

The logo for NRI (National Research Institute) is displayed in a large, bold, white sans-serif font in the top-left corner. The background of the slide is a vibrant, abstract composition of flowing, wavy lines in shades of blue and purple, creating a sense of motion and depth.

NRI

Is it possible to deliver large, complex programs using Agile development?

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ProjectChat2026 Adelaide

NRI Five Questions we will seek to answer

1. What is Agile (and what is it not)?
2. Does Agile Development offer improved delivery outcomes?
3. Is Agile suitable for Major and Complex Programs?
4. What challenges are we seeing to success in what are considered Agile delivery contexts?
5. What approach do we propose when seeking to apply Agile delivery to large, complex programs?

NRI What is Agile?

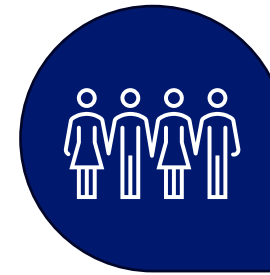
Agile is:

- A series of development principles
- A response heavy, plan-driven methods that struggled with change and uncertainty

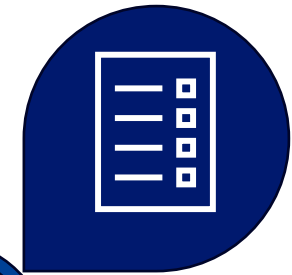
Agile is not:

- a methodology for project or program delivery
- an excuse for no governance.

INDIVIDUALS AND
INTERACTIONS OVER
PROCESSES AND TOOLS



WORKING SOFTWARE OVER
COMPREHENSIVE
DOCUMENTATION



CUSTOMER COLLABORATION
OVER CONTRACT
NEGOTIATION



RESPONDING TO CHANGE
OVER FOLLOWING A PLAN

NRI Does Agile Development offer improved delivery outcomes?

1994 Standish Group CHAOS Report

~16%

~31%

Predominant delivery approach:
Waterfall, plan driven

2024 Standish Group CHAOS Report

~36%

~19%

Predominant delivery approach:
Agile and hybrid

Key takeaways from 2024 Report:

- Projects using Agile approaches show success rates ~25–30% higher than traditional waterfall
- However, the data also shows that success rates are still not as high as we would undoubtedly want

NRI Is Agile suitable for Major and Complex Programs?

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Complex Programs can typically be defined by a range of similar characteristics:

- large budgets
- multiple partners
- regulatory oversight, and
- high uncertainty.

Traditional Delivery Models have been shown to struggle with evolving requirements and often cause delays and cost overruns.

NRI Is Agile suitable for Major and Complex Programs?

Agile offers a number of benefits that are especially valuable when managing large, complex programs:

- Adapting to Complexity and Uncertainty
- Reducing Risk through Early Delivery
- Enhancing Stakeholder Alignment and Trust
- Continuous Value Prioritisation

NRI What Challenges are we seeing with Agile?

Some common challenges for organisations with failing Agile programs:

- A lack of overarching delivery plan
- Failure to properly prioritise development activities or identify/understand dependent activities
- Poor choice of sponsor and insufficient governance
- Incremental delivery not supported by incremental testing and use

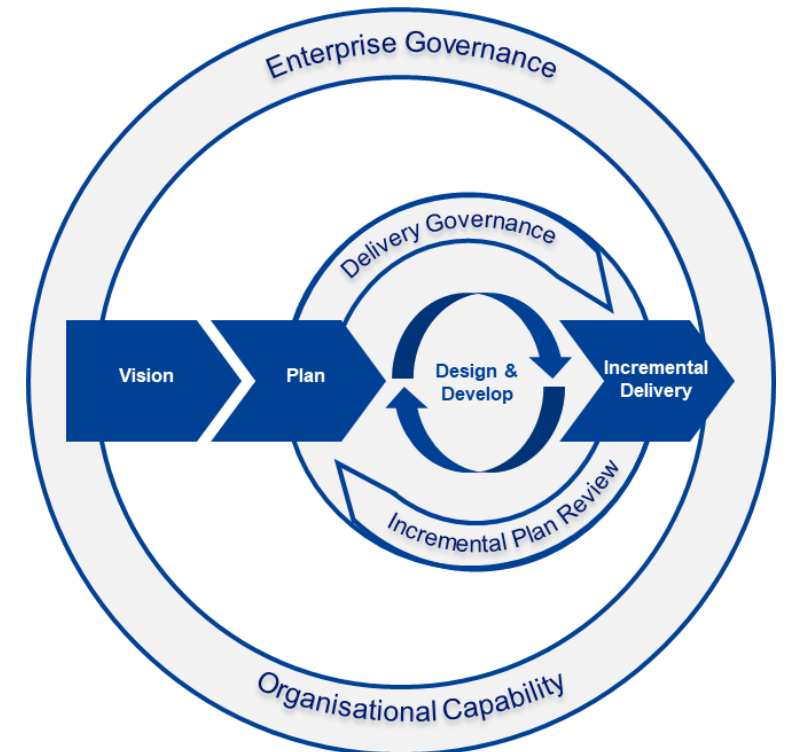
NRI Proposed Governed Agile Approach

Governed Agile – a view that recognises the importance of agile development practices within a carefully engineered governance structure.

A model is required that recognises complex programs evolve through a range of stages – and require a blend of approaches beyond just agile or predictive. Our suggested model stages are Vision, Plan, Design & Develop and Incremental Delivery.

- Vision - ensures clarity of program purpose and alignment with organizational objectives
- Plan – recognises the critical importance of a mechanism to track and adapt overall progress, identify priority activities and dependencies across the program
- Design and Deliver (loop) – emphasising measurable outcomes against defined Epics (or big functional areas) and the importance of feedback and adaption to allow flexible evolution
- Incremental Delivery – release of product when useful but noting the critical importance of elemental integration

Wrapping around delivery is the Delivery Governance function that seeks to oversee overall program progress against organisational imperatives rather than managing delivery tasks to support agile initiatives.



Thank you & Questions

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