Case Study

**Using SAFe® on a program
(NPDE : New process for job seekers)
for the French national employment agency Pôle emploi**

pôle emploi

A case study presented in 2 steps

SAFe® is a registered mark of Scaled Agile, Inc.

A case study presented in 2 steps

P. 3   **How NPDE discovered SAFe® principles to deliver on time…**

P. 14   **How SAFe® helps NPDE benefit from even more agility…**

SAFe® is a registered mark of Scaled Agile, Inc.

pôle emploi

Program Context

- **Based on a national agreement …**

- **Our customers are asking for …**

- **We'll never make it !!!**
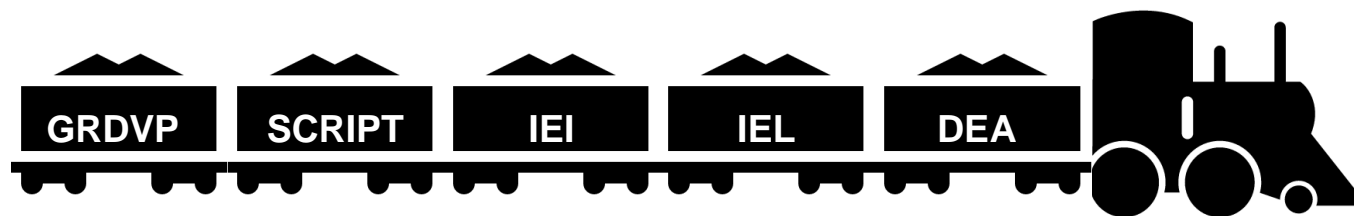 - **Management's answer …**

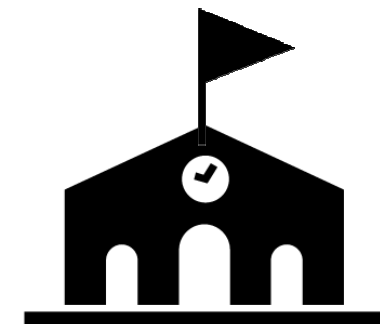**Just do it**

The program's ambitions

130 to **150** **people involved**

20 000 m/d

80% **of the scope of an IT release**

| GRDVP | SCRIPT | IEI | IEL | DEA |

**4** **cross-functional projects and even a little brother, GRDVP**

Planned arrival September 20th

pôle emploi

Question 1 : What can we do to achieve our commitments ?

Action 1.1

- February 2015 – Meet with our customers and agree on a more realistic scope

  - **We did manage to reduce the size of the backlog … a little bit!**

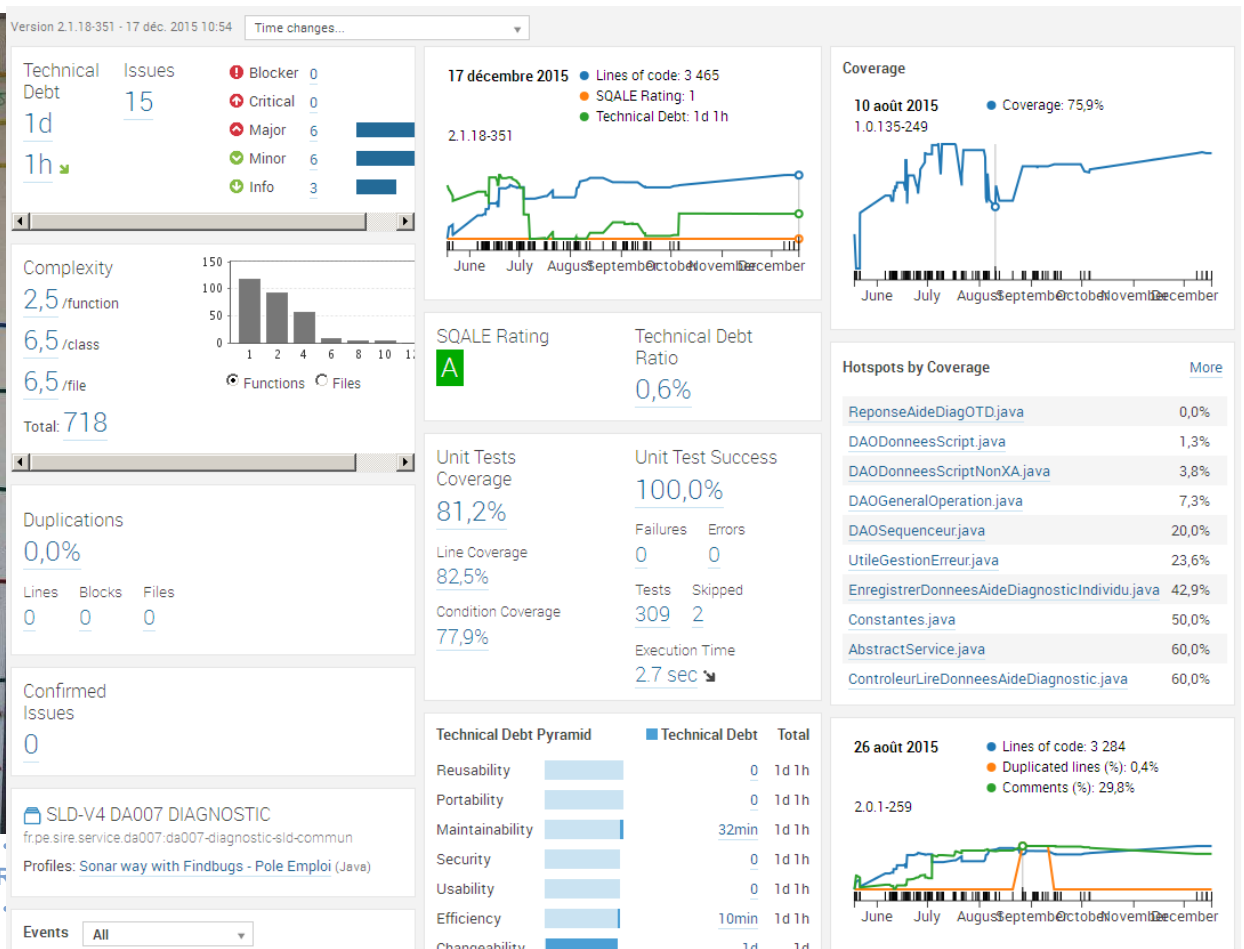**DIRECTION DES SYSTÈMES D'INFORMATION / 29 février 2016**

pôle emploi
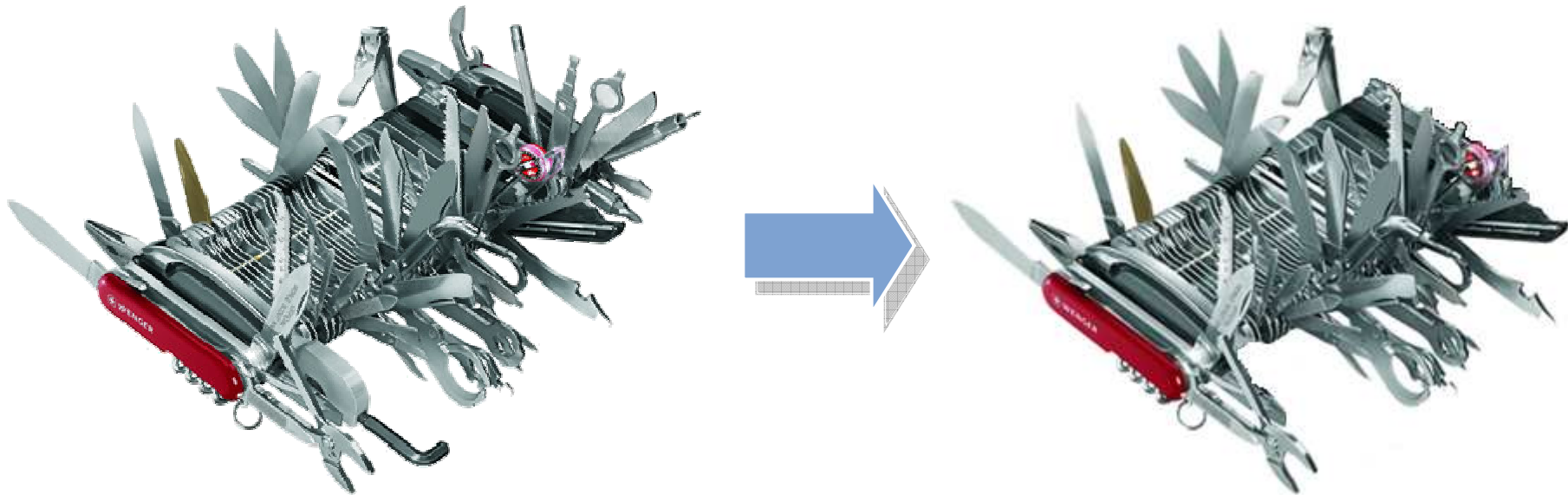
Question 1 : What else can we do to meet our commitments ?

- **Rely on our fully committed and motivated teams**

- **Continue to value and emphasize XP techniques, code quality and continuous integration (at least for all new applications)**

Action 1.2

Question 2 : What can we do to stay in sync?

- **Within the program, we have :**

  - **Scrum teams**

  - **Teams working with the waterfall method**

  - **An external supplier developing our COBOL legacy system**

- **Pragmatic decisions :**

  Action 2

  - **We decide to set the same pace for all teams :**

    - **The 5 scrum teams have 3 weeks' sprints**

    - **The teams start and finish their sprints on the same day**

    - **The release packaging is planned to start at the end of the 5th sprint**

  - **We try to organize integration points with the other teams at the end of the sprints**

pôle emploi

Question 3 : What can we do to increase team collaboration ?

We will bring together all key actors in the same room, to identify the dependencies between the different software components

Action 3

- Development planning seminar on March 10th and 11th 2015 :

  - Around 30 people

  - Program managers, PMO, project managers, enterprise level business analysts, software architects and technical architects

  - Together they identified the key features that needed to be integrated successfully

pôle emploi

Question 4 : What can we do to reduce integration risks on such a large scope ?

- **Action 4.1** **Usually, the environments are never ready until the system test phase. We must remove this impediment…**
  - **Initial meeting on the subject at the planning seminar on March 10th and 11th**
  - **Recurrent meetings happen to synchronize the people involved on the environments' set-up**
    - **Improved collaboration between the different departments**
    - **Allowed tracking progress on the environment set-up and issues' escalation**

- **Action 4.2** **We are aware that tests must be done as close to the development as possible to increase quality and reduce the time required to fix the bugs.**
  - **Even if they couldn't be co-located, 2 testers were assigned to 3 agile teams (one of them assigned to 2 teams) to test the stories before integration**

- **Action 4.3** **We tried to get users feedback on the integrated product as soon as possible.**
  - **A demonstration of the integrated product was organized at the end of sprint 4. It was late, but we had never done that on such a large scope**
  - **Intermediate Acceptance testing by the users (called TAMI) were organized 2 months before production date to get users feedback earlier than usual**

pôle emploi

# Question 5 : How can we maintain a good vision of the product?

- **The program is developed by teams coming from different departments not used to working closely together :**
  - **Internet (1 department)**
  - **Legacy business applications (3 departments)**
  - **The group dealing with Statistics is also involved**

Action 5

- **One person is in charge of the coherence of the entire solution**
  - **He is assisted by 2 persons from different departments**
  - **They organize weekly meetings to make sure their solution stays in line with the overall vision**

- **We organize weekly cross functional meetings**
  - **Review all features and changes that have occurred since last meeting, in order to solve the problems together and in a coherent way taking into account all constraints**

pôle emploi

Question 6 : How can we track the progress of so many teams?

■ **We decide to create a new role : Delivery Manager (DM)**

Action 6

 ● **The DM should consolidate the necessary information to track the overall progress, but he has a hard time dealing with this role**

■ **We also centralize progress tracking into a tool : IBM RTC**
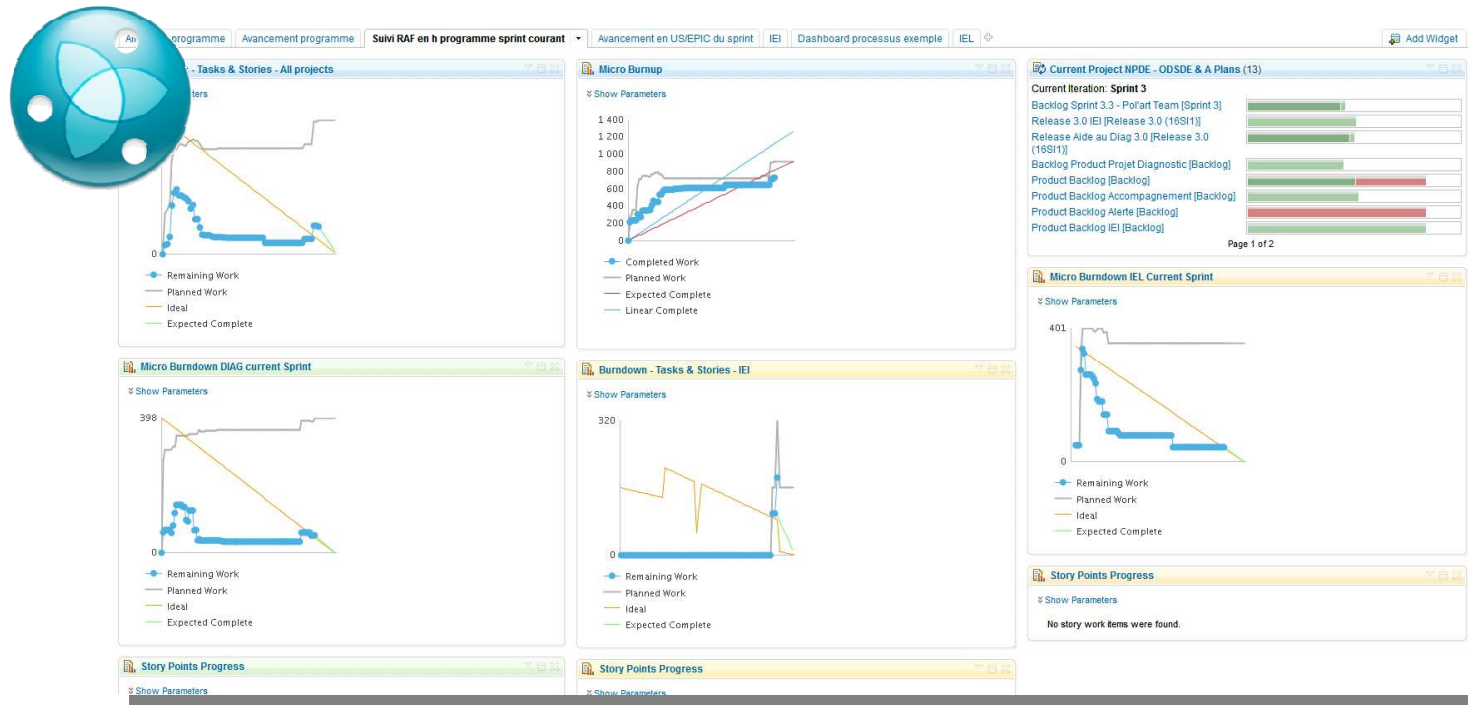
Rational Team Concert is a trademark of IBM Corporation in the United States, other countries, or both.

pôle emploi

In the end, we pragmatically discovered SAFe® principles!
… well … a small portion of it…

Action 1.1 : First attempt at creating a roadmap with the business representatives

Action 4.1 : A specific tracking of the environment set-up

Action 5 : A strong pair to convey a global vision

Action 4.2 : Test engineer integrated in teams

Action 1.2 : Continuous integration and tests automation

Action 3 : Planning seminar on March 10th and 11th

Action 6 : First attempt at the RTE with the DM

Action 4.3 : Integrated demo and TAMI

Action 2 : Sprints Synchronization
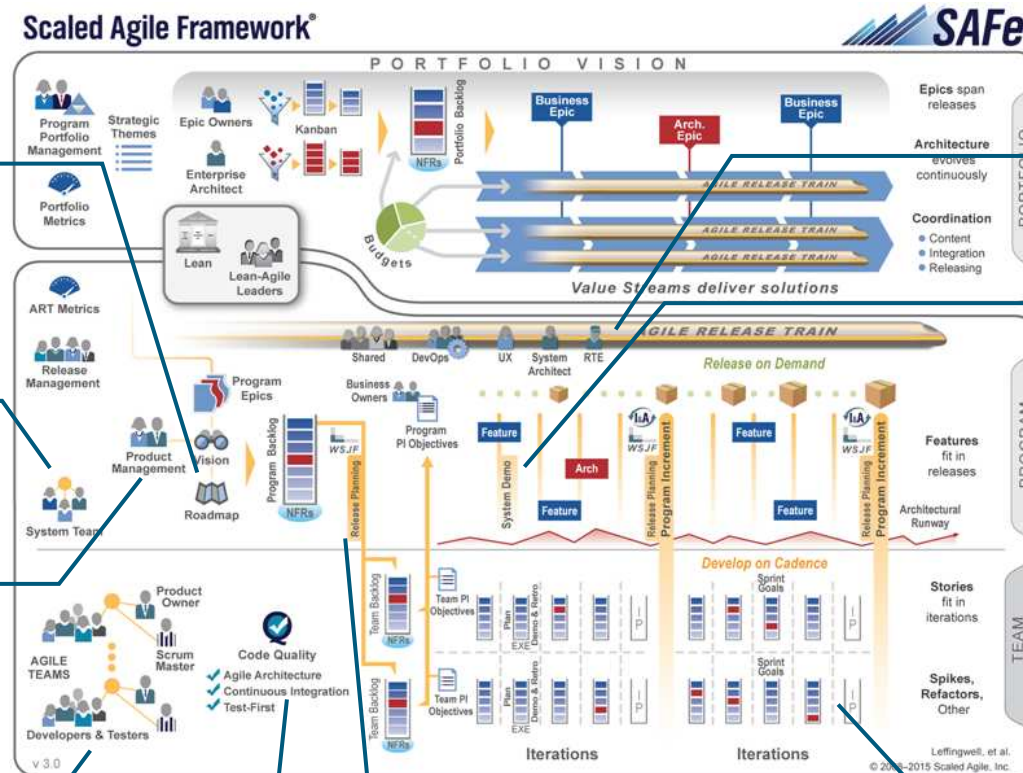
A case study presented in 2 steps

P. 3 **How NPDE discovered SAFe® principles to deliver on time…**

P. 14 **How SAFe® helps NPDE benefit from even more agility…**

SAFe® is a registered mark of Scaled Agile, Inc.

What can we do to increase visibility on the new business requirements?

- **Since the February 2015 meetings helped clarifying the scope, we decide to do it again in June…**
  - *Action 1* • **This time, we try to write a roadmap using a SAFe® template**

DIRECTION DES SYSTÈMES D'INFORMATION / 29 février 2016

SAFe® is a registered mark of Scaled Agile, Inc.
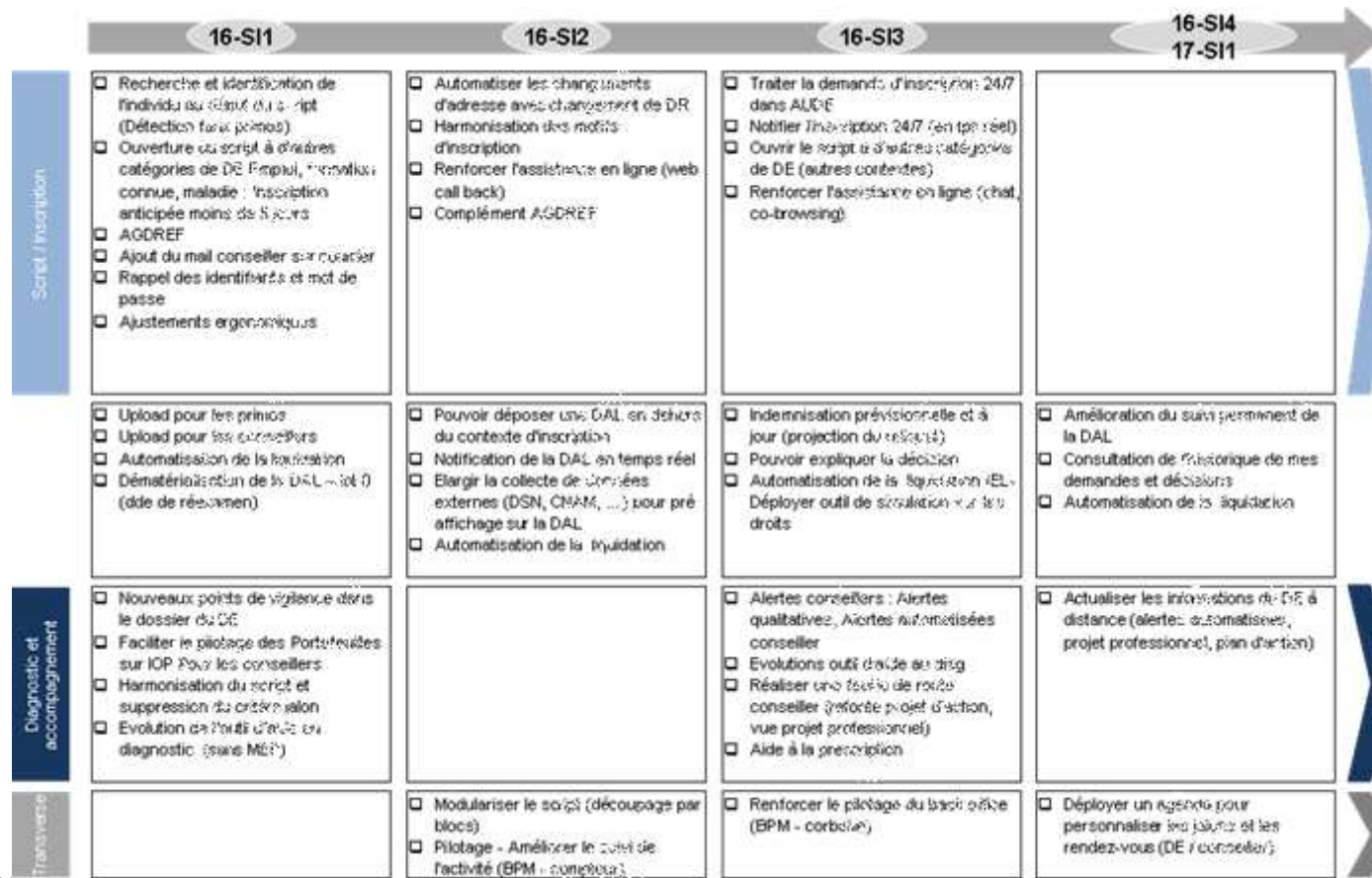
How do we stay focused on the program's objectives?

- **SAFe® talks about an agile release train, but we have difficulties defining what it is in our context.**

- **For the SAFe® pilot, we decide to have the train aligned with the business program.**

Action 2

- **Advantages**
  - **All dependencies within the train are perfectly addressed by SAFe® practices**

- **Drawbacks**
  - **There can be subsystems impacted by other projects/programs, and those technical and organizational dependencies are not addressed during the SAFe® PI planning.**
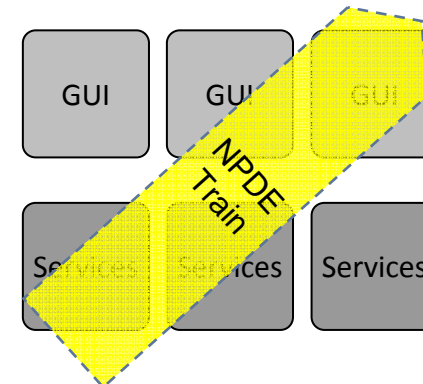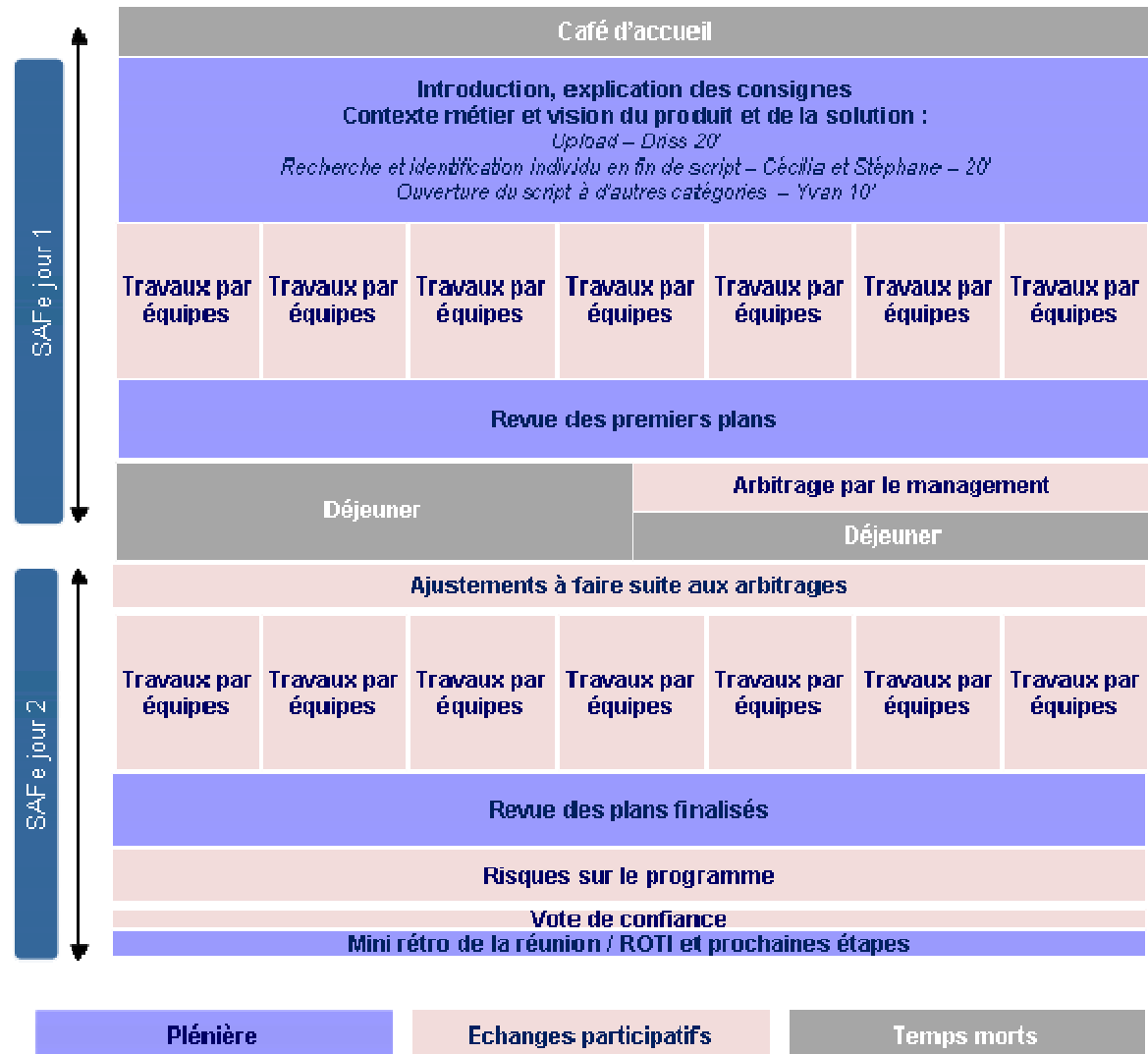
- **Note**
  - **We need to find solutions so we can manage the impacts from other programs/projects on the subsystems modified within the ART scope.**

GUI GUI GUI

NPDE Train

Services Services Services

pôle emploi

SAFe® is a registered mark of Scaled Agile, Inc.

How can we improve the effectiveness of our release planning meeting? (1/6)

Action 3

- **The PI planning meeting in SAFe® gives us lots of ideas…**

- **Idea 1 : SAFe® gives us a standard agenda that we customize to our needs.**

SAFe jour 1

Café d'accueil

Introduction, explication des consignes
Contexte métier et vision du produit et de la solution :
Upload – Dnss 20'
Recherche et identification individu en fin de script – Cécilia et Stéphane – 20'
Ouverture du script à d'autres catégories – Yvan 10'

| Travaux par équipes | Travaux par équipes | Travaux par équipes | Travaux par équipes | Travaux par équipes | Travaux par équipes | Travaux par équipes |

Revue des premiers plans

| Déjeuner | Arbitrage par le management |
| | Déjeuner |

SAFe jour 2

Ajustements à faire suite aux arbitrages

| Travaux par équipes | Travaux par équipes | Travaux par équipes | Travaux par équipes | Travaux par équipes | Travaux par équipes | Travaux par équipes |

Revue des plans finalisés

Risques sur le programme

Vote de confiance
Mini rétro de la réunion / ROTI et prochaines étapes

| Plénière | Echanges participatifs | Temps morts |

pôle emploi

How can we improve the effectiveness of our release planning meeting? (2/6)

- Idea 2 : SAFe® offers a template that teams can use to structure their plans

SAFe® is a registered mark of Scaled Agile, Inc.
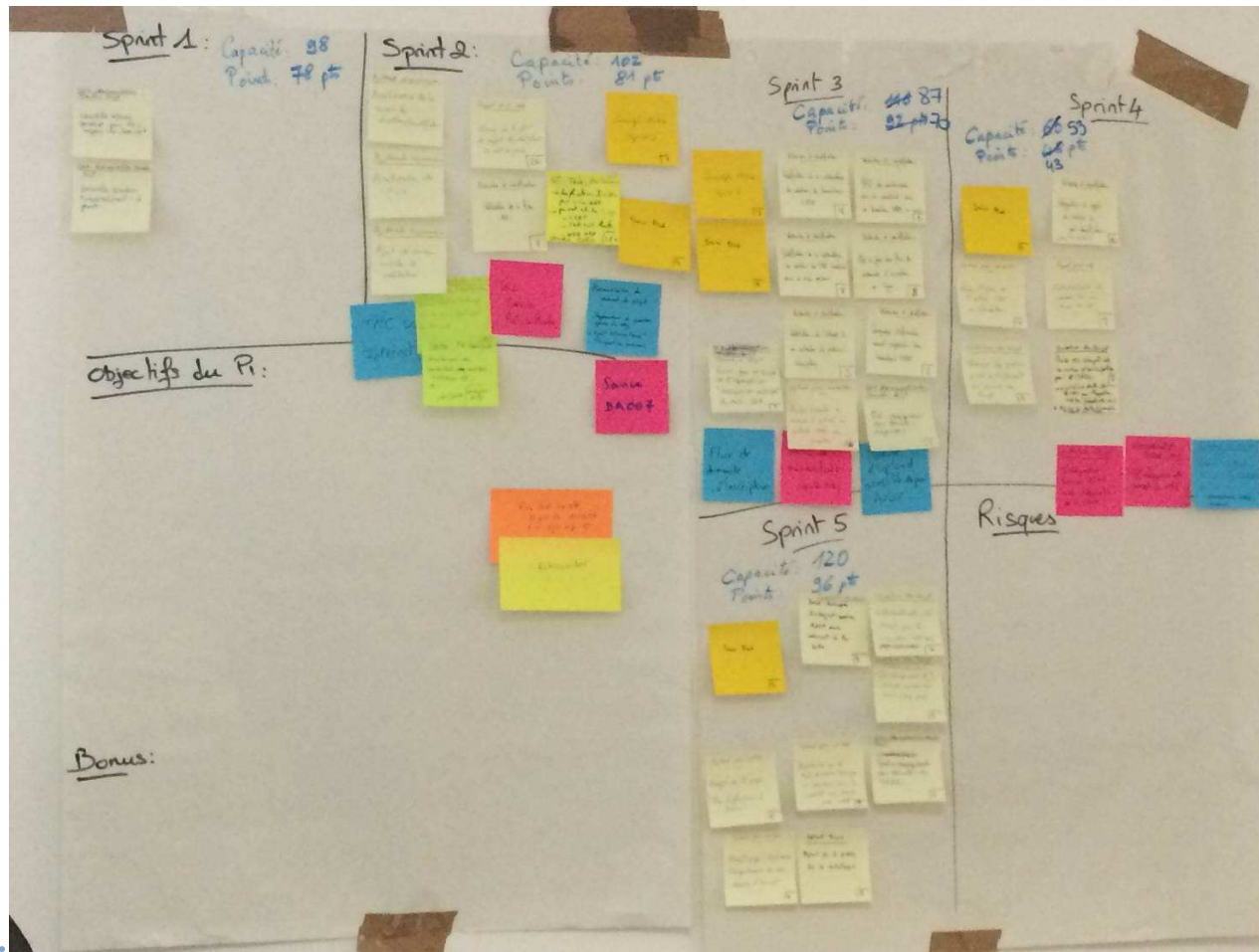
How can we improve the effectiveness of our release planning meeting? (3/6)

- **Idea 3 : SAFe® offers a template for the program to visualize the dependencies between the teams**

SAFe® is a registered mark of Scaled Agile, Inc.

How can we improve the effectiveness of our release planning meeting? (4/6)

- Idea 4 : SAFe® offers a way to identify, document and manage risks that teams may discover during the PI planning
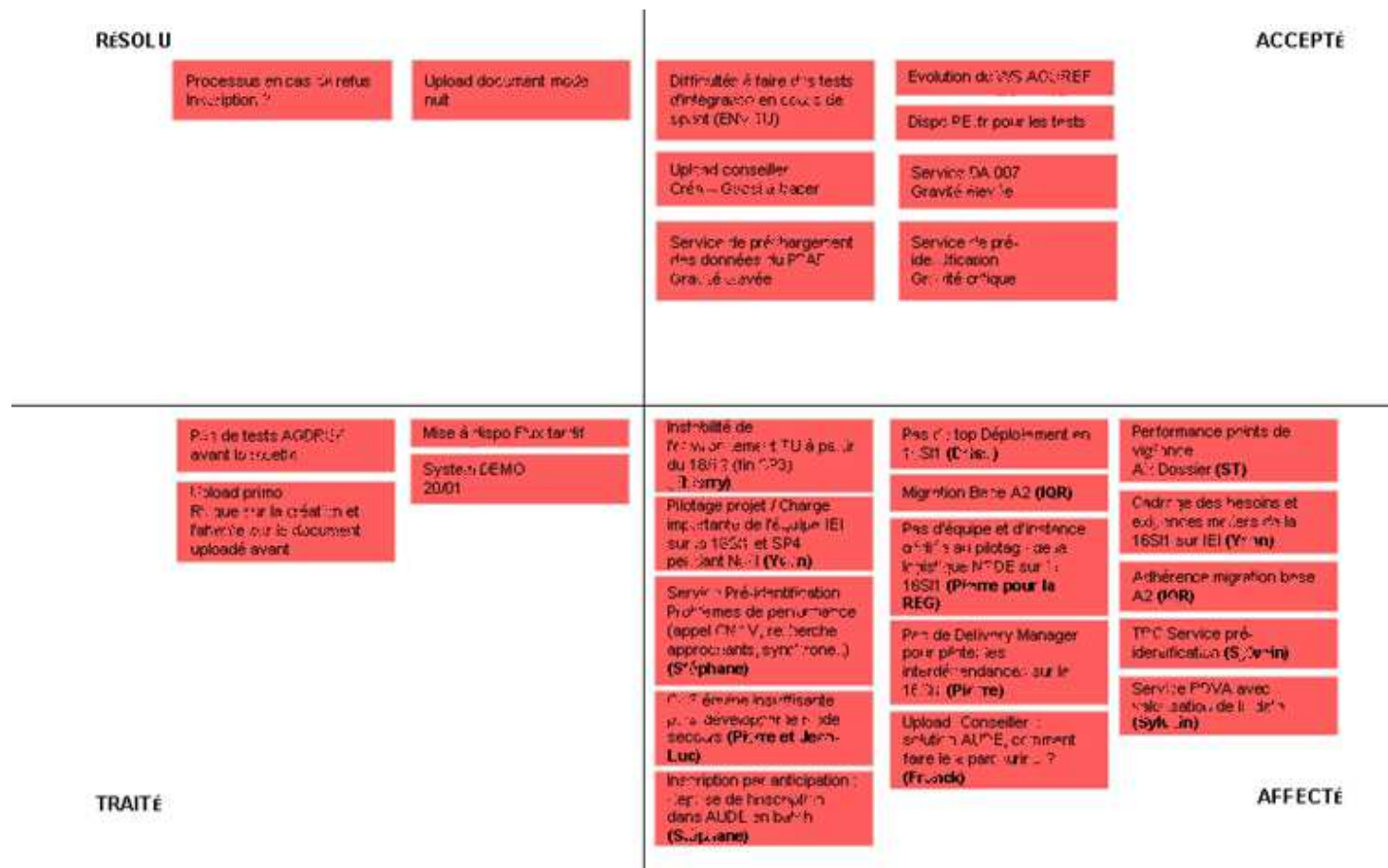
Results on NPDE boards

SAFe® is a registered mark of Scaled Agile, Inc.

How can we improve the effectiveness of our release planning meeting? (5/6)

- **Idea 5 : With SAFe®, the PI planning event should take place with everyone involved in the product's development**
  - **In addition to the participants identified for the March meeting, we invite the teams' POs and SMs, 3 people from our external supplier's team, a UX person, a statistics team representative, testers… totaling about 50 people**

NPDE picture

SAFe® is a registered mark of Scaled Agile, Inc.

How can we improve the effectiveness of our release planning meeting? (6/6)

- **We have already identified additional areas of improvement ...**
  - **Invite the business so that they can help us decide and re-prioritize the requirements as necessary**

  - **Better prepare the list of features before the meeting**

  - **Invite more people from the development teams to increase alignment and improve the planning reliability**

  - **Increase the team breakout times so that they are more confident with their final plans**

  - **Differentiate the SAFe® program increment from the IT release so that:**

    - **All the work the teams need to produce are included in the SAFe® PI planning, including the work that might not be going to production in the next IT release, as well as the work required to finalize the previous IT release**

    - **Work better on the dependencies between trains, for the products impacted by several business programs**
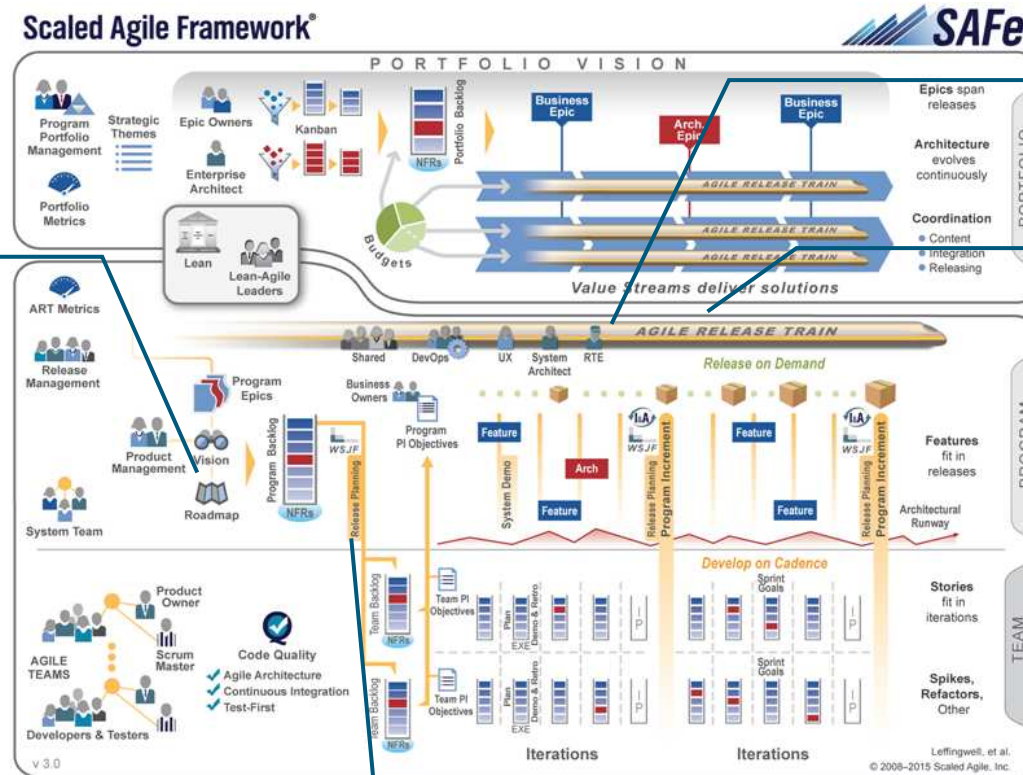
How can we improve progress tracking at the program level?

- **Identify the RTE role as defined in SAFe®**

  Action 4.1

  - **To build on our experience with the DM role, we choose an internal employee who already knows the technical implementation of the solution at a high level, which is the right level of understanding to be able to communicate with the different development teams.**

  - **His main responsibilities are better defined :**

    - **He works with the scrum masters to help concatenate progress at the features level and makes sure the dependencies between teams are managed**

    - **He escalates the issues that can not be dealt with at the teams level and manages the risks**

- **Scrum of scrums installment**

  Action 4.2

  - **We feel we still need the « project » level for tracking progress so we establish 2 scrum of scrums**

    - **At the project level : Each project has a project engineer (equivalent to RTE at the project level). The project engineer meets with the scrum masters and the people representing the other contributing teams**

    - **At the program level : The RTE meets with all project engineers and the system team scrum master to track dependencies and risks**

SAFe® is a registered mark of Scaled Agile, Inc.

Summary of the new SAFe® elements in use

Action 4.1 : RTE assigned

Action 1 : Roadmap improvements

Action 2 : Definition of the Agile Release Train

Action 4.2 : Scrum of scrums

Action 3 : First PI planning meeting on Nov. 18th

# And all the questions we continue to work on …

How do we manage to take the business further within Agility?

Could WSJF help our prioritization process?

Who should assume the Product Management role in our organization? PMs? Functional architects?

How can we move forward with the system team ?

Should we organize PO Sync ?

What do we need to do to start system demos earlier in the PI?
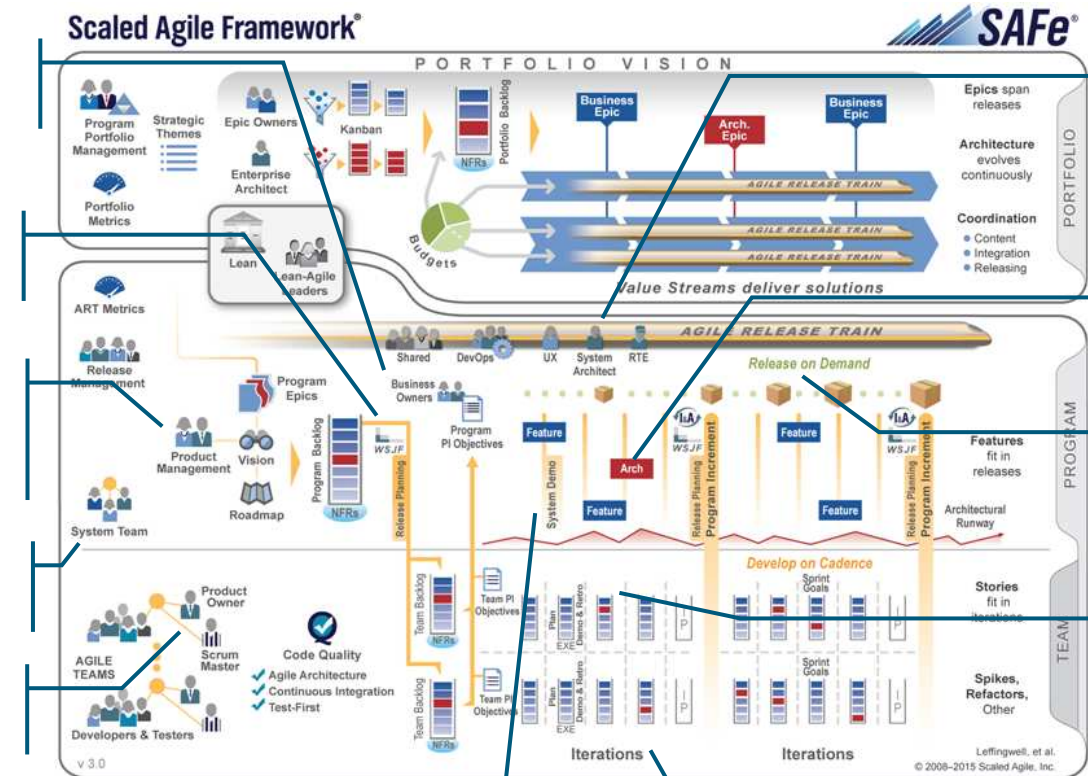
Who can be assigned the system architect role?

Who should deal with the enablers features and stories?

Will we be able to dissociate PI from our quarterly IT releases?

What do we need to do to move more teams to an agile cycle?

Will we manage to reduce the sprint size to 2 weeks one day?

Together, we improve and go further !

Addendum : Who are we?

pôle emploi

Pôle emploi is the French national employment agency

- **Pôle emploi's main missions are:**

  - **register unemployed people, help them find a job and provide them with financial aid**

  - **help companies find candidates for a job**

  - **help job seekers in their search for a job**

Pôle emploi is ...	Registrations and payment	Help people find a job
54 000 employees focused on employment	**6,3** millions registrations from job seekers	**408 000** companies use our services
905 local agencies, 145 specialized agencies and 69 services platforms	**31,7** billion Euros distributed to unemployed people and companies regarding unemployment insurance	**4** millions job offers published on pole-emploi.fr
	8 millions requests for financial aid processed	More than **4 000** forums and organized events
2014 data		**2,2** millions of successful job fulfillments

The IT environment

1 345	**connected geographical sites**
63 532	**workstations**
58 929	**telephones (ToIP)**
7 645	**open access terminals**
319	**video conference material**

2015 data