



## **ASL® and BiSL® in an AGILE environment**

### **An introduction**

**ASL BiSL Foundation**

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## 1 Introduction

When starting an agile way of working in an organization it turns out that there is little information about connecting agile to traditional departments that use ASL, BiSL and/or ITIL. This ambiguity concerns the organization itself and the roles involved.

In this white paper we mapped ASL and BiSL processes to agile principles and the other way around. This may seem to be in conflict, but it revealed the gaps, the overlap and the possible areas where they can strengthen each other.

The goal of this article is to describe the main purposes of ASL, BiSL and Agile and how the three make a perfect match to do your application management and business information management.

But first we start with some prejudices regarding Agile, ASL and BiSL.

## 2 Prejudices regarding Agile, ASL and BiSL and their disproval

### Agilists

- Actually, agilists are just fooling around. After me, the deluge. Registering requirements is not necessary, because if anybody has a question, just ask the team. Those cowboys think they have a license to hack. Sure, they are successfully in renewal, but a disaster in maintenance. It already started with RAD, which stands for Rapidly Achieving Disaster. Didn't become any better. -> Agile without discipline won't work. Agile is about self organization. With freedom comes responsibility. And a good agile team feels that responsibility. It is not even necessary to impose that. One team covering renewal and maintenance is the best possible way to organize.
- Agilists are changing their path frequently. After every sprint they are renegotiating. Today to the left, tomorrow to the right. That's not straight to their goal, so it can't be efficient. They should think a little longer before departure to straighten their path. -> It's necessary to change the course if the goal moves. Of course a vision upfront is important, but goals are not made of concrete.
- Working agile is wasting money. Because every team uses its own tooling, its own process, invents its own wheel. One agile kingdom doesn't learn from another, they suffer from the Not Invented Here syndrome. They don't know that you need standardization to improve. -> The power of improvement comes from the freedom within the team. Scaling frameworks are a way to standardize. Not on details but on the big pictures and principles.
- You never know what you get upfront. So the business and its product owner asks for the whole package. Because if you don't ask for it know, you may never get it. -> working agile means splitting in smaller parts. Largest value first. That means that some features will not be build. Especially the ones that the business does not need. And that's nice, because the business doesn't know exactly what they want upfront. You just shift from efficiently building the wrong features to effectively building the right features. From spending hours to delivering value.
- Agilists don't care about architecture so they discover halfway that they should use another structure -> agilists do take their time for a steady basis. They plan sprint zero before they actually start to ensure the bare minimum and they have regular refinement sessions. The team continuously keeps refactoring in mind. The SAFe framework (the Scaled Agile Framework) mentions the Architectural Runway.
- Agilists cannot handle very large projects. -> projects are outdated. A project is just a – large - collection of features. This collection should be structured in feature sets, delivering value on their own. This makes an earlier start with focus on the highest value possible, shortening the time to market. Bringing together too much features reduces productivity.
- Agilists are a bunch of individuals instead of a collaborative team -> Agile becomes really successful when you allow a group of individuals to become a real team. To enable them to develop a steady velocity. Psychologist Bruce Tuckman says that every change in a team leads to another round of forming, storming, norming and performing. So turning and restructuring of organizations has a negative effect on the collaboration.

### ASL- en BiSL-addicts:

- are on the right side of the manifesto. They stress processes and tools. A process is more important than the result. Teams drown into processes. -> The ASL processes helps you doing your work. With these processes you can make a jump start. Besides, also in Agile you have processes but, just as in ASL, the process is not the goal, the result is.
- make a fetish of documentation. It doesn't matter if the business is satisfied, as long as the documentation is ok -> BiSL and ASL don't require documentation, it is the organization itself. As with Agile, Lean principles can be used, just enough and just in time.
- register detailed contracts regarding cooperation, mitigate all risks, make everybody put their mark at the bottom of the contract. -> In the real world you need a kind of contract. If for instance you use suppliers to do the job (whether or not agile) you need an agreement. The demand and supply organization must be linked together in the right manner.



- take more time for preparation than for realizing. Especially for a nice detailed planning-> BiSL and ASL offer enough space to deliver in small increments. You are not obliged to make a big plan or big design up front. As with processes, it often depends on the specific organization. This is resolved using Lean principles combined with ASL/BiSL.
- use so many processes, but where is the improvement process. -> In the managing processes both BiSL and ASL have the Plan Do Check Act cycle. The continuous improvement process is an inextricable part of ASL/BiSL.
- think that following the plan is more important than achieving the revised goal. And if the goal changed along the way, they will conclude that they have not been thinking long and hard enough upfront. -> At several points the change management process contributes to changing the goal. Besides, application management is short cyclic enough to adjust the goal in time. Also Application management is not a project with a long time frame.

### 3 Introduction ASL

In 2002, the Application Services Library (ASL) was launched into the public domain as a framework for application management. The framework is promoted and supported by the ASL BiSL Foundation and sponsored by both IT service providers and user organizations that benefit from sharing their best practices and using a knowledge platform for application management.

ASL 2 (version 2 was released in 2009) is intended to support Application Management by providing two categories of aids:

- Descriptions of the processes for Application Management. Supplemented with best-practices
- Standard terminology, avoiding the pitfall of talking about different topics while using the same words or the other way around.

The goal of ASL is to assist in the professionalization of Application Management.

#### Structure of ASL 2

ASL2 contains 3 levels, 6 clusters of processes (3 on the operational level, 1 on the tactical level, 2 on the strategic level) and a total of 26 processes.

#### Operational level

##### *Application Support cluster*

The application support cluster consists of 4 processes and aims to ensure that the current applications support the business with a minimum of resources and operational distortions. The processes within this cluster have as well been defined in the ITIL framework. The processes are similar, but are viewed from another point of view, therefore the activities in each of these processes may differ from the activities in an ITIL-environment.

##### *Application Maintenance and Renewal cluster*

With the 5 processes within the Application Maintenance and Renewal cluster the majority of the work of Application Development is done. A major part of the work of Application Management deals with designing, programming and testing applications and information systems. Prior to that, impact analysis is a key activity. Subsequently there is an implementation process.

##### *Connecting Processes Operational Level cluster*

The 2 connecting processes aim at the synchronization of the activities between Service Organization/operations (using the applications) and development and maintenance (changing the applications).

#### Management level

##### *Management Processes cluster*

The 5 processes in this cluster are used in the management of the activities within the clusters on the operational level. The processes are located on the tactical level, are used for steering the operational processes

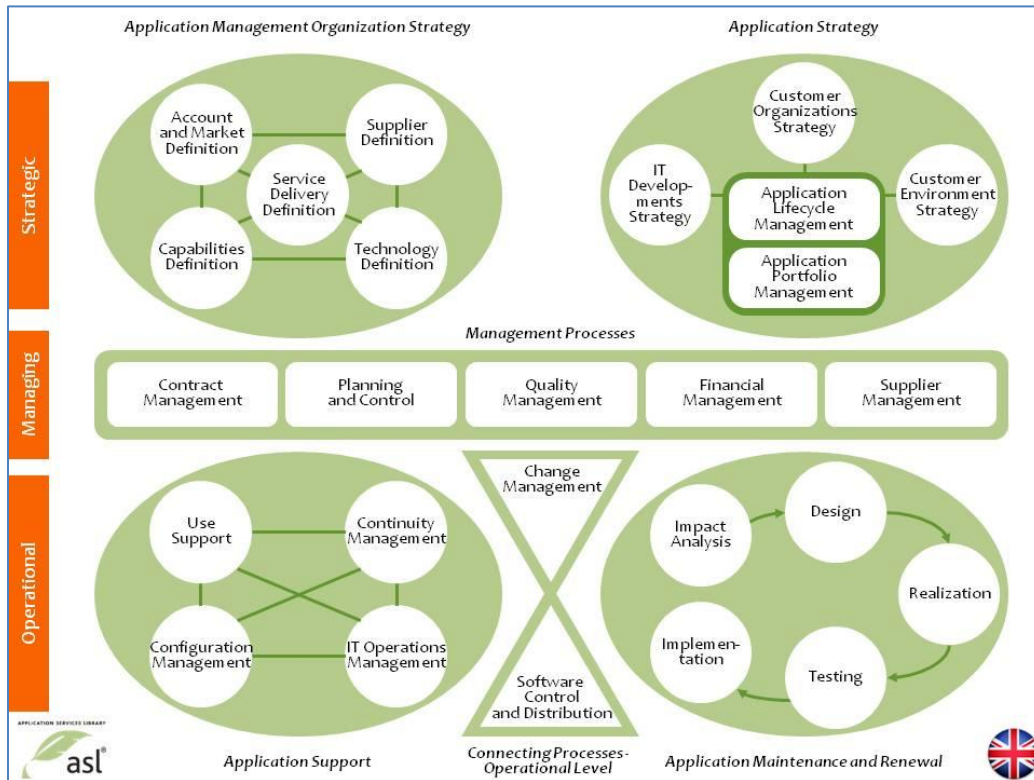
#### Strategic level

##### *Application Strategy cluster*

There are 5 processes within the Application Strategy cluster. Applications live for longer than expected. Systems, functionality, concepts and structure of information systems remain stable over many years. This knowledge is rarely used. It is important that, while maintaining and enhancing systems, there is a clear view needed what the demands are in the future, and based on that, what and how the future of these applications should look like. This view, the application portfolio management strategy, is created within the cluster Application Strategy.

**Application Management Organization Strategy cluster**

The 5 processes within the Application Management Organization Strategy cluster aim at the future of the Application Management organization. With aspects as skills and capabilities, markets and customers, being very important. Creating the organization management strategy for this is the aim of Application Management Organization Strategy cluster.



**Figure 1: The ASL framework**

## 4 Introduction BiSL

The Business Information Services Library (BiSL) was published in 2005 and comprises:

- A process framework for Business Information Management (BIM)
- A dynamic collection of best practices contributed by industry partners
- A maturity model, with a description of five maturity levels for each process
- An organization that offers support (publications, education, consultancy and certification) to those who wish to professionalize their BIM.

BiSL offers guidance for the BIM domain, which deals with actively managing, maintaining and supporting the functionality of information systems. BIM represents the user organization that benefits from the functionality, is the owner of the information system and is responsible for the entire information provisioning of the organization.

BiSL assumes a business point of view and describes the processes and activities related to information management that are a business responsibility. This gives a clear demarcation between business management, the users, BIM and the IT service providers.

### BiSL framework

BiSL comprises processes at three levels, as shown in Figure 2:

**Operational.** The implementation or operational processes involve the day-to-day use of the information provisioning, and determining and effecting changes to the information Provisioning.

**Management.** The management of income, expenditure, planning, the quality of the information provisioning and making agreements with IT suppliers.

**Strategic.** Defining the nature of the information provisioning in the long-term and how its management should be structured.

Within these three levels the various processes are grouped in seven process clusters: three at the operational level, one at the management level and three at the strategic level. These clusters are discussed in detail as follows.

### Operational level

**Use management.** The purposes of the processes in this cluster is to provide optimum, ongoing support for the relevant business processes. The use management processes focus on providing support to users on the use of the information provisioning, the operational management of IT suppliers and the control of data administration. The key question for use management is: Is the operational information provisioning being used and managed properly?

**Functionality management.** The aim of the processes in the functionality management cluster is to structure and effect changes in the information provisioning. The key question here is: What will the modified information provisioning look like?

**Linking processes at the operational level.** The goal of the processes in this cluster is decision-making about which changes need to be made to the information provisioning and their actual implementation in the information provisioning within the user organization. The key question is: Why and how should we modify the information provisioning?

### Management level

The management processes are 'umbrella' processes: that is, they are situated above the operational processes. These management processes act as a bridge linking the strategic level and the operational processes. The processes at the managerial level ensure the comprehensive



management of the implementation of the information provisioning. From the perspective of planning, cost-effectiveness, needs, contracts and service levels, direction is given to administrative work, and maintenance, innovation and the linking processes. The key question pertaining to the managerial processes is: How do we manage the information provisioning?

### Strategic level

The three clusters of processes at the strategic level address the formulation of policy concerning the information provisioning and the organizations involved in this.

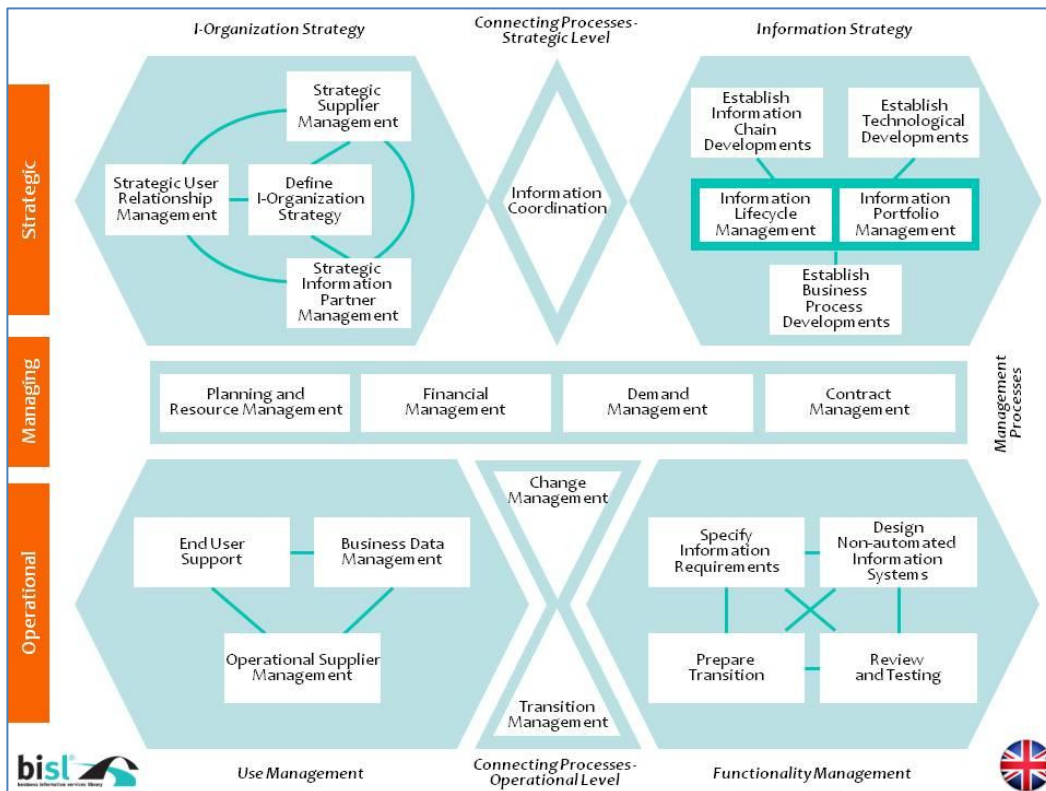


Figure 2 The BiSL Framework

## 5 Introduction Agile

In February 2001, 17 people with a founding relation to different lightweight development methods met at the Snowbird, Utah resort, to discuss, ski, relax, and to find some common ground. They published the Manifesto for Agile Software Development to define the approach now known as agile software development.

The Agile Manifesto reads, in its entirety, as follows:

*'We are uncovering better ways of developing software by doing it and helping others do it. Through this work we have come to value:*

- **Individuals and interactions** over processes and tools
- **Working software** over comprehensive documentation
- **Customer collaboration** over contract negotiation
- **Responding to change** over following a plan

*That is, while there is value in the items on the right, we value the items on the left more.*

### **Agile principles:**

The Agile Manifesto is based on twelve principles:

1. Our highest priority is to satisfy the customer through early and continuous delivery of valuable software.
2. Welcome changing requirements, even late in development. Agile processes harness change for the customer's competitive advantage.
3. Deliver working software frequently, from a couple of weeks to a couple of months, with a preference to the shorter timescale.
4. Business people and developers must work together daily throughout the project.
5. Build projects around motivated individuals. Give them the environment and support they need, and trust them to get the job done.
6. The most efficient and effective method of conveying information to and within a development team is face-to-face conversation.
7. Working software is the primary measure of progress.
8. Agile processes promote sustainable development. The sponsors, developers, and users should be able to maintain a constant pace indefinitely.
9. Continuous attention to technical excellence and good design enhances agility.
10. Simplicity--the art of maximizing the amount of work not done--is essential.
11. The best architectures, requirements, and designs emerge from self-organizing teams.
12. At regular intervals, the team reflects on how to become more effective, then tunes and adjusts its behavior accordingly.'

More information: <http://www.agilemanifesto.org>

Agile can best be described as the above mentioned set of values and principles. It is a philosophy, a mindset. The word Agile is not new but has been given additional meaning in the context of software development in 2001. This origin in the IT is reflected explicitly in the Manifesto for Agile Software Development. However nowadays the values and principles are applied more and more on complete value chains of product development and innovation.

The most widely used Agile “method” is Scrum  
(see [www.scrumguides.org/download](http://www.scrumguides.org/download))

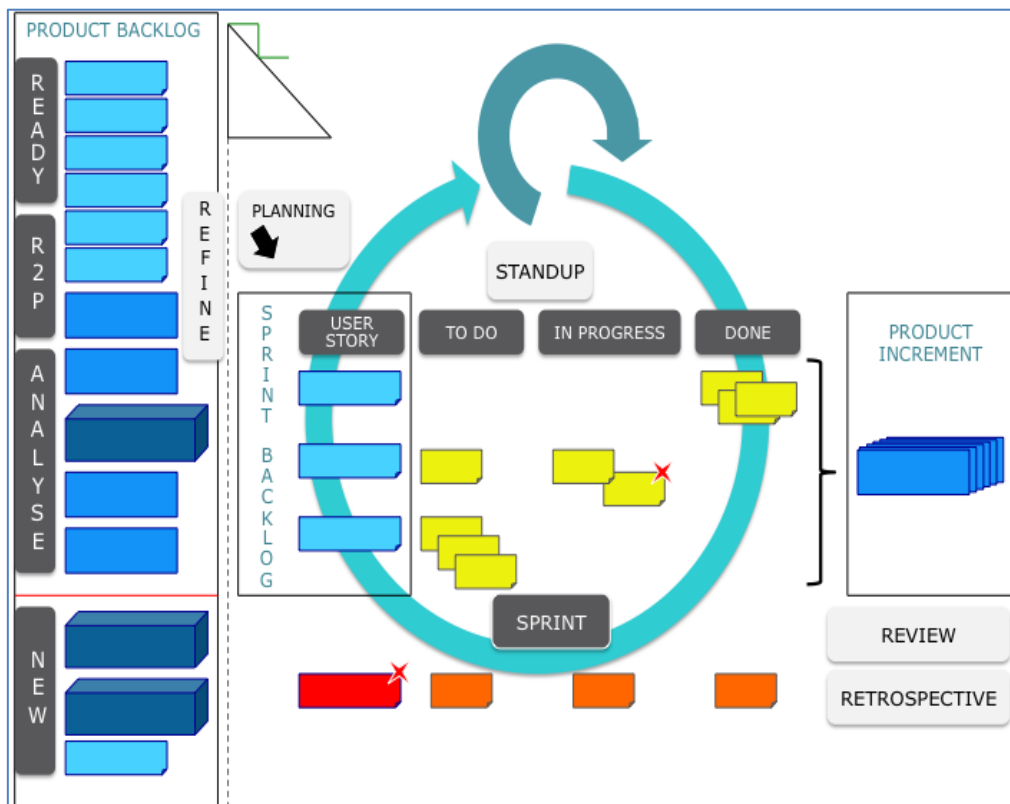
Scrum is based on best practices from the Japanese industry, including the Lean Management principles. Subsequently, Jim Coplien, Mike Beedle, Ken Schwaber and Jeff Sutherland further elaborated on this and in 1995 Scrum was formalized by Ken Schwaber and Jeff Sutherland.

Scrum is more a framework than a method and facilitates an Agile way of working by providing Three roles:

1. The Product Owner (PO), managing the product backlog
2. The Scrum Master (SM), guardian and facilitator of the agile way of working
3. The team, multi disciplinary team members who work together on the product (iterative and incremental). The scrum guide distinguishes between the development team and the Scrum team which also includes the PO.

Three artifacts:

1. The product backlog: One prioritized list containing all the product requirements and changes, if effort is needed from the team this must be visualized on the product backlog.
2. The sprint backlog: The top of the product backlog that is being “pulled” into the sprint, declared “Ready” by the team.
3. Product increment: The result of the sprint. This is the (sub) product(s)/results consisting of one or more related backlog items, declared “done” by the stakeholders/product owner.



**Figure 3 The events**

#### The events:

1. Refinement sessions: Prerequisite for a sprint to start is the “readiness” of the product backlog, meaning that the top of the backlog needs to contain between 1 and 2 sprint loads of “ready” items. Backlog items become “ready” items during refinement sessions where they are explained, questioned, elaborated, estimated and in general after several sessions declared “ready”.
2. Planning session: At the start of the sprint the sprint backlog is filled with the top items of the product backlog. The load is determined by the team. In the second part of the planning meeting, the backlog items are split into tasks, this is done in a way that supports an effective collaboration between the team members with focus on finalizing backlog items.
3. Daily stand up sessions: While the planning session sets one or more goals for the sprint, the daily stand up results in a goal for the day. This way facilitating effective collaboration on a day to day basis. It is a short meeting (15 minutes) which boosts the communication and collaboration and prevents other less effective meetings if done right.
4. Review session: Also known as the demo. The increment is shown, formal acceptance and update of the product backlog takes place. Ideally a product owner uses this session regularly for stakeholder involvement/management.
5. Retrospective session: While the review meeting has a product focus, the retrospective is focused on the process/way of working. What is going well and should be kept, what can be improved and is picked up with focus to invest in.

#### Visual management tools / information radiators:

1. Product burndown chart: Roughly estimated product backlog with a tolerance bandwidth on the vertical axis and the time expressed in sprints on the horizontal axis. This provides a dashboard in the realization of the backlog items. The number of (effort) story points are burned down each sprint and a trend line can be drawn related to the ideal burndown. A good practice is to add a burn up indicating the realized value after each sprint (introduction of value points). The product backlog is roughly estimated in story points because of the large items with larger tolerance on the lower part of the product backlog.
2. Sprint burndown chart: comparable to the product burndown there is a burndown for a sprint. In fact this is the sprint detail on the top of the product backlog. The sum of story points in the sprint is on the vertical axis and the days in the sprint on the horizontal axis. Every day during the stand up meeting the burndown chart is updated. It is also possible to have an additional burndown on hours instead of storypoints, with the hours coming from the tasks related to a user story. Such a burndown might be misleading when too much stories are in progress. Resulting in a nice burndown chart but a result with everything almost done.
3. Scrumboard: the scrumboard indicates the stories (backlog items) in the current sprint, with their related task. During the daily standup the board is used and it is constantly updated, reflecting the current situation. Tasks are pulled in “progress” and to “Done” by team members. When all tasks are done, the story is done and the burndown chart can be updated. High priority items are at the top of the board, and focus should be on finalizing stories with effective team effort, top down.
4. Impediment list: When work is blocked or risks are indicated that might become blocking, this should be indicated as an impediment. Scrum is not solving your problems but makes them clear so they can be solved. Therefore impediment management is very important, taking away impediments results in flow and is an important subject in the stand up meetings. Good practice is to indicate impediments on the scrum board and to visualize the actions with their progress that are taken to solve the impediment.

Agile has its roots in software development, however nowadays the awareness has grown that Agile is about the whole value stream from idea to product/service, from problem to solution. The whole value chain from customer to customer. The best term in the market at this moment, matching this scope of Agile is: BusDevOps.



With this we add the Business to the more familiar term DevOps that stands for Development and Operations.

The term DevOps was born with the start of the DevOps Days in 2009 in Ghent, Belgium. Since then, there have been DevOps Days conferences all over the world.

DevOps is a response to the, for many organizations recognizable disconnect between the “traditional” development organization part and the “traditional” operations organization part. This disconnect often manifests itself as conflict, inefficiency, delays in the value chain and lengthy rework periods to fix customer satisfaction instead of incrementally and iteratively building up the value for the customer.

DevOps is not an approach, method, separate department or a team. It is a movement, a philosophy, a way of thinking, driven by a passionate community, which organizes events facilitating the exchange of good practices.

DevOps involves collaboration between different disciplines. Not only development (dev) and operations (ops), but also the business, suppliers, management, design, test, architecture, security, support, etc. DevOps is not just about automation, technological innovation and continuous delivery. It is above all about a culture in which people manage to collaborate with each other toward a common goal and respect each other. This way continuously improving the knowledge worker (people) and with that the organization and its products and/or services.

Sometimes organizations start with DevOps teams. Actually those are “traditional” Scrum teams for which the Definition of Done is extended towards delivering the product- or service-increment to the customer. Besides that, the Application Support, Maintenance and Renewal (ASL) team members become part of this multi-disciplinary Scrum team. In a lot of organizations this is the moment where the operations part is seriously introduced to Agile. Before the integration the operations part is more likely making use of KANBAN.

A mixed form of Scrum and Kanban is an obvious good practice. However, before giving an example first some more information on Kanban.

On Wikipedia the following information can be found: Kanban is a method for managing knowledge work with an emphasis on just-in-time delivery while not overloading the team members. In this approach, the process, from definition of a task to its delivery to the customer, is displayed for participants to see and team members pull work from a queue. Kanban in the context of software development can mean a visual process management system that tells what to produce, when to produce it, and how much to produce inspired by the Toyota Production System and Lean manufacturing.

A common Kanban board which nicely shows the link to ASL's Application maintenance and renewal:

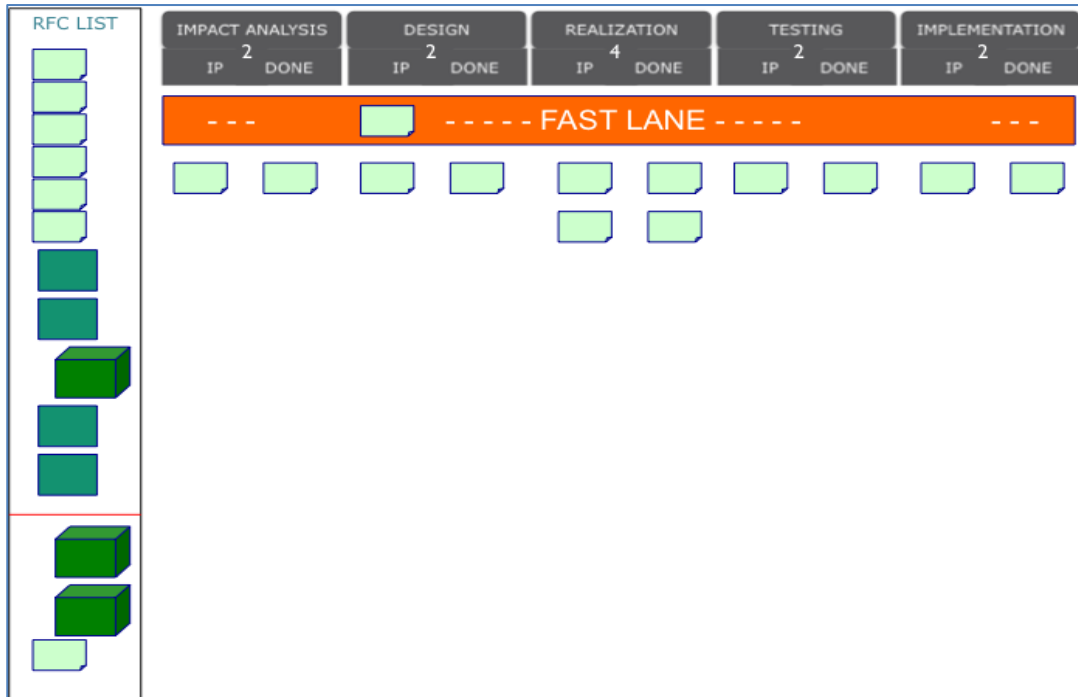
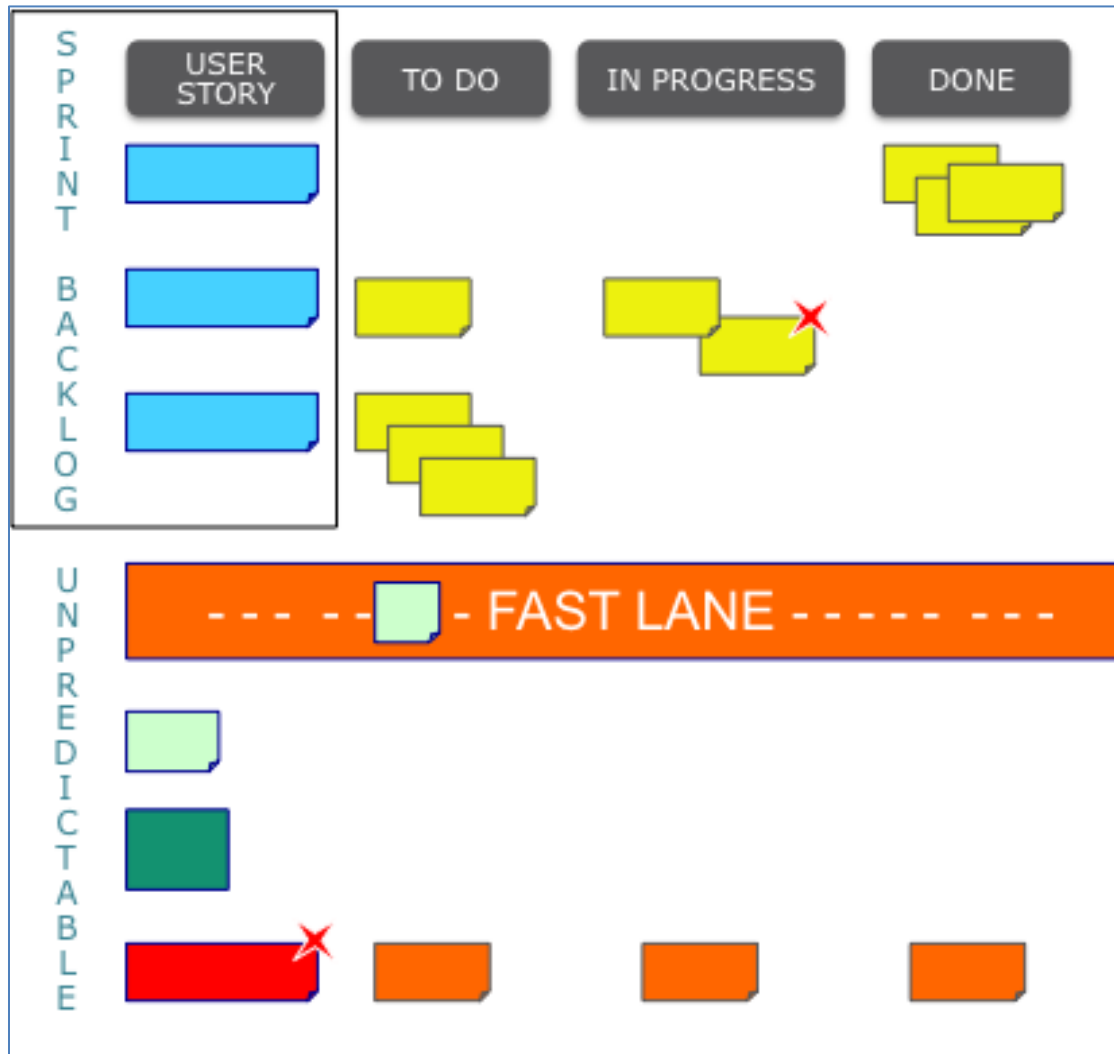


Figure 4 A Kanban board linking to ASL processes

A good practice for a board combining Scrum for predictable work and Kanban for the rest is the following ScrumBan board:



**Figure 5 Combining Scrum and Kanban into a ScrumBan board.**



## 6 Mapping Agile to ASL and BiSL

First we map ASL and BiSL to Agile principles. After that we translate Agile principles towards ASL and BiSL.

### How do ASL and BiSL fit in an Agile approach

In the table below you find the different process clusters of ASL and BiSL and the processes within that clusters mapped to the corresponding Agile Principles and, if necessary, an explanation. If no corresponding agile principle is found, the column is left empty.

ASL and BiSL processes functionally grouped	Agile principle from the Agile manifesto	Explanation
<b>BiSL Information Coordination</b>		
<b>BiSL I-organization strategy cluster</b>	Build projects around motivated individuals. Give them the environment and support they need, and trust them to get the job done.	This is a cultural issue. Management must facilitate entrepreneurship and innovation
Strategic user relationship management		
Strategic supplier management		
Strategic information partner management		
I-organization strategy		
<b>ASL Organization Cycle Management</b>	Build projects around motivated individuals. Give them the environment and support they need, and trust them to get the job done. Continuous attention to technical excellence and good design enhances agility	This is a cultural issue Management must facilitate craftsmanship (budget, time, and leadership)
Account & market definition		
Supplier definition		





ASL and BiSL processes functionally grouped	Agile principle from the Agile manifesto	Explanation
Capabilities definition		
Technology definition		
Service delivery definition		
<b>BiSL Information strategy cluster</b>		
Establish information chain developments		
Establish technological developments		
Establish business process developments		
Information lifecycle management		
Information portfolio management	The best architectures, requirements and designs emerge from self-organizing teams	(BiSL) Make the link between demand mngt (bottom up from the teams) and information portfolio mngt.
<b>ASL Application Cycle Management</b>	Continuous attention to technical excellence and good design enhances agility	Application strategy provides guidance: “future proof”. A Stakeholder for technical excellence is needed for making the right decision (connecting application lcm and portfolio mngt with the PO role)
IT Developments strategy		
Customer Organizations strategy		
Customer environment strategy		
Application lifecycle management		
Application portfolio management	The best architectures, requirements and designs emerge from self-organizing teams	(ASL) Make the link between quality mngt (bottom up from the teams) and application portfolio mngt.
<b>BiSL Management Processes</b>		
Planning and resource management	Working software is the primary measure of progress	Planning and Control includes progress on implemented work items



ASL and BiSL processes functionally grouped	Agile principle from the Agile manifesto	Explanation
Financial management		
Demand management	<p>Simplicity – the art of maximizing the amount of work not done – is essential</p> <p>The best architectures, requirements and designs emerge from self-organizing teams</p> <p>At regular intervals, the team reflects on how to become more effective, then tunes and adjusts its behavior accordingly</p>	<p>Long term MoSCoW prioritizing for an effective way to reach fit for use</p> <p>Make the link between demand mngt (bottom up from the teams) and information portfolio mngt.</p> <p>Besides the use of metrics interactive sessions with combined BiSL &amp; ASL teams (focus on product Chain)</p>
Contract management		
<b>ASL Management processes</b>		
Contract management		
Planning and control	<p>Working software is the primary measure of progress</p> <p>Agile processes promote sustainable development. The sponsors, developers and users should be able to maintain a constant pace indefinitely</p> <p>Continuous attention to technical excellence and good design enhances agility</p>	<p>Planning and Control includes progress on implemented work items</p> <p>Planning and Control (ASL) activities become a team responsibility</p> <p>Planning and control for competence availability</p>



ASL and BiSL processes functionally grouped	Agile principle from the Agile manifesto	Explanation
Quality management	<p>Agile processes promote sustainable development. The sponsors, developers and users should be able to maintain a constant pace indefinitely</p> <p>Continuous attention to technical excellence and good design enhances agility</p> <p>The best architectures, requirements and designs emerge from self-organizing teams</p> <p>At regular intervals, the team reflects on how to become more effective, then tunes and adjusts its behavior accordingly</p>	<p>Quality Management (ASL) is also (partially) an important team responsibility. Team pulls the work inside, is involved in estimating, risk identification, splitting up large changes, alternative solutions, etc. so that (re) prioritization can be done.</p> <p>Team also involved in evaluation which leads to continuous improvement.</p> <p>Quality is non negotiable, the team prevents technical debt.</p> <p>No refactor sprint, “continuously cleaning the house”</p> <p>Quality Management (ASL) for existing and desired quality level</p> <p>(ASL) Make the link between quality mngt (bottom up from the teams) and application portfolio mngt.</p> <p>Besides the use of metrics interactive sessions with combined BiSL &amp; ASL teams (focus on product Chain)</p>
Financial management		
Supplier management		
<b>BiSL Use Management</b>		
End user support		
Business data management		
Operational supplier management		



ASL and BiSL processes functionally grouped	Agile principle from the Agile manifesto	Explanation
<b>ASL Application Maintenance</b>		
Use Support		
Configuration management		
Continuity management		
IT operation management		
<b>BiSL Functionality management cluster</b>	Business people and developers must work together daily throughout the project The most efficient and effective method of conveying information to and within a development team is face-to-face conversation	BISL: Functionality Management Cluster and ASL: AM&R are organized close together
Specify information requirements	Welcome changing requirements, even late in development. Agile processes harness change for the customer's competitive advantage Simplicity – the art of maximizing the amount of work not done – is essential	Before AM&R pick up a work item, this work item must be accepted by the team in terms of specs and impact analysis (Definition of Ready) The first work item to be picked up is the one with the highest priority at that moment. MoSCoW prioritizing for an effective way to reach fit for use
Design non-automated information systems		
Review and testing		
Prepare transition		



ASL and BiSL processes functionally grouped	Agile principle from the Agile manifesto	Explanation
<b>ASL Application maintenance and renewal</b>	<p>Our highest priority is to satisfy the customer through early and continuous delivery of valuable software</p> <p>Deliver working software frequently, from a couple of weeks to a couple of months, with a preference for the shorter timescale</p> <p>Business people and developers must work together daily throughout the project</p> <p>The most efficient and effective method of conveying information to and within a development team is face-to-face conversation</p>	<p>Application Maintenance and renewal (AM&amp;R) in a short cyclic way.</p> <p>BISL: Functionality Management Cluster and ASL: AM&amp;R are organized close together</p>
Impact analysis	<p>Welcome changing requirements, even late in development. Agile processes harness change for the customer's competitive advantage</p> <p>Continuous attention to technical excellence and good design enhances agility</p> <p>Simplicity – the art of maximizing the amount of work not done – is essential</p>	<p>Effort is estimated by the AM&amp;R team (impact analysis) and is needed for prioritizing</p> <p>Before AM&amp;R pick up a work item, this work item must be accepted by the team in terms of specs and impact analysis (Definition of Ready)</p> <p>The first work item to be picked up is the one with the highest priority at that moment.</p> <p>Impact analysis and design must contribute to the technical excellence</p> <p>MoSCoW prioritizing for an effective way to reach fit for use</p>
Design	Continuous attention to technical excellence and good design enhances agility	Impact analysis and design must contribute to the technical excellence
Realization		
Testing		
Implementation		



ASL and BiSL processes functionally grouped	Agile principle from the Agile manifesto	Explanation
<b>BiSL Connecting processes</b>		
Change management	Welcome changing requirements, even late in development. Agile processes harness change for the customer's competitive advantage Working software is the primary measure of progress	Change management (BiSL) determines which specs will be modified. Burndown on list of work items (change management (ASL & BiSL))
Transition management		
<b>ASL Connecting processes</b>		
Change management	Our highest priority is to satisfy the customer through early and continuous delivery of <b>valuable</b> software Deliver working software frequently, from a couple of weeks to a couple of months, with a preference for the shorter timescale Working software is the primary measure of progress Simplicity – the art of maximizing the amount of work not done – is essential	All work items for AM&R are constantly prioritized by Change Management (ASL) The first work item to be picked up is the one with the highest priority at that moment. Burndown on list of work items (change management (ASL & BiSL)) MoSCoW prioritizing for an effective way to reach fit for use
Software control & distribution		



## Agile principles translated towards ASL BiSL

In the table below we have the Agile Principles on the left with the related ASL/BiSL processes. Here also is an explanation if necessary. If no corresponding ASL/BiSL process is applicable the column is left empty.

Principle (Agile Manifesto)	Related process ASL/BiSL	Explanation
Our highest priority is to satisfy the customer through early and continuous delivery of <b>valuable</b> software	Application Maintenance and renewal (AM&R) in a short cyclic way. Change management (ASL) takes care of prioritizing the work	All work items for AM&R are constantly prioritized by Change Management (ASL) The first work item to be picked up is the one with the highest priority at that moment. Effort is estimated by the AM&R team (impact analysis) and is needed for prioritizing
<b>Welcome changing requirements</b> , even late in development. Agile processes harness change for the customer's competitive advantage	Change management (BiSL) determines which specs will be modified.	Before AM&R (within ASL) pick up a work item, this work item must be accepted by the team in terms of specs and impact analysis (Definition of Ready) The first work item to be picked up is the one with the highest priority at that moment.
<b>Deliver working software frequently</b> , from a couple of weeks to a couple of months, with a preference for the shorter timescale	Application Maintenance and renewal (AM&R) in a short cyclic way. Change management (ASL) takes care of prioritizing the work	
<b>Business</b> people and <b>developers</b> must <b>work together</b> daily throughout the project	BiSL makes the connection to business	BiSL: Functionality Management Cluster and ASL: AM&R are organized close together
Build projects around <b>motivated individuals</b> . Give them the environment and support they need, and trust them to get the job done.	Culture	
The most efficient and effective method of conveying information to and within a development team is <b>face-to-face conversation</b>	BiSL enables the conversation between business and IT	
<b>Working software is the primary measure of progress</b>	Planning and Control includes progress on implemented work items	Burndown on list of work items (change management (ASL & BiSL)

Principle (Agile Manifesto)	Related process ASL/BiSL	Explanation
Agile processes promote <b>sustainable development</b> . The sponsors, developers and users should be able to maintain a constant pace indefinitely	<p>Planning and Control (ASL) activities become a team responsibility</p> <p>Quality Management (ASL) is also (partially) an important team responsibility</p>	<p>Team pulls the work inside, is involved in estimating, risk identification, splitting up large changes, alternative solutions, etc. so that (re) prioritization can be done.</p> <p>Team Also involved in evaluation which leads to continuous improvement.</p> <p>Quality is non-negotiable, the team prevents technical debt.</p> <p>No refactor sprint, “continuously cleaning the house”</p>
Continuous attention to <b>technical excellence</b> and good design enhances agility	<p>Quality Management (ASL)</p> <p>For existing and desired quality level</p> <p>Planning and control for competence availability</p> <p>Impact analysis and design must contribute to the technical excellence</p> <p>Application strategy provides guidance: “future proof”</p>	<p>Stakeholder for technical excellence is needed for making the right decision (connecting application lcm and portfolio mngt with the PO role)</p> <p>Management must facilitate craftsmanship (budget, time, and leadership)</p>
<b>Simplicity</b> – the art of maximizing the amount of work not done – is essential	<p>Change management &amp; Impact Analysis (ASL) &amp; Specify information requirements (BiSL)</p> <p>Interact with each other to ensure solutions are fit for use, future proof/maintainable (Figure 5.3. ‘Specify information requirements process’, page 57 BiSL book English version, 2nd revised edition)</p> <p>Demand mngt (BiSL) for long term</p>	<p>MoSCoW prioritizing for an effective way to reach fit for use</p>
The best architectures, requirements and designs emerge from <b>self-organizing teams</b>	<p>(ASL) quality mngt, application portfolio mngt (BiSL) demand mngt , information portfolio mngt.</p> <p>(figure 7.9. ‘Subjects in demand management’, page 107, BiSL book English version, 2nd revised edition)</p>	<p>(ASL) Make the link between quality mngt (bottom up from the teams) and application portfolio mngt.</p> <p>(BiSL) Make the link between demand mngt (bottom up from the teams) and information portfolio mngt.</p> <p>Close collaboration between functional and application mngt (for example on incidents and requirements)</p>





Principle (Agile Manifesto)	Related process ASL/BiSL	Explanation
	Specify information requirements (BiSL) & Design (ASL)	
At regular intervals, the team <b>reflects on how to become more effective</b> , then tunes and adjusts its behavior accordingly	Quality mngt (ASL), Demand Mngt (BiSL)	Besides the use of metrics interactive sessions with combined BiSL & ASL teams (focus on product Chain)

## 7 Conclusion and tips

ASL, BiSL and Agile make a perfect match to do your application management and business information management, because:

- The Agile mindset helps to create a Minimum Viable Organization because it downsizes a traditional ASL and BiSL organization to an Agile organization with cross functional teams
- ASL and BiSL help the company to steer the agile power in the right direction. ASL and BiSL connects the agile teams with the strategic goals

### Practical Agile tips for a (traditional) ASL BiSL organization:

1. To handle incidents in a scrum team, we usually see a rotating single point of contact within the team for incidents who is responsible for getting the incident on the “kanban board” with that making the effort on incidents visible and making it a team effort.
2. Visualize the Application Maintenance & Renewal processes as columns on a Kanban board and fill it with the Work in progress.
3. Use BiSL to fill the gaps between the team product owner and the business product owner.
4. Traditional roles have to transform into agile roles. Not only in name but also in mindset and culture. ‘System owners’ versus product owner, project managers versus scrum masters, program manager = release train engineer (according to SAFe).
5. Manage dependencies with third parties by visualizing them as row in the portfolio wall next to the other (internal) teams
6. ASL and BiSL provide the business information and application management framework that connects the different layers of Kanban boards.

The picture below shows the relation between BiSL and ASL



Figure 6: Relation between BiSL (upper layer) and ASL (lower layer)

All these processes can be related to the Agile lifecycle from the book: 'Agile Pocketguide voor wendbare organisaties'. First a short description of the Agile lifecycle. The Agile lifecycle describes the value stream for product creation/innovation, maintenance and enhancement.

The lifecycle starts at the top left with ideas and strategic enhancement. The first prioritization takes place and a strategy filter is used for this. High priority means early realization and the necessary splitting up. Feature mapping and Story mapping is used for this splitting up and the portfolio wall visualizes the distribution over teams in time. Splitting up from theme to feature and feature sets provides the implementable packages.

Teams need a further splitting up in stories and are involved in this splitting up. A ready kanban visualizes the progress in getting backlog items ready for the teams. A combination of Scrum and Kanban (ScrumBan) is being used by the teams to support the realization of both the plannable and unplannable work. If not part of the realization, an operation kanban may be used to visualize the IT operations work. The customer as well as all other stages can take the roundabout in the middle of the picture to give feedback like incidents, new ideas, etc.

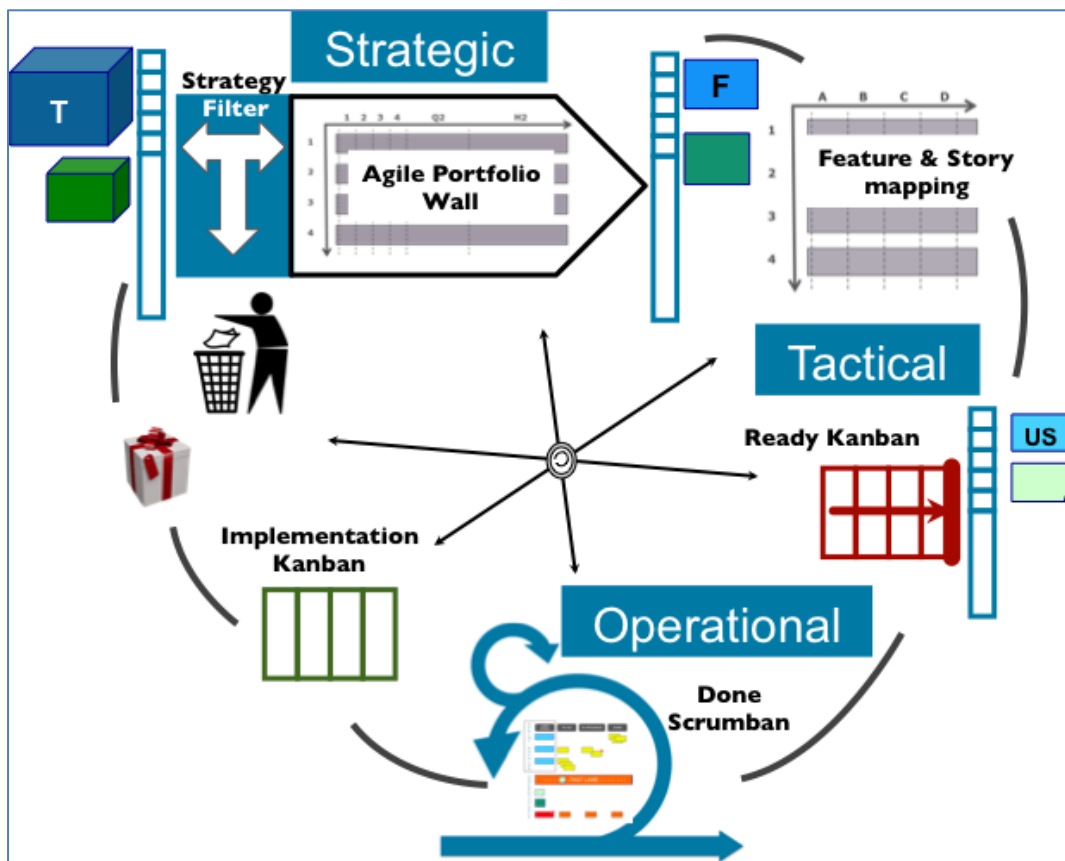
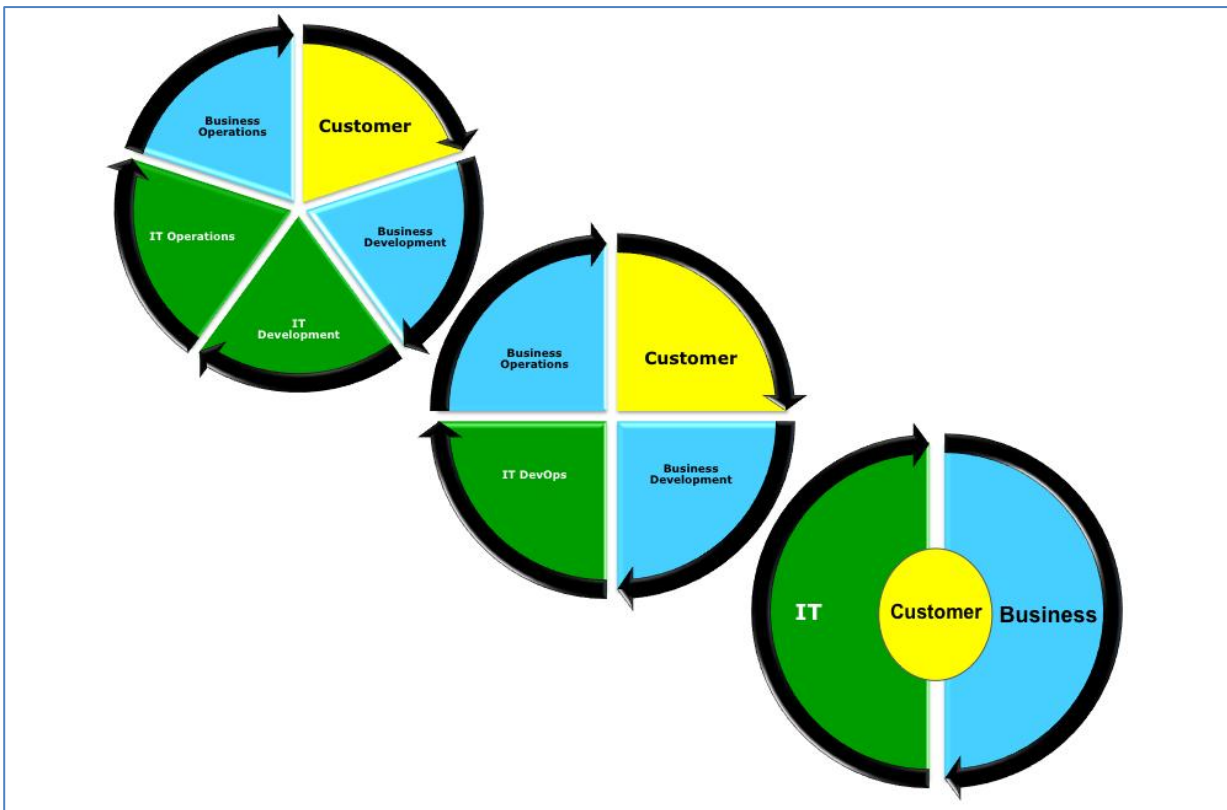
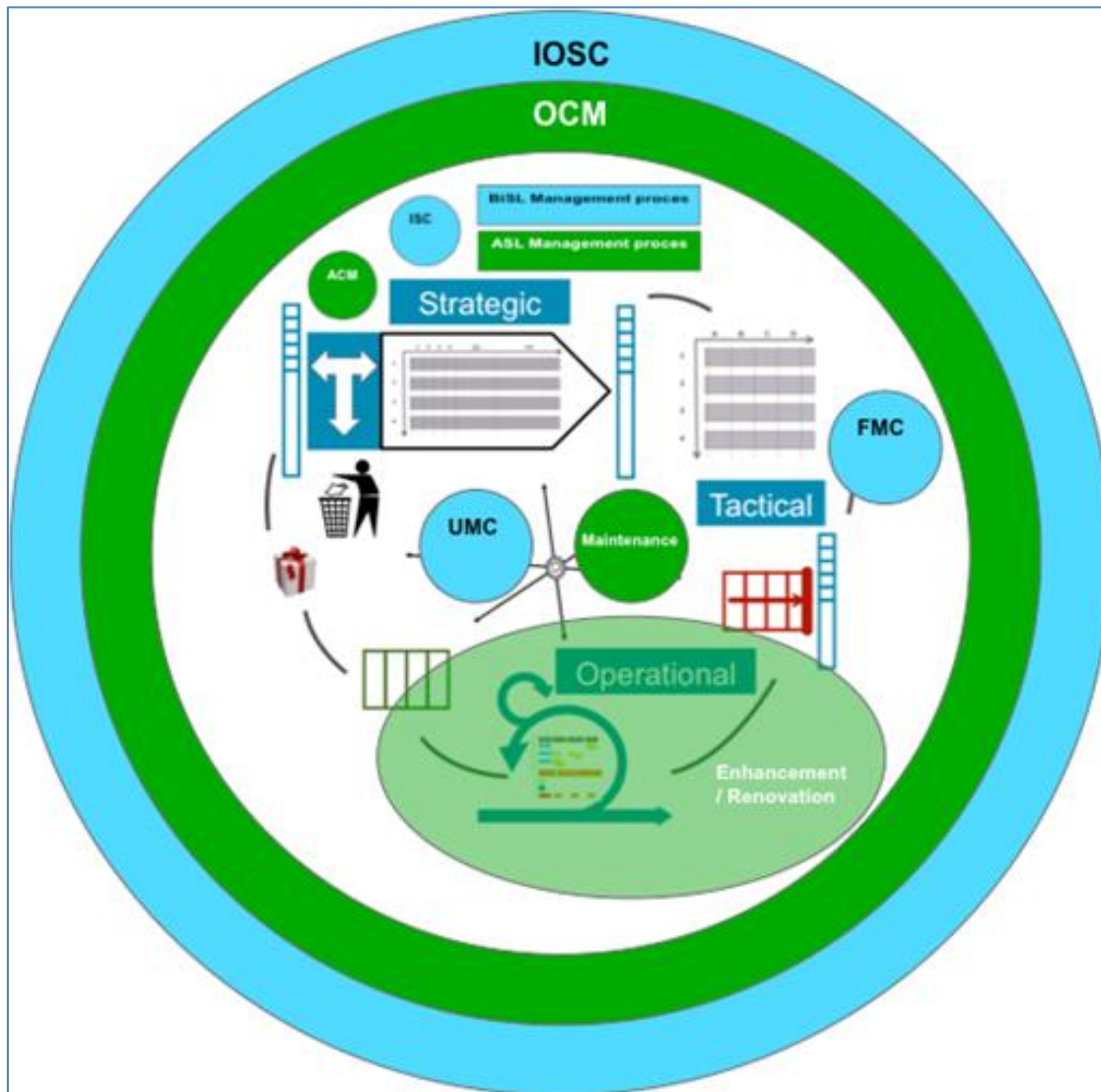


Figure 7: Agile lifecycle

In many organizations the customer is separated from the IT DevOps organization by Business Development (Changing) and Business Operations (Running). With the start of an Agile way of working, IT will become a business enabler and the customer will get a more central place. In the picture below these steps are visualized. In a way the customer focus restructures the organization with a closer collaboration between IT and Business and with that making a practical link between ASL and BiSL.



**Figure 8: Closer Customer collaboration between Business and IT**



**Figure 9: The relation between the ASL and BiSL processes and the Agile lifecycle**

BiSL-IOSC: I-organization strategy cluster provides the context for the Agile Lifecycle, positioning the Agile Organization (Business and IT) as a whole in its environment with customers, suppliers and strategic value chain partners. A nice example of the need to be an adaptable organization is the growing collaboration with lean startups (strategic partners) to accelerate on product innovation or product renewal.

This process has a relation with BiSL-ISC: Information Strategy Cluster. ISC is positioned at the start of the Agile lifecycle providing the input on the high level backlog for the realization of the innovation and renewal. The theme's that enter the backlog are weighted against the Organization strategy filter. Another relation of IOSC is with ASL-OCM: Organization Cycle Management. Within the context of IOSC the Application Management organization is defining its services and the necessary effective organization.



The process providing the input to the Agile Lifecycle is ASL-ACM: Applications Cycle Management. Opportunities by technical developments, changes in user organizations or in their environment initiates input for the high level backlog and prioritization with the strategy filter.

The BiSL and ASL management processes are positioned around the Agile portfolio wall which provides one of the agile visual management tools showing progress and predictability in the value realization. Additional metrics may be added here. For example, a more short cyclic budgeting on teams and sprints (instead of projects) and improvements on the collaboration with suppliers and value chain partners.

The BiSL-UMC: Use Management Cluster, is positioned at the roundabout in the middle. Input for the Agile Lifecycle from this process may enter at different levels. The same applies to the ASL Maintenance process. The BiSL-FMC: Functionality Management Cluster is positioned around the feature- and story mapping, and the Ready kanban, resulting in the Stories than can be realized by the teams.

The ASL-Enhancement/Renovation process is positioned at the "ScrumBan" at the bottom, including the operations kanban.



## 8 More info

The official website of the ASL BiSL Foundation contains a lot of best practices, publications and articles on ASL, BiSL and related topics::

[www.aslbisfoundation.org](http://www.aslbisfoundation.org).

The website of Agile Consortium contains a lot of information on events, blogs and certification: [www.agileconsortium.nl](http://www.agileconsortium.nl).

### **This paper is based on:**

Remko van der Pols, ASL2, a framework for application management, Van Haren Publishing 2012

Theo Gerrits, Rik de Groot, Jeroen Venneman, Agile Pocketguide voor wendbare organisaties, Van Haren Publishing 2013

Machteld Meijer, Processen van applicatiemanagement, Checklist en informatiemanagement, SDU uitgevers, 2010 (in Dutch).

Meijer, Machteld, Mark Smalley and Sharon Taylor (2008) 'ITIL® V3 and ASL: Sound guidance for application management and application development', White Paper, January, TSO and the ASL BiSL Foundation.

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