

PM WORLD TODAY – FEATURED INTERVIEW – JULY 2008

An Interview with Luigi Iperti
Chairman of the XXII IPMA World Congress
to be held in Rome, Italy on 9-11 November 2008



Luigi Iperti is Chairman of the 22nd IPMA World Congress “Project Management to Run” to be held in Rome, on 9-11 November 2008. He is also currently Vice President and Member of the Board of Techint Compagnia Tecnica Internazionale, an engineering and construction company based in Milan, Italy. Techint is part of a Group that comprises more than 100 companies operating worldwide with a workforce of 60.000 experienced professionals and skilled workers. The global annual turnover is nearly USD 25 billion. Luigi has broad experience in the management of large industrial projects and in the General Management of project-oriented companies. He graduated as an electrical engineer from Genoa University. During his career he has acted as project manager and project director for large industrial projects such as a turnkey project for a rolling mill in Argentina in the years 1967-1969, a steel plant in Mexico in 1970-1974, a steel plant in Venezuela in 1975-1977 and in Libya in 1980-1985. He was General Manager of Techint from 1980 and CEO from 1994 to 2005. Luigi is a founding member of ANIMP – Italian National Association of Industrial Plant Engineering – that was founded in 1974. Its main objectives include the development of project management, and project management training courses. Luigi was President of ANIMP from 1986 to 1990 and Chairman of the IPMA (at the time called INTERNET) World Congress in Florence in 1992. From 1996 to 1999 he was President of AIM (Italian Association of Metallurgy). Now he is an ANIMP and AIM Board Member. He is editor of Impiantistica Italiana, the magazine of ANIMP. He holds posts in other companies and foundations, including Vice President and Member of the Board of Techint Finanziaria S.r.l.; Vice President and Member of the Board of TENOVA S.p.A., an engineering company specializing in the design and construction of equipment and plants for the steel industry with a turnover of 2.0 billion USD; President of Fondazione Luigi de Januario, an Organization recognised by the Italian Ministry of Education, University and Scientific Technological Research; President of the Italy-Uzbek Chamber of Commerce (CIUZ); Vice President of the Italy-Russia Chamber of Commerce (CAMCIR); Member of the Board of the Italy-Russia Relationships Development Foundation; and Member of the UNIVA Board (Industrial Union of Varese Province).

PM World Today (PMWT): You are the Chairman of this year's 22nd IPMA Congress which will be held in Rome in six month's time. Organising a Congress for a thousand or so people is a big job. Why did you (ANIMP & IPMA) in Italy decide to do it?

Luigi Iperiti: Italian main contractors have a very long and significant history in project management applied to large industrial and infrastructural projects throughout the world. Italy now needs a more extensive application of this experience to adapt its own "country system" to the huge challenges of today's fast moving global market. Rome is the stage where the Excellence of international project management will be presented with the focus on results and concrete achievements. The event will therefore give a powerful support to the spreading of a project management culture for the strategic needs of our Nation and will also consolidate the image of our contractors held by our present and future clients worldwide.

PMWT: Can you tell us something about the organisation of the Congress? When did you really start, how many people have been involved?

Iperiti: The organization of the Congress started two years ago and here I have to express my thanks to the Italian Government, to the engineering companies and to all the technical /financial institutions and associations that have not only fully endorsed the goals set for the Congress but have also supported its organization in a concrete manner. A group of 30-40 professionals - IPMA Boards members, Advisory Board members, stream Chairmen, senior PMs and the staff of two Congress services companies – have been directly involved in the setting up of the various aspects of this event. It's a difficult job: just to give an example, nearly 400 abstracts have been submitted from 40 countries. Our Congress will be a truly international Congress with people coming from USA, Europe, India, China, Australia and from many other Countries.

PMWT: This year's theme is "Project Management to Run", what made you choose it? Why did you feel it was an important issue for people interested in project management?



Iperiti: "Project Management to Run" has been chosen to reflect the new and increasing importance of time in the delivery of projects. With good Project Management you can run faster. Therefore "Project Management to run" means that a company is able to deploy for a project all its available resources and know-how in an "activities detailed" planned form, including

the control tools that provide the capability of anticipating possible deviations. The project therefore “runs” enabling the company to leaving its competitors behind. Is this vision sufficiently vivid to attract a CEO? We think it is.

PMWT: How has the response been? Have you had many proposals for contributions?

Iperti: As said the participation in the submission of abstracts – a fundamental matter for any Congress – has exceeded all of the most optimistic forecasts. Nowadays the issue of project management is recognised as being strategic, taking into consideration the many variables that affect the markets of today. Increasing complexity needs increasing solving power. But there is no real power without control and deviation analysis, in order to keep the project on its original “time & budget” track. This is the true essence of project management.

PMWT: Does the Congress have something special to offer young project managers?

Iperti: The IPMA Young Crew Initiative – a special seminar included in the programme – will provide a grounding for PM knowledge and experimental learning. In a three day seminar, organized before the Main Congress, many young PMs will have the chance to interact, exchanging information on techniques, results and opportunities.

PMWT: What about more experienced project managers?

Iperti: The Congress Streams - ranging from a variety of operating issues which include PM in main public projects, new trends, PM in new fields, complex PM, etc – will give senior participants a unique opportunity to meet colleagues and high level professionals. The purpose being the integration of different approaches and the validation of important outcomes, as expressed in the papers.

PMWT: Is there something in it for researchers?

Iperti: Some Key-note speakers will cover this particular aspect, having been selected for the highly innovative content of their studies and applications. In addition there are specific streams dedicated to “PM in new fields” and “New trends”, such as for instance ICT, biotechnologies and environment.

IPMA Research Awards is another important event to promote research for the enhancement of project management.

PMWT: One last question, how sensitive would you say the Italian public authorities are to project management?

Iperti: This last question covers an issue of the utmost importance! Seminars carried out by IPMA-Italy in recent months have indicated a rising interest in PM within the Italian public Authorities: operating offices from the field of education, from Armed Forces organisations and from the Ministries involved with infrastructural



projects have already started to adopt a PM based approach to some developments. Their participation in the Congress will enhance this strategy, also helping them to spread the use of PM techniques by focusing on tailored training programmes. The Project Excellence Award is a fantastic event within the Congress that will help demonstrate that good PM can help prevent time and budget overruns, that are major problems for our Public Administration.

PMWT: We wish you all the best and look forward to seeing you in six months' time. All those interested in more details should go to your excellent website! www.ipmaroma2008.it.

Iperti: We thank you very much for your kind interest in our Congress and would remind you that we are giving a great deal of attention to the Cultural Events and the Social Programme. Rome, the Eternal City, is irresistibly beautiful and offers delicious food and endless opportunities for entertainment and shopping. **Welcome to 2700 years of history! Welcome to Rome!**

Editor's note: This interview is being published simultaneously in English in PM World Today and in French in the newsletter of the French Project Management Association AFITEP.