



Fitness of Methodological Resolution for the Intended Determination

Variable Resolution, Methodological Completeness, and Fitness for Purpose

Foundational Article 11 — Third Edition

Whole-Quality Institute

Introduction

Whole Quality requires a practical decision before a Quality State determination begins:

How much detail is needed for the intended task?

Some tasks require only a broad determination.

Other tasks require a more detailed examination of the same Quality Object.

The Quality Object does not become more complex when we examine it more closely. A finer resolution simply reveals more relevant conditions, relationships, and possible failures.

This question affects the whole quality architecture.

The intended determination may require:

- a broader or more detailed view of Intended Results;
- broader or finer Quality Factors;
- more or fewer Quality Indicators;
- more or fewer Quality Outcome Criteria;
- different Evidence.

Whole Quality does not begin by choosing a preferred number of Quality Factors.

The number of Quality Factors should emerge from the work needed to understand Function Realization well enough for the intended Quality State determination and Quality Claim.

This helps explain why different Core Standards may use different quality architectures.

An infrastructure Core Standard may require one set of Quality Factors.

The AMSI Personal Care Assistance Core Standard may require another.

The AMSI Vocational Rehabilitation and Job Support Core Standard may require a different set again.

These differences may reflect different Quality Objects, Intended Functions, Intended Results, Function-Realization Requirements, Failure-Mode Families, Critical Conditions, and determination tasks.

Completeness does not mean including every possible detail.

It means including enough relevant detail to support the intended determination responsibly.

This Foundational Article explains how to choose a methodological resolution that fits the task.

It also explains why different Whole Quality applications may reasonably use different numbers and levels of Quality Factors, Quality Indicators, and Quality Outcome Criteria.

FTA11 does not try to prove that any IQI or AMSI Core Standard has the only correct number of Quality Factors.

The detailed reason for a particular Core Standard architecture belongs within the responsible IQI or AMSI platform.

FTA11 develops the general methodological basis for asking:

Is this quality architecture complete enough, clear enough, and practical for the intended Quality State determination and Quality Claim?

1. The Great Britain Coastline Example

1.1 One Coastline, Different Measurements

Imagine that three people measure the coastline of Great Britain.

The first uses a measuring unit that is 100 kilometers long.

The second uses a measuring unit that is 1 kilometer long.

The third uses a measuring unit that is 1 meter long.

They are measuring the same coastline.

Yet they obtain different total lengths.

Why?

The coastline is not straight. It has bays, cliffs, beaches, rocks, peninsulas, and many curves.

A long measuring unit passes over many of these details.

A shorter measuring unit follows more of the coastline.

A very short measuring unit follows even more curves and small irregularities.

As the measuring unit becomes smaller, more detail is included, so the measured length increases.

The coastline itself has not changed.

Only the level of detail has changed.

The same idea appears in everyday life.

A world map may show the main shape of Great Britain.

A road map may show cities and highways.

A local map may show individual streets.

All three describe the same place.

They simply show different levels of detail.

Whole Quality works in a similar way.

The same Quality Object may be examined at different levels of detail.

For example, a natural gas pipeline may be examined as one complete transportation system.

It may also be examined through its compressor stations, pipeline sections, valves, control systems, environmental conditions, and relationships.

The pipeline has not become more complicated.

The finer examination reveals more of the structure needed for the intended determination.

This is the starting idea of methodological resolution.

1.2 Why the Measuring Unit Changes the Result

The measured length of a coastline depends on how closely the measurement follows its shape.

A long measuring unit skips many small curves.

A shorter measuring unit includes more of them.

This is why different methods can give different lengths for the same coastline.

This does not mean that one method is always right and the others are wrong.

The useful method depends on the task.

For example, a school map does not need to show every small bay and rock.

A navigation chart may need much more detail.

A local environmental study may require even finer detail.

Each task requires a different level of measurement.

The same principle applies in Whole Quality.

When the task needs only a broad determination, extra detail should be avoided.

When the task needs a more complete determination, enough detail must be included so important conditions are not missed.

The appropriate methodological resolution is the one that is fit for the intended determination.

1.3 Which Measurement Is Correct?

At first glance, the different coastline measurements may seem contradictory.

If one person measures 2,800 kilometers and another measures 3,500 kilometers, a reader may ask:

Which one is correct?

Both measurements may be correct.

Each was made with a different measuring unit and for a different task.

The same principle applies in Whole Quality.

One infrastructure task may ask:

Did natural gas reach the receiving network?

This question may require only a limited determination.

Another determination may ask:

Was natural gas transported safely and reliably throughout the relevant Lifecycle?

The second determination needs more detail.

It may need more Quality Factors, Quality Indicators, Quality Outcome Criteria, and Evidence.

The infrastructure system may be the same.

The intended determination is different.

A similar difference appears in support services.

One task may ask:

Did the support worker arrive?

Another may ask:

Did the support service protect the person's safety, dignity, autonomy, and participation?

The first question may need only limited information.

The second needs a more complete determination.

The same is true for Human Body Health.

One task may ask:

Can the person walk?

Another may ask:

What is the Quality State of the person's overall health?

The second task needs much more information.

A simple determination is not always enough.

A very detailed determination is not always necessary.

The best determination uses the level of detail needed for its purpose.

1.4 Fitness for the Intended Task

The coastline example gives one practical rule: the level of detail should fit the intended determination.

Whole Quality does not ask how much information can be collected. It asks how much relevant detail is needed.

That choice affects the Quality Factors, Quality Indicators, Quality Outcome Criteria, and Evidence.

A broad determination should avoid unnecessary detail. A demanding determination should include enough detail to prevent important conditions from being missed.

Methodological resolution should be fit for the intended determination.

The next section explains what this means within the Whole Quality methodology.

2. What Methodological Resolution Means in Whole Quality

2.1 The Quality Object Does Not Change

Imagine that you are examining a used car.

Its Intended Function is:

Transport people from one location to another.

One task may need only a broad determination.

For example:

Can the car complete a short local trip?

Another task may require a more detailed determination:

Can the same car support regular long-distance travel under the expected conditions?

The Quality Object remains the same car.

The Intended Function also remains the same.

Only the purpose and depth of the determination change.

The broader determination may examine more Intended Results, Function-Realization Requirements, Quality Factors, Quality Indicators, Quality Outcome Criteria, and Evidence.

This does not mean that words such as safe, reliable, or compliant create new Intended Functions.

Those words usually describe conditions or requirements for realizing the declared Intended Function. An additional Intended Function exists only when the Quality Object is intended to do something else. For example:

Transport people.

and

Transport parcels.

are two different Intended Functions.

Whole Quality therefore separates three questions:

What is the declared Quality Object?

What is its Intended Function?

How much methodological detail is needed to determine its Function Realization for the intended task?

The Quality Object and Intended Function remain stable unless the object scope or real functional purpose is deliberately changed.

2.2 The Intended Determination Determines How Much Detail Is Needed

After the Quality Object and Intended Function are clear, the purpose of the determination guides the required depth of examination.

Whole Quality does not seek the largest or the smallest possible architecture. It seeks an architecture that is sufficient for the intended determination.

No important condition should be overlooked, and no element should be added without a methodological reason.

The intended determination sets the required methodological resolution.

2.3 Broad and Fine Methodological Resolution

Imagine two people looking at the same city.

The first is flying in an airplane.

From high above, the person can see the city, rivers, highways, parks, and airports.

The second is walking along one street.

This person can see buildings, sidewalks, traffic lights, shops, trees, and people.

Neither view is better.

Each provides different information.

A broad resolution shows the overall result.

A finer resolution helps explain why that result occurred.

The same principle applies in Whole Quality.

Sometimes a broad determination is enough.

The right resolution provides enough relevant information for the intended task.

A broad determination may answer this question.

Why were some buses late?

Now a finer methodological resolution may be needed.

The determination may examine traffic conditions, vehicle reliability, driver availability, weather, route planning, passenger demand, and other relevant conditions.

The transportation service is the same.

The intended determination is different.

The methodological resolution has changed.

Fine methodological resolution helps us understand the reasons behind that picture.

Whole Quality may use either approach.

The choice depends on the intended determination.

Sometimes a broad determination is sufficient.

Sometimes a finer determination is necessary.

Neither approach is universally better.

The appropriate methodological resolution is the one that provides enough quality-relevant information for the intended determination.

2.4 Scale and Methodological Resolution Are Different

Scale and methodological resolution are related, but they are not the same.

Imagine that you are looking at a city.

Changing the scale changes what is examined.

Changing the methodological resolution changes how closely the same Quality Object is examined.

Another studies one neighborhood.

A third studies a single building.

They are working at different scales.

Now imagine that all three people are studying the same building.

The first only checks whether the building is open.

The second examines the electrical, plumbing, and heating systems.

Now the scale is the same.

They are all examining the same building.

What has changed is the methodological resolution.

The same principle applies in Whole Quality.

Sometimes the Quality Object changes.

- an entire transportation network;
- one railway line;
- one railway station.

This is a change of scale.

In another situation, the Quality Object remains the same.

For example, we may examine the same railway station.

One task may simply ask:

Is the station open and operating?

Can the station safely, reliably, and efficiently serve passengers under the expected operating conditions?

The scale has not changed.

Only the methodological resolution has changed.

This distinction is important.

Changing the scale changes what is being examined.

Changing the methodological resolution changes how deeply the same Quality Object is examined.

Sometimes a Quality State determination requires a different scale.

Sometimes it requires a finer methodological resolution.

Sometimes it requires both.

Whole Quality therefore considers both questions before a determination begins:

What is the declared Quality Object?

and

What methodological resolution is appropriate for the intended determination?

These are different decisions.

Both are important.

2.5 More Detail Is Not Automatically Better

It is easy to think that collecting more information always leads to a better determination.

In practice, this is not always true.

Imagine that you want to buy a loaf of bread.

You may ask:

Is the bread fresh?

This question can usually be answered quickly.

Now imagine that someone decides to collect hundreds of additional observations about the bread.

The size of every air bubble.

The exact shape of every seed.

The position of every small crack in the crust.

Most of this information does not help answer the original question.

It simply makes the determination more difficult.

Now imagine a different task.

A bakery is trying to understand why the bread loses its quality after two days.

This task requires much more information.

The recipe.

The ingredients.

The baking process.

The storage conditions.

The packaging.

The transportation conditions.

Here, the additional detail is useful because it helps answer a broader question.

The same principle applies in Whole Quality.

The purpose of the determination decides how much detail is needed.

Too little detail may leave important conditions unnoticed.

Too much detail may make the determination more complicated without improving the result.

The aim is not to collect the greatest possible amount of information.

The aim is to collect the information that is needed for the intended determination.

The same principle applies to the quality architecture.

More Quality Factors are not automatically better.

More Quality Indicators are not automatically better.

More Quality Outcome Criteria are not automatically better.

The best methodology is the one that includes what is needed for the intended determination and avoids unnecessary complexity.

This is the meaning of fit-for-purpose methodological resolution.

It is one of the fundamental principles of Whole Quality.

3. Fitness for the Intended Determination

3.1 What Is the Purpose of the Determination?

Before a Quality State determination begins, one question should be clear:

Why is this determination being performed?

Imagine a city bus.

Its Intended Function is:

Transport passengers from one location to another.

One determination may be needed only to confirm that the bus completed its route.

Another determination may be needed before the bus is approved for continued service.

The first may need only limited information.

The second may need a broader examination of the conditions required for continued Function Realization.

Whole Quality therefore does not begin by choosing a number of Quality Factors or Quality Indicators.

That purpose helps establish how much methodological detail is needed.

The purpose of the determination guides the methodological resolution.

3.2 What Quality Claim Is Intended?

The intended Quality Claim also affects the needed resolution.

Imagine that a person examines a bicycle.

One Quality Claim may be:

The bicycle can be used for a short ride today.

Another Quality Claim may be:

The bicycle can be used regularly for the next year.

The second claim covers a longer time and more operating conditions.

It therefore needs a broader methodological basis.

A check made today cannot by itself support a claim about an entire year of future use.

The same principle applies in Whole Quality.

The Quality Claim should not go beyond the determination that supports it.

A broader Quality Claim usually requires:

- broader Boundaries;
- more complete examination of Function Realization;
- additional Quality Indicators and Quality Outcome Criteria;
- stronger or more extensive Evidence.

The broader the intended Quality Claim, the broader the methodological basis usually needs to be.

3.3 What Could Happen if the Determination Is Wrong?

Not every incorrect determination has the same consequences.

Imagine two household objects.

The first is a flashlight.

The second is a smoke alarm.

If the flashlight does not work, the inconvenience may be small.

If the smoke alarm does not work during a fire, the consequences may be serious.

The smoke-alarm determination needs greater care because the cost of being wrong is much higher.

When an incorrect determination may affect safety, health, dignity, property, public services, or the environment, a broader or finer methodological resolution may be needed.

This may require:

- closer examination of Function Realization;
- additional Quality Factors;
- more detailed Quality Indicators;
- stronger Quality Outcome Criteria;
- more reliable Evidence;
- clearer treatment of Critical Conditions and Uncertainty.

The methodology becomes more detailed because the possible consequences are greater.

The greater the consequences of an incorrect determination, the stronger its methodological basis should be.

3.4 How Much Confidence Is Required?

Different decisions require different levels of confidence.

Imagine two weather-related decisions.

A person wants to know whether to carry an umbrella.

A city must decide whether to evacuate people because of an approaching hurricane.

Both decisions concern the weather.

However, the second decision requires much greater confidence.

The same applies in Whole Quality.

A decision affecting safety, major investment, continued operation, or human well-being may require:

- more complete Evidence;
- more reliable Evidence Sources;
- additional observations;
- clearer treatment of Uncertainty;
- a finer methodological resolution.

The purpose is not to achieve absolute certainty.

The goal is to reach a level of confidence that fits the decision.

The required confidence influences how deeply Function Realization should be examined and how much Evidence is needed.

3.5 What Physical Time, Lifecycle Stage, and Context Apply?

The same Intended Function may be realized under different conditions.

Imagine a city bus again.

Its Intended Function remains:

Transport passengers from one location to another.

This function may be examined:

- during normal daytime service;
- during winter weather;
- during peak-hour traffic;
- after many years of operation;
- after major repair;
- during an emergency.

These circumstances do not automatically create a new Intended Function.

They change the Context in which the same Intended Function must be realized.

They may also change which conditions require closer examination.

For example, winter operation may make tire condition, braking, visibility, and heating more important.

Peak-hour service may make passenger capacity, boarding time, and service continuity more important.

After major repair, the determination may need to examine whether the repaired systems support continued Function Realization.

Physical Time also matters.

A determination made five years ago may no longer support a current Quality Claim if the Quality Object has deteriorated, been repaired, changed, or entered another Lifecycle stage.

When is the determination being performed?

At what Lifecycle stage?

Under what Context is the Intended Function expected to be realized?

Context does not automatically change the Intended Function.

It changes the circumstances in which Function Realization is examined.

The Intended Function tells us what the Quality Object is intended to do. Context tells us under what circumstances Function Realization occurs and is determined.

4. Intended Function, Context, and Methodological Resolution

4.1 The Intended Function Describes What the Quality Object Is Intended to Do

The Intended Function describes the functional purpose of the Quality Object: what it is intended to do.

Examples include transporting passengers, transporting natural gas from a sending point to a receiving point, or providing access to library services and information.

This section separates three ideas that are easy to mix: Intended Function, Context, and methodological resolution.

Keeping the functional purpose separate from the conditions of its realization makes the quality architecture easier to derive and explain.

4.2 Conditions Such as Safety and Reliability Belong to Function Realization

The Intended Function states what the Quality Object is intended to do.

Consider passenger transportation.

The Intended Function is:

Transport passengers from one location to another.

Safety, reliability, continuity, accessibility, and compliance describe how the Intended Function should be realized.

For that function to be realized responsibly, many conditions may matter.

The vehicle may need to:

- move as intended;
- steer and stop;
- protect passengers;
- operate without unacceptable interruption;
- provide access to the intended users;
- comply with applicable requirements.

These conditions do not necessarily create separate Intended Functions.

They describe what successful Function Realization depends upon.

Whole Quality examines these conditions through:

- Intended Results;
- One Intended Function is realized through multiple Intended Results.
- Function-Realization Requirements;
- Quality Factors;
- Quality Indicators;

- Quality Outcome Criteria;
- Evidence.

This distinction is important.

The Intended Function describes what the Quality Object is intended to do.

4.3 Context Changes the Circumstances, Not Automatically the Intended Function

Imagine the same bus operating in different situations.

It may operate:

- on a short city route;
- during heavy snow;
- at night;
- during peak-hour traffic;
- on a route used by many passengers with mobility needs.

The Context changes.

Different Contexts may make different aspects of Function Realization more important.

On a route used by many passengers with mobility needs, accessible entry, securement systems, information, and assistance may need greater attention.

Context may therefore change:

- which Intended Results are especially relevant;
- which Quality Factors require greater attention;
- which Quality Indicators and Quality Outcome Criteria apply;
- what Evidence is needed.

It does not automatically create a new Intended Function.

Context refines the determination of Function Realization. It does not automatically redefine the Intended Function.

4.4 The Same Intended Function May Be Examined at Different Resolutions

The same Intended Function can be examined broadly or in greater detail.

Consider again:

Intended Function: Transport passengers from one location to another.

A broad determination may examine only whether passengers reached the destination.

A finer determination may also examine:

- whether the trip was completed within the expected time;
- whether interruptions occurred;
- whether passengers were protected;
- whether the vehicle remained controllable;
- whether boarding and exiting were possible;
- whether important operating conditions were maintained.

The Intended Function has not changed.

The finer determination examines more of what Function Realization depends on.

This may lead to:

- more detailed Intended Results;
- additional Function-Realization Requirements;
- broader or finer Quality Factors;
- more Quality Indicators;
- more Quality Outcome Criteria;
- more Evidence.

The added detail should arise from the intended determination.

It should not be added merely to make the architecture appear more complete.

The same Intended Function may require different methodological resolutions for different determination tasks.

4.5 A Genuinely Additional Intended Function Changes the Quality Architecture

Sometimes the Quality Object is expected to perform another real function.

For example, a bus may be used not only to transport passengers but also to transport parcels.

The second function is not a more detailed description of passenger transportation.

It is a different functional purpose.

Transport parcels.

It may require additional Intended Results and different quality-relevant conditions.

Passenger transportation may require attention to seating, boarding, accessibility, and passenger protection.

Parcel transportation may require attention to secure storage, identification, handling, and delivery.

The same principle can apply to a library.

A library may have one Intended Function of providing access to books and information.

It may also have an additional Intended Function of providing community meeting space.

The second function may require a different set of Intended Results and Quality Factors.

When a genuinely additional Intended Function is declared, the quality architecture may need to expand.

This differs from examining the same Intended Function at a finer resolution.

4.6 Why These Differences Must Not Be Mixed

Three different changes may occur:

- The Intended Function may remain the same while the methodological resolution changes.
- The Context may change while the Intended Function remains the same.
- A genuinely additional Intended Function may be introduced.

These situations are related, but they are not identical.

For example:

Transport passengers is the Intended Function.

Transport passengers during winter weather applies that function in a different Context.

Examining braking, traction, visibility, and heating in detail applies a finer methodological resolution.

Transport parcels introduces an additional Intended Function.

When these differences are mixed, the number of Quality Factors may seem arbitrary.

When they are separated, the quality architecture is easier to understand.

The basic logic is:

The Intended Function tells us what the Quality Object is intended to do.

Context tells us under what circumstances Function Realization occurs and is determined.

Methodological resolution tells us how much detail is needed to determine its Function Realization.

An additional Intended Function may require an additional branch of the quality architecture.

This distinction prepares the basis for understanding why different determinations and different Core Standards may contain different numbers of Quality Factors.

5. Why Different Core Standards May Use Different Numbers of Quality Factors

5.1 There Is No Universal Number

People sometimes ask:

How many Quality Factors should a Core Standard contain?

There is no single answer.

Whole Quality does not begin by selecting a preferred number.

Instead, the number of Quality Factors develops from the methodological work.

Imagine that three teachers prepare three different examinations.

One examination contains ten questions.

Another contains twenty.

A third contains forty.

This does not automatically mean that one examination is better than the others.

Each examination was prepared for a different subject and a different purpose.

The same principle applies in Whole Quality.

Whole Quality treats the number of Quality Factors as a methodological result.

It is not chosen in advance.

It emerges from the work needed for the intended determination.

As a result, different Core Standards may reasonably contain different numbers of Quality Factors.

The important question is therefore not:

How many Quality Factors are there?

The important question is:

Does this set of Quality Factors provide a sufficiently complete methodological basis for the intended Quality State determination?

5.2 Quality Factors Should Emerge from the Methodology

If Whole Quality does not choose the number first, where do the Quality Factors come from?

Imagine that a doctor is preparing a health examination.

The doctor does not begin by saying:

I will examine exactly twelve things.

The doctor first identifies the purpose and scope of the examination.

The methodology develops step by step.

First, the Quality Object is declared and sufficiently described.

Structural Checkpoints confirm that the description is adequate for the intended determination.

The Intended Function and its multiple Intended Results are identified.

Function Realization and the Function-Realization Requirements are examined.

Relevant Failure-Mode Families are used as a methodological completeness check.

This work reveals the principal quality-relevant dimensions of Function Realization.

Those principal dimensions become the Quality Factors.

The process is therefore not:

Choose the Quality Factors first.

The process is to:

Declare its Intended Function and identify its Intended Results.

Understand how Function Realization occurs and what it requires.

Check the principal ways in which Function Realization may be weakened, interrupted, or lost.

Identify the principal quality-relevant dimensions.

Those dimensions become the Quality Factors.

Only then does the methodology develop the Quality Indicators through which each Quality Factor becomes observable and the Quality Outcome Criteria through which each Indicator is interpreted.

Evidence supports findings associated with those Quality Indicators and Quality Outcome Criteria before Quality Factor Interpretation and Quality State determination proceed.

Quality Factors should therefore emerge from the methodology.

Each Core Standard should develop the Quality Factors required by its Quality Object, Intended Function, Function Realization, and intended determinations.

5.3 When Is the Set of Quality Factors Sufficient?

After the Quality Factors have been identified, an important question remains:

How do we know that the set is sufficient?

Whole Quality does not expect every possible condition to become a separate Quality Factor.

That would make the methodology unnecessarily fragmented.

Instead, the set should represent the principal dimensions needed to examine Function Realization for the intended Quality State determination.

The right toolbox depends on the task.

Imagine that you are assembling a toolbox.

If the task is to tighten one loose screw, a screwdriver may be enough.

If the task is to renovate an entire house, many more tools are needed.

If an important part of Function Realization is not covered by any Quality Factor, the architecture may be incomplete.

The same principle applies in Whole Quality.

The goal is to include the Quality Factors needed for the intended determination.

If an important dimension cannot be examined because no Quality Factor addresses it, the architecture may be under-resolved.

If several Quality Factors describe substantially the same dimension without a clear reason, the architecture may be unnecessarily fragmented.

A sufficient set of Quality Factors supports the intended Quality State determination without unnecessary complexity.

A positive answer does not prove absolute or permanent completeness.

It supports the conclusion that the set is sufficiently complete for the declared purpose, scope, Context, and methodological resolution.

A sufficient set of Quality Factors provides the principal quality-relevant coverage needed for the intended determination without material omission or unnecessary duplication.

5.4 Different Core Standards May Reach Different Results

The same Whole Quality methodology can lead to different Core Standard architectures.

The IQI and AMSI examples show this clearly: different domains may reasonably use different numbers of Quality Factors.

Their Quality Factors should therefore be derived from their own Function Realization rather than copied from another domain.

A larger set is not automatically more complete. A smaller set is not automatically weaker. Each set should provide the principal coverage needed for its own intended Quality State determination.

Methodological consistency requires a common derivation logic, not identical numbers of Quality Factors.

The detailed justification for a particular Core Standard belongs within the responsible IQI or AMSI platform.

5.5 Quality Architectures May Develop Over Time

A Whole Quality Core Standard may need to change as knowledge and experience grow.

Imagine that a city is expanding.

When the city was small, one map was enough.

As new neighborhoods, roads, bridges, and parks are built, the map is updated.

The city has changed.

The map changes to describe it more accurately.

The same principle applies in Whole Quality.

As experience grows, new research may show that:

- an important aspect of Function Realization has not been sufficiently represented;
- two Quality Factors should be combined;

- one Quality Factor should be divided into two;
- new Quality Indicators or Quality Outcome Criteria are needed;
- existing Quality Factors can be described more clearly.

These changes do not necessarily mean that the earlier architecture was wrong.

They may reflect a better understanding of the Quality Object and Function Realization.

Whole Quality therefore encourages methodological improvement.

Changes should not be made only to increase or reduce the number of Quality Factors.

Every change needs a clear methodological reason.

The purpose is always the same:

To provide a more appropriate methodological basis for the intended Quality State determination.

Whole Quality Core Standards should therefore be stable, but not frozen.

They should remain stable enough for consistent use.

They should also remain open to justified improvement based on research and experience.

This balance supports both consistency and learning.

6. Methodological Resolution Influences the Entire Quality Architecture

6.1 Methodological Resolution Is Not Only About Quality Factors

Methodological resolution affects more than the number of Quality Factors.

A short city guide and a detailed guide describe the same city but support different tasks. In the same way, different determinations may need different levels of detail across the Whole Quality architecture.

A change in resolution may affect Intended Results, Function-Realization Requirements, Quality Factors, Indicators, Criteria, Evidence, and the scope of the final Quality Claim.

These layers should develop together and remain traceable from Function Realization to the bounded Quality Claim.

Methodological resolution influences every connected layer of the Whole Quality architecture.

6.2 Methodological Resolution Should Develop the Architecture Logically

A finer resolution does not mean adding detail everywhere.

Imagine that you are writing a book.

A new chapter should be added because it helps explain the subject, not simply to make the book longer.

The same principle applies in Whole Quality.

Each new or refined element should have a clear reason and a clear place in the architecture.

A Quality Factor should represent a principal dimension of Function Realization.

One Quality Factor becomes observable through multiple Quality Indicators.

One Quality Indicator is interpreted through multiple Quality Outcome Criteria.

Evidence supports findings about the Indicator in relation to the applicable Criteria.

These findings support Quality Factor Interpretation and, together with Critical-Condition and Non-Compensability review, the Quality State determination.

Each layer should support the next.

No element should be added only to make the architecture look more detailed.
This traceability keeps the methodology understandable, balanced, and practical.

Methodological resolution should develop the Whole Quality architecture logically, consistently, and only as much as the intended determination requires.

6.3 A Balanced Quality Architecture

A good quality architecture is not the one with the most elements.
It is the one in which the elements work together.
Imagine an orchestra.
An orchestra does not improve simply by adding more musicians.
Each musician has a role, and the sections must work together.
The same principle applies in Whole Quality.
A Quality Factor should have suitable Quality Indicators.
Each Indicator should have applicable Quality Outcome Criteria.
Relevant Evidence should be obtainable to support findings about the Indicator in relation to those Criteria.
The layers do not need identical levels of detail.
They should be coherent and proportionate.
A broad Quality Factor may reasonably require several detailed Indicators.
A single Indicator may reasonably require several complementary Criteria.
What matters is that the relationships remain clear and traceable.
Whole Quality therefore seeks coherence and proportion, not quantity.
Every element should contribute to the intended Quality State determination.

A balanced quality architecture is coherent, proportionate, traceable, and fit for the intended determination.

6.4 Methodological Resolution Should Be Methodologically Justified

Two people may develop different quality architectures for similar Quality Objects.
This does not automatically make one better than the other.
The important question is:

Why was the methodological resolution chosen?

Imagine that two architects design two bridges across similar rivers.
One bridge is larger.
The other is smaller.
The larger bridge is not automatically better.
The smaller bridge is not automatically better.
Each design should be justified by its purpose, expected use, site conditions, safety requirements, and other relevant conditions.
The same principle applies in Whole Quality.
Resolution should not be chosen merely because it looks simpler.

It should not be chosen merely because it looks more comprehensive.

It should be chosen because it fits the intended determination.

The methodology should be able to explain:

- why the Intended Function was declared as it was;
- why the chosen methodological resolution is appropriate;
- why the resulting Quality Factors are sufficient for the intended determination;
- why the selected Quality Indicators, Quality Outcome Criteria, and Evidence support that determination.

This makes the quality architecture understandable.

It is not merely a collection of elements.

It is the result of a logical process.

Clear reasons also make future improvement easier.

If new research shows that the architecture should change, the reasons for the original decisions are already clear.

Whole Quality therefore encourages important methodological decisions to be explained.

This helps others understand, apply, review, and improve the methodology.

A quality architecture should not only be methodologically sound. It should also be methodologically explainable.

7. Conclusion

Methodological resolution helps Whole Quality decide how much relevant detail is needed for a responsible Quality State determination.

FTA11 distinguishes three ideas that must remain separate:

The Intended Function tells us what the Quality Object is intended to do.

Context tells us under what circumstances Function Realization occurs and is determined.

Methodological resolution tells us how much detail is needed to examine that Function Realization.

A different Context or a finer resolution does not automatically create a new Intended Function. Only a genuinely additional functional purpose creates an additional Intended Function and may require another branch of the quality architecture.

The right resolution depends on the Quality Object, Intended Function, purpose and scope of the determination, intended Quality Claim, consequences of error, required confidence, Physical Time, Lifecycle stage, Context, available Evidence, and remaining Uncertainty.

The number of Quality Factors is not chosen in advance. It should emerge from a complete-enough and appropriately resolved view of Function Realization.

The central question is not how many Quality Factors are included. It is whether the architecture provides the principal coverage needed for the intended Quality State determination and bounded Quality Claim.

Methodological consistency does not require identical architectures. It requires each architecture to be derived through the same Whole Quality methodology and to remain understandable, traceable, justified, and fit for the intended determination.

One Intended Function is realized through multiple Intended Results.

One Quality Factor becomes observable through multiple Quality Indicators.

One Quality Indicator is interpreted through multiple Quality Outcome Criteria.

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