

# ACCREDITATION

## CASE STUDY



### Introduction

Global energy and petrochemical major Shell operates in over 90 countries and territories and is a key provider of energy used by millions of people and businesses for heating and power.

Shell has more than a century of experience in oil and gas development and has completed some of the largest projects in the world. Today it employs around 93,000 people in the exploration, production, manufacturing and distribution of hydrocarbon products.

This number includes some 3,000 project management professionals and a further 5,000 technical staff involved in project delivery across the various businesses.

### Quality performance

Shell is in the business of delivering highly complex projects in challenging locations. In recent years, its huge project portfolio has averaged US\$25-30 billion a year.

Project management is fundamental to the way the group works across the full array of technical, organisation, commercial, environmental and political aspects. All projects are developed and managed to processes and standards built on Shell's 100 years of experience and which cover all the key components of the APM Body of Knowledge.

An impressive level of investment is going into creating new assets, new technology and working at the very



frontiers of the industry as Shell prepares to maximise the opportunities opening up in even more challenging future. A number of initiatives have been introduced to improve project delivery, providing unique development and employment opportunities for Shell staff.

Solid, top quality performance in project delivery is essential to maximise these opportunities that directly impact on Shell's production, reserves, share price, reputation and stakeholder confidence. These also come with major challenges for the project delivery organisations as well as for all staff involved.

The energy sector is under great pressure to innovate to be able to satisfy the world's growing energy needs at reduced environmental cost. Continued economic growth in China and other developing economies, a growing world population and fierce competition drive companies like Shell to develop new technologies and products.

“ I want to see a greater focus on project delivery as promised. That means delivering projects better than our competition, time and again.”

Peter Voser, CEO, Royal Dutch Shell

Speaking at a recent industry event, Shell's CEO, Peter Voser, talked about these challenges and the way Shell is responding to them. “We know that global energy demand is likely to double during the first half of this century. We also know that global greenhouse gas emissions per unit of energy must drop dramatically. So, to transform the world's energy system, we need leadership and action on many fronts.

“The first priority for an energy company like Shell has to be to deliver more energy supplies to help meet the world's growing energy needs. To that end, we've kept up one of the most ambitious investment programmes in the world, right through the economic downturn.

“The world's population is growing – and developing countries are trying to lift hundreds of millions of people from poverty. This means that advanced economies have a special responsibility to promote energy conservation. So another important priority for all of us as consumers has to be energy efficiency and conservation. Vehicle and fuel efficiency standards are good examples. A third priority is to diversify the energy mix and increase the share of alternative energies. Our main effort is in biofuels for transport, which we expect to grow from 2-3 per cent of the world's road transport fuel market today to between 7 per cent and 9 per cent in 2030.”

Although it has a mature project management approach, proven and developed over 100 years of experience, Shell

has responded to the changing global situation by recently completing an organisational restructuring programme called Transition 2009. One result of that restructuring was to centralise the projects and technology delivery capability into one new business.

With the increasing scale and complexity of projects, it has been vital to establish better quality and turn-around of learning between people and their projects. To achieve this Shell continues to build a global community of project professionals and a strong platform for establishing a culture of sharing best practices and mutual support to collectively deliver the entire project portfolio.

The Shell Project Academy (SPA) is at the heart of this drive, providing a competence development scheme to develop people to their full potential and contribute to improved top quartile performance.

## World class competence

The SPA was established six years ago and is now recognised throughout the industry. Its vision is 'to provide a world-class, accredited, competence development programme to develop Shell project professionals capable of delivering sustained, top quartile performance in Shell's capital investment programme'

The academy has top-level backing and is governed by a board of executive vice-presidents directly responsible for delivering all capital projects and the competence development of all project management staff.

Regular review meetings monitor the progress of the SPA, how it fits with ongoing business targets and needs and how improvements and lessons learned can be incorporated into the programme.

Based on the belief that experience in the right job drives a person's development, stimulated by a number of well-chosen activities, the academy's approach centres around a 'pentagon' of linked processes. These include learning, experience, networking, coaching and mentoring, professional accreditation and guidance for long-term competence development – all strongly aligned to APM's five dimensions of professionalism.

Those taking part include project engineers, discipline engineers, business leaders and a range of other professionals who are involved in project preparation and delivery at all levels.

The learning portfolio is both practical and vocational, based on defined core project processes and using a

blended approach of virtual learning, work-based activities and face-to-face training, brought to life through case studies based on real projects.

Mentoring partnerships harness the wealth of knowledge and experience of senior project staff, while regular networking events such as regional conferences and global web casts further strengthen this important element of knowledge sharing.

Although primarily aimed at members of the global project engineering community, learning events are also available to any staff member who has been recommended for competence development in project management. Such groups include opportunity managers, discipline engineers, development engineers, subsurface engineers, well engineers and finance and commercial personnel.

A clearly defined competence ladder sets out the skills and experience required for each of the four levels – project engineer, senior project engineer, project manager and project director. Because of the global nature of Shell's operation, the profiles of these levels have been mapped against the internationally recognised standards of the International Project Management Association (IPMA), which also ensures compatibility with APM qualifications and its competence framework.

The SPA learning portfolio spans five steps of development depending on individual need, with each level setting out what it contributes to each step of the ladder:

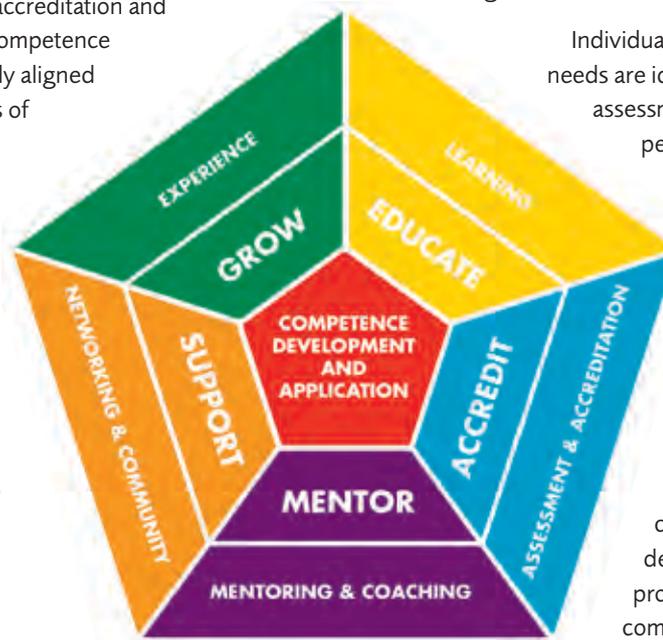
**Foundation** – a broad introduction for a wide audience

**Core** – training in the core competences for project engineering

**Focus** – more in depth training on critical topics

**Leadership & People** – addressing particular aspects for projects

**Toolbox** – a range of events on the use of project management tools



Individual learning and development needs are identified through a formal assessment that looks at each person's current level of competence tested against a set of targets by proven results.

Input from line managers and, where appropriate, peer review is included in the process, together with the results of continual assessment of learning events and the continuous professional development which every project professional has to complete and record.

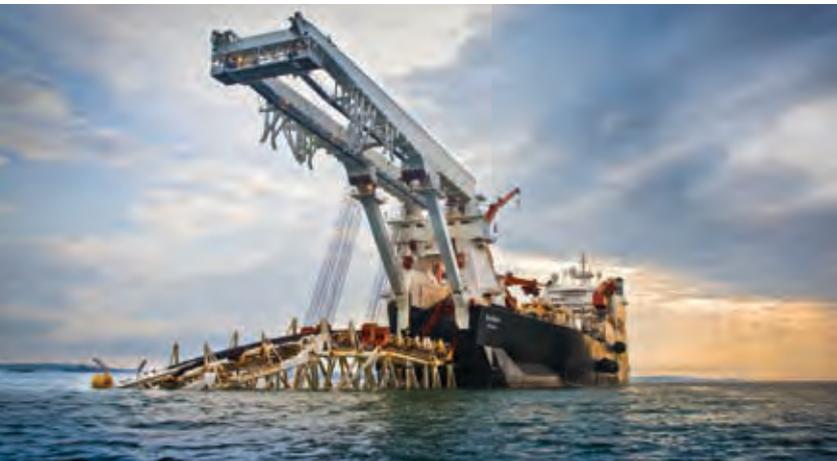
A comprehensive suite of guides and information sheets are available on the academy's dedicated website so that all project staff can see where they are on the ladder in terms of experience and qualifications and what is required to progress their career, wherever in the world they are based.

Project professionals are also actively encouraged and supported in gaining external certification and to join professional bodies of the country in which they operate. In the UK, this is APM certification and membership.

Learning events are developed and delivered jointly by Shell and external partners, selected for the quality and depth of their expertise in project management in order to provide a consistent world-class programme to all Shell businesses in all regions. In the UK, the partner is APM accredited training provider Cranfield School of Management.

"The SPA leverages both learning and competency development," said Dick Wynberg, head of SPA. "Learning events provide a unique opportunity for networking and probing lessons learned, leading to improved knowledge transfer as well as peer-to-peer support.

"These efforts are underpinned by the assessment and accreditation process for competency assurance of Shell's project professionals. SPA will be looked upon by Shell as the principal means to grow competent and motivated project professionals."



SPA opted for APM accreditation of its Competence Development Programme as this certifies the programme, and recognises the products of this process – competent project managers that are externally recognised."

Dick Wynberg, head of SPA



## Personal story

Senior project engineer Mohamed Darwish is glad that he followed the Shell competency ladder and completed the Shell Project Academy (SPA) assessment because it focused his sights on a more professional project management future.

Mohamed is a civil engineer and joined Shell in 2007. He holds a PhD degree from Delft University of Technology and worked in the construction industry following his graduation in 1991. He had been involved in project management activity and although it was the path he wanted to pursue, he had never received any formal certification.

"The SPA assessment exercise made me look back at what I had done, identify my competence gaps and try to fill them. It clarified my thoughts on where I currently stood, where I wanted to be in the future and how to get there. That helped me to write my individual development plan (IDP) in a more structured way. I was impressed with the way the set of competencies were written, covering every aspect. I went through them one by one to see what each meant and how far on the scale I had covered them.

"When we identified my competence gaps, my line manager and I looked at the SPA courses and the 'on the job training' opportunities to fill these gaps and define my next job.

"The courses are very useful, with the blended learning material of virtual, assignments, face-to-face and case studies, which enabled me to apply the what I had learned when I returned to the office."

Mohamed, who until recently was working on one of Shell's biggest prospects, was assessed and approved at level 2 (PE2A) – Senior Project Engineer. He is now aiming to become a level 3 Project manager – and beyond.

"I enjoy a challenge and my ultimate goal is to become a project director on one of the top 10 projects in Shell. I'm so glad I went through this SPA assessment process and I now recommend it to colleagues."

## Association for Project Management and Shell

The Shell Project Academy learning programme is aligned to APM's five dimensions of professionalism and the curriculum refers to the key elements of the APM Body of Knowledge. As well as encouraging UK professionals to join APM and achieve APM qualifications in addition to its internal competence levels, Shell is also a corporate member of the association, giving its project professionals access to their CPD activities. The company has selected an APM accredited training partner to help deliver the learning and development programme.

By mapping levels of the Shell competence ladder to those of IPMA, it also links these levels to APM qualifications:

### Level 1 Project Engineer

APMP, IPMA D

### Level 2 Senior Project Engineer

APMP Practitioner Qualification, IPMA C

### Level 3 Project Manager

APM Certificated Project Manager, IPMA B

“ The Pentagon approach enables APM to externally accredit SPA's Competence Development Process. Without the aspects of mentoring, assessments, competence development interventions and the building of a project community, this would not be possible.”

Liz Wilson, APM Head of Professional Standards and Knowledge



## Personal story

Chris Bonner is a Shell project engineer based in Canada and took a personal decision to study for both the APMP and AMP Practitioner Qualification on his own because he wanted recognised British professional qualifications.

Although thousands of miles from the SPA's main centre in the Netherlands, he is also able to compare his knowledge and skills against the academy's online competency tool to ensure he is meeting both the APM continuing professional development requirements and those required by Shell.

“Studying for the APMP was a timely reinforcement of my basic project management knowledge. I signed up with one of the APM's UK accredited providers and I took option of the online course and a one-day preparation workshop, followed by the exam.

“There was a lot that I was familiar with but had forgotten the details! For me, the value was not so much in the exam itself but in the revision and learning beforehand.”

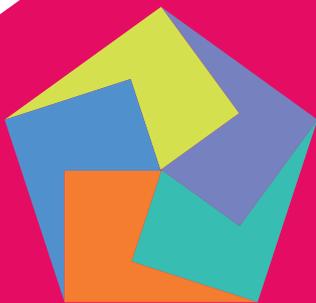
“The APM Practitioner Qualification was tough. Part of the challenge was simply the stress of being continually 'on test' – in effect, a two-and-a-half day interview. After one session I remarked to my fellow candidates that I felt like I had faced Alan Sugar in The Apprentice!

“My view is this qualification is looking for people to demonstrate that they can lead projects and can actively put theory into practice and still react to changing conditions and environment. There is a broad alignment between the objectives of Shell and APM, even if the method of assessment is different.”

## Association for Project Management

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### **FIVE**Dimensions of Professionalism

#### **APM Corporate Accreditation**

APM Corporate Accreditation will help you stand out as an exemplar in the development of project management professionals. It provides assurances to your customers and suppliers and allows you to attract and retain the best project management talent in the country.

APM Corporate Accreditation recognises the commitment of organisations and professional development services to the defined APM FIVE Dimensions of Professionalism, each of which is supported by an APM standard:

#### **Breadth**

The *APM Body of Knowledge* defines the knowledge needed to manage any kind of project. It underpins many project management standards and methods including the National Occupational Standard in Project Management.

#### **Depth**

The *APM Competence Framework* provides a guide to project management competences. It is part of your professional toolkit; mapping levels of knowledge and experience to help you progress your skills and abilities.

#### **Achievement**

APM qualifications take your career in new and exciting directions. They are recognised across the profession and aligned with IPMA's 4 level Certification Program.

#### **Commitment**

Continuing Professional Development helps develop your project management practice. A targeted development plan will enhance your project management career.

#### **Accountability**

The APM Code of Professional Conduct outlines the ethical practice expected of a professional. Becoming an APM member shows your commitment to the Code and sets you apart from others.