

Enterprise Architecture Assessment v1.0

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

General Questions:

- Q. The levels in the EA Assessment Framework do not seem to build from one to another in a linear fashion. In some cases, there appears to be no difference between levels 1 and 2, and a big difference between levels 2 and 3. Was this part of the assessment level design? Are the levels weighted? Are the sections or the categories weighted?**
- A. The sections and levels are not weighted. The degree of difference in levels within the assessment is designed to collect an accurate representation of the status of each agency's EA. In future versions of the assessment framework we will refine the levels based on user feedback.
- Q. Has anyone done a study to introduce the Information Value Chain Model into a Federal agency EA? Is OMB planning to fund this effort as part of an agency EA budget? Is there a government website reference defining the Information Value Chain Model, a reference model or a business case with cost-benefit analysis? What is the value of creating this model for an agency?**
- A. The purpose of this cell is to determine if a transition plan is used to describe some of the changes required to move from the baseline ("as-is") to the target ("to-be"). The point of the Information Value Chain Model is not to prescribe a specific methodology, but rather to look for the types of elements that might be used within an agency's EA for purposes of describing the changes from baseline to target.
- Q. What does the FEA Program Management Office consider to be a documented source(s) of agency head and stakeholder buy-in?**
- A. Many elements of the assessment are based upon the CIO Council's *A Practical Guide to Federal Enterprise Architecture*. Please refer to Section 3.1 of the *Practical Guide* for additional information on agency head and stakeholder buy-in. This document is currently available in the EA archives of the documents section of the CIO Council's website or by clicking on the link below.
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- Q. Please explain why the EA communications strategy criterion is included under Strategic Direction within the Change capability assessment category at level 4, as opposed to level 2.**
- A. Levels 0 – 3 within the framework represent an assessment of the content of the EA program, and levels 4 - 5 represent an assessment of the extent of use of the EA program as part of the agency's IT investment decision-making process.
- Q. Is the term architectural approach considered to be synonymous with framework? OMB may consider modifying the "Architectural Approach" to indicate what the architecture contains in terms of its framework (assuming approach equivocates to framework). The goal of these metrics should be to assess the completeness of the framework.**
- A. The term architectural approach is not intended to be considered synonymous with framework. The definition of framework as found in the CIO Council's *A Practical Guide to Federal Enterprise Architecture* is a logical structure for classifying and organizing complex information. Approach

extends beyond the framework. Please refer to the CIO Council's *A Practical Guide to Federal Enterprise Architecture* for additional information on architectural approaches. This document is currently available in the EA archives of the documents section of the CIO Council's website or by clicking on the link below.

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- Q. Under Strategic Goals within the Business Alignment capability assessment category, level 1 states “EA contains high-level strategic goals.” Is this statement referring to the EA program goals or the strategic goals of the agency?**
- A. This statement is referring to the strategic goals of the agency.
- Q. Under Performance within the Convergence capability assessment category, level 1 states “EA conceptually defines performance measures.” Is this statement referring to the performance measures for the agency’s EA program, or indicating that the EA includes performance measures for the agency?**
- A. This statement is referring to the performance measures of the agency.
- Q. Referring to the previous question: If the latter, are the performance measures PRM-related operationalized measures, or IT-based measures?**
- A. Performance measures can utilize any of the performance areas and categories as defined in the PRM, and are established by the agency.
- Q. Please further explain the criteria “Interoperability standards are defined through patterns and are related to business functions.” What is the value of this linkage between standards and business functions?**
- A. For clarification reference information regarding the linkage between interoperability standards and business functions, please refer to the CIO Council's *A Practical Guide to Federal Enterprise Architecture*. This document is currently available in the EA archives of the documents section of the CIO Council's website or by clicking on the link below.
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- Q. Due date is 5/15, a Saturday. Can this be extended to COB Monday?**
- A. The submittal date is not being extended beyond May 15, 2004. Please submit your assessment to OMB by not later than May 15, 2004.

Using the EA Assessment File:

- Q. How can you save the completed PDF form with the added comments for our records or provide an electronic copy of the assessment if Adobe Acrobat 6.0 Professional or Adobe Acrobat Standard 6.0 is not available?**
- A. The assessment framework uses the Adobe Acrobat functionality in order to maintain consistency of assessments and responses. Alternative formats of the framework (e.g. - MS Excel) are available upon request for those that do not have access to Acrobat 5.0 or higher. Please apply the framework within your agency in any way you wish, but please submit your assessment to OMB using the original Version 1.0 formatting.

Q. How can the "Rationale" box be expanded to enter a larger comment? Is the expectation that it is to be filled with limited wording to fit the space provided or is it expected that a larger rationale be attached?

A. The expectation is that the rationale should be brief enough to fit within the space provided. If, however, more space is required to sufficiently address the rationale, please attach a file with that information.

Q. Assessment Value levels range from 0 to 5. In the case where an agency meets all the criteria outlined for a particular level and meets some criteria for the next level, can the agency receive partial credit for meeting a portion of the criteria at that next level? For example, if all of the criteria for level 2 are met and half of the criteria for level 3 are met, can the agency score itself at a 2.5 value?

A. At this time, the value ranges are limited to whole numbers only.

Q. Is there anything on the receiving end that will automatically truncate the submission?

A. OMB does not have any mechanism in place which will automatically truncate an agency assessment submission.

Clarifying Definitions:

Q. Please provide a definition for the term "business rules (logic)."

A. The definition we are applying to the term Business rules (logic) in the context of EA is the inputs/outputs required within and between business processes. We will attempt to clarify this and other terms in future versions of the assessment.

Q. Why is "Business Logic" included within an EA assessment? Business Logic is confined to a system development plan rather than an EA.

A. Business logic (in the case of an EA) represents the inputs and outputs within and between the business processes and components of an agency's EA.

Q. What is meant by "portion of the architecture?" Is this phrase referring to a specific layer (e.g., business, application, technology) of the architecture, a component within a layer, or something else?

A. "Portion of the architecture" refers to the existence of a particular set of information within a section of the architecture.

Q. What is meant by the term "alignment analysis?"

A. Assessing the degree to which the EA supports determining investment/program/organizations alignment with the business functions and strategic goals of the agency. Please refer to the CIO Council's *Architecture Assessment and Alignment Guide* for further information regarding alignment analysis. This document is currently available in the EA archives of the documents section of the CIO Council's website or by clicking on the link below.

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Q. Please explain the difference between the term “components” and “services” with the Component area.

A. Components and services are defined within the assessment as follows:

Component – A self-contained business process or service with pre-determined functionality that may be exposed through a business or technology interface.

Shared Services – Architectural elements (business processes and/or technology components) that are used by multiple organizations within the enterprise.

Q. Are the “patterns” referred to in this assessment similar to the IBM “patterns?” Please provide concrete examples of “patterns” and how they relate to standards.

A. Patterns are defined within the assessment as follows:

Patterns – Frequently occurring combinations of business and technical elements that can be used to deliver re-useable business services across the enterprise.