



PLM 2025-35 Future PLM Steering Group

Project Proposal

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PLM has been a recognised discipline for more than two decades, but the knowledge and expertise gained over that period has never been captured. Manufacturing technology has moved on, and PLM as it currently exists has not evolved sufficiently to keep up.

It is important for PLM that some kind of discussion takes place. What we knew in 2005 when PLM first started is not what we need to know now.

The platform for this 'Big Rethink' of PLM is the Future PLM Steering Group, bringing together organisations from many countries to review and redirect the way that PLM is evolving. Steering Group members provide high-level guidance to the PLM 2025-35 Project, which turns it into practical advances via the Body of Knowledge.

This document is a Proposal for the PLM Interest Group to manage and support the Future PLM Steering Group over the twelve-month project timeframe, and explains how organisations of all types can participate.

Executive Summary

PLM has grown from a few start-up companies in the 1980s to an \$87B industry, with massive implementations around the world. This growth disguises the fact that its development has been haphazard, driven mainly by vendor competition (trying to create separation); and technology advancements (totally unrelated to PLM).

Meanwhile the global manufacturing environment is 2026, and it is becoming clear that PLM has not evolved far enough to be able to cope. Major corporations are having to apply tools that were never designed for the complexity of the modern environment, based on underlying logic that has not moved with the times.

There has been no industry Vision, and no collective 'Voice of PLM' to define where PLM should be going. People are talking of a future in which AI somehow provides all the answers, while in the real world, PLM knowledge is siloed within the companies that are applying it, with no definition of best practice or right-first-time methods.

The Future PLM Steering Group is a platform for experienced practitioners to collaborate in a free and open thought space to revisit the aims and scope of PLM, resolve the misconceptions and barriers, and define a PLM Blueprint for the industry.

It is an integral part of the PLM 2025-35 Project, and is therefore backed up by the Body of Knowledge and AI Working Group streams. Steering Group members provide the guidance, and the Project produces the results.

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1 OVERVIEW

1.1 Timeline

PLM has seemed like a 'never-ending quest' for a long time, and the signs have been there that it will never actually complete the journey. Even a decade ago when Industry 4.0 was proposed it was clear that PLM would not be able to handle it, and since then manufacturing technologies and product complexity have advanced off the scale.

State of PLM 2026 Report

Industry veteran Doug Macdonald laid down a challenge with a Keynote at the PLMIG *State of PLM Debate* on 02 June. The output was the [*State of PLM 2026 Report*¹](#), which highlights how far PLM evolution has fallen behind modern manufacturing methods and technologies.

State of PLM 2026 Position Statement

A further debate on 30 June worked through the conclusions of the Report and generated the [*State of PLM Position Statement*²](#) as a starting point for improvement. The document goes on to explain the possible ground-up and top-down approaches, and the need for a Steering Group to make it happen.

Future PLM Preview Report

The third reference document comes from the *Future PLM Preview Forum* of 11 August, which presented three different possibilities and then ran a group discussion to challenge and build on them. The findings are captured in the [*Future PLM Preview Report*³](#).

Conclusions...

There were obviously lots of thought-provoking ideas, but what came out of the overall discussions was more important.

Everywhere in PLM you can see proposals for new solutions to fix almost any particular problem, but with no over-arching view of what PLM actually is. The fundamental principles of PLM, that were well known in the early years, have dropped completely off the radar.

The way to dissolve complexity is what could be termed the 'Big Rethink', and that is what the Steering Group is set up to do.

¹ <http://www.plmig.com/welcome/acplm2025-35.shtml#plm2535spr26>

² <http://www.plmig.com/welcome/acplm2025-35.shtml#plm2535pip>

³ <http://www.plmig.com/welcome/acplm2025-35.shtml#plm2535sgos>

1.2 Position Statement

The Position Statement itself is very concise. It cuts out the noise and summarises the current state of PLM.

PLM is indispensable for engineering and manufacturing companies in every type of industry, and shortfalls in PLM capability have a direct impact on product management and performance.

If PLM had been developed in with modern technology and with modern manufacturing ideas the solutions would be more comprehensive, more integrated, more effective and easier to apply.

The PLM industry therefore needs to rethink the aims, scope and features of PLM in order to recalibrate for the future; and to publish this redefinition as a global reference point for practitioners to act on.

1.3 Future PLM Steering Group

If the PLM industry is to rethink its understanding of PLM for 2026 and beyond, it needs a platform to do so. It needs practitioners from the real world who are doing or supporting PLM, can see the issues, and want to sort them out in an organised and well-structured way.

The Steering Group is for organisations from all parts of the industry. Users, vendors, integrators and consultancies all have a stake in the future of PLM and should all have an influence on the way that it changes. It is run on a Round Table basis, with full support from the PLMIG, and enables its members to align their thinking, plan for the future.

The 12-month deliverable is an industry-wide Blueprint for modern PLM, and the remainder of this document explains how that deliverable is achieved.

1.4 PLM Blueprint

This PLM Blueprint is not a three- or four-page white paper but a comprehensive document incorporating all of the new thinking, spelling out the advanced scenario that will meet the needs of modern manufacturing into the mid-term future.

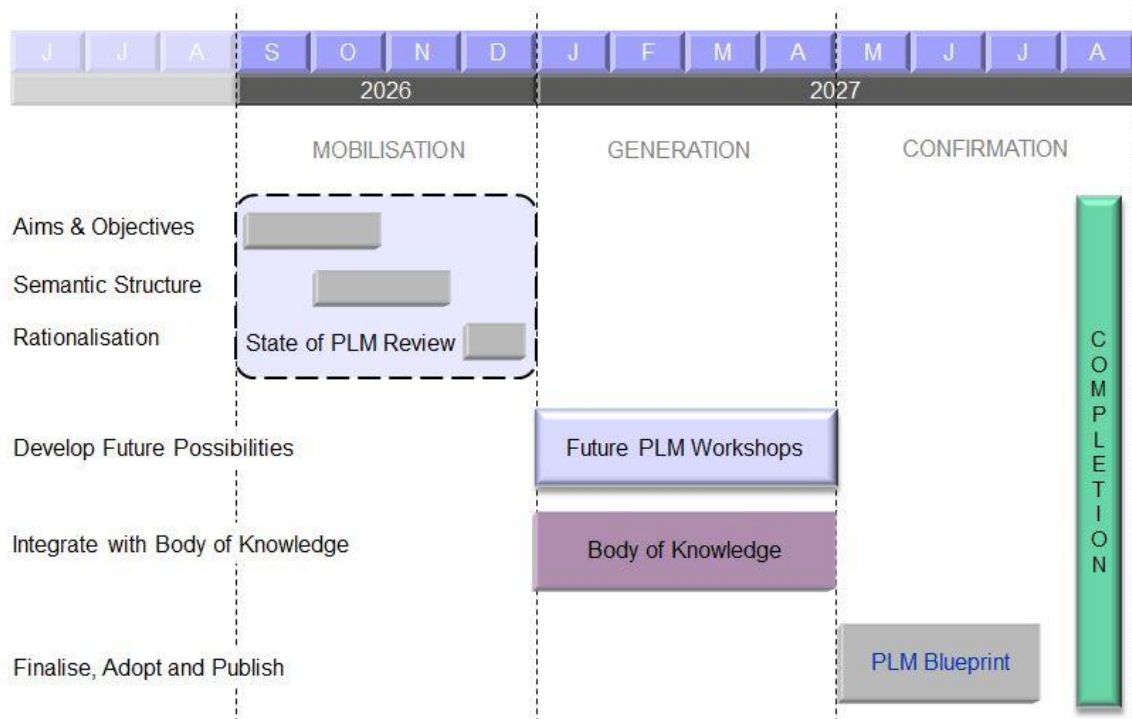
The PLM industry will change not because the Steering Group dictates or demands it, but because User companies around the world will use the PLM Blueprint as a reference document. It will be globally available, and globally adopted. Over time the Supply Side will adapt, and PLM will become what Users want.

2 METHODOLOGY

The Future PLM Steering Group brings experienced practitioners from different organisations and backgrounds together to combine their views the aims and scope of PLM and to define a PLM Blueprint for the industry.

The first part of the process is to get everyone aligned and up to speed; then the serious development begins, and the results are rationalised and consolidated.

The Future PLM Steering Group therefore works in three phases: Mobilisation, Generation and Confirmation.



Mobilisation is essentially a 'State of PLM Review', in which SG Members align and organise their thinking. Each Member has a different starting point, and different **Aims & Objectives**, so these are shared via PLMIG support. A **Semantic Structure** is agreed so that everyone is on the same page, and **Rationalisation** sets everyone up for the next phase.

Generation is where the main work is done. The PLMIG provides the working material and runs concise Workshops to **Develop Future Possibilities** in a formal and structured way, integrated with the detailed work of the **Body of Knowledge** stream. The continuous feed of technical progress from the Users and the Knowledge Development team gives greater insights into the possibilities and requirements that the Steering Group should cover.

The Confirmation Phase produces the finalised **PLM Blueprint** which becomes the global reference point for PLM orientation and adoption into the future.

3 INTEGRATED PARTICIPATION

The PLM 2025-35 Project will redefine the future of PLM and raise it to a professional level. It comprises three streams of work, running in parallel.

The headline stream is the **Future PLM Steering Group**, which will take a high-level viewpoint of the state of the industry and map out the future possibilities.. There are also a host of direct benefits: high-level cross-fertilisation of ideas and methods; a re-appraisal of PLM aims and strategy; visibility of the current and 'successor' vendor marketplace; and first adoption of the PLM Blueprint.

It is no good defining great new ideas if the tools and methodologies are not there to support them, so the second stream develops the **PLM Body of Knowledge**. The first things to be created for the Body of Knowledge are the solutions to the participants' own problems and issues, so they not only get first view of the techniques but also fixes for their most important headaches.

The third stream positions the role of AI in all this. The **AI Working Group** is made up of technical guys from the participants who want to set up a fully-functioning, controlled and productive AI platform for their own companies. Their collaboration builds the standard working platform, which they can take away and run live.

The point is that by joining the Project, organisations participate in all three streams at once, getting the benefits of all of them. The particular benefit for the Steering Group is that everything is set up to make their job easy.

All of the working material is provided by the PLMIG, both before the on-line meetings to set up the discussion, and after the meeting with the reports and follow-on actions. The workshops will be on subjects identified by the Steering Group, which makes them of direct benefit; and the new tools and methodologies will be produced and published by the PLMIG so they can easily be applied.

The result is a holistic, year-long collaboration that will transform the ease and efficacy of PLM implementation. Participants get 12 months of direct PLM improvement and best practice absorption, as well as the Project Deliverables that become a new industry standard.

4 BENEFITS AND DELIVERABLES

The Future PLM Steering Group provides direct, ongoing benefits as well as final deliverables for those who take part.

Direct Benefits

Direct Benefits for each participating organisation include:-

- ❖ Multi-country C-level collaboration on the future direction of PLM
- ❖ High-level comparison with, and learnings from, other companies
- ❖ Re-appraisal and validation of PLM aims and strategy
- ❖ DASAMASA improvements for multinationals
- ❖ Direct input to the PLM Blueprint and its development process
- ❖ Visibility of the current and 'successor' Vendor marketplace
- ❖ 'Ideas Factory' for future improvements
- ❖ Findings from the PLM Body of Knowledge
- ❖ Results from the AI Working Group
- ❖ In-house application of the new advanced PLM environment

Final Deliverables

Deliverables at the completion of the Project include:-

- Industry-wide PLM Blueprint for current and medium-term PLM
- Vendor and provider adaptation to the new advanced principles
- Marketplace understands why it is doing PLM, and the best way to do it
- Value Chain Integration along the Customer and Supply chains
- Raised standards across the board for PLM

5 PLMIG SUPPORT

5.1 Management

This is a participatory project, designed to run with a minimum of effort and overhead for the participants. The PLMIG provides the tools and the structure; participants receive the material and join in with the actions at each stage, contributing to the findings; and the PLMIG provides the published results.

5.2 Tools

The PLMIG provides all of the tools and working documentation for the project, together with direct support for participants as they are used. In the opening Mobilisation stage these will be bespoke working tools for alignment and definition; and in the 'Solution Generation' stage they may include any of the multiple handbooks and manuals that the PLMIG has developed over twenty years.

The PLMIG also sets up and runs the on-line workshops designed to produce the specific problem solutions, and publishes the findings for follow-on use.

5.3 Workshops

There will need to be specific working meetings to investigate and analyse the detailed issues that participants want to work on. The PLMIG has extensive experience in running such workshops to produce accurate and useful findings, and the Project members who are interested in each particular issue can take part.

5.4 Documentation

In addition to the direct project documentation the PLMIG will produce all of the neutral, 'distilled' documentation for the teams in each stream to work on, and will construct the eventual written Body of Knowledge.

Participants in all streams will receive all of the current PLMIG toolsets, and all of the new tools produced during the 12 months of the Project, as part of their Project Membership.

5.5 Coordination

Once the mobilisation phase has been completed, PLM Teams from different organisations will be talking to each other in much more detail than has previously been possible. When PLM practitioners get together in this way they generate their own ideas. It is expected that participants may hold local discussions amongst themselves, as part of the general activity of a community. This is to be encouraged, subject to confidentiality, and findings or actions from these interactions can be fed back into the centralised coordination if required.

6 ADMINISTRATION

PLM 2025-35 is designed to be an informal and flexible project that is easy to be involved with and to benefit from. The Conditions of Participation are therefore minimal:-

1. Membership of the Project commences on receipt of the Membership Fee, and will last until the completion of the 12-month project schedule.

The Membership Fee is €8,500 (£7,400, \$10,000), which allows an organisation to participate in any or all of the three streams [Future PLM Steering Group, Body of Knowledge and AI Working Group].

2. User organisations are eligible to join the User Collaboration strand of the Body of Knowledge stream, and if so should be willing and able to participate in its activities. The internal discussions of the UC members are confidential, and any documentation published outside the stream will be neutral and non-attributable. The detailed focus of this half of the project will be decided by its members.
3. Organisations of all types are eligible to join the Future PLM Steering Group, the Knowledge Development strand, and the AI Working Group. The internal discussions will be confidential, and the published documentation will be in the proposed neutral format.
4. New Members may join at any time by payment of the same fee, and their membership will run until the completion of the 12-month schedule. It is not expected that the Groups will become so large that they cannot function.
5. No specific practical, financial or legal liability is attached to Project Membership.
6. For the first 12 months (as covered by this Proposal) the Body of Knowledge will be entirely in draft form, with the first release at the end of the project period. The PLMIG and the project members will therefore own it collectively while it is under this development. As publisher, the PLMIG will retain the copyright, and make it available to every project member.
7. At the end of the 12 months the PLMIG and project members will decide whether the Project should continue in its current form, and how the Body of Knowledge should be further developed.
8. PLMIG tools and material, and new material produced by Project activity, are confidential to Members. Participants are encouraged to reproduce, modify, or take extracts from any part of it for their internal use. The PLMIG may compile some of the ongoing draft documentation into new tools which will then become available as part of general PLMIG Membership.

Further information can be requested via steering_group@plmig.com.