

## **SUITE Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)**

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**If your question(s) was not answered here, please send your question(s) to [suite@michigan.gov](mailto:suite@michigan.gov)**

1. What is SUITE?

SUITE (State Unified Information Technology Environment) is the mechanism for implementing CMMI Level-3 in the Michigan Department of Information Technology (MDIT). The purpose of SUITE is to standardize the methodologies, procedures, training, and tools for project management and systems development lifecycle management throughout MDIT. This is being done to implement repeatable processes and conduct development activities according to Capability Maturity Model Integration (CMMI) Level 3 requirements.

2. When do I need to start using SUITE processes?

As of April 1, 2008, all new systems development, enhancement, and maintenance work entering either the SEM Initiation and Planning Stage or the SEM Requirements Definition Stage must use all implemented SUITE processes. This includes the Project Management Methodology (PMM), the Systems Engineering Methodology (SEM), and related SUITE processes. This mandate is documented in a letter from Pat Hale, Lynn Draschil, Carol Steffanni, and Palmer Giron dated December 13, 2007 with the subject "Systems Engineering Methodology (SEM) Training and Implementation."

3. I understand our large projects like BRIDGES are not using the SUITE processes. Is this true, and if so why?

This is correct. Several of MDIT's larger projects are not using all SUITE processes. However, these projects are using the State's Project Management Methodology (PMM), which is a large component of SUITE. The projects in question were well beyond the Requirements Definition Stage when SUITE usage became mandatory, and were therefore exempt from using the SEM. We are working with these large projects to institute best practice processes where appropriate, such as formal Structured Walkthroughs.

4. I see that there are two web sites to access SUITE. Which one should I be using?

Yes, there are two SUITE-related websites. One is at [www.michigan.gov/suite](http://www.michigan.gov/suite) and the other is on TechTalk (Projects -> MDIT -> SUITE). SUITE resources are co-located on the [www.michigan.gov/suite](http://www.michigan.gov/suite) website so they can be accessed by both MDIT staff and our vendor partners. The TechTalk website contains additional information on the SUITE Project, including training information and SUITE Team composition.

5. What is CMMI, and what is CMMI Level-3?

CMMI<sup>®</sup> (Capability Maturity Model<sup>®</sup> Integration) is a process improvement maturity model for the development of products and services. It consists of best practices that address development and maintenance activities that cover the product lifecycle from conception through delivery and maintenance. CMMI Level-3 is an organizational maturity level that ensures use of consistent processes across the organization. The high-level characteristics of each CMMI maturity level is as follows:

- Level 1 – **Initial**: Process unpredictable, poorly controlled, and reactive
- Level 2 – **Managed**: Process developed for projects and is often reactive

Level 3 – **Defined**: Process characterized for the organization and is proactive

Level 4 – **Quantitatively Managed**: Process measured and controlled

Level 5 – **Optimizing**: Focus is on continuous improvement

6. Why is MDIT aligning with CMMI?

CMMI is the most endorsed benchmark for IT sector process improvement.

7. Is CMMI just for Information Technology projects?

No. There are three “flavors” of CMMI. These “flavors” are referred to as “constellations,” and are:

- CMMI for Development
- CMMI for Acquisition
- CMMI for Services

MDIT has adopted the CMMI for Development constellation, which applies to all systems development efforts.

8. What CMMI level are we currently at?

MDIT is currently at CMMI Maturity Level-1, as we have not yet fulfilled the requirements for CMMI Maturity Level-2

9. When will MDIT be at CMMI Maturity Level-3?

The goal of SUITE Phase 4, which ends September 2010, is to have addressed, implemented, and begin the institutionalization all CMMI Maturity Level-2 and Level-3 processes. SUITE Phase 5, which ends September 2012, is designed to prepare MDIT for an official SCAMPI (Standard CMMI Appraisal Method for Process Improvement) appraisal.

10. What training is available to learn SUITE?

The SUITE Project Team has implemented an internal training program, meaning that all SUITE-related training is done in-house by qualified MDIT employees. The list of training opportunities can be found on the SUITE Homepage (TechTalk: Projects → MDIT → SUITE). The direct link is [Visit this page](#) periodically, as training offerings are added as needed.

11. The rest of the people in my area have already taken the SUITE Detail Training class. How do I sign up for this training?

SUITE Detail Training is usually taught by a SUITE Champion from your area. Contact the SUITE Support Team leader in your area to set up individualized training or a group training session if multiple

staff members need to be trained. If this option proves unsuccessful, send an email to [SUITETRAINING@michigan.gov](mailto:SUITETRAINING@michigan.gov) for assistance.

12. With regard to the SUITE training, can our area request this SUITE training be held at our work location?

Yes, as long as the instructor for the workshops you are requesting can accommodate the request. If you do not know who these instructors are, please send an email to [SUITETRAINING@Michigan.gov](mailto:SUITETRAINING@Michigan.gov) and request an instructor list.

13. Can our contractors receive SUITE training?

Yes, this can be done on a case-by-case basis at the discretion of the Project Manager. This decision should be based on the value-add to the project of funding contractor attendance at SUITE training sessions.

14. How do I sign up for SUITE training?

Navigate to the SUITE Team Room on TechTalk (TechTalk -> Projects -> MDIT -> SUITE) and click on the SUITE 101 Workshops link.

15. Is there a SUITE Certification similar to the PM Novice Certification?

The concept of a SUITE or SEM Certification has been on the drawing board since the initial release of the SEM. This will be a task for the Phase 4 SUITE Awareness Team.

16. Is SUITE documentation available on the web?

Yes. The main source for all SUITE documentation is [www.michigan.gov/suite](http://www.michigan.gov/suite). All SUITE documentation internal to MDIT can be found on TechTalk in the SUITE Team Room (Projects -> MDIT -> SUITE).

17. Do MDIT contractors have access to the SUITE documentation?

Yes. All published SUITE documentation can be found on the internet at [www.michigan.gov/suite](http://www.michigan.gov/suite). Contractors can also ask questions or give feedback on the SUITE processes via email at [suite@michigan.gov](mailto:suite@michigan.gov).

The requirement to use SUITE has been incorporated into the State's IT boilerplate Request For Proposal (RFP) documentation.

18. My work area has been using the same documentation forms for years. Do I really need to use the new SEM templates?

Yes, typically the majority of project documentation that you have been using for years will map to the SUITE templates. As a result of the mapping, it does not require much effort to change to using the SUITE templates.

19. Our area hired a contractor to do development for one of our systems. The contractor has their own forms/templates, which are, for the most part, generated by an automated tool. Will this suffice for SUITE/SEM documentation?

No. The SUITE/SEM documents need to be utilized. The reason for this is that when the contractor completes their work, the automated tools usually go with the contractor, too. This makes it difficult, if not impossible, for the State to maintain that documentation. The contractor needs to copy/paste the information into the SUITE templates. This ensures that all systems utilize the same documentation and processes, which is required for CMMI Level-3 compliance.

20. How do I learn more about using the SUITE templates?

Instructions on using the SUITE templates can be found in the document titled “SEM Template Instructions,” which is located on the MDIT Forms webpage.

21. If I am using PMM Express, does that mean I should be using SEM Express?

Not necessarily. PMM Express and SEM Express were not designed to be complementary, although they were designed with the same high-level concept in mind – to include the essential components of managing a project (PMM Express) and the essential components of developing/enhancing a system (SEM Express).

PMM Express can be used with the full SEM, a tailored SEM, or SEM Express, as long as the project is fairly straight forward and non-complex. SEM Express, however, should not be used when the full PMM is used, due to the complexity of the project and/or the system.

22. Can I customize the usage of SEM for my project? It seems too small for SEM and too big for SEM Express.

Sometimes. Projects that are considered medium sized projects will typically customize the SEM processes for development of the system. Guidance on customization can be found in the SEM, Chapter 2 – *Adapting the Lifecycle*.

23. What is a “touch point”?

A touch point is where an organizational area or function, outside of the systems development team needs to be engaged as part of the systems development / enhancement effort. Touch points provide a product or service needed for the system to be operational. Examples of touch points are the Office of Enterprise Security, the Enterprise Architecture Team, eMichigan, Technical Services, and MDIT Contracts.

24. How do I use SUITE on a systems maintenance effort?

When a system is to be enhanced or some aspect of the system requires a change (due to system software upgrade, server move, database management system upgrade, etc.), it is systems maintenance. A Systems Maintenance / Break Fix template is normally used to document the system change(s), as well as needed updates to the base system documentation, such as the Requirements Specification, Functional Design, or Systems Design. Refer to the *SEM Systems Maintenance Guidebook* for further guidance.

25. When do I need to do a Structured Walkthrough?

A structured walkthrough is typically performed when the team that created the deliverable(s) / document(s) to be reviewed feels that it is ready for sign-off. It is good practice for MDIT staff to informally step through the document prior to the formal walkthrough process where the client is in attendance. See the *Structured Walkthrough Process Guide* for more information.

26. Can I combine a Structured Walkthrough (SWT) and a Stage Exit in the same meeting?

Yes, providing the deliverable(s) / document(s) for the stage have already successfully been through a SWT or will go through one as part of this meeting. It is important that you are confident that the deliverable(s) / document(s) have gone through enough pre-reviews so that the result is not “Approved with No Changes” or “Approved with Revisions.” This can be a productive way to handle both processes (SWT and Stage Exit).

27. I heard someone mention in a training session something about a SUITE Companion tool. Is this a real tool and if so, how I can get access to it?

The Enterprise Architecture Group, in conjunction with the SUITE Core Team, has been working on a tool to automate the process of developing a work breakdown structure (WBS) and an MS Project schedule. These items would be based on a set of parameters including project type, project size, etc. The initiative was put on temporary hold until a permanent technical resource is assigned to the SUITE project.

28. What is a SUITE Support Team (SST)?

The main function of an SST is to coordinate SUITE initiatives in its respective Client Services Director (CSD) or equivalent area. The SST is the central point of contact for questions or issues regarding the implementation of SUITE processes. For more information on SSTs, please read the “SST Roles and Responsibilities” document and the “SST Team Roster” located in the SUITE Team Room on TechTalk (Projects → MDIT → SUITE).

29. How can I get involved with the SUITE project?

If you have the time available and have a strong desire to be involved in an enterprise-wide process development/improvement initiative, the first step is to talk with your manager. If you are not already part of a SUITE Support Team (SST), your manager might first recommend that assigning you to your area's SST.

30. What is the SEPG (Systems Engineering Process Group) and what is its function?

The SEPG is a team of people representing all areas of MDIT. This group facilitates the definition, implementation, and improvement of SUITE processes and related process assets. Providing more information on the SEPG will be a task for the Phase 4 SUITE Awareness Team.

31. How do I send in an improvement suggestion?

Currently, improvement suggestions are sent to the SUITE mailbox ([suite@michigan.gov](mailto:suite@michigan.gov)). The improvement suggestions are routed to the Systems Engineering Process Group (SEPG) where they are reviewed, prioritized and then either responded to immediately or assigned for handling. Suggestions may be assigned to an individual on the SEPG itself or to a Process Action Team (PAT), if warranted. The submitter of the suggestion is kept informed regarding the progress of the improvement suggestion, and is often consulted by the PAT to provide input into the development of a solution to the suggestion. The submitter has the option to become a part of the PAT if they are able.