

REGIONAL REPORT - SWITZERLAND



Export of Swiss Project Management know-how to the Middle East

Reflections on Iranian Project Management – A mighty engine already roaring, yet to speed at full power

By Alexander Matthey, PMP

Am I just lucky? Or was it a premonition? Maybe a logical sequence subconsciously planned during long time ago events? Anyway, spending one week in Tehran was a most revealing experience. A surprise in the positive sense!

My immediate mission was to deliver 5 days of Project Management training to Iranian Project Management professionals. The learning at the end occurred on both sides. While a group of experienced professionals were absorbing PMI ® principles based best practices, through their examples and questions transpired a picture worthy to be on the radar screens of many enlightened business minded people.

What dominates today's world of project management in Iran is large infrastructure projects - building of roads, dams, oil and gas refineries, construction of mega edifices. Although the scope of projects is relatively clear on the project side, the process side definition may be lacking.

Timing often is respected; at the same time budget overruns are frequent. While communication may occur in top down organisational structures, thorough stakeholder identification and management is rather an exception.



Mr. Alexander Matthey, PMP, the trainer in action.

Procurement as an operational function is under control; unfortunately risk management similarly is applicable mainly in the functional management arena. Often the numerous ambiguities are not tackled before the detailed planning begins.

Beyond the symptoms are the probable causes: there is an acute shortage of qualified PM professionals, lack of usage of real and correctly used international standards, no formal bodies exist aiming at the definition of a formal methodology per industry. Moreover, there seems to be a disconnect between organisational strategy implementation, project portfolio management and use of projects best practices.

Would you feel discouraged because of all those? That's not what prevails in between the young professionals in Iran. If I used one expression to characterise their attitude, it would be: sparkling of vitality. The handful of people I met represent a substantial part of

the new generation of Iranian society: well educated, often even in the west, but motivated well beyond their western counterparts to succeed. Eager to learn from practitioners, drawing pride and self confidence from a glorious past, and wanting to take a very active part in the building of a modern society. The country may be called "developing", but the tremendous number of ongoing various projects already lifts the spirits of the willing.



The organiser Mr. Moeed Haghnevis from TUV Academy Iran-Germany, based in Iran and Mr. Alexander Matthey, PMP the instructor delegated from ESC Lille, based in Switzerland.

I came back energised. And it was not only due to the business potential, but due to the pleasant and green urban surroundings, to the kindness and hospitality of the people.

Some recommendations to my fellow practitioners in Iran: popularise even further best practices based Project Management through training and seminars, build mixed teams for projects for on the job transfer of experience – coaching, look immediately in Programme and Project Portfolio Management.

Gain some CEO level supporters to the cause of transversal management, establish a community of Project Management practice in each big city of Iran for sharing experience and networking, come to international congresses and seminars to learn and to teach, and never loose motivation no matter the macro economical and political situation.



And some words to my fellow western practitioners: apply common sense when listening to news about Iran; do not take for granted propaganda; visit Iran, get impregnated by culture and propose collaboration in Project Management; accept without fear to hold a training session, a seminar or to coach local PMs; do not worry remuneration may be negotiated at acceptable to home levels; be open minded to accept cultural differences; and most importantly rejoice yourself in advance to be treated amicably and with honour the way you may not always be at home.



The class of the 5 days PM fundamentals course in Tehran, Iran

Iranian Project Management – let's work together to get this speeding on the runway jumbo to take off!



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Alexander Matthey is also the Managing Director of 3PM Experts Sàrl. He has over 24 years experience, has worked extensively in many countries and cultural environments worldwide, and is an expert in the areas of project management office (PMO), organizational PM maturity, and PM for software and IT projects. Alexander has written and lectured widely on Project Management in French and English, is the author and trainer of PMP certification courses, and is a frequent speaker at International PMI leadership meetings and congresses. He is a faculty member at the International University in Geneva, and a lecturer at the University of Geneva. He is currently Vice President of the PMI Switzerland Chapter. Alexander holds a Masters Degree in Computer Electronics and Software Engineering and a Masters in Business Information Systems. Fluent in the English, French, Hungarian and Bulgarian languages, Alexander also speaks some German and Russian. Additional information about Alexander Matthey can be found at (link to PMF correspondents bio). Alexander Matthey can be contacted at a.matthey@3pmexperts.com.