

The SEI's Agile in Government team has been assisting the Federal Government in adopting Agile and lean principles and methods since 2009. Our body of knowledge is based on our research in adapting best commercial practices in the Agile and lean arena for use in navigating the highly regulated government environment. The greatest hurdle to government adoption is knowledge and culture.

Our Agile in government team offers expert coaching and mentoring that leverages our years of research and experience working with dozens of defense and Federal programs. Our coaches understand that each program will face a unique set of challenges, and will tailor coaching activities to the specific program environment. Agile adoption coaching and mentoring can take many forms and address a variety of needs discussed in our coaching framework.

SEI has an extensive toolkit to help the government learn about Agile and lean concepts, and to navigate the cultural changes inherent in Agile adoption. Our toolkit includes:

- Readiness assessment
- Risk assessment
- Tailored training
- Embedded advisors
- Agile methods coaching
- Devising workable hybrid options
- Program start-up workshops



The Carnegie Mellon University Software Engineering Institute (CMU SEI) serves the nation as a Federally Funded Research and Development Center (FFRDC) sponsored by the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) and based at Carnegie Mellon University.

Providing Agile and Lean Capabilities for the Federal Government

Agile Adoption Coaching

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Agile Adoption Coaching Framework



Building and sustaining sponsorship

This coaching category helps the organization obtain and sustain the cascading sponsorship needed for the implementation that is envisioned. Agile-specific aspects of this include the coach having deep knowledge and experience in the types of issues that are likely to occur in the organization's setting and an ability to communicate effectively with leadership about those.



Setting and measuring against realistic goals

An Agile coach knows that one of the keys to a successful adoption is to understand the organization's current context and to help the organization set appropriate intermediate and long term goals for the adoption. They also help the organization to determine the appropriate progress measures.



Developing and sustaining Agile/Lean adoption support infrastructure

Every major organizational change involves the establishment and sustainment of organizational and technical infrastructure. An Agile coach will help the organization identify the types of infrastructure necessary for the scope of Agile implementation envisioned. The coach will also

provide consulting and insight into different ways to implement the needed infrastructure with awareness and understanding of the constraints that are present in the organization.



Defining/describing enterprise and local Agile/Lean practices

There are many ways to implement Agile principles, so having relevant descriptions of the practices that have been chosen for the organization's implementation is important in most organizational settings. "Relevant" in this context may take many forms — tutorials, process descriptions, templates and checklists for supporting different activities, etc. Agile coaches can help an organization make choices about how to best serve the needs of the practitioners.



Deploying (new and improved) practices

In this area, Agile coaches provide organizations with advice on different approaches to planning and executing an Agile adoption, based on their knowledge and skills in analyzing adoption risks, providing suggestions for mitigating those risks, and constructing and executing adoption plans that account for the organization's context.



Determining adoption progress

Beyond planning and supporting execution, an Agile coach provides the organization with different kinds of progress information – things like the burn down of adoption risks, the diffusion (breadth) and infusion (depth) of the adoption, and progress toward the established success measures.



Agile/Lean-specific coaching

In addition to coaching the adoption aspects of an Agile adoption, Agile coaches provide education, advice, and workshops on the relevant concepts, techniques, and practices that are relevant to the particular Agile approach selected by the organization. A coach does not "do" the new practices for the practitioners in the organization, although they may demonstrate techniques to support the practitioners' learning.

(Note that SEI's FFRDC status prohibits us from competing with the commercial marketplace, so any education activities will focus on the unique government interaction aspects associated with Agile rather than the aspects of Agile skills and knowledge commonly available from the commercial marketplace.)