



High Level Design Document and TOGAF

In one of ITSM PORTAL's [LinkedIn groups](#), an interesting question was submitted, on high level documents in TOGAF:

"Traditionally HLDs have been associated with Waterfall (though it is not an architectural practice but more for SDLC management). I have gone through standard definitions of HLD but not too sure at which phase of TOGAF this fits in. Is this part of the Architecture Definition Document (ADD) or the Architecture Requirements spec(ARS)? These are mostly drafts until we reach planning phase and mostly different for different domain architecture. But does the HLD not cover the conceptual and logical description of the intended system?"

This confirmed my finding that the Netherlands have a unique approach to information management, and frameworks like ITIL, COBIT and TOGAF are now moving to overlap with this approach. The appearance of the term "Business Service Management" is also a symptom of that transition.

Back to the original question on HLDs. You may find some relief by stepping outside the TOGAF context.

The problem that is addressed here was described in 1986 shortly after Maarten Looijen published his thesis at Eindhoven University. It has been at the base of all serious IT educated people in the Netherlands. 27 years ago, Maarten Looijen expressed the HLD as 'functional design' versus 'technical design'.

The separation between these two was actually based on this world's most important control mechanism: separation of duties. The corporate environment is separated into three piled sections: business, information management, and IT management. The chain of command going from left to right, but each section is within the previous level, kind of a Matrusjka.

If you add the management paradigm to this, you'll get a simple 3x3 matrix model that serves as a hell of conceptual blueprint for all these questions.

You can read about this model in an article, available for free download.

That model is very specific in determining the position of High Level Documents (or "functional design" as the Dutch call it).

