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- SUITE 101 Workshop Training Surveys – Please take the time to complete!
- Developing New! SUITE Workshops

CMMI Process Development Team

- Finalizing Process Mappings
- Developing action plans to address process gaps



CMMI Mentored Self Assessment

SUITE completed its first Capability Maturity Model Integrated (CMMI) appraisal in May, 2009. Representatives from six project teams, plus observers from various SUITE teams, devoted three full days to discussing how they use SUITE processes. The CMMI Lead Appraiser presented her findings to the participants and SUITE sponsors on the morning of the fourth day. The appraisal findings establish a clear point from which to map our journey forward to higher levels of CMMI maturity.

Appraisal Background

CMMI appraisals use the Standard Appraisal Method for Process Improvement (SCAMPI), and fall into three classes:

Characteristic	Class C	Class B	Class A
Amount of objective evidence	Low	Medium	High
Ratings generated	No	No	Yes
Resource needs	Low	Medium	High
Team size	Small	Medium	Large

A Mentored Self Assessment falls in the SCAMPI C category. It is the least rigorous, focuses on processes only (not work artifacts), and does not generate a CMMI rating. A SCAMPI C is recommended as the starting point for organizations serious about process improvement.

The SUITE Mentored Self Assessment was facilitated by Kathy Smith, a CMMI Lead Appraiser, who works for EDS on a team dedicated to process improvement. Kathy has facilitated hundreds of Mentored Self Assessments and specializes in working with high maturity organizations. Kathy became familiar with MDIT and the SUITE initiative in November 2008, when she delivered the Introduction to CMMI course with another instructor.

SUITE Mentored Self Assessment Participants

Representatives from six projects responded to Kathy's questions about how they used CMMI process areas in their day-to-day work. The assessment resembled a conversation about how work is performed. The projects included:

- MDOT: Road Quality Forecasting and MI Drive Phase II
- CSS: Parks Infrastructure Management
- UIA: Payroll Provider File Submission and One-Stop MIS – No Worker Left Behind Waiting Lists
- ORS: Jukebox to Magnetic Storage

Have Questions About SUITE?

Many of your coworkers have had questions as well. The SUITE Team has accumulated a collection of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) relating to the various aspects of SUITE. This FAQ is available on the SUITE website at www.michigan.gov/suite in News / Quick Links.

Your question(s) not there? Send your question(s) to suite@michigan.gov and they will be promptly answered and posted on the SUITE FAQ!



System Maintenance Are Projects Too!

System maintenance projects may actually include many small projects bundled into a single release. It was this fundamental difference from new development that drove the need for a process that was tailored for small projects. The result was the System Maintenance Guidebook,

The System Maintenance Guidebook, (SMG) was originally created in the fall of 2007. It advised using the SEM and SEM Express processes and templates for small projects. This was still much more of a process than was needed for small maintenance projects. So, a sub committee was formed in early 2008 to work on streamlining the SMG.

Everyone performs maintenance on applications they are responsible for, and most are likely to follow a similar process. First, a request is received from the business which may be captured by automated tools. Then the change is made, documented at different levels, and then released into production. The changes may be bundled together in a single release. The SMG provides an opportunity for us to use a common process and documentation for these maintenance releases.

The SMG has the following new features:

- Project Guidelines that suggest which Software Development Life Cycle, (SDLC), to use, whether it's the new SMG, SEM Express or SEM based on the size of a project.
- A new System Maintenance Document, (SEM-0931) that can be used for project documentation.

The SMG is designed to assist with managing maintenance projects. Chapter 1 discusses background, guidelines, maintenance categories, and contains a call for projects process. The second chapter walks through the SDLC and provides help in filling out the System Maintenance Document. The third chapter discusses release management.

Many areas have started to use the new process and template. There are a couple application teams that are pursuing creation of a template in an automated request tool, like Serena Team Track, now called Business Mashups in the latest software release.

The SMG is located on the SUITE page in TechTalk under the MDIT SUITE Quick Links and the System Maintenance Document, SEM-0931 is located in the MDIT forms area on TechTalk.

Please send suggestions on how to improve the system maintenance process or template to suite@michigan.gov. The SEPG will respond to you.



NEW - Process Improvement Release Process

As a result of the Mentored Self Assessment that was performed in mid-May (see article in this issue of SUITE Talk), the SEPG has been tasked with creating a structured release process for publishing process and template improvements. This practice is recognized as an industry “best practice.”

The purpose of implementing a release process is to facilitate the “orderly” publishing of new or modified processes and/or templates. Its purpose is also to ensure that a consistent method of deployment is followed. Instead of publishing a new or updated process or template when it is completed, this new release process will allow the SEPG to schedule releases once per quarter instead of trying to communicate the introduction of new or updated processes and templates sporadically.

This change will allow your teams to know when, and be able to plan for, the introduction of new or updated processes or templates into your area. Release Management is a proactive method for publishing new or updated processes and or templates, allowing project teams to plan for the new or updated processes.

New and/or improved SUITE processes and templates will be published on a quarterly basis. The schedule is as follows: February 1st; May 1st; August 1st; and November 1st. Exceptions to this schedule will occur when deemed necessary by the

SEPG, and these updates will be communicated appropriately as they occur.

New or updated processes and templates will be communicated to SUITE stakeholders as appropriate, before being published as part of a scheduled release.

A log is maintained on the SUITE website detailing what components will be added/updated during the next scheduled release.

If needed, training will be developed and delivered in a timely fashion. This may include updates to our existing training classes or the addition of new SUITE 101 workshops on the usage of the new process or processes being released.

Our first official release, based on this new process, will take place on Monday, November 2nd, followed by another release on February 1st.

SUITE Support Teams

In July 2008 SUITE published a document titled “SUITE Support Team (SST) Roles and Responsibilities” and began implementation of a team structure that provides foundational support using SUITE processes. To quote from the initial publication:

The primary functions provided by the SST are:

- Provide management and direction regarding SUITE to their teams
- Function as champions of SUITE; reinforce SUITE usage across the teams.
- Encourage attendance at SUITE related training/workshops.
- Operationalize the methodology across the teams.
- Collect and report critical metrics.
- Responsible for communications regarding SUITE from upper channels to lower channels and vice versa.
- Establish a document repository for all project documentation.
- Share experiences with their respective functional area as well as the broader SST community – through SST Community Meetings.
- Representation at the SST Community Meetings, as appropriate.
- Responsible for process compliance.
- Share lessons learned and best practices with their counterparts on other SST’s through the SST community.

SSTs are the local face of SUITE. Across the diversity of MDIT Agency Services and Infrastructure Services, SSTs are intended to champion and support consistent, standard project management and system engineering processes. Not included in the list above, but certainly worth adding, is identification of process improvement suggestions. SST members working with SUITE processes on a daily basis are best positioned to improve those processes.

The SST Community and SST Leaders alternate bimonthly meetings. The SST Community meetings typically include updates on SUITE activities and presentations or panel discussions on best practices. The SST Leaders meetings typically include SUITE updates and discussion of challenges, roadblocks, and improvement opportunities.

Your ideas are welcome, and your participation is what makes this approach work!

CMMI Mentored Self Assessment Continued...

Members of the SUITE Core Team, Process and Product Quality Assurance team, CMMI Process Development team, and Systems Engineering Process Group also participated, usually as observers but occasionally as providers of information to augment the project team view.

SUITE Mentored Self Assessment Findings

The purpose of SUITE is to improve delivery of on-time, on-budget systems that meet customer expectations. Compliance with CMMI maturity level 3 is an industry standard associated with these MDIT business objectives. SUITE is the vehicle to implement CMMI at MDIT.

Similar to an audit, the Mentored Self Assessment findings identify process areas that need improvement, rather than areas of strength. The scope of the assessment included 18 process areas related to CMMI maturity level 3. We covered 16 of the 18 process areas, largely due to time constraints. Each process area has 1-3 goals, and each goal has 1-7 practices. The Lead Appraiser characterized each practice as:

- Green: The intent of the practice is judged to be adequately addressed in a manner that would support goal achievement, if the deployment occurred in this way across the organization.
- Yellow: The intent of the practice is judged to be partially addressed; gaps in the process may threaten goal achievement if the deployment occurred in this way across the organization.
- Red: The intent of the practice is judged to be absent or poorly addressed; gaps or issues will prevent goal achievement if the deployment occurred in this way across the organization.

A high level view of the SUITE Mentored Self Assessment scorecard shows the following distribution of process areas:

- Green: 17
- Yellow: 14
- Red: 7

Recurring themes among the yellow and red findings include:

- Lack of a SUITE repository that can be used as “lessons learned” for future projects
- Limited collection of work products, measures, and improvement information from projects for future use and improvement of the organizational processes
- Absence of Quality Assurance processes in many areas
- Inconsistent use of software configuration management processes; typically only code is placed under configuration management
- Lack of adequate resources for project management activities
- Inadequate training for project management and engineering activities

Areas of strength include:

- Project planning
- Requirements management
- Requirements definition
- Technical solution
- Product integration
- Verification
- Organizational process focus

The Road Ahead . . .

The SUITE team leaders developed a RACI (Responsible, Approval Authority, Consulted, Informed) matrix that includes all the Mentored Self Assessment findings as well as weaknesses previously identified by the SUITE CMMI Process Development Team. Each “responsible” team will develop an action plan and milestone schedule to address the yellow and red findings.

When we have addressed the findings from this first appraisal, we will more than likely conduct another Mentored Self Assessment to validate our processes, and then develop a plan for continuing the process improvement journey.