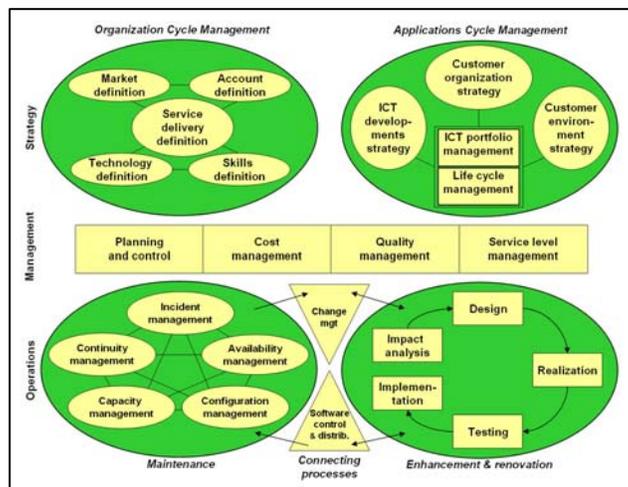# Improving Managed Services with ASL

Sharada Prasadita & Mark Smalley

Managed services represent a substantial and increasing part of India's IT economy, providing recurring business to compliment project-oriented work.

The Application Service Library (ASL) provides a process framework with many best practices, the implementation of which is particularly meaningful for managing applications as a service.

Managed services represent a substantial and increasing part of India's IT economy, providing recurring business to compliment project-oriented work. According to META Group's findings, Indian firms lead the offshore outsourcing market. A vast majority of the firms in India are managing applications of clients spread across the globe very successfully. The managed services market was growing at annual compound rate of more than 17 percent in 2007 worldwide and according to the Group, "The offshore outsourcing market will continue to grow nearly 20 percent annually through 2008..."

What is worth noting here is that India is gaining a larger section of the managed IT services market and according to Gartner, six of the top offshore services in the country now hold 2.4 per cent of the IT services market, compared to 1.9 per cent in 2006. Gartner expects the share of these companies to continue growing.

Where CMMi is used to improve the maturity of application development, ITIL is often used for managed services. The majority of IT companies in India are adopting the ITIL framework for both application management services and infrastructure management. However, where application management is included in managed services, ITIL often seems to fall short on acceptance. The new version (V3) of ITIL covers almost every conceivable IT service management topic, but if you are looking for a dedicated framework on application management there is an alternative that can be used as an add-on to ITIL. The Application Service Library (ASL) provides a process

framework with many best practices and is particularly meaningful for managing applications as a service. There is a formalized training program with EXIN certification.

IT management, which is currently challenged by having to justify the large proportion of IT spending, mitigating operational and other risks while coping with increasing technical and organizational complexity, and the seemingly never-ending challenge of bridging the gap between IT and the business. ASL contributes to these issues by providing better insight into the costs of application management, reducing risks by improving the reliability of both management processes and operational processes, while also improving alignment with the business by initiating and feeding a strategic dialogue between application management and business information management.

ASL addresses responsibilities of application management and provides a starting point for defining and fine-tuning management and maintenance processes. Thanks to ASL, employees speak the same language and know exactly what their activities and roles are in maintenance and management. Process improvements can be carried out by implementing the processes and best practices. This means that IT services and products can be delivered according to pre-determined service levels. Better insight of the activities is beneficial to cost control. The self-assessment benchmark provides organizations and processes a comparison with one another.

The ASL guidance can give considerable boost to a process improvement initiative within a managed services environment. Because ASL focuses on application management, it tends to be more attractive to the applications community than the generic ITIL, thereby increasing the chances of successful implementation.

For further information, the authors recommend a comprehensive white paper available at www.best-management-practice.com/Knowledge-Centre/White-Papers that compares ASL to ITIL and the publications at the ASL BiSL Foundation's website at http://www.aslbislfoundation.org/component/option,com_docman/Itemid,68/lang,en/

The authors are Head - Service Offerings Domain HCU - AMS-ADMS, Satyam Computer Services Ltd and Director of International Affairs, ASL BiSL Foundation. They can be reached at Sharada_Prasadita@satyam.com and mark.smalley@aslbislfoundation.org respectively.