Release notes: noslegal taxonomy v 3
10 July 2025

These release notes accompany v3 of the noslegal taxonomy released in March 2025 with minor[1] updates in July 2025. It explains what v3 contains, together with the prior history. We also outline expected developments and invite participation.

1. Introduction

The v3 release benefits from much experience and discussion since 2023 and is

- simplified and refined in some respects
- expanded in areas where this is valuable

As in previous versions, v3 is mono-hierarchical and faceted. Multi-faceted concepts are expressed by combining concepts from different facets. To make the taxonomy easy to understand and work with, each facet contains a core of widely-relevant content plus extension packs for more specialist needs. One aim underlying v3 has been to

- draw on practical experience of using and implementing noslegal and other taxonomies since 2023
- produce a more coherent, joined-up whole, stripping out some elements which were of lesser value and restructuring or otherwise refining other elements

Our aim is to keep the structure as stable as possible now, so that future work can largely concentrate on updates within this structure to:

- reflect changes in the world (e.g. treaty memberships)
- refine points of detail
- add and update extension packs and work element packs
- add new facets where there is real demand for them

2. Outline of v3 content

v3 of noslegal has eight facets. Seven have a core. Four of these have extension packs. One has packs without a core. Size varies greatly depending on needs in a particular context.

---

[1] (1) **Laws** facet - adding missing parents ('law') for law-civ and law-tax. (2) **Work types** facet - correcting parent of wkt-adv to be wkt, correcting Legal operations code from ope to lop. (3) **Information assets** facet - splitting out knowledge asset from the core into an extension pack. Renumbering the extension packs. Updating the codes in the status extension pack to start with ina-sta instead of ina-ias-sta.

Facet 7 - Places - is by far the largest though many of the types are based on an internationally recognised standard which we have built upon in ways helpful for practical legal work. Facet 3 - Sectors - also draws on an internationally recognised standard, but we have built on it to make it more suitable for practical legal work.

	Name	Covers	Core	Extension packs
1	**Laws**	Areas of law, separated out from types of process, places and sectors	**77 types / 2 levels** ● 15 - 1st level ● 62 - 2nd level	-
2	**Work types**	Types of legal work in the process sense (e.g. investigation, transaction) irrespective of the laws, sectors and places involved	**35 types / 2 levels** ● 7 - 1st level ● 28 - 2nd level	-
3	**Sectors**	Areas of economic activity, with some configuration to what's typically important in legal work	**76 types / 2 levels** ● 15 - 1st level ● 61 - 2nd level	**2 XPs** 1. 19 types 2. 11 types
4	**Participants**	Types of person, property and obligation. Extension packs include roles (e.g. defendant, buyer) and other features (e.g. SME, HNWI) of relevance in legal work	**19 types / 3 levels** ● 3 - 1st level ● 9 - 2nd level ● 7 - 3rd level	**3 XPs** 1. 46 types 2. 24 types 3. 22 types
5	**Connectors**	Connections between participants or between participant and places	**14 types / 2 levels** ● 10 - 1st level ● 4 - 2nd level	-
6	**Information assets**	High level categories of documents and other things in which law-related or legally relevant information is found, including concepts for describing status and audience	**16 types / 3 levels** ● 6 - 1st level ● 6 - 2nd level ● 4 - 3rd level	**2 XPs** 1. 3 types 2. 7 types
7	**Places**	Countries, regions and jurisdictions of the world. The core and some other elements are based on the UN / ISO standard but we have enriched it with further information which is relevant in a legal context, such as some further subdivisions, system types and treaty memberships	**249 types / 1 level**	**10 XPs** ● 249 types ● 31 types ● 7 types ● 249 types ● 66 types ● 16 types ● 5,095 types ● 113 types ● 1,694 types ● 55 types
8	**Work elements**	Breakdowns of what's involved in particular matter types - defined by one or more of the Work types, Laws, Places or Sectors involved. This includes their typical phases and deliverables	**3 packs** ● 1 main + 1 variant ● 1 main + 1 variant ● 1 main + 3 variants	

3. Structural changes in v3

Compared with v2 (May 2023):

- The ordering of the facets has been changed and through-numbering scheme has been introduced for all facets (1 to 8) and their cores (*.0) and packs (*.1, *.2 etc)

- Two facet names have been changed:
    - **Work** is now **Work types**[2]
    - **Subjects** is now **Participants**[3]

- One new facet, published in draft in 2024 as **Phases** has been adopted under the title **Work elements**

- The **Perspectives** facet from v1 and v2 has been deleted with some of its content being reimplemented in **Laws** and **Sectors**. We think this is a more familiar and hence acceptable structure.

- The **Needs** and **Combinations** facet have been deleted as unnecessary as the relevant issues are now explained in the new taxonomy guide published together with these release notes.

- **Connectors** has been split out into a separate facet, combining concepts which were previously within **Subjects** and **Places**, and simplifying them.

- The first extension pack (**Knowledge assets**) of the **Information assets** facet has been merged into the core.

- The three-letter prefix codes in facets 1 to 6 have been overhauled to reflect the new names and also drop the letter 'l' (for legal) which preceded them.

The [appendix](#) contains further information about v1 and v2 of the taxonomy.

---

[2] We considered changing this to "Process" but the word has different understandings (with some seeing it as referring to quite low-level processes) so we concluded that it would be too confusing. "Work types" was adopted in order to suggest a link with but also a distinction from the more detailed "Work flows."

[3] "Subjects" was causing confusion because the intended meaning was persons and things which are the subjects of legal work but it was sometimes understood to mean "topics" in a vaguer sense. We considered "entities" but considered that lawyers' usage of that term typically refers to a company or other "legal entity" rather than to the full range of persons, property and legal relationships covered by this facet. "Participants" seemed to be the best word overall despite the suggestion of personification.

4. Other notable changes in v3

Taking the eight facets one by one

1. **Laws** - substantially added to and refactored.
2. **Work types** - flattened to two levels instead of three, with more 1st level concepts. Also incremental improvements throughout.
3. **Sectors** - various incremental improvements, separated out into separate extension packs the additional noslegal concepts (financial services and professions) from the NACE concepts omitted from the core
4. **Participants** - not changed other than the facet name and codes
5. **Connectors** - split out from Places and Participants and refactored to simplify it
6. **Information assets** - merged the knowledge assets extension pack into core, but otherwise unchanged
7. **Places** - largely incremental updates to place subdivisions and treaty memberships, but we have also added subdivision system types for three places (UK, US, Canada)
8. **Work elements** - this is a new facet based closely on the draft published in 2024 with minor updates.

5. Details of the changes in v3

The taxonomy spreadsheets contain detailed change logs. The entire log of historic changes and release notes can be accessed [on Github](#).

6. Possible refinements later in 2025

We plan to ask law firms involved in noslegal - and anyone else who wishes to - to become involved in certain aspects with a view to a possible v 3.1 being issued in late 2025.

(a) Testing and refinement of the **Laws** facet. This has been particularly challenging to design as the conceptualisation varies so much across legal systems, organisations and needs (e.g. financial reporting versus knowledge). There is no one right answer, but there are better and worse possibilities. The new version has significantly wider coverage than the original (2023) version but remains relatively simple, with just levels and limited types. We propose to ask interested organisations to test and refine it against their data and to provide feedback based on this. We will also explore any interest in producing extension packs in particular areas.

(b) Extending the **Work elements** facet, using the published work as a template for future areas.

(c) There has been some debate about whether to keep **legal system types** in **Places**. It is not entirely subjective, but does involve more judgement than the other elements of Places, and its use cases are relatively narrow compared with the rest of the taxonomy. As there is some effort involved in maintaining it, we will ask for views on this.

(d) While these are the three priority areas identified so far, we also welcome suggestions for improvement of existing facets (e.g. **Information assets** or **Participants**, which haven't been a focus of this release) or addition of new facets. The work, of course, always falls in the end to teams of individuals so, in making suggestions, please indicate if you are prepared to participate in such a team!

Appendix: history of the noslegal taxonomy

v1 (April 2022)

v1 of the noslegal taxonomy was released in March 2022. It can be found in the Github [archive folder](#). There is a [folder for release notes](#) as well.

That first release had four facets

- Work
- Subjects
- Perspectives
- Places

The release notes started with the question, "Who is this for?" and answered it with this table - three types of organisation with five types of need.

Designed for	Not designed for
People:	
1. **Providers of legal services** (e.g. law firms, NewLaw, corporate legal department) 2. **Buyers of legal services** (e.g. corporate legal in their buying/coordinating capacity, buyers who aren't lawyers) 3. **Providers and users of technology in connection with legal work** (e.g. for describing information stored in such technology)	1. **Writers, researchers and educators on legal rules and doctrines** 2. **Legislators and regulators**
Need:	
1. **Describing, analysing and reporting on legal matters**, including internally (e.g. within a law firm or legal department) and to clients, and including analysis to compare work done for different clients or by different providers 2. **Organising and finding practical legal knowledge** (e.g. documents, process templates, examples, how-to guides, training courses) 3. **Describing and finding legal services** (e.g. on a law firm's website or in a legal services marketplace) 4. **Describing how legal services providers are organised and what they do** (e.g. law firms, NewLaw providers, corporate legal departments or others) 5. **Describing and finding individual legal experience and specialisms** for individuals (e.g. for work allocation or training purposes)	1. **Researching and analysing legal rules and doctrines**, including legal research databases, textbooks and theoretical legal analysis 2. **Describing legal roles and activities within a matter** (e.g. drafting, negotiating, adjudicating, advocating) 3. **Describing phases and tasks within a legal matter** (e.g. due diligence, trial) 4. **Describing legal document types (e.g. pleadings, contracts) and their parts (e.g. provisions)** (a project has been proposed for us to look at this together, but we are still considering whether to do so) 5. **Deep dives into local or specialist topics** (if required, we envisage these being added as modules which can fit into the higher level categories we have defined)

The release notes observe that Work, Subjects and Perspectives are fairly simple (70 concepts in total), with Places being much more detailed (7,000 rows).

We described their relative maturity levels like this:

> **Legal Places** is largely quite mature, though certain points have been highlighted for feedback. The other three facets are earlier stage. We believe that **Legal Work** is fundamentally robust in that it
>
> - has undergone some testing in large organisations against real data;
> - has been validated verbally by a significant range of knowledgeable people as making relevant distinctions of practical significance for the intended use cases;
> - is relevant across a range of legal work and places;
> - Is simple enough to have a prospect of being applied with reasonable accuracy, first by humans and over time with machine assistance
>
> However, the details will definitely evolve. **Legal Subjects** and **Legal Perspectives** are the least mature, having been developed in 2022 Q1 as a result of feedback on earlier iterations of Legal Work plus an earlier concept known as Legal Contexts.
>
> If you come from the software world, you may find it helpful to think of Legal Places as a [1.0 release](#), Legal Work as a [public beta](#) and the other two as a [public alpha](#).

v2 (May 2023)

In v2, we made some significant updates to **Work** and **Subjects**, some incremental updates to Places, and added two major new facets: **Sectors** and **Laws**. The work done to develop these is described in the [v2 release notes](#).

We noted that these, and combinations derived from them, would probably supersede **Perspective**s, but lef it in at that stage.

We also introduced three facets of a rather different nature from the others

- **Needs** - a formal articulation of the four areas of need we seek to meet in noslegal, driven by the importance of not over-fitting it to just one area - which we see as one of our major risks of failure over time

- **Information assets** - intended for knowledge needs in particular (though also relevant to knowledge-based marketing) so more niche than other aspects of noslegal

- **Combinations** - examples of how to combine concepts from different facets

In July 2024, we released a v2.1 of the Places facet containing minor updates described in release notes.

In v2, the revised facets were made available as two separate spreadsheets.

- **Places**
  - Contents
  - Core - the 249 countries and other top-level ISO/UN areas
  - XP1.1 - Non-English names
  - XP2.1 - Regions - UN
  - XP2.2 - Regions - alt (e.g. EMEA)
  - XP3.1 - Legal systems (for each of the areas in Places Core)
  - XP3.2 - System types (used in 3.1)
  - XP4.1 - Subdivisions (of the areas in Places Core)
  - XP4.2 - Subdivision types (used in 4.1)
  - XP5.1 - Connecting factors
  - XP6.1 - Memberships (of treaties and international organisations)
  - XP6.2 - Treaties (used in 6.1)

- **All other facets**
  - Introduction (contents page)
  - **1. Needs**
  - **2. Work**
  - **3. Subjects**
    - Subjects XP1 - Person roles
    - Subjects XP2 - Subject connectors
    - Subjects XP3 - Person features
    - Subjects XP4 - Organisation types UK
  - **4. Perspectives**
  - **5. Sectors**
    - Sectors XP1 - Further subtypes
    - Sectors XP2 - Alternative aggregations
  - **6. Laws**
  - **7.Information assets**
    - Information assets XP1 - Knowledge assets
    - Information assets XP2 - Status
    - Information assets XP3 - Audience
  - **8. Combinations**

 In August 2024, we published a draft **Phases** facet intended to establish a template for future additions. This is, in slightly updated form, the basis of the **Work elements** facet released in March 2025.