

Ethics, compliance and sustainability

Five key rules, each with a worked example, then the two model sheets. They serve IPMA, PMI and APM exams alike.

KEY RULES

What the IPMA, PMI and APM codes of conduct share

report truthfully · declare conflicts of interest · refuse bribes · obey the law, keep people safe · own your decisions · stay competent

Our own summary, not the codes' wording; read your body's code. PMI's applies to its certification holders and applicants.

Example: While you negotiate the price of a €24,000 change with a supplier, it offers you a €1,500 trip: declare it, decline it, tell the sponsor in writing

Five steps for an ethical dilemma

spot it → get the facts → check the rules → weigh four lenses → decide, act, explain

Our own steps; the lenses follow Jónasson and Ingason (2018): virtue (the choice an honest, fair person makes), utility (weighing the outcome for everyone affected), duty (keeping rules and promises), rights (respecting what people are owed). Where they disagree, say so and take it to whoever may decide.

Example: Asked to report 'on track' when 3 in 100 of 26,000 migrated parking permits carry a wrong plate or zone: $26,000 \div 100 \times 3 = 780$ residents whose valid permit would not show, so they could be fined. Report 'at risk' with options

Compliance: how binding, then three moves

must · agreed · expected · chosen, then identify → plan → check

Our bands, from laws to voluntary standards. Each rule gets an owner and becomes a requirement, clause or test. Inform and engage regulators; never escalate to them.

Example: A new rule cuts data retention from 5 years to 90 days: add a deletion requirement and test, name an owner, keep the evidence

Sustainability: targets you measure and report

social + environmental + economic effects → targets → reported at each gate

The ICB4 and PMI name three sides (ICB4: people, planet, profit); APM's PMQ syllabus adds administrative.

Example: A service replaces 40,000 printed letters a year; target: 30,000 fewer in year 1, or $30,000 \div 40,000 = 75\%$

Continuing professional development (CPD)

IPMA: 35 hours a year; recertify every 5 years · PMP®: 60 professional development units (PDUs) every 3 years · APM: part of professionalism

From the bodies' 2026 documents; details vary, so check the official site. Find your gaps, set goals, learn, record.

Example: IPMA: $35 \times 5 = 175$ hours over each five-year certificate. PMP®: $60 \div 3 = 20$ PDUs a year

IN THIS HANDOUT

Ethical decision steps

p. 2

Compliance map

p. 3

Sources: IPMA ICB4 (2015); IPMA Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct (2025); IPMA International Certification Regulations (ICR) v4.4 (2025); PMI, PMBOK® Guide, 8th ed.; PMI, Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct (2025); PMI, PMP® Examination Content Outline (2026); APM Body of Knowledge, 8th ed.; APM Code of Professional Conduct (2024); APM, PMQ handbook (v6, 2026); Jónasson & Ingason, Project: Leadership

Key: IPMA = International Project Management Association; ICB4 = IPMA's Individual Competence Baseline; PMI = Project Management Institute; PMBOK® Guide = PMI's body-of-knowledge guide; PMP® = PMI's Project Management Professional; APM = Association for Project Management; PMQ = APM's Project Management Qualification; CPD = continuing professional development; ICR = IPMA's International Certification Regulations; PDU = PMI's professional development unit. Unofficial study material for IPMA®, PMI® and APM exams. Not affiliated with, endorsed by or approved by IPMA, PMI or APM, and not an accredited or endorsed training provider. IPMA® and IPMA ICB® are registered trademarks of IPMA in Switzerland and other countries. PMI, PMP, CAPM and PMBOK are registered marks of Project Management Institute, Inc. APM is a trade mark of the Association for Project Management. Other marks belong to their owners. PMP® exam facts are from PMI's public PMP® Examination Content Outline (2026); check the current version on pmi.org. APM's qualifications are its own; this series is not an APM Accredited Provider or APM Endorsed. Examples use a fictional city and its projects.

All episodes, sheets and handouts: pm.fannarmaximus.com · **Watch:** youtube.com/@fannarmaximus



Scan for the episode

Ethical decision steps

Work through a dilemma in a clear order, so the decision holds under pressure.

STEP	WHAT YOU DO	ASK YOURSELF
1 Spot it	Name the dilemma and everyone it touches	Whose interests collide here?
2 Get the facts	Separate what you know from what you assume	What would change my mind?
3 Check the rules	Law, contract, policy and your code of conduct	Does a rule already settle it?
4 Weigh four lenses	Virtue, utility, duty and rights	Where do the lenses disagree?
5 Decide, act, explain	Tell those affected; record it; check later	Could I explain it in public?

Our own five steps. The four lenses follow Jónasson and Ingason, Project: Leadership (2018), ch. 7.

WHAT IT IS

A code of conduct sets the floor, but cannot foresee every case. These five steps are **our own design** for the rest. Step four weighs the options through four classic ethical theories, **virtue, utility, duty and rights**; Jónasson and Ingason (Project: Leadership, 2018) advise using all four. Where the lenses disagree, you have found the real dilemma: say so, and take it to whoever may decide.

HOW IT WORKS

- 01 Virtue lens:** which choice fits the person you want to be?
- 02 Utility lens:** which option gives the best overall result for everyone affected?
- 03 Duty lens:** which rule should hold for everyone, whatever the result?
- 04 Rights lens:** whose rights could this option harm?

MID-LEVEL · WORKED EXAMPLE

Apply it well

The situation: A city team has eight months to move resident parking permits online with a supplier. While a change is priced, the supplier invites the project manager to its conference, travel and hotel paid.

Spot it: a possible conflict of interest. Facts: the trip is worth far more than a token gift. Rules: the city's gifts policy, and every code of conduct asks for interests to be declared. The lenses agree. The project manager declines, tells the sponsor, and notes it in the project log.

In the exam: Name the dilemma, the facts, the rule that applies and one or two lenses. End with the decision, **who you told**, and how you recorded it.

SENIOR · WORKED EXAMPLE

Design and lead it

The situation: A city is joining 14 online services under one login over 30 months. Before the city council election in month 20, a board member asks to launch one service early.

Accessibility testing would not be finished, so some residents could not use the service. The project manager takes the lenses to the steering board openly: the rights and duty lenses weigh against an early launch. The board keeps the tested date and minutes its reasons.

In the exam: Show ethics as **part of governance**: shared rules, declared interests, a safe way to raise concerns, and board decisions minuted with their reasons.

WHERE IT SITS

IPMA · ICB4	PMI · PMBOK® GUIDE 8 · PMP® EXAM	APM · BOK 8 · PMQ EXAM
4.4.2 Personal integrity and reliability: values in every decision (4.4.2.1); codes of conduct: 4.3.3.3	Standard §3.6: Be an Accountable Leader; PMI's code of ethics. Exam outline: Business Environment task 1 (ethics)	BoK (APM's Body of Knowledge) §4.6.3 Ethics and standards: code of conduct, speaking up. PMQ (APM's Project Management Qualification) objective 15

Sources: Jónasson & Ingason, Project: Leadership; IPMA ICB4 (2015); PMI, PMBOK® Guide, 8th ed.; PMI, Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct (2025); PMI, PMP® Examination Content Outline (2026); APM Body of Knowledge, 8th ed.; APM Code of Professional Conduct (2024); APM, PMQ handbook (v6, 2026)

Key: IPMA = International Project Management Association; ICB4 = IPMA's Individual Competence Baseline (4.4.2 etc.: its competence elements); PMI = Project Management Institute; PMBOK® Guide = PMI's body-of-knowledge guide; PMP® = PMI's Project Management Professional; APM = Association for Project Management. Unofficial study material for IPMA®, PMI® and APM exams. Not affiliated with, endorsed by or approved by IPMA, PMI or APM, and not an accredited or endorsed training provider. IPMA® and IPMA ICB® are registered trademarks of IPMA in Switzerland and other countries. PMI, PMP, CAPM and PMBOK are registered marks of Project Management Institute, Inc. APM is a trade mark of the Association for Project Management. Other marks belong to their owners. PMP® exam facts are from PMI's public PMP® Examination Content Outline (2026); check the current version on [pmi.org](https://www.pmi.org). APM's qualifications are its own; this series is not an APM Accredited Provider or APM Endorsed. Examples use a fictional city and its projects. Levels (this series' labels): Mid-level = moderately complex projects (IPMA Level C, PMI's PMP®); Senior = complex projects and people (IPMA Level B, APM's Chartered Project Professional).

All episodes, sheets and handouts: pm.fannarmaximus.com · Watch: youtube.com/@fannarmaximus



Scan for the episode

Compliance map

Find every rule that applies, see how binding it is, then build it in and prove it.

BAND	WHERE IT COMES FROM	EXAMPLE IN A CITY SERVICE	WHO HELPS
Must	Laws and regulations	Data protection, accessibility	Legal, the data protection officer
Agreed	Contracts and the standards they bind	Card payment security rules	Procurement, the supplier
Expected	Codes of conduct, own promises	Staff conduct code, climate targets	HR, sustainability lead
Chosen	Voluntary standards and methods	A project management guide	The project office

Our own map, from binding to voluntary. The law and contract decide what binds, not this table.

WHAT IT IS

Our own tool. It sorts each rule by how binding it is: **must** (laws), **agreed** (contracts), **expected** (codes, own promises), **chosen** (voluntary standards). Each rule may be a threat or an opportunity. A regulator is a stakeholder: inform and engage it, never escalate to it.

HOW IT WORKS

- 01 Identify:** scan law, contracts, codes and policies; ask experts.
- 02 Plan:** give each rule an owner and a requirement, clause or test.
- 03 Check:** keep evidence, pass audits, watch for changes.

MID-LEVEL · WORKED EXAMPLE

Apply it well

The situation: A city team has eight months to move resident parking permits online. It will store residents' addresses and licence plates, and take card payments through a gateway.

In month one, the project manager fills in the map with the data protection officer. **Must:** addresses and plates are personal data, so access and retention become requirements. **Agreed:** the gateway must be certified before go-live. Each rule gets an owner and a test.

In the exam: Name two or three real rules, how binding each is, what you built into the plan, who advised you, and what **evidence** you kept.

SENIOR · WORKED EXAMPLE

Design and lead it

The situation: A city is joining 14 online services under one login over 30 months, with a platform supplier, an integration partner and nine owners of old systems.

One map covers all services: each service owner fills in its rows, the data protection officer advises the board, and shared security and accessibility standards go into every contract. The national authority is informed, never escalated to.

In the exam: Show the **system**: who owns the map, how it reaches suppliers and service owners, how rule changes are caught, and the board's trade-offs.

WHERE IT SITS

IPMA · ICB4	PMI · PMBOK® GUIDE 8 · PMP® EXAM	APM · BOK 8 · PMQ EXAM
Element 4.3.3: laws (4.3.3.1), codes of conduct (4.3.3.3); regulators treated as stakeholders	Guide §2.1.6: compliance in Governance; laws as external factors (Standard §2.2.1.2). Exam outline: Business Environment task 2	BoK (APM's Body of Knowledge) §4.6.2 Regulatory environment: track changing laws; §4.6: discretionary standards. PMQ (APM's Project Management Qualification) 15b–15c

Sources: IPMA ICB4 (2015); PMI, PMBOK® Guide, 8th ed.; PMI, PMP® Examination Content Outline (2026); APM Body of Knowledge, 8th ed.; APM, PMQ handbook (v6, 2026)

Key: IPMA = International Project Management Association; ICB4 = IPMA's Individual Competence Baseline (4.3.3 etc.: its competence elements); PMI = Project Management Institute; PMBOK® Guide = PMI's body-of-knowledge guide; PMP® = PMI's Project Management Professional; APM = Association for Project Management. Unofficial study material for IPMA®, PMI® and APM exams. Not affiliated with, endorsed by or approved by IPMA, PMI or APM, and not an accredited or endorsed training provider. IPMA® and IPMA ICB® are registered trademarks of IPMA in Switzerland and other countries. PMI, PMP, CAPM and PMBOK are registered marks of Project Management Institute, Inc. APM is a trade mark of the Association for Project Management. Other marks belong to their owners. PMP® exam facts are from PMI's public PMP® Examination Content Outline (2026); check the current version on pmi.org. APM's qualifications are its own; this series is not an APM Accredited Provider or APM Endorsed. Examples use a fictional city and its projects. Levels (this series' labels): Mid-level = moderately complex projects (IPMA Level C, PMI's PMP®); Senior = complex projects and people (IPMA Level B, APM's Chartered Project Professional).

All episodes, sheets and handouts: pm.fannarmaximus.com · Watch: youtube.com/@fannarmaximus



Scan for the episode