

3.1 Nature of the Reference Architecture

[Return to 3. FDIS Reference Architecture](#)

The [Federated Data Interpretation Systems Reference Architecture \(FDIS-RA\)](#) defines a shared architectural framework for systems that interpret, validate, compare, and govern information produced through statutory, regulatory, contractual, and other governed reporting regimes.

FDIS-RA identifies the architectural responsibilities, constraints, quality characteristics, interfaces, and relationships required to support transparent, comparable, auditable, traceable, and governable interpretation of regulated information throughout its lifecycle.

FDIS-RA is not the architecture of a particular system, organisation, deployment, or product. It does not prescribe:

- Internal component structures
- Algorithms
- Data schemas
- Processing workflows
- Runtime behaviour
- Operational configurations
- Technology selections

Instead, FDIS-RA operates at a higher level of abstraction by establishing architectural expectations that apply across multiple systems, organisations, jurisdictions, and implementation approaches.

FDIS-RA is distinct from a software architecture.

A software architecture describes the internal structure, components, interfaces, deployment, and runtime behaviour of a particular software system.

FDIS-RA defines the architectural responsibilities, constraints, quality characteristics, governance mechanisms, and semantic obligations that software architectures satisfy when they support regulated data interpretation.

Software architectures may realise, align with, or conform to FDIS-RA. FDIS-RA does not prescribe system decomposition, implementation structure, programming models, products, or technology choices.

Instead, it constrains how systems manage:

- Semantic meaning
- Interpretation logic
- Provenance
- Traceability
- Governance
- Version management
- Controlled semantic evolution

These constraints enable software architectures to support long-term regulatory reliance while preserving semantic integrity, auditability, accountability, and comparability.

FDIS-RA is also distinct from a reference implementation, technical specification, data standard, communication protocol, or implementation framework.

It does not define:

- Executable software
- Concrete data models
- Exchange formats
- Protocol bindings
- Programming interfaces
- Platform-specific behaviour

Standards, semantic models, schemas, ontologies, rules, APIs, and other implementation artefacts may realise, align with, or support aspects of FDIS-RA. They do not replace the Reference Architecture.

FDIS-RA provides the architectural context within which such artefacts are designed, evaluated, governed, and assessed for conformance.

Accordingly, FDIS-RA serves as a framework for architectural design, assessment, governance, procurement, and conformance evaluation.

It establishes a common architectural baseline against which organisations evaluate systems for alignment with the objectives of regulated data interpretation, including:

- Long-term semantic stability
- Controlled semantic evolution
- Traceability
- Auditability
- Comparability
- Accountability
- Governance across reporting periods, organisations, and regulatory regimes

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