IICTP and PMI: two credentials for two different jobs

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People often ask how IICTP compares with PMI. The honest answer is that they certify different things. PMI certifies project management. IICTP certifies technical practice. Whether one is better for you depends on the decisions your job asks you to make. Here is a fair look at both, including where PMI is clearly ahead.

TL;DR The short version

- PMI certifies project management; IICTP certifies technical practice, the decisions engineers and technical leaders make about systems.
- PMI is established and widely recognised, while IICTP's scenario-based exams test the technical decisions a project management credential does not.
- A tech lead who also runs delivery may reasonably hold both.

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PMI facts in this post were read on pmi.org on 20 October 2026 and may have changed since. PMI®, PMP®, CAPM® and PMI-ACP® are marks of Project Management Institute, Inc. IICTP is not affiliated with or endorsed by PMI.

What PMI certifies

The Project Management Institute is a long-established body for project management. On its certifications page (read 20 October 2026) it lists four core credentials, CAPM, PMP, PgMP and PfMP, and a set of specialised ones, including PMI-ACP for agile, PMI-RMP for risk, PMI-PBA for business analysis, PMI-SP for scheduling, PMI-PMOCP for project management offices, PMI-CP for construction, CSPP for sustainability and PMI-CPMAI for managing AI projects. PMI says it has 1.7 million or more certification holders worldwide and has led the field since 1969.

PMI describes the PMP as demonstrating the ability to lead projects without being tied to any one methodology, industry or geography. That is a credential about running projects: people, processes and business priorities.

What IICTP certifies

IICTP certifies technical practice, meaning the decisions engineers and technical leaders make about systems. Its body of knowledge, the TPBOK, has five domains: Architecture & Systems Design; Engineering Governance & Agile Delivery; Applied AI & Emerging Tech Integration; Infrastructure & Security; and People Leadership in Engineering. There are ten credentials, from the entry-level ATP and the flagship CTP to program and portfolio levels and six specialist credentials.

Side by side

	PMI	IICTP
Main subject	Managing projects, programs and portfolios	Technical decisions: architecture, delivery, AI, infrastructure, security, engineering leadership
The question it answers	Will this work be delivered within scope, time and budget?	What is the best technical decision here, and who does it affect?
Typical holder	Project managers, program managers, PMO staff, and others who manage delivery	Developers, tech leads, engineering managers, architects, technical program managers
Exam content	Project management knowledge across people, process and business environment (per the PMP page)	Scenario-based technical judgement across the five TPBOK domains
Track record	Since 1969, with 1.7M+ holders (PMI's figures)	New in 2026; no holders yet

PMI column from pmi.org, read 20 October 2026. IICTP column from iictp.org.

Where PMI is ahead

PMI is established and widely recognised. It has decades of history, a very large community and chapter network, a mature continuing-education system and an extensive training-partner network. PMI also states that its PMI-ACP exam is ISO-accredited. IICTP is an independent technical credential focused specifically on technical judgement, system design and engineering governance. If an employer specifically asks for a PMP, an IICTP credential will not substitute for it.

Where IICTP's approach fits technical people better

- **It tests the decisions technical people make.** A project management credential, by design, does not ask whether you can choose between two architectures, contain a failing dependency or set guardrails for AI-generated code. IICTP exams do.
- **Scenario-based, not recall-based.** CTP candidates face 150 scenario questions in 180 minutes and are asked for the best decision, not a memorised definition.
- **The exam is described in the open.** Questions, time, pass mark and the share of questions per domain are published for all ten credentials on the exam facts page, with a blueprint PDF for each.
- **Vendor-neutral.** Nothing in the TPBOK depends on one cloud, tool or framework.
- **Renewal tied to technical growth.** Credentials renew through Technical Development Units earned from learning and from giving back, such as mentoring and open source. See how renewal works.

You may want both

A tech lead who also runs delivery might reasonably hold a project management credential and a technical one. They answer different questions. The decision guide in our third post in this series maps common roles to the credential that fits.

Sources and further reading

1. Project Management Institute. "Project Management & Specialized Certifications." pmi.org/certifications. Read 20 October 2026.

2. Project Management Institute. “Project Management Professional (PMP)® Certification.” pmi.org/certifications/project-management-pmp. Read 20 October 2026.
3. Project Management Institute. “PMI Agile Certified Practitioner (PMI-ACP)® Certification.” pmi.org/certifications/agile-acp. Read 20 October 2026.
4. IICTP. Exam facts and eligibility. iictp.org/certifications/exam-facts.

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