Illinois Project and Portfolio Management System

" What's in it for me?"

Category: Business Process Innovations

State: Illinois
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DoIT
Illinois Department of
Innovation & Technology

Executive Summary

In the interest of cost savings for real estate, hardware, software, and more efficient use of IT staff resources, in 2003 the state of Illinois began consolidating its IT data centers and resources, as well as started the state's first Enterprise Portfolio Management Office (EPMO). The process began with the consolidation of agency infrastructure staff and the related hardware and software that they managed. Next was the physical transfer of hardware and software to a central data center. Eventually, application development staff and all other technology staff were transferred from their respective agencies to a newly created agency named the Department of Innovation & Technology (DoIT).

As of October 2018, the Enterprise Portfolio Management Office included an EPMO Director, Portfolio Manager and Governance Administrator. The EPMO's primary function was to manage the Enterprise Project Management (EPM) Portal and provide limited support to project managers (PMs) using the portal. The EPM Portal was a SharePoint site with limited workflow automation, designed primarily to capture IT architecture governance documents that were submitted by PMs and reviewed for approval by solution architects. There were over 700 "active" projects in the EPM portal submitted by any of the 53 agencies, boards, or commissions under the domain of DoIT.

After a thorough review of the EPM Portal data, it was determined that most of the 700+ projects in the EPM Portal were inactive. The metrics produced from the EPM portal, while accurately reflecting the data, did not accurately reflect the real-time state of the projects within the EPM portal.

In addition to the inaccurate picture that the EPM portal data provided, significant technical expertise was required to produce the metrics and data visualization needed by management. Other issues included limited workflow process automation, a lack of project and workflow status transparency, and a confusing user interface. As part of the continuing effort to consolidate and transform agency IT resources into a single unified agency, the EPMO procured the Micro Focus Project and Portfolio Management (PPM) system in October 2018. This marked the start of the DoIT Project and Portfolio Management (PPM) system journey.

The EPMO envisioned that the PPM would provide a single platform with full transparency for DoIT leadership, agency CIOs, Group CIOs, portfolio managers, program managers, project managers, project stakeholders, and the project development team. It would have: 1) integrated capabilities for portfolio, program, project, financial and eventually resource management, 2) user role based dashboard access to real-time proposal and project data , 3) an automated workflow process promoting projects through IT governance and a document library, 4) a place for auditors to identify projects for audits, 5) and lastly a single, consistent view and process for all agencies to manage IT proposals and projects.

IDEA

As a new agency, the Department of Innovation & Technology (DoIT), wanted to better understand how many *active* IT projects were in play and wanted to understand timelines and priorities to ensure support to those projects. As agencies continued to look to DoIT for the support of their mission critical applications, DoIT found itself often unaware of new implementations in development until they were already moving to production. The PPM system corrected this by providing the full lifecycle transparency that was needed for this new organization model to succeed.

DoIT also wanted professional project management practices to serve as a standard across all IT project development efforts. They believed formal project management provided the best opportunity for project success. IT management did not have a view into projects from a single source. Each project was managed differently; each without consistent, standard project management processes, controls, or documentation. Project teams should be accountable for their projects and formal project management provided that as well as a common communication standard that defined project status.

Project alignment to agency priorities would reduce unplanned projects that started without agency leadership's knowledge and many times stalled due to lack of executive support when projects ran into funding or resource issues. The PPM addresses this by providing the ability for agency leadership to make sure only proposals that align with leadership priorities get promoted to projects, saving dollars and time, and focusing limited resources on key strategic initiatives. Under the previous approach, it was not uncommon for agency leadership to learn about projects in progress that did not meet agency goals for that fiscal year.

DoIT procured the Micro Focus Project and Portfolio Management system and built up the Enterprise Portfolio Management Office (EPMO) by tripling staff to include a team of 18 project managers and business analysts. The new PPM provides the ability for agencies, including DoIT itself, to have a formal IT proposal approval process that identifies and documents the need for IT projects, categorizes the project need, provides a rough order a magnitude (ROM) estimate, and requires sign-off from the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) and agency leadership BEFORE a project is initiated. This formal process is called the proposal phase.

All IT projects are now required to navigate the PPM proposal process *before* they are promoted to real, resource-consuming projects. In addition, before a proposal can be promoted to a project, a project manager must be identified and assigned to the fledgling project. DoIT did not want a proposal to be promoted to a project and then become inactive due to a lack of resources, such as project manager to drive project success. Under the PPM, if a project becomes inactive for any number of reasons (funding, resources, lower prioritization, etc.) it is formally placed on hold. The PPM allows agency leadership to distinguish active projects from projects "on hold". This differentiation is an important milestone for agency CIOs, allowing them to show their agency leadership specific projects that are on hold, for how long, and why. The PPM ends the days of "working on" projects indefinitely. All projects can now be fully transparent, accountable, and well-aligned to agency priorities.

Project managers are onboarded to projects with an established framework defining expectations for them, and with PPM training available to them on a weekly basis, conducted by EPMO staff, each with specific expertise in various areas, such as program management, status reports, schedules, dashboards, etc. Project managers can now drive their projects to success using the PPM as the standard project management tool, keeping the project data fresh and up to date in terms of schedules, risks, issues, and project financial data.

IMPLEMENTATION

The PPM project officially started in January 2019. Micro Focus assigned an enterprise architect and project manager to the project. DoIT EPMO assigned a project manager and identified two DoIT technical administrators/configurators. DoIT's goal is to eventually manage and configure the PPM with DoIT resources so that we are not reliant indefinitely on Micro Focus professional services.

The IT architectural governance process, in place with the EPM portal, was used as the initial foundation for the workflow process. However, the Micro Focus PPM solution is designed to accommodate a two-step workflow process: 1) IT proposal submission, review, approval, then promotion to the project phase and, 2) as a project, the workflow steps follow a standard software development life cycle (SDLC) that has been integrated with IT governance.

PPM **Proposal** Workflow
Proposal Phase (PRP)

APRC: Agency Proposal Review Committee AFA: Agency Final Approver
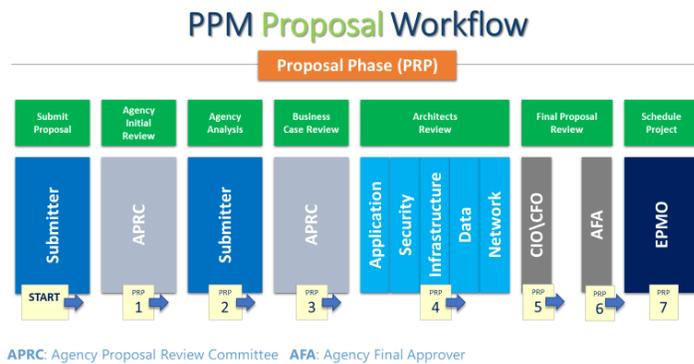
This separation of proposals from projects was new to DoIT. In the past, once an idea for a project was submitted, it was accepted as a project. With PPM that's not the case. A formal proposal is required to be submitted and it must navigate through multiple reviews before it is accepted as project. Once a PM has been identified the EPMO will promote the proposal to a project. The project then continues through the governance process as it works its way through a standard software development life cycle within the PPM project workflow.

PPM **Project** Workflow
Project Phase (PRJ)
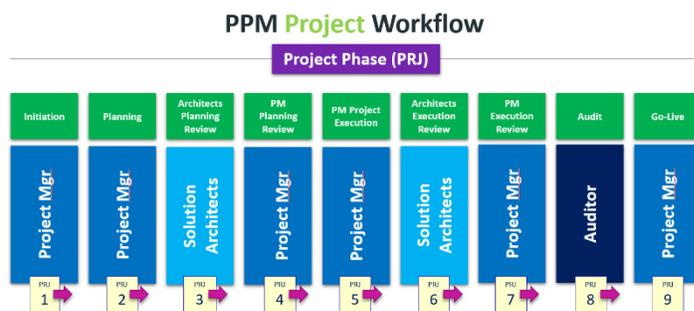
Agency CIOs from small to large agencies, DoIT enterprise architects, EPMO governance staff and project managers all participated in requirements-gathering process. It was important for DoIT to bring in resources from outside DoIT to provide input, as the majority of stakeholders that would be using the system would be from agencies outside DoIT. The primary work in these sessions was to identify the workflow and roles, and various data points for project categorization.

In order to rollout PPM to the agencies, not only did the PPM system need to be ready, but the business processes that were previously informal now needed to be formalized and documented as part of the workflow in PPM. In the past, email approval of a project from an executive may have been standard practice for approval. Now, EPMO staff developed training for how to process proposals, as well as introduced agency leadership to the formal structure of the PPM workflow process. Projects identified in the EPM portal were migrated to the PPM and mapped to existing projects, so those currently active projects would be available in the project phase for the PMs in PPM.

After nine months of development, the PPM system went into Production in Sept 2019. Three agencies went live, with other agencies scheduled to go live throughout the next 12 months.

Project implementation consisted of sending out "starter kits" to an agency CIO. These starter kits were used to gather information needed to populate workflow roles with specific staff for each agency, in addition to confirming which projects were active and which were not. Training by user role was

introduced and projects were migrated from the EPM portal to the PPM. Agency migration took six weeks from the initial introduction to PPM to full migration of data and all trainings.

A new role within the EPMO was identified – PPM Liaison. This role provided the organizational change management that was needed to integrate the PPM into the real-world workflow of front line project managers. The PPM Liaison also provided a single point of contact for agencies. An individual PPM Liaison manages several agencies, conducting periodic meetings to answer questions, confirm project management processes are in place, and monitor activity or lack thereof in the PPM. This position was and remains a key role to fostering agency success, as introducing the PPM incurred significant additional effort by agencies to incorporate the new project management model into their established workflows. With that combination of agency and EPMO effort, the PPM is developing into a key source of high quality project data that can result in successful projects.

IMPACT

DoIT's goal was to focus on three areas: 1) transparency, 2) accountability and, 3) alignment. By focusing on these areas, the PPM system has had the following postive impacts:

- Sun-setting legacy portal projects and producing a true picture of an agency's IT activity by reducing project inventory up to 80%.
- Providing "Right-Size Governance," analogous to a T-Shirt size concept for proposals/projects, which in turn allows governance fast tracking for smaller projects.
- Giving group CIOs early visibility into their agencies' project activity through consolidated, real-time dashboards.
- Automating project status reporting that repurposes PPM content into status reports, saving PMs time and providing a consistant, standardized report across all projects.
- Creating role-based dashboards for CIOs and others, allowing a view into IT projects to ensure alignment with agency goals, project costs and execution progress, all via a single PPM tool.
- Distinguishing proposals from projects, allowing early input by the IT Architecture team (data, network, application, security, infrastructure) during the proposal phase.

Transparency

For the first time since DoIT's inception, a single system now provides accurate metrics to identify the health and progress of DoIT projects.   This data is no longer buried in the various organizational silos of infrastructure, network, enterprise applications, etc. All current and new DoIT IT projects are listed in the PPM and all start with a proposal that goes through a proposal review workflow. This process is set up to ensure alignment of projects with strategic initiatives and reduces unplanned projects, allowing agencies to focus limited funds and resources on high priority, high significance projects.

For example, when PPM is implemented at an agency, the agency's current projects have to be reviewed before they are included in PPM as worthwhile projects. **Some agencies migrating from the legacy EPM portal into PPM were able to reduce their project inventory by as much as 80% as a direct result of this review process.**

This was because PPM is structured to provide agencies with a clear, realistic picture of *active* projects and a sharper focus on the resources needed for those projects. This resulted in reclassifying many projects as either not worth migrating, or perhaps worth migrating, but not in active status. These

projects were placed "on hold" for various reasons, such as reduced budget, resource limits, changes in priorities, etc., allowing the agency to keep track of potential future work, without diverting scarce resources prematurely.

Once projects have been migrated into PPM, the agency CIO has dashboard access to a variety of PPM-

Reduction in Project Inventory

DEPT OF REV — PPM: 10, Legacy Portal: 45

DOIT — PPM: 13, Legacy Portal: 66

■ PPM ■ Legacy Portal
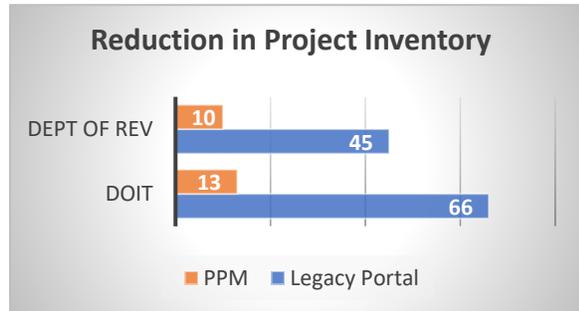
generated data visualizations that are based on solid, accurate data as opposed to ancedotal stories from users saying "we're swamped". Showing a clear, well documented list of projects "on hold" allows for a frank discussion on whether these projects should remain on hold, returned to active status, or removed from the portfolio altogether, with the option to be added back in the future as a new proposal. With a focus on truly active projects only, resources and funds can be maximized for the success of the agency's most important projects, instead of being spread too thin across too many projects.

At a high level, the outcome is project transparency. Project transparency provides agency leadership with a consistant view of project status and and project controls across the entire agency portfolio. PPM enables a comprehensive overview of agency projects, including schedules, Gantt charts, risks, issues, scope changes, budget forecasting, and cost burndown, available to all stakeholders via the PPM in real time. Projects that can be grouped together are associated with an agency program and can be managed as a cohesive unit by a program manager. Issues, risks, scope changes, and budgetary issues associated with the program are escalated to a program manager who manages at the program level and not the project level.

At the day to day project management level, the PPM provides the front line project manager and stakeholders with a standardized project status report that covers a project's overall health, schedule, cost, issue, scope, risk, resource, quality and procurement status. ***Over 50% of all projects managed by EPMO staff currently use the the PPM standard status report with a goal of 100% by 2021***. With global visibility of standardized project status reports and project schedules, the EPMO can work with PMs to ensure agency leadership stays in the loop and projects stay on track.

Alignment

PPM provides a workflow for IT architecture governance that ensures all projects meet IT standards, and that once a project is implemented, DoIT will be able to provide production support for the resulting applications. ***Because the proposal process is separate and distinct from the project process, IT architecture reviews now occur at the proposal level before a project has been initiated, as well as during planning and execution.*** In the past, it was not uncommon for DoIT infrastructure to find out only after a procurement that they would be required to support a DoIT non-standard application architecture or technology.

Now, under the PPM, all IT projects start with an IT proposal submitted to the agency proposal review committee. The committee is made up of agency and IT leadership. Each proposal is reviewed and either approved or denied based on its merit and alignment, providing agencies with a stronger level of control over the flow of new project ideas.

Nearly 10% of proposasl submitted to the DoIT Agency Proposal Review Committee via the PPM were

DoIT Proposal Alignment

- DENIED
- APPROVED
- DENIED - NOT Key Initiative
- DENIED - Key Initiative

91% 9%   7%

2%

denied. Of those denied, about 80% were not identified as key initiatives by agency leadership. Using the PPM to focus on key initiatives via the approval process ensures any new projects are better aligned with agency objectives and goals from the get go.
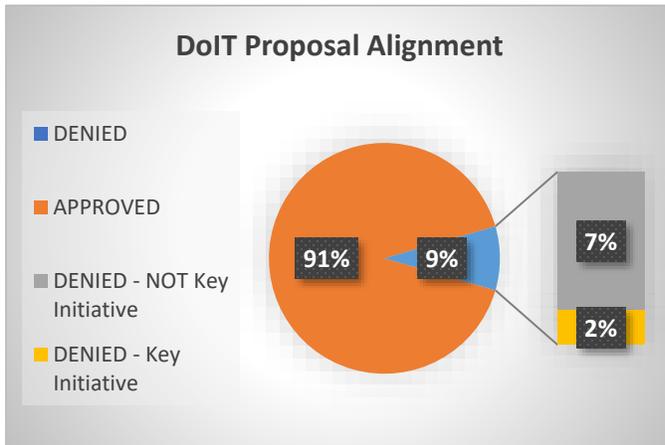
Project class identification helps agency leadership define its strategic objectives and goals, ensuring agency projects are not aligned solely to maintenance and operations projects, but also have budgets and resources appropriate for projects associated with

innovation, efficiencies, etc.

Accountability

Monitoring of project activity within the PPM is one way project accountability is managed by the EPMO. If projects are not updated with schedules, budgets, and project controls such as risks and issues, EPMO staff contacts the PMs to make sure they are not having any problems using the PPM tool. ***If PPM training is not the cause of the inactivity, then these less active projects can be put "On Hold"***. For any training issues that do exist*,* PMs can attend weekly classes offered by the EPMO or online classes that are available 24/7/365. These classes cover PPM usage and project management basics such as scheduling using Microsoft Project.

Projects that have been paused indefinitely or canceled by the project leadership due to lack of

DoIT Project Accountability

- Active
- On Hold
- Canceled
- Complete

13%

18%

47%

22%
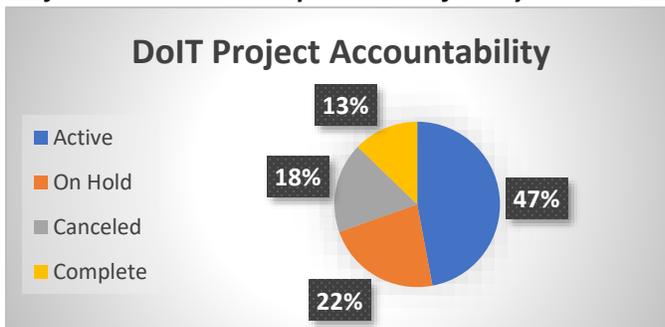
budget, resources, reprioritization, etc. are canceled in PPM. ***This accountability ensures that only active projects are listed within the PPM***. This high level of visibility also ensures that project management best practices are in place and PMs are actively managing the project in PPM. This process ties to DoIT's other objective of transparency. Without actively managed projects in PPM,

stakeholders and agency leadership do not have a window into a project's progress or lack thereof. This monitoring of projects by the EPMO provides project data that PPM users can be assured is up to date, accurate, and relevant when viewing dashboards related to agency aggregate data.

In summary, now that PPM is in place, both EPMO and agency leadership finally have a tool to get better metrics for tracking both quantitative and qualitative success in reaching agency strategic objectives. This is a 100% improvement from the previous state, which lacked enterprise-based project success metrics, making it extremely difficult to make truly data-driven decisions. Under the PPM, the new metrics and EPMO processes allow for continuous improvement and tracking of progress towards mission objectives, cost savings, operational efficiencies, and DoIT's agility to change course when required.