

White Paper

Turning Enterprise Architecture from an Expense into an Asset

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Louw Labuschagne CBPA®

Louw is a Managing Partner at CS Interactive Training, a specialist IT consultancy focused on providing methodology consulting, training and systems to organizations who need to build internal capacity within their Analysis, Architecture, Design, and Requirements Management environments. Louw is passionate about all aspects of information management and has had the opportunity to act as strategist, architect, speaker, trainer, analyst, modeler and developer within this field over the past 20 years.

The current difficult economic conditions that organizations (and governments) are facing globally are placing management teams under immense pressure to cut costs and reduce overhead.

Operating an enterprise architecture practice is an expensive and time consuming exercise, which is attracting the attention of financial managers focused on cutting expenses and strategic management teams working to reduce headcount.

Under these conditions, the architecture team must convince executive management that the cost of maintaining the architecture practice will be an outlay of cash to upgrade the business asset rather than a maintenance expenditure. The former would mean that the organization can capitalise the expense, while the latter is a good excuse to close the practice in the current economic conditions.

The architecture management team (and sponsors) are now confronted with the question of what assets in the organization they must create or extend. Answering the question without going into a philosophical explanation is sometimes very difficult, but it could be as straight forward as; “Our EA practice is creating intangible information assets, which are non-physical resources, but they add value to the organization because they give *[your business name goes here]* an advantage in the market place. Furthermore the output produced by the team will support information-related activities. These activities will be negatively affected if the architecture artefacts are removed or allowed to deteriorate”. For the above statement to be true, the architecture artefacts must be referenced and used within the organization by all significant projects and change initiatives.

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In this white paper I will highlight the engagement mechanisms that the architecture team must implement to ensure that the deliverables they produce are used on a continued basis, thus creating a valuable information asset for the organization.

Alignment & Coordination

Achieving alignment and coordination between the Enterprise Architecture (EA) effort and the implementation projects in the organization requires the establishment of a stakeholder engagement model. This will ensure that the organization implements and references the architectures developed by the EA team. There are different approaches to take in defining the engagement model, but I prefer rolling certain TOGAF 9 Architecture Development (ADM) Phases into a variation of the IT Engagement Model outlined in Chapter 6 of Enterprise Architecture as Strategy (A resource that I love using; more information about the book and where to buy it is available here <http://www.imd.org/book/eas>). The TOGAF 9 ADM consists of major phases that are further decomposed into main steps to follow when performing architecture activities. In figure 1 below, the 10 architecture phases of the ADM are depicted:

- The Preliminary phase is not executed as part of every architecture project, but is used to establish and maintain the architecture capability within the organization.
- Phase A to E are the main parts of the architecture development project executed by a core architecture team.
- Phase F is a multi-disciplinary phase where you plan the architecture implementation projects define the transition architectures.
- Phase G & H are not architecture development phases, but contain steps that must be used to govern the implementation project teams and operational staff.

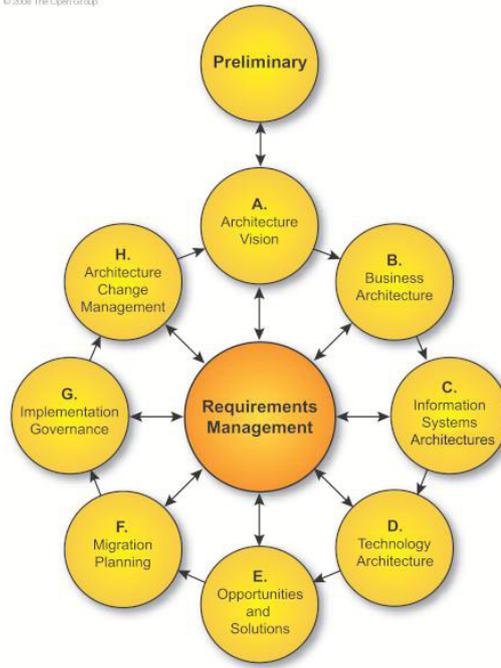


Figure 1: TOGAF Architecture Development Method

A constant complaint about the TOGAF diagram above is that it is not very intuitive and does not give enough guidance on how or where the different phases can or should be executed, leading to different interpretations and inconsistent implementation models.

The Alignment & Coordination Model in Figure 2 below is aimed at solving the problem of visualising the relationships between the TOGAF 9 ADM phases by overlaying it with a practical implementation model that provides better guidance for practitioners. The main components of the Alignment & Coordination model consist of:

1. A validated set of Enterprise Architecture deliverables developed using:
 - a. Architecture Development framework
2. A Stakeholder Engagement Model including:
 - a. A solid project management methodology
 - b. Company-wide Architecture Governance Framework
 - c. Business Sponsorship
 - d. Project Management Office
 - e. Business Project Prioritisation
 - f. Implementation Project Management
 - g. Architecture Compliance Reviews

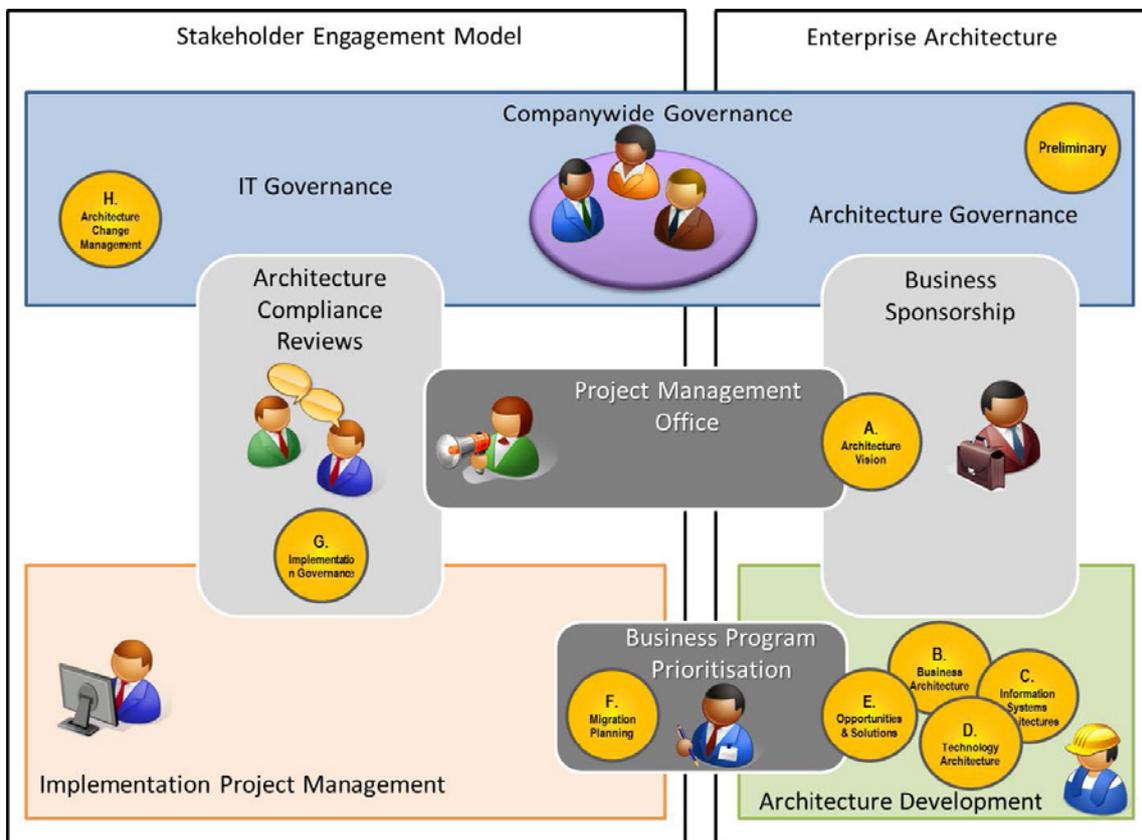


Figure 2: Alignment & Coordination Model

The focus of this white paper is on the Stakeholder Engagement Model, because that is where the architecture investment is realized and where re-use of architecture artefacts is achieved.

In the next section the engagement model will be discussed in more detail with the assumption that the architecture development, with the corresponding ADM Phases (as depicted in figure 2), is well documented and is being executed in the organization. The alignment between the Business Sponsor's requirements and the architecture development process is also assumed to be governed, with a minimum set of controls in place to ensure that the architecture delivered is of an acceptable standard and quality.



TIP: Use the TOGAF 9 templates available from The Open Group <https://www2.opengroup.org/ogsys/jsp/publications/PublicationDetails.jsp?catalogno=i093> in conjunction with the ADM phases to kick-start the definition of standardised deliverables.

The Stakeholder Engagement Model

The stakeholder engagement model links companywide governance structures with project management structures, resulting in better aligned and coordinated projects that adhere to the architectures and blueprints defined for the organization.

In this section I will highlight the key steps that must be taken to ensure a functioning Stakeholder Engagement Model.

Step 1: Establish architecture governance on a companywide IT Governance body



Enterprise Architecture deliverables are information assets in an organization and thus must be treated as such by the management team. The assets must be placed under Information Governance control, meaning that IT governance structures must take accountability for the architecture and also the realisation of value from the architecture deliverables.

Such IT Governance structures might be an IT Steering Committee, Architecture Board, IT Design Authority, Centre of Practice or a specific organizational management team. This authority must be educated to be able to interpret the architecture information presented to them so that the impacts of the decisions taken are understood. During the Preliminary phase of TOGAF 9, the Governance framework used in the organization must be confirmed or created by the Chief Enterprise Architect or CIO.



TIP: If the organization has no IT governance in place, use COBIT 4.1 or (soon to be released) COBIT 5 as a reference architecture to implement a basic IT governance: <http://www.isaca.org/Knowledge-Center/cobit/Pages/Downloads.aspx>

Without a central steering committee or governing body, no lasting architecture change can be effected, leaving the organization vulnerable to maverick project implementations without proper control over diversity, standards and re-use of architecture assets.

Step 2: Align the Business Program Prioritisation process with the Architecture Roadmap



The financial department in an organization is usually responsible for the investment management and appraisal of new projects. The main objective of investment management is to ensure that the organization's investment programmes deliver an economic benefit at an acceptable cost within a specified risk range.

The financial department will have an implemented management framework that allows the organization to identify business requirements, develop a clear understanding of candidate investment programmes, analyse the alternatives, define the programme and, finally, document a detailed business case per project.

Management Framework Interactions

If the Enterprise Architecture processes are not aligned with financial investment appraisal processes then the organization will not realize the benefit from the architecture initiatives. Any potential architecture solutions identified by the architecture team must be aligned with the financial aspects of the business case required by the financial department. Only when all the initiatives are assessed for dependencies, costs, and business benefit can the program prioritisation be performed as an integrated, organization driven initiative, not an EA or finance initiative.

Prioritisation of the Migration Projects

Use the TOGAF 9 ADM Phase F process steps to ensure that all departments within the organization concerned with change initiatives and investment appraisals are involved when prioritising the enterprise architecture project portfolio. During this phase it is important to ensure that the??



TIP: I found The Val IT Framework (<http://www.isaca.org/Knowledge-Center/Research/ResearchDeliverables/Pages/Val-IT-Framework-2.0.aspx>) from the ITGI a very useful framework to define the business case for projects. Mapping this framework to TOGAF 9 also makes it easier to communicate with the financial department and can form the basis for investment appraisal and portfolio management.

Step 3: Implement standardised Project Management practices



Without a formalised framework to manage projects, organizations will not be able to benefit from implementing Enterprise Architecture practices. Formal project management practices enable an organization to reduce risk and manage change with predictable results. Without an enterprise project management methodology, there is no predictable mechanism to ensure that architecture blueprints are realized within the organization.

The TOGAF 9 ADM defines a core set of project management deliverables to enable architecture practitioners to integrate project management practices in all their architecture projects. The Statement of Architecture Work and Communication Plan are two examples included in the TOGAF 9 document and The Open Group has also made templates available for download that will help architecture practitioners with the management of their architecture project. (<https://www2.opengroup.org/ogsys/jsp/publications/PublicationDetails.jsp?catalogno=i093>).

Architecture roadmaps are realized using implementation projects that are executed throughout all departments within an organization. To ensure that the projects are aligned with the blueprints and architectures designed the architecture team should follow the guidelines defined in TOGAF 9 ADM Phase G.

TOGAF 9 also promotes the use of Transition Architectures to assist the organization with realising value from the implementation earlier in the implementation lifecycle. This also minimizes the risk in the migration programme. Each transition architecture represents an incremental step towards the business vision, and each delivers business benefit in its own right.



TIP: I normally find skilled resources within the Internal Auditing departments of an Organization. They have the experience and techniques available to assist with architectural reviews from a business perspective. This will counter the usually IT oriented architecture teams normally assigned to perform architecture reviews in organizations.

Conclusion

Architecture development is an expensive exercise for an organization and if the architecture is not realising value through a series of implementation projects then the business is justified in calling the Chief Architect to account for the reasons why.

TOGAF 9 helps organizations take the architecture beyond development by providing the following four steps:

- Step 1:** Establish architecture governance on a companywide IT Governance body
- Step 2:** Align the Business Program Prioritisation process with the Architecture Roadmap
- Step 3:** Implement standardised Project Management practices
- Step 4:** Perform Architecture Compliance Reviews

As a final point, I believe operational changes within the organization have a big influence on the value of the architecture. If there is no change management or governed change processes implemented as part of the operational management framework in the organization, then the architecture value will decline very quickly. The proper positioning of an Architecture governance authority will counter that threat (See TOGAF ADM Phase H for more detail).



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Orbus Software

3rd Floor
111 Buckingham Palace Road
London
SW1W 0SR
United Kingdom

+44 (0) 870 991 1851
enquiries@orbussoftware.com
www.orbussoftware.com

