The Ericsson's Approach to Software Improvements

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In 1993 Ericsson Corporate initiated the ESSI (Ericsson Systems Software Initiative), to achieve breakthrough improvements in software developments. CMM has been selected as a framework for these improvements. An infrastructure across the corporation has been put in place to allow for the CMM to be used as a strategic tool for improvements of software processes. CMM assessments are carried out across the Ericsson Design Centres on regular intervals to set baselines and measure the improvements progress.

Ericsson Australia's software improvement program is being carried out in the form of a project. A baseline was defined in Feb'95 through the CMM assessment. The assessment team comprised of members of the Ericsson Design Centres in Brazil, Mexico, USA, Holland, Sweden and Australia.

The project, called SWIFT (Software Improvement For System Design and Engineering Division), is run according to standard Ericsson project methodology - PROPS - with defined project Milestones and Tollgates. The project Steering Committee is the management team of the System Design and Engineering Division. The Steering Committee approves the direction of the project, makes a business decision at Tollgates and is informed of the progress on a regular basis.

Most important aspects of the improvement project:
- visibility of the project to the organisation (the highest priority aspect)
- well communicated approach to improvements (especially that it is unlike ISO9001)
- clear understanding of the purpose and goal
- clearly defined roles within the project
- well communicated expectations and impact to the business operation
- CMM interpretation

Ericsson Australia intends to use the Ericsson improvement cycle PDCA (Plan, Do, Check, Act) as a main improvement methodology. Upon conclusion of the SWIFT, the next improvement methodology will be defined and carried out.