

The relationship between ASL® 2 and ITIL® v3

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INTRODUCTION

In 2009 a new version of ASL became available on the Dutch market: ASL2. The English version was released in 2012. The book on ASL2 sometimes briefly discusses the relationship between ASL processes and IT infrastructure management. It does not, however, address ASL's relationship with ITIL. So far, literature has already been published in English comparing ASL 1 with ITIL v2 and ITIL v3 with ASL. This article complements the literature with a brief comparison between ASL 2 and ITIL v3, as interested users of the live frameworks often have many questions both on the usefulness of the frameworks for the different management domains and on the relationship between the IT management frameworks.

ITIL v3

ITIL, which is managed by the British Cabinet Office, provides guidelines for the implementation of service management. This basically means that it's about guidelines for the implementation of new IT services: within ITIL the term 'service' is central. A service is composed of services related to products produced by internal and external parties outside the area of service management.

Structure

ITIL v3 consists of 5 books [CO] which advise you:

- to think about what services you want to offer (Service Strategy)
- then to design a new service (Service Design)
- then to ensure that the new service can be taken into use (Service Transition)
- then to perform the service well (Service Operation).

Finally, it is important that you regularly focus on the renewal / improvement of your services (Continual Service Improvement).

The five books correspond to the five phases of the lifecycle of a service (see Figure 1).

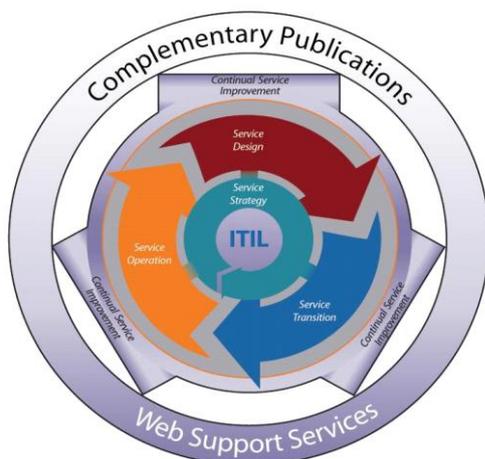


Figure 1: ITIL v3 life cycle stages Source: CO

The familiar ten Service Support and Service Delivery processes from the previous versions of ITIL are divided about these new books. Some processes are addressed in more than one book because they consist of both tactical and operational elements. Furthermore, the number of processes is increased to approximately 25. ITIL doesn't only use processes to describe service management. Additionally, activities, functions, principles, etc., are described to complete the picture. Considering ITIL as a process model only, as was customary previously, doesn't give it enough credit.

Customer – IT service provider - supplier

The ITIL books do not make a clear distinction between processes/activities that lie with the supplier of the services (the IT service provider) and processes/activities that are the responsibility of the recipient of these services (usually the user (customer) organization). Most of the ITIL processes take place within IT only. The description of some processes partly involves the customer organization. Within these processes, responsibilities are not clearly divided. Therefore, the customer-supplier relationship is not clear. It is notable that business information management on the customer side is not explicitly recognized.

More clearly described is the relationship between the IT service provider and the suppliers of components, which are considered by ITIL as the building blocks of a service. ITIL classifies these components into four categories: applications, data, infrastructure and environment (building, power, etc.).

ITIL thus focuses primarily on services but it does also focus on products in the sense that requirements are set up. ITIL, however, hardly pays attention to how the products must be manufactured or maintained.

ASL 2

ASL 2’s objective [Pols, 2012], like ASL 1, is to professionalize application management. ASL is managed by the ASL BiSL Foundation and consists of a framework of processes and a library of best practices in the field of application management. Application Management is seen here in a broad sense: it includes all processes and activities required for keeping the functionality and functioning of the application (software) up-to-date for the lifetime of the supported business processes.

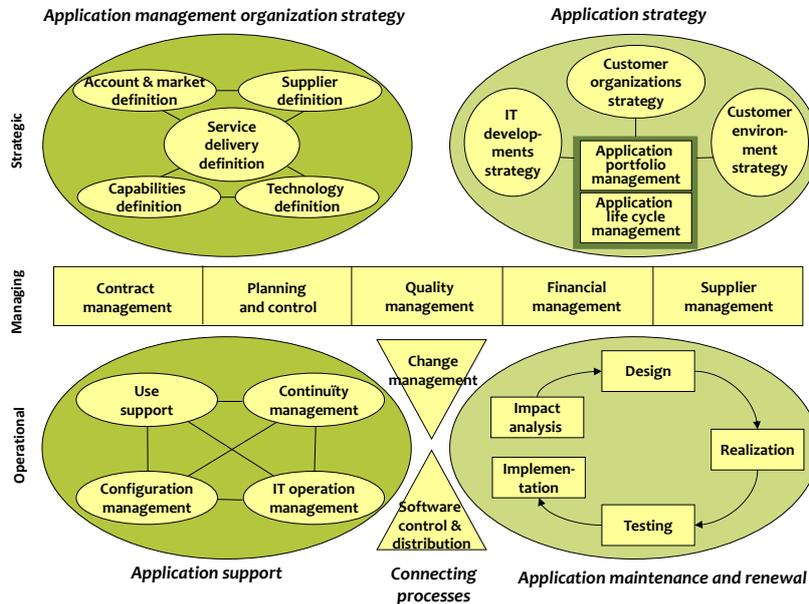


Figure 2: The ASL 2 framework

Structure

In the framework (see Figure 2), which has already been briefly described [Meijer, 2009], six process clusters are defined:

- Application support
- Application maintenance and renewal

- Connecting processes
- Management processes
- Applications strategy
- Application management organization strategy.

The domains which ASL (application management) and also BiSL® (business information management) focus on are based on the three forms of IT management defined by Looijen and Delen. The distinction between customer and supplier, and its importance, is a starting point for these two models.

APPLICATION MANAGEMENT

ASL and ITIL use the terms application management and application development in different ways: ASL positions maintenance (including renewal) within the scope of application management and defines application development as the function that produces new applications, not releases of existing applications. ITIL's application management does ensure however that applications which are built (initial development) or changed (maintenance) meet the demands of service management.

	ITIL	ASL
Developing new applications	Application Development	Application Development
Maintaining existing applications	Application Development	Application Management
Operational management of applications	Application Management	Application Management

Table 1: Application management and development according to ASL and ITIL

Application management within ITIL is seen not only as an activity but also as a functional unit which manages applications, just like technical management within ITIL manages IT infrastructures. The employees are part of the IT operations management function.

ITIL considers applications (customized or standard, it makes no difference) to be a part of all products and activities that make up an IT service.

ITIL AND ASL

In early days ASL was developed based on ITIL, among other sources. Therefore the first versions of both frameworks contain many similar processes. Both ASL and ITIL are based on best practices, however each has its own scope. They both describe activities and processes (and more). So, which ASL 2 processes and activities are and which are not in ITIL v3? On the basis of the process clusters of the ASL process model, this is briefly explained below (see also Table 2). The main differences and similarities between ASL and ITIL v2 and ITIL v3 have been described previously [Meijer et al, 2005, 2008].

Application support processes

The four ASL Application Support processes ensure that the applications do what they should do on a daily basis. Since, on the one hand, the names of the processes within ASL have changed and some processes have been clustered and, on the other hand, ITIL has decomposed some processes, the similarity between ASL and ITIL is optically much less evident than before. Therefore the relationships appear more complex.

Handling disruptions in the services, ITIL's Incident Management, is part of the ASL process Use support. However, in this process, ASL deals with other calls as well, such as questions and service requests. These activities are covered by ITIL's Request Fulfilment. The ASL process also strongly emphasizes proactive communication with customers much more than ITIL does.

The new ASL process IT Operation Management includes ITIL's Capacity Management, Availability

Management and parts of Demand Management. In ASL, the given examples are relevant to application management staff. In ITIL the processes are described in much more detail than in ASL but specific application examples are little discussed. The examples are very general and not specifically focused on managing technical infrastructures either; they are therefore widely applicable.

ASL's Continuity Management still contains activities that can be found in the ITIL processes IT Service Continuity Management, Information Security Management (securing information) and Access Management (authorizations, etc.). Again, the descriptions in ITIL are much more extensive but less specifically oriented to applications.

ASL's Configuration Management is focused solely on application objects and service items. The ITIL counterpart, Service Asset and Configuration Management, is focused on all configuration items that should be managed, particularly the IT infrastructure components. The latter process also includes elements from the ASL Software Control and Distribution process, namely version management.

The extensive ITIL descriptions in the English books of the analogs of these four ASL processes are, as already indicated, applicable not only for infrastructure and infrastructure services but also for application services. For application management staff they can have a clear added value to the process descriptions and the current best practices within ASL.

Maintenance and renewal processes

Within the cluster maintenance and renewal of ASL, the processes that play a role in changing an application in response to disruptions and new requirements are discussed, from defining the consequences of a change request to supporting the customer in his acceptance testing.

ITIL describes the design of the Service Design book; Impact Analysis is part of the ITIL Change Management process. How the product (the changed application) is established (ASL processes Realization and Testing) is not described within ITIL.

ITIL does pay attention to various activities necessary for including the new products in the new services, such as: (acceptance and exploitation) tests, ensuring that everything that must be done before the actual transition has indeed been carried out, etc. There is a clear relationship to ASL's Implementation process, in which some attention is paid to the deployment to operation of applications.

Connecting processes

The Connecting processes of ASL control the transfer from day-to-day operation to maintenance and vice versa. There is an important relationship to the ITIL processes Change Management, Release and Deployment Management and Transition Planning and Support.

In ITIL, Change Management covers *all* changes, even changes in the nature of the services provided. In ASL (and BiSL) Change Management covers solely the changes in the functionality of the applications (or the information provision, respectively). Thus providing an additional production run is not a change in ASL whereas it is in ITIL.

From the point of view that 'the making of a product is not a concern within ITIL', it is not unexpected that ITIL pays little attention to development environments (and transferring to and from those environments). Production and test environments do get a lot of attention.

Management processes

In ASL's Management processes all parts of the application management are controlled and managed and agreements with customers and suppliers are defined.

For the ASL processes Financial Management, Contract Management (contracts with customers) and Supplier Management (contracts with the suppliers of the application management organization) ITIL has equivalent processes: Financial Management, Service Level Management plus Catalogue

Management and Supplier Management.

ITIL does not recognize separate processes for Quality Management and Planning and Control. In the Continual Service Improvement book much attention is paid, however, to continuous improvement of services and customer satisfaction and therefore it has a significant relationship with ASL's Quality Management.

Strategic processes

ASL distinguishes the process clusters Application management organization strategy (AMOS) and Applications strategy, which deal with the strategy for the services of the own (application management) organization and the application portfolio of the customer organization, respectively. In ITIL the AMOS activities can be mainly recognized in the Service Portfolio Management process. ITIL devotes a whole chapter in the Service Strategy book to determining the market (Account and market definition in ASL). The activities of the ASL Supplier Definition process are addressed in the ITIL process Supplier Management. ASL includes a few more strategic activities (identification of the why) and ITIL describes more guidelines for the (corresponding) activities that have to be performed. In the Continual Service Improvement book, ITIL pays attention to the importance of periodic consultations with the customer about future developments in and around the (business) organization and to determining its impact on the IT services. This covers some aspects of Application strategy, however no processes or chapters are devoted to this issue.

ASL describes the strategic elements in 10 processes and it clearly adds something to ITIL.

ASL 2	ITIL v3
<i>Application management organization strategy</i>	
Account & market definition	SS: Chapter Define the market SS: There is no specific process for Account definition, although there is some attention
Technology definition	SS, SD, e.a.: No specific process, but it gets attention in many places
Capabilities definition	SS: There is attention to people throughout the book, but not process-wise
Supplier definition	Supplier Management
Service delivery definition	Service Portfolio Management
<i>ACM</i>	
Customer organizations strategy	
Customer environment strategy	
ICT developments strategy	
Application portfolio management	
Application life cycle management	
<i>Managing processes</i>	
Contract management	Service Level Management Service Catalogue Management Service Measurement Service Reporting
Quality management	Problem Management (covers a small part of QM) Knowledge Management CSI: pays some attention to continuous improvement: e.g. 7-steps improvement process
Planning and control	CSI: Chapters on Service Measurement and Service Reporting cover some parts
Financial management	Financial Management
Supplier management	Supplier Management
<i>Operational processes</i>	
Use support	Incident Management Request Fulfilment Event Management SO: Chapter Service Desk
IT operation management	Availability Management Capacity Management Demand Management Event Management
Continuity management	IT Service Continuity Management Information Security Management

ASL 2	ITIL v3
	Access Management
Configuration management	Service Asset and Configuration Management
Change management	Change Management
Impact analysis	Change Management
Design	SD: Chapter Requirements Engineering SD: Chapter Data and Information Management SD: Chapter Design activities
Realization	--
Testing	--
Implementation	Service Validation and Testing Transition Planning and Support
Software control and distribution	Release and Deployment Management Transition Planning and Support Service Asset and Configuration Management

Table 2: Corresponding processes and subjects in ASL 2 and ITIL v3

People, process, technology, and other philosophies

Longstanding within the ITIL philosophy, a service is made of people, processes and technology. Hence, in all books in various places, attention is paid to the topics people and technology. In version 3 ITIL even speaks about the 4 P's: People, Processes, Products and Partners. So far ASL has mainly focused on the processes however ASL 2 gives a little more attention to the importance of the human touch, even outside the Capabilities Definition process. Furthermore, ASL is more based on integrated services now, a view that ITIL exposes much more explicitly. This is reflected, for example, in the respective processes Supplier Management and Supplier Definition (ASL) and Supplier Management (ITIL).

With regard to the common processes, the process structures of ASL and ITIL are still well comparable. ITIL gives more checklists and examples; ASL is more specific to her field and will be more appealing to application management staff than the broader ITIL.

In the Netherlands, many organizations would rather use the ITIL Foundations book [Bon, 2007], that summarizes the five official ITIL books, than the original five English books. This Dutch book has some more focus on IT infrastructure than the English series has. Furthermore, much of the ITIL information that can be used within application management is provided much more comprehensively in the original English books. Therefore these have more value to application managers than the Dutch summary has.

Maturity Model and certification

When certifying the service management organizations the ISO 20000 standard can be used. For certifying application management organizations the NEN 3434 standard may also be used. These two standards have already been compared [Haagen, 2007].

The NEN standard is based on the ASL processes and includes a maturity model: for each process the criteria which an organization must meet to reach a certain maturity level are defined. These five maturity levels can also be found in the ASL self-assessment, on which the standard is also based [Meijer and Sieders, 2009]. ITIL does not contain a maturity or growth model; ISO 20000 which is usually used for certification of the 'ITIL organizations' does not have maturity levels either.

Co-operation

The Management processes in ASL have many interfaces with the corresponding ITIL processes. The information exchanged between the various processes of ASL and ITIL is not elaborated in the ASL book and it would go too far for this article to cover this extensively here. In a number of previous articles, which were based on ASL 1 and ITIL v2, this was already discussed in some more detail [see e.g. Meijer, 2006-2007]. They show, among other things, that there is no one-to-one relationship between the corresponding ASL and ITIL processes. Some of the ASL processes cover activities of

several ITIL processes and vice versa. Furthermore, one change in application management (such as a release) will pass through the change process in IT infrastructure management several times (preparing DTAP environments, purchasing PCs, installing network, etc.). With sufficient knowledge of ASL and ITIL the implementation of the co-operation is not a problem, particularly if one focuses on the similarities and does not concentrate on the differences.

CONCLUSION

Much like their predecessors, ASL 2 and ITIL v3 have similarities, differences and added value relative to each other.

ASL is still primarily a process model whilst ITIL is primarily a stage model now; it describes the stages you must go through in the service lifecycle. Within those stages processes are identified and described in the books. Since application service provision basically goes through the same stages as infrastructure services, many principles in the ITIL books are applicable to both IT infrastructure management and application management. In terms of philosophy ASL seems to be moving slowly towards ITIL: focusing at mixed services.

ITIL pays no attention to the processes in which products that will be included in the services are made, while in ASL these processes are as important as the service management processes. In addition, the separation between customer and supplier is much more explicit in ASL than in ITIL. Therefore, the way the frameworks look at the world differs. With this different view ASL offers added value and, because ASL covers application management processes other than ITIL (e.g. more processes at the strategic level), it better speaks the language of the application manager and developer. ASL and ITIL still have many similar processes. However, they look at the world from their own perspective and therefore the content is somewhat different and they often have a different name.

ASL 2 provides more background on the model than ASL 1, which provides added value compared to the first ASL book. Many more examples are given in the English ITIL books than in the standard ASL books, making them more practical. The Dutch ITIL Foundations book and the basic ASL 2 book may be regarded as more comparable.

Organizing the co-operation between ITIL and ASL has, at first sight, become more complicated, because there are only few processes left with corresponding names. Yet this is not the case; co-operation is possible and with sufficient knowledge perfectly implementable. Handles that support this should still be further developed.

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