CherryRoad Oracle Cloud Implementation Methodology

CherryRoad will use our own FastTrack Cloud Implementation Methodology as a guide for the implementation of Oracle Cloud-based applications and technology at NCDPI. FastTrack embodies the experiences of over 100 person years of successful implementation expertise at CherryRoad. Offering a comprehensive methodology and support tools specifically for Oracle Cloud/SaaS software implementations, FastTrack addresses the entire implementation lifecycle, from strategic systems planning through system support.

The following diagram illustrates the major phases/tasks in the FastTrack Cloud Implementation Methodology and the key deliverables/milestones in each phase.

Description of FastTrack Implementation Methodology

The FastTrack Implementation Methodology consists of five key project phases essential for a Cloud software implementation. The major phases include:

Project Planning and Discovery

The Project Planning and Discovery phase ensures that all the facets of the project are directed towards meeting the defined goals and objectives. This includes the people, the deployed technology, and the methods and approach for completing the tasks and activities associated with the project.
As one of the first steps in this phase, a detailed Project Charter and Plan is prepared and approved by all parties. This final plan provides a schedule and resources for the project and serves as an overall guide to monitor project progress and track the completion of milestones and deliverables.

Prior to the official Project Kickoff, CherryRoad will prepare and deliver a set of Discovery Questionnaires for NCDPI to complete. These questionnaires are designed to get basic answers from NCDPI related to data, processes and business rules, and organizational considerations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. Core HR Data</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Question</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>3.1 Which of the following represents your Employment model?</td>
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<td>3.5 Of the following HR actions, which do you use?</td>
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CherryRoad will conduct a series of workshops to review the completed Discovery Questionnaires and use this information to prepare, configure, and deliver an initial Best Practices Prototype System that will be used as a baseline to design and configure NCDPI's final solution.

As part of these workshops, CherryRoad will conduct a series of overview training sessions for the NCDPI Project Team that demonstrate the initial Cloud prototype, basic navigation and processing capabilities, and the pre-configured data and workflows in the software.

**Solution Configuration and Prototype(s)**

The Solution Configuration and Prototype(s) phase is a critical component of the CherryRoad FastTrack methodology and sets the stage for all future phases of the project. This phase incorporates all of the tasks necessary to analyze and review the best practices software configuration and make necessary changes to address NCDPI's business requirements. This includes finalizing a new chart of accounts, adjusting standard workflow, and adding additional fields on transactions and screens/forms that are specific to NCDPI.

Oracle Cloud/SaaS applications include a specific tool to support rapid configuration for a SaaS/Cloud-based solution. CherryRoad will use and leverage the Oracle Functional Setup Manager to rapidly configure the Cloud applications to meet the requirements of NCDPI.

Using this productivity tool, you can implement the Oracle Cloud applications through a standard and consistent process:

- Learn about and analyze implementation requirements and steps.
- Configure Cloud applications to meet requirements.
- Get complete visibility to setup requirements and steps through guided, sequential lists, downloadable into Excel for project management and planning.
- Enter all required setup data from links available directly from the task list to user interfaces.
- Export and import data from one database instance to another for rapid setup of alternate environments for testing, training, etc.
- Validate all setups by reviewing setup data reports.
The approach to be followed for the Solution Configuration and Prototype phase consists of a set of structured analysis sessions with key users to validate new system requirements and analyze how the Cloud software applications can be tailored to meet the unique requirements of NCDPI’s business. Because the Cloud/SaaS solution database is already configured with basic public sector best practices – the analysis typically focuses on gaps and the changes and additions required to incorporate NCDPI’s specific functions and business needs. The initial Prototype system prepared in the prior phase will be used as a baseline during this analysis process.

Key activities in the Gap Analysis include:

- A review and validation of system requirements.
- Mapping of user requirements to baseline software capabilities and best practices configurations.
  - Gap Analysis
  - Re-engineering of business processes
  - Review and incorporation of industry best practices
  - Change management impacts
- Solution Designs to address gaps, new extensions, and reports.

Once the Gap Analysis is completed, the initial prototype is re-configured and updated to meet the unique requirements identified in the previous tasks. Solutions for addressing gaps in functionality are developed.

This includes setting-up and configuring a fully functioning software application with:

- Business rules
- NCDPI-specific codes and configuration options
- New or additional fields on forms/screens
- Approval rules
- Workflow and routing
- Specific validation requirements
- Typical users and security
Typical configurations to address the unique requirements of a customer’s business include the deployment and enablement of:

- **Flexfields** – Oracle Flexfields allow you to add user defined fields to your Oracle Cloud applications quickly and without coding. These customizable fields are part of the Oracle Cloud applications architecture and can be used to capture more information that is unique to a customer business models and processes. Once setup, Flexfields automatically appear on the appropriate screens and data capture. They can also be used in workflows, ad hoc reports, and for integration with external systems. Since Flexfields are a delivered component of the application, they are fully upgrade safe.

- **Tailoring Applications Look and Feel** – Oracle Cloud applications also provide the ability to tailor the look and feel of the application to suit business needs. Some of the available configurations include the ability to hide, enable, reorder, rename, and highlight the elements of the application. Oracle applications support two types of “tailoring”: one that is controlled and mandated by the organization, and one that allows individuals to “personalize” the application to their requirements. In both cases, an Oracle tool is part of the Cloud applications to make these configurations quickly and easily.

- **Workflow Configurations** – Oracle Cloud applications contain a number of built-in workflows that are based on commonly used best practices. The solution also allows users to manage workflow processes to their specific requirements. A graphical user interface is available for users to easily modify and customize workflows.

- **Personalizations** – Personalizations are used to change an individual’s view of a portal or application page. Other users are not affected by this change. Oracle Composer is a delivered tool to simplify the personalization process by displaying information in a role-based view, so that users only see components relevant to them.

Once the configuration of the Cloud applications has been completed, the final step in this phase is the preparation and demonstration of one or more Prototypes or Conference Room Pilots (CRPs). In this activity, CherryRoad creates a working CRP of a fully configured application and demonstrates the prototype to key users. This prototype is subsequently used to make refinements and changes as demonstrated in subsequent CRP activities until the entire system represents a fully working and functioning solution.

The CRPs are also useful tools for key users to gain hands-on access and “come up the learning curve” by processing real transactions and reviewing new and re-engineered business processes within the new system well before implementation.

**Solution Deployment and Testing**

In the Solution Deployment and Testing phase, all development activity needed for the new system is planned and executed. Typical development activity will include:

- Integration/interfaces
- Conversion processes
- New workflows, extensions, and reports (if any)

For Interfaces and Conversions to be developed, this phase incorporates the following key activities:

- Interface and Conversion Specifications and Design where all required interfaces and automated conversion programs are designed, and processing specification documented.
- Interface and Conversion Development where interfaces and automated conversions programs or spreadsheet templates are developed.
- Interface and Conversion Testing where interfaces and automated conversion processes are unit tested with test data.

Standard Oracle tools to support Integrations/Interfaces and Conversions for Cloud implementations include:

- **File Based and Spreadsheet Loader** – File Based Loader or Spreadsheet Loader is a powerful and efficient method of importing bulk data into Oracle Cloud applications. The upload process can be scheduled to reduce manual intervention in the integration process. In addition, File Based Loader and Spreadsheet Loader leverage the core business objects that serve as the foundation for the Cloud solution – meaning that all edits, business rules, and validation logic that an online user would be subject to also govern all data being loaded into the Cloud applications as well. Spreadsheet Loader allows business users to work with data within a familiar Excel format and upload bulk data into the system.

- **System Extract** – Outbound data can be extracted using System Extract or built-in reporting tools like Oracle Transactional Business Intelligence. System Extract consists of a set of prebuilt templates delivered by Oracle on certain defined Oracle data objects. It is ideal for complex reporting and extraction needs, such as distribution of data to third-party systems. Customers can also easily modify existing templates or create their own templates to extract virtually any data in their Cloud Service.

- **Web Services** – Web Services are utilized as a standardized way of integrating Cloud Services with other disparate application systems. These Web Services, when invoked or initiated by an event, carry out business process functions. The function of each Web Service is described in a Web Service Description Language (WSDL) file. This simple architecture ensures that users need only invoke the required Web Services and expect the correct results, without going into further complexities. Delivered Oracle Cloud Application Web Services are documented and available for review within the Oracle Enterprise Repository.

Once the development of conversion and integration processes and extended capabilities are completed, they are thoroughly tested. The CherryRoad Testing task in our FastTrack methodology covers all the tasks necessary to plan and execute all the testing necessary before production operations. Tests are conducted from both a **functional** (does it do what it is specified to do?) and a **performance** (does it adversely impact system performance, or does it meet performance requirements?) perspective.
The four kinds of tests performed are:

- **Unit Tests** – Performed on individual programs to validate the program logic.
- **System/Integration Tests** – Performed on a logical component of programs to validate the accuracy and completeness at performing the designed functions as well as testing interaction between programs and subsystems.
- **Performance Tests** – Performed on the entire system to verify the ability of the software to perform under "stress" conditions.
- **User Functional Tests** – Performed on the entire system by users and management representatives to verify system functionality and usability.

**Training and Implementation**

The CherryRoad training and change management approach is designed to help mobilize an organization for change and assess the landscape for change issues.

Under the CherryRoad Training Approach, there are four key tasks that needed to be completed for the development and execution of an effective training program.

- **Training Assessment** – where the training needs of an organization and the logistics are determined, and a Training Plan is prepared.
- **Training Development** – where standard CherryRoad Training Material is customized to reflect specific NCDPI configuration and business rules.
- **Training Delivery and Execution** – where training classes are conducted and delivered.
- **Training Evaluation** – where the effectiveness of the Training program is measured, and any remedial training needed is conducted.

The CherryRoad Training Approach is designed to provide NCDPI with the training they need to effectively use the new system in their defined roles. CherryRoad’s general philosophy is to use "customized" train-the-trainer training delivered by CherryRoad staff using custom developed training materials.

Concurrent with the execution of a training program, a variety of production preparation activities occur including:

- Establishing the production environment.
- Performing final configurations in production.
- Migrating all extensions and NCDPI-specific business objects to production.
- Establishing users and related security profiles.
- Running and validating final conversions.
- Preparing Go-Live checklists for the user organizations and validating readiness.
- Preparing a post-production support strategy.

**Production Support**

CherryRoad recognizes the importance of proving onsite support to end-users and technical staff after Live operations and our methodology specifically incorporates these activities. The goals of this phase are to make NCDPI "self-sufficient" functionally and technically in the operations and use of the new system.
To facilitate this, CherryRoad provides the following support:

- Question and answer type of support
- Help desk support
- System monitoring
- Performance tuning
- Remedial training
- Transition documentation and planning

One of the key components of this phase is the preparation of a Transition Plan document. This deliverable provides comprehensive documentation of the software status (release levels, patches applied, etc.), NCDPI-specific extensions, and project documentation (libraries where project designs and deliverables are maintained).

CherryRoad will end its implementation assistance by debriefing management on our assessment of the current status of the project and by offering recommendations, which will enhance the overall use of the system in the future.

In addition to Post Implementation Support that is provided on every project as part of the CherryRoad FastTrack Methodology, CherryRoad also offers our clients a managed services support structure and assistance beyond the first month of implementation. This initiative provides:

- As needed telephone support and assistance
- Dial-in support
- Upgrade Support – where CherryRoad provides support for the first Oracle Release after Go-Live
- Critical Events Support – where CherryRoad staff provide support to a client during the first round of critical events:
  - Fiscal Year Close
  - First 1099 Cycle
  - First Budget Cycle

**Project Management**

Project Management refers to those tasks accomplished by the management team to administer and control the overall project, manage project resources, and to track, document, and communicate project issues.

The CherryRoad Project Management approach is designed to focus on a client’s project and organizational objectives, the structures necessary for sustaining a partnership through and beyond the project, and the tracking processes needed to meet our quality, schedule, and budgetary commitments. Our Project Management approach seeks to ensure that the project is driven by NCDPI’s objectives.

Accomplishing this means more than merely checking that correct tasks are in the work plan. It means involving NCDPI in the process of scope control, design tradeoffs, and issue resolution. A fundamental requirement for the success of any project is to build a partnership environment with a single, unified Project Team. Close coordination and open communication are critical to the project and can only be achieved through a true partnership between CherryRoad and NCDPI.

The CherryRoad approach to managing project resources is open, proactive, and requires day-to-day involvement of management. This task usually involves one or more of the following activities:
• **Task Management:** Managing the team activities so as to meet project goals on schedule and within budget.

• **Risk Management:** Identifying risks, devising a strategy for mitigating them, and constantly monitoring their changing status.

• **Quality Management:** Adapting to NCDPI’s definition of quality and also complying with NCDPI standards.

• **Financial Management:** Ensuring that the project is managed according to the contract provisions.

Our Implementation Methodology is a Cloud/SaaS specific approach that is founded on the completion of deliverables/milestones. Our fixed fee projects utilize deliverables and milestones to track progress and act as a payment vehicle throughout the life of the project. Deliverables must be approved or contested within five (5) business days of deliverable submission. Milestones are considered approved when the milestone is achieved.

Deliverables/milestones are produced in each phase of a LEA implementation as seen in the following diagram.

**Change Management**

CherryRoad is intimately familiar with the performance and morale challenges that can be presented during new system implementations and upgrades. We have partnered with hundreds of clients in facilitating the organizational change management (OCM) process with executive stakeholders, front line supervisors, and end-users. Our goal has always been focused on increasing adoption and improving organizational performance as swiftly as possible before, during, and after Go-Live.
To address these challenges, CherryRoad proposes using an elegant approach aimed at one strategic goal: changing the LEA organizational behavior swiftly and effectively using industry standard OCM practices. The four major components of the CherryRoad OCM approach include:

- Change Leadership
- Change Readiness
- Change Communications
- Training

**Change Leadership**
Organizational change requires a collaborative effort across all departments and divisions but the key ingredient to successful change is leadership and governance, which includes setting goals, shaping the project path, and leading the way to a successful implementation. The CherryRoad OCM approach engages with senior leaders to build an engaging governance structure at the executive level as well as at the operational level of the organization. The purpose of this two-level governance model is to build support for the change throughout the formal and informal leadership structure of the organization. CherryRoad also collaborates with client leaders to build a change readiness network of formal and informal leaders who can coordinate events, communicate with stakeholders, and coach users through the change process.

**Readiness**
CherryRoad recognizes the chaos that can occur at the department level during an enterprise systems project. To mitigate the confusion and ensure all organizational components are progressing according to plan, we recommend the creation of a department readiness network that will ensure each department and division has the opportunity to participate in the design of the solution as well as prepare their staff for Go-Live. Whether it's adjustments to Chartfields, side system interface specifications, data conversion standards, or the completion of user training, the readiness network, managed at the project level, will ensure the entire LEA organization will be ready on Go-Live day.
Communications

As leaders across the organization develop a plan for change and marshal resources to get the work done, they also need to get the word out about why change is going to happen, who needs to prepare for the change, and how the organization will support users and stakeholders alike. This is where the CherryRoad OCM communication approach will build trust and light the path towards project goals, as well as build social and political support for the project. CherryRoad recommends the facilitation of roadshows, town hall meetings, and other events that allow users to hear directly from leaders and process experts about what is changing and why. Also, change readiness communications feature print- or web-based information that users and stakeholders can access 24x7 while also providing feedback to the project team.

Training

The CherryRoad training effort is managed as a separate track of work, but it is integrated into the OCM process as a means of facilitating and enhancing user adoption. This critical cog in the change process must feature engaging, hands-on experiences that anchor skills, knowledge, and standards so that end-users can quickly integrate these new behaviors into their daily routines. To accomplish this goal, CherryRoad will facilitate collaboration between functional and training experts to work together to create instructional strategies that ensure users know what to do, how to do it, and have a support community in place beyond Go-Live day.

The Organizational Change Management Plan – Activities, Roles, and Responsibilities

CherryRoad will develop an OCM plan during the first weeks of the project, comprised of the four components described above. These components will be integrated into the CherryRoad project plan to not only support project activities but to create a foundation of user support that will continue well beyond Go-Live. Additionally, to build the LEA ownership and expertise, CherryRoad will provide OCM guidance to LEA staff throughout the project on all OCM related activities. The following table summarizes the major OCM related activities during each stage of each project phase.

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<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>Summary of OCM Activities</th>
<th>CherryRoad</th>
<th>LEA</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Planning and Organizing</td>
<td>• Create Governance&lt;br&gt;• Complete Stakeholder Analysis&lt;br&gt;• Develop Communication Plan&lt;br&gt;• Create Readiness Network</td>
<td>Advise</td>
<td>Execute</td>
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<tr>
<td>Solution Configuration and Prototyping</td>
<td>• Facilitate Governance Meetings&lt;br&gt;• Facilitate Readiness Activities&lt;br&gt;• Execute Communications Plan&lt;br&gt;• Document Change Impacts</td>
<td>Advise</td>
<td>Execute</td>
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<tr>
<td>Solution Deployment and Testing</td>
<td>• Facilitate Governance Meetings&lt;br&gt;• Facilitate Readiness Activities&lt;br&gt;• Execute Communications Plan&lt;br&gt;• Development of Training</td>
<td>Advise</td>
<td>Execute</td>
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<tr>
<td>Training and Implementation</td>
<td>• Facilitate Governance Meetings&lt;br&gt;• Facilitate Readiness Activities&lt;br&gt;• Execute Communications Plan&lt;br&gt;• Delivery of Training</td>
<td>Advise</td>
<td>Execute</td>
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<tr>
<td>Support</td>
<td>• Facilitate Governance Meetings&lt;br&gt;• Facilitate Readiness Activities&lt;br&gt;• Execute Communications Plan</td>
<td>Advise</td>
<td>Execute</td>
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**Quality Assurance**

Provided by CherryRoad, the Quality Assurance (QA) personnel will provide an independent review of the project at pre-determined dates over the life of the project. QA personnel will document review findings and provide written communication and recommendations to both the LEA Steering Committee and the project team. The responsibilities of the QA function provided by CherryRoad will have an emphasis on a review of core business processes, procedures, and implementation implications.

The basic goals for quality management of ERP technology projects are to assure:

- Project deliverables meet their stated requirements.
- Project management processes are appropriately followed.
- Project risks are being monitored and evaluated.

While QA staff will be monitoring and reviewing Project Status Reports and Steering Committee Reports on an ongoing and routine basis, specific Quality Assurance Reviews will be conducted at key milestone points in the project. The following are some of the key project milestones that will be reviewed by the QA Team:

**Final Project Plan** – The QA team will review, assess, and present recommendations to the Steering Committee on the Final Project Plan deliverable. Specifically, the QA team will highlight key milestone dates and potential risk areas and focus on:

- Documentation standards
- Issue tracking processes and procedures
- Status and management reporting procedures

**Gap Analysis Documents Review** – The QA team will review and provide an overall system assessment of the finalized Implementation Gap Analysis (Configuration Design) documents prepared by the project team. Specific emphasis will be given to a review of:

- Business process changes
- Overall workflows
- Incorporation of best practices
- Reporting strategy

**System Prototype Review** – The QA team will obtain and assess user feedback and comments on the system prototype and make recommendations for change and enhancement, if required.

**Training and Change Management Plan** – The QA team will review the overall Training Plan and strategy and provide an assessment of:

- Communications strategy
- Overall training approach
- Training evaluation

**Risk and Issue Management**

**Risk Management**

There are numerous areas of risk associated with a typical ERP project. In this section, we have highlighted some of these risk areas and discussed approaches for how we can mitigate risk.

In summary, the scope and overall success of the project will be impacted by the following risk areas:
- **Assignment of LEA Staff** – CherryRoad has assumed a highly collaborative and interactive implementation effort where LEA staff actively participates in the effort. CherryRoad recognizes the demands placed on key LEA staff, and a key risk area associated with this project is the ability for LEA staff to be fully engaged with the implementation.

- **Trying to Do Too Much Immediately** – There is often a tendency on technology projects for users to want “everything” right away. CherryRoad believes that a measured, planned implementation strategy where core capabilities are implemented first (followed by advanced functions and capabilities) is sound and leads to successful efforts.

- **Slow Decision Making** – Another key risk area is a lack of ability to make project decisions that can impact software configuration and new system workflow and procedures. A clear, well-defined decision-making process with assigned responsibilities is critical in each of the module areas.

- **User Buy-In and Acceptance** – It is critical to project success and momentum to get early buy-in from the user community. Involvement of staff at all levels and effective communication on project status and progress are essential to mitigate this risk area.

- **Lack of Executive Sponsorship** – Another critical risk area that can impact project scope and schedule is the lack of executive sponsorship. Visibility at the highest levels of the LEA is essential as well as active and regular support and participation.

Any large project undertaking of the size, scope, and duration of the LEA’s new ERP is not without problems or risks. There can be many types of risks – technical, resource constraints, personal and organizational relationships, political considerations, and commitments, among others. However, at the lowest common denominator, virtually any problem which arises in a project such as this is often directly traceable to problems in the way the project is managed; with management being broadly defined to include the management resources and commitments brought to bear by all parties – the LEA and CherryRoad. A carefully constructed approach to ensuring that several critical risk factors are managed is a key component of our proposal.

Several such risk areas, and our approach for dealing with them, are presented in the following chart.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Potential Problem/Risk Area</th>
<th>Proposed CherryRoad Approach for Addressing Risk Area</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Lack of Overall Project Decision Making</strong></td>
<td>Throughout the project, the LEA must realize that many key decisions will ultimately impact success. These are decisions in areas such as project direction, design features, and policy issues. While CherryRoad can provide input into the decision process, delegating or abdicating on key decisions which are truly internal issues can cause numerous problems. CherryRoad will work to ensure the active participation of key personnel from various LEA organizations throughout the effort. Particular emphasis will be placed on regular, substantive meetings with a Project Steering Committee which will be a forum for making key decisions as well as reviewing project progress. CherryRoad will identify these key issues, present the LEA with options and alternatives, and work to achieve timely and effective resolutions.</td>
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<td><strong>Lack of LEA Involvement</strong></td>
<td>Failure by the LEA to actively participate in all project areas can ultimately result in the LEA not being prepared to take on responsibility for system operations. CherryRoad will include LEA staff in all areas of the project. Early on, we will tap into the designated Subject Matter Experts/Module Coordinators to help us tailor the system to the LEA requirements. Further, through newsletters, briefings, user groups, etc., we will keep LEA staff at all levels involved and apprised of project progress.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Potential Problem/Risk Area</td>
<td>Proposed CherryRoad Approach for Addressing Risk Area</td>
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<td><strong>Commitment to an Unrealistic or Overly Long Schedule</strong></td>
<td>CherryRoad will work with senior LEA management early in the project to define the phases, the specific functionality to be included, and the department rollout process. We will monitor progress closely and quickly bring potential slippage to management’s attention as well as a continuing set of back-up plans.</td>
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<td>A “rushed” implementation established to meet artificially set dates without the availability of proper resources, or the appropriate timeframe for the LEA resources to weigh options and make key decisions will inevitably result in a poorly designed and tested system.</td>
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<td><strong>Scope Creep</strong></td>
<td>Change control will be an important function throughout this project. From the earliest design sessions, we will help the LEA understand alternatives provided by the software which may not require modifications. Where possible, we will implement changes through system options so that potentially conflicting requirements of different users can be simultaneously handled.</td>
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<td>In order to ensure that the needs of all the LEA users (departments, etc.) are met and LEA-wide buy-in is achieved; numerous personnel from many organizations will participate in the analysis/design and prototyping sessions. Each group may have their own idea of “requirements.” Further, our experience shows that as user get familiar with the new system, the desire for additional enhancements often increases.</td>
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<td><strong>Staffing and Personnel Risks</strong></td>
<td>CherryRoad ensures that each key project team member has a “back-up” who can assume appropriate responsibilities if a team member departs. We strongly recommend that the LEA follow a similar approach for its key project staff.</td>
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<td>Throughout the project, there are risks that both key LEA and CherryRoad staff assigned to the project may leave or be unavailable to the project for a variety of personal reasons.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Data Conversion Risk</strong></td>
<td>CherryRoad will mitigate conversion risks in a variety of ways. First, we start the conversion design and analysis early in the project. Second, since CherryRoad has already converted numerous legacy systems to Oracle, we already have in-depth knowledge and experience to successfully undertake this conversion. We have assigned several individuals to this project that have deep Oracle software experience as well as expertise in converting to an Oracle application. Further, we will use various CherryRoad-developed utilities that seamlessly extract the necessary Oracle data and load Oracle tables using standard Cloud Interface/Integration tools.</td>
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<td>Data conversion represents a significant area of risk with a system like the LEA’s new ERP. The fact that the LEA is migrating from a “legacy” environment to a web-enabled set of technologies adds to the risk of conversion.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Getting the LEA to Give-Up Older Systems</strong></td>
<td>CherryRoad will provide numerous briefings and presentations to the user community to raise awareness of the benefits and features of the new ERP. Further, through regular newsletters, we will keep the user community involved and apprised of project progress. Lastly, we intend to prototype the new system and provide hands-on access for users early in the project so that the benefits and capabilities can be fully appreciated by all levels of users.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Often systems implementations like this are complicated by the fact that there may be user and departmental biases to the “old way of doing business” that impact the LEA’s use and acceptance of the new system.</td>
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**Issue Management**

Problem identification and resolution are important project management activities that will occur throughout the LEA’s ERP project. CherryRoad has a clear strategy and a set of software tools for dealing with the documentation and resolution of problems and issues. Our project methodology stresses the need to first search out critical issues that, until resolved, will make analysis and design decisions difficult.

Before presenting our approach to issue resolution, it is important to first define what constitutes a project issue or problem. An issue is any question that requires some amount of analysis and understanding before it can be resolved or answered. An issue is not typically a problem that can be addressed through informal methods of communication or discussion between individual team members.

In our approach, the analysis of an issue or problem is clearly documented in an issue paper to provide the decision maker(s) with all the needed information to make an informed decision.

**Documenting and Tracking Issues**

Given the importance of the issue or problem resolution process to our methodology, we track and manage issues as part of our weekly project management meetings. Numerous tools are used including:

- **Online “Issue Binder”** – Provides ready access to team members. Each open and closed issue along with the appropriate analysis is maintained.
- **Online Issue Log** – Presents a summarized view of project issues including issue number, description, impacts, status, responsibilities for resolution, and due dates.
- **Issue Papers** – Contain the detailed analysis of the issue, pros and cons, and recommendations if appropriate.

**Issue/Problem Resolution**

Our issue resolution process typically includes the following process:

- As issues and problems are identified, they are logged in the Issue Log and assigned to one or more team members for resolution.
- The issue is researched, analyzed, and documented in an Issue Paper.
- Based on the type of issue and whether it requires a decision from a client, the issue is presented and discussed in an ad hoc meeting held specifically to address the issue. Appropriate CherryRoad and client staff are present at this meeting.
- If the issue cannot be resolved by the immediate project team (e.g., significant policy issues for example) it is escalated to the Project Steering Committee who will be the ultimate decision makers.
- Once resolved, the issue is placed in a closed status on the Issue Log and all appropriate material and documentation is placed in the Issue Binder. This provides an audit trail for the decision-making process.

**Communications Management**

As leaders across the organization develop a plan for change and marshal resources to get the work done, they also need to get the word out about why change is going to happen, who needs to prepare for the change, and how the organization will support users and stakeholders alike. This is where the CherryRoad OCM communication approach will build trust and light the path towards project goals, as well as build social and political support for the project. CherryRoad recommends the facilitation of roadshows, town hall meetings, and other events that allow users to hear directly from leaders and process experts about what is changing and why. Also, change readiness communications feature print- or web-based information that users and stakeholders can access 24x7 while also providing feedback to the project team.
Resource Management

A major factor in CherryRoad’s business success is the consistency with which CherryRoad project managers lead client projects to timely completion with successful results within budget. The CherryRoad approach to project management is a fundamental reason for the success we have had in developing and implementing large-scale public sector ERP systems. Our project management approach focuses on the project and organizational objectives, the structures necessary for sustaining a partnership through and beyond the project, a proactive risk management methodology, and the tracking to meet our quality, schedule, and budgetary commitments.

The CherryRoad approach to managing project resources is open, proactive, and requires day-to-day involvement of management. This task usually involves one or more of the following activities:

- **Task and Resource Management** – Managing the team activities so as to meet project goals on-schedule and within budget.
- **Risk Management** – Identifying risks, devising a strategy for mitigating them, and constantly monitoring their changing status.
- **Quality Management** – Adapting to the client’s definition of quality and also complying with client standards.
- **Financial Management** – Ensuring that the project is managed according to the contract provisions.

Project Plan

The development of a Project Plan is one of the first management activities that will occur on the project in what CherryRoad calls the Project Planning phase. The Project Plan defines the approach, schedule, goals, responsibilities, and standards to be followed for the entire implementation effort.

This includes:

- Preparation of a Final Project and Resource Plan to serve as a blueprint for all project activities.
- Orienting the LEA’s project team to the implementation methodology.
- Organizing and locating the project team onsite.
- Reviewing and documenting project standards for deliverables, meetings, etc.
- Reviewing and documenting key project goals and how they will be achieved.
- Conducting a Management Orientation presentation for LEA managers.

CherryRoad will prepare a Final Project Plan which will identify each specific task, activity, and deliverables. The Project Gantt chart will include the key tasks to be undertaken as part of this project and will serve as the basis of this Project Plan. The Project Plan will include specific responsibilities, task assignments, deliverables, and milestone/deliverable dates.

This detailed plan will also be used to monitor project progress during the implementation. In this activity, we review the project plan on a periodic basis, usually weekly, and update it to reflect the current status of project tasks, activities, and deliverables. Changes in due dates must be reflected to present an accurate picture of when the LEA can expect to receive scheduled deliverables in order to begin their review. This activity is relatively straightforward and is designed to ensure that the plan is always accurate.
Microsoft Project will be used by CherryRoad to coordinate and track project activities, and to document and manage the project planning effort. Microsoft Project will enable the CherryRoad Project Manager to use graphical and quantitative management planning techniques in an organized and integrated manner. The tool has powerful data manipulation and reporting capabilities such as a Gantt chart, a task dependency function for critical path calculations, the ability to accurately track hours and dollars for project budgeting, as well as an automatic scheduling function.

Planned budget versus actual expenditures are supported, and a comprehensive set of standard project management reports can be easily produced with a few simple commands. Additionally, an ad hoc reporting feature enables the complete customization of project management reporting, if desired.

**Project Status Reporting**

The organization and management of project status meetings will be essential in reporting project status, identifying and resolving project issues, and reviewing major decisions and deliverables.

There are usually a variety of project status meetings held on a regular basis for projects like the LEA’s new ERP:

- **Project Team Leader Meetings (Weekly)** – At these meetings, the management team will review project progress with team leaders, identify issues or major problems, and review tasks to be accomplished over the next period. Agendas are always prepared for every meeting, and minutes are always taken. The CherryRoad Project Manager will be responsible for publishing the minutes of the meeting and the weekly project status report and ensuring that the project plan is maintained to reflect information presented in the status meeting. The typical weekly status report shows:
  - Updated project plan using Microsoft Project.
  - Narrative describing each task currently in progress using Microsoft Word.
  - Narrative describing project accomplishments for the week using Microsoft Word.
  - Narrative describing activities planned for the coming week and action items using Microsoft Word.
  - Narrative describing problems or concerns for discussion, action, resolution, and action items using Microsoft Word.
  - Narrative describing changes in personnel, organization, or resource assignments using Microsoft Word.

- **Project Status/Steering Committee Meetings (Monthly)** – The management team will meet with the LEA’s Executive Team to provide a complete status of the project on a monthly basis. At this meeting, a Project Status Report is submitted to the LEA, which provides a more formal means of ensuring a common understanding of events and activities. Each Status Report includes a brief description of work accomplished, tasks and sub-tasks planned for the next interval period, issues pending and resolved, and any problems encountered. Proposed work plan revisions and schedules, as appropriate, are submitted with the Status Report for review and approval.