

COSA

COSA BPM Suite

Roadmap

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Date: June 2009

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Preface

This roadmap represents the current state of planning for further development of our **COSA BPM** product line. It enables customers to make a reliable planning of their release usage of the software **COSA BPM**. Modifications due to customer requirements and market requirements may lead to changes in planning. Therefore, this document cannot be considered as a **COSA BPM** datasheet.

Note that this is a living document and decisions made by the **BPS-Solutions** product management influence the contents. Please, refer to the most recent version of this document for the current state of planning.

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1 COSA BPM Suite 6.0

1.1 Technology

Enterprise applications like BPM and DMS must run 24 hours a day and seven days a week. In other words, stability and availability are strong market requirements. Another important aspect is that such applications must be able to grow at the same rate as the number of users or business cases. In this respect, scalability must be guaranteed. Other requirements are workload distribution on multiple servers, integration capability and distributed transaction support.

To meet these requirements, the appropriate technology must be chosen. J2EE-based application servers offer those features. Application servers are a platform to run Enterprise Java Beans (EJB) that stick to the J2EE specification.

The J2EE technology is at least as stable as native programs can perform, as fast as native code and offers strong improvements in integration and development effort. With a Web service access, the BPMS service is independent of the operating system and programming environment, for example a Microsoft .NET client can access the engine as well.

The COSA Server 6.0 will be based on this component architecture and is no longer a stand-alone component. COSA BPM 6.0 will benefit from the features offered by J2EE-based application servers. COSA BPM will be the first BPM and DMS product based on this state-of-the-art technology.

1.2 Link of business processes and context

Additionally there are some extensions to existing functionality derived from a new concept. BPM related objects like process definitions and process instances have some similarities with DMS related objects. I.e. both object types have attributes, both have access rights, both have some kind of content and both have relations to other objects. The COSA BPM Suite offers an equivalent handling of these business objects, i.e. the possibility to search for processes as known from DMS retrieval as well as linking one object to another despite of its origin and type. All in all, another step forward towards more convenience.

The COSA Designer (formerly COSA Process Designer) is an established component for business process analysis and business process modeling. As modeling of process related data is getting more and more important, the COSA Designer allows users to define complex data structures and to specify all document management related settings, such as object types, object type specific indexing attributes, object relations, permissions etc. Links to dossiers or documents are supported when modeling processes, thus providing a close integration. So the COSA Designer is not just an easy-to-use BPM definition tool but a content definition module, too.

The defined objects can be deployed as usual directly from the COSA Designer to the COSA Server. And this deployment directly impacts all connected clients.

⇒ affected components	COSA Designer
	COSA Server
	COSA Context Handler

1.3 System Administration

Administration data have been spread over multiple configuration files and database tables in the past. These settings will be re-centralized. I.e. COSA BPM configuration data will be collected in the database.

Administrators expect a console that fits into the infrastructure of application servers. For this purpose, COSA BPM Suite will contain an administration API. This API enhances an optimized control and audit of modifications.

The administration will be based on JMX technology, i.e. it can be integrated with existing management consoles, like SNMP-based tools or the JBoss management console.

➡ affected components	COSA System Administration
	COSA Server

2 COSA BPM Suite 6.1

2.1 Business Process Modeling Notation

The Business Process Modeling Notation (BPMN) has become a standard accepted by business users as well as by industry. The COSA Designer, yet providing BPMN 1.0 compliant process design capabilities will be extended to cover the complete BPMN 1.1 standard. Supporting BPMN 1.1 goes along with switching the process definition storage format to XPDL 2.1.

➔ affected components	COSA Designer
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2.2 Web Services

The web service API provided by the COSA Server will be extended to cover complete functionality.

➔ affected components	COSA Server
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2.3 HTML user interface

The COSA Context Handler as the out-of-the-box user interface offers rich functionality. It is available as a Java applet (running in a browser) respectively as a Java application. However, more and more customers expect a HTML user interface using state-of-the-art AJAX technology.

The next-generation Context Handler will be provided in two different alternatives: as a Java application/applet and as a HTML rich client with reduced functionality.

➔ affected components	COSA Context Handler
	COSA Control Station

3 COSA BPM Suite 6.2

3.1 Process metrics

Business Activity Monitoring (BAM) is one of the major disciplines within business process management. To meet the expectations the Control Station will be extended by BAM functionality. This embedded BAM will be able to retrieve and display data based on individual key performance indicators defined in the COSA Designer.

➔ affected components	COSA Designer
	COSA Control Station
	COSA Server

3.2 Access rights for process models

Process maps and process definitions are assigned to responsible roles by defining a process manager. Changing one process model will be allowed for employees in the corresponding process manager role.

The publishing component COSA Viewer will even be more restrictive: within a process definition the Process Viewer only shows swimlanes referring to the user's roles. All other swimlanes are collapsed.

➔ affected components	COSA Designer
	COSA Viewer
	COSA Server

3.3 Microsoft Outlook embedded user interface

Groupware systems like Microsoft Outlook seem to be the only applications still running as fat clients, whereas all other systems should offer their user interfaces in a browser. And these groupware systems are running all day on users' desktop allowing immediate notification and in-time reaction on whatever appears there (emails, appointments, tasks).

Business Process Management systems also require fast reactions on certain workitems. Therefore users' worklists are shown as tasks in Microsoft Outlook using a COSA BPM Outlook plug-in. This plug-in is available since many years, but will be re-designed to take the COSA BPM content respectively context approach into account. I.e. the COSA BPM Outlook plug-in will not just display workitems but the complete process specific context.

➔ affected components	COSA Outlook Plug-In
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4 COSA BPM Suite 6.3

4.1 Collaboration

Customers respectively users have the choice to use either structured or ad-hoc processes. Both types of processes assign workitems to certain roles. I.e. one role or – to be more concrete – one member of the role executes the step to complete it and continue in the process.

This COSA BPM release will account for collaboration, i.e. the aspect of numerous people doing different things to complete a step.

➔ affected components	COSA Designer COSA Server
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4.2 Filing plan

Many organizations store their files according to a filing plan. Organizations in the public administration must even store their files this way. With COSA BPM Suite customers can setup such a filing plan since many years. However, with this release a generic build-in filing plan will become part of the product. This new features not only helps to setup a structured hierarchy of files and documents but allows automatic creation of file numbers and life cycle information (e.g. retention period).

➔ affected components	COSA Designer COSA Context Handler COSA Server
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4.3 Business Rules

Business rules are very important in business process management as they control processes. COSA BPM Suite has an embedded rules engine, which is proven and stable. However, the rules editor, which is part of the COSA Designer, will be re-worked to make it more convenient for business users.

➔ affected components	COSA Designer
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5 COSA BPM Suite 7.0

5.1 Business Process Execution Language

The COSA BPM Suite is known for its outstanding capabilities in supporting human-to-human processes as well as human-to-system as well as system-to-system processes. Especially for the system-to-system aspect of processes the Business Process Execution Language (BPEL) has become as standard, especially for orchestrating web services in service oriented architectures (SOA). This BPEL standard will be supported by this COSA BPM Suite release.

➔ affected components	COSA Designer
	COSA Server

5.2 Extended standardized interfaces

In the past COSA BPM always emphasized the use of standards. The commitment to standards is not only valid but will even be extended. The J2EE community has agreed on certain topic spanning interfaces. These interfaces are described in a multitude of Java Specification Requests (JSR). Some of these JSRs will be implemented by the COSA BPM Suite.

The COSA BPM relevant interfaces are:

- Content Repositories or Document Management (JSR170 and JSR 283)
- Rules Engine (JSR 94)
- Process Definitions (JSR 207)
- Performance Management (JSR 285)

These implementations will not replace the existing API but will become additional interfaces.

➔ affected components	COSA Server
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6 COSA BPM Suite 7.1

6.1 Best practices

Process maps with numerous detailed process definitions usually are not stable forever. Changes in the quantity structures of processes (due to a changing market situation) and personnel situation (due to employee turnover) can lead to the situation that certain processes need adaptations – or better optimization – to improve the process metrics.

COSA BPMS has recorded the complete process execution including manual overrides by Control Station users. This collected data is the basis to analyze weaknesses and to provide proposals for optimized process models, which are presented in the Designer. The responsible process manager has to accept the adaptations.

➔ affected components	COSA Designer
	COSA Server

7 Release Plan

The release strategy for the COSA BPM Suite product is to have one minor release every eight to ten months.

Minor releases have a focus on usability improvements compared to the preceding major releases (problem fixes, platform support, and local changes with none or little migration risks). Major releases are planned every two to three years and contain major functional improvements that may also affect interfaces.

Product release	Status
COSA BPM Suite 6.0	pending
COSA BPM Suite 6.1	pending
COSA BPM Suite 6.2	pending
COSA BPM Suite 6.3	pending
COSA BPM Suite 7.0	pending
COSA BPM Suite 7.1	pending



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