

Cockpits for Swiss Municipalities - A Web Based Instrument for Leadership

The increasing complexity concerning leadership and management of small and medium size municipalities in Switzerland, poses high demands on executive authorities. Cockpits for municipalities collect data for the decision-making processes in order to launch and establish a strategy and to enhance information based municipal leadership.

Within an applied R&D-project (2007-2011) we are developing and implementing IT based cockpits for seven small municipalities in Switzerland. The cockpits are built on top of a web-based platform to incorporate collaborative functions and data that is structured and analyzed using Business Intelligence (BI) methods and technologies.

The project adopts a management- and a technical research perspective. The researchers dealing with the first perspective have to raise the municipalities' awareness for strategic leadership, understand their policy making and administrative processes in-depth, and support the identification of strategy based indicators. The more technical oriented team has to adapt BI for municipalities' cockpits, ensure data import, storage and processing (Data Warehouse, OLAP, balanced scorecard based performance management) and presentation in the cockpits. The municipalities were provided with a simple cockpit early on in the project. This ensured an effective dialog between the municipalities and the project team.

Preliminary results of the interdisciplinary R&D-project will be fruitful for researchers and developers who are interested in the topic ICT based leadership and management – especially those focusing on the public sector.

In small and middle municipalities, the principle of strategic thinking is less popular than direct problem solving. The decision-makers are generally not used to measurements in the political context. The cockpit provides utility for strategic management through performance management that is consistent with the strategy definition. Additionally it provides support for the daily business.

The challenge is to identify incentives to transform the cockpit from a playground into an acceptable and frequently used management tool. It is not just about providing a system, but about working with the municipalities and to show them how they can use the cockpit it in their daily business and decision-making processes.

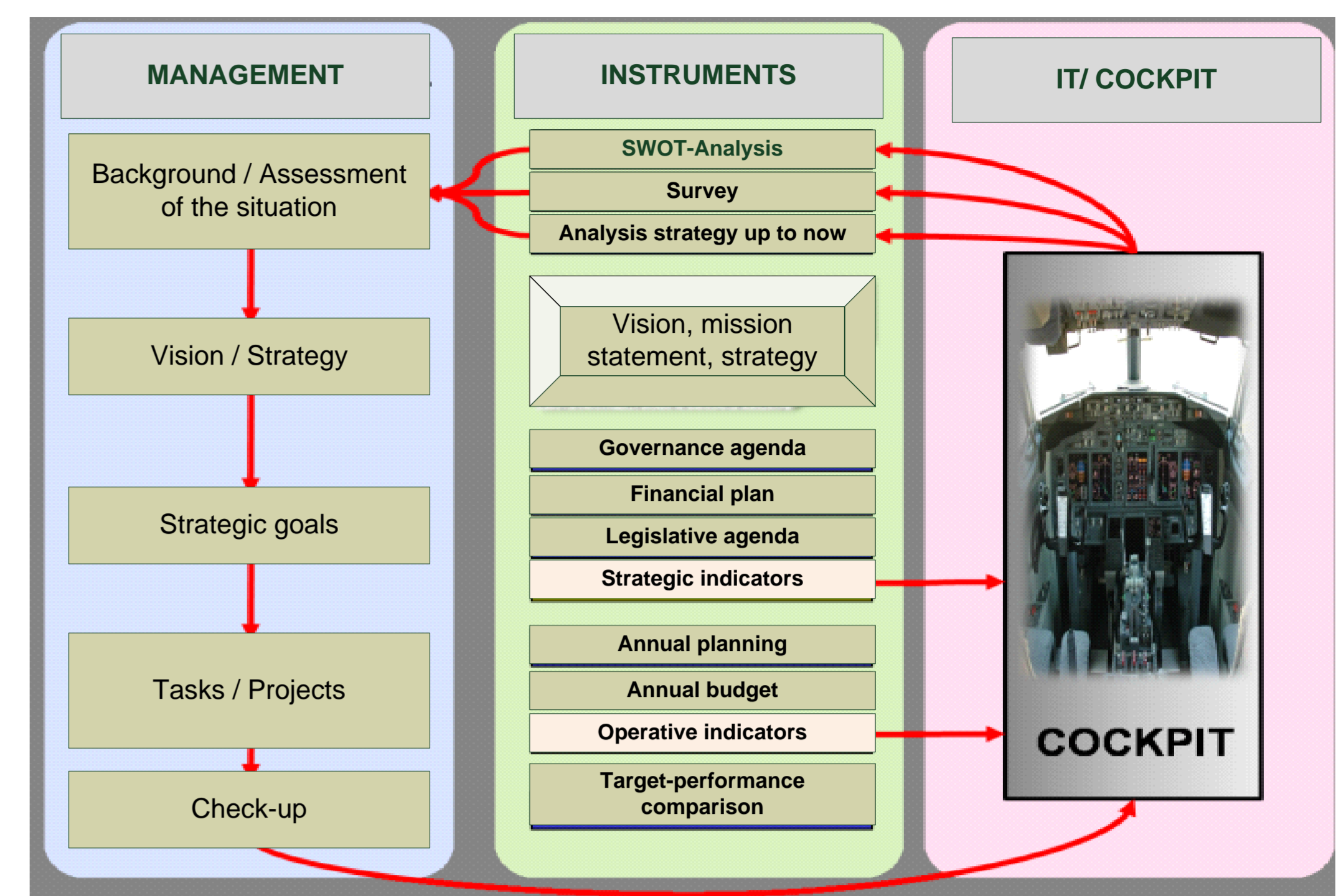


Figure 1: Management Process with Instruments

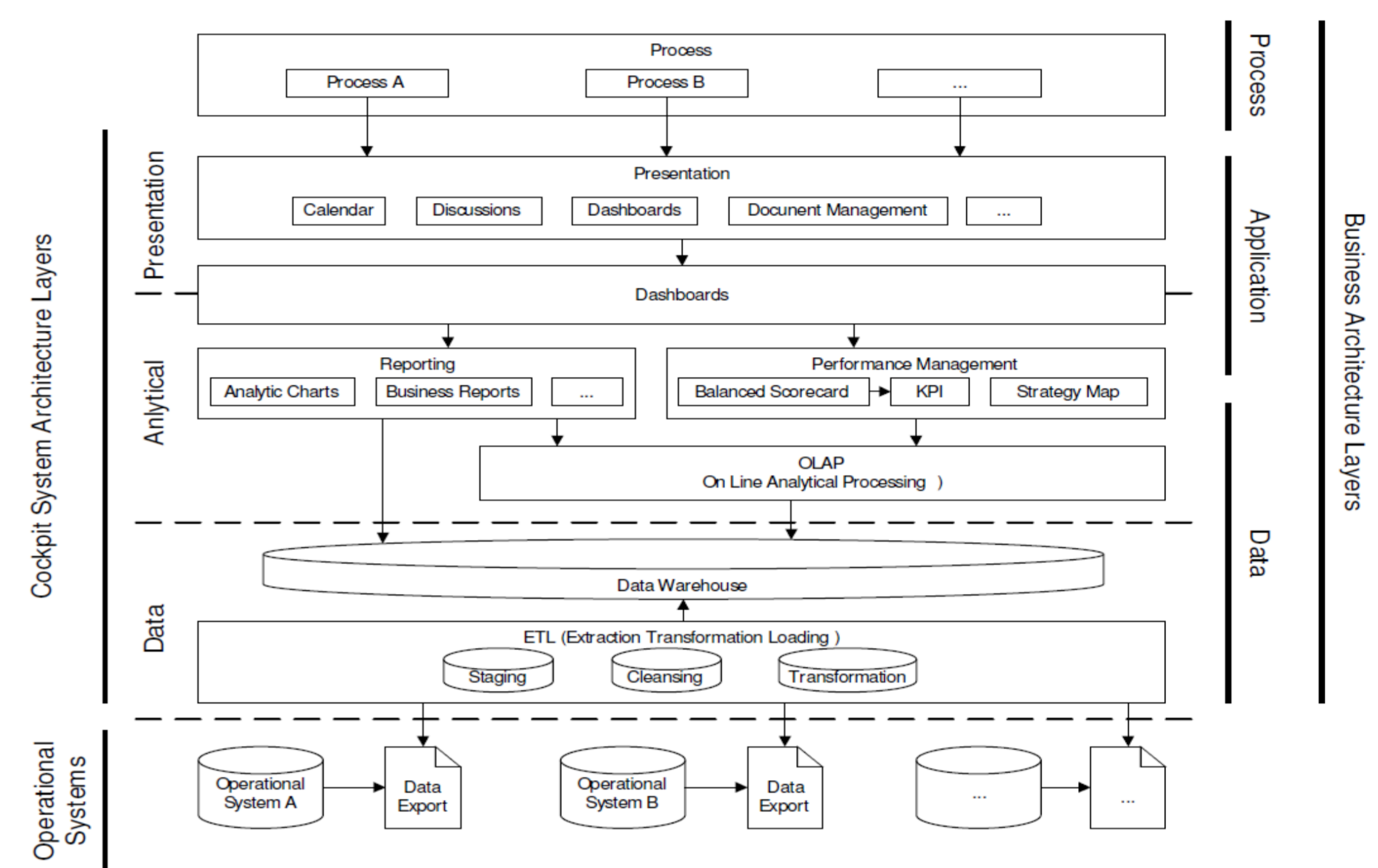


Figure 2: Cockpit Solution Architecture

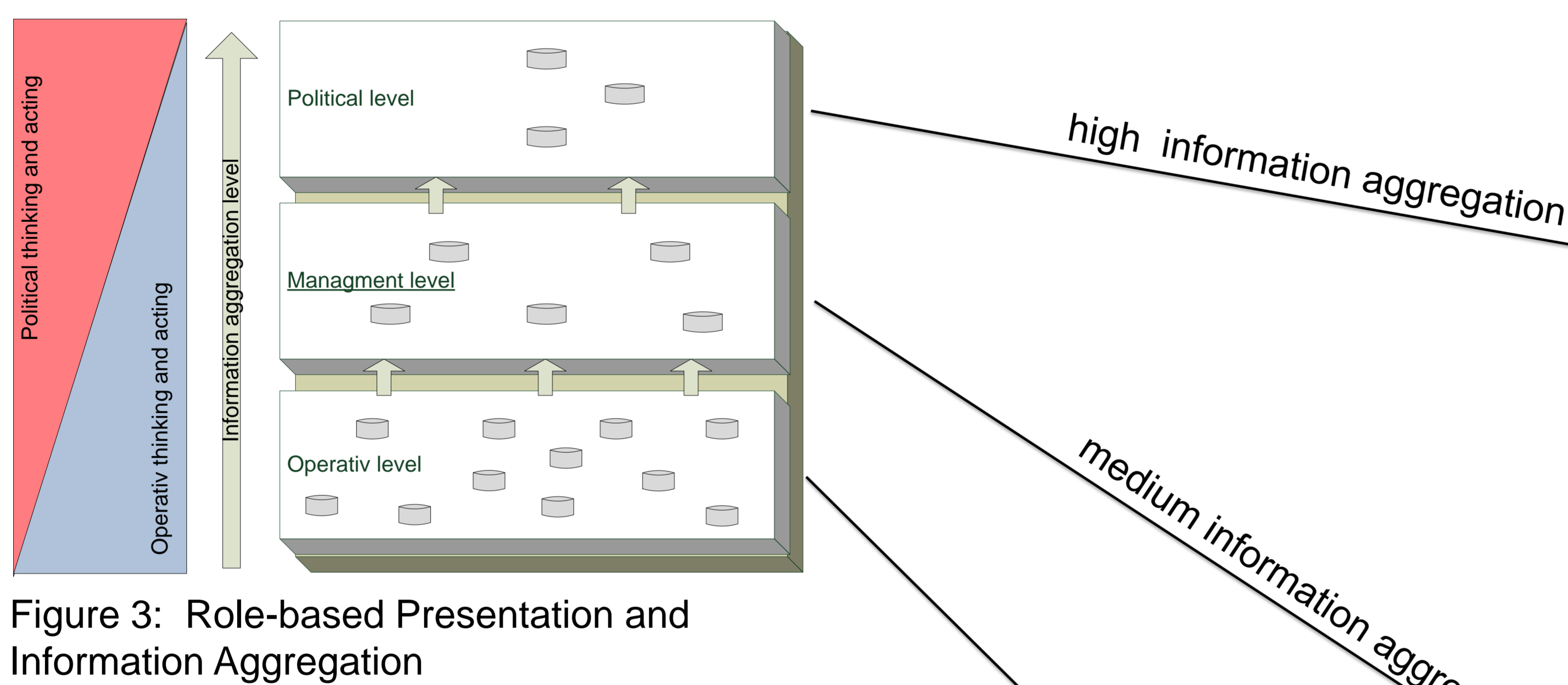


Figure 3: Role-based Presentation and Information Aggregation

The cockpit aims to support the daily business as well as the political decision-making process or the municipalities. To efficiently support processes and to accommodate for the different needs on the political and operative level the cockpit uses different views with optimized and structured data presentation. While the views' content depends on the process being supported, the level of information aggregation is basing on the target role. It varies from highly aggregated overviews for the political level to detailed data for the operative level. To reach an integration between the cockpit and the processes it is necessary to reach an alignment between the IT and business view. Here, the two research perspectives of the project depend on each other.

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Interests: Management Instruments in the Public Sector, IT-based Leadership, Innovation in Municipalities, IT-based Policy Making, eParticipation, Local Governance, Business Intelligence, "Staat der Zukunft - 2060"

Competencies Technical View: Business Intelligence, Data Warehousing, Performance Management, .Net

Competencies Business and Social View: Public Management, Leadership & IT in the federal State, Process Optimization, ICT-based Change Management, Participation, Interorganizational Collaboration, Complexity Management, Communication in the Administration and Executive.



Figure 4: Cockpit Screenshots