Three Business Functions of Enterprise Architecture

Planning and Alignment

This function helps insure that the projects selected for funding are the most likely to deliver strategic value over a long term.

Project prioritization by EA is typically based upon the ability of a project to deliver strategic results as well as reduce complexity and increase agility.

The Enterprise Architecture function is responsible for envisioning the future state architecture and advising the funding process, but does not control either the funding or project governance processes.

Innovation

This function insures consideration of new technologies and shared infrastructure that could potentially create a competitive advantage for the enterprise.

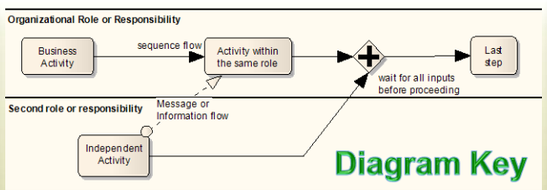
Cross-business projects that align with enterprise strategies may be developed, as would proof-of-concept initiatives designed to demonstrate the value of a new idea.

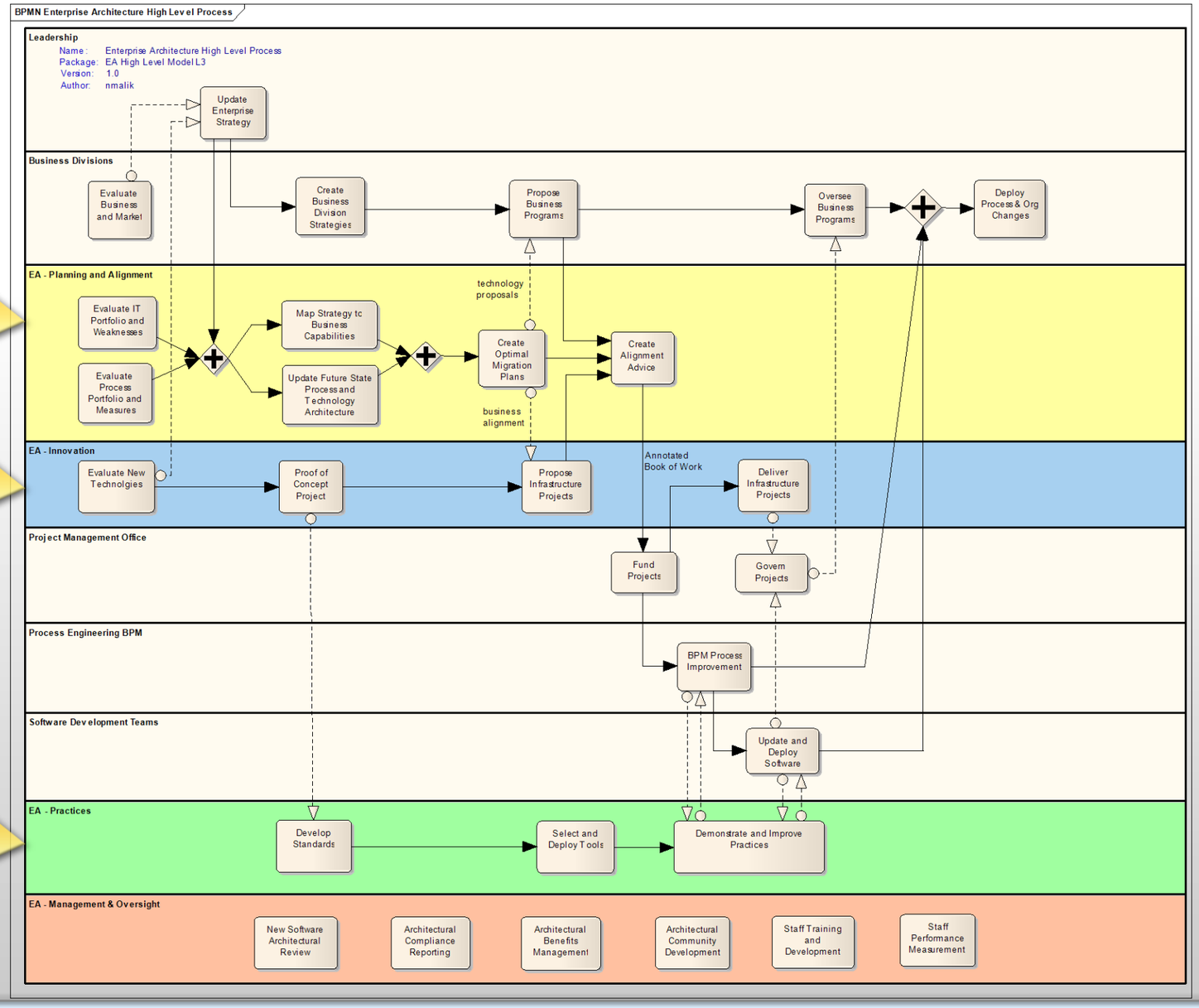
This team suggests projects for the same funding cycle as business-inspired projects, oversees adoption, and must demonstrate measurable business value.

Standards and Practices

This function creates a focal point for improving the way that IT teams practice their craft, including the selection of tools, the development of shared standards, and the demonstration of best practices.

Architects involved in these efforts are directly engaged with IT teams, working with them on a continuous basis to insure that the entire team grows in their skills, capabilities, and adoption of advanced methods. They serve to educate and empower, not to backfill for staff shortages.





The Supporting Capabilities of Enterprise Architecture

Enterprise Architecture succeeds by overcoming the political, cultural, or financial constraints inherent in an enterprise. As such, Enterprise Architecture represents an agent of change. These three functions support change in different ways, necessitating separate workflows integrated with other agents of change as illustrated.

The bottom row in the above diagram illustrates supporting capabilities needed by an Enterprise Architecture program in order to be successful. New Software Architectural Review and Architectural Compliance Reporting support the Planning and Alignment function, both by collecting useful information, and encouraging compliance with architectural standards. Architectural Benefits Management is the ability to demonstrate the value of the architecture program, and the value of architectural alignment, to the organization. Architectural Community Development fosters the growth of architectural skills, understanding, and engagement throughout the enterprise. Staff training and Performance Management are necessary to insure a high bar of quality in architectural deliverables and artifacts.

EA Measures

EA planning functions are effective if the organization approaches, in a measurable way, a strategically aligned future state architecture.

Innovation functions are effective if a project is adopted by multiple business units and adoption delivers net positive benefits to the enterprise.

Practice functions are effective if the quality of the software improves in a measurable manner, sufficient to return a net improvement in TCO.

EA Skillset

These different functions require different skills. The planning and alignment function requires excellent business and negotiation skills.

The innovation function requires a broad understanding of industry trends and deep technical skills.

The practice function requires a strong delivery focus, state of the art development skills, and excellent communication skills.

EA Adoption

An Enterprise Architecture program can be sustained with any combination of these business functions, as each function provides value independently.

It is not necessary for an enterprise to adopt all three business functions. Over time, the mix of functions may change.

Organizations traditionally begin with Standards and Practices and grow to include other functions.

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Version 2.0
16-Jul-08