Benchmarking Outsourcing Application Development Contracts using ISBSG Data

IT Confidence
September 19, 2025
H.S. van Heeringen

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Nesma: Metrics and more

In a world that is becoming more and more agile, metrics are an indispensible base for managing the essentials of your software project: quality, cost and time. Nesma provides you with valuable information about software metrics and measurements, and the way metrics support your road to successful and cost-effective software projects.

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Your starting point for successful software projects

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Unlock the Power of Nesma – Where Software Measurement Excellence Begins

At Nesma, we believe in the transformative power of software measurement. Our mission is to empower organizations worldwide with the tools, knowledge, and community support they need to excel in software measurement and improve their software development processes.

Introducing me

- >25 years experience in IT, >**20 years in software measurement and metrics.**
- **Ex-Sogeti –** 17 years – Metrics desk: FPA, metrics, estimation, benchmarking.
- **IDC Metri** – 10 years – Principal Consultant and Practice Lead IT Intelligence services.
- **ISBSG** – Immediate Past President, data collection.
- **NESMA** – President.
- **SIG ICEAA Software** – Board member.

Harold van Heeringen

52 years young.

Living in Veendam, the Netherlands.

Married, 3 children.

Passions: playing blitz chess, skiing, travelling, zwifting, mountain biking, playing padel **and software metrics!**

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Topics for today

- Benchmarking
- Metrics in agile teams
- Application Development contracts based on T&M
- (Agile) Team performance
- Measuring key metrics
- Benchmarking metrics using ISBSG data
- Output-based contracting
- Q&A

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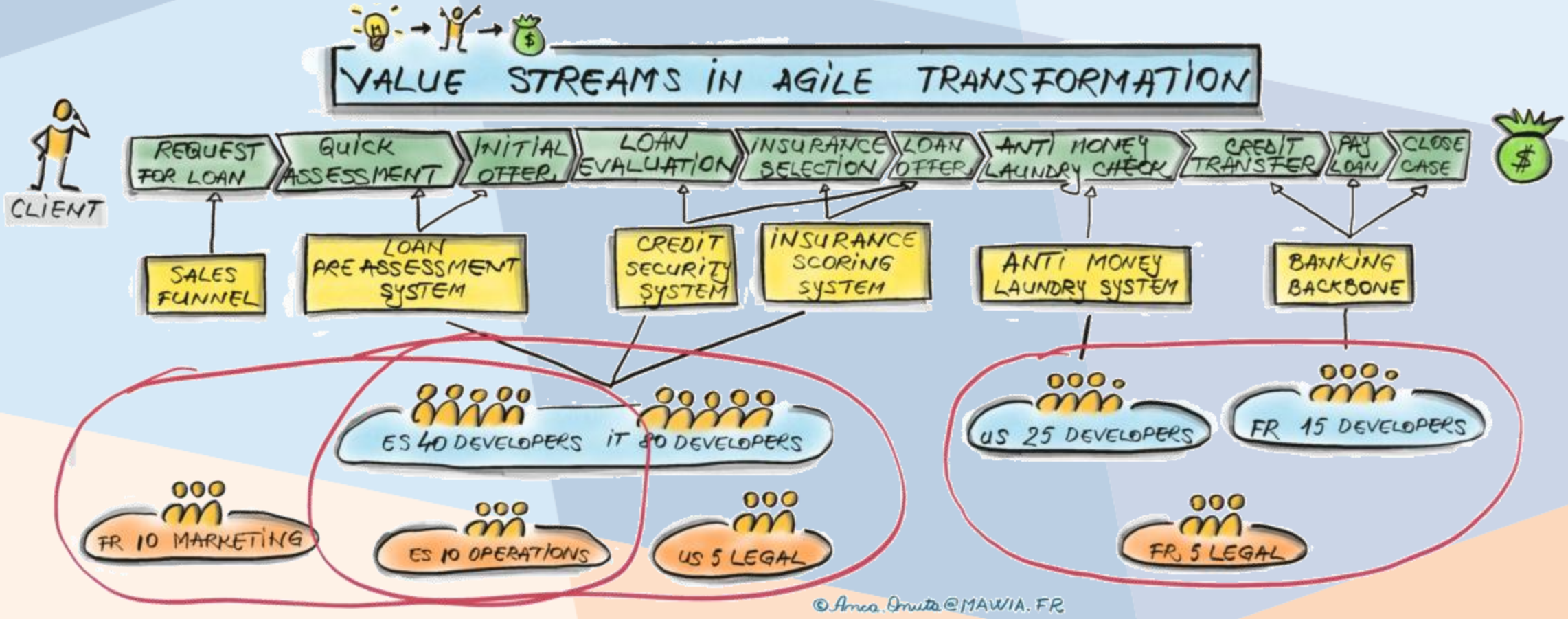
Agile Teams Deliver Business Value



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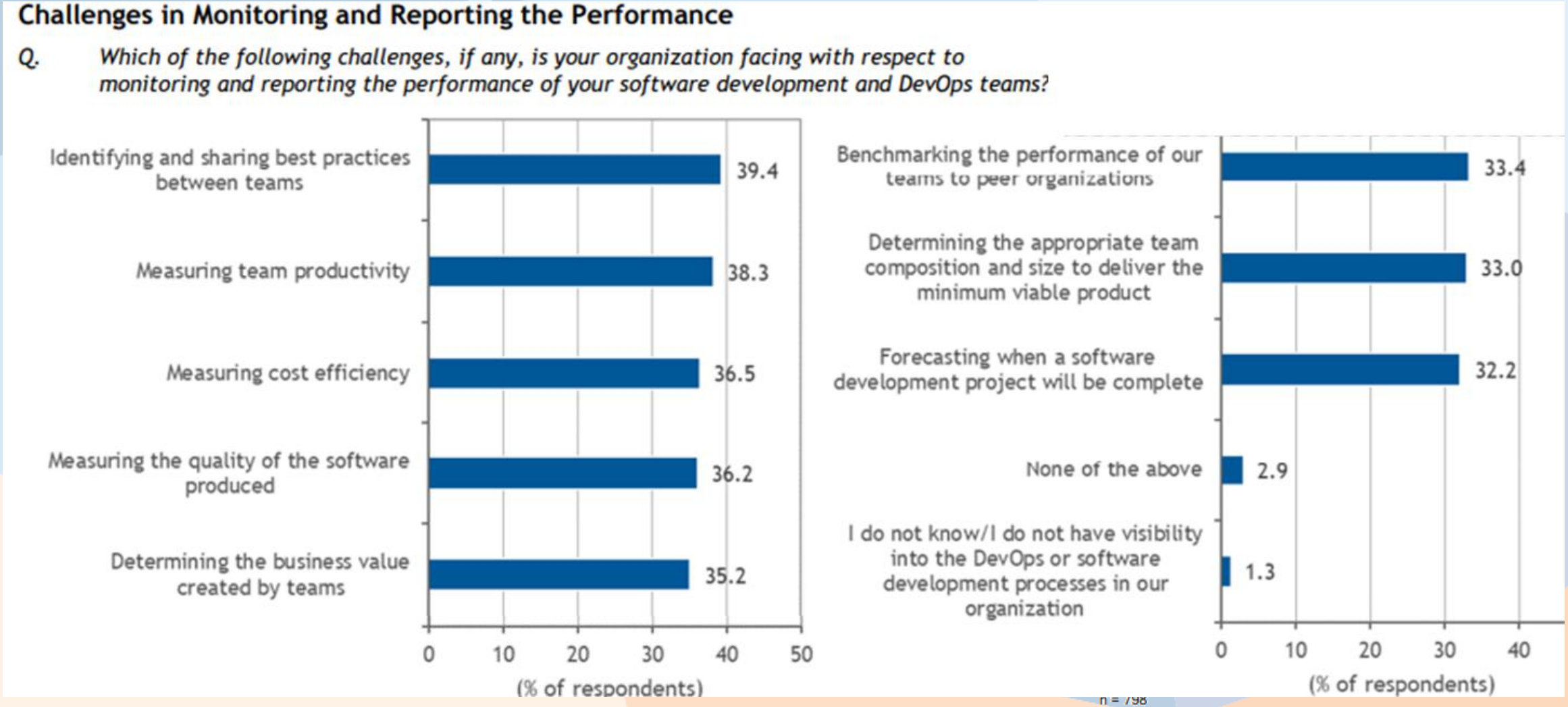
The CIO challenge



Source: IDC's *Future Enterprise Resiliency and Spending Survey* wave 1, February 2022

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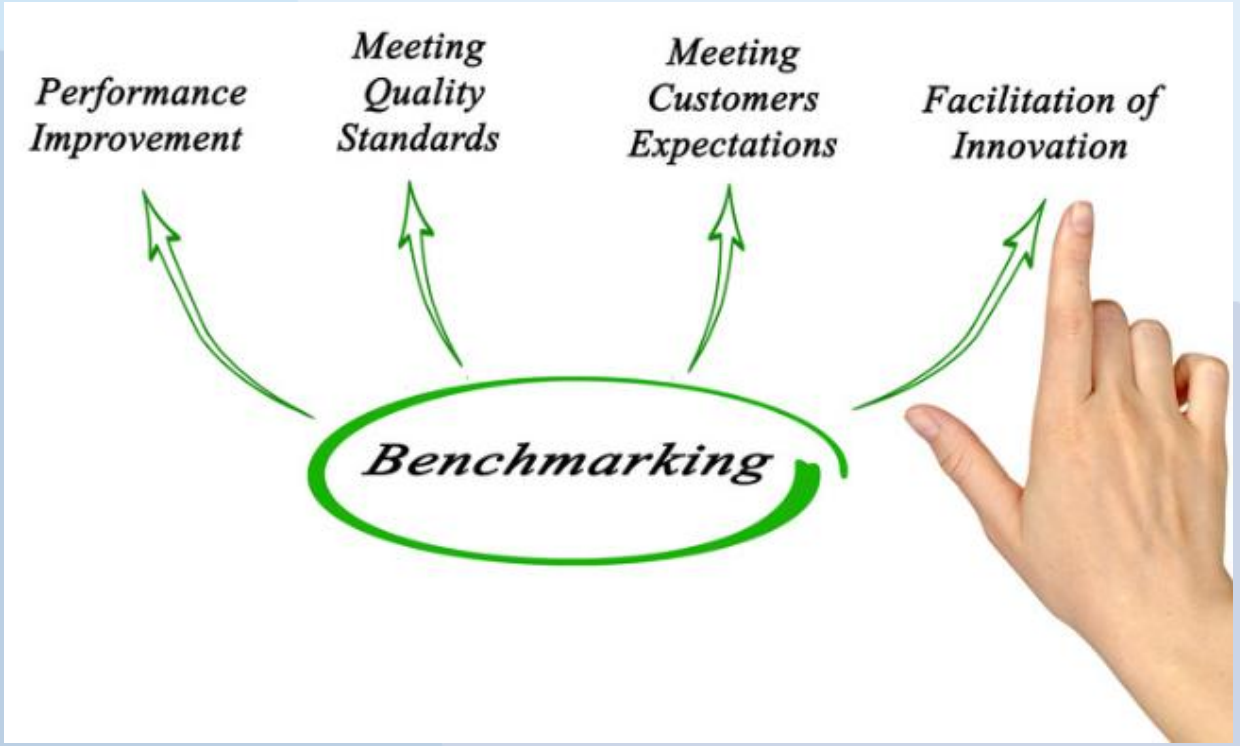
Introducing Benchmarking

Benchmarking is the practice of **comparing** your organization's processes, **performance metrics,** and strategies against those of industry leaders or similar companies. It's essentially a way to gauge your own performance by looking at how others achieve success.

The key aspects of benchmarking are:

- **Comparison:** It involves comparing your performance indicators (KPIs) against established benchmarks or the practices of leading companies in your industry.
- **Focus:** The focus can be on various aspects like efficiency, quality, cost, customer satisfaction, or even specific processes like application development or maintenance.
- **Goal:** The ultimate goal is to identify areas where you can improve your own practices, optimize resource allocation, and ultimately achieve superior performance.



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Industry – Hourly Rates (T&M)

- A typical agile team contains 7 FTE. In a 2-week sprint they typically spend 7 x 80 = 560 effort hours.
- At an average rate of $ 100, a sprint costs $ 56000.
- Industry bad practice: Hourly rates.
- Hourly Rates can be negotiated and easily benchmarked.
- However: 'If you pay peanuts, you will get monkeys'!.
- Suppliers 'don't care' about productivity, quality, etc.
- If deadlines are missed, 'we just do some more sprints'.
- Senior management have no grip on costs and value delivered!

Role	Junior (1-3 years)	Mid-Level (4-7 years)	Senior (8+ years)
Software Developer	$40 - $60	$60 - $90	$90 - $150
DevOps Engineer	$50 - $70	$70 - $100	$100 - $160
Data Analyst	$35 - $55	$55 - $80	$80 - $120
Cybersecurity Specialist	$50 - $75	$75 - $110	$110 - $180
Cloud Architect	$60 - $85	$85 - $120	$120 - $200
Network Administrator	$30 - $50	$50 - $75	$75 - $110
Project Manager (IT)	$45 - $65	$65 - $95	$95 - $140
UI/UX Designer	$35 - $55	$55 - $85	$85 - $130
Database Administrator	$40 - $60	$60 - $90	$90 - $140
Machine Learning Engineer	$55 - $80	$80 - $120	$120 - $200

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Benchmarking AD and AMS performance

Benchmarking Application Development (AD) and Application Maintenance & Support (AMS) processes.

- Up to **70% of the IT budget** is often spend on AD and AMS processes and/or services.
- However, most organizations/management lack understanding of the value for money and/or improvement potential.
- Especially organizations with external teams and/or maintenance contracts don't know if the delivered value for money is in line with market expectations.
- Current industry practices:
  - AD: Hourly rate cards, Blended rates.
  - AMS: fixed price or ticket-based pricing (incidents, problems, service requests).

Benchmarking offers many benefits:

- Understanding the value for money delivered by external teams.
- Identify areas for improvement in your development & maintenance processes.
- Compare your performance against industry leaders & similar organizations.
- Set realistic goals and targets.
- Reduce costs and enhance application quality & reliability.
- Adjust supplier contracts pricing and quality KPIs to reflect updated market pricing.
- **Output-based pricing of AD teams, using market average KPIs.**
- Stay competitive!

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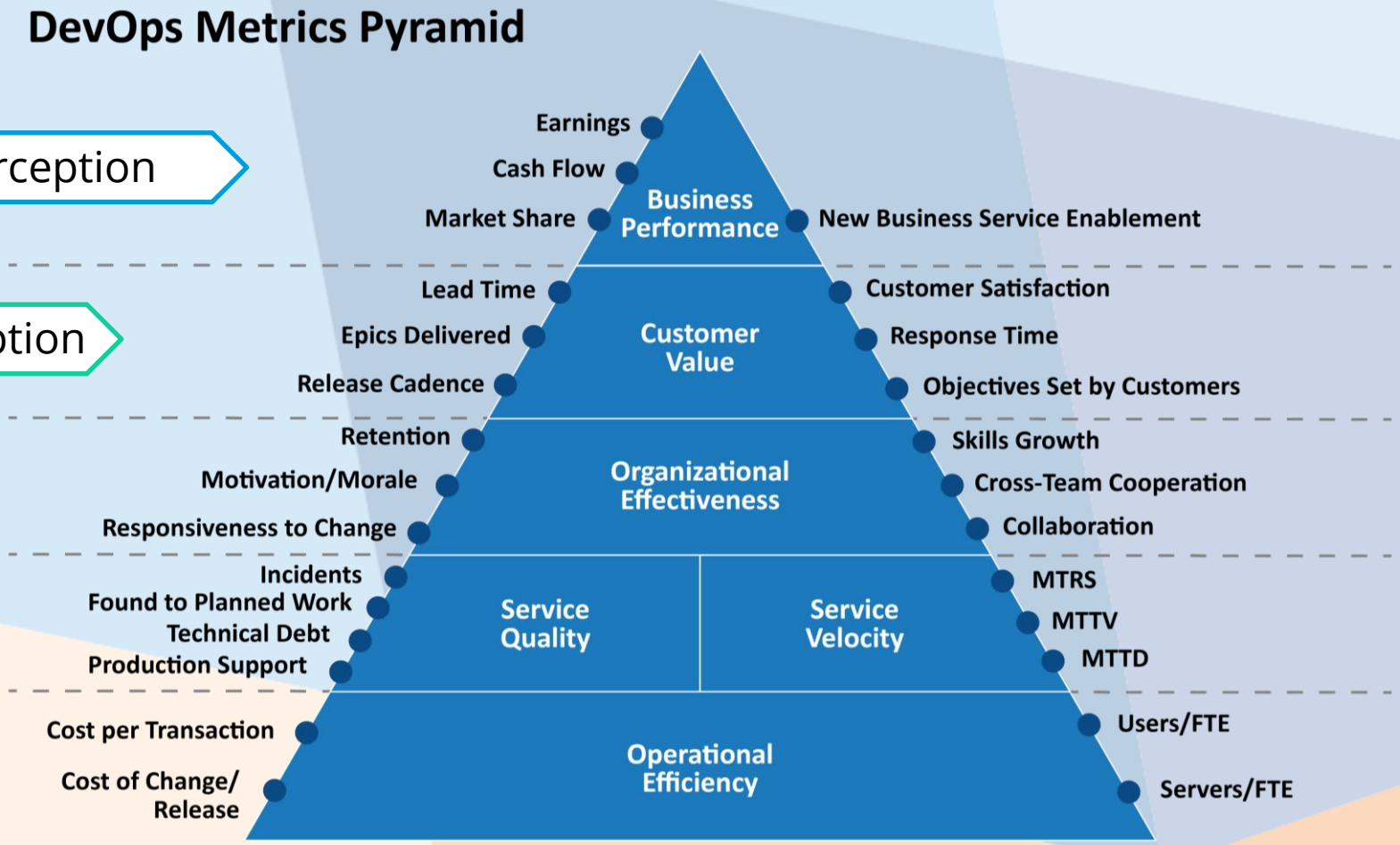
The goal is to provide business value!

Business value perception

IT Business perception



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Introducing Functional Size Measurement (FSM)

Functional Size Measurement: A consistent method to quantify the amount of requested **functionality** that an information system offers to its users. **Functionality is a good proxy for business value**. Therefore, it is important to track!

Main advantages

- Objective (ISO/IEC standard), repeatable, verifiable and therefore defensible measurement of **functionality**.
- Basis for objective metrics, independent of the technical and non-functional requirements.
- Therefore, it is possible to use functional size in **software project estimation, project control, productivity measurement, benchmarking, pricing and contracting.**
- **When prioritized well, Functionality is a good proxy for (business) value!**

Current ISO standards for Functional Size Measurement:

- **Nesma** **ISO/IEC 24570**
- IFPUG ISO/IEC 20926
- COSMIC ISO/IEC 19761
- MK II ISO/IEC 20968
- FiSMA ISO/IEC 29881

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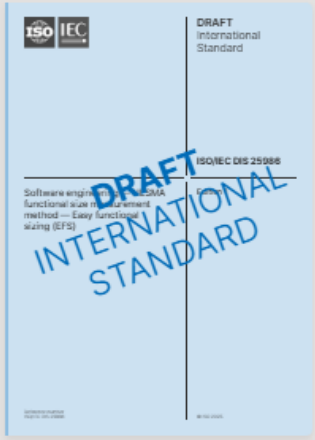
New Standard! Easy Functional Sizing – ISO/IEC 25986



Read sample

ISO/IEC DIS 25986

Software engineering — NESMA functional size measurement method — Easy functional sizing (EFS)

Under development

This Draft International Standard is in the enquiry phase with ISO members.

General information

Status : Under development
You can help develop this draft international standard by contacting your national member

Stage : DIS ballot initiated: 12 weeks [40.20]

Edition : 1

Number of pages : 16

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New Nesma Guide: Easy Functional Sizing (EFS)

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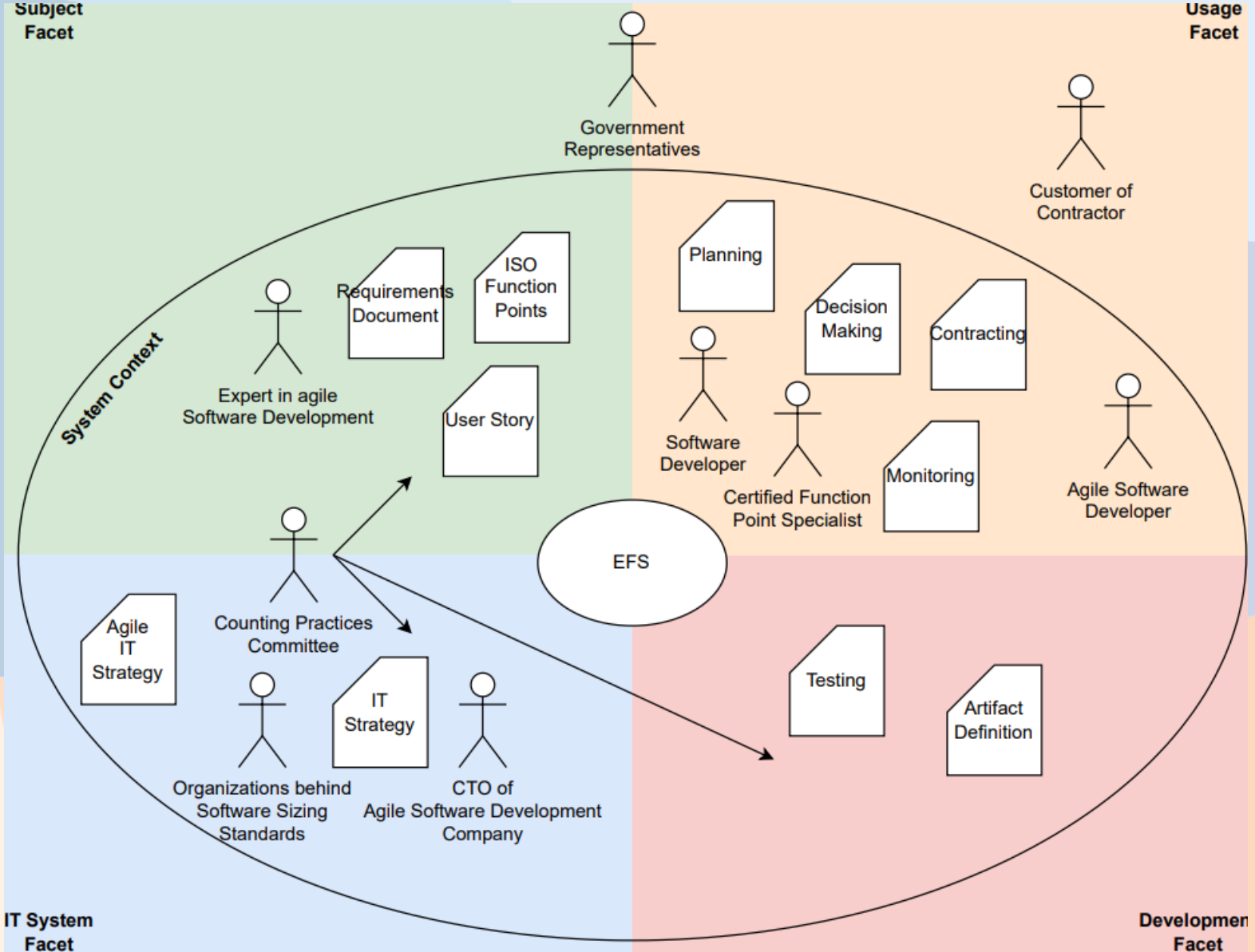
- Especially for **Agile working teams** (but others can use it as well!)
- Only Logical Files, External input and External outputs are measured!
  - Logical File: 7 FP
  - External input: 4 FP
  - External output: 5 FP
- Positioned at the heart of the Organization!



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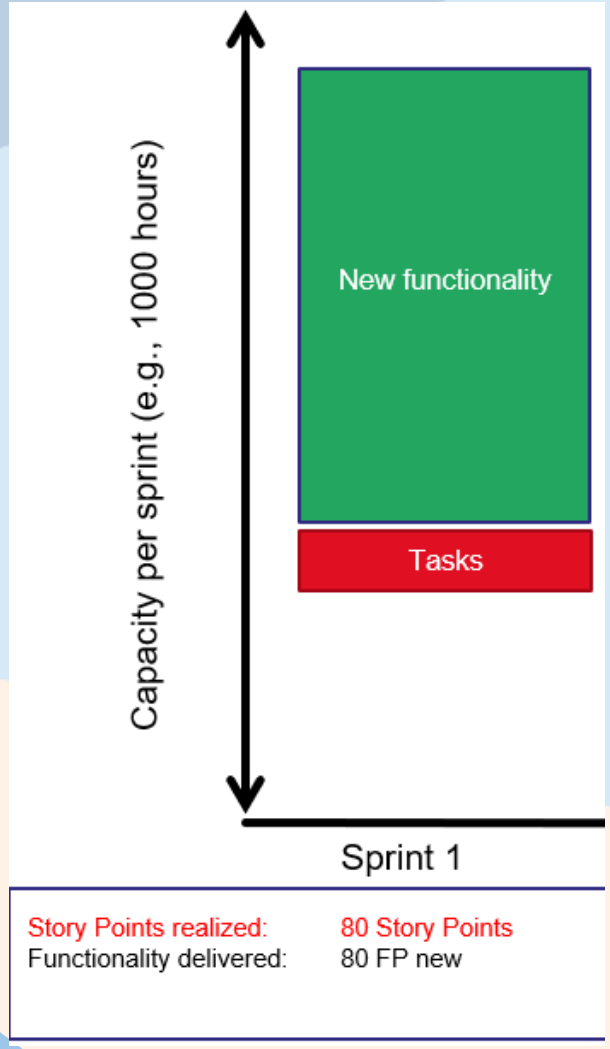
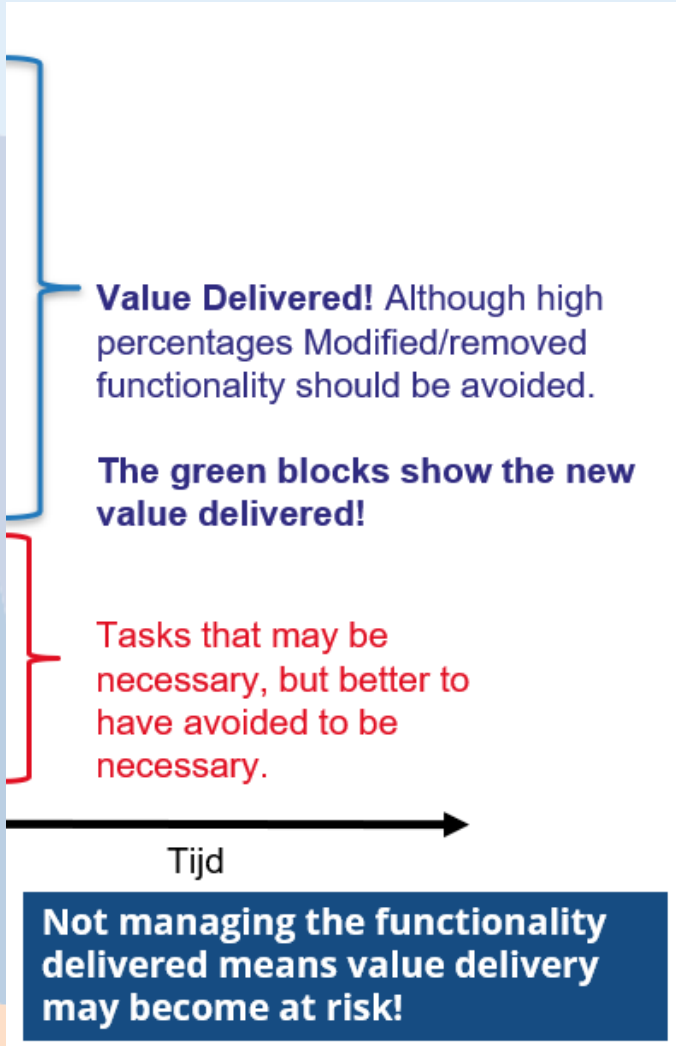
Why? Story Points guess effort, don't measure value





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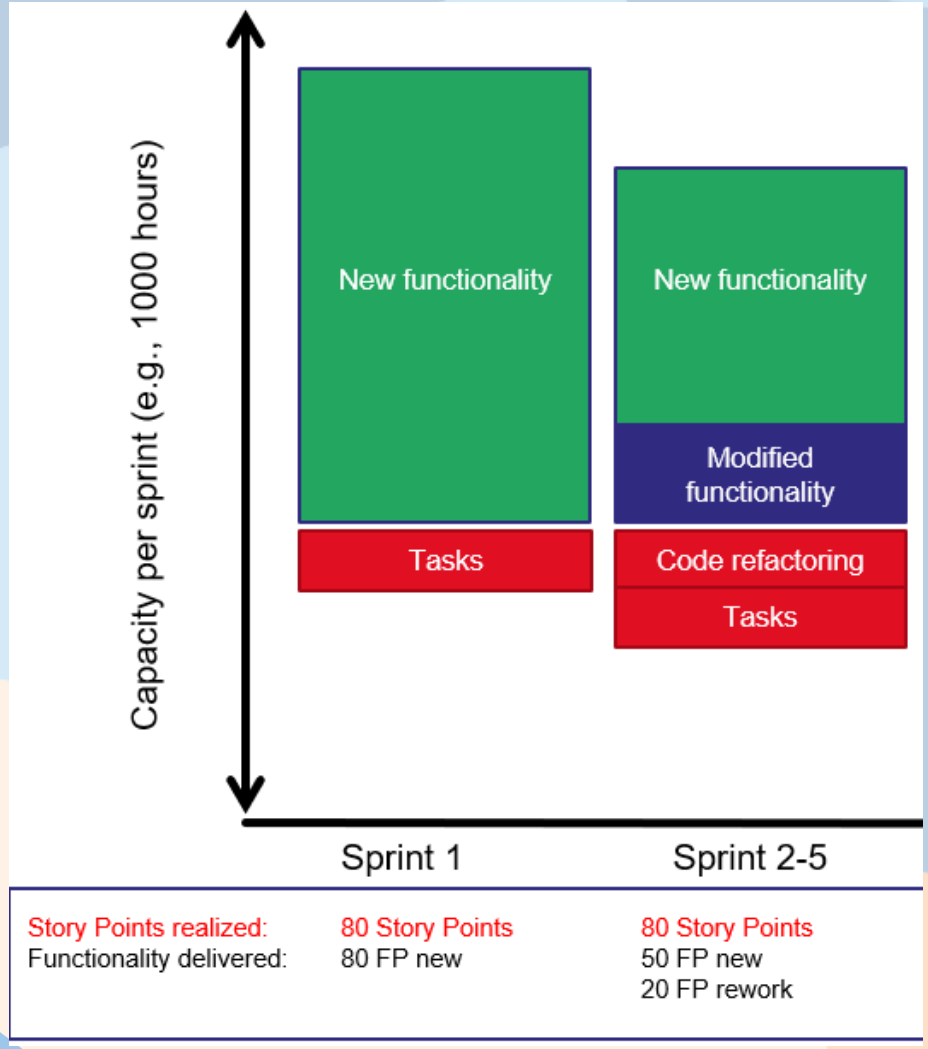

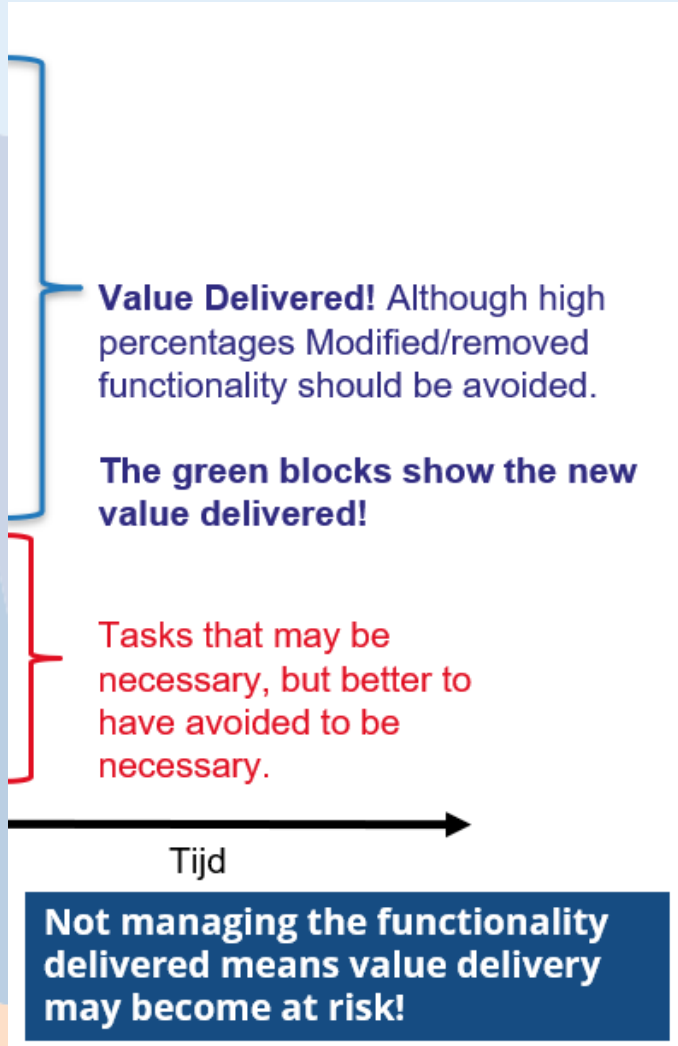

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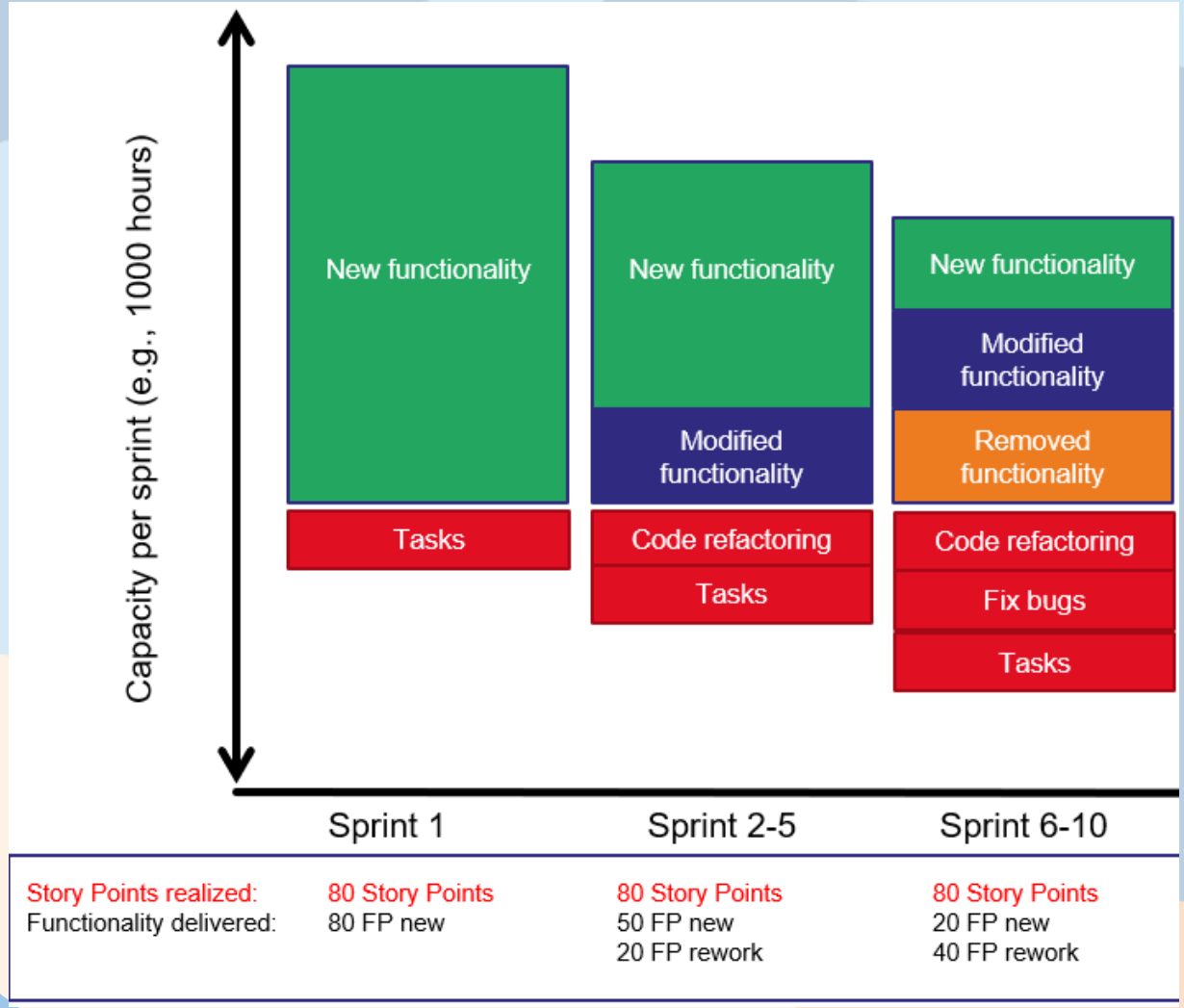

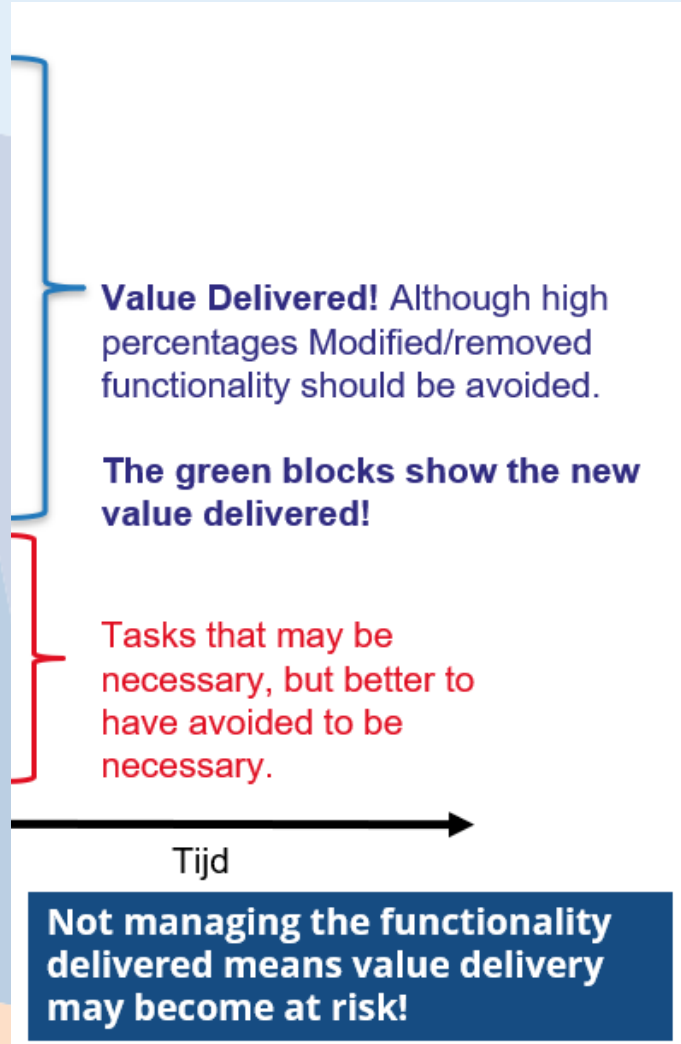

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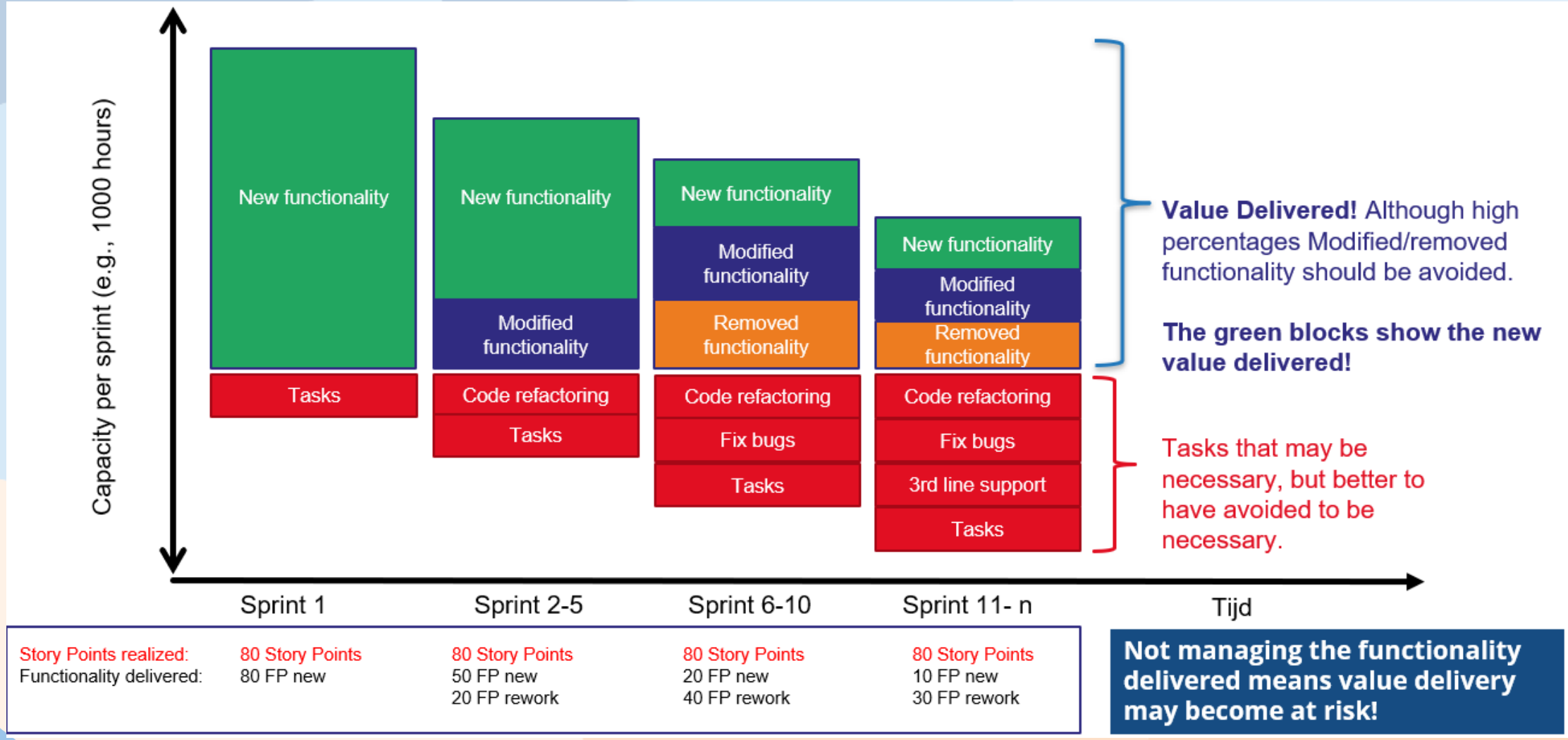

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Key team performance metrics

Objective size → **objective metrics!**

- **Project Delivery Rate (PDR)** = effort hours spent per FP, e.g., 12,3 hours/FP.
- **Cost Efficiency** = $ per FP, e.g., 792 $/FP.
- **Delivery Speed** = FP per month, e.g., 98 FP per month.
- **Process Quality** = Defects/1000 FP, e.g., 154 defects per 1000 FP.
- **Value for Money** = FP per $1000 spent, e.g., 3,5 FP/$1000

What to do with **objective metrics**:

- **Software Cost Estimation** using parametric models and historical data.
- **Project Management:** track process improvement over time.
- **Performance measurement and benchmarking:** compare teams, projects or contracts.
- **Objective management information** – to understand and to manage the value creation function!
- **Procurement:** use as KPIs in contracting external agile teams.
  - Price per FP contracts are a win-win for both parties.
  - NPR 5333 – Output-based contracting of agile teams - launched in the Netherlands

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Benchmarking

Steps in Benchmarking:

1. **Identify Metrics:** Choose relevant KPIs (e.g., Project Delivery Rate (PDR), Cost Efficiency, Delivery Speed).
2. **Collect Data:** Gather internal project data and external benchmarks from industry reports, tools, or competitor analysis.
3. **Analyze Gaps:** Compare your project's performance to benchmarks to pinpoint weaknesses.
4. **Implement Improvements:** Adjust processes, tools, or strategies based on findings.
5. **Monitor Progress:** Continuously track metrics to ensure improvements align with goals.

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Data: The Gold Standard in Software Benchmarking

The International Software Benchmarking Standards Group (ISBSG), founded in 1997, is a non-profit organization dedicated to establishing and promoting **industry standards for software development and maintenance benchmarking**. They provide a comprehensive data repository of real-world project metrics from leading organizations worldwide.

Mission: "**To improve the management of IT resources** by both business and government, through the provision and exploitation **of public repositories of software engineering knowledge** that are standardized, verified, recent and representative of current technologies"

Nesma has been a Gold Partner of ISBSG since its establishment in 1997. This long-standing partnership signifies our deep commitment to:

- **Reliable Benchmarking Data**: Nesma leverage ISBSG data to allow our members to use the most up-to-date and reliable industry data for benchmarking, estimation, outsourcing, performance measurement, research and analysis, etc. Nesma members are encouraged to submit data and receive large discounts on ISBSG data.
- **Advanced Benchmarking Expertise**: Nesma shares extensive knowledge of ISBSG data and methodologies, allowing our members to deliver insightful analyses and actionable recommendations.
- **Continuous Improvement**: Nesma actively collaborates with ISBSG to contribute to the evolution of software benchmarking standards and best practices.

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ISBSG data – example – New release 2025- September !!

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13147 rows

D&E Corporate Release September 2025 V1

PDR = hours per FP (inverse of universal concept of Productivity)

ISBSG Project ID	Rating	Rating	Software Age	Major Grouping	Major Grouping	Major Grouping	Major Grouping	Major Grouping	Major Grouping	Major Gro	Sizing	Sizing	Effort	Productivity
	Data Quality Rating	UFP rating	Year of Project	Industry Sector	Organisation Type	Application Group	Application Type	Development Type	Primary Programming Language	Count Approach	Functional Size	ative S	Normalised Work Effort Level 1	Normalised Level 1 PDR (ufp)
10031	B	A	2024	Utilities		Business Application	Transaction Processing;	Enhancement	Java	NESMA	1509	L	10493	7
10051	B	A	2021	Communication	Telecommunications;	Business application	Stock control & Order processing;	Enhancement	C	IFPUG 4+	103	M1	564	5,5
10071	B	A	2024	Construction		Business Application	Data Warehousing;	Enhancement	Java	NESMA	837	M2	5698	6,8
10089	B	A	2021	Communication	Telecommunications;	Business application	Customer Relationship management;	Enhancement	Amdocs framework	IFPUG 4+	222	M1	1684	7,6
10138	B	A	2022	Finance		Business Application	Data Warehousing;	Enhancement	ABAP	NESMA	479	M2	4766	9,9
10148	B	A	2020	Communication	Telecommunications;	Business Application	Customer relationship management;	Enhancement	Amdocs framework	IFPUG 4+	60	S	2718	45,3
10157	B	A	2023	Government		Business Application	Expert System;	Enhancement	.Net	NESMA	3147	XL	14240	4,5
10162	B	A	2024	Finance		Business Application	Management Information Systems (MIS);	Enhancement	Mendix	NESMA	990	M2	2270	2,3
10165	B	A	2020	Telecom	Telecommunications;	Business Application	Other;	Enhancement	FR-C JAVA	IFPUG 4+	71	S	1215	17,1
10185	B	A	2020	Telecom	Telecommunications;	Business Application	Other;	Enhancement	Unknown	IFPUG 4+	50	S	174	3,5
10186	B	A	2023	Communication	Telecommunications;	Business Application	Customer Management;	Enhancement	AWS	IFPUG 4+	82	S	6812	83,1
10186	B	A	2023	Communication	Telecommunications;	Business Application	Workforce Management;	Enhancement	Unknown	IFPUG 4+	74	S	379	5,1
10195	B	A	2024	Utilities		Business Application	Report Generation;	Enhancement	Java	NESMA	715	M2	8432	11,8
10197	B	A	2020	Mining		Business Application	Multimedia;	Enhancement	Oracle	NESMA	1.778	L	6824	3,8
10206	B	A	2020	Communication	Telecommunications;	Business Application	HR Management;	Enhancement	ABAP 4	IFPUG 4+	111	M1	564	5,1
10219	B	A	2024	Mining		Business Application	Report Generation;	Enhancement	.Net	NESMA	1409	L	18058	12,8
10219	B	A	2023	Communication	Telecommunications;	Business Application	Other: Online. eSales;	Enhancement	html	IFPUG 4+	345	M2	2304	6,7
10240	B	A	2024	Wholesale		Business Application	Command/Control;	Enhancement	Oracle	NESMA	1173	L	13076	11,1
10241	B	A	2024	Government		Business Application	Business Analysis Tool;	Enhancement	.Net	NESMA	1067	L	11007	10,3
10241	B	A	2023	Communication	Telecommunications;	Business Application	Customer Management;	Enhancement	iOS	IFPUG 4+	391	M2	1588	4,1
10260	B	A	2021	Telecom	Telecommunications;	Business Application	Customer Management;	Enhancement	iOS	IFPUG 4+	175	M1	2557	14,6
10262	B	A	2022	Government		Business Application	Expert System;	Enhancement	.Net	NESMA	2544	L	9612	3,8
10297	B	A	2021	Communication	Telecommunications;	Business application	Other;	Enhancement	Unknown	IFPUG 4+	88	S	641	7,3
10327	B	A	2023	Utilities		Business Application	Computer Aided Design;	Enhancement	Java	NESMA	392	M2	3518	9
10346	B	A	2020	Communication	Telecommunications;	Business Application	Customer relationship management;	Enhancement	Amdocs framework	IFPUG 4+	95	S	1146	12,1
10366	B	A	2021	Communication	Telecommunications;	Business application	Customer Management;	Enhancement	iOS	IFPUG 4+	68	S	386	5,7
10382	C	C	2023	Telecom	Telecommunications	Business application		Enhancement	Java	IFPUG SFP	180,2	M1	4608	25,6
10433	B	A	2024	Government		Business Application	Database Application;	Enhancement	Oracle	NESMA	2940	L	24711	8,4
10439	C	C	2023	Government	Government	Business application	Catalogue or register of things or events;	Re-development	C#	IFPUG SFP	113,2	M1	2270	20,1
10491	B	A	2024	Utilities		Business Application	Financial Transactions;	Enhancement	ABAP	NESMA	731	M2	7881	10,8

13000+ data points of new development and enhancement projects, releases and sprints.
253 columns with project data attributes.

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Data Analysis example

- 1 sprint of 1 agile team.
- Primary Programming Language = Java.
- EFS measurement of functionality delivered: 124 FP.
- Data collection results:

Team	Effort	%	Cost	%
Requirements	56	5%	€ 5.880	5%
Design	90	8%	€ 11.200	10%
Development	493	44%	€ 46.816	44%
Test	314	28%	€ 27.910	26%
Implementation	67	6%	€ 6.854	6%
Scrum Master	101	9%	€ 8.770	8%
Total	**1.120**	**100%**	**€ 107.430**	**100%**

Performance metric	Value	UoM
Functionality Delivered	124	FP
Defects	21	
PDR	9,0	Hours/FP
Cost Efficiency	€ 866	EUR/FP
Delivery Speed	124	FP/month

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Historical Data – select relevant data

The ISBSG repository (2023) was used to select the historical data to use:

- Data Quality Rating: A or B.
- Count Approach = Nesma FP.
- Development Methodology = Agile Development.
- Relative Size: S (30-100 FP) and M1 (100-300 FP).
- Project Year > 2021.
- Primary Programming Language = Java

This results in **39 data points**.

D&E Corporate Release September 2025 V1

ISBSG Project ID	Rating: Data Quality Rating	Rating: UFP rating	Software Age: Year of Project	Major Grouping: Industry Sector	Major Grouping: Organisation Type	Major Grouping: Application Group	Major Grouping: Application Type	Major Grouping: Development Type	Major Grouping: Primary Programming Language	Major Grouping: Count Approach	Sizing: Functional Size	Sizing: Relative S	Effort: Normalised Work Effort Level 1	Productivity: Normalised Level 1 PDR (ufp)
35238	B	A	2024	Utilities		Business Application	Workflow;	Enhancement	Java	NESMA	273	M1	2736	10
35602	B	A	2022	Government	Government;	Business application	Workflow support & management;	Enhancement	Java	IFPUG 4+	148	M1	704	4,8
35744	B	A	2024	Communication	Telecommunications;	Business Application	Integration;	Enhancement	Java	IFPUG 4+	66	S	437	6,6
36635	B	A	2024	Communication	Telecommunications;	Business Application	Integration;	Enhancement	Java	IFPUG 4+	92	S	680	7,4
38327	B	A	2024	Wholesale		Business Application	Document Management;	Enhancement	Java	NESMA	220	M1	2993	13,6
38500	B	A	2024	Communication	Telecommunications;	Business Application	Integration;	Enhancement	Java	IFPUG 4+	162	M1	1826	11,3
39053	B	A	2021	Communication	Telecommunications;	Business Application	Other;	Enhancement	JAVA	IFPUG 4+	165	M1	1264	7,7
39363	B	A	2021	Wholesale		Business application	Decision Support System;	Enhancement	Java	Nesma	225	M1	1688	7,5
41058	B	A	2021	Communication	Telecommunications;	Business Application	Other;	Enhancement	JAVA	IFPUG 4+	128,2	M1	2625	20,5
41879	B	A	2022	Government	Government;	Business application	Workflow support & management;	Enhancement	Java	IFPUG 4+	177	M1	548	3,1
44078	B	A	2023	Wholesale		Business Application	Document Management;	Enhancement	Java	NESMA	269	M1	1593	5,9
46271	B	A	2021	Communication	Telecommunications;	Business Application	Other;	Enhancement	JAVA	IFPUG 4+	280,9	M1	3858	13,7
47580	B	A	2021	Communication	Telecommunications;	Business Application	Other;	Enhancement	JAVA	IFPUG 4+	228,7	M1	2013	8,8
47831	B	A	2024	Services		Business Application	Process Control;	Enhancement	Java	NESMA	181	M1	2035	11,2
48607	B	A	2022	Government	Government;	Business application	Catalogue or register of things or events;	New development	Java	IFPUG 4+	65	S	430	6,6
49144	A	A	2021	Government	Government;	Business application	Electronic data interchange;	Enhancement	Java	IFPUG 4+	113	M1	957	8,5
49581	B	A	2024	Communication	Telecommunications;	Business Application	Other;	Enhancement	JAVA	IFPUG 4+	62	S	660	10,6
50767	B	A	2024	Communication	Telecommunications;	Business Application	Content Management	Enhancement	JAVA	IFPUG 4+	82	S	336	4,1
50787	B	A	2023	Government		Business Application	Business Intelligence;	Enhancement	Java	NESMA	175	M1	2070	11,8
50806	B	A	2022	Government	Government;	Business application	Workflow support & management;	Enhancement	Java	IFPUG 4+	112	M1	600	5,4
51276	B	A	2024	Communication	Telecommunications;	Business Application	Integration;	Enhancement	Java	IFPUG 4+	221	M1	1514	6,9
52404	B	A	2024	Services		Business Application	Multimedia;	Enhancement	Java	NESMA	286	M1	2341	8,2
52479	B	A	2023	Government		Business Application	Document Management;	Enhancement	Java	NESMA	248	M1	1957	7,9

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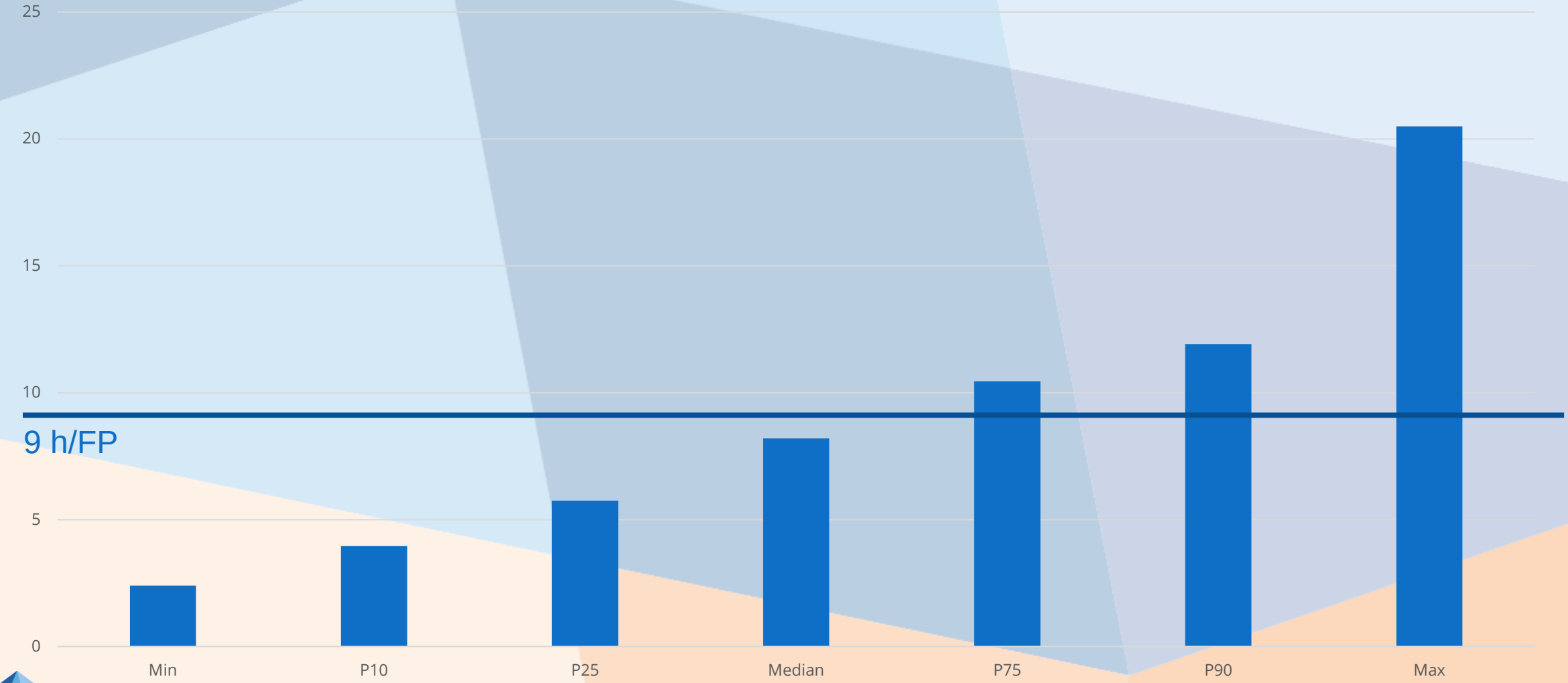
Project Delivery Rate (h/FP)



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Team Metrics based on EFP (another example)

- Project Delivery Rate: effort hours/EFP
- Cost Efficiency: Cost/EFP
- Delivery Speed: EFP/month
- Sprint Quality: Defects/ 1000 EFP

Tracking the trend brings value, but how is the performance against:

- other teams?
- the industry?

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Calculating indices based on industry data

Select a **Peer Data set** using attributes like programming language, team size, industry, application type, development method.

After determining the industry average metrics for the data set, it becomes possible to calculate the team performance against the industry average:

- Productivity Index: PDR compared to industry
- Cost Index: Cost Efficiency compared to industry
- Delivery Speed Index: Delivery Speed compared to industry
- Process Index: Sprint Quality compared to industry

By doing this for each team, understanding team performance against the industry becomes possible, identifying **high-performing and low-performing teams and vendors!**

Also, it allows the **comparison of teams and vendors** based on these indices!

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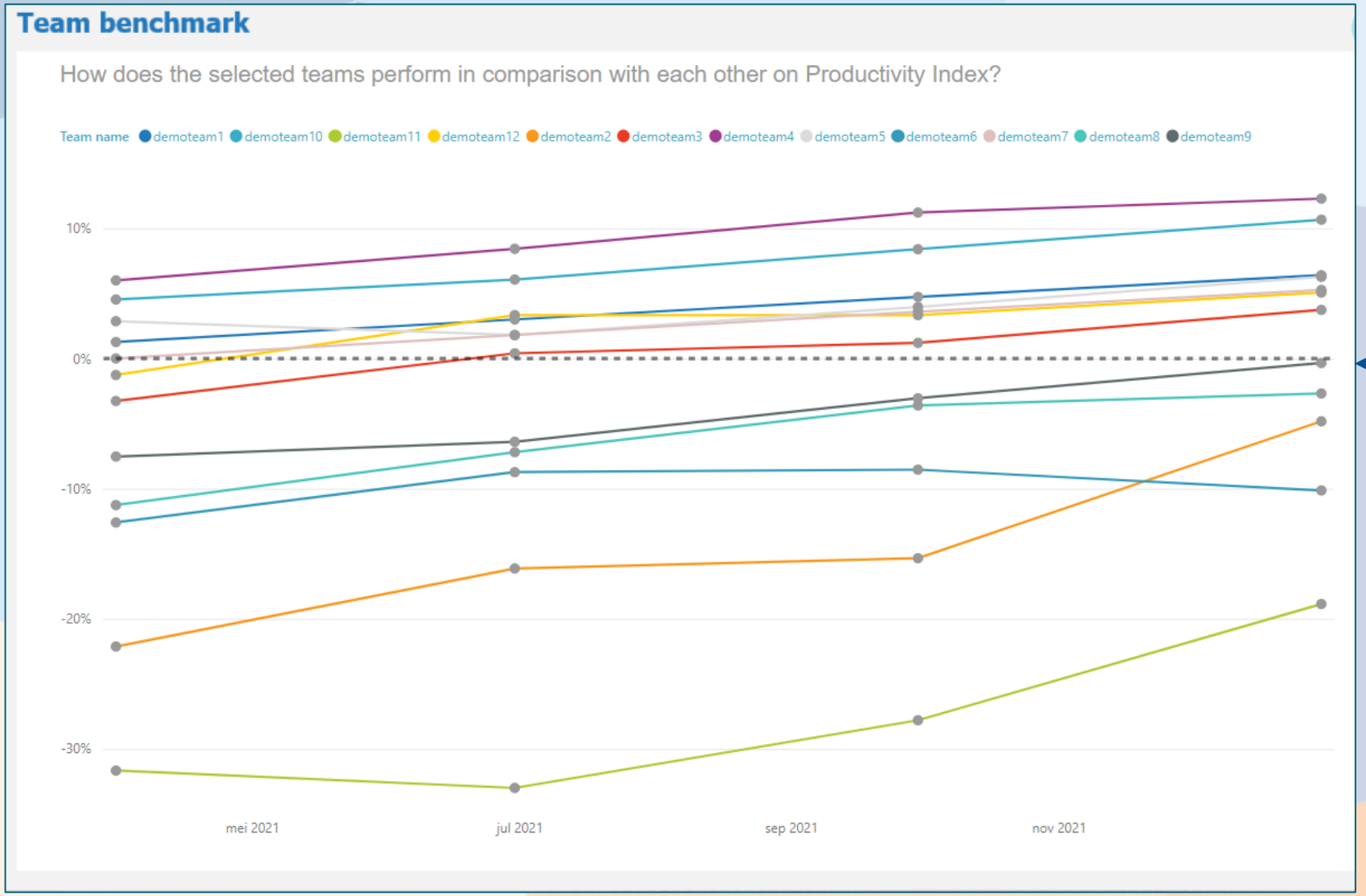
Compare teams based on indices



Industry average (different for each team)

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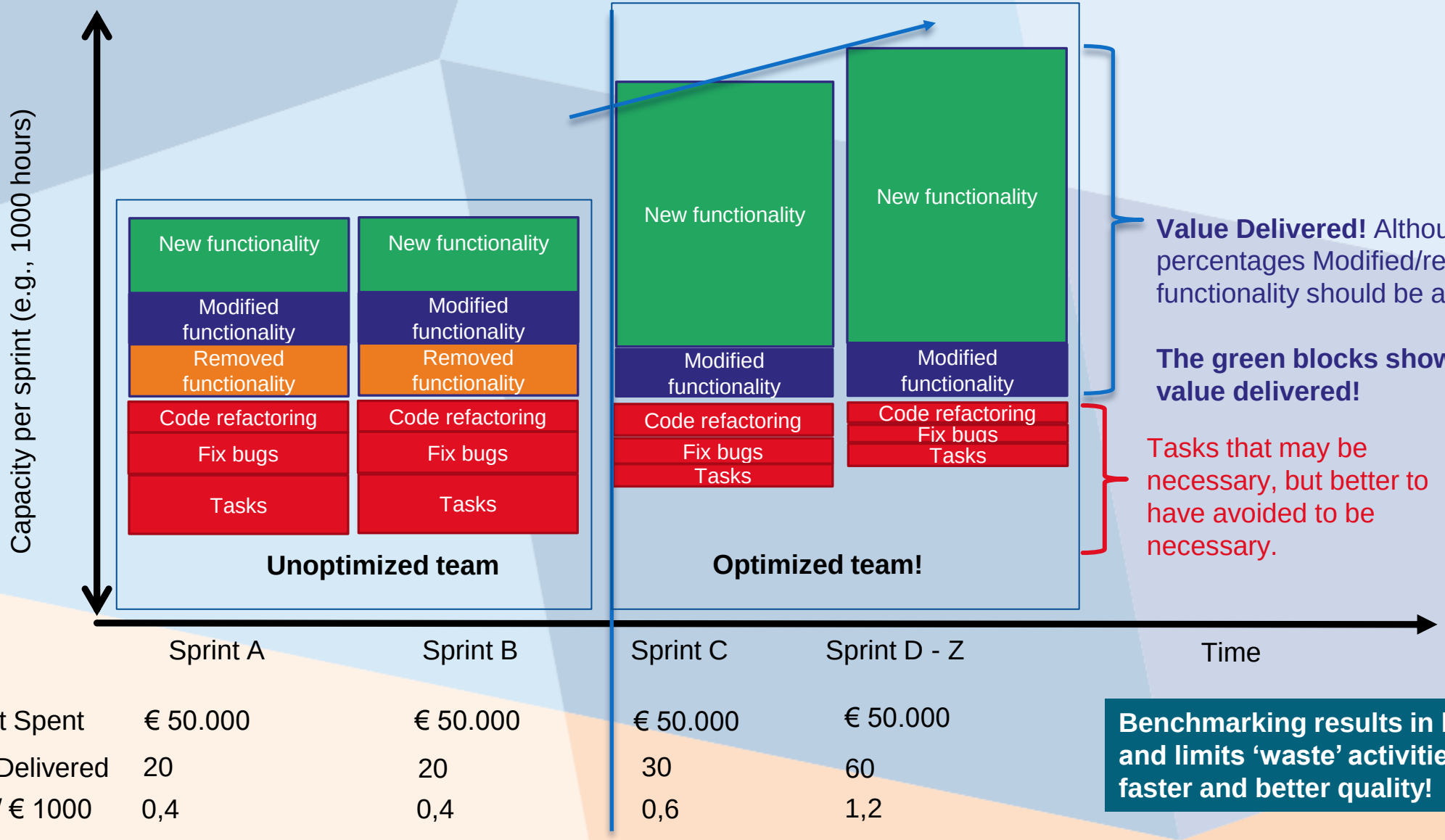
Increase Value Delivery



Value Delivered! Although high percentages Modified/removed functionality should be avoided.

The green blocks show the new value delivered!

Tasks that may be necessary, but better to have avoided to be necessary.

	Sprint A	Sprint B	Sprint C	Sprint D - Z
Budget Spent	€ 50.000	€ 50.000	€ 50.000	€ 50.000
Value Delivered	20	20	30	60
Value / € 1000	0,4	0,4	0,6	1,2

Benchmarking results in better insights, and limits 'waste' activities. More value, faster and better quality!

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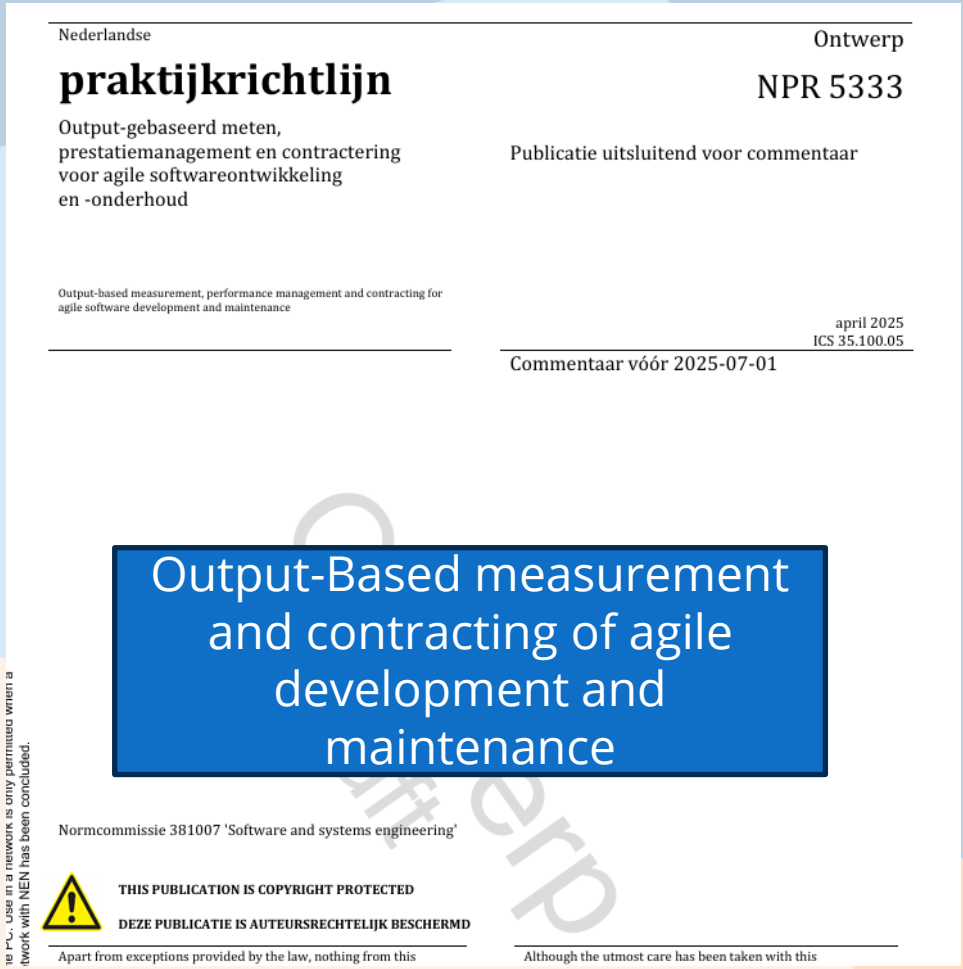
NPR5333 and Easy Functional Sizing (EFS)



Nederlandse

Ontwerp

praktijkrichtlijn

NPR 5333

Output-gebaseerd meten,
prestatiemanagement en contractering
voor agile softwareontwikkeling
en -onderhoud

Publicatie uitsluitend voor commentaar

Output-based measurement, performance management and contracting for agile software development and maintenance

april 2025
ICS 35.100.05

Commentaar vóór 2025-07-01

Output-Based measurement and contracting of agile development and maintenance

Normcommissie 381007 'Software and systems engineering'

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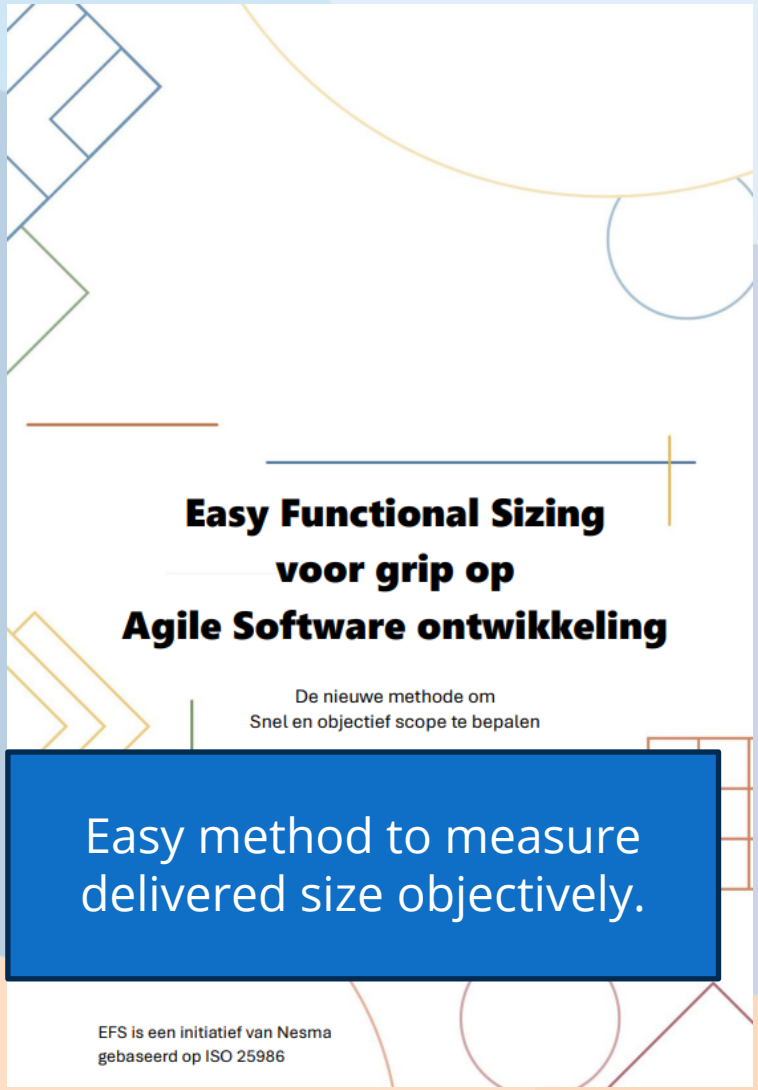

Easy Functional Sizing
voor grip op
Agile Software ontwikkeling

De nieuwe methode om
Snel en objectief scope te bepalen

Easy method to measure delivered size objectively.

EFS is een initiatief van Nesma
gebaseerd op ISO 25986

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Key Take Aways

- Since the move to agile, there is more focus on **delivery of business value.**
- Many organizations contract **external agile teams** using T&M and ratecard contracts, where vendors are not incentivized.
- Management perceives a **lack of insights** and are unable to manage based on management information, as the agile teams don't measure output in a **standardized way.**
- It's not possible to measure business value, however Functional Size Measurement is an **ISO/IEC standard** that measures **functionality**, a good proxy for **business value**, in an objective, repeatable and standardized way.
- This allows the **use of objective metrics** for estimation, benchmarking, team measurement, contracting, etc.
- ISBSG offers **historical data** of over 13.100 completed projects, releases and sprints. The data can be used for many purposes, e.g. estimation, benchmarking, contracting, etc.
- New developments are the **Nesma EFS standard** and the Dutch (for now) **NPR 5333** to measure and contract external agile teams in an output-based way.
- This way it becomes easier to **contract external agile teams** and to easily measure and benchmark team performance, allowing to compare teams and understanding low and high performing teams.

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Q&A

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Nesma - Software Measurement Standards and Improvement

Nesma is a non-profit international software measurement organization, founded in 1989, focused on:

- Governing the **Nesma standard** for functional size measurement.
- Promoting measurement and metrics based on functional size, which is the best **proxy for business value**.
- Spreading knowledge about **software measurement** and **software metrics**.
- Act as a **Body of Knowledge** for the industry regarding the use of software metrics in all business areas.
- Remain independent, objective, and **not-for-profit**.
- Research the applicability of software metrics in **all business areas**.
- **Connect relevant organizations in the industry** that are expert in the areas where software measurement and metrics are important.
- Produce **relevant guidelines, reports and other information products** that are useful for the software industry.
- Produce a platform where experts can discuss issues, they experience with software measurement and metrics or where they can **exchange ideas and/or knowledge**.

Nesma is Gold Partner of **International Software Benchmarking Standards Group**, partner in the **International Cost Estimation and Analysis Association (ICEAA) Software** Special Interest Group and partner with the **China Software Process Improvement** group.

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Thank you!

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Haroldvanheeringen

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