

fairsfair Initial Body of Work

Foundational Series

Edition v1.0 · Frozen

Series	Foundational
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1 Introduction

1.1 Mature conventions for the digital world

Cooperation depends on conventions that have matured over centuries. Agreements make reciprocal expectations explicit. The rights and obligations remain with those to whom they belong. Work may be delegated without transferring the underlying responsibility. Information is provided when it is needed for an agreed purpose.

fairsfair aligns these mature conventions in the digital world.

It provides a consistent operational means through which natural persons, businesses and public authorities can cooperate across independent systems. They can perform reciprocal Agreements as Transactions without surrendering their autonomy, centralising their information or depending upon a single intermediary to organise the exchange.

1.2 From Agreement to outcome

An Agreement establishes the shared context for a Transaction. The Transaction is performed through an agreed sequence of Transaction Activities, each comprising the Actions required to transform minimally required Input into Output.

The Output establishes what a Transaction Activity achieved and contributes to the state of play of the Transaction. Each side can therefore understand what has been fulfilled and what remains to be performed without requiring access to all underlying information.

Information remains at its Source Location. Its availability is related to the relevant Transaction Activity under the Transaction ID. It may be read or retrieved only as required for the Actions being performed, while the resulting Output remains available as evidence of what was achieved.

This makes the Transaction—not the collection of data—the organising context.

1.3 What the Foundational Series establishes

The fairsfair Foundational Series establishes three connected models.

The Transaction Model establishes how an Agreement is performed as a Transaction. It defines the Transaction Process, its four reciprocal Transaction Activities, their Actions and Constitutional Capabilities, and the state of play through which the Transaction progresses.

The Operational Model establishes how information is related to a Transaction Activity, made available through its Formal and Material Expressions, used as Input, produced as Output and preserved at its Source Location.

The Role Model establishes the legal-economic positions expressed through the Constitutional Roles, the Actions distinguished through the Data Roles, and how specified Actions may be performed by a Delegated Agent without transferring the Principal's rights, obligations or responsibility.

Together, the models establish:

what is performed → how information is made available and handled → who may perform the Actions

1.4 Operational means to individual and societal ends

fairsfair supports cooperation in which natural persons, businesses and public authorities can manage information according to the outcomes they seek, without treating privacy and convenience as opposing interests.

Its conventions align with objectives pursued through European regulation and public policy, including transparency, neutrality and accountability in digital ecosystems. They support data minimisation, purpose limitation, interoperability, data portability, traceability and identification only where necessary.

fairsfair leverages the legal principles underlying these objectives by giving them a consistent operational form. The Agreement establishes the purpose. The Transaction Activity establishes what must be performed. Input is limited to the information minimally required for that performance. Output establishes what was achieved.

This also changes where justification begins. A natural person need not justify why information or identification should be withheld. The Transaction Activity must establish why it is minimally required. Where that necessity is absent, the information is not required as Input and the natural person need not be identified.

The same structure supports legitimate secondary use of the state of play without unnecessarily exposing the personal data underlying the Transaction. Different participation in delivery and payment Transaction Activities can remain related to the relevant Transaction without requiring a persistent identity for the natural person across those contexts.

1.5 Boundaries

fairsfair does not issue or govern identities, credentials or legal authority. It does not create rights, obligations or public powers. These arise from Agreements, legislation and other recognised sources outside fairsfair.

It does not centralise information or prescribe where participants maintain it. It does not prescribe technologies, data structures, organisational arrangements or implementation choices.

fairsfair gives applicable legal principles, authority and obligations a consistent operational form. Compliance remains determined by the applicable law and the circumstances of each Transaction.

1.6 Reading the Foundational Series

Part 2 introduces fairsfair through a simple observation and shows what its conventions make possible.

Part 3 establishes the Transaction Model: how an Agreement is performed as a Transaction.



Part 4 establishes the Operational Model: how information is related, made available, handled and preserved.

Part 5 establishes the Role Model: where rights and obligations belong, which Actions may be performed with information, and how Actions may be delegated.

Appendix A provides the defined terminology used throughout the Foundational Series.

2 fairsfair

2.1 The operational line

Conventions
↓
Agreements
↓
Transactions
↓
Transaction Processes
↓
Transaction Activities
↓
Actions
↓
Input & Output
↓
Formal & Material Expressions

2.2 A simple observation

Civilisation exists because of conventions. They are the do's and don'ts of everyday life. They allow cooperation, specialisation and delegation for practical, economic or specialist reasons.

Those same conventions allow similar outcomes whether those involved know each other well or have never met before. When rights and obligations become reciprocal, they are usually made explicit through an Agreement. It establishes their shared expectations and boundaries.

The Agreement establishes a Transaction. Its performance follows the agreed Transaction Process through reciprocal Transaction Activities.

fairsfair begins there.

It brings those same conventions into the digital world.

A legal entity is represented by an Entity ID. A natural person's participation is related to the relevant Transaction under its Transaction ID, without requiring a persistent fairsfair identifier. Where identification or evidence of an attribute is minimally required for a Transaction Activity, the necessary identifier or credential is made available from an authorised source as Input.

Each Transaction Activity is a coherent sequence of Actions transforming Input into Output in the context of the reciprocal Agreement. Input is the information minimally required to perform those Actions. Output is the information they produce and establishes what the Transaction Activity achieved.

Completing a Transaction Activity changes the state of play of the Transaction. Its Output establishes what the Transaction Activity achieved. Within the agreed Transaction Process, the resulting state shows what has been fulfilled and what remains to be performed.

Information required or produced within a Transaction Activity is made available through its Formal and Material Expressions. The Formal Expression notifies that the information is available, relates its availability to the Transaction Activity under the Transaction ID and identifies its Source Location. The Material Expression is the information available at that Source Location.

The Data Roles distinguish the Actions that may be performed with information required or produced within a Transaction Activity: establishing the conditions for its use, holding and organising it, reading it directly, or retrieving and processing it.

That's all.

2.3 What fairsfair makes possible

By bringing familiar conventions into the digital world, fairsfair allows independent participants to cooperate without giving up their autonomy.

Agreements make reciprocal expectations explicit. The rights and obligations remain with the Principals to whom they belong, while specific Actions may be performed by Delegated Agents where authority has been established.

Information remains at its Source Location and is made available only when authorised for a Transaction Activity. Unnecessary copying and central ownership are avoided. Where identification or evidence of an attribute of a natural person is minimally required, it is provided through an identifier or credential issued and governed outside fairsfair.

This allows natural persons, organisations and public authorities to cooperate while retaining control over their information and responsibilities.

These conventions support transparency, accountability and traceability, together with data minimisation, purpose limitation and identification only where necessary. They also support interoperability, data portability and digital sovereignty by allowing independent participants and systems to work together while remaining independent.

fairsfair does not establish these objectives. It provides a consistent operational means to realise them.

3 Transaction Model

3.1 Context

An Agreement constitutes the shared context for a Transaction. It identifies the subject of the exchange, the reciprocal rights and obligations, the participating Constitutional Roles and the agreed Transaction Process.

Participation in a Transaction does not require every participant to be persistently identified within fairsfair. A legal entity is represented by an Entity ID. A natural person's participation is related to the relevant Transaction under its Transaction ID, without requiring a persistent fairsfair identifier. Identification or evidence of an attribute is required only where minimally required for a Transaction Activity.

This shared context relates the Transaction Activities and their Actions to the same Transaction, regardless of where, when or through which systems they are performed.

3.2 Transaction and Transaction Process

The Transaction is the performance of the Agreement as a coherent whole.

The Transaction Process is the agreed sequence through which the Transaction is performed. It comprises four Transaction Activities, each performing a distinct part of the Agreement.

Each Transaction Activity occupies a defined place within that sequence. Its completion changes the state of play and, where another Transaction Activity follows, allows the Transaction to continue from what has been achieved.

3.3 Actions and Constitutional Capabilities

A Transaction Activity is performed through Actions. Each Action contributes to the purpose of the Transaction Activity and remains distinct even where several Actions are performed together or through the same system.

A Constitutional Capability is the competence required to perform an Action within the context of a Transaction Activity. The participant must also be expressly authorised to perform that Action in the particular Transaction.

Authorisation follows from the Agreement or another recognised source of authority. How those Actions are assigned and by whom they may be performed is established through the Role Model and Reference Model. Where a Delegated Agent acts, the Principal's Constitutional Role, rights, obligations and responsibility remain with the Principal.

3.4 Constitutional Form

Every Transaction Activity has the same constitutional form: Actions transform minimally required Input into Output.

Input is the information minimally required to perform the Actions. Output is the information those Actions produce and establishes what the Transaction Activity achieved.

Input → Actions → Output

This form remains the same regardless of the purpose of the Transaction Activity or the technology through which it is performed.

3.5 Reciprocal Transaction Activities

A reciprocal Agreement for delivery in return for payment is performed through four Transaction Activities:

Delivery Identification establishes that delivery can be made to the intended recipient or consumer of the agreed product or service.

Delivery Fulfilment establishes that the agreed product or service has been delivered.

Payment Identification establishes that the agreed payment can be provided.

Payment Fulfilment establishes that the agreed payment has been made.

Together, these four Transaction Activities establish and fulfil both sides of the reciprocal Agreement. Their sequence may vary according to that Agreement and does not prescribe how or through which systems they are performed.

3.6 State of Play

The state of play expresses which Transaction Activity is ongoing, what has been achieved within the Transaction and what remains to be performed. It changes when a Transaction Activity is completed and its Output contributes to the Transaction.

This allows each side to understand the state of the Transaction as a whole without requiring access to all underlying Input and Output. That state may also support secondary use without unnecessarily disclosing personal data.

Because the sequence of Transaction Activities is established by the Agreement, the same constitutional form accommodates different real-life sequences and use cases, such as pre-paid and post-paid Transactions.

4 Operational Model

4.1 Metadata

The metadata relates each Transaction Activity to the Transaction under its specific Transaction ID.

When information is made available, the metadata relates that availability to the relevant Transaction Activity and identifies its Source Location. These relations allow different systems to recognise the same operational context.

The relations do not establish which Actions may be performed or whether the information may be read or retrieved. That is established separately through Authorisation.

4.2 Authorisation

Authorisation establishes which Actions may be performed and whether information may be read or retrieved for a Transaction Activity.

It remains related to that Transaction Activity under its specific Transaction ID and is limited to its agreed purpose and duration.

4.3 Formal and Material Expression

Information required or produced within a Transaction Activity is made available through its Formal and Material Expressions.

A Formal Expression notifies that information is available, relates its availability to the Transaction Activity under the Transaction ID and identifies its Source Location.

Where Input is made available from independently governed sources, each Material Expression has its own Formal Expression and Source Location.

A Material Expression is the information available at the Source Location identified by its Formal Expression.

4.4 Input

Input is the information minimally required to perform the Actions of a Transaction Activity. Where no information is minimally required, the Material Expression of the Input is empty.

Input remains at its Source Location or independently governed Source Locations. Each Material Expression may be read directly or retrieved for processing where authorised.

Authorisation to read, retrieve or process the Input continues only while it is minimally required for the Transaction Activity.

4.5 Output

Output is the information produced by the Actions of a Transaction Activity. It establishes what the Transaction Activity achieved.

When the Output becomes available, the Transaction Activity is complete and the Output contributes to the state of play of the Transaction.

4.6 Preservation

Output is preserved at its Source Location for as long as required by the Agreement or an applicable obligation.

Preservation maintains the Output and its relation to the Transaction Activity under the Transaction ID. Whether the preserved Output may be read or retrieved remains subject to Authorisation.

5 Role Model

5.1 Constitutional Roles

Constitutional Roles express the reciprocal legal-economic positions established by the Agreement:

Party Entitled to Delivery

Party Obligated to Deliver

Party Obligated to Pay

Party Entitled to Payment

Each Constitutional Role is fulfilled by a Principal. A Principal may fulfil one or more Constitutional Roles within a Transaction, and the same Constitutional Role may be fulfilled by different Principals in different Transactions.

The rights and obligations expressed through a Constitutional Role belong to the Principal fulfilling it.

5.2 Data Roles

Data Roles distinguish the Actions that may be performed with information required or produced within a Transaction Activity. The four Data Roles are:

Data Rights Holder
Establishes or maintains the conditions under which information may be used.

Data Holder
Holds information and organises it for use as Input.

Data Consumer
Reads authorised information directly from its Source Location for and during the Transaction Activity.

Data Services Provider
Retrieves and processes authorised information.

Data Roles do not predetermine who performs their Actions. A Principal may appoint a Data Services Provider to retrieve and process authorised information, including Output made available by a completed Transaction Activity.

5.3 Delegation and Agency

Delegation authorises a Delegated Agent to perform specified Actions on behalf of a Principal. It does not transfer the Principal's Constitutional Role, rights, obligations or responsibility.

Delegated authority may arise from an Agreement, legislation or another recognised source of authority. It remains limited to the Actions, purpose and duration for which it is established.



The Delegated Agent must possess the Constitutional Capabilities required to perform those Actions.

Agency is the performance of the authorised Actions by the Delegated Agent on behalf of the Principal.

Appendix A Glossary

The definitions below reproduce the terminology established in Parts 3–5. The governing section remains authoritative for the operation and relations established through each term.

Agreement

An Agreement establishes the shared context for a Transaction, including the subject of the exchange, the reciprocal rights and obligations, the participating Constitutional Roles and the agreed Transaction Process.

Part 3 — Transaction Model

Transaction

A Transaction is the performance of the Agreement as a coherent whole.

Part 3 — Transaction Model

Transaction Process

A Transaction Process is the agreed sequence through which the Transaction is performed. It comprises four Transaction Activities.

Part 3 — Transaction Model

Transaction Activity

A Transaction Activity is the coherent sequence of Actions transforming Input into Output in the context of the reciprocal Agreement. The four are:

Delivery Identification establishes that delivery can be made to the intended recipient or consumer of the agreed product or service.
Delivery Fulfilment establishes that the agreed product or service has been delivered.
Payment Identification establishes that the agreed payment can be provided.
Payment Fulfilment establishes that the agreed payment has been made.

Part 3 — Transaction Model

Transaction ID

A Transaction ID is the identifier under which a Transaction, its Transaction Activities and their related information are connected.

Part 3 — Transaction Model

Entity ID

An Entity ID is the persistent identifier through which a legal entity is represented within fairsfair.

Part 3 — Transaction Model

Action

An Action is an operation performed within a Transaction Activity.

Part 3 — Transaction Model

Constitutional Capability

A Constitutional Capability is the competence required to perform an Action within the context of a Transaction Activity.

Part 3 — Transaction Model

State of Play

The state of play expresses which Transaction Activity is ongoing, what has been achieved within the Transaction and what remains to be performed.

Part 3 — Transaction Model

Input

Input is the information minimally required to perform the Actions of a Transaction Activity. Where no information is minimally required, the Material Expression of the Input is empty.

Part 4 — Operational Model

Output

Output is the information produced by the Actions of a Transaction Activity. It establishes what the Transaction Activity achieved.

Part 4 — Operational Model

Formal Expression

A Formal Expression notifies that information is available, relates its availability to the Transaction Activity under the Transaction ID and identifies its Source Location.

Part 4 — Operational Model

Material Expression

A Material Expression is the information available at the Source Location.

Part 4 — Operational Model

Authorisation

Authorisation establishes which Actions may be performed and whether information may be read or retrieved for a Transaction Activity.

Part 4 — Operational Model

Source Location

A Source Location is the location at which the Material Expression remains available.

Part 4 — Operational Model

Preservation

Preservation maintains Output at its Source Location and retains its relation to the Transaction Activity under the Transaction ID.

Part 4 — Operational Model

Principal

A Principal is a party whose legal-economic position is constituted by the Agreement.

Part 5 — Role Model

Constitutional Role

A Constitutional Role expresses one of the reciprocal legal-economic positions established by the Agreement. The four Constitutional Roles are:

Party Entitled to Delivery
Party Obligated to Deliver
Party Obligated to Pay
Party Entitled to Payment

The rights and obligations expressed through a Constitutional Role belong to the Principal fulfilling it.

Part 5 — Role Model

Data Role

A Data Role distinguishes the Actions that may be performed with information required or produced within a Transaction Activity. The four Data Roles are:

Data Rights Holder establishes or maintains the conditions under which information may be used.

Data Holder holds information and organises it for use as Input.

Data Consumer reads authorised information directly from its Source Location for and during the Transaction Activity.

Data Services Provider retrieves and processes authorised information.

Part 5 — Role Model

Delegation

Delegation authorises a Delegated Agent to perform specified Actions on behalf of a Principal. It does not transfer the Principal's Constitutional Role, rights, obligations or responsibility.

Part 5 — Role Model

Delegated Agent

A Delegated Agent performs authorised Actions on behalf of a Principal and must possess the Constitutional Capabilities required to perform them.

Part 5 — Role Model

Agency

Agency is the performance of authorised Actions by a Delegated Agent on behalf of a Principal.

Part 5 — Role Model