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Metamodel Extension Facility (MEF)

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Preface

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Times/Times New Roman - 10 pt.: Standard body text

Helvetica/Arial - 10 pt. Bold: OMG Interface Definition Language (OMG IDL) and syntax elements.

Courier - 10 pt. Bold: Programming language elements.

Helvetica/Arial - 10 pt: Exceptions

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1 Scope

The Metamodel Extension Facility (MEF), part of the Meta Object Facility (MOF) family of specifications, provides structure, operations and interchange for adding extended structured capabilities to existing metamodels.

It builds on, and provides more control compared to, the Semantic Structures for MOF (SMOF) specification: specifically it allows the same capabilities provided by UML Profiles to be applied to any other metamodel. For example, it makes explicit the application of metamodels to a model and allows the application of additional metaclasses to be constrained.

And, for UML, it provides a more flexible and convenient Profile application, manipulation and interchange capability, while remaining compatible with existing UML (2.5.x) Profile definitions. By making use of SMOF multiple classification it avoids the need to create an additional element and link for each attached Stereotype.

2 Conformance

This specification defines the following conformance points:

- *UML Profile MEF Conformance*: Conformant products must provide exactly the profile definition and application modeling capabilities specified by UML, though they must also provide import and export of models in the XMI format specified in this MEF specification (this may be instead of or in addition to the UML format).
- Non-filtering UML Profile MEF Conformance: As for UML Profile MEF Conformance but without support for the profile filtering capability specified by UML. In other words the isStrict parameter to applyProfile() is assumed to be false.
- *Non-Profile MEF Conformance*: Conformant products need only support the ability to apply and unapply metamodels to models: they do not need to support Profiles and Stereotypes.
- Full MEF Conformance: Conformant products shall implement all parts of this specification.

3 References

3.1 Normative References

The following normative documents contain provisions which, through reference in this text, constitute provisions of this specification. For dated references, subsequent amendments to, or revisions of, any of these publications do not apply.

[MOF] Meta Object Facility (MOF) Core, version 2.5.1, OMG Specification

https://www.omg.org/spec/MOF/2.5.1

[SMOF] MOF Support for Semantic Structures (SMOF), version 1.0, OMG Specification

https://www.omg.org/spec/SMOF/1.0

[UML] Unified Modeling Language (UML), version 2.5.1, OMG Specification

https://www.omg.org/spec/UML/2.5.1

[XMI] XML Metadata Interchange (XMI), version 2.5.1, OMG Specification

https://www.omg.org/spec/XMI/2.5.1

3.2 Non-normative References

None.

4 Terms and Definitions

For the purposes of this specification, the following terms and definitions apply.

Profile

A metamodel designed to extend a reference metamodel with the purpose of adapting the metamodel to a specific platform or domain. As such it is more constrained than a general metamodel.

Stereotype

A metaclass designed to be added to an element already classified with another metaclass (from a specified set).

5 Symbols

The following symbols and/or abbreviations are used throughout this specification.

None.

6 Additional Information

(informative)

6.1 How to read this Specification

Clause 7 is an informative overview of the principles of operation. Clause 8 defines the abstract architecture. As such it shows also the positioning of the Metamodel Extension Facility in relation to the MOF Facility and Object Lifecycle and MOF Versioning and Development Lifecycle specifications, even though those specifications are *not* used or referenced by this specification. Clause 9 specifies the new metaclasses and operations. Clause 10 provides a step-by-step example of how to use the Metamodel Extension Facility.

All clauses of this document are normative unless explicitly marked "(informative)". The marking "(informative)" of a particular clause also applies to all contained sub-clauses of that clause.

6.2 Acknowledgments

The following organizations submitted this specification:

- 88 solutions Corporation
- · Adaptive, Inc
- Microsoft Corporation
- Model-Driven Solutions, Inc
- No Magic, Inc
- SOFTEAM Group

7 Principles of Operation

(informative)

Creating information models using a modeling language, like the Unified Modeling Language (UML), means to create an arrangement of representations of modeling language elements. In a UML Class Diagram, this would be an arrangement of class boxes, connected by representations of relationship elements, like associations, dependencies, or generalizations. Such a model is logically situated at the model level, also referred to as the "M1 metalevel". The set of available model elements to create M1 models is defined by another model logically situated above the model level at the "M2 metalevel", and is usually called the (modeling language) metamodel. Metamodels are comparably small, use only a limited set of modeling elements and are usually closed, except for dedicated extension mechanisms, if any. OMG provides the Meta Object Facility (MOF) as the common modeling language and modeling environment to specify metamodels. This MOF modeling language, though it reuses a subset of UML, is logically situated at the "M3 metalevel", and is self-defining (reflective), so no further metalevel is needed.

Each model element at a certain metalevel, for example the definition (often called "type") of a user-created UML element of type Class or type Association at M1 level is defined by (or is an instance of) a class named "Class" or a class named "Association" at the M2 level. These classes are typically referred to as "metaclasses" and are defined by the MOF language ("metametamodel") at level M3. While the model management capabilities of the MOF Core and its extension by the MOF Support for Semantic Structures (SMOF) are primarily intended to construct and maintain metamodels, the provided capabilities can be equally applied to any metalevel. The capabilities of MOF can be used to manipulate and/or extend any metamodel, however not every metamodel is prepared to tolerate such manipulations without becoming inconsistent or invalid. A common approach to control alterations and/or extensions of metamodels is the use of "Profiles". A profile is a collection of metamodel elements, together with related rules, constraints, and a well defined mechanism for applying the profile to the base model to achieve the intended alteration or extension effect. This mechanism is most prominent in UML and UML-derived languages like the Systems Engineering Modeling Language (SysML), but is also a common approach used by other modeling systems. MOF itself lacks a Profile concept, this is now provided by the Metamodel Extension Facility (MEF).

To freely allow the application and un-application (removal) of Profiles, UML provides a form of metaclass extension called "Stereotype". Stereotypes are the UML-way to add additional classifications to regular UML elements, however burdened with limitations and restrictions resulting from the underlying mechanisms of UML. Among others, Stereotypes can only extend existing metaclasses, they cannot represent new independent metaclasses. Even if they are defined to extend multiple metaclasses, they can extend only one of those metaclasses at any given point of time. Also, Stereotypes can only subclass other Stereotypes, not regular metaclasses, they can only participate in binary associations, and more restrictions. See the Profile clause of the UML specification [UML] for the full list of restrictions. The root of these restrictions is the fact that Stereotypes are defined at the M1 level, using M1 level capabilities for creation and management of M2 level constructs. SMOF, on the other hand, can freely alter the classifications of any element at any metalevel with nearly no restrictions. MEF uses the the power of SMOF while closely resembling the UML Profile structure and semantics. MEF Profiles therefore replace UML Profiles to eliminate the Stereotypeborn restrictions while preserving the specific profile semantics. Due to the close resemblance, and identical abstract syntax, MEF Profiles may reuse the graphical notation, and UML tooling, of Stereotype definition as a pure matter of convenience, while the actual metaclass extension will be the result of a MEF or SMOF operation. MEF Profiles are pure MOF and SMOF metamodels, and have no dependency on UML (besides the portion of the metamodel shared between MOF and UML, see the MOF Core specification [MOF] for details). MEF Profiles may therefore be used with any MOF metamodel.

8 Abstract Syntax Architecture

8.1 Introduction

MOF shares part of the UML metamodel, adding reflection, factory, and extended model management. Further detail on this is laid out in the MOF Core specification [MOF]. SMOF extends MOF Core with the ability to dynamically reclassify elements.

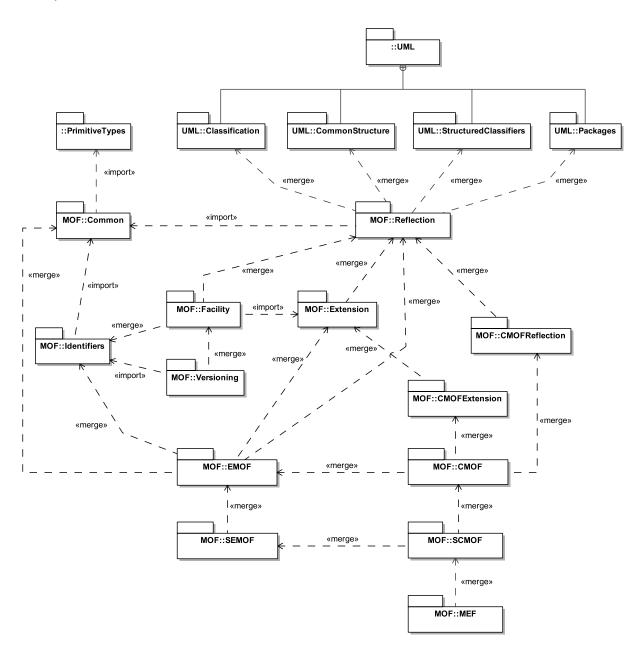


Figure 8.1: All MOF Packages

This specification provides the new package MOF::MEF, which merges with SCMOF. This new package provides a version of Profile that complements the implicit profile application and removal operations with a pair of explicit

operations that perform profile application and removal by executing a sequence of SMOF reclassification operations. Package MOF::MEF also extends MOF::SEMOF::Element with new operations required by the explicit profile application and removal operations. The extensions to Profile and Element are incorporated using PackageMerge.

8.2 MOF Family of Specifications

The Package diagram in Figure 8.1 provides an architectural overview of the family of MOF specifications, and their interrelationships. Since version 2.4, MOF and UML share the underlying metamodel. Details about this sharing can be found in the description of the Essential MOF (EMOF) and Complete MOF (CMOF) within the MOF Core specification [MOF]. UML 2.5 eliminated the split of UML into Infrastructure and Superstructure and simplified the package structure of the UML metamodel. In addition, all UML sub-packages are imported into the top-level package UML. The Package diagram in Figure 8.1 shows that only the four sub-packages UML::Classification, UML::CommonStructure, UML::StructuredClassifiers, and UML::Packages contain metaclasses shared with, and extended by MOF. The extensions provided by MOF are introduced into the shared metamodel by applying Package-Merge.

8.2.1 MOF Core

The packages MOF::Common, MOF::Reflection, MOF::Identifiers, and MOF::Extension constitute the inner core of MOF, and lead to the basic MOF functionality, the Essential MOF (package MOF::EMOF). EMOF is then expanded to the full capabilities of the Complete MOF (package CMOF) by merging the packages MOF::CMOFReflection and MOF::CMOFExtension into EMOF. See the MOF Core specification [MOF] for details.

8.2.2 **SMOF**

The MOF Support for Semantic Structures (SMOF) specification extends EMOF with the ability to dynamically reclassify and/or multiple-classify any element. These capabilities are added to EMOF via a single structural change and additional operations on Element. This leads to package SEMOF, and with the additional CMOF capabilities merged in, to package SCMOF. See the MOF Support for Semantic Structures specification [SMOF] for details.

8.2.3 MEF

This document contains the Metamodel Extension Facility specification, which extends SCMOF with additional operations on Element, Package and Factory to provide the metamodel management and extension capabilities using the combined capabilities of MOF, SMOF and MEF.

8.2.4 Facility and Versioning

The packages for these two members of the MOF family of specification are shown in Figure 8.1 only for completeness and for their positioning relative to other MOF packages. Facility and Versioning are *not directly used or referenced* by the Metamodel Extension Facility (MEF).

9 Metamodel Extension Facility

9.1 Introduction

The Metamodel Extension Facility (MEF) reproduces and extends the metamodel extension mechanism provided by UML, using Profiles and Stereotypes, for any MOF metamodel, including, but not limited to, UML. Replacing the traditional stereotype application method of UML by SMOF reclassification operations, nearly all restrictions on Stereotype are removed. MEF is independent of UML, reusing the Stereotype definition abstract and concrete syntaxes is a pure convenience. From MEF perspective, a Stereotype is a regular metaclass with a specific association to one or multiple base-metaclasse(s).

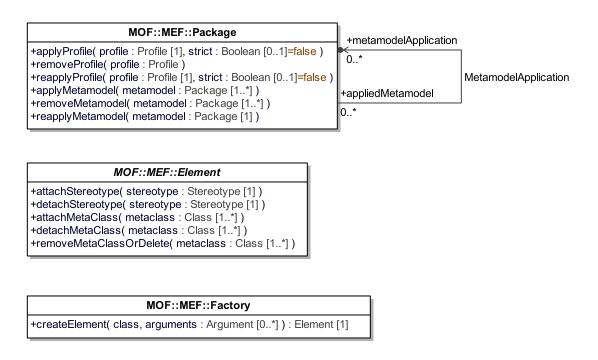


Figure 9.1: MEF extension to MOF and SMOF

9.2 Class Descriptions

9.2.1 MOF::MEF::Package

MEF::Package extends UML::Package (from the metamodel shared between UML and MOF) with a pair of operations for the explicit application and removal of Profiles following the UML extension semantics, and a second generic pair of operations to add or remove MOF metamodels. These four operations make Profile-based and Profile-alike extensions available to all MOF metamodels.

applyProfile()

```
applyProfile( profile : Profile[1], strict : Boolean[0..1] = false )
```

The applyProfile() operation is defined on MOF::MEF::Package and applies the Profile specified in the profile parameter to the current Package. If the optional parameter "strict" is present and set to "strict = true", then the Profile is applied in strict mode, which will invoke the filtering rules as specified in the UML specification [UML]. The Profile and the Package are connected via an instance of ProfileApplication, with links to the Profile and the Package. The Profile is not automatically applied to nested and imported Packages, it must be applied to these individually. Reapplying the same Profile has no effect, even if the Profile has changed. To correctly reapply a Profile, the Profile must be reapplied using the reapplyProfile operation (see below), which performs additional consistency checks. For each Stereotype owned by the Profile that has an Extension with "isRequired = true", the whole Package is searched for elements classified by the base-metaclass(es) associated with the Stereotype. For each element found, the Stereotype classification is then added to that element using the MEF operation attachStereotype() with the Stereotype as argument.

removeProfile()

```
removeProfile( profile : Profile[1] )
```

The removeProfile() operation is defined on MOF::MEF::Package and removes the Profile specified in the profile parameter from this Package. All instances of the stereotypes owned by the specified Profile are detached from elements in this Package using the detachStereotype() operation, which will in turn invoke the removeMetaClass() SMOF operation to remove the classification associated with the Stereotype. The ProfileApplication linkage between the Profile and Package is destroyed.

reapplyProfile()

```
reapplyProfile( profile : Profile[1], strict : Boolean[0..1] = false )
```

The reapplyProfile() operation is defined on MOF::MEF::Package and applies the Profile specified in the profile parameter to the current Package. If the optional parameter "strict" is present and set to "strict = true", then the profile is applied in strict mode, which will invoke the filtering rules as specified in the UML specification [UML]. The reapplyProfile operation will compare the profile provided in the profile argument with the profile discovered through the connected instance of ProfileApplication to ensure that existing Stereotype attachments based on the previous application of the Profile are consistent with the reapplication of the Profile. In particular, correct application of any {required} Stereotypes needs to be assured. The Profile is not automatically applied to nested and imported packages, it must be applied to these individually. Reapplying the same profile has no effect, even if the profile had changed. For each Stereotype owned by the profile that has an Extension with "isRequired = true", the whole package is searched for elements classified by the base-metaclass(es) associated with the Stereotype. For each element found, the Stereotype classification is then added to that element using the MEF operation attachStereotype() with the Stereotype as argument.

applyMetamodel()

```
applyMetamodel( metamodel : Package[1])
```

The applyMetamodel() operation is defined on MOF::MEF::Package and applies the metamodel specified in the metamodel parameter to the current Package. The metamodel and the package are connected via the MetamodelApplication

Association, creating a link from the target package to the package containing the metamodel to be applied. The metamodel is not automatically applied to nested and imported packages, it must be applied to these individually. Reapplying the same metamodel has no effect, even if the metamodel had changed. To correctly reapply a metamodel, the metamodel must be reapplied using the reapplyMetamodel operation, which performs additional consistency checks.

removeMetamodel()

```
removeMetamodel( metamodel : Package[1] )
```

The removeMetamodel() operation is defined on MOF::MEF::Package and removes the metamodel specified in the profile parameter from this Package. All classifications by metaclasses contained in the metamodel to be removed are detached from elements in this package using the removeMetaClassOrDelete operation, which will remove the classification associated with the metaclass, or will deep delete the element and all its dependent elements if the removed classification was the final classification of the element. The link between the metamodel and package is destroyed.

reapplyMetamodel()

```
reapplyMetamodel( metamodel : Package[1] )
```

The reapplyMetamodel() operation is defined on MOF::MEF::Package and reapplies the metamodel specified in the metamodel parameter to the current Package. The reapplyMetamodel operation will compare the metamodel provided in the metamodel argument with the metamodel discovered through the established link as instance of the MetamodelApplication Association, and perform actions to preserve consistency, if required. Note, the metamodel is not automatically applied to nested and imported packages, it must be applied to these individually.

9.2.2 MOF::MEF::Element

MOF::MEF::Element extends MOF::SEMOF::Element with additional classification operations related to the profile-based extension mechanism.

attachStereotype()

```
attachStereotype( stereotype : Stereotype[1] )
```

This operation adds the classification by a Stereotype to the Element. The element must already be classified by the base-metaclass, or one of the set of base-metaclasses if the Stereotype extends multiple base-metaclasses. For MEF, a Stereotype is a regular metaclass, the restrictions on UML Stereotypes do not apply. As the first step, the attachStereotype() operation verifies that the element is in fact classified by the, or one of the, base-metaclass(es) of the Stereotype. If this is not the case, then that is an error situation and no action is performed. If the element is classified by the base-metaclass, or one of the base metaclasses, then the classification by the Stereotype is added using the addNewMetaClass() SMOF operation. In case the Stereotype classification is already present at the element, then invocation of addNewMetaClass() by the attachStereotype() operation causes no effect.

detachStereotype()

```
detachStereotype( stereotype : Stereotype[1] )
```

This operation removes the classification by a Stereotype from the Element. As first step, the classification by the Stereotype *and* the base-metaclass of the Stereotype, or one of the base-metaclasses, is verified to ensure that the element is in fact classified by the Stereotype. Then the classification introduced by the Stereotype is removed using the SMOF operation removeMetaClass. The classification by the applicable base-metaclass is *not* removed.

attachMetaClass()

```
attachMetaClass( metaclass : Class[1..*] )
```

This operation adds the classification by one or multiple metaclass(es) to the element. Every Metaclass listed in the metaclass parameter is tested if it is the base-metaclass of a {required} Stereotype. If so, then the classification by that Stereotype is also added. The actual classification of the element is performed by invoking the SMOF operation addNewMetaClass(). In case the element is already classified by any of the metaclasses listed in the metaclass parameter of attachMetaClass(), or by any of the implicit Stereotype classifications, than those classifications are ignored and not added again by invoking the addNewMetaClass() SMOF operation.

detachMetaClass()

```
detachMetaClass( metaclass : Class[1..*] )
```

This operation removes the classification by one or multiple metaclass(es) from the element. If, after removal of the specified metaclasses, the element has attached to it one or more Stereotypes no longer supported by one of their base metaclasses (or a subclass) then those Stereotypes are detached. The actual reclassification of the element is performed by invoking the SMOF operation removeMetaClassOrDelete(), which is a variant of the SMOF operation removeMetaClass() operation does not allow the removal of *all* classifications from an element, and would signal an error in that attempt, the remove MetaClassOrDelete() operation performs a deep delete of the element when its last classification is removed.

removeMetaClassOrDelete()

```
removeMetaClassOrDelete( metaclass : Class[1..*] )
```

This operation is a variation of the removeMetaClass() SMOF operation. Like the original operation, it will remove the classifications by the Metaclasses listed in the metaclass parameter from the element it is executing on. However, instead of refusing to remove the last remaining classification of the element, and signalling an error condition on that attempt, removeMetaClassOrDelete() will initiate a deep delete of the element, deleting the element itself and all compositely contained elements.

9.2.3 MOF::MEF::Factory

MEF extends the semantics of the createElement operation defined by MOF::CMOFReflection to make it aware of potential Stereotypes that have "isRequired = true" set on their Extension.

createElement

```
createElement( class, arguments : Argument [0..*] ) : Element [1]
```

This operation extends the MOF::CMOFReflection::Factory::createElement() operation with a test checking if the specified metaclass in the class parameter is the base-metaclass of a {required} Stereotype. If so, then the classification by that Stereotype is also added. The actual classification of the element after creation is performed by invoking the SMOF operation addNewMetaClass().

10 Example

(informative)

10.1 Introduction

This informative clause demonstrates a step-by-step example of the use of MEF capabilities, utilizing a test profile developed by the Model Interchange Working Group of the Object Management Group. The model is shown in Figure 10.1 below, the application of the MEF capabilities is then detailed in several steps. Prefix "TP" will be used for the test profile.

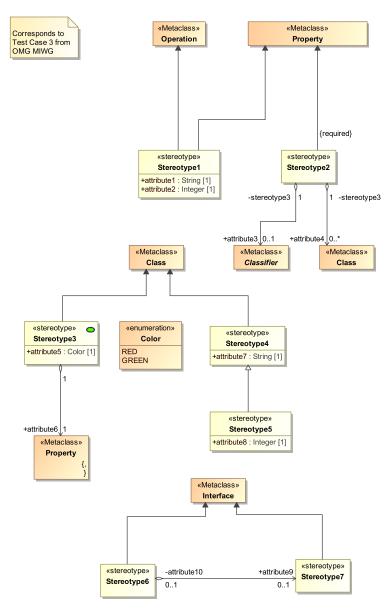


Figure 10.1: MIWG Test Case 3: A Profile

For each step, the user action is shown first, then the resulting model as instance diagram, and as the XMI serialization. Changes in the XMI resulting from the corresponding step are shown in bold font.

10.2 Step-by-Step Example

10.2.1 Step 1

Create a Package and apply the Test Profile TP.

```
f a MOF::Factory
pkg = f.createElement(UML::Package)
pkg.applyProfile(TP)
```

MEF and SMOF Operations for Step 1

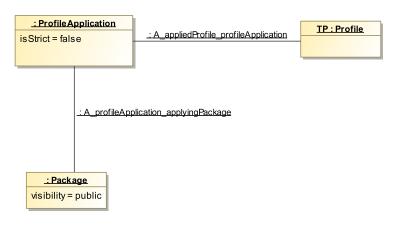


Figure 10.2: Resulting model for Step 1

XMI Serialization for Step 1

10.2.2 Step 2

Create a Property (instance of the UML metaclass)(Stereotype2 is automatically added)

```
f a MOF::Factory
p = f.createElement(UML::Property)
(implicit p.attachStereotype(TP::Stereotype2))
```

MEF and SMOF Operations for Step 2

: Stereotype2, Property

Figure 10.3: Resulting model for Step 2

(Note: the top level Package is not shown in the following and subsequent XMI listings)

XMI Serialization for Step 2

10.2.3 Step 3

Set value for attribute4 to a new random class named Class1

```
c = f.createElement(UML::Class)
c.setValue(name, "Class1")
```

MEF and SMOF Operations for Step 3

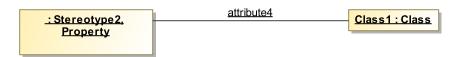


Figure 10.4: Model for Step 3

XMI Serialization for Step 3

10.2.4 Step 4

Add Stereotype1 as an additional stereotype

```
p.attachStereotype(Stereotype1)
```

MEF and SMOF Operations for Step 1

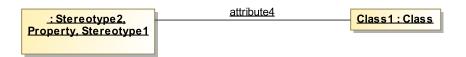


Figure 10.5: Model for Step 4

XMI Serialization for Step 4

10.2.5 Step 5

Set attribute1 of Stereotype1

```
p.setValue(attribute1, "a string")
```

MEF and SMOF Operations for Step 5



Figure 10.6: Model for Step 5

XMI Serialization for Step 5

10.2.6 Step 6

Set name of the Property to E1

```
p.setValue(name, "E1")
```

MEF and SMOF Operations for Step 6

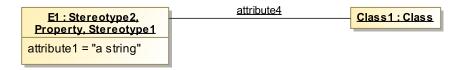


Figure 10.7: Model for Step 6

XMI Serialization for Step 6

10.2.7 Step 7

Change the base class to Operation

```
p.reclassify(oldMetaClass=uml:Property, newMetaClass=uml:Operation)
```

MEF and SMOF Operations for Step 7

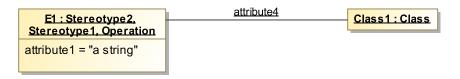


Figure 10.8: Model for Step 7

XMI Serialization for Step 7

10.2.8 Step 8

Detach Stereotype2 (it's no longer required)

```
p.reclassify(oldMetaClass=uml:Property, newMetaClass=uml:Operation)
```

MEF and SMOF Operations for Step 8



Figure 10.9: Model for Step 8

XMI Serialization for Step 8