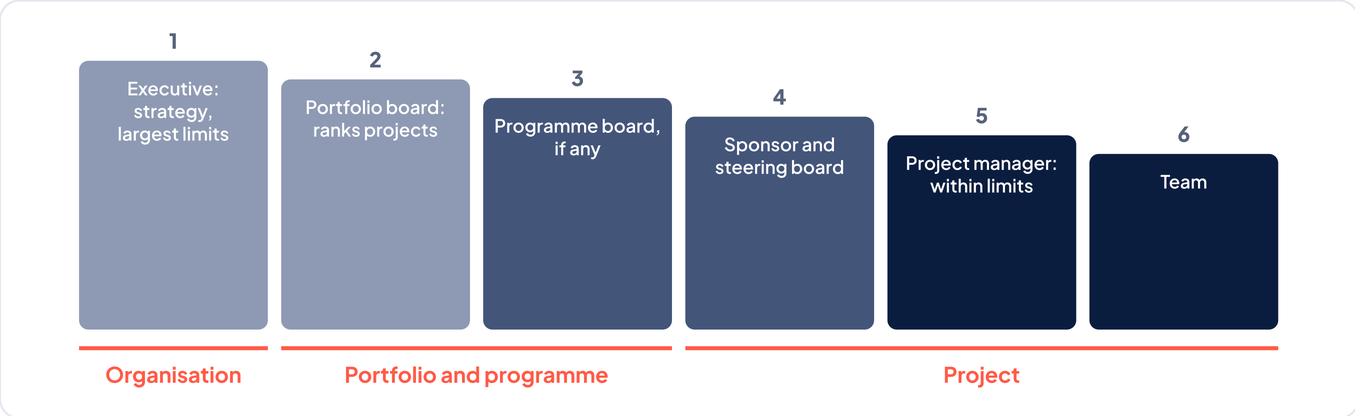
Governance levels and escalation

Who decides what, at which level, and within which limits.



Our own picture. Limits go down, reports go up. A programme board sits in between only where there is a programme.

WHAT IT IS

Governance says who holds authority over a project and who answers for what. Each **level** sets **limits** for the one below (APM: tolerances; PMI: thresholds) and gets reports from it. Inside your limits you decide and report; a forecast that breaks one goes **one level up** at once, with options.

HOW IT WORKS

01 Map the levels above you and who sits on each board.

02 Agree your limits early: money, time, scope, quality, risk.

03 Report up in the format each level needs.

04 Breach forecast: one level up at once, with options.

MID-LEVEL · WORKED EXAMPLE

Apply it well

The situation: A city team has eight months to move resident parking permits online. Only its steering group may release the €40,000 change budget.

The supplier quotes €30,000 for renewal reminders and agrees €24,000. The project manager takes it to the steering group with options and the effect on go-live. Approved, it leaves €40,000 − €24,000 = €16,000.

In the exam: Name the levels above you, your own limits, and one decision you took up a level: what you brought, who decided, and how fast.

SENIOR · WORKED EXAMPLE

Design and lead it

The situation: A city is joining 14 online services under one login over 30 months, with a €1.2 million contingency and a steering board of department heads.

The project manager may commit up to €40,000 per decision from the contingency. Larger ones go to the steering board, then the chief executive; a council committee sees only budget or scope beyond the delegated limits. Scarce specialists shared with other projects are allocated at portfolio level.

In the exam: Show that you designed the ladder: limits per level, who sits where, how fast a decision moves, and how you kept it light.

WHERE IT SITS

IPMA · ICB4	PMI · *PMBOK® GUIDE* 8 · PMP® EXAM	APM · BOK 8 · PMQ EXAM
4.3.2.5: decisions beyond your own authority; delegation levels: 4.5.5.2	Guide: Governance domain, §2.1. Exam outline: Business Environment task 1 (thresholds)	BoK (APM's Body of Knowledge) §1.1.2, §2.6.1: delegated limits ('tolerance'). PMQ (APM's Project Management Qualification) objective 2c

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 (4.3.2 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. 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).

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