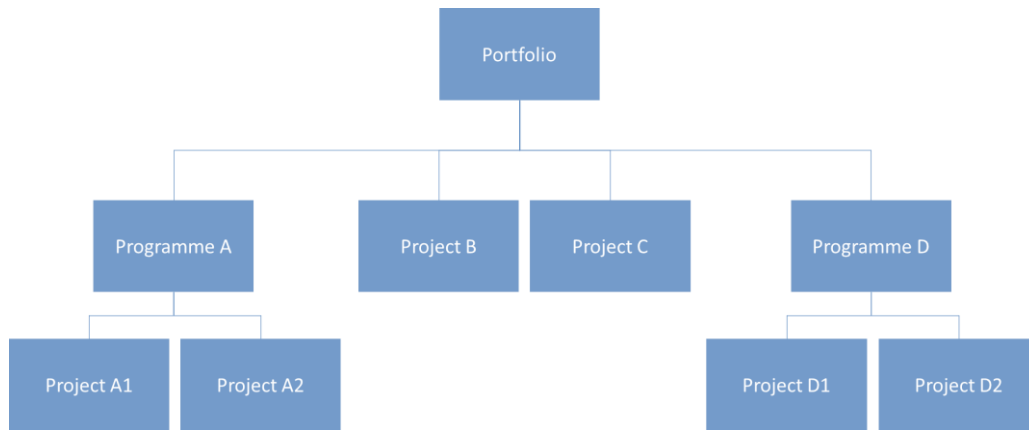Praxis®

This guide explains the principles of the Praxis approach to consolidating capability maturity assessments for programmes and portfolios.

Praxis allows assessments to be nested within other assessments. Portfolios will have component programmes and projects, and programmes will have component projects.

The hierarchy of portfolio, programmes and projects above would appear in your Praxis assessments overview page as an indented list:

Note: the screen shot above is a simplified version as it doesn't show multiple assessments for any individual project, programme or portfolio.

For now, we'll just concentrate on Programme A.
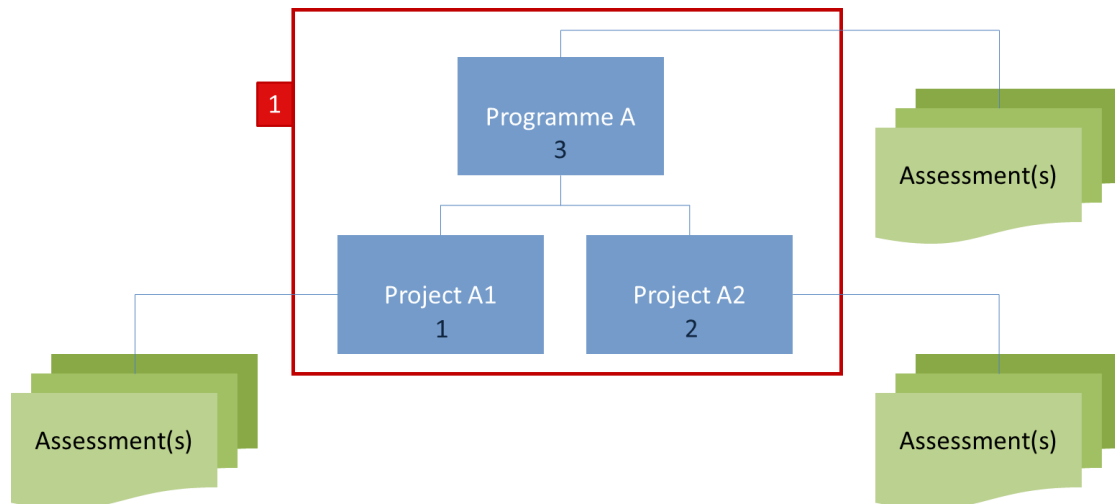
In this example, assessments of the management of Programme A have resulted in a capability maturity level of 3. However, assessments of Project A1 have resulted in a capability maturity level of 1. For Project A2 the level is 2.

This means that the overall capability maturity of Programme A is level 1 (as shown in the red box). Although the management team of Programme A are operating at level 3, the capability maturity of the overall programme is governed by the weakest link, i.e. Project A1.

If we could get Project A1 to level 2, then the overall programme would also be at level 2. To get the whole programme to level 3, we would need to improve both projects until they were operating at level 3.

The same principles are applied when consolidating to portfolio level:
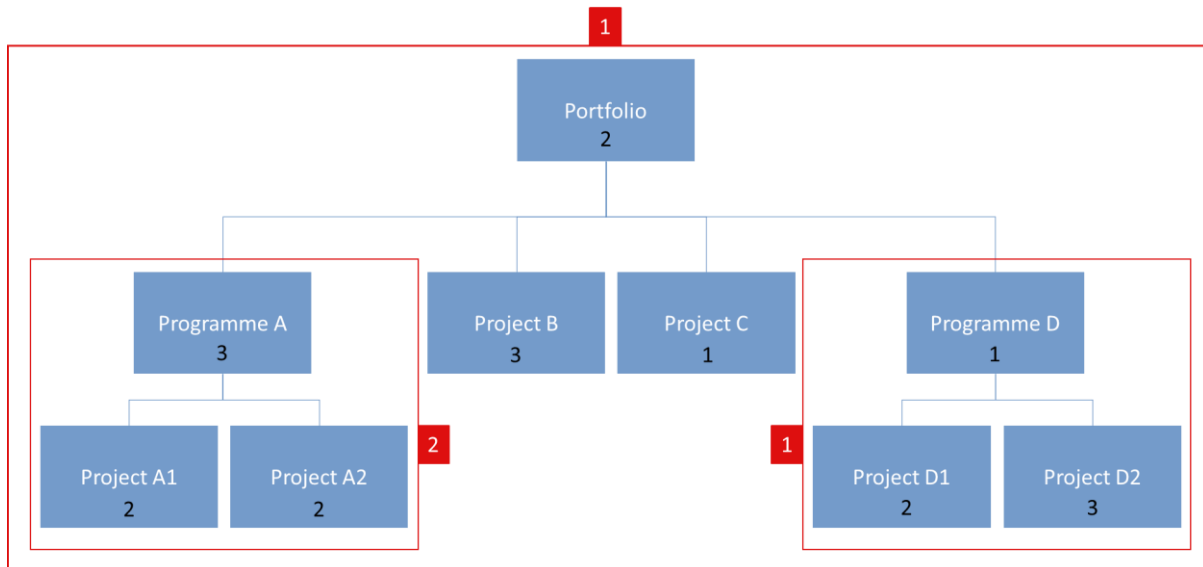
In this example, the management of the portfolio has been assessed at level 2, but the overall level of the portfolio is only 1 – because of Project C and Programme D. These should be our initial focus if we are to improve the overall capability maturity of the portfolio as a whole.

One final matter to consider is "how do we achieve capability maturity levels 4 and 5?"

Individual projects and programmes can achieve a maximum of level 3; levels 4 and 5 are concerned with how P3 management is governed, promoted and improved across a portfolio. Therefore levels 4 and 5 are only achieved at portfolio level.
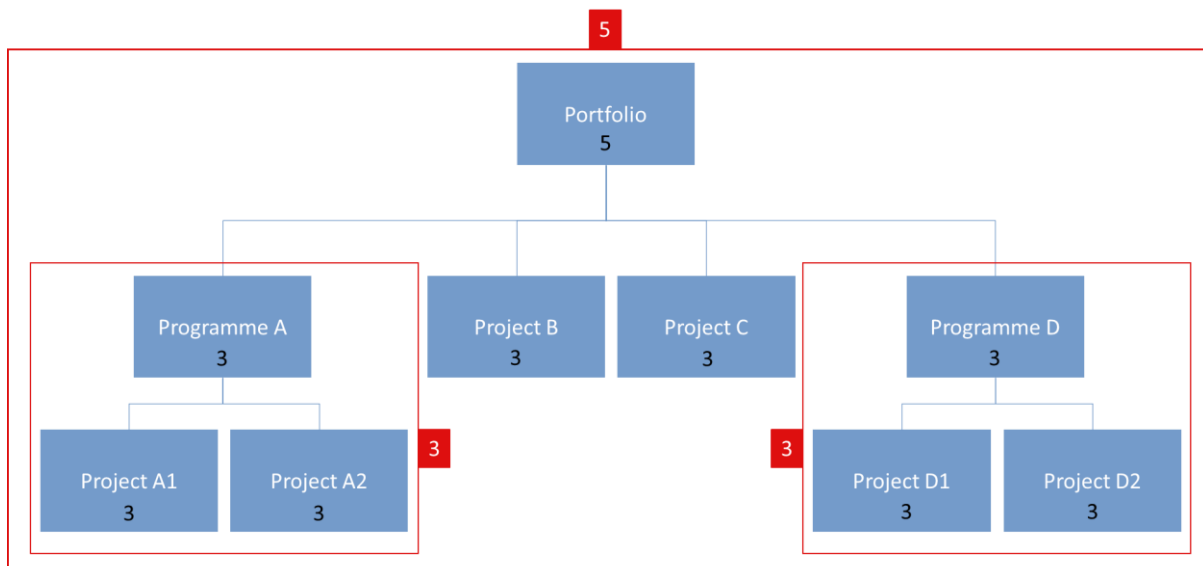
To achieve levels 4 and 5 for a portfolio, you must first achieve the maximum of level 3 for all the component projects and programmes.

Achievement of levels 4 and 5 is then governed by your application of the portfolio management processes, and in particular those that indicate that you are setting quantitative targets for your P3 management and investing in initiatives that will ensure continuous improvement across the portfolio.

To summarise what we have discussed in this guide:

- Praxis differentiates between the capability maturity of programme management and the capability maturity of a programme.

- A programme is dependent upon the capability maturity of its component projects.

- The same principles are applied to portfolios and their component projects and programmes.

- Levels 4 and 5 of capability maturity are achieved through good governance and a commitment to improvement across the portfolio.