PROCEDURE OVERVIEW

RELEASE PLANNING refers to the first phase in the System Development Life Cycle.
The main purpose of this phase is for the business areas (***Contracting Organizations***) of the company to determine the business strategy, priorities, and scope of the release/project prior to involving the ***Performing Organizations*** (i.e. ***Engineering***). In order to implement a release effectively, SDLC.com upper management needs to establish the infrastructure necessary to make decisions on all priorities across business areas so that ***Engineering*** can be effective in responding to the needs of the business.

One of the keys to successful **RELEASE PLANNING** is having a business strategy for the SDLC product and identifying requests/features that are aligned to that strategy. **RELEASE PLANNING** should also include establishing overall budgets and business plans as well as identifying the relative priority of each request being considered for inclusion in a release.

To ensure that ***Engineering*** resources are being used wisely to deliver added business value; it is essential that requests be submitted using a well-defined and consistent process.

During the **RELEASE PLANNING PHASE**, feasibility studies are performed, user requirements are defined, high level estimates are produced and compared to forecasts of the ***Performing Organization's*** capacity, business cases are prepared and all possible projects are prioritized to assist in project selection. Scenarios may be created to investigate possible combinations of projects (features) which would be affordable based on the capacity of the ***Performing Organization***. Many of these activities are performed on an ongoing basis as new customer requests are submitted.

*The **Product Group** does most of the work performed in this phase. Since the owner of this procedure is **Engineering**, this document will serve to provide guidelines for the **Product Group**, by specifying the expected inputs and outputs needed by **Engineering**. This will ensure that the **RELEASE PLANNING** phase is a success and that the release may proceed to the next phase in the System Development Life Cycle, the Definition Phase.*

Procedure Owner: Program Manager, Engineering Department

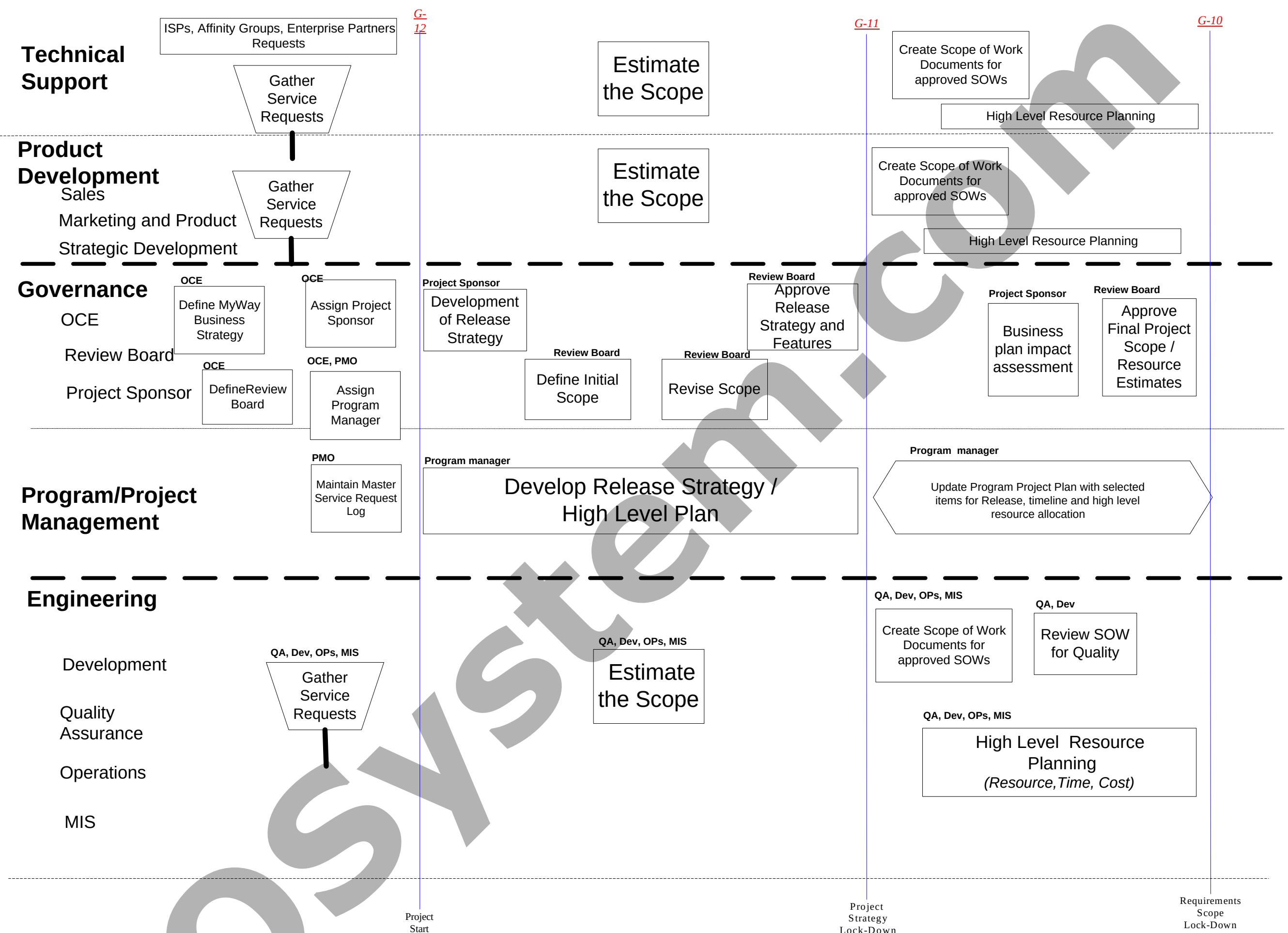
Table of Contents

Revision History

Version	Date	Author	Description

Distribution List:
Director of Programming-Content, Product
Director of Advanced Product Development, Product
Director, Technical Support
Program Manager, Engineering Department
Program Manager, Engineering Department
Technical Support Manager, Technical Support
Project Manager, Technical Support
CTO, Engineering Department
Director of Development, Engineering
V.P., Marketing

PROCEDURE DIAGRAM



ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Office of Chief Executive (OCE)

It is the responsibility of the ***Office of Chief Executive (OCE)*** in the **RELEASE PLANNING PROCEDURE** to establish the overall business goals, R&D budgets, and business strategy. They also direct the organization by identifying the opportunities that need to be pursued by the business in the next software release and assist the assigned ***Project Sponsor*** and ***Program Manager*** in developing a **Release Strategy Plan**.

The ***OCE*** is also responsible for assigning a ***Release Planning Review Board*** (see below for description) which can act on their behalf to evaluate, prioritize, and determine which service requests will be included in the next release.

Project Sponsor

The ***Project Sponsor*** is assigned by the ***OCE*** during the concept phase and is responsible for all project start-up activities. The ***Project Sponsor*** should be a member of the ***OCE***, as this person needs to be able get backing, commitment and support from top-level management. The ***Project Sponsor*** develops a release strategy (project strategy) which includes a timeline, research and development budget, affordability percentage, service requests to be included, and any additional anchor objectives. The ***Project Sponsor*** is empowered by the ***OCE*** to arbitrate amongst projects for resources, commit the organization to specific deliverables and timeframes, and facilitate resolution of obstacles to the successful completion of a release. A release should not be started without an assigned and committed ***Project Sponsor***.

Release Planning Review Board

The ***Release Planning Review Board*** is responsible for evaluating, prioritizing, and determining which service requests will be included in the next release. They ultimately direct the fate of the release and are the key decision-makers in the relative prioritization of requests and resource commitments. The ***Release Planning Review Board*** is appointed by the ***OCE*** and should include the ***Project Sponsor*** and representative(s) (Director/V.P. level) from ***Product Management***, ***Channel Marketing***, ***Engineering***, ***Technical Support***, and ***Program/Project Management***. With the exception of the ***Project Sponsor*** and ***Program manager*** assigned to the release, the ***Release Planning Review Board*** members remain constant release after release. The ***Release Planning Review Board*** may or may not be the same the ***Gate Review Board*** defined below depending on how the organization structure is defined.

Gate Review Board

The ***Gate Review Board*** is composed of representatives from both the ***Performing*** and ***Contracting Organizations***, as well as the ***Project Sponsor***, ***Program Manager*** and ***Program Manager***. ***Gate Review Boards*** assess the deliverables at each gate in the System Development Life Cycle to insure that requirements have been met. Also, the ***Gate Review Board's*** specific knowledge of the project's goals and status allow it to make informed decisions to which they are held accountable.

Milestone/Gate reviews provide the mechanism for the management of the ***Performing Organization*** and the ***Contracting Organization*** to make decisions concerning the scope, cost and schedule of the project. At each review, the members of the ***Gate Review Board*** are required to make decisions that are in the best interests of SDLC.com. These decisions may involve making tradeoffs to arrive at an optimal decision. It may be necessary to omit or remove scope in order to satisfy cost and schedule constraints. Additional cost may be approved to maintain scope and schedule commitments. A schedule delay may be agreed upon to enable required scope to be delivered within existing budgets. Each case is unique and must be considered on its specific merits.

Contracting Organization

The organization that contracts with the ***Performing Organization*** to develop the project/release. The contracting organization for all the releases at SDLC.com is mainly the ***Product Group***. Other ***Contracting Organizations*** include the ***Technical Support Group***, and the ***Engineering Group.***

The following organizations are defined in this document as part of the Product Group:

> ***Sales and Advertising:*** The area that sells to ISPs, affinity groups, and advertisers, in both the domestic and international markets.
>
> ***Marketing and Product:*** This area manages the portfolio of features and functionality for outbound marketing.
>
> ***Strategic Development:*** Research and Development group viewing opportunities in emerging markets and up-selling existing accounts.

Performing Organization

The ***Performing Organization*** is the enterprise whose employees are most directly involved in defining the user requirements and enhancing the SDLC.com platform or system as defined by the ***Contracting Organization***. In the Release Planning Phase, all the ***Engineering*** departments will be considered the ***Performing Organization***. The ***Engineering*** Department consists of Development (Sustaining, Advanced and Strategic), Validation/Quality Assurance, Operations (OCC, Release Engineering, Database Administration, Network, Unix, and Operations Engineering), Systems Engineering/Architecture and project management.

Requestor

The member of the Contracting Organization that requests a new feature or enhancement to the system. The ***requestor*** is responsible for completing a **Service Request Form.**

Business Analysts

The member(s) of the **Contracting Organization** who fully analyze and document the user requirements (**Scope of Work documents).** These members have a good understanding of the SDLC.com system and a technical background which allows them to understand the impact of the each user requirement on the system. They also perform usability studies and prototype the windows and dialog flows.

METRICS

RELEASE PLANNING metrics are focused on the measurement of cycle times and defects. Measurements provide the foundation to quickly identify, isolate and remediate inefficient results from activities that under perform expected performance levels.

Cycle Time

Cycle time is the number of days or hours necessary to complete requirements for a SDLC Business Gate and/or Milestone.

Defects

The delivery from one group to another that performs in a sub-standard form, as measured against specification/acceptance criteria, are recorded and reported at the end of the project. (I don't get that sentence) Root cause analysis from the correction of defects will be categorized, tracked and reported.

Change Agents

Individuals that analyze a process and recommend ways to improve it will be reported to ***Engineering*** management. These individuals will receive recognition for their effort to compress cycle times and/or improve quality.

PROCEDURE ACTIVITIES

The foundation of the **RELEASE PLANNING PROCEDURE** is the SDLC Business Gates. The **RELEASE PLANNING PROCEDURE** focuses on Gates 12 through 10. Gate 12 begins Project Start up in which a ***Project Sponsor*** and ***Program Manager*** are assigned. Gate 11 begins the process of developing an approved set of features and a release strategy. Lastly Gate 10, involves approving the **Scope of Work** (**SOW**) for which the organization will commit, and develop the requirements.

Release Pre-Requisites

Define SDLC Business Strategy

Prior to implementing a release, it is imperative that the ***OCE*** define a Business Strategy and/or Business Plan for the SDLC.com product. A well-defined Business Strategy should define the goals of the company and the type of initiatives that should be pursued. Without such a strategy it becomes very difficult, if not impossible for the ***Release Planning Review Board*** to prioritize and to select which requests/projects should be pursued in any given release. The remainder of this document assumes that the goals of the SDLC.com product are well defined and that a Business Strategy is in place.

As part of the Business Strategy, date-driven releases should be planned in advance, which would give the SDLC.com ***Sales force*** a release schedule before making commitments to any client.

Gather Service Requests/ Funneling Process

The funneling process manages the flow of requests:

- Requests are being made from any of the following four department sources: ***Engineering***, ***Technical Support***, ***Channel Marketing*** and ***Product Management***.
- Requests being made can vary greatly- they can range from a request for the introduction of a major new business process, to a request for a relatively minor content change
- The reasons for requests can also vary – bug fixes, content changes, ISP/client needs, product development service/feature definitions, advertisers, new content tools, new architecture, etc.

Service requests begin with the initiation and approval, or rejection, of requests in the four departments. Each department assigns ***designated representatives*** through whom all requests within that department flow. These ***designated representatives*** gather **Service Requests Forms** initiated within their department and ensure they have been justified, adequately documented and classified. They also ensure that each request is evaluated according to the pre-defined acceptance criteria as defined in the **Service Request Form**.

A ***requestor*** completing a **Service Request Form** will initiate the request. For the purpose of this document, the ***requestor*** is defined as any internal SDLC department or personnel. The ***requestor*** is responsible for clearly defining the service request by completely filling out the **Service Request Form** and forwarding it on to their ***designated representatives***.

At a minimum, the **Service Request Form** should contain the following information:

- Request title
- Requestor's name
- Requesting organization
- Request description
- Request submit date
- Requested completion date
- Request type (enhancement, new feature, bug/defect fix)
  - Enhancement: a change to an existing feature or process; a change in the way the system was originally defined in the original user requirements
  - New Feature: a feature, service, or product to be incorporated in the system for the first time
  - Bug/defect fix: A "bug" or "defect" occurs when the production system functionality is not performing in accordance with the Business/Users requirements.
- Business objectives supported by the request
- Business justification
- Associated Benefits
  - metrics to measure success
- Financial impact
- Potential risks
- Future opportunities
  - Functionality is being introduced during the current release, with a view to implementing further functionality during subsequent releases.
  - New data being captured for which future releases could benefit
- Dependencies
  - Contracts
  - Partners
  - Etc.
- Interested parties/distribution list

If the request is not filled out completely, the ***designated representatives*** rejects it and returns the **Service Request Form** back to the ***requestor***.

Maintain Master List of Service Requests

Once the ***designated representatives*** from the functional areas accept the **Service Request Forms**, they are sent to the ***Program Management Office (PMO),*** which maintains a master list of all **Service Request Forms** from all the functional areas. The **Master Request List** will contain all the information entered onto a **Service Request Form** as well as the following information:

- Request status (Open, Closed)
- Review board status (Approved, Rejected, On-Hold)
- Reject date
- Rejection reason
- Approve date
- Approval reason
- On-hold date
- On-hold reason
- Assigned release name
- Priority number (in release)
- Interested parties/distribution list

At the time of this writing, it was suggested that the Service Request Form be an automated form. Several software (groupware) tools that have the capability of tracking Service Requests were recommended such as:

- *Clarify*
- *Vantive*
- *E-service*
- *ClearQuest, ClearCase (Rational)*

Project/Release Start (Gate 12)

Business Objective: Declare the start of the project. This gate is used to kick-off finalization of the feature set and project strategy.

Owner: ***Project Sponsor***

Review Board: ***N/A***

Assign Project Sponsor and Program Manager

Project Start begins with the designation of a ***Project Sponsor*** and ***Program Manager (technical)***. The ***Project Sponsor*** is assigned by the ***OCE*** and the ***Program Management Office (PMO), OCE, and Project Sponsor*** assign the ***Program Manager***. The ***Project***

Sponsor is responsible for executing all project start up activities including finalization of the feature set and release strategy.

Project Strategy Lock-Down (Gate 11)

Business Objective: Approved set of features and release strategy

Owner: ***Program Manager***

Review Board: ***Project Sponsor, Program Manager, Contracting Organization(s), Performing Organization(s), OCE***

Develop Release Strategy

The ***OCE*** with assistance from the ***Project Sponsor*** and ***Program Manager*** assigned to the release are responsible for developing a release strategy, which includes the following:

- Release timeline
- R&D Budget
- Affordability Percentage
- Anchor Objectives (or Strategic Business drivers) for the release

The main deliverable from this activity is the **Release Definition Document** (see Appendix) which should be completed by the ***Project Sponsor*** with the assistance of ***the Program Manager***. The ***Release Definition Document*** defines the release timeline, release objectives, business justification, high level milestones, high level resource requirements, and risks and dependencies. Upon completion, both the ***Project Sponsor*** and ***Program Manager*** sign the **Release Definition Document.**

Define Release Prioritization Criteria

The ***Program Sponsor*** and ***Program Manager,*** assigned to the release are responsible for working with the ***OCE*** to develop the release prioritization criteria.

In preparing for the initiation of a release, one of the first steps that must take place is the establishment of the prioritization categories, relative weighting factors and rating scales that will enable the calculation and assignment of business value.

Prioritize and Define Initial Release Scope

As described above, the **Service Requests Forms** approved by the functional areas are sent to the ***Program Management Office*** which maintains a master list (or tool). Upon kicking off a release (project), the master list is given to the ***Release Planning Review Board*** for further review and prioritization across all groups.

The ***Release Planning Review Board*** evaluates each **Service Request Form**, using the pre-defined prioritization categories/weighting factors and determines a business value rating. Using the release timeline and budget defined above, the ***Release Planning Review Board*** determines, at a high level, which of the requests should be considered for inclusion into the release. The output from this step is a **Prioritized List** of requests that should be considered for inclusion into the release (First cut at the release scope). Upon completion, the ***Program Manager*** and ***Project Sponsor*** present this list to the ***OCE*** for approval. The ***OCE*** either approves or rejects the list, if the list is rejected, negotiations need to take place between the ***Release Planning Review Board*** and the ***OCE*** to determine the 1st (spell out first) cut at the release scope (i.e. the **Service Requests Forms** which will be analyzed further).

All **Service Requests** that are dropped from the release remain on the master list maintained by the ***PMO*** for future consideration.

Once the first cut at the release scope is approved by the OCE, the ***Program Manager*** bundles the approved **Service Requests Forms** together and distributes them to the ***Performing Organization(s)***.

Estimate the Scope (High Level)

The ***Performing Organization Manager(s)*** receive the first cut of the release scope along with the **Service Request Forms** for each item included in the release. The ***Performing Organization Manager(s)*** provide a “quick quote” resource, time, and cost estimate for each proposed service request and determines whether or not the request is technically feasible. Using the pre-defined release timeline (provided by the ***Project Sponsor***), request priority number, and the high-level development estimates, the ***Performing Organization Manager(s)*** recommend which requests can be completed in the release timeframe. The ***Program Manager*** will set up a pre-defined end date for when estimates need to be complete and returned to the ***Program Manager***.

Revise Release Scope

The development estimates are delivered back to the ***Program Manager*** who organizes a meeting with the ***Release Planning Review Board.*** If necessary, the ***Release Planning Review Board*** revises the scope and priorities for the release. All **Service Requests** that are rejected are placed back on the master list maintained by the ***PMO*** for future consideration.

Finalize Release Strategy and Features

Throughout this gate***,*** the ***Program Manager*** is responsible for ensuring the following documents are completed with quality and meet defined acceptance criteria:

- Release Definition Document
- “Quick Quote” Estimate for Release
- Release Strategy
  - Timeline

- R&D Budget
- Affordability Percentage
- Service Requests to be included
- Anchor objectives

Approve Release Strategy and Features

Once all the documents are completed, the ***Program Manager*** will meet with the ***Release Planning Review Board*** to provide evidence that all requirements have been met for Gate 11 – Project Strategy Lock-Down.

Upon approval by the ***Release Planning Review Board***, the ***Program Manager*** communicates all materials to the ***Contracting and Performing Organizations***. The ***Program Manager*** will establish a preliminary project plan incorporating the project strategy and high-level effort estimates received within this Gate.

Requirements Scope Lock-Down (Gate 10)

Business Objective: Approve the scope of work for which the organization will commit to develop requirements.

Owner: ***Program Manager***

Review Board: ***Project Sponsor, Program Manager, Program Manager, Contracting Organization(s), and Performing Organization(s)***

Create Scope of Work documents

Once the initial scope of the release is defined, ***Business Analysts*** (from ***the Contracting Organization***) work with the initial ***requestors*** to further define the requests that have been approved by creating **Scope of Work (SOW)** documents (see Appendix for **Scope of Work** template). In some cases, work sessions will be needed with members of ***Development*** to assist with technical questions. These work sessions should be kept to a minimum to reduce drain on the technical resources. The ***Program Manager*** will set up a pre-defined date specifying when the **SOW's** need to be completed, allowing enough time for the **SOW's** to be adequately defined. All **SOW's** not complete by the pre-defined deadline are at risk to be dropped from the release by the ***Release Planning Review Board***.

At a minimum, the **SOW's** should contain the following information:

- SOW title
- SOW name
- Requesting organization
- SOW submit date
- Requested completion date

- request type (enhancement, new feature, bug/defect fix)
- SOW Executive Summary
- Background rationale
  - business objectives supported by the request
  - business justification
  - benefits associated
  - Metrics (How we will measure release's success)
  - financial impact
- Deployment Requirements
- Hardware Requirements
- Software Requirements
- Hosting Requirements
- Training and Documentation Requirements
- Administrative/Help Desk Support Requirements
- Testing Requirements
- Requirement definition and feature description
- Functional Analysis
  - Use Cases
  - Business Rules
  - Navigation
  - Page layouts
  - Interfaces
  - Prototype
  - Usability Study Performed (required only for new features or changes to the front door)
- Potential risks
- Impact on current release and current customer base
  - Migrating existing customers to current release
  - Operational changes
  - Contract/SLA changes
- Future opportunities
- Dependencies
  - Impact on
  - Contracts
  - Partners
  - Vendors
  - Etc.
- Interested parties/distribution list

Contracting Organization performs Quality Review on Scope of Work (SOW

The ***Contracting Organization*** review each **SOW** for accuracy and completeness before they sending them to the ***Program Manager***. If the **SOW's** are not adequately filled out, they are sent back to the ***requestor*** to be completed.

Review Scope of Work (SOW) Documents for Completeness

The ***Program Manager*** collects and bundles the **SOW's** and gives them to the ***Performing Organization managers*** to provide initial high -level cost and resource estimates.

The ***Performing Organization*** reviews each of the **SOW's** for completeness. If the **SOW's** are not adequately filled out, they are sent back to the ***Contracting Organization*** to be completed. The ***Contracting Organization(s)*** are given 5 business days to complete this task. If the **SOW** is not complete within the stated time period, the **SOW** is in jeopardy of being dropped from the release. In such a case, the ***Program Manager*** would escalate the issue to the ***Release Planning Review Board*** to obtain approval to drop the **SOW** from the Release.

Develop Preliminary Resource, Time, and Cost Estimates

Each ***Performing Organization (Ops, Dev., QA, MIS, and Tech. Support)*** review each **SOW** that impacts them and provides a **Project Resource Plan** that includes resource, time, and cost estimates for each **SOW.** The **Project Resource Plan** is delivered to the ***Program Manager***.

Collect and Distribute Estimates

The ***Program Manager*** totals all estimates and creates an overall estimate for each **SOW**. The ***Program Manager*** then totals all the **SOW's** estimates together to develop a total estimate for the release. Using these estimates, the ***Program Manager*** meets with the ***Performing Organization(s)*** to determine how many of the **SOW's** can be completed in the defined release timeframe. If there is no pre-defined timeframe, the Performing Organization(s) states how long it would take to complete all SOWs. The prioritized list created in the previous gate is now used to recommend the release scope. The ***Performing Organization(s)***, if necessary, makes a recommendation to the ***Release Planning Review Board*** on which **SOW's** can be accomplished in the timeframe of the release and which **SOW's** should be dropped from the release.

Perform Business Plan Impact Assessment

The ***Program Manager*** meets with the ***Project Sponsor*** to review the resource, time, and cost estimates developed by the ***Performing Organization(s)*** for the release. Also presented at this meeting are any risks, issues, and dependencies that were identified in the **Scope of Work** (**SOW**) documents that need to be addressed before the project should proceed further.

The ***Project Sponsor*** compares these estimates to the **Release Strategy** (which included a timeline, a research and development budget, affordability percentage, service requests to be included, and any additional anchor objectives) and develops the **Business Plan Impact Assessment.** This assessment recommends whether the delivered features, timeline, and cost are still justified.

At this time, the ***Project Sponsor*** working with the ***Program Manager*** may choose to discuss various time, cost (resource), and feature (quality) options with the ***Performing*** and ***Contracting Organization(s)***.

Create Initial Portfolio Scope

Based on the discussions with the ***Performing Organization(s***) ***and Contracting Organization(s)***, the ***Project Sponsor*** and ***Program Manager*** adjust the scope of the release accordingly and develop an **Initial Portfolio Scope** (Excel spreadsheet). This **Initial Portfolio Scope** lists all the SOWs to be included in the release. The **Initial Portfolio Scope** is sent to the **Performing Organization(s)** who are responsible for revising their **Project Resource Plans**.

Prepare Package for Gate Review Board

The ***Program Manager*** is responsible for scheduling, notification, meeting materials, meeting facilitation and meeting minutes for this formal ***Gate Review Board*** Meeting. The ***Program Manager*** packages and prepares the following documents for this meeting:

- Scope of Work Documents - Owner: ***Contracting Organization(s)***
- Initial Portfolio Scope - Owner: ***Contracting Organization(s)***
- Project Resource Plan - Owner: ***Performing Organization(s)***
- Business Plan Impact Assessment - Owner: ***Project Sponsor***

Review and Approve Project Scope

The ***Gate Review Board*** at this point decides whether the release is still cost justified by reviewing all of the above documents. If the above documents are approved, the requirements are locked down and the ***Gate Review Board*** commits the organization to the further definition and plan the release. This does not constitute a commitment to deliver the project as it is defined at this point. The additional definition and planning which takes place during the **REQUIREMENTS DEFINITION PROCEDURE** will increase knowledge about scope, cost and schedule of the release which may result in changes to any or all of those parameters.
If the above documents are not approved, the ***Gate Review Board*** either decides to drop the Release (project) or negotiates with the ***Performing Organization(s) and Contracting Organization(s)*** to revise the timeline, cost (resources), and/or scope. If the timeline, cost (resources), or scope is changed, all steps in this Gate will need to be repeated in order to revise the documents needed for gate approval.

FORMS

- Service Request Form
- Scope of Work Document

EXCEPTIONS

- None identified at this time

AFFECTED/RELATED PROCEDURES

- **PROGRAM PROJECT MANAGEMENT**
- **REQUIREMENTS DEFINITION**

TOOLS/SOFTWARE/TECHNOLOGY USED

- MS Word (Version Office 97)
- MS Excel (Version Office 97)
- MS Project (Version 98)

- Service Request Tracking Tool (TBD)

APPENDIX

Appendix 1 – Service Request Template
Appendix 2 – Scope of Work Template
Appendix 3 – Detailed Procedure Diagrams
Gate 12-11
Gate 10