

MODAF Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

This section aims to answer some of the more common MODAF queries and misconceptions.

MODAF and Tools

The MODAF policy on tools is contained within the MODs Enterprise Architecture policy. If, however, the FAQs do not provide the answer you need, please contact us via the e-mail address given.

What is an Enterprise?

An Enterprise is any collection of organizations that has a common set of goals and principles and/or a single bottom line. Therefore an enterprise can be a whole corporation, a division of a corporation, a government organization, a single department, or a network of geographically distant organizations linked together by common objectives

What is the status of MODAR?

When MODAF was originally developed, there was a vision of a single repository for MODAF architectures. The MOD Architecture Repository (MODAR) was the name proposed for this central repository. Over time it has become apparent that this approach is not sustainable and a federated approach is preferable. The US DOD also appear to be moving in this direction with their Defence Architecture Repository System (DARS) repository, where the 'R' is now thought of in many areas as 'Registry'.

The MOD is still determining the best way forward for this federated approach. The US DOD are looking to adopt the federated approach for their DODAF 2 development.

Key MODAF Definitions

Capability

Capabilities in the MODAF sense are specifically not about equipment but are a high level specification of the enterprise's ability. A capability is a classification of some ability – and can be specified regardless of whether the enterprise is currently able to achieve it. For example, one could define a capability "Manned Interplanetary Travel" which no-one can currently achieve, but which may be planned or aspired to. Capabilities in MODAF are not time-dependent – once defined they are persistent. It is only the Capability Requirement that changes.

MODAF allows the architects to develop a formal taxonomy of capabilities which can be re-used across multiple architectures.

MODAF operational architectures refer to capabilities – i.e. they define what capabilities are required for a given scenario or operation. Systems architectures define the personnel, platforms, equipment and processes needed to fulfil capabilities.

Capability Requirement

A time-dependent requirement for a Capability. A capability requirement is a statement that a Capability is required to a certain level (specified by formal metrics and natural language assertions) within a specified time frame. Taking the interplanetary travel capability from before, we could create a Capability Requirement stating that a space agency intend to achieve the capability by 2020, with a required journey time to Mars of 6 months.

Capability Configuration

A combination of organisational aspects (with their competencies) and equipment that combine to provide a capability. A Capability Configuration is a physical asset, organisation or post configured to provide a capability.

Operational Node

An Operational Node is a logical element of the operational Architecture that may produce, consume, or process information, energy, materiel or people. It is possible to think of Nodes as a container for a set of coherent operational activities.

What constitutes an Operational Node can vary among Architectures, including:

- a logical or functional grouping (e.g. Logistics Node, Intelligence Node)
- the headquarters for an organisation (e.g. Command HQ) or an organisation type (e.g. Joint Task Force HQ)
- the base for an operational capability or other facility of importance to the business

Needline

A Needline documents the exchange (required or actual) of information between Nodes. A needline is a conduit for one or more information exchanges – i.e. it represents a logical bundle of information flows. The Needline does not indicate how the information transfer is implemented

What MODAF views are mandated?

Mandation of MODAF views has always been a confusing issue. In a sense, it shows a lack of understanding of the primary purpose of MODAF, which is to present complex relationships in a simple, consistent manner. If this thought process is followed through, the question therefore becomes 'which MODAF views do I, as a presenter, need to produce to show my customer the results of my work'.

The maturity and scope of the architecture will also help determine which views are produced. In the early stages of a small project, it is not reasonable to expect a wide range of views. Even a major project may use only a small set of views to communicate on a particular issue.