How Does the EA Development Process Relate to Operations and Support (ITIL) Processes?
by Roger Evernden

TOGAF is clearly part of a larger set of enterprise activities that range from strategy and investment planning all the way through to operations and support. The link between the TOGAF development process – as defined in the ADM – and any business change or IT development processes is fairly clear. But the link between the ADM and operations and support processes can be overlooked.

In this blog I want to look at the relationship between the EA, operations, and support processes.

In TOGAF Chapter 2 - the Core Concepts – there is a section that talks about using TOGAF with other frameworks. Here it states that:

“...it is expected that the architect will adapt and build on the TOGAF framework in order to define a tailored method that is integrated into the processes and organization structures of the enterprise. This architecture tailoring may include adopting elements from other architecture frameworks, or integrating TOGAF methods with other standard frameworks, such as ITIL, CMMI, COBIT, PRINCE2, PMBOK, and MSP.” [Section 2.10]

In other words – it’s up to you! As the architect, you are expected to build the workflows, checkpoints and handovers between TOGAF and the processes in frameworks such as Information Technology Infrastructure Library (ITIL) or Control Objectives for Information and Related Technology (COBIT).

TOGAF does offer a bit more support than this, but it isn’t always obvious. And there are some things that TOGAF doesn’t cover. So here are my top tips for integrating TOGAF with operations and support:

• Bear in mind that everyone working in operations or support is a potential stakeholder for your EA initiatives. So the first step is to figure out who these stakeholders are, what their concerns and needs are with respect to EA, and how you are going to communicate and work with them. Have a look at TOGAF Chapter 24 on Stakeholder Management; in particular look at the Template Stakeholder Map for examples of their concerns and the type of artefacts TOGAF recommends. For example, a concern for IT Service Management might be “ensuring that IT services provided to the organization meet the service levels required by the organization to succeed in business”;
  artefacts might include technology standards and portfolio catalogues, a process/application realization diagram, and an enterprise manageability diagram.

• It is important to remember here that some of the example artefacts in TOGAF may not be the best ones for your needs. Have a look at Chapter 35 which lists the Architectural Artifacts by each Phase of the ADM, and customize or extend this list to suit your situation.

• In the Preliminary Phase TOGAF talks about the need to understand the Organizational Context surrounding your use of architecture frameworks. This includes processes “that support execution of change and operation of the enterprise”. The documentation suggests that you need to examine what frameworks, management processes or methods are in use for systems management; project portfolio management; and application, information and technology portfolio management.

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Once you have examined all of the above, I find it really useful to put together a high-level process flow diagram that shows the main interaction points between architecture, operations and support. Actually, this can be very useful for understanding how EA fits with any other organizational processes. In some organizations, this may be complex, whereas in others, it is relatively straightforward. Architectures from development to production and many architecture teams also have an active role in monitoring the behaviour and use of the enterprise architecture. It is very rare that a planned architecture operates exactly as expected! When things don’t work as well as they might, people find workarounds and fixes; additional components are informally added to the architectural mix; components degrade; new relationships are forged between components. So the monitoring and adaptability part of managing the architecture is important.

TOGAF also doesn’t have a lot to say on the sharing of information between architecture, operations, or support. There is a lot to be gained by working together, but this is often hindered by the different perspectives of each viewpoint. In some organizations, each team even uses a different vocabulary; for example, a “system”, or an “application” might be different things for the EA team and the operations team. The answer here is to develop a common metamodel that can be shared between all teams, and to accommodate all views and viewpoints. This is not an exhaustive guide explaining how EA works with operations or support, but I hope it has provided some clues on how to improve cooperation and collaboration between these teams.

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