Way 6 – Scoop for the IS planning process

Introduction

This 6th way presents the fourth part of the cycle method presented by Salmela and Spil in 'dynamic and emergent information systems strategy formulation and implementation'. It presents the 6th tool out of 45 and part of the 2nd task in the first cycle. There are many different definitions on the scope of a project under IT and business literature. In general we speak about three definitions: The project scope, the product scope and the scope of work. This document will focus on the project scope. Developers and management usually underestimate the importance of a project scope. A survey ('critical failure factors in information systems projects') has shown that an unclear definition of the project scope can lead to confusion, misinterpretation an delay. An approach that deals with scope definition and continuous scope change control trough out the project is called as the Project Scope Management(PSM).

Scope of The PSM Process

in this chapter the main thing is on the time scope, abstraction level, focus and stakeholders of the PSM process. The PSM Process is a large undertaking and contains a continuous change control element. Time that is spent on the PSM process is relative to, but not limited to, the size, abstraction, complexity and stakeholders of the project. Therefore it is vital to specify size, abstraction, complexity and the stakeholders before starting with the process. Abstraction level is the amount of detail that the document should contain for it to be useful while staying high enough to keep an overview of the project. The focus areas is that the IS system will reside within an organization and is thusly influenced by different external and internal factors which should be taken into consideration. The scope document has to be sponsored, created, managed and executed, these are the Stakeholders.

Project Scope Management Process

This chapter describes the 5 elements that both have input, output in the PSM theory. The 5 elements are Scope Initiation, Scope Planning, Scope definition, Scope Verification and Scope Change Control. These 5 elements together form the PSM Process as we can see below in the picture. The figure gives a methodically process where the elements follow each other in a chronologically way. The scoop of control must be read as a 'loop', a continuous process during the entire project. A not must be made that changes in external or internal environment could change the scope of the project. Therefore the internal and external environment must be monitored closely.
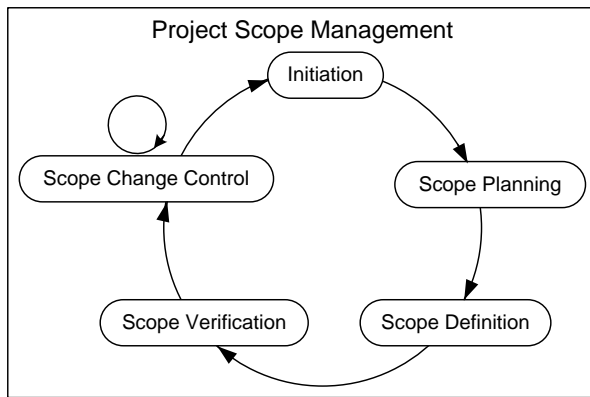
Figure 1: project scope management overview, from [PMI00]

Scope Initiation

In this section the process links the project to the organization. The inputs in this section are the planning objectives and outcomes, the organizational strategic plan, historical information and project criteria & planning objectives. These inputs leads to the following outputs: The Project Charter, Project Manager, Constraints and Assumptions.

Scope Planning

In this section the process is defined as creating the scope. Various analyses are involved for the purpose of documenting the work that is required to produce the IS. The inputs in this section are: product analysis, benefit/cost analysis, Alternate identification and expert judgement. These 4 inputs should result in a scope statement, that is the foundation for the IS project understandable for all stakeholders. It delivers also a document which contains the assumptions and constraints and a document on how to scope and how to scope changes.

Scope definition

In this section the scope statement is broken down into smaller more manageable objects, that are easier to understand and manage. Important inputs here are: The scope statement, assumptions, constraints and historical information. This section results in 1 or more documents about small objects with their scope, constraints and assumptions.

Scope Verification

In this section the stakeholders has to make an formal acceptance of the documents. All documents must be correct and complete.

Scope Change Control

In this section it is important to have continuous monitoring of scope changes, managing these changes when they happen and making sure that the scope changes that occur are agreed upon.

Conclusion

In this tool we described a theoretical approach on Project Scope Management. We described the hole process. We followed the 5 elements, Initiation, Planning, Definition, Verification and Change control that are involved in the process. Following the description above will create a scope management process to facilitate an IS project and give the project a much bigger chance on successful completion