**Fundamentals of an Enterprise:**

**a. Mission and Vision:**

• Mission: The primary purpose or reason for the enterprise's existence.

• Vision: The long-term goal of the enterprise; what it aspires to achieve.

**b. Goals and Objectives:**

• Goals: Broad, long-term aims that define the desired outcomes.

• Objectives: Specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART) targets.

**c. Stakeholder Engagement:**

Enterprises have various stakeholders, such as employees, customers, suppliers, and shareholders. Engagement and management of these stakeholders are crucial.

**d. Resource Management:**

Efficient use and allocation of resources, including human, financial, and material resources, to achieve goals.

**e. Process and Workflow:**

A standardized set of tasks and procedures to ensure consistency, efficiency, and quality.

**f. Risk Management:**

Identifying, evaluating, and mitigating risks to ensure the enterprise remains viable and can overcome challenges.

**g. Governance and Compliance:**

Adhering to regulations, laws, and internal policies. It involves structures, processes, and rules that guide the operations of the enterprise.

Eight essential EA artifacts

As a result of my analysis of EA artifacts I identified eight specific EA artifacts which can arguably be considered as essential for EA practices since they are found in the majority of organizations with more or less mature EA practices. These eight essential EA artifacts are principles, technology reference models, guidelines, business capability models, roadmaps, landscape diagrams, solution overviews and solution designs. Importantly, these EA artifacts represent eight consistent groups of EA artifacts with very similar meaning found in different organizations regardless of their organization-specific titles. The titles provided above are merely the most popular titles for these EA artifacts, but the same EA artifacts can be used under different titles in different organizations. Now I will describe each of these essential EA artifacts in detail.

**Principles** (sometimes also called maxims) describe high-level policy statements having significant impact on both business and IT, for instance, that all provided services should be available to customers via single sign-on. The list of ~10-20 principles is typically defined and then periodically reviewed collaboratively by architects and senior business leaders in order to achieve the agreement on basic rules, values, directions and aims. All business and IT decisions, as well as architectures of all IT projects, are evaluated for their compliance with established principles. Principles are the most ‘classic’ EA artifacts related to the considerations general type (business-focused rules). Like all EA artifacts related to considerations, principles represent the overarching context for information systems planning.

**Technology reference models (TRMs**) (can be called technology standards or split into infrastructure, applications and other more specific reference models) provide standardized sets of available technologies to be used in all IT projects structured according to their domains, often with their lifecycle phases color-coded. TRMs are typically developed by architects and subject-matter experts in specific technologies and then updated in a periodic manner, often yearly. Architectures of all IT projects are reviewed by architects to ensure their alignment to TRMs and thereby achieve overall technological homogeneity and consistency of the IT landscape.

**Guidelines (**often also called standards) define low-level IT-specific prescriptions or best practices to be followed in all IT projects grouped by their technology domains, for instance, that certain network protocols should be used for particular purposes or certain encryption standards should be used for particular types of data. Guidelines are typically developed and periodically updated by architects and subject-matter experts in specific areas. Architectures, of all IT projects, are reviewed by architects to ensure their adherence to guidelines and thereby achieve technical consistency and, in some cases, regulatory compliance as well.

Even though both TRMs and guidelines describe some implementation-level technical rules relevant to IT projects, they are complementary to each other because TRMs provide lists of technologies to be used, while guidelines define more narrow prescriptions regarding their usage. TRMs and guidelines are the most common EA artifacts related to the standards general type (IT-focused rules). Like all EA artifacts related to standards, TRMs and guidelines represent proven reusable means for IT project implementation.

**Business capability models (BCMs)** (sometimes also called business capability maps) provide structured views (‘maps’) of all organizational business capabilities on a single page, sometimes together with other supporting information like business strategy, objectives, main customers, partners, etc. BCMs are typically developed collaboratively by architects and senior business leaders and then ‘heat mapped’ to identify best investment opportunities, priorities future IT spending and ensure the alignment between IT investments and desirable business outcomes. BCMs are often considered as ‘entry points’ into IT for business executives.

**Roadmaps** (which can also be called investment roadmaps, divisional roadmaps, capability roadmaps, technology roadmaps, etc.) provide structured views of planned future IT investments with their tentative timelines aligned to different capabilities or business areas, often outlining their high-level target states after several years. They usually explain how and when ‘heat mapped’ business capabilities will be uplifted. Roadmaps are typically developed collaboratively by architects and senior business leaders and help priorities proposed IT initiatives, align future IT investments to business plans and initiate IT projects.

Even though both BCMs and roadmaps provide some descriptions of the desired future from the business perspective, they are complementary to each other because BCMs help decide where future IT investments should go, while roadmaps help decide when these IT investments should be made. BCMs and roadmaps are definitely the most common EA artifacts related to the visions general type (business-focused structures). Like all EA artifacts related to visions, BCMs and roadmaps represent agreed and shared long-term goals for business and IT.

**Landscape diagrams** (used under very diverse titles, including system interaction diagrams, relational diagrams, platform architectures, one-page diagrams, integration contexts, etc.) describe high-level connections between various applications, databases, platforms, systems and sometimes business processes covering large parts of the corporate IT landscape, typically in their current states. Landscape diagrams are usually maintained by architects and updated at the completion stages of all IT projects modifying the IT landscape. They help architects optimize the IT landscape and select best implementation options for new IT projects. Landscape diagrams are seemingly the most common EA artifacts related to the Landscapes general type (IT-focused structures). Like all EA artifacts related to landscapes, landscape diagrams represent reference materials for general technical planning.

**Solution overviews** (can be called conceptual architectures, solution outlines, conceptual designs, preliminary solution architectures, solution briefs, etc.) describe specific IT projects in a brief business-oriented manner, usually including their high-level architectures, expected business value, estimated costs, risks and timelines. Solution overviews of ~15-30 pages long are typically developed for all proposed IT projects at their early stages collaboratively by their business sponsors and architects. They help senior business stakeholders estimate the overall business impact and value of proposed IT projects and make informed investment decisions regarding these projects. Solution overviews are the most common EA artifacts related to the outlines general type (business-focused changes). Like all EA artifacts related to outlines, solution overviews represent benefit, time and price tags for specific IT projects.

**Solution designs** (can be called high-level designs, solution definitions, detailed designs, full solution architectures, project-start architectures, etc.) describe specific IT projects in a highly technical manner with all the necessary details required to implement these projects. Solution designs of ~25-50 pages long are typically developed for all approved IT projects collaboratively by architects, project teams and business representatives to reflect both business and architectural requirements. They are used by projects teams during the whole duration of IT projects and help implement these projects according to the pre-agreed requirements. Solution designs are the key EA artifacts related to the designs general type (IT-focused changes). Like all EA artifacts related to designs, solution designs represent communication interfaces between architects and project teams.