Reference Tags in Sparx EA

How to Create

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1 Introduction
This document gives an overview of how reference tags can be created in Sparx EA tool.

2 How to Create Reference Tags
EA allows tags to be defined that hold a reference (held internally as a GUID) to either a single model element or to a list of model elements.

First, the tag must be created. This is done via the “Project/Settings/UML Types...” menu:

When the dialog opens, select the “Tagged Value Types” window:

Name the tag and give it a description. Next, in the “Detail” pane, start by pasting in some standard text.
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For a tag that can hold a reference to a single model element, paste the following:

```
Type=RefGUID;
Values=Type1,Type2;
Stereotypes=Stereotype1;
```

For a tag that can hold a reference to a multiple model elements, paste the following:

```
Type=RefGUIDList;
Values=Type1,Type2;
Stereotypes=Stereotype1;
```

This standard text should then be edited:

- In the “Values” line, replace Type1, Type2 by a comma-separated list of model element types that can be referenced in the tag. In the example screenshot above, the “reference” tag can only hold references to packages as determined by the “Values=Package;” setting.
- If you want to further restrict the model element types that can be selected by stereotype then set the “Stereotypes” line as appropriate. For no such restriction, delete this line. In the example screenshot above, the “reference” tag can only hold references to packages that have the stereotype «section» as determined by the “Stereotypes=section;” setting.

Once defined in this way, this reference tag definition can be used when defining tags as part of an MDG Profile. In the profile helper for a stereotype definition, open the “Tagged Values” window, right-click in the window and select “Add Specialized Tagged Value/Predefined”:

![Dialog box for adding specialized tagged value](image)

A dialog box will then be displayed that allows the defined reference tag to be selected:
When tags based on this definition are edited, EA presents a browser that will only allow the correct model element types to be selected. For example, in the diagram below the user has selected a package, “ACRE”. However, this package does not have the «section» stereotype and so the “OK” button is greyed out:

Compare this to the diagram below:
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Here the user has selected two packages that do have the «section» stereotype and so the “OK” button is usable. Pressing it adds references to the selected packages to the tag:

These references are actually held as GUIDs, but display the name of the referenced model element. This means that if the name is changed, the display will update with the changed name. The referenced elements’ names are displayed in the tag field of the properties dialog, as above, and also in any generated documentation.

3 Other Types of Predefined Tags

EA supports other types of predefined tags, apart from the reference tags described here, including spinners and colour pickers. For details, see the EA help documentation that can be read here:

http://sparxsystems.com/enterprise_architect_user_guide/12.1/building_models/predefinedtaggedvaluetypes.html