

Status report and RAG

Tell each level where the project stands, where it is heading and what to decide, in colours read the same way.

COLOUR	OUR THRESHOLD	WHO ACTS
Green	The forecast meets the baseline	The team, as planned
Amber	It misses; recoverable within tolerance	The project manager
Red	The forecast breaks the tolerance	The steering group or sponsor

Our convention, not a standard: set thresholds before the first report, and give every colour a forecast and trend.

WHAT IT IS

In the ICB4 (IPMA's Individual Competence Baseline), reporting runs both ways: team leads report to the project manager, who reports on to the sponsor and boards, always with a forecast (4.5.10.4). **RAG** (red, amber, green) appears as stoplight charts in PMBOK® Guide (PMI's body-of-knowledge guide) dashboards and as APM (Association for Project Management) BoK (APM's Body of Knowledge) traffic lights, with no fixed meaning. Our convention ties each colour to a **threshold** agreed in advance, so a colour is a request, not a mood. An **exception report** goes up between reports as soon as a forecast breaks a limit.

HOW IT WORKS

- 01** Agree the structure: what, for whom, how often, what form.
- 02** Status against the baseline; forecast to the end; the trend.
- 03** Top risks and issues with owners; decisions needed, with dates.
- 04** Between reports: an exception report once a limit breaks.

MID-LEVEL · WORKED EXAMPLE

Apply it well

The situation: A city team has eight months to move resident parking permits online. The project manager may absorb a go-live slip of up to 10 working days (the tolerance) and reports every 2 weeks.

One page: status, forecast, trend, top risks, decisions needed. Testing is forecast 3 days late; reordering work can win them back, and 3 is within 10, so the project manager reports **amber** with the recovery plan. A 12-day forecast would be red: an exception report at once.

In the exam: Show a report you made: status against the baseline, the forecast, your colour and its threshold, and the decision you asked for.

SENIOR · WORKED EXAMPLE

Design and lead it

The situation: A city is joining 14 online services under one login over 30 months, with two suppliers, several delivery teams and a steering board; a council committee is briefed quarterly.

Reports roll up from each team and supplier into one page for the board, in one format with the same thresholds. Progress counts accepted results, not hours spent. The committee gets a short briefing. No one is blamed for an amber, so problems surface early.

In the exam: Explain the reporting system you designed: levels, formats, thresholds, exception reports, what counts as progress, and how bad news arrived early.

WHERE IT SITS

IPMA · ICB4	PMI · PMBOK® GUIDE 8 · PMP® EXAM	APM · BOK 8 · PMQ EXAM
4.5.10.4: reporting structure, progress and forecast reports, report by exception; information flows: 4.5.5.3	Guide: work performance reports, p. 144; dashboards and stoplight (RAG) charts, p. 190. Outline: Process task 9	BoK §5.5.4: traffic lights, dashboards, trends shown graphically. PMQ (APM's Project Management Qualification) outcome 6b: factors reported on

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)

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