



by David L. Pells, PMP, Contributing Editor

Global Forums: A Key to Globalization of the Profession

The global networking of project management practitioners and thinkers is good for individuals, associations, and the profession. As Global Forums proliferate around the world, a standard model for planning and organizing will help them continue to attract the kind of high-level, international audience that inspires growth and change among the attendees.

FOR MANY YEARS the leaders of PMI, the International Project Management Association (IPMA) in Europe, the Australian Institute of Project Management (AIPM), the Engineering Advancement Association (ENAA) in Japan, and other project management associations have met periodically to discuss cooperation, certifications, international standards, research, exchanges of literature, etc. This is especially true in Europe, where representatives of project management associations belonging to IPMA meet in semi-annual Council of Delegates Meetings. Occasionally, representatives from AIPM, PMI, and other international associations not belonging to IPMA have been invited to participate.

Not until 1995, however, was a truly "global" project management forum hosted by PMI, at the PMI '95 Annual Seminars & Symposium in New Orleans, La. For the first time, leaders of all known project management associations worldwide were invited to come together, to meet and discuss issues of common global interest to the profession. While only about 30 countries were represented, including those with the largest and most mature project management associations such as the U.S., U.K., Australia and Canada, it was significant that several regions of the world were represented for the first time in such discussions. For instance, the Global Project Management Forum in New Orleans included representatives from the Czech Republic, Indonesia, Malaysia, Mexico, Pakistan and the Philippines, where project management associations or PMI Chapters have been formed only in the last three years or are still in the formation stages. Not only were we able to receive input from these areas on global issues

such as international standards and certifications, but we were able to hear first-hand about the status of the project management profession in those countries.

Since then, the enthusiasm for the Global Forum approach has increased. Two Global PM Forums were held in 1996: IPMA hosted a forum just prior to the start of the IPMA '96 World Congress on Project Management in Paris, France. Another was held in Boston in conjunction with the PMI '96 Annual Seminars & Symposium. The Boston Global Forum involved two days of meetings, with a mix of presentations, discussions, and breakout sessions. It included panel discussions on Project Management in Latin America; Project Management in the European Union; and The International Performance Management Council—Multinational Cooperation for Better Program Management on Major Defense Programs and Projects, a panel on cooperation within the defense community featuring representatives from the defense departments of Australia, Canada and the U.S. A final highlight of the Boston Global Forum was the election of a Global Project Management Forum Steering Committee.

Global PM Forum Steering Committee. In order to ensure continuity of the Global Forum initiative, and based on a proposal and vote during the plenary session of the Global Forum in Boston, a Global Project Management Forum Steering Committee was formed on 10 October 1996. (Prior discussions on this subject had occurred between leaders of PMI and IPMA during the meeting in Paris. Subsequently, the PMI Board of Directors named David Pells as official PMI representative to the Steering Committee.) Nominations were

accepted from the floor in Boston, with the following individuals elected as members: David Pells (USA-PMI), Gilles Caupin (Europe-IPMA), Paul Dinsmore (Brazil-PMI), Brian Fletcher (Canada-PMI), Adesh Jain (India-PMA), Brian Kooyman (Australia-AIPM), Carlos Uriegas-Torres (Mexico-PMI), Bruce Rodrigues (South Africa-PMI), Hiroshi Tanaka (Japan-ENAA), and Vladimir Voropajev (Russia-SOVNET). A first meeting of the GPMF Steering Committee was held in Boston, with PMI Chairman Ron Waller and AIPM President Roy Sargent joining in.

The GPMF Steering Committee was chartered with establishing guidelines for future Global Forums, planning and communication with other stakeholders (primarily the leaders of project management associations worldwide). The Steering Committee has corresponded during the past year, and will meet again in Chicago on 27 September 1997, the day before the next Global Forum.

Proposed Concept Model. Leaders of several project management associations have expressed interest in hosting Global Forums. Therefore, one of the first priorities of the Steering Committee was to issue guidelines for future forums. I prepared a Concept Model and, in January 1997, sent it around the world for comment. In general, the response was entirely positive, with the model to be finalized at the next meeting of the GPMF Steering Committee and presented to the general session of the Global Forum in Chicago in September. The general concept model is outlined in the sidebar. Comments on this model are welcomed.

1997 Global Forums. A Global PM Forum will be sponsored by PMI on 28 September in

conjunction with the PMI '97 Annual Seminars & Symposium at the Sheraton Hotel and Towers in Chicago, Ill., USA. (This GPMF is expected to be the biggest to date. Please see the article in the Milestones section of this issue for a description of the Chicago Global Forum.)

Another Global Forum is being planned in Australia, sponsored by AIPM and held in conjunction with AIPM's Annual Project Management Conference in Brisbane. Again, all project management associations worldwide will be invited to participate in the Global Forum in Australia, scheduled for November.

In addition, international project management conferences are scheduled in South Africa (November), New Zealand (November) and New Delhi, India (December), which will offer leaders an opportunity to meet again, although formal "global forums" have not been announced.

1998 and Beyond. Already three Global Forums are being planned for 1998: Bali, Indonesia (May); Ljubljana, Slovenia (June); Long Beach, Calif., USA (October). The Global Forum in Bali will be sponsored by the Indonesian PMI Chapter, while the Global Forum in Ljubljana will be held in conjunction with the IPMA '98 World Congress on Project Management, which will be hosted by the Project Management Association of Slovenia. Other events may be planned and scheduled in the coming months, although individual forums may become regional forums, based on actual attendance and participation.

As PMI has made a commitment to sponsoring Global Project Management Forums, they are expected to continue to be held in future years in conjunction with PMI's Annual Seminars & Symposia. Since IPMA sponsors a World Congress on Project Management somewhere in Europe every two years, these events are also natural choices for conducting future Global Forums.

Global Working Groups. One of the most important aspects of each Global Forum has been the opportunity to break out into discussion groups on specific topics of global interest—international standards, PM certifications, PM education, PM research, organizational issues, global communications. At each of the Global Forums to date, several hours have been reserved in the agenda for breakout discussions. In several cases, attempts have been made to establish and continue "global working groups" on individual

Concept Model for Global Forums

Event Description. The following general conditions are proposed to describe future Global Project Management Forums:

What: One-day meeting of project management leaders and experts, representing professional project management organizations in various nations around the world.

When: At least one Global PM Forum each year.

Who: May be sponsored or hosted by any professional organization recognized by the Global Forum Steering Committee.

Where: Anywhere in the world that can be conveniently reached by attendees from other countries.

General Objectives

To provide leaders of the project management profession around the world with the opportunity to meet personally, face-to-face, to share and discuss ideas, issues and information of common global interest.

To advance the globalization of the project management profession by promoting communication and cooperation between and among project management organizations and professionals around the world.

To provide educational opportunities for participants to learn about issues, status of the profession and perspectives from colleagues from other parts of the world.

To advance the project management profession in more geographic areas, industries and organizations, on a global basis.

General Guidelines. The following guidelines are a basis for planning future forums anywhere in the world:

- Each Global Forum should be sponsored by a recognized project management professional organization.
- Global Forums should be planned and conducted in a professional and culturally sensitive manner.
- Global Forums should be planned and scheduled in conjunction with major international project management conferences.
- All project management associations worldwide should be invited to participate.
- Notices and invitations should be issued at least 30 days prior to the event.
- Global Forums should be open to the public professional community, based on space and seating availability.
- Results or minutes of each Global Forum should be recorded and made available to all other project management professional associations.
- Attendance and travel costs for attendees should be reasonable.
- Official languages of all Global Forums should be English, along with the local language of the host association, or with English translators and translations made available by the host organization.
- The host (sponsoring) organization shall be responsible for planning, logistics, agenda setting, invitations and project management of individual Global Forums.

issues as well, but with only partial success. On some issues, global consensus is already close; for instance, with respect to promoting basic education and research related to the fundamentals of project management. On the issues of standards and certifications, however, there are significant differences of opinion and approaches. Future forums will continue to emphasize the need to discuss these topics and promote international collaboration and cooperation.

THERE ARE MANY initiatives and activities by PMI leaders worldwide that support globalization of the project management profession; globalization of the profession, however, is a big step and will take many years to accomplish. But the process has certainly started. A common language is evolving in the project

management profession, albeit in some cases and regions multiple terms and concepts are still in use. International standards are being addressed, as well as the worldwide recognition of a family of project management certifications. The Global Project Management Forums are a critical and necessary part of this process, since it is our coming together face-to-face that really allows us to overcome our political and cultural barriers, identify real issues and see the bigger picture—the global future of the project management profession. ■

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