

# Managing Projects Across Borders<sup>SM</sup>



## *Initiating International Projects* *Executing International Projects* *online classes*

### Frequently Asked Questions

**1. What is the “Initiating International Projects” (IIP) Online Class about?**

This class teaches participants how to initiate international projects effectively, tailor project team communication to expectations and preferences, master the virtual team challenges of distance, culture, and languages, and adjust managerial and leadership practices to a given international project environment.

**2. What is the “Executing International Projects” (EIP) Online Class about?**

This online class teaches participants how to communicate across cultures in ways that build trust and enable the exchange of accurate information and feedback, how to execute international projects in spite of differences in values and work styles, monitor project progress and insure fact-based decision making, and how to maintain a sense of one team, prevent conflict when possible and resolve it when necessary.

Taken together, the IIP and EIP online classes cover the same content as the three-day classroom workshop on “Managing International Projects” (MIP), offered within the same series ([www.managingprojectsacrossborders.com/wkshps/mip.htm](http://www.managingprojectsacrossborders.com/wkshps/mip.htm)).

**3. Who should attend these Online Classes?**

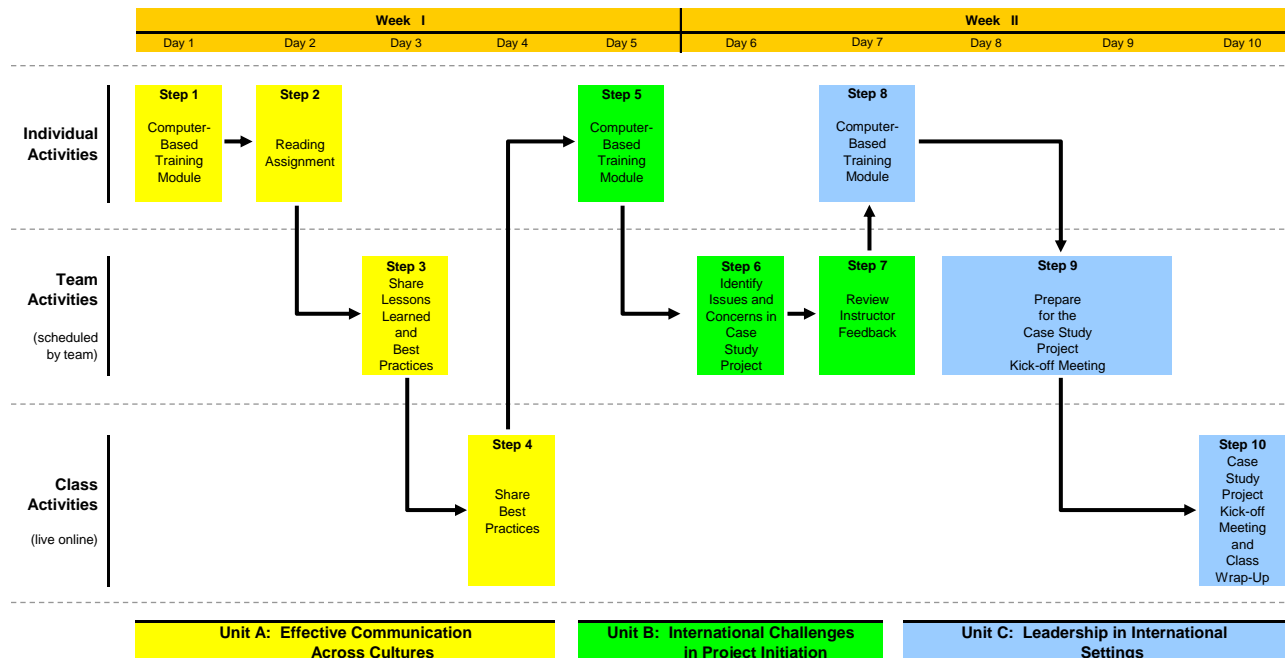
The following participant groups will find these online classes highly valuable:

- Project managers working with international project teams
- Project managers working with foreign collaborative development or outsourcing partners
- Team members assigned to international projects.

4. **Most online training classes consist of pre-recorded presentations delivered over the web. Is that how the IIP and EIP Online Classes work?**

Not really. Given the complexity of the subject covered, the IIP and EIP Online Classes strongly depend on extensive interaction among participants, as well as between participants and instructors. Accordingly, each of these classes takes place in a two-week period and consists of 10 separate learning steps (see also the illustration below), each of which employs one of these formats:

- **Individual Activity:** self-paced learning. Examples are self-contained multimedia lectures (Computer-Based Training Modules) or reading assignments.
- **Team Activity:** working in a team of about 4-8 students. Examples are team assignments, case studies, or simulated team events. Some of these activities are supported by participating instructors.
- **Class Activity:** a Live Virtual Meeting with all Online Class participants and the class instructors.



**Overview of Class Structure and Timing (Example: IIP Class)**

**5. How much time will I need to complete the IIP and EIP Online Classes?**

Each of these Online Classes takes place over the course of two weeks (=10 business days; see also the illustration above). During this time, participants spend an average total of about 12 hours to complete the class. Given the nature of online learning and the variance in individual work paces, some participants may find that they need less time than that, while others may need more.

Of the total class time, about 4 hours will be spent in **Individual Activities** that can be scheduled freely by each participant. About 5 hours will be spent in **Team Activities** that require aligning the schedules of each team of about 4-6 participants. The remaining 3 hours will be spent in two 90-minute **Class Activities** that require all class participants to attend Live Virtual Meetings.

**6. Will I get a certificate for attending these Online Classes?**

Yes. For each completed class you will receive a Certificate from the University of Texas at Dallas.

**7. I am a Project Management Professional (PMP), certified by the Project Management Institute (PMI). Can I get credits for my continuing professional education by attending the IIP/EIP Online Classes?**

Yes. Attendees of the IIP and EIP Online Classes earn 12 PDUs for each class. Information on how to register the PDUs will be shown on the Certificate (see also 6.).

**8. When can I get the complete class calendar?**

The IIP and EIP Online Classes are designed to accommodate participants from around the world. This means possibly having participants from several different time zones in the same class. Instead of setting fixed meeting times upfront, the exact schedules for the two **Class Activities**, which are live virtual meetings, are set to best accommodate the participants in each class. We will post the detailed schedule as soon as possible, but no later than five calendar days before a class starts.

For similar reasons, **Team Activity** schedules are set by team members for each team to make it as convenient as possible for all participants.

**9. How are teams formed and team activities coordinated?**

Once all class registrations are received, we assign students to teams to provide diversity and convenience. We try to create teams of students with the same or similar time zones and we try to put people on teams with people with whom they don't work on a regular basis.

We also ask a volunteer on each assigned team to serve as that team's coordinator for the duration of the class.

**10. I signed up for an IIP/EIP Online Class. What do I need to do next?**

Make sure to block out significant time on your calendar during the two-week timeframe of the class for which you signed up.

As soon as all class registrations are received and processed, but definitely no later than five calendar days before the class, you will receive information from the class instructors with a welcome package and instructions on the class setup. An important first step will be to fill in a short online survey to tell the instructors about your job, related experience, and expectations from the class. It is very important that we receive your survey inputs as soon as possible, so we can use that data in the team assignments and in customizing the class.

**11. I have a schedule conflict with a Team or Class Activity. What should I do?**

If you have a **Team Activity** schedule conflict, notify the class instructors at [instructors@mpab.info](mailto:instructors@mpab.info) and your team coordinator as soon as possible. The instructors will work with the team coordinator to determine how best to deal with the schedule conflict.

If you have a **Class Activity** schedule conflict, notify the class instructors at [instructors@mpab.info](mailto:instructors@mpab.info) as soon as possible. The instructors will work with you to determine how best to deal with the schedule conflict.

If at all possible, please give advance notice of the schedule conflict. Missing a scheduled activity without prior notice may mean that you cannot complete the class and/or receive the Certificate for it.

**12. What are my responsibilities as a Team Coordinator?**

You are responsible for coordinating the scheduling of team meetings in ways that are as convenient as possible for all team members and that ensure that the required **Team Activities** can be completed on schedule. In parallel, you will be working with the instructors to insure things are working as planned for all members on the team.

**13. What are my responsibilities as a Team Member?**

All members of the team equally share the work related responsibilities of the team, i.e., assuming the leader role on particular tasks, querying the instructors for clarification on questions, preparing materials and presenting for the team. In addition, you need to inform the **Team Coordinator** as soon as possible if you are unable to attend a scheduled team meeting.

**14. What computer setup do I need to participate in an IIP/EIP Online Class?**

You will need a computer that is VOIP ready, meaning that it has either a headset with integrated microphone (preferred), or a set of speakers plus a separate microphone. For other hardware and software requirements, please see

<http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobatconnectpro/systemreqs/#role01>.

**15. I have a technical problem accessing the IIP/EIP Online Class website. Where can I get help?**

First, please verify that your problem is not due to an issue caused by your computer that needs to be solved by your company's technical support staff.

Next, verify that Adobe Flash Player (version 8 or later) is installed on your computer. To download or update the player, visit

<http://www.adobe.com/support/flashplayer/downloads.html>.

If your problem is related to attending a Live Virtual Meeting, please re-visit the Adobe Connect Pro website at

<http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobatconnectpro/systemreqs/#role01>

and verify that your computer setup meets the minimum requirements.

If none of the above solves the issue and you are certain that it directly relates to the MPAB systems, please send an email to [support@mpab.info](mailto:support@mpab.info) describing your problem. Support is available during regular business hours, U.S. Central time. We will strive to help you resolve your issue as soon as possible.

**16. What is "Managing Projects Across Borders" (MPAB)?**

The **Managing Projects Across Borders**<sup>SM</sup> series enables program managers, project managers, and other professionals to master the challenges of cross-cultural project management and collaboration. The classroom workshops and online classes in the series teach the competencies needed to:

- master the many challenges of communicating across distances, languages, and cultures,
- avoid misaligned expectations across international project teams and internal/external stakeholders,
- initiate projects effectively by leveraging cultural differences rather than letting them become obstacles, and
- successfully execute projects in spite of differences in values and work styles.

For further information, please visit  
[www.managingprojectsacrossborders.com](http://www.managingprojectsacrossborders.com).

**17. Do the MPAB workshops and online classes include case studies and exercises? Which countries and cultures do the MPAB workshops and online classes address?**

MPAB learning time balances group discussions (large and small) and application exercises in which participants apply the skills taught to actual business situations. The MPAB workshops and online classes include a number of different case studies, some of which extend across several practice sessions.

The workshops and online classes cover a wide range of cultures, with examples geared specifically to those that are of highest interest to participants. Application exercises include role plays involving Indian, Chinese, Japanese, Mexican, Hungarian, and Korean nationals, as well as case studies and other practice with examples from several other cultures. In addition, time is provided for participants to ask specific questions about international groups with whom they are most concerned.

**18. What do past participants say about MPAB workshops and online classes?**

The first MPAB workshops have been conducted in May 2005. Many have been held since then. The feedback from participants has consistently been extremely positive when measured against the highest standards. When asked whether they would recommend the workshop they took to others, 100% of participants said “yes.” Frequent comments include “best workshop I ever attended” or “I hope that my co-workers and my boss can come.”

**19. How will I personally benefit from attending the “Initiating International Projects” and “Executing International Projects” Online Classes? How will my organization benefit from sending me?**

Individually, you will communicate more effectively, identify potential problems and conflicts before they affect project success, achieve more productive teamwork across your international project team, and improve the overall planning and execution of your projects. You will avoid some of the common and costly errors that project managers make in working with different cultures: errors that sometimes cost you time and goodwill, and sometimes cost you the project.

Your company will enjoy considerable returns on the investment from better forecasting, higher resource utilization, and significantly higher project success rates.

**20. Who teaches the MPAB online classes?**

**Sue Freedman**, Ph.D, PMP runs Knowledge Work Global, a Dallas based management consultant specializing in technology based organizations. Sue has helped US and foreign owned fortune 500 companies implement and upgrade project management practices, build cohesion and loyalty across geographically and functionally diverse groups, implement systems to track technical and leadership competence, and enable employees responsible for new product development and other complex, time sensitive work to collaborate more efficiently and more effectively.

Sue teaches Project Management and Organizational Behavior in the graduate MBA program at the University of Texas at Dallas, School of Management. She is a founding member the Virtual Collaboration Research Group at the University of North Texas, co-author of *“Beyond Teams: Building the Collaboration Organization”*, published by Jossey-Bass, and is a frequent presenter in national conferences in the area of collaboration, leadership, and organizational and team design for project rich organizations. Sue formerly served as Manager of Organizational Effectiveness at Texas Instruments and Vice-president of Organizational Effectiveness for a large real estate investment trust.

You can contact Sue at [sue@mpab.info](mailto:sue@mpab.info).

**Lothar Katz**, PMP leads international business consultancy Leadership Crossroads, helping clients improve their global business success. He is a former Vice President and General Manager with Texas Instruments, where he managed large distributed product development organizations across the U.S., Europe, Asia, and Australia, and served in project management roles from individual project team member to executive sponsor. Originally from Germany, he has worked with employees,

customers, outsourcing vendors, and other partners in more than 25 countries around the world and has lived in the United States and in Europe.

Lothar teaches Global Project Execution at the University of Texas at Dallas, School of Management, and serves as a Business Leadership Center Instructor at the Southern Methodist University's Cox School of Business. He is a member of the Asian American Citizens Council and of the Dallas Committee on Foreign Relations. His book *"Negotiating International Business: The Negotiator's Reference Guide to 50 Countries around the World"* was published by BookSurge Publishing in 2007.

You can contact Lothar at [lothar@mpab.info](mailto:lothar@mpab.info).

**21. What minimum work experience are MPAB workshop and online class participants expected to have?**

MPAB participants should be familiar with all fundamental project management practices and should have at least two years of actual project management experience either as team members or project managers. Being a certified PMP<sup>®</sup> is advantageous, but it is not a prerequisite for the series. Having personal experience in an international project environment is a great advantage and may make the learning experience more valuable.

**22. Do the MPAB workshops and online classes follow the practices described in PMI's Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK<sup>®</sup>)?**

Yes. The MPAB workshops and online classes were originally developed and conducted in cooperation with the University of Texas at Dallas, whose Project Management Program is accredited by PMI. All of the classes are based on the practices described in the PMBOK<sup>®</sup>.

**23. Which areas of project management as defined in PMI's PMBOK<sup>®</sup> are addressed in the IIP and EIP Online Classes?**

"Initiating International Projects" and "Executing International Projects" both focus primarily on the project management knowledge areas of: Integration Management, Scope Management, Time Management, Cost Management, Human Resource Management, Communications Management, and Risk Management.

**24. Can I copy MPAB materials and give them to my colleagues or friends?**

Unless otherwise noted, copying any of the MPAB materials without written permission from the copyright owners is prohibited by law. Upon request by past participants, we sometimes give special written permission for distribution of specific articles and tools, if reproduced as is and with all references included.

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