SCALES AGILE METHOD:
IMPLEMENTING DYNAMICS AX STEP BY STEP ADOPTING MICROSOFT SURE STEP™ FOR AGILE PROJECTS

The success of your Microsoft Dynamics AX solution is to a large degree determined by the speed and the effectiveness of the software to add value to your organisation. That is why SCALES is introducing Agile: a new, practical implementation methodology that allows you to implement operating functionality in short iterative cycles starting with the most important ones. This enables you to generate faster results, gain immediate insight into the value, increase the flexibility of the implementation and improve progress monitoring.

Respond faster to market demands. That is what customers and both internal and external stakeholders expect. This poses high demands on the set up and flexibility of your IT landscape. But how does this need translate into the implementation of new projects? Can the software give added value faster and optimally meet the requirements of the end user?

To successfully meet these requirements SCALES is introducing a new, practical, hands-on implementation methodology. This iterative methodology, called Agile, is based on the ‘Lean’ principles for software development and uses elements from ‘Scrum’ as implementation methodology and follows Microsoft Sure Step™ implementation methodology.

The focus is on simplicity. At a very early stage you gain a good picture of your system on the basis of standard Microsoft Dynamics AX software with baseline configuration. Then new functionalities for your solution are delivered step by step in so-called ‘sprints’.

AGILE: CONTINUOUSLY ADOPTING TO THE REQUIREMENTS OF YOUR BUSINESS

Faster results
• Step by step delivery of software via ‘sprints’ of 1-4 weeks duration
• Delivery of software based on the priorities of the customer
• Costs and value per sprint clearly shown

More transparency
• Checkpoints (demos) to check requirements and results
• Risks are quickly identified and therefore manageable
• Frequent meetings of the implementation team
• Business is permanently and from early on involved in the process

Increased flexibility
• The project team can respond to changes per ‘sprint’
• Continuous configuration and delivery of software
• Constant taking into account the increased insight into the business

BACKGROUND OF AGILE
The word Agile means to move fast, lightly and easily. Agile execution expects that during the implementation the users discover the possibilities of the system, adjusts demands and requirements, and want to profit immediately from the advantages. The aim of Agile is to deliver operating functionality of the software as fast as possible, starting with the components that are most important for your business. Being able to demonstrate software in operation quickly creates understanding and enthusiasm. Certainly for users that aspect is more important than the availability of detailed
Another core element is cooperation. Individual interests and interaction are more important than agreements about processes and tools. The use of Scrum methodology guarantees continuous communication and coordination between the business and IT. This prevents misunderstandings and ensures added value at an early stage. The business is responsible for answering the ‘what’ questions and assigns priorities. The SCALES implementation team then determines ‘how’ this can be done best and makes an estimate of the efforts required to do this.

AGILE: THE PROJECT PHASES

AGILE PREPARATION phase represents selection of key processes and performing a high-level fit/gap evaluation. The phase ends with defining the solution backlog representing all requirements to be designed in the execution phase.

AGILE EXECUTION phase covers detailed analysis, design and development in one common phase where the Agile execution is divided into an agreed number of Sprint Cycles. The goal of the Agile Execution phase is to transform the requirements gathered during the Agile Preparation phase into solution deliverables. This is executed through a series of Sprint Cycles – typically with duration of 1-4 weeks - where the customer and consultant resources work as a team to design and develop the Microsoft Dynamics AX that meets the business’ requirements.

DEPLOYMENT The Deployment phase is where all the efforts of the project team come together for a successful transition to the new Microsoft Dynamics™ solution. Key activities in this phase include End User Training, User Acceptance Testing, and the actual cutover to the new or upgraded production environment.

OPERATION The Operation phase defines the activities required to close the project, provide post-production support, and transition the solution and knowledge to the customer.

AGILE: THE EXECUTION

Using SCALES Agile methodology ensures that transparency, efficiency and flexibility are obtained during the Agile execution; The implementation starts with a basic configuration of the standard Microsoft Dynamics™ AX software. In small iterations, so-called sprints, the implementation team continually delivers new functionalities. In this way your new solution can deliver immediate profit at an early stage. You also prevent time and money being spent on functionality that you do not require. In this way you can adapt to changing requirements as well as re-prioritize the solution backlog continuously during the sprint cycle execution – always knowing what the outcome will be. Having the full picture of the continuous solution delivered, it is clear what progress has been made and what still needs to be done. In this way risks and problems are identified at an early stage of the project.
CONDITION OF SUCCESS

Agile is based on a short implementation cycle and high speed. This requires constant feedback and attention from the 'Process Owner(s)' who represents the business stakeholders. Important conditions for success are therefore the involvement from the business, a clear picture of the requirements and priorities for the project and good technological preparation. If the correct setup is not yet present then the project focuses on this first. Involvement of business via 'Process Owner(s)' ensures decision-making and internal coordination and communication with the various business stakeholders concerning the requirements and priorities; these are the most important tasks of a Process Owner (PO). In this way the PO represents the customer and the requirements and links these to the implementation team. The PO also administers the Solution Backlog. This is a list of the requirements and the processes and functionalities to be designed from the point of view of the business. With this the PO gives the implementation team clear priorities for the various remaining requirements. Finally it is crucial that the availability of the PO is frequent enough during the project.
GOOD INVENTORIES OF REQUIREMENTS AND PRIORITIES FOR THE PROJECT
What are the operating processes and functionalities desired in the new system? **The clearer this is, the better the scope** of the project can be defined. Especially if the priorities are established on the basis of the most added value for the organisation.

GOOD TECHNOLOGICAL PREPARATION
**A good start is half the work.** That also applies to the technology. Having a technological environment available in good time on which the baseline configuration can run will speed up the project. For an existing system a technical analysis has to be considered to identify possible dependencies and to anticipate these.

OPTIONS
Each project has its own characteristics. As an alternative to the classical waterfall model, the linear implementation methodology used in most ERP projects over the years, there is now the option of using **SCALES Agile methodology**. You must make a well-informed choice here. The degree of flexibility desired during the implementation and the necessity for continuous coordination with the business is an important criteria here. As also the requirements are imposed on documentation and organisational change management. We will, of course advise you on how your project can deliver the best results.

TO LEARN MORE
Ready to learn more about **SCALES Agile methodology**? Are you asking yourself whether your project is suitable for this approach? Would you like more detailed information about the way in which SCALES can successfully conclude your project in a new, innovative and efficient manner?
During a personal meeting we will be pleased to examine the possibilities of Agile for your organization in more depth. Then contact **SCALES**, telephone +45 3271 3622.