

ArchiMate® in Financial Services

Achmea

Achmea has embraced the use of enterprise architecture to achieve improvement of the business value of IT and to align strategic choices in business and IT.

Facts

Name:	Achmea
No. Employees:	25,000
No. Applications:	±1,750
No. Projects:	±150
No. ArchiMate Users:	±60

Using ArchiMate®

To analyze strategic choices, create current and future state architecture on all layers, make analysis, and create project start architectures.

“Consistent EA modeling with ArchiMate® helps us to get a grip on the major challenges we are facing.”

Ronald Polderdijk, Group Technology Officer, Achmea

Achmea is an all risk, all care insurance company with a revenue in 2007 of 15.610 million Euro. Achmea employs over 25.000 people. Achmea is successful in its market with over 150 products and services. To deliver these products and services, over 250 business processes are active, supported by more than 1,750 business applications and numerous infrastructure components. Enterprise architecture is a key strategic instrument to manage change in business and IT.

In the mid 1990s, the first architects were appointed within Achmea. Enterprise architecture was at first limited to technical infrastructure architecture. Currently, around 60 architects work on a full-time basis within the Achmea Enterprise Architecture Programme. The key stakeholders of the Enterprise Architecture Programme are the COO of the Executive Board and the CIO.

Achmea has embraced the use of enterprise architecture to achieve improvement of the business value of IT and to align strategic choices in business and IT. By the use of enterprise architecture, Achmea is able to increase its agility and reduce the time-to-market of new products and services. Major application migrations have been prepared and checked for feasibility by using enterprise architecture. Moreover, enterprise architecture is used to structure and plan change programs and to assess and reduce their risk and costs.

In the last two years, Achmea has achieved a Group Business Information Plan and derived from that Division Business Information Plans. In these plans, business strategy is translated into project portfolios, based on common agreed architectural principles. This includes products and services, processes, information and information systems, and technical infrastructure. On top of that, Achmea achieved a common agreed Achmea Target Architecture (ATA) based on a set of product models, process models, information models, and service models. Target applications and infrastructure are agreed. Furthermore, for 90% of the (total 150) projects Achmea produces a Project Start Architecture (PSA) in which the project change is scoped and in which the principles are applied to the specific case in the project. Modeling is becoming a central element in these PSAs and ensures re-use and consistency.

The future plan is to focus on product, process, and application rationalization within information domains, and to further strengthen the discipline of controlling enterprise architecture in an outsourced IT operation.

Why use ArchiMate®?

ArchiMate® is a dedicated common language for EA modeling. It is an easy-to-use open standard, providing consistent modeling, view generation, and impact analyses.

Lesson learned

Overcoming the “not invented here” syndrome and focusing on delivering added value are the main success factors for ArchiMate implementation.

TOGAF™ and ArchiMate®

TOGAF and ArchiMate are complementary open standards. ArchiMate provides instruments to support enterprise architects in describing, analyzing, and visualizing the relationships among domains in an unambiguous way. All models in the ADM can be delivered using ArchiMate.

Architecture modeling with ArchiMate®

From 1995 to 2002, the Achmea enterprise architecture practice consisted of a group of people sharing the same interest. From 2003 to 2006, this practice was part of a central IT organization in which all the architects were centralized. This helped to learn the job of being an architect and to set governance processes, architecture products, etc. From 2006 until now, the architecture practice works in a federated governed organization. This allows a much closer alignment with business change.

The Achmea architecture team decided to develop the skill set first and then decide on methods and the toolset. Until 2007 they only used Microsoft Word and Powerpoint. With the growth of the architecture community, consistency between and re-use of architecture products became more important. Achmea now uses Dynamic Enterprise Architecture (DYA) as an architecture method, ArchiMate as the architecture modeling language with a certified ArchiMate tool with repository.

The key requirements for the selection of the enterprise architecture language, methods, and tools were:

- Adhering to open standards, without vendor lock-in
- Ease-of-use, low complexity, step-by-step growth in advanced use
- Consistent modeling and maintenance
- Possibility to generate views for stakeholders
- Answering impact of change questions

Currently, 50 architects are educated (two-day training) in the use of ArchiMate and the supporting tool. Achmea started with modeling the technical infrastructure and the application layers. The architects in the different divisions model the processes. The resulting models are stored in a central repository, supporting integration of the models, generating views, and creating analyses.

Lessons learned

Some major lessons learned in selecting and using proper methods and tools are to overcome the “not invented here” syndrome, and to focus the architecture teams on delivering value rather than talking about methods and tools. Achmea chose ArchiMate with a dedicated EA-tool because of the positive pilot experiences within Achmea.

Future

For the future, Achmea strives to improve the enterprise architecture model management skills. Since ArchiMate is complementary to TOGAF™, Achmea is investigating the possibilities of integrating these open standards. Enterprise architecture will certainly remain a key strategic instrument to manage change in business and IT.

For more information, visit www.opengroup.org.

Copyright © 2009, The Open Group. All rights reserved.

TOGAF™ is a trademark and ArchiMate®, Making Standards Work®, The Open Group®, UNIX®, and the “X” device are registered trademarks of The Open Group in the United States and other countries. All other trademarks are the property of their respective owners.