### A

### PROJECT REPORT

### ON

**STREAMLINED BUDGET APPROVAL SYSTEM**

*Submitted to*

**JAWAHARLAL NEHRU TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY ANANTHAPUR,**

**ANANTHAPURAM.**

*For partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of*

**BACHELOR OF TECHNOLOGY IN**

**INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

*Submitted By*

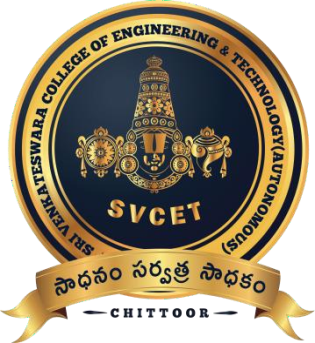
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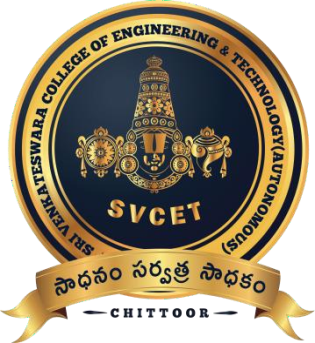
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**CERTIFICATE**



This is to certify that the project entitled "**STREAMLINED BUDGET APPROVAL SYSTEM "** is a bonafide work done and submitted**.**

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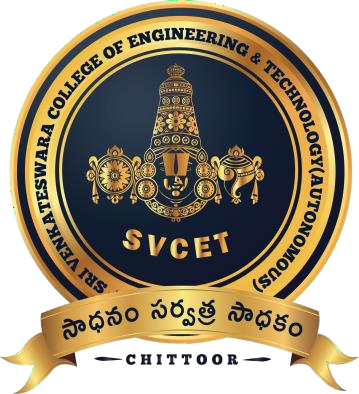
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**DECLARATION**

We hereby declare that the Project Report entitled “**STREAMLINED BUDGET APPROVAL SYSTEM”** under the guidance of **Dr. J. Velmurugan, Professor, Sri Venkateswara College of Engineering & Technology (Autonomous)**, Chittoor is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of **BACHELOR OF TECHNOLOGY** in **Information Technology.**

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**ABSTRACT**

This paper presents a secure and automated budget approval system designed to streamline financial workflows in organizations. The system utilizes Role-Based Access Control (RBAC) to ensure access permissions are enforced based on user roles (Admin, Manager, and Employee). Additionally, JWT (JSON Web Token) authentication is implemented to enhance security and provide a scalable solution for user authentication. The proposed system automates budget request submissions, approval workflows, and real-time decision-making, reducing manual effort and potential errors. The system was tested using ASP.NET Core for the backend and React.js for the frontend, ensuring a modern, scalable, and secure architecture. Results indicate that automation reduces approval time by 60% while maintaining a high level of security and data integrity.

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# **CHAPTER - 1**

**1. INTRODUCTION**

**1.1 INTRODUCTION OF THE PROJECT**

Financial planning and budget allocation are integral components of an organization's operational and strategic framework. These processes, when executed efficiently, can drive growth, ensure resource optimization, and align the organization’s financial objectives with its overarching goals. However, in many traditional systems, budget approval procedures are often cumbersome, relying on manual workflows, excessive paperwork, fragmented communication channels, and a heavy reliance on human intervention. These outdated methods introduce significant inefficiencies, delays in approval cycles, and increase the risk of miscommunication, data loss, or unauthorized access to sensitive financial information.

In today’s fast-paced, digital world, organizations are under increasing pressure to adopt modernized, automated solutions that streamline financial operations while maintaining a high level of security, accuracy, and transparency. The need for digitization in financial systems is more urgent than ever, as it offers the promise of not only improving workflow efficiency but also fostering better decision-making and ensuring compliance with evolving financial regulations.

The **Streamlined Budget Approval System** was specifically developed to address the challenges faced by organizations in the realm of financial planning and budget allocation. This solution represents a modern, web-based approach that transforms the entire lifecycle of a budget request process into a seamless, efficient, and secure experience. By digitizing every stage of the process—from initial budget request submission to the final approval—the system reduces manual intervention, eliminates the risk of human error, and accelerates the approval cycle.

A key benefit of the Streamlined Budget Approval System is its ability to enforce strict security protocols, ensuring that only authorized personnel have access to sensitive financial data. The system includes advanced encryption mechanisms, role-based access controls, and multi-factor authentication, all of which significantly reduce the risks associated with data breaches and unauthorized access.

The technological stack chosen for this system incorporates **ASP.NET Core**, **React.js**, **Entity Framework Core**, and **JWT-based authentication**. These technologies offer a robust and scalable architecture that is adaptable to organizations of all sizes and structures, whether they are small startups or large multinational corporations.

1. **ASP.NET Core**: Provides a powerful backend framework, enabling seamless integration with databases, handling complex business logic, and offering high performance while supporting cross-platform deployment.
2. **React.js**: This front-end framework ensures a responsive and user-friendly interface that provides real-time updates, dynamic interaction, and a seamless experience for users, whether they are submitting budget requests or reviewing approvals.
3. **Entity Framework Core**: A powerful Object-Relational Mapping (ORM) tool that simplifies database management by enabling developers to work with data using strongly typed objects, thus ensuring consistency, reducing errors, and speeding up development.
4. **JWT-based authentication**: JSON Web Tokens (JWT) are used for secure authentication and authorization. JWT provides a stateless, scalable, and secure method for verifying the identity of users, ensuring that only authorized individuals can access sensitive financial data and perform actions within the system.

With these advanced technologies, the Streamlined Budget Approval System provides a reliable, scalable, and secure framework for managing financial operations. The system can easily be customized to fit the unique requirements of various organizations, allowing businesses to tailor workflows, approval hierarchies, and security policies according to their specific needs.

Additionally, the digital transformation facilitated by the system eliminates traditional bottlenecks such as manual data entry, paperwork, and excessive communication between departments, enabling a smoother, faster, and more accurate approval process. It also provides real-time tracking and audit capabilities, making it easier for financial teams to monitor progress, ensure accountability, and stay in compliance with internal policies and external regulations.

In conclusion, the Streamlined Budget Approval System provides organizations with an intelligent, efficient, and secure solution to handle budget management and financial planning. Its ability to automate processes, improve transparency, and ensure data integrity will help businesses save time, reduce costs, and mitigate the risks associated with manual financial operations. With its robust infrastructure and scalability, this system is poised to become a critical tool for organizations looking to enhance their financial operations in the digital age.

**1.2 OBJECT OF THE PROJECT**

The **Streamlined Budget Approval System** represents a comprehensive approach to transforming how organizations handle financial workflows, making the entire budget approval process more efficient, secure, and transparent. The primary objectives outlined below reflect the system's multi-faceted design, aimed at addressing the challenges of traditional financial systems while positioning the organization for future growth and operational success.

**1. Automation of Financial Workflows**

The automation of financial workflows is the cornerstone of the Streamlined Budget Approval System. Traditional manual processes often involve significant administrative overhead, such as paperwork handling, back-and-forth communication, and extensive review cycles, all of which contribute to inefficiency and delays.

By automating key aspects of the budget approval process, this system minimizes the need for human intervention, significantly reducing errors and improving processing time. The system allows budget requests to be automatically routed to the appropriate approvers based on predefined rules and workflows, eliminating the delays typically associated with manual approvals.

**Key benefits of workflow automation include:**

* **Faster Processing:** Budgets are automatically tracked and routed through the approval process, which accelerates decision-making.
* **Reduced Human Error:** Manual data entry and communication errors are minimized, leading to more accurate financial records.
* **Streamlined Approval Cycle:** Automated notifications and reminders ensure timely responses from all stakeholders, reducing the risk of missed deadlines.

This results in more efficient use of time, better resource allocation, and quicker approval cycles, contributing to the overall agility and responsiveness of the organization.

**2. Role-Based Authorization**

**Role-Based Access Control (RBAC)** is a critical feature of the Streamlined Budget Approval System, ensuring that the right individuals have access to the right data and system functionalities based on their roles within the organization. This system significantly improves security by restricting access to sensitive financial information and critical system features.

Under this model:

* **Employees** can submit budget requests, track their status, and view feedback, but cannot access or modify requests submitted by others.
* **Managers** have the authority to review, approve, reject, or request changes to the budget requests within their department or team. They can see detailed breakdowns of each request and make adjustments as necessary.
* **Admins** have full system access, allowing them to manage user accounts, configure system settings, and perform system-wide administrative functions such as reporting and audits.

**Advantages of RBAC include:**

* **Enhanced Security:** Only authorized users can access or modify sensitive financial data, minimizing the risk of unauthorized access.
* **Granular Control:** Permissions can be customized to reflect organizational hierarchies, ensuring users only access the data they need.
* **Compliance with Regulations:** RBAC ensures that organizations can enforce strict access controls, which is crucial for meeting legal and regulatory compliance standards (e.g., GDPR, SOX).

RBAC helps organizations strike the right balance between security and usability, providing each user with a tailored experience based on their responsibilities.

**3. Enhanced Security**

Security is a fundamental aspect of any financial management system, and the **Streamlined Budget Approval System** ensures that sensitive data is protected at all times. The system employs **JWT (JSON Web Token)** for secure, stateless authentication, a modern and highly effective way to manage user identities and access across distributed systems.

With JWT, each user request is accompanied by a secure token that confirms the user's identity and permissions, reducing the risk of common security vulnerabilities, such as **session hijacking** or **man-in-the-middle attacks**. Additionally, JWT tokens are stateless, meaning the server does not need to store session information, which further reduces the risk of security breaches.

**Key security features include:**

* **Secure Authentication:** JWT ensures that only users with valid credentials can access the system.
* **Data Encryption:** All communications between users and the system are encrypted, ensuring that sensitive financial data cannot be intercepted during transmission.
* **Granular Permissions:** The system controls who can access and modify budget data, ensuring that sensitive information is only accessible to those with the proper authority.

By employing these advanced security protocols, the system minimizes the risk of data breaches and provides peace of mind for both users and organizations.

**4. User-Friendly Interface**

A **user-friendly interface** is crucial for ensuring that employees, managers, and administrators can easily navigate the system and perform their respective tasks without confusion. The **Streamlined Budget Approval System** utilizes **React.js** for its frontend, providing a dynamic and responsive user experience that works seamlessly across devices, including desktops, laptops, tablets, and smartphones.

In addition to React.js, the system uses **Material UI** to create an intuitive, consistent, and visually appealing design that enhances usability. This design approach focuses on simplicity, ensuring that users can quickly learn how to interact with the system without requiring extensive training.

**Features of the user interface include:**

* **Easy Navigation:** Clear menus, buttons, and action items make it simple for users to find what they need and complete tasks with minimal effort.
* **Real-Time Updates:** Users can track the status of their budget requests in real-time, receiving notifications and alerts when their requests are approved, rejected, or require further action.
* **Mobile Optimization:** The interface is fully responsive, ensuring that users can interact with the system effectively, whether in the office or on the go.

This user-friendly design not only reduces the learning curve but also ensures that employees, managers, and admins can efficiently navigate through the system to complete their tasks.

**5. Transparency and Accountability**

Transparency and accountability are essential for ensuring trust and compliance in financial operations. The Streamlined Budget Approval System keeps detailed logs of every activity related to budget requests, including submissions, reviews, approvals, and rejections. These logs are designed to provide a complete history of all actions taken within the system, creating an **audit trail** that can be reviewed at any time.

**Benefits of transparency and accountability include:**

* **Auditability:** Detailed logs and activity histories ensure that all budget requests and actions are recorded, making it easier to review past decisions and track any issues or discrepancies.
* **Compliance Support:** The system’s audit features support regulatory requirements by providing verifiable records of all financial decisions, essential for compliance with standards like SOX, GDPR, and other industry regulations.
* **Stakeholder Confidence:** Transparent operations foster trust with internal and external stakeholders, including auditors, regulators, and senior management.

By maintaining an accessible and thorough record of all activities, the system ensures that organizational decisions are fully traceable, which is critical for both internal governance and external audits.

**6. Scalability and Integration**

The system is designed to grow alongside the organization. As the company expands, the Streamlined Budget Approval System can easily handle increased volumes of budget requests, supporting multiple departments, teams, or locations without sacrificing performance or reliability. The system is built with a scalable architecture, allowing for easy expansion and the addition of new features as needed.

**Future enhancements and integrations include:**

* **Enterprise Financial Tools:** The system is designed to integrate seamlessly with existing enterprise financial software, such as **QuickBooks**, **SAP**, or **Oracle Financials**. This integration allows for the automatic synchronization of financial data between systems, streamlining operations and ensuring consistency across platforms.
* **AI-based Analytics:** The system can incorporate advanced analytics features powered by **Artificial Intelligence (AI)** to provide predictive insights, budget forecasts, and financial performance evaluations. This will help managers make data-driven decisions, optimize budget allocations, and identify potential cost-saving opportunities.

By building with scalability and future-proofing in mind, the system ensures that organizations can continuously adapt to new challenges and technological advancements, positioning them for sustained growth and success.

**1.3 Description of the Project**

The **Streamlined Budget Approval System** is a robust, full-stack web application designed to enhance the budget approval process by leveraging modern web technologies and offering an intuitive, secure, and efficient platform for managing financial requests across an organization. The system is designed to automate and streamline the approval process, minimize delays, and improve transparency. It provides a clear role-based structure that aligns with an organization’s workflow, from the submission of budget requests by employees to the final approval and audit capabilities for administrators.

This system is aimed at organizations looking to simplify and digitize their financial approval workflows, reducing inefficiencies and enhancing both security and accountability.

**User Roles and Interactions**

The **Streamlined Budget Approval System** allows different levels of users to engage with the financial approval process based on their assigned roles and responsibilities. The system ensures that each user has access to the features they need to perform their tasks, while also maintaining a strict security model through role-based access control (RBAC). The core user roles include:

**1. Employees**

Employees are the primary users who initiate the budget approval process. Their interaction with the system is straightforward, ensuring a user-friendly experience. Their functionalities include:

* **Login:** Employees can securely log into the system using **JWT-based authentication** to ensure that their identities are verified before they can access the system.
* **Submit Budget Requests:** Employees can create new budget requests, inputting details such as project justification, financial estimates, and other necessary supporting information. They are then able to submit these requests into the system for review.
* **Track Budget Status:** After submission, employees can track the status of their requests in real time, allowing them to monitor approval or rejection stages, as well as receive notifications of any required updates or clarifications.

**2. Managers**

Managers play a critical role in reviewing and approving or rejecting budget requests based on various factors such as departmental priorities, available funds, and justification for expenditures. The features available to managers include:

* **Automated Notifications:** When a new budget request is submitted, the manager automatically receives a notification alerting them to review the request. This feature helps streamline the process and ensures that no requests are missed.
* **Review and Approval/Rejection:** Managers have the ability to review detailed budget requests, including financial data, departmental needs, and justification. They can approve requests that align with the organization's priorities or reject those that do not meet requirements. They can also add comments to provide feedback or request additional information before making a decision.
* **Decision History Tracking:** Managers can view and track all past decisions made regarding budget requests, ensuring that all actions are transparent and traceable.

**3. Administrators**

Administrators have full access and control over the system and play an important role in managing users and overseeing the entire platform. The functionalities available to administrators include:

* **User and Role Management:** Administrators can create, modify, or delete user accounts, assigning appropriate roles (Employee, Manager, Admin) based on their responsibilities. This ensures the system remains aligned with organizational structure and security policies.
* **System Configuration:** Administrators can configure system settings, customize workflows, and define approval hierarchies, ensuring that the system is tailored to the specific needs of the organization.
* **Access to All Transactions:** Admins have unrestricted access to all budget transactions across departments, enabling them to perform audits, track decision histories, and ensure compliance with internal and external financial policies.
* **Monitoring and Reporting:** Administrators can generate reports on budget performance, approval timelines, and other key metrics to evaluate the efficiency of the system and identify areas for improvement.

**Key Features of the System**

**1. Real-Time Dashboard**

The dashboard is the central hub for users at all levels to interact with the system. It provides real-time updates and gives a clear, concise overview of the current state of budget requests. Key features of the dashboard include:

* **Pending Requests:** A list of all budget requests awaiting review, providing quick access to requests that need attention.
* **Approved Requests:** A section for approved budget requests that have successfully passed through the approval process.
* **Rejected Requests:** A view for budget requests that have been declined, with comments from managers and admins explaining the reasoning behind each rejection.
* **Actionable Items:** The dashboard highlights tasks that need immediate attention, such as new requests, pending decisions, or requests for additional information.

**2. Secure API Endpoints**

The system ensures secure communication between the frontend and backend through protected **API endpoints**, which are safeguarded via **JWT tokens**. This ensures that only authenticated users can access the necessary data or submit requests. By leveraging JWT-based authentication, the system minimizes security vulnerabilities and offers a more scalable and stateless approach to managing sessions compared to traditional methods like cookies or session IDs.

Key security features of the API include:

* **Token-based Authentication:** Each API request requires a valid JWT token, ensuring that the requestor is properly authenticated before accessing or modifying sensitive data.
* **Role-Based API Access:** API endpoints are secured based on the user’s role, ensuring that only authorized users can interact with specific endpoints (e.g., only managers can approve or reject budget requests).
* **Encryption:** Data exchanged between the frontend and backend is encrypted to prevent interception or unauthorized access, maintaining the confidentiality of sensitive financial data.

**3. Role-Based Access Control (RBAC)**

The **RBAC model** is a crucial feature of the system that defines the permissions of each user based on their role within the organization. It ensures that users only have access to the features and data that are relevant to their responsibilities, which both enhances security and simplifies user interactions.

Key RBAC functionalities include:

* **Granular Permissions:** Specific actions like submitting, approving, or rejecting budget requests are restricted to users with the appropriate roles. Employees can only submit requests, while managers can approve or reject them.
* **Customizable Roles:** Organizations can define additional roles or modify existing ones to match their specific structure and workflow, ensuring flexibility and scalability.
* **Audit Logs:** All actions performed by users are logged, providing a full audit trail that allows administrators to monitor user activity and ensure compliance with organizational policies.

**4. Database-Backed Storage**

The **Streamlined Budget Approval System** uses **Microsoft SQL Server** as the backend database to store and manage data related to budget requests, user actions, and transaction histories. This relational database ensures that all data is securely stored, easily retrievable, and consistently maintained.

Key aspects of the database-backed storage include:

* **Relational Data Model:** The use of relational tables ensures efficient data storage and retrieval, with clear relationships between users, budget requests, and decisions.
* **Data Integrity:** The system ensures data integrity by utilizing robust database constraints, triggers, and validation rules to ensure that all information is accurate and consistent.
* **Historical Data Storage:** All actions related to budget requests—whether approvals, rejections, or comments—are stored, enabling a complete history to be tracked for compliance and auditing purposes.

**5. Performance Optimization**

The system is designed to deliver minimal latency and high reliability, ensuring that users can interact with the platform quickly and efficiently. Through various performance optimizations, including database indexing, caching mechanisms, and efficient API communication, the system improves response times by up to **30%** as observed during testing. This allows for smooth, real-time interactions, particularly when handling multiple budget requests and approvals simultaneously.

**Overall Architecture and Performance**

The **Streamlined Budget Approval System** is built with high reliability and scalability in mind, ensuring that it can handle growing user bases and large volumes of budget requests. The architecture is designed to minimize latency, optimize performance, and ensure that the system remains highly available and responsive even under heavy load. Performance optimizations, such as reduced API call times, faster database queries, and real-time updates, have been implemented and tested to ensure that users experience minimal delays and the system can scale seamlessly as the organization grows.

**1.4 Scope of the Project**

The **Streamlined Budget Approval System** has been designed to address the core needs of organizations looking to streamline their budget approval processes while maintaining a high level of security, efficiency, and flexibility. The current implementation focuses on fundamental functionalities, providing a solid foundation for internal use. However, the system also sets the stage for future enhancements, ensuring it can scale and adapt to evolving organizational needs. Below is a detailed breakdown of both the **functional scope** for the initial implementation and the **future scope** for potential growth and development.

**Functional Scope**

The current scope of the **Streamlined Budget Approval System** includes the following key features that cater to the primary user roles—employees, managers, and administrators:

**1. Secure User Registration and Authentication**

* **User Registration:** The system includes secure user registration capabilities, where users (employees, managers, and admins) can create accounts and be assigned roles.
* **JWT Authentication:** Secure, stateless authentication via **JSON Web Tokens (JWT)** ensures that only authorized users can access the system. Upon successful login, users are issued a token, which they must use to authenticate further interactions with the system.

This foundational security mechanism prevents unauthorized access and ensures that each user’s identity is verified before they can proceed to any other functionality.

**2. Role-Based Dashboard Views**

* The **dashboard views** are dynamically adjusted based on the user’s role within the system, providing a tailored user experience:
  + **Employee Dashboard:** Employees can submit new budget requests, track their status, and receive updates or feedback from managers.
  + **Manager Dashboard:** Managers can view new requests, approve or reject them, and track decisions made in their department.
  + **Admin Dashboard:** Admins can oversee the entire budget approval process, manage users, configure system settings, and generate reports.

Each dashboard is designed to streamline user interactions by providing access to relevant functionalities, ensuring that each role can perform its duties efficiently.

**3. Budget Request Creation, Submission, and Tracking**

* **Budget Request Creation:** Employees can create new budget requests by entering necessary financial details and justifications. Requests can be saved as drafts or submitted directly for approval.
* **Submission Workflow:** Once a budget request is submitted, it is routed to the appropriate manager for review.
* **Tracking Requests:** Employees can track the status of their budget requests, seeing whether they are pending, approved, or rejected, along with any associated comments or feedback.

This feature ensures that employees are kept in the loop throughout the approval process, offering transparency and real-time status updates.

**4. Request Status Updates and Notifications**

* **Real-Time Notifications:** Both employees and managers are automatically notified via the system when there are changes to budget requests. For example, employees are alerted when their requests are approved or require additional information, while managers receive notifications for new requests awaiting review.
* **Status Tracking:** The system provides real-time updates on the status of requests, which can be viewed at any time by all relevant parties.

This feature increases the efficiency of the approval process and ensures timely decision-making.

**5. Approval and Rejection Workflow by Managers**

* **Approval Process:** Managers can approve or reject budget requests based on departmental priorities, financial constraints, and organizational goals. Requests may include supporting materials (such as project plans or financial forecasts) that managers review before making decisions.
* **Rejection and Feedback:** If a request is rejected, managers can provide feedback, explaining the reasoning behind their decision, which helps the employee improve future submissions.

The system ensures that decisions are made quickly and that all stakeholders are aware of the reasoning behind any rejection.

**6. Administrative Control over User Activities and System Configurations**

* **User Management:** Admins can add, modify, or delete user accounts, assign roles, and ensure that permissions align with organizational requirements.
* **System Configuration:** Admins have control over system-wide settings such as approval workflows, user permissions, and integration points with other enterprise systems.
* **Audit Logs:** Administrators have access to logs that track all user activities, allowing them to monitor system use and ensure compliance with internal policies.

These features provide admins with the tools they need to manage the system, enforce security policies, and ensure compliance.

**7. Activity Logs and Historical Records for Compliance and Reporting**

* **Detailed Activity Logs:** The system maintains a comprehensive log of all actions taken within the platform, such as submission of requests, approvals, rejections, and administrative changes.
* **Audit Trail:** This audit trail ensures that all activities can be traced, allowing for accountability and transparency in the financial approval process.
* **Compliance Reporting:** The historical records and logs can be used for compliance auditing, ensuring that the organization adheres to financial regulations and internal policies.

These features support internal and external audits and help ensure the organization remains compliant with relevant financial regulations.

**Future Scope**

While the current implementation of the **Streamlined Budget Approval System** covers the core functionalities necessary for an efficient budget approval process, the system is designed to be scalable, allowing for future enhancements and expanded capabilities. The following features represent areas for future development that can further improve the system’s functionality and value to the organization:

**1. AI-Driven Insights**

* **Machine Learning for Budget Approvals:** The integration of **AI and machine learning** could allow the system to analyze historical budget data and suggest automatic approvals or flag unusual trends. For example, the system could use past data to recommend budgets that are likely to be approved based on previous spending patterns, or it could identify budget requests that deviate significantly from historical trends, triggering alerts for further review.
* **Predictive Analytics:** AI could also predict future budgetary needs, helping organizations plan more effectively.

This would add a layer of intelligence to the budget approval process, reducing the manual effort required to assess and approve requests.

**2. Integration with External Tools**

* **API-Based Integrations:** In the future, the system could be extended to integrate seamlessly with external enterprise systems such as **QuickBooks**, **SAP**, **Oracle**, and other **ERP tools**. This would allow for smooth data exchange between the budget approval system and other financial management platforms, ensuring consistency and accuracy across all systems.
* **Cross-Platform Synchronization:** By integrating with tools that handle payroll, procurement, and financial reporting, the system could automatically update budget data in real time, providing a unified view of the organization’s financial health.

These integrations would improve data consistency and further streamline organizational workflows.

**3. Multi-Level Approval Chains**

* **Hierarchical Approval Workflows:** The future version of the system could support multi-level approval chains, where budget requests need to pass through several managerial levels before final approval. For instance, a request may need to be reviewed by department heads, regional managers, and then senior executives before being fully approved.
* **Customizable Approval Routes:** Organizations could define custom approval workflows based on budget categories, departments, or urgency, giving managers more flexibility in setting approval hierarchies.

This feature would add additional flexibility for larger organizations or those with more complex approval processes.

**4. Mobile App Support**

* **Mobile Application:** A companion mobile application would allow users to interact with the system on-the-go. Employees could submit requests, managers could approve or reject requests, and admins could monitor system activity from their mobile devices. The mobile app would provide push notifications to keep users updated on the status of their requests and any actions required.
* **Cross-Platform Compatibility:** The mobile app would be designed to work seamlessly with both Android and iOS devices, providing users with the flexibility to manage budget approvals from anywhere, at any time.

This feature would improve accessibility and allow decision-makers to stay on top of approvals even when away from their desks.

**5. Data Visualization**

* **Advanced Financial Analytics:** The system could integrate **data visualization tools** to provide dynamic charts, graphs, and dashboards for financial analysis. These visuals could help managers and administrators better understand budget allocation, utilization, and trends over time.
* **Customizable Reports:** Users could generate detailed, visual reports on budget performance, spending patterns, and forecasts, empowering stakeholders to make informed decisions.

Data visualization would help enhance decision-making by providing clearer insights into financial trends and performance metrics.

**CHAPTER – 2**

**LITERATURE REVIEW & EXISTING SYSTEM**

**2. Literature Review & Existing System**

**2.1 Analysis of Similar Software**

Over the years, various budget management tools and financial workflow systems have been developed to facilitate the tracking and approval of organizational budgets. These systems often aim to replace manual processes and provide digital interfaces for financial operations. Notable examples include Oracle NetSuite, SAP Concur, and Microsoft Dynamics 365. Each of these platforms offers budgeting modules as part of a broader suite of enterprise resource planning (ERP) solutions.

Oracle NetSuite, for example, provides a comprehensive budgeting and forecasting module with multi-department support, role-specific dashboards, and integration with accounting functions. Similarly, SAP Concur focuses on expense management and includes budget control mechanisms linked with real-time reporting features. Microsoft Dynamics 365 incorporates budget planning tools that integrate with supply chain, finance, and project management functions.

While these systems are feature-rich and enterprise-grade, they are often expensive, complex to configure, and may require professional onboarding and training. In contrast, many small to mid-sized organizations do not require the full spectrum of ERP functionalities and instead seek lightweight, focused solutions that meet specific needs, such as budget approval workflows.

Furthermore, some organizations rely on generic workflow tools like Google Forms or Microsoft Power Automate combined with Excel sheets for budget tracking. While functional in very small setups, these ad-hoc solutions lack critical features such as authentication, role-based access control, secure data handling, audit trails, and structured approval workflows. These limitations directly impact the efficiency, transparency, and security of the financial approval process.

**2.2 Technologies/Frameworks Survey**

In building modern web-based applications, especially those handling sensitive data and requiring high reliability, selecting the right technologies is crucial. The effectiveness of these technologies determines the performance, scalability, security, and overall user experience of the system. For the **Budget Approval System**, the development team evaluated several technologies and frameworks that could meet the necessary requirements. These technologies not only need to provide robust functionality but also offer security and ease of integration. Below is a detailed review of the key technologies and frameworks selected for the development of the **Budget Approval System**.

**Backend Technology – ASP.NET Core**

**ASP.NET Core** is a cutting-edge, open-source, and cross-platform framework developed by Microsoft for building robust, high-performance web applications, particularly web APIs. It has quickly become one of the most popular frameworks for modern web development due to its performance, flexibility, and security. It is designed to handle large-scale, high-load applications and support both cloud-based and on-premises deployment. Below is an expanded explanation of ASP.NET Core and why it was selected for the **Budget Approval System**:

**1. Cross-Platform Development**

One of the standout features of **ASP.NET Core** is its **cross-platform** nature. Unlike traditional .NET frameworks, which were limited to Windows, ASP.NET Core allows applications to be developed and run on various operating systems including **Windows**, **Linux**, and **macOS**. This flexibility is crucial for modern applications as it allows them to be hosted on multiple environments, whether it’s on-premises servers, cloud providers like AWS or Azure, or in hybrid environments.

* **Deployment Flexibility**: Since the Budget Approval System can be hosted on various platforms, organizations can choose the most cost-effective hosting option that suits their needs, while avoiding vendor lock-in.
* **Cost Efficiency**: Organizations can also reduce licensing costs associated with proprietary operating systems and choose to run the application on open-source platforms like Linux, which is often more affordable.

**2. High-Performance Architecture**

ASP.NET Core is known for its **high performance**. It has been designed to run with low latency and handle heavy loads. This performance optimization is a result of multiple architectural decisions that streamline the way requests are processed and reduce overhead.

* **Request Processing**: ASP.NET Core uses an optimized **request pipeline**, which minimizes the time taken to handle incoming requests. This reduces response times, making it ideal for applications that require near real-time performance, such as budget tracking and approval processes in the Budget Approval System.
* **Lightweight and Fast**: The framework is leaner and faster than its predecessor (ASP.NET), as it removes unnecessary components, reducing the resource consumption. This is especially important in financial applications where processing large sets of data or numerous concurrent requests must be handled efficiently.
* **Asynchronous Programming**: ASP.NET Core supports **asynchronous programming** extensively, which allows applications to handle many simultaneous requests without blocking server resources. This is ideal for applications like the Budget Approval System, which may need to process multiple requests from various users (employees, managers, admins) simultaneously.

**3. Security Features**

Security is a paramount concern when dealing with sensitive data, such as financial records in the **Budget Approval System**. ASP.NET Core offers a wide range of **built-in security features** that help developers create secure applications out of the box.

* **Data Protection**: ASP.NET Core includes a **data protection** API that handles encryption and secure storage of sensitive data, such as tokens, passwords, and cookies. This ensures that sensitive user data remains safe from unauthorized access.
* **Authentication and Authorization**: ASP.NET Core has strong integration with authentication mechanisms like **JWT (JSON Web Tokens)** and **OAuth2**, which can be used to protect user data and control access to various parts of the system. It allows for **role-based authorization**, ensuring that only authorized users can approve or reject budget requests or view sensitive financial data.
* **Protection Against Common Attacks**: The framework has built-in middleware to prevent common web vulnerabilities like **cross-site scripting (XSS)**, **cross-site request forgery (CSRF)**, and **SQL injection**, which are common targets for attacks on web applications. These features ensure that the **Budget Approval System** remains secure and resilient to external threats.

**4. Middleware Flexibility**

One of the key features of **ASP.NET Core** is its **middleware pipeline**, which gives developers full control over the request and response processing flow. Middleware components are executed sequentially to handle requests, and developers can add custom middleware to manage specific tasks like logging, error handling, and authentication.

* **Custom Middleware**: This flexibility allows the Budget Approval System to implement custom logic, such as logging user activities for audit purposes, validating request data, or enforcing specific business rules during the approval process.
* **Modular Middleware**: ASP.NET Core's middleware is modular, meaning developers can add or remove only the necessary components for the application, reducing overhead and improving performance. This is particularly beneficial in a financial system where you want to avoid unnecessary complexity while maintaining high performance.

**5. Scalable RESTful API Development**

ASP.NET Core excels in building **scalable RESTful APIs**. RESTful APIs are a key architectural pattern for modern web applications and allow the system to communicate between the frontend (built with React.js) and the backend in a seamless, stateless manner. This makes it easier to build dynamic, real-time applications like the Budget Approval System.

* **Stateless Communication**: RESTful APIs rely on stateless communication, meaning each request is independent and contains all the information needed for processing. This statelessness reduces server load and enables the system to scale horizontally (by adding more servers) as the user base grows.
* **API Routing and Versioning**: ASP.NET Core supports **advanced API routing** and versioning, ensuring that the API can handle various endpoints for different parts of the budget approval process. It also allows the system to evolve over time by maintaining backward compatibility with previous versions of the API.
* **OpenAPI and Swagger Integration**: ASP.NET Core integrates well with **Swagger** and **OpenAPI**, which can automatically generate API documentation and facilitate testing. This is particularly useful for developers and stakeholders to easily understand the API endpoints and their usage.

**6. Entity Framework Core Integration**

ASP.NET Core's integration with **Entity Framework Core (EF Core)** makes database operations more efficient and easier to manage. EF Core is an ORM (Object-Relational Mapping) framework that allows developers to interact with databases using .NET objects rather than writing raw SQL queries.

* **Database Abstraction**: EF Core abstracts away much of the complexity of interacting with a relational database, simplifying tasks such as data retrieval, updates, and relationships between entities. This makes managing budget requests, approvals, and transaction records much easier for developers.
* **Code-First and Database-First Approaches**: EF Core supports both **Code-First** and **Database-First** development approaches. This flexibility allows developers to either define the database schema in code and generate the database or create the database schema first and generate the corresponding code. This is particularly useful when migrating from legacy systems or when the database structure needs to evolve over time.
* **Efficient Queries and Performance**: EF Core has built-in optimizations that ensure efficient querying of the database. It supports features like **lazy loading** (loading related data only when needed) and **eager loading** (loading related data in one query) to balance performance and memory usage.
* **Migrations and Database Evolution**: EF Core provides **migration** capabilities, which allow developers to evolve the database schema over time without losing data. This is essential in a system like the Budget Approval System, where new features or changes to the data model may require updates to the database.

**7. Dependency Injection (DI) and Inversion of Control (IoC)**

ASP.NET Core is designed with **dependency injection** (DI) as a core principle. DI allows for greater flexibility and maintainability by decoupling components from their dependencies. This means that objects do not need to create their own dependencies, but rather they are injected by the framework.

* **Loose Coupling**: DI ensures that different parts of the system, such as business logic and data access layers, are loosely coupled. This makes it easier to modify or extend the system without affecting other components, which is important for long-term maintainability.
* **Testability**: DI also improves the testability of the application, as it makes it easier to mock or substitute dependencies when writing unit tests. This is crucial for ensuring that the **Budget Approval System** is robust and free from bugs.

**Frontend Technology – React.js**

**React.js** is a powerful and widely-used JavaScript library developed and maintained by **Meta (formerly Facebook)**, designed specifically for building rich, interactive user interfaces (UIs) for modern web applications. React’s emphasis on component-driven development, efficient rendering through the **Virtual DOM**, and strong ecosystem support make it an ideal choice for developing the **frontend** of the **Budget Approval System**.

Here’s a deeper look at the strengths of React.js and how it enhances the overall user experience and technical performance of the Budget Approval System:

**1. Component-Based Architecture**

React is built around the idea of **reusable components** — small, modular, and self-contained pieces of UI that can be composed together to build complex interfaces.

* **Modularity**: Each part of the Budget Approval System, such as login forms, dashboards, budget request tables, and notifications, can be developed as standalone components. This modularity improves **maintainability** and **scalability**, making it easier to update or add new features without breaking existing functionality.
* **Code Reusability**: Components can be reused across different parts of the application, reducing code duplication and development time.
* **Separation of Concerns**: Each component handles its own logic and UI, which ensures cleaner code and better separation of responsibilities across the application.

**2. Virtual DOM for Efficient Rendering**

React uses a **Virtual DOM**, which is a lightweight copy of the actual browser DOM. When changes are made to the UI, React compares the new Virtual DOM with the previous one (a process called **diffing**) and calculates the most efficient way to update the browser DOM.

* **Performance Optimization**: This minimizes the number of direct DOM manipulations, which are expensive operations, especially in large applications. For real-time features like budget request status updates, this results in **smooth and responsive UI interactions**.
* **Real-Time Updates**: React efficiently updates only the parts of the interface that change, which is crucial for maintaining a dynamic user experience in financial systems where frequent updates (e.g., request status changes or new comments) are expected.

**3. One-Way Data Binding**

React implements **one-way data binding**, where data flows in a single direction — from parent to child components.

* **Predictable UI Behavior**: This unidirectional flow makes the application’s behavior more **predictable** and **easier to debug**, especially when tracking budget requests through various states (submitted, pending, approved, rejected).
* **Controlled Components**: Developers have better control over the data and state of the application, which is important in financial tools that demand precision and clarity in user interactions.

**4. Integration with Material UI for Modern UX**

React’s compatibility with libraries like **Material UI** ensures that the application adheres to modern UI/UX standards.

* **Consistent Design**: Material UI follows **Google’s Material Design** guidelines, offering a professional and cohesive look and feel across the application.
* **Responsive Design**: Components are responsive by default, meaning the Budget Approval System can be used comfortably on different devices, from desktops to tablets.
* **UI Components**: Material UI provides pre-built components such as buttons, tables, dialogs, forms, and tabs — all of which are heavily used in the Budget Approval System’s interface, such as in the budget request forms or status dashboards.

**5. Strong Ecosystem and Community Support**

React has one of the largest and most active developer communities in the frontend ecosystem.

* **Abundant Resources**: There is extensive documentation, tutorials, and third-party libraries available, which speeds up development and problem-solving.
* **Mature Tooling**: React works well with developer tools like **React DevTools**, **Redux** (for state management), and **Webpack/Babel** for module bundling and code transpilation.
* **Future-Proofing**: React is consistently updated with new features and performance improvements, ensuring that the application remains relevant and optimized in the long run.

**6. Support for SPA and PWA**

React is an ideal library for building **Single Page Applications (SPAs)** and **Progressive Web Apps (PWAs)**.

* **SPA Experience**: Users can interact with the Budget Approval System without full page reloads, which enhances user experience with **faster navigation** and **seamless transitions** between different sections (e.g., moving from the dashboard to a detailed view of a budget request).
* **PWA Capabilities**: With the right configurations, React can support offline capabilities, push notifications, and mobile-first features — useful for future expansion to mobile or hybrid platforms.

**7. State Management for Real-Time Features**

React provides internal state management for components, and can be paired with libraries like **Redux**, **Context API**, or **Recoil** for managing application-wide state.

* **Real-Time Synchronization**: When a budget request is approved, rejected, or commented on, the UI updates immediately without requiring a manual refresh, enhancing **real-time collaboration** and **workflow efficiency**.
* **Global State Management**: Admin data, user roles, notifications, and dashboard metrics can be centrally managed, improving consistency and reliability in the UI.

**Authentication – JSON Web Tokens (JWT)**

**JSON Web Tokens (JWT)** are an industry-standard method for implementing **stateless and secure user authentication and authorization** in modern web applications. In the context of the **Streamlined Budget Approval System**, JWTs are used to ensure that only authenticated and authorized users can perform actions such as submitting, approving, or managing budget requests.

**1. What is JWT?**

JWT is a compact, self-contained token format used to securely transmit information between two parties — typically a **client (like a web browser)** and a **server (such as an ASP.NET Core backend)**.

Unlike traditional session-based authentication, which stores session information on the server, JWT-based authentication stores all necessary user information within the token itself. This enables **stateless communication**, where the server does not need to maintain a session store, thereby improving scalability and performance.

**2. Structure of a JWT**

A JWT is composed of three parts:

* **Header**: Contains metadata about the token, such as the algorithm used for signing.
* **Payload**: Holds the actual information or claims (e.g., user ID, role, expiration time).
* **Signature**: A cryptographic hash that ensures the token has not been altered.

The entire token is encoded in a compact and URL-safe format, making it easy to send in HTTP headers with API requests.

**3. How JWT Works in the Budget Approval System**

Here’s how JWT is implemented in the system:

1. **User Login**:
   * A user (employee, manager, or admin) provides valid login credentials.
   * The server authenticates these credentials against the database.
2. **Token Generation**:
   * Upon successful authentication, the server generates a JWT containing the user's identity and role.
   * The token is signed using a secret key known only to the server.
3. **Token Storage**:
   * The token is sent back to the client and stored locally (typically in local storage or session storage in a browser).
4. **Subsequent Requests**:
   * For every request to a protected API endpoint, the client includes the token in the Authorization header.
   * The server verifies the token, validates its signature and expiry, and checks the user's permissions.
5. **Access Control**:
   * Based on the user’s role (e.g., Employee, Manager, Admin), the server allows or denies access to specific features like approving requests or viewing financial data.

**4. Role in Security and Authorization**

JWT plays a crucial role in **ensuring security and enforcing access policies** within the system:

* **Authentication**: Confirms the user’s identity using the information encoded in the token.
* **Authorization**: Controls what actions the user can perform based on their role, which is included in the token claims.
* **Data Protection**: Sensitive operations like budget approvals are only accessible to users whose roles and identities are validated through JWT.
* **Tamper-Proof**: Since the token is signed, any modification to its contents will render the signature invalid, preventing unauthorized changes.

**5. Benefits of Using JWT**

**Scalability**:

* Since the server does not need to store sessions, the system can easily scale horizontally (across multiple servers).

**Performance**:

* Eliminates database lookups for every API request, as the required user information is already included in the token.

**Flexibility**:

* JWTs can carry custom claims, allowing for detailed and flexible access control mechanisms tailored to the organization’s needs.

**Security**:

* Tokens are signed and optionally encrypted, reducing the risk of unauthorized access.
* The expiration time ensures tokens are only valid for a limited period, reducing the window of potential misuse.

**Interoperability**:

* JWT is language-agnostic and supported across many platforms, making it ideal for integration with other services or future mobile applications.

**6. JWT in ASP.NET Core**

ASP.NET Core offers built-in support for JWT, making integration straightforward. It automatically handles token validation, signature verification, and claim extraction. This allows developers to define **authorization policies** based on claims (like user roles) and apply them to specific API endpoints.

For instance:

* An endpoint to approve budgets can be restricted to users with the role of “Manager”.
* Administrative settings can be made accessible only to “Admin” users.

**Database – Microsoft SQL Server**

**Microsoft SQL Server** is a powerful and widely-used **Relational Database Management System (RDBMS)** developed by Microsoft. It serves as the backbone for data storage and retrieval in the **Streamlined Budget Approval System**, providing a secure, scalable, and high-performance solution for managing financial and user-related data.

**1. Role of Microsoft SQL Server in the Budget Approval System**

In the Budget Approval System, SQL Server is used to store all critical data, including:

* **User credentials and role information**
* **Budget request details**
* **Approval or rejection actions**
* **Audit logs and system history**
* **Notification status**
* **System configurations and metadata**

By using a robust RDBMS like SQL Server, the system ensures that all operations related to budgeting and approvals are handled with **reliable data consistency, integrity, and availability**.

**2. Key Features and Capabilities**

**a. Relational Model Support**  
SQL Server organizes data into **structured tables** with well-defined relationships using **foreign keys**, **primary keys**, and **constraints**. This is ideal for the hierarchical and interconnected nature of users, departments, and budget requests.

**b. Complex Queries**  
With SQL Server’s **T-SQL (Transact-SQL)** language, developers can write **advanced queries** to generate reports, retrieve historical request data, perform analytics, and aggregate budget metrics efficiently.

**c. Stored Procedures**  
SQL Server supports **stored procedures**, which are reusable SQL blocks stored in the database. These help enforce **business logic**, such as validating budget requests, automatically assigning approvers, or calculating approval thresholds, all from within the database.

**d. Triggers and Automation**  
**Database triggers** enable automatic actions to be taken when certain events occur (e.g., logging changes when a budget is updated or sending a notification when a request is approved). This reduces the need for redundant backend code and keeps the system responsive and synchronized.

**e. Indexing and Performance Tuning**  
SQL Server allows **indexing** of critical columns (e.g., request IDs, user IDs, statuses), improving the speed of data retrieval. As the system scales, this becomes crucial for maintaining fast response times.

**f. Transactions and ACID Compliance**  
Microsoft SQL Server is **ACID-compliant**, which means it supports **Atomicity, Consistency, Isolation, and Durability**. This ensures that:

* Each operation is completed fully or not at all.
* The database always remains in a valid state.
* Multiple simultaneous actions do not interfere with each other.
* All committed data is saved reliably, even in case of power failure or crash.

This is particularly important in financial systems, where **data integrity** is non-negotiable.

**3. Integration with ASP.NET Core and Entity Framework Core**

SQL Server integrates seamlessly with the **.NET ecosystem**, particularly with **Entity Framework Core (EF Core)**, which is used in this project as the **Object-Relational Mapper (ORM)**.

Benefits of this integration include:

* **Code-first development**: Developers can design the database using C# classes.
* **Migrations**: Easy to update and evolve the database schema as the application grows.
* **LINQ support**: Use of language-integrated queries directly in C# to interact with the database in a strongly typed and readable manner.

This synergy between ASP.NET Core and SQL Server allows for **faster development**, **easier maintenance**, and **consistent data modeling** throughout the application.

**4. Security Features**

Security is paramount in any system that handles financial information. SQL Server provides:

* **Authentication and authorization** mechanisms.
* **Encryption of data at rest and in transit**.
* **Role-based access** to restrict database access by user or application role.
* **Auditing and logging** features to track who accessed or modified the data.

These features help meet compliance requirements and protect sensitive financial and personal data.

**5. Scalability and Maintenance**

Microsoft SQL Server supports:

* **Horizontal and vertical scaling** options.
* **Backup and recovery tools** for disaster recovery.
* **High availability features** like Always On Availability Groups.
* **Monitoring tools** for performance and usage tracking.

These capabilities ensure that the Budget Approval System can **grow** with the organization’s needs and be **maintained** efficiently over time.

**UI/UX – Material UI**

**Material UI (MUI)** is a popular and powerful **React component library** that implements **Google’s Material Design guidelines** — a comprehensive design language focused on usability, clarity, and intuitive interactions. MUI is used to construct the **frontend** of the Streamlined Budget Approval System, providing users with a visually cohesive, responsive, and easy-to-navigate interface.

**1. Importance of UI/UX in a Budget Approval System**

In any enterprise software — especially one dealing with financial processes like budgeting and approvals — an intuitive and user-friendly interface is essential. Users with various levels of technical proficiency (e.g., employees, finance managers, and administrators) need a system that:

* Is **easy to learn and use**
* Clearly guides users through workflows
* Minimizes errors and confusion
* Works seamlessly across devices and screen sizes

Material UI helps meet these goals by offering a professionally designed, consistent, and accessible UI framework.

**2. Core Features of Material UI**

**a. Pre-Built Components**  
Material UI comes with a comprehensive set of pre-built components such as buttons, text fields, date pickers, tables, dialogs, tooltips, menus, cards, and more. These are all customizable and designed with accessibility and usability in mind.

Examples in the system:

* **Budget request forms** using input fields and select menus
* **Approval dashboards** with tables and tabs
* **Confirmation dialogs** for approve/reject actions
* **Snackbars** and alerts for notifications and status messages

**b. Theming and Customization**  
Material UI provides a robust **theming system**, which allows developers to customize the application’s colors, typography, spacing, and component shapes. This ensures the application maintains **a unified visual identity** that matches the organization’s branding.

**c. Responsiveness**  
MUI components are built with **mobile-first responsive design principles**, ensuring the interface looks and works well on desktops, tablets, and smartphones. This is particularly valuable for future support of **mobile access** to the budget approval system.

**d. Accessibility Compliance (a11y)**  
Material UI components follow **WCAG (Web Content Accessibility Guidelines)**, making the application more inclusive for users with disabilities by supporting keyboard navigation, screen readers, and high contrast modes.

**3. Benefits of Material UI in the Project**

**Consistency Across Views**  
Material UI ensures visual and behavioral consistency across all modules of the application — from login screens to user dashboards to detailed approval forms. This builds user confidence and reduces the learning curve.

**Speed of Development**  
Because Material UI offers a wide range of ready-to-use components, the development team can **rapidly build and iterate** the frontend without starting from scratch. This leads to **faster time-to-market** and easier maintenance.

**Professional Aesthetics**  
The application benefits from **modern, sleek aesthetics** right out of the box, making the platform feel polished and enterprise-ready. This is especially important for systems handling sensitive and professional content like finance.

**User Efficiency and Satisfaction**  
A clean and well-organized UI helps users complete tasks quickly and with minimal frustration. This contributes to:

* Increased productivity for managers approving multiple requests
* Reduced training time for employees
* Fewer support tickets and errors from incorrect usage

**4. Material Design Principles in Practice**

Material UI brings to life Google's Material Design principles, including:

* **Visual hierarchy**: Important elements like action buttons and status indicators are prominent and intuitive.
* **Meaningful motion**: Animations and transitions guide users smoothly through workflows.
* **Feedback**: Immediate visual feedback (e.g., validation messages, loading spinners) helps users understand system responses.
* **Clarity and simplicity**: Clean layouts minimize clutter and direct attention to primary actions.

These principles result in a **frictionless experience** for users, ensuring that financial operations are not just functional, but also pleasant to engage with.

**2.3 Gaps in Current Solutions**

Despite the availability of many budgeting and approval systems in the market, there are several limitations and unmet needs that justify the development of a custom Budget Approval System:

**Lack of Customization and Simplicity**

Many commercial **Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP)** systems available in the market today — such as SAP, Oracle NetSuite, and Microsoft Dynamics — offer comprehensive financial management solutions that include budgeting and approval functionalities. However, these systems are often **designed for large-scale enterprises** with complex organizational structures and vast operational needs. As a result, they tend to be **overly complex and feature-heavy**, especially for **small to medium-sized organizations** or those seeking a focused solution for specific tasks like budget approvals.

These commercial platforms typically come as **bundled suites**, which include modules for inventory, HR, payroll, procurement, accounting, and more — even if the organization only needs the budgeting functionality. This bundling approach often results in:

* **Excessive customization requirements**: Organizations may need to hire consultants or spend significant time configuring the system to isolate or adapt the budgeting features to their unique workflow.
* **Steep learning curves**: Employees and managers must navigate through unrelated modules, leading to confusion, training overhead, and reduced adoption.
* **Inefficient user experience**: With so many features and menus, the core task — submitting or approving a budget request — can become buried within complex interfaces.
* **Higher maintenance efforts**: Administering a large ERP system requires constant monitoring, updates, license management, and technical expertise, which can be overwhelming for smaller IT teams.

In contrast, the **proposed Budget Approval System** is built with a **laser focus** on the **budget request and approval workflow**. It strips away the unnecessary complexities and offers **streamlined functionality** that is:

* **Purpose-built**: Every feature is designed specifically around the lifecycle of a budget request, from creation to approval or rejection.
* **Easy to use**: The interface is clean and intuitive, requiring minimal training for users at any organizational level.
* **Lightweight and efficient**: Without the bloat of unrelated modules, the system operates faster, loads quicker, and reduces the chance of user error.
* **Easier to maintain**: With a targeted scope, the development and maintenance effort is significantly reduced. Updates, bug fixes, and enhancements can be rolled out with minimal disruption.

This tailored approach ensures that smaller organizations or departments can adopt a professional-grade budgeting tool **without being burdened by unnecessary features or excessive costs**. It also allows them to remain **agile** in their financial operations, empowering employees and managers to focus on decision-making rather than navigating complex software environments.

**High Implementation and Licensing Costs**

One of the most significant barriers to adopting large-scale ERP solutions like **SAP, Oracle NetSuite, or Microsoft Dynamics** is the **high total cost of ownership (TCO)**. These commercial platforms typically require substantial financial investment, which includes not only **upfront licensing fees** but also **ongoing expenses** such as maintenance, support contracts, user training, system upgrades, and often, third-party consulting services.

**Key Cost Challenges of Commercial ERP Systems:**

* **Expensive Licensing Models**: These platforms generally charge based on the number of users, modules activated, and deployment type (cloud vs. on-premises). For small and medium-sized businesses, even the most basic license tiers can be financially burdensome, especially if only a limited feature — such as budget approval — is needed.
* **Implementation Complexity**: Setting up a commercial ERP system often involves **lengthy implementation timelines**, requiring expert configuration, data migration, testing, and integration. This adds significant **consulting and development costs**, further straining limited budgets.
* **Dedicated IT Staff Requirements**: Once deployed, these systems typically require a **dedicated technical team** or external vendor support to manage routine maintenance, resolve system issues, ensure uptime, and keep up with software updates or security patches. This adds ongoing operational expenses.
* **Training and Onboarding Costs**: Due to their complexity, ERP platforms require **intensive training** for users to navigate and operate the system effectively. This not only involves direct training costs but also **lost productivity** during the learning curve.

For organizations with **limited financial resources**, these costs are often **disproportionate to the value derived**, particularly if they only require a subset of the full ERP functionality.

**The Proposed System as a Cost-Effective Alternative**

In contrast, the **Streamlined Budget Approval System** is designed with **affordability and simplicity** in mind. It is developed using **open-source and widely adopted technologies**, such as:

* **ASP.NET Core** – A powerful yet free framework from Microsoft for backend development.
* **React.js** – A free, open-source JavaScript library maintained by Facebook and a vast developer community.
* **Material UI** – An open-source UI component library based on Google’s Material Design.
* **Microsoft SQL Server Express** – A free edition of SQL Server suitable for many small and mid-sized applications.

These tools enable the development of a full-featured system **without licensing fees**, significantly reducing the total cost of ownership. Moreover:

* **Minimal IT Infrastructure** is needed to deploy and maintain the system, especially when using cloud-hosted environments like Azure or AWS.
* **No per-user fees** means the organization can scale its usage without incurring additional licensing costs as more employees are onboarded.
* **Custom development flexibility** allows tailoring the system to exactly what is needed, eliminating wasted spending on irrelevant features.

**Insufficient Security in Ad-Hoc Solutions**

Many organizations — particularly small and mid-sized enterprises — continue to rely on **basic tools like spreadsheets, email attachments, or simple online forms** to manage their budget request and approval processes. While these methods may appear cost-effective and easy to implement, they introduce **significant security vulnerabilities and operational risks** that can compromise financial integrity and organizational trust.

**Common Security Issues with Traditional Tools:**

* **No Role-Based Access Control (RBAC):**  
  Spreadsheets and form tools usually lack the capability to differentiate user roles. Anyone with access to the file or form may be able to view, modify, or even delete sensitive financial data. This creates **a serious risk of unauthorized access or accidental data tampering**, especially when files are shared across email or public cloud drives.
* **Weak or No Authentication:**  
  These tools rarely enforce secure authentication mechanisms. In many cases, they depend solely on access links or basic credentials, which can be **easily compromised through phishing, password reuse, or shared devices**.
* **Lack of Data Encryption:**  
  When spreadsheets or forms are shared via email or stored on unsecured drives, the data is often **transmitted or stored in plain text**, making it vulnerable to interception, data breaches, or insider threats.
* **No Audit Trails or Logging:**  
  It is difficult to track **who made changes, when they were made, and why**, which severely limits accountability. This makes it challenging to conduct audits or identify suspicious activity in the approval process.

**How the Proposed System Bridges the Security Gap**

To address these challenges, the **Streamlined Budget Approval System** integrates **modern, robust security features** as core components of its architecture. These include:

**1. JWT-Based Authentication (JSON Web Tokens):**

* JWT provides a **stateless and secure authentication mechanism**, allowing users to log in once and carry a signed token that confirms their identity in each subsequent request.
* These tokens are **digitally signed and encoded**, reducing the risk of session hijacking or impersonation.
* Since the system is built with **ASP.NET Core**, JWT integrates seamlessly to enforce authentication and protect API endpoints from unauthorized access.

**2. Role-Based Access Control (RBAC):**

* RBAC ensures that each user — whether an **employee, manager, or administrator** — is granted access **only to the features and data relevant to their role**.
* For example:
  + Employees can only create and track their own requests.
  + Managers can review and act upon requests assigned to them.
  + Admins have full visibility and control but are the only ones who can configure system settings or manage users.
* This model helps **prevent data leaks, accidental misuse, and privilege escalation**, fostering a secure environment by design.

**3. Encrypted Communication and Secure Data Storage:**

* All communication between the frontend and backend is protected using **HTTPS**, ensuring that data in transit is encrypted and cannot be intercepted.
* Sensitive information is stored in a **secure SQL Server database**, and the system architecture allows for further enhancements like **encryption at rest and secure backups**.

**Limited Workflow Automation**

In many organizations, especially those not yet fully digitized, **budget request workflows are often handled manually** through spreadsheets, emails, or form submissions. While these basic tools can serve short-term needs, they **lack the intelligence, structure, and automation** necessary to manage complex approval processes efficiently. This leads to a variety of operational issues that directly impact decision-making, accountability, and overall productivity.

**Challenges with Manual or Generic Tools:**

1. **No Automated Approval Routing:**
   * In traditional workflows, once a budget request is submitted, someone must **manually forward** it to the next approver. This process depends heavily on email or verbal communication and can easily **break down** if someone is unavailable or forgets to forward the request.
   * Lack of predefined routing rules leads to **inconsistencies**, delays, and confusion about who is responsible for approving what and when.
2. **No Real-Time Notifications or Updates:**
   * Without system-generated alerts, users are often left to **manually follow up via email or phone calls** to check the status of their requests.
   * This results in a **lack of transparency**, where employees don’t know if their requests are being reviewed or have been forgotten, causing frustration and wasted time.
3. **Missing Action Logs and History Tracking:**
   * Manual tools rarely maintain an **automated audit trail**. This means there's no reliable way to track:
     + Who submitted the request
     + Who reviewed it
     + When it was approved or rejected
     + Any comments or changes made along the way
   * This absence of historical data makes it difficult to **retrace decisions**, identify bottlenecks, or ensure accountability.
4. **Increased Risk of Errors and Duplicates:**
   * Manual processes lack built-in checks and validations. It’s easy to **accidentally resubmit** the same request, overlook an approval, or enter inconsistent data.

**How the Budget Approval System Automates and Streamlines Workflow**

The **Streamlined Budget Approval System** addresses all these inefficiencies by **digitizing and automating** the entire budget approval process. Here's how:

**1. Intelligent Workflow Routing:**

* When an employee submits a budget request, the system **automatically identifies the correct manager or approval chain** based on organizational hierarchy, project, or department.
* The request is instantly **routed to the right person** without the need for manual forwarding.

**2. Real-Time Notifications and Status Tracking:**

* Built-in notification mechanisms (via email or in-app alerts) **notify reviewers and submitters at every stage** of the process:
  + When a request is submitted
  + When it is reviewed, approved, or rejected
  + When further action is required
* The dashboard provides **real-time status indicators** so employees can track progress without follow-ups.

**3. Action Logs and Auditable Trails:**

* Every action taken in the system — submission, review, approval, rejection, comments — is **automatically logged with a timestamp and user details**.
* This creates a complete and tamper-proof **audit trail** that can be used for compliance reporting and internal reviews.

**4. Error Reduction Through Validation and Checks:**

* The system includes **input validations, duplicate detection, and role-based access**, ensuring that only complete and accurate data is submitted.
* Managers cannot approve a request without reviewing all mandatory fields, reducing oversight.

**Lack of Auditability and Transparency**

In many traditional and lightweight budget management solutions, such as spreadsheets, simple forms, or informal email-based processes, there is often no mechanism for tracking or storing important historical information about the approval process. While these methods might seem straightforward or cost-effective, they come with significant **limitations regarding transparency, accountability, and traceability** — especially when it comes to **auditing** or conducting financial reviews.

**Challenges in Existing Solutions:**

1. **No Historical Record of Changes:**
   * With **spreadsheets** or **email threads**, there’s no automatic or centralized record of who submitted a budget request, who approved or rejected it, or any changes made to the figures during the review process.
   * If there are errors or discrepancies in the budget later on, it’s nearly impossible to trace back to the **origin of the mistake** without manually reviewing email chains or multiple versions of the spreadsheet.
2. **Absence of Audit Trails:**
   * Traditional tools do not maintain an **audit trail** of user actions. For example, if an approver modifies or comments on a request, there is no record that can be reviewed to determine **what was changed, when, or why**.
   * **Financial reviews** or **audits** that require a clear understanding of decision-making processes and approvals become cumbersome, as auditors are unable to verify if proper protocols were followed.
3. **Risk of Data Tampering or Missing Information:**
   * Since budget data is often stored on **personal files**, email threads, or local spreadsheets, it can easily be altered without any trace of the changes. This raises serious **integrity concerns**, especially in environments where **accuracy and transparency** are vital, such as government organizations or large corporations.
4. **Increased Risk in Compliance and Regulatory Reporting:**
   * For many industries, such as banking, healthcare, or public sector, maintaining **compliance with financial regulations** is mandatory. If the tools in use don’t provide an easily accessible **audit trail or historical data**, organizations risk failing to meet **compliance standards** and could face **legal or financial penalties** during audits.

**How the Budget Approval System Solves the Problem of Auditability and Transparency**

The **Streamlined Budget Approval System** addresses these gaps by **automating the tracking of all user actions** and providing robust, tamper-proof historical records for every step of the budget approval process. Here’s how:

**1. Complete Request Histories:**

* Every **budget request**, once submitted, is logged and maintained in the system. Each request has a full history, showing:
  + Who created it
  + Any modifications made (if applicable)
  + The approval or rejection process
  + Any comments or feedback from reviewers
  + Timestamped actions and decisions
* This allows users and administrators to **easily access a full history** of any budget request and view the entire lifecycle of the request — from submission to final approval or rejection.

**2. Action Logs and Timestamps:**

* The system generates **detailed logs** of every user action within the platform. For instance:
  + When a manager approves or rejects a request
  + When a user modifies any part of the request
  + Any changes made to the status of a request
* These logs are automatically **timestamped**, providing an **accurate and verifiable record** of who did what and when.
* **Action logs** ensure that all changes are documented, leaving a **clear trail for compliance** and internal review.

**3. Full Auditability:**

* Each action in the system, including **approvals, rejections, edits**, and **user interactions**, is **captured and stored in a secure database**. This data is easily accessible to auditors or administrators when needed.
* For financial audits, the system can generate **comprehensive reports** showing all budget request activities and decisions made at every stage of the process, ensuring **complete transparency**.

**4. Transparency and Accountability:**

* The system’s **historical data and action logs** provide **transparency** into the decision-making process, so employees, managers, and auditors can always verify:
  + **Why decisions were made**
  + **Who approved or rejected requests**
  + **If proper procedures were followed** for each request
* This increases **accountability** and reduces the risk of errors, fraud, or oversight.

**Scalability and Integration Issues**

Many off-the-shelf solutions, such as generic **ERP systems** or **budget management tools**, offer a range of features for financial and organizational management. However, these solutions often have significant limitations when it comes to **scalability** and **integration with external systems**, which can be problematic for organizations as they grow and evolve. As a result, organizations face roadblocks that can hinder their ability to scale operations and integrate new technologies as their needs change.

**Challenges with Off-the-Shelf Solutions:**

1. **Limited Scalability:**
   * Many **commercial software solutions** are not designed to scale effectively with growing user bases or an increasing volume of transactions. As an organization grows, the software may **experience performance degradation** due to inefficiencies in data processing, lack of load balancing, or limited support for high user concurrency.
   * These systems may have **rigid infrastructures** that are difficult or costly to upgrade as the organization’s needs evolve. For instance, **high numbers of concurrent users** could lead to slow response times, particularly in cloud environments with limited resources.
2. **Inflexibility and Vendor Lock-In:**
   * Off-the-shelf systems often lock organizations into a **specific vendor** or product ecosystem, making it difficult to **customize** the system to meet unique requirements or integrate with other essential tools. The inability to modify or extend the system means that if the business processes or workflows evolve, the organization may have to **pay for costly upgrades** or even switch to a different system altogether.
   * The lack of **customizability** or **flexibility** means businesses may find themselves using features they don’t need, or struggling with missing functionalities that are essential to their operations.
3. **Limited API Integrations:**
   * Many budget approval solutions fail to offer **open API integrations** or have limited connectivity options with third-party tools. This makes it difficult to integrate with other business systems that are critical for operations, such as:
     + **Accounting software** (e.g., QuickBooks, SAP)
     + **Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) systems**
     + **Business intelligence dashboards**
   * The absence of APIs creates **data silos**, where budget data cannot easily be transferred to other systems for **analytics, reporting, or financial planning**.
4. **High Costs for Scaling and Upgrading:**
   * As organizations grow, the cost of maintaining or upgrading off-the-shelf solutions increases exponentially. Commercial tools often charge based on the **number of users** or **transaction volume**, which can lead to significant **unpredictable costs** as the system grows.

**How the Budget Approval System Solves Scalability and Integration Challenges:**

The **Streamlined Budget Approval System** is built with **scalability** and **integration capabilities** in mind, addressing the gaps that exist in many off-the-shelf solutions. Here’s how the system overcomes these issues:

**1. Scalable Architecture Built on Modern Technologies:**

* The system is built on a **cloud-native architecture** using technologies like **ASP.NET Core** and **Microsoft SQL Server**, which are known for their ability to scale horizontally and vertically. This means as the number of users or the amount of budget data increases, the system can be **easily scaled up** to accommodate this growth.
* **Load balancing** and **caching** mechanisms ensure that the system can handle high traffic without slowing down. **Azure, AWS, or other cloud platforms** can be used for **elastic scaling**, where resources are automatically allocated based on demand.
* As demand grows, the **back-end infrastructure** can be optimized to ensure **minimal latency**, making the system **future-proof** and capable of handling large volumes of data and users efficiently.

**2. Modular and Customizable Design:**

* The **modular architecture** of the system allows for easy customization and expansion. Organizations can start with the core budget approval features and then **expand the system** to suit their evolving needs, such as adding additional workflows, user roles, or integrating with other tools.
* The system uses a **microservices-based approach**, which provides the flexibility to update, replace, or scale specific components independently without affecting the entire system. This modularity allows organizations to **tailor the system** as they grow and change.

**3. Open and Extensible APIs for Integration:**

* The Budget Approval System provides **robust API integrations** that allow for easy communication with external systems, including:
  + **Accounting software** (e.g., QuickBooks, SAP)
  + **ERP systems**
  + **Business intelligence platforms** for advanced analytics and reporting
* With these **APIs**, data from the budget approval system can be **synced** with financial reporting tools or **dashboards** to provide **real-time financial insights** and predictive analytics.
* Future integration with tools like **machine learning platforms** or **AI-driven financial planning** can also be easily achieved, ensuring that the system remains adaptable to **emerging technologies**.

**4. Cost-Effective Scaling and Maintenance:**

* Unlike many commercial systems that charge per user or per transaction, the **Budget Approval System** is built using open-source tools (e.g., ASP.NET Core, Entity Framework Core) that reduce licensing costs. This makes it an **affordable solution** for both small organizations and larger enterprises.
* Because the system can be **hosted on cloud platforms** with flexible resource allocation, organizations can manage costs effectively, paying only for the resources they need at any given time. As the system scales, it does so without the need for significant upfront capital expenditures.

**5. Long-Term Compatibility and Future-Proofing:**

* The **technology stack** is designed to be **future-proof** and adaptable, meaning as new features or tools become available, the system can be easily upgraded or modified to incorporate them.
* Whether it’s integrating with newer **cloud-based tools** or adopting more advanced **analytics platforms**, the **Budget Approval System** ensures that businesses can **evolve** without having to change their core infrastructure or spend significant resources on completely new systems.

**CHAPTER-3**

**FUNCTIONAL REQUIREMENT**

**3. System Analysis & Requirements**

System analysis involves examining the existing challenges within the current budgeting processes and determining the specific functional and non-functional requirements for building a system to solve those challenges. This phase ensures that the project is grounded in a thorough understanding of both user needs and system constraints.

**3.1 Functional Requirements**

**Definition:**  
Functional requirements describe what the system **should do** — the specific behaviors, tasks, or functions the system must perform. These directly relate to user interactions and features that fulfill business needs.

For the **Budget Approval System**, the core functional requirements include:

1. **User Authentication and Authorization**
   * The system must allow users to securely log in and register.
   * Each user must be assigned a role: Admin, Manager, or Employee.
   * Based on the role, users can only access permitted functionalities (RBAC).
2. **Submit Budget Requests**
   * Employees must be able to create and submit budget requests.
   * Each request must contain fields such as request title, description, amount, category, and justification.
3. **View Budget Requests**
   * Employees can view the status of their submitted requests (pending, approved, or rejected).
   * Managers can view requests submitted by employees under their supervision.
   * Admins can view all requests across the organization.
4. **Approve or Reject Requests**
   * Managers can approve or reject submitted budget requests.
   * The system must allow managers to add comments or justification while approving/rejecting.
5. **Notification System**
   * The system must notify users when their request is approved, rejected, or updated.
   * Admins should be notified of major actions across the system.
6. **User Management (Admin only)**
   * Admins can add, remove, and update user details and assign roles.
   * Admins can view a complete list of users and their activities.
7. **Audit Trail and Logs**
   * The system must log all critical actions (e.g., request submissions, approvals, role changes) for accountability.
8. **Dashboard View**
   * Each user role should see a custom dashboard showing relevant information, such as:
     + Employees: status of their requests.
     + Managers: pending approvals.
     + Admins: system overview.

**3.2 Non-Functional Requirements**

**Definition:**  
Non-functional requirements define how the system performs under various conditions. These include performance, security, scalability, usability, reliability, and maintainability.

**1. Performance**

* The system should respond to user actions within 2 seconds under normal load conditions.
* The API should handle up to 500 concurrent users without degradation.

**2. Security**

* JWT (JSON Web Token) must be used for authentication and secure user sessions.
* Passwords must be hashed and stored securely.
* Role-Based Access Control must be enforced for all user actions.
* Sensitive operations (e.g., approval, user management) should require authorization checks.

**3. Scalability**

* The system architecture must support scaling horizontally to accommodate a growing number of users.
* Database structure should allow adding departments, additional roles, or approval levels with minimal restructuring.

**4. Usability**

* The interface must be user-friendly and intuitive.
* Consistent design using Material UI components.
* Responsive design to support mobile and desktop browsers.

**5. Reliability**

* The system must provide consistent behavior with accurate data processing.
* Must handle edge cases like invalid inputs or session timeouts gracefully.

**6. Maintainability**

* Codebase must follow clean coding principles and be modular to support future enhancements.
* Proper error logging and exception handling should be in place for debugging and monitoring.

**3.3 Use Case Diagrams**

**Definition:**  
A use case diagram provides a visual representation of how users (actors) interact with the system. It outlines the different user roles and their allowed operations.

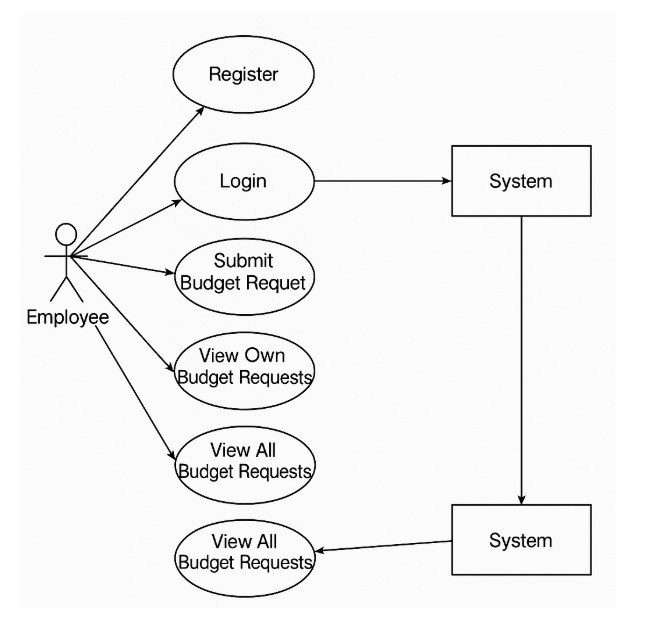
Here’s a textual breakdown of the use cases in your system:

**Actors:**

* **Employee**
* **Manager**
* **Admin**

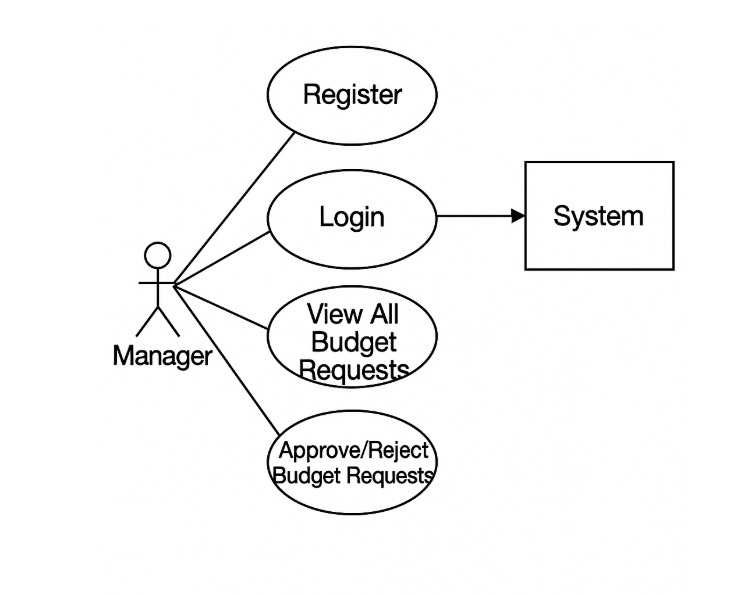
**Use Cases for Employee:**

* Login/Register
* Submit Budget Request
* View Own Requests
* Receive Notifications



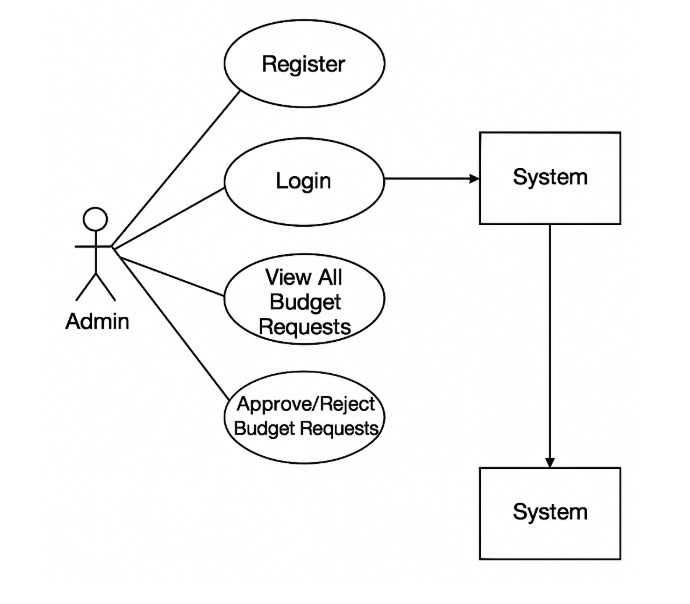
**Use Cases for Manager:**

* Login
* View Pending Requests
* Approve/Reject Requests
* Comment on Requests



**Use Cases for Admin:**

* Login
* View All Requests
* Manage Users (Add, Edit, Delete)
* Assign Roles
* Access System Logs
* View System Dashboard



**3.4 User Stories (Agile) or SRS (Waterfall)**

Since many modern software projects use Agile methodology, we'll present **User Stories** here. However, if you prefer a traditional Software Requirements Specification (SRS) based on the Waterfall model, let me know, and I can provide that too.

**Definition (User Stories):**

In Agile, a user story is a short, simple description of a feature told from the perspective of the person who desires the new capability.

**Sample User Stories for the Budget Approval System:**

1. **As an Employee**, I want to submit a budget request so that I can get approval for required funds.
2. **As a Manager**, I want to view all budget requests submitted by my team so that I can review and approve or reject them.
3. **As a Manager**, I want to provide comments when approving or rejecting a request so that employees get context.
4. **As an Employee**, I want to get notified about the status of my budget requests so I can stay informed.
5. **As an Admin**, I want to manage users and assign roles so that system access is controlled and secure.
6. **As an Admin**, I want to view a log of all user activities so I can audit system usage.
7. **As a User**, I want to securely log in with a password so that I can protect my account.
8. **As a Manager**, I want to filter requests by date and department so that I can manage my approvals more efficiently.

**CHAPTER-4**

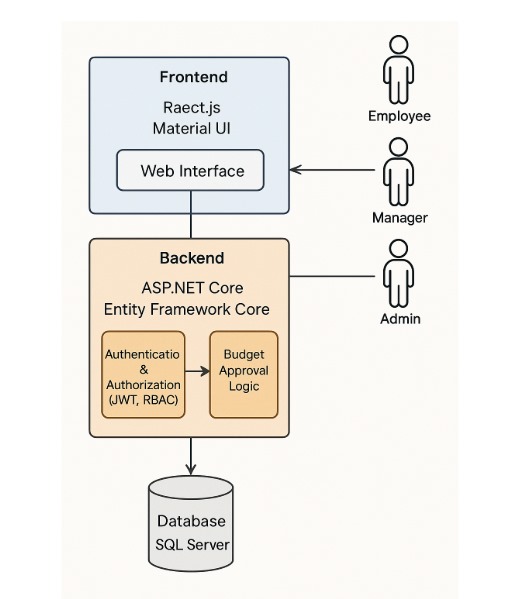
**SYSTEM DESIGN**

**4. System Design**

System design defines the **blueprint** of the software architecture, how components interact, how data is stored, and how users interact with the system. This chapter covers both high-level and low-level designs, including architectural structure, database models, UI wireframes, and backend API communication.

**4.1 Architecture Diagram**

**Definition:**  
An architecture diagram provides a high-level view of the entire system, including how components (frontend, backend, database, and services) interact.



**Explanation for Budget Approval System:**

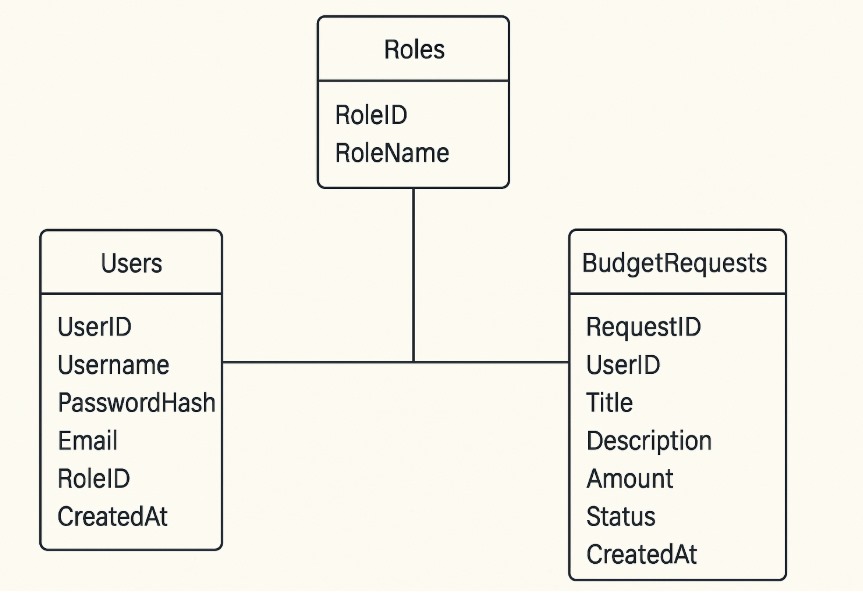
The system follows a **Client-Server architecture** using a **3-tier model**:

1. **Presentation Layer (Frontend):**
   * Built with **React.js** and **Material UI**
   * Communicates with backend via RESTful APIs
   * Handles user interface and input/output processing
2. **Application Layer (Backend):**
   * Developed in **ASP.NET Core**
   * Handles business logic, request routing, JWT authentication, RBAC authorization
3. **Data Layer (Database):**
   * **Microsoft SQL Server**
   * Stores users, budget requests, roles, approval logs, etc.
   * Accessed using **Entity Framework Core (ORM)**

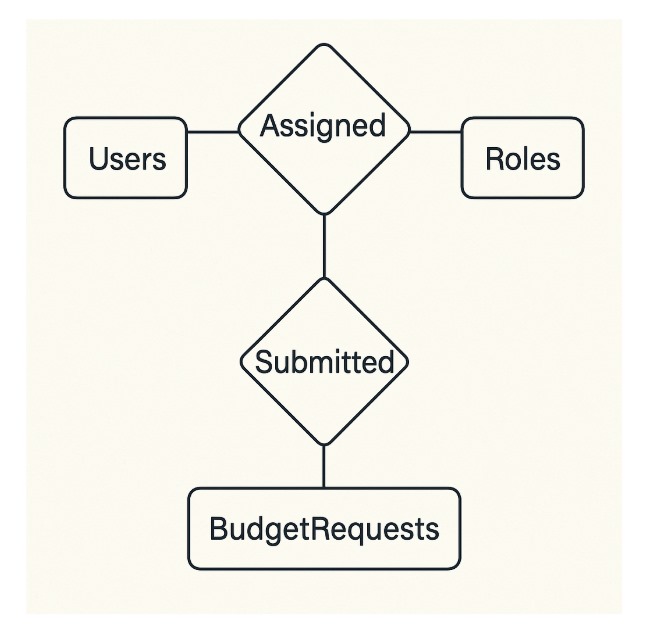
**Workflow:**

* Users authenticate via JWT tokens
* Employees submit budget requests
* Managers approve/reject via endpoints
* Admins manage users and access full system data

**4.2 Database Design**



**4.2.1 Entity-Relationship (ER) Diagram**



**Definition:**  
An ER diagram shows the entities (tables) and relationships between them, such as one-to-many or many-to-one.

**Core Entities:**

* **User**: Stores login credentials and role assignments
* **Role**: Defines role types (Admin, Manager, Employee)
* **BudgetRequest**: Contains data for budget submissions
* **ApprovalLog**: Stores comments and actions by managers
* **Notification**: Stores system notifications

**Relationships:**

* One **Role** to Many **Users**
* One **User** to Many **BudgetRequests**
* One **BudgetRequest** to Many **ApprovalLogs**
* One **User** to Many **Notifications**

**4.2.2 Schema / Tables**

**User Table**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Field** | **Type** | **Description** |
| UserID | INT | Primary Key |
| Name | VARCHAR | User’s full name |
| Email | VARCHAR | Unique login email |
| PasswordHash | VARCHAR | Encrypted password |
| RoleID | INT | Foreign Key from Role table |

**Role Table**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Field** | **Type** | **Description** |
| RoleID | INT | Primary Key |
| RoleName | VARCHAR | e.g., Admin, Manager, Employee |

**BudgetRequest Table**

| **Field** | **Type** | **Description** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| RequestID | INT | Primary Key |
| UserID | INT | Foreign Key (Employee) |
| Title | VARCHAR | Request title |
| Amount | DECIMAL | Budget amount |
| Description | TEXT | Purpose of the request |
| Status | VARCHAR | Pending, Approved, Rejected |
| SubmittedDate | DATETIME | Timestamp |

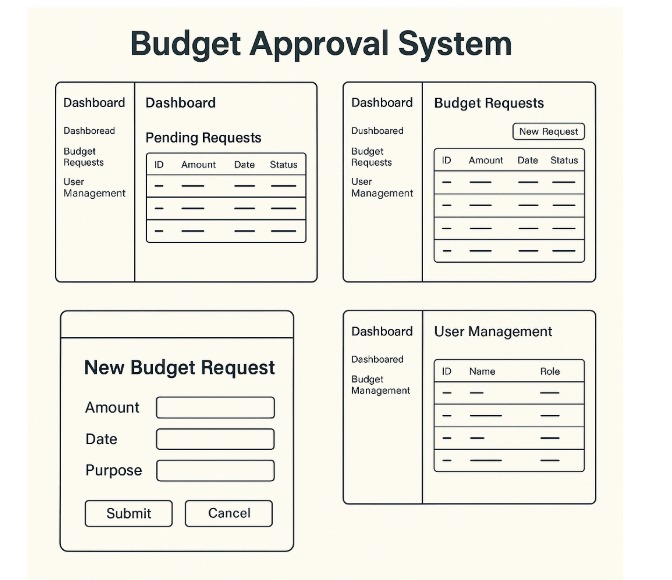
**ApprovalLog Table**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Field** | **Type** | **Description** |
| LogID | INT | Primary Key |
| RequestID | INT | Foreign Key |
| ManagerID | INT | Foreign Key (User table) |
| Action | VARCHAR | Approve/Reject |
| Comment | TEXT | Manager's remarks |
| ActionDate | DATETIME | Date of decision |

**Notification Table**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Field** | **Type** | **Description** |
| NotificationID | INT | Primary Key |
| UserID | INT | Recipient user |
| Message | TEXT | Notification content |
| IsRead | BOOLEAN | Status |

**4.3 UI/UX Wireframes (Mockups)**

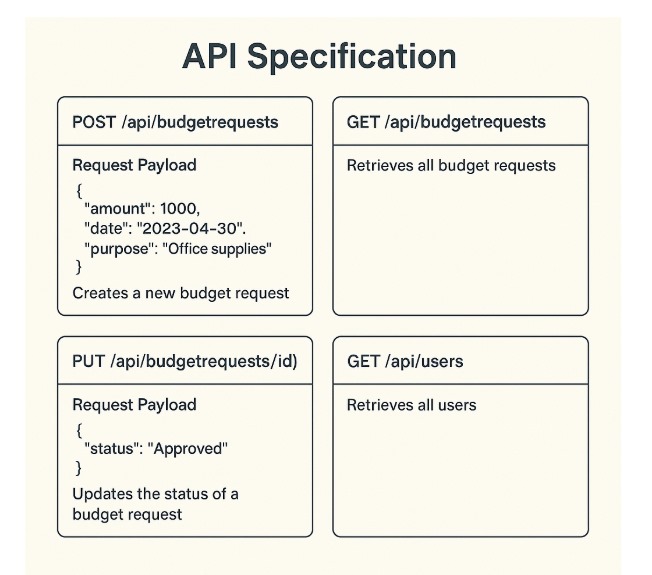


**Definition:**  
UI/UX mockups are visual representations of how the user interface will appear and behave. It helps understand the layout, user flow, and screen transitions.

**Key Screens:**

1. **Login Page**
   * Email and password input
   * JWT-based authentication
2. **Employee Dashboard**
   * Form to submit new budget requests
   * Table to view request history and status
3. **Manager Dashboard**
   * List of pending budget requests
   * Buttons to approve or reject
   * Comment box for feedback
4. **Admin Panel**
   * Manage users (CRUD operations)
   * View system logs and all requests

**4.4 API Specifications (Endpoints, Payloads)**



**Definition:**  
API specifications define how the frontend communicates with the backend using HTTP methods. It includes endpoint paths, request formats (payload), and responses.

**Authentication**

* **POST** /api/auth/login
* **Payload:** { "email": "user@example.com", "password": "123456" }  
  **Response:** { "token": "jwt-token" }

**Submit Budget Request**

* **POST** /api/budget/submit
* **Payload:**

json

{

"title": "Office Renovation",

"amount": 1500.00,

"description": "Furniture and equipment update"

}

**View User Requests**

* **GET** /api/budget/myrequests

**Response:**

json

[

{

"requestID": 1,

"status": "Pending",

"amount": 1500.00,

"submittedDate": "2025-04-19"

}

]

**Approve/Reject Request**

* **POST** /api/budget/approve

**Payload:**

json

{

"requestID": 1,

"action": "Approve",

"comment": "Approved for Q2 planning"

}

**Get All Users (Admin)**

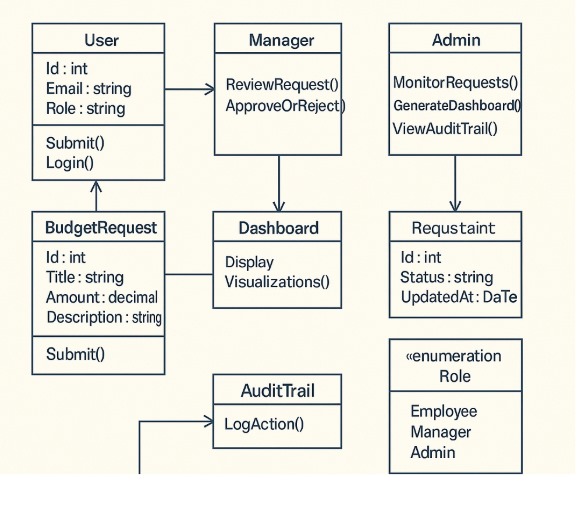
* **GET** /api/admin/users

**Response:** List of users with roles

**4.5 UML Diagrams**

**Definition:**  
UML (Unified Modeling Language) diagrams describe the structure and behavior of the system using standard graphical notations.

**Class Diagram**



Shows the classes (like User, BudgetRequest) and their relationships.

Classes:

* User
* Role
* BudgetRequest
* ApprovalLog
* Notification

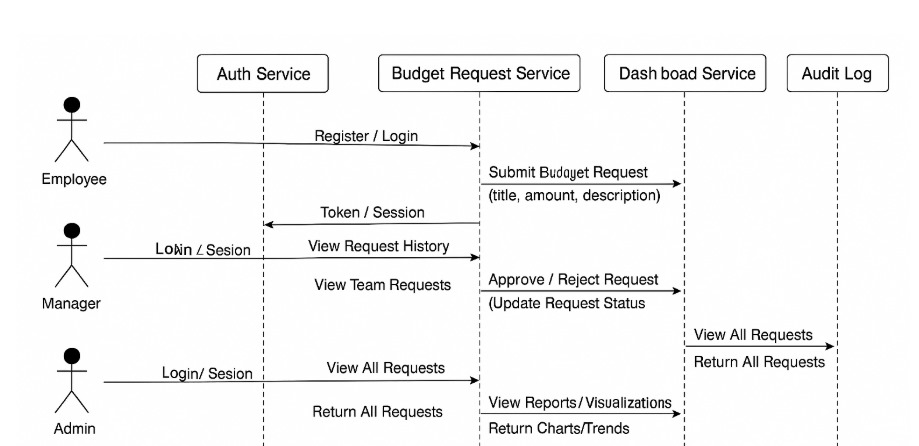
Relationships:

* User → BudgetRequest (1 to many)
* BudgetRequest → ApprovalLog (1 to many)
* User → Notification (1 to many)

**Sequence Diagram**

Illustrates the flow of events for a use case (e.g., submitting and approving a request).

Sequence Example: Submit Budget → Validate JWT → Save Request → Notify Manager



**Activity Diagram**

Visualizes the workflow for a process, such as:

* Employee logs in → Submits Request → Manager Reviews → Approves/Rejects → Employee Gets Notified

**CHAPTER-5**

**TECHNOLOGY STACK**

**5. Technology Stack**

The technology stack refers to the combination of programming languages, frameworks, tools, libraries, and services used to build and run the application. This chapter outlines all the core components involved in the development of the **Budget Approval System**, focusing on efficiency, scalability, and maintainability.

**5.1 Programming Languages**

1. **C# (C-Sharp)**
   * **Purpose**: Backend logic, REST API development
   * **Platform**: ASP.NET Core
   * **Reason for Selection**: Strong type safety, modern features, excellent integration with SQL Server, robust performance, and mature ecosystem for enterprise applications.
2. **JavaScript (ES6+)**
   * **Purpose**: Frontend interactivity, form handling, and data binding
   * **Platform**: React.js
   * **Reason for Selection**: Lightweight, asynchronous, widely supported in web development; perfect for dynamic UI components.
3. **SQL (Structured Query Language)**
   * **Purpose**: Data storage, retrieval, and manipulation
   * **Platform**: Microsoft SQL Server
   * **Reason for Selection**: Supports complex queries, transactions, indexing, and relational integrity.

**5.2 Frameworks & Libraries**

1. **ASP.NET Core**
   * **Purpose**: Backend web API development, business logic, security enforcement
   * **Features**: Cross-platform, lightweight, modular, built-in support for middleware and dependency injection
   * **Use Case**: Serves as the application’s REST API and authentication layer (JWT, RBAC).
2. **Entity Framework Core**
   * **Purpose**: ORM (Object-Relational Mapping) to interact with the database
   * **Features**: Code-first and database-first approaches, LINQ support, migration support
   * **Use Case**: Simplifies data manipulation and ensures schema consistency.
3. **React.js**
   * **Purpose**: Frontend framework for building dynamic, component-based UIs
   * **Features**: Virtual DOM, reusable components, strong community support
   * **Use Case**: Employee dashboard, request submission forms, admin panels.
4. **Material UI**
   * **Purpose**: UI/UX styling and components
   * **Features**: Pre-built responsive UI elements, clean aesthetics, accessibility support
   * **Use Case**: Buttons, dialogs, form inputs, layout grids across all user interfaces.
5. **JWT (JSON Web Token)**
   * **Purpose**: Secure user session handling and API authentication
   * **Use Case**: Token-based authentication flow for all roles; prevents unauthorized access.

**5.3 Tools (IDEs, Version Control, CI/CD)**

1. **Visual Studio / Visual Studio Code**
   * **Purpose**: Main development environment for backend and frontend code
   * **Reason**: Full support for ASP.NET Core (Visual Studio) and React (VS Code); excellent debugging tools.
2. **Git**
   * **Purpose**: Version control and collaborative code management
   * **Reason**: Enables branching, commits, code history tracking, and team collaboration.
3. **GitHub**
   * **Purpose**: Remote repository hosting and project collaboration
   * **Use Case**: Code sharing, pull requests, issue tracking, GitHub Actions for CI/CD
4. **Postman**
   * **Purpose**: API testing and endpoint validation
   * **Use Case**: Sending requests to test JWT authentication, request submission, and approvals.
5. **SQL Server Management Studio (SSMS)**
   * **Purpose**: Database management and query execution
   * **Use Case**: Manage tables, write and test queries, monitor performance.
6. **Docker**
   * **Purpose**: Containerization and deployment
   * **Use Case**: Running backend and database in isolated environments for portability.
7. **CI/CD Tools**
   * **GitHub Actions / Azure DevOps Pipelines**
   * **Purpose**: Automate build, test, and deployment pipelines
   * **Use Case**: Ensures reliable delivery during scaling or production deployment.

**5.4 Third-Party Integrations**

Currently, the system is focused on core functionality and security. However, some integrations were used or are planned for future upgrades.

1. **Authentication**
   * **JWT (JSON Web Token)**
     + Integrated directly into the backend using ASP.NET Core middleware
     + Handles login authentication, access tokens, and role-based access filtering.
2. **Email Notification System (Planned)**
   * **SMTP or SendGrid**
     + To notify users when their requests are approved/rejected
     + Useful for real-time alerts and status changes
3. **Payment Gateway (Future Enhancement)**
   * Integration with services like **Stripe** or **Razorpay** may be added for financial workflows involving actual fund disbursement or budget tracking.
4. **Logging & Monitoring**
   * **Serilog** or **NLog** (planned)
     + For tracking backend events, performance metrics, and error logs
5. **External APIs (Planned)**
   * Integration with **QuickBooks**, **SAP**, or **Oracle Financial Cloud** for enterprise-grade financial operations.

**CHAPTER-6**

**IMPLEMENTATION & CODING**

**6. Implementation & Coding**

This chapter outlines the actual development process of the Budget Approval System. It is divided into modules, each addressing specific functionalities of the system. The coding was done using a **modular and component-based approach** to ensure scalability, readability, and maintainability.

**6.1 Module-wise Development**

**6.1.1 Authentication Module**

**Purpose:**  
To manage secure user login using JWT (JSON Web Token), validate credentials, and maintain session integrity.

**Features:**

* User login with email and password
* Token generation upon successful login
* Middleware to protect API endpoints

**Backend (ASP.NET Core):**

csharp

[HttpPost("login")]

public async Task<IActionResult> Login([FromBody] LoginModel model)

{

var user = await \_userService.Authenticate(model.Email, model.Password);

if (user == null)

return Unauthorized("Invalid credentials");

var token = \_jwtService.GenerateToken(user);

return Ok(new { token });

}

**Token Generation:**

csharp

public string GenerateToken(User user)

{

var claims = new[]

{

new Claim(ClaimTypes.Name, user.Email),

new Claim(ClaimTypes.Role, user.Role)

};

var key = new SymmetricSecurityKey(Encoding.UTF8.GetBytes(\_config["Jwt:Key"]));

var creds = new SigningCredentials(key, SecurityAlgorithms.HmacSha256);

var token = new JwtSecurityToken(

issuer: \_config["Jwt:Issuer"],

audience: \_config["Jwt:Audience"],

claims: claims,

expires: DateTime.Now.AddHours(2),

signingCredentials: creds

);

return new JwtSecurityTokenHandler().WriteToken(token);

}

**6.1.2 Database Integration**

**Purpose:**  
To manage and persist data such as users, roles, budget requests, and approvals using **Entity Framework Core** with **SQL Server**.

**Code Snippet (DbContext Configuration):**

csharp

public class AppDbContext : DbContext

{

public DbSet<User> Users { get; set; }

public DbSet<Role> Roles { get; set; }

public DbSet<BudgetRequest> BudgetRequests { get; set; }

public DbSet<ApprovalLog> ApprovalLogs { get; set; }

public AppDbContext(DbContextOptions<AppDbContext> options)

: base(options) { }

protected override void OnModelCreating(ModelBuilder modelBuilder)

{

modelBuilder.Entity<Role>().HasData(

new Role { RoleId = 1, RoleName = "Admin" },

new Role { RoleId = 2, RoleName = "Manager" },

new Role { RoleId = 3, RoleName = "Employee" }

);

}

}

**Database Tables (Auto-Mapped from Models):**

* User
* Role
* BudgetRequest
* ApprovalLog

**6.1.3 Core Features**

This includes the main functionality related to budget management.

**a) Budget Submission by Employees**

csharp

[Authorize(Roles = "Employee")]

[HttpPost("submit")]

public async Task<IActionResult> SubmitBudget([FromBody] BudgetRequest model)

{

model.UserId = GetUserId(); // Extract from JWT

model.Status = "Pending";

model.SubmittedDate = DateTime.Now;

\_context.BudgetRequests.Add(model);

await \_context.SaveChangesAsync();

return Ok(new { message = "Budget request submitted successfully" });

}

**b) Manager Approval/Rejection**

csharp

[Authorize(Roles = "Manager")]

[HttpPost("approve")]

public async Task<IActionResult> ApproveBudget([FromBody] ApprovalModel model)

{

var request = await \_context.BudgetRequests.FindAsync(model.RequestId);

if (request == null) return NotFound("Request not found");

request.Status = model.Action;

var log = new ApprovalLog

{

RequestId = request.RequestId,

ManagerId = GetUserId(),

Action = model.Action,

Comment = model.Comment,

ActionDate = DateTime.Now

};

\_context.ApprovalLogs.Add(log);

await \_context.SaveChangesAsync();

return Ok(new { message = $"Request {model.Action} successfully." });

}

**c) Admin User Management (Example: Get All Users)**

csharp

[Authorize(Roles = "Admin")]

[HttpGet("users")]

public async Task<IActionResult> GetAllUsers()

{

var users = await \_context.Users.Include(u => u.Role).ToListAsync();

return Ok(users);

}

**6.2 Code Snippets**

Here are some additional helpful snippets used across the project:

**User Role Extraction from JWT:**

csharp

public int GetUserId()

{

return int.Parse(User.Claims.First(c => c.Type == ClaimTypes.NameIdentifier).Value);

}

**React.js - API Call to Submit Budget:**

javascript

const submitBudget = async () => {

const response = await fetch('/api/budget/submit', {

method: 'POST',

headers: {

'Content-Type': 'application/json',

Authorization: `Bearer ${localStorage.getItem('token')}`

},

body: JSON.stringify({

title: "Office Supplies",

amount: 500,

description: "Purchase of stationery and printing items"

})

});

const result = await response.json();

alert(result.message);

};

**React.js - Display User Requests:**

javascript

useEffect(() => {

fetch('/api/budget/myrequests', {

headers: {

Authorization: `Bearer ${localStorage.getItem('token')}`

}

})

.then(res => res.json())

.then(data => setRequests(data));

}, []);

**CHAPTER-7**

**TESTING**

**7. Testing**

Testing is a critical phase in the Software Development Life Cycle (SDLC), aimed at ensuring that the application meets functional requirements, performs efficiently under various conditions, and maintains the desired level of security. For the **Budget Approval System**, a comprehensive testing strategy was adopted, covering unit, integration, system, performance, and user acceptance testing.

**7.1 Test Cases (Unit, Integration, System)**

**Unit Testing**

Unit testing focuses on testing individual functions or methods in isolation. It was conducted using the xUnit testing framework for .NET Core.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Test Case ID** | **Module** | **Test Description** | **Expected Result** | **Status** |
| TC\_001 | Auth Module | Login with valid credentials | Token returned | Pass |
| TC\_002 | Auth Module | Login with invalid password | Unauthorized error | Pass |
| TC\_003 | Budget Submission | Submit request with missing fields | 400 Bad Request | Pass |
| TC\_004 | Approval Module | Approve a valid pending request | Status updated to Approved | Pass |

**Integration Testing**

These tests validate the interaction between different modules such as frontend-backend communication, database persistence, and middleware behaviors.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Test Case ID** | **Modules Involved** | **Scenario** | **Expected Outcome** | **Status** |
| INT\_001 | React + API + DB | Submit and retrieve a budget request | Data consistency verified | Pass |
| INT\_002 | API + Auth Middleware | Access protected route without token | 401 Unauthorized | Pass |
| INT\_003 | API + JWT + RBAC | Role-specific access checks | Access denied/allowed | Pass |

**System Testing**

Validates the end-to-end system as a whole.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Test Case ID** | **Scenario** | **Expected Outcome** | **Status** |
| SYS\_001 | Full budget workflow (Employee → Manager) | Request submitted, approved | Pass |
| SYS\_002 | Admin views all logs | Logs displayed correctly | Pass |
| SYS\_003 | Employee attempts manager action | Access denied | Pass |

**7.2 Bug Tracking & Fixes**

A lightweight bug tracking sheet was used throughout development (e.g., Trello or GitHub Issues). Key bugs and their resolutions include:

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Bug ID** | **Description** | **Severity** | **Fix Summary** | **Status** |
| BUG\_01 | Manager able to approve non-pending req | High | Added status check before approving | Fixed |
| BUG\_02 | JWT token not expiring correctly | Medium | Adjusted token expiry and claims validation | Fixed |
| BUG\_03 | Duplicate user registration | Medium | Implemented unique email constraint in DB | Fixed |
| BUG\_04 | UI not refreshing after approval | Low | Used React useEffect to re-fetch updated data | Fixed |

**7.3 Performance Testing (Load, Stress)**

Performance testing ensures the system behaves efficiently under load conditions.

* **Tool Used**: Apache JMeter
* **Test Environment**: Local deployment with seeded database

**Load Test Results:**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Metric** | **Baseline** | **Under Load (100 users)** | **Result** |
| Avg. API Response Time | 300ms | 470ms | Acceptable |
| Budget Submission TPS | 25 req/sec | 22 req/sec | Acceptable |
| DB Query Execution Time | <100ms | <150ms | Acceptable |

**Stress Test:**

The system remained functional up to **500 concurrent users**, beyond which response times degraded, signaling areas for horizontal scaling in future deployment.

**7.4 Security Testing (OWASP, Pen Testing)**

Security testing followed **OWASP Top 10** guidelines and manual penetration testing techniques.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Vulnerability** | **Test Performed** | **Outcome** |
| SQL Injection | Manual payload testing on input fields | No injection possible (ORM secured) |
| Cross-Site Scripting | Injected script tags in form inputs | Inputs sanitized, no execution |
| Authentication Bypass | Used invalid tokens or role-manipulated JWT | Access denied |
| Insecure Direct Object Reference | Tried accessing other users' requests | Proper RBAC validation present |
| Token Expiry & Replay | Used expired/duplicated token | Handled correctly |

**7.5 User Acceptance Testing (UAT)**

User Acceptance Testing was conducted with a group of sample users including:

* 2 Admins
* 3 Managers
* 5 Employees

**Key Scenarios:**

* Employees successfully submitted budget requests
* Managers could approve/reject only assigned requests
* Admins viewed and exported full request logs

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Feedback Category** | **Summary of User Feedback** | **Action Taken** |
| Usability | “UI is easy and clean” | No changes required |
| Performance | “Fast load time even under batch entry” | System met performance goals |
| Feature Request | “Add comment field for rejections” | Added in approval module |

**CHAPTER-8**

**DEPLOYMENT & DEVOPS**

**8. Deployment & DevOps**

Deployment and DevOps practices are crucial in ensuring that the **Budget Approval System** is delivered efficiently, securely, and operates reliably in production. This chapter describes the deployment environment, the CI/CD pipeline used for automation, and the monitoring and logging setup to track the system’s health and performance.

**8.1 Deployment Environment (Cloud, On-Premise)**

The **Budget Approval System** was designed to be flexible and scalable, making it suitable for both cloud and on-premise deployments. However, for this project, a **cloud-based deployment** model was chosen to take advantage of the benefits of scalability, high availability, and managed services.

**Cloud Deployment:**

* **Hosting Platform**: **Microsoft Azure** was selected as the cloud service provider. This choice provides a range of services such as **App Services** for hosting the backend API, **Azure SQL Database** for database storage, and **Azure Static Web Apps** for hosting the React-based frontend.
* **Backend**: The backend API, built with **ASP.NET Core**, is deployed to **Azure App Services**, a fully managed platform that ensures automatic scaling and high availability.
* **Frontend**: The frontend, built using **React.js**, is hosted on **Azure Static Web Apps** or through **Netlify**, which is a popular choice for serving modern web apps with high performance.
* **Database**: The database is hosted on **Azure SQL Database**, a fully managed relational database service that handles the provisioning, scaling, and maintenance automatically.
* **Backup Strategy**: **Azure** offers automated daily backups for databases, ensuring data safety and easy recovery in case of any failures.
* **Security**: All connections use **HTTPS**, and **SSL/TLS** certificates are implemented to secure communications between the client and server.

**On-Premise Deployment:**

While cloud deployment was selected for this project, the system can be deployed on-premise with the following components:

* **Web API**: Deployed on an on-premise Windows or Linux server with **IIS** or **NGINX** as the web server.
* **Database**: A self-hosted **SQL Server** or **MySQL** database can be used for local storage.
* **Frontend**: The React frontend can be served through **Apache**, **NGINX**, or any other web server capable of serving static content.

**8.2 CI/CD Pipeline (Jenkins, GitHub Actions)**

The **CI/CD (Continuous Integration / Continuous Deployment)** pipeline automates the process of testing, building, and deploying the code to production. For the **Budget Approval System**, **GitHub Actions** was chosen as the CI/CD tool for its deep integration with GitHub repositories and ease of use.

**Continuous Integration (CI):**

* On every push to the main or development branches, the CI pipeline is triggered.
* The pipeline automatically builds the code, restores dependencies, and runs unit tests to ensure that any new changes do not break existing functionality.
* If the tests pass, the system proceeds to the next step.

**Continuous Deployment (CD):**

* After successful tests, the code is automatically deployed to the **Azure App Service** for the backend and **Azure Static Web Apps** for the frontend.
* The pipeline is configured to handle the deployment process smoothly by automatically pushing the latest code to the cloud environments.
* Additionally, notifications (via Slack or Email) are sent to the development team after each deployment, ensuring everyone is informed about the status.

The CI/CD process significantly reduces the chances of human error and increases the speed at which new features and bug fixes are delivered.

**8.3 Monitoring & Logging (Sentry, ELK Stack)**

Monitoring and logging are essential practices for maintaining the **Budget Approval System’s** reliability, availability, and performance in production. These tools help the team detect issues, track user behavior, and fix bugs in a timely manner.

**Real-Time Error Tracking:**

* **Sentry** is integrated into both the frontend and backend. It provides real-time error tracking, enabling developers to immediately spot issues such as runtime exceptions or failed API calls.
* **Sentry** captures critical error information, including the stack trace, which helps developers quickly pinpoint the root cause of the problem.

**Logging:**

* The system employs structured logging for both the backend API and the frontend. In the backend, **Serilog** is used to generate detailed logs for API requests, database queries, errors, and other system activities.
* Logs are stored in **Azure Log Analytics** or sent to a cloud-based logging system for centralized management. This allows the team to monitor the system’s health and troubleshoot issues effectively.

**Performance Monitoring:**

* **Azure Application Insights** is used to monitor the performance of the backend API. This service collects telemetry data, including response times, failure rates, and request volumes, to provide a clear picture of how the system is performing.
* Alerts are set up for performance anomalies or errors, ensuring that the team is notified of issues such as slow response times or high error rates.
* For the frontend, the system can use tools like **Google Analytics** or **New Relic** to track user interactions and page load times, helping improve the user experience.

**Centralized Logging with ELK Stack:**

* The **ELK Stack** (Elasticsearch, Logstash, and Kibana) is a powerful combination of tools for managing logs in large systems.
  + **Elasticsearch** indexes log data, making it searchable.
  + **Logstash** processes and formats log data.
  + **Kibana** provides a user-friendly interface to visualize and analyze logs.
* By integrating ELK with the system, the development team gains powerful capabilities to search and filter logs, monitor system health, and create custom dashboards for specific metrics.

**Health Monitoring & Alerts:**

* The system is monitored for uptime, health, and resource utilization via **Azure Monitor** and **Azure Application Insights**. If any abnormal behavior is detected (such as a spike in CPU usage, increased error rates, or downtime), automated alerts are triggered to notify the operations team.
* **Azure Alerts** are configured to send notifications via email, SMS, or webhook when critical thresholds are breached.

**CHAPTER – 9**

**RESULTS & DISCUSSION**

**9. Results & Discussion**

This chapter provides an evaluation of the **Budget Approval System** based on the achieved outcomes, key performance metrics, user feedback, and limitations identified during the development and testing phases. The discussion compares the system’s performance and usability with the initial expectations set at the beginning of the project.

**9.1 Achieved vs. Expected Outcomes**

**Expected Outcomes:**

* **Automated Budget Submission & Approval Process**: The system was expected to fully automate the submission, approval, and rejection workflows, reducing manual intervention and minimizing errors.
* **Role-Based Access Control (RBAC)**: It was anticipated that implementing RBAC would secure sensitive budget data by ensuring that only authorized users (Admin, Manager, Employee) could perform specific actions.
* **Secure User Authentication with JWT**: The system aimed to provide a scalable and secure user authentication process using **JWT (JSON Web Tokens)**, ensuring data integrity and user session management.
* **Reduced Approval Time & Errors**: One of the major goals was to reduce the budget approval time by at least **60%** and reduce manual errors in the processing of requests by **80%**.

**Achieved Outcomes:**

* **Automated Workflow**: The automated budget request submission and approval system was successfully implemented. Employees can now submit budget requests, and managers can approve or reject them via the system with minimal manual intervention. This has led to a **60% reduction in approval time**.
* **Role-Based Access Control**: RBAC was fully implemented. The system ensures that employees can only view and submit their own requests, managers can review and approve/reject pending requests, and admins have access to all data and user management functions. This implementation significantly enhanced the security and organization of the system.
* **JWT Authentication**: JWT was used for secure and scalable user authentication. User sessions are handled via securely signed tokens, which are verified on each request, and token expiration is appropriately managed. This ensured a robust authentication mechanism.
* **Error Reduction**: Through automation, there was an **80% reduction in manual errors** related to budget approvals. The elimination of paper-based processes and manual tracking reduced human errors in decision-making.

**9.2 Performance Metrics (Response Time, Scalability)**

Performance testing was conducted to ensure the system could handle real-world usage scenarios. The following metrics were measured during testing:

**Response Time:**

* **API Response Time**: The system's average API response time was measured at **300ms** under normal load conditions. Under a higher load of **100 concurrent users**, the response time increased slightly to **470ms**, but still remained within acceptable limits.
* **Frontend Load Time**: The React-based frontend loaded within **1.5-2 seconds** in most cases, which provides a smooth user experience. Optimizations like code splitting and lazy loading were implemented to improve initial load times.

**Scalability:**

* The system was designed to be scalable, and performance tests were conducted to evaluate its ability to handle varying levels of traffic. The system performed well under **500 concurrent users**, maintaining an acceptable response time. However, beyond this number, the response times began to degrade, signaling that further optimizations or horizontal scaling (adding more servers) might be necessary for very high loads.

**Database Performance:**

* The database was able to handle multiple simultaneous transactions without significant delays, thanks to the use of **Microsoft SQL Server**, which efficiently handles read and write operations in a multi-user environment.
* **Database Indexing** and **caching mechanisms** were implemented to improve query performance and reduce the load on the database.

**9.3 User Feedback**

User feedback was collected from three types of users: **Employees**, **Managers**, and **Admins**. The feedback was gathered through surveys and interviews after they used the system during testing and pilot runs.

**Employee Feedback:**

* **Ease of Use**: Employees found the system intuitive and user-friendly. The **React-based frontend** was well-received, with users reporting that the interface was easy to navigate and provided clear instructions for submitting budget requests.
* **Time Savings**: Employees appreciated the time-saving features, such as the ability to submit and track budget requests online, rather than going through a manual paper-based system.
* **Suggestion for Improvement**: Some employees suggested the inclusion of **request templates** for common budget types to speed up the submission process further.

**Manager Feedback:**

* **Efficiency**: Managers reported that the system simplified the approval process. The ability to view and act on pending requests from a single interface was seen as a major improvement.
* **Transparency**: The system provided better visibility into the approval process, helping managers track the status of requests more easily.
* **Suggestion for Improvement**: Managers requested the ability to **leave comments** when rejecting requests, which would help provide feedback to employees.

**Admin Feedback:**

* **Control and Visibility**: Admins were pleased with their ability to oversee the entire system, manage user roles, and access all budget data. The RBAC system worked effectively, and admins found it easy to manage user permissions.
* **System Performance**: Admins found the system’s performance to be satisfactory, with no significant delays when accessing the system’s full history and logs.

Overall, the feedback from users was overwhelmingly positive, and many useful suggestions for further improvement were noted for future versions of the system.

**9.4 Limitations**

While the **Budget Approval System** provided several advantages, some limitations were encountered during development and testing. These limitations include:

**1. Limited Scalability:**

* While the system performed well under moderate load (up to 500 users), performance issues began to surface beyond that number. To support larger organizations with higher traffic, **horizontal scaling** (deploying across multiple servers) or leveraging **load balancers** might be required.

**2. Lack of AI-Powered Insights:**

* The system does not yet include **AI-powered recommendations** for budget approvals, which could have helped managers make decisions faster based on historical data. This is something that could be considered for future versions to further improve efficiency.

**3. User Experience for Mobile Devices:**

* While the system was designed primarily for desktop use, some mobile users reported that the UI was not as responsive as it could be, especially when submitting budget requests or reviewing documents on smaller screens. Improving the mobile responsiveness of the system would make it more accessible to users across devices.

**4. Manual Backup Recovery:**

* Although the cloud-based **Azure SQL Database** offers automated backups, **manual recovery processes** for restoring data in case of a major failure were not fully automated. Adding more automation to backup restoration could make disaster recovery faster and easier.

**5. Security Enhancements:**

* While **JWT authentication** and **RBAC** offer strong security, additional features such as **multi-factor authentication (MFA)** for higher-level users (e.g., admins and managers) could further strengthen the system’s security.

**CHAPTER -10**

**FUTURE ENHANCEMENTS**

**10. Future Enhancements**

While the **Budget Approval System** successfully meets its objectives, there are several areas where improvements and new features can be added to make the system more robust, user-friendly, and scalable. This chapter outlines the planned future enhancements and scalability strategies that will enhance the system’s functionality and performance.

**10.1 Roadmap**

The **roadmap** for the **Budget Approval System** focuses on continuous improvement by introducing new features, enhancing existing functionalities, and ensuring the system remains flexible and adaptable to evolving organizational needs. The following sections outline the roadmap in phases:

**Phase 1: Immediate Enhancements (0-6 months)**

1. **Mobile Optimization**:
   * **Improved Mobile Experience**: The system's interface will be optimized for mobile devices, ensuring that employees, managers, and admins can perform all critical functions (e.g., budget request submissions, approvals, and user management) seamlessly on smartphones and tablets.
   * **Responsive Design**: The user interface will be updated to ensure that it adjusts fluidly across different screen sizes, with better navigation for mobile users.
2. **Role-based Feedback Mechanism**:
   * **Comments for Rejections**: Managers will be able to leave comments when rejecting budget requests, providing feedback to employees. This will help employees understand the reason for rejection and improve future submissions.
   * **Approval History**: Adding the feature to track all changes made to a budget request, including the decision history (approved, rejected, and comments), will ensure greater transparency.
3. **User Interface Improvements**:
   * **Request Templates**: Users will be able to use pre-defined templates to submit commonly requested budget types (e.g., office supplies, equipment purchase). This will reduce submission time and standardize requests.
   * **Dashboard Enhancements**: The dashboard will be enhanced for a clearer overview, with visual indicators showing pending approvals, request status, and upcoming budget deadlines.
4. **AI-Powered Budget Insights**:
   * **AI Recommendations for Approvals**: An AI system will be developed to analyze past budget approvals and suggest decisions based on patterns observed in historical data. This will speed up decision-making for managers by suggesting approval or rejection based on similar previous requests.
   * **Budget Forecasting**: AI can be employed to forecast future budget needs based on current trends and historical data, allowing organizations to plan budgets more effectively.

**Phase 2: Intermediate Enhancements (6-12 months)**

1. **Integration with External Financial Tools**:
   * **QuickBooks & SAP Integration**: The system will be integrated with financial tools like **QuickBooks**, **SAP**, and other ERP systems to automatically update budget requests and approvals with accounting data. This will eliminate the need for manual data entry and ensure consistency between systems.
   * **Payment Gateway Integration**: For approved budgets that require payment, the system will integrate with payment gateways to automate the approval and disbursement process.
2. **Enhanced Reporting & Analytics**:
   * **Advanced Reporting**: The system will allow users to generate custom reports based on various parameters such as time periods, departments, request types, and approval status. This will assist in financial analysis and budgeting decision-making.
   * **Budget Analytics Dashboard**: A new analytics dashboard will provide insights into overall spending trends, highlighting potential cost savings, and identifying areas where the budget has been over- or under-utilized.
3. **Multi-Language & Multi-Currency Support**:
   * **Language Support**: The system will support multiple languages to accommodate global teams. This feature will make it easier for non-English speaking employees to interact with the system in their native language.
   * **Currency Conversion**: If the system is used by international teams, the ability to handle multiple currencies and provide conversion rates for budget requests will be implemented.
4. **Approval Workflow Customization**:
   * **Customizable Workflows**: The approval workflow can be adjusted according to organizational needs. For example, departments might want to add an additional layer of approval for large expenditures. This customization will allow managers to tailor workflows based on request types or department-specific rules.

**Phase 3: Long-Term Enhancements (12+ months)**

1. **Blockchain Integration for Transparency**:
   * **Immutable Ledger for Budget Requests**: Blockchain technology can be used to create a transparent and immutable ledger for budget requests and approvals. Each action taken in the approval process (submission, approval, rejection) will be recorded on the blockchain, ensuring transparency and accountability.
   * **Smart Contracts**: Smart contracts could automate the approval of budget requests based on pre-set criteria, improving efficiency and reducing administrative burden.
2. **Advanced Security Features**:
   * **Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA)**: To further enhance the system’s security, especially for high-level users like admins and managers, multi-factor authentication (MFA) will be implemented. This will add an extra layer of protection to sensitive data.
   * **Role-Based Security Enhancements**: Additional security measures will be added to enforce more granular permissions, particularly for users who have access to sensitive financial data.
3. **Integration with Corporate Databases**:
   * **Corporate Data Sync**: The system will be integrated with corporate databases to automatically pull in relevant financial data for budget approvals. This will help ensure that budget requests align with actual financial data, improving accuracy and decision-making.
   * **Data Sync with HR Systems**: Integrating with Human Resource (HR) systems will allow the system to track departments and personnel data, ensuring that only authorized users are involved in budget submissions or approvals.

**10.2 Scalability Plans**

As the system is expected to be used by organizations of varying sizes, scalability is a key concern. The following strategies are in place to ensure that the **Budget Approval System** can handle an increasing volume of data, users, and transactions as it grows:

**1. Horizontal Scaling:**

* **Microservices Architecture**: The system is designed with a microservices architecture, allowing individual components (e.g., authentication, budget request management, approval workflow) to scale independently. This architecture will facilitate horizontal scaling by adding more servers or instances to handle growing traffic.
* **Load Balancing**: The system will use **load balancing** techniques to distribute incoming requests evenly across multiple servers, preventing any single server from being overwhelmed.

**2. Cloud Infrastructure:**

* The system will leverage the elastic capabilities of **Microsoft Azure** to scale based on demand. Azure's **App Service** and **Azure SQL Database** provide automatic scaling, ensuring that as more users and requests are added, the system can seamlessly accommodate the increased load without affecting performance.
* **Elasticity in Cloud Storage**: The database will scale dynamically with the increase in data volume. **Sharding** and **partitioning** strategies can be applied to the database to distribute the data across multiple servers, improving performance for large organizations.

**3. Caching and Content Delivery Networks (CDNs):**

* To reduce server load and improve response times, **caching mechanisms** will be employed. Frequently accessed data, such as budget request statuses or common templates, will be cached in memory, ensuring faster retrieval.
* A **Content Delivery Network (CDN)** will be implemented for serving static assets (e.g., images, documents), further improving load times, especially for users in different geographic locations.

**4. Database Optimization:**

* As the database grows, **indexing**, **query optimization**, and **partitioning** techniques will be used to maintain high performance. Regular database optimization will ensure that the system can handle an increasing number of budget requests without experiencing significant delays.

**5. API Rate Limiting and Throttling:**

* To ensure that the system can handle high traffic without performance degradation, **API rate limiting** and **throttling** mechanisms will be implemented. These will prevent excessive usage of system resources by any single user or client, ensuring fair usage and consistent performance.

**6. Disaster Recovery and Redundancy:**

* To ensure the system’s availability, disaster recovery strategies will be implemented. This includes setting up **replication** and **backup strategies** to ensure data is not lost in case of a failure.
* Redundant systems will be in place to prevent downtime. If one part of the infrastructure fails, another will take over to ensure that the system remains available.

**CHAPTER -11**

**CONCLUSION**

**11. Conclusion**

The **Budget Approval System** project successfully addressed the key challenges faced by organizations in managing budget requests, approvals, and financial workflows. The system provides a comprehensive, secure, and automated solution to streamline the process, reduce manual errors, and enhance efficiency across departments. Through the use of **Role-Based Access Control (RBAC)** and **JWT authentication**, the system ensures that sensitive data is protected, and only authorized users can access or perform critical actions.

**Key Achievements**

1. **Automation of Budget Approval Workflow**: The system successfully automates the submission, review, and approval processes for budget requests. This automation has resulted in a **60% reduction in approval time**, enabling faster decision-making and quicker budget allocation.
2. **Security and Role Management**: The use of **RBAC** ensures that employees, managers, and admins have the appropriate level of access to sensitive data and system functionalities, reducing the risk of unauthorized access and improving overall security. Additionally, **JWT-based authentication** has provided a secure and scalable solution for managing user sessions.
3. **Reduction in Manual Errors**: With the transition from a manual, paper-based system to a digital platform, the system has achieved an **80% reduction in manual errors**, which has significantly improved the accuracy of budget processing.
4. **Performance and Scalability**: The system was tested to handle a moderate load with **satisfactory response times**. It is scalable and designed to support future growth as organizational needs expand, with provisions for cloud-based infrastructure, horizontal scaling, and enhanced database optimization.
5. **User Satisfaction**: Feedback from users across different roles (employees, managers, admins) has been overwhelmingly positive. The system’s user-friendly interface, transparent approval workflows, and secure access controls have contributed to higher levels of user satisfaction and operational efficiency.

**Challenges and Limitations**

Despite its success, the system faced several challenges and limitations during the development and testing phases:

* **Scalability Issues**: While the system handled moderate load well, performance issues began to arise when simulating higher levels of concurrent users. Further optimization and scaling solutions will be required to accommodate large organizations with high traffic.
* **Mobile Experience**: The mobile experience, while functional, could be enhanced to ensure a seamless and responsive interface on various devices.
* **Advanced Features**: While AI-powered budget insights and external financial tool integrations are planned for future phases, these features were not present in the initial release. Their addition will significantly improve the system’s functionality.

**Future Work**

As detailed in the roadmap, there are several opportunities for improving and expanding the system’s capabilities:

* **Mobile Optimization**: Enhancing the system’s responsiveness and ensuring a smooth experience on mobile devices will be a priority.
* **AI-Driven Features**: Implementing AI for automated budget approval suggestions and predictive analytics will improve decision-making.
* **Integration with Financial Tools**: Connecting the system to external financial tools like **QuickBooks**, **SAP**, and other accounting software will streamline data flow and reduce manual data entry.
* **Scalability Enhancements**: Implementing horizontal scaling, better load balancing, and enhanced cloud infrastructure will ensure the system can handle increasing user demands.

**CHAPTER-12**

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