



# ARCHITECTURE REVIEW BOARD

Date: 04/19/2010

## Architecture Review Board Policy and Standard Approval Process

### Enterprise Architecture Governance

The State of Minnesota has established a comprehensive Enterprise Architecture program to harmonize and coordinate information and telecommunications technology systems and services. The purpose of the enterprise architecture program is to align the information technology (IT) investments and implementations with the enterprise's business strategies.

The Office of Enterprise Technology accomplishes this by working with the agencies as a community. The primary outputs of the architecture program are architectural artifacts, which are the policies, standards, guidelines and processes that communicate the state's information technology architecture direction and decisions. The artifacts are developed under the direction of a formal Architecture Review Board (ARB) through four architecture domain groups using the governance process described below before formal issuance by the State CIO.

The artifacts are created through a community process that starts with a need that is identified and articulated. Potential solutions are researched and proposed policies, standards and guidelines (the artifacts) are formulated and vetted by representatives of the agencies. The artifacts are made available through the Office of Enterprise Technology's website for examination by agencies, vendors and the general public.

Goals of the enterprise architecture governance process are based on a desire to create alignment within the IT community by providing leadership and direction in closing the gaps among agencies and encouraging cross-agency collaboration and integration. Cost avoidance is sought by generalizing from due diligence already conducted, communicating decisions already made and avoiding reinventing the wheel.

### Architectural artifacts

Architectural artifacts include policies, standards and guidelines.

- A policy is a senior leadership statement that indicates the direction or intent of an organizational propose for a given subject area.
- A standard is a general or specific directive constraining detail decisions. A standard describes what must be done. It is required (normative).
- A guideline is non-mandatory. A guideline may provide historical and background information, describe the intended use of the standard, or explain ways to meet the standard. A guideline amplifies a standard (informative).

## General Notes

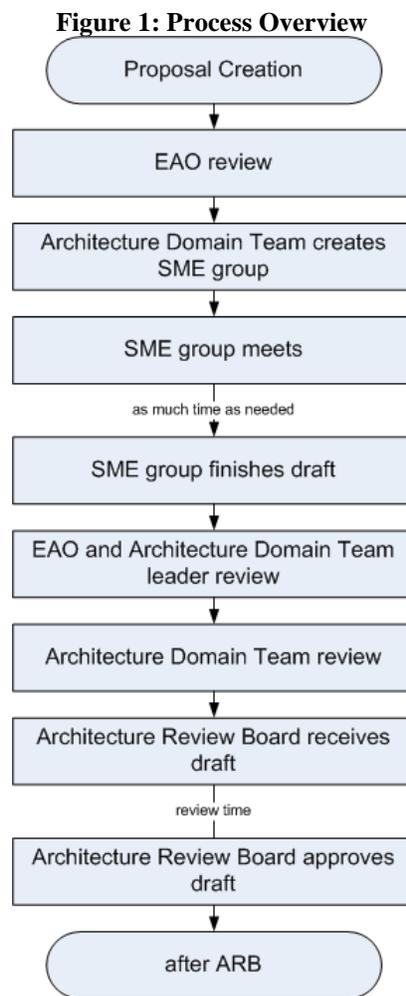
Once a proposal to create a standard has been accepted, it is available for viewing. Interested parties may comment on proposals at any time.

The Enterprise Architecture Policy will normally serve as the accompanying policy for all Architecture standards.

Guidelines do not require approval, but will normally accompany their associated standard and (if any, policy) documents through the process.

## Process Overview

Figure 1 illustrates the process from inception to Architecture Review Board (ARB) approval.



## Proposal Creation

A proposal for an artifact may come from any part of Minnesota government. The proposal must be written and include the identified need. The proposal need not be complete. All proposals are submitted to the Enterprise Architecture Office (EAO).

## EAO Review

The EAO staff reviews the proposal and considers it. Possible results are:

- The subject matter may not be in the Enterprise Architecture purview. In this case, it won't be considered any further by this process.
- The subject matter duplicates an existing policy, standard or guideline. In this case, it won't be considered any further by this process.
- The subject matter is not ready for consideration at this time. In this case, the proposal is kept on file until the appropriate time.
- The subject matter is within the Enterprise Architecture purview, it doesn't duplicate any existing work and it is ready to be considered. In this case the EAO staff refers the proposal to the appropriate Architecture Domain Team.

The domain areas are:

- Business
- Information/Data
- Information Systems/Applications
- Technology

If a proposal spans more than one Architecture Domain Team, one will be selected as primary. There is a mechanism (described in the next step) that allows all teams to be involved in the actual creation of a draft.

Security-related policies, standards and guidelines are handled through the Enterprise Security Office.

## Architecture Domain Team Creates Subject Matter Expert (SME) Group

The proposal is now reviewed by the appropriate Architecture Domain Team. There are four of these teams:

- Business Architecture Domain Team
- Information/Data Architecture Domain Team
- Information Systems/Application Architecture Domain Team
- Technology Architecture Domain Team

If there are issues, the proposal is referred back to the EAO.

The Architecture Domain Team's agenda and minutes – which are public documents – provide formal notice that that this proposal is undergoing review.

The EAO and Architecture Domain Team will jointly define a Subject Matter Expert Working Group (SME group) with staff drawn from the EAO, any or all of the Architecture Domain Teams, or other places as appropriate. Where appropriate, the SME group may consist only of the members of only one Domain Team.

## SME Group Meets

The SME group meets and takes as much time as required to develop a draft. It will typically take 2-6 meetings over 1-3 months to develop a draft. However, the SME group may take as long as required.

The SME group may also determine that it is not appropriate to continue with this work at this time.

The SME group will take all relevant factors – including business ones – into account when developing the draft.

The SME group is welcome to seek all relevant input during this process, including input from the public. The scope of such input is determined by the SME group.

## **SME Group Finishes Draft**

The SME group delivers a final text of the draft standard and, if appropriate, guidelines. At this point, the proposal should be completely finished except for recordkeeping items such as a final issue date.

The SME group is the final arbitrator of the proposal text (excluding template text). If any material changes are requested by the EAO, Architecture Domain Team or ARB, the proposal should be returned to the SME group for review.

Non-material changes will be made as necessary throughout the process by the EAO.

## **EAO Review and Architecture Domain Team Leader Review**

The proposal is reviewed by the EAO and the leaders of all Architecture Domain Teams. The review is for consistency with all other enterprise policies, standards, and guidelines as well as other proposals that are in process. If there are issues, the proposal is referred back to the SME group.

## **Architecture Domain Team Review**

The appropriate Architecture Domain Team receives the proposal back from the EAO. It reviews any concerns and either approves the proposal or refers it – along with the accompanying comments – back to the SME group for rework.

## **Architecture Review Board Receives Draft**

The proposal is now received by the Architecture Review Board for review.

If a formal public comment period is required by statute or similar external constraint, the period between this step and the next may be used for such a period.

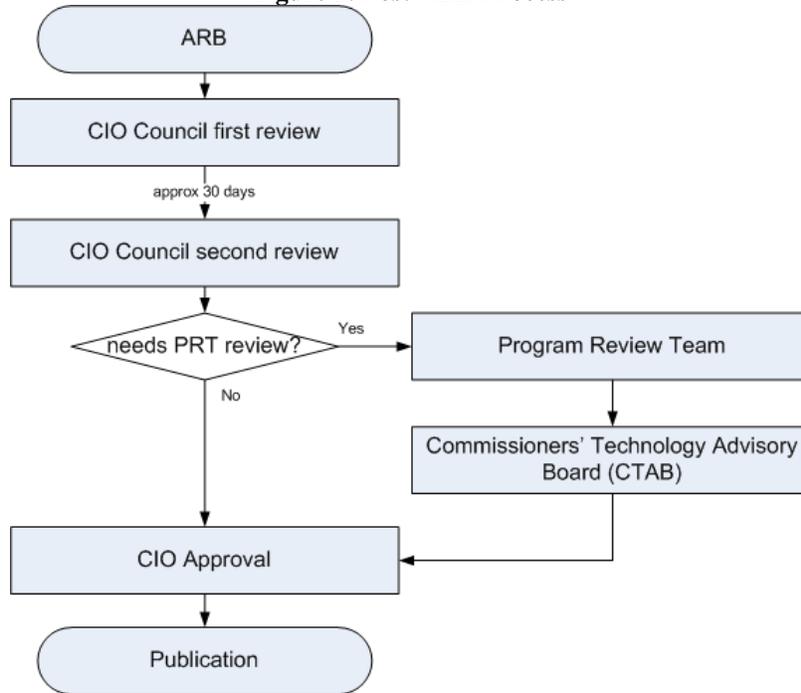
## **Architecture Review Board Approves Draft**

The ARB either approves the proposal or sends it back to the SME group for rework. The ARB may elect to combine this step with the previous one to receive and approve a proposal at the same meeting.

## After ARB

After the ARB approves a proposal, it enters the same review stream used by all other policies and standards.

**Figure 2: Post-ARB Process**



From the ARB, the proposal goes to the CIO council, where it is introduced at one meeting and approved at the next. If the proposal needs Program Review Team review, it is sent to that team and then to the Commissioners’ Technology Advisory Board.

Finally, all proposals are sent to the CIO for signature and are then published.

## Changes to Policies and Standards

Material changes to an approved policy or standard require that this process be repeated from the beginning. Where appropriate, the members of the SME group that worked on the earlier version will be included in the revision.