# FAQs

How is architecture data shared between users?

It is important to appreciate that architecture modelling is a collaborative activity, and cannot be undertaken by individuals working in isolation. Various individuals may be responsible for developing models of specific aspects of an enterprise, for a specific purpose, and these individual pieces of work can have some value in answering specific questions. However, the full value of architecture models is only realised when they are collected together within a shared model repository, and more particularly are linked together in a way that recognises common shared elements and relationships.

The diagram below illustrates this point. The diagram shows a number of separate working environments (which could be co-located or undertaken at different locations), each responsible for developing their own MODAF-compliant architecture work products. There may be an informal exchange of intermediate work products, as a means of sharing knowledge and attaining a degree of consistency. Ultimately, however, there will come a point where it is necessary for finished architecture work products to be collated within a shared repository (such as the IA's architecture repository). A number of practical matters need to be dealt with in order for this collation to be undertaken and maintained, including issues such as naming convention, ontology, use of modelling construct, and configuration management. These are currently being looked into by the IA and other organisations involved in developing and maintaining architecture repositories.
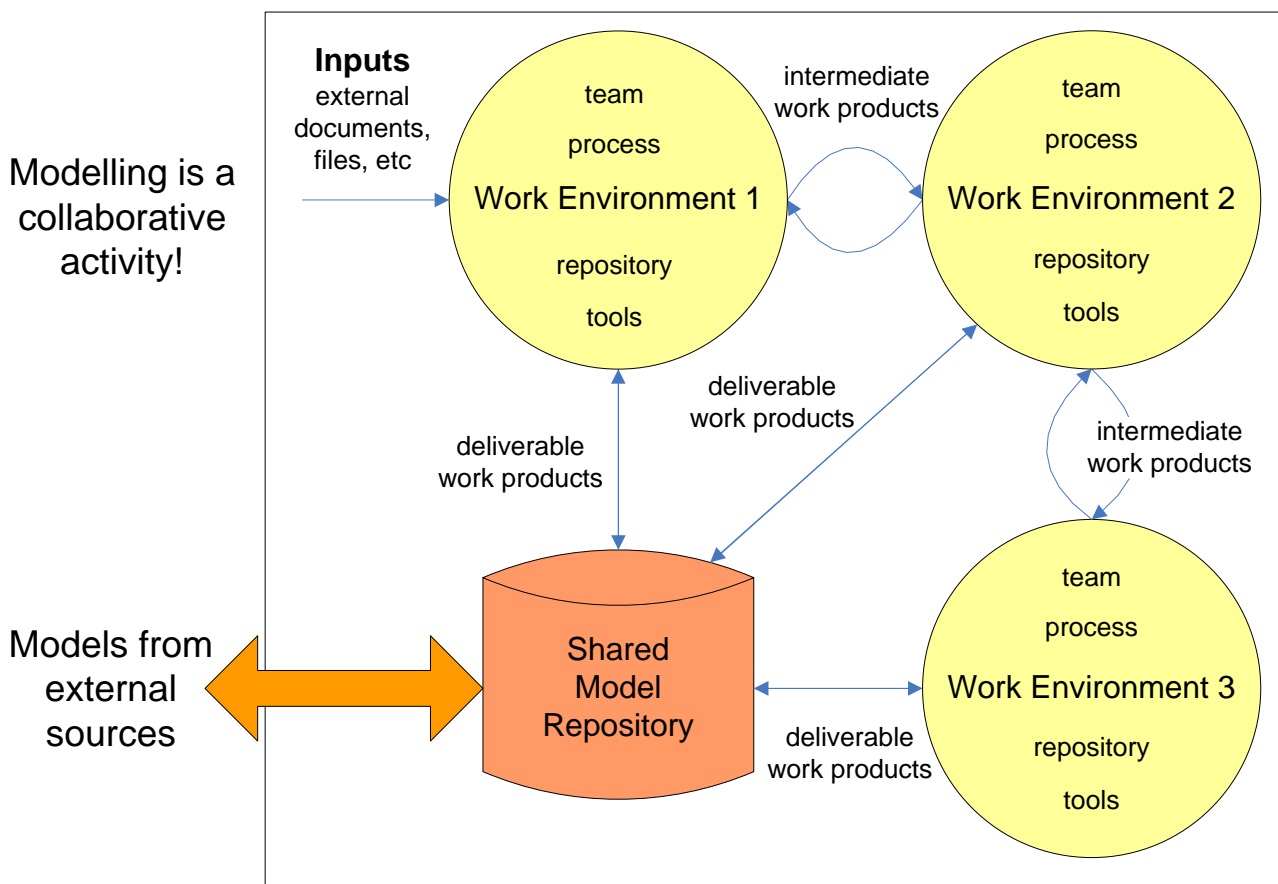
The diagram also makes the point that there may be other valid sources of model data, in addition to the products of the collaborating architecture teams, that can usefully be collated in some way

with the growing repository of MODAF-compliant architecture models. Depending on the standards used for developing these external models, there may be limits to how well they can be formally integrated into the repository. However, this should not prevent useful relationships being established between common or related elements, which could support a wider and richer range of queries than would be possible if limited only to the core MODAF-compliant set. This is likely to involve the wider use of semantic web technology to create equivalences and relationships between modelling domains that adhere to related but different ontologies.

MODAF supports the sharing of architectural data in the following ways:

- at the presentation level, the standardised views help MODAF users to understand the models created by other people

- at the data level, the MODAF Meta-Model (when used appropriately in conjunction with the XMI2.1 open standard), provides the data format standard aimed at ensuring passage of data in a tool-agnostic manner.

Use of architectural repositories within MOD will formalise the sharing of information – subject to the appropriate governance being in place.