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Status of This Document

This document defines the ADAC Specification for version 0.9.0-draft.1.

Status: Draft This profile is functionally complete but has not yet undergone jurisdictional legal review. It is released for evaluation, testing, and community feedback. Breaking changes may occur before the 1.0.0 legal-stable release.

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Revision History

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ADAC-Legal v0.9.0 — Legal Document Profile Specification

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Status

This document is maintained by InnoVadens, LLC as the official steward of the ADAC Standard.

John Vaden has decades of experience in genealogical research and in contributing to standards, workflows, and data practices across analyst and software development teams. He serves as the editor and steward of the ADAC Standard. InnoVadens, LLC is the legal steward of ADAC.

This specification defines metadata structures for representing legal documents and their provenance. It does not provide legal advice, does not interpret law, and does not establish legal authority. Users should consult qualified legal professionals for legal guidance.

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Base Format: [ADAC 1.0 — Archival Digital Asset Container](#)

Abstract

The **ADAC-Legal** profile defines a domain-specific metadata extension for the [ADAC 1.0](#) container format, designed for the long-term preservation, chain-of-custody tracking, and confidentiality management of legal documents — tribunal exhibits, court filings, contracts, witness statements, judicial orders, sworn instruments, and other records produced or received during legal proceedings. The profile adds matter references, document classification with sequential production numbering

and confidentiality levels, chain of custody, retention policies, legal privilege logging, preservation hold notices, production tracking, and per-region exhibit and redaction annotations — all without modifying the core ADAC specification.

This profile is designed to be **jurisdiction-neutral at its base**. It defines the concepts, schema structures, and controlled vocabulary values that are meaningful across major world legal traditions — common law, civil law, mixed, and religious law systems. Jurisdiction-specific terminology, document types, procedural concepts, and regulatory references are defined in companion jurisdiction profile specifications (such as ADAC-Legal-US, ADAC-Legal-UK, ADAC-Legal-DE) and are not part of this document.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Problem Statement

Legal document management demands meticulous tracking of provenance, confidentiality, and evidentiary integrity across every legal tradition. Documents submitted to a tribunal must be numbered and classified. Redactions must be documented with the legal authority that authorized them. Chain of custody must be recorded from the moment a document is received through every transfer, scan, and storage event. Retention obligations must be tracked alongside preservation directives. Legal privilege determinations must be logged. Productions or disclosures must be tracked across multiple counsel and parties.

All of this context must travel with the document — not in a separate database that could become disconnected when systems are migrated, decommissioned, or lost. Worse, in contested proceedings, an opposing party may challenge the authenticity of a digital document and demand evidence that it has not been tampered with since collection. Without a cryptographically verifiable chain of custody, that challenge can be difficult to rebut.

1.2 Solution

ADAC-Legal solves this by embedding legal context directly into the archival container alongside the document, leveraging ADAC 1.0's built-in cryptographic features:

- **Matter reference** — matter number, tribunal, jurisdiction, docket identifier, matter caption, and named parties.
- **Document classification** — document type, exhibit or production identifier, filing date, confidentiality level, and sequential production numbering range.
- **Chain of custody** — chronological record of every person or entity that handled the artifact, from receipt through processing and storage, with optional cryptographic attestation at each handoff.
- **Legal privilege** — explicit determinations of legal professional privilege, the basis for those determinations, and any waiver events.
- **Preservation holds** — directives that suspend ordinary retention rules (litigation hold, regulatory hold, audit hold), with issuance dates, scope, and release authority.
- **Production tracking** — records of when and to whom a document was disclosed or produced, including production sets and redaction variants.
- **Retention policy** — retention period, expiration date, disposition action, and hold status.
- **Exhibit, redaction, and privilege annotations** — per-region tags marking specific areas on scanned documents.
- **Cryptographic chain of custody** — when used with ADAC's Signed Archival conformance, every significant custody event is cryptographically attestable; the master file checksum proves the underlying document has not been altered.

- **Jurisdiction profiles** — country-specific and subdivision-specific variants (such as ADAC-Legal-US, ADAC-Legal-UK, ADAC-Legal-DE) that extend the base profile with jurisdiction-appropriate document types, matter types, procedural terminology, and regulatory references.

1.3 Design Philosophy

Principle	Description
ADAC-native	ADAC-Legal is a pure ADAC profile extension. No core specification modifications are required. Any ADAC reader can open an ADAC-Legal container.
Jurisdiction-neutral base	The base specification defines concepts and value sets meaningful across common law, civil law, mixed, and religious law systems. US-specific, UK-specific, and other jurisdiction-specific terms belong in companion jurisdiction profiles, not here.
Legal-first	Every schema element maps to a concept recognized across major legal traditions: document identity, legal professional privilege, custody of evidence, confidentiality, retention obligations, production to opposing parties.
Non-intrusive	Non-legal ADAC consumers ignore all legal data. Linked entity values survive round-trip serialization unchanged.
Cryptographically grounded	For evidentiary use, ADAC-Legal containers SHOULD be Signed Archival ADAC containers. Signatures plus hash-chained provenance plus master immutability together provide cryptographic chain of custody.
Confidentiality-aware	The confidentiality level classification enables automated access control. ADAC-Legal integrates with ADAC's <code>accessControl</code> and <code>EncryptionDescriptor</code> mechanisms; the legal profile describes the legal basis, not the enforcement mechanism.
Jurisdiction-aware	Legal systems vary significantly by country and by subdivision. ADAC-Legal supports jurisdiction profiles that extend the base specification with locale-appropriate terminology, document types, and procedural concepts — without fragmenting the core profile.
Multi-profile	ADAC-Legal containers can coexist with other profiles (such as ADAC-Genealogy). A succession document could carry both a legal profile (matter metadata, custody chain) and a genealogy profile (person annotations, transcriptions).
Forward-compatible	All JSON structures tolerate unknown properties. Future profile versions can add fields without breaking existing readers.

1.4 Scope

This specification defines:

- The legal profile file schema (`metadata/profiles/legal.json`)

- Matter reference, tribunal jurisdiction, and party schemas
- Document classification, confidentiality, sequential numbering, and retention policy schemas
- Chain-of-custody event schema and its relationship to the ADAC provenance log
- Legal privilege log and preservation hold notice schemas
- Production and disclosure tracking schema
- Per-region linked entity schemas for exhibit, redaction, and privilege annotations
- Guidance on integrating with ADAC `accessControl`, `EncryptionDescriptor`, and signature mechanisms
- Profile-specific validation rules
- Jurisdiction-neutral well-known value sets for document types, confidentiality levels, matter types, custody actions, redaction reasons, privilege categories, and hold types
- The jurisdiction profile mechanism and naming convention for country-specific and subdivision-specific extensions

This specification does **not** define:

- The content of individual jurisdiction profiles (those are defined by companion specifications such as ADAC-Legal-US and ADAC-Legal-UK)
- Jurisdiction-specific document types, procedural terminology, or regulatory citations (such as US Federal Rules, UK Practice Directions, EU GDPR provisions, or German ZPO references — those belong in jurisdiction profiles)
- The ADAC core container format (see the [ADAC 1.0 Format Specification](#))
- Application-level APIs, programming interfaces, or dependency injection
- User interface requirements for displaying legal data
- Actual encryption or access control enforcement (ADAC-Legal records intent and authority; enforcement is the responsibility of the consuming system)

1.5 Audience

This specification is intended for:

- Software developers implementing legal document management features in ADAC readers and writers
 - Legal technologists evaluating the format for disclosure management and document production across jurisdictions
 - Compliance officers assessing chain-of-custody and retention policy capabilities
 - Litigation support and legal operations teams managing exhibit and production numbering workflows
 - Standards bodies evaluating the format for adoption across legal traditions
-

2. Conformance

The key words "MUST", "MUST NOT", "REQUIRED", "SHALL", "SHALL NOT", "SHOULD", "SHOULD NOT", "RECOMMENDED", "MAY", and "OPTIONAL" in this document are to be interpreted as described in [RFC 2119](#).

2.1 Profile Conformance

An ADAC container conforms to this profile specification when:

1. It is a valid ADAC 1.0 container at any conformance level (Minimal, Archival, or Signed Archival).
2. It contains a file at a path listed in the manifest's `metadata.profiles` array whose filename portion matches `legal.json` (case-insensitive).
3. That file is valid JSON containing at least the `profileId`, `profileType`, and `profileVersion` fields, with `profileType` equal to "legal" and `profileId` equal to "urn:adac:profile:legal:v1".

2.2 Recommended Conformance for Evidentiary Use

For documents intended to serve as evidence in legal proceedings, **Signed Archival** conformance is STRONGLY RECOMMENDED. This provides:

- **Cryptographic chain of custody** through CMS signatures applied at each significant handoff (receipt, scan, production, sealing).
- **Tamper-evident provenance** through ADAC's hash-chained provenance log.
- **Document immutability** verifiable by SHA-256 checksum comparison against the recorded master file hash.

Containers used purely for internal document management (where no opposing party will challenge authenticity) MAY use Archival conformance. Minimal conformance is not recommended for legal document workflows.

2.3 Forward Compatibility

Readers MUST tolerate unknown JSON properties in all legal profile structures. Unknown properties MUST be preserved during round-trip serialization. Writers that cannot preserve unknown fields MUST set the manifest's `roundTripFidelity` to "degraded" and append a `fidelityLoss` provenance event, in accordance with ADAC 1.0 Section 6.2.

3. Terminology

The following terms are defined using jurisdiction-neutral language applicable across major world legal systems. Where a term corresponds to a jurisdiction-specific concept (such as "deposition" in US practice or "Schriftsatz" in German practice), the jurisdiction-neutral equivalent is used here; the jurisdiction-specific term appears in the applicable jurisdiction profile.

Term	Definition
ADAC-Legal Container	An ADAC container that includes a legal profile at <code>metadata/profiles/legal.json</code> . Uses the standard <code>.adac</code> extension.
Matter	The legal proceeding, case, transaction, or engagement that the archived document belongs to. Equivalent to "case" (common law), "affaire" (French), "Sache" (German), "asunto" (Spanish).
Tribunal	Any court, arbitral panel, administrative body, or adjudicative forum before which the matter is conducted. Equivalent to "court" (common law), "tribunal" (civil law), "Gericht" (German).
Matter Reference	Structured identification of the legal matter — matter number, tribunal, jurisdiction, docket identifier, caption, and parties.
Document Classification	Metadata describing the document type, exhibit or production identifier, confidentiality level, and sequential numbering range.
Sequential Numbering	Any sequential per-page or per-document numbering system used to uniquely identify documents in a production or disclosure set. Called "Bates numbering" in US practice; equivalent concepts exist in other jurisdictions under various names.
Confidentiality Level	The access restriction classification applied to the document (<code>public</code> , <code>confidential</code> , <code>legallyPrivileged</code> , <code>sealed</code> , etc.).
Chain of Custody	A chronological record of every person or entity that handled the artifact, establishing an unbroken evidentiary trail.
Cryptographic Chain of Custody	A chain of custody where each significant transfer is supported by a CMS signature attesting to the container state at that moment. Provided by ADAC Signed Archival conformance.
Retention Policy	Rules governing how long the document must be preserved and what happens when the retention period expires.
Preservation Hold	A directive suspending normal document retention or destruction schedules due to pending or anticipated proceedings, regulatory requirements, or audit obligations. Called "litigation hold" in US practice; equivalent concepts exist in other jurisdictions.
Legal Professional	The right to withhold from disclosure communications between a legal adviser and client made for the purpose of giving or receiving legal advice, and related litigation

Term	Definition
Privilege	materials. Called "attorney-client privilege" and "work-product privilege" in US practice; "legal professional privilege" in UK practice; "Anwaltsgeheimnis" in German practice; "secret professionnel de l'avocat" in French practice. The underlying concepts, though not identical across jurisdictions, are broadly analogous.
Production	The act of disclosing documents to an opposing party, regulatory body, or tribunal pursuant to a legal obligation. Called "production" or "disclosure" depending on the jurisdiction and context.
Production Set	A bundle of documents disclosed together, typically sharing a common sequential number prefix and disclosure date.
Exhibit	A document or item formally introduced into evidence before a tribunal.
Redaction	The removal or obscuring of specific content from a document prior to disclosure, with the redacted area documented as to reason and authority.
Jurisdiction Profile	A country-specific or subdivision-specific variant of ADAC-Legal identified by the <code>jurisdictionProfile</code> field (such as "us", "uk", "de"). Jurisdiction profiles extend the base ADAC-Legal specification with locale-appropriate document types, matter types, procedural terminology, and regulatory references.

4. Legal Tradition Compatibility

ADAC-Legal is designed to be usable across the major families of legal systems in the world. This section documents how the base schema maps to each tradition and identifies where jurisdiction profiles are needed to fill gaps.

4.1 Common Law Jurisdictions

Common law jurisdictions (United States, United Kingdom, Australia, Canada outside Québec, Ireland, India, Hong Kong, Singapore, and others) share broadly compatible concepts of pleading, disclosure, privilege, and exhibit management, though with significant procedural differences. The base ADAC-Legal schema aligns most naturally with common law practice. Jurisdiction profiles for specific common law jurisdictions address procedural terminology (for example, "disclosure" vs. "discovery", "claimant" vs. "plaintiff", "barrister vs. solicitor" role distinctions).

4.2 Civil Law Jurisdictions

Civil law jurisdictions (France, Germany, Italy, Spain, the Netherlands, Japan, South Korea, most of Latin America, Québec, Louisiana, and others) operate under codified statutes rather than case law precedent. Procedural concepts differ significantly: written pleadings (Schriftsatz, conclusions, escrito) rather than oral advocacy, examining magistrates rather than adversarial pre-trial discovery, and notarial instruments as a common document type. The base ADAC-Legal schema uses neutral field names (`tribunal` rather than "court", `matterCaption` rather than "case caption", `documentingProfessional` rather than "attorney") and neutral value set identifiers to maximize civil law applicability. Jurisdiction profiles for civil law jurisdictions add codified document types and adjust procedural terminology.

4.3 Mixed Legal System Jurisdictions

Several jurisdictions blend common law and civil law traditions (Scotland, South Africa, Québec, Louisiana, Puerto Rico, Philippines, Sri Lanka). These jurisdictions often need both common law procedural concepts (oral advocacy, cross-examination) and civil law document types (notarial acts, statutory declarations). Jurisdiction profiles for mixed jurisdictions address this duality explicitly.

4.4 Religious and Customary Law Jurisdictions

Some jurisdictions incorporate religious law (Sharia in civil matters in several Middle Eastern and Southeast Asian countries) or customary law. The ADAC-Legal base schema does not attempt to model religious or customary law concepts, which vary too widely to generalize. Jurisdiction profiles for these jurisdictions should add the relevant document types and procedural concepts specific to their legal tradition.

4.5 The Jurisdiction-Neutral Principle

When in doubt, ADAC-Legal base value sets use the most widely understood neutral term. Where no neutral term commands broad recognition, the base value set uses a descriptive functional label rather than a jurisdiction-specific term.

Examples of this principle applied:

US-Specific Term	UK Term	Neutral Base Value
Deposition	Witness statement (written), Examination (oral)	"witnessStatement" / "examiningStatement"
Brief	Skeleton argument / Written submissions	"writtenSubmissions"

US-Specific Term	UK Term	Neutral Base Value
Pleading	Statement of case	"statementOfCase"
Motion	Application	"application"
Subpoena	Witness summons	"witnessSummons"
Bates number	Production number / disclosure reference	Sequential numbering
Attorney-client privilege	Legal professional privilege	"legalProfessionalPrivilege"
Work-product privilege	Litigation privilege	"litigationPrivilege"

5. Relationship to ADAC

5.1 Extension Mechanisms

ADAC-Legal extends ADAC through three primary mechanisms defined by the ADAC 1.0 specification:

1. **Profile file** — A self-describing JSON file placed at `metadata/profiles/legal.json` and referenced in the manifest's `metadata.profiles` array. Non-legal readers ignore this file entirely.
2. **Linked entities** — Per-region JSON objects stored in the `linkedEntities` dictionary on each region, keyed by namespaced strings (`legal:exhibit`, `legal:redaction`, `legal:privilege`). Non-legal readers preserve these values unchanged during round-trip serialization.
3. **Provenance events** — Legal applications SHOULD append events to ADAC's hash-chained provenance log when significant legal handling actions occur (custody transfer, redaction applied, privilege determination, hold notice issued, document produced). Recommended event type names: `legalCustodyTransfer`, `legalRedaction`, `legalPrivilegeDetermination`, `legalHoldIssued`, `legalHoldReleased`, and `legalProduction`. These appear in the same chronological hash chain as ADAC's built-in events and inherit the same tamper-evident properties.

5.2 Optional ADAC Features Used by This Profile

ADAC-Legal makes substantial use of ADAC 1.0 optional features:

ADAC Feature	Legal Use Case
signatures/ (CMS detached signatures)	Cryptographic chain of custody. Each significant handoff (receipt, scan, production, sealing) SHOULD result in a new container signature. The signature index records purpose and signer identity.
accessControl (per-master, per-derivative, container-level)	Tagging files with confidentiality and embargo information. The legal profile's <code>confidentialityLevel</code> records the legal basis; ADAC's <code>accessControl</code> records the operational classification for repository systems.
EncryptionDescriptor	Storing privileged or sealed content as ciphertext when the container is shared outside controlled environments.
Hash-chained provenance log	Tamper-evident audit trail of all custody transfers, redactions, and productions. The chain hash makes it cryptographically detectable if past events are deleted or altered.
structure.json (paged-document sequences)	Generic page ordering for multi-page documents. Useful for productions where sequential numbering follows page order.

5.3 What This Profile Does NOT Modify

- The ADAC container format (ZIP structure)
- The manifest schema (`manifest.json`)
- The core metadata schema (`metadata/core.json`)
- The region annotation schema (structure of regions or bounds)
- The edit pipeline schema
- The provenance log schema or hash-chain mechanism
- The checksum manifest schema or fixity computation
- The signature mechanism or signature index schema
- Any ADAC validation rules or error codes

6. Container Format

6.1 File Extension

Property	Value
File extension	<code>.adac</code>
MIME type	<code>application/vnd.adac.container</code>

ADAC-Legal containers use the standard .adac extension. The presence of the legal profile is identified by the profileType field inside metadata/profiles/legal.json, not by the file extension.

6.2 Directory Structure

```
<container>.adac
├── manifest.json                (REQUIRED - ADAC)
├── master/                     (REQUIRED - ADAC)
│   ├── master_0001.tif
│   └── ...
├── metadata/                  (REQUIRED - ADAC)
│   ├── core.json              (REQUIRED - ADAC)
│   ├── structure.json         (OPTIONAL - ADAC)
│   ├── xmp/                   (OPTIONAL - ADAC)
│   │   ├── ...
│   └── profiles/              (REQUIRED for this profile)
│       └── legal.json         (REQUIRED for this profile)
├── derivatives/               (OPTIONAL - ADAC)
│   └── ...
├── regions/                   (RECOMMENDED for this profile)
│   ├── master-001.regions.json
│   └── ...
├── edits/                     (OPTIONAL - ADAC)
│   └── ...
├── provenance/                (REQUIRED for Archival ADAC)
│   ├── log.json               (hash-chained events)
│   └── checksums.json
└── signatures/                (OPTIONAL - RECOMMENDED for evidentiary
    ├── index.json
    └── *.p7s
use)
```

6.3 Manifest Integration

```
{
  "metadata": {
    "core": "metadata/core.json",
    "structure": "metadata/structure.json",
    "profiles": [
      "metadata/profiles/legal.json"
    ],
    "provenanceLog": "provenance/log.json",
    "checksums": "provenance/checksums.json",
    "signatures": "signatures/index.json"
  }
}
```

```
}  
}
```

A container MAY include multiple profiles simultaneously. A succession or probate document might carry both a legal profile and a genealogy profile:

```
{  
  "metadata": {  
    "core": "metadata/core.json",  
    "profiles": [  
      "metadata/profiles/legal.json",  
      "metadata/profiles/genealogy.json"  
    ]  
  }  
}
```

7. Legal Profile

Path: metadata/profiles/legal.json **Status:** REQUIRED for ADAC-Legal containers

The legal profile is the root metadata file for this extension. It uses the standard ADAC 1.0 profile wrapper (Section 13.2 of the ADAC core specification) to declare its identity, then carries legal-specific content under the data field.

7.1 Schema

```
{  
  "profileId": "urn:adac:profile:legal:v1",  
  "profileType": "legal",  
  "profileVersion": "1.0.0",  
  "title": "ADAC Legal Profile",  
  "schema": "https://adac.example.org/schemas/legal-v1.json",  
  "data": {  
    "jurisdictionProfile": "uk",  
    "matterReference": { ... },  
    "classification": { ... },  
    "custodyChain": [ ... ],  
    "privilegeLog": [ ... ],  
    "holdNotices": [ ... ],  
    "productions": [ ... ]  
  }  
}
```

7.2 Profile Wrapper Fields

Field	Type	Required	Value	Description
profileId	string	REQUIRED	"urn:adac:profile:legal:v1"	URN identifying this specific profile and version.
profileType	string	REQUIRED	"legal"	The profile type identifier. MUST be "legal".
profileVersion	string	REQUIRED	"1.0.0" for this spec	Semantic version (MAJOR.MINOR.PATCH).
title	string	OPTIONAL	—	Human-readable title for display.
schema	string	OPTIONAL	—	URI of a JSON Schema document that validates the data subobject.
data	LegalData	OPTIONAL	—	The legal-specific payload. See Section 7.3.

7.3 LegalData Fields

Field	Type	Required	Default	Description
jurisdictionProfile	string	OPTIONAL	null	Identifies a country-specific or subdivision-specific jurisdiction profile (see Section 8). When absent, only the base ADAC-Legal schema and value sets apply.
matterReference	MatterReference	OPTIONAL	null	Legal matter identification (see Section 9).
classification	DocumentClassification	OPTIONAL	null	Document type, confidentiality, and sequential numbering (see Section 10).
custodyChain	CustodyEntry[]	OPTIONAL	null	Chronological chain-of-custody entries (see

Field	Type	Required	Default	Description
				Section 11).
privilegeLog	PrivilegeEntry[]	OPTIONAL	null	Legal privilege determinations (see Section 12).
holdNotices	HoldNotice[]	OPTIONAL	null	Preservation hold notices (see Section 13).
productions	Production[]	OPTIONAL	null	Disclosure and production records (see Section 14).

7.4 Forward Compatibility

Unknown JSON properties at any level (within the wrapper or within data) **MUST** be preserved during round-trip serialization.

8. Jurisdiction Profiles

Legal systems vary dramatically across countries and subdivisions. ADAC-Legal addresses this through **jurisdiction profiles** — named variants that extend the base specification with country-specific or subdivision-specific terminology, well-known value sets, and procedural concepts.

8.1 Mechanism

The `jurisdictionProfile` field in the legal profile data identifies which jurisdiction variant applies to this container. When present, it signals to consuming applications that jurisdiction-specific document types, matter types, and procedural concepts **MAY** appear in the container's metadata.

When `jurisdictionProfile` is absent or `null`, the container uses only the base ADAC-Legal schema and value sets defined in this specification.

8.2 Naming Convention

Jurisdiction profile identifiers follow a hierarchical, hyphen-delimited naming convention based on ISO 3166 codes:

```
{country}
{country}-{subdivision}
```

Identifier	Full Name	Legal Tradition
"us"	ADAC-Legal-US	United States — common law (federal and most states)
"uk"	ADAC-Legal-UK	United Kingdom — common law (England & Wales; Scotland and Northern Ireland may further specialize)
"au"	ADAC-Legal-AU	Australia — common law
"ca"	ADAC-Legal-CA	Canada — common law (further specializes to "ca-qc" for Québec civil law)
"de"	ADAC-Legal-DE	Germany — civil law (ZPO procedure)
"fr"	ADAC-Legal-FR	France — civil law (CPC procedure)
"nl"	ADAC-Legal-NL	Netherlands — civil law
"es"	ADAC-Legal-ES	Spain — civil law
"jp"	ADAC-Legal-JP	Japan — civil law
"sg"	ADAC-Legal-SG	Singapore — common law
"us-la"	ADAC-Legal-US-LA	Louisiana, USA — civil law tradition within a common law country
"us-pr"	ADAC-Legal-US-PR	Puerto Rico — civil law tradition, bilingual system
"ca-qc"	ADAC-Legal-CA-QC	Québec, Canada — civil law tradition within a common law country

Additional jurisdiction profiles MAY be defined by companion specifications following this naming convention.

8.3 Inheritance Model

Jurisdiction profiles follow an **additive inheritance** model:

1. **Base layer** — The ADAC-Legal specification (this document) defines the core schema and base well-known value sets. Every jurisdiction profile inherits all base fields and values.
2. **Country layer** — A country-level jurisdiction profile (such as "de") MAY add jurisdiction-specific values to existing well-known value sets, define additional linked entity types specific to the jurisdiction, and provide country-specific guidance on populating base fields.
3. **Subdivision layer** — A subdivision-level profile (such as "us-la") inherits from its country layer and MAY further specialize with subdivision-specific document types and terminology.

Jurisdiction profiles **MUST NOT** remove or redefine base ADAC-Legal fields, remove base well-known values, change the meaning of base fields, or modify the ADAC core specification.

8.4 When to Create a Jurisdiction Profile

A jurisdiction profile is warranted when a legal system has **structural differences** that cannot be adequately represented by the base well-known value sets:

Condition	Example
Distinct legal tradition	Louisiana (civil law in a common law country), Québec, Scotland (mixed).
Unique document types	Notarial acts (civil law), statutory declarations (UK/AU/CA), Schriftsatz (Germany), huissier-served process (France).
Different procedural terminology	"Parish" vs. "county", "pursuer" vs. "claimant" (Scotland), "Schuldner" vs. "defendant".
Jurisdiction-specific regulatory framework	GDPR data protection obligations (EU), Civil Procedure Rules (UK), Federal Rules of Civil Procedure (US).

A jurisdiction profile is **not** warranted for minor terminological preferences that can be handled by free-text fields or custom values in existing value sets.

8.5 Interoperability Across Jurisdiction Profiles

- An application that understands only the base ADAC-Legal specification can process any jurisdiction profile container — jurisdiction-specific values appear as ordinary strings in well-known value set fields.
- An application that understands "ca" but not "ca-qc" can process a Québec container — it will recognize all base and Canadian-level values.
- Cross-jurisdiction document collections (such as a multinational arbitration matter) **MAY** contain containers with different jurisdiction profiles. Applications **SHOULD** handle mixed-jurisdiction collections gracefully.

9. Matter Reference

The matter reference identifies the legal matter or proceeding that the archived document belongs to, enabling retrieval, indexing, and compliance tracking across large document collections. The term "matter" is used in preference to "case" because it accommodates transactional, regulatory, and advisory work alongside contentious proceedings.

9.1 Schema

```
{
  "matterReference": {
    "matterNumber": "2026-LIT-04521",
    "tribunalName": "Commercial Court, King's Bench Division",
    "jurisdiction": {
      "country": "GB",
      "subdivision": "England and Wales"
    },
  },
  "docketIdentifier": null,
  "matterType": "litigation",
  "matterCaption": "Acme Ltd v. Brixton Holdings plc",
  "parties": [
    {
      "name": "Acme Ltd",
      "role": "claimant",
      "legalRepresentative": "Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer LLP"
    },
    {
      "name": "Brixton Holdings plc",
      "role": "defendant",
      "legalRepresentative": "Clifford Chance LLP"
    }
  ],
  "relatedMatters": [
    {
      "matterNumber": "2025-ARB-00881",
      "relationship": "predecessorOf",
      "containerId": "550e8400-e29b-41d4-a716-446655440099",
      "note": "Arbitration that preceded current court proceedings."
    }
  ]
}
```

9.2 Matter Reference Fields

Field	Type	Required	Description
matterNumber	string	OPTIONAL	Matter or file number assigned by the tribunal or firm.
tribunalName	string	OPTIONAL	Name of the tribunal (court, arbitral panel, administrative body).

Field	Type	Required	Description
jurisdiction	Jurisdiction	OPTIONAL	Geographic and legal jurisdiction of the matter (see Section 9.3).
docketIdentifier	string	OPTIONAL	Docket or cause number, if distinct from the matter number.
matterType	string	OPTIONAL	Type of legal matter. See Section 20.3 for well-known values.
matterCaption	string	OPTIONAL	Matter caption or title (such as "Acme Ltd v. Brixton Holdings plc").
parties	Party[]	OPTIONAL	Named parties and their roles. See Section 9.4 .
relatedMatters	RelatedMatter[]	OPTIONAL	Other matters related to this one. See Section 9.5 .

9.3 Jurisdiction

Describes the geographic and legal jurisdiction of the matter.

```
{
  "country": "GB",
  "subdivision": "England and Wales",
  "localUnit": "London"
}
```

Field	Type	Description
country	string	The country. ISO 3166-1 alpha-2 code RECOMMENDED (such as "US", "GB", "DE", "FR", "JP").
subdivision	string	State, province, Bundesland, région, or equivalent administrative division. ISO 3166-2 code or free text.
localUnit	string	City, county, Landkreis, département, or equivalent local unit. Free text.

All fields are OPTIONAL. Populate only the levels relevant to the matter's jurisdiction.

9.4 Party

Identifies a named party in the legal matter.

```
{
  "name": "Acme Ltd",
```

```

"role": "claimant",
"legalRepresentative": "Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer LLP"
}

```

Field	Type	Required	Description
name	string	REQUIRED	The party's name (individual or entity).
role	string	OPTIONAL	The party's role in the proceedings. Jurisdiction-neutral well-known values: "claimant", "defendant", "petitioner", "respondent", "appellant", "appellee", "applicant", "intervenor", "thirdParty". Jurisdiction profiles MAY add jurisdiction-specific role values.
legalRepresentative	string	OPTIONAL	Name of the law firm, barrister's chambers, Rechtsanwaltskanzlei, cabinet d'avocats, or other legal representative acting for this party.

9.5 Related Matters

Matters are often related to other proceedings — consolidated, severed, appealed, remanded, or part of a multi-party arbitration or regulatory inquiry. The `relatedMatters` array captures these relationships.

```

{
  "matterNumber": "2025-ARB-00881",
  "relationship": "predecessorOf",
  "containerId": "550e8400-e29b-41d4-a716-446655440099",
  "note": "Arbitration that preceded current court proceedings."
}

```

Field	Type	Required	Description
matterNumber	string	REQUIRED	The related matter's reference number.
relationship	string	OPTIONAL	The relationship type. Well-known values: "consolidatedWith", "severedFrom", "appealOf", "remandFrom", "relatedTo", "successorTo", "predecessorOf", "multiPartyMember".
containerId	string	OPTIONAL	UUID of an ADAC container holding records for the related matter. When present, MUST be a valid UUID (RFC 4122) matching the manifest <code>id</code> of the referenced container.
note	string	OPTIONAL	Free-text explanation of the relationship.

10. Document Classification

Document classification describes the document type, exhibit or production identification, confidentiality level, sequential numbering, and retention policy.

10.1 Schema

```
{
  "classification": {
    "documentType": "courtFiling",
    "exhibitIdentifier": "Claimant's Bundle Tab C",
    "filingDate": "2026-03-15T00:00:00Z",
    "confidentialityLevel": "confidential",
    "sequentialNumberStart": "ACM000123",
    "sequentialNumberEnd": "ACM000125",
    "retentionPolicy": {
      "period": "7 years after matter closure",
      "expiresOn": null,
      "disposition": "review",
      "holdActive": true
    }
  }
}
```

10.2 Document Classification Fields

Field	Type	Required	Description
documentType	string	OPTIONAL	The document type. See Section 20.1 for well-known values.
exhibitIdentifier	string	OPTIONAL	Exhibit identifier, bundle tab reference, or similar formal designation (such as "Exhibit A", "Claimant's Bundle Tab C", "Anlage K1", "Pièce adverse No. 3").
filingDate	string	OPTIONAL	Date the document was filed with the tribunal or received by the firm (ISO-8601).
confidentialityLevel	string	OPTIONAL	Access restriction level. See Section 20.2 for well-known values. See Section 19 for the relationship to ADAC's <code>accessControl</code> mechanism.

Field	Type	Required	Description
sequentialNumberStart	string	OPTIONAL	Beginning of the sequential production number range (such as "ACM000123", "SHP-000042"). This is a jurisdiction-neutral generalization of Bates numbering.
sequentialNumberEnd	string	OPTIONAL	End of the sequential production number range.
retentionPolicy	RetentionPolicy	OPTIONAL	Retention period, disposition, and hold status.

10.3 Retention Policy

Describes the rules governing how long the document must be preserved.

```
{
  "period": "7 years after matter closure",
  "expiresOn": null,
  "disposition": "review",
  "holdActive": true
}
```

Field	Type	Required	Default	Description
period	string	OPTIONAL	null	Human-readable retention period (such as "7 years", "permanent", "6 years from transaction close").
expiresOn	string	OPTIONAL	null	ISO-8601 date when the retention period expires. null when indefinite or not yet calculated.
disposition	string	OPTIONAL	null	Action when the period expires: "destroy", "review", "archive", "transfer".
holdActive	boolean	OPTIONAL	null	When true, destruction is suspended regardless of the retention period. This is a summary boolean; for tracking multiple overlapping holds use the holdNotices array (Section 13).

10.4 Sequential Numbering Notes

Sequential numbering (called "Bates numbering" in US practice and known by various names or conventions in other jurisdictions) is used to uniquely identify every page in a production or disclosure set.

- Sequential numbers are assigned externally during production. ADAC-Legal records the assigned range — it does not generate sequential numbers.
- For a single-page document, `sequentialNumberStart` and `sequentialNumberEnd` SHOULD be the same value.
- A document MAY be numbered differently for different productions. Each numbering belongs in its corresponding `productions[]` entry (Section 14). The `classification` fields reflect the primary or original numbering.

11. Chain of Custody

The chain of custody provides a chronological, unbroken record of every person or entity that handled the artifact. This documentation is essential for establishing admissibility of evidence and demonstrating that the document was not tampered with between collection and production.

11.1 Schema

```
{
  "custodyChain": [
    {
      "id": "custody-001",
      "action": "received",
      "custodian": "A. Blackwell, Solicitor",
      "timestamp": "2026-03-15T09:00:00Z",
      "organization": "Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer LLP",
      "signatureRef": "signatures/container-ingest.p7s",
      "notes": "Original contract received from client by hand delivery."
    },
    {
      "id": "custody-002",
      "action": "scanned",
      "custodian": "Litigation Support",
      "timestamp": "2026-03-16T14:30:00Z",
      "organization": "Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer LLP",
      "notes": "Scanned at 600 DPI, TIFF format, flatbed scanner."
    },
    {
      "id": "custody-003",
```

```

    "action": "stored",
    "custodian": "Records Management",
    "timestamp": "2026-03-16T16:00:00Z",
    "organization": "Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer LLP",
    "signatureRef": "signatures/container-archived.p7s",
    "notes": "Physical original placed in locked document store."
  }
]
}

```

11.2 Custody Entry Fields

Field	Type	Required	Description
id	string	REQUIRED	Unique identifier for this custody entry within the container.
action	string	REQUIRED	The custody action performed. See Section 20.4 for well-known values.
custodian	string	REQUIRED	Name of the person or entity who performed or received custody.
timestamp	string	REQUIRED	ISO-8601 timestamp of when the action occurred.
organization	string	OPTIONAL	Firm, court office, or organization associated with the custodian.
signatureRef	string	OPTIONAL	Container-relative path to a signature file (in <code>signatures/</code>) that cryptographically attests to the container state at the moment of this custody event. References the <code>file</code> field in <code>signatures/index.json</code> .
notes	string	OPTIONAL	Free-text notes describing the event.

11.3 Cryptographic Chain of Custody

For evidentiary use, ADAC-Legal RECOMMENDS that significant custody events be supported by container signatures:

1. When a significant custody event occurs (receipt, scan, production handoff), the holding party re-saves the container following the ADAC write-order procedure (Section 16.6 of the ADAC core specification).
2. The save includes a new CMS signature in `signatures/`, listed in `signatures/index.json` with a `purpose` value describing the custody event.
3. The new custody entry's `signatureRef` field references the path of the signature file.
4. The signature attests to the state of `manifest.json` and `provenance/checksums.json` at that moment, which transitively attests to every file in the container including the master.

This produces a chain of custody where every link is cryptographically verifiable. An opposing party challenging authenticity can verify each signature against the holding party's certificate chain. Tampering between custody events is detectable as a checksum mismatch or signature failure.

11.4 Relationship to ADAC Provenance Log

The chain of custody and the ADAC provenance log (`provenance/log.json`) serve complementary but distinct purposes:

Aspect	Chain of Custody	Provenance Log
Records	Legal handling of the physical or logical document	Technical actions on the ADAC container
Audience	Legal professionals, tribunals, compliance officers	Software developers, archivists
Examples	"Received from instructing client", "Produced to opposing solicitors"	"scan", "import", "derivativeCreated", "save"
Scope	May predate container creation	Begins at container creation
Tamper-evidence	Indirect — relies on container signatures and checksums	Direct — events are linked in a hash chain

Both SHOULD be populated when applicable. Implementations SHOULD also append a `legalCustodyTransfer` event to the provenance log when adding a custody chain entry, so the legal action appears in the cryptographically chained event log.

11.5 Custody Chain Guidelines

- Custody entries SHOULD be in **chronological order** (earliest first).
 - Every significant handoff — including internal transfers within the same organization — SHOULD be recorded.
 - The `notes` field SHOULD include specifics that support admissibility: receipt references, storage locations, scanner details, witness names.
 - When the container is signed at a custody event, the corresponding entry SHOULD include `signatureRef`.
-

12. Legal Privilege

Legal privilege (called "attorney-client privilege" and "work-product privilege" in the US, "legal professional privilege" in the UK and Australia, "secret professionnel" in France, "Anwaltsgeheimnis" in Germany) is recognized across major world legal traditions, though its exact scope and sub-categories vary. The privilege log records explicit determinations of privilege, the legal basis for those determinations, and any waiver or disclosure events.

12.1 Schema

```
{
  "privilegeLog": [
    {
      "id": "priv-001",
      "claim": "legalProfessionalPrivilege",
      "basis": "Communication between A. Blackwell (solicitor) and Acme Ltd (client)
dated 2026-03-10, seeking legal advice on contract interpretation.",
      "claimedBy": "Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer LLP",
      "claimedOn": "2026-04-01T10:00:00Z",
      "scope": "fullDocument",
      "waivedOn": null,
      "waiverBasis": null
    }
  ]
}
```

12.2 Privilege Log Fields

Field	Type	Required	Description
id	string	REQUIRED	Unique identifier for this privilege entry within the container.
claim	string	REQUIRED	The privilege claimed. See Section 20.5 for well-known values.
basis	string	OPTIONAL	Free-text description of the factual and legal basis for the privilege claim.
claimedBy	string	OPTIONAL	Person or firm asserting the privilege.
claimedOn	string	OPTIONAL	ISO-8601 timestamp of when the claim was asserted.
scope	string	OPTIONAL	Scope of the claim: "fullDocument" (entire document is privileged), "partialRedacted" (some areas redacted; see <code>legal:privilege</code> annotations on regions), "metadataOnly" (metadata only is privileged, document contents are producible).

Field	Type	Required	Description
waivedOn	string	OPTIONAL	ISO-8601 timestamp if the privilege has been waived or lost.
waiverBasis	string	OPTIONAL	Free-text description of the waiver or loss of privilege (voluntary disclosure, court-ordered production, inadvertent disclosure, common interest waiver).

13. Preservation Holds

Preservation holds document directives that suspend ordinary retention or destruction schedules. A single document may be subject to multiple overlapping holds (pending litigation, regulatory inquiry, and internal audit simultaneously), which is why `holdNotices` is an array rather than a single boolean.

13.1 Schema

```
{
  "holdNotices": [
    {
      "id": "hold-001",
      "holdType": "litigation",
      "matterReference": "Acme Ltd v. Brixton Holdings plc, 2026-LIT-04521",
      "issuedBy": "A. Blackwell, Solicitor, Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer LLP",
      "issuedOn": "2026-02-01T00:00:00Z",
      "scope": "All contracts and correspondence with Brixton Holdings plc from 2024-01-01 onward.",
      "releasedOn": null,
      "releaseAuthority": null,
      "notes": "Hold issued upon receipt of claim letter."
    }
  ]
}
```

13.2 Fields

Field	Type	Required	Description
id	string	REQUIRED	Unique identifier for this hold notice within the container.
holdType	string	REQUIRED	The type of hold. See Section 20.6 for well-known values.
matterReference	string	OPTIONAL	Free-text reference to the matter or proceeding triggering

Field	Type	Required	Description
			the hold.
issuedBy	string	OPTIONAL	Person or entity who issued the hold notice.
issuedOn	string	OPTIONAL	ISO-8601 timestamp of when the hold was issued.
scope	string	OPTIONAL	Free-text description of the documents covered by the hold.
releasedOn	string	OPTIONAL	ISO-8601 timestamp if the hold has been released. null if still active.
releaseAuthority	string	OPTIONAL	Free-text description of who authorized the release and on what basis.
notes	string	OPTIONAL	Free-text notes about the hold.

13.3 Hold Notices and Retention Policy

When any active hold notice exists for a document (`releasedOn` is null), destruction **MUST NOT** occur regardless of the `retentionPolicy.period` or `retentionPolicy.expiresOn` values. The `retentionPolicy.holdActive` boolean is a convenience summary.

Implementations **SHOULD** set `retentionPolicy.holdActive` to `true` when at least one hold notice has `releasedOn`: null, and to `false` when all holds have been released.

14. Production Tracking

In legal proceedings, the same document may be disclosed or produced multiple times — to different parties, in different forms (with or without certain redactions), under different production rounds, with different sequential numbering. The `productions` array records these disclosure events.

14.1 Schema

```
{
  "productions": [
    {
      "id": "prod-001",
      "productionSetId": "Acme v. Brixton - Disclosure Set 1",
      "producedOn": "2026-04-15T00:00:00Z",
      "producedBy": "Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer LLP",
      "producedTo": "Clifford Chance LLP (for Brixton Holdings plc)",
      "sequentialNumberStart": "ACM000123",
    }
  ]
}
```

```

    "sequentialNumberEnd": "ACM000125",
    "redactionVariant": "deriv_redacted_001",
    "notes": "First disclosure set. Redacted version produced per Disclosure
Protocol Order dated 2026-03-01."
  }
]
}

```

14.2 Production Entry Fields

Field	Type	Required	Description
id	string	REQUIRED	Unique identifier for this production record within the container.
productionSetId	string	OPTIONAL	Identifier of the production set or disclosure batch this document belongs to.
producedOn	string	OPTIONAL	ISO-8601 timestamp of when the production was made.
producedBy	string	OPTIONAL	Person, firm, or organization that produced the document.
producedTo	string	OPTIONAL	Recipient of the production (opposing party, regulatory body, tribunal).
sequentialNumberStart	string	OPTIONAL	Sequential number assigned in this specific production (may differ from <code>classification.sequentialNumberStart</code>).
sequentialNumberEnd	string	OPTIONAL	End of the sequential number range for this production.
redactionVariant	string	OPTIONAL	The id of the derivative file in the manifest that represents the redacted version produced. <code>null</code> if the unredacted master was produced.
notes	string	OPTIONAL	Free-text notes about this production event.

15. Region Linked Entities

ADAC-Legal stores per-region legal data in the ADAC region `linkedEntities` dictionary — a JSON object on each region where keys are namespaced strings and values are arbitrary JSON objects.

15.1 Linked Entity Keys

Key	Description
<code>legal:exhibit</code>	Exhibit identification and marking (see Section 16).
<code>legal:redaction</code>	Redaction reason, authority, and notes (see Section 17).
<code>legal:privilege</code>	Per-region privilege annotation for partial-document privilege claims (see Section 18).

15.2 Round-Trip Safety

Non-legal consumers that read a container and write it back MUST preserve all linked entity data. Because the ADAC core treats `linkedEntities` values as opaque JSON objects, no legal data is lost during round-trip serialization by tools that do not understand the legal namespace.

15.3 Multiple Entities per Region

A single region MAY have multiple linked entities simultaneously. For example, a bounding box around a paragraph that is both a privileged communication and has been redacted could have both a `legal:privilege` entity and a `legal:redaction` entity. Legal linked entities coexist with linked entities from other profiles without conflict.

16. Exhibit Annotation

Linked Entity Key: `legal:exhibit`

Exhibit annotations tag a bounding-box region on a scanned document as an exhibit marker, label, or sticker area. This allows applications to locate exhibit tags within multi-page productions programmatically.

16.1 Schema

```
{
  "exhibitId": "Claimant's Bundle Tab C",
  "description": "Signed contract dated 2024-03-15",
  "markedOn": "2026-04-01T10:00:00Z",
  "introducedBy": "Claimant"
}
```

16.2 Fields

Field	Type	Required	Description
exhibitId	string	REQUIRED	The exhibit identifier (such as "Exhibit A", "Claimant's Bundle Tab C", "Defense 7", "Anlage K1").
description	string	OPTIONAL	Human-readable description of the exhibit.
markedOn	string	OPTIONAL	ISO-8601 timestamp of when the exhibit was marked or admitted.
introducedBy	string	OPTIONAL	The party or representative who introduced the exhibit (such as "Claimant", "Defence Counsel").

16.3 Usage Guidelines

- The `exhibitId` SHOULD match the `classification.exhibitIdentifier` in the profile when the entire document is a single exhibit.
- For documents containing multiple exhibit stickers (such as a deposition transcript with several marked exhibits), each sticker region gets its own `legal:exhibit` entity with a distinct `exhibitId`.
- The `description` SHOULD be sufficient for a reviewer to identify the exhibit without opening the document.

17. Redaction Annotation

Linked Entity Key: `legal:redaction`

Redaction annotations record that a specific region on a scanned document has been redacted, including the reason, legal authority, and the person who authorized the redaction. The annotation does not perform the actual redaction — the visual redaction (black box, white-out, etc.) exists in the stored image or derivative. This metadata records **why** the region was redacted and under whose authority, enabling compliance auditing.

17.1 Schema

```
{
  "reason": "personalData",
  "authority": "Protective Order dated 2026-01-10",
  "authorizedBy": "A. Blackwell, Solicitor",
  "appliedToDerivativeIds": ["deriv_redacted_001"],
  "redactedOn": "2026-04-01T08:30:00Z",
```

```
"notes": "Home address of individual witness – redacted per Protective Order ¶ 4(b)."  
}
```

17.2 Fields

Field	Type	Required	Description
reason	string	REQUIRED	The reason for the redaction. See Section 20.7 for well-known values.
authority	string	OPTIONAL	The legal authority or basis (such as "Protective Order dated 2026-01-10", "GDPR Art. 17", "CPR r. 31.22").
authorizedBy	string	OPTIONAL	Person or entity who authorized the redaction.
appliedToDerivativeIds	string[]	OPTIONAL	Array of derivative file id values (from the manifest) on which the visual redaction has been applied.
redactedOn	string	OPTIONAL	ISO-8601 timestamp of when the redaction was applied.
notes	string	OPTIONAL	Free-text notes describing what was redacted.

17.3 Usage Guidelines

- The `reason` field SHOULD use well-known values when applicable to enable automated filtering and compliance reporting.
- The `authority` field SHOULD be specific enough for a reviewer or tribunal to verify the legal basis for the redaction.
- A single document MAY have many redacted regions. Each redacted area gets its own region with its own `legal:redaction` entity.
- Applications SHOULD render redaction annotations as a distinct overlay style (such as black boxes with a "REDACTED" label).

18. Privilege Annotation

Linked Entity Key: `legal:privilege`

Privilege annotations mark specific regions of a document as privileged where the privilege claim does not extend to the entire document (corresponding to `scope: "partialRedacted"` in the `privilegeLog`). This enables per-paragraph or per-section privilege mapping.

18.1 Schema

```
{
  "privilegeLogId": "priv-001",
  "claim": "legalProfessionalPrivilege",
  "notes": "Paragraph 3 contains legal advice from solicitor; remainder of document
is producible."
}
```

18.2 Fields

Field	Type	Required	Description
<code>privilegeLogId</code>	<code>string</code>	OPTIONAL	The id of the corresponding <code>privilegeLog</code> entry in the profile. Links this region annotation to its privilege determination.
<code>claim</code>	<code>string</code>	REQUIRED	The privilege claim applying to this region. SHOULD match the <code>claim</code> value of the referenced <code>privilegeLog</code> entry. See Section 20.5 for well-known values.
<code>notes</code>	<code>string</code>	OPTIONAL	Free-text explanation of why this specific region is privileged.

19. Confidentiality and Access Control

19.1 The Two-Layer Model

ADAC-Legal uses a two-layer approach to confidentiality:

1. **Legal classification** (`classification.confidentialityLevel` in the legal profile) — Records the legal designation of the document as a whole. This is informational metadata describing the legal status.
2. **Operational access control** (ADAC's `accessControl` mechanism) — Enforces access at the file level within the container, controlling which parts of the container are readable by different classes of reader.

The legal profile records intent and authority. The ADAC `accessControl` mechanism provides the enforcement hook for consuming systems.

19.2 Mapping Confidentiality Levels to Access Control

Legal Classification	Recommended <code>accessControl</code> Action
"public"	No restriction.
"confidential"	Restrict to authorized recipients. Tag master and derivatives accordingly.
"legallyPrivileged"	Restrict to privileged recipients. Consider <code>EncryptionDescriptor</code> for containers shared outside counsel.
"sealed"	Restrict to court-authorized recipients. <code>EncryptionDescriptor</code> STRONGLY RECOMMENDED.
"restricted"	Restrict per specific conditions defined in notes.

19.3 Encryption for Privileged Content

When a container containing privileged or sealed content must be transmitted or stored outside controlled environments, the ADAC `EncryptionDescriptor` mechanism provides a way to store the master file as pre-encrypted ciphertext. The legal profile describes the legal basis for confidentiality; the `EncryptionDescriptor` provides the technical means of protecting the content.

20. Well-Known Value Sets

ADAC-Legal defines controlled vocabularies for several fields. Implementations SHOULD use these well-known values when applicable but MAY use custom values for domain-specific or jurisdiction-specific needs. All values use `camelCase` strings.

The value sets defined in this section are the **base** values available to all ADAC-Legal containers regardless of jurisdiction. Jurisdiction profiles (see [Section 8](#)) MAY extend these value sets with additional jurisdiction-specific values. Jurisdiction profiles MUST NOT remove or redefine base values.

20.1 Document Types

Used in `classification.documentType`.

Value	Description
"exhibit"	A document formally introduced as evidence before a tribunal.
"courtFiling"	A document filed with a court or tribunal (petition, complaint, statement of case).
"statementOfCase"	A pleading or statement of case defining the issues in dispute.
"application"	An application or motion submitted to the tribunal.
"judicialOrder"	An order, judgment, or ruling issued by the tribunal.
"correspondence"	Correspondence between parties, counsel, or the tribunal.
"contract"	A contract, agreement, or deed.
"testament"	A will or testamentary instrument.
"witnessStatement"	A written witness statement or sworn affidavit.
"expertReport"	An expert witness report or opinion.
"transcript"	A transcript of oral proceedings (hearing, examination, oral argument).
"writtenSubmissions"	Written submissions, skeleton arguments, or legal briefs.
"witnessSummons"	A summons or subpoena compelling testimony or document production.
"notarialAct"	A notarial act or instrument executed before a notary (civil law jurisdictions).
"regulatoryFiling"	A document filed with a regulatory body.
"internalMemo"	An internal memorandum or working document.

20.2 Confidentiality Levels

Used in `classification.confidentialityLevel`.

Value	Description
"public"	Public record — no access restrictions.
"confidential"	Restricted access under a protective order, confidentiality agreement, or professional obligation.
"legallyPrivileged"	Subject to legal professional privilege — withheld from production unless waived.
"sealed"	Sealed by tribunal order — access prohibited without court authorization.
"restricted"	Subject to specific access conditions defined by statute, regulation, or agreement.

20.3 Matter Types

Used in `matterReference.matterType`.

Value	Description
"litigation"	Contentious civil or commercial litigation before a court.
"arbitration"	Arbitration proceedings before an arbitral tribunal.
"mediation"	Mediation or other alternative dispute resolution.
"transaction"	Transactional matter (mergers, acquisitions, closings, financing).
"regulatory"	Regulatory, supervisory, or compliance matter.
"succession"	Succession, estate administration, or probate.
"familyLaw"	Family law matter (dissolution, custody, adoption, maintenance).
"criminal"	Criminal defense or prosecution.
"immigration"	Immigration or asylum matter.
"realProperty"	Real property or land matter.
"intellectualProperty"	Intellectual property matter (patents, trademarks, copyright).
"insolvency"	Insolvency, bankruptcy, or restructuring proceeding.
"publicLaw"	Public law, constitutional, or administrative law matter.
"employment"	Employment or labor matter.
"investigation"	Internal or regulatory investigation.
"advisory"	Transactional or advisory engagement without contentious proceedings.

20.4 Custody Actions

Used in `custodyChain[].action`.

Value	Description
"received"	Document received from an external source.
"transferred"	Document transferred to another custodian or organization.
"copied"	Document copied or duplicated.

Value	Description
"scanned"	Physical document scanned to digital form.
"stored"	Document placed into archival or controlled storage.
"retrieved"	Document retrieved from storage.
"sealed"	Document sealed by tribunal order.
"produced"	Document produced or disclosed to an opposing party or tribunal.
"destroyed"	Document destroyed per retention policy or court order.
"exported"	Document exported from a document management system.

20.5 Privilege Categories

Used in `privilegeLog[].claim` and `legal:privilege` linked entity `claim`.

Value	Description
"legalProfessionalPrivilege"	Legal professional privilege (jurisdiction-neutral base value). Encompasses advice privilege and litigation privilege where the distinction is not made.
"litigationPrivilege"	Privilege attaching to documents prepared for the dominant purpose of litigation (UK and other common law jurisdictions).
"commonInterestPrivilege"	Privilege shared among parties with a common legal interest.
"withoutPrejudice"	Documents or communications made without prejudice to settlement negotiations.
"publicInterestImmunity"	Immunity from disclosure on grounds of public interest (Crown privilege).
"journalisticPrivilege"	Privilege protecting journalistic sources.

NOTE — Jurisdiction-specific privilege categories (such as "attorneyClientPrivilege" and "workProductDoctrine" in US practice) are defined in the applicable jurisdiction profile.

20.6 Hold Types

Used in `holdNotices[].holdType`.

Value	Description
"litigation"	Hold issued in connection with pending or anticipated litigation.
"regulatory"	Hold issued in connection with a regulatory inquiry or investigation.
"audit"	Hold issued in connection with an internal or external audit.
"governmentInvestigation"	Hold issued in connection with a government investigation.
"contractual"	Hold required by a contractual obligation.
"statutory"	Hold required by statute or regulation.

20.7 Redaction Reasons

Used in redaction annotation reason.

Value	Description
"personalData"	Personal data or personally identifiable information (PII) protected by applicable data protection law.
"legallyPrivileged"	Content subject to legal professional privilege.
"commerciallyConfidential"	Commercially sensitive or proprietary business information.
"tradeSecret"	Trade secret or confidential technical information.
"tribunalOrder"	Information redacted pursuant to a tribunal order or direction.
"protectedIdentity"	Identity of a protected person (minor, witness protection, undercover officer).
"thirdPartyConfidential"	Confidential information belonging to a third party not a party to the proceedings.
"nationalSecurity"	Information whose disclosure would harm national security.
"regulatoryRestriction"	Information restricted by statute or regulatory rule.

21. JSON Conventions

All JSON within this profile follows the ADAC 1.0 conventions:

Convention	Requirement
Property naming	camelCase
Formatting	2-space indented (human-readable)
Null handling	Null-valued properties SHOULD be omitted
Encoding	UTF-8 without BOM
Unknown properties	MUST be preserved during round-trip serialization
Date/time format	ISO-8601 with UTC offset (e.g., "2026-04-01T10:00:00Z")
Identifiers	UUID v4 (RFC 4122) RECOMMENDED for id fields
Enum values	camelCase strings

22. Interoperability

22.1 Document Management System Integration

ADAC-Legal containers carry sufficient metadata to integrate with legal document management systems and e-discovery platforms:

- **Sequential numbering** enables page-level identification within production sets.
- **Confidentiality levels** map to privilege designations in review workflows.
- **Document types** correspond to standard classification taxonomies.
- **Redaction annotations** provide audit trails for redacted productions.
- **Matter reference** enables grouping by matter across large collections.

22.2 Confidentiality as Metadata

The `confidentialityLevel` field is **informational metadata**, not an enforcement mechanism. ADAC-Legal records the classification; the consuming application or document management system is responsible for enforcing access controls based on that classification. This design keeps the format simple and avoids coupling the specification to any particular access control system.

22.3 Profile Coexistence

ADAC-Legal containers MAY include additional profiles. Common combinations include:

- **Legal + Genealogy** — A succession or probate document with matter metadata, custody chain, and genealogical person annotations.
- **Legal + Preservation** — A legal document in an institutional archive with both matter tracking and archival description.

The profiles coexist without conflict. Linked entity keys use distinct namespaces (`legal:exhibit` vs. `genealogy:person` vs. `archival:description`).

22.4 Chain of Custody vs. Provenance Log

The chain of custody (this profile) and the ADAC provenance log (core ADAC) serve complementary purposes. Both SHOULD be populated when applicable. See [Section 11.4](#) for a detailed comparison.

22.5 Jurisdiction Profile Interoperability

Jurisdiction profiles are designed for graceful degradation:

- An application that understands "us" but not "us-la" can still process a Louisiana container — it will recognize all base and US-level values and treat Louisiana-specific values as custom strings.
- An application that understands only the base ADAC-Legal specification can process any jurisdiction profile container — jurisdiction-specific values appear as ordinary strings in well-known value set fields.
- Cross-jurisdiction document collections (such as a multinational litigation matter) MAY contain containers with different jurisdiction profiles. Applications SHOULD handle mixed-jurisdiction collections gracefully.

23. Complete Container Example

The following shows a complete ADAC-Legal container for a three-page contract exhibit in a commercial litigation matter.

23.1 Container Structure

```
acme-v-brixton-contract-001.adac
├─ manifest.json
├─ master/
│  ├─ master_0001.tif          (Page 1 - signature page, 600 DPI TIFF)
│  ├─ master_0002.tif        (Page 2 - terms and conditions)
│  └─ master_0003.tif        (Page 3 - schedules)
├─ metadata/
```

```

├── core.json
├── profiles/
│   └── legal.json
├── derivatives/
│   └── deriv_redacted_001.jpg          (Redacted web preview of page 1)
├── regions/
│   └── master-001.regions.json
├── provenance/
│   ├── log.json
│   └── checksums.json
└── signatures/
    ├── index.json
    ├── container-ingest.p7s
    └── container-archived.p7s

```

23.2 Legal Profile (metadata/profiles/legal.json)

```

{
  "profileId": "urn:adac:profile:legal:v1",
  "profileType": "legal",
  "profileVersion": "1.0.0",
  "title": "ADAC Legal Profile",
  "data": {
    "jurisdictionProfile": "uk",
    "matterReference": {
      "matterNumber": "2026-LIT-04521",
      "tribunalName": "Commercial Court, King's Bench Division",
      "jurisdiction": {
        "country": "GB",
        "subdivision": "England and Wales"
      },
    },
    "matterType": "litigation",
    "matterCaption": "Acme Ltd v. Brixton Holdings plc",
    "parties": [
      {
        "name": "Acme Ltd",
        "role": "claimant",
        "legalRepresentative": "Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer LLP"
      },
      {
        "name": "Brixton Holdings plc",
        "role": "defendant",
        "legalRepresentative": "Clifford Chance LLP"
      }
    ]
  },
  "classification": {

```

```
"documentType": "contract",
"exhibitIdentifier": "Claimant's Bundle Tab C",
"filingDate": "2026-03-15T00:00:00Z",
"confidentialityLevel": "confidential",
"sequentialNumberStart": "ACM000123",
"sequentialNumberEnd": "ACM000125",
"retentionPolicy": {
  "period": "7 years after matter closure",
  "disposition": "review",
  "holdActive": true
}
},
"custodyChain": [
  {
    "id": "custody-001",
    "action": "received",
    "custodian": "A. Blackwell, Solicitor",
    "timestamp": "2026-03-15T09:00:00Z",
    "organization": "Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer LLP",
    "signatureRef": "signatures/container-ingest.p7s",
    "notes": "Original contract received from client by hand delivery."
  },
  {
    "id": "custody-002",
    "action": "scanned",
    "custodian": "Litigation Support",
    "timestamp": "2026-03-16T14:30:00Z",
    "organization": "Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer LLP",
    "notes": "Scanned at 600 DPI, TIFF format."
  },
  {
    "id": "custody-003",
    "action": "stored",
    "custodian": "Records Management",
    "timestamp": "2026-03-16T16:00:00Z",
    "organization": "Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer LLP",
    "signatureRef": "signatures/container-archived.p7s",
    "notes": "Physical original placed in locked document store."
  }
],
"privilegeLog": [
  {
    "id": "priv-001",
    "claim": "legalProfessionalPrivilege",
    "basis": "Advice in schedule 3 given by A. Blackwell (solicitor) to Acme Ltd
regarding contractual risk.",
    "claimedBy": "Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer LLP",
    "claimedOn": "2026-04-01T10:00:00Z",
    "scope": "partialRedacted",
```

```

    "waivedOn": null,
    "waiverBasis": null
  }
],
"holdNotices": [
  {
    "id": "hold-001",
    "holdType": "litigation",
    "matterReference": "Acme Ltd v. Brixton Holdings plc, 2026-LIT-04521",
    "issuedBy": "A. Blackwell, Solicitor",
    "issuedOn": "2026-02-01T00:00:00Z",
    "scope": "All contracts and correspondence with Brixton Holdings plc from
2024-01-01 onward.",
    "releasedOn": null,
    "releaseAuthority": null,
    "notes": "Hold issued upon receipt of claim letter."
  }
],
"productions": [
  {
    "id": "prod-001",
    "productionSetId": "Acme v. Brixton - Disclosure Set 1",
    "producedOn": "2026-04-15T00:00:00Z",
    "producedBy": "Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer LLP",
    "producedTo": "Clifford Chance LLP (for Brixton Holdings plc)",
    "sequentialNumberStart": "ACM000123",
    "sequentialNumberEnd": "ACM000125",
    "redactionVariant": "deriv_redacted_001",
    "notes": "Redacted version produced per Disclosure Protocol Order dated 2026-
03-01."
  }
]
}
}

```

23.3 Region Annotations (regions/master-001.regions.json)

```

{
  "mediaId": "master-001",
  "coordinateSystem": "pixel",
  "width": 4800,
  "height": 6400,
  "regions": [
    {
      "id": "region-001",
      "type": "boundingBox",
      "label": "Exhibit label - Claimant's Bundle Tab C",

```

```
"bounds": {
  "x": 3800.0,
  "y": 100.0,
  "width": 900.0,
  "height": 200.0
},
"linkedEntities": {
  "legal:exhibit": {
    "exhibitId": "Claimant's Bundle Tab C",
    "description": "Signed service contract dated 2024-03-15",
    "markedOn": "2026-04-01T10:00:00Z",
    "introducedBy": "Claimant"
  }
}
},
{
  "id": "region-002",
  "type": "boundingBox",
  "label": "Redacted - privileged legal advice",
  "bounds": {
    "x": 2200.0,
    "y": 3400.0,
    "width": 600.0,
    "height": 60.0
  },
  "linkedEntities": {
    "legal:redaction": {
      "reason": "legallyPrivileged",
      "authority": "Legal professional privilege - Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer
LLP",
      "authorizedBy": "A. Blackwell, Solicitor",
      "appliedToDerivativeIds": ["deriv_redacted_001"],
      "redactedOn": "2026-04-01T08:30:00Z",
      "notes": "Legal advice regarding contractual risk - privilege claimed per
priv-001."
    },
    "legal:privilege": {
      "privilegeLogId": "priv-001",
      "claim": "legalProfessionalPrivilege",
      "notes": "Schedule 3 advice paragraph."
    }
  }
}
},
{
  "id": "region-003",
  "type": "boundingBox",
  "label": "Signature - Acme Ltd authorized signatory",
  "bounds": {
    "x": 800.0,
```

```
        "y": 5800.0,
        "width": 1200.0,
        "height": 300.0
      }
    }
  ]
}
```

24. Validation

24.1 Base Validation

ADAC-Legal containers are validated by the standard ADAC validator. The ADAC validator verifies:

- The manifest references the legal profile correctly (ADAC-050 error if the referenced profile file is missing).
- All region annotation files exist (ADAC-023 error if missing).
- SHA-256 checksums for all files including the legal profile (ADAC-082 on mismatch).

24.2 Profile-Specific Validation Rules

Rule	Severity	Description
LEG-001	Error	The profile file's <code>profileType</code> is not "legal".
LEG-002	Error	The profile file's <code>profileId</code> is not "urn:adac:profile:legal:v1".
LEG-010	Warning	<code>matterReference.matterNumber</code> is empty when a matter reference is provided.
LEG-011	Warning	<code>matterReference.relatedMatters[].containerId</code> is present but is not a valid UUID (RFC 4122).
LEG-020	Warning	<code>classification.sequentialNumberStart</code> is present but <code>sequentialNumberEnd</code> is absent (or vice versa).
LEG-021	Warning	<code>classification.confidentialityLevel</code> is not in the well-known set.
LEG-030	Warning	<code>custodyChain[]</code> entries are not in chronological order by <code>timestamp</code> .

Rule	Severity	Description
LEG-031	Warning	A <code>custodyChain[]</code> entry has <code>action: "destroyed"</code> but <code>retentionPolicy.holdActive</code> is <code>true</code> . Destruction is prohibited while a hold is active.
LEG-040	Warning	A <code>privilegeLog[]</code> entry has <code>scope: "partialRedacted"</code> but no <code>legal:privilege</code> linked entity appears in any region of the container.
LEG-050	Warning	A <code>holdNotice[]</code> entry has <code>releasedOn</code> set but <code>retentionPolicy.holdActive</code> is still <code>true</code> .
LEG-060	Warning	A <code>productions[]</code> entry has a <code>redactionVariant</code> value that does not match any derivative <code>id</code> in the manifest.
LEG-070	Warning	A <code>legal:redaction</code> linked entity <code>reason</code> is not in the well-known set.
LEG-080	Info	Container has <code>classification.confidentialityLevel: "legallyPrivileged"</code> or <code>"sealed"</code> but is not Signed Archival. Signed Archival is RECOMMENDED for privileged or sealed documents.

24.3 Recommended Application-Level Checks

Check	Description
Matter number format	Verify that <code>matterReference.matterNumber</code> follows the naming convention of the applicable jurisdiction profile, when <code>jurisdictionProfile</code> is set.
Sequential number ordering	Verify that <code>sequentialNumberStart</code> \leq <code>sequentialNumberEnd</code> when both are present (lexicographic ordering).
Custody chain completeness	Verify that custody entries cover the document from first receipt through the most recent action.
Exhibit consistency	Verify that <code>legal:exhibit</code> annotation <code>exhibitId</code> matches <code>classification.exhibitIdentifier</code> when both are present.
Jurisdiction profile recognition	When <code>jurisdictionProfile</code> is present, verify it follows the naming convention and optionally load jurisdiction-specific validation rules.
Merkle root validity	Verify that <code>mutableStateRoot</code> correctly reflects the current state of the legal profile and all redaction annotations.

25. References

25.1 Normative References

Reference	Description
ADAC 1.0 Format Specification	The base container format this profile extends.
RFC 2119	Key words for use in RFCs to Indicate Requirement Levels.
RFC 4122	UUID URN Namespace. Required format for <code>containerId</code> values.
ISO 8601	Date and time representations. Used for all timestamp fields.
IETF BCP 47	Tags for Identifying Languages.
ISO 3166-1	Country codes. Used for <code>jurisdiction.country</code> .
ISO 3166-2	Subdivision codes. Used for <code>jurisdiction.subdivision</code> .

25.2 Informative References

Reference	Description
EDRM (Electronic Discovery Reference Model)	US industry framework for managing electronic discovery.
Sedona Principles (Third Edition)	Best practices for electronic document production in litigation.
GDPR (Regulation (EU) 2016/679)	European Union General Data Protection Regulation. Informs <code>personalData</code> redaction reason and <code>regulatory</code> hold type.
Civil Procedure Rules (UK)	UK procedural rules. Informs UK terminology alignment.
Dublin Core Metadata Element Set	Core metadata vocabulary. ADAC core metadata aligns with Dublin Core.
ADAC-Genealogy 1.0 Profile Specification	The genealogy profile extension for ADAC. Companion profile that can coexist with the legal profile.
ADAC-Preservation 1.0 Profile Specification	The Preservation profile extension for ADAC. Companion profile for institutional archival management.
ADAC-Legal-US 1.0 Profile Specification	The United States jurisdiction profile. Defines US-specific document types, privilege doctrine, confidentiality tiers, and field guidance.
ADAC-Legal-US-LA 1.0 Profile Specification	The Louisiana subdivision jurisdiction profile. Civil law tradition, parish-based jurisdiction, notarial acts.

Reference	Description
ADAC-Legal-US-PR 1.0 Profile Specification	The Puerto Rico subdivision jurisdiction profile. Spanish civil law tradition, bilingual system, <i>municipio</i> -based jurisdiction.

About the Editor

ADAC is edited and maintained by **John Vaden**, a genealogist and technical workflow contributor with decades of experience in genealogical research and in shaping data practices and process standards across analyst and software development teams. His work on ADAC emphasizes clarity, interoperability, and practical implementation for genealogists, developers, and archival practitioners. InnoVadens, LLC serves as the legal steward of the ADAC Standard.

He is not a legal professional, and ADAC-Legal does not provide legal advice.

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