Interview questions

The ITANA frameworks group plans to interview architects at selected institutions about their use of EA frameworks and framework-related tools. The following interview questions are proposed.

Background

1. Briefly, what is the history of your EA group, how does it fit into your IT organization or institution, and what are its main activities?
2. Who initiated the adoption of an EA framework?
3. What did the decision-makers involved mean by an EA framework?
4. What were the major goals for adoption of an EA framework? For example, is your framework intended to:
   a. Define for your institution the structure and practice of Enterprise Architecture
   b. Collect and organize information about your institution, in order to understand its business goals, processes, data, and technology solutions
   c. Identify gaps between current and desired capabilities, and lay out a roadmap for closing those gaps
   d. Analyze your institution's business -- its strategic goals, business model, business domains, business processes, business rules, etc.
   e. Analyze your institution's information -- its information needs, conceptual and logical data entities, master data, etc.
   f. Analyze your institution's technology -- its solutions, applications, services, data stores, infrastructure, etc.
5. What EA frameworks did you consider as alternatives?

About the framework

1. Is your framework external, home grown, or some combination?
2. If it is an external framework, what parts of the framework are you using, which parts did you set aside, and why?
3. How have you changed the framework you started with, in response to what challenges?
4. Many frameworks distinguish between the business, information, and technology aspects of the enterprise.
   a. Does your framework deal with a "business layer", and how developed is that aspect of your framework? For example, does it extend to: strategic goals, business model, business domains, business processes, business rules.
   b. Does your framework deal with an "information layer", and how developed is that aspect? For example, does it extend to: information needs, conceptual and logical data entities, master data.
   c. Does your framework deal with a "technology layer", and how developed is that aspect? For example, does it extend to: solutions, applications, services, data stores, infrastructure.

We think an EA framework can serve three important functions:

- It can be a statement of professional standards, explicitly defining for your institution the structure and **practice** of Enterprise Architecture;
- It can be **descriptive**, providing a context for situating and relating information about your institution, particularly its goals and the information, processes and systems that support those goals;
- It can be **prescriptive**, identifying gaps and laying out a roadmap for the delivery of new capabilities.

We would like to ask you about each of these areas:

Framework as EA practice

1. What aspects of your EA practice are you supporting with your framework? For example, information gathering; business processes analysis; system interdependencies; planning; project management.
2. Who are the main consumers (in and out of IT) of the artifacts resulting from your framework?
3. Does your EA framework include an Architecture Review Board? If so:
   a. Describe board membership. What members are inside or outside IT?
   b. At what points in your EA process does your board provide reviews?
   c. How are reviews conducted? What is in scope for review, what are the inputs and outputs?
   d. How are exceptions/waivers considered and granted?
4. Even if you don't have an ARB, are there processes that require reference to your framework? For example:
   a. As part of project management, do projects identify their goals or impact by reference to the framework?
   b. As part of change management, are proposed changes assessed by reference to the framework and/or are changes incorporated in the framework as updates?
5. Do you use your framework to provide guidance to designers and implementers? For example:
   a. Guidance for selection of operating systems, application servers, languages, application frameworks, etc.
   b. Guidance for finding and re-using existing services, such as web services, directory services, authentication services, etc.
   c. Guidance on solution design issues such as scalability, virtualization, security, high availability, backup, disaster recovery, etc.
   d. Guidance for understanding and using master data, business rules, workflows, etc.

Framework for information gathering

1. Do you use your framework to capture the following kinds of information:

	Business	Information	Technology
Conceptual	Strategic goals High level business model Business domains and goals	Conceptual entities Conceptual relationships	Requirements High level services, consumers

Logical	Business processes Business policies and rules Business roles	Logical data models Logical data flows	Applications Dependencies Schedules
Physical	Forms Workflows	Physical data models Physical data flows Master data	Installed software in production, QA, dev, etc. Servers, storage Data centers

1. In practice what is the scope of what you capture:
   a. Breadth: Are you gathering information one project at a time; one domain at a time; systematically across the whole enterprise?
   b. Depth: Is there a standard or required level of detail, or is it ad hoc?
   c. Time: Are you mainly documenting the as-is state of the enterprise? Are you modeling to-be state(s)? Do you track history of changes?
2. What categories or metadata have helped you the most in organizing the information in your framework?

Framework as roadmap

1. Does the framework guide IT strategic planning? Does it guide institutional strategic planning?
2. Is the framework used to identify, prioritize, and budget essential projects?
3. What projects, or changes to projects, have resulted from the guidance provided by the framework?

Tools

Modeling/analysis methods

1. Please list methods you use in your EA practice and their purpose
   a. UML including its various flavors
   b. Archimate
   c. IDEF0
   d. Primarily text documents and spreadsheets
   e. Other ...

Templates

1. Please describe (or provide pointers to) templates that you have found particularly helpful for the various aspects of your practice.

Managing/reposing EA information

1. Please list the methods and tools you use to manage EA information
   a. EA- or UML-specific repositories
   b. Homegrown repository containing searchable and/or re-usable data
   c. Wiki
   d. Other ...

Presenting EA information

1. Please list the methods and platforms you use to communicate EA activity and provide customers with the information that results from that activity.
   a. Internally to fellow-architects
   b. To project members
   c. To planners and campus leaders
   d. To the world
2. What are some of the use cases your presentation of information is designed to support:
   a. Look up information on a topic (e.g. a domain, process, or service) and find cross-references or links to related information
   b. Tie together documentation in a domain with a conceptual business model of the domain
   c. Compare as-is and to-be states and expose gaps
   d. Trace dependencies and expose downstream effects of proposed changes
   e. Is it designed to support/fit gap analysis, to highlight problems, to identify potential projects?
3. Is there training for users of the framework? What skill sets are involved in working with the framework?