

Appraisal Project and Organizational Support Function Eligibility

Ensuring projects and Organizational Support Functions in-scope of an appraisal meet MDD requirements

A CMMI appraisal represents a snapshot in time of an Organizational Unit's (OU's) performance. Therefore, when determining the scope of an appraisal, it is critical for the Appraisal Team Leader (ATL) to help the appraised organization select projects and Organizational Support Functions (OSFs) that meet the eligibility requirements of the CMMI Appraisal Method Definition Document (MDD). Recently, Quality Management has observed several cases of appraisals wherein the in-scope projects have not always met MDD requirements. Specifically, these appraisals included projects that have been closed or inactive for greater than six months, which is in violation of the MDD. This has led to these appraisals being rejected by CMMI Institute. The aim of this Quality Tip is to help guide ATLs to select projects and OSFs that are appropriate for appraisal selection based on MDD requirements.

MDD Section 1.1.4 Determine Appraisal Scope outlines the eligibility requirements for projects and OSFs to be included in an appraisal. It is important to note that the list included in the MDD is not exhaustive; ATLs should utilize their professional judgement in addition to the MDD requirements to determine the projects and OSFs appropriate for inclusion in an appraisal. Accordingly, ATLs must ensure that the projects selected for an appraisal allow for sufficient coverage based on sampling factors and sampling factor values.

The MDD permits projects to be included in an appraisal after they have been closed or inactive for up to six months prior to the Conduct Phase of the appraisal. It is critical that ATLs perform their due diligence during planning to review projects plans, work breakdown structures (WBSs), and schedules to determine the project lifecycles. If these projects are contracts, the contracts would clearly define the periods of performance (PoPs) and any associated maintenance periods. For ongoing services projects, ATLs should input the corresponding calendar/fiscal year as the project dates in the CMMI Appraisal System (CAS). Quality Management may ask the ATL to provide documentation supporting any changes to project and/or OSF start and end dates if changes to these fields are necessitated during quality review.

Quality Management has also noticed a trend of ATLs including only closed projects within the scope of their appraisals. As noted in the MDD, active projects, and projects that are just starting can also be included in scope. These projects have the potential to be great representatives of the OU's current performance of their processes and should be given consideration.

To help proactively prevent MDD violations for project and OSF selection eligibility, Quality Management has put more focus on checking project dates in CAS during sample scope reviews to verify

that no projects or OSFs which have been closed or inactive for greater than six months from the Conduct Phase have been included. This is being done as a quality assurance and failsafe measure; however, ATIs are ultimately responsible for ensuring that their appraisal planning and conduct meets the requirements of the MDD. Appraisals that include projects or OSFs which are ineligible as per MDD requirements will not be accepted by CMMI Institute. In such cases, ATIs will need to replan and redo the appraisal from the sampling phase.

Questions regarding this Quality Tip can be sent to quality@cmmiinstitute.com.