

Ansvarig
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Sammanfattning

Sambruk¹ meddelades under september 2008 av Verva om möjligheten att lämna synpunkter på EU/IDABC:s utvärderingsmetod för standarder och specifikationer, CAMSS.

Sambruk inkommer därför med nedanstående synpunkter. Eftersom ursprungsdokumentet är på engelska, och eftersom Verva kommer att sammanställa synpunkter till IDABC inom EU-kommissionen har vi för enkelhets skull valt att skriva resten av synpunktsdokumentet på engelska.

¹ Sambruk är en medlemsförening med fokus på gemensam verksamhetsutveckling och sambruk av kommunala e-tjänster. I dagsläget är c:a 80 kommuner medlemmar. SKL och Verva ingår i styrelsen. Se även www.sambruk.se.

Summary

Sambruk² has the view that a substantial part of the CAMSS proposal document is of good value.

However, we would like to point out the following:

- The structure of the document should be further elaborated. In the proposal, the structure is not coherent between the different criterion chapters.
- An important criterion missing is TCO (Total Cost of Ownership). Since there should be an underlying principle of evaluating Cost vs. Benefit in choices being made, coarse estimations of cost level affected by choosing a certain standard should be performed.
- The evaluation aspects should be further elaborated and be made more directly usable for evaluations. For example, if checklist questions (as in chapter 5) are used, they could include possible evaluation grades. See below.

Further elaborated viewpoints and comments from Sambruk about the CAMSS proposal

Structure of the document

The structure of the document should be elaborated – specifically so that the different criterion chapters should be coherent in structure.

We suggest that it would be valuable that a tree-structure approach should be taken when listing sub-criteria or aspects, since often these can be categorized in several levels to make the matter easier to grasp.

There are also some examples of overlapping aspects in the proposal. For example, maintenance is effectively included in both Potential and Market Conditions.

Missing criterion: Expected TCO

Cost vs. Benefit should be one of the most important evaluation principles in all types of organizations. The proposal covers benefit aspects, but almost no cost aspects. This is such an important issue that we suggest a new criterion chapter for this.

² Sambruk is a co-operation organization for municipalities in Sweden. It focuses on business development and on e-services. Approximately 80 municipalities are members. The members represent both large and small municipalities and all geographical parts of the country. Also, refer to www.sambruk.se.

One aspect of considering TCO is that it might easily happen that an overly complex and cost generating standard or specification is chosen, when it had been perfectly alright with a simpler standard for a given usage – a standard that is “good-enough”.

Examples of cost problems when choosing standards or specifications could be:

- That the existing implementations of a standard or specification are very costly whereas a competing standard is less costly.
- That the complexity of a standard or specification means that it is likely that both buying software that supports the standard or specification and integrating the standard or specification together with other software becomes costly.
- That the complexity of a standard or specification means that it will be costly to maintain the staff’s knowledge about the standard, or twill necessitate frequent hiring of consultants.
- That the standard or specification inherently will cause a need for expensive infrastructure, high-performance hardware or fault-tolerant cluster solutions

Naturally, exact TCO figures cannot be calculated in these cases. Instead, a very course cost grouping should be made.

Evaluation schemes

To further make CAMSS amore practical tool for assessments, we suggest that some type of evaluation scheme template could be included.

Such template schemes could be constructed in many ways, but one practical idea is the following:

- Each leaf in the criterion tree formulates a question.
- Five alternative answers to this question are formulated beforehand. A positive side-effect of this is also that it will much easier to understand the question (there are examples of checklist questions in the proposal that could be interpreted in several ways).
- In a simple questionnaire, the evaluator selects the most appropriate answer, relevant to the specific case.
- Each alternative (in each question) has an assigned “weight” that is formulated beforehand. In this way it will be easy to express that e.g. alternative A and B are much more desirable than C, D and E.
- The selected alternatives’ weights are added together to form a grade.

This type of grading, although coarse, can be very useful, especially when creating a short-list of standards or specifications, or to realize that one standard is considerably better than the others. In most cases, since the grade is coarse, it should be used together with an elaborated reasoning to create the decision base.

The weights in the template may easily be adapted to the needs of different evaluating organizations, thus making the questionnaire tailor-made.

Quality of body that supports standard or specification

The quality of the body (community, consortium, government agency or formal standardization body) that develops a standard or specification is very important. With quality we mean how agile the body is, how well its decision mechanisms work, openness, if it is a “playground” for a dominating vendor, etc.

One more categorization in this context could be if a standard or specification is implemented only by commercial vendors, only by open source software or both.

These issues are partly covered in the proposal under Potential, and Market Conditions, but this aspect should be given a stronger expression.

Time-line

It is often of benefit to evaluate the history and estimate the future of a standard or specification, i.e. its time-line. For example:

- Upcoming and promising but not proven
- In use in several places
- “Work-horse”, has been in use for many years

This of course affects the risk involved in choosing a certain alternative.

Also refer to the so-called Gartner Hype Cycle (www.gartner.com > Hype Cycle).

I detta ärende har Föreningens verkställande tjänsteman, Claes-Olof Olsson, beslutat. Yttrandet har tagits fram av Sven-Håkan Olsson, DocAccount och Anders Lindgren, Know IT

För föreningen Sambruk

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Verkställande tjänsteman