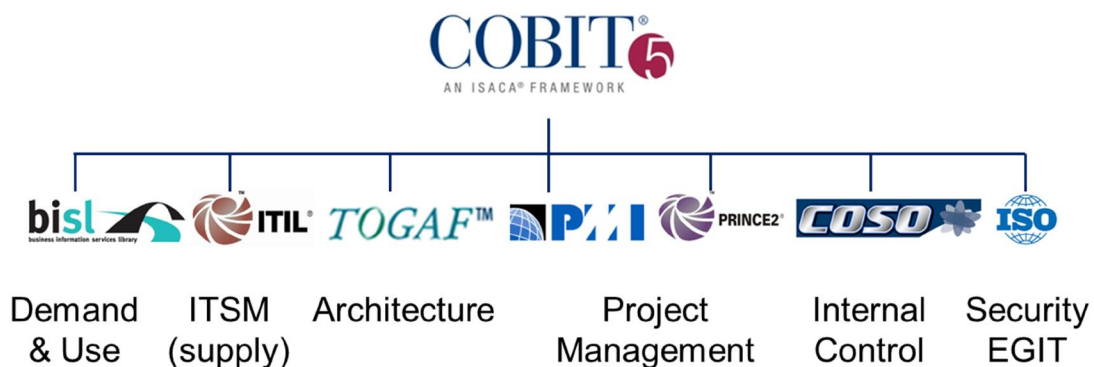




# White Paper

## COBIT<sup>®</sup> 5 & BiSL<sup>®</sup>

This paper compares the scope and perspective of COBIT 5 and BiSL and shows how these two frameworks can be used in conjunction to assure that business information management processes are executed effectively and efficiently. COBIT guides enterprises in rigorous governance and management of processes and other enablers related to demand, supply and use of information and technology. It provides much guidance for assurance of benefits realization, risk optimization and resource optimization. It refers to the predominantly IT-*supply* oriented frameworks and standards ITIL<sup>®</sup>, TOGAF<sup>®</sup>, PMBOK<sup>®</sup>, PRINCE2<sup>®</sup>, COSO and ISO for additional specific guidance. Because BiSL provides extensive guidance regarding the content of the processes for *demand and use* of information and technology, COBIT and BiSL can also be regarded as complimentary frameworks.



Machteld Meijer & Mark Smalley, 28 January 2014



## COBIT 5

According to its owner, ISACA, "COBIT 5 is the only business framework for the governance and management of enterprise IT. This evolutionary version incorporates the latest thinking in enterprise governance and management techniques, and provides globally accepted principles, practices, analytical tools and models to help increase the trust in, and value from, information systems. COBIT 5 helps enterprises of all sizes to:

- Maintain high-quality information to support business decisions
- Achieve strategic goals and realize business benefits through the effective and innovative use of IT
- Achieve operational excellence through reliable, efficient application of technology
- Maintain IT-related risk at an acceptable level
- Optimize the cost of IT services and technology
- Support compliance with relevant laws, regulations, contractual agreements and policies"

## BiSL

The Business Information Services Library (BiSL), according to its owner, the ASL BiSL Foundation, "establishes a bridge between IT and business processes, and between business information administrators and information managers. The BiSL process model provides an insight into all of the primary processes within their field of operations and into the relationship between the various processes. It offers a starting point for the improvement of these processes using best practices, amongst other things, and it provides uniform terminology."

The domain that BiSL addresses is referred to as 'business information management' that is defined as the means by which an organization efficiently plans, collects, organizes, uses, controls, disseminates and disposes of its information, and through which it ensures that the value of that information is identified and exploited to the fullest extent. It is a corporate responsibility that needs to be addressed and followed from the most senior levels of management to the front line worker. Organizations must be held and must hold their employees accountable to manage information appropriately and responsibly. [Ref: BIM]



## Comparison of scope

COBIT offers guidance to help enterprises govern and manage 'enablers' related to information and IT in order to achieve goals and thereby create value for their stakeholders. These are:

- Principles, policies and frameworks
- Processes
- Organizational structures
- Culture, ethics and behaviors
- Information
- Services, infrastructure and applications
- People, skills and competences.

BiSL offers guidance to help enterprises manage and execute processes and activities related to managing business information and to the demand and use of IT. BiSL addresses six of the seven enablers, as illustrated in the following table. *Italic text denotes the process or process cluster in which the enabler is to be found.*

COBIT	BiSL
Principles, policies and frameworks	<i>I-organization strategy:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supplier policy</li> <li>• Policy for the information function</li> <li>• Policy for inter-enterprise information chains</li> </ul> <i>Information strategy:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information policy</li> </ul>
Processes	23 processes for information management
Organizational structures	<i>Strategic user relationship management:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organizational structure of the information function</li> </ul> <i>Information coordination:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Authorities matrix</li> </ul>
Culture, ethics and behaviors	-
Information	1. Business information <i>Information strategy:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information strategy</li> <li>• Information architecture</li> </ul> 2. GEIT information <i>In all processes:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High-level information flow needed to support execution of business information management processes</li> </ul>
Services, infrastructure and applications	<i>Contract management:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Required IT services</li> </ul>
People, skills and competences	<i>Planning and resource management:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annual resourcing plan for execution of business information management</li> </ul>



Implementation of business information management requires insight into:

- which activities should be executed and
- which measures should be taken to manage the activities and risks and to assure benefits realization, risk optimization and resource optimization.

Most of BiSL's guidance addresses the first point, whereas COBIT is stronger in the second area.

## Similarities and differences

BiSL does not address IT supply and therefore has a narrower scope as far as the 'information technology supply chain' is concerned. BiSL also addresses fewer 'enablers', focusing on the processes and activities needed to execute the processes.

Regarding the execution of activities, COBIT focusses on governing and *managing* the execution of activities whereas BiSL focusses on management and the *content* of the activities.

BiSL also addresses managing the execution of activities in terms of time, costs, quality and agreements but with less emphasis on *assurance* than COBIT, that uses an extensive set of key practices to manage benefits realization, risk optimization and resource optimization. Two thirds of the COBIT key practices and the management practices apply partially to business information management. Half of these practices spans one or two BiSL processes while the other half spans three to six BiSL processes.

The following two tables illustrate the core similarities and differences in the scope of COBIT and BiSL. The two main points are that BiSL (1) just focuses on demand and use, and (2) gives more detailed 'practitioner guidance'.

<i>BiSL focuses on demand and use</i>	COBIT	BiSL
Use of information	✓	✓
Management of information	✓	✓
Use of IT	✓	✓
IT demand	✓	✓
IT supply	✓	

<i>BiSL gives more detailed practitioner guidance</i>	COBIT	BiSL
Governance	✓	
Management of enablers/resources	✓	✓
Management of execution of activities	✓	✓
Execution of activities		✓



## Application of COBIT in combination with BiSL for business information management

Many COBIT practices apply to business information management and contribute to providing assurance that business information management processes are executed effectively. The COBIT-BiSL cross reference below gives an indication of the relationship between the COBIT processes and the BiSL process clusters. A cross reference on a more detailed level was the basis of this mapping. Business information managers who want to use COBIT key practices to assure themselves and stakeholders that the information systems (in the broadest sense of the word) in an organization are under control, can use the more detailed cross reference to determine in which BiSL processes they should implement the key practices. BiSL does not provide specific guidance as to *how* to comply with the key practices but gives an extensive description of the content of the processes. COBIT refers explicitly to BiSL's in-depth guidance in the COBIT 5 Enabling Information publication: "A useful reference framework to consult for more detailed management of demand and use of information is the Business Information Services Library (BiSL)".

*Relationship:*  
*x = weak*  
*xxxx = strong*

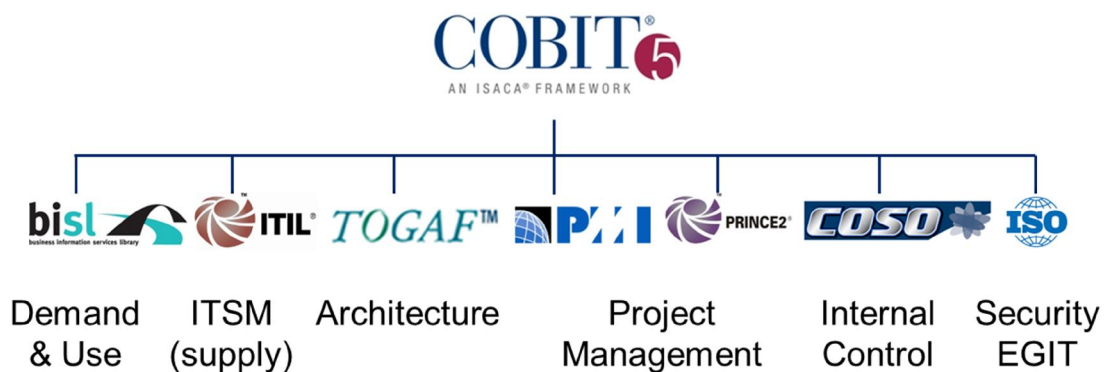
		I-organization strategy	Information coordination	Information strategy	Management processes	Use management	Connecting processes	Functionality management
EDM	Evaluate, Direct and Monitor	x	x	x				
APO	Align, Plan and Organize	x		xx	xxx			
BAI	Build, Acquire and Implement				xx	x	xx	xxxx
DSS	Deliver, Service and Support					xx		
MEA	Monitor, Evaluate and Assess							



## Conclusion

COBIT guides enterprises in rigorous governance and management of processes and other enablers related to demand, supply and use of information and technology. It provides much guidance for assurance of benefits realization, risk optimization and resource optimization. It refers to the predominantly *IT-supply* oriented frameworks and standards ITIL®, TOGAF®, PMBOK®, PRINCE2®, COSO and ISO for additional specific guidance.

Because BiSL provides extensive guidance regarding the content of the processes for *demand and use* of information and technology, COBIT and BiSL can also be regarded as complimentary frameworks.



## References

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