Washington State Administrative Office of the Courts

Superior Court Case Management System (SC-CMS)

SC-CMS Project Governance Plan V1.8

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1. Introduction

The project governance is comprised of the management model, decision making process, and organization put into place to govern interaction between the project and the various stakeholders that are ultimately affected by the project'. Governance is the act of affecting through policy the strategy and direction of an organization or project. In general, governance comprises the traditions, institutions, and processes that determine how authority is exercised, how stakeholders are given a voice, and how decisions are made on issues of concern to the project.

1.1 Project Background

In September 2010, The Superior Court Judges' Association (SJCA), Washington State Association of County Clerks (WSACC), and the Association of Washington Superior Court Administrators (AWSCA) jointly requested that the Judicial Information System Committee (JISC) provide a modern case management system that enhances their ability to:

- Efficiently direct and monitor court case progress.
- Schedule case events.
- Enforce court business rules.
- View case plans/schedules, status, progress, and case party information.
- Communicate court schedules and orders.
- Maintain the existing functionality for county clerks while leveraging new technology to offer efficiencies not available in a 34-year-old case management system.

In November 2010, AOC contracted with MTG Management Consultants, LLC (MTG) to conduct a feasibility study with guidance from an Executive Sponsor Committee consisting of superior court judges, county clerks, and court administrators. After reviewing four alternatives, the Executive Sponsor Committee supported MTG's recommendation to acquire a centrally hosted, commercial off-the-shelf (COTS) case management system for superior courts.

In September 2011, the JISC accepted the recommendation from the Feasibility Study and authorized the development of a Request for Proposal (RFP) to obtain a new superior court case management system COTS solution on the condition that it meet the business requirements of superior courts in all 39 Washington counties. In December 2011, after multiple on-site court visits by AOC and six full-day sessions with stakeholders, the JISC received a signed letter from each of the association presidents affirming that the documented business requirements met the needs of all the superior courts in Washington State. The RFP to acquire a new COTS case management system for the superior courts was developed in 2012.

On June 22, 2012, the JISC decided to release the RFP to the vendor community.

1.2 Overview

The remainder of this section describes and defines the project governance model, decision making process, and corresponding roles and responsibilities established for the project. It additionally provides an organization chart that helps to communicate how stakeholder groups, such as the JISC, Project Steering Committee, Project Sponsors and Project Team are integrated into the overall project organization and the way in which communication between these stakeholder groups and the project is handled.

Several elements of project management drive the overall project governance model and decision making process. These elements are captured and defined in the Project Management Plans that are developed during the initial phase of the project. Specific information as it relates to the project governance and the roles and responsibilities associated with the deliverables management, issue

management, risks management, and change control management process are documented as shown in Exhibit 1-1 below.

Exhibit 1-1: Related Documentation

Deliverable
SC-CMS Deliverables Management Plan
SC-CMS Risk Management Plan
SC-CMS Issue Management Plan
SC-CMS Change Management Plan

Each of these components of the Project Management Plan represents a process that interacts with project governance. For example, a change in scope that is in the change control process would require a decision at the appropriate governance level. Likewise if there is an issue around resources, the SC-CMS project team would attempt to resolve the issue through the AOC project sponsor path. If a decision could not be made at that level it would escalate to the project steering committee.

2. Scope

The scope of this document is to establish a process for the timely making of decisions that impact the project. The following items are within the scope of this document:

- Define the decision making groups.
- The tolerance level that each decision making group will be allowed to make decisions.
- The way decisions are escalated from one decision making group to the next level decision making group.
- How decisions are documented and communicated.

The following items are not within the scope of this document:

- The people that are included in each decision making group.
- The method of decision making within each decision making group (unanimity, consensus, appeal, etc).

3. Assumptions and Constraints

This document is based on a list of assumptions and constraints as follows:

- Decisions will be made in a timely manner at the lowest level possible.
- Executive Sponsors and/or Project Sponsors will facilitate timely decision making at the Steering Committee and the JISC level.
- The Court User Work Group will be empowered with the authority to make decisions that impact business processes within the courts at the level identified in Exhibit 5-2: Escalation Tolerances.

4. Project Management Model

Exhibit 4-1 depicts the high-level project management model upon which the project governance documented in this section is founded. This model drives the governance framework within which the project management processes are conducted.

Exhibit 4-1: Project Management Model

The governance dimension is often among the key determinants of a project's success or failure. Project governance is most effective when stakeholders are clearly identified, communication processes are consistent, transparent, and well documented, and decision processes have clear and well-accepted owners who are well informed and empowered to make timely decisions. Such an effective governance structure makes it possible for project management to focus on delivery. In contrast, deficiencies in the governance structure can impede or undermine even the best project management processes, by delaying critical decisions, precipitating frequent or drastic changes in direction, and diverting excessive project management attention from internal processes and deliverables ("managing down") to external reporting and communications ("managing up").

5. Project Governance Model

The project governance model is designed to make decisions at the lowest level possible for the decision being made. For instance many decisions that do not materially impact scope, schedule, budget or business processes will be made at the project level. These decisions would not change the overall timeframe of the project or significant project milestones.

Decisions that are made at the next level would be those with greater impact. For example a decision that would not materially affect scope, schedule or budget but would have an impact on the business process flow in the courts would be made by the Court User Work Group (CUWG). The CUWG would need to make decisions in this area that are within the tolerances identified in Exhibit 5-2: Escalation Tolerances.

Likewise, the AOC Project Sponsors are empowered to make decisions that have an impact on scope, schedule and budget. Project sponsors will be empowered to make decisions that fall within the tolerances identified in Exhibit 5-2: Escalation Tolerances. The project sponsors are also empowered to make decisions on expanding scope. For example, if there is an item that is currently in scope and an item that is wanted that is not in scope that falls within the scope tolerances identified in Exhibit 5-2: Escalation Tolerances, the decision should be made at the project sponsor level. Executive Sponsors play the valuable role in the governance model. The role is one of providing support to the steering committee and the project sponsors in the decision making process.

Items that are outside the tolerances established in Exhibit 5-2: Escalation Tolerances will escalate to the project steering committee. These are generally decisions that significantly alter the scope, schedule, budget or business process. In addition to these types of decisions, the steering committee will be notified in the event a decision needs to be made that has reached a decision due date but no decision has yet been made. The steering committee is empowered to make every decision without any further escalation with the exception of the currently established go/no go decisions that will be made by the JISC. Decisions will be documented and reported to JISC. The Steering Committee, the AOC Project Sponsors and the Executive Sponsors at their own discretion may choose to escalate a decision to the JISC. In any case where a decision is escalated to the JISC it will be communicated to the steering committee in advance. No other entity in the decision process has this authority.

Exhibit 5-1: Project Governance Model

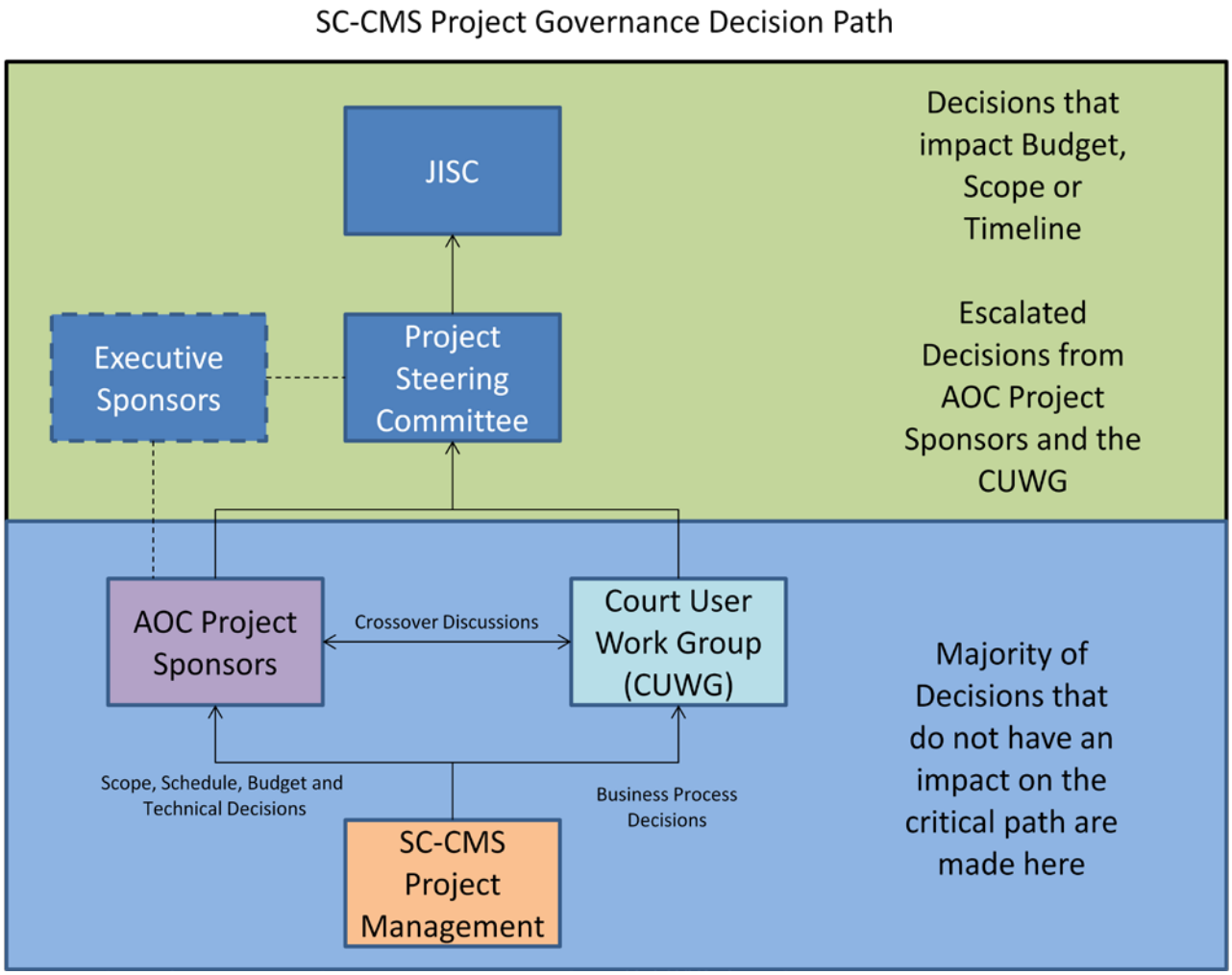


Exhibit 5-2: Escalation Tolerances

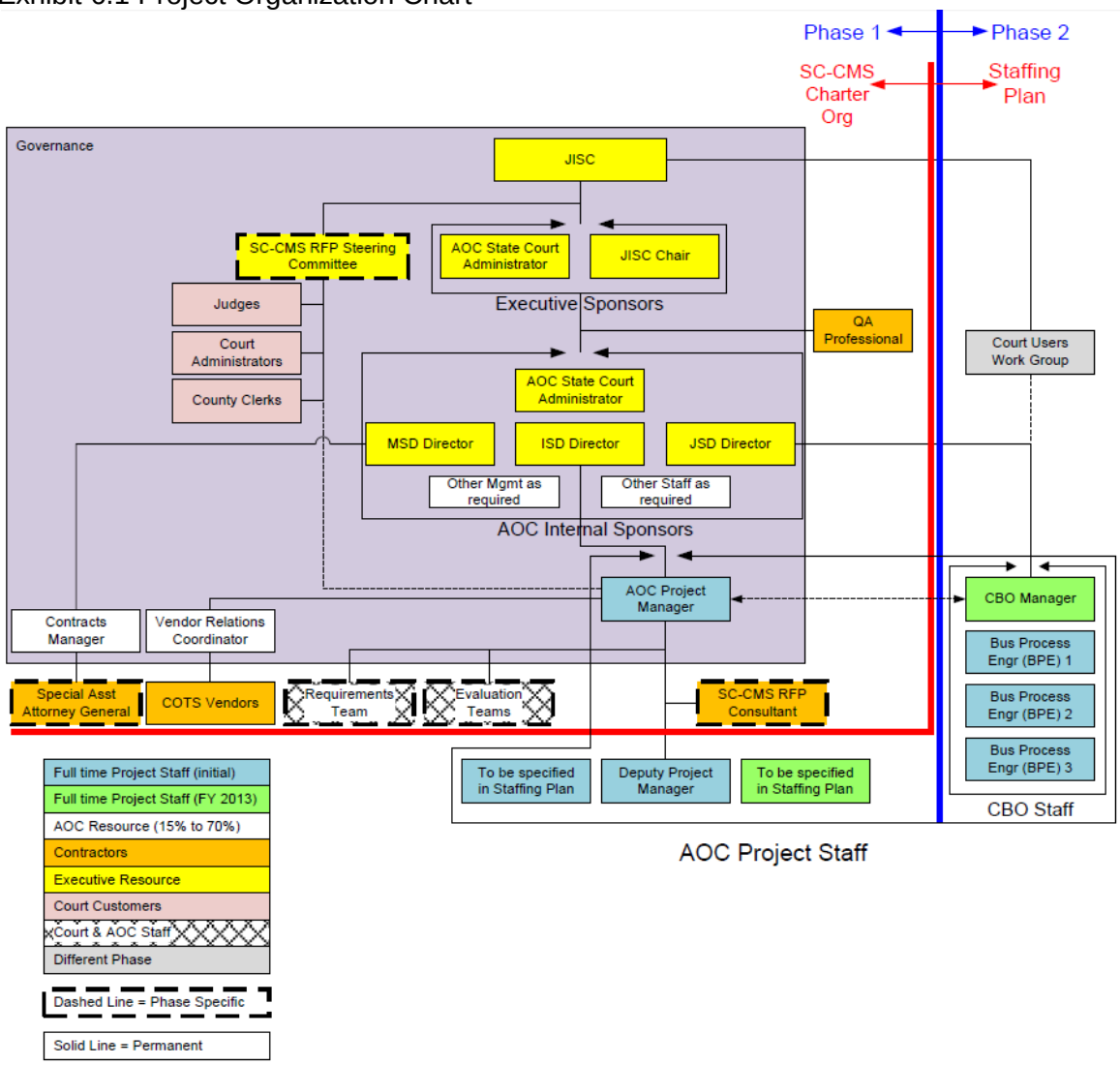
SC-CMS Project Team	**Tolerance Before Escalation to AOC Project Sponsors or CUWG**
Scope, Schedule and/or Budget Decisions	The SC-CMS project management team has the authority to make changes in scope, schedule and/or budget that do not have an impact on the critical path and/or resource availability.
Business Process Decisions	The SC-CMS project management team will defer all decisions around business process to the Court User Work Group (CUWG).
Court User Work Group (CUWG)	**Tolerance Before Escalation to Project Steering Committee**
Scope, Schedule and/or Budget Decisions	The CUWG will defer all decisions that impact scope, schedule and/or budget to the SC-CMS Project Team.
Business Process Decisions	The CUWG will make decisions on court business processes that impact each of the represented organizations (SCJA, AWSCA, WSACC, AOC). For example, if there is a decision to be made that only impacts the County Clerks, the CUWG will have the authority to make that decision. However, before that decision is made it is expected that the County Clerk representatives on the CUWG will have a process to communicate, examine the issue, and get the buy-in or approval from the County Clerks Association. The same process is expected from the judges, and the court administrators. If a decision needs to be made that impacts more than one of the represented organizations and unanimity and/or consent cannot be reached at the CUWG, the decision will be escalated to the SC-CMS Project Steering Committee. It is anticipated that the decisions that fall into the escalated category may have an impact on policy.
AOC Project Sponsors	**Tolerance Before Escalation to Project Steering Committee**
Scope, Schedule and/or Budget Decisions	Decisions that impact the budget by over $50,000.00 in a given quarter will escalated to the Project Steering Committee. Decisions that impact the completion of a major milestone or milestones by more than three weeks in a given quarter will escalated to the Project Steering Committee. Increases and/or tradeoffs in scope that do not have an impact on schedule or budget will be made at the project sponsor level or below and will not be escalated to the project steering committee.
Business Process Decisions	The Project Sponsors will defer all business process decisions to the CUWG unless the decision has a material impact on scope, schedule or budget. If a decision made by the CUWG has an impact in one of these areas the decision will be escalated to the Project Steering Committee.

6. Project Organization Chart

This organization chart shows the various project stakeholder organizations and what the relationships are to the project. It is important to note that the Project Team includes the Court Business Office (CBO). This will ensure that the CBO is included in decisions that are made at the project level. Having the CBO within the project scope ensures business decisions that affect the court are routed to the CUWG for decision making. Likewise, the project team communication path to the AOC Project Sponsors will ensure that decisions around scope, schedule, budget and internal AOC enterprise decisions are communicated through the AOC Project Sponsors.

It is also important to note that all decisions will be taken to the Steering Committee by the project manager prior to being raised to the level of the JISC.

Exhibit 6.1 Project Organization Chart



7. Roles and Responsibilities

This section lays out the roles and responsibilities of the various project stakeholder groups that are involved in the decision making process. Included in this list are groups that are decision makers and groups that support decisions.

Each of these areas are identified in the Project Organization Chart in Exhibit 6.1 Project Organization Chart. Those roles that are decision makers are also shown in Exhibit 5.1 Project Governance Decision Path.

Exhibit 7.1 Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Responsibilities
JISC	▪ Provide input into the decision making process. ▪ Make decisions around the go/no-go decision points built into the project phases. ▪ Resolves issues that have been brought to them by the steering committee, the executive sponsors or the project sponsors.
Project Steering Committee	▪ Provide input into the decision making process where appropriate. ▪ Make decisions that significanty impact scope, schedule, budget or business process. ▪ Make timely decisions on the decision points that are escalated due to the lack of decision or the inability to make a decision at a lower level where the lack of decision making will impact scope, schedule, budget or business process.
Executive Sponsors	▪ Facilitate the decision making process. ▪ Provide input into the decision making process.
Project Sponsors	▪ Make the majority of decisions that have an impact on the scope, schedule or budget for the SC-CMS project. ▪ Provide analysis to the AOC and CUWG to enable them in decision making.
AOC SC-CMS Management Advisory Team	▪ Facilitate the decision making process. ▪ Provide input into the decision making process.
Project Management Office	▪ Facilitate the decision making process. ▪ Provide input into the decision making process.
Court User Work Group	▪ Make the majority of decisions that have an impact on the court business processes. ▪ Provide analysis and documentation to the steering committee for business decision processing when the decision is deemed to be significant enough for escalation. ▪ Provide analysis and documentation to the steering committee for business decision processing when the decision cannot be reached at the CUWG level.
Quality Assurance	▪ Facilitate the decision making process. ▪ Provide input into the decision making process.
SC-CMS Project Management Team	▪ Makes decisions at the project level that do not have a material impact on the scope, schedule or budget. ▪ Manages the decision making process to facilitate timely decision making. ▪ Documents and maintains a decision log to track what and when decisions were made.

SC-CMS Project Team	▪ Make decisions at the project level that do not have a significant impact on the overall schedule or impact the completion date of significant project milestones. ▪ Provide analysis and documentation to the project sponsors and/or steering committee for business decision processing when the decision cannot be reached at the project level.

8. Decision Log

The SC-CMS Decision Log is a SharePoint custom list that is designed to capture the information around the decisions that are in the process of being made and those that have been made. This log will provide a view of where a decision is in the resolution process, when it will escalate and ultimately what decision was made, who made it and the decision effective date. This tool will provide the ability to report on issues that are nearing the decision deadline to ensure decisions are made in a timely manner. Exhibit 8-1: SC-CMS Decision Log shows the tool where decisions will be documented.

Once enough information has been collected to determine who owns the decision, the decision owner will be entered into the log. The act of entering the owner into the log will launch a SharePoint workflow that notifies the owner or owner group of the need to make a decision.

Reports will be generated on a weekly basis and discussed with the SC-CMS Project Steering Committee to address any decisions that are needed that are near or past the date needed. Reports can be generated on an ad-hoc basis if required by an individual or organization within the area of project governance.

Exhibit 8-2: SC-CMS Decision Log Attributes describes each of the attributes in the tool.

Exhibit 8-1: SC-CMS Decision Log

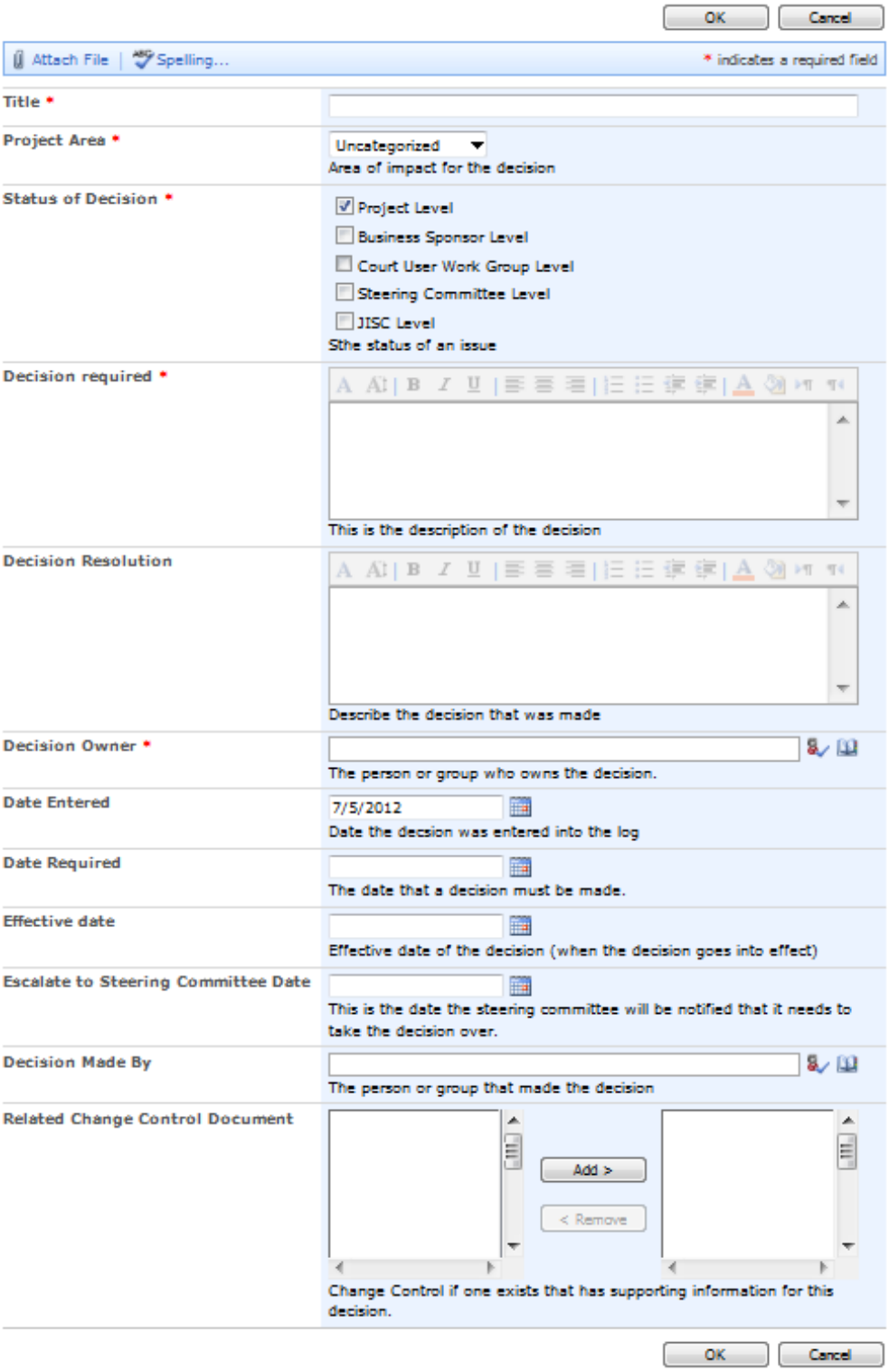


Exhibit 8-2: SC-CMS Decision Log Attributes

Attribute	Definition
Title	This is a required attribute that is a high level title associated with the decision to be made.
Project Area	This is a required attribute containing a selection list that categorizes the decision as one of Scope, Schedule, Budget or Business Process.
Status of Decision	This is a required multi-select attribute that shows what level the decision is at in the process. The multi-select allows management to know what level the decision started at and its current level within the governance escalation process.
Decision required	This is a required attribute stating what decision needs to be made.
Decision resolution	This is a non-required attribute that describes the decision that was made.
Decision owner	This is a required attribute that identifies who is reponsible for this decision. This person or organization is not necessarily the person responsible for making the decision.
Date entered	This is a defaulted attribute that identifies the date the decision log entry was made.
Date required	This is a non-required attribute that identifies the date by which the decision needs to be made.
Effective date	This a non-required attribute that represents the date that the decision made goes into effect.
Escalate to Steering Committee Date	This is a non-required attribute that represents the date that the decision will escalate to the steering committee if the decision has not been made.
Decision made by	This is a non-required attribute representing the person or organization that made the decision.
Related change control document	This is a non-required attribute that links one or more change control log entries to the decision if a change control log entries exists for the decision.