MRMv2 Project Update to MISA/ASIM Canada Board of Directors

December 2011

On December 2, 2011, the MRMv2 Project Team invited a broad selection of stakeholders (municipalities, MISA Board members, IBM, some private sector representatives), to participate in a discussion of the current status of the MRMV2 project and to discuss proposed future directions. Those invited included all municipalities who had contributed funding to the project, as well as Board members from both MISA Ontario and MISA/ASIM Canada.

Following the morning’s open discussion, the afternoon session was open only to Steering Committee members, with a goal of providing a set of recommendations to the sponsoring organization, the MISA/ASIM Canada Board of Directors.

While there was much useful discussion, the Steering Committee approved the following four main recommendations:

1. **The MRMv2 Project should be closed, subject to completion of certain wrap-up activities.**
2. **Required wrap-up activities should be undertaken as quickly as possible by the existing project team, under the leadership of Roy Wiseman.**
3. **While the existing MRMv2 Project should be wrapped up, a new phase of the MRMv2 Program should be initiated.** Such new phase should focus on the MRMv2 “content” and collaboration, rather than software solutions. In particular, the existing plans for a hosted MRMv2/System Architect solution should be discontinued, at least for the time being.
4. **Notwithstanding #3, the updated Relationship Agreement with IBM should be approved for execution.**

The remainder of this report provides substantial further detail and rationale for these recommendations.

1. **The MRMv2 Project should be closed, subject to completion of certain wrap-up activities.** This recommendation is based on a number of overriding realities:
   1. Funds collected from various municipalities to undertake the project have essentially been exhausted. A full accounting of project expenditures has been provided previously, with the major expenditure categories being for initial consulting (Chartwell/KPMG), software acquisition (IBM) and solution hosting (eSolutions). A final accounting will be provided as part of project close-out.
   2. A significant proportion of those previous involved in project governance (Steering Committee) or as members of the project team (various municipal representatives) are no longer active participants. As a result, efforts over the past year have been largely undertaken by retirees or other volunteers.
   3. Although the products have not yet been “packaged” and delivered to the contributing municipalities, one can realistically say that most of the originally defined “deliverable” have, in fact, been produced. Of course, there is always more that can be done, but only if there is continued interest and resources to continue – which gets into the discussion of “what comes next”.
2. **Required wrap-up activities should be undertaken as quickly as possible by the existing project team, under the leadership of Roy Wiseman.** Such activities include:
   1. Complete final versions of the main MRMv2 Products:
      1. MRMv2 Modeling Principles and User Guide documents;
      2. MRMv2 Meta-Model in an appropriate platform-neutral format;
      3. MRMv2 Authoritative Reference Model, in spreadsheet format;
      4. MRMv2 implementation within System Architect, as represented by a User Properties file (essentially the database schema) and an Encyclopedia (Meta-Model and Authoritative Reference Model implemented in System Architect)
   2. Distribute products (i), (ii) and (iii) to all municipalities who contributed MRMv2 funding;
   3. Make available product (iv) to any funding municipality who is interested and wishes to acquire the required System Architect licences.
   4. Develop and provide one or more “training sessions”, in the form of webinars, for all MRMv2 contributors, with the sessions to cover:
      1. MRM Fundamentals – Modeling principles, definitions, etc. Discussion of the MRMv2 Meta-Model
      2. MRM Uses and Use Cases – how these concepts and principles can be applied by municipalities for various purposes (use cases), with specific examples and case studies;
      3. MRMv2 Authoritative Reference Model as implemented in spreadsheet form – explanation of content, examples, applying the spreadsheet to address various use cases
      4. MRMv2 System Architect implementation – overview of capabilities, again with reference to how this version might be used to address various use cases.
   5. Shut down the existing hosting environment, including obtaining backups of all required datasets and documentation. Notify eSolutions that their hosting services are no longer required, effective January 1, 2012 (or as soon as the service can be successfully shut down.)
   6. Install the delivered System Architect software and solution in at least two MRMv2 contributing municipalities, who agree to act as “custodians” for the delivered solution, pending further decisions. Peel Region, York Region and the Town of Markham have volunteered to undertake such implementations and act as “custodians”.
   7. Deliver final version of all of products (i), (ii), (iii) and (iv) (system backup) to the MISA/ASIM Canada Board for appropriate custodianship and future directions.
   8. Provide a recommendation to the MISA/ASIM Canada Board regarding retention, distribution or reassignment of System Architect licences acquired from IBM. Such recommendation will require further discussion with IBM and/or with municipalities who may have an interest.
   9. Provide the MISA/ASIM Canada Board a final accounting of all MRMv2 Project expenditures and revenues.
   10. Disband the existing MRMv2 Project Steering Committee and close the MRMv2 Project.
3. **Notwithstanding #1 and #2 above, the MRM represents hugely important and valuable intellectual property that is still of great interest to many municipalities/MISA Members. As a result, while the existing MRMv2 Project should be wrapped up, a new phase of the MRMv2 Program should be initiated.** To support this new phase:
   1. MISA/ASIM Canada should assign Roy Wiseman, as MISA/ASIM Canada Executive Director, responsibility for establishing a new program plan and governance structure by March 31, 2012.
   2. As a first step, MISA/ASIM Canada should canvass municipalities who have expressed an interest in the MRM in the past for their willingness to participate in a new Steering Committee. Ideally, such Steering Committee should better reflect the national scope of MISA/ASIM Canada.
   3. Once formed, the new Steering Committee should be tasked with developing a new business model for the ongoing success of MRMv2.
   4. Without restricting the decisions of the new Steering Committee, the existing Steering Committee recommends the following for consideration:
      1. **The goal is that the MRM (concepts, definitions, etc.) be adopted as a standard for Canadian municipalities.**
      2. Consistent with this, the **MRMv2 Meta-Model should be placed in the public domain**, under appropriate intellectual property protection which ensures continued recognition of MISA/ASIM Canada’s “ownership”. This step will allow software developers, trainers, consultants and others to consider offering MRM-related services. The business model may include provisions which allow software vendors, trainers, consultants, etc. to become “MRM certified” (at a cost), but providing a minimum of information in the public domain may be necessary to generate interest in undertaking this next step.
      3. **The MRMv2 Modeling Principles and User Guide should be made available at no cost to all members of any MISA/ASIM Canada member association**. Again, if the goal is for the MRM to be a standard, access to basic information should be provided for free (or at a minimal charge).
      4. **The MRMv2 Authoritative Reference Model should be made available to interested municipalities on a subscription basis.** This is partly to protect the investment of those who contributed to its development. However, it is also in recognition that the model content is only useful with a certain amount of training and orientation. A subscription will ensure that this can be provided, to maximize likelihood of successful adoption.
      5. **In the immediate future, the MRMv2 Program should focus on further developing the MRMv2 content, as implemented in low-tech solutions – e.g. spreadsheet.** Existing users have already identified many areas in which the content can be further developed and enhanced – e.g. defining performance measures, filling out a more complete list of services of a given type (e.g. all business licencing services provided by any municipality, rather than just a representative sample), defining processes for a given set of services (e.g. IT Services), etc. Such content enhancement would be based on priorities determined by an MRMv2 user community and development would be by working groups of interested participants.
      6. **Notwithstanding the above, MISA should continue to work with IBM on the System Architect implementation.** This work represents a significant investment which should not be lost. At least some existing or potential MRMv2 users have expressed interest in this version, recognizing that a low-tech (spreadsheet) solution can take us only so far. On this basis, those municipalities who are interested should have a means of continuing to work with IBM to further enhance this product.
      7. **In the immediate future, MISA should withdraw from offering the System Architect solution as a hosted service.** This is in recognition that MISA has neither the financial nor human resources to support this service offering, which is likely to be of immediate interest to only a limited set of municipalities. In the longer term, MISA can consider re-introducing this option, provided that there is sufficient interest – or, more likely, exploring other options for delivering the services. For instance, IBM may be interested in offering a “cloud version” of the MRM, but only if they can confirm sufficient interest to make this worthwhile. In the interim, municipalities who are interested in the System Architect implementation will be required to acquire their own SA licences, but will be provided (based on an appropriate subscription fee) with the appropriate “encyclopedia” with the MRMv2 content. Since they will be required to acquire their own SA Licences, the subscription feel may the same as, or not much more than, those acquiring the same content in the spreadsheet version.
      8. **Since collaboration is an essential element of a successful MRMv2 Program** (all existing users have referenced the value of sharing and learning from others), **the new program should include an enhanced collaboration site.** However, it is not clear that this requires anything more advanced than capabilities currently available through the MISA Ontario or other web sites of MISA Member Associations. In any case, a collaboration forum should be an early goal for the new program.
      9. **MISA should actively seek partners who will further the goal of establishing the MRM as a standard for Canadian municipalities.** Potential partner organizations should, ideally, be national or international in scope – e.g. CAMA, FCM, GFOA, OMBI, MSDO, ICCS, GMIS/LOLA, as well as appropriate standards bodies (e.g. OMG), industry associations (e.g. ITAC), academic institutions, etc. This recommendation recognizes that the potential interest in and uses of the MRM are much broader than MISA’s IT/CIO base.
      10. Related to the above, **MISA should investigate and actively pursue appropriate funding opportunities that might further or accelerate the development of the MRM as a standard.**
4. **Notwithstanding the recommendations above to de-emphasized the System Architect solution, at this time, and to discontinue offering the hosted System Architect Solution, the Steering Committee recommends executing the updated Relationship Agreement with IBM for the following reasons:**
   1. The partnership with IBM still provides substantial credibility for the MRMv2, which supports its being adopted as a standard;
   2. IBM has, in good faith, invested very substantial human resources in developing the MRMv2 solution in System Architect. As noted, this is already of interest to some municipalities and may well be of increasing interest as time passes.
   3. The Agreement provides IBM with a non-exclusive right to offer MRM-based solutions, incorporating MRMv2 content (e.g. the Meta-Model and Reference Model) to other organizations and have already started to do so – e.g. in a project with the City of New Orleans. (IBM already has the right to do so under the previously executed Relationship Agreement.)
   4. The Agreement is simply an update of the previously executed Relationship Agreement. In addition to reflecting the current software product set, the only other changes are as requested by MISA – e.g. to clarify our ability to offer the MRM to organizations outside Canada.
   5. The Agreement imposed no financial obligations on MISA. It simply says that MISA, or those to whom we provide the MRM solution, will need to acquire the appropriate licences for the underlying IBM software – which is a given, in any case. It does not commit us to a specific number of licences, ongoing software maintenance or any other specific financial commitment. It is fundamentally, no more than an agreement to continue to work together on the MRM.
   6. The revised agreement has been closely reviewed by Fraser Mann of Miller Thomson, who in fact drafted a number of the changes. In addition, subsequent to the most recent Steering Committee meeting, Skip Lumley and Nasir Kenea both volunteered to review the agreement in detail. Both have confirmed the above interpretation and support execution of the Agreement.

Appendix A: Summary of Changes

MRMv2 Relationship Agreement, MISA/ASIM Canada and IBM

Further to the recommendation to execute the updated MRMv2 Relationship Agreement with IBM, I have attached:

1.       Existing Relationship Agreement with IBM (signed in September 2009);

2.       Proposed updated and amended agreement.

The updated agreement contains mark-ups to indicate all changes:

* Red with strikethrough for words, phrases or paragraphs which have been deleted or replaced;
* Blue with double underlining for words, phrases or paragraphs which have been inserted or which replace existing wording.

The significant changes in the document are as follows:

1.       Since this is a five-year agreement (paragraph 4.1), and the effective date has been updated, we are effectively starting a new five-year term.

2.       Preamble inserted to link back to the original Relationship Agreement;

3.       IBM Base Software Products (Definition) have been updated;

4.       “Configuration Profiles” have essentially been replaced with “SDW Configuration”.  Service Design Extensions have been removed.  With the original solution, IBM was required to custom develop some code (Service Design Extensions) to pass information between the different Rational products.  With the System Architect solution, all products (e.g. SA and Rational Publishing Engine) talk to each other without the requirement for such custom interfaces.

5.       Description of the MRM has been expanded and clarified – see MRM, MRMv2 Package, MRM Municipal Model, MRM Reference Model).  If not clear, MRM Municipal Model is essentially each municipalities “My Municipality”, built from the Reference Model (Reference Profiles).  As stated in the definition, each municipality owns its Municipal Model.  This is not part of what is being provided to IBM.

6.       Scope of work has been updated to reflect both the change in software and the time frame when this work was done.  Note (2.2 (d))that MISA is effectively agreeing that the delivered product “has demonstrated the capabilities of the package to address the functional needs”.  Note also (2.2 (e)) the commitment to further development against a prioritized list of future enhancements.  In my view, this is not a strong commitment, since any such enhancements must be mutually agreed.  In other words, we don’t have to ask for any enhancements.  But if we do and IBM agrees to make them, we have a commitment to test the resulting work – which only makes sense.

7.       Notwithstanding all the words in 3.2 (a), the significant change (requested by us) was that rather than having to ask permission to make the MRM available outside Canada, we now simply agree to notify and discuss  such opportunities with IBM for at least 30 days.  After such discussion, we can proceed, if we so choose.

8.       It is also worth noting that 3.2 (a) only refers to MISA “providing the MRMv2 Package to its MISA Member Associations and the municipal members”.  It doesn’t say how we might do this – e.g. hosted solution or simply let them install it in their own site.  The prerequisite, however, is that those using the MRMv2 Package must have appropriate licences for the base software – either through MISA or acquired directly.

9.       The last sentence of 3.2 (a) is also significant, since it gives us the right to update the SDW Configuration ourselves.  (This is essentially the User Props file.)  This should probably have been broken out into a separate paragraph, rather than being buried here.  (I may request this in any final revision.)

10.   Paragraph 3.2 (b) has not really been changed, but outlines what we are licensing to IBM.  They can make the “MRMv2 Package” available, essentially without restriction.   From the definitions, the “package” includes the software and the “MRM data”, but not any Municipal Profiles.  Since “MRM Data” isn’t defined, it might have been better to have referred to the MRM Metamodel and MRM Reference Profiles – or just “the MRM”, which is defined to include exactly these two components.  (It’s amazing what you still pick up when you go over it again.)  Not however, that these rights are non-exclusive, and also non-transferrable.

11.   Section 3.2 (c) is also critical, giving us full rights to make the MRM (Meta-model, Reference Model) available to others or event place all or part of it in the public domain.

12.   Section 3.2 (e) is not new, but may be of interest to the MISA Board.  It simply says that if MISA wants to get out of the MRM business we will notify IBM, in case they want to take it on.  However, this clause doesn’t preclude MISA from seeking or accepting other proposals.   Note that we don’t have to notify IBM if we want to turn it over to a Canadian public sector or not-for-profit organization (e.g. FCM, ICCS).

13.   Section 8.1 contains another change that we requested.  I didn’t want the Agreement to say that MISA (i.e. MISA/ASIM Canada) has the sole and exclusive right to the MRM, given the complex relationship between MISA Ontario and MISA/ASIM Canada.   The new wording simply says that we have the authority to enter into the agreement  - based on the recent MOU with MISA Ontario.

14.   We should consider who will execute this Agreement on behalf of MISA, assuming that we agree to go ahead.  The Board can authorize me to do it, or it can be executed by one or more of the Board members – e.g. Maurice.