

BPMI.org
www.bpmi.org
info@bpmi.org

BPMN

Charter

Business Process Modeling Notation
Working Group Charter
Draft, for review by members of BPMN-WG
9/10/2001

Casewise
CSC
MEGA International
Popkin Software & Systems

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Background

The need for a standard visual notation for modelling business processes has been identified, and the creation of a Business Process Modelling Notation Working Group (BPMN-WG) has been proposed to and approved by the BPMI Board. The reasoning is:

- BPML is extending process semantics and these are not fully supported by existing visual notations.
- Existing notations are not oriented for use by business users. The objectives of the BPMI.org are to support process management by both technical users and business users. The development of a notation that is intuitive to business users yet able to represent complex process semantics needs to be resolved.
- The market acceptance of process management by end users will be limited unless the industry converges upon a standard business process notation. This is of fundamental importance to business process modeling vendors, not only the BPMI.org. The board of directors recognizes that the development of BPMN is strategic for the BPMI.

The business world is rapidly changing. Customers, suppliers, partners and businesses are communicating in faster and more efficient ways. The Internet has revolutionized the way in which business is conducted. The speed of the Internet take up has led to complex and complicated business interactions. In fact many businesses have grown and transformed so quickly that they do not understand their core business infrastructure. This lack of understanding leads to the inability of organizations to respond to change.

The BPMN will provide businesses with the capability of understanding their business procedures in a graphical notation and will give organizations the ability to converse in a standard manner. This will ensure that businesses will understand themselves and participants in their business and will enable organizations to adjust to new business circumstances quickly.

Founding Members and Liaison

Casewise, CSC Computer Sciences, MEGA International, Popkin Software & Systems

The authors of the BPML specification will assist the development of BPMN and it's alignment with BPML.

Once BPMN has been developed, approved, and ratified by the BPMN-WG members, the expectation is that it will become the modeling notation in many process-modeling tools and business process management systems.

Charter

The BPMN Working Group will ensure that the notation will:

- Be method (process) independent, in the sense that it will be able to express any process expressible using BPML.
- Be acceptable and usable by the business community. If small BPML processes (or fragments of processes) cannot be easily jotted down by a business analyst on a blank piece of paper, then BPMN will not have been successful.
- Be useful in illuminating a complex BPML process. That is, a complex BPML instance, transcribed to BPMN, must be a step forward in understanding the process instance, for those not able to read BPML XML schema directly!
- Support the BPML (Business Process Modeling Language) semantics.
- Be constrained to support only the concepts of modeling that are applicable to business processes
- Be extensible to support the future growth of BPML and business process modeling.
- Have a real semantics, not just a visual notation, as would be the case using diagramming tools for process modeling.
- The BPMN notation of a business process must be unambiguous. There should be a mapping from a BPML instance to one BPMN notation instance (and visa-versa).

BPMN should be the natural visual form of BPML. BPMN should illuminate and inform the business user about the structure and nature of a BPML process. The purpose of BPMN is to be an intuitive notation for the development of BPML processes at the business level. Where BPML is used to carry process semantics among computers, BPMN carries it among business users.

In the course of its work the BPMN Working Group will:

- Keep under review and periodically update the BPMN notation and outline the notation release schedule.
- Seek to minimize the technical constraints placed upon the business user when modeling business processes. This principle is paramount.
- Consider issues and opportunities of information sharing and dissemination in areas of common and related interest with other working groups and standards bodies.
- Ensure that the development of BPML is reflected in BPMN.
- Produce a standard glossary of terms for use within process modeling.

Method of Working

The BPMN-WG members will elect a chair of the group.

The BPMN will be developed and maintained under the ownership of BPMI.org.

BPML and BPMN must be two independent efforts. They will have their own deliverables and their own development schedules. This work will result in the publication of two separate specifications.

The founder members will submit a draft proposal for such a notation as the starting point for the working group's activities. Submissions from other working group members are welcomed and have equal status.

The BPMI will make best endeavors to ensure that the working group includes companies that have a primary interest in this topic, in order to ensure industry acceptance.

As in the case of BPML, the working group will elect a primary author for the specification and a small number of contributors committed to creating such a specification and promoting its market acceptance in an open and transparent manner.

Deliverables & Time Scales

The first release is expected to be complete by January 2002, but since the effort is ambitious, the working group members recognize that this will be only a first step.

Design Considerations

It will be the responsibility of the BPMN Working Group to make sure that BPMN will adhere as much as possible to the BPML specification and to provide the appropriate "binding" mechanisms.

BPMN must be extensible in order to support vertical-specific business process modeling. This is the same principle for BPML. Thus, BPMN must be a meta language for the notational modeling of process modeling languages. The board of directors believes that this level of abstraction is necessary to ensure the success of BPMN but recognizes that this is a longer term objective. Shorter term pragmatic work is equally desirable (see Deliverables and Timescales).

The term 'notation' refers to visual notations, designed to clearly visualize business processes. However, the notation is not limited to diagrammatic or symbolic forms of notation.

The working group need not address those aspects relating to manipulation of business processes by visual means, but this is not excluded if the working group members chose to include this. For example, there are a number of scenarios in process management, such as process decomposition, composition and manipulation, which may require particular visualizations.

The notation need not be limited to the current industry standard ways of modeling processes. The working group should be creative about how to represent complex process semantics in a way that can be understood by business people. However, initially the working group should consider focusing upon pragmatic extensions of current practice that can support more of the semantics of BPML than existing notations.

It is recognized that it may not be possible to represent all BPML semantics using a visual notation, but this should be the objective and pursued aggressively. The working group must explicitly identify where BPML semantics are not being represented within the notation.

The working group recognizes that there will be considerable innovation among BPM vendors with respect to the process desktop, that is, the user interface metaphor and representation for the management of business processes. The objective of this working group is not to standardize the process desktop, rather, it is to develop a canonical representation that can represent any business process expressed in BPML using notational semantics.

The BPMN-WG members will ascertain the extent to which BPMN can be a standard notation, yet support multiple “look and feels” for how a particular process desktop might implement the BPMN specification.