



FROM QUALITY CONDITIONS TO CLAIMS

The Claim as a Quality Object

Foundational Article 16 — First Edition

Whole-Quality Institute

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Foreword

A Quality Determination establishes Evidence-Supported Findings concerning applicable aspects of the Quality State of a defined Quality Object.

Those Findings may establish achievement or non-achievement of required Quality outcomes and other determined conditions concerning applicable aspects of the Quality State of the Quality Object. They do not constitute or create the Quality State itself. Where separately examined under the Quality–Harm methodology, related Findings may also concern resulting Quality conditions, Harm-capable conditions, Harm pathways, Possible Harm or Realized Harm, Risk, Safety, Uncertainty, or other matters relevant to understanding the Quality Object.

Foundational Articles 14 and 15 examined the relationship between Quality and Harm while preserving an essential methodological boundary. Quality, Harm, Risk, and Safety are related, but they are not interchangeable. A Finding in one does not automatically establish a Finding in another.

A further question arises after the applicable determinations have been made:

How should the determined Findings concerning a Quality Object be communicated to a person or organization that needs to know what those Findings mean?

The answer is not necessarily the reproduction of every individual Finding.

A recipient may need a Conclusion concerning the Quality Object as a whole. The recipient may also need the material Findings supporting that Conclusion, conditions that remain to be fulfilled, significant limitations or Uncertainty, and Findings relevant to avoiding Harm.

The movement from individual Findings to such a Conclusion requires Synthesis of Material Findings.

The resulting Claim must also be distinguished from the Findings on which it is based.

The Findings concern the original Quality Object. The Claim is made by a claimant and communicates what that claimant concludes or otherwise asserts about the Quality Object for a particular recipient and purpose.

This distinction is important because a Claim does not exist independently of its claimant. Different claimants may formulate different Claims concerning the same Quality Object, even where they work from substantially the same determined Findings. The Quality of those Claims can therefore become a separate subject of determination.

Professional practice also demonstrates that synthesis does not necessarily produce only a simple positive or Negative Conclusion.

A claimant may express a Positive Conclusion. A Positive Conclusion may instead be supportable only subject to identified conditions that remain to be fulfilled, including conditions requiring substantial resources, actions, or time; in that case, a Conditionally Positive Conclusion may apply. The applicable Findings may support a Negative Conclusion. There may also be circumstances in which the claimant Refuses to Express a Conclusion and states the material reasons for that refusal.

These possibilities require methodological examination rather than assumption.

They also raise a second question:

What makes the Claim itself a Quality Object?

Once made, the Claim can be considered separately from the original Quality Object. It has a claimant, a recipient, an Intended Function, a Boundary and Context, an Applicable Basis where relevant, and traceable relationships to the Findings and evidentiary basis upon which it relies.

The Claim can therefore itself be treated as a Quality Object.

This produces two related but distinct objects of determination.

The first is the original Quality Object and what has been established about its Quality State through applicable Findings.

The second is the Claim made about that Quality Object.

An unfavorable Finding concerning the original Quality Object does not necessarily produce a poor-quality Claim. A Claim may adequately report an unfavorable determination. Conversely, favorable Findings concerning the original Quality Object do not ensure a high-quality Claim if the Claim omits material Findings, obscures material information, exceeds what the Evidence supports, or cannot be adequately traced to its basis.

This Article establishes the methodological basis for recognizing that second Quality Object.

It considers the path from recipient needs and Evidence-Supported Findings to Materiality, Synthesis of Material Findings, and expression of a Claim, and then establishes how that Claim may itself become a Quality Object within the Whole-Quality methodology.

1 Scope

This Foundational Article examines the movement from determined Findings concerning a Quality Object to a Claim and establishes the basis for treating that Claim as a separate Quality Object.

The Article begins after the applicable determinations concerning the original Quality Object have been made.

Those determinations may establish:

- determined Findings concerning achievement or non-achievement of applicable Quality Outcome Criteria;
- Findings concerning applicable aspects of the Quality State of the original Quality Object;
- Harm-capable conditions and Harm pathways, where separately demonstrated;
- possible or Realized Harm, where established;
- Risk or Safety Findings, where separately determined; and
- Uncertainty or limitations affecting the Findings.

This Article does not repeat the methodologies through which those Findings are established. The relationships among Quality, Harm, Risk, and Safety developed in Foundational Articles 14 and 15 remain applicable. The WQI methodology for Evidence Quality also remains separately established and is not recreated here.

The present Article addresses a different question:

How are determined Findings concerning the original Quality Object considered, synthesized, and communicated through a Claim that serves the needs of a recipient?

The Article examines:

- recipients of Claims and their needs;
- the relationship between recipient needs and determined Findings;
- Materiality of Findings to the Claim;
- Synthesis of Material Findings;
- expression of a Conclusion concerning the original Quality Object;
- Positive, Conditionally Positive, and Negative Conclusions;
- refusal to express a Conclusion and the reasons for that refusal;
- reporting what has been established about the Quality State through the material Findings necessary to understand the Conclusion;
- reporting of material Harm-related Findings, where applicable;
- Uncertainty and limitations;
- the claimant and attribution of the Claim;
- the recipient, Context, and Intended Function of the Claim; and
- the basis for treating the Claim as a separate Quality Object whose own Quality can be determined.

The Reference Layer and Applicable Basis remain relevant where laws, regulations, standards, scientific knowledge, professional requirements, or other applicable sources establish requirements affecting the original Quality Object or the Claim.

A mandatory requirement may materially affect the Findings that can support a Claim. Its non-achievement cannot be disregarded merely because other Findings are favorable. At the same time, non-achievement of a mandatory requirement does not by itself establish what Conclusion must be expressed. Its significance depends upon its relationship to the applicable Quality requirements, the Intended Function of the original Quality Object, the determined Findings, and the Boundary and purpose of the Claim.

This distinction is particularly important where the determined Findings support a Positive Conclusion only subject to identified conditions. Such conditions may be substantial. Their fulfillment may require significant actions, resources, investment, or time.

Accordingly, this Article examines Positive, Conditionally Positive, and Negative Conclusions together with circumstances in which a claimant may refuse to express one of these conclusions and state the reasons for that refusal.

A refusal to express a Conclusion is not a Negative Conclusion. Whether the available basis supports expression of a Conclusion and what that conclusion states about the Quality Object are different questions.

These forms are applied in this Article consistently with VOC1 Revision 2.5. Their use in a particular Quality Claim remains dependent upon the applicable Findings, Synthesis of Material Findings, Intended Function, Context, and Applicable Basis.

This Article also does not establish a Claim Core or invariant Quality Factors and Quality Indicators for Claims. It does not establish a universal method for combining achieved and unachieved Quality Outcome Criteria into a final conclusion.

Those matters require further research.

The purpose of this Article is foundational: to establish the methodological bridge from determined Findings concerning an original Quality Object to an attributable Claim made for a recipient, and from that Claim to its treatment as a separate Quality Object within the Whole-Quality methodology.

2 Recipient Needs

2.1 Recipients of Quality Claims

A Claim is made for a recipient.

The recipient may be a person, organization, public authority, customer, owner, operator, investor, lender, prospective acquirer, regulator, insurer, professional, or another party that needs information about a Quality Object for a particular purpose.

The claimant and recipient may belong to the same organization, or they may be independent of one another. The recipient may also be the person or organization that requested the determination from which the Claim arises.

What matters methodologically is not the organizational relationship between the claimant and recipient, but the role of the recipient in relation to the Claim.

The recipient receives the Claim because information about the original Quality Object is needed.

That need may concern whether the Quality Object realizes its Intended Function, what material Findings concerning Quality have been determined, whether identified conditions remain to be fulfilled, what limitations or uncertainty affect the Findings, or whether findings exist that may be relevant to avoiding Harm.

The same original Quality Object may therefore give rise to Claims addressed to different recipients.

Those recipients may have different legitimate needs.

For example, an owner may need information for decisions concerning continued operation or improvement. A customer may need information concerning whether an object is suitable for an intended use. An investor, lender, or prospective acquirer may need information concerning the Quality Object and material conditions affecting an investment, financing, or acquisition decision. A regulator may need information concerning applicable mandatory requirements. An insurer may need information concerning conditions relevant to an insured interest, including conditions that may contribute to Harm.

These differences do not change the determined condition of the original Quality Object.

They may, however, affect what information is material to the recipient and therefore what must be adequately communicated through the Claim.

The recipient is consequently not merely the person or organization to whom a completed Claim is delivered.

Recipient needs are part of the Context in which the Claim is formed and provide an important basis for determining its Intended Function, Boundary, material content, and required level of communication.

This relationship can be expressed as:

Recipient → need for information about the original Quality Object → Claim intended to satisfy that need

The recipient therefore provides one of the starting points for examining the Claim as a Quality Object.

2.2 Recipient Needs and Interests

A recipient seeks a Claim because the determined condition of the original Quality Object may affect an interest, responsibility, decision, action, or exposure of that recipient.

Recipient needs therefore provide an important reason for the Claim, but they do not determine the condition of the original Quality Object.

The Quality Object must be determined on the basis of the applicable Quality requirements, Evidence, and methodology. A recipient's interests cannot change an achieved Quality Outcome Criterion into an unachieved one, change an unachieved criterion into an achieved one, or otherwise alter the determined Findings.

Recipient needs instead affect what the recipient needs to know about those Findings.

- whether the original Quality Object realizes its Intended Function;
- its Quality State as described by the determined Findings;
- material achieved and unachieved Quality outcomes;
- determined Findings concerning achievement or non-achievement of applicable Quality Outcome Criteria;
- conditions that must be fulfilled to achieve or sustain a required outcome;
- applicable mandatory requirements and material conditions affecting their fulfillment;
- Uncertainty or limitations affecting the determination;
- Harm-capable conditions or Harm pathways, where demonstrated;
- possible or Realized Harm, where established;
- Risk or Safety Findings, where separately determined; and
- other material information necessary for the recipient to understand and use the Claim for its intended purpose.

Different recipients may therefore require different information concerning the same determined Quality Object.

An operator may need information necessary to maintain or restore required performance. An investor, lender, or prospective acquirer may need to understand conditions that could affect the object, required future actions, resources, or exposure to Harm or loss. A regulator may require information relevant to mandatory requirements. A customer or user may need information necessary to determine whether and under what conditions the object can be relied upon for an intended use.

These differences concern the recipient's needs and the Intended Function of the Claim. They do not create different underlying findings merely because the recipients have different interests.

This distinction is important.

A Claim should not be formed by starting with the outcome preferred by its recipient and selecting only those Findings that support that outcome.

At the same time, a Claim that reports determined Findings without considering what is material to its recipient may fail to serve its Intended Function.

Recipient-centered reporting therefore requires both fidelity to the determined Findings and attention to the recipient's legitimate information needs.

The relationship can be expressed as:

$$\begin{array}{c} \textbf{Determined findings concerning the original Quality Object} \\ + \\ \textbf{Recipient needs and interests} \\ \rightarrow \\ \textbf{material information required from the Claim} \end{array}$$

Recipient needs consequently help establish what the Claim must communicate, while the determined Findings establish the reality that the Claim must adequately represent.

2.3 The Need to Know the Quality State of the Original Quality Object

A recipient commonly needs more than a collection of individual Findings.

The recipient needs to understand what the determined Findings tell it about the Quality State of the original Quality Object.

Within the Whole-Quality methodology, Quality Determination evaluates Evidence in relation to applicable Quality Outcome Criteria. Its results are Evidence-Supported Findings concerning applicable aspects of the Quality State, including achievement, non-achievement, other determined conditions, or that the available Evidence does not support determination.

Those Findings concern applicable aspects of the Quality State of the original Quality Object.

Quality State is therefore not introduced here as a separate synthesized Conclusion produced before the Claim. The Evidence-Supported Findings are the results established through Quality Determination; together they provide the basis for what can be established about the Quality State.

Different Findings may have different significance.

A particular non-achievement may materially affect realization of the Intended Function even where many other Quality Outcome Criteria are achieved. A Critical Condition or a matter subject to Non-Compensability may prevent favorable Findings elsewhere from compensating for that non-achievement.

Conversely, the existence of an unfavorable finding does not by itself establish what Conclusion should be expressed about the Quality Object. Its significance must be considered together with the other material Findings and their relationships.

The recipient therefore needs access to the material Findings necessary to understand what has been established about the Quality State and, later, the Conclusion expressed by the claimant.

This becomes particularly important where realization or continuation of the Intended Function depends upon conditions that remain to be fulfilled. Such conditions may require corrective actions, technical modifications, regulatory actions, investment, resources, or substantial time.

The same principle applies where favorable and unfavorable Findings coexist. Reporting should preserve the Findings necessary to understand what has been established about the Quality State rather than reduce them to a count, average, or prematurely synthesized overall result.

The relationship can therefore be expressed as:

actual Quality State

Quality Determination

(applied through applicable Evidence and Quality Outcome Criteria)



Evidence-Supported Findings concerning the Quality State

The later Claim process identifies which Findings are material to the Claim, synthesizes those material Findings, and supports expression of a Conclusion.

This preserves a single Synthesis of Material Findings in the Claim process while keeping the underlying Quality Determination and its Findings traceable.

2.4 Material Quality Findings

A Quality Determination may produce multiple Findings concerning the original Quality Object.

Not every determined Finding necessarily has the same significance to understanding the Quality State, realization of the Intended Function, or the needs of the recipient.

The Claim therefore requires consideration of which Findings concerning Quality are material to what is being communicated.

Materiality does not determine whether a Finding exists. The finding is established through the applicable determination. Materiality concerns the significance of that finding to the Quality Object, the Claim, or the recipient's use of the Claim.

A Finding concerning Quality may be material because it:

- affects realization or continuation of the Intended Function;
- concerns a Critical Condition or a matter subject to Non-Compensability;
- concerns achievement or non-achievement of a mandatory requirement within the Applicable Basis;
- materially affects another finding or an important Interface or dependency;
- establishes a condition that must be fulfilled for a Conclusion to remain supportable;
- is relevant to a separately demonstrated Harm-capable condition or Harm pathway; or
- is otherwise necessary for the recipient to understand the Quality State or use the Claim for its Intended Function.

The same determined Finding may have different significance in different Claims because Claims may have different recipients, Intended Functions, Boundaries, or Contexts.

This does not change the Finding itself. It changes its materiality to the particular Claim.

Materiality therefore requires a relational judgment rather than a numerical rule. A finding should not be treated as immaterial merely because many other Findings are favorable, nor as controlling merely because it is unfavorable.

Where Critical Conditions or Non-Compensability apply, their established significance must be preserved.

The relationship can be expressed as:

Determined Finding concerning Quality



significance within the applicable Quality structure and Intended Function of the original Quality Object



significance to the recipient and Intended Function of the Claim



materiality to the Claim

Material Findings concerning Quality provide the Evidence-supported basis for the later synthesis through which the claimant forms and expresses the Conclusion.

2.5 Recipient Need to Avoid Harm

A recipient may need a Claim not only to understand the Quality State of the original Quality Object, but also to understand material Findings relevant to avoiding Harm.

This need does not make Harm part of Quality.

Quality and Harm remain distinct. A resulting Quality condition concerns achievement or non-achievement of required Quality outcomes. Harm concerns injury, damage, or loss. The relationship between them must be separately established.

Nevertheless, a determined Quality condition may be important to the recipient because it can provide a condition through which Harm may become possible.

The recipient may therefore need to know whether a material Quality condition:

- has been identified as a Harm-capable condition;
- is connected to a demonstrated Harm pathway;
- may affect an identifiable person, property, system, organization, environment, financial interest, or other subject or interest;
- requires actions or conditions to prevent or limit Possible Harm;
- is associated with Risk or Safety Findings, where separately determined; or
- has already contributed to Realized Harm, where established.

The recipient's need is therefore not an interest in Harm itself.

It is a need to understand material conditions and relationships that may be necessary to avoid, prevent, reduce, or otherwise respond to Harm.

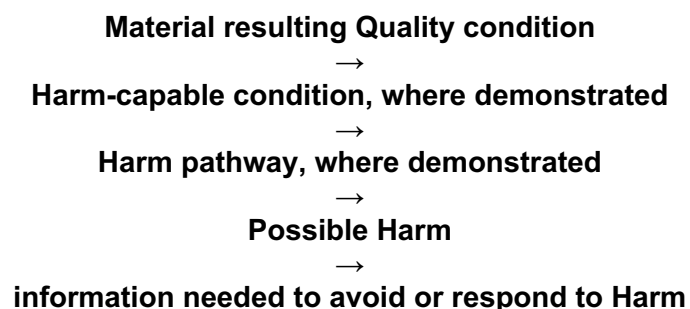
This distinction is particularly important where the original Quality Object continues to realize some or much of its Intended Function while a material condition capable of contributing to Harm remains present.

A conclusion concerning realization of the Intended Function should not, by itself, cause a material Harm-related Finding to disappear from the Claim.

Similarly, the existence of a Possible Harm pathway should not automatically change what the Findings concerning Quality establish about the Quality State of the original Quality Object. The Finding concerning Quality and the Harm-related finding remain distinct even where they are connected.

The Claim must therefore preserve the relationship without collapsing one determination into the other.

For the recipient, the relevant progression may be expressed as:



Where Harm has already occurred, the Claim may also need to communicate the Realized Harm and its demonstrated relationship to the original Quality condition.

Recipient need to avoid Harm therefore provides an additional basis for determining what information is material to the Claim, while preserving the methodological distinction between the Quality of the original Quality Object and its Harm-related consequences.

2.6 Harm-Capable Conditions, Harm Pathways, and Possible Harm

Where a material resulting Quality condition has potential relevance to Harm, the recipient needs sufficient information to understand what has actually been determined.

The Claim should preserve the distinction among a resulting Quality condition, a Harm-capable condition, a Harm pathway, and Possible Harm.

These are related, but they are not equivalent Findings.

A resulting Quality condition becomes relevant to Harm where the applicable determination establishes that the condition is capable, under identifiable circumstances, of contributing to injury, damage, or loss.

Identification of such a Harm-capable condition does not by itself establish that Harm will occur.

A further determination may establish a Harm pathway connecting the condition to Possible Harm affecting an identifiable subject or interest.

The recipient may therefore need to know:

- the material resulting Quality condition from which the Harm-related examination begins;
- whether that condition has been determined to be Harm-capable;
- the Harm pathway, where demonstrated;
- the subject or interest that may be affected;
- the possible injury, damage, or loss;
- the conditions under which the pathway may progress toward Harm;
- actions or conditions relevant to interrupting or controlling the pathway; and
- material Uncertainty or limitations affecting the Harm-related Findings.

These distinctions are important to the Quality of the Claim.

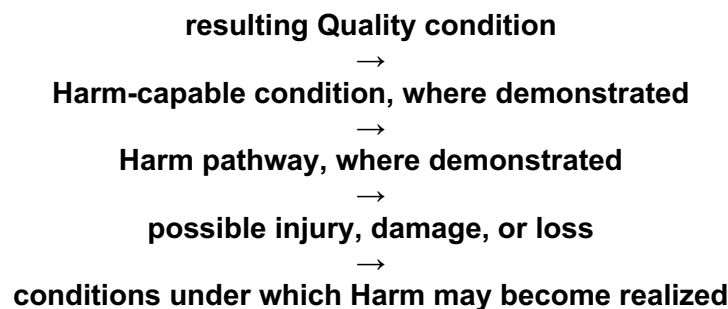
A Claim that reports only that a Quality deficiency exists may fail to communicate a demonstrated Harm-related significance of that deficiency.

Conversely, a Claim that describes a Quality deficiency as Harm without establishing the necessary relationship may exceed the determined Findings.

The same applies to Possible Harm.

Possible Harm should not be reported as Realized Harm merely because a Harm-capable condition or Harm pathway has been demonstrated. The Claim should communicate the stage of the relationship that has actually been established.

For the recipient, the relevant structure can be expressed as:



This structure also preserves Traceability.

A material Harm-related statement in the Claim should remain traceable through the demonstrated Harm pathway to the resulting Quality condition from which the examination began and to the Evidence supporting the applicable findings.

The purpose is not to convert Harm into another component of the Quality State of the original Quality Object.

It is to ensure that, where the second nature of a Quality Factor or Quality Indicator becomes materially expressed through a particular resulting Quality condition, the recipient is adequately informed about the demonstrated relationship and its possible consequences.

Harm-capable conditions, Harm pathways, and Possible Harm therefore constitute distinct but connected information that may be material to the recipient and, consequently, to the Claim.

2.7 Realized Harm, Risk, and Safety, Where Determined

A recipient may also need information concerning Realized Harm, Risk, or Safety where these have been separately determined and are material to the Claim.

These findings should remain distinguishable from the Findings concerning Quality describing the Quality State of the original Quality Object and from one another.

Realized Harm exists where injury, damage, or loss has occurred.

Where Realized Harm has been established, the recipient may need to know what occurred, what subject or interest was affected, and whether a demonstrated Harm pathway connects that Harm to a resulting Quality condition of the original Quality Object.

The occurrence of Harm does not replace the underlying Finding concerning Quality.

Likewise, the existence of a Quality deficiency and the occurrence of Harm do not by themselves establish that the two are connected. Where the Claim states or implies such a relationship, that relationship should be supported by the applicable determination and remain traceable through the demonstrated Harm pathway.

Risk and Safety require similar discipline.

A Harm-capable condition or demonstrated Harm pathway does not by itself establish the Risk associated with Possible Harm. Risk must be separately determined using the applicable basis and methodology.

Safety likewise should not be inferred merely from a favorable Quality State, the absence of Realized Harm, or the absence of an identified Harm pathway.

Where Risk or Safety has been separately determined, however, those Findings may be material to the recipient.

The recipient may therefore need to know:

- whether Harm has been realized;
- the nature of the injury, damage, or loss, where established;
- the affected subject or interest;
- the demonstrated relationship, if any, between Realized Harm and a resulting Quality condition;
- material Risk findings, where separately determined;
- material Safety findings, where separately determined;
- conditions or limitations affecting those determinations; and
- the Evidence and Traceability necessary to understand the basis of the reported findings.

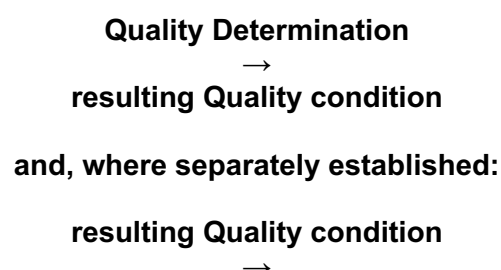
The significance of these findings to the Claim depends upon the recipient, the Intended Function and Boundary of the Claim, and the relationship of the Findings to the original Quality Object.

For some Claims, a separately determined Risk or Safety Finding may be central to the recipient's decision.

For others, it may be outside the Boundary of the Claim or not material to its Intended Function.

The claimant should therefore neither omit a material Harm, Risk, or Safety Finding merely because the Quality Conclusion is otherwise favorable nor introduce such a Finding where it has not been determined.

The relevant structure remains:



Harm-related determination

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Realized Harm, Risk, or Safety Finding, as applicable

The Claim may bring these findings together for the recipient, but bringing them together does not merge the determinations from which they arise.

Realized Harm, Risk, and Safety therefore enter the Claim as distinct, Evidence-supported findings where they have been determined and where their communication is material to the recipient and the Intended Function of the Claim.

2.8 Uncertainty, Evidence, and Traceability

A recipient needs to understand not only what has been determined, but also material Uncertainty or limitations affecting those Findings.

Uncertainty does not automatically establish an unfavorable Finding concerning Quality.

It may instead indicate that a particular finding, relationship, or conclusion cannot be established to the degree required for its intended use.

This distinction is important to the Claim.

A claimant should not convert uncertainty into a Negative Conclusion merely because the available Evidence does not support a Positive or Conditionally Positive Conclusion. Similarly, uncertainty should not be omitted merely because the available findings otherwise support a favorable conclusion.

The significance of uncertainty depends upon what remains uncertain and how that Uncertainty affects the determined Findings describing the Quality State, realization of the Intended Function, or the recipient's ability to use the Claim.

Material uncertainty may concern:

- whether a required Quality outcome has been achieved;
- the significance of a determined Finding concerning Quality;
- the relationship among multiple Findings concerning Quality;
- fulfillment of an identified condition;
- the applicability or interpretation of a requirement;
- a Harm-capable condition or Harm pathway;
- possible or Realized Harm;
- a separately determined Risk or Safety Finding;
- the Boundary within which a Finding can be supported; or
- the extent to which a Conclusion concerning the original Quality Object can be expressed.

Evidence provides the basis for the applicable determinations.

The Quality of that Evidence is governed by the separately established WQI methodology for Evidence Quality. This Article does not create a second Evidence Quality framework for Claims.

For purposes of the Claim, the relevant question is whether the statements and Conclusions communicated by the claimant remain adequately supported by the Evidence and determinations on which they rely.

The Claim should not extend beyond that support.

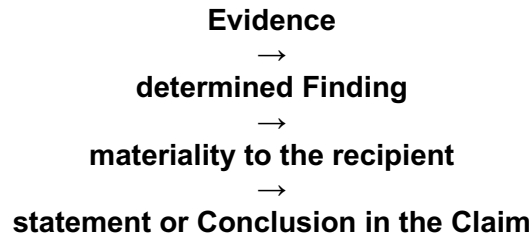
Traceability provides the connection.

A material statement in the Claim should be traceable, as applicable, to the determined Finding from which it arises, the Evidence supporting that finding, the applicable Quality requirement or other Applicable Basis, and the original Quality Object to which the Finding relates.

The relationship can be expressed as:

Applicable requirement or basis

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Where Uncertainty or a limitation exists, that Uncertainty or limitation should also remain traceable to the part of the determination or Evidence to which it applies.

This prevents uncertainty from becoming a general qualification disconnected from its source.

It also helps the recipient distinguish among:

- what has been determined;
- what has not been determined;
- what remains uncertain;
- what is subject to a stated limitation or condition; and
- what Conclusion the available determined Findings support.

These distinctions become especially important where the claimant must decide whether a Positive, Conditionally Positive, or Negative Conclusion can be expressed or whether the available basis instead requires refusal to express one of those conclusions.

That decision is examined later in this Article.

At the recipient-needs stage, the essential principle is that Uncertainty, Evidence, and Traceability must be communicated to the extent necessary for the recipient to understand both the Claim and the limits of what the Claim can support.

2.9 Quality Information and Recipient Decisions

A recipient may rely on a Quality Claim in making a decision concerning the original Quality Object.

The decision may concern use, acceptance, operation, investment, acquisition, financing, regulation, insurance, continued support, corrective action, or another matter within the recipient's responsibility or interest.

The function of the Quality Claim is not to make that decision for the recipient.

Its function is to communicate the determined information that the recipient needs in order to understand the condition of the original Quality Object and to make its own decision.

This distinction is important.

The same body of determined Findings describing the Quality State may be relevant to different recipients in different ways. A finding that is material to an operator may have a different significance to an insurer, regulator, investor, customer, or other recipient. Where Harm-related Findings have been separately established, their significance may likewise depend upon the recipient's relationship to the Quality Object and the decision to be made.

These differences do not change the determined Findings.

Recipient interests cannot convert an achieved Quality Outcome Criterion into an unachieved one, remove a material Finding concerning Quality, create a Harm pathway that has not been demonstrated, or eliminate uncertainty that remains in the Evidence.

They can, however, affect which determined Findings are material to the Intended Function of the Quality Claim and therefore need to be communicated.

The consequences of a recipient's decision also do not justify changing or overstating the Findings. A decision may involve substantial financial, operational, regulatory, human, or other consequences, but the Quality Claim must remain traceable to what has actually been determined.

Accordingly, useful Quality information requires both fidelity to the determined Findings and consideration of the recipient's legitimate information needs.

This brings together the elements examined in this Section:

Recipient needs

→

material Findings concerning Quality describing the Quality State

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material Harm-related Findings, where separately established

→

Uncertainty, Evidence, and Traceability

→

information needed for the recipient's decision.

The next question is how these elements are brought together by a claimant and expressed as a Quality Claim.

That movement from determined Findings to the Quality Claim is examined in Section 3.

3 From Determined Findings to the Claim

3.1 Purpose of the Claim

A Quality Determination establishes findings concerning the original Quality Object. Those findings do not by themselves constitute a Quality Claim.

A Quality Claim arises when a claimant communicates a Conclusion, assertion, or other statement about the determined condition of the original Quality Object for a recipient and an Intended Function.

In this Article, Quality Claim means an attributable communication by a claimant concerning the Quality State of a defined Quality Object, made for a recipient and an Intended Function and supported by applicable Findings established through Quality Determination.

The term Claim is used in this defined sense. It does not mean a legal demand, complaint, or claim for relief.

At the general level, the Intended Function of a Quality Claim is to provide its recipient with a supportable and materially sufficient communication of what has been established about the Quality State of the original Quality Object, for the purpose and within the Context for which the Claim is made.

This does not mean that the recipient determines what the Quality Claim should conclude.

The Findings concerning Quality remain grounded in the Quality Determination and concern applicable aspects of the actual Quality State; they do not constitute or alter that Quality State. Harm, Risk, and Safety findings remain separately determined where applicable. Recipient interests cannot alter those Findings.

The recipient and Intended Function of the Quality Claim instead affect what must be communicated, which findings are material to the Claim, and how the determined Findings need to be brought together so that the Claim can fulfill its purpose.

The purpose of a Quality Claim may therefore differ even where the original Quality Object and its determined Findings are the same.

An operator may require information necessary to determine actions affecting continued operation. A regulator may require information relevant to applicable requirements. An insurer may require information concerning material conditions and Harm-related Findings. An investor, lender, or prospective acquirer may require information relevant to the condition of the Quality Object and conditions affecting its intended use or value. A recipient of a support service may require information relevant to whether the service achieves the required support results.

These differences concern the purpose and content of the Quality Claim. They do not create different determined realities for the original Quality Object.

Accordingly, the movement from determined Findings to a Quality Claim begins with two elements that must remain distinct:

- what has been determined about the original Quality Object; and
- what the Quality Claim is intended to communicate to its recipient.

The first provides the factual and methodological basis of the Quality Claim.

The second establishes its communicative purpose.

The Quality Claim must connect the two without allowing the purpose of the communication to distort the determined Findings on which it is based.

This relationship can be expressed as:

Determined findings concerning the original Quality Object

→

recipient and Intended Function of the Quality Claim

→

material information to be communicated

→

Quality Claim.

The next step is therefore to examine the determined Findings that form the basis for the Quality Claim.

3.2 Determined Findings as the Basis for the Claim

A Quality Claim must have a basis in the determined Findings concerning the original Quality Object.

Those Findings are established before the Quality Claim is formed. They provide the determined basis from which the claimant may develop the Claim, but they remain distinct from both the Quality State and the Claim itself.

Depending upon the applicable determination, the Findings may include:

- determined Findings concerning achievement or non-achievement of applicable Quality Outcome Criteria;
- Findings concerning applicable aspects of the Quality State of the original Quality Object;
- material conditions affecting realization or continuation of the Intended Function;
- conditions that remain to be fulfilled;
- findings concerning applicable mandatory requirements;
- Harm-capable conditions and Harm pathways, where separately demonstrated;
- possible or Realized Harm, where established;
- Risk or Safety Findings, where separately determined; and
- Uncertainty or limitations affecting any of these findings.

Not every determination will produce every type of finding.

The presence of one type of finding also does not automatically establish another. Under the Quality–Harm methodology, a resulting Quality condition does not by itself establish a Harm-capable condition. A Harm-capable condition does not by itself establish Realized Harm. Realized Harm does not by itself establish Risk or Safety. These relationships must remain consistent with the applicable WQI methodologies through which the respective findings were determined.

The claimant therefore does not create the underlying findings when forming the Quality Claim.

The claimant identifies what is material to the intended Quality Claim, synthesizes the material Findings and their relevant relationships, and communicates what the applicable Findings support for the recipient and Intended Function of the Claim.

This distinction places an important boundary on the Claim.

A claimant may explain the significance of determined Findings, bring related findings together, identify material Findings and conditions that remain to be fulfilled, and express a Conclusion supported by them.

The claimant cannot properly present as determined something that was not established through the applicable determination.

Similarly, the formation of the Quality Claim should not erase distinctions preserved in the underlying findings.

Where Quality, Harm, Risk, and Safety have been separately determined, they remain distinct even when information concerning them is brought together within the same Quality Claim.

Where Uncertainty remains, synthesis does not remove that Uncertainty.

Where Evidence supports only a limited finding, the Quality Claim should not extend that finding beyond what the Evidence supports.

Where the Applicable Basis establishes a mandatory requirement, the claimant cannot disregard its non-achievement merely because other Findings are favorable.

The determined Findings therefore establish both the basis and the limits of what can support the Quality Claim.

This relationship can be expressed as:

Applicable determination

→

determined Findings concerning the original Quality Object

→

basis and limits of support for the Quality Claim.

The existence of determined Findings, however, does not mean that every finding must receive the same significance within every Quality Claim.

The next question is which findings are material to the Claim.

That question is examined in Section 3.3.

3.3 Materiality of Findings to the Claim

Determined findings do not necessarily have the same significance to every Quality Claim.

A finding may be established concerning the original Quality Object but differ in its significance to the recipient, the Intended Function of the Quality Claim, and the Conclusion to be expressed.

Materiality addresses that significance.

Materiality does not determine whether a Finding exists. A determined Finding remains what was established through the applicable determination regardless of whether it is material to a particular Quality Claim.

A finding may be material to the Quality Claim where it affects, among other matters:

- Findings concerning applicable aspects of the Quality State of the original Quality Object;
- realization or continuation of its Intended Function;
- a Critical Condition or matter subject to Non-Compensability;
- achievement or non-achievement of a mandatory requirement within the Applicable Basis;
- a condition that must be fulfilled for a Conclusion to remain supportable;
- a material Interface or dependency;
- a Harm-capable condition or Harm pathway, where demonstrated;
- possible or Realized Harm, where established;
- Risk or Safety, where separately determined;
- Uncertainty or a limitation affecting the reliability or meaning of the Conclusion; or
- information that the recipient legitimately needs for the Intended Function of the Quality Claim.

Materiality is therefore relational.

It depends not only upon the individual finding, but also upon its relationship to other Findings, what those Findings establish about the Quality State and Intended Function of the original Quality Object, the recipient, and the Intended Function and Boundary of the Quality Claim.

A finding that appears limited when considered separately may become material when considered together with other Findings.

Conversely, the existence of numerous favorable or unfavorable Findings does not by itself establish their materiality. Materiality is not determined by counting findings, averaging them, or balancing one finding mechanically against another.

This is particularly important where Critical Conditions or Non-Compensability apply. A material non-achievement cannot necessarily be offset by achievement elsewhere in the Quality Object.

Materiality also cannot be determined according to whether a Finding is convenient for the claimant or recipient.

An unfavorable finding does not become immaterial because its inclusion could affect a desired Conclusion or decision. A favorable finding should likewise not be emphasized beyond its actual significance merely because it supports a preferred result.

The same determined Findings may therefore support different selections of material information for different Quality Claims, provided that the differences arise from legitimate differences in recipient needs, Intended Function, Boundary, or Context and do not distort what has been established about the Quality State of the original Quality Object.

Determining materiality to the Quality Claim can therefore be expressed as:

Determined finding

→

significance to the Quality State and Intended Function of the original Quality Object

→

significance to the recipient and Intended Function of the Quality Claim

→

materiality to the Quality Claim.

Once the material Findings have been identified, they must be considered together rather than merely presented as a collection of separate findings.

That process is synthesis.

Section 3.4 examines the Synthesis of Material Findings.

3.4 Synthesis of Material Findings

A Quality Claim concerning the original Quality Object cannot necessarily be formed by reporting each material finding separately.

The material Findings must also be considered together.

This process is synthesis.

Synthesis of Material Findings is the structured consideration of material Findings and their relevant relationships to establish what Conclusion, if any, those Findings support for an intended Quality Claim.

Synthesis does not create new findings.

It brings together findings already established through the applicable determinations and considers their combined significance within the Intended Function, Boundary, Context, and Applicable Basis of the original Quality Object and the Intended Function of the Quality Claim.

The synthesis may need to consider relationships among:

- determined Findings concerning achievement or non-achievement of applicable Quality Outcome Criteria;
- what the material Findings establish about the Quality State;

- conditions affecting realization or continuation of the Intended Function;
- Critical Conditions and matters subject to Non-Compensability;
- mandatory requirements within the Applicable Basis;
- material Interfaces and dependencies;
- conditions that remain to be fulfilled;
- Harm-capable conditions and Harm pathways, where separately demonstrated;
- possible or Realized Harm, where established;
- Risk and Safety findings, where separately determined; and
- material Uncertainty and limitations.

These findings are not combined through simple arithmetic.

A larger number of favorable Findings does not necessarily compensate for a material unfavorable finding. Likewise, the presence of an unfavorable finding does not necessarily determine the Conclusion without consideration of its significance and relationship to the Quality Object as a whole.

Where Non-Compensability applies, synthesis must preserve it. A finding that cannot be compensated for by favorable performance elsewhere cannot be neutralized through aggregation or balancing.

Synthesis must also preserve the boundaries among different determinations.

Findings concerning Quality remain Findings concerning Quality. Harm, Risk, and Safety findings remain separately determined even where their relationships are material to understanding the original Quality Object.

The purpose of synthesis is therefore not to merge different determinations into a single undifferentiated judgment.

Its purpose is to understand what the configuration of material Findings supports.

That configuration may show that the Intended Function is realized as required.

It may show that realization or continuation of the Intended Function depends upon identified conditions that remain to be fulfilled.

It may show that the applicable findings do not support realization of the Intended Function as required.

It may also show that the available basis does not support expression of any of these Conclusions.

Accordingly, synthesis provides the methodological bridge between material Findings and expression of a Conclusion.

The sequence can be expressed as:

Material determined Findings

→

relationships among the Findings

→

combined significance within the applicable Quality structure

→

synthesis

→

Conclusion supported by the synthesis, if one can be expressed.

The Conclusion is attributable to the claimant, but the synthesis supporting it must remain traceable to the determined Findings on which it is based.

The next step is therefore the Expression of the Conclusion, examined in Section 3.5.

3.5 Expression of the Conclusion

Synthesis of Material Findings establishes what Conclusion, if any, the material Findings support for the intended Quality Claim.

The Conclusion is the claimant's attributable expression of what the Synthesis of Material Findings supports concerning the Quality State of the original Quality Object.

It is therefore distinct from both the individual determined Findings and the synthesis through which their combined significance is considered.

The Conclusion should not be formed first and then supported by selecting findings that are consistent with it.

The methodological direction is the reverse:

Determined findings

→

identification of material Findings

→

synthesis of their relationships and combined significance

→

Conclusion supported by the synthesis.

The Conclusion must remain within the support provided by the determined Findings.

Where the Synthesis of Material Findings supports that the original Quality Object realizes its applicable Intended Functions and Intended Results as required within the applicable scope and conditions, a Positive Conclusion may be expressed.

Where the Synthesis of Material Findings supports a Positive Conclusion subject to identified material conditions that are to be fulfilled in the future, a Conditionally Positive Conclusion may be expressed.

Where the Synthesis of Material Findings supports that the original Quality Object does not realize its applicable Intended Functions or Intended Results as required within the applicable scope and conditions, a Negative Conclusion may be expressed.

There may also be circumstances in which the available basis does not support expression of any of these Conclusions. In such circumstances, the claimant may refuse to express a Conclusion and state the reasons for that refusal.

Refusal to Express a Conclusion is not a Negative Conclusion.

A Negative Conclusion states something determined about the original Quality Object.

A Refusal to Express a Conclusion states that the claimant does not have an adequate basis to express a Positive, Conditionally Positive, or Negative Conclusion within the applicable Boundary and Context.

The distinction is fundamental.

Insufficient Evidence to support a Positive Conclusion does not by itself support a Negative Conclusion. Likewise, Uncertainty concerning a material matter does not become an unfavorable finding merely because it prevents a favorable Conclusion.

The form of Conclusion must therefore follow from what the synthesis supports rather than from a preference for a particular outcome.

The Conclusion also does not replace the material Findings on which it is based.

A Positive Conclusion may still require communication of material conditions or limitations.

A Conditionally Positive Conclusion requires communication of the conditions upon which it depends.

A Negative Conclusion may require identification of the material Findings supporting it.

A refusal to express a Conclusion requires communication of the reasons why a Conclusion cannot supportably be expressed.

Where material Harm-related Findings, Risk, Safety, Uncertainty, or limitations have been separately determined, their significance to the Quality Claim must also be preserved as applicable. They do not become part of the Quality determination merely because they are communicated together with the Conclusion.

Accordingly, expression of a Conclusion is not a compression of all determined information into a single favorable or unfavorable statement.

It is an attributable expression of what the Synthesis of Material Findings supports, accompanied by the material information necessary for the recipient to understand its meaning, conditions, and limitations.

For purposes of this Article, four forms are examined:

- Positive Conclusion;
- Conditionally Positive Conclusion;
- Negative Conclusion; and
- Refusal to Express a Conclusion.

For purposes of Quality Claim formation, Positive Conclusion, Conditionally Positive Conclusion, and Negative Conclusion are the substantive Conclusion forms. Refusal to Express a Conclusion is distinct from those substantive Conclusion forms.

The following subsections examine each form separately.

3.6 Positive Conclusion

A Positive Conclusion may be expressed where the Synthesis of Material Findings supports that the original Quality Object realizes its applicable Intended Functions and Intended Results as required within the applicable scope and conditions.

The Conclusion concerns what the Synthesis of Material Findings supports about realization of the Intended Function of the original Quality Object within the applicable Boundary, Context, and Applicable Basis.

A Positive Conclusion does not mean that the Quality Object is perfect.

It does not require that every characteristic of the Quality Object be favorable, that every possible improvement has been made, or that no minor deficiency exists.

Rather, the material Findings, considered together, support realization of the Intended Function as required, and no material finding prevents that Conclusion.

This distinction is important where the Quality Object contains numerous Quality Outcome Criteria.

A Positive Conclusion should not result merely from a numerical majority of achieved Quality Outcome Criteria. The significance and relationships of the Findings must be considered through synthesis.

Where a Critical Condition or Non-Compensability applies, its material non-achievement cannot be offset simply by favorable Findings elsewhere.

Applicable mandatory requirements must likewise be considered according to their significance to the determined Findings, Intended Function, and Applicable Basis. A Positive Conclusion cannot disregard a material non-achievement that is inconsistent with the Conclusion being expressed.

A Positive Conclusion also does not establish that Harm is impossible.

Quality and Harm remain distinct determinations.

A Quality Object may support a Positive Conclusion concerning realization of its Intended Function while separately determined information concerning Harm, Risk, or Safety remains material to the recipient.

Where such information has been established and is material to the Quality Claim, it should not be omitted merely because the Quality Conclusion is positive.

Similarly, a Positive Conclusion does not eliminate Uncertainty or limitations that remain material to understanding the Conclusion. Any such Uncertainty or limitation must be communicated where

necessary to prevent the Conclusion from conveying more certainty than the determined Findings support.

A further distinction must be made between a Positive Conclusion and a Conditionally Positive Conclusion.

A Positive Conclusion is supported where realization of the applicable Intended Functions and Intended Results as required is established within the applicable scope and conditions.

Where the support for a positive Conclusion instead depends upon identified conditions that remain to be fulfilled, the Conclusion is not simply Positive for purposes of the working structure examined in this Article.

It is Conditionally Positive.

Accordingly, a Positive Conclusion can be expressed through the following relationship:

Material determined Findings

→

synthesis supports realization of the Intended Function as required

→

no material unresolved condition prevents that Conclusion

→

Positive Conclusion.

The Positive Conclusion remains attributable to the claimant and traceable to the material Findings and synthesis on which it is based.

The next subsection examines the different situation in which a positive Conclusion depends upon conditions that remain to be fulfilled.

3.7 Conditionally Positive Conclusion

A Conditionally Positive Conclusion may be expressed where the Synthesis of Material Findings supports a Positive Conclusion subject to identified material conditions that are to be fulfilled in the future.

The conditional nature of the Conclusion is substantive.

It means that support for the Positive Conclusion is expressly conditional upon future fulfillment of the identified material conditions; the Conditionally Positive Conclusion does not establish or predict that those conditions will be fulfilled.

Such conditions may concern, among other matters:

- completion of required technical or operational actions;
- correction of identified unfavorable Findings concerning Quality or the conditions they describe;
- fulfillment of applicable mandatory requirements;
- resolution of material Interfaces or dependencies;
- implementation of required controls or protective measures;
- completion of regulatory or other required actions;
- provision of resources or investment;
- completion of work requiring substantial time; or
- another material condition established through the applicable determination.

A condition does not become minor merely because the Conclusion is described as Conditionally Positive.

Its fulfillment may require substantial engineering work, organizational action, regulatory processes, financial resources, or an extended period of time.

The significance of the condition must therefore be communicated rather than obscured by the positive element of the Conclusion.

A Conditionally Positive Conclusion also differs from a Positive Conclusion accompanied only by information about ordinary future activities, recommendations, or opportunities for improvement.

The distinction depends upon whether fulfillment of the identified condition is material to the support for the Conclusion.

If the positive Conclusion depends upon fulfillment of the condition, the conditional relationship must remain explicit.

This relationship can be expressed as:

Material determined Findings

→

synthesis supports realization of the Intended Function subject to identified material conditions

→

fulfillment of those conditions is necessary to support the positive Conclusion as expressed

→

Conditionally Positive Conclusion.

The conditions must be traceable to the determined Findings on which they are based.

They should also be stated with sufficient clarity for the recipient to understand:

- what condition remains to be fulfilled;
- why it is material to the Conclusion;
- what part of the Quality Object or its Intended Function it affects; and
- where applicable, the limitation that exists until the condition is fulfilled.

A Conditionally Positive Conclusion should not be used to convert a Negative Conclusion into a favorable one merely by attaching hypothetical future actions.

There must be an affirmative basis in the applicable Findings and their Synthesis for supporting a Positive Conclusion subject to the identified material conditions.

Similarly, the claimant should not assume that a condition will be fulfilled merely because fulfillment is technically possible, planned, financed, required, or expected.

Until fulfillment is established, the condition remains part of the Conclusion.

Where the condition concerns a mandatory requirement, Critical Condition, Non-Compensability, or another matter of particular significance, that significance must be preserved in the Quality Claim.

Where Harm-related Findings, Risk, or Safety are separately determined and materially related to a condition, those Findings must likewise remain distinct and be communicated as applicable. The conditional Quality Conclusion does not itself determine Harm, Risk, or Safety.

A Conditionally Positive Conclusion therefore communicates both elements together:

a supportable positive Conclusion concerning the original Quality Object, and the material conditions upon which that Conclusion depends.

Neither element should be communicated without the other.

The next subsection examines the situation in which the synthesis supports that the original Quality Object does not realize its Intended Function as required.

3.8 Negative Conclusion

A Negative Conclusion may be expressed where the Synthesis of Material Findings supports that the original Quality Object does not realize its applicable Intended Functions or Intended Results as required within the applicable scope and conditions.

The Conclusion must arise from what has been determined about the Quality Object.

It is not established merely because a Positive or Conditionally Positive Conclusion cannot be supported.

This distinction is fundamental.

Insufficient Evidence, unresolved Uncertainty, an inadequate Boundary of examination, or another limitation may prevent the claimant from expressing a supported Conclusion. Such circumstances do not by themselves establish that the Quality Object fails to realize its Intended Function.

A Negative Conclusion requires an affirmative basis in the determined Findings.

That basis may include, among other matters:

- material non-achievement of applicable Quality Outcome Criteria;
- material Findings concerning Quality that establish conditions preventing realization of the Intended Function as required;
- non-achievement of a Critical Condition;
- a matter subject to Non-Compensability that prevents favorable Findings elsewhere from compensating for the non-achievement;
- material non-achievement of an applicable mandatory requirement;
- failure of a material Interface or dependency; or
- another material configuration of determined Findings that supports the negative Conclusion.

The presence of an unfavorable finding does not automatically require a Negative Conclusion.

Its significance must be considered through synthesis in relation to the other material Findings and the Intended Function of the original Quality Object.

Likewise, a Negative Conclusion is not established by counting unfavorable Findings or by mechanically comparing their number with favorable Findings.

The Conclusion concerns what the material Findings, considered together, establish about realization of the Intended Function.

A Negative Conclusion also does not mean that every aspect of the Quality Object is unfavorable.

The Quality Object may achieve numerous Quality Outcome Criteria, contain functioning elements, or possess other favorable characteristics while the synthesis nevertheless supports that it does not realize its Intended Function as required.

Those favorable Findings remain part of what has been established about the Quality State of the Quality Object and should not be erased merely because the overall Conclusion is Negative.

A Negative Conclusion must also remain distinct from Harm, Risk, and Safety.

Failure to realize the Intended Function as required does not by itself establish that Harm has occurred, that a Harm pathway exists, that a particular Risk is present, or that the Quality Object is unsafe.

Where Harm, Risk, or Safety has been separately determined and is material to the Quality Claim, those Findings may be communicated together with the Negative Conclusion while remaining separate determinations.

Similarly, Realized Harm does not by itself establish a Negative Quality Conclusion. Any relationship between the Harm and the applicable Findings concerning Quality must be supported through the applicable determinations.

The relationship supporting a Negative Conclusion can therefore be expressed as:

Material determined Findings

→

synthesis supports non-realization of the Intended Function as required

→

Negative Conclusion.

The Conclusion must remain traceable to the material Findings and synthesis supporting it.

Where the available basis does not support a Positive, Conditionally Positive, or Negative Conclusion, the methodological result is different.

The claimant may instead need to refuse to express a Conclusion.

That situation is examined in Section 3.9.

3.9 Refusal to Express a Conclusion

There may be circumstances in which the claimant cannot supportably express a Positive, Conditionally Positive, or Negative Conclusion concerning the original Quality Object.

In such circumstances, the claimant may refuse to express a Conclusion.

Refusal to Express a Conclusion is not a Conclusion that the original Quality Object has a favorable or unfavorable Quality State.

It does not establish that the Quality Object realizes its Intended Function as required, realizes it subject to conditions, or does not realize it as required.

Instead, it concerns whether the available basis is sufficient for the claimant to express one of those Conclusions.

This distinction separates Refusal to Express a Conclusion from a Negative Conclusion.

A Negative Conclusion requires determined Findings whose synthesis supports that the original Quality Object does not realize its Intended Function as required.

Refusal to Express a Conclusion is an attributable statement by the claimant that the available basis does not support expression of a Positive, Conditionally Positive, or Negative Conclusion, together with the material reason or reasons for that refusal.

Accordingly:

Insufficient basis for a Conclusion

≠

Negative Conclusion.

Likewise:

Uncertainty

≠

determined unfavorable Finding concerning Quality.

The inability to establish that the Quality Object realizes its Intended Function as required does not establish that it fails to do so.

The reverse is also true. The inability to establish a Negative Conclusion does not establish a Positive Conclusion.

Refusal therefore preserves the boundary between what has been determined and what remains undetermined.

Circumstances leading to refusal may involve limitations concerning Evidence, Boundary, access to material information, unresolved conditions, conflicting or incomplete Applicable Basis, Uncertainty affecting material Findings, or other matters that prevent supportable synthesis.

The existence of such a circumstance does not automatically require refusal.

Its significance depends upon whether it materially prevents the claimant from forming and supporting a Conclusion within the Intended Function and Boundary of the Quality Claim.

Where only a limited part of the determination is affected, the claimant should consider whether the limitation can be clearly identified without preventing a supportable Conclusion concerning the Quality Object as a whole.

Where the limitation affects a matter material to the Conclusion and cannot be adequately resolved or bounded, refusal may be necessary.

Refusal also should not be used as a substitute for an unfavorable Conclusion.

Where the determined Findings support a Negative Conclusion, a claimant should not avoid that Conclusion merely because it is undesirable, consequential, or inconsistent with the interests of the claimant or recipient.

Conversely, a claimant should not express a Positive or Conditionally Positive Conclusion merely because a recipient requires a Conclusion or because refusal would create practical, financial, regulatory, or other difficulties.

The Quality Claim must remain within what the determined Findings and available basis support.

Where the claimant refuses to express a Conclusion, the refusal itself becomes part of the Quality Claim and must be attributable to the claimant.

It should also be accompanied by the reasons necessary for the recipient to understand why a Conclusion cannot supportably be expressed.

The relationship can therefore be expressed as:

Determined findings and available basis

→

material limitation prevents supportable synthesis or expression of a Positive, Conditionally Positive, or Negative Conclusion

→

Refusal to Express a Conclusion

→

reasons for refusal.

Refusal to Express a Conclusion therefore protects the distinction between an unfavorable determination and the absence of an adequate basis for determination.

The reasons supporting such a refusal are examined in Section 3.10.

3.10 Reasons for Refusal to Express a Conclusion

A refusal to express a Conclusion must have a reason.

The reason should identify what prevents the claimant from supportably expressing a Positive, Conditionally Positive, or Negative Conclusion concerning the original Quality Object.

The existence of Uncertainty, incomplete information, or another limitation does not by itself require refusal.

The limitation must be material to the Conclusion.

Depending upon the Quality Object, Boundary, Context, Applicable Basis, and Intended Function of the Quality Claim, reasons for refusal may include:

- insufficient Evidence concerning a matter material to the Conclusion;
- inability to establish the Quality of material Evidence as required by the applicable WQI methodology;
- inability to examine a material part of the Quality Object;
- a Boundary that does not permit determination of a matter necessary to support the Conclusion;
- unresolved material Uncertainty;
- conflicting material Evidence that cannot be adequately resolved;
- absence, incompleteness, or unresolved conflict within the Applicable Basis where that basis is necessary for the determination;
- inability to determine achievement or non-achievement of a material Quality Outcome Criterion;
- inability to determine the significance of a material Interface or dependency;
- unresolved conditions whose significance prevents supportable synthesis;
- inability to establish a material relationship necessary to the Conclusion; or
- another material limitation that prevents the synthesis from supporting one of the three Conclusion forms.

These circumstances are not established here as an exhaustive classification.

Different Quality Objects and different Quality Claims may present different reasons why a supportable conclusion cannot be expressed.

The methodological question is not whether a particular limitation appears on a predetermined list.

The question is whether the limitation materially prevents the claimant from establishing what the synthesis of determined Findings supports concerning realization of the Intended Function of the original Quality Object.

A reason for refusal should therefore be connected to the Conclusion that cannot be expressed.

For example, the mere absence of some information does not necessarily prevent a Conclusion. If the missing information is not material to the applicable determination or synthesis, its absence may have no effect on the Conclusion.

Conversely, a limitation affecting a single matter may be sufficient to prevent a Conclusion where that matter concerns a Critical Condition, Non-Compensability, a mandatory requirement, a material Interface or dependency, or another matter essential to determining realization of the Intended Function.

The significance of the limitation, rather than its quantity, is therefore controlling.

The claimant should also distinguish between a limitation that prevents a Conclusion and a determined unfavorable finding.

Where Evidence establishes material non-achievement, the result may support a Negative Conclusion.

Where the Evidence is insufficient to determine whether the material requirement is achieved or not achieved, the result is uncertainty rather than established non-achievement.

Accordingly:

Evidence supports material non-achievement

→

determined unfavorable finding

→

synthesis may support a Negative Conclusion.

Evidence does not support determination of achievement or non-achievement of a material matter

→

material Uncertainty

→

synthesis may be unable to support a Conclusion

→

Refusal to Express a Conclusion.

This distinction prevents absence of Evidence from being transformed into Evidence of absence or non-achievement.

The reasons for refusal must themselves be supportable and traceable.

A claimant should be able to identify the limitation, the material matter affected by it, and why that limitation prevents expression of a Conclusion.

Where the limitation can reasonably be resolved within the applicable determination, refusal should not substitute for completing the necessary determination.

Where it cannot be resolved, the Quality Claim should communicate the refusal and its material reasons with sufficient clarity for the recipient to understand what remains undetermined and why.

Refusal therefore does not terminate the responsibility to communicate.

It changes what can supportably be communicated.

Instead of communicating a Conclusion about whether the original Quality Object realizes its Intended Function as required, the claimant communicates that such a Conclusion cannot be supportably expressed and identifies the material reasons for that result.

The next subsection returns from the forms of conclusion to the content of the Quality Claim and examines reporting the Quality State of the original Quality Object.

3.11 Reporting the Quality State of the Original Quality Object

The conclusion expressed by the claimant does not by itself provide the recipient with the information necessary to understand the Quality State of the original Quality Object.

The Quality Claim must therefore be accompanied by reporting sufficient to communicate the material Findings through which what has been established about that Quality State can be understood.

The conclusion and the reporting perform different functions.

The conclusion is the claimant's attributable expression of what the Synthesis of Material Findings supports.

The reporting communicates the material Findings necessary for the recipient to understand the basis, meaning, conditions, and limitations of that conclusion.

The reporting does not constitute a second Quality Determination or a second synthesis.

It draws upon findings already established through the applicable Quality Determination and preserves the relationship between those Findings and the Conclusion expressed by the claimant.

Accordingly, the methodological sequence remains:

Quality Determination

- **Evidence-Supported Findings**
- **Materiality**
- **material Findings**
- **Synthesis of Material Findings**
- **Conclusion or Refusal to Express a Conclusion**
- **Quality Claim accompanied by necessary reporting.**

The reporting attached to the Quality Claim need not reproduce every determined Finding concerning the original Quality Object.

Its content is governed by materiality to the Quality Claim.

The reporting must include those Findings and relationships necessary for the recipient to understand what has been established about the actual Quality State of the original Quality Object and what supports the Conclusion expressed.

The form of this reporting is not prescribed by this Article.

Determined findings and the reporting derived from them may be maintained and communicated through software environments, structured electronic records, databases, reports, working papers, paper records, or other appropriate forms, including combinations of these forms.

The methodological requirement concerns the information and its function, not its physical or digital container.

Whatever form is used, the reporting must preserve the material meaning of the determined Findings, their relevant relationships, and their Traceability to the applicable basis and Evidence.

The form should also be appropriate to the recipient, Intended Function, Boundary, and Context of the Quality Claim.

A complex infrastructure Quality Object may require extensive structured electronic information and supporting records. A more limited Quality Object may be adequately reported through a substantially simpler form.

The difference in form does not change the methodological function of the reporting.

Nor does the use of a particular software system, report format, record structure, or other medium itself establish the Quality of the reporting.

The reporting must be sufficient for its function within the Quality Claim.

This principle also permits the reporting to draw upon existing controlled information rather than requiring unnecessary duplication.

Where material determined Findings are already maintained in an appropriate and accessible form, the Quality Claim may identify, incorporate, reference, or otherwise connect to that information, provided that the recipient can understand the material Findings relevant to the Claim and their relationship to the Conclusion.

The Quality Claim therefore does not require creation of a separate document called a Quality State report, nor does reporting create or reconstruct the Quality State.

It requires that what has been established about the actual Quality State of the original Quality Object be understandable through the material Findings reported with, incorporated into, or traceably connected to the Claim.

The next question is which Findings concerning Quality must be included in that reporting.

That question is addressed in Section 3.12.

3.12 Reporting Material Quality Findings

The reporting accompanying a Quality Claim must include the Findings concerning Quality that are material to understanding what has been established about the Quality State of the original Quality Object and the Conclusion expressed by the claimant.

Material Findings concerning Quality are drawn from the Evidence-Supported Findings already established through the applicable Quality Determination.

Reporting them does not create new findings and does not change the Findings established through that determination.

A Finding concerning Quality may be material to the reporting where it is necessary to understand, among other matters:

- realization or non-realization of the Intended Function;
- the basis for the Conclusion expressed by the claimant;
- achievement or non-achievement of a material Quality Outcome Criterion;
- a Critical Condition or matter subject to Non-Compensability;
- achievement or non-achievement of a material mandatory requirement within the Applicable Basis;
- a material Interface or dependency;
- a condition upon which a Conditionally Positive Conclusion depends;
- the basis for a Negative Conclusion;
- a material limitation affecting what can be concluded; or
- another relationship necessary for the recipient to understand the Quality State or the Conclusion.

Material findings are not limited to unfavorable Findings.

A favorable finding may be material where it is necessary to understand realization of the Intended Function, the relationship among findings, the basis for the Conclusion, or another matter significant to the recipient and Intended Function of the Quality Claim.

Similarly, an unfavorable finding does not become immaterial merely because the overall conclusion is Positive or Conditionally Positive.

The reporting must therefore preserve material Findings regardless of whether they support, qualify, limit, or otherwise contribute to understanding the Conclusion.

A Negative Conclusion likewise does not justify omission of favorable Findings that remain material to understanding the Quality State of the original Quality Object.

Where the claimant refuses to express a Conclusion, material Findings concerning Quality that have nevertheless been established remain reportable.

Refusal to Express a Conclusion does not erase findings that have already been established.

The reporting should also preserve material relationships among findings.

A finding considered separately may not communicate its full significance where that significance depends upon another finding, a Critical Condition, Non-Compensability, an Interface, a dependency, the Applicable Basis, or another part of the applicable Quality structure.

Where such a relationship is material, the reporting must preserve it sufficiently for the recipient to understand the Finding in its proper context.

Materiality does not require every underlying item of Evidence or every intermediate record to be reproduced within the Quality Claim.

The necessary Evidence and records may remain within the applicable information or record system, provided that the reported finding remains adequately supported and traceable in accordance with the applicable WQI methodology.

Accordingly, the relationship can be expressed as:

- Evidence-Supported Findings concerning Quality**
- **Materiality to the Quality Claim**
- **material Findings concerning Quality**
- **necessary reporting accompanying the Conclusion.**

The reporting may be contained directly within the Quality Claim or may be incorporated, referenced, linked, or otherwise traceably connected to it through an appropriate information or record system.

The method of connection may vary.

The requirement is that the recipient can identify and understand the material Findings concerning Quality necessary to understand what has been established about the Quality State and the Conclusion, and that those Findings remain traceable to their applicable basis.

This preserves flexibility of implementation without making the reporting optional.

The organization may determine the appropriate form and information environment.

The methodology determines the function that the reporting must perform.

Material Harm-related Findings may also be necessary to the Quality Claim, but they remain distinct from Findings concerning Quality that address applicable aspects of the Quality State of the original Quality Object.

Their reporting is examined separately in Section 3.13.

3.13 Reporting Material Harm-Related Findings

A Quality Claim may require reporting of material Harm-related Findings where those Findings are necessary for the recipient to understand the significance of the Quality condition, the basis or limits of the Conclusion, or information relevant to the Intended Function of the Claim.

Harm-related Findings remain distinct from Findings concerning Quality. A Quality deficiency, non-achievement, or other unfavorable Finding concerning Quality does not by itself establish Harm, Risk, or lack of Safety. Likewise, a Finding concerning Harm, Risk, or Safety does not replace or alter the applicable Finding concerning Quality.

Where separately established and material to the Quality Claim, Harm-related reporting may include Findings concerning:

- a Harm-capable condition;

- an applicable Harm pathway;
- Possible Harm;
- Conditions of Materialization;
- Realized Harm;
- Risk, including the probability and severity of Possible Harm;
- Safety, where applicable Risk has been evaluated against applicable Safety criteria; and
- material Uncertainty or limitations affecting any such Finding or determination.

The existence of one element does not automatically establish another. A Harm-capable condition does not by itself establish a Harm pathway. A Harm pathway does not establish that Harm has been or will be realized. Possible Harm does not by itself establish Risk, and Risk does not by itself establish Safety or lack of Safety. Each matter requires the Evidence, Applicable Basis, and determination appropriate to it.

Materiality governs what Harm-related Findings must be communicated. A Harm-related Finding is material where its inclusion, relationship, or omission can materially affect the synthesis, Conclusion, or the recipient's understanding of the Quality Claim. Harm-related information should therefore not be added merely because Harm is conceivable; nor should a material Harm-related Finding be omitted because the Quality Claim concerns the Quality State of the original Quality Object.

Where Realized Harm has occurred, its occurrence may be material to the Quality Claim, but it does not by itself establish the prior Risk, the Safety of the condition before the Harm occurred, or the Quality State of the original Quality Object. Those matters remain subject to their respective determinations.

Where Risk or Safety has not been determined, the Quality Claim should not imply that such a determination has been made. The absence of a Risk or Safety determination likewise does not by itself establish that the Quality Object is safe, unsafe, or free from Possible Harm.

Reporting may communicate the material Harm-related Findings directly or provide traceable access to them. In either case, their relationship to the applicable Findings concerning Quality, supporting Evidence, Applicable Basis, material Uncertainty, and the Conclusion should remain sufficiently clear for the recipient to understand what has been established and what has not.

Accordingly, Harm-related reporting extends the information available to the recipient where such information is material, but it does not merge the distinct methodological determinations of Quality, Harm, Risk, and Safety.

3.14 Uncertainty and Limitations

A Quality Claim shall remain within the scope and certainty supported by the applicable Findings and Quality Determination. Material Uncertainty and limitations therefore form part of the information necessary to understand what the Claim establishes and what it does not establish.

Uncertainty does not alter the actual Quality State of the original Quality Object. It concerns limitations in what can responsibly be established about that state or about other matters examined through the applicable determination. Similarly, a limitation in Evidence, Methodological Resolution, Boundary, Context, Applicable Basis, or another element of the determination does not by itself establish favorable or unfavorable Quality.

Uncertainty or a limitation is material to the Quality Claim where its inclusion, relationship, or omission can materially affect the synthesis, Conclusion, or the recipient's understanding of the Claim.

Material Uncertainty and limitations may concern, as applicable:

- the scope, Sufficiency, Trustworthiness, or Applicability of Evidence;
- unresolved or conflicting Evidence;
- assumptions and possible Assumption Drift;
- Unresolved Conditions;
- the temporal basis of the Quality Determination;
- the defined Boundary, Interfaces, Scale, Context, or Methodological Resolution;
- the applicability or interpretation of the Applicable Basis or Quality Outcome Criteria;
- the scope or certainty of particular Findings;

- relationships among Findings;
- Harm pathways, Possible Harm, Conditions of Materialization, or Realized Harm, where examined;
- probability, severity, or other matters affecting a Risk determination, where performed; and
- applicable Safety criteria or the resulting Safety determination, where performed.

The existence of Uncertainty does not automatically prevent expression of a Conclusion. Its effect depends upon its materiality to the applicable Findings, their synthesis, and the intended Quality Claim. A Conclusion may remain supportable where material Uncertainty is appropriately bounded and does not prevent the applicable Findings from supporting that Conclusion.

Where material Uncertainty or a limitation makes a Positive Conclusion supportable only subject to identified future conditions, the requirements for a Conditionally Positive Conclusion apply. Where the applicable Findings affirmatively support non-realization of the required Intended Functions or Intended Results, a Negative Conclusion may be appropriate.

Insufficient Evidence, an evidence gap, or Uncertainty does not by itself support a Negative Conclusion. Where such limitations prevent responsible expression of a Positive, Conditionally Positive, or Negative Conclusion, the claimant should Refuse to Express a Conclusion and identify the material reason or reasons for that refusal.

Reporting of Uncertainty and limitations should be proportionate to their materiality. The Quality Claim need not reproduce every methodological qualification or minor limitation. It shall, however, communicate or provide traceable access to those limitations necessary for the recipient to understand the meaning, basis, scope, certainty, and conditions of the Claim.

A limitation shall not be obscured by the form of the Claim. Concise reporting, summary language, classification, graphical presentation, or other communication methods do not justify omission of material Uncertainty or expansion of the Claim beyond what the applicable Findings can responsibly support.

Accordingly, Uncertainty and limitations constrain the permissible scope and certainty of the Quality Claim without changing the underlying Quality State or substituting for the Findings established through Quality Determination.

3.15 Claimant and Attribution of the Claim

A Quality Claim is attributable to a claimant. Attribution identifies the person, organization, body, or other responsible source that expresses the Claim and assumes responsibility for expressing it within the scope and certainty supported by its applicable basis.

The claimant is distinct from the Quality Object, the recipient, and the persons or organizations that may have generated Evidence, performed examinations, established Findings, or otherwise contributed to the Quality Determination. The same person or organization may perform more than one of these roles, but those roles should not be assumed to be identical.

The claimant does not create or alter the Quality State of the original Quality Object. Nor does attribution permit the claimant to alter Findings established through Quality Determination. The claimant enters the Claim architecture through the formation and expression of the Quality Claim on the basis of the applicable Findings.

The claimant's role includes, as applicable:

- identifying the intended Quality Claim and its Intended Function;
- identifying the intended recipient or class of recipients;
- determining which applicable Findings are material to the intended Quality Claim;
- ensuring that material Findings and their relevant relationships are appropriately considered in Synthesis of Material Findings;
- expressing the Conclusion supported by that synthesis or Refusing to Express a Conclusion where no substantive Conclusion can responsibly be expressed;
- ensuring that material conditions, limitations, Uncertainty, and other necessary information are communicated or made traceably accessible; and

- ensuring that the Quality Claim does not exceed the scope or certainty supported by the applicable Findings and Quality Determination.

Attribution does not require that the claimant personally perform every activity supporting the Claim. Evidence may originate from different sources, and Quality Determination or other relevant determinations may be performed by other persons or organizations. Where the claimant relies upon such work, the material relationships between the Claim and its supporting Findings, Evidence, Applicable Basis, and determinations should remain traceable.

A claimant may express a Quality Claim for a purpose different from the purpose for which some of the underlying Evidence or Findings were originally developed only where their Applicability to the intended Claim is established rather than assumed. A change in claimant, recipient, Context, or Intended Function may therefore affect Materiality and the permissible scope of the Claim without changing the underlying Quality State or established Findings.

Different claimants may express different Quality Claims on the basis of the same applicable Findings where their Intended Functions, recipients, Contexts, or Materiality differ. Such differences do not by themselves establish inconsistency in the underlying Findings. Each Claim must independently remain supportable by the Findings upon which it relies.

Attribution should be sufficiently clear for the recipient to understand whose Quality Claim is being communicated. A statement should not acquire apparent authority merely because Evidence, a Quality Determination, certification, professional work, regulatory information, or another authoritative source contributed to its basis. Responsibility for the Quality Claim remains with the claimant expressing it.

Where a Quality Claim reproduces, incorporates, summarizes, or relies upon another claimant's Claim, the relationship between the claims should remain clear. Attribution of the original Claim should not be transferred to the later claimant, and the later claimant remains responsible for any new Claim that it independently expresses.

Accordingly, attribution connects the Quality Claim to the claimant responsible for its expression without transferring authorship of the underlying Quality State, Evidence, Findings, or determinations to that claimant.

3.16 Recipient and Context

A Quality Claim is made for a recipient within an applicable Context. The recipient and Context help determine what information is material to the Claim, how that information must be communicated, and what the recipient must be able to understand for the Claim to realize its Intended Function.

A recipient may be an individual, organization, authority, professional body, customer, service user, decision-maker, public audience, or other defined person or class of persons for whom the Quality Claim is intended.

The recipient does not determine the Quality State of the original Quality Object. Recipient needs, interests, expectations, or preferences likewise do not alter Findings established through Quality Determination. They affect the formation and communication of the Quality Claim only to the extent that they are relevant to its Intended Function, Materiality, Context, and necessary reporting.

Context identifies circumstances relevant to understanding or using the Quality Claim. Depending upon the Claim, these circumstances may include:

- the purpose for which the Claim is made;
- the decision, action, or understanding that the Claim is intended to support;
- the recipient or class of recipients;
- the time or period to which the Claim relates;
- the applicable legal, regulatory, contractual, professional, technical, social, organizational, or other setting;
- the Scale, Boundary, Interfaces, and Context of the original Quality Object relevant to the Claim;
- the applicable Methodological Resolution;
- relevant conditions or limitations affecting interpretation of the Findings or Conclusion; and

- other circumstances necessary for the recipient to understand the meaning and permissible use of the Claim.

The same applicable Findings may support different Quality Claims for different recipients or Contexts where Materiality or the information necessary to realize the Intended Function of the Claim differs. Such differences do not alter the Findings or the actual Quality State of the original Quality Object.

A difference in recipient or Context does not, however, permit a claimant to select or omit information in a manner that makes the Quality Claim unsupported or materially misleading. Material Findings, conditions, limitations, Uncertainty, and other information necessary for the recipient to understand the Claim shall remain communicated or traceably accessible.

The form and level of detail of reporting may therefore vary according to the recipient and Context. A technical recipient may require direct access to detailed Findings, Evidence, methods, or Applicable Basis, while another recipient may require a more concise form of communication. Differences in presentation do not justify differences in the substantive support required for the Claim.

Where a Quality Claim is communicated beyond its originally intended recipient or Context, its meaning or permissible use should not automatically be assumed to transfer unchanged. Information sufficient for one recipient, purpose, time, or Context may be insufficient or inapplicable for another.

Where a Claim is reused, transferred, summarized, or communicated in a different Context, the applicability of its Findings, Conclusion, conditions, limitations, and supporting basis should therefore be established for that use rather than assumed.

Recipient and Context consequently operate as conditions of responsible Claim formation and communication. They influence Materiality and necessary reporting but do not create, modify, or replace the Quality State, Evidence-Supported Findings, or other determinations upon which the Claim depends.

3.17 Intended Function of the Claim

Every Quality Claim has an Intended Function.

At the general level, the Intended Function of a Quality Claim is to provide its recipient with a supportable and materially sufficient communication of what has been established about the Quality State of the original Quality Object, for the purpose and within the Context for which the Claim is made.

This general Intended Function applies to the Quality Claim as a class of Quality Objects. It establishes the fundamental communicative function of the Claim without prescribing the particular purpose for which an individual Claim is made.

A particular Quality Claim may have a more specific Intended Function within that general function. Depending upon its recipient, purpose, and Context, the Claim may be intended to enable the recipient to understand, evaluate, communicate, decide, authorize, compare, act upon, or otherwise use what has been established about the Quality State of the original Quality Object.

The specific Intended Function does not replace the general Intended Function. It specifies what the particular Claim is intended to accomplish for its recipient while remaining bounded by what the applicable Findings can responsibly support.

Accordingly:

General Intended Function of a Quality Claim



**provide the recipient with a supportable
and materially sufficient communication
of what has been established about the
Quality State of the original Quality Object**



for the applicable purpose and Context

and, for a particular Quality Claim:

General Intended Function

+
particular recipient
+
particular purpose
+
particular Context

↓
specific Intended Function
of that Quality Claim.

The Intended Function of the Quality Claim is distinct from the Intended Functions of the original Quality Object. The original Quality Object has its own Intended Functions and Intended Results, which are relevant to determining its Quality. The Quality Claim is a different Quality Object whose Intended Function concerns communication of what has been established about the Quality State of that original Quality Object.

The Intended Function therefore affects, as applicable:

- which Findings are material to the Quality Claim;
- which relationships among Findings must remain visible;
- what material Findings concerning Quality must be reported;
- what material Harm-related Findings must be reported;
- what Uncertainty, limitations, conditions, and qualifications must be communicated;
- the level and form of information necessary for the recipient;
- the Context within which the Claim can responsibly be understood and used; and
- the scope and certainty that the Claim may responsibly express.

The Intended Function of the Claim does not expand what the applicable Findings can support. A Claim intended to support an important decision, authorization, comparison, transaction, communication, or other use remains bounded by the Evidence, Findings, Quality Determination, material Uncertainty, and other applicable determinations upon which it relies.

Where the available Findings cannot support a Claim capable of realizing its Intended Function, the claimant shall not compensate for that limitation by expanding the Conclusion, suppressing material Uncertainty, or presenting unsupported certainty. The Claim must instead remain within what can responsibly be supported, including through a Conditionally Positive Conclusion or Refusal to Express a Conclusion where applicable.

A Quality Claim may have more than one Intended Function. Where this occurs, the applicability of the Findings, Materiality, necessary reporting, and other elements of the Claim to each Intended Function should be established rather than assumed. Information sufficient for one Intended Function may not be sufficient for another.

A change in the Intended Function of an existing Claim may therefore require reconsideration of Materiality, recipient needs, Context, necessary reporting, and the permissible scope of the Claim. It does not alter the actual Quality State of the original Quality Object or the Findings already established about that state.

The Intended Function also provides the basis for examining the Quality of the Claim itself. Once expressed, the Quality Claim can be defined as a separate Quality Object. Its Quality can then be considered in relation to whether it realizes its own Intended Function and Intended Results for the applicable recipient and Context.

This creates two distinct but connected Quality relationships:

Original Quality Object
↓
Quality Determination
↓

Evidence-Supported Findings



Materiality



Synthesis of Material Findings



**Conclusion or
Refusal to Express a Conclusion**



attributable Quality Claim

and then:

Quality Claim as a separate Quality Object



its own Intended Function and Intended Results



**determination of what can be established
about the Quality State of the Claim.**

The Quality of the Claim is therefore not the Quality of the original Quality Object repeated at another level. It concerns whether the Claim itself realizes what it is intended to do as a communication Quality Object.

This distinction provides the transition from formation of the Quality Claim to examination of the Quality of that Claim.

4 The Claim as a Quality Object

4.1 The Claim and the Original Quality Object

Once expressed, a Quality Claim may itself be treated as a Quality Object. This does not make the Claim part of the Quality State of the original Quality Object. The original Quality Object and the Quality Claim are distinct Quality Objects, each with its own Intended Function, Intended Results, Boundary, Context, and Quality State.

The original Quality Object exists independently of the Claim. Its Quality State is its actual Quality-relevant condition at the applicable time or period. The Claim arises later as an attributable communication supported by applicable Evidence-Supported Findings established through Quality Determination concerning that state.

The Claim therefore does not contain, reproduce, create, or alter the Quality State of the original Quality Object. It communicates what the applicable Findings support within the scope and certainty of the Claim.

The Quality of the two objects is likewise distinct. A Claim concerning an original Quality Object with an unfavorable Quality State may itself realize its Intended Function well where it communicates the applicable Findings responsibly. Conversely, a Claim concerning an original Quality Object with a favorable Quality State may fail to realize its own Intended Function where it materially misstates, omits, distorts, obscures, or exceeds what those Findings support.

The connection between the two Quality Objects is established through the applicable Findings and other material relationships necessary to support the Claim, including, where applicable, Evidence, Applicable Basis, Quality Outcome Criteria, Materiality, Synthesis of Material Findings, the Conclusion or Refusal to Express a Conclusion, material Uncertainty and limitations, attribution, recipient, Context, and Traceability.

These relationships form an Interface between the original Quality Object and the Quality Claim. The Interface preserves connection without merging the two objects or their Quality States.

Accordingly, two distinct questions arise: what can be established about the Quality State of the original Quality Object; and what can be established about the Quality State of the Quality Claim as a separate Quality Object. The second determination does not redetermine the first object.

4.2 Intended Function of the Claim as a Quality Object

At the general level, the Intended Function of a Quality Claim is to provide its recipient with a supportable and materially sufficient communication of what has been established about the Quality State of the original Quality Object, for the purpose and within the Context for which the Claim is made.

This general Intended Function applies to the Quality Claim as a class of Quality Objects. A particular Claim may have a more specific Intended Function within that general function, such as enabling a recipient to understand, evaluate, communicate, decide, authorize, compare, act upon, or otherwise use what has been established.

The specific Intended Function does not expand what the applicable Findings can support. It specifies what the particular Claim is intended to accomplish for its recipient while remaining bounded by the determined basis.

For determination of the Claim's own Quality, its Intended Function and Intended Results must be considered together with its Boundary, Interfaces, recipient, Context, temporal basis, and Applicable Basis. These elements relate to the Claim itself and are not automatically identical to those of the original Quality Object.

Production, issuance, receipt, formal acceptance, or authority of a Claim does not by itself establish realization of its Intended Function. Function Realization concerns whether the Claim actually performs its defined communicative function within the applicable methodological frame.

4.3 Sources of Claim Quality

The Quality of a Quality Claim arises from realization of the Claim's own Intended Function and Intended Results. Several matters may contribute to that realization, but FTA16 does not establish them as a universal set of Quality Factors or Quality Indicators.

Potential sources include the Claim's substantive support in applicable Evidence-Supported Findings; treatment of Materiality; preservation of material relationships among Findings; consistency between the Synthesis of Material Findings and the Conclusion or Refusal to Express a Conclusion; treatment of material Uncertainty and limitations; attribution; applicability to the intended recipient and Context; Traceability; and communication sufficient for the Claim's Intended Function.

These matters are interdependent and are not assumed to be compensable. Clear communication cannot make an unsupported Conclusion supportable. Extensive Traceability cannot by itself compensate for omission of a material Finding. Accurate individual Findings may still be communicated deficiently if their material relationships are distorted or obscured.

Recipient need and determined support meet through Materiality. Recipient needs cannot create Findings, increase supported certainty, or justify omission of material information. At the same time, the existence of Findings does not require every Finding to be reproduced in every Claim. The relevant question is what supported information is material to the intended Claim and necessary for realization of its Intended Function.

More information therefore does not automatically produce greater Claim Quality. The form and level of detail may vary with recipient and Context, while the substantive meaning, scope, certainty, conditions, and limitations supported by the applicable Findings must be preserved.

The matters identified here establish where Claim Quality may arise or fail. Whether they resolve into invariant Quality Factors, Quality Indicators, or another common architecture is reserved for separate methodological derivation and justification.

4.4 Evidence and Traceability

Determination of the Quality of a Quality Claim requires Evidence concerning the Claim as the defined Quality Object. This Evidence is methodologically distinct from the Evidence used to determine the Quality of the original Quality Object, although information may be relevant to both determinations.

Evidence concerning the Claim may include the Claim as expressed and received; the communicated Conclusion or Refusal to Express a Conclusion; material Findings and limitations communicated or made accessible; information establishing attribution, recipient, purpose, Context, and Intended Function; the Applicable Basis and Quality Outcome Criteria applicable to the Claim; and records establishing the relationship between the Claim and the Findings upon which it relies.

Supporting Evidence for the original Quality Determination does not by itself establish favorable Quality of the Claim. Conversely, determining Claim Quality does not require repeating the entire original Quality Determination. Sufficient access to the relevant basis is required where realization of the Claim's Intended Function depends upon whether its content, scope, certainty, or applicability is supported.

Traceability permits the material relationships connecting the Claim to its methodological and evidentiary basis to be followed and understood. It may connect the Claim to the original Quality Object, applicable Findings, Evidence and Evidence Quality, Applicable Basis, Materiality, Synthesis, Conclusion or Refusal, material Uncertainty and limitations, attribution, recipient, Context, and separately determined Harm-, Risk-, or Safety-related matters where material.

Traceability does not require every supporting element to be reproduced within the immediate form of the Claim, nor does Traceability itself establish favorable Claim Quality. Evidence used to determine Claim Quality remains subject to Evidence Quality, and limitations in that Evidence constrain what can responsibly be established about the Claim's Quality State.

4.5 Determining the Quality of the Claim

Once the Quality Claim is defined as a Quality Object, the general Whole-Quality methodological architecture can be applied to it. The Quality State of the Claim is its actual Quality-relevant condition, at the applicable time or period, in relation to realization of its own Intended Function and Intended Results.

The Quality of a Quality Claim concerns the degree to which the Claim realizes those Intended Functions and Intended Results within its declared Boundary and Interfaces in relation to applicable Quality Outcome Criteria. Quality Determination establishes, through applicable Evidence, what can be established about that Quality.

The determination therefore requires a defined Claim, its Intended Function and Intended Results, Boundary and Interfaces, recipient, Context, temporal basis, applicable Scale and Methodological Resolution, Applicable Basis, applicable Quality Outcome Criteria, and Evidence appropriate to the Claim.

Favorable Claim Quality is not established merely because the original Quality Determination was sound, the claimant is authoritative, the Claim follows a required format, extensive documentation exists, or the Claim communicates a favorable Conclusion. Likewise, a Negative Conclusion or a properly supported Refusal to Express a Conclusion does not by itself establish deficient Claim Quality.

Quality Determination of the Claim establishes Evidence-Supported Findings concerning applicable aspects of the Claim's Quality State. Their scope and certainty cannot exceed what the Evidence concerning the Claim can responsibly support. Material relationships, Critical Conditions, Non-Compensability, and Uncertainty remain applicable where relevant.

If Findings concerning the Claim are subsequently communicated through another Quality Claim, that later Claim is itself a further communication Quality Object. This recursive possibility does not mean that every Claim requires another Claim concerning its Quality; it demonstrates that the same Whole-Quality architecture remains applicable when a Claim itself becomes an object of determination or communication.

The essential distinction is therefore preserved among the actual Quality State of the original Quality Object, what has been established about that state, and the Quality State of the Claim through which those Findings are communicated.

4.6 Boundary of FTA16 and Further Methodological Development

FTA16 establishes the formation of the Quality Claim and the methodological basis for treating the resulting Claim as a separate Quality Object. It intentionally stops before deriving a universal architecture for Claim Quality.

The sources and relationships identified in this Article provide research premises for further work. They are not, by their inclusion here, established as invariant Quality Factors, Quality Indicators, Quality Outcome Criteria, a scoring system, or requirements of a Claim Quality Core.

A subsequent methodological study should begin from the general Intended Function of the Quality Claim and determine, rather than assume, which dimensions of Function Realization are common across materially different types of Claims. Candidate Factors and Indicators should be tested for necessity, distinctness, applicability, interaction, Critical Conditions, Non-Compensability, and their relationship to applicable Quality Outcome Criteria.

Only after that derivation and justification should an invariant Claim Quality architecture, if supported, be formalized in a Claim Quality Standard — Core. Context-specific requirements may then be developed separately where the Core requires interpretation or application to particular classes of Claims.

This separation preserves the methodological sequence: FTA16 establishes the Quality Claim and the Claim-as-Quality-Object proposition; subsequent research derives and justifies the architecture of Claim Quality; and the later Core formalizes the supported requirements. FTA16 therefore provides the foundation for that work without predetermining its result.

5 Conclusion

A Quality Claim is not the Quality State of the original Quality Object, nor is it the Quality Determination through which Findings concerning that state are established.

The Quality State is the actual Quality-relevant condition of the defined Quality Object. Quality Determination establishes, through applicable Evidence and Quality Outcome Criteria, what can be established about that state. Its results are Evidence-Supported Findings.

The Quality Claim arises subsequently as an attributable communication by a claimant concerning the Quality State of the original Quality Object, made for a recipient and an Intended Function and supported by applicable Findings established through Quality Determination.

This distinction establishes the fundamental architecture developed in this Article:

Original Quality Object



actual Quality State

Quality Determination

**(applied to that defined Quality Object and actual Quality State,
through applicable Evidence and Quality Outcome Criteria)**



**Evidence-Supported Findings
concerning the Quality State**



Materiality



Synthesis of Material Findings



**Conclusion or
Refusal to Express a Conclusion**

↓
attributable Quality Claim.

The Claim does not create the Quality State or the Findings upon which it relies. Nor may recipient needs, claimant preference, communicative purpose, or desired outcome expand what those Findings can responsibly support.

Materiality provides the relationship between the determined Findings and the particular Claim. It identifies which Findings, conditions, relationships, limitations, and other matters are significant to the synthesis, Conclusion, or information necessary for the Claim to realize its Intended Function for its recipient.

Synthesis of Material Findings provides the structured consideration through which those material Findings and their relevant relationships support the permissible Conclusion, if any. This synthesis must preserve applicable Critical Conditions, Non-Compensability, Interfaces, dependencies, Uncertainty, and other material constraints rather than reducing the Findings to an automatic count, average, weighting, or score.

Three substantive Conclusion forms are distinguished: Positive Conclusion, Conditionally Positive Conclusion, and Negative Conclusion. Refusal to Express a Conclusion is distinct from those substantive forms and states that the available basis does not support expression of any of them, together with the material reason or reasons for that refusal.

A Positive Conclusion requires support for realization of the applicable Intended Functions and Intended Results as required within the applicable scope and conditions. A Conditionally Positive Conclusion supports a Positive Conclusion subject to identified material conditions to be fulfilled in the future and does not establish or predict their fulfillment. A Negative Conclusion requires an affirmative basis in the applicable Findings for non-realization of the applicable Intended Functions or Intended Results as required. Insufficient Evidence, an Evidence gap, or Uncertainty does not by itself establish a Negative Conclusion.

The Quality Claim must remain bounded by the scope and certainty of its applicable Findings. Material Findings concerning Quality, material Harm-related Findings where separately established and applicable, material Uncertainty, limitations, conditions, and other necessary information must be communicated or made traceably accessible where their omission would materially affect the meaning or Intended Function of the Claim.

Harm, Risk, and Safety remain methodologically distinct from Quality. A Quality deficiency does not by itself establish Harm, Risk, or lack of Safety. Where Findings or determinations concerning Harm, Risk, or Safety are material to a Quality Claim, they may form part of its necessary reporting without being merged with the Quality Determination of the original Quality Object.

The claimant is responsible for expression of the Quality Claim but does not thereby become the source of the underlying Quality State, Evidence, Findings, or determinations. Attribution identifies whose Claim is being communicated and preserves responsibility for its expression.

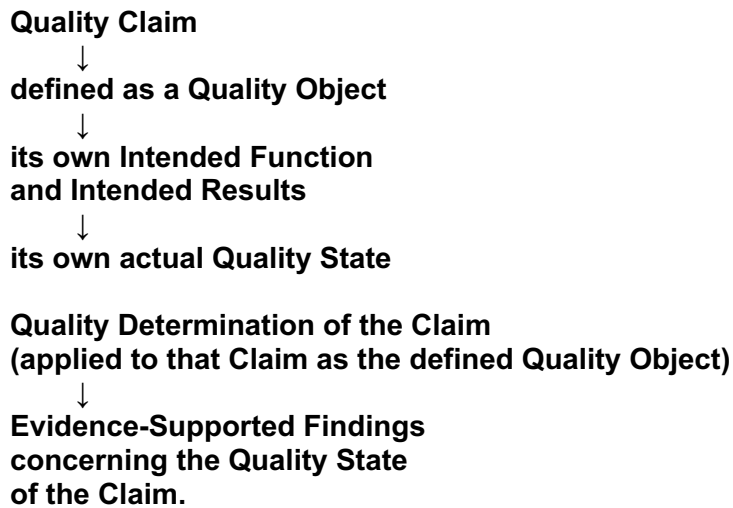
The recipient and Context influence Materiality, necessary reporting, form of communication, and the specific Intended Function of the Claim. They do not alter the underlying Findings or permit unsupported certainty.

At the general level, the Intended Function of a Quality Claim is to provide its recipient with a supportable and materially sufficient communication of what has been established about the Quality State of the original Quality Object, for the purpose and within the Context for which the Claim is made.

A particular Quality Claim may have a more specific Intended Function within that general function. The distinction permits different Claims to serve different recipients and purposes while preserving the common methodological requirement that each remain supported by what has actually been established.

The article further establishes that, once expressed, the Quality Claim may itself be defined as a separate Quality Object.

This produces a second but distinct Quality relationship:



The Quality of the Claim is therefore not a repetition of the Quality of the original Quality Object.

A Claim concerning an original Quality Object with an unfavorable Quality State may itself realize its Intended Function well where it responsibly communicates what has been established. Conversely, a Claim concerning an original Quality Object with a favorable Quality State may fail to realize its own Intended Function where it materially misstates, omits, distorts, obscures, or exceeds what the applicable Findings support.

Determination of Claim Quality consequently requires Evidence concerning the Claim as the Quality Object. That Evidence is methodologically distinct from, although potentially connected to, the Evidence used in determining the Quality of the original Quality Object.

Traceability preserves the necessary connections between these two determinations without merging them. It enables the material relationships among the Claim, Findings, Evidence, Applicable Basis, Conclusion or Refusal to Express a Conclusion, Uncertainty, attribution, recipient, Context, and other applicable elements to be followed and understood.

The sources and relationships identified in this Article indicate where realization or non-realization of the Claim's Intended Function may arise. They provide research premises for examining Claim Quality but are not established here as a universal set of Quality Factors, Quality Indicators, Quality Outcome Criteria, a scoring system, or a predetermined Claim Quality Core.

Whether an invariant Core can be derived for Quality Claims is a separate methodological question requiring its own derivation and justification.

FTA16 therefore establishes two connected but non-identical methodological pathways:

**determining what can be established
about the Quality State
of the original Quality Object**



**forming a supportable,
materially sufficient,
and attributable Quality Claim**



**and, where the Claim itself
becomes a Quality Object,**

determining what can be established

about the Quality State of that Claim.

By preserving these distinctions, Whole-Quality methodology can address not only the Quality State of an object, but also the methodological integrity of the communication through which what has been established about that state is conveyed to another person or organization.

The Claim thereby becomes neither an afterthought to Quality Determination nor a substitute for it. It becomes a distinct Quality Object whose own Quality can be defined, evidenced, determined, and communicated within the Whole-Quality methodology.

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Use of this article does not create a certification, conformity assessment, accreditation, legal opinion, professional opinion, or formal Quality Determination. Any application of the Whole-Quality methodology should be appropriately bounded, evidenced, and interpreted within the relevant Quality Object, Context, Applicable Basis, and Reference Layer.