AEA by Ivory & Co.

Adaptive Enterprise Architecture (AEA)

Architecture Set Standard

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Enterprise Architecture began with the right intention: make complex organisations understandable enough that change could be deliberate rather than accidental.

The enterprise changed.

Businesses now operate through combinations of employees, contractors, partners, platforms, automation, intelligent agents, outsourced capability, distributed technology and relationships that extend well beyond formal organisational boundaries.

The result is not merely a more complicated organisation.

It is a different shape of enterprise.

Adaptive Enterprise Architecture was developed to describe that enterprise without assuming a particular operating model, organisational form, technology stack or fulfilment configuration.

AEA does not begin with systems, departments, roles or applications.

It begins with the business itself.

What is it trying to realise?

What business is being architected?

What must it be capable of doing?

Who and what does it relate to?

How is work performed?

How is identity and value expressed?

What could become possible?

What is actually true?

What must be understood?

Who or what participates?

What physical and technological enablement is required?

And what can be relied upon, under what conditions, and with what authority?

AEA provides eleven precision cuts through one enterprise.

The cuts are deliberately separate.

The enterprise is not.

> Precision of separation enables coherence of composition.

AEA is intended for the enterprise as it exists today and for the enterprise it may become tomorrow.

It does not assume work is human.

It does not assume technology is passive.

It does not assume capability resides inside the organisational boundary.

It does not assume authority, execution and intelligence reside in the same participant.

It does not prescribe a human-led, automated, hybrid or agentic operating model.

> AEA is stable enough to describe an enterprise that is not.

1.1 Purpose

This Standard defines the Adaptive Enterprise Architecture Set and the meta-rules, architecture-set principles, architecture boundaries and conformance requirements that govern its use.

It establishes the parent architecture within which the eleven AEA Architecture Standards operate.

1.2 Applicability

AEA may be applied to a legitimate enterprise boundary including:

- a business;
- an enterprise;
- a business unit;
- a portfolio;
- a controlled group of businesses;
- a defined operating entity;
- or another bounded enterprise context where the architecture can be established coherently.

AEA is designed to remain valid across different operating models and fulfilment configurations.

This includes enterprises in which work is fulfilled through combinations of:

- humans;
- agents;
- organisations;
- technology;
- outsourced providers;
- automated mechanisms;
- and hybrid arrangements.

1.3 What AEA Does Not Prescribe

AEA does not prescribe:

- a particular operating model;
- a technology architecture;
- a human-centric organisation design;

- an AI operating model;
- a maturity model;
- a transformation methodology;
- a strategic planning methodology;
- a process methodology;
- or a single implementation pattern.

AEA defines the architecture from which such configurations and renders may be constructed and tested.

AEA consists of eleven architectures organised as a Value Nucleus and an Operating Ring.

2.1 Value Nucleus

The Value Nucleus contains the architectures through which the enterprise establishes, performs, expresses, explores and understands the core propositions of the business.

Directional Architecture — Intent

Defines the strategic scope and choices that the business must be designed to realise.

Domain Architecture — Scope

Defines the business's value logic and the stable capabilities required to realise it.

Ecosystem Architecture — Interconnectedness

Defines the actors, relationships, exchanges and dependencies through which the enterprise creates, accesses, exchanges and sustains value.

Execution Architecture — Instructions

Defines the enterprise's instructions for how work is performed.

Expression Architecture — Individuality

Defines how the enterprise gives form to its identity and value for relevant audiences and contexts.

Possibility Architecture — Optionality

Defines how the enterprise systematically imagines, explores and preserves possibilities for its future as understanding develops.

Reality Architecture — Actuality

Defines the basis upon which the enterprise captures its actual position and the context necessary for that position to correspond with actuality across time.

2.2 Operating Ring

The Operating Ring contains the architectures through which the enterprise understands, participates, enables and establishes reliance around the Value Nucleus.

Intelligence Architecture — Understanding

Defines how the enterprise establishes, maintains and develops the understanding required by its architectures to operate across time and horizons.

Workforce Architecture — Participation

Defines how the enterprise composes the roles required to participate in its work and determines how those roles are sourced, fulfilled, structured and assigned to human, agent or organisational participants.

Environment Architecture — Enablement

Defines the physical and technological enablement required to execute the enterprise's instructions for delivering its intended outcomes.

Trust Architecture — Reliance

Defines the conditions under which reliance between parties is warranted, and how that reliance is established, maintained, changed, transferred, lost and restored over time.

2.3 Architectural Geometry

The Value Nucleus and Operating Ring are not sequential phases.

They operate concurrently.

The geometry exists to distinguish architectural proposition from operating condition, not to imply that one layer is subordinate to another.

The architecture is therefore represented as an interlocking system rather than a linear lifecycle.

Each architecture answers a distinct question.

AEA-Q01 — Directional Architecture Where is the enterprise choosing to go, within what strategic scope, and through what choices?

AEA-Q02 — Domain Architecture What business are we architecting, how does it create economic value, and what stable business abilities must exist for that value logic to operate?

AEA-Q03 — Ecosystem Architecture What Actors and Relationships must exist around the enterprise, what passes between them, and what Dependencies arise through that interconnectedness?

AEA-Q04 — Execution Architecture How is this work to be performed?

AEA-Q05 — Expression Architecture How should this enterprise express who it is and the value it offers, to this audience, in this context?

AEA-Q06 — Possibility Architecture What could become possible for the enterprise?

AEA-Q07 — Reality Architecture What is the enterprise's actual position?

AEA-Q08 — Intelligence Architecture What is required for the enterprise to understand what an architecture has determined must be understood?

AEA-Q09 — Workforce Architecture What participation is required, and who or what will fulfil it?

AEA-Q10 — Environment Architecture What physical and technological enablement must be provided, and how will that requirement be fulfilled, for the enterprise's instructions to be executable as intended?

AEA-Q11 — Trust Architecture What can be relied upon, under what conditions, and with what authority?

> No architecture shall answer another architecture's governing question.

AEA is designed for an enterprise in which fulfilment may be distributed across humans, agents, organisations, technology and combinations of them.

This is a design condition of the Standard, not a separate architecture.

AEA therefore does not assume:

- a Role is human;
- a Process is manually executed;
- software is passive;
- intelligence is produced only by people;
- capability resides within the enterprise boundary;
- execution and authority sit in the same participant;
- organisational structure describes delivery structure;
- or technical access constitutes authority.

The governing principle is:

> AEA architects the business proposition before determining the mechanism through which it is fulfilled, except where fulfilment is intrinsic to the proposition itself.

This allows AEA to remain valid as fulfilment models evolve.

The AEA Meta-Laws govern the Architecture Set itself.

They are normative.

AEA-M01 — Law of Singular Ownership

Every architectural proposition shall have one authoritative architectural home.

Consumption, measurement, interpretation, enablement, reliance, rendering or use by another architecture shall not transfer ownership.

AEA-M02 — Law of Semantic Precision

One defined AEA concept shall have one controlled meaning.

Different architectural propositions shall not be collapsed through ambiguous terminology.

AEA-M03 — Law of Structural Integrity

An architectural proposition shall not change architectural identity merely because another architecture consumes, measures, interprets, enables, constrains or relies upon it.

AEA-M04 — Law of Implementation Independence

An architectural proposition shall remain independent of the current human, organisational, technological or agentic mechanism through which it is fulfilled, except where fulfilment is intrinsic to the proposition.

AEA-M05 — Law of Scale Consistency

AEA architectural distinctions shall remain coherent across legitimate scales of enterprise application.

Scale may change the instance, resolution or boundary.

It shall not change the underlying architectural logic.

AEA-M06 — Law of Concurrent Architecture

The eleven architectures are distinct but not operationally independent.

Their propositions may operate concurrently and interact across the enterprise.

AEA-M07 — Law of Coherent Composition

Architectural separation exists to preserve meaning and ownership.

Cross-architecture composition may combine propositions without collapsing their architectural boundaries or ownership.

AEA-M08 — Law of Explicit Unknowns

Where an architectural proposition cannot be established, it shall remain explicitly unknown.

Architectural completeness shall not be manufactured through unsupported inference.

AEA-M09 — Law of Controlled Extensibility

AEA may evolve only where a proposed extension preserves semantic precision, ownership, boundaries and coherence across the Architecture Set.

A new concept shall not be added merely because it is useful.

Its architectural home and collision impact shall first be established.

AEA-M10 — Law of Model Agnosticism

AEA shall not prescribe a particular operating model or fulfilment configuration.

Operating models are configurations constructed from architectural propositions.

AEA-M11 — Law of Adaptive Stability

AEA shall remain sufficiently stable to describe an enterprise as its configuration changes.

The architecture shall not require redesign merely because its current implementation changes.

AEA-M12 — Law of Architectural Sufficiency

An architecture shall establish only the propositions necessary to answer its own governing question.

It shall not absorb another architecture's proposition merely because that proposition affects its operation.

AEA-M13 — Law of Architectural Interdependence

Architectural separation shall not be interpreted as enterprise separation.

The architectures are precision cuts through one enterprise and may materially influence one another.

> Precision of separation enables coherence of composition.

The following principles govern interaction across the eleven architectures.

AEA-S01 — Ownership Survives Cross-Architecture Use

The architecture that owns a proposition retains ownership when another architecture consumes, measures, renders, interprets or relies upon it.

AEA-S02 — State Is Not Identity

The owning architecture defines what an object is and what its states mean.

Reality captures the state the object is actually in.

AEA-S03 — Measure Definition Is Not Measured Actuality

The architecture owning the proposition owns the meaning of the measure.

Reality captures the actual observed or derived value.

Intelligence may own the derivation where required.

AEA-S04 — Requirements of Understanding Originate in the Source Architecture

The architecture requiring understanding shall establish what must be understood and why.

Intelligence shall architect the fulfilment required to establish that understanding.

AEA-S05 — Information About X Is Not X

Information, evidence, signals, confidence or understanding concerning an architectural object do not transfer ownership of that object to Intelligence.

AEA-S06 — Reality Captures; It Does Not Judge

Reality captures what is and what was.

It shall not determine whether Actuality is desirable, strategically aligned, trustworthy or worthy of action.

AEA-S07 — Reality Trajectory Is Retrospective

Reality may represent historical Position, Movement and Trajectory.

Forward projection shall not be represented as Reality.

AEA-S08 — Trust Is Relational and Contextual

Trust shall not be represented as a universal property of a party.

Reliance shall be contextual to who relies, upon whom or what, for what, under what conditions, to what extent and on what basis.

AEA-S09 — Authority Is Not Trust

Being trusted shall not confer Authority.

Being authorised shall not establish universal Trust.

AEA-S10 — Actor, Role and Participant Are Distinct

Actor belongs to Ecosystem Architecture.

Role and Participant belong to Workforce Architecture.

Execution establishes participation requirements.

> Actor "` Role "` Participant.

AEA-S11 — Workforce Has Four Orthogonal Structures

Workforce Architecture shall distinguish:

1. Delivery Structure 2. Organisation Structure 3. Authority Structure 4. Discipline Structure

No structure has inherent precedence over another.

AEA-S12 — Renders Do Not Become Native Architecture Objects by Composition

A Strategic Plan, BOAS, SOP, User Journey, Scenario Plan, Change Impact Assessment or other cross-architecture render shall not become a native object of an architecture merely because that architecture contributes substantially to it.

AEA-S13 — Cross-Architecture Composition Belongs to AEA in Action

The Published Standards shall define enough doctrine to support correct composition.

The method for assembling architectures for specific purposes belongs to AEA in Action unless formally promoted into the Standard.

AEA-S14 — AEA in Action Is Not a Standards Gap

The absence of a proprietary implementation, traversal, rendering or application method from a Published Standard shall not be treated as an architecture doctrine gap.

Adaptive Enterprise Architecture (AEA)

The architecture system defined by this Standard and its eleven child Architecture Standards for describing the enterprise independently of its current operating model and implementation.

Architecture Set

The complete set of eleven AEA Architectures governed by this parent Standard.

Architecture

A bounded architectural perspective that owns a distinct class of enterprise proposition and answers a defined governing question.

Architectural Proposition

A formally defined statement, object, condition, relationship or rule owned by an AEA architecture.

Architectural Ownership

The authoritative home in which the identity and meaning of an architectural proposition are defined.

Value Nucleus

The group of seven AEA architectures comprising Directional, Domain, Ecosystem, Execution, Expression, Possibility and Reality.

Operating Ring

The group of four AEA architectures comprising Intelligence, Workforce, Environment and Trust.

Native Object

An architectural object whose identity and meaning are defined within a particular architecture.

Render

A purpose-specific representation composed from one or more architectural propositions.

AEA in Action

The governed application layer through which architectural propositions are traversed, assembled, compared or rendered for a specific enterprise purpose.

Source Architecture

The architecture that owns the proposition giving rise to a cross-architecture requirement or use.

Requirement of Understanding

A requirement established by a source architecture identifying what must be understood and why.

Intelligence Fulfilment Requirement

The Intelligence Architecture requirement defining what is necessary to establish the Understanding requested by a source architecture.

Actuality

What is or was actually the case for an architecturally material proposition in its relevant context.

Reliance

The warranted dependence one party may place upon another party or proposition within a defined Reliance Context.

Participant

A human, agent or organisation fulfilling participation in enterprise work.

Hybrid Enterprise

An enterprise in which work, participation, intelligence, enablement or fulfilment may be distributed across humans, agents, organisations, technology and combinations of them.

The AEA Architecture Set consists of the following normative child standards:

1. Directional Architecture Standard 2. Domain Architecture Standard 3. Ecosystem Architecture Standard 4. Execution Architecture Standard 5. Expression Architecture Standard 6. Possibility Architecture Standard 7. Reality Architecture Standard 8. Intelligence Architecture Standard 9. Workforce Architecture Standard 10. Environment Architecture Standard 11. Trust Architecture Standard

Each child Standard shall:

- inherit this parent Standard;
- preserve the AEA Meta-Laws;
- preserve the Architecture Set Principles;
- define its own scope;
- define its native model;
- define controlled vocabulary;
- define normative principles;
- define conformance criteria;
- define non-conformance conditions;
- distinguish informative guidance from normative requirements;
- and preserve cross-architecture ownership boundaries.

Where a child Standard conflicts with this parent Standard, the conflict shall be resolved through AEA Governance before publication or release.

An enterprise, model, implementation, architecture package or AI system shall not claim conformance with AEA solely because it uses AEA terminology.

Conformance requires preservation of the architecture system.

At minimum, a conformant application shall:

1. recognise all eleven AEA architectures as the complete Architecture Set; 2. preserve each architecture's governing question; 3. preserve architectural ownership; 4. preserve the Value Nucleus and Operating Ring distinction; 5. preserve the AEA Meta-Laws; 6. preserve the Architecture Set Principles; 7. distinguish source propositions from cross-architecture use; 8. distinguish object identity from actual state; 9. distinguish measure definition from measured Actuality; 10. distinguish Understanding from Actuality; 11. distinguish Intelligence confidence from Trust Reliance; 12. distinguish Authority from Trust; 13. distinguish Actor, Role and Participant; 14. preserve the four Workforce Structures; 15. prevent a current implementation from redefining an architecture proposition without architectural basis; 16. preserve explicit unknowns where propositions cannot be established; 17. distinguish native architecture objects from cross-architecture renders; 18. identify AEA in Action where cross-architecture composition occurs; 19. preserve controlled terminology; 20. and comply with the applicable child Architecture Standards for the scope being claimed.

An application is non-conformant with the AEA Architecture Set where it:

- uses AEA architecture names while redefining their governing questions;
- assigns the same architectural proposition to more than one architecture;
- transfers ownership merely because another architecture consumes a proposition;

· treats current implementation as architectural identity;
· treats a system, person, agent or organisation as a Capability merely because it currently fulfils one;
· treats a Relationship as Trust;
· treats Dependency as warranted Reliance;
· treats Authority as Trust;
· treats technical access as Authority;
· treats information confidence as a Trust Score;
· treats a Role as an Ecosystem Actor;
· treats an Actor Type as an Audience Segment;
· treats a future projection as Reality;
· treats a Hypothesis as an adopted strategic choice;
· treats a cross-architecture render as a native architecture object without formal architectural basis;
· manufactures missing architectural propositions through inference;
· introduces a new architecture or cross-cutting concept without testing semantic collision and ownership;
· or claims AEA conformance while omitting architecture boundaries necessary to the claimed scope.

AEA does not prescribe an operating model.

An operating model is a configured expression of enterprise architecture for a particular business context.

A conventional human-led operating model, a digitally enabled model, an outsourced model, a platform model, a hybrid model and an agentic model may all be described through the same Architecture Set.

The architecture remains stable while fulfilment changes.

For example, replacing human execution with agent execution may change:

· Workforce Participant Type;
· Environment runtime;
· Trust Reliance Conditions;
· Execution Variant;
· and Reality state

without necessarily changing the Domain Capability.

If a change in fulfilment requires the business architecture itself to be rewritten, the original architecture may have described implementation rather than the business proposition.

AEA in Action applies the Architecture Set to a purpose.

It may construct or support:

· Strategic Plans;
· BOAS;
· SOPs;
· User Journeys;
· Scenario Plans;
· Change Impact Assessments;
· Operating Models;
· diagnostic views;
· capability views;

· workforce views;
· technology enablement models;
· Trust assessments;
· and other purpose-specific renders.

The relevant architectural propositions retain their original ownership within those renders.

AEA in Action may contain proprietary application, traversal, assembly, diagnostic and rendering methods not contained within the Published Standards.

AEA Governance governs the Standards system itself.

It establishes:

· version control;
· document authority;
· approval;
· publication;
· conformance governance;
· change control;
· extension rules;
· terminology control;
· release status;
· archive treatment;
· and supersession.

AEA Governance is distinct from the governance structures represented inside an enterprise.

No enterprise Participant, Role or Authority Structure gains authority over the AEA Standards merely because it uses them.

The AEA publication system distinguishes:

Normative content — binding requirements, definitions, principles, models, scope and conformance rules.

Informative content — explanation, rationale, examples, commentary and guidance.

Informative content may aid interpretation.

It shall not override normative content.

Where informative commentary appears inconsistent with a normative statement, the normative statement governs.

Each AEA child Architecture Standard should use the following publication anatomy:

1. Front Matter 2. Informative Foreword / Thesis 3. Normative Scope and Applicability 4. Normative Architecture Model 5. Normative Principles 6. Normative Controlled Definitions 7. Normative Architecture Boundaries 8. Normative Conformance Criteria 9. Normative Non-Conformance Criteria 10. Informative Application Guidance or Companion Reference 11. Governance / Citation / Version Information

The Published Standard may remain concise where detailed schemas, construction protocols, native renders or AEA in Action methods belong downstream.

AEA-P01 — Authority Through Precision

Normative content shall be short, precise and testable.

AEA-P02 — Explanation Without Dilution

Informative content may be provocative, explanatory or editorial, but shall not weaken or alter normative meaning.

AEA-P03 — Executive Skim Path

The Set and each child Standard should permit the core architecture to be understood through its model, governing question, principles and conformance logic without requiring sequential reading of every explanatory section.

AEA-P04 — Machine Addressability

Normative rules should be uniquely addressable so they can be cited by people, governance systems and AI.

AEA-P05 — Technology-Agnostic Durability

Published language should remain valid beyond current technology categories wherever the architectural proposition itself is technology-independent.

AEA-P06 — Contemporary Applicability

Where examples are used, they should reflect the operating conditions of modern enterprises, including human, organisational, digital, automated and agentic participation, without making the Standard dependent upon one technology era.

AI may assist the application, interrogation, testing and traversal of AEA.

AI shall not:

- redefine architecture ownership;
- invent missing architectural propositions;
- collapse distinct AEA terms;
- treat inference as established architecture;
- override governance authority;
- convert current implementation into architectural identity;
- or expose proprietary AEA in Action methods as though they were normative Standard doctrine.

AI shall preserve the distinction between:

architecture !’ actuality !’ understanding !’ reliance !’ action

where those distinctions are relevant to the application.

The following items remain governance and publication work rather than architecture doctrine gaps:

- final document identifiers;
- final owning authority wording;
- licence;
- formal citation convention;
- controlled glossary publication;
- final cross-standard numbering;
- final visual schematic;

· release metadata;
· and archive/supersession treatment.

No architecture doctrine gap is currently identified that prevents preparation of AEA v1.0.0 for publication.

Adaptive Enterprise Architecture provides a coherent architecture for describing the modern enterprise independently of its current operating model and implementation.

It consists of eleven architectures:

Directional — Intent

Domain — Scope

Ecosystem — Interconnectedness

Execution — Instructions

Expression — Individuality

Possibility — Optionality

Reality — Actuality

Intelligence — Understanding

Workforce — Participation

Environment — Enablement

Trust — Reliance

The architectures are distinct so that meaning, ownership and boundaries remain precise.

They are interconnected because the enterprise itself is interconnected.

AEA therefore does not attempt to create one giant model of everything.

It creates eleven precise architectural propositions that can be composed without being collapsed.

No architecture answers another architecture's question.

No implementation defines the architecture merely because it is current.

No use of a proposition transfers its ownership.

No unknown becomes known simply because completeness is desirable.

No operating model is prescribed by the Standard.

This is what allows the same architecture to describe the enterprise as its people, technology, relationships, processes, environments, intelligence and fulfilment models continue to change.

AEA is stable enough to describe an enterprise that is not.