Case Study: EA Capability for Telecommunications Giant using Abacus

A large multi-national Telecommunications Group required an Enterprise Architecture (EA) capability to provide strategic context for their goals of moving towards a "Telco 2.0" business model, and standardisation of their information systems across operating companies. They hoped to achieve efficiencies in both business and IT operations, to generate better returns on past investment, to lower risk on future investment, and to improve procurement for simplicity, speed, architectural coherence and cost saving.

The EA capability needed to provide the ability to develop and analyse architecture content within an EA repository, to enable the enterprise to identify customer touchpoints, asset and process optimisation opportunities; as well as to build consistent strategies for sustainable growth and guide innovation holistically.

Real IRM assisted the Telecommunications Group to select an EA tool, as part of their initial efforts to establish an EA practice. As a non-biased and vendor independent organisation, our consultants created a short-list in consultation with the client, and used our toolset evaluation methodology to perform a detailed evaluation. The tool chosen by the client was ABACUS from Avolution. ABACUS was selected for its industry reference models, ease of use (particularly in updating content); and group content re-use whilst architecture content specific to the operating company is segmented.

In the following year, Real IRM planned, designed and built an EA capability for the Telecommunications Group, and installed and configured the ABACUS modelling toolset. The EA capability included architecture definitions, principles, a meta-model, modelling standards, and roles and responsibilities for the EA team members.

Real IRM consultants assisted in operationalising the EA practice by providing consulting and modelling services, developing architecture standards for the group and modelling the initial business, data, application and technology architecture content in the ABACUS repository. Our technical services team assisted in the development of document generation and other utilities and a visual dashboard to enhance productivity and output from the environment.

Over the next few years, Real IRM helped to roll-out the EA capability to Group operating companies in Africa and the Middle East and provided customised ABACUS training to the architects. The training included hands-on modelling across all the architecture domains, using the Telecommunications Group standards for modelling in ABACUS.

Although Real IRM provides services covering strategic planning, application portfolio rationalisation and business transformation, the focus here was on standardisation across

operating companies including the phasing out of non-standard applications. The development and publication of EA content led to sustained growth of the EA capability promoting standardisation and synergy across the extended enterprise. Architecture and operations teams at the operating companies were given much greater visibility of architecture plans and standards, which enabled them to streamline systems implementations. Systems vendors and implementation partners were better able to customise their offerings to align with the group's objectives and requirements.