
Department of Veterans Affairs



One VA Enterprise Architecture Guidance Document

Creating VA IT Communication Plans

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Approval History

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Guidance for Creating VA IT Communication Plans

Table of Contents

SCOPE OF GUIDANCE _____	5
PRELIMINARY QUESTIONS _____	5
DEVELOPMENT METHODOLOGY _____	5
SECTION GUIDANCE _____	7
Goals and Outcomes _____	7
Scope of Communication Plan _____	7
Requirements _____	8
Stakeholder Engagement _____	8
<i>Stakeholder Identification</i> _____	8
<i>Stakeholder Assessment and Analysis</i> _____	9
Messages to Stakeholders _____	9
Medium and Distribution _____	9
Communication Strategy _____	10
<i>Identification of Communication Projects</i> _____	10
<i>Planning and Executing Communication Projects</i> _____	11
<i>Communication Plan Metrics and Performance Measures</i> _____	12
Current Communication Project and Status _____	13
APPENDICES _____	14
Appendix A - Template IT Communication Plan - Table of Contents \ _____	14
Appendix B - IT Communication Project Charter - Template _____	15
Appendix C - Development of WBS and Activities for IT Communication Projects - Template _____	17
Appendix D – Sample Work Breakdown Structure (WBS) _____	18
Appendix E – Sample Gantt Chart _____	19
Appendix F – IT Communication Project Linear Responsibility Matrix - Template _____	20
Appendix G – Project Status Report - Template _____	21
Appendix H – Communication Plan Change Request Form _____	22
Appendix I – IPv6 Transition Project communications Plan (Sample) _____	23

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1 Methodology for Creating IT Communication Plans at VA 7
Figure 2 Identification of Communication Projects..... 10
Figure 3 Planning of Communication and Training Projects Training Projects..... 12
Figure 4 Execution of Communication Projects..... 12

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1 - Questions Inventory..... 8
Table 2 Stakeholder Identification Matrix (SID)..... 9
Table 3 Stakeholder Assessment Matrix (SAM) 9
Table 4 Stakeholder Message and Medium Matrix (SMCM) 10
Table 5 Stakeholder Analysis Communication Mapping (SACM) 11

SCOPE OF GUIDANCE

This guidance document covers the development of Communication Plans for IT projects at VA. It serves only as a best practice and not as VA mandated style, format or content. The guidance follows standard PMBOK methods for communications development and the *Department of Veteran Affairs Office of Information Technology Project Management Guide*. Keep this in mind, as the Communication Plan develops, internal project communication and communication external to the project may need to be addressed separately. While this guidance does not specifically cover training, the development of a Training Plan and projects follows the same general principals for the development of a Communication Plan.

PRELIMINARY QUESTIONS

The following is a list of the questions, the answers to which will shape the development of a communication plan:

- Why do we need to develop processes around a Communication Plan?
- What other development and deployment processes and plans are fed by the Communication Plan? (e.g., training, requirement development)
- What do we want a group of stakeholders to do as a result of this communication? Do we want an action or are we just providing information?
- Who are our allies? Who will publicly support IPV6?
- Who do we ultimately want to influence?
- How do we want the IPV6 program to be perceived?
- How do we want the issues relating to transition to be perceived?
- How are we going to coordinate deployment management?
- How are we going to train stakeholder groups in IPV6? What is the feedback mechanism? (rolls into Training Plan)
- How are we going to communicate the rollout process?
- How are we going to measure success? (Metrics and benchmarks)
- When do we need the communications to be done? Then, when do we need to see a resulting action from the communication?

DEVELOPMENT METHODOLOGY

Why – Identify the goal of the Communication Plan and how it aligns to your mission, such as:

- We need a Communication Plan in order to meet the IPV6 ultimate goal of the project
- We need a Communication Plan to communicate deployment planning and requirement to effected field units which will be impacted by project deployment
- We need a Communication Plan to inform each of the service line managers in each of the effected networks and data center.
- We need a Communication Plan in order to meet possible external reporting requirements

-
- We need a Communication Plan to communicate effectively between project team members

What - Identify what message/s are going to be communicated. Examples of areas to consider:

- Marketing - What IPV6 will do for Stakeholders?
- Additional business needs to be satisfied by the project (rolling into requirements/development processes)
- Assure early post-deployment production results are captured and analyzed to satisfy project metrics
- Testing the effectiveness of the Communication Plan through feedback

Who - Identify with whom you are going to communicate, i.e., identify your stakeholders and audience. These can probably be divided into broad levels groups like VA IT project team, VA internal and VA external stakeholders. You may also want to divide up stakeholder categories into sponsors, users, team members, reporting, and working groups, such as:

- Network Engineers and Administrators
- Server Engineers and Administrators
- IPV6 Transition Team
- Other inter-departmental and cross department communities of interest

How - Identify how you are going to communicate the messages to the stakeholders groups, such as:

- Develop websites for stakeholder group to communicate Transition Process and updates
- Develop Outreach Process to Lines of Business to gather additional requirements
- Establish Working Groups with representative stakeholders to establish metrics for deployment

When – Identify the sequence of communications with identified stakeholders.

- Organize your Communication Plan based on the SDL phases or your phased deployment stages and the types of communications you will need in each phase

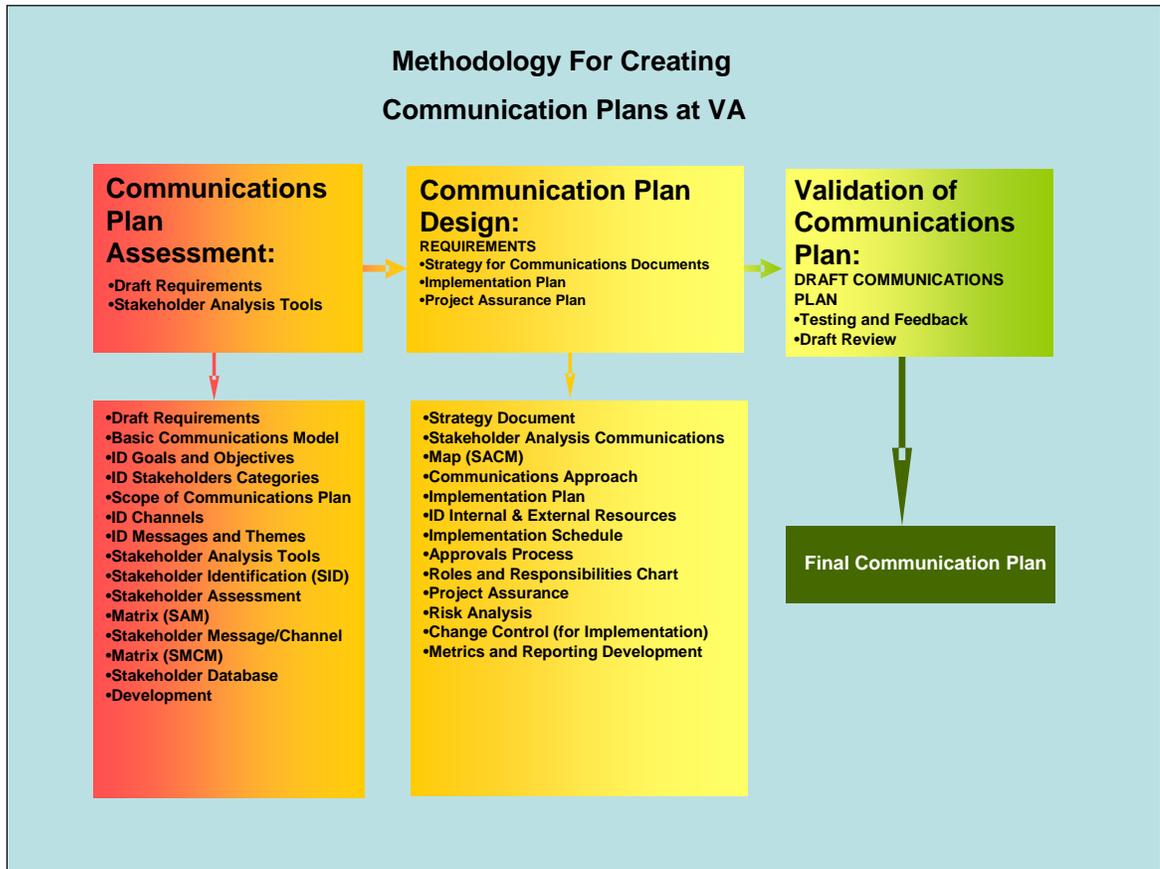


Figure 1 Methodology for Creating IT Communication Plans at VA

SECTION GUIDANCE

Appendix A to this guidance document, gives a Table of Contents outline template for an IT Communication Plan. Appendix I is a specific sample for IPV6 based on approved hypothetical goals five to EA on September 15, 2006.

Goals and Outcomes

List and explain the goals and outcomes of the Communication Plan and how it aligns to strategic plans. Remember that for every goal there has to be a way to measure success.

Scope of Communication Plan

It is important for any Communication Plan to be bounded by what it is and what it is not. Some questions you might want to ask before are:

- Will this Communication Plan cover internal project communications or only external communication?
- Will this Communication Plan cover external training?

Requirements

Put governing requirements for Communication Plan here as well as specific requirements of the project and customers.

If requirements gathering is needed from stakeholders for further development, OMB gives method guidance in the creation of a basic question inventory, which can be adapted to fit most projects. The answers to these questions can be used for further requirements development.

Inventory of Questions from VA IT Project to Business		
Business Question No.	Date	Business Question
0.001	OMB	What business questions do you want the IPV6 Deployment to address?
0.002	OMB	What information should be added to the IPV6 Rollout effort to make it more useful to you and your organization?
0.003	OMB	What are your other suggestions for making the IPV6 Rollout more useful to its "consumers"?
0.004	OMB	How would you want to participate in building the IPV6 Rollout effort?
0.005	2/15/2005	What role does my program within the LOB play in the future IPV6 applications?

Table 1 - Questions Inventory

Stakeholder Engagement

Engaging stakeholders and Lines of Business leaders is key to collaboration and aligning goals to reduce risk and to advance performance. The first steps are to inventory EA stakeholders, to map their relationships, and to develop a strategic plan to reach them.

Stakeholder Identification

It has been said that the customer of VA IT projects is the lines of business. The definition of an IPV6 stakeholder is any person or group having a vested interest in or expectation from the performance of the IPV6 Project. These stakeholders can be identified by:

- Categories of Stakeholders based on their use of IPV6
- Classifications of Stakeholders based on their function within VA

The Sample matrix (SID) helps to identify specific groups of stakeholders.

Stakeholder Identification	Category		
	Policy and Governance	Users	Designers
Administrations			
Government External			
Industry Experts			

Table 2 Stakeholder Identification Matrix (SID)

Stakeholder Assessment and Analysis

Knowing who the IPV6 stakeholders are, assists in the determination of what their motivations and goals are with respect to the project. How IPV6 communicates with them and in what ways is directly related to their importance and impact the IPV6 Project. The stakeholder assessment matrix (SAM) below captures the information needed to determine individual mediums of communications for stakeholders.

Stakeholder Assessment Matrix					
Stakeholder	Goals, Motivations	Power and influence	Importance to project	Impact of project	Role in project

Table 3 Stakeholder Assessment Matrix (SAM)

Messages to Stakeholders

Identify key messages of the IPV6 Project. Major high level messages should be able to address the following:

- Introduction of the project to the stakeholders
- Engage the stakeholder by making them part of the process.

Medium and Distribution

At the same time, messages for specific audiences need to be tailored to suit the need of each stakeholder group. Below is a sample matrix (SMCM) to capture the message and medium identification.

IPV6 Stakeholder Message/Medium Matrix	Information to be Communicated	Method of Communication	Desired Outcomes of Communication
Stakeholder Category/Classification			
Administrations Government External Industry Experts Policy and Governance Users Designers			

Table 4 Stakeholder Message and Medium Matrix (SMM)

Communication Strategy

Timelines and methods need to be considered as well as the identification and impact maximization of individual communication projects in the overall development of strategy. An example of strategy for a specific communication project is to participate in a relevant conference when there are common stakeholders.

Identification of Communication Projects

Remember each project meets one or more of the identified goals and each project must have a measure for success. Selected projects usually fall into these categories:

- Human Factors
- Collateral
- Public Relations

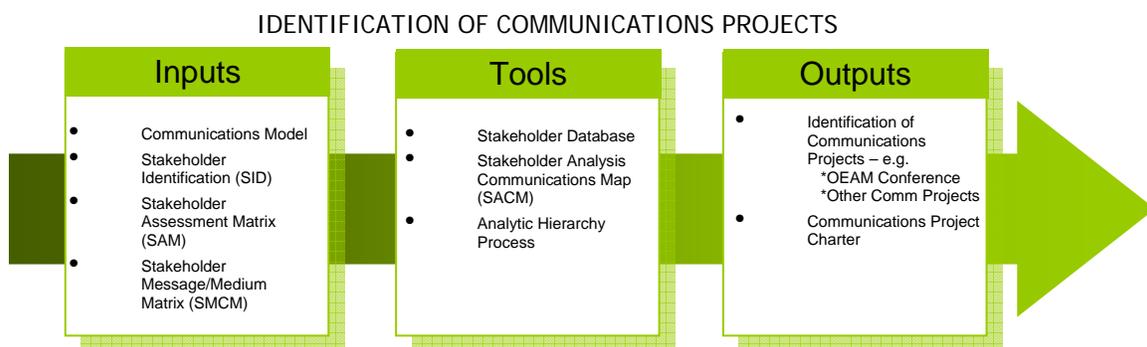


Figure 2 Identification of Communication Projects

Communication Mapping

The Stakeholder Communication Mapping (SCM) serves as a dynamic tool for the definition of communication projects.

IT Stakeholder Communication Map	Category			Information to be Communicated (*from SMM)	Schedule	Method of Communication (Medium) (*from SAM)	Responsible Person or Team
	Classification	Policy and Governance	Users				
Administrations							
	x						
Government External							
	x						
Industry Experts							
	x						

Table 5 Stakeholder Communication Mapping (SCM)

Stakeholder Database

It is suggested that stakeholder contact information will be stored in a database or spreadsheet. This will depend on the number of contacts and changing nature of the communications. It can be used to generate information for specific projects and mediums. This information should be maintained by the project’s communications manager or a designated staff member and kept in a central location.

Planning and Executing Communication Projects

The planning of communication and training projects, while not within the scope of this plan for specific projects, will take into consideration good project management planning methods. The first things to ask are:

- What will be delivered precisely during the project?
- How it will be delivered and who will be in charge?
- When this will the communication project be complete?

The following two figures describe the inputs, tools and outputs of planning and executing IT communication projects.

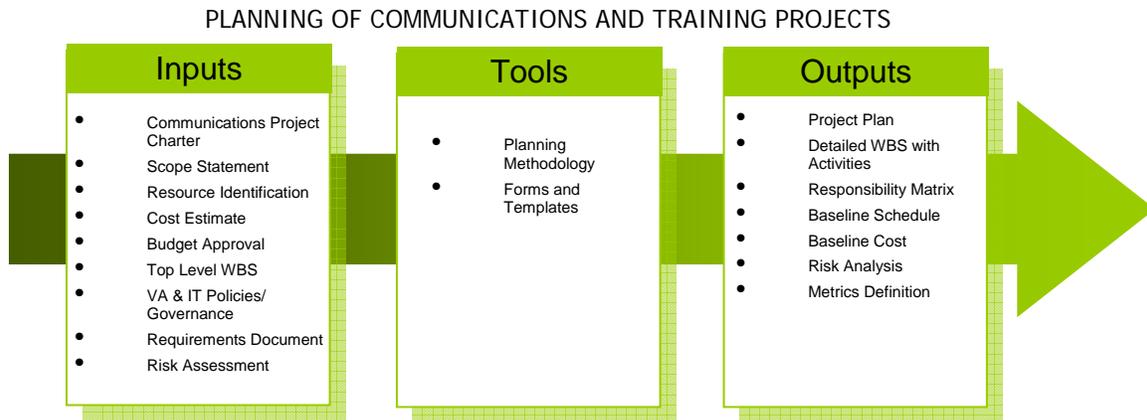


Figure 3 Planning of Communication Projects

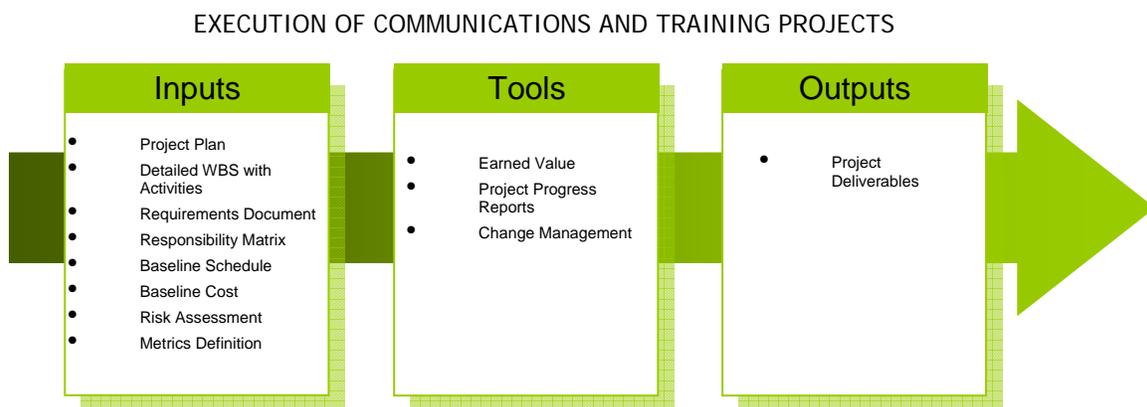


Figure 4 Execution of Communication Projects

More forms and templates for planning IT communication projects are contained in Appendices B-H.

Communication Plan Metrics and Performance Measures

Adding "metrics" to communication provides alignment with objectives, requirements, laws, policies and commitments. Every objective needs to have a correlating metric

Every IT communication project features inherent opportunities to measure success. This is contingent upon a number of factors unique to the project and defined by the project plan.

Overall Communication Plan metrics will reflect the success of the project in meeting it's ultimate goal.

There are generally three levels of communication measurement: output, outtakes, and outcomes.

Output measurement assesses productivity. Examples of these types of measurements are the number of communication projects and website hits.

Determining outtakes relies on research to benchmark how awareness, retention and general understanding can be shifted over time in the desired manner. Examples include feedback surveys, feedback and knowledge levels from training.

Outcomes are based on similar research, but actually track changes in stakeholder opinions, attitudes and, ultimately, behavior. The initial benchmark of the above measures will drive the specific changes to the communication strategy.

Current Communication Project and Status

Document the description, status and performance of current communication projects the sections.

- Briefings
- Letters
- Satellite videos
- Webinars
- Off-sites

APPENDICES

Appendix A - Template IT Communication Plan - Table of Contents \

INTRODUCTION.....

BACKGROUND.....

Organizational History

Current and Past Approach to Communications

GOALS AND OUTCOMES.....

SCOPE OF COMMUNICATION PLAN.....

REQUIREMENTS.....

METHODOLOGY FOR CREATING COMMUNICATION PLAN.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT.....

Stakeholder Identification

Stakeholder Assessment and Analysis

MESSAGES TO STAKEHOLDERS.....

Key Messages and Channels

COMMUNICATION STRATEGY.....

Identification of Communication Projects

Planning and Executing Communication Projects

PROJECT AND PLAN ASSURANCE.....

Project Risk and Issue Analysis

Communication Plan Change Management Process

Communication Plan Metrics and Performance Measures

Feedback and Validation of Communication Projects

COMMUNICION PROJECT DOCUMENTATION.....

CURRENT COMMUNICATION PROJECT AND STATUS.....

APPENDICES

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF TABLES

Appendix B - IT Communication Project Charter - Template

Project Charter – Outline of Format

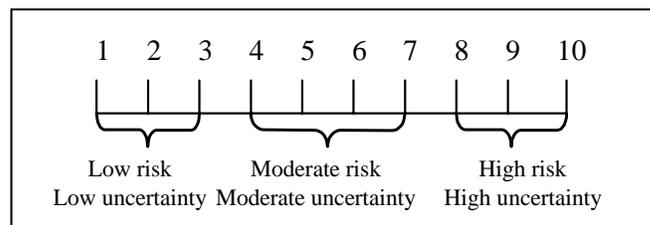
1. Overview
 - 1.1. Purpose
 - 1.2. Background
2. Project Scope
 - 2.1. Deliverables listed outlined in detail
3. Project Customers
 - 3.1. Key Stakeholder
 - 3.2. Customer Needs
 - 3.3. Customer Requirements
 - 3.4. Customer Acceptance Criteria
4. Deliverables
 - 4.1. Final Deliverable
 - 4.2. Interim Deliverables
 - 4.3. Organizational Deliverables
 - 4.4. Work Breakdown Structure (WBS) – high level (3 levels)
 - 4.5. Major Milestones

Milestone Description	<i>Total Days</i>	Start Date	Finish Date
-----------------------	-------------------	------------	-------------

5. Supporting Processes/ Systems Impacted

System or Process	Impact or Use
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6. Project quality assurance (risk assessment)



- 6.1. Assumptions
- 6.2. Risk/Contingency Planning (for each risk)

- 6.3. Reviews and Approvals Required
- 6.4. Status Reports Required

Who	What	Date Due
-----	------	----------

- 7. Change Management
 - 7.1. The Project
 - 7.2. The Organization
- 8. Team Resources
 - 8.1. Team Assignments (including Project Org Chart)
 - 8.2. Staffing Level Resource Estimate

Staff Effort			Staff Cost
Team Member or Suppliers Name	Work Effort	Cost per Staff Unit	Total Cost

9. Budget Resources

Type of Expense	Cost
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- 10. Close-out
 - 10.1. Metric of Success

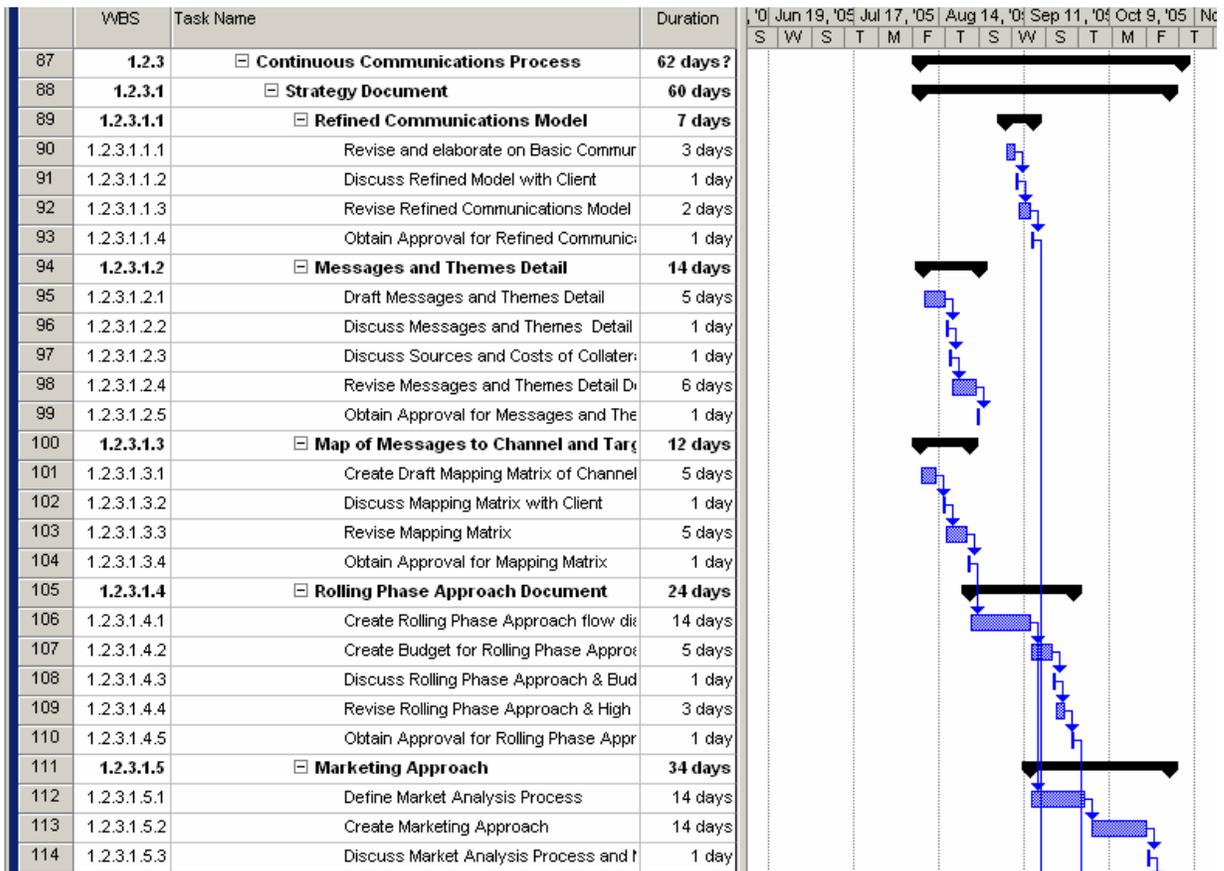
Appendix C - Development of WBS and Activities for IT Communication Projects - Template

Communication Project Activity Estimate	Project Sponsor	Responsible Organization
	Project Manager	Doing Organization
WBS No.	Title of Activity	
Activity No.		
Activity Description		
Activity Start Date	How Long will this activity take	
Activity End Date		
Activities that need to happen before	Activities that need to happen after	
Required Skills		
Resource/s Assignment		
Prepared by:	Approved by:	

Appendix D – Sample Work Breakdown Structure (WBS)

WBS - Communication Plan	
1	Communication Plan
	Methodology for Creating Communication Plan
1.1	Communication and Training Plan
1.2	Assessment
1.2.1	Draft Requirements Document
1.2.1.1	Basic Communication Model
1.2.1.2	ID Goals and Objectives
1.2.1.3	ID Stakeholders
1.2.1.3.6	Create Mailing List for Stakeholders
1.2.1.4	ID Target Audience
1.2.1.5	Scope Statement
	Discuss Scope Statement and Rolling Wave Approach with Client
1.2.1.5.2	Wave Approach with Client
1.2.1.5.3	Develop Scope Change Management Plan
1.2.1.6	ID Mediums
1.2.1.7	ID Messages and Themes
1.2.1.7.3	Discuss Collateral Types with Client
1.2.2	SWOT Analysis Document
1.2.2.1	SWOT Meeting
1.2.2.2	SWOT Matrix
1.2.2.3	SWOT Analysis
1.3	Communication and Training Plan Design
1.3.1	Strategy Document
1.3.1.1	Refined Communication Model
1.3.1.2	Messages and Themes Detail
1.3.1.2.3	Discuss Sources and Costs of Collateral with Client
1.3.1.3	Mapping of Messages to Medium and Targets
1.3.1.4	Rolling Phase Approach
1.3.1.4.1	Create Rolling Phase Approach flow diagram
1.3.1.4.2	Create Budget for Rolling Phase Approach
1.3.1.5	Marketing Approach
1.3.1.5.1	Define Market Analysis Process
1.3.1.5.2	Create Marketing Approach
1.3.2	Implementation Plan - Phase I
1.3.2.1	ID Internal & External Resources - Phase I
1.3.2.1.1	Create List of Potential Implementation Internal and External Resources Phase I
1.3.2.2	WBS - Phase I
1.3.2.3	Budget - Phase I
1.3.2.3.1	Prepare RFQ
1.3.2.3.2	Obtain quotes for outsourcing

Appendix E – Sample Gantt Chart



Appendix F – IT Communication Project Linear Responsibility Matrix - Template

Responsibility			Project Manager	Conference Planner	Planning Committee	Speaker Coordinator	Registration Coordinator	Special Need Coordinator	On Site Coordinator	OEAM Sponsor	OEAM Service Line Manager
Deliverable	Activity	Work Package									
Invitation List	Determine Participants	1.1	x							x	x
	Prepare Contact List	1.2			x						
	Confirm Attendance	1.3	x								
Conference Workgroups	Determine Areas of Interest	2.1								x	x
	Contact Leaders	2.2				x					
	Confirm Workgroup	2.3		x							
Conference Schedule	Determine Date of Conference	3.1			x					x	
	Prepare Time Slot Schedule	3.2	x								
	Match Workgroup Leaders to Topics	3.3	x								

Appendix G – Project Status Report - Template

ITCOMMUNICATION PROJECT STATUS REPORT			
Project Name: _____			
Project Sponsor: _____			
Reporting Period: _____			
Scope Status:			
Deliverable/s	Review Status	Internal Customer Acceptance	
Changes to Plan:			
Description of Change	Date	Change Approved?	Revision to Plan
Schedule Status:			
Milestone	Planned Date	Actual Date	Programmed Date
Deliverables Completed since last update:			
Deliverable	Date Completed		
Deliverables Scheduled for completion:			
Deliverable	Scheduled Completion Date		
Issues:			
Issue	Action Taken	Action Required	Required Date
Overall Program Schedule:	___ Ahead ___ On ___ Behind ___ In Jeopardy		
Overall Staffing Status:	___ Over ___ On ___ Below ___ In Jeopardy		
Overall Spending Status:	___ Over ___ On ___ Below ___ In Jeopardy		

Appendix H – Communication Plan Change Request Form

ITCOMMUNICATION AND TRAINING PLAN CHANGE REQUEST FORM			
			Urgency:
	Change request #:	Originator:	Change requested by:
			Date requested:
Justification	Description of Change Requested:		
	Reason for Change:		
	Proposed Approach to Resolve:		
Approvals to Proceed:			
	Originator/Date	Project Leader/Date	Sponsor/Date
			Customer/Date

Appendix I – IPv6 Transition Project communications Plan (Sample)

See attached