**OPEN ITEMS SUMMARY - 26/04/2011**

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| Open Item | Comments |
| 1) One output per service rule - is this necessary? | AM: I think it is necessary to make use of the MRM - for example process patterns.  If after using this for a time we discover that it is not workable, it should be discussed then.  RW: I would like to retain this as an assumption for now.  If we find specific examples where it doesn’t work, we may have to reconsider.  (I think Adele and I are saying the same things.)  AF  I am still struggling with this rule, but will work along to see how things go.  MM:  I agree with Roy and Adele.  However, I too have found cases where it is hard due to the local culture.  It is one of the best ways to make sure your processes line up appropriately and you measure the right thing(s) to determine success and need for change.  JA: It depends on how cohesion and coupling are managed. Keeping it to one output ensures services and their outputs are decoupled. But it could encourage complex, multi-part outputs which result in further coupling and less flexible and maintainable services.  SL: Process outputs will help people get this. Virtually everything that can be seen or touched is a process output, e.g. a driver’s license: the physical card is a process output, permission to drive is the service output. The former is a service delivery view, the latter is a policy view. |
| 2) Service value information - should we look at this more closely? | RW: Yes, specifically related to the beneficial client.  For me, the service value identifies one of the most important measures for the service.  It also clarifies the identification of the beneficial client.  So the Public Health Value of Solid Waste Collection is reduced incidence of disease resulting from uncollected garbage.  (Could be tightened up, but we need to say more than that there is a Public Health value.  As mentioned on the call, I would then question whether there is a Public Health Value (or the same public Health Value) from other waste streams (e.g. White Goods/Appliances collection.)  Making it explicit forces the thinking process.  But saying that we should do it, doesn’t mean that it is a priority.  AF: When we meet with our employees to do the service workshops, the first question we ask is who is the beneficial client. We push them hard to get to only 1. Then we ask the value of the service to that client. Sometimes we go back and redefine the client and then back again to clarify the value. But we can’t get any further in to the service profile until these 2 items are clearly defined.  MM:  I think Ann has nailed the process on this.  In response to Roy’s question – do all the service values in a Program or Bundle of Services have to be of the same type?  That is, if Curbside collection is about public health but Whitegoods collection is about community beautification is that problematic?  Stan Mathewson beat into us that a well defined service will support a multitude of Programs or value types even though there is a very important exercise to be had in isolating a primary value.  JA: I find service value increases the "distance" between a service and its outcome - the thing that is of actual interest to the target groups. Suggest that this be an optional concept, or a relationship with the service itself, not necessarily with between the output and outcome?  SL: I’m with Stan Mathewson. For the record, the current Metamodel enables one service to have multiple service values. Each service value can be coded to characterize them. The consensus so far is that there must be at least one service value associated with a ‘benefited’ client, and in some cases another associated with a ‘direct’ client where the clients are not the same. I believe there are more complex cases (the classic one being water supply that provides a public health value, a public safety value, and an economic development value) but that ultimately the way in which this concept is used is a ‘methodology’ question and the answers might differ from one municipality to another. |
| 3) Should we give increased priority to adding Process information to the Reference Model? How could that be done? | AM: Could we use the process patterns linked to the output type as a starting point (i.e. taken from the GSRM or BTEP) and have the standards group pick one or two services that these are applied to for their municipality (i.e. step through an exercise of using them as the starting point to define processes for a particular service and discuss how much modification was required)  this could start to mimic how we would expect to use this same information if/when populated in the MRM tool.  RW: No to increased priority.  My recommendation is that where municipalities have identified services that we believe are processes, we should add them in as processes (so that municipalities can see where they are).  But we shouldn’t otherwise spend time trying to think of the processes that go into making up a service.  Having said this, there may be value (at some point, not right now) in tackling the processes for a specific service grouping, just to illustrate what this would look like.  There is, I think, a structure (process) for identifying processes.  AF: Not sure how much energy this would take, but I am having a hard time keeping up now and worry this just won’t get done. I have attached the ASQ file I use to look at processes. Maybe this will be helpful??  MM:  I agree with Ann here again.  Maybe we have time to outline processes later, but we are still struggling with the top layer.  I also wonder to what extent processes are a real manifestation of local culture or needs.  In the debate that was had over water / wastewater and OMBI, there was no agreement as to whether processes should follow assets or process level outputs.  Depending on the way the local municipality does business, it may be different.  JA: You said something on the call today that would seem to enforce this - that the opportunity as in the projects, not the metamodel. These projects will have to deal with processes and resources. How to provide a service effectively may be just as valuable as identifying the service and its outcomes. So I'd think this would be valuable - but recognize that there is more variability here.  SL: If the GSRM process patterns that Adele refers to are available to us for MRM use, I believe they will have a reduce the effort required to define reference processes, and increase the quality of the results. This would also be true for performance indicators, which are included in the patterns. |
| 4) We need to see a comprehensive example or scenario, to see how everything fits or works together and what it looks like, e.g. up to three needs or program fields per service? | AM: Yes - and I also strongly believe that for this standards group to be effective, it would be really helpful for us to participate in a single MRM training workshop (not the tool, the MRM concepts etc.)  I feel that this would get us on the same playing field and when we discuss potential changes to the MRM we know we are coming from a similar understanding.  I know my only 'training' was a 2 day 'conference' in victoria about 4-5 years ago and some on-the-job work done at the city with chartwell.  I'm not so confident I have a similar grounding as the others on the team.  Maybe I'm alone in thinking this, but I really think this would give our little committee an effectiveness boost :)  RW: Agreed.  To me, needs are associated with a Service Value – so a service provides a set of Service Values, each of which addresses a different Need.  The Need is typically related to a Program Field, but we are starting to talk about at least a two-level hierarchy of Program Fields/Sub-Fields (Public Safety subdivided into Fire Safety, Police Safety (Safety from Crime), etc.)  Regarding training, I agree that we should participate.  But my training consists primarily of many hours talking to Skip and Alan.  I don’t perceive an imbalance in our respective levels of understanding, but I do think that this process is also part of our training – sharing and debating the concepts and learning from each other.  MM:  Adele you had 2 DAYS of training on the MRM?!  Luxury!  In part I agree with both.  I have come to believe that the MRM is a discipline, not a tool.  The discipline is precision in language and concepts and that there must be sufficient room within the discipline to acknowledge local needs.  However, if we want to be comparative, we need to have sufficient cross-municipal discipline to make it work.  As OMBI enters year 10 (as Roy can now attest), it is evident the tension between local relevance and comparative strictness.  I think our group is not only about application of the discipline, it is about defining the discipline.  We are creating the MRM as we go along.  Right Alan?  JA: Yes - something that stakeholders can understand to generate interest. |
| 5) Should we define reference Programs, whether Services are linked to them or not? | AM: I like the idea  proposed of using the Program fields instead - this provides more stability to the model as needs likely don't change over time, but programs will (based on funding, politics, etc.)  It may still be useful to have at least one instance of the complete set of MRM services linked to programs so that it becomes a 'starter' template.  Without that the person working with the services has to assemble it all from scratch - and as you said, in municipalities the program definition isn't that strong anyway - likely it will take on an organizational flavor and maybe that's ok as a starter set of programs linked to services?    However with the use of Prgram Fields I'm not sure we would need to rush into doing this - may become more of a 'nice to have'?  RW: I would also work from the program fields, including sub-programs fields, but we should recognize that these will start to look like the programs that municipalities are already using.  Some municipalities will be using programs at the higher level (similar to program fields); others will be working at what we will call the sub-program field level.  But the key point from Skip and Alan’s presentation is that we recognize that each service may contribute to multiple program fields (needs).  We can propose one of these relationships as being prime, but this is the least important of our decisions.  Is Solid Waste Collection mostly about Public Health, Environmental Protection or Economic Development (protection of property values).  The important thing is that if start from any of these program fields, I will see Solid Waste Collection as a potential service that might contribute to addressing this need.  AF: I am not sure I know the answer to the question, but I do want to share the way we use programs. In 1998 , when we first started this  we used programs  to help make 2 decisions. We reorganized our Departments and tried hard to make then program focused( not so successful). We also used the programs to establish committees of Council. We now have a Public safety Committee and a Community Development Committee and a Transportation committee as examples. This helps the members of council focus on services and not Departments (somewhat successful). We use programs in our tax flyer. We show citizens what it cost in tax dollars to provide: Public safety, Transportation, Community Development etc. Again we use a slight variation because folks do want to know what police and fire services cost, but we try our best to keep it at the higher level. Our next step is to use influence the language in our Municipal Plan to reflect our programs. We hope to have the chapters organized by programs. There are other reasons why the use of program is important to us, and I would not want them to get lost from the model.  MM:  Ann, I feel like we are long lost twins.  Your description of what you are doing is very similar to ours.  We have just created program oriented standing committees that are meant to help Council link related issues together.  We are preparing a Program and Service based budget view to show the public their taxes by the higher level program as well as the services.  JA: If they have outcomes, with a lot of variability in the services that contribute that outcome - too much to put a stake in the ground in the reference model, then sure. Why not. But note that target groups aren't interested in the governance of the services (the programs that administer them), they're interested in the outcomes.  SL: Specific, in-depth program and service definitions with accompanying rationale from participating municipalities clearly illustrate the value the MRM can bring, and sharing them via the MRM collaboration site should be a given. The challenge here is the credibility of the Reference Model, which is not a model of a municipality. Discussion of programs – formally defined or not – triggers organizational territoriality, so I think there are only two alternatives: do nothing or name some obvious programs and include a couple of completely obvious and non-controversial services in each as a kind of ‘starter set’. |
| 6) Should we declare at least some Program - Service linkages initially to serve as examples? What about the longer term - should the plan be to assign all Services to Programs eventually? | AM: See above.  RW: See above.  All services should be associated with one or more program fields/sub-program fields – through their Service Values.  MM:  I may have missed something in the discussion, but I am not wedded to Programs having a single value or value type.  So a Program like environmental protection may contain services which have service values that are not only about the environment.  EG:  Curbside collection is in my Environmental Program but its service value is a public health value.  The public health benefit comes through a safer environment.  I worry that we over think this sometimes and that creates problems with the buy-in amongst other municipal staff.  If services which have a natural affinity (waste collection services) are split into multiple programs to achieve some kind of “perfection” in the model, it will create data collection and administrative nightmares.  So if the Environmental Protection Program is permitted to have multiple but related service values – public health through environmental clean up, green infrastructure development, lowering greenhouse gases and climate change – then services with natural affinity can stay together.  JA: As a means of organizing services into functional areas, possibly (although that is independent of administration). Can a service ever exist without being administered? How would it ever function?  SL: See above. |
| 7) Is there any way to deal more easily with the large volume of data in the spreadsheet prior to getting access to System Architect to review the ARM (and getting trained)? | AM: Could Alan/Skip start using the mrm to store the data and extract the information the standards group is discussing into reports for discussion (similar to how the municipal MRM administrator/business analyst role will eventually be expected to work with business stakeholders?)  RW: Agree with Adele.  We should start putting this into the MRM/System Architect.  I don’t see an intermediate step.  This will also tell us whether SA actually helps this type of analysis or whether we all go back to using the spreadsheet.  Also, putting it into SA allows us to generate reports which we can publish on the Quickr site or distribute by email.  JA: That is easily possible using a spreadsheet template, and saving as a CSV file that can be imported into SA. That's how I got all the data from RecPro into SA. I wrote a Ruby program to convert the CSV files from on format to the other. |
| 8) Other questions? | AF: Is there some specific questions we should be pondering as we look at the ARM, or are we just looking for general comments and reactions? |