Reusing Objects

Reusing Objects in the Business Modeler

Objects (e.g. activities, organizational elements, systems or data) can be reused in the **Modeler**. **Definitions** or **occurrences** are used for this purpose.

A **definition of an object** contains the **content** of the object (for example, type and attributes) and its **relationships** and **assignments**. It is arranged in the **Explorer** folder structure and is visible there. The definition of an object is created the first time it is used in a model and can be identified by its name.

If an object is inserted in a model, e.g. by **copying/pasting** or **placing** from the **object panel**, an occurrence of the object is created that is visible in this model. **The occurrence** is a graphical representation of the object and therefore carries graphical information such as **symbol**, **appearance** or **attribute placements**. An occurrence is always assigned to exactly **one model** and **one object definition**.

If an object is **reused** (by simple copying), a new occurrence of the object is created. This can also happen several times in a model, for example, a role is used three times in different activities. Since all occurrences are assigned to the same object definition, all occurrences initially have the same attribute values. If you change an attribute, for example, the name of the role (or another attribute), this becomes visible in all occurrences in this model and in other models.

Special Aspects

- If you **delete** an occurrence, this has no effect on the definition.
- There can be definitions without occurrences, but no occurrences without definitions .
- If a definition is deleted, the tool warns you that all occurrences must also be deleted and that this may have an effect on many models.
- If an occurrence requires its own attribute, you can use a **linked attribute** to overwrite a value in the definition locally. This can be useful, for example, for transaction codes in the context of a process.
- In the **Explorer information** page and in the **occurrence panel**, you can see where and which occurrences exist for a definition.

Two Types of Copy

If an object is copied, you must decide how you want the object to be copied. A distinction is made between **2 types of copy**:

The Occurrence Copy:

- Only a **new** occurrence is created for an existing definition. Since this is the most desirable case of reuse, it is the **standard** copy method (for example, **Ctrl+C**, **Ctrl+V**, or copy the object definition from the **Explorer Structure Bar** and paste it inside the model).

The Definition Copy:

- In addition to the new occurrence, the definition is also copied here, **including** all attributes, but **without** its relationships or assignments.
- Since the name of the object is also copied, the new definition can only be distinguished from the old definition by its **date of origin** and, if applicable, by its **author**. This copy method can be activated by **Ctrl+C**, **Ctrl+Shift+V** or via the **toolbar**.

Special Aspects

- When you copy a **model**, you can also decide whether you only want to create **occurrence** copies or **definition** copies of all objects in the model.
- When a model is **moved** between folders, you can decide whether the **definitions** are also moved.
- If you have created a **definition copy** by mistake or if definitions prove to be logically identical afterwards, you can use the "**Consolidation**" function to **merge** two definitions into one.