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Project Management Update from Lisbon

*End of February 2010**By Alexandre Rodrigues, PMP**International Correspondent for PMForum & PM World Today
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In the last quarter of 2009, the Portuguese economy dropped by 0.8% in comparison to the previous year of 2008, having overall slowed down by 2.7% in 2009. The forecasts from the European commission however indicate that in 2010 the GDP will grow by 0.3%, yet below the average 0.7% expected for the European Union (EU). Unemployment is expected to be maintained at 9%, below the expected average of 10.7% for the EU.

The scenario for 2010 is certainly not an optimistic one.

However, large government investments are on the way this year through large projects and programs, namely the high-speed train network (TGV), improvement of other railway infra-structures, the new airport of Lisbon and the on-going investment in the modernization of all public schools throughout the country (the “Parque Escolar” program), altogether leading to an overall budget of several billion investment.

Interestingly, the awareness about the importance of modern Project Management best practices and standards can be found on some of these investments, namely at the “Parque Escolar” program and at REFER EPE (the national railway infra-structures company, the largest investor in projects on an on-going basis in Portugal). While “Parque Escolar” continues its initiative since January 2009 of using *Earned Value Management* as its primary tool for performance based program management, REFER EPE decided this year to extend the use of EVM to a portfolio of 12 major investment projects with a total budget well above 500 million Euros.

Furthermore, REFER EPE is also planning to formally consider the use of the EVM method as a preferential criteria for selecting their contractors in the private sector, both Engineering and Construction companies.

The market is also paying attention to the new emerging approaches and techniques of Project Management, namely the agile approach SCRUM and the Earned Value Practitioner (EVP®) certification from the US-based AACE – public courses are being scheduled during this first quarter, for the first time in Portugal regarding EVP.

While the PMI Portugal Chapter is currently planning elections and its annual conference, one of the largest events in Portugal, the Portuguese Association of Project Management (APOGEP) claims to having established an agreement with the APM Group (Prince2).



Lisbon, Portugal from the water

About the Author

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Alexandre Rodrigues, PMP, is an International Correspondent for PMForum in Portugal. He is also Executive Partner of PMO Consulting, an international consulting firm based in Lisbon specialized in Project Management (PM) and delivering advanced PM training and consulting services to clients across Europe and other parts of the world. His Clients include a wide range of international organizations, like Volkswagen, Motorola, Microsoft, BHP Billiton in Australia and Africa, and NATO C3 in Brussels and Holland. He is also a Senior Consultant with the Cutter Consortium, belonging to the Business-IT Alignment and Agile PM Practices, and to the Risk Management Intelligence Network. He has over a decade of teaching experience, having lectured on PM and System Dynamics related topics at universities in Portugal and the UK. Dr. Rodrigues worked for several years in PM for the military and consulting industries in the UK and the US. Alexandre Rodrigues holds a five-year "licenciante" degree in Systems and Informatics Engineering from the University of Minho (Portugal) and a Ph.D. in Project Management and System Dynamics from the University of Strathclyde (UK). He is a member of the Project Management Institute (PMI®) and a certified Project Management Professional (PMP®), a Chartered Member of the Portuguese Association of Engineering, and a member of the British Association for Project Management (APM). Alexandre was founding president of the PMI Portugal Chapter and is currently a PMI Component Mentor for Central and Northern Europe. Additional information about Alexandre Rodrigues can be seen at (link to breaking news article about Alex becoming a correspondent). Additional information about PMO Consulting can be found at www.pmo-consulting.pt. Alexandre Rodrigues can be contacted at Alexandre.Rodrigues@PMO-Consulting.pt.