Adapt 2.0

Framework Overview

Document Control

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Description		This document provides an overview of the Adapt 2.0 governance framework	
Version History			
Version	Author	Date	Comment
1 0			Original Version of Adapt 2.0
1 1	RS	06.01.14	Includes the definition of the modules
1 2	RS	05.05.14	Includes new module infographic

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Contents

1 Overview

The Adapt 2.0 framework is the leading framework for the structured governance of Agile projects. It incorporates a range of concepts and practices that both improve the benefits and extend the applicability of Agile processes.

The framework is designed to sit above and augment the Agile process that is being used to manage the day-to-day execution of the project. It is used to map Agile processes onto existing governance procedures, and can also be used to provide a consistent view across different projects and programmes that may be using a variety of processes, including waterfall projects (Fig 1.0).

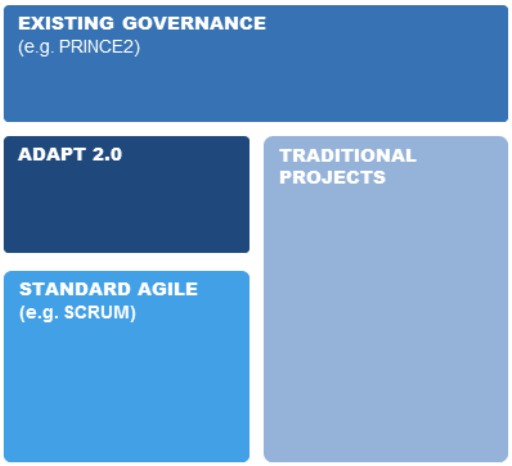


Fig 1 - Adapt 2.0 in conjunction with exiting governance

The addition of Adapt 2.0 makes Agile a more complete process. It does this by addressing gaps within standard Agile, including:

- The absence of a complete plan
- Incomplete approach to forecasting
- Inappropriate change management

Importantly it does this by supporting and harnessing the core principles of Agile, in contrast to other governance solutions that can often dilute the intended Agile benefits. Besides creating a context in which Agile projects can be better governed the Adapt 2.0 framework also provides an approach that:

- Covers the full end-to-end project lifecycle, rather than focusing overly on the build phase
- Can be used for programmes and portfolios, as distinct from single projects
- Is more generally applicable than IT and software development e.g. it can be used for business change programmes.

2 Why is Adapt 2.0 Required

Adapt 2.0 is a response to a range of issues observed across many organisations that have implemented Agile processes in different ways in different contexts and with widely differing outcomes.

A common thread running through these issues is the observation that Agile tends to focus on the detail, at the expense of the "big picture". In one sense this is an intentional facet of Agile, because the traditional approach to mapping the big picture to the detail (stepwise refinement) creates significant overheads that Agile is specifically trying to avoid.

At the same time this is a key source of the difficulty experienced when governing Agile projects, because governance is essentially a big picture activity. Some basic attempts to "add" governance to Agile fail to address this key point. For example, inviting governance stakeholders "into the room" to observe events as they occur implies observing the detail and interpreting those observations subjectively. Similarly, adding activities which appear to provide control, such as task-breakdowns and burn-downs in Scrum, are again operating only at the detail level.

Another common approach to addressing the recognised issues with Agile is to add elements of waterfall back into the end-to-end process. One extreme (but sadly common) pattern is to use Agile purely for the development phase, having fully specified the requirements and design before Agile "starts". This severely constrains the benefits of using Agile and removes any opportunity to optimise across projects as a whole. Less extreme variants identify some reduced up-front process which delivers a "sufficiency" of high-level design. This is getting closer to an optimal approach but still leaves a lot of room for subjective interpretation as to the meaning of "sufficiency", and causes the up-front work to be inherently process-driven rather than objective-driven.

3 Core Principles

The framework is based on a core model of what it means to work in an Agile way, and why this is beneficial. This model identifies three headline elements of an Agile approach:

1. Collaboration
2. Incremental Planning
3. Optimised Uncertainty Management

These are discussed below:

Collaboration – Working in a collaborative way is generally more efficient, effective and responsive to change than the alternative. The alternative can be thought of as formal delegation, where specific deliverables are formally assigned to an owner. While collaboration is preferable, delegation cannot be eliminated - the very essence of governance is an act of delegation to the delivery team and inevitably creates a need to manage that delegation.

Incremental Planning – A good Agile plan maximises early value by planning incrementally. This involves a deeper level of understanding and management of value than is required on a traditional project. It also requires additional skills, both to identify candidate incremental strategies and to address the underlying challenges of incremental delivery such emergent design, rework and on-going change.

Optimised Uncertainty Management – Building the solution is only part of a project. The other part is addressing the uncertainties. This occurs not only through traditional activities such as analysis and design, but also through more dynamic alternatives such as experimentation and feedback loops. Traditional processes assume that all uncertainty is removed upfront, but this is suboptimal because it leads to lower quality resolutions and decisions made without the additional information available later in the project. It also delays the delivery of value. Some implementations of Agile go to the other extreme and leave all design decisions until implementation which significantly increases project risk. The optimal approach is to make explicit decisions about the best time and means to resolve uncertainty.

3.1 Governance Principles

The Adapt 2.0 framework is based on a number of core governance principles. The most significant are:

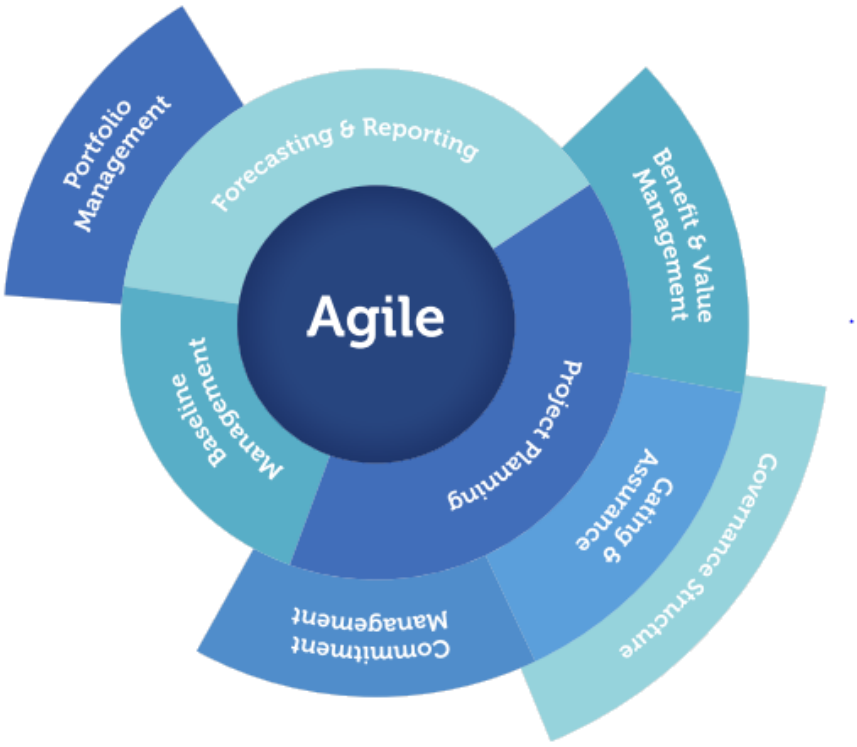
1. It is the responsibility of the project to provide information to stakeholders in a form which is meaningful. It is not the responsibility of the stakeholders to receive raw data and interpret it.
2. The most efficient form of providing this useful information is Reporting By Exception. This involves establishing a clear, agreed baseline, then reporting when the baseline changes, or is at risk.

3. Achieving the benefits of the Agile approach is dependent upon the content of this baseline in terms of its level of granularity, detail and resolution of uncertainty. Too much detail and too many assumptions will create a baseline that needs to change unnecessarily and create project overhead and expense. The skill is to create a baseline that reflects the intent but does not overly prescribe the solution.

4 Framework Overview

The Adapt 2.0 framework consists of a number of modules (Fig 2.0). These are divided into two groups:

- Core modules, which are mandatory on all projects. However, each module has parameters that can be adjusted dependent upon the specifics of the project. It is still possible when appropriate to define a governance process with zero formality, similar to the way many Agile projects are run today, but based on a well-structured evaluation.
- Extension modules can be used individually or jointly to address additional demands of the project.



The content of the modules is as follows:

Core Modules	
FRM210 – Governance Structure	This module defines the impact that Agile has on typical governance structures and how a project or product fits into the wider organisational context, including funding and approval models.
FRM220 – Project Planning	This module addresses the central question of what constitutes a complete and sufficient plan for an Agile project. Building on the Product Backlog, Adapt 2.0 introduces the concepts of incremental strategy and the planned management of

	uncertainty.
FRM230 – Forecasting and Reporting	Appropriate forecasting and reporting is fundamental to achieving effective governance. This module extends the use of velocity to address real-world complexities and provide a framework for reporting by exception.
FRM240 - Baseline and Change Management	Baseline and Change Management is an essential element of effective governance, the alternative being uncontrolled change and communication around change. Traditional change management is not consistent with the core principles of Agile, but approaches are possible which support the Agile benefits.
Extension Modules	
FRM250 – Commitment Management	Making formal commitments is a common challenge for Agile projects, because of the intentional uncertainty being carried forward. While a product backlog with estimates, together with a project velocity, can be used to produce an overall cost and timescale, this is a plan rather a commitment. Providing commitment requires additional techniques for understanding and managing variability.
FRM260 – Portfolio Management	Additional governance techniques are required to manage multiple projects or products. In particular this includes approaches for managing the relationship between work and teams.
FRM270 – Benefit and Value Management	Traditional processes normally define the governance baseline in terms of the solution. Due to the inherent uncertainty, in Agile the baseline needs to be defined at a higher level, in terms of meeting the underlying requirement and intended value. The understanding of value, mapping between value and solution, and the use of value to drive the project through prioritisation, experimentation and measurement is a key part of the effective management of projects and products.

FRM280 – Gating and Assurance	Assurance is a mechanism to build confidence and a means of avoiding surprises. Traditionally assurance is achieved through lifecycles and gating definitions and explicit validation criteria at each stage. This module defines how assurance is achieved within the Agile approach, and provides mechanisms for increased assurance capability where trust needs to built, or as a diagnostic.