



BSI Standards Publication

Software, systems and enterprise — Architecture description

National foreword

This British Standard is the UK implementation of ISO/IEC/IEEE 42010:2022. It supersedes BS ISO/IEC/IEEE 42010:2011, which is withdrawn.

The UK participation in its preparation was entrusted to Technical Committee ICT/1, Information systems co-ordination.

A list of organizations represented on this committee can be obtained on request to its committee manager.

Contractual and legal considerations

This publication has been prepared in good faith, however no representation, warranty, assurance or undertaking (express or implied) is or will be made, and no responsibility or liability is or will be accepted by BSI in relation to the adequacy, accuracy, completeness or reasonableness of this publication. All and any such responsibility and liability is expressly disclaimed to the full extent permitted by the law.

This publication is provided as is, and is to be used at the recipient's own risk.

The recipient is advised to consider seeking professional guidance with respect to its use of this publication.

This publication is not intended to constitute a contract. Users are responsible for its correct application.

© The British Standards Institution 2022
Published by BSI Standards Limited 2022

ISBN 978 0 539 00085 6

ICS 35.080

Compliance with a British Standard cannot confer immunity from legal obligations.

This British Standard was published under the authority of the Standards Policy and Strategy Committee on 30 November 2022.

Amendments/corrigenda issued since publication

Date	Text affected
------	---------------

INTERNATIONAL
STANDARD

ISO/
IEC/IEEE
42010

Second edition
2022-11

Software, systems and enterprise — Architecture description

Logiciel, systèmes et entreprise — Description de l'architecture



Reference number
ISO/IEC/IEEE 42010:2022(E)

Documents
© ISO/IEC 2022
© IEEE 2022



COPYRIGHT PROTECTED DOCUMENT

© ISO/IEC 2022
© IEEE 2022

All rights reserved. Unless otherwise specified, or required in the context of its implementation, no part of this publication may be reproduced or utilized otherwise in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, or posting on the internet or an intranet, without prior written permission. Permission can be requested from either ISO or IEEE at the respective address below or ISO's member body in the country of the requester.

ISO copyright office
CP 401 • Ch. de Blandonnet 8
CH-1214 Vernier, Geneva
Phone: +41 22 749 01 11
Fax: +41 22 749 09 47
Email: copyright@iso.org
Website: www.iso.org

Published in Switzerland

Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers, Inc
3 Park Avenue, New York
NY 10016-5997, USA

Email: stds.ipr@ieee.org
Website: www.ieee.org

Contents

Page

Foreword	v
Introduction	vii
1 Scope	1
2 Normative references	1
3 Terms and definitions	1
4 Conformance	5
5 Conceptual foundations	5
5.1 General	5
5.2 Conceptual models of an architecture description	6
5.2.1 Context of architecture description	6
5.2.2 Architectures and architecture descriptions	6
5.2.3 Stakeholders and concerns	7
5.2.4 Stakeholder perspectives	8
5.2.5 Aspects	8
5.2.6 Architecture considerations	9
5.2.7 Architecture views and architecture viewpoints	9
5.2.8 Model kinds, legends and architecture view components	11
5.2.9 Architecture description (AD) elements	12
5.2.10 View methods	12
5.2.11 AD element correspondence	13
5.2.12 Architecture decisions and rationale	14
5.3 Architecture description in the life cycle	15
5.4 Architecture description frameworks and languages	15
5.4.1 General	15
5.4.2 Architecture description frameworks	15
5.4.3 ADF utilization	17
5.4.4 Architecture description languages	18
6 Specification of an architecture description	19
6.1 Architecture description identification and overview	19
6.2 Identification of stakeholders	20
6.3 Identification of stakeholder perspectives	20
6.4 Identification of concerns	20
6.5 Identification of aspects	21
6.6 Inclusion of architecture viewpoints	21
6.7 Inclusion of architecture views	21
6.8 Inclusion of view components	22
6.9 Recording of architecture correspondences	23
6.9.1 Consistency within an architecture description	23
6.9.2 Correspondences	23
6.9.3 Correspondence methods	23
6.10 Recording of architecture decisions and rationale	24
6.10.1 Decision recording	24
6.10.2 Rationale recording	25
7 Architecture description frameworks and architecture description languages	25
7.1 Specification of an architecture description framework	25
7.2 Specification of an architecture description language	27
8 Architecture viewpoints and model kinds	27
8.1 Specification of an architecture viewpoint	27
8.2 Specification of a model kind	28
8.3 View methods	28

Annex A (informative) Notes on terms and concepts

Annex B (informative) Guidelines to specification of architecture viewpoints	40
Annex C (informative) Relationship to other standards	44
Annex D (informative) Uses of architecture descriptions	51
Annex E (informative) Architecture and architecture description life cycles	53
Annex F (informative) Architecture description frameworks	55
Bibliography	59
IEEE Notices and Abstract	63

Foreword

ISO (the International Organization for Standardization) and IEC (the International Electrotechnical Commission) form the specialized system for worldwide standardization. National bodies that are members of ISO or IEC participate in the development of International Standards through technical committees established by the respective organization to deal with particular fields of technical activity. ISO and IEC technical committees collaborate in fields of mutual interest. Other international organizations, governmental and non-governmental, in liaison with ISO and IEC, also take part in the work.

The procedures used to develop this document and those intended for its further maintenance are described in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 1. In particular, the different approval criteria needed for the different types of ISO/IEC documents should be noted. This document was drafted in accordance with the rules given in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2 (see www.iso.org/directives or www.iec.ch/members_experts/refdocs).

IEEE Standards documents are developed within the IEEE Societies and the Standards Coordinating Committees of the IEEE Standards Association (IEEE-SA) Standards Board. The IEEE develops its standards through a consensus development process, approved by the American National Standards Institute, which brings together volunteers representing varied viewpoints and interests to achieve the final product. Volunteers are not necessarily members of the Institute and serve without compensation. While the IEEE administers the process and establishes rules to promote fairness in the consensus development process, the IEEE does not independently evaluate, test, or verify the accuracy of any of the information contained in its standards.

Attention is drawn to the possibility that some of the elements of this document may be the subject of patent rights. ISO and IEC shall not be held responsible for identifying any or all such patent rights. Details of any patent rights identified during the development of the document will be in the Introduction and/or on the ISO list of patent declarations received (see www.iso.org/patents) or the IEC list of patent declarations received (see <https://patents.iec.ch>).

Any trade name used in this document is information given for the convenience of users and does not constitute an endorsement.

For an explanation of the voluntary nature of standards, the meaning of ISO specific terms and expressions related to conformity assessment, as well as information about ISO's adherence to the World Trade Organization (WTO) principles in the Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT), see www.iso.org/iso/foreword.html. In the IEC, see www.iec.ch/understanding-standards.

ISO/IEC/IEEE 42010 was prepared by Joint Technical Committee ISO/IEC JTC 1, *Information technology*, Subcommittee SC 7, *Software and systems engineering*, in cooperation with the Software and Systems Engineering Standards Committee of the Computer Society of the IEEE, under the Partner Standards Development Organization cooperation agreement between ISO and IEEE.

This second edition cancels and replaces the first edition (ISO/IEC/IEEE 42010:2011), which has been technically revised.

The main changes are as follows:

- The term used to refer to the subject of an architecture description is changed from “system of interest” to “entity of interest” (EoI) to be compatible with ISO/IEC/IEEE 42020 and ISO/IEC/IEEE 42030 standards and to allow for its application in non-system architecture situations. The term “entity” is also used in this document when entities are considered as surrounding things in an environment of an EoI.
- The term “architecture description framework” (ADF) replaces “architecture framework” in the previous edition. It is defined in order to differentiate ADFs from other kinds of architecting frameworks like architecture evaluation frameworks specified in ISO/IEC/IEEE 42030.

- Architecture description element, introduced in the 2011 edition (see ISO/IEC/IEEE 42010:2011, 4.2.6, 5.7 and A.6) is now defined in [Clause 3](#) as identified or named part of an architecture description allowing representing at least stakeholders, concerns, perspectives, and aspects identified in an AD, and views, view components, viewpoints, and model kinds included in an AD.
- Aspect and stakeholder perspective concepts —already introduced in the 2011 edition (See [3.5](#), note 1 of 5.6, [Annex A](#) and [B](#)) are defined and described to accommodate current practice where these ideas are prevalent.
- A correspondence defines an identified or named relation between AD elements, as in Clause 4.2.6 of the 2011 edition. But, to clarify the relationship between AD and correspondence, a note 1 to the definition is added to state that for the purpose of correspondences, an architecture description can be considered as an AD element in another architecture description. This correspondence between ADs is necessary because an architecture can be described by more than one AD and these alternatives of architectures have related for activities like trade-off analysis and decision making.
- The term “architecture view component” is introduced as a separable portion of one or more architecture views, replacing “architecture model” in the 2011 edition. This change is to account for the fact that some parts of a view are model-based while others may not be. View components can be derived from an information source, which can sometimes be a model.
- Model-based view components are governed by model kinds and documented by legends. Non-model-based view components are documented by legends.
- Model kinds are identified as a new conformance case to encourage model-based architecting.
- The concept of architecture viewpoint is updated to accommodate current practice where a viewpoint governs one or more architecture views within an AD.
- The definition of “model kind” given by the 2011 edition is extended to include categories of models as used by ADF like UAF.
- The figures use an informal entity-relationship diagram notation replacing UML class diagrams in the 2011 edition, to facilitate comprehension by users of this document. The multiplicities of the relationships are explained in the text when necessary.
- [Annex E](#) illustrates a few concepts pertaining to architecture life cycles and architecture description life cycles.
- [Annex F](#) shows examples of how some architecture description frameworks can conform to requirements of this document.

Any feedback or questions on this document should be directed to the user’s national standards body. A complete listing of these bodies can be found at www.iso.org/members.html and www.iec.ch/national-committees.

Introduction

The complexity of human-made entities has grown to an unprecedented level. This has led to new opportunities, and also increased challenges for organizations that create and use these entities. Architecting is increasingly applied by organizations, teams and individuals, to help manage the complexity faced by stakeholders of these entities.

Examples of entities include the following: Enterprise, organization, solution, system (including software systems), subsystem, process, business, data (as a data item or data structure), application, information technology (as a collection), mission, product, service, software item, hardware item, product line, family of systems, system of systems, collection of systems, collection of applications.

An architecture of an entity, expressed in one or more architecture descriptions (AD), assists in understanding the fundamental concepts or properties of the entity, pertaining to its structure, behaviour, design and evolution, such as feasibility, utility and maintainability and fundamental concepts for its development, operation, employment, external impacts, utilization and decommissioning.

ADs are used by the parties that create, use and manage human-made entities to improve communication and cooperation, enabling all parties, organizations, teams and individuals to work together in an integrated and coherent fashion.

NOTE ISO/IEC/IEEE 42020 specifies a set of processes for architecting which can be employed in support of creating one or more ADs. The architecture elaboration process in ISO/IEC/IEEE 42020 is especially relevant for creation of ADs.

Whereas an AD is a tangible work product, an architecture is intangible and abstract, understood through its concepts, properties and principles.

Architecture description frameworks (ADF) are used to codify the conventions and common practices of architecture description. Architecture description languages (ADL) are used to codify the description of architectures within different communities and domains of application.

ADs have many uses, such as design, development, documentation, analysis, evaluation, maintenance, risk mitigation, downstream user specifications, tool specification, communication, planning, guidance, life cycle support, decision support, review, training, design validation, solution trade studies, cost comparison and analysis, by a variety of stakeholders throughout the life cycles of their entities of interest. [Annex D](#) describes more uses of an AD.

This document provides terms, definitions and relationships for best practices in ADs. The provisions of this document serve to specify desired properties of ADs. This document also gives provisions that specify desired properties of ADFs and ADLs in order to usefully support the development and use of ADs. This document provides a basis for considering and comparing ADFs and ADLs by providing a common ontology for specifying their contents.

This document can be used to establish a coherent architecting practice for developing ADs, ADFs and ADLs within an organization, in the context of an entity of interest (EoI) or its architecture. The provisions of this document can be used to assess conformance of specifications of ADs, ADFs, ADLs, viewpoints and model kinds.

The intent of this document is to enable a range of consistent and coherent approaches to describing an architecture including document-centric and model-based techniques.

This document also provides motivations for use of architecture-related terms and concepts in other documents such as guides and standards.

Users of this document are advised to consult [Clause 5](#) to gain appreciation of the conceptual foundations, along with the concepts and principles associated with an AD work product.

This document does not explicitly address completeness or correctness regarding the inclusion of particular elements in an AD. Nevertheless, completeness and correctness of an AD can be partially checked, for example, through the consistency of the AD elements established, whether or not they are

are transitive, and whether AD elements are shown in the views. Consistency rules can also be defined by showing whether the same particular AD element has correspondences with an AD. In addition, specifications that appear as elements within an AD are expected to be complete, precise and verifiable with respect to the subject of the specification.

In this document, the following verbal forms are used:

- “shall” indicates a requirement;
- “should” indicates a recommendation;
- “may” indicates a permission.

Software, systems and enterprise — Architecture description

1 Scope

This document specifies requirements for the structure and expression of an architecture description (AD) for various entities, including software, systems, enterprises, systems of systems, families of systems, products (goods or services), product lines, service lines, technologies and business domains.

This document distinguishes the architecture of an entity of interest from an AD expressing that architecture. Architectures are not the subject of this document.

This document specifies requirements for use of the architectural concepts and their relationships as captured in an AD. It does not specify requirements for any entity of interest or its environment.

This document specifies requirements for an architecture description framework (ADF), an architecture description language (ADL), architecture viewpoints and model kinds in order to usefully support the development and use of an AD.

This document specifies conformance to the requirements for an AD, ADF, ADL, architecture viewpoint and model kind.

This document does not specify the processes, architecting methods, models, notations, techniques or tools by which an AD is created, utilized or managed.

This document does not specify any format or media for recording an AD.

2 Normative references

There are no normative references in this document.

3 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this document, the following terms and definitions apply.

ISO, IEC and IEEE maintain terminology databases for use in standardization at the following addresses:

- ISO Online browsing platform: available at <https://www.iso.org/obp/ui>
- IEC Electropedia: available at <https://www.electropedia.org/>
- IEEE Standards Dictionary Online: available at <https://dictionary.ieee.org/>

NOTE For additional terms and definitions in the field of systems and software engineering, see ISO/IEC/IEEE 24765, which is published periodically as a “snapshot” of the SEVOCAB (Systems and software Engineering Vocabulary) database and is publicly accessible at www.computer.org/sevocab.

3.1 architecting

conceiving, defining, expressing, documenting, communicating, certifying proper implementation of, maintaining and improving an *architecture* (3.2) throughout the life cycle of an *entity of interest* (3.12)

3.2 architecture

fundamental concepts or properties of an entity in its *environment* (3.13) and governing principles for the realization and evolution of this entity and its related life cycle processes

[SOURCE: ISO/IEC/IEEE 42020:2019, 3.3, modified — The notes to entry have been removed.]

3.3 architecture description

AD
work product used to express an *architecture* (3.2)

Note 1 to entry: A work product is an artifact produced by a process (see ISO/IEC 20246:2017, 3.18).

Note 2 to entry: An AD is a tangible representation of information provided to the *stakeholders* (3.17). An AD is considered an *information part* (3.14).

3.4 architecture description element AD element

identified or named part of an *architecture description* (3.3)

Note 1 to entry: AD elements include *stakeholders* (3.17), *concerns* (3.10), *stakeholder perspectives* (3.18), and *aspects* (3.9) identified in an AD (3.3), ADLs (3.6), ADFs (3.5) and *correspondences* (3.11) and correspondence methods used in an AD, and *architecture views* (3.7), *view components* (3.19), *architecture viewpoints* (3.8), and *model kinds* (3.15) included in an AD (3.3).

Note 2 to entry: For the purpose of *correspondences* (3.11), an AD (3.3) can be considered as an AD element in another AD (3.3).

3.5 architecture description framework ADF

conventions, principles and practices for the description of *architectures* (3.2) established within a specific domain of application or community of *stakeholders* (3.17)

EXAMPLE Generalized Enterprise-Referencing Architectures Modelling Framework (GERAM) (ISO 15704:2019, Annex B), Reference Model of Open Distributed Processing (RM-ODP),^[2] Unified Architecture Framework (UAF)^[48], and NATO Architecture Framework (NAF)^[44].

Note 1 to entry: Architecture description frameworks promote structured organization, consistency of description, greater potential for reuse, and completeness of *architecture views* (3.7) and models.

3.6 architecture description language ADL

means of expression, with syntax and semantics, consisting of a set of representations, conventions, and associated rules intended to be used to describe an *architecture* (3.2)

EXAMPLE Architecture Analysis and Design Language (AADL),^[52] ArchiMate,^[61] UML,^[49] SysML,^[47] UAF Profile^[48].

3.7 architecture view

information part (3.14) comprising portion of an *architecture description* (3.3)

EXAMPLE An Information or Data View addresses information-relevant concerns framed by an Information viewpoint. It contains as *view components* (3.19), a conceptual data model, a data management model and a data access model and correspondences linking those components together.

3.8

architecture viewpoint

set of conventions for the creation, interpretation and use of an *architecture view* (3.7) to frame one or more *concerns* (3.10)

Note 1 to entry: In this document, “to frame” concerns means “to shape, compose, give expression to” those concerns. It is used to distinguish the stages of framing concerns by a viewpoint from addressing those concerns in a resulting view. This is analogous to the distinction between “framing a problem” and “solving that problem”.

Note 2 to entry: A viewpoint is a frame of reference for the concerns determined by the architect as relevant to the purpose of the *architecture description* (3.3).

Note 3 to entry: The conventions of an architecture viewpoint are documented in a *specification* (3.16) of that viewpoint. In some communities and architecture description frameworks, “view specification” and viewpoint are synonyms.

Note 4 to entry: The identification of a viewpoint is often the result of prior knowledge, experience and praxis in the domain(s) to which the viewpoint applies, indicating the information relevant to addressing the *concern* (3.10).

3.9

aspect

part of an entity’s character or nature

EXAMPLE Functional, structural and informational aspects of an entity.

Note 1 to entry: A particular aspect can be used for capturing the relevant features of the *entity of interest* (3.12) as a refinement of one or more *concerns* (3.10) under examination with respect to some part of its character, e.g. the structural character, functional character or informational character of the entity.

Note 2 to entry: Aspects enable the architect to analyse, address and structure *concerns* (3.10). In general, there is a many-to-many relation between aspects and *concerns* (3.10).

Note 3 to entry: See 5.2.5 for more discussion and examples.

3.10

concern

matter of relevance or importance to a *stakeholder* (3.17)

Note 1 to entry: concerns can be identified with regards to an *entity of interest* (3.12) or independently, such as with regards to environment, scenario, situation or use case of that entity.

Note 2 to entry: In this document, interest in an entity is intended to encompass interest in that entity’s *environment* (3.13), life cycle, *architecture* (3.2), requirements, design, implementation and operation. Such interests are captured via *aspects* (3.9), concerns and *stakeholder perspectives* (3.18).

Note 3 to entry: The identification of a concern is often the result of prior knowledge, experience and praxis in the domain to which the concern applies.

Note 4 to entry: See 5.2.3 for more discussion and examples.

[SOURCE: ISO/IEC/IEEE 42020:2019, 3.8, Notes have been modified]

3.11

correspondence

identified or named relationship between two or more *architecture description elements* (3.4)

EXAMPLE Correspondences are used to express a wide range of relationships, such as equivalence, composition, refinement, consistency, traceability, dependency, constraint, satisfaction, and obligation.

Note 1 to entry: For the purpose of correspondences, an *architecture description* (3.3) can be considered as an *AD element* (3.4) in another *architecture description* (3.3).

Note 2 to entry: Correspondences can be identified or named relationship between *architecture description elements* (3.4) in different *architecture descriptions* (3.3) or between *architecture description elements* (3.4) stated in different notations.

3.12 entity of interest

Eol

subject of an *architecture description* (3.3)

EXAMPLE Enterprise, organization, solution, system (including software systems), subsystem, process, business, data (as a data item or data structure), application, information technology (as a collection), mission, product, service, software item, hardware item, product line, family of systems, system of systems, collection of systems, collection of applications.

Note 1 to entry: In this document, the term entity of interest refers to the entity whose *architecture* (3.2) is under consideration in the preparation of an *architecture description* (3.3).

Note 2 to entry: This document distinguishes the entity of interest from other entities which are not the subject of the *architecture description* (3.3).

Note 3 to entry: In this document, interest in an entity is intended to encompass interest in that entity's environment, life cycle, architecture, requirements, design, implementation and operation. Such interests are captured via aspects, concerns and stakeholder perspectives.

3.13 environment

context of surrounding things, conditions, or influences upon an entity

Note 1 to entry: The environment of an *entity of interest* (3.12) includes external entities that can have various influences upon an *entity*, such as developmental, technological, business, operational, organizational, political, economic, legal, regulatory, ecological and social influences as well as external physical effects such as electromagnetic radiation, charged particles, gravitational effects, and electric and magnetic fields.

Note 2 to entry: A label attached as a qualifier to the term environment identifies a particular context within another context, such as development environment, test environment, and operational environment.

3.14 information part

separately identifiable body of information that is produced, stored, and delivered for human and machine use

3.15 model kind

category of model distinguished by its key characteristics and modelling conventions

EXAMPLE Functional models, activity models, structural models, use case models, geopolitical models, analytic models and economic models.

3.16 specification

information part (3.14) that identifies, in a complete, precise and verifiable manner, the requirements, design, behaviour, or other expected characteristics of an entity

[SOURCE: ISO/IEC/IEEE 15289:2019, 3.1.26 — “a system, service or process” replaced with “an entity”, “information item” replaced with “information part”]

3.17 stakeholder

role, position, individual, organization, or classes thereof, having an interest, right, share, or claim, in an *entity of interest* (3.12)

EXAMPLE End users, operators, acquirers, owners, suppliers, architects, developers, builders, maintainers, regulators, taxpayers, certifying agencies, and markets.

3.18

stakeholder perspective

way of thinking about an *entity of interest* (3.12), especially as it relates to *concerns* (3.10)

EXAMPLE The labels given to the middle three rows (i.e. owner, designer and builder) of the Zachman framework^[67] correspond to stakeholder perspectives. The rows in the Unified Architecture Framework^[48] and NATO Architecture Framework^[44] grids correspond to stakeholder perspectives (although they are called "domains" and "subjects of concerns," respectively in those frameworks). See 5.2.4 for more examples.

Note 1 to entry: The way one thinks about an entity can be influenced by one's beliefs, training, experience, knowledge, personality, character traits, culture, peer pressure, role or stance, etc.

3.19

view component

architecture view component

separable portion of one or more *architecture views* (3.7) that is governed by the applicable *model kind* (3.15) or legend

EXAMPLE An architecture view component describing access control mechanisms can be used in several views of an *architecture description* (3.3) to explain functional flows, behaviour and security features of an entity.

Note 1 to entry: In the context of an *architecture description* (3.3), a legend is an informal documentation of conventions.

4 Conformance

The requirements in this document are contained in [Clauses 6, 7](#) and [8](#). There are five situations in which claims of conformance with the provisions of this document can be made.

- 1) When conformance is claimed for an architecture description, the claim shall demonstrate that the specification of the architecture description meets the requirements listed in [Clause 6](#).
- 2) When conformance is claimed for an architecture description framework, the claim shall demonstrate that the specification of the architecture description framework meets the requirements listed in [7.1](#).
- 3) When conformance is claimed for an architecture description language, the claim shall demonstrate that the specification of the architecture description language meets the requirements listed in [7.2](#).
- 4) When conformance is claimed for an architecture viewpoint, the claim shall demonstrate that the specification of the architecture viewpoint meets the requirements listed in [8.1](#).
- 5) When conformance is claimed for a model kind, the claim shall demonstrate that the specification of the model kind meets the requirements listed in [8.2](#).

This document is designed such that "tailoring" is neither required nor permitted for its use when claims of conformance are made.

5 Conceptual foundations

5.1 General

This clause introduces the conceptual foundations of architecture description expressed in a set of conceptual models (see [5.2](#)) and the application of those foundations to ADs ([5.2](#)), ADFs (see [5.4.2](#)) and ADLs (see [5.4.3](#)). The use of the architecture descriptions to support different architecture practices is outlined in [Annex D](#). The concepts introduced in this clause are used in [Clauses 6](#) to [8](#) to express requirements.

NOTE [Annex A](#) provides further discussion of the terms and concepts used in this document and presents examples of their use in an historical context.

5.2 Conceptual models of an architecture description

5.2.1 Context of architecture description

The term "entity of interest" is used in this document to refer to the subject of an architecture description. The term is intended to encompass, but is not limited to, entities within the following fields of application, reflecting the intended scope of this document as specified in [Clause 1](#).

- software, including software products and services, per ISO/IEC/IEEE 12207;
- systems, including one-of-a-kind systems, mass-produced systems, customized, adaptive systems, stand-alone and embedded systems, per ISO/IEC/IEEE 15288;
- enterprises as described in ISO 15704, i.e. human undertakings or ventures that have mission, goals and objectives to offer products or services, or to achieve a desired project outcome or business outcome.

This document takes no position on what constitutes an entity within those or other fields of application or elsewhere. An entity can be a concrete entity or an abstract entity. An AD as specified in this document is suitable not only for entities in the fields of applications listed above, but also for entities in fields such as natural systems or conceptual systems.

Each entity of interest is situated in an environment which influences its characteristics and behaviours. The environment determines the totality of influences upon the entity of interest and the totality of influences of the entity of interest upon that environment, including its interactions with the environment and other entities, throughout the life cycle of that entity of interest.

[Figure 1](#) depicts key concepts pertaining to an entity of interest and its architectures as a means of understanding ADs.

NOTE 1 The figures and text in the remainder of [Clause 5](#) constitute a set of conceptual models of architecture description. [Figures 1](#) to [6](#) use an informal entity-relationship diagram notation to facilitate comprehension by users of this document. In the figures, rounded rectangles represent information objects, and arrows represent relationships between objects with the annotation read in the arrow direction. The figures illustrate the key concepts described throughout [Clause 5](#). [Annex A](#) presents the full conceptual model.

NOTE 2 Identification of the EoI can emerge from the analysis of the concerns of the stakeholders or can preexist before identification of some stakeholders and their concerns.

EXAMPLE The identification of an EoI generally results from the definition of the problem space. The problem description can be expressed with an architecture definition of a set of operational capabilities (often called "capability architecture"). At this capability definition stage, identified stakeholders are potentially concerned by the future EoI.

5.2.2 Architectures and architecture descriptions

The architecture of an entity of interest comprises the fundamental concepts or properties of that entity considered in its environment. The architecture of an entity of interest can pertain to any or all of the entity's:

- constituent elements;
- interactions or interrelationships among its elements;
- interactions or interrelationships with its environment, including with other entities in that environment;
- behaviour and structure;
- principles governing its design, use, operation and evolution.

An AD is an expression of an architecture. ADs are work products resulting from architecting efforts. As a work product, an AD is devised for the specific purpose for which the architecting effort is undertaken, which is distinct from the purpose of the entity of interest. An AD comprises AD elements (see 5.2.10).

The architecture of an entity of interest can be understood through one or more distinct ADs, each created for a purpose relative to the architecture and stakeholder needs. Different ADs can, for example, be based on different stakeholders (see 5.2.3), stakeholder perspectives (see 5.2.4), time periods (sometimes termed epochs), or specific contexts or usage within the environment.

NOTE ISO/IEC/IEEE 42020 specifies a set of processes for architecting which can be employed in support of creating one or more ADs.

5.2.3 Stakeholders and concerns

Stakeholders are parties with direct or indirect interests in an entity. Among the stakeholders are those parties that have influence or control over and those who are impacted by an entity. A stakeholder's interests are typically expressed as concerns about an entity of interest or the architecture of which they are aware. Concerns are often the result of the stakeholder's perspective gained from domain knowledge, experience, training, responsibility and authority.

Concerns are matters of interest or importance to one or more stakeholders. A concern can be shared by one or more stakeholders and a stakeholder can hold more than one concern. The legitimacy and importance of a concern held by a stakeholder can be a consequence of the role of the stakeholder (e.g. owner, end user or participant, developer, architect, maintainer, disposer) or financial or social rights, shares, impact or claims (e.g. funding organization, governmental body, party receiving environmental impact from entity, stakeholder of an entity impacted by the entity of interest).

Some stakeholders' concerns are contrary to the success of the entity of interest. These stakeholders can have disagreements on the grounds of political or environmental considerations, can seek active disruption of the entity's operations, or even outright destruction of the entity. Adversarial concerns can be taken into account when developing the architecture of the entity. For example, political objections can be resolved by incorporating a negotiated solution in the architecture of the entity, or threats can be mitigated by taking preventative measures.

During the entity of interest's life cycle, concerns can arise at any time including (but not limited to) during conceptualization, when design choices are made, from construction or implementation, through deployment, operation, transfer of ownership, retirement and disposal.

Concerns can manifest in various ways in relation to stakeholder's needs, architecture goals, expectations, responsibilities, requirements, design constraints and assumptions. Concerns can also manifest in recognition of dependencies, quality attributes, architecture decisions, risks or other issues.

Concerns can pertain to influences exerted upon or by an entity of interest, including developmental, technological, business, operational, organizational, political, economic, legal, regulatory, ecological, social and physical influences. Concerns can also pertain to design influences such as internal structural features and component interoperability, particularly when architecting a system of systems or an enterprise.

EXAMPLES

- How is the system maintained?
- What system behaviours are safety-critical?
- Can the entity of interest attain compliance with national regulations?
- What is the cost to operate?
- What are the risks, opportunities, satisfaction, resilience, coherence, affordability, complexity and trust offered by this architecture?
- What are the distribution transparencies described in the Reference Model of Open Distributed Processing^[1]?

- In case of a flight navigation system of a commercial aircraft, what is GPS signal availability, tracking, degree of accuracy, line of sight reception, altitude or elevations?
- What are the data qualities (i.e. data qualities as described in ISO/IEC 25012:2008, Clause 4 or traditional system quality attributes as described in ISO/IEC 25010.)?
- What is the system's ability to maintain confidentiality, integrity, and availability for protecting operations?
- What is the ability to support a seamless transition from a legacy capability to a modernized operational capability?

5.2.4 Stakeholder perspectives

Stakeholders often form distinct groupings, or stakeholder perspectives, based on their common roles, experiences, beliefs or other characteristics. A perspective can reflect domain knowledge, professional experience, training or proximity to the entity of interest in its lifecycle (e.g. design, development, manufacturing, supply, operation and use). Importantly, a stakeholder perspective can also be influenced by personality, character traits, culture, peer pressure, constituency, etc.

Stakeholder perspectives are ways of thinking about the entity of interest in a context, especially as they relate to concerns. Typically, there are several ways of thinking about the architecture of the entity of interest.

The purpose of an AD (see [6.2](#)) guides the identification of concerns that can reflect the perspectives of some stakeholders. There are often multiple stakeholder perspectives on any entity of interest.

EXAMPLE 1 Operational and financial perspectives about an industrial production system.

EXAMPLE 2 Business, management, acquisition and supply perspectives about a banking system.

EXAMPLE 3 Development, deployment and customization perspectives about a mobile app.

EXAMPLE 4 Provider and consumer perspectives about a hospitality service.

EXAMPLE 5 Data user and data provider perspectives about a content provider entity.

Each perspective results in one or more concerns. Because concerns arise from stakeholder perspectives, architecture viewpoints framing those concerns are often grouped by stakeholder perspectives. Concerns are based on current interests and influences of the stakeholders and are often subjective in nature.

5.2.5 Aspects

Aspects capture a set of characteristics or features of the entity of interest in its environment to address concerns within an AD.

An aspect can relate to one or more concerns of stakeholders. Usage of known aspects based upon prior experience within a field of application enables systematic coverage of the range of established concerns and also the identification of new concerns.

Aspects are based on experience in characterization of architectures and are more objective in nature as they arise from agreements among experts about practice in a domain and therefore are presumed to be best practice.

By examining aspects, relevant features or properties of the entity of interest can be discerned or predicted. Analysis of aspects can uncover one or more concerns.

The definition of the relationships between aspects and concerns are based on the experience of the architects and are assessed by the stakeholders with their understanding and knowledge.

NOTE [A.4.2](#) contains more information about the utility of aspects.

EXAMPLE 1 Spatial, structural, functional, informational and programmatic aspects in an aircraft AD.

EXAMPLE 2 Behavioural, informational and structural aspects in a computer AD.

EXAMPLE 3 Connectivity aspects in a communications network AD (commonly shown as separate logical network and physical network depictions of a configuration of links and nodes in the network).

Figure 1 depicts relationships between concerns, aspects, and stakeholder perspectives as utilized in an AD.

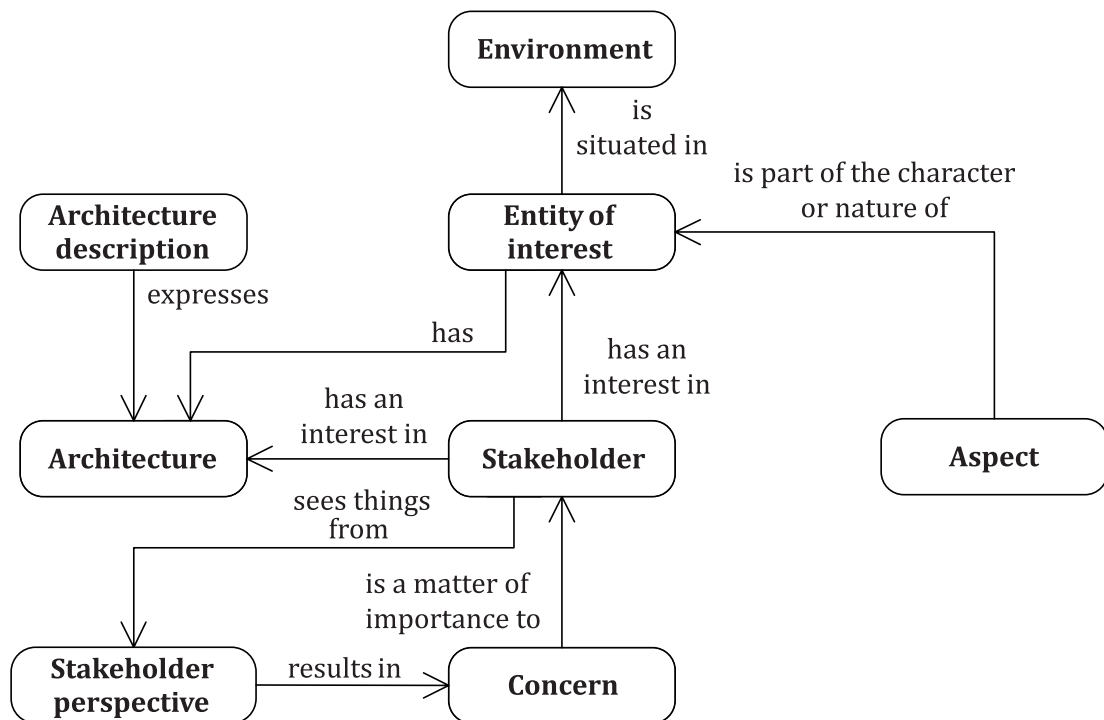


Figure 1 — Concerns, aspects, and stakeholder perspectives

5.2.6 Architecture considerations

Architecture considerations are factors taken into account when architecting. Concerns (see 5.2.3), stakeholder perspectives (see 5.2.4) and aspects (see 5.2.5) are different considerations to consider while architecting. There are other considerations that can arise due to the architecture practices in use.

Architecture considerations are useful when specifying architecture viewpoints and when constructing, interpreting, organizing or using architecture views (see 5.2.7). Architecture considerations can group specifications of architecture viewpoints, e.g. with respect to stakeholder perspectives.

EXAMPLES Considerations include: the ability of stakeholders to interpret the architecture description languages chosen to express stakeholder views, the degree of formality required for viewpoints and model kinds, the availability of supporting tools, standard practices used in the given industry domain, the availability of time and resources, the criticality of the depth of understanding that stakeholders need to achieve.

NOTE Other considerations can relate to contexts, criteria, building blocks and domain vocabulary.

5.2.7 Architecture views and architecture viewpoints

An AD contains one or more architecture views. An architecture viewpoint governs one or more of these architecture views. A specification of an architecture viewpoint establishes the conventions for creating, interpreting, presenting and analysing a view to address the concerns framed by that viewpoint. Viewpoint specifications typically reflect the information elements required to facilitate

the application of knowledge (including possibly informal or tacit experiential knowledge) to ascertain whether the architecture addresses the concerns satisfactorily.

NOTE 1 Architecture concerns, stakeholder perspectives and aspects can serve as an organizing basis for the viewpoints of an AD. Aspects are refinements of concerns and these aspects can be used to establish the viewpoint conventions. These aspects are evidenced in the resulting architecture view(s).

EXAMPLE 1 A telecommunications network (entity) is represented by a network connectivity deployment diagram that can be used to express the network model (as an architecture view) contained in a telecommunications architecture description. That view addresses communications parameters such as throughput and uptime (concerns) of operators and users (stakeholders).

EXAMPLE 2 A Parts and Variations View describing the content of a product line (entity) including common parts and individual products with their variants and options.

[Figure 2](#) depicts the relationship between architecture views and architecture viewpoints in an AD.

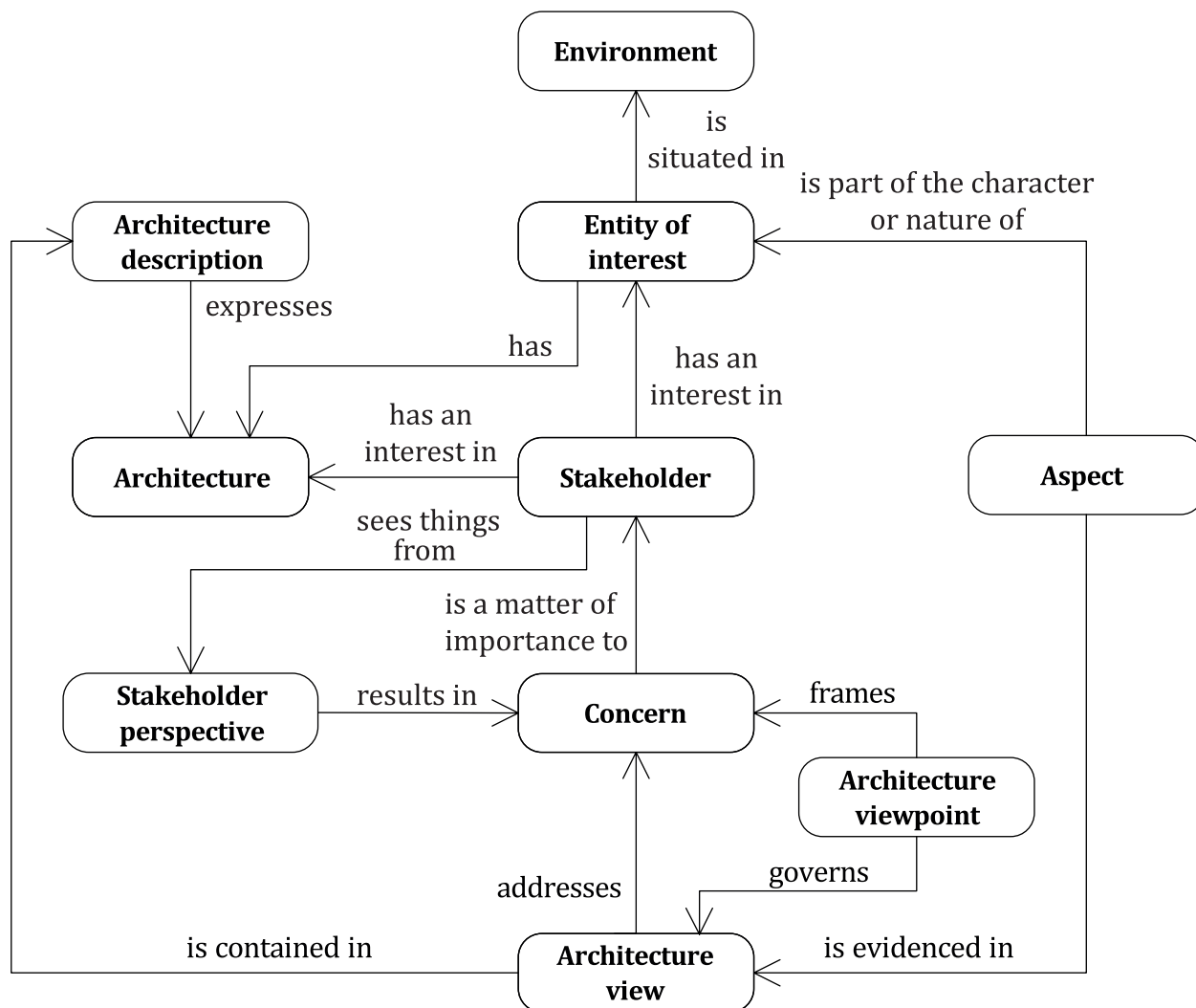


Figure 2 — Architecture views and architecture viewpoints

An architecture viewpoint frames one or more concerns (see [5.2.3](#)). A concern can be framed by more than one viewpoint. The architecture viewpoint identifies the specific aspects to be reflected in and concerns to be addressed by one or more architecture views. The specification of an architecture

viewpoint provides conventions, e.g. AD elements, syntax and semantics, usage guidance and direction, to those who are creating, interpreting or using the architecture views.

NOTE 2 Distinct from requirements for product acceptance, architecture views for the entity of interest that addresses concerns and reflects aspects can result in modified requirements.

Using a metamodel or other conventions, the viewpoint specification establishes the manner in which AD elements (e.g. entities, relationships, attributes and constraints) are used, and possibly transformed by the viewpoint, when creating a view (see 5.2.9).

Architecture viewpoints are important analytical resources for development of architecture views because viewpoints reflect the architecting purpose, typical stakeholders and their perspectives, identified concerns, defined aspects of the entity of interest, and particular AD elements.

NOTE 3 [Clause 8](#) specifies requirements on specification of architecture viewpoints. [Annex B](#) provides guidance on preparing architecture viewpoints.

5.2.8 Model kinds, legends and architecture view components

An architecture view is composed of one or more architecture view components. A view component that can be based on a model or not. Each view component is governed by a model kind or legend identified by its architecture viewpoint. A model kind determines the conventions for model-based view components. A legend documents the conventions for view components. These conventions include the intended uses, the terminology, the notations and their syntax and semantics and symbology of its governed models. A model kind or legend can be used by more than one viewpoint in an AD. Within an AD, an architecture view component can be part of more than one architecture view to enable sharing information when its content and presentation is relevant to more than one view.

EXAMPLE 1 Model kinds include use cases, activity models [such as structured analysis and design technique (SADT^[53]) and ICAM¹⁾ Definition Language (IDEF0^[60])], threat models, component models and connectivity models.

EXAMPLE 2 A data flow diagram can be a view component of a functional view. A separate control flow diagram can be a second view component in the same functional view. The functional view can also contain a narrative that explains how to interpret the flow diagrams in the view. The flow diagrams are model-based while the narrative is not. The data flow diagram can be part of an information security view.

EXAMPLE 3 A symbology table can be a legend of an operational view.

[Figure 3](#) depicts the composition of views from view components and the kinds of view components.

1) ICAM is an acronym for "Integrated Computer Aided Manufacturing"

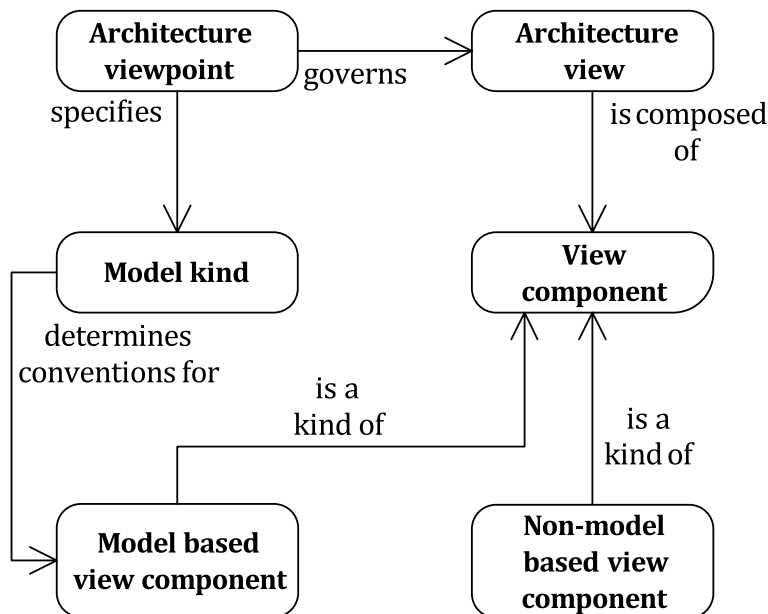


Figure 3 — Conceptual model for views and view components

5.2.9 Architecture description (AD) elements

An AD element is an occurrence of one or more architectural concepts in an AD. The AD elements include occurrences of the following architectural concepts: stakeholder, concern, aspect, stakeholder perspective, architecture viewpoint, architecture view, model kind, legend, architecture view component, architecture decision, architecture rationale and any correspondence and correspondence method specified on those constructs.

Any one of these concepts can have multiple occurrences in one or more AD. An AD element occurrence specifies one or more architectural concepts.

An AD element in an AD can be refined or elaborated by reference to another AD. An AD can utilize protocols introduced as AD elements of distinct ADs.

As viewpoints (see 5.2.7), model kinds (see 5.2.8) and legends (see 5.2.8) are specified and applied, additional AD elements are introduced. The governing viewpoint or model kind or legend determines the syntax and semantic conventions for these introduced AD elements.

EXAMPLE AD elements introduced by viewpoints or model kinds include use case constructs such as preconditions, actors, boundaries, systems; activity model constructs such as activities, inputs, outputs, controls, and mechanisms; architecture or design patterns to be employed.

5.2.10 View methods

A specification of an architecture viewpoint includes one or more view methods. View methods provide guidance, heuristics, metrics, patterns, design rules or guidelines, best practices and examples to aid in view construction and use of associated views. View methods specify expression rules, modelling methods, analysis techniques and other operations on views. These methods specify the AD elements used when creating the view and methods to analyse, interrogate or query views to assess properties of interest. Requirements on view methods are specified in 8.3.

View methods are divided into categories, including:

- Construction methods are the means by which views are prepared using a viewpoint. These can be in the form of process guidance (how to start, what to do next); or description guidance (templates for views of this type); or heuristics, styles, patterns, or other idioms to employ.

- Interpretive methods are the means by which views are to be understood by stakeholders and other users.
- Analysis methods are used to check, reason about, transform, predict, apply and evaluate results from this view.

NOTE View methods are usually defined in a viewpoint and are referenced by or used by model kinds, architecture description frameworks, and architecture description languages.

EXAMPLE View methods pertaining to: chaining dependencies to assess the impact of a change; workshops to trade-off qualities or other concerns; boundary analyses to determine whether context and entity of interest are well defined; guidance on partitioning; analysis of architectural complexity; creation and enforcement of architecture styles (such as layered, aspect-oriented); pattern families to promote intended properties of the entity of interest; analyses against requirements for completeness and coverage; interpretation and integration of external models as information sources.

5.2.11 AD element correspondence

An AD element correspondence identifies an identified or named relation between two or more AD elements.

An AD element correspondence can relate:

- one or more AD elements with one or more AD elements within an AD;
- one or more AD elements with one or more AD elements occurring in multiple ADs;
- one or more AD elements with one or more AD elements within an ADF or across several ADFs;
- one or more AD elements with one or more AD elements using one or more ADLs

For the purposes of correspondences, an AD itself may be considered an AD element of a different AD.

AD element correspondences may be used to indicate consistency relationships within and among ADs; to facilitate correlations among ADs of related systems; or to enable coordinated interpretation and analysis of related descriptions.

An AD element correspondence may be governed by a correspondence method which expresses rules, practices or models to specify the particular relation between the AD elements.

AD element correspondences and correspondence methods can be used to express and enforce architecture relations such as composition, refinement, consistency, traceability, dependency, constraint, satisfaction and obligation [26] of AD elements.

EXAMPLE 1 A correspondence between an AD element within a view and the concern that it addresses; between an architecture view and the aspect that it implements; between an AD element and the function that it implements; between an interface on a component and the stack of standards to which the interface conforms; between a data object on a functional flow and the full data structure definition; between a system and the organizational structure that implements it.

EXAMPLE 2 “Self-referential” correspondences are an activity that is refined into two or more activities of the same kind, or an activity that can recursively invoke itself.

[Figure 4](#) depicts the nature of AD element correspondences.