

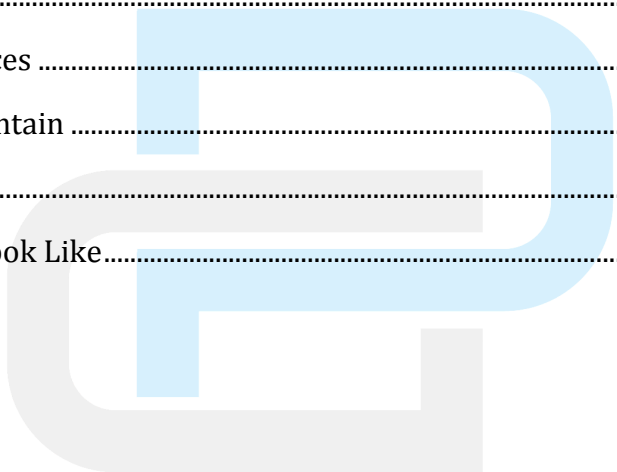


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How to Create a Business Context Diagram

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Introduction

A business context diagram (BCD) is a one-page diagram intended to convey the overall scope of an investment, including the impacted business processes, services, key stakeholders, and interfaces.

A BCD is used to communicate important high-level information about an investment. A BCD is not intended to capture every detail about an investment. The intended audience for a BCD is an organization's senior management, decision makers/approvers, or anyone who needs a quick overall picture of the investment.

As an investment matures over time, the BCD evolves with it. At the outset of an investment, it is possible that only processes and/or stakeholders are known. However, as the investment matures, and additional information, such as capabilities, services, and interfaces becomes available, the diagram can be updated to reflect this.

Creating a BCD

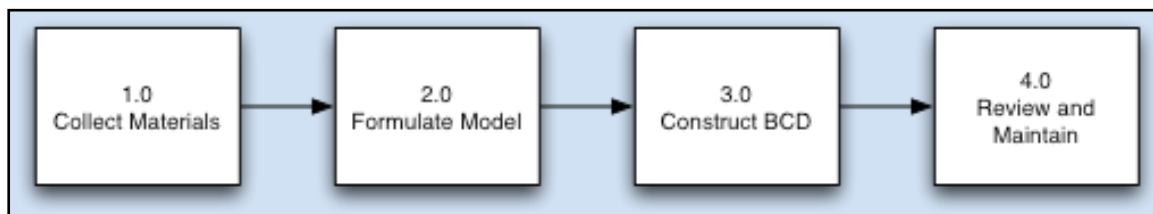


Figure 1 - Four Steps to Creating a BCD

There are four basic steps to creating a BCD. The following sections describe each step of the process, its purpose and related best practices.

Step 1.0 – Collect Materials

This is a basic but an important and time consuming step of the process. It is critical to collect all the latest written documentation that describes the investment. Typically, this involves documents that have been created to support the acquisition process for an organization, such as a preliminary mission needs statement (P-MNS), mission needs statement (MNS), concept of operations (CONOPS), statement of work (SOW), Exhibit 300, systems requirements document (SRD), executive presentations, etc. Important resources to consider are data repositories that contain archives of business processes, services, capabilities, and data.

Best Practices

Within each organization, there are many resources for acquiring information needed to create a BCD. In all cases architects should ask each group for any or all of the documents they might have regarding investments. Listed below are typical offices and positions that could be contacted for information and information that should be available.

Executive Office – Can usually provide points of contact, the official name of your investment, and information about other processes, such as management reporting and acquisition.

Mission or Operations Lead – A person that works within the mission area that champions the investment or is seen as the key user. The lead is usually the official project manager (PM) or the “unofficial” sponsor for the project; in some cases, the lead is both the PM and the champion. Mission leads specialize in knowing how the investment will support the business, how it will close key functional gaps, key stakeholders (internal and external), timelines and the business case (i.e. justification) for the investment.

PMO – A group usually charged with walking the investment through the acquisition process. The PMO takes an investment from original conception all the way through implementation. Relative to creating a BCD, the PMO should be able provide much of the information needed for a BCD, such as a Preliminary Mission Needs Statement (P-MNS), Mission Needs Statement (MNS), Concept of Operations (CONOPS), Statement of Work (SOW), Exhibit 300 and related executive presentations or briefings.

Technical Architecture Office – An office that is charged with supervising the alignment of the investment with the overall strategic direction of the Agency and the CIOs Office. This office also has oversight of investment compliance with established guidelines and relevant policies. Relative to creating a BCD, the Technical Architecture Office reviews and comments on key documents listed above. The Technical Architecture Office is also charged with creating, maintaining, and providing access to the enterprise architecture repository that contains data on business processes, services, and capabilities.

Online Resources – May contain samples of key documents for other investments, and in some cases, these investments could be “close relatives” because they are earlier versions of the investment being considered.



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Step 2.0 – Formulate Model

In the PGPS architect step the PGPS architect formulates the BCD by reading and processing all the collected materials and makes the best judgments as to what will be placed on the BCD, including the stakeholders, processes, services, and interfaces. Standards for diagram format such as color and boundary drawings are also addressed.

Best Practices

Refer to the Figure 2, there are four steps (2.1- 2.4) to formulating a BCD model:

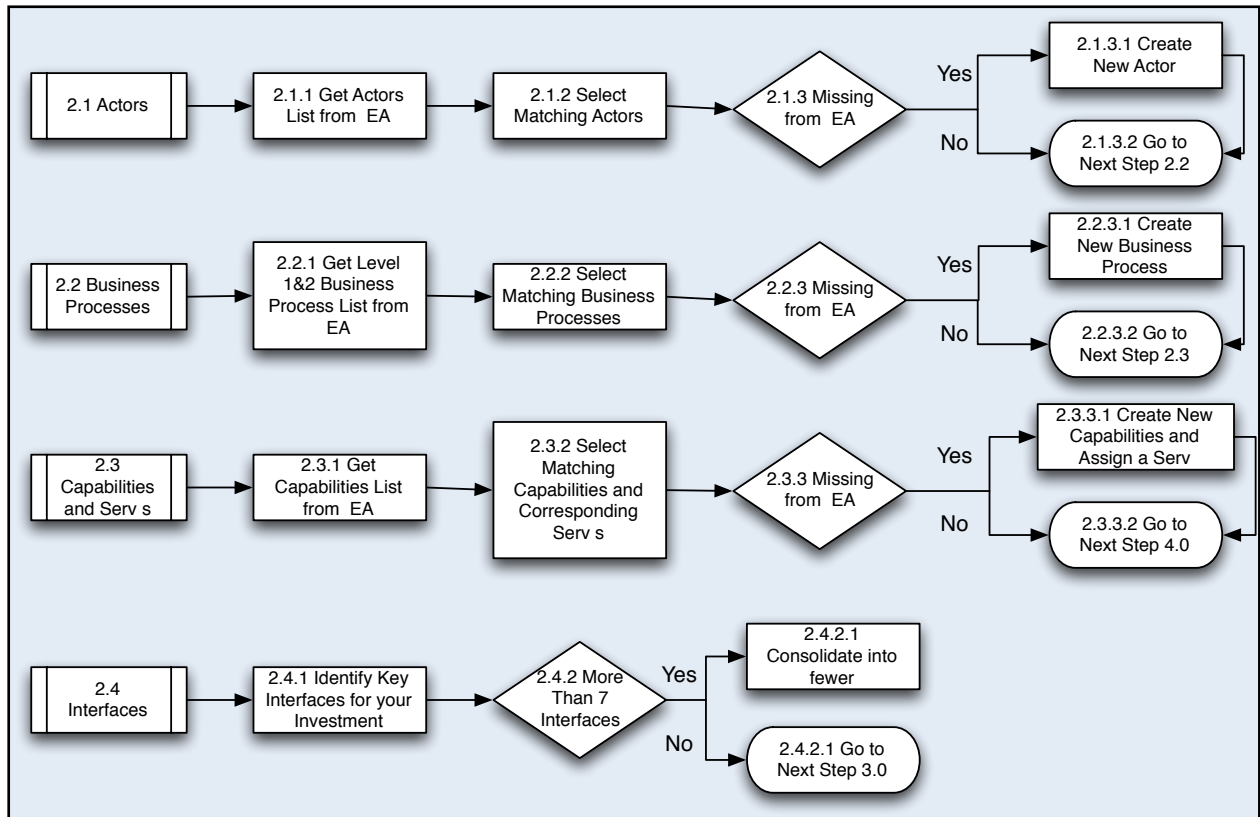


Figure 2 - Formulating a BCD

Step 3.0 – Construct BCD

In this step the PGPS architect creates the BCD by laying out the basic boundary areas for business process, services, and shared services. After laying out these areas, the BCD creator inserts the information collected in Step 2.0 into the appropriate area of the BCD.

Steps and Best Practices

Refer to the Figure 3, there are four steps (3.1- 3.4) to constructing a BCD:

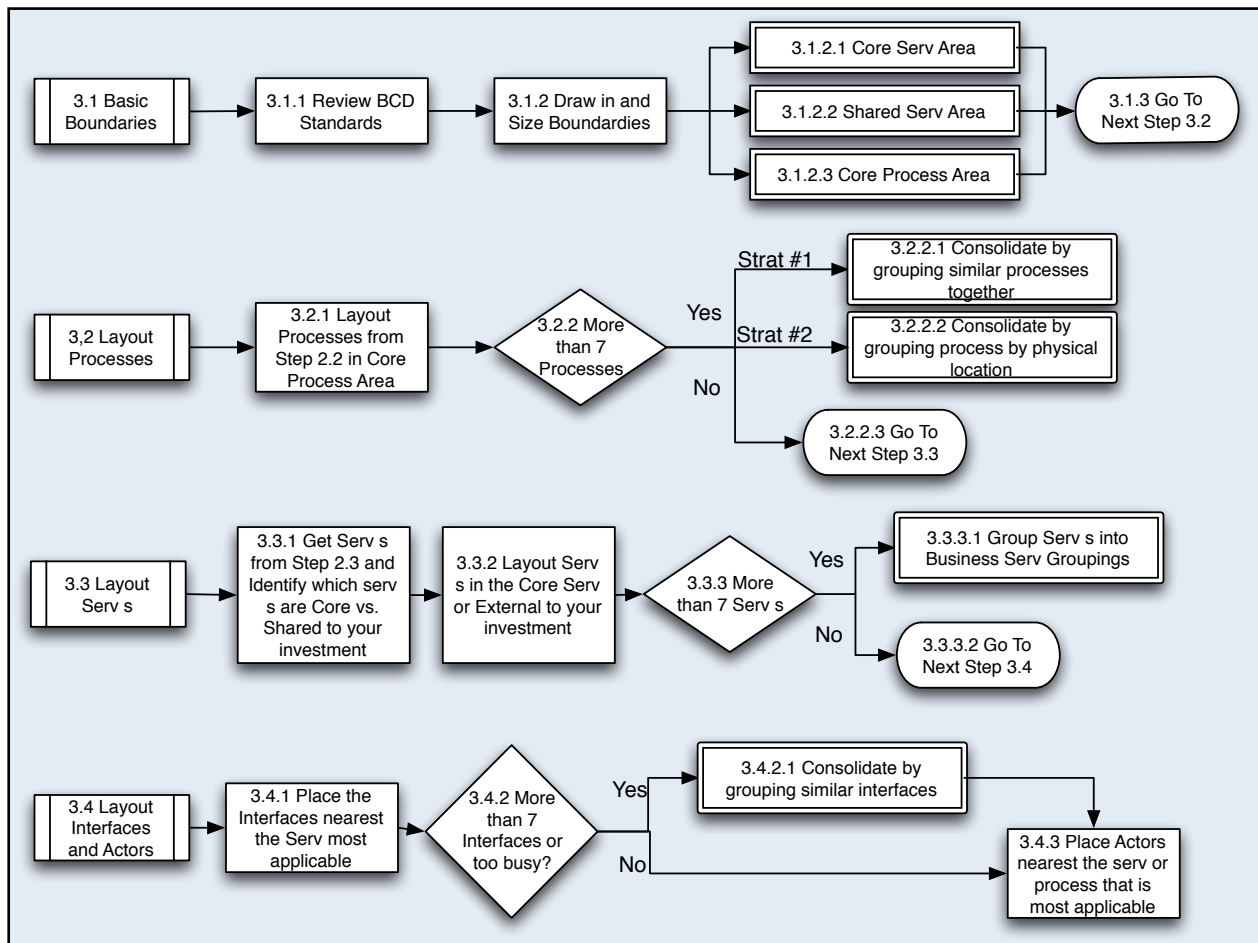


Figure 3 - Construct a BCD

Step 4.0 – Review and Maintain

In this step the BCD creator reviews and updates his/her BCD with key stakeholders, first from the mission-side to validate existing BCD content like business process, actors, interfaces, and services. The BCD creator will also meet with more “technically-savvy” individuals from the systems development area of the CIOs Office and Architecture Divisions to review/update the BCD. It is important that the BCD be maintained throughout the life of the investment and that the information within the BCD be synchronized at all times with the clients’ enterprise architecture data repository.

Steps and Best Practices

After you’ve completed your first draft BCD, review it with the mission area of the Agency that will champion the investment. Make sure to get specific feedback from the “Lead;” usually the official project manager (PM) or the “unofficial” sponsor for the project. In some cases, the Lead is both the PM and the champion. Mission leads specialize in knowing how the investment will support the business, how it will close key functional gaps, key stakeholders (internal and external), and as such, a mission lead is a critical reviewer of the BCD throughout the life of the investment.

After reviewing the BCD with the mission area, locate the IT Program Manager (ITPM) within the Technology/Systems Development Office that is charged with overseeing or building the investment. The ITPM will need to review the BCD, because they are a critical supporting entity. It’s likely that you will take your BCD back and forth several times between the mission area and Technology/Systems Development Office before the first draft of your BCD is considered publishable.

When the BCD is considered ready for publication, take the diagram to an architect in the office responsible for technical architecture. This office is usually charged with overseeing that the investment aligns with the overall strategic direction of the Agency and the CIOs Office and developed according to established guidelines. The office responsible for technical architecture will have key input into all the content put onto your BCD. You may consult this office as a first step before going to the Mission and any Technology/Systems Development ITPM. The BCD will be placed into any existing enterprise architecture repository that contains a list of relevant business processes, services, capabilities, and data.

When stakeholders from Mission, Technology/Systems Development, and Architecture all agree on the content/format of your BCD, it is considered publishable. Place a version number on the diagram and put a copy of it on any relevant online resources and send copies to entities involved in the review process.

Whenever there is a change to your BCD, be sure you publish a copy of the diagram onto existing online databases and copies should be sent to entities involved in the review process.