even plan driven more deterministic oriented projects can benefit from this approach by delivering results during each iteration.

The work environment (gemba) must provide people with maximum support in delivering these services. In addition, the employees make working arrangements, of which they constantly adjust the standard to the higher levels. This is stimulated by the agile leader. In this way, a process of continuous improvement is created that contributes to achieving top performance.

The agile leader, knows the purpose and potential of the organisation, contributes to the formation of effective new teams and to the increase in the effectiveness of existing teams. S/he builds a network of business relations that support their own organisation.

Knowledge

4M; 5S; 5W-1H; Effectiveness; Effectuation; Efficiency; Gemba Kaizen; Kata; PDCA; Productivity; SDCA; Seven Statistical instruments; Skills and abilities; Empirical working; Facilitates multiple teams.

Skills and abilities

Combining helicopter view and attention to essential details; Efficiency, effectiveness and productivity; Identifying and assessing alternative options; Sensitivity to organisational do's and don'ts.

Key Competence Indicators

IPMA Agile Leader	
People 10.1	Evaluate all decisions and actions against their impact on customer value and the goals of the organisation
People 10.2	Balance needs and means to optimise outcomes and success
People 10.3	Create and maintain a healthy, safe and productive agile work environment
People 10.4	Promote and 'sell' the agile work and its outcomes
People 10.5	Deliver results and get acceptance

Practice

Practice 1: Design

Description

The approach to realise a certain goal depends on the situation. The guiding principles are the perspective competence elements, but also the technological solution that is used to build the solution. This choice starts with what is the best already available, then what needs to be built on top of that. This will be the technological architecture. In the early stages the team(s) have to decide on this.

We are also faced with complexity and uncertainty, which means that every situation requires a different approach. The various agile approaches are therefore usually called 'frameworks', they are a starting point from which an approach should gradually evolve. When one starts, one look at lessons learned, chooses a certain framework and is aware that this choice is an assumption that has yet to be proven to be the right one.

We work empirically when we test this assumption or hypothesis by means of an experiment. Such a hypothesis must be formulated in such a way that it is possible to falsify it. It is often possible to adjust in small steps, and sometimes it is necessary to radically change the way we work.

Knowledge

Architecture; Complexity; Complicatedness; Criterium; Cynefin framework; Diamond model; Empirical working; Experimentation; Factor; Hypothesis; Learning points; Lessons Learned; Technological solutions.

Skills and abilities

Contextual awareness; Empirical working; Handling of complexity; Incorporation of lessons learned; Recognises success factors and criteria.

Key Competence Indicators

IPMA Agile Leader	
Practice 1.1	Acknowledge, prioritise and review success criteria
Practice 1.2	Review, apply and exchange lessons learned from retrospectives and with other agile teams
Practice 1.3	Determine complexity and its consequences for the approach
Practice 1.4	Select and review the overall agile work approach
Practice 1.5	Design an initial (technical) product architecture

Practice 2: Goals and requirements

Description

A clear, inspiring and supported vision for a product or result to be delivered gives meaning to the higher goals the organisation wants to achieve with it. It provides direction and sets boundaries. When there is a lot of uncertainty and a changing context, it is often not possible to specify the goals and requirements for the end result. Therefore the team continues to communicate with the user. The focus and boundaries of the product vision enable us to constantly refine it with sub-goals. We then work in the "plan-do-check-act" mode until we have achieved the results.

The agile leader embraces uncertainty and accepts changing requirements as a result of changing insights. When we say, that we prefer cooperation with the customer over contract negotiations, we mean the conversation about what he or she needs. For this we define global stories within the product vision, which we gradually split into user stories. Setting priorities in requirements and wishes, taking care that stories with the most value and the least effort are first, is a recurring activity. We determine acceptance criteria per user-story. By means of the definition of done, we ensure that it is clear when something is really finished. The aim is a 'working' result that is of direct value to the customer.

Knowledge

Definition of done; Epic; Kata; Solution; Product vision; User-story; acceptance criteria; Goal analysis; value management; fit-for-use; fit-for-purpose; benefits mapping.

Skills and abilities

Corporate strategy; Formulation of the solution (epic, feature, story, etc.); Stakeholder relationships.

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Key Competence Indicators

IPMA Agile Leader	
Practice 2.1	Define and develop the goal hierarchy of the agile work
Practice 2.2	Identify and analyse the stakeholder needs and requirements
Practice 2.3	Continuously improve the definition of done

Practice 3: Scope

Description

The scope is what teams deliver. In general, this is recorded in the backlog, which we gradually refine. The backlog shows the different deliveries in order of value to the customer.

In the case of product development, change programmes or activities where there is a lot of uncertainty, the Minimal Viable Product is a product with just enough features to satisfy early customers, and to provide feedback for future product development within the scope we aim for. With the help of an MVP, we are able to check whether certain assumptions are correct in a relatively short period of time.

The agile approach ensures that the team always delivers what is most valuable to the customer, user or stakeholders at that particular moment. The most rigid definition of the scope is made 'just what you need', so just before the team starts to carry out the work.

Knowledge

Backbone; Backlog; Minimal Viable Product; Ordering on value; Potential Shippable Product; Story map; Technical debt; User story

Skills and abilities

Backlog refinement.

Key Competence Indicators

IPMA Agile Leader	
Practice 3.1	Define the solution or outcome
Practice 3.2	Ensures the identification of a minimal viable product
Practice 3.3	Ensures the successive increments
Practice 3.4	Establish and maintain scope configuration (i.e. backlog; user stories; story maps; or equivalent)

Practice 4: Time

Description

Time is a phenomenon that is difficult to manage. After all, even if you do nothing, time still passes by, you just waste time. What needs to be done is to use the available time wisely. The effort must be worth doing so. Teams work in fixed so-called time-boxes at a pace that can be sustained over a long period of time. We determine what is valuable for each box and in this way we control the use of our available time.

If there is one team, this is simple; more coordination is needed for several teams. We therefore translate the vision and the higher goals into the different initiatives and ensure that they have meaning for the people in the different teams. Before the teams actually start, there is a period in which we put together the large-scale story and estimate the number of iterations we need for this.

Knowledge

Cadence; Hoshin Kanri (X Matrix); Just-in-time; Planning poker; Release planning; Release planning; Sprint planning; Synchronisation; Time-box; Value to the Customer; Velocity.

Skills and abilities

Estimate velocity.

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Key Competence Indicators

IPMA Agile Leader	
Practice 4.1	Define the activities required to deliver the agile work
Practice 4.2	Determine the work effort and duration of activities
Practice 4.3	Decide on release schedule approach
Practice 4.4	Sequence backlog items and plan iterations (e.g. sprints)
Practice 4.5	Monitor outcomes against the schedule and respond to change

Practice 5: Organisation and Information

Description

Organisation and Information includes assignment of the required roles and responsibilities (such as product owner, scrum master, team members) as well as effective information exchange within the temporary organisation. According to the Agile Manifesto, one of the characteristics of an agile organisation is that people and their interaction are valued over processes and tools. This does not mean that we don't use processes, but the ones that do exist are 'lightweight' and are at the service of collaborating people who create customer value by the work they do.

In an agile organisation, each team owns its own progress. This does not mean there is no steering from above at all, two operating systems can be active simultaneously. The first is the hierarchy in which senior management chooses the direction and makes the resources available. She realises that self-organisation is necessary to deal with the complexity of this world and therefore places a lot of responsibility and authority on the workforce. There is room for trust and delegation. These components operate from the second, the so-called network operating system. We see the emergence of varying collaborations, exchange of information, opportunities, innovations and the like. There is freedom as long as value is provided. The hierarchical system, if any, should support the network system as much as possible.

An agile organisation works empirically and constantly strives to test and adjust its hypotheses on actual information. This requires frequent and transparent communication. We are constantly striving to ensure that all stakeholders have the information necessary to fulfil their role. There is a lot of communication and transparency (using information radiators).

Knowledge

Agile Information Management; Component Team; Dual organisation; Feature Team; Hierarchical operating system; Information radiator; Information Security; Information versus data; Network operating system; Power of attorney; Self-organisation.

Skills and abilities

Cross-sectional alignment; Minimisation organisational dependencies; Stimulates information sharing; Stimulates self-organisation; Understanding his/her own authority; Use of information radiators.

Key Competence Indicators

IPMA Agile Leader	
Practice 5.1	Assess and determine the needs of stakeholders relating to information and documentation
Practice 5.2	Define the structure, roles and responsibilities within the agile work
Practice 5.3	Establish infrastructure, processes and systems for information flow
Practice 5.4	Implement, monitor and maintain the organisation of the agile work

Practice 6: Quality

Description

A quality product or service enables a customer to achieve his goals. The agile way of working is based on the assumption that subsequent inspection can at most merely prove the lack of quality. We prefer validation above verification. Real quality is built into the product or service during each step of the value stream. It is an attribute to which we never make a concession.

The focus is mainly on preventing errors rather than detecting them. In this process it is possible that legacies from the past make it desirable to repair things. Therefore, the team proposes to add restoration-items to the backlog. During the planning activity, we then determine the priority in relation to all other items. But also we take into account existing quality directives. The individual team members, and the customer(s) need to agree and accept which rules apply to the quality of the work they deliver.

Knowledge

Acceptance Test-Driven Development; Built-in quality; Definition of done; Definition of ready; Design thinking; Fail-fast; Quality Management Standards; Test-Driven Design/Development; Validation; Verification.

Skills and abilities

Uncompromising towards quality.

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Key Competence Indicators

IPMA Agile Leader	
Practice 6.1	Develop, monitor the implementation of, and revise quality rules and goals for agile work
Practice 6.2	Review the agile work and its deliverables to ensure that they continue to meet the requirements of the quality rules and goals
Practice 6.3	Verify the achievement of quality goals and recommend any necessary improvements
Practice 6.4	Plan and organise the validation of the outcomes of the agile work
Practice 6.5	Ensure quality throughout the agile activities

Practice 7: Finance

Description

When we make a decision, we do so with the economic aspects in mind. The organisation can invest in make or buy solutions. We allocate the available resources to a specific value stream or product. In that sense, the resource costs are therefore fixed and can be 'monitored' very easily. We always look for the best possible relationship between cost and customer or organisational value. The focus on the most economically advantageous solution is a responsibility that all members of the organisation must bear.

Instead of budgets as performance indicators, which we use to assess the responsible manager, we work with progressive long-term forecasts. Forecasts that we adjust at a fixed cadence so that they always reflect actuality. They serve as predictions and not as a means of appraising managers.

Knowledge

Alignment organizational governance; Already done libraries; Best Value for Money; Beyond budgeting; Budget; Economic view; Financing options; Funding sources; Liquidity Budget; Methods for monitoring and controlling expenditures; Monitoring; Progressive financial forecasts.

Skills and abilities

Developing a budget; Negotiating with sponsors; Reading financial statements.

Key Competence Indicators

IPMA Agile Leader	
Practice 7.1	Estimate costs
Practice 7.2	Establish the budget
Practice 7.3	Helps to secure funding
Practice 7.4	Develop, establish and maintain a financial management and reporting system
Practice 7.5	Encourages the detection and elimination of waste in order to stay within budget.

Practice 8: Resources

Description

We need to make a distinction into human and non-human resources. The last ones are static, whereas the first are dynamic and therefore sometimes unpredictable. A human being is therefore not a resource that you control, but a person to be involved.

In an agile environment, we reduce organisational complexity as much as possible so that people can focus on their work and create customer value. We do this by using dedicated teams as much as possible. As a result, you avoid waste and team members will work together better and more effectively, making the teams more predictable. Incidentally, there are also situations in which we achieve creativity and value creation by working in teams with changing memberships. The starting point is always that we set up partnerships that can deliver optimal value.

The members of the team are not only experts but also curious and driven to expand their expertise to other areas. Leadership is focused on talent based utilisation and counters the waste of human talent. In this way, the team achieves greater flexibility and thus partly meets its own capacity needs, without becoming too large in size. We are therefore making the best possible use of the available capacity by focusing on utilising human talent and countering its waste.

Although 'all the necessary resources in one team' is preferred, this is not always possible. Sometimes there is a need for a specific type of specialist for a limited period of time. In that case, an organisation works with a flexible external shell. We speak of shared services when we group certain specialisms into a single, shared organisational unit.

Knowledge

Capacity plan; Flexible shell; Material; Facilities; People; Resources; Shared Services; Skills matrix; T-Shaped;

Skills and abilities

Developing T-Shaped specialist; Working with the available resources.

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Key Competence Indicators

IPMA Agile Leader	
Practice 8.1	Develop strategic resource plan to facilitate the agile work
Practice 8.2	Define the quality and quantity of resources required
Practice 8.3	Identify the potential sources of resources and negotiate their acquisition
Practice 8.4	Allocate and distribute resources according to defined need
Practice 8.5	Evaluate resource usage and take any necessary corrective actions

Practice 9: Procurement

Description

The 'make or buy' decision not only looks at how the potential supplier provides value, but also at how we work together. When we work agile, it should preferably be done throughout the supply chain. Because the supplier is a distinct legal entity, this creates additional challenges.

When we prefer cooperation with the customer over contract negotiations, there are two sides to this. It has consequences both for the selection of suppliers and the way we manage the contracts concluded during the execution.

In addition to the conviction that the supplier can deliver the value we need, we must also ensure that we share all the necessary information with each other during execution. We need to work together. This does not happen automatically, but requires ongoing effort.

Knowledge

Best value procurement; Contract types; Contractual judicial knowledge; Contractual terms and conditions; Input/Output control; Make/buy analysis; Make/buy decision; Organisational policies; Outsourcing; Procurement methods; Sourcing strategies; Supply Chain Management;

Evidence of competence

Skills and abilities

Contract administration.

Trust-based cooperation with suppliers;

Key Competence Indicators

IPMA Agile Leader	
Practice 9.1	Agree on procurement needs, options and processes
Practice 9.2	Contribute to the evaluation and selection of suppliers and partners
Practice 9.3	Contribute to the negotiation and agreement of contractual terms and conditions that meet the goals of the agile work
Practice 9.4	Supervise the execution of contracts, address issues and seek redress where necessary

Practice 10: Plan and Control

Description

For agile, each schedule or estimation is a hypothesis about a possible development in the future. It is meant more as a starting point than a genuine commitment made by the team. It's unpractical to set a plan in stone, because the future is difficult to predict.

Control doesn't mean to ensure that a plan is realised the same way it was written down, it is whether value to the customer is delivered. We are referring to it as the ability of an agile organisation to manage change in a structured and responsible manner. But also teams that are in control of their own work, therefore discuss their own rules of cooperation.

Plans are general and will gradually expand. We constantly review the assumptions we make and embrace every instance of change so as to use it to our organisation's advantage as much as possible. Customer and organisational value are always leading principles.

If all teams involved use the same length for their iterations, it is possible to synchronise their work and coordinate deliveries. We call a series of different iterations together a release. The number of iterations within this is fixed, in this way we reach a so-called cadence. There are ceremonies in place to ensure that the different teams and employees see their contribution in the bigger picture.

Knowledge

Backlog; Burn-down chart; Burn-up chart; Business Case; Cadence; Ceremony; Cost of delay; Delphi-method; Gross Net capacity; Impediments; Information radiator; Minimum Viable Product (MVP); Planning Poker; Release plan; Retrospective; Silent Grouping/Poker; T-Shirt planning; Velocity; Weighted Job Shortest Job First; Working arrangements.

Skills and abilities

Backlog refinement; Facilitating ceremonies (planning, retrospectives, demo's etc.); Removing impediments.

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Key Competence Indicators

IPMA Agile Leader	
Practice 10.1	Start the agile activities and develop and get agreement on the MVP; Release planning; and the team rules
Practice 10.2	Initiate and manage the transition to a new release
Practice 10.3	Control agile work performance against the customer value and take any necessary remedial actions
Practice 10.4	Report on progress by using information radiators. Invites executives to 'go and see'
Practice 10.5	Welcomes changing requirements when they benefits the customers competitive advantage
Practice 10.6	Close and evaluate a release, a sprint or the complete agile work

Practice 11: Risk and Opportunity

Description

Advancing technology and growing connectivity rapidly increases the level of uncertainty and complexity in the world. This has major consequences for the way in which organisations deal with risks and opportunities. Instead of a distinct approach, it needs to be embedded in our day-to-day way of working. We accept the inevitability of uncertainty and ensures that people understand this.

Through intensive cooperation with the customer, short-term empirical work, testing of assumptions and the rapid completion of work, an organisation can respond better to the opportunities and risks that exist. The incremental delivery of useful products or results and the possibility to adjust per iteration ensures that the right solution is finally realised. For agile works, the following adage applies: "fail fast, learn fast".

Introducing agile working methods can be a risk that we must take into account (as with any organisational change).

Knowledge

Confidence vote; Empirical working; Programme risk; Risk walling; Risk; Risks of starting an agile transition; Uncertainty; VUCA.

Skills and abilities

Welcoming uncertainty and change.

Key Competence Indicators

IPMA Agile Leader	
Practice 11.1	Tailor the risk management frameworks for the agile work
Practice 11.2	Identify risks and opportunities
Practice 11.3	Assess the probability and impact of risks and opportunities
Practice 11.4	Select strategies and implement response plans to address risks and opportunities
Practice 11.5	Evaluate and monitor risks, opportunities and implemented responses

Practice 12: Stakeholders

Description

The Agile Manifesto states that we value collaboration with the customer over contract negotiations. If we extend this preference to the way we deal with stakeholders, it means that we are also looking for some form of effective collaboration with them. Just as we seek personal contact with the customer, so do we with other stakeholders.

Collaboration is essential!

The stake that someone has, is dependent on the value that (the creation of) the product or service has for him, but also with the value that may be destroyed. The more that is at stake, the more somebody may want to cooperate or resist. We adopt an attitude of appreciation and respect, and see resistance as an opportunity to learn from each other and to test assumptions.

Knowledge

Attitude; Collaboration; Stakeholder analyses; Stakeholder management; Stakeholders.

Skills and abilities

Contextual awareness; Networking skills; Strategic communication skills.

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Key Competence Indicators

IPMA Agile Leader	
Practice 12.1	Identify stakeholders and analyse their specific interests and influence
Practice 12.2	Develop and maintain a stakeholder strategy and communication plan
Practice 12.3	Engage with the executive, sponsors and higher management to gain commitment and to manage interests and expectations
Practice 12.4	Engage with team members, users, partners and suppliers to gain their cooperation and commitment
Practice 12.5	Organise and maintain networks and alliances

Practice 13: Change and Transformation

Description

The agile way of working is to enable an organization to continuously adapt to the changing circumstances of its environment. The key and prerequisite for change is providing customers and other stakeholders with value. It is a fact that their needs can change over time. Therefore, one of our principles is that we welcome changing requirements, even late in the development process. Agile processes therefore utilize changes to gain a competitive advantage for our customers.

Agile work itself is also a continuous process of change in which the agile leader plays an important role. He must understand how change processes work and furthermore, he must play an active role in the process itself. The agile leader is an agent of change, and as such assists managers, teams and employees during this transformation.

Knowledge

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Diffusion of Innovations; Field Theory (Lewin); Five disciplines of the learning organisation; Kotters 8 steps of change; Learning and survival anxiety; The 'lone nut' and first follower; Theory of change.

Skills and abilities

Assessing change capacity and capability; Convincing; Dealing with resistance; Create a safe environment; Resilience; Role model.

Key Competence Indicators

IPMA Agile Leader	
Practice 13.1	Assess the adaptability to change of the organisation(s)
Practice 13.2	Identify change requirements and transformation opportunities
Practice 13.3	Develop change or transformation strategy
Practice 13.4	Implement change or transformation management strategy