Using Process Management

Introduction

In many organizations, projects must be approved and reapproved by senior management at various points in their life cycles. In some organizations these approval points will be called "gates" (The popular Stage-Gate(Tm) process for example).

We call this kind of organization mandated behavior a "Signoff Process." When a project is subject to such a process, formal approvals will be required at one or more times in the life of the project.

Project Gateway provides a way to automate the implementation of such signoff processes so that large numbers of projects can managed in a consistent and predictable fashion.

By separating process management from project tasking, the system ensures process compliance without adding complexity to the project workplan. By alerting the project leader and program manager to upcoming and overdue requirements, and interlocking project approval with process approvals, the system provides the "push" to ensure that the process is followed.

Definitions

A "**Signoff**" is a named approval (e.g. Gate 1, Budget Approved, etc.) which is represented by a document called a Signoff Definition.

A "**Signoff Process**" is a named list of required "Signoffs" and a set of rules for sequencing them. It is represented by a document called a Signoff Process Definition.

A "**Signoff Request**" is a simple document that is created by the project leader to obtain a particular signoff for his or her project. The document is routed to the appropriate authorities for approval and stored in the repository as evidence of that approval.

The system will remind the project leader to create requests at the appropriate times so as to comply with the process.

Adopting processes

A project logically "adopts" a process. Once adopted, the process must be followed.

A process can be adopted manually by the project manager, or automatically when the project is created according to the program to which the project is assigned.

A process can also be associated with a Schedule Template. When the template is used to generate assignments in a project, the processes which have been listed in the schedule template will automatically adopted by the project.

A single project can adopt several processes. Once adopted, however, they are treated as a single composite process for dashboard and notification purposes.

The Project Dashboard Process Indicator

The fifth color coded indicator on the project dashboard uses stoplight icons to display the current process condition. There are 4 possible states. Blank means that no processes are in use. Green means that all process requirements have been met. Yellow means that there are requirements that must be met in the very near future. Red means that some required document or signoff has not been obtained as required by the process.

The Project Go Process Tracking Agent.

This system agent periodically evaluates the performance of every project on its adopted processes. It sets the project condition (Green, Yellow, Red) in the project profile and dashboard. It also sends an email to the project leader detailing the process requirements and deficiencies. This will advise the project leader as to upcoming requirements as well as overdue items. The email is sent whenever the process condition changes. If there are outstanding problems, but no changes, the email will be resent every two weeks as reminder. If there are no process problems or requirements, no email will be sent.

This agent will also maintain a schedule of upcoming signoff requirements in the project profile.

The Project Process Control Panel

In the project profile document, located just below the statistics area and project checklist panel, the process control panel contains the following:

1. A list of processes that have been adopted by this project

2 A statement of the process condition (RED, YELLOW, or GREEN) and a summary of current deficiencies if there are any.

3 A list of signoffs already obtained for this project.

4 A list of signoffs that will be required (including any that are already due) and the planned date for each.

5 A collection of action buttons to do the following:

Project Process Actions

Adopt

This will add a process to the project. Once added the project leader will be required to obtain all the signoffs required by that process.

Remove

This will remove an already adopted process.

Process Checkup

This will generate a report identifying any process problems that the project has. This report will integrate all of the processes adopted by the project.

Adjust Schedule

This will allow the project leader to manually adjust the expected dates for future process signoffs.

Request Signoff

This will evaluate what signoffs are currently permitted and allow you to create a signoff request form. If several signoffs are currently possible, you will be given a list of to choose from. If all remaining signoffs are dependent upon something like a missing document, the system will tell you of the dependence.

Signoff Report

This will generate a report tabulating all signoffs obtained for this project.

Process Gantt

This will generate a Gantt Chart showing all existing and required signoffs and the dependencies with documents, signoffs, and milestones in your project plan.

Process Calendar(web only)

This will show the process events in project calendar format.

The process panel lists the name of the processes, the names of signoffs already obtained, and lists signoffs expected.

Program Process Controls

In the ***Program Profile*** form, there is a section labeled "Process Management" which contains the following items.

Program Process List:

This will list all processes that have been adopted by the program. The list shows the name of the process and the name or the person who adopted the process and the date this was done.

Adopt as default for new projects created in this program?

This Yes/No parameter provides a way to preload processes onto new projects, but still allow the project leader the ability to remove the process if they feel it is inappropriate for that project.

Required for all projects in the program?

If this is set to Yes, then it overrides the previous parameter. If it is No, then the previous parameter is operative.   When you set this to Yes, you are forcing every project in the program to use every process listed in the Program process list above. While the project leader can still use the "Remove" action, the ProjectGo\Process Tracking agent will simply reattach the process to the project. Hence, the project leader has no choice except to comply.

Notify the Program Executive about project process problems?

This has three options:

Do Not notify.

The program executive will never receive an email about the process.

Notify on Red or Yellow conditions

The Program executive will receive the same emails as the project leader.

Notify on Red condition.

The Program executive will only be notified if a process fault has occurred. These are caused by overdue documents or signoffs.

Action Buttons:

Adopt Process.

This will add a process to the program process list (and may add it to all projects).

Remove Process.

This will remove a process from the program process list, but will not change the process adoptions of any of the existing program projects. If you need to remove the process from all projects, you have to do that on each individual project.

Signoff Report.

This will generate a report of all projects in the program listing the signoff request documents that have been obtained by each.

Process Calendar

This will generate a program level calendar report showing all process events.   You can also do this using the Custom Todo link (web) or Todo action in Notes and choosing only the process options.

Process Reports (Web Only)

Process Usage

This report shows the processes adopted by each project in the program, the current phase and signoffs.

Process Experience

This report shows, for each process used in the program's projects, the project statistics recorded at the time of each signoff for all projects using that process in the program. A set of 37 checkbox options allow you to select the details of interest to you.

This report can also be run for the specific project from that project profile.

Implementing the process

Once a process has been adopted, the system will tell the project leader when signoffs are due by sending emails to the project leader (and optionally to the program manager) about upcoming and overdue signoffs that are required by the process.

The Project Leader must request the signoff by creating a Signoff Request document when that project leader believes that the requirements of that signoff have been met.

A signoff request is simply a special form of a project document. You can create these using the button in the process control panel or by using the Document action and selecting the format "signoff". Note that unlike other project document, the creation of a signoff is only allowed when the preconditions for that signoff (as defined in the process definition) have been met.

On the Signoff Request document, the project leader must attest to the completion of all requirements for that signoff. Once completed by the project leader, the signoff request is then sent the designated authority for approval. Once approval has been obtained, the signoff is posted on the project profile and the next part of the process can begin.

Process Forms

There are three forms used to define processes in your repository. These documents can be found in the Project\Processes view from the Projects Navigator and created from the same place.

The Signoff Definition Form

The Signoff Definition form names the signoff and lists the specific person whose approval is required. It also provides a place to document the requirements of that signoff and to provide additional help information for the project leader requesting the signoff.

The Document Type Definition Form

This form simply formally defines a document type (e.g. tracking code) and provides help for people preparing documents of this type.

The Signoff Process Definition Form

This form names the process (e.g. Development Process) and defines all of the rules and relationships that govern the execution of the process and the projects that adopt it.

A process is simply a definition which does nothing unless adopted by one or more projects.

Building the Process in the Repository

A process is constructed out of three forms. Document Type Definitions, Signoff Definitions and Signoff Process Definitions. The first two are simple, the last a bit more complex, but none should take more than a few minutes to create.

e.g. Example

A large firm requires that new product pricing be approved by a corporate committee before the project is announced. As a precondition, the project manager must provide a business plan and a competitive analysis and the project must have been previously approved by the Technical Committee.

We will call this the "The Corporate New Product Release Process"

This process has two signoffs "Technical Committee Approval" and "Marketing Committee Approval". The first would be required before the second. There would also be two documents required for the second approval. The documents "The Business Plan" and "The Competitive Analysis".

In the repository you would create 5 documents

1. A Document Type definition for "The Business Plan"

This describes what is to be included in this document

2. A Document Type definition for "The Competitive Analysis"

This describes what is to be included in this document

3 A Signoff Definition for "Technical Committee Approval"

This lists the requirements for approval and lists the name(s) of the members of the committee that must actually record the signoff decision in the database.

4. A Signoff Definition for "Marketing Committee Approval"

This lists the requirements for approval and lists the name(s) of the members of the committee that must actually record the signoff decision in the database.

5. A Signoff Process Definition for "The Corporate New Product Release Process"

This contains a table that lists the two signoff steps and the relationships that affect them.

Step 1: Technical Committee Approval with no other preconditions

Step 2: Marketing Committed Approval with the preconditions of Technical Committee Approval and the precondition of having The Business Plan and The Competitive Analysis available.

When a project adopts "The Corporate New Product Release Process", the system will enforce this process by reminding and nagging the project leader into meeting the requirements of the process.

Using a Process

Processes can be forced upon projects or adopted at the option of the project leader. The program manager may mandate that all projects in that program use a process. In this case the process will be automatically adopted by each new project created in that program. Alternatively a project leader can adopt a process that is appropriate for the work at hand based upon an understanding of corporate requirements.

In any event, once a process is adopted, the system knows that certain signoffs are going to be required during the life of the project. It creates a schedule of these requirements and begins tracking the performance of the project against this schedule. As each signoff is obtained, it is logged into a list inside the project profile.

The project leader will be prompted by both email and dashboard indicators to obtain signoffs when they are required by the process.

To obtain a signoff, the project leader initiates a "Signoff Request" document. There is a button on the project profile for this purpose. The system checks to make sure that all the preconditions for this signoff have been met before allowing the Signoff Request to be created. The project leader fills in the form, attesting to the fact that the project is ready for this approval. When the project leader submits the form, the system will request approval from the person(s) who are designated as the signing authorities for this particular signoff. These would typically be the recording secretaries for the committees.

When the signoff is approved, it is logged as an accomplishment onto the project profile and the process condition is updated to reflect the change.

The Document Type Definition Document

The purpose of the Document Type Definition is to provide a place to construct a list of document types that can be used in Signoff Process Definitions (thus avoiding potential misspellings). It's other purpose is to provide a place to record instructions for users that can be accessed when they are composing project documents. For example the definition of "Functional Spec" can provide detailed instructions for actually preparing a functional specification including an outline of the required sections.

Another valuable feature made possible by these documents is the Examples report. This report shows you all the documents in the repository that have been created of this type. By looking at the work of others, the user can learn how to write better documents and better understand the expectations of the project community.

Creating a Document Type Definition document.

These can be composed from the projects navigator.

Tracking Type:

This is the unique name that you create to for this kind of document. The tracking type is used when the actual document is created. It is also used in any assignments that create or require documents of this type. It is used in Signoff Process Definitions to identify documents needed before signoffs can be obtained.

User ID for Process Manager

This is your name or the name of the person who will be able to modify this document in the future.

Instructions for a user who is creating a document of this type:

Please provide specifics as to the content and organization expected for such documents.

Finding Document Definitions

Use the Project\Processes view. There is a top level category for Document Type Definitions. If this category is not shown, then there are no definitions in the repository.

Special actions on the Document Definition form:

Examples

This produces a report which links to all documents in the repository that have been previously created with this tracking type.

Note that, if your repository has a designate Archive database, the archive will also be searched for examples of the document type.

Process Usage

This produces a report showing all Signoff Process Definitions that use this tracking type.

Asgn Usage

This produces a report showing all project assignments in the repository that list this tracking type in the documents created or documents required field.

The other actions have their usual meanings.

Using Help when creating Project Documents

Web browsers:

Click the help button to the right of the tracking type in the top section of the document. This will open a new window showing the help information and the Examples report action.

Notes clients:

Click the Help action button at the top of the form, this will open a new window show the help information and the Examples report action.

The Signoff Definition Document

Signoff definitions are central to the process management facility. Each Signoff Definition defines a name for a particular signoff and the names of the people who will be required to approve a request for this signoff. In essence this document says " The Signoff of Gate1 requires the approval of Bill Jones."

Some signoffs are purely approvals while others may be used primarily to enforce reporting requirements.

Creating a Signoff Definition

Name

The name you give to this signoff. This should be consistent with your existing corporate nomenclature. If use a gate system, then signoffs should be gate names.   Note that signoffs names are global to the repository, so each one has to have a unique name. One signoff can be used in several different processes.

User Id for Process Manager

This is the person, or persons, who is to have the right to modify this signoff. Normally this would be the person that creates it.   These entries should be Notes User ID's.   Separate with commas.

Required Approvers.

This is where you identify the people who must actually approve each signoff request of this type. Keep this list as short as possible to minimize delays.

The list is created in a fashion very similar to that used for approval lists in project profiles. There are three subsections a) Checkbox options, b) Participant Selection, and c) User name entry.

Checkbox Options:

Process Manager - this refers to the person or persons listed above in the User ID for Process Manager field. If this option is checked, then those people must approve each signoff request.

Program Manager - When a signoff request is made, the system will determine the program to which the project requesting the signoff is assigned. The person, or persons listed as the User ID for Program Manager in the Program Profile will be required to approve the signoff request. Note that this is a function of the project. If you use this feature, it would be best to inform the program managers that they may be asked to approve signoff requests.

Project Customer/Requester - When the signoff request is submitted for approval, the system retrieves the name of the Project Customer from the project profile. Note that, if the project was created from a Work Request, the name of the requester will have been preset as the Project Customer. In any event, if there is a project customer specified, and if this option is checked, the Project Customer will have to approve the signoff.

Participants

You may select one or more participants. The names found in the User ID for Participant fields in each Participant Profile will added to the required approvers list.

Selected Users

You may enter one or more names into this field as additional approvers. This would be used for management representatives from corporate committees, for example, who are probably not participants or program managers. Note that you must ensure that the users are allowed access to the repository. If in doubt about this, consult with your Notes administrator. If a requested approver cannot approve, the process will come to a halt until an administrator intervenes.

Requirements for this Certification

This text will appear automatically in the signoff request form.

In this field you should be specific (numbered list is good) as to what the project leader must do before requesting the signoff. The project leader will be required to mark the signoff request so as to claim compliance with these requirements. This list should identify those things that are external to the project such as "1. Have budget number assigned by Finance administrator" Things that are internal to the project team, such as the project charter, can be used as preconditions in the process definition and so may not need to be listed here.

A requirement can also be used to tell the project leader that some kind of attachment is required to accompany the signoff request. Such attachments might be the minutes of a particular meeting or the official notice of some regulatory agency.

Instructions for creating a document of this type.

This text will appear if the project leader presses the Help action while composing a signoff request.

The Signoff Process Definition Document

This document describes a process as a sequence of signoffs. It specifies the ordering and timing of the signoff requirements. Itprovides rules for governing the termination of the process, the stage naming, and the approval state of the controlled project.

A process can have both required and conditional signoffs. Required signoffs will be required of all projects that adopt the process. Each required signoff is a one time event. For example: Funding Approval. Conditional signoffs can be repetitive and required only when certain project conditions are met. For example: monthly customer reviews.

The process specifies the "nominal" point in the life of the project at which each required signoff will be required. These nominal dates can be adjusted by the project leader.

For each required signoff, it specifies the prior signoffs that must be obtained and any specific approved documents that must be in the repository.

For conditional signoffs, it specifies what project conditions should exist (such as an amount of work, or the presense of a particular kind of document), and whether or not the signoff should be needed more than once.

The process definition also specifies interlocks between the project approval status and the process. For example, it can specify that the project must remain in the "Proposed" status until a particular signoff (e.g. Budget Approval) has been obtained.

Finding Signoff Process Definitions in the Repository.

Signoff Process Definitions are listed in the Project - Process view under the category heading of "Process Definitions". If this category heading is now shown, there are no signoff process definitions in the repository.

Creating a new Signoff Process Definition.

Use the create icon from the navigator, view or menu to compose a new Signoff Process Definition form. Enter the following fields and save/submit the document.

Name

Enter a unique name for this process. This name will selected by a project or program manager to adopt the process, so it should be chosen for clarity. It must also be unique name. While not a requirement, it would be best if the process name was different from the name of any signoff or document type.

User ID of the process manager

Enter your user ID and that of any other people who you want to be able to modify the design of the process. Note that this has nothing to do with the users of the process. Any project can use any process.

Guidelines for adoption:

Clearly describe the kinds of projects that should use this process.

e.g. Software Development Projects whose budget is 50K or more.

These guidelines will be shown to the user at the time they choose processes. Hence, you can prevent mistakes by giving clear guidelines.

Part I: REQUIRED SIGNOFFS

This blue table is the heart of the process definition. The table has room for 10 signoffs, which should be enough for most processes. Note that all the signoffs you use must be already defined in the repository.

Every signoff listed here will be required by every project that adopts the process.

There are 10 rows in the table. On each row are the following fields

Signoff Name

Select the name of this signoff from the list provided.

Prior Signoffs Required

Select the name of any signoffs that must already be obtained before this can be requested. In most cases the signoff defined on row 1 will be required on row 2, row 2 will be required on row 3 etc. This defines a simple linear sequence of signoffs.

You can, however, allow several signoffs to occur in parallel, then have all of them required for the final signoff of the process.

Approved Documents Required

Here you list any document types that should be created and approved for the project prior to the request for this signoff. Lets say you put the document type "QA PLAN" as a condition for row 2. The system will require each project to have a document of the type "QA PLAN" in the repository and approved before it will allow the project leader to request the signoff specified on row 2 of the process.

Note that all document types used in processes must be previously defined with Document Type definition forms.

There can be more than one document type required for each process step.

Document requirements become part of the process schedule and can affect the process condition.

When is the signoff expected to be obtained during the life of the project.

At all times, a project has a start date and an estimated end date. These two dates define the duration of the project. Naturally this end date can change as the project evolves.

What you do in this field is to provide a "rule" that will allow the software to set an expected date for each process step. If there were no such rule, then the system would have to assume that all signoffs were required immediately (which is very unlikely).

You set the expected date as a percentage of the project duration. You can set it as a specific number of days after the project start. You can also set is as a certain number of days after the completion of the signoff on the previous row.

e.g.

Row 1 - Signoff Gate 1 20 days after project start

Row 2 - Signoff Gate 2 prior signoff - Gate 1 50 % of project duration

Row 3 - Signoff Gate 3 prior signoff - Gate 2 90% of project duration

If the project is 300 days long, then Gate 1 will be expected at day 20, Gate 2 at day 150, Gate 3 at day 270.

If the project is 60 days long, then Gate1 will be expected at day 20, Gate 2 at day 30, Gate 3 at day 54.

If the project is 30 days long, Gate 1 will still be at day 20, Gate 2 will be at day 21 (because it must be after Gate 1, even though 50% would be at day 15), and Gate 3 will be at day 27.

Title of Stage (Phase, Step) achieved when this signoff is obtained.

This requires a bit of explanation.

A signoff is an significant event. Generally the maturity of a project is perceived in relation to these events. For example, a project that has not yet have Budget Approval might be considered "Seeking Funding". After achieving such approval, its might be thought of a "Funded Project" . In most corporations, there is a huge difference in how such projects are treated. Funded projects get real commitments for resources. Unfunded ones are not taken seriously.

Thus the achievement of these management checkpoints can fundamentally alter the perception of the project and its interaction with others. To advertise this, we assign labels to describe the management situation. These labels are sometimes called Stages or Phases or Approval Levels. In the example, the project transition from the "Seeking Funding" Stage to the "Funded Project" Stage.

You enter the label that best describes the project when each signoff is achieved. You do not need to enter these labels if you do not want to. You do not need to have a new label for every signoff. The project will always display the label associated with the highest numbered row that that has been obtained that has a label defined.

As the project proceeds, its current "Stage" will be clearly displayed at the top of the project profile and in the Project Profiles or Observatory project report.

To summarize: The process defines a series of signoffs. The achievement of a signoff can trigger a change in the "Stage" which is a high level synopsis of the project from an management perspective.

The process definition document defines both the signoff sequence and the phase name sequence.

Note that there is a field provided to name the initial stage of the process (the stage that exists after the process has been adopted, but before any signoffs have been obtained).

The formal names you apply to the stages of the project are very important and should be chosen to be consistent with your corporate or institutional practice. The system is very protective of these labels. There is no way that a project leader can get to "Funded" status without achieving the required signoff. That signoff, in turn, cannot be obtained without the electronic signature(s) of the predefined authorities.

For most processes, a few rows in this table are all that will be required.

PART II: CONDITIONAL AND RECURRING SIGNOFFS

This is a powerful, but rather very advanced feature. Most organizations will not need to use it.

This gold colored table defines signoffs that might be required by a project under certain conditions or that will be required more than once. For example, a corporate committee might decide that each software project should be reevaluated every month to see if it is still needed. Or a corporate quality assurance group might want to require periodic approval of any project that has a large number of open issues.

This table defines such signoffs and the rules which determine when and if they will be required during the course of a particular project. Note that these rules can involve project specific data so that the signoff requirements may vary from on project to another even though both projects use the same signoff process.

Signoff name

This must be selected from the predefined list of signoffs.

Signoff Limitations

These two columns allow you to specify a time period defined in terms of other required signoffs. For example, you can state that this signoff will only be required during the period started by Signoff A and ending at Signoff B.

Project Condition that require this signoff

A signoff can be required only when one or two specific project conditions exist.

The system provides for the use statistics, target, dashboard, and document based conditions.

The default value of these rows is "[Not Used]".

Each row allows up to two project conditions to be specified. If both are used, then both must be true before the signoff will be required.

Statistics Based Conditions

The format of each condition is "If condition name", a selection of a comparison relationship, and a comparison value.

The relationships are:

> Greater than

< Less than

= Equal

>= Greater or Equal

<=Less or Equal

<> Not Equal.

The comparison value must be a number or left blank (meaning zero)

The conditions are listed below. All of the names correspond to items on in the statistics section of the project profile document. "Asgns" means assignments,

If Asgns Total

If Asgns Started

If Asgns Finished

If Asgns Overdue

If Hours Total

If Hours Actual

If Hours Overdue

If Hours Cap

If Hours Remaining

If Hours Reference

If Hours Due

If Hours Earned

If KeyEvents Total

If KeyEvents Finished

If IssuesRisks Total

If IssuesRisks Open

If IssuesRisks Overdue

If IssuesRisks Act Hours

If IssuesRisks Rem Hours

If Scope Open

If Scope Overdue

If Scope Closed

If Scope Approved:

If Scope Act Hours

If Scope Rem Hours

If Scope Apvd Hours

If Scope Apvd Cost

If Scope Apvd Days

Target Based Conditions

For these two options the relationship is ignored, but the comparison value is required.

If Finish>Target By (Days)

If the projected finish date (EndsOn column on Dashboard) exceeds the Target Date by more than a number of days entered into the comparison value, then the condition is true.

If Effort>Target By (Hrs)

If the effort at completion (actual + workremaining) exceeds the Target Effort by more than a number of hours entered into the comparison value, then the condition is true.

Dashboard Based Conditions

NotGreen means that the indicator is Blue, Red, or Bomb.

All Green means that all four indicators are Green.

HasRed means that any of the four indicators are Red or Bomb.

Note: The relationships and comparison values are ignored if one of the "When Dashboard" conditions is selected.

Note: Time, Effort, Pgrs(Progress) and Issues are the color coded indicators shown on the project dashboard.

The follow tests are provided:

When Dashboard TimeNotGreen

When Dashboard EffortNotGreen

When Dashboard PgrsNotGreen

When Dashboard IssuesNotGreen

When Dashboard TimeIsRed

When Dashboard EffortIsRed

When Dashboard PgrsIsRed

When Dashboard IssuesIsRed

When Dashboard NotAllGreen

When Dashboard HasRed

Document Based Conditions

This allows you to make a signoff dependent upon the existance or non existance of a particular kind of project document for that project.

Unlike a document requirement for a required signoff, this feature does not force the project leader to create a document. Rather, it is used to sense the presence of a document as a flag that then triggers the requirement for a signoff.

The choices that will appear are of the form

Has Avpd (document type)

No Avpd (document type)

The document types will be those defined in the repository and provided as options in the required signoff area. Note that only the first 100 document types are listed.

e.g.

A weekly review is required for all projects until their "Business Requirements" are approved.

For this purpose a conditional signoff is defined in the standard project process.

The name of the signoff is "***Weekly Startup Review***".

The next two columns are left blank.

In the first condition field ***No Apvd (Business Requirements)*** is selected. This condition will be true until an approved document is in the repository that has the tracking type "business requirements".

In the How Often field, "***Every Wednesday***" is selected.

When the process containing this definition is adopted, the system will force the project leader to create signoff requests each week in the "Weekly Startup Review" format until an approved document whose tracking type is "Business Requirements" is in the repository. If the document is present when the process is adopted, no signoffs will be required.

Note: For this example you must predefine the document type "*Business Requirements*" and the Signoff "*Weekly Startup Review*".

How Often will this signoff be required with the project is in this condition

Once is the default. You can choose other options to require weekly, monthly etc. signoffs.

The full list of choices is:

Once

Weekly

Every Monday

Every Tuesday

Every Wednesday

Every Thursday

Every Friday

Monthly

First of Each Month

Middle of Each Month

End of Each Month

Quarterly

First of Each Quarter

Middle of Each Quarter

End of Each Quarter

Naturally the longer periods are for projects that will have long durations. If you have End of Quarter rules and a 1 month project, it is unlikely any signoff would be required.

Example

Assume that in the Part I table, required signoff 1 is ***Funding Approval***, and required signoff 2 is ***Release Approval***.

Now, in this Part II table we define a signoff rule for "Budget Review". It is limited to the period between Funding Approval and Budget Approval.

Assume there are no project conditions selected.

In the last column we state that the signoff is required every 4 weeks.

If we have done so, then, every four weeks after ***Funding Approval*** has been obtained up to the time that ***Release Approval*** has been obtained the system will require the project leader to request another "Budget Approval" signoff.

To keep the names distinct for each of the instances of Budget Approval, the actual signoff name will include the date in brackets (e.g. Budget Approval [2004-03-04]).

Another Example.

Lets assume that the Quality Assurance group wants to checkup on all projects which have lots of open issues.

Define a Part II signoff called "QA Checkup"

Set the project condition to "If IssuesRisks Open > 10"

Set the last column to Weekly.

This will force the project leader to submit weekly signoff requests to the QA group so long as the project has more than 10 open issues.

To further qualify the requirement, you might add a second condition AsgHours>500 so that only larger projects are affected.

PART III: TERMINATION

This allows you to specify none, one or more signoff(s) which, if any are obtained, will terminate the use of this process. You do not have to use this option. If your process is a simple list in the first table, then the process will end naturally when the last signoff is obtained because there is nothing else to do.

The termination option is really intended for cases where there are multiple processes assigned to the same project. Then the completion of one process can trigger the termination of the others.

PART IV: PROJECT APPROVAL INTERLOCKS

The first rule prevents the project from becoming approved until a particular signoff is obtained.

The second prevents it from being declared as finished, until a particular signoff is obtained.

Remember that a project can be in one of six approval states:

Proposed, Approved, On Hold, Approved Until, Finished or Canceled.

While in the proposed state, no one can report timesheet hours against the project. This is a good status for early project development since it gives the project leader a little time to get the workplan and project charter in place.

By linking the transition to Approved to a Signoff, you formalize the initiation of reportable work and put the burden on the project leader to meet whatever initial conditions are desired as quickly as possible.

At the other end, by linking the transition to Finished to the last signoff, you can force the project leader to complete any project closure criteria (such as preparing a post-mortem report) before allowing them to shut down the project.

While this may sound a bit draconian, it is a very simple and practical way to use the process system to enforce consistent project discipline across a large group of project leaders without constantly having to remind people.

Note that the transition to Approved or Finished is not automatic. The project manager must still go to the project profile and manually change the approval state.

PART V: PURPOSE OF THE PROCESS

This field is optional. On the other hand, you ought to be able to describe the purpose of any process you are going to deploy.

This completes the preparation of the Signoff Process Definition form.

Actions available on Signoff Process Definition form.

Gantt

The Gantt action will generate a Gantt diagram in PDF format which will show the dependency structure of the signoffs and required documents using a pro forma project time line.

Identification

This action allows you to initiate a change in the name of the process. This change is actually implemented by a system agent (Implement ProjectAndParticipantNameChanges) that will normally run nightly. If you have [PGADMIN] rights and a Notes client, you can force the name changes to be implemented using the Admin\ImplmentPendingNameChangesNow command from the Notes Actions Menu.

Usage

These action generates a useful report which shows all projects that have adopted this project and the current signoffs of the process on each project. Both posted and approved but not yet posted signoffs are listed.

Experience

This action generates a very elaborate web report. The report is organized as a table. The table columns are the required signoffs of this process. The table rows show the names of each project. At the intersection between signoff and project is a data cell. In this cell you can display any or all of some 37 available project statistics. These are the values for project totals (such as actual work), which were displayed at the time that the signoff was recorded.

This is truly interesting report once you have actually done a number of projects using the process as it shows how the project labor, issues, etc. have been deployed in the various stages of the process.

The options for data are listed at the bottom of the report. Click any items of interest and press "Update Report." All data rows are labeled.

Note: Experience data is not created until the signoff is posted to the project profile by the Maintain Dashboards agent. Normally this occurs on the night following the approval of the signoff. Hence, it is possible to have signoffs that appear in the Usage report that do not yet appear in the experience report.

Delete

The delete action first checks to see if the process is in use. If it is, it cannot be deleted. If there are no projects using this process, you will be redirected to the delete form or action.

Review, Note, Edit

These actions have the usual meaning.

Advanced Topics

Using multiple processes

A project can adopt any number of processes. These run in parallel, but can interact through the use of a common signoffs. There is often good reason to use multiple processes.

Many organizations have several processes to which a project must comply. For example, there may be a management process which is primarily concerned with budget approvals. Then there is a quality organization that want to signoff at various points of design and testing. Then there may be a regulatory compliance organization that has its one set of approvals.

Rather than creating one very complicated process, you can simply adopt a management process, a quality process and a regulatory process like a Chinese menu. Within each process there are various requirements and dependencies. The process tracking and charting system will integrate the processes into a single list of required activities for the project manager to perform.

Creating more complex processes.

If 10 required signoffs are not enough, you can simply divide your process into several definitions. Make the first signoff in the second definition dependent upon the completion of the last signoff in the first definition , etc. Then adopt all of the processes onto the project. The result can be a very elaborate process. This is made possible because signoffs are global so that they can be used on more than one process definition. There is really no limit to the possible structure.

If you will have several projects that need this complexity, it is best to adopt the processes at the program level, that way the entire set will be adopted automatically on each project without any work on the part of the project manager.

Linking signoffs with project milestones.

A project planner (or template designer) who knows that his project will be subject to a process may choose to integrate some or all of the process steps into the project workplan. In this way, the planner can coordinate tasks with the process requirements and assign individuals to prepare the required documents and reviews that will be needed to ensure smooth operation.

This feature also allows the project leader complete control over the dates of signoff requirements, rather than being subject to the rather arbitrary calculated dates that based upon the overall project schedule and what may be good or bad assumptions made by the process designer.

The process (signoff requirements) and the schedule (assignments) are linked using key events with document requirements that use a special syntax so that they can be recognized as signoff requirements.

Linking a milestone task (key event) with a process signoff is very easy. All you have to do is to make the signoff a required document for the task. In the documents required field, enter the phrase "signoff(signoff name)". Or, in the MS Project Notes field, enter ::signoff(signoff name)

e.g. ***signoff(gate 1)***

Note the word "signoff" and the parentheses are mandatory and the text inside the parentheses must exactly match the name of a signoff definition document.

There is a system process (implemented by the MaintainDashboards agent) that looks for assignments that contain these special "signoff()" requirements. When one of these is found, the system first checks that the name of the signoff corresponds to an existing signoff definition. If it does not, it sends an email to the project leader explaining that there is either a misspelled reference or a missing signoff definition.

Assuming that the signoff() references a valid signoff definition, the system modifies the assignment document in several ways.

1. It sets the Timesheet Option to "Exclude". This prevents this task from being reported on via a timesheet.
2. It writes a detailed message into the comments field of the assignment telling the user that this assignment is linked with a process step and that its status cannot be changed directly.
3. 3.It periodically checks the project profile to see if the signoff has been obtained. If it is, it marks the assignment as complete. The assignments dates are set to the approved date of the signoff. If the signoff has for some reason been removed, the assignment is returned to an unstarted state.

Whenever the process calendar, Gantt Chart, or process condition is evaluated, the scheduled dates of the key event will be used as the forecast dates for the signoff. If the schedule is recalculated, changes to the key event dates will apply to the process schedule.