

VADR

THE CONCEPTUAL
SYNTHESIS COMPANY

THE AUTONOMOUS
FUTURE

HUMAN CREATIVITY.
AUTONOMOUS EXECUTION.

Foundational Series Volume 003

Conceptual Synthesis

The Discipline of Creating Conceptual Systems

Version 1.0
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VADR
A Conceptual Synthesis Company

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Preface

Conceptual Synthesis is the discipline of organizing existing technologies, organizational models, economic frameworks, governance principles, and human ingenuity into genuinely new operational capabilities to create enduring value in the Autonomous Future.

Foundational Series Volume 003 is the practitioner's handbook for Conceptual Synthesis. The Blueprint established VADR as a Conceptual Synthesis Company and defined the discipline in principle. This handbook explains how the discipline is practiced: how a Conceptual Synthesist discovers and qualifies an opportunity, establishes an Objective, directs the work its Process produces, governs the autonomous workforce that carries it out, decides at Gate Evaluation, and validates, evolves, and commercializes what results. It is written to be used, not only read: most chapters are procedures, each with its steps, its outputs, what the Auditor reviews, and the mistakes to avoid.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Conceptual Synthesis is the discipline of organizing existing technologies, organizational models, economic frameworks, governance principles, and human ingenuity into genuinely new operational capabilities to create enduring value in the Autonomous Future.

VADR operates according to a simple philosophy:

Human Creativity. Autonomous Execution.

Humans are the **Creative Workforce**. Human creativity is responsible for vision, judgment, ethics, and Conceptual Synthesis. The **Autonomous Workforce** — Autonomous Leaders and Autonomous Workers — is responsible for execution, operating under Delegated Authority. Of everything VADR works with, human creativity is the scarcest resource. Execution can be scaled almost without limit; creativity cannot.

Every procedure that follows is designed to spend human creativity only where nothing else can supply it, and to delegate everything else to autonomous execution. Telo drafts everything: the Objective, the Deliverables its Process calls for, the Plan, and the workforce that performs it. The Auditor reviews everything the workforce produces, and the Autonomous Leader triages what the Auditor finds. The Conceptual Synthesist notices what is worth doing, describes it, answers, and decides.

That work has a repeatable shape: notice an opportunity and describe it; promote the Objective Telo drafts from that description; direct the work its Process produces; govern the workforce the Autonomous Leader designs; decide at the gates on what the Auditor and the Autonomous Leader bring; then validate, evolve, and, where appropriate, commercialize what results.

Practice is also how a Conceptual Synthesist earns responsibility. The Creative Workforce has no managers and no assigned work. Work is chosen, leadership is earned through followership, and standing is earned through demonstrated merit in six performance categories, observed by Ascent from the record of real work. Each category has a chapter explaining how the practice meets it.

Every procedure chapter follows the same pattern:

- **When It Applies:** the situation that calls for the procedure.
- **Inputs:** what must be in hand before beginning.
- **Steps:** what to do, in order.
- **Output:** what the procedure produces, and where it lives.

Conceptual Synthesis: The Discipline of Creating Conceptual Systems

- **What the Auditor Reviews:** the checks the Auditor makes, and the Autonomous Leader resolves, before the work reaches a decision.
- **Common Mistakes:** what goes wrong, and how to recognize it.

The Conceptual Synthesist's only written input is a description. Every other contribution is an answer or a decision. Where the discipline needs a concept VADR's volumes do not yet define, a concept is proposed. Proposed concepts are marked and collected for review before adoption.

HOW TO USE THIS HANDBOOK

Who It Is For

This handbook is for every Conceptual Synthesist, in every discipline: marketing, sales, finance and accounting, operations, and the synthesis of new Conceptual Systems. The procedures are the same in each. What differs is the work the Autonomous Workforce performs and the craft required to judge it.

How It Is Organized

- **The role:** what a Conceptual Synthesist does, and the instruments of practice.
- **The procedures:** one for each step of the practice, in the order of the Conceptual System Lifecycle: Discover, Synthesize, Validate, Evolve, Commercialize.
- **The Creative Workforce:** working in a self-organizing workforce, how responsibility is earned, and how the practice meets each of the six performance categories.
- **Judgment and failure:** escalation, disputes, ethics, and the failure modes of the discipline.
- **The reference sections:** checklists, a worked example, proposed concepts, and the glossary.

Leaders and Workers

Both workforces have Leaders and Workers, and the two are never the same thing. An **Autonomous Leader** and an **Autonomous Worker** belong to the Autonomous Workforce and act under Delegated Authority. A Leader or Worker in the **Creative Workforce** is a person, whose standing is earned through merit. This handbook always states which is meant.

Relationship to Other Volumes

This handbook describes practice. It does not restate the constitutions it practices under. The Blueprint defines the discipline and the VADR Operating Model. The Autonomous Company volume defines the constructs of autonomous execution: Objectives, Deliverables, Delegated Authority, Fid, Roles, and the rest. The Creative Workforce volume defines how the Creative Workforce is governed, placed, advanced, and compensated, including the six performance categories and the band thresholds. Ascent will define the earned-responsibility mechanism itself. Where this handbook and a constitutional volume differ, the constitutional volume governs, and the difference is corrected here.

How It Evolves

This handbook evolves the way a Conceptual System does. When practice reveals a better procedure, the procedure is changed here, explicitly, and the reason is recorded.

CHAPTER 1 – WHAT A CONCEPTUAL SYNTHESIST DOES

This chapter describes the role. It establishes the division between human creativity and autonomous execution, what the role owns and what it does not do, the capabilities it requires, and the working principles that shape every procedure that follows.

The Role in One Paragraph

The Conceptual Synthesist notices opportunities worth pursuing and describes them; promotes the Objectives Telo drafts from those descriptions, setting their funds and confirming their bounds; directs the work their Processes produce; governs the autonomous workforce that the Autonomous Leader designs; and decides on what that workforce produces, once the Auditor has reviewed it and the Autonomous Leader has triaged the findings. Accountability for all of it remains with the Conceptual Synthesist.

Human Creativity. Autonomous Execution.

The Conceptual Synthesist is a member of the Creative Workforce. That membership defines the role: the Creative Workforce supplies what autonomous execution cannot, and delegates everything else.

- **Human creativity is responsible for** vision, judgment, ethics, and Conceptual Synthesis: seeing the opportunity, deciding what should exist, deciding what is right, and deciding whether the result serves its purpose.
- **Autonomous execution is responsible for** everything that can be specified: drafting, planning, designing the workforce, research, building, operating, reviewing, triaging, and reporting, performed by the Autonomous Workforce under Delegated Authority.

Creativity Is the Scarcest Resource

Autonomous execution scales with Fid. Human creativity does not scale at all: every Conceptual Synthesist has a finite amount of attention and judgment, and it is the one resource VADR cannot buy more of on demand. The discipline is therefore, in large part, the discipline of spending creativity well.

Every procedure applies the same test to each thing a human is asked to do: does this require human creativity or judgment, or could it be specified and delegated? If it could be delegated, it should be. A human coordinating work, drafting wording, designing what an Autonomous Leader could design, or reviewing what the Auditor reviews is creativity spent on execution, and it is creativity no longer available for the next opportunity.

The reward for spending creativity well is leverage. A Conceptual Synthesist who sets sound purposes and judges well directs far more work than any person could perform, and each Conceptual System synthesized frees creativity for the next.

What the Conceptual Synthesist Owns

- **The opportunity:** whether it is worth pursuing, and why.
- **The purpose:** what the Conceptual System is for, and what success means.
- **The bounds:** the Delegated Authority, Fid, and Oversight Level under which the workforce acts. Every grant traces back to the Conceptual Synthesist.
- **The judgment:** every Approved, Revise-Requested, and Rejected decision, and every Resolution of an Open Decision — including the decision to approve the workforce the Autonomous Leader proposes.

What the Conceptual Synthesist Does Not Do

Each of the following spends scarce creativity on execution.

- **No execution.** Conceptual Synthesists do not write code or configure infrastructure directly. In every discipline, the Autonomous Workforce performs the work.
- **No workforce design.** The Autonomous Leader plans the work, proposes the Roles and their conduct, and identifies and builds what the work depends on. The Conceptual Synthesist judges that design; it does not produce it.
- **No coordination.** A design that requires a human to move work from one step to the next by hand is wrong. The workforce proceeds on its own and surfaces only for genuine decisions.
- **No reviewing.** The Auditor reviews every Deliverable, gated or not, and the Autonomous Leader triages the findings, resolving what is within its authority. The Conceptual Synthesist decides on what they bring: approve, reject, or change.
- **No drafting.** Beyond the initial description, the Conceptual Synthesist writes nothing. Telo drafts; when something needs to change, the Conceptual Synthesist states what should change and why, the Role that produced it makes the revision, and the result is reviewed again.

Two Capabilities

The role requires two capabilities, and both are required.

- **Craft:** the ability to do the discipline's own work well. A marketer who cannot build a good campaign cannot tell whether an Autonomous Worker built one.

- **Governance of autonomous execution:** the ability to decide whether a proposed workforce, as the Auditor has reviewed it, is sound — its Roles, what each may do unaided, what is verified, and what returns to a human — and to set purposes and bounds under which it can run without supervision. Someone with craft who cannot govern autonomous execution is practicing the discipline's work without the synthesis.

The Working Loop

Most practice is spent in a loop that repeats across many Objectives at once:

1. Notice an opportunity, describe it, and judge and promote the Objective Telo drafts (From Description to Objective).
2. Direct the work the Objective's Process produces (Directing the Synthesis) and govern the workforce the Autonomous Leader designs (Governing the Autonomous Workforce).
3. Let the workforce execute, and decide at the gates set for it on what the Auditor and the Autonomous Leader bring (Evaluating Deliverables).
4. Validate what was produced against real use (Validating Through Practice).
5. Evolve it as practice teaches something new (Evolving a Conceptual System), and commercialize it where appropriate (Commercializing a Conceptual System).

Working Principles

- **Spend creativity only where it is irreplaceable.** Vision, judgment, ethics, and synthesis belong to humans. Everything that can be specified belongs to the Autonomous Workforce.
- **Autonomous by default.** The system does the work. A human is involved only for decisions and approvals.
- **Describe, answer, decide.** The only thing a Conceptual Synthesist writes is a description. Everything else is drafted by Telo, reviewed by the Auditor, triaged by the Autonomous Leader, and decided by a human.
- **Decide the change, not the wording.** Accept, reject, or modify a proposed change; do not draft it.
- **Proportionate design.** Build for needs that have actually been demonstrated, not for needs that are only imagined.
- **Reuse before creating.** Check whether something already exists before defining something new. Extend it rather than building a parallel version.

- **Adopt proven patterns.** Where a problem has a well-proven solution elsewhere, start from it and adapt it.
- **Be precise.** Distinct things get distinct names. Two concepts must never be allowed to blur into one.
- **Read for intent.** If something obviously should not be done, silence in a rule does not require doing it. Equally, silence is not permission.

CHAPTER 2 – THE INSTRUMENTS OF PRACTICE

This chapter introduces the constructs a Conceptual Synthesist works with, as the practitioner experiences them. For each, it states what the construct is and the decision it requires. Full definitions live in The Autonomous Company volume.

Telo

Telo is the operating implementation of The Autonomous Company and the instrument through which Conceptual Synthesis is practiced. It hides the technology so that human creativity stays on what is being synthesized, not on how it is built. Every construct below either carries execution away from the Creative Workforce or marks a point where human judgment is genuinely required.

The Constructs and the Decisions They Require

- **Candidate Objective:** an opportunity, described by the Conceptual Synthesist and drafted in conversation by the Autonomous Creative, which surfaces content, questions, and recommendations before the Objective becomes binding. Decision: promote it, or decline it.
- **Objective:** a fixed purpose delegated to a Company, with success criteria that cannot change after establishment. Decision: what exactly should be accomplished, and how will accomplishment be recognized?
- **Process:** the sequence of Stages a kind of work follows, each Stage producing the Deliverables it declares. The Process decides what the work produces. The Autonomous Leader recommends one. Decision: accept it or change it.
- **Oversight Level:** Autonomous, Milestone-Gated, or Step-Gated. The Autonomous Leader recommends one. Decision: accept it or change it — how often must the work pause for a human?
- **Optimization Directive:** Cost-Optimized, Balanced, or Precision-Optimized. Set initially at intake; the Autonomous Leader recommends a final value. Decision: accept it or override it.
- **Delegated Authority:** permission to act, always bounded, always traceable to its originating Conceptual Synthesist. Decision: what may the workforce do on its own?
- **Fid:** the bounded funds the workforce may spend on an Objective. The Conceptual Synthesist sets the initial allocation; the Autonomous Leader's Plan later brings an

estimate. When Fid runs out, the work escalates. Decision: how much is this worth, does the estimate fit it, and when it runs out, is it worth more?

- **Autonomous Leader:** coordinates execution. It plans the work and estimates its cost, designs the workforce — proposing Roles and their conduct — identifies and builds what the work depends on, and triages the Auditor's findings: it resolves what is within its authority and brings the rest as Recommendations and as Questions with options. Decision: approve, reject, or modify its Plan and its Recommendations, and answer its Questions.
- **Autonomous Worker:** performs specialized work under an Assignment and produces Deliverables. Decision: none directly; its work is judged through Gate Evaluation.
- **Auditor:** independently reviews every Deliverable, gated or not, and surfaces findings; it informs and does not decide. Its findings reach the Conceptual Synthesist only through the Autonomous Leader's triage.
- **Deliverable and Schema:** the artifacts the workforce produces, each reviewed by the Auditor against the Schema for its type. Decision: made at Gate Evaluation.
- **Gate Evaluation:** the decision on a Deliverable: Approved, Revise-Requested, or Rejected. By the time a gate is ready, the Auditor has reviewed the Deliverable and the Autonomous Leader has triaged the findings. What remains arrives as Recommendations, and as Questions: Open Decisions, each with options and a recommended answer, each answer recorded as its Resolution. Decision: accept, reject, or modify each Recommendation, answer each Question, and approve, request revision, or reject.
- **Role and Role Conduct Specification:** the classification an Autonomous Worker holds, and the written purpose, guidance, and rules that govern how it conducts its work. Roles are proposed in the Autonomous Leader's Plan and established when the Plan is Approved. Decision: made with the Plan.
- **Mandate:** a standing, pre-authorized instruction that originates Objectives on a schedule, for work that recurs. Decision: is this a one-time result, or an ongoing responsibility, and is its Fid ceiling right?
- **Organizational Experience:** what a Role has learned from its own reviewed work, identified by the Auditor and kept or discarded by the Curator. It informs the workforce, and its effect appears in quality over time.

Ascent

Ascent is the Operational Conceptual System that governs the Creative Workforce through earned responsibility. It observes work, not claims about it. The chapters on the Creative Workforce explain how the procedures in this handbook produce the evidence Ascent uses.

CHAPTER 3 – FROM DESCRIPTION TO OBJECTIVE

This chapter is the procedure for the Discover stage and the establishment of an Objective. The Conceptual Synthesist notices an opportunity and describes it. Telo drafts everything else in conversation. The Conceptual Synthesist answers, judges, and decides whether to promote.

When It Applies

Whenever a problem, a friction, or a gap appears that existing capabilities might close: in a discipline's own work, in a customer conversation, in an Autonomous Leader's Recommendation, or in something the Autonomous Workforce keeps escalating.

Where Opportunities Appear

Noticing an opportunity is among the purest uses of human creativity; no autonomous capability supplies it. Opportunities tend to appear in recognizable places:

- **Ungoverned layers:** capabilities that have commoditized with no system organizing them for people.
- **Structural conflicts of interest:** where whoever provides a capability cannot act fully in the interest of whoever uses it.
- **Coordination failures:** where value exists across several parties and no one is positioned to organize it.
- **Trust deficits:** where adoption stalls for lack of confidence, not for lack of capability.
- **Unexamined human work:** functions that remain manual only because no autonomous workforce has been established to perform them.

The Description

The description is the only thing the Conceptual Synthesist writes. Everything that follows is drafted by Telo from it, so its quality shapes everything downstream. A good description is short and states:

- **What was observed:** the signal itself, not an interpretation of it.
- **Who has the problem,** and how they cope today.
- **Why it matters:** what is lost while the problem remains.
- **What is already known:** prior attempts, constraints, and relevant facts.

It describes the problem, not a solution. A description that names the answer narrows the drafting to that answer.

Steps

1. **Confirm the signal is observed, not assumed.**
2. **Open a Candidate Objective.** Write the description, set the initial Optimization Directive, and set the initial Fid allocation: the Conceptual Synthesist's statement of what the result is worth.
3. **Engage the drafting conversation.** The Autonomous Creative surfaces content — the problem framing, the Definition of Success, the Purpose, and the Success Criteria — together with questions and recommendations. Answer each question by choosing one of its options or stating another; accept, reject, or modify each recommendation. Work from general to specific: agree the framing before the detail.
4. **Say where the draft misses the intent.** State what is wrong and why; the Autonomous Creative redrafts it. Whether the draft is complete, consistent, and observable is the Auditor's review, not the Conceptual Synthesist's.
5. **Accept or change the recommended settings.** The Autonomous Leader recommends the Process, the Oversight Level, and the Optimization Directive. The Process decides what the work will produce. For Oversight Level: Autonomous where the work is well understood and a wrong result is cheap to correct; Milestone-Gated where each Stage should be approved before the next begins; Step-Gated only where every step carries real risk. Every gate spends human creativity; accept gates only where human judgment would change the outcome.
6. **Decide.** Promote the Candidate Objective, or decline it in Telo, where the decline and its reasoning are recorded. Promotion is authorization: from that moment the workforce proceeds within the authority and Fid granted. The Opportunity is then reviewed by the Auditor and triaged by the Autonomous Leader, like every Deliverable.

What Only the Conceptual Synthesist Decides

- **Is the gap real,** observed rather than assumed, and worth pursuing?
- **Is the value enduring,** or tied to one implementation that will commoditize?
- **Does it fit VADR's strategic domains** and strengthen the portfolio?

What the Auditor Reviews

- Someone else could read the problem framing and describe the same problem back.
- The gap can be closed mostly by organizing existing capability, with little invention.
- Every condition in the Definition of Success, and every Success Criterion, is observable — a condition, not an activity.
- The Purpose describes an outcome, not a method.
- The result can be validated through practice.
- Nothing depends on a supplier who could withdraw permission, reprice at success, or restrict where it may operate.

Output

An established Objective, with its Purpose, Success Criteria, Process, Oversight Level, Optimization Directive, and Fid, and the Opportunity Deliverable it came from. Or a decline, recorded in Telo with its reasoning. Promoted work is visible to the whole Creative Workforce, and others may choose to join it.

Common Mistakes

- **Describing a solution instead of the problem.** "We should build a dashboard" closes the question before it is asked.
- **Rewriting what is surfaced.** State what is wrong and why, and let the Autonomous Creative redraft.
- **Accepting recommendations unread.** A recommendation accepted without judgment is a default by another name.
- **Gating everything.** Step-Gated work that did not need it wastes attention and teaches nothing.
- **Trying to change an Objective after establishment.** If the purpose was wrong, retire it and establish a new one.

CHAPTER 4 – DIRECTING THE SYNTHESIS

This chapter is the procedure for the Synthesize stage: the work an established Objective's Process produces. What is produced depends on the Process. The workforce drafts every Deliverable, the Auditor reviews it, and the Autonomous Leader triages the findings; the Conceptual Synthesist directs the drafting from general to detail through answers and decisions.

When It Applies

After an Objective is established, through every Stage of the Process it runs under.

Inputs

- The established Objective and its Opportunity.
- The Process the Objective runs under, and the Deliverables each of its Stages declares.
- The Conceptual Synthesist's vision of what is wanted, expressed through answers and decisions.

What the Process Determines

Each Stage of a Process declares the Deliverables it produces. The Process accepted at promotion therefore decides what the synthesis is:

- **A new Conceptual System (the Synthesis Process):** the Conceptual System Definition first, then the Stages that design, plan, and build what it defines. Nothing is designed or built until the Conceptual System Definition is Approved.
- **An ongoing responsibility (the Team Process):** a Team Definition and a Mandate, establishing a Team with standing work. No Conceptual System Definition is produced.
- **Any other Process:** exactly the Deliverables its Stages declare, each checked against the Schema for its type.

The Conceptual System Definition

Where the Process calls for one, the Autonomous Creative drafts the Conceptual System Definition. It has two parts:

- **Concepts:** the units the system is composed of. Each Concept answers the nine questions below.

- **Rules:** the statements each Concept must hold, each tied to its Concept and carrying the acceptance criteria that prove it. Every Rule is built and proven, and nothing is built that no Rule asks for.

The Nine Questions of a Concept

Every Concept is defined by answering the same nine questions, the structure VADR's constitutional volumes use for every concept they define:

- **Definition:** What is it?
- **Semantics:** What does it fundamentally mean?
- **Conceptual Purpose:** Why does it exist?
- **Objectives:** What is it intended to accomplish?
- **Composition:** What conceptually constitutes it?
- **Capabilities:** What must it be capable of?
- **Behaviors:** How does it behave?
- **Conceptual Interdependencies:** Which other Concepts does it depend on, and how?
- **Constraints:** What boundaries govern it?

The Plan

Before anything is built, the Autonomous Leader produces the Plan: the work, its sequence and dependencies, the Roles it proposes, and its cost estimate in Fid. The estimate is set against the Objective's Fid, which was the Conceptual Synthesist's own statement of what the result is worth. Governing the Autonomous Workforce covers the Plan in full.

Steps

1. **Agree the outline before the detail.** The drafting Role proposes the outline first: the decomposition into Concepts, or the shape of the Process's own Deliverables. Answer the questions on the outline; detail built on the wrong outline is discarded.
2. **Answer each question as it is surfaced.** Every question comes with options and a recommended answer. Choose an option, or state a different answer and why. Then move to the detail, one part at a time.
3. **Leave the review to the Auditor.** The Auditor reviews every Deliverable against its Schema and the checks below; the Autonomous Leader resolves what is within its authority and brings the rest to the gate.

4. **Decide at each gate** the Oversight Level sets, on what the Auditor and the Autonomous Leader bring (Evaluating Deliverables).
5. **Decide on the Plan and its cost estimate** (Governing the Autonomous Workforce).

What the Auditor Reviews

Before a Conceptual System Definition reaches the Conceptual Synthesist, the Auditor checks it, and the Autonomous Leader triages every finding:

- Every Concept serves the Objective's Purpose, and every Concept answers all nine questions.
- No two Concepts contradict or overlap, and nothing is present without a reason.
- Every Rule belongs to a Concept and has acceptance criteria that can be tested independently.
- Every term is used exactly as the canonical vocabulary defines it; a collision with an existing term is resolved, never passed through.
- No undefined dependency: every Concept relied on is defined, at least as the shape the other Concept needs.
- No encumbered dependency: nothing whose license can be revoked, repriced at success, or restricted by territory.
- Every invented element is named and justified; existing capability is organized wherever it exists.
- Real scenarios, including a failure and an edge case, walk through the system without contradiction or gap.

Output

The Approved Deliverables each Stage of the Process declares: for the Synthesis Process, an Approved Conceptual System Definition, then the design, the Plan, and the build; for the Team Process, an Approved Team Definition and Mandate.

Common Mistakes

- **Enumerating everything by hand.** The drafting Role proposes the decomposition; the Conceptual Synthesist answers and decides.
- **Jumping to detail before the outline is agreed.** Detail built on the wrong outline is discarded.
- **Reviewing the Deliverable line by line.** The Auditor reviews it; re-reviewing spends creativity on execution. Decide on what the review brings.

- **Expecting the same Deliverables from every Process.** A Team Objective produces a Team Definition and a Mandate, not a Conceptual System Definition.
- **Leaving a choice to a default.** A question no one answers is decided later by someone who does not know they decided it.

CHAPTER 5 – GOVERNING THE AUTONOMOUS WORKFORCE

This chapter is the procedure for governing the workforce the Autonomous Leader designs. The design is autonomous execution, and so is its review: the Auditor reviews the Plan and the Autonomous Leader triages the findings. Setting the bounds and deciding are human judgment.

Purpose

Governing the workforce is where Human Creativity. Autonomous Execution. becomes concrete. The Autonomous Leader plans the work and designs the workforce that performs it: which Roles are needed, how each conducts itself, what it depends on, in what order the work proceeds, and what it will cost. The Conceptual Synthesist decides whether that workforce, as reviewed, will produce good work while consuming as little human creativity as possible.

When It Applies

- When an Autonomous Leader's Plan is presented for approval, including any Roles it proposes.
- When an Autonomous Leader proposes a Mandate for recurring work.
- When a workforce already running escalates, exceeds its Fid, or produces a finding that traces to its design.

Inputs

- The Plan, with its proposed Roles, their Role Conduct Specifications, the order of work, and its cost estimate.
- The Auditor's review of the Plan, and the Autonomous Leader's triage of it.
- Craft in the discipline: good work must be recognizable before a workforce's design for producing it can be governed.

What the Autonomous Leader Designs

- **Plan Items:** the work, its sequence, and its dependencies.
- **Cost estimate:** the Plan's estimate in Fid, for the work and for each Objective a Mandate will originate.
- **Proposed Roles:** each with the Purpose of the Role's Work, General Behavioral Guidance, and Rules. On approval of the Plan, each Role is established with its Role Conduct Specification.

- **Dependencies:** anything the work needs that does not yet exist. The Autonomous Leader identifies it and assigns Autonomous Workers to build it; no prerequisite Objective is needed.
- **Mandates:** for work that recurs, a standing instruction with a schedule and a Fid ceiling for each Objective it originates.

What the Auditor Reviews

- The Plan accomplishes the Objective's Purpose and Success Criteria, and nothing else.
- Existing Roles, Schemas, and Processes are reused where they fit; nothing parallel is proposed.
- New domains get new Roles. A Role stretched across domains never develops expertise, and experience from one domain misdirects another.
- Each Role's conduct describes judgment — how good work is recognized and how to decide — not a script. Steps belong in the Process.
- Each Role's boundaries of autonomy are explicit: what it decides unaided, what another Role verifies, and what returns to a human. Only decisions requiring human creativity, judgment, or ethics return to a human.
- No step requires a human to move the work along.
- Recurring responsibilities are Mandates, not repeated one-time Objectives. A report is a deliverable; keeping the numbers right every month is a Mandate.
- The cost estimate reflects real cost.

How the Autonomous Leader Triage

The Autonomous Leader resolves every finding within its authority, revising the Plan itself. What it cannot resolve, it brings to the Conceptual Synthesist as Recommendations — a specific change, with its reason, to accept, reject, or modify — and as Questions, each with options and a recommended answer. The Plan is ready for a decision only when this is done.

Steps

1. **Read the Autonomous Leader's summary:** the work, the proposed Roles, and the cost estimate against the Objective's Fid.

2. **Decide each Recommendation.** Accept it, reject it, or modify it, stating what should change and why. Do not turn a specific recommendation back into a question.
3. **Answer each Question.** Choose an option, or state a different answer and why.
4. **Decide the cost.** Does the estimate fit what the result is worth? If not, add Fid, narrow the work, or decline it. Exceeding Fid later is the escalation that returns ungated work to a human.
5. **Decide.** Approve, reject, or approve with changes. The Autonomous Leader revises the design, and the Roles are established when the Plan is Approved.

After Approval

- Ungated work runs without human review. The Auditor still reviews it, and the Autonomous Leader resolves every finding; exceeding Fid is the only escalation.
- When a finding traces to the design — a Rule that permitted a bad action, an authority that was too broad — the Autonomous Leader corrects the design, not only the output. A correction beyond its authority comes back as a Recommendation.
- Relax oversight as evidence accumulates. Tighten it only where evidence shows it is needed.

Output

An Approved Plan, with its cost estimate, and established Roles; or an Approved Mandate: a workforce that can run within its bounds without supervision.

Common Mistakes

- **Designing the workforce by hand.** It spends creativity on execution the Autonomous Leader exists to perform.
- **Reviewing the Plan again.** The Auditor has reviewed it; decide on what the triage brings.
- **Accepting a stretched Role because it is convenient.** It saves an hour and costs the domain its expertise.
- **Correcting outputs while leaving the design that caused them.** The same failure returns.
- **Approving general capability for an imagined need.** Wait until the need is demonstrated.

CHAPTER 6 – EVALUATING DELIVERABLES

This chapter is the procedure for Gate Evaluation: deciding on what the Autonomous Workforce produces. By the time a Deliverable reaches the Conceptual Synthesist, the Auditor has reviewed it and the Autonomous Leader has triaged the findings. It is the most frequent act of judgment in the discipline, and the place where human creativity is most easily spent on work that is not its own.

When It Applies

Whenever work pauses for a decision: at each gated milestone or step, when an Autonomous Leader brings a Recommendation, or when Fid runs out and the work escalates.

What Happens Before the Gate

- **The Auditor reviews** every Deliverable, gated or not, against the Objective's Purpose and Success Criteria, the Schema for its type, the decisions already Approved, the canonical vocabulary, and its dependencies. It informs; it does not decide.
- **The Autonomous Leader triages** the findings. It resolves what is within its authority, returning revisions to the producing Role, and brings the rest to the Conceptual Synthesist.
- **The gate is ready** only when the review has run and the Autonomous Leader has finished. Opening a gate runs nothing.

What Arrives

- **The Deliverable**, with the producing Role's Recommendation.
- **Recommendations**: specific changes, each with its reason, to accept, reject, or modify.
- **Questions**: the Open Decisions, each with options and a recommended answer.
- **Observations**: what the review noticed that needs no decision.

Steps

1. **Keep the Purpose and Success Criteria in view.** The decision is whether the Deliverable serves them, not whether it matches taste.
2. **Decide each Recommendation.** Accept it, reject it, or modify it, stating what should change and why.

3. **Answer every Question.** Choose an option, or state a different answer and why; each answer is recorded as the Resolution of its Open Decision. Defer one to the next revision only explicitly.
4. **Decide.** Approve if it is right. Approve the changes and revise where the accepted changes are all it needs: the producing Role makes them, and a revision that makes exactly the approved changes certifies on approval. Request revision where more is needed, stated as changes. Reject where revision cannot fix it, which retires the Objective.
5. **State changes, not wording.** Say what must change and why; the producing Role makes the revision. A quick direct edit remains a human prerogative, as does certifying at any time; neither is ever required.
6. **When Fid runs out, decide whether the result is still worth more.** Add Fid, or stop. Running out is information: ask why the estimate was wrong.

Output

A recorded decision, a Resolution for every Open Decision, and, where revision is requested, a clear statement of the changes needed. The decision and its reasoning become part of what future Autonomous Workers validate against, and part of the record of the Conceptual Synthesist's own judgment.

Before Deciding

- Every Recommendation is accepted, rejected, or modified.
- Every Question is answered, or explicitly deferred.
- Every change is stated as a change, with its reason, not as wording.

Common Mistakes

- **Reviewing the Deliverable again.** The Auditor has reviewed it; re-checking it line by line spends creativity on execution. Where the review missed something, say so: the Auditor's and the Autonomous Leader's conduct is what needs correcting.
- **Approving to keep things moving.** An Approved Deliverable becomes the foundation for everything after it.
- **Vague changes.** "Make it better" produces another cycle with the same result.
- **Silent resolution.** A tension resolved in someone's head and not in the record will be reopened; the next Autonomous Worker cannot see it.

- **Turning a recommendation back into a question.** Decide on the specific change brought.

CHAPTER 7 – VALIDATING THROUGH PRACTICE

This chapter is the procedure for the Validate stage. It explains how to demonstrate, with evidence, that a Conceptual System works as intended under real conditions, how the Outcome of an Objective is evaluated, and what to do with a result that disappoints.

Purpose

Synthesis produces something that should work. Validation establishes whether it does. Until a Conceptual System has been operated for its real purpose and observed to meet its Success Criteria, it is a well-reviewed design, not a capability. The Blueprint states the principle directly: validate through practice rather than theory alone. VADR is the first practitioner of every Conceptual System it creates, so validation begins with VADR's own use, before anyone else depends on the system.

Validation is also where human judgment meets real evidence. The Autonomous Workforce operates the system and the Auditor observes the results, but deciding whether the Objective was accomplished, and what to do next, is the Conceptual Synthesist's.

When It Applies

- **When an Objective's Outcome has been produced:** its Deliverables are complete, and the Objective awaits evaluation against its Success Criteria.
- **Before a Conceptual System is relied upon,** extended through a new Objective, or offered to anyone else.
- **When ongoing use calls an earlier validation into question:** a pattern in Organizational Experience, a recurring escalation, or a failure in real use that the original validation did not anticipate.

Inputs

- **The Success Criteria.** They are the validation plan. Each was written as an observable condition when the Objective was established, and it cannot be changed now.
- **The Outcome and the Deliverables behind it,** including every Resolution recorded at Gate Evaluation along the way.
- **A real use for the system,** beginning with VADR's own. A demonstration built for the purpose of being validated is not a real use.
- **The Objective's Fid,** what remains of it, and the Plan's estimate for the validation work.

What Validation Is For

Validation answers three questions, and keeps them separate:

- **Does the capability exist?** Under real use, does the system do what each Success Criterion says it does? This answer is binary: it does, or it does not.
- **How well does it work?** Quality, judged through Gate Evaluation and through the experience accumulated as the system runs. Quality improves over time; existence does not come in degrees.
- **Is it worth relying on?** Whether, given what validation found, VADR should rely on the system, evolve it, or retire it. This is a judgment no evidence makes by itself.

How the Outcome Is Evaluated

Every Objective has exactly one Outcome, which evaluates the complete set of Deliverables produced under it. The evaluation is a human act: a Conceptual Synthesist evaluates it, never the Autonomous Workforce.

- **The result is binary.** An Objective is Accomplished or Not Accomplished against its fixed Success Criteria. There is no partial success, and no Objective is "mostly accomplished."
- **Evaluation completes the Objective.** Once its Outcome is evaluated, the Objective is Completed, and everything delegated beneath it concludes with it. Its Delegated Authority and its unspent Fid expire and return to their source.
- **The record is kept either way.** An Outcome contributes to Organizational Experience whether it was Accomplished or not. A Not Accomplished result teaches the workforce as much as an Accomplished one, and often more.
- **A completed Objective is never reopened.** Work that builds on it is a new Objective with a Baseline Reference to it (Evolving a Conceptual System).

Steps

1. **Decide on the validation plan.** Telo derives it from the Success Criteria: for each criterion, the observation that would show it met, the real use that would produce that observation, and the failure and edge cases that use must include. The Auditor checks that every criterion names an observation, not an activity, and that the plan exercises errors and interruptions as well as the expected path. Decide on what the review brings; do not write the plan.
2. **Operate it first.** Use the system for its real purpose, as its first practitioner, before anyone else depends on it. Where the system serves VADR itself, VADR's own work

is the use. Where it does not, find the nearest real use available: a pilot, a partner, a bounded deployment. Choose the use that would expose a failure, not the one most likely to succeed.

3. **Insist on evidence, not assertions.** An Autonomous Worker's report that something works is a claim. The Auditor verifies the observed result: the record of the action, the state it produced, the escalation that fired or failed to fire. A Success Criterion supported only by a report is not supported.
4. **Separate capability from quality.** For each criterion, say whether the capability exists. Judge how well it works separately, and do not let a quality concern turn into a statement that the capability is "partly there," or let a working capability excuse poor quality.
5. **Read the Autonomous Leader's Recommendation.** The Autonomous Leader brings the validation evidence as the Auditor reviewed it, its own Recommendation on whether the Objective was accomplished, and Questions on anything the evidence leaves open. Decide each Recommendation and answer each Question as at any gate.
6. **Evaluate the Outcome.** Decide Accomplished or Not Accomplished against the Success Criteria as they were written, not as they might now be rewritten. Record the reasoning, including which observations each criterion rests on. If the criteria themselves turn out to have been wrong, say so: that is a finding about the Objective, and the right response is a new Objective, not a generous reading of the old one.
7. **See every failure traced.** The Auditor and the Autonomous Leader trace each failure to the Concept, Role, Rule, Delegated Authority, Oversight Level, or setting responsible. A failure traced only to "the Worker made a mistake" is not traced: the question is what allowed the mistake.
8. **Treat a negative result as rigorously as a positive one.** Demonstrating that something does not work is real merit when it keeps VADR off a flawed path. Report it fully, with its evidence, in the same record a success would have used.
9. **Decide what comes next:** rely on it, evolve it, or retire it. Rely on it where the capability exists and its quality serves the purpose. Evolve it where the cause of a failure can be corrected (Evolving a Conceptual System). Retire it where the purpose itself no longer holds or the cost of correction exceeds the value.

What Only the Conceptual Synthesist Decides

- Whether the Objective was Accomplished against its Success Criteria.

- Whether the real use chosen was demanding enough to count.
- Whether a failure is a defect to correct or evidence that the purpose was wrong.
- Whether the system is relied upon, evolved, or retired.

What the Auditor Reviews

- Every Success Criterion is supported by an observation, not a report.
- The system was used for real, not only in a demonstration, and the use included errors, edge cases, and interruptions.
- Capability and quality are stated separately for each criterion.
- Every failure is traced to something that can be changed: a Concept, a Role, a Rule, an authority, or a setting.
- A negative result is recorded with the same completeness as a positive one would have been.

Output

An evaluated Outcome, Accomplished or Not Accomplished, with the reasoning recorded against each Success Criterion; a record of validation evidence, including every failure found and where it traced to; and a decision on what comes next. The Objective is Completed, and its record joins Organizational Experience.

Common Mistakes

- **Accepting a report as evidence.** The Auditor verifies it; a decision taken on a claim alone is taken on nothing.
- **Validating only the happy path.** Real use includes errors, edge cases, and interruptions.
- **Choosing the use most likely to succeed.** A validation designed to pass proves only that it was designed to pass.
- **Avoiding validation that might disappoint.** An unwelcome result found early is worth more than a welcome one found late.
- **Calling a capability "partly there."** It either works or it does not; how well it works is a separate question.
- **Rereading the Success Criteria generously.** They were fixed for a reason. If they were wrong, establish a new Objective with the right ones.

- **Stopping at the symptom.** A failure corrected in its output and not in its cause returns.

CHAPTER 8 – EVOLVING A CONCEPTUAL SYSTEM

This chapter is the procedure for the Evolve stage. It explains how to change a Conceptual System deliberately: classifying the change, making it in the right place, preserving the system's principles and its history, and retiring what no longer serves.

Purpose

Conceptual Systems are intended to evolve. Technologies, standards, and opportunities change, and the system should change with them while preserving the principles it was founded on. The objective is not to preserve any single implementation. It is to preserve enduring principles while implementations evolve freely beneath them. Evolution done carelessly does the opposite: it erodes the principles while freezing the implementation in place.

When It Applies

- **When validation or ongoing use shows something should change:** a failure traced to its cause, a quality the system does not yet reach, a need real use has demonstrated.
- **When a technology beneath the system changes:** a provider changes its terms, a better approach becomes available, a dependency is withdrawn.
- **When the system's constitution and its implementation have drifted apart:** the system does something its definition does not say, or its definition says something it does not do.
- **When Organizational Experience shows a pattern** worth acting on. Organizational Experience informs; it never changes anything itself. Any change it suggests is a deliberate decision.

The Two Layers

Every change is first classified by the layer it touches.

- **The Constitutional Layer** holds what must remain stable as the implementation changes: the system's Conceptual Purpose, its Concepts and their meaning, its Constraints, and the principles that govern it. A change here changes what the system is.
- **The Implementation Layer** holds what should change freely: Role Conduct Specifications, interface behavior, providers and technologies, patterns, settings, and schedules. A change here changes how the system does what it is.

Most changes are implementation. A system whose constitution changes often was not well defined, or is being amended for changes that belong elsewhere.

Steps

1. **Classify the change first.** Decide whether it touches the Constitutional Layer or only the Implementation Layer. Where it is unclear, ask whether the system's purpose, its Concepts, or its Constraints would read differently afterward. If not, it is implementation.
2. **For implementation changes, just fix them.** Conduct rules, interface behavior, and patterns are changed where they live, through the ordinary work of the Autonomous Workforce, reviewed by the Auditor like any other Deliverable. They do not require a constitutional amendment.
3. **For constitutional changes, require a Change Request before anything changes.** It states the provision affected, its current text, the proposed text, the reasoning, what else it affects, and anything it reverses. Telo drafts it from the finding that prompted it; the Auditor reviews whether its stated reach is complete. For a Conceptual System's own constitution, the Conceptual Synthesist accountable for it decides. For one of VADR's own constitutional volumes, the body that volume names decides: for the Creative Workforce volume, VADR's owners and the Conceptual Stewardship Council jointly, exercising Capital Governance and Creative Governance. Nothing changes until the Change Request is adopted.
4. **Find everything the change reaches.** Before it is adopted, the Change Request names every Concept, Rule, Role, Schema, Process, and Conceptual System that depends on the provision. A change applied in one place and missed in another leaves a contradiction, which is itself a defect.
5. **Enhance through a new Objective.** When the change is substantial work, establish a new Objective with a Baseline Reference to the Outcome it builds on. The new Objective's workforce can read everything the referenced Objective produced; the referenced Objective itself is never reopened, modified, or extended.
6. **Supersede, never erase.** Every revision is a new version that points to the one it replaces, with the reason for the change recorded. Amendments to a Role, Schema, or Process keep their full history: what each was before every change, and why it changed. History is preserved so that anyone can see what the system was, and why it is now different.
7. **Resolve drift when it surfaces.** Where the constitution and the implementation diverge, decide which is right, deliberately. If the implementation is right, adopt a

Change Request bringing the constitution into line. If the constitution is right, correct the implementation. Either way, record which, and why.

8. **Evolve standing work within its bounds.** A Mandate may adapt over time only within bounds a human authorized in advance: adjusting a Fid ceiling or a schedule within a range already approved needs no new decision; adapting a Mandate's scope, or proposing a new Role or Deliverable Type, is new judgment, reviewed and, where uncertain, brought to a Conceptual Synthesist. Every Mandate includes work whose purpose is to review its own accumulated history.
9. **Retire what no longer serves.** Retirement is explicit and recorded, with its reason. A retired Objective, Role, Schema, or Process can no longer be used for new work, but nothing retired is deleted: its history, its Deliverables, and what was learned from it remain.

What Only the Conceptual Synthesist Decides

- Whether a change touches the constitution, where the classification is genuinely uncertain.
- Whether to adopt a Change Request to the constitution of a Conceptual System they are accountable for, and whether to raise one against a constitutional volume.
- Which side of a drift is right.
- Whether to retire something, and whether a substantial enhancement is worth a new Objective and its Fid.

What the Auditor Reviews

- The change is in the right layer.
- Every constitutional change has a Change Request recorded and adopted before the change was made.
- The Change Request's stated reach is complete: nothing that depends on the provision was missed.
- Every revision supersedes the one before it, and the history is intact.
- Where an earlier framing is corrected, it is stated plainly that it was wrong.

Output

An implementation fix, made where it lives; or an adopted Change Request and an updated, versioned definition, with the reasoning preserved; or a new Objective with a Baseline Reference; or a recorded retirement.

Common Mistakes

- **Amending the constitution for an implementation fix.** It makes the constitution unstable and the fix slow.
- **Silent amendment.** A change nobody can find the reason for will be reversed by someone who doesn't know why it was made.
- **Applying a decision in one place.** A change missed where it also reaches leaves the system contradicting itself.
- **Reopening a completed Objective.** Establish a new one with a Baseline Reference.
- **Cosmetic evolution.** Change that has no operational effect is activity, not improvement.
- **Leaving known drift in place.** Either the implementation or the constitution is wrong; decide which.
- **Deleting what is retired.** The history of what failed is part of what the system knows.

CHAPTER 9 – COMMERCIALIZING A CONCEPTUAL SYSTEM

This chapter is the procedure for the Commercialize stage. It explains how to decide whether a validated Conceptual System should be offered to others, how to prepare it, and what commercialization means for the people who contributed to it.

Purpose

VADR commercializes Conceptual Systems, not consulting or professional services. A Conceptual System offered to others carries VADR's principles into their hands: if it fails them, or is built to serve VADR at their expense, the damage is to the trust every other system depends on. Commercialization is therefore the most demanding test a system faces, and it comes last.

When It Applies

When a Conceptual System has been validated through sustained real use and others could benefit from it. Not every system should be commercialized. Conceptual Systems are Operational, strengthening VADR's own operating model; Commercial, validated and intended for external adoption; or Exploratory, investigating frameworks that may not yet be practical. Remaining Operational or Exploratory is a legitimate outcome, not a failure to progress.

Inputs

- The validation record: evaluated Outcomes, the evidence behind them, and every failure found and corrected.
- The system's record of sustained operation: its escalations and how they resolved, its boundary failures if any, and its Fid against its estimates.
- The system's dependencies, with the license and terms of each.
- The current Participation Record for the system.

Steps

1. **Confirm readiness.** Three conditions must hold. The system has operated internally, over a sustained period, without a boundary-authority failure requiring Constitutional Reserve Authority intervention. Its escalations resolve as intended: what should return to a human does, and what should not does not. And an outside party could audit its controls, including its spending limits, without first learning VADR's internal vocabulary. If any of these does not hold, the work is more validation, not commercialization.

2. **Choose the Target System:** how the system will be deployed. SaaS; internal to Telo; internal and SaaS; a package for external deployment; or an Autonomous Participant. The choice follows who will use the system and how they will govern it.
3. **Choose the commercial model that fits the participants.** Subscription, usage-based pricing, marketplace participation, transaction fees, or licensing. The model follows the system, not the other way around, and no single model is imposed across the portfolio.
4. **Apply the neutrality test.** Would the commercial model ever give the system a reason to act against the people it serves? A system that represents someone must act only in their interest; one that earns more when it serves its principal less has captured neutrality. If the test fails, change the model, not the system's duty.
5. **Re-check every dependency at commercial scale.** License terms that were harmless in internal use may reprice, restrict by territory, or be withdrawn at the moment of commercial success. Anything a supplier could withdraw, reprice at success, or restrict is replaced or bounded before the system is offered.
6. **Confirm the Participation Record is current.** Who contributed what, at which stage, and with what relative weight, as recorded while the work happened. Commercialization is when that record begins to carry money; it must be accurate before then, not reconstructed after.
7. **Present the drafted proposal to the Conceptual Stewardship Council** with the validation evidence. Telo drafts the proposal from the record; the Conceptual Synthesist decides it is ready to present. The Council evaluates it as part of its stewardship of VADR's portfolio.
8. **Certify realized revenue when it arrives.** A Conceptual System counts as commercialized for the Creative Workforce's compensation only when it has reached the Commercialize stage with real, realized revenue. The Council certifies that to Capital Governance, which approves that the system has been successfully commercialized. That approval is what brings profit share and earned-ownership consequences into effect (Earned Responsibility in Practice).

What Only the Conceptual Synthesist Decides

- Whether the system is ready to propose, and whether others would genuinely benefit from it.
- Whether the commercial model passes the neutrality test.
- Whether to propose commercialization at all, or keep the system Operational.

What the Auditor Reviews

- The readiness conditions are each supported by the operating record, not asserted.
- Every dependency's terms have been re-checked at commercial scale.
- The commercial model creates no incentive against the people the system serves.
- The Participation Record was maintained as the work happened and agrees with the record of the work.

Output

A commercialization proposal, supported by validation evidence, a chosen Target System and commercial model, a verified dependency record, and a current Participation Record; the Council's decision on it; and, once revenue is realized, the Council's certification and Capital Governance's approval.

Common Mistakes

- **Commercializing before validating.** External adoption is the most demanding validation there is; it should not be the first.
- **Selling the practice instead of the system.** VADR commercializes Conceptual Systems, not the labor of synthesizing on someone else's behalf.
- **Choosing the model first.** A model chosen before the participants are understood bends the system to fit it.
- **Trusting internal terms at external scale.** The dependency that was free at ten users may not be at ten thousand.
- **Fixing the Participation Record at payout.** A record assembled when money is at stake is a negotiation, not a record.

CHAPTER 10 – PRACTICING ACROSS DISCIPLINES

This chapter explains how the procedures apply across the disciplines in which Conceptual Synthesists practice. The discipline is the same in each; the work being governed, the craft needed to judge it, and the decisions that must return to a human differ.

The Same Discipline, Different Work

In every discipline, the Conceptual Synthesist decides what should exist, sets its purpose and bounds, governs the workforce the Autonomous Leader designs, and judges the result. What changes is the craft used to judge and the shape of the recurring work. The Creative Workforce is placed and advanced against the same bands and the same six performance categories in every discipline; what differs is the work, and the description of what good work looks like in it.

Two capabilities are required in every discipline, and the absence of either shows. A Conceptual Synthesist must be able to do the discipline's own work well, by hand if necessary, and must be able to govern the autonomous workforce that does it: its Roles, what each may do unaided, what is verified, and what returns to a human.

What Varies by Discipline

- **The split between one-time and standing work.** Every discipline has both. One-time work is an Objective; standing work is a Mandate. Getting the split right is the first judgment in any discipline.
- **The Roles.** Each discipline's work divides into domains, and each domain gets its own Role. A Role stretched across domains never develops expertise.
- **What a Worker may do unaided.** The boundary of autonomy is drawn by consequence: what is cheap to correct may be autonomous; what binds VADR, spends beyond a limit, or cannot be undone returns to a human.
- **What the Auditor checks.** Every discipline has its own failures: an unsupported claim in marketing, an unauthorized commitment in sales, a broken separation of duties in finance, an irreversible action in operations.
- **What the craft judges.** The quality no Schema can state: whether a campaign will move its audience, whether a forecast is honest, whether a control will hold.

How the Procedures Apply

Marketing. Campaigns are Objectives; the content calendar, performance reporting, and audience research are Mandates.

- **Typical Roles:** content, channel, and analysis, each a separate domain.
- **Autonomous:** drafting, scheduling, and publishing within approved brand rules and spend pacing.
- **Returns to a human:** a challenged claim, a complaint, spend running off pace, and anything that speaks for VADR in a new way.
- **The Auditor checks:** every claim against its evidence, brand and disclosure rules, and spend against plan.
- **Craft judges:** message, audience, and brand, and whether the claims are supported by evidence.

Sales. Pipeline hygiene, prospect research, outreach, and follow-up are Mandates; a new market entry is an Objective.

- **Typical Roles:** prospecting, outreach, and follow-up.
- **Autonomous:** research, outreach within contact limits, and follow-up within approved terms. Contact limits keep autonomy from becoming volume.
- **Returns to a human:** pricing exceptions, discounts beyond authority, commitments to customers, and anything that binds VADR.
- **The Auditor checks:** every promise against what the product actually does and what the Worker was authorized to offer.
- **Craft judges:** the reading of a customer, the honesty of a forecast, and when a deal is worth less than it looks.

Finance and accounting. Close, reconciliation, payables, receivables, and reporting are Mandates.

- **Typical Roles:** reconciliation, payables, and receivables.
- **Autonomous:** matching, reconciling, and preparing entries within materiality limits.
- **Returns to a human:** the amounts that always require a human, changes to payment details, adjustments above materiality, and revenue treatment that is not routine.
- **The Auditor checks:** separation of duties expressed as authority, so that a Worker able to create a vendor cannot pay one, and every exception to it.
- **Craft judges:** materiality, the difference between an error and a timing difference, and whether a control will hold under pressure.

Operations. Monitoring, maintenance, and incident response are Mandates with clear escalation.

- **Typical Roles:** monitoring, remediation, and change.
- **Autonomous:** routine remediation the runbooks allow, such as restarting a service.
- **Returns to a human:** anything irreversible, anything touching data loss, access, or security, and changes to production, which are gated. Runbooks are expressed as Role Conduct, not as steps a human follows.
- **The Auditor checks:** that every action stayed within its runbook and authority, and that a remediation is not repeating without effect.
- **Craft judges:** whether an alert is real, whether an emergency justifies breaking a freeze, and whether a post-incident review is honest about cause.

System synthesis. New Conceptual Systems are Objectives under the Synthesis Process: the Conceptual System Definition, then the Stages that design, plan, and build it. Here the craft is the synthesis itself: seeing the real opportunity rather than the obvious symptom, organizing what already exists before inventing, and abandoning an idea honestly when a test says to.

In every discipline, the Conceptual Synthesist brings the creativity the discipline depends on — the campaign idea, the pricing judgment, the reading of a customer, the judgment of a control — and the Autonomous Workforce carries the execution.

Starting in a New Discipline

1. **Describe the discipline's recurring work**, as a skilled person does it, in a Candidate Objective: what is done, how often, what goes wrong, and what a mistake costs.
2. **Judge how Telo separates the one-time work from the ongoing responsibilities.** A report is a Deliverable; keeping the numbers right every month is a Mandate.
3. **Promote Objectives for the one-time work**, and judge the Mandates and Roles the Autonomous Leader proposes for the ongoing responsibilities: one Role per domain, conduct that describes judgment rather than a script, and boundaries of autonomy drawn by consequence.
4. **Gate heavily at first**, and relax oversight as evidence accumulates. Early gates teach the workforce through the decisions recorded at them; later, the same decisions are made by the conduct those gates shaped.

5. **Watch where the discipline's failures appear.** Where an escalation recurs, or a finding traces to the design, the Autonomous Leader corrects the design, and the Conceptual Synthesist decides any correction beyond its authority.

Common Mistakes

- **Carrying one discipline's boundaries into another.** What is safe to automate in marketing is not what is safe in finance.
- **Judging work without the craft to judge it.** A Conceptual Synthesist who cannot do the work cannot tell whether a Worker did it well.
- **Treating standing work as a series of Objectives.** Recurring responsibility is a Mandate.
- **Relaxing oversight on schedule rather than evidence.** Oversight relaxes when the record shows it can, not when enough time has passed.

CHAPTER 11 – WORKING IN A SELF-ORGANIZING WORKFORCE

This chapter explains what it means, day to day, to work in a Creative Workforce with no managers, no supervisors, and no assigned work: the bodies whose decisions shape the work, how work is found and chosen, how leadership is earned and lost, how capacity is managed, how new members are brought in, and the policies that bind practice. The governing principles are in the Creative Workforce volume; this chapter explains how to practice within them.

What Membership Means

A Conceptual Synthesist is not employed into a position. No one assigns the work, no one supervises it, and no one's title gives them authority over anyone else. In place of a hierarchy, membership rests on five things, each of which the rest of this chapter makes concrete:

- **Work is chosen.** It is chosen by the person who does it, or offered and voluntarily accepted. It is never assigned by directive.
- **All work is visible.** Everyone can see all ongoing work at every stage, because no one can choose work they cannot see.
- **Leadership is followership.** A Leader in the Creative Workforce is someone others choose to follow, and remains one only while they continue to be followed.
- **Standing is earned.** Authority, standing, and compensation follow demonstrated merit, observed by Ascent from the record of real work, never tenure, position, or self-description (Earned Responsibility in Practice).
- **Every consequential decision has a named decider.** No standing or financial consequence is ever produced by a formula running outside anyone's accountable judgment.

The absence of managers does not mean the absence of governance. It means governance is exercised by bodies with stated, limited decision rights, and the day-to-day choices are the Conceptual Synthesist's own.

The Bodies Whose Decisions Shape the Work

Two kinds of governance shape the decisions a Conceptual Synthesist works within, and each is exercised by one body: Capital Governance by VADR's owners, and Creative Governance by the Conceptual Stewardship Council. Knowing which decides what is part of the practice: it is how a question reaches the right place, and how a decision that exceeds a body's authority is recognized.

- **Capital Governance** is exercised by VADR's owners. It decides amounts, structures, and thresholds: the pay-band structure and the amount of every band and step, which it publishes; benefits; the equity pool and its vesting schedule; individual equity grants; the annual share of profit from commercialized Conceptual Systems allocated to the profit-sharing pool; whether a Conceptual System has been successfully commercialized; the hiring authority it delegates; and the foundational operating-model policies that bind the Creative Workforce. It does not supervise the practice, direct the Creative Workforce, or decide whether any individual's work was excellent.
- **Creative Governance** is exercised by the Conceptual Stewardship Council, always collectively, never by one person acting on its behalf. It stewards the discipline of Conceptual Synthesis, the Creative Workforce, the VADR Operating Model, and VADR's portfolio of Conceptual Systems. It certifies; it does not allocate capital or set amounts. The Council's members are senior Conceptual Synthesists who have earned membership through demonstrated merit, confirmed by non-conflicted review, for intentionally limited terms. The Council evaluates opportunities and approves Conceptual Syntheses; prioritizes the portfolio; certifies Participation Records and commercialization; decides entry placements; resolves contested advancement claims and every gaming finding; hears disputes; and grants exceptions to policy where a policy allows them. It evaluates, certifies, and prioritizes. It does not direct day-to-day work.

Above them sits a narrow safeguard: Capital Governance's Constitutional Reserve Authority, which can intervene only in a small, stated set of exceptional circumstances and is never an operational veto (Judgment, Escalation, Review, and Disputes).

In practice: a question about how much something pays is Capital Governance's; a question about who contributed what, whether a contested claim was earned, or whether a system reached the Commercialize stage with realized revenue is the Council's to decide or certify, while whether it was successfully commercialized is Capital Governance's; a question about what work to do and how to do it is the Conceptual Synthesist's own.

How Work Is Found

Work reaches a Conceptual Synthesist through one of two channels:

- **Directed:** Capital Governance sets a strategic objective and allocates Fid to it. A team self-assembles around it. Who leads is whoever draws real, voluntary followership, not whoever proposed pursuing it.
- **Undirected:** each Conceptual Synthesist's annual Individual Exploration Fid, spent on self-directed opportunities, alone or pooled with others, through the same

Discover, Synthesize, Validate, Evolve, and Commercialize lifecycle as any Conceptual System. Here nothing was assigned, so a person becomes a Leader purely because others choose to join their pursuit of an idea.

All ongoing work, at every stage, is visible to the whole Creative Workforce. That visibility is what makes choice possible, and it is a structural requirement, not a transparency preference.

The one exception is work subject to a genuine external legal or contractual restriction: government classification, a security clearance requirement, or a counterparty confidentiality obligation of comparable force, where disclosure to the Creative Workforce would be unlawful or a genuine breach. Such work is organized as a separate track with hard eligibility requirements, such as a clearance or a briefing-in process. Earned standing does not by itself grant access to it. Strategic sensitivity, competitive concern, and reputational preference never qualify: work cannot be hidden because someone would prefer it hidden.

Choosing Work

1. **Look across all visible work**, not only the work already familiar. Breadth of real contribution is itself evidence (Meeting Collaboration and Organizational Health).
2. **Choose where creativity and craft add the most**, not where the work is easiest, most visible, or most likely to succeed. A record of only safe choices is a visible pattern.
3. **Check capacity honestly before joining**. Capacity is visible to Leaders and to the Conceptual Synthesist alike. Joining work that cannot be carried harms reliability and every team involved.
4. **Join, contribute, and confirm the Participation Record reflects the contribution** as the work happens, not afterward.
5. **Leave deliberately when leaving is right**. Team membership is never a permanent appointment. Say so, hand over what is held, and see that the record shows the handover.

Using Individual Exploration

Individual Exploration is the undirected channel in practice. Each Conceptual Synthesist receives an annual Fid allocation for self-directed opportunities.

- **Spend it on opportunities, through the same procedures**. An exploration is described, promoted as an Objective, and taken through the lifecycle like any other work (From Description to Objective).

- **Pool it where pooling serves the idea.** Several Conceptual Synthesists may combine their allocations behind one opportunity. Each contribution is recorded in the Participation Record.
- **Expect the same evidence standard.** A rigorous negative result from an exploration is real merit; an exploration that never reaches validation is analysis.
- **Know how success is rewarded.** A successful exploration carries no standing revenue-share contract. Its reward routes through the mechanisms that already exist: accelerated vesting of earned ownership sized to the contribution, the system's commercial success flowing into the company-wide profit-sharing pool with the originator correctly credited, a cash bonus sized to the realized commercial value, and renewed or expanded Fid for the next exploration (Earned Responsibility in Practice).

Leading in the Creative Workforce

A Leader in the Creative Workforce is a person whom others choose to follow. Leadership is earned through voluntary followership, gated by demonstrated Ascent standing — never by position, tenure, or declaration. It persists only as long as it continues to be followed. A Leader in the Creative Workforce is never an Autonomous Leader: one is a person whose standing is earned; the other is a member of the Autonomous Workforce acting under Delegated Authority.

- **Lead by the quality of the idea and the conduct of the work,** not by claiming the role. Proposing an objective does not make its proposer the Leader.
- **Invite people whose visible availability and qualifications fit the need.** Leaving a capable, available person uninvited when their qualifications matched what the team needed is a negative signal for the Leader. The test is comparative and evidentiary: a real match that existed, not a hindsight claim that someone could have been engaged.
- **Do not invite someone already fully burdened.** Sustained overutilization is a negative signal for both the person and every Leader of the teams they are on.
- **Develop the people on the team.** Capability growth attributable to working together is evidence of stewardship; the success of people who were already succeeding is not.
- **Hand on responsibility.** Leadership is stewardship, not accumulation. Handing consequential work to capable people and to the Autonomous Workforce is itself evidence.

- **Expect to stop leading.** People may leave, teams may dissolve, and a Leader no one follows is no longer a Leader. That is the mechanism working, not a failure.

Hiring

Hiring authority is a delegated grant from Capital Governance, never an inherent right of any person, because hiring commits compensation, which is Capital Governance's decision. A Conceptual Synthesist who holds that authority exercises it on behalf of the workforce, and how it was exercised is reviewable: a confirmed, sustained pattern of underutilization is evidence that hiring authority was not exercised well, and Capital Governance may narrow, suspend, or decline to renew it. Placement of a hire is decided by the Council on the entry assessment (Earned Responsibility in Practice); whether an offer is made at all stays within the delegated hiring authority.

Capacity

Self-organization can fail quietly: a capable person nobody invites, a person overloaded because no one can see their real load, or a person who understates their capacity to avoid work. Ascent watches for all three, and each has its own consequence.

- **Underutilization.** When a Conceptual Synthesist goes without real team engagement for a sustained period, Ascent escalates to the Conceptual Stewardship Council. It never assigns work automatically: placement remains a human, accountable decision. The underutilization is a negative signal for every Leader who had real capacity needs during that period that the person's visible availability and qualifications matched.
- **Overutilization.** Ascent shows both a Leader and a Conceptual Synthesist the person's existing workload. A Leader should not invite a fully burdened person onto new work, and the person is responsible for managing and disclosing their own capacity. Sustained overutilization is a negative signal for both, since both could see it and both could have prevented it.
- **Workload understatement.** Claiming a light load to avoid work is detected comparatively: a claimed light load alongside low output, measured against comparable people carrying real work, is a distinguishable pattern.

In practice: disclose real capacity and keep it current; say no to new work when fully committed; and, when work is scarce, look across all visible work and offer to join it, rather than waiting to be found.

Onboarding, Mentorship, and Coaching

- **Onboarding.** A new Conceptual Synthesist is onboarded through Ascent, with real training in how the organization actually works, and becomes at once a visible, available member who can see all ongoing work at every stage.
- **Mentorship.** A mentor may be assigned for a defined onboarding period. Where one is, the preferred path is for the mentor to bring the new member onto their own team to shadow for that period: a real team and a real person, rather than a cold placement. Mentoring is a creditable contribution, recorded in the Participation Record as a contribution to the person mentored, not a parallel reward. It counts toward Talent development (Meeting Stewardship), and when that person later contributes to a commercialized Conceptual System, a share of the credit follows (The Participation Record, below).
- **Coaching.** Coaching a colleague through a confirmed deficiency is weighted above ordinary mentorship, given what is at stake. A coach must hold demonstrated strength in the specific category being coached; general standing is not enough (Earned Responsibility in Practice). Coaching is recorded and carries credit forward the same way, with more weight. The colleague who clears the deficiency earns a signal of their own, Deficiency turnaround (Meeting Reliability and Responsibility).

In practice: accept a mentoring or coaching request only where the strength it needs is genuinely held; treat it as real work, with real commitments; and see that it is recorded.

The Participation Record

The Participation Record states who contributed what, and to what: to a Conceptual System, at which stage of its lifecycle; to a person, as their assigned mentor or coach or as their Leader on the work where they grew; or to VADR itself, through service such as the Council, non-conflicted review, or assessing candidates. For each, it holds Creative Governance's account of the relative weight of each contribution. Not every contribution is tied to a Conceptual System, and the record does not require one. It is the basis for profit share, for crediting exploration, and for much of the evidence of contribution Ascent observes. It is maintained as work happens — never assembled afterward — and the Council certifies its accuracy.

- **Confirm your entries as the work happens.** Credit follows the record, not a later claim. An origination not recorded at the time is hard to establish later and easy to dispute.
- **Record others' contributions as faithfully as your own.** A record that inflates its author or omits a colleague is a gaming risk, and the network of records is analyzed for reciprocal-credit rings and closed groups that inflate one another.

- **Raise a disagreement about the record promptly**, with the colleague first and then, where unresolved, with the Council (Judgment, Escalation, Review, and Disputes).
- **Know what it will carry**. Once a system is successfully commercialized, the profit-sharing pool is distributed according to this record, not by discretion.

Credit follows the person. Value often reaches a Conceptual System through the people who were developed to create it, and the record follows it there:

- **Development carries credit forward**. When someone you mentored, coached, or led through real growth later contributes to a system that is successfully commercialized, you are credited with a share of that contribution's weight. Ordinary help between colleagues counts under Collaboration and Organizational Health and carries nothing forward.
- **The share comes from the system, never from the person developed**. Being developed never costs anyone their own credit.
- **The share reflects the development, and fades**. Coaching that cleared a confirmed deficiency weighs more than mentorship. The share declines with time and ends once the person has earned standing of their own, at the latest one band graduation after the development. Its size and rate are still to be set.
- **The Council certifies it** with the rest of the system's record, and the contribution-graph check surfaces development credit that runs in circles.
- **Standing does not wait for a system**. Development counts toward Talent development from the moment the person's growth is shown, whether or not a system they contribute to is ever commercialized.

Policies That Bind Practice

Foundational operating-model policies are established by Capital Governance and bind every Conceptual Synthesist. Each policy states its own exception treatment.

- **Conceptual Synthesists do not write code or configure infrastructure directly**. Operational execution, including the code and infrastructure that realize a Conceptual System, is the Autonomous Workforce's responsibility, regardless of individual technical capability. Designing a workforce in Telo — its Roles, conduct, authority, verification, and escalation — is governance, not configuration, and is the Conceptual Synthesist's work. Exceptions, such as a declared emergency in which the Autonomous Workforce is genuinely unavailable, are requested through Ascent and granted by the Conceptual Stewardship Council.

- **VADR takes no political or social position.** VADR's name, channels, accounts, and identity are never used to express one, corporate funds are never directed toward one, and no directed work may do so. This does not restrict what any Conceptual Synthesist believes or says in their own name. Where value earned from VADR's products is directed toward people and causes beyond the company, The Transition is the mechanism by which that occurs. This policy admits no exceptions: an exception to a policy of taking no position would itself be a position.

How exceptions work. Each policy states its own exception treatment, decided when it is established: it may delegate exceptions to the Council, through Ascent's request mechanism; reserve them to Capital Governance; or admit none. No default applies. Where a policy delegates exceptions to the Council, a request goes through Ascent, and the Council decides it on its own standing authority. Every exception granted is recorded in the Council's exception log with its basis and the specific member or members who approved it. A pattern of exceptions becoming routine practice is itself a trigger for Constitutional Reserve Authority. A request for an exception is therefore a request for something genuinely exceptional, made with its basis stated.

Common Mistakes

- **Waiting to be assigned.** No one will assign the work. Look across all visible work and choose.
- **Treating proposal as leadership.** Proposing an objective earns nothing until others choose to follow.
- **Hiding capacity in either direction.** Overcommitting harms the teams; understating is detectable.
- **Leaving the Participation Record for later.** Later, it is a dispute.
- **Treating a body's decision as someone else's.** Bringing a question to the wrong body delays it; asking a body to decide beyond its authority produces a decision that does not stand.

CHAPTER 12 – EARNED RESPONSIBILITY IN PRACTICE

This chapter explains how practice becomes standing and what standing earns. It covers how a person enters the Creative Workforce, the rules of evidence Ascent applies, how bands and steps work, how advancement is confirmed, how the Creative Workforce is paid and shares in what it creates, and what happens when a deficiency is found or a signal is gamed. The chapters that follow take each of the six performance categories in turn.

Work Is the Evidence

Ascent observes what a Conceptual Synthesist does, not what is said about it. Every signal is derived from real organizational events: lifecycle events, Participation Records, commitments, team formation, governance decisions, validation results, economic outcomes, escalations, and authority grants. A person may provide context; a person never creates the evidence.

The procedures in this handbook each produce such events. Promoting an Objective, deciding at a gate, tracing a failure, recording a Resolution, granting authority, handing on responsibility: each is recorded where it happens. Practiced well, they are the evidence. There is no separate performance review to prepare for, and nothing to write about oneself.

Entering the Creative Workforce

Every member of the Creative Workforce entered through the same assessment, and every member will meet candidates going through it. Knowing how it works matters in both roles.

Placement is by assessment alone. Years of experience, degrees, prior titles, and prior pay are not placement criteria and are not asked. Each would import another organization's judgment, including its errors, into a decision VADR makes on evidence it observes itself.

The assessment. Ascent conducts it: three sessions of roughly two hours each, over seven to ten days, taken remotely, with small events between sessions that take minutes to answer. Each candidate works in a fictional organization generated for them alone, described in a dossier of documents, some contradictory, some irrelevant, and some carrying a quietly wrong assumption. Ascent plays every other party: a Leader, teammates with distinct working styles, a stakeholder, and Autonomous Workers the candidate may direct. The sessions have the same shape in every discipline:

1. **Do the work:** the discipline's own craft, by hand, with the simulated team.
2. **Design the workforce:** turn that work into an autonomous function in Telo — its Roles, conduct, authority, verification, and escalation. This is governance, not configuration; a short orientation to Telo is given to every candidate alike.

3. **Run it:** the candidate's own design operates in a Telo sandbox while Ascent introduces events, including one in which a conclusion the candidate reached earlier is shown by new evidence to be wrong.

What it observes. Every event exists at difficulty tiers corresponding to Band 0 through Band 3, and Ascent moves a candidate up a tier as the evidence supports it. Consequential events are paired: a consensus that is flawed in some worlds and sound in others, pressure to set evidence aside that rests on credible facts in some and on nothing in others, a shortcut that breaks a principle in some and is entirely legitimate in others. Any rule of thumb is wrong about half the time; what is observed is whether the candidate reads the situation. Discipline craft is evidence within the categories it bears on, and each discipline sets a craft floor below which no one is hired into it.

The outcome. No hire; Band 0; Band 1, 2, or 3 at a stated step; or, for a candidate who reaches the ceiling of Band 3, a recommendation for a second stage that can place at Band 3, 4, or 5 and never below the offer already made. Ascent recommends; the Auditor reviews the evidence and the integrity of the assessment; the Conceptual Stewardship Council decides the placement. A Council member with any relationship to the candidate, including having referred them, takes no part.

What it means for the new member. The offer states a band and a step. It is not negotiable: there is no signing bonus and no individual exception, because negotiation is where band structures fail. The amount of every band and step is published, and the whole process, including the time it takes, is disclosed before a candidate begins, so a candidate knows what every outcome pays and decides whether it is worth their time. Assessment time is not paid, and so no candidate's work is ever used: the organization is always fictional, and nothing a candidate produces in it is used for anything but deciding and reviewing their placement and the integrity of the assessment. An unpaid assessment must never become unpaid work. Results are sealed: a candidate learns their band and step and nothing else. There is no probationary period: Ascent's observation is continuous for everyone, and a placement that proves too high or too low is corrected by the same mechanisms that apply to anyone.

What is inherited, and what replaces it. Organizational Value, and the signals that need a working history — peer demand, contribution diversity, team outcome contribution — cannot be observed in an assessment. Each is inherited at the band placed, recorded as an assumption, and replaced by observed evidence from the first day of real work. Where the observed evidence diverges materially from the entry profile, the divergence is itself a signal.

Band 0. Band 0 is placed by the same assessment as every other band, open to anyone regardless of education or career stage. It is developmental: a Band 0 Conceptual Synthesist is expected to reach Band 1 within a defined period, and not reaching it is a

sustained deficiency, addressed by the same coaching and improvement that apply to anyone.

What it asks of every member. Never disclose assessment content, to a candidate or to anyone else: disclosure is a gaming finding decided by the Council, and evidence that a candidate had prior access voids their assessment. A member who refers a candidate takes no part in deciding their placement, and candidates referred by the same person are watched for reasoning that matches too closely.

The Six Performance Categories

- **A. Synthesis Contribution:** creating and improving Conceptual Systems.
- **B. Judgment Quality:** the soundness of decisions and escalations.
- **C. Stewardship:** how authority, resources, portfolio, people, and principles are cared for.
- **D. Collaboration and Organizational Health:** the effect on the people and teams worked with.
- **E. Reliability and Responsibility:** whether commitments and responsibility hold.
- **F. Organizational Value:** the real value created for VADR.

Each category has a chapter explaining what it measures, the signals within it, the practice that meets each signal, how each signal can be gamed and how the gaming is countered, and what each band requires.

Rules of Evidence

- **No offsetting.** A band is met only when all six categories meet its threshold. Strength in one never substitutes for a deficiency in another, deliberately, so that no one advances by specializing in their strengths while declining to address a weakness.
- **No single score.** Ascent keeps a multidimensional profile. Different classes of evidence stay visible; many trivial positives never erase one material governance failure.
- **Corroboration.** No important conclusion rests on one signal. Extraordinary progress in one category alongside weak signals elsewhere is examined, not averaged.
- **Outcome lag.** Signals for judgment, stewardship, commercialization, and mentorship remain provisional until enough time has passed to see the real outcome.

- **Comparative, not absolute.** Many signals are judged against comparable authority, stakes, and difficulty across the workforce. Playing it safe is itself a visible pattern.
- **Contribution, not participation.** Where it can, Ascent asks what changed because of a specific contribution, not only who was present. This is hard, and Ascent pursues it without claiming it is solved.
- **First instance, then the Council.** Most judgments about the weight of a contribution — its rigor, its materiality, its consequence — are made by Ascent or the Auditor in the first instance. The Council decides only where an evaluation is genuinely contested.
- **The measurement can be wrong.** Where a person's apparent trajectory and independently observable outcomes diverge materially, Ascent treats the possibility that the measurement is wrong as seriously as the possibility of gaming.

Bands and Steps

- **Six bands,** Band 0 through Band 5. Band 0 is placed only at entry. What changes from one band to the next is the level required in each category, never which categories count.
- **Four steps within each band.** Growth is continuous; band graduation is discrete and hard. Steps recognize real progress at a band's level — deeper, more consistent, at greater scale — before every threshold of the next band is cleared. Whether Band 5 has steps is still open.
- **No overlap.** Every step of a band pays less than the first step of the band above, so a band always answers why a person earns what they earn.
- **Two hard graduations.** Band 2 to Band 3 is the largest: Stewardship first requires holding real authority over others, and Reliability first requires performance after greater responsibility is granted rather than before. Band 4 to Band 5 is the second: it requires recovery from a real, material miss, which no one can pursue deliberately. Some strong Conceptual Synthesists will remain at Band 4 for a long time on that alone, and that is correct.

How Advancement Happens

1. **Ascent's mechanism records progress** within each category from observed evidence. How progress is represented is Ascent's to define; it must be real, ordered, and verifiable, never asserted or self-reported.

2. **Reaching a new level makes the Conceptual Synthesist eligible** for the corresponding band and its standing. Eligibility opens the door; it does not advance anything by itself.
3. **Steps within a band are administered directly** once eligibility and level are confirmed. A step re-affirms standing already confirmed, so it needs no new review.
4. **Band graduation is confirmed by non-conflicted peer review** before it takes effect. Reviewers check the claim against the Participation Record and Ascent's recorded basis, and confirm it or contest it with a specific basis. A contested claim goes to the Council (Judgment, Escalation, Review, and Disputes).
5. **Pay follows the confirmed band and step**, and nothing else.

There is no calendar-based review and no scheduled raise. Tenure advances nothing.

What Standing Earns

Compensation follows the same principle as standing: earned through demonstrated merit, decided by a named, accountable body, and never running on a formula outside anyone's judgment.

- **Base salary.** Set by band and step. The amount of every band and step is published to the Creative Workforce, to candidates, and to the public, so that a person's pay is explained by their band and step alone. It rises only through confirmed advancement.
- **Benefits.** A standard package, set by Capital Governance.
- **Commercialization profit share.** A company-wide pool, not an individual entitlement. Each year Capital Governance decides the share of net profit from commercialized Conceptual Systems that goes into the pool. The pool is distributed across contributors to commercialized systems according to the Participation Record, including the development credit that follows a person, not by discretion. A system counts once the Council certifies that it reached the Commercialize stage with real, realized revenue and Capital Governance approves that it was successfully commercialized.
- **Earned ownership.** Equity or profits interests that vest against earned-responsibility milestones, never tenure alone. The instrument depends on VADR's entity type, which has not yet been decided. Capital Governance sets the pool and the vesting schedule and approves individual grants. Warrants may recognize a specific contribution to a specific commercialized system, as a supplemental grant.

- **Individual Exploration.** The annual Fid for self-directed work, rewarded on success through accelerated vesting, the profit-sharing pool, a cash bonus sized to realized value, and renewed or expanded Fid, never a standing revenue-share contract (Working in a Self-Organizing Workforce).

The actual numbers — band and step amounts, the profit-pool percentage, the equity pool, the vesting schedule — are left to Capital Governance's own first exercise of these decisions. This handbook does not state them because they have not been set.

Deficiency and Improvement

1. **A confirmed, sustained deficiency starts an improvement process**, not a bare negative score.
2. **A coach is assigned** who holds demonstrated strength in the specific deficient category; general standing is not enough.
3. **Ascent and the coach craft a tailored plan** together: specific, actionable, and trackable, with check-ins scheduled automatically.
4. **The coach and Ascent jointly evaluate the outcome** at the end of the plan.
5. **Clearing the deficiency earns its own positive signal** for the turnaround, Deficiency turnaround under Reliability and Responsibility, not only the removal of the negative finding. The coach's contribution is recorded to the person coached and counts toward the coach's Talent development.
6. **A poor outcome goes to the Council** with a termination recommendation. Ascent may recommend; it never decides. The Council alone adjudicates.

Deliberate non-development — a sustained refusal to grow in a required category — is its own finding, distinct from scoring low. Working on a weakness slowly is development; declining to work on it is not.

In practice: treat a confirmed deficiency as work, with commitments like any other. The record of a turnaround is evidence of exactly the qualities the higher bands require.

Gaming

Every signal has a known way to be gamed and a stated counter; the category chapters name each. Most signals are made expensive to fake because they need corroborating evidence from independent events, not because suspicious behavior is detected afterward. Ascent's vigilance is continuous, not confined to a review period, and a suspected attempt is escalated for human review whenever it is detected, not only at graduation. Every gaming finding is decided by the Council; none is resolved silently, and none by peer reviewers.

The practical rule is simple: do the real work and let the record show it. A confirmed attempt to manipulate any signal is not only a deduction against that signal; it is direct evidence, weighed under Stewardship, about whether a person should be trusted with greater responsibility at all.

What Is Provisional

The Creative Workforce volume states these mechanisms provisionally, pending Ascent's formal publication. Provisional does not mean optional: each statement is binding until Ascent publishes the authoritative text and the two are reconciled, on the record. Where they differ, the Council and Capital Governance resolve the difference jointly.

Common Mistakes

- **Writing about oneself.** There is nowhere to put it. The record of the work is the evidence.
- **Specializing around a weakness.** No offsetting means the weakest category sets the band.
- **Expecting tenure to count.** It does not, in pay or in standing.
- **Negotiating.** There is nothing to negotiate: no one holds the authority to agree an individual exception to a placement or an offer, and that is deliberate.
- **Treating a deficiency as a verdict.** It is the start of a plan, and a turnaround is credited.

CHAPTER 13 – MEETING SYNTHESIS CONTRIBUTION

This chapter explains how practice meets Performance Category A, Synthesis Contribution: the creation and improvement of Conceptual Systems. For each signal it states what is observed, the practice that meets it, the record that shows it, and how the signal is protected against gaming.

What It Measures

Whether a Conceptual Synthesist's contributions become part of real, operating Conceptual Systems — originated, integrated, validated, or improved — rather than remaining analysis or activity. The category deliberately credits all four kinds of contribution, so that it rewards the people who make systems work and make them better, not only the people who first had the idea.

Signals and the Practice That Meets Them

Concept origination. Originating an opportunity or conceptual insight that materially becomes part of a Conceptual System.

- **Practice:** notice opportunities others miss and describe them well (From Description to Objective). Confirm the origin is recorded in the Participation Record at the time.
- **The record that shows it:** the description and the Candidate Objective it opened, the promotion, and the Participation Record's attribution.
- **Gaming risk:** claiming origination for an idea substantially developed by someone else.
- **Counter:** credit is weighted by the Participation Record's required attribution, not by self-declaration. Credit follows the record, not a later claim.

Synthesis quality. Whether a contribution genuinely integrates disparate ideas into a coherent operational capability, rather than producing analysis alone.

- **Practice:** insist on a sharp Conceptual Purpose, the nine questions, and the scenario walk (Directing the Synthesis); move Objectives genuinely through their stages.
- **The record that shows it:** Approved Conceptual System Definitions, and stage progression certified by the Council.
- **Gaming risk:** producing high-volume analysis without real integration, to appear productive.

- **Counter:** judged by the Council's certification of genuine stage progression, not by activity volume.

Validation contribution. Meaningful contribution to real validation, including rigorously demonstrating that something does not work. A rigorous negative result that keeps VADR off a flawed path is demonstrated merit, not a failure.

- **Practice:** require observed evidence against the Success Criteria; choose the use that would expose failure; report negative results fully (Validating Through Practice).
- **The record that shows it:** evaluated Outcomes, the validation evidence behind them, and the failures traced.
- **Gaming risk:** manufacturing trivial validation activity, or avoiding validation that might produce an unwelcome result.
- **Counter:** weighted by rigor and consequence, not by whether the result was positive, evaluated by Ascent or the Auditor in the first instance, and escalated to the Council only where genuinely contested.

Evolution contribution. Real improvement to an existing Conceptual System resulting from evidence or operational experience.

- **Practice:** require failures to be traced to their cause and the cause corrected; make changes with operational effect (Evolving a Conceptual System).
- **The record that shows it:** adopted Change Requests, Objectives with a Baseline Reference, and the measured effect afterward.
- **Gaming risk:** claiming evolution credit for cosmetic or trivial changes.
- **Counter:** weighted by demonstrated operational impact, not change volume.

What Each Band Requires

- **Band 0:** contributes useful pieces to well-scoped work with guidance; reasoning is visible and sensible, if not yet reliable.
- **Band 1:** real contribution to work someone else scoped; concepts that hold up.
- **Band 2:** takes an ambiguous problem and decomposes it without being told how.
- **Band 3:** synthesis others build on — work that becomes a foundation rather than an output.
- **Band 4:** originates the shape of a Conceptual System, not only its parts.
- **Band 5:** synthesis across systems — recognizing structure that spans what others see as separate problems.

In Practice

- **Describe the problem, not the solution.** Origination is credited for the opportunity seen, and a description that names its answer forecloses the synthesis.
- **Move the work through its stages.** Origination is credited before lifecycle progression, but synthesis quality is judged by certified stage progression, never by the volume of analysis produced.
- **Contribute to other people's systems.** Validation and evolution are credited within the category alongside origination, and they are often where the hardest problems are.

What Does Not Count

- Claiming origination for an idea substantially developed by someone else.
- High-volume analysis that never integrates into a system.
- Trivial validation activity, or cosmetic changes presented as evolution.

CHAPTER 14 – MEETING JUDGMENT QUALITY

This chapter explains how practice meets Performance Category B, Judgment Quality: the soundness of decisions, escalations, and responses to evidence. Judgment is the Creative Workforce's central contribution, and Gate Evaluation is where most of it is recorded.

What It Measures

Whether decisions were sound given what was knowable at the time — never judged by hindsight alone — and whether escalation, uncertainty, and new evidence are handled well. A good decision can have a bad outcome, and a bad decision can be lucky; the category judges the reasoning against what could be known when the decision was made.

Signals and the Practice That Meets Them

Decision quality. The outcome of consequential decisions made within a person's Earned Authority, judged by whether the reasoning was sound given what was knowable at the time.

- **Practice:** decide at the gates against the Success Criteria, on what the Auditor and the Autonomous Leader bring (Evaluating Deliverables); record the reasoning in each Resolution. Take on consequential decisions.
- **The record that shows it:** Gate Evaluations, Resolutions, Outcome evaluations, and the reasoning recorded with each.
- **Gaming risk:** only ever making trivially safe, low-consequence decisions to keep a clean record.
- **Counter:** weighted by the comparative consequence of the decision. A record of only safe decisions is itself a visible pattern.

Escalation judgment. Escalating when genuinely warranted, and deciding independently when holding enough authority and information. Both directions count, because excessive escalation can masquerade as prudence.

- **Practice:** apply Decide, Ask, or Escalate deliberately (Judgment, Escalation, Review, and Disputes).
- **The record that shows it:** escalations, what they were about, and how they resolved; decisions made within authority without escalation.
- **Gaming risk:** escalating routinely to avoid ever being wrong, or never escalating to appear decisive.

- **Counter:** Ascent tracks the escalation rate against comparable authority and comparable stakes. Either extreme is a visible pattern.

Uncertainty recognition. Identifying material unknowns, weak assumptions, missing evidence, or unresolved questions before they become problems.

- **Practice:** raise them in the drafting conversation, or as changes at a gate; flag what matters, not everything.
- **The record that shows it:** the questions raised and answered, and whether what was flagged turned out to matter.
- **Gaming risk:** manufacturing minor, low-stakes uncertainties to appear thorough.
- **Counter:** weighted by materiality, evaluated by Ascent or the Auditor in the first instance. Trivial flags do not count, and only a contested evaluation reaches the Council.

Evidence responsiveness. Whether a stated position changes appropriately when credible contrary evidence appears.

- **Practice:** when validation or new facts contradict an earlier conclusion, say so and change course on the record. When the pressure to change rests on nothing, hold the position and say why.
- **The record that shows it:** positions recorded, the evidence that followed, and whether the position moved with it.
- **Gaming risk:** never updating regardless of evidence, to appear consistent; or reversing performatively without real cause.
- **Counter:** Ascent tracks the correspondence between new evidence and changes of position over time. Both non-responsiveness and performative reversal are distinguishable patterns.

What Each Band Requires

- **Band 0:** knows when they do not know; asks rather than guesses, even where their own decisions still need checking.
- **Band 1:** sound decisions within a defined problem; escalates genuine uncertainty rather than guessing.
- **Band 2:** judgment holds under conditions the original framing did not anticipate; stated confidence tracks real outcomes.
- **Band 3:** sound judgment where the stakes are real and the cost of reversal is high.

- **Band 4:** judgment others rely on when they are uncertain — sought out, not merely correct.
- **Band 5:** judgment on questions with no precedent to check against, where being wrong compounds.

In Practice

- **Write the reasoning down where the decision is made.** Decisions are judged on whether the reasoning was sound given what was knowable at the time. A Resolution with its reasoning puts that reasoning in the record, where it can be judged.
- **State confidence honestly.** At Band 2 and above, whether stated confidence tracks outcomes is part of the evidence.
- **Read the situation, not a rule of thumb.** Always challenging, always escalating, or always refusing a shortcut is wrong about half the time.

What Does Not Count

- Deciding only trivially safe matters to keep a clean record.
- Manufacturing minor uncertainties to appear thorough.
- Holding a position against evidence for consistency, or reversing performatively.

CHAPTER 15 – MEETING STEWARDSHIP

This chapter explains how practice meets Performance Category C, Stewardship: the care of authority, resources, portfolio, people, and principles. It is the category most directly tied to leadership as stewardship rather than supervision, and the one Ascent needs real evidence of before granting more stewardship.

What It Measures

Whether a Conceptual Synthesist can be trusted with more — because what has already been entrusted, including authority over the Autonomous Workforce and over other people, has been cared for well.

Signals and the Practice That Meets Them

Authority judgment. The quality of authority decisions: appropriate scope, appropriate recipient, appropriate timing.

- **Practice:** set Delegated Authority and Oversight Levels by risk; approve workforces whose boundaries of autonomy are sound (Governing the Autonomous Workforce); hand authority to people when they are ready.
- **The record that shows it:** authority grants, Oversight Levels, and what happened under them.
- **Gaming risk:** granting only narrow, low-risk authority to avoid ever being blamed for a bad grant.
- **Counter:** weighted against comparable authority-granting patterns. Excessive caution is as visible as recklessness.

Resource stewardship. Outcomes achieved relative to resources consumed or committed: using resources intelligently, not merely spending less.

- **Practice:** fund Objectives by value; treat Fid overruns as information; never starve necessary work to look efficient.
- **The record that shows it:** Fid allocated, estimated, and consumed, against the Outcomes it produced.
- **Gaming risk:** underspending to appear efficient while starving necessary work.
- **Counter:** judged against outcomes achieved, not spend alone. Starved work shows up independently in other signals.

Portfolio judgment. The quality of prioritization across competing opportunities.

- **Practice:** decline and hold with recorded reasoning; take on hard, consequential opportunities, not only safe ones.
- **The record that shows it:** promotions and declines, with their reasoning, and what became of each.
- **Gaming risk:** prioritizing only safe opportunities already likely to succeed.
- **Counter:** weighted by the difficulty and consequence of the call, evaluated by Ascent or the Auditor in the first instance, with the Council reserved for contested or high-consequence cases.

Talent development. Whether the people a Conceptual Synthesist develops, as their Leader, their assigned mentor, or their assigned coach, demonstrably increase their capability and go on to earn greater responsibility. Coaching that clears a confirmed deficiency weighs more than mentorship. This is the signal mentoring and coaching count toward.

- **Practice:** mentor, coach, and bring people onto teams where they can grow (Working in a Self-Organizing Workforce).
- **The record that shows it:** mentoring and coaching recorded in the Participation Record as contributions to the people developed, and their later trajectory. When they later contribute to a commercialized system, a share of the credit follows (Earned Responsibility in Practice).
- **Gaming risk:** choosing people already likely to succeed and claiming credit for their trajectory.
- **Counter:** weighted by capability growth attributable to the relationship, not by the raw success rate of the people worked with.

Responsibility handoff. Delegating meaningful responsibility, rather than accumulating it.

- **Practice:** hand consequential work to capable people and to the Autonomous Workforce.
- **The record that shows it:** what was handed off, to whom, and how it went.
- **Gaming risk:** delegating only trivial responsibility while keeping everything consequential.
- **Counter:** weighted by the significance of what was handed off, evaluated by Ascent or the Auditor in the first instance.

Constitutional stewardship. Adherence to VADR's constitutional principles, particularly where violating them would have been easier or advantageous.

- **Practice:** follow the principles when a shortcut is tempting; raise a Change Request rather than working around a rule; refuse a shortcut that breaks a principle and take one that does not.
- **The record that shows it:** decisions taken where a principle was at stake, Change Requests raised, and exceptions requested or declined.
- **Gaming risk:** there is no meaningful way to fake it affirmatively. The real risk is a false negative: a principled person penalized for a single defensible judgment call.
- **Counter:** the Council distinguishes a real constitutional violation from a defensible judgment call.

Constitutional stewardship carries exceptional weight for Council eligibility. Someone may be extraordinarily productive and still be a poor candidate for stewarding the Operating Model; the Council treats that as disqualifying for membership specifically, whatever else the person has earned.

What Each Band Requires

- **Band 0:** takes care of assigned work, stays within the authority given, and causes no harm through carelessness.
- **Band 1:** stewards their own work and commitments; does not create cost others must absorb.
- **Band 2:** stewards a piece of work others depend on — reliable custody of something shared.
- **Band 3:** holds real authority soundly — appropriate scope, recipient, and timing when handing it on — and develops the people they work with. This is the first band that requires holding authority over others, and the main reason Band 2 to Band 3 is the hardest graduation.
- **Band 4:** stewards a portfolio: prioritization across genuinely competing claims, judged on the difficulty of the call rather than the success rate.
- **Band 5:** constitutional stewardship at the exceptional weight required for Council eligibility.

In Practice

- **Seek custody of something shared before seeking authority over others.** The bands build in that order.
- **Record the reasoning for declines and holds.** Portfolio judgment is read from what was not done as much as from what was.

- **Give authority away on evidence.** Holding authority that others are ready for is itself a pattern.

What Does Not Count

- Granting only narrow, risk-free authority to avoid blame.
- Underspending to appear efficient.
- Claiming credit for the trajectory of people who were already succeeding.
- Delegating only trivial responsibility.

CHAPTER 16 – MEETING COLLABORATION AND ORGANIZATIONAL HEALTH

This chapter explains how practice meets Performance Category D, Collaboration and Organizational Health: the effect a Conceptual Synthesist has on the people and teams worked with.

What It Measures

Whether teams are better for a Conceptual Synthesist's presence — in outcomes, in shared knowledge, and in the quality of their decisions — and whether that person imposes costs that output alone would hide. The category exists in part to catch the brilliant but destructive performer whom output measures routinely reward.

Signals and the Practice That Meets Them

Peer demand. Repeated, voluntary selection by different qualified people to work together again, anchored to a real, verified outcome rather than popularity.

- **Practice:** deliver real outcomes with others.
- **The record that shows it:** team formation over time, and the outcomes of the teams.
- **Gaming risk:** cultivating popularity disconnected from outcomes.
- **Counter:** only repeat selection after a verified good outcome counts. Popularity without outcome does not qualify.

Contribution diversity. Real, useful contribution across different teams, Conceptual Systems, stages, or roles.

- **Practice:** choose work beyond familiar territory where the contribution is real.
- **The record that shows it:** the Participation Record across systems and stages.
- **Gaming risk:** superficial, drive-by involvement across many systems to inflate breadth.
- **Counter:** weighted by the Participation Record's contribution weighting. A trivial contribution carries no weight, not trivial weight.

Team outcome contribution. Contribution to successful team outcomes, whoever leads.

- **Practice:** make an attributed contribution, recorded in the Participation Record.
- **The record that shows it:** the team's outcome and each person's attributed weight in it.

- **Gaming risk:** free-riding on a successful team's outcome.
- **Counter:** weighted by each person's attributed contribution, not by team membership.

Knowledge contribution. Reusable knowledge that measurably improves other people's synthesis or judgment.

- **Practice:** make decisions whose recorded reasoning others reuse, and see that lessons are captured where others will find them.
- **The record that shows it:** demonstrated reuse of what was produced.
- **Gaming risk:** high-volume, low-value documentation.
- **Counter:** weighted by demonstrated reuse and impact, not volume.

Constructive challenge. Materially useful dissent that genuinely improves a decision, a Conceptual System, or a validation.

- **Practice:** challenge when the evidence warrants, with reasoning, and let the outcome be the measure.
- **The record that shows it:** the challenge, the decision, and whether the challenge changed it for the better.
- **Gaming risk:** routine, low-cost objections to appear engaged.
- **Counter:** weighted by demonstrated impact on the outcome, evaluated by Ascent or the Auditor in the first instance. Objection alone earns nothing.

Independent judgment. Reaching a reasoned position independently of prevailing consensus, including where it is not adopted. It does not require being right: the merit is in bringing a genuinely reasoned independent view into the synthesis.

- **Practice:** form a view before hearing the room when it matters, and show the reasoning.
- **The record that shows it:** positions recorded with their reasoning, alongside the consensus they departed from.
- **Gaming risk:** performative disagreement — dissenting only when confident of winning, or as a posture.
- **Counter:** weighted by the reasoning behind the position, not by whether it was adopted or by disagreement alone.

Collaboration drag. A negative signal for recurring behavior that imposes a measurable cost on teams despite acceptable individual output.

- **Practice:** notice the cost of one's own conduct on others and correct it.
- **Gaming risk:** none meaningful; the signal exists because output measures are otherwise gameable by exactly this behavior.
- **Counter:** corroborated across several independent team relationships before it counts. A single complaint does not establish a pattern.

What Each Band Requires

- **Band 0:** works cooperatively; takes feedback and uses it.
- **Band 1:** works with others without imposing measurable cost on teams.
- **Band 2:** peer demand — people who worked with them, with real outcomes, choose to work with them again.
- **Band 3:** improves the work of the teams they join; constructive challenge that changes decisions.
- **Band 4:** sustained followership — others choose to follow their lead across multiple efforts.
- **Band 5:** followership across teams and Conceptual Systems, sustained over time and through difficulty.

Peer demand, contribution diversity, and team outcome contribution need a working history, so at entry they are inherited at the band placed and replaced by observed evidence from the first day of work (Earned Responsibility in Practice).

What Does Not Count

- Popularity disconnected from outcomes.
- Superficial involvement across many efforts.
- Routine objection, or disagreement as a posture.
- High-volume, low-value documentation.

CHAPTER 17 – MEETING RELIABILITY AND RESPONSIBILITY

This chapter explains how practice meets Performance Category E, Reliability and Responsibility: whether commitments hold, whether responsibility holds once granted, and what happens after a miss.

What It Measures

Whether others can rely on what a Conceptual Synthesist commits to, estimates, and decides — including after being given more responsibility, and including after something goes wrong. The category closes the loop between merit demonstrated and responsibility granted: a single past contribution never permanently over-credits anyone.

Signals and the Practice That Meets Them

Commitment reliability. Completing what was committed to, weighted by the difficulty of the commitment, not by raw completion count.

- **Practice:** commit to meaningful work and complete it.
- **The record that shows it:** commitments recorded, and what became of each.
- **Gaming risk:** committing only to trivially safe work to guarantee a perfect record.
- **Counter:** weighted against comparable commitment difficulty. A pattern of only safe commitments is visible.

Responsibility reliability. Observed performance after greater responsibility has been granted.

- **Practice:** treat each expansion of authority as a new test; reputation does not substitute for performance under it.
- **The record that shows it:** performance measured after the grant, against the scope of the new responsibility.
- **Gaming risk:** coasting on a strong initial reputation.
- **Counter:** measured specifically after the grant. Prior reputation does not substitute.

Recovery quality. What someone does after a real miss: disclose it, contain the consequences, correct it, and demonstrably learn from it.

- **Practice:** disclose at once; contain the consequences; see the cause corrected, not only the output; confirm that what changed is recorded.

- **The record that shows it:** the disclosure, the containment, the correction, and the change that followed.
- **Gaming risk:** performative disclosure with no real correction or contained consequence.
- **Counter:** weighted by verified containment and correction. Disclosure alone earns nothing.

Deficiency turnaround. Clearing a confirmed deficiency through the improvement process: the gap owned, the plan worked, and the category brought up to its threshold and held there.

- **Practice:** own the deficiency, work the plan with the coach, and keep the check-ins (Earned Responsibility in Practice).
- **The record that shows it:** the plan, its check-ins, the coach's and Ascent's evaluation, and the category's evidence after the plan closes.
- **Gaming risk:** clearing the measured signals while the underlying behavior returns once coaching ends.
- **Counter:** measured after the plan closes, over the same outcome lag as other provisional signals. A deficiency that recurs reverses the credit.

Predictability. Whether others can rely on stated commitments, estimates, availability, and decisions.

- **Practice:** set Fid and commitments honestly, and keep stated availability current.
- **The record that shows it:** estimates against actual outcomes, over time.
- **Gaming risk:** deliberately understating estimates in order to beat them.
- **Counter:** Ascent compares historical estimate accuracy against outcomes. Systematic sandbagging is a distinguishable pattern.

Ownership behavior. Remaining engaged through resolution, rather than treating one's own contribution as the endpoint.

- **Practice:** follow an Objective through validation and evolution, not only to one's own contribution.
- **The record that shows it:** engagement recorded through to the resolution.
- **Gaming risk:** disengaging after one's own narrow contribution.
- **Counter:** weighted by verified engagement through the actual resolution.

What Each Band Requires

- **Band 0:** keeps small, clear commitments, and says so when one slips.
- **Band 1:** follows through on commitments made; estimates are predictable.
- **Band 2:** reliable under conditions that were not anticipated when the commitment was made.
- **Band 3:** responsibility reliability — performance holds after greater responsibility is granted, not only before. This is the second reason Band 2 to Band 3 is the hardest graduation.
- **Band 4:** ownership through resolution, including where resolution is someone else's to complete.
- **Band 5:** recovery quality proven on a real, material miss: disclosed, contained, corrected, and demonstrably learned from.

Band 5 cannot be pursued deliberately: no one should engineer a material miss to prove they can recover from one. Some strong Conceptual Synthesists remain at Band 4 for a long time for that reason alone, and that is correct.

In Practice

- **Say when a commitment slips, as soon as it does.** At every band, saying so is part of reliability, not an admission against it.
- **Disclose a miss before someone else finds it.** The order of events is part of the record.
- **Estimate honestly, including when the honest estimate is unwelcome.** An estimate beaten by design is as unreliable as one missed.

What Does Not Count

- Committing only to trivially safe work.
- Coasting on reputation after responsibility grows.
- Performative disclosure without correction.
- Disengaging once one's own part is done.

CHAPTER 18 – MEETING ORGANIZATIONAL VALUE

This chapter explains how practice meets Performance Category F, Organizational Value: the real value a Conceptual Synthesist creates for VADR. It measures effects that exist only after real work has been done, so at entry it is inherited at the band placed and then replaced by observed evidence.

What It Measures

Whether the work creates value that can be traced: economic results, new capability, assets others reuse, and harm prevented. It is the category in which every other category's work eventually shows, and the one in which attribution matters most, because shared results are easy to overclaim.

Signals and the Practice That Meets Them

Economic contribution. Realized revenue, cost reduction, avoided expenditure, or other objectively measurable economic value attributable to a contribution.

- **Practice:** take Conceptual Systems through validation to commercialization (Commercializing a Conceptual System), and keep the Participation Record accurate.
- **The record that shows it:** realized revenue and costs, and the Participation Record's attribution.
- **Gaming risk:** claiming outsized attribution for a shared economic result.
- **Counter:** weighted by the Participation Record's attribution, not self-declared.

Capacity creation. Making VADR capable of something it previously could not do.

- **Practice:** pursue opportunities that close real Synthesis Gaps.
- **The record that shows it:** VADR's capability before and after.
- **Gaming risk:** overstating the novelty of an incremental improvement.
- **Counter:** evaluated by Ascent or the Auditor against the real prior state of VADR's capability, not asserted novelty, and escalated to the Council only where genuinely contested.

Reusable leverage. Knowledge, methods, Conceptual Systems, or other assets that materially improve later work: the direct measure of whether each Conceptual System strengthens the next.

- **Practice:** favor reuse and extension; build what others will actually use.

- **The record that shows it:** demonstrated later reuse.
- **Gaming risk:** producing assets labeled reusable that are never reused.
- **Counter:** weighted by demonstrated reuse, not by the asset's existence.

Risk prevention. Identifying or resolving a material problem before it causes harm.

- **Practice:** surface risks in validation and scenario walks, and see them resolved.
- **The record that shows it:** the risk raised, its resolution, and the harm it would have caused.
- **Gaming risk:** manufacturing minor risks to discover and resolve for credit.
- **Counter:** weighted by independently assessed materiality, evaluated by Ascent or the Auditor in the first instance, not self-assessed.

What Each Band Requires

- **Band 0:** work produced is fit to be used once reviewed.
- **Band 1:** work that is genuinely used rather than produced and set aside.
- **Band 2:** reusable leverage — something they produced is demonstrably used by others.
- **Band 3:** real, traceable economic contribution or risk prevention.
- **Band 4:** capacity creation — VADR can do something it could not do before, attributable to this person.
- **Band 5:** capacity creation at the level of what the organization is for, not only what it can do.

In Practice

- **Value is traced through the Participation Record.** An accurate record is the only way economic contribution reaches the person who made it.
- **Measure against what VADR could do before.** Capacity creation is judged against VADR's prior capability, not against what is new to the person.
- **Build for reuse, then let reuse prove it.** The label earns nothing; the second use earns the credit.

What Does Not Count

- Outsized attribution for a shared result.
- Incremental improvement presented as new capability.

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- Assets labeled reusable that no one reuses.
- Minor risks manufactured to be discovered.

CHAPTER 19 – JUDGMENT, ESCALATION, REVIEW, AND DISPUTES

This chapter addresses the decisions no procedure can make: when to decide, when to ask, and when to escalate; how to act when the rules are silent; when to stop work; how to serve as a peer reviewer; how disputes are resolved; when Constitutional Reserve Authority applies; and how the rules themselves change.

Judgment Is the Human Contribution

Autonomous execution can follow rules. It cannot supply vision, weigh what is right, or decide what matters when the rules run out. Those remain the responsibility of human creativity, and they cannot be delegated. Every procedure in this handbook ends in a judgment; this chapter covers the judgments that come before and around them.

Decide, Ask, or Escalate

- **Decide** when the matter is within delegated authority and the necessary information is in hand. Most matters are decided. A decision deferred without reason is a decision made later by someone with less context.
- **Ask** when a colleague holds knowledge that is missing. Ask a specific question, of the person who holds the answer, and record what it changed.
- **Escalate** to the Conceptual Stewardship Council when a decision exceeds delegated authority, affects VADR's principles, or creates legal, regulatory, or reputational exposure. Escalate with the facts, the options, and a recommendation: an escalation that only hands over a problem asks someone else to do the thinking.

Escalation judgment is observed in both directions (Meeting Judgment Quality). Escalating routinely to avoid being wrong and never escalating to appear decisive are both visible extremes, judged against comparable authority and comparable stakes.

When the Rules Are Silent

Read for intent. If something obviously should not be done, the absence of a rule against it does not make it acceptable. If something obviously should be done, the absence of a rule requiring it is not a reason to skip it. When the silence matters — when two reasonable readings would lead to different results — decide by the principles, record the decision and its reasoning, and raise the gap so that the rule can be written. A gap decided silently is decided again, differently, by the next person.

When to Stop Work

- When continuing would violate a principle of the system or of VADR.

- When the Objective's Purpose turns out to be wrong. Retire it and establish the right one; do not bend the work to a purpose it no longer serves.
- When the result is no longer worth its cost.
- When an act cannot be undone and the authority for it is not clearly held.

Stopping is a decision like any other. Record it, with its reason, and see that whatever depends on the stopped work learns of it.

Serving as a Peer Reviewer

Band graduation is confirmed by non-conflicted peer review before it takes effect. Peer review is a check on the claim, not a second decision-making body: it confirms or contests; it never grants standing. It is scoped to band graduation only; routine work is covered by the Council's ordinary certification.

Who may review. A reviewer is non-conflicted only if all of the following hold:

- No standing-dependency relationship with the person reviewed, now or within a defined recent period: not their mentor, not their coach, and not the Leader of a team they followed.
- No stake: the reviewer's own pay, standing, or advancement does not depend on the outcome.
- No direct, credited contribution to the Conceptual System whose Participation Record is under review for the claim.
- No unusually frequent collaboration: the reviewer's recent working frequency with the person does not exceed what Ascent's workforce-wide baseline treats as a normal working relationship.

Independence also holds over time. A reviewer who repeatedly reviews the same person, or whose own outcomes depend on the people they review, is not genuinely non-conflicted even where no single review shows a conflict; Ascent tracks reviewer pairings and surfaces the pattern. Where no one in the Creative Workforce qualifies for a given claim, the review goes directly to the Council rather than to a conflicted reviewer under a weaker standard.

1. **Decline any review where a conflict exists**, however small it seems. Declining is not a judgment on the person; excluding conflicted reviewers is what the standard exists to do.
2. **Review the claim against the evidence:** the Participation Record and Ascent's recorded basis for the advancement — not an impression of the person, and not their reputation.

3. **Confirm the claim, or contest it with a specific, stated basis.** A general or unsubstantiated objection is not a contest. A confirmed claim takes effect; a contested one goes to the Council, and the reviewer does not decide it.
4. **Keep the review to its scope.** Peer review checks whether this graduation was genuinely earned rather than achieved by gaming. Where the evidence shows the climb was gamed, contest the claim on that basis; the Council decides it. The reviewer never decides a gaming finding.

Resolving Disputes

Disputes arise over contested advancement claims, credit in a Participation Record, Council decisions, or between members directly. Every dispute has a named path, and no dispute is resolved by a conflicted party.

1. **Resolve directly** between the parties where genuinely possible: with the colleague first, with the facts in view.
2. **Escalate to the Conceptual Stewardship Council**, which hears and decides most disputes. Bring the record: the Participation Record, the decisions involved, and what each party says it shows.
3. **Constitutional Reserve Authority** is reserved for the narrow cases set out below. It is not an appeal for disagreement, and it is not available because a party disagrees with a decision the Council was entitled to make.

Every escalation and its resolution is documented. An undocumented resolution is not a resolution.

Constitutional Reserve Authority

Capital Governance holds a narrowly bounded Constitutional Reserve Authority to protect VADR's constitutional integrity. For the Creative Workforce, it may be exercised only on four conditions:

- The Council has exceeded its delegated authority.
- A violation of VADR's constitutional principles.
- Material legal or regulatory exposure.
- A confirmed pattern in which a standing exception authority — most directly, the Council's authority to grant exceptions to policy — has become routine practice rather than genuine exception.

How it is exercised. The basis is documented in writing, naming which condition applies and why, and disclosed to the Council. The matter is then returned to the Council for

reconsideration consistent with that basis: Constitutional Reserve Authority intervenes and returns the matter; it never substitutes its own final decision for the Council's.

The pattern condition has its own path. The Auditor monitors exception-granting activity and escalates a suspected pattern to Capital Governance; Capital Governance alone determines whether it reflects real abuse. On confirmation, the first step is a probationary reset: the Council's exception authority is narrowed or suspended for a stated period and then returns in full. If the pattern persists or recurs, Capital Governance may force the early rotation of the specific Council members the exception log identifies as responsible. How many instances make a pattern, and how long a reset lasts, are still to be set.

What it means in practice. A member who believes the Council has acted outside its authority, against VADR's principles, or into material legal exposure raises it, with the record. A member who simply disagrees with a decision the Council was entitled to make does not: the Council's decision stands.

How the Rules Change

The Creative Workforce volume is provisional in places, pending Ascent's formal publication. A provisional statement binds until Ascent publishes the text it anticipates; then the two are reconciled on the record. Where they agree, the provisional marking is removed; where they differ, the Council and Capital Governance resolve the difference jointly. Any other change to the volume's principles requires the documented agreement of VADR's owners and the Council, exercising Capital Governance and Creative Governance, naming the provision changed and the reasoning. This handbook follows the constitutional volumes: where it differs from one, the volume governs, and the handbook is corrected.

Neutrality and Conflicts of Interest

Where a system represents someone, it must act only in their interest. Never accept a design or commercial arrangement that pays the system to do otherwise. The same holds for people: a decision in which the decider has a stake is made by someone else.

Owning Mistakes

When an earlier framing was wrong, say so plainly and correct it on the record. A quiet correction teaches no one, and a well-handled miss is itself evidence of reliability: disclosed, contained, corrected, and learned from (Meeting Reliability and Responsibility).

CHAPTER 20 – FAILURE MODES OF THE DISCIPLINE

This chapter names the recurring ways Conceptual Synthesis goes wrong, both in the practice of synthesis and in working within the Creative Workforce. For each failure mode, it gives the symptom to watch for and the correction.

In the Practice of Synthesis

- **Creativity Spent on Execution.** Symptom: a human's time goes to work that could have been specified and delegated, including designing a workforce the Autonomous Leader should design, or reviewing what the Auditor reviews. Correction: specify it, and delegate it.
- **Technology First.** Symptom: the problem statement names a tool. Correction: restate the problem without it.
- **Invention Creep.** Symptom: several Concepts have no existing material behind them. Correction: search again; invent only what is truly missing.
- **False Novelty.** Symptom: no capability can be named that did not exist before. Correction: decline, or find the real gap.
- **Implementation Bleed.** Symptom: a vendor, model, or screen appears in a Constraint. Correction: move it to the Implementation Layer.
- **Vocabulary Sprawl.** Symptom: people ask whether two terms mean the same thing. Correction: one name, one meaning; record the resolution.
- **Silent Defaults.** Symptom: behavior nobody remembers deciding. Correction: make the choice explicit and record it.
- **Unvalidated Elegance.** Symptom: approval without a scenario walkthrough. Correction: require the Auditor's review to walk real cases, including failure.
- **Validation Designed to Pass.** Symptom: the real use chosen for validation is the one least likely to expose a failure. Correction: choose the use that would.
- **Generous Rereading.** Symptom: an Outcome evaluated against what the Success Criteria might have meant, not what they say. Correction: evaluate against the text; if the criteria were wrong, establish a new Objective.
- **Human as Coordinator.** Symptom: work waits for a human to move it along. Correction: require the Autonomous Leader to redesign the Process.
- **Human as Reviewer.** Symptom: the Conceptual Synthesist re-checks, line by line, Deliverables the Auditor has reviewed. Correction: decide on what the Auditor and

the Autonomous Leader bring; where their review missed something, correct their conduct, not only the Deliverable.

- **Role Stretch.** Symptom: one Role serving several domains. Correction: require a Role per domain.
- **Captured Neutrality.** Symptom: the system earns more when it serves its principal less. Correction: change the economic model.
- **Unbounded Authority.** Symptom: an action with no traceable grant. Correction: bound it, or escalate it.
- **Half-Applied Change.** Symptom: a decision or amendment made in one place and contradicted in another. Correction: find everything it reaches before it is adopted, and apply it everywhere.

In the Creative Workforce

- **Playing It Safe.** Symptom: a record of only safe decisions, safe commitments, and safe opportunities. Correction: take on consequential work; the record is judged against its difficulty.
- **Waiting to Be Assigned.** Symptom: a Conceptual Synthesist without work, waiting for someone to bring it. Correction: look across all visible work and choose; no one assigns it.
- **Leadership by Declaration.** Symptom: someone claims to lead because they proposed the work. Correction: leadership is whoever others choose to follow; let the followership decide.
- **Hidden Capacity.** Symptom: a person overloaded because no one could see their load, or a claimed light load alongside low output. Correction: disclose real capacity and keep it current; Leaders do not invite the fully burdened.
- **The Uninvited Colleague.** Symptom: a capable, available person whose qualifications matched a team's need, left without engagement. Correction: Leaders look at visible availability before looking elsewhere.
- **The Retroactive Record.** Symptom: a Participation Record assembled when money or standing is at stake. Correction: record contributions as they happen.
- **Offsetting in One's Own Head.** Symptom: a strength relied on to carry a weakness that is never addressed. Correction: no category offsets another; work on the weakest.

- **Conflicted Review.** Symptom: a reviewer with a mentoring, coaching, followership, stake, contribution, or frequent working relationship reviewing anyway. Correction: decline; where no one qualifies, the Council reviews.
- **Gaming the Signal.** Symptom: work shaped to produce a signal rather than a result. Correction: do the real work and let the record show it; a confirmed attempt is evidence about trustworthiness itself.
- **Exception as Routine.** Symptom: exceptions to policy requested and granted as a matter of course. Correction: an exception is for the genuinely exceptional, requested with its basis, and the pattern is itself a trigger for Constitutional Reserve Authority.
- **Appeal by Disagreement.** Symptom: a Council decision made within its authority pursued further because a party disagrees. Correction: Constitutional Reserve Authority is for its four conditions only; the decision stands.
- **Hindsight Judgment.** Symptom: a decision judged by its outcome alone. Correction: judge it against what was knowable when it was made.

CLOSING PERSPECTIVE

Every procedure in this handbook rests on the same philosophy:

Human Creativity. Autonomous Execution.

Human creativity is the scarcest resource VADR has. The Conceptual Synthesist spends it on vision, judgment, ethics, and synthesis, and on nothing else. Everything that can be specified — including the design of the workforce itself — is delegated to the Autonomous Workforce, under bounded authority and accountable to human stewardship.

Practiced this way, the discipline compounds: each Conceptual System frees creativity for the next, and the record of that practice is how each Conceptual Synthesist earns greater responsibility.

GLOSSARY

Term	Canonical Definition
Ascent	The Operational Conceptual System that governs the Creative Workforce through earned responsibility: it observes work, conducts the entry assessment, keeps each person's evidence profile, and determines level advancement in the first instance; band graduation is confirmed by peer review, and placement, gaming findings, and any termination are decided by the Conceptual Stewardship Council.
Auditor	A Role in the Autonomous Workforce that independently reviews every Deliverable, gated or not, and surfaces findings; it informs and does not decide. Its findings reach the Conceptual Synthesist through the Autonomous Leader's triage.
Autonomous Leader	A member of the Autonomous Workforce that coordinates execution: it plans the work and estimates its cost, designs the workforce by proposing Roles and their conduct, builds what the work depends on, triages the Auditor's findings, and brings Recommendations and Questions.
Autonomous Worker	A member of the Autonomous Workforce that performs specialized work under an Assignment and produces Deliverables.
Autonomous Workforce	VADR's operational workforce of Autonomous Leaders and Autonomous Workers, which performs execution under Delegated Authority.
Band	One of six levels of earned responsibility, Band 0 through Band 5, each requiring a threshold in all six performance categories.
Band Graduation	Advancement from one band to the next, made eligible by reaching a new earned-responsibility level and confirmed by non-conflicted peer review before it takes effect.
Baseline Reference	An optional reference from a new Objective to the Outcome of a prior, Completed Objective that it enhances, corrects, or extends; it gives read access to the earlier Deliverables and never reopens the earlier Objective.

Term	Canonical Definition
Candidate Objective	An opportunity, described by the Conceptual Synthesist and drafted in conversation by the Autonomous Creative, which surfaces content, questions, and recommendations before the Objective becomes binding; it is promoted into an established Objective, or declined.
Capital Governance	Governance exercised by VADR's owners; it decides amounts, structures, and thresholds for the Creative Workforce, including pay bands, profit share, and equity, and does not direct the Creative Workforce or the practice of Conceptual Synthesis.
Change Request	A recorded, named proposal to amend a constitutional provision, stating the provision, current and proposed text, reasoning, and impact, adopted before the change is made.
Coach	A Conceptual Synthesist with demonstrated strength in a specific performance category, assigned to help a colleague clear a confirmed deficiency in that category; coaching is weighted above ordinary mentorship.
Concept	A named unit from which a Conceptual System is composed, defined by answering the nine questions.
Conceptual Interdependencies	The relationships through which the Concepts of a Conceptual System rely on one another.
Conceptual Purpose	The single statement of why a Conceptual System exists, against which every Concept is justified.
Conceptual Stewardship Council	The body of senior Conceptual Synthesists, holding limited terms earned through demonstrated merit, that exercises Creative Governance, always collectively; it evaluates, certifies, prioritizes, decides placements and disputes, and grants policy exceptions, and does not direct day-to-day work.
Conceptual Synthesis	The discipline of organizing existing technologies, organizational models, economic frameworks, governance principles, and human ingenuity into genuinely new operational capabilities to create enduring value in the Autonomous Future.

Term	Canonical Definition
Conceptual Synthesist	A member of the Creative Workforce who practices Conceptual Synthesis: describing opportunities, setting purposes and bounds, directing synthesis, governing the Autonomous Workforce, and deciding on what it produces.
Constitutional Layer (Proposed)	The elements of a Conceptual System that must remain stable as its implementation changes.
Constitutional Reserve Authority	Capital Governance's narrowly bounded authority to intervene where the Council exceeds its delegated authority, VADR's constitutional principles are violated, material legal or regulatory exposure arises, or a standing exception authority has become routine; it documents its basis and returns the matter, and is never an operational veto.
Creative Governance	Stewardship of the discipline of Conceptual Synthesis, the Creative Workforce, the VADR Operating Model, and VADR's portfolio of Conceptual Systems, exercised by the Conceptual Stewardship Council; it certifies and does not allocate capital.
Creative Workforce	VADR's human workforce, responsible for vision, judgment, ethics, and Conceptual Synthesis. Conceptual Synthesists are its members.
Definition of Success	The observable conditions under which an opportunity's problem would be solved; the source of an Objective's Success Criteria.
Earned Ownership	Equity or profits interests that vest against earned-responsibility milestones, never tenure alone; the instrument depends on VADR's entity type.
Entry Assessment	The scenario-based assessment, conducted by Ascent in three sessions (do the work, design the workforce, run it), through which a candidate's first band and step are recommended; reviewed by the Auditor and decided by the Conceptual Stewardship Council.
Exception Log	The Conceptual Stewardship Council's continuous record of every exception it grants to foundational operating-model policy, with its basis and the specific members who approved it.

Term	Canonical Definition
Foundational Operating-Model Policy	Policy established by Capital Governance and binding on the Creative Workforce, each stating its own exception treatment; for example, that Conceptual Synthesists do not write code or configure infrastructure directly.
Gate Evaluation	The decision on a Deliverable, after the Auditor's review and the Autonomous Leader's triage: Approved, Revise-Requested, or Rejected, with a Resolution for each Open Decision.
Human Creativity. Autonomous Execution.	VADR's operating philosophy: human creativity, the scarcest resource, is responsible for vision, judgment, ethics, and Conceptual Synthesis; autonomous execution transforms those ideas into operational reality under Delegated Authority.
Implementation Layer (Proposed)	The elements of a Conceptual System that should change freely as technologies, standards, and opportunities evolve.
Individual Exploration	An annual Fid allocation per Conceptual Synthesist for self-directed opportunities.
Leader (Creative Workforce)	A person whom others in the Creative Workforce choose to follow; leadership is earned through voluntary followership, gated by Ascent standing, and lasts only while it is followed. Never an Autonomous Leader.
Mandate	A standing, pre-authorized instruction that originates Objectives on a schedule, for work that recurs.
Material Provenance (Proposed)	The record of where each material in a Conceptual System came from, why it was chosen, and what it depends on.
Nine Questions	Definition, Semantics, Conceptual Purpose, Objectives, Composition, Capabilities, Behaviors, Conceptual Interdependencies, and Constraints: the structure by which every Concept is defined.
Non-Conflicted Peer Review	Verification of a band-graduation claim by a reviewer with no standing-dependency, stake, direct contribution, or unusually frequent collaboration with the person reviewed.

Term	Canonical Definition
Open Decision	A point on a Deliverable that requires the Conceptual Synthesist's explicit judgment, put as a question with options and a recommended answer.
Outcome	The single, human-evaluated result of an Objective's Deliverables against its Success Criteria: Accomplished or Not Accomplished. Its evaluation completes the Objective.
Oversight Level	Autonomous, Milestone-Gated, or Step-Gated; how often an Objective's work pauses for approval.
Paired Probe	An entry-assessment event that appears, across candidates, in two forms calling for opposite responses, so that no coached rule of thumb reliably succeeds.
Participation Record	The record, maintained as work happens, of who contributed what and to what: to a Conceptual System, at which stage; to a person, as their mentor, coach, or Leader; or to VADR itself; with each contribution's relative weight. The basis for profit share, including the development credit that follows a person into a commercialized system.
Performance Categories	The six categories in which earned responsibility is observed: Synthesis Contribution; Judgment Quality; Stewardship; Collaboration and Organizational Health; Reliability and Responsibility; Organizational Value.
Plan	The Autonomous Leader's Deliverable setting out the work, its sequence and dependencies, the Roles it proposes, and its cost estimate in Fid; Roles are established when the Plan is Approved.
Profit Share	A company-wide pool funded each year by the share of net profit from commercialized Conceptual Systems that Capital Governance sets, distributed across contributors according to the Participation Record.
Recommendation	The producing Autonomous Worker's specific, reasoned proposal for how to proceed, present on every Deliverable produced under Gate Evaluation.
Role Conduct Specification	The written purpose, general behavioral guidance, and rules that govern how a Role conducts its work.

Term	Canonical Definition
Step	One of the levels within a band, recognizing real progress at the band's level before the next band's thresholds are met; administered directly once eligibility and level are confirmed.
Successfully Commercialized	A Conceptual System that has reached the Commercialize stage with real, realized revenue, certified by the Conceptual Stewardship Council and approved by Capital Governance; the trigger for profit-share and earned-ownership consequences.
Synthesis Gap (Proposed)	The distance between what existing capabilities can do and what people and organizations can understand, trust, govern, and adopt.
Target System	The deployment type of a Conceptual System: SaaS, internal to Telo, internal and SaaS, a package for external deployment, or an Autonomous Participant.