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1. Document

1.1. What is Enterprise Architecture

Enterprise Architecture (EA) is a strategic planning and management discipline that is used to assist in the methodical design and management of a complex enterprise. EA uses quantitative engineering techniques, perfected in complex manufacturing processes such as aircraft design and development, in order to cope with the accelerating change and radical increases in information, experienced by the modern enterprise.

EA provides assurance that business processes and technology investments are aligned with organization goals and objectives. EA assures that the predicted or promised benefits of projects are rationally measured and that the measured results and lessons learned are fed-back into strategic planning in order to improve the development process. EA enforces reuse of existing assets (particularly information and process components) and EA encourages integration of processes in order to improve operating efficiency.

EA has evolved out of the information technology discipline and is most directly applied to the selection, design and development of IT investments; however, EA is as readily applicable to any management domain and any asset class within the enterprise.

1.2. Why is Enterprise Architecture Important

EA is mandated by Congress through the Clinger-Cohen Act of 1996 and by OMB through Circular A-130:

- Agencies must have an EA;
- The EA must be used to justify and control investments;
- The CIO must be responsible for implementing the EA.

The primary purpose of the EA is to develop a course of action whereby VA business process engineering investments and information technology investments are assured to contribute significantly to accomplishing VA's strategic goals and veteran service objectives.

The Mission of VA's Enterprise Architecture is to articulate a direction in and foster the

implementation of IT investments that:

- Support the mission and goals of VA;
- Improve service to veterans;
- Enforce economical investment and asset management;
- Exploit technological innovation to meet business objectives.

1.3. How is Enterprise Architecture used at VA

The Department of Veterans Affairs is continually challenged to improve its operating efficiency and the quality of service provided to its clients. Enterprise Architecture is used as a planning process for:

- Communicating and collaborating with VA stakeholders to capture and articulate VA business and service requirements;
- Defining VA's baseline (As-Is) business, information (data) and technology architecture;
- Defining VA 's target (To-Be) business, information and technology environment and identifying and performing the steps for moving from the baseline to the target stage (transition plan);
- Promoting information sharing, data reuse, sharable process component re-use and utilization of the President's Management Agenda Line of Business (PMA-LOB) solutions and e-Gov initiative solutions, inaugurated by OMB;
- Advising the Capital Planning and Investment Process (CPIC) on IT project selection and advising the Project Management Oversight Process on IT Project Conformance, and developing and exercising performance metrics to assure that IT project objectives are met;
- Identifying technology standards and best practices for business process re-engineering and technology selection and system development and identification and Selection of Emerging Technologies to meet VA 's client service needs;
- Aligning VA's EA with that of other federal Departments and Agencies through the Federal Enterprise Architecture Program Management Office (FEA-PMO) initiatives, sponsored by OMB.

These then are the activities supported by the products and services provided in the EA Architecture Assessment . They are abstracted here and are explained in detail through the body of the EA Web-portal publication.

1.4. Stakeholder Communication

The most important activity within EA and within the Office of Enterprise Architecture Management (OEAM) is communication and collaboration with VA's Stakeholders to determine business and service requirements and to validate results -- this activity is detailed within the EA

Communications and Training Plan.

1.5. Defining the Baseline (As-Is) Environment

In order to know how to get to where it wants to go, VA must know from where it is starting. The Baseline Architecture provides a description of existing business functions and processes, a description of existing information classes and an existing application inventory, as well as modeling constructs for associating these into composite views. This material is essential in developing a transition plan to get to the desired Target state. The current Baseline Architecture information is detailed in the Baseline Architecture section.

1.6. Defining the Target Environment and the transition to achieve it

Second in importance, only to stakeholder communications and collaboration, is defining and developing the Target Architecture. This is where EA can make a proactive contribution to the overall efficiency and effectiveness of VA operations and to the quality of service offered to veterans. The products defining this work and the current IT portfolio are detailed in the Target-Architecture section.

1.7. Promoting Information and Process Sharing

Facilitating information and process reuse, and utilizing PMA-LOB solutions, e-Gov solutions and COTS product solution election form a recurring theme throughout the EA. These themes are particularly emphasized within the IT portfolio discussions in the Target-Architecture section and in the FEA-Alignment section.

1.8. Developing Discrete Segment Architectures

Beginning with EA V4.2, OEAM is working with business and IT leadership to define a series of Segment Architectures. A Segment Architecture may define the discrete properties of a series of highly related business lines and their underlining technologies or it may define a series of enterprise-wide sharable services. Segment Architectures are used to create well-defined delineations of scope between process domains and well-defined interfaces to obtain shared services. The use of Segment Architecture facilitates efficient IT project implementation and can reduce project risk and cost. Segment Architecture development is directed by OMB and is fully supported by OEAM as an EA best practice. VA's Segment Architecture approach is discussed within the Segment Architecture Sub-Section of the Target Architecture.

1.9. Advising the CPIC and Project Management Oversight

These activities, as well as overall EA governance are defined within the EA Program Management Plan while specific guidance to project planners and EA reviewers is provided in the EA Review of Budget Requests procedure and in the EA Review of Project Milestones procedure.

1.10. Demonstrating EA Results and Impact upon the Enterprise

OEAM has focused upon EA and portfolio results and upon EA collaboration. The Target Architecture has been expanded to emphasize these areas as follows: The Project Abstracts sub-section has been expanded to provide a value-proposition matrix, a Results section has been added to demonstrate progress achieved in meeting portfolio and EA objectives, and a Target Project Support Section has been added to emphasize OEAM's direct support and involvement with EA business and Technology elements.

1.11. Identifying Technology Standards and Best Practices

These technical mandates and recommendations range from providing standard "Patterned" solutions to recurring engineering problems to providing guidance on application development and system certification and accreditation. They are detailed in the VA Technical Reference Model and Standards Profile (TRM/SP). VA's TRM/SP, including VA's internally developed patterns, are cross-referenced to the FEA-TRM (and thereby to the TRM documents of other Agencies and Departments) through the FEA-TRM Mapping Model in the FEA Alignment section.

1.12. Aligning VA's EA with the FEA and other federal Agencies

This monumental initiative is spearheaded by the development of the Federal Enterprise Architecture (FEA) reference models by OMB in conjunction with the CIO Council. VA's participation in the development of the FEA and VA's alignment with the federal reference models is represented in the FEA Alignment section. This section also supports the Performance Line of Sight model which traces the implementation of VA's business objectives and metrics across business lines and processes and into the IT portfolio.

1.13. Aligning EA with the Business Year Portfolio

The annual OMB submission delivery date, for VA's EA, is ideally suited to make the EA available for planners in time to advise the upcoming business year budget submission; however, this EA delivery, by necessity, must exclude that same business year's projects from the portfolio

since they are not yet known.

Therefore, the VA will continually update an additional EA assessment product, throughout the year, in order to capture the latest changes affecting the portfolio. This incremental work in progress will be available on the VA Intranet and will be incorporated into the subsequent annual OMB submission.

1.14. Improvements in EA Usability

Finally, experience with prior versions of the EA has demonstrated that the complete EA Knowledgebase Portal is large, complex, and difficult to use by the casual user. Therefore, the current EA has continued (the practice established in EA V4.1) to provide a series of Role-Based Views which attempt to provide dash-boards for different collections of specific artifacts that should be of interest to different user communities. The VA continues to alter and improve these dash-boards over time with user experience and feedback.

In addition to providing role-based navigation dashboards, VA has expanded the series of animated PowerPoint Tutorials , initiated in EA V4.1, to assist the new user in understanding the details of the more involved models provided within the EA. Additional tutorials will be added over time to complete this effort.

Presentation material complementing this Executive Summary may be found at the Presentations sub-section of the Executive Summary.

1.15. EA Maturity Self Assessment

VA has developed an EA self assessment evaluation, based upon OMB's current maturity Model. This evaluation is provided at the EA Self Assessments and Self Assessment Scorecard .