Flexibility: Change, but Change What?

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Enterprises need to be flexible to adjust their behavior to changing environment conditions. To be flexible requires introspection and action capabilities. The members of the enterprise need to understand what they do, what needs to change and, eventually, they need to deploy the changes. In this presentation, we introduce some key concepts for understanding the flexibility process as described above.

We explain how the perceived reality relates to the (implicit or explicit) business understanding the members have of their enterprise. Understanding this is necessary as, sometimes, flexibility requires significantly changing the business understanding of the members.

Members then need to analyze the issues and design the changes. Changes are usually made to have a business impact and, often, require infrastructure changes. We illustrate how an enterprise can be modeled as multi-level systems. This is useful to assess the numerous impacts expected (or not) from the planned changes.

Finally, the specified changes need to be deployed in the actual enterprise. To ease this, adequate governance and technical infrastructure are helpful. We explain how they contribute to increase the capability to be flexible.

To conclude the presentation, we draw parallels between the presented flexibility process and the *flexibility taxonomy* defined as a result of the previous BMPDS workshop [1]. The examples illustrating the presentation are developed with *SEAM (Systemic Enterprise Architecture Methodology)* [2, 3], a method designed to address the above issues.

[1] Regev, G., Soffer, P. and Schmidt, R., Taxonomy of Flexibility in Business Proc-esses, http://lamswww.epfl.ch/conference/bpmds06/taxbpflex, accessed March 2006.
[2] Wegmann, A., "On the Systemic Enterprise Architecture Methodology (SEAM)," presented at 5th ICEIS, Angers, France, April 2003.
[3] Wegmann, A., Regev, G., and Loison, B., "Business and IT Alignment with SEAM," presented at REBNITA / 13th IEEE RE workshop, Paris, September 2005.