

ASL[®] 2 Self-assessment

Diagnosis for application management



René Sieders
Remko van der Pols †

APPLICATION SERVICES LIBRARY



ASL[®] 2 Self-assessment

Name

Group

Date

Colophon

Title: ASL® 2 Self-assessment

Subtitle: Diagnosis for application management

Authors: René Sieders and Remko van der Polst, The Lifecycle Company

Publisher: Van Haren Publishing, Zaltbommel, The Netherlands, www.vanharen.net

ISBN Hard copy: 978 90 8753 740 1
ISBN eBook: 978 90 8753 764 7

Edition: First edition, first impression, March 2014

DTP: CO2 Premedia, Amersfoort

Copyright: © ASL BiSL Foundation / Van Haren Publishing 2012, 2014

For any further enquiries about Van Haren Publishing, please send an e-mail to: info@vanharen.net

No part of this publication may be reproduced in any form by print, photo print, microfilm or any other means without written permission by the publisher.

Although this publication has been composed with most care, neither author nor publisher can accept any liability for damage caused by possible errors and/or incompleteness in this publication.

TRADEMARK NOTICE

ASL® and BiSL® are registered trademarks of the ASL BiSL Foundation.

Contents

1 Introduction	5
1.1 Objective	5
1.2 Introduction	5
1.3 Prerequisite knowledge	5
1.4 Structure	6
2 Development phases	7
2.1 Process clusters	7
2.2 Development phases	8
2.3 Importance of the levels	9
3 Approach	10
3.1 Filling in the questionnaires	10
3.2 Summarizing the results of each cluster	10
3.3 Summarizing the total and the analysis	11
3.4 Assigning responsibilities and owners	12
4 The self-assessment	14
4.1 Application support processes	14
4.2 Summary application support processes	16
4.3 Application maintenance and renewal processes	18
4.4 Summary application maintenance and renewal processes	20
4.5 Connecting processes	22
4.6 Summary connecting processes	24
4.7 Management processes	26
4.8 Summary management processes	28
4.9 Application strategy	30
4.10 Summary application strategy	32
4.11 Application management organization strategy	34
4.12 Summary application management organization strategy	38
5 Instruments for analysis	40
5.1 Results page of self-assessment	40
5.2 Results page: proposed actions	41
5.3 Results page definitive actions	42

1 Introduction

1.1 Objective

This is the ASL 2 self-assessment workbook. The self-assessment is a tool which will give you insight into the way in which ASL processes are established within your organization. This will provide you with a clear view of how your organization is managed and what the consequences are.

This view may be interesting in itself, but more important is that, based on the insights provided by this self-assessment, you will get a feel for the strong points of your organization, and also for the limitations of your organization and possible bottlenecks associated with the service delivery. This will give you a starting point for any improvements that you wish to make. The number of improvement actions taken should be limited however, since experience shows that the majority of actions fail, due to the large number of actions started (that is to say: proposed).

1.2 Introduction

With this self-assessment you have the first final version based on the new version of ASL: ASL 2. This first final version was preceded by a number of pilot versions. The results of those assessments have resulted in this workbook. However, the workbook may still contain some imperfections and we, therefore, gladly welcome any suggestions or recommendations for its improvement.

This workbook is, of course, largely based on the *workbook ASL-self assessment* related to the first version of ASL, but it has been revised completely and adapted to ASL 2.

This ASL 2 self-assessment is also available as an interactive e-book. With this enhanced e-pdf it is possible to save your work (assessment) on your computer (laptop). To do this, you need Acrobat Reader version X or higher.

1.3 Prerequisite knowledge

The prerequisites for this self-assessment are: knowledge of ASL, knowledge of the processes in your organization and external support.

1. Knowledge of ASL

In order to use this self-assessment, a good knowledge of ASL 2 is required. This workbook does not describe or explain ASL. There are different ways to learn about ASL. The first is to read the ASL 2 framework book or the pocket guide:

Pols, R. van der (2012). *ASL 2 - A Framework for Application Management*. Van Haren Publishing. ISBN 978 90 8753 313 7

Backer, Y. and R. van der Pols (2014). *ASL 2 - A Pocket Guide*. Van Haren Publishing. ISBN 978 90 8753 643 5

Also there is the NEN 3434 standard for application management. This Dutch standard is derived from the ASL-self assessment (version 1). The standard is, as with national and international standards, a bit stricter in terms of requirements.

There are also ASL courses which can be taken. Courses are available at a number of accredited training organizations. The knowledge objectives of

the 'ASL 2 Foundation' course are more or less the starting points for this assessment.

2. *Knowledge of the processes within your organization*

It is assumed that you have a reasonably good knowledge of the processes within your own organization and that you are familiar with the way processes are implemented and managed etc. In this self-assessment, it is required that you are able to explain how things work within your organization.

3. *External support*

The self-assessment contains many assertions that need to be judged for your own situation within a very short time-scale. You and your team will go through a process in which choices must be made and priorities set. Consequently, external team support and guidance is recommended, both for providing further explanatory information on the questions and for the critical assessment of the answers. Also we think guidance in the entire process is indispensable.

Based upon our own experience, we recommend a follow-up to this self-assessment after completion. All too often, assessments are carried out without doing anything with the results. In such cases, the ASL self-assessment would be pointless. You could have saved yourself the time and spent it reducing backlogs.

1.4 Structure

This workbook comprises three parts:

1. *The technique of the ASL 2 self-assessment*

The first part (chapters 1 to 3) focuses on the context, the approach, the set-up and the technique of the self-assessment. You have already almost completed the first chapter (chapter 1).

Chapter 2 describes the method, this is the substantive scope of the self-assessment. Topics are addressed such as subdivision, phases and the importance of a correct phase.

Chapter 3 consists of the approach and the actual technique. This is where you will find the actual instructions, the do's and don'ts and possible considerations.

2. *The questionnaires*

The second part (chapter 4, sections 4.1 to 4.12) contains the questionnaires of the self-assessment. Each process cluster has its own section and includes a number of statements. Each questionnaire is followed by an outline in which the results of each process cluster are summarized.

3. *The analysis and decision-making tools*

The final part (chapter 5) contains the analysis tools themselves. In this part, the results are placed in a much broader perspective. Based on the analysis undertaken by the group of participants and the priorities that have been set, the measures to be taken are described and assigned to an owner, who is responsible for taking action. Additional requirements are also defined, such as planning and milestones.

2 Development phases

2.1 Process clusters

The self-assessment follows the clustering of processes within ASL. Knowledge of the ASL framework (see figure 2.1) and the grouping of clusters is therefore assumed.

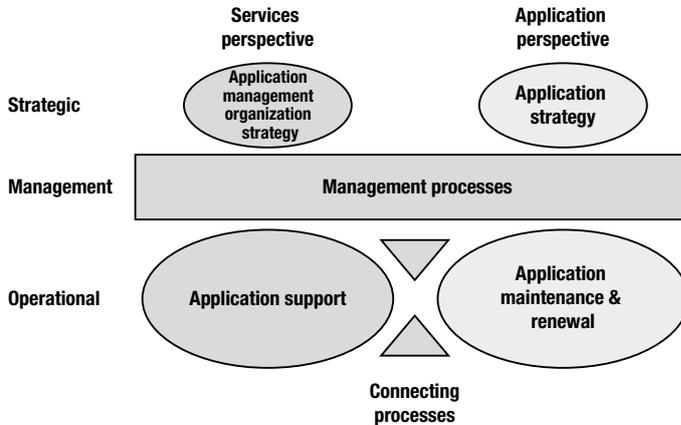


Figure 2.1 An outline of the ASL framework

In this self-assessment, the following six process clusters are addressed:

1. Application support

The application support processes ensure an optimal utilization of the applications used in support of the business process. This, with a minimum of technical resources and disturbances in the operation. This means keeping applications up and running and ensuring that they support the daily activities of the organization. In practice, these activities easily make up 20 to 40 percent of all the application management activities.

2. Application maintenance and renewal

The application maintenance and renewal processes ensure that applications are adapted to new needs and requirements as a result of changes in the organization and in its environment. The data models, software and documentation are modified as necessary.

3. Connecting processes

The connecting processes *Change Management* and *Software Control and Distribution* form the bridging elements between both process clusters at the operational level. *Change Management* forms the main inlet of application maintenance and renewal and, likewise, *Software Control and Distribution* forms the outlet back towards application support. *Change Management* caters for the logistics of the change requests, whereas *Software Control and Distribution* handles the logistics of the physical objects of the information system.

4. Management processes

Both support and application maintenance and renewal activities must be managed, preferably in a cohesive manner. These management processes cater for the overall management of the operational processes for both exploitation and maintenance and renewal. In addition, the clusters Application management organization strategy and Application strategy, i.e. the clusters responsible for future developments, feed the management processes. The strategic processes determine the policy and governance input. The strategic and operational levels both feed the

management processes and, likewise, these are fed by the management processes. Consequently, both future and daily reality are embedded in these processes.

5. Application strategy

Application strategy is the cluster of processes that ensures the design of the long-term strategy of the various applications. Additionally, this cluster provides all of the information provisioning to a user/client organization in relation to their long-term organization policy. Therefore, this process cluster is focused primarily upon the user-organizations.

6. Application management organization strategy

This is the cluster of processes, which focuses upon the development of a future view of the IT service organization itself. Consequently, this view towards the future is translated into an innovation policy with regard to the services provided by the IT service organization.

It is our experience that application management organizations do not generally have a view towards the future and the services they want to provide. Nor do they give sufficient thought to the partnerships that are required in order to provide the desired services to their customers.

2.2 Development phases

In the self-assessment we distinguish different development phases or so-called *levels of maturity*. At each level certain characteristics can be recognized in terms of process and process results. The maturity level is determined by the response to the statements in the questionnaires. The maturity levels are similar to those of CMM and EFQM.

In this self-assessment tool, five levels are distinguished (see figure 2.2).

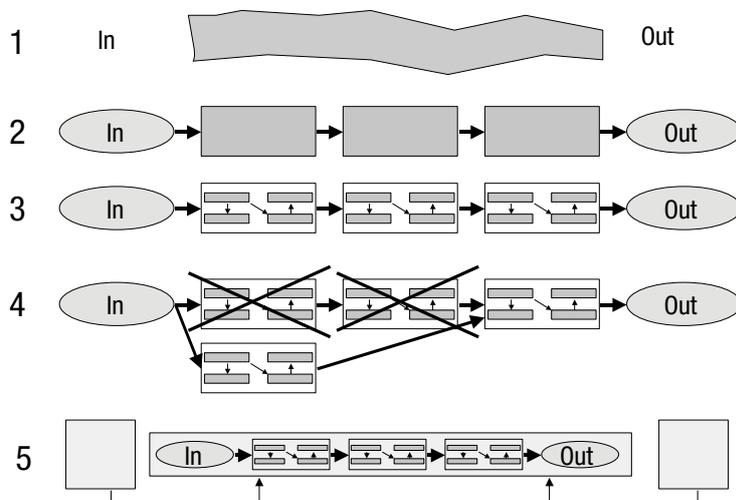


Figure 2.2 Maturity levels

These five levels are:

(0. Absent)

- Initial:** The organization has no stable environment to implement the ASL 2 framework processes. Nevertheless, certain process activities are implemented. Initiatives are also taken and sometimes activities are carried out in order to gain better insight and knowledge. The results and the outcomes of those activities, however, are not always predictable.
- Repeatable:** The organization performs its activities based on repetition. Previous experiences and approaches often form the basis of the performance. This is where a standard way of working begins to emerge,