AEA by Ivory & Co.

Directional Architecture Standard

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1. Definition

> Directional Architecture defines the strategic scope and choices that the business must be designed to realise.

Directional Architecture is the architecture of Intent.

Its governing question is:

> Where is the enterprise choosing to go, within what strategic scope, and through what choices?

Directional Architecture establishes the destination, strategic envelope and choices against which the rest of the enterprise can be designed.

It does not perform the analysis that discovers possibilities, capture the enterprise's actual position, define the stable Capabilities required, or execute the work.

Its concern is the strategic choice itself.

> Strategy-as-choice belongs in Directional Architecture. Strategy-as-analysis, strategy-as-design, strategy-as-delivery and strategy-as-measurement do not.

2. Why Directional Architecture Exists

An enterprise cannot be coherently designed without knowing what it is trying to realise.

Direction must therefore precede detailed enterprise design.

Directional Architecture establishes:

- why the enterprise exists;
- what it intends to become;
- what it ultimately intends to cause externally;
- the direction it is committing to pursue;
- the strategic scope within which it will operate;
- the strategic and commercial choices it has made;
- what it deliberately excludes;
- the intended basis of Competitive Advantage;
- and the guardrails within which movement remains coherent.

These propositions establish the strategic scope against which Domain, Ecosystem, Expression, Workforce, Environment, Execution and the wider Architecture Set can be designed.

> Direction sets the scope of the enterprise design problem, not merely its heading.

3. Purpose

Purpose defines why the enterprise exists.

Purpose establishes the enduring reason for the enterprise's existence beyond a particular

plan, initiative or near-term target.

Purpose should not be confused with:

- Vision;
- Mission;
- Ultimate Outcome;
- a financial target;
- a marketing statement;
- or a Capability purpose.

Purpose may inform the enterprise's Directional Intent and strategic choices without prescribing every future choice.

4. Mission

Mission defines the enterprise's enduring undertaking in pursuit of its Purpose.

Mission describes what the enterprise is fundamentally committed to doing.

It provides a bridge between Purpose and the more specific strategic choices through which Direction is realised.

Mission is not an operational process description.

Execution remains responsible for how work is performed.

5. Vision

Vision defines what the enterprise intends to become.

It is an internally referential future-state proposition concerning the enterprise itself.

Vision answers:

> What do we intend this enterprise to become?

Vision is distinct from Ultimate Outcome.

The enterprise may become something in order to cause something beyond itself.

Those are different propositions and must remain separate.

6. Ultimate Outcome

Ultimate Outcome defines what the enterprise ultimately intends to cause externally.

It is the outward consequence the enterprise seeks to create through becoming and operating as intended.

Ultimate Outcome answers:

> What do we ultimately intend to cause beyond the enterprise?

The distinction is:

> Vision — what the enterprise intends to become.
>
> Ultimate Outcome — what the enterprise ultimately intends to cause externally.

Neither should be collapsed into the other.

7. Directional Intent

Directional Intent expresses the enterprise's committed direction of movement.

It connects the enterprise's enduring Purpose, Mission, Vision and Ultimate Outcome to the strategic choices required in the relevant horizon.

Directional Intent should be sufficiently clear to guide architecture while remaining durable enough not to become a list of initiatives.

It establishes the intended direction against which movement and architectural coherence can later be assessed.

8. Strategic Scope

Strategic Scope defines the strategic envelope within which the enterprise chooses to operate.

It establishes both inclusion and exclusion.

Strategic Scope may concern:

- markets;
- customer or beneficiary domains;
- geographies;
- industries;
- business activities;
- economic mechanisms;
- product or service spaces;
- value propositions;
- channels;
- partnerships;
- ownership positions;
- or other strategically material boundaries.

This is not a closed taxonomy.

The essential proposition is:

> Strategic Scope states both where the enterprise chooses to play and where it deliberately chooses not to play.

Scope prevents Directional Architecture from becoming aspiration without boundary.

9. Strategic Thesis

A Strategic Thesis expresses the enterprise's reasoned proposition about how its chosen direction and strategic choices are expected to create the intended advantage and outcomes.

It connects strategic choices into a coherent proposition rather than leaving them as unrelated decisions.

A Strategic Thesis may be informed by understanding established through Intelligence and possibilities explored through Possibility.

Directional owns the adopted thesis.

It does not own the underlying evidence, actuality or hypotheses merely because they informed the choice.

10. Strategy as Choice

Within AEA, Strategy is treated principally as choice.

A strategic choice establishes a material commitment about what the enterprise will pursue, prioritise, exclude or configure in order to realise its Directional Intent.

The governing boundary is:

> Strategy-as-choice belongs in Directional Architecture.

The following do not become Directional objects merely because they are commonly called “strategy”:

- market analysis;
- environmental scanning;
- scenario analysis;
- strategic planning processes;
- implementation plans;
- transformation programs;
- performance reporting;
- strategic dashboards;
- or delivery roadmaps.

Those activities or renders may consume Directional Architecture without being owned by it.

11. Strategic Choices

A Strategic Choice is a material choice that shapes the enterprise the business must be designed to realise.

Strategic Choices may concern:

- where to compete;
- how to compete;
- what to prioritise;
- what to exclude;
- what economic mechanisms to pursue;
- what Route to Market to adopt;
- where to grow;
- what to scale;
- what to own;
- what to access through others;
- or another materially directional proposition.

The choice must be sufficiently material to affect enterprise design.

Routine operational decisions do not become Directional merely because they involve choice.

12. Commercial Choices

Commercial Choices are Directional choices concerning the commercial posture through which the enterprise intends to realise its strategy.

They may concern matters such as:

- commercial model;
- pricing posture;
- ownership posture;
- monetisation direction;

· market participation;
· partnership posture;
· or another strategically material commercial commitment.

Detailed Business Model architecture remains Domain.

Actual pricing or commercial performance remains outside Directional where it concerns execution or actuality.

Directional establishes the commercial choice. Domain establishes the resulting value logic where that choice affects Business Model architecture.

13. Route-to-Market Choice

A Route-to-Market Choice is the strategic choice concerning the pathway through which the enterprise intends to reach, transact with or serve relevant markets or audiences.

Route to Market spans several architectures and must be separated by proposition.

Directional — strategic Route-to-Market choice

Ecosystem — Actors, Relationships, Exchanges and Dependencies required by that route

Expression — how Enterprise Identity and value are expressed through the route

Execution — work performed through it

Environment — physical and technological enablement supporting it

Directional does not own every object involved in the route.

It owns the strategic choice of route.

14. Competitive Advantage

Competitive Advantage within Directional Architecture defines the intended basis upon which the enterprise chooses to be advantaged relative to relevant alternatives.

Directional owns the intended basis of advantage.

Domain determines which Capabilities must differentiate in order for that intended advantage to be realisable.

Directional defines the intended basis of Competitive Advantage. Domain identifies the Capabilities that must differentiate to support it.

A Capability is not automatically Differentiating because it performs well or is strategically important.

Its Differentiating posture must trace to the intended basis of Competitive Advantage.

Actual evidence that an advantage exists is a Reality proposition supported by relevant Intelligence.

15. Growth and Scale Choices

Directional Architecture may establish choices concerning how and where the enterprise intends to grow or scale.

Growth and Scale Choices may concern:

· market expansion;
· business model expansion;

- geographic expansion;
- portfolio expansion;
- replication;
- leverage;
- distribution;
- acquisition;
- licensing;
- partnership;
- or another strategic mechanism.

Possibility may explore candidate growth options.

Directional owns the adopted choice.

Domain, Ecosystem, Workforce, Environment, Execution and other architectures then determine what must be designed to realise it.

16. Strategic Trade-offs

A Strategic Trade-off makes explicit what the enterprise is prepared to sacrifice, constrain, defer or exclude in order to preserve a more important strategic choice.

Trade-offs are essential because strategy without exclusion can collapse into an accumulation of ambitions.

A trade-off may concern:

- market breadth;
- speed;
- margin;
- control;
- ownership;
- customisation;
- scale;
- optionality;
- investment;
- experience;
- or another strategically material dimension.

A strategic choice becomes more architecturally useful when its trade-offs are visible.

17. Goals and Targets

Goals and Targets may belong to Directional Architecture where they represent explicit directional commitments.

A Goal expresses a desired result that the enterprise commits to pursue.

A Target expresses a defined level, threshold or point the enterprise intends to reach.

The target definition may therefore be Directional where it establishes strategic commitment.

The actual measured value is Reality.

Intelligence may establish the information or derivation required to understand progress.

Directional may define the target. Reality captures where the enterprise actually is against it.

Not every metric or operational threshold is Directional.

Operational performance measures remain with their owning architecture.

18. Values Guardrails

Values Guardrails define enduring values-based boundaries within which the enterprise intends to act.

They constrain permissible strategic movement.

Values Guardrails are Directional because they shape what choices remain acceptable regardless of whether a particular option appears commercially attractive.

They do not by themselves establish Trust.

Trust may use consistency between stated Values Guardrails and actual behaviour as an Integrity Condition or Trust Indicator.

Directional owns the Values Guardrail. Reality captures behaviour. Trust determines the reliance consequence.

19. Directional Guardrails

Directional Guardrails establish strategic boundaries that constrain how the enterprise may pursue its Directional Intent.

They may arise from:

- Values;
- strategic scope;
- ownership principles;
- risk appetite where established through the appropriate architecture;
- capital principles;
- commercial principles;
- or another adopted strategic constraint.

Directional Guardrails define permissible strategic movement.

They do not prescribe the detailed operational controls used to enforce them.

20. Coherence Boundaries

A Coherence Boundary defines the point beyond which a proposed strategic movement would cease to remain coherent with established Directional Architecture.

Coherence may be tested against:

- Purpose;
- Mission;
- Vision;
- Ultimate Outcome;
- Directional Intent;
- Strategic Scope;
- Strategic Choices;
- Trade-offs;
- Values Guardrails;
- or other Directional propositions.

A proposal may be attractive yet directionally incoherent.

That does not mean it is objectively bad.

It means it conflicts with the direction currently adopted by the enterprise.

21. Permitted and Excluded Movement

Directional Architecture may explicitly define:

- movement that remains permitted within established direction;
- movement that requires reconsideration of Directional Architecture;
- and movement that is excluded by current strategic choices or guardrails.

This enables enterprise change to be assessed without treating every adaptation as a strategy change.

> Not every course correction changes the destination or strategic scope.

Where movement remains inside established Directional boundaries, the enterprise may adapt through other architectures without reopening Directional Architecture.

22. Course-Correction Rules

Course-Correction Rules establish the conditions under which the enterprise may adjust its path while preserving its Directional Intent.

They support adaptation without strategic drift.

A course correction may respond to:

- new Actuality;
- new Understanding;
- changed external conditions;
- emerging possibilities;
- constraints;
- execution learning;
- or another material development.

The rule does not predetermine the new choice.

It establishes when reconsideration is warranted.

> Hold the destination and strategic intent distinctly from the path used to reach them.

23. Directional Architecture and Reality

Reality Architecture captures the enterprise's actual Position.

Directional Architecture establishes the intended direction from that Position.

> Reality answers: Where are we actually?
>
> Directional answers: Where are we choosing to go, and within what strategic scope?

Reality does not choose the destination.

Directional does not redefine Actuality to make the chosen direction appear more plausible.

Actual performance against Directional Goals or Targets remains Reality.

The strategic commitment represented by the Goal or Target remains Directional.

24. Directional Architecture and Intelligence

Directional Architecture originates Requirements of Understanding where strategic choice requires understanding.

Intelligence Architecture architects the fulfilment of those requirements.

Directional may require understanding of:

- current strategic position;
- customers;
- competitors;
- economics;
- capabilities;
- relationships;
- performance;
- external conditions;
- or another proposition relevant to choice.

The underlying subject remains owned by its source architecture.

Intelligence establishes the Understanding required.

Directional uses that Understanding to make strategic choices.

> Directional determines what it needs to understand in order to choose. Intelligence establishes how that Understanding is formed.

Intelligence does not make the strategic choice merely because it assembles the understanding required for it.

25. Directional Architecture and Possibility

Possibility Architecture expands and explores the enterprise's future option space.

Directional Architecture makes the strategic choice.

> Possibility asks: What could become possible?
>
> Directional asks: What are we choosing to pursue?

A Possibility Hypothesis does not become Directional merely because it is strategically interesting.

It becomes Directional when the enterprise adopts the relevant choice or commitment.

Waypoints used to explore possible futures remain Possibility where they are hypotheses or option-space devices.

Directional Goals and Targets remain Directional where they are adopted commitments.

> Possibility expands the option space. Directional narrows it through choice.

26. Directional Architecture and Domain

Directional establishes the strategic scope and choices the business must be designed to realise.

Domain establishes the Business Models, Value Chains and Capabilities required to realise them.

The handoff is:

> Directional strategic choice !’ Domain business scope

Directional does not own the Capability Model.

Domain does not independently determine strategic direction.

Competitive Advantage provides a specific interlock:

> Directional defines the intended basis of advantage !’ Domain determines which Capabilities must differentiate.

27. Directional Architecture and Ecosystem

Directional choices may determine which markets, channels, partnership models or external arrangements the enterprise intends to pursue.

Ecosystem establishes the Actors, Relationships, Exchanges and Dependencies required around those choices.

Route to Market illustrates the boundary:

> Directional chooses the route. Ecosystem establishes the relationship network through which the route operates.

Directional does not acquire Actor or Relationship ownership because it chooses a strategy requiring them.

28. Directional Architecture and Expression

Directional establishes strategic identity propositions and choices that Expression may need to make perceptible.

Expression establishes how Enterprise Identity and value are expressed to relevant audiences and contexts.

Directional owns strategic Route-to-Market choice.

Expression owns Route-to-Market expression.

Directional may establish Values Guardrails.

Expression may express those values.

Reality may capture whether actual experience corresponds.

Trust may determine the reliance consequence.

> Strategic identity and choice inform Expression without transferring ownership of Directional propositions.

29. Directional Architecture and Execution

Directional defines what the enterprise chooses to realise.

Execution defines how work is performed.

A strategic choice is not an Instruction.

A Strategic Plan is not the same thing as Directional Architecture.

Execution may operationalise Directional choices through Process Modules, Operational Policies or other instruction structures.

> Direction establishes strategic intent and choice. Execution establishes work.

Direction also does not confer Workforce Authority.

30. Directional Architecture and Workforce

Directional choices may create implications for:

- Roles;
- sourcing;
- Participant Types;
- Workforce Structures;
- skills;
- or other participation propositions.

Workforce Architecture determines how those implications are architected.

Directional does not assign people merely because it sets a priority.

Direction "` Authority.

A Directional proposition may establish what must be pursued.

Workforce Authority Structure establishes who holds binding decision rights in execution.

31. Directional Architecture and Environment

Directional choices may create physical or technological implications.

A choice to digitise, automate, expand geographically, establish a physical presence or adopt another operating mechanism may create Environment Requirements.

Environment owns those requirements and their fulfilment.

Directional chooses what the enterprise will pursue. Environment determines the physical and technological enablement required by the adopted work.

Technology availability does not independently determine Directional choice.

32. Directional Architecture and Trust

Directional Architecture may establish Values Guardrails, commitments and strategic propositions that affect Trust.

Trust Architecture owns warranted Reliance.

Consistency between Directional representations and Actuality may become a Trust Indicator or Integrity Condition.

Directional establishes the commitment. Reality captures what actually occurs. Trust determines the reliance consequence.

Trust may also constrain strategic choice where the enterprise cannot warrant the reliance required for a proposed direction.

That constraint does not transfer Trust ownership to Directional.

33. Strategic Planning

Strategic Planning is not a native Directional Architecture object.

Strategic planning is a purpose-specific cross-architecture activity and render.

It may require:

- Directional Architecture for existing strategic intent and choices;
- Reality Architecture for actual Position;
- Intelligence Architecture for Understanding;
- Possibility Architecture for future hypotheses and option space;
- Domain Architecture for business scope and Capability implications;
- and other architectures as relevant.

Intelligence enables the Understanding required for the planning activity.

AEA in Action performs the cross-architecture composition.

The resulting Strategic Plan is therefore a cross-architecture render.

Directional contributes strategic choice. It does not own the entire strategic planning mechanism.

34. Strategic Plan

A Strategic Plan may record or render adopted Directional choices together with the cross-architecture implications, actions, measures, horizons or other propositions required for a particular planning purpose.

It is not itself Directional Architecture.

The Directional propositions inside the plan remain Directional.

Reality propositions remain Reality.

Possibility hypotheses remain Possibility until adopted.

Capability implications remain Domain.

Execution work remains Execution.

A document containing Directional Architecture does not become a Directional object merely because Direction is prominent within it.

35. Directional Architecture and AEA in Action

AEA in Action may combine Directional Architecture with the wider Architecture Set to construct:

- Strategic Plans;
- strategy maps;
- portfolio views;
- transformation views;
- operating model views;
- investment views;
- growth pathways;
- change impact assessments;
- or other purpose-specific renders.

Directional contributes the adopted strategic propositions.

Intelligence enables the Understanding required for composition.

AEA in Action performs the composition.

Proprietary methods for comparing, traversing or assembling architectural propositions remain in AEA in Action rather than the Published Standard.

36. Governing Principles

Directional Architecture is the architecture of Intent.

Directional Architecture defines the strategic scope and choices that the business must be designed to realise.

Direction sets the scope of the enterprise design problem, not merely its heading.

Purpose defines why the enterprise exists.

Vision defines what the enterprise intends to become.

Ultimate Outcome defines what the enterprise ultimately intends to cause externally.

Vision "` Ultimate Outcome.

Strategic Scope establishes inclusion and exclusion.

Strategy-as-choice belongs in Directional Architecture. Strategy-as-analysis, strategy-as-design, strategy-as-delivery and strategy-as-measurement do not.

Strategic choice must be material enough to affect enterprise design.

Directional owns strategic Route-to-Market choice.

Directional defines the intended basis of Competitive Advantage. Domain identifies the Capabilities that must differentiate to support it.

Strategic Trade-offs make exclusion visible.

Directional may define strategic Goals and Targets. Reality captures actual performance against them.

Directional owns Values Guardrails. Trust owns the Reliance consequence of correspondence or inconsistency with them.

Reality establishes actual Position. Directional establishes intended direction.

Directional determines what it needs to understand in order to choose. Intelligence establishes how that Understanding is formed.

Possibility expands the option space. Directional narrows it through choice.

Direction "` Authority.

Strategic Planning and Strategic Plan are cross-architecture AEA in Action mechanisms/renders, not native Directional objects.

37. AI Protocol

AI may assist Directional Architecture by:

· testing whether Purpose, Mission, Vision and Ultimate Outcome are distinct;
· identifying candidate strategic choices from established source material;
· testing whether choices are material enough to affect enterprise design;
· identifying implicit exclusions and trade-offs;
· testing Strategic Scope for inclusion and exclusion;
· testing coherence between Directional propositions;
· identifying Capability implications that should be routed to Domain;
· identifying Route-to-Market implications that should be routed to Ecosystem, Expression, Execution and Environment;
· identifying Requirements of Understanding that should be fulfilled through Intelligence;
· comparing proposed movement against established Directional Guardrails;
· and identifying where a proposal remains a Possibility rather than an adopted Directional choice.

AI must not:

- invent strategic intent because the enterprise has not established it;
- collapse Vision and Ultimate Outcome;
- treat market analysis as Directional Architecture;
- treat a Possibility Hypothesis as an adopted strategic choice;
- infer Competitive Advantage solely from current Capability performance;
- assign Capability Posture without tracing it to Directional Competitive Advantage;
- treat current channel use as proof of strategic Route-to-Market choice;
- treat a target's actual measured value as Directional Actuality;
- treat strategic alignment as Authority to decide or execute;
- treat a Strategic Plan as a native Directional object;
- make a governed strategic decision merely because it can recommend one;
- or expose proprietary AEA in Action composition methods as Published Standard doctrine.

AI may test and inform Directional coherence. It must not manufacture strategic choice or authority.

38. Conformance

A conformant application of Directional Architecture must preserve, where applicable:

1. Purpose; 2. Mission; 3. Vision; 4. Ultimate Outcome; 5. Directional Intent; 6. Strategic Scope; 7. Strategic Thesis where established; 8. Strategic Choices; 9. Commercial Choices where material; 10. Route-to-Market Choices where material; 11. Competitive Advantage; 12. Growth and Scale Choices where material; 13. Strategic Trade-offs; 14. Goals and Targets where they are directional commitments; 15. Values Guardrails; 16. Directional Guardrails where established; 17. Coherence Boundaries where established; 18. permitted and excluded movement where established; 19. Course-Correction Rules where established; 20. distinction between Vision and Ultimate Outcome; 21. distinction between strategic choice and analysis; 22. distinction between Directional Target and actual measured value; 23. distinction between Direction and Authority; 24. Requirements of Understanding originating in Directional where applicable; 25. and separation between native Directional propositions and AEA in Action strategic planning renders.

39. Non-Conformance

An application is non-conformant where it:

- treats Directional Architecture as a collection of aspirations without choices or boundaries;
- collapses Vision and Ultimate Outcome;
- defines Strategic Scope only by inclusion and omits material exclusion;
- treats market analysis as Directional Architecture;
- treats scenario analysis as Directional Architecture;
- treats every business decision as a Strategic Choice;
- assigns strategic Route-to-Market choice to Expression or Ecosystem;
- assigns Capability Posture independently of the Directional basis of Competitive Advantage;
- treats actual target performance as Directional-owned Actuality;
- treats Values Guardrails as Trust propositions;
- treats a Possibility Hypothesis as adopted Direction;
- treats strategic alignment as authority to decide or execute;
- treats Strategic Planning as a native Directional object;

· treats a Strategic Plan as a native Directional object;
· or absorbs Reality, Intelligence, Possibility, Domain or Execution propositions because they appear in a strategy document.

40. Published Gaps

GAPS — None currently identified that prevent publication of this Standard.

Detailed Directional information fields, Strategic Scope schema, Strategic Choice classifications, Commercial Choice fields, Route-to-Market choice schema, Competitive Advantage specification, Goal and Target structures, Guardrail specifications, Course-Correction protocols and native schematic construction rules belong in the downstream Directional Architecture package.

Their absence from this Published Standard does not constitute an architecture doctrine gap.

41. Publication Position

Directional Architecture provides AEA with its architecture of Intent.

It establishes the strategic scope and choices the rest of the enterprise must be designed to realise.

It distinguishes:

Purpose — why the enterprise exists

Mission — the enduring undertaking through which it pursues that Purpose

Vision — what the enterprise intends to become

Ultimate Outcome — what the enterprise ultimately intends to cause externally

Directional Intent — the committed direction of movement

Strategic Scope — the envelope of inclusion and exclusion

Strategic Choice — the material choices shaping the enterprise to be designed

and preserves the boundaries:

strategy-as-choice "` strategy-as-analysis

Vision "` Ultimate Outcome

strategic Route-to-Market choice "` Route-to-Market relationship or expression

Competitive Advantage "` Capability Posture

Directional Target "` actual measured value

Direction "` Authority

Strategic Planning "` Directional Architecture

and:

Strategic Plan "` native Directional object.

Directional Architecture therefore gives the wider Architecture Set a stable strategic proposition against which business design can be tested without swallowing the analysis, understanding, actuality, capability design, execution or application mechanisms required to realise it.

The governing proposition remains:

Directional Architecture defines the strategic scope and choices that the business must be designed to realise.