Best Practices in Implementing a Grants Management System

Simons Award Manager (SAM)

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Agenda

01 Introduction

02 Requirements Gathering

03 Configuration

04 Demo

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01 Introduction

Simons Foundation Growth

2007

- ❖ $33M grants paid, $77M grants payable
- ❖ 53 active awards
- ❖ 2 award types
- ❖ 31 institutions, 0 international
- ❖ 90 payments
- ❖ 112 deliverables
- ❖ 3 funding areas
- ❖ 1 competitive RFA
- ❖ 8 applications
- ❖ 1 grants management employee

2021

- ❖ $310M grants paid, $525M grants payable
- ❖ 2,750 active awards
- ❖ 141 award types
- ❖ 550 institutions, 28 international
- ❖ 2,400 payments
- ❖ 3,936 deliverables
- ❖ 13 funding divisions
- ❖ 25 competitive RFAs
- ❖ 2,392 applications
- ❖ 18 grants management employees

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Requirements for a new system

❖ Own our data

❖ Ability for staff to configure forms and workflows

❖ Robust permissions (role-based and field level permissions)

❖ Role-specific dashboards

❖ Flexible form design (deliverable web forms, application templates, etc.)

❖ Robust reporting and ability to track changes on all fields

❖ One pre- and post-award system

❖ Integration with our finance systems

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Timeline

2015

Search for new GMS Begins

2019

Work on SAM Begins

❖ SF selects SmartSimple as the new grants management system

2020 - 2022

Applications Configured

July 2022

SAM Launches First RFAs

❖ First requests for applications go live

Summer/ Fall 2023

SAM Replaces pC

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02 Requirements Gathering

Six stages of requirements gathering

Assigned roles & determined decision-making process

Executive Steering Committee (ESC)

End Users:
1. Internal Stakeholders
   a. Grants staff
   b. Program staff
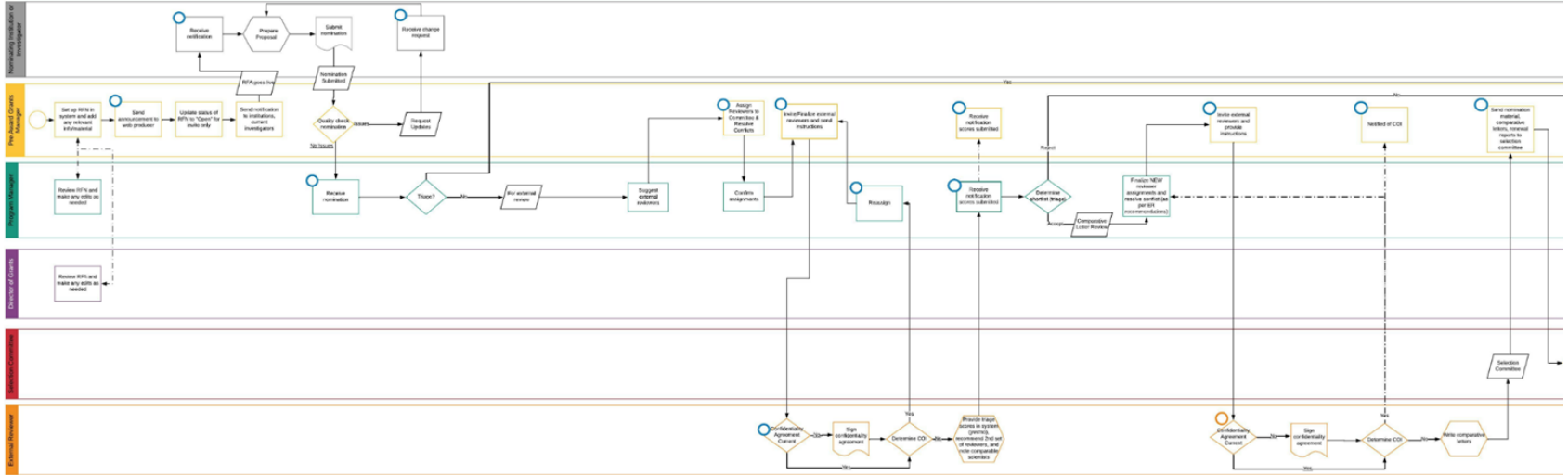2. External Stakeholders

Core Team

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Six stages of requirements gathering

1. Assigned roles & determined decision-making process

2. Gathered and documented requirements

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Six stages of requirements gathering

1. Assigned roles & determined decision-making process
2. Gathered and documented requirements
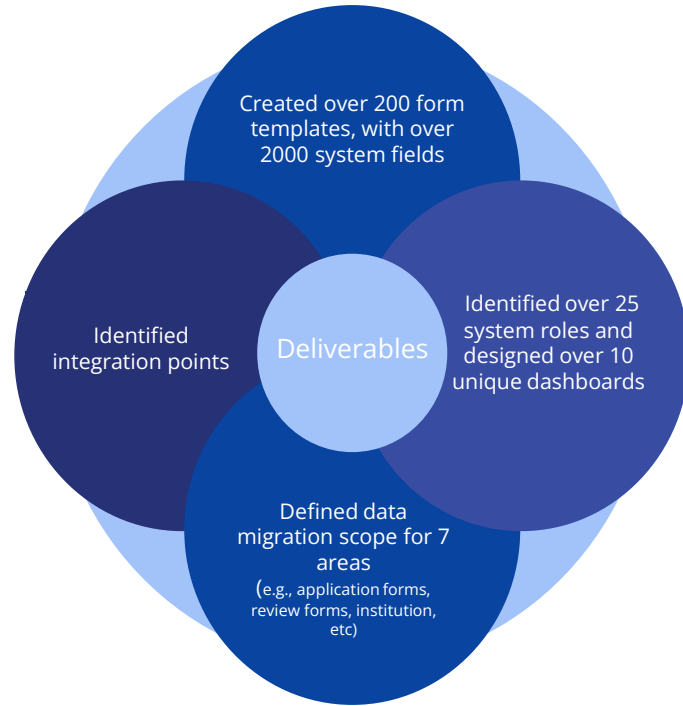3. Streamlined requirements

Cut ~55%

From 75 workflows
to 41 workflows

- Consistent approach for internal and external workflows
- Flexible internal and external review process
- Deprioritized fringe workflows

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Six stages of requirements gathering

1. Assigned roles & determined decision-making process
2. Gathered and documented requirements
3. Streamlined requirements
4. Generated deliverables

Created over 200 form templates, with over 2000 system fields

Identified integration points

Deliverables

Identified over 25 system roles and designed over 10 unique dashboards

Defined data migration scope for 7 areas
(e.g., application forms, review forms, institution, etc)

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Six stages of requirements gathering

1. Assigned roles & determined decision-making process
2. Gathered and documented requirements
3. Streamlined requirements
4. Generated deliverables
5. Acquired approval
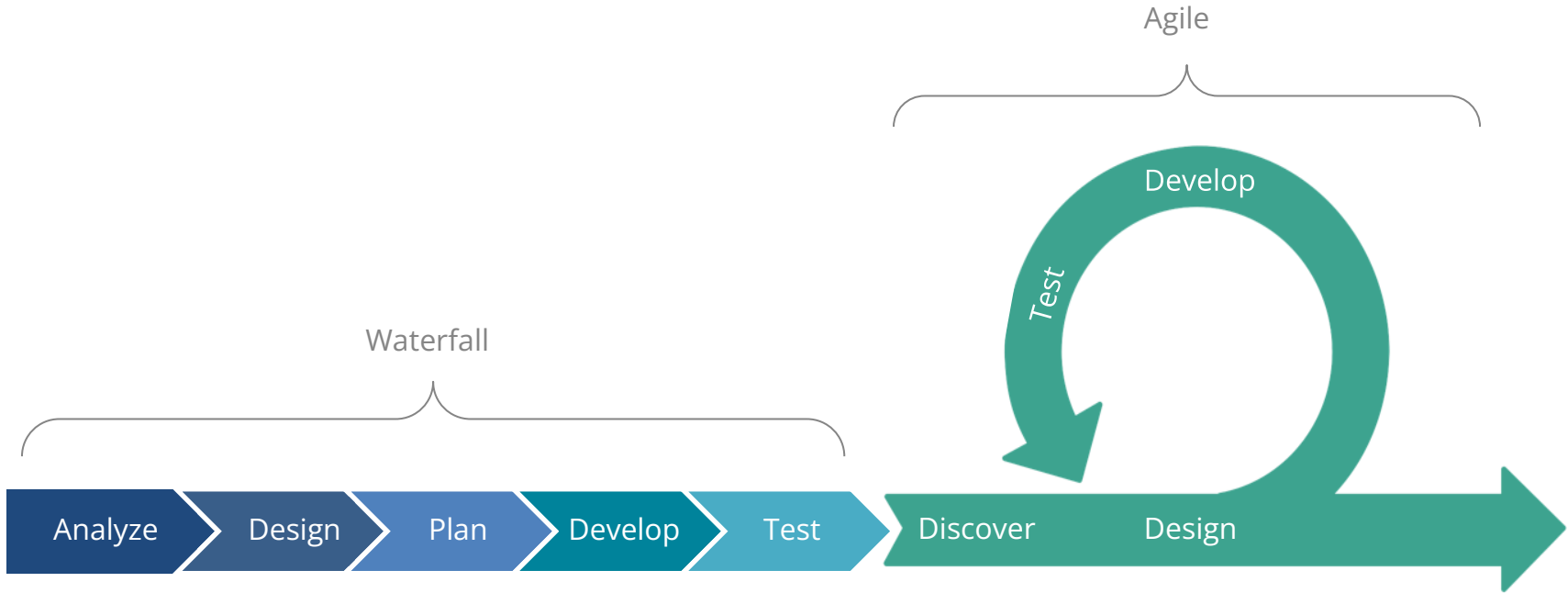6. Created Business Requirements Document (BRD)

Business Requirements Document (BRD)

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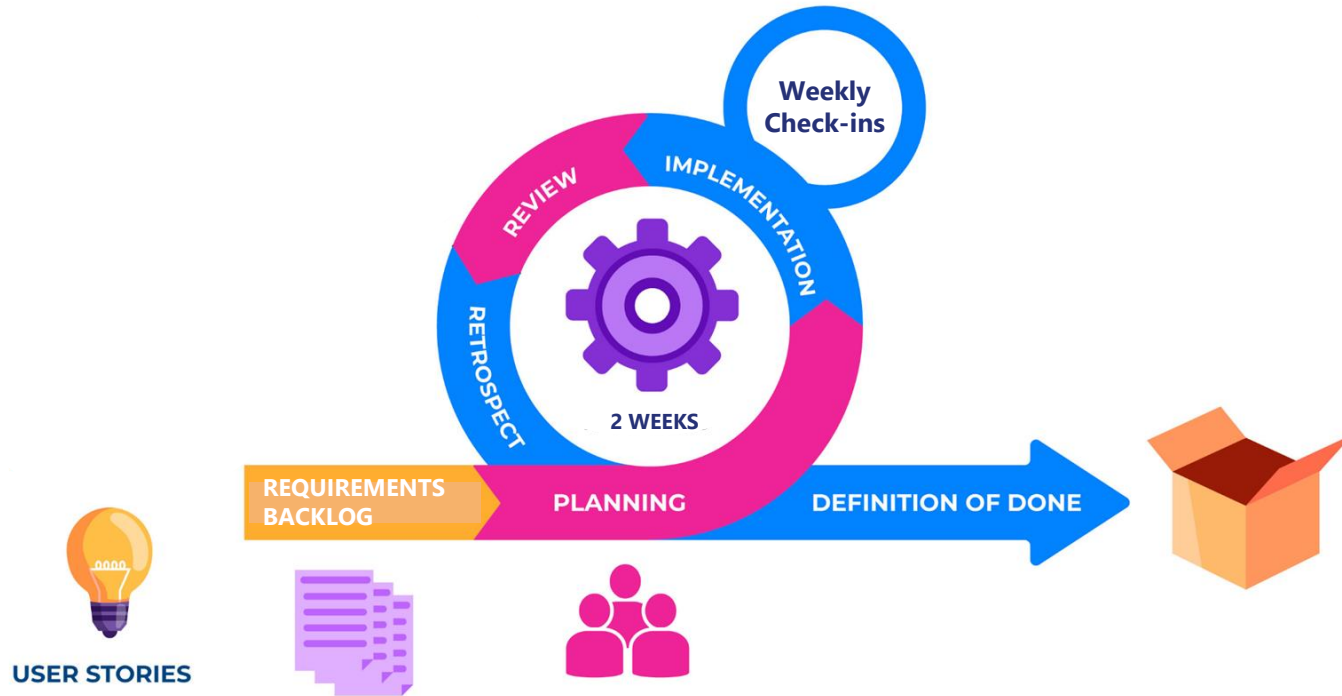# Best practices in requirements gathering

- ❖ Dedicate time for requirements gathering

- ❖ Engage all stakeholder groups

- ❖ Develop a change management strategy

- ❖ Focus on 'MVP' for first release

- ❖ Scope migration objects as you are gathering requirements

- ❖ Engage vendor/developer in requirements gathering process

- ❖ Use vendor/developer templates

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03 Configuration

Evolution of configuration - Lesson learned

Agile

Develop

Test

Waterfall

Analyze   Design   Plan   Develop   Test   Discover   Design

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Evolution of configuration - Successful approach

Phased approach

		Releases	Functionality	Implementation timeline
1	Pre Award	2	• Application submission • Application review • Application notifications • Integrations (ORCID, PubMed, OpenAlex)	18 months
2	Post Award	4	• Award letters • Deliverables • Payments • Integrations (finance, docusign)	14 months

Best practices in configuration

❖ Develop iteratively

❖ Outline requirements in user stories

❖ Reassess requirements

❖ Engage developers in the review of user stories

❖ Automate processes

❖ Do not over-engineer

❖ Communicate often with stakeholders on what will and will not be delivered

❖ Estimate more time than anticipated

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05 Demo

Demo content

1. Institution profile

2. User profile

3. Application

4. Review process manager

5. Deliverable setting manager

6. WalkMe

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Q&A

Resources

Helpful Links/Tools

SAM:
sam.simonsfoundation.org

Instructional Videos:
simonsfoundation.org/funding-opportunities/sam-instructional-videos/

WalkMe:
Navigate to the Help Center Menu on the right hand side of SAM

Contact Information

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