

IFC 5: Entering a new era

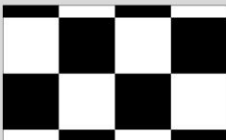
The Industry Foundation Classes (IFC) have a long history for the AEC industry. Started in the late 1990s it gained popularity as data exchange standard using the STEP physical file format. Today users expect more from IFC. The new IFC 5 is focussed on supporting advanced use-cases like incremental updates, shared authorship and communication through an Application Programming Interface (API).



[Explore use-cases](#)

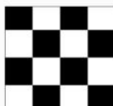
[Learn more about IFC 5](#)

Adequate functionality; maximum reliability



The development of IFC version 5 is a major advancement in the openBIM standard, driving digital transformation in the construction industry. This update enhances interoperability across software platforms, ensuring seamless data exchange and collaboration throughout a building's lifecycle. With new support for emerging technologies like digital twins and smart systems, IFC version 5 addresses the growing complexities of modern construction. It's a key step forward, enabling more efficient, sustainable, and innovative building practices for the future.

[Explore older releases](#)

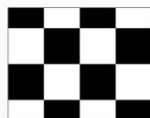


Meeting minutes

IFC 5 is currently developed by a taskforce that focusses on the core use-cases. The developments are focussed on increasing the current common use-cases capabilities like use of typical objects; while extending the functionalities that are required for modern data exchange.

[See the minutes overview](#)

Modular release strategy



Since IFC 5 will be (even more) modular, the release will also come in phases. The core of IFC 5 will be released first. This will go hand in hand with some decision on a new file format. This allows software vendors to get used to the principles and implement a reliable IFC without the burden of thousands of properties. After the first release of the core, a first version of the API will be developed and released. Finally the domain modules will be released. This will be preceded by a big clean-up in classes and properties. The different parts of IFC will also go to ISO in different stages.

[Register for updates](#)

Frequently Asked Questions

Does the new IFC 5 use the same geometry kernel?

Why not just use existing things like openUSD?

Is IFC 5 able to exchange data over an API?

Can IFC 5 be a digital twin?

A first "Hello Wall" prototype

The IFC 5 taskforce has created a 'hello wall' prototype. This IFC dataset has a wall in there with one typical window that is used twice. The window is an assembly of glass and wood objects. The typical window is positioned twice in the wall. The windows are positioned relative to the wall. The extended example turns the wall with two windows into a typical and places that three times along an alignment.

[Learn more about the 'hello wall'](#)

[Explore the IFC 5 hello wall prototype code](#)

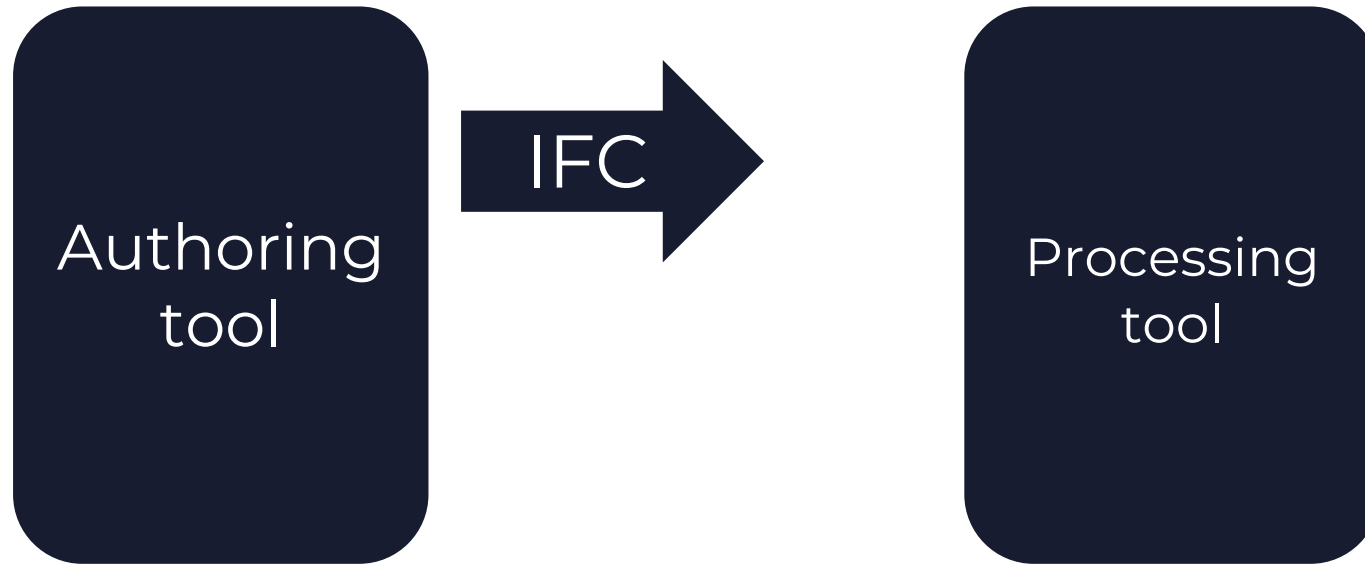
<https://buildingsmart.org/standards/bsi-standards/ifc5>

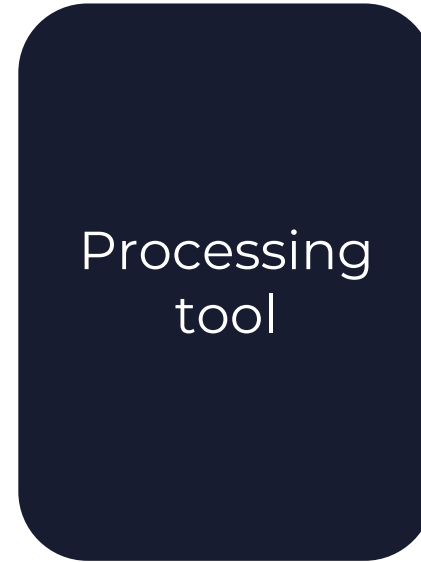
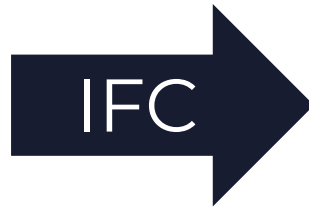
Adequate functionality
Maximum reliability

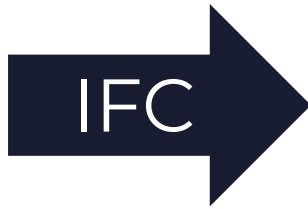
Adequate functionality

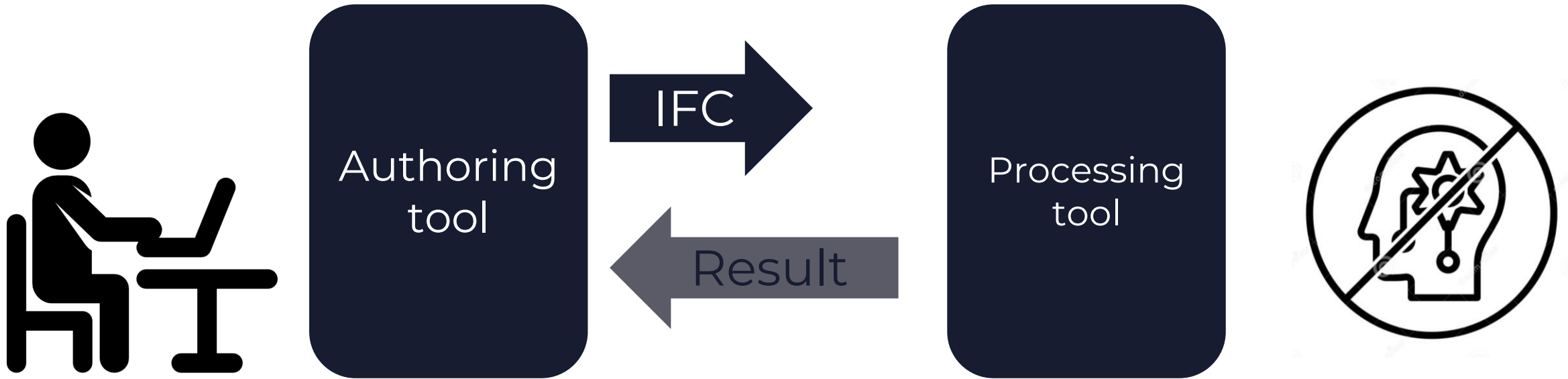
Maximum reliability

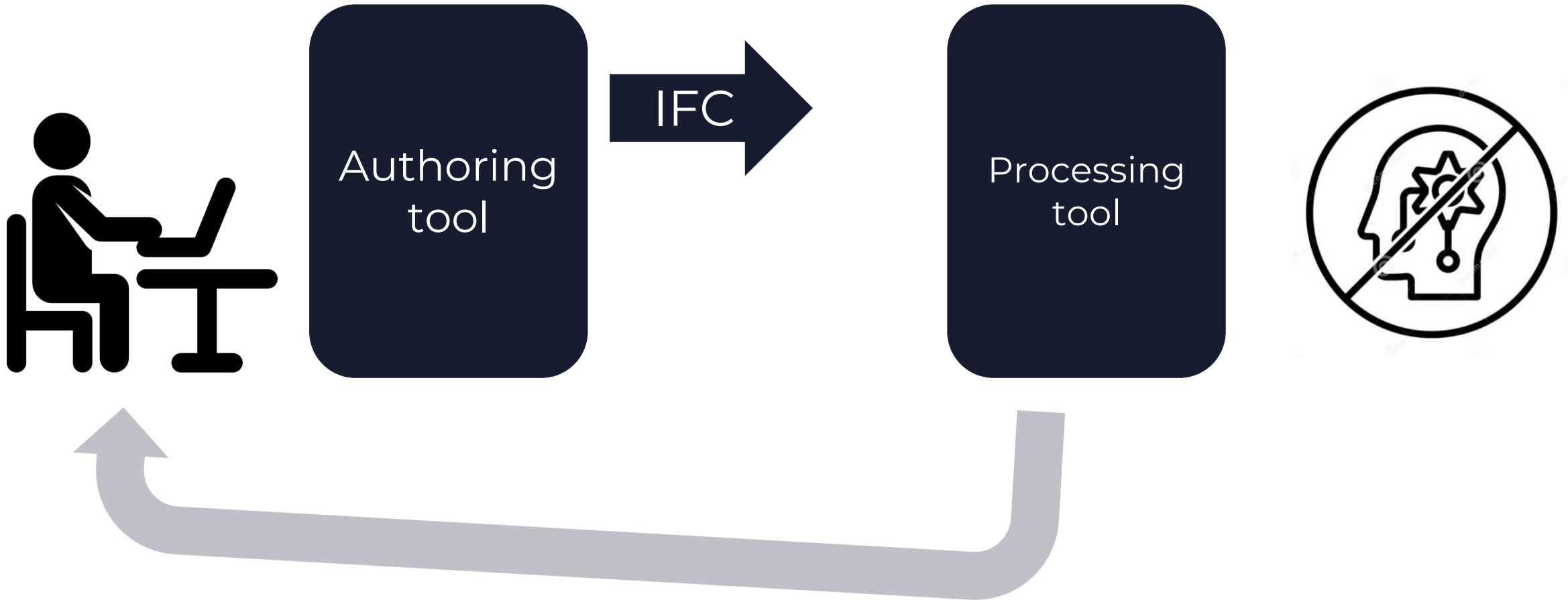
Yes, this has consequences
We need to reduce functionality (textures, etc)

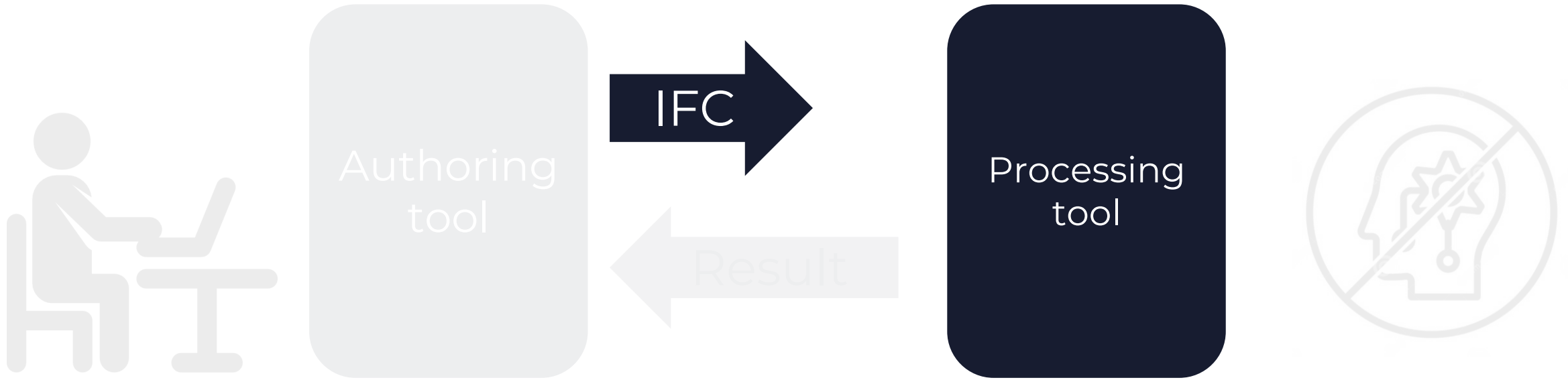




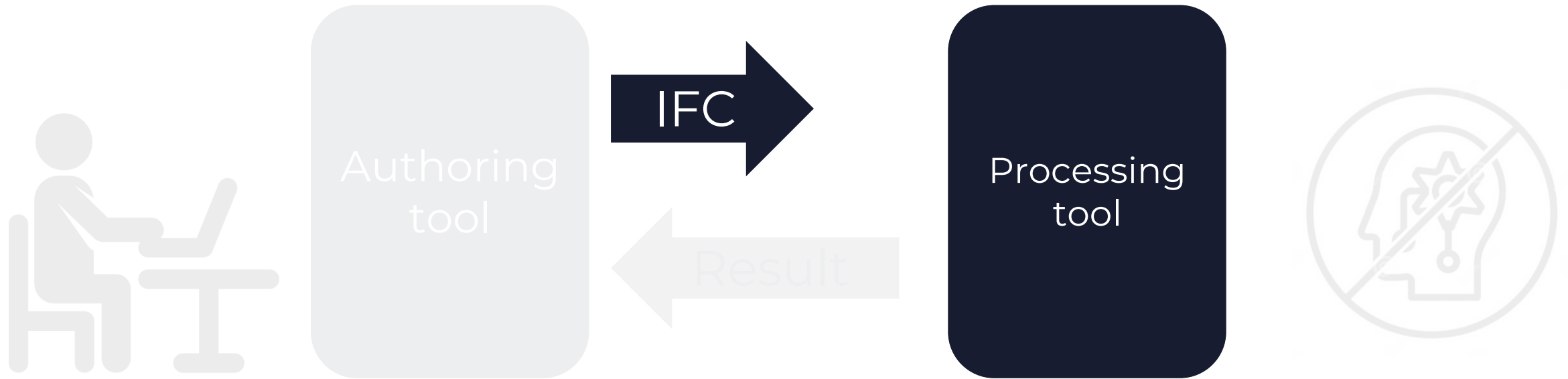






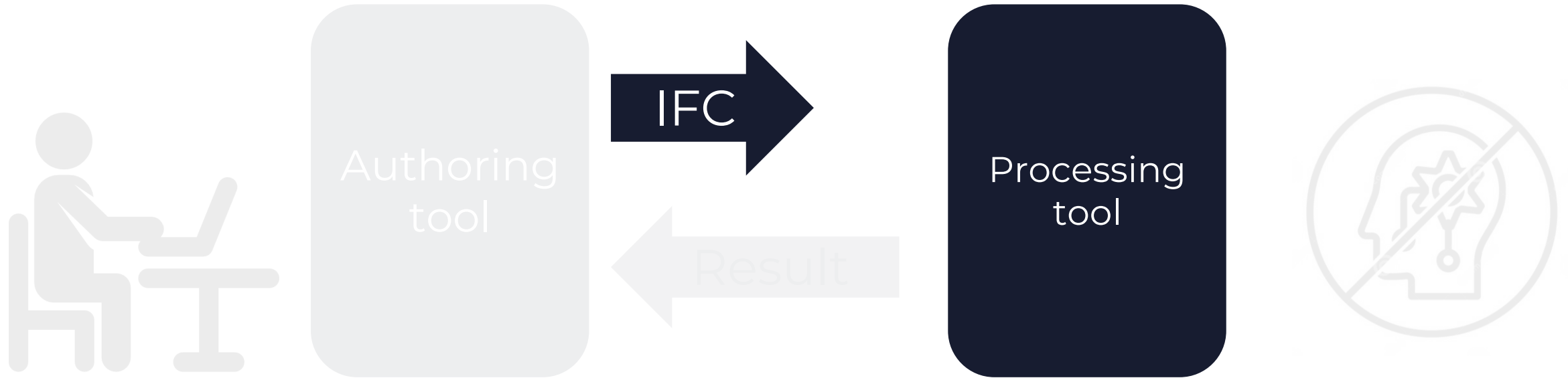


Focus for IFC5



Focus for IFC5

Maximum reliability



Predictable processing

Receiving software needs to understand it.
There needs to be clarity and only one obvious
way to do things.
No ambiguity and no human interpretation
necessary.

IFC 5 objectives



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Easy to implement

As in: fast. Within a couple of days
Receiving software needs to understand it:
without exceptions.
It needs to be predictable in implementation.
It might need to re-use other standards (like USD)
Yeah yeah... also an API

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One exchange standard

A data-model. Not a system.
But one for the whole industry (not just
coordination)
Maybe even just one file format.

IFC 5 objectives



For buildingSMART:

Do the hard work to make it easy for others.

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Focus on the minimal possible solution

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Do the hard work to make it easy for others.

Focus on the minimal possible solution

Deliver data model + API + set of rules

NOT for buildingSMART:

- How vendors implement it
- Complex solutions
- 100% coverage of every thinkable use-case
- Solutions that already exists (rendering, pointclouds, etc)

IFC 5 use-cases

New ones:

- Incremental updates (shared authorship)
- Automated processing
- Better types/typicals

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The ones we might need to drop **(for now)**

- Rendering
- Cost / scheduling
- Style of representation
- Parametric / complex geometry (just simple geometry in first version)

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The future:

- IDS (requirements)
- BCF (topics/issues)

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New ones:

- Incremental updates (shared authorship)
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- Better types/typicals

Yeah yeah... also API
and binary stuff

The ones we might need to drop (for now)

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The future:

- IDS (requirements)
- BCF (topics/issues)

So base principles IFC 5

- Multiple authors can contribute to a shared data set
- Geometry and data is stored unambiguously
- Ease of implementing readers that can read all geometry and data (not necessarily processing/computing)
- Reference third party data into an IFC data set (the point cloud example)
- Ability to integrate data sets with “IDS 5” and “BCF 5”
- Modular data schemas (that allows validation against multiple data schemas separately)
- Express libraries of objects that can be placed in a data set
- Add properties of library objects on a per-instance, per-project
- Facilitate performant implementations
- Provide basis for partial, atomic transactions

What this means for IFC 5 (v1)

- Only simple geometry (preferably something existing)
- One way of doing placement (alignment)
- Relative placement (tree)
- Control data (placement to origin calculated) to check
- Assembly of components
- Data can be in 1 or n files; doesn't matter
- Starting with limited number of classes and properties
- Multiple 'opinions' possible on the same data
- User decides what data is visualized/shown (layers?)
- Updates are the same as static datasets
- Clearly split authorship

Timeline

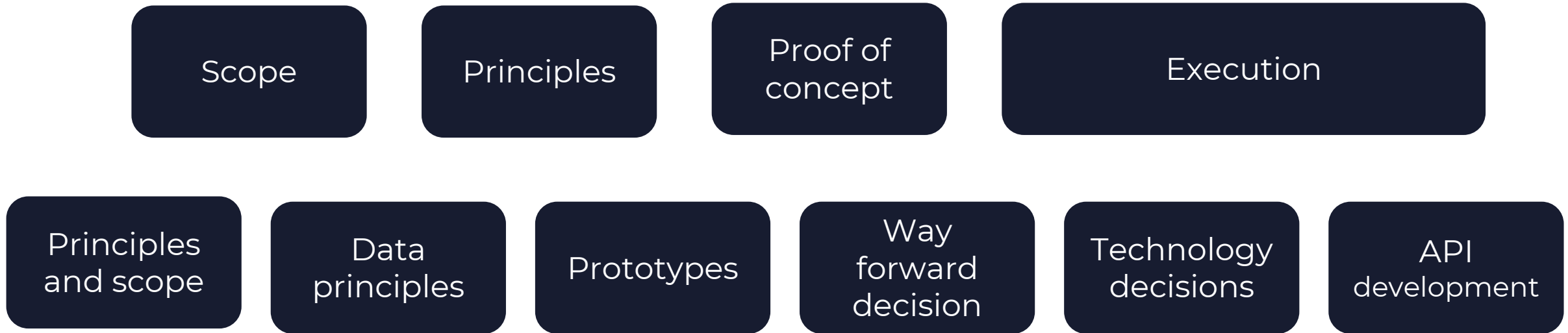
Scope

Principles

Proof of
concept

Execution

Timeline



Timeline

Scope

Principles

Proof of
concept

Execution

Principles
and scope

Data
principles

Prototypes

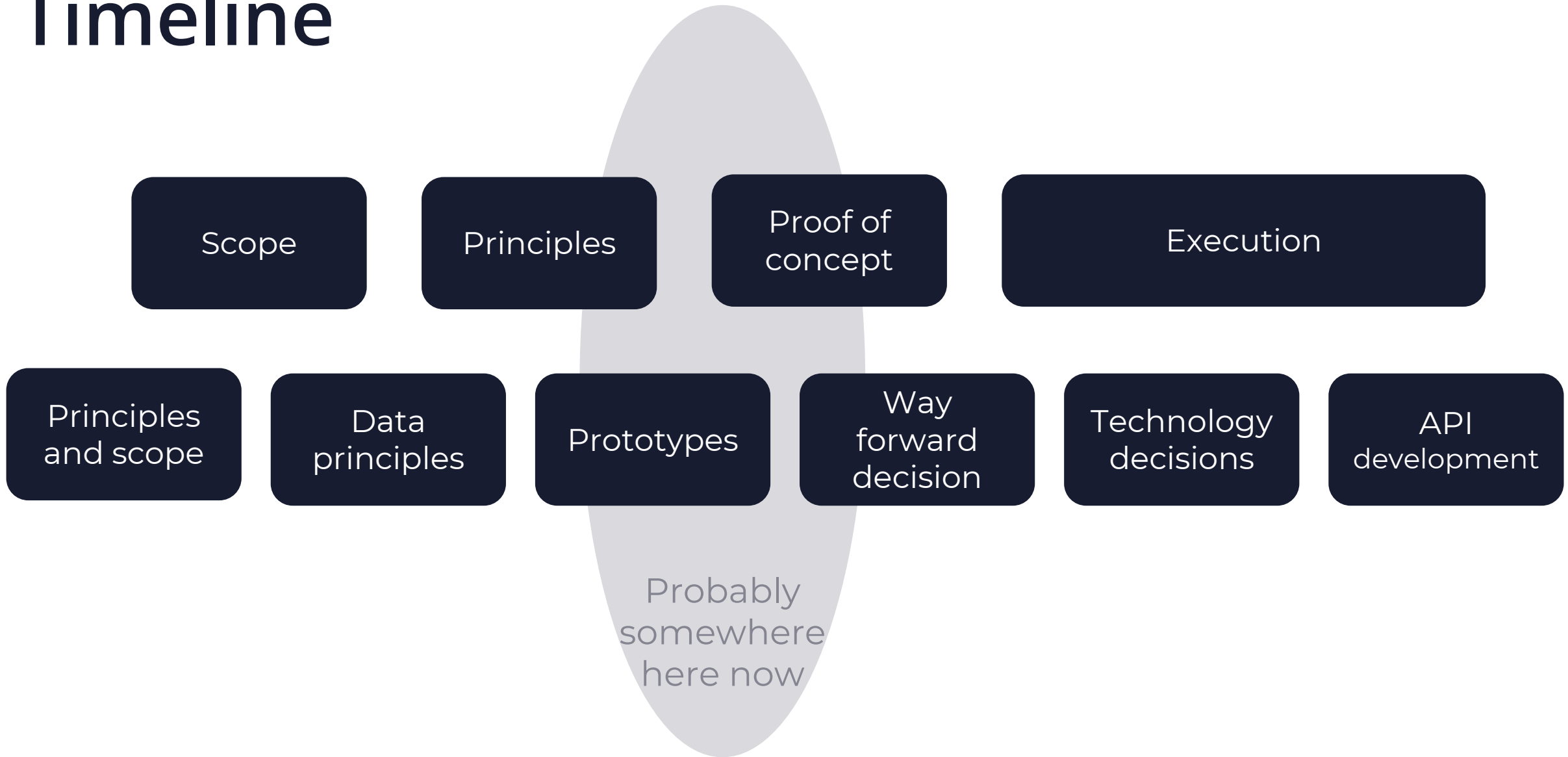
Way
forward
decision

Technology
decisions

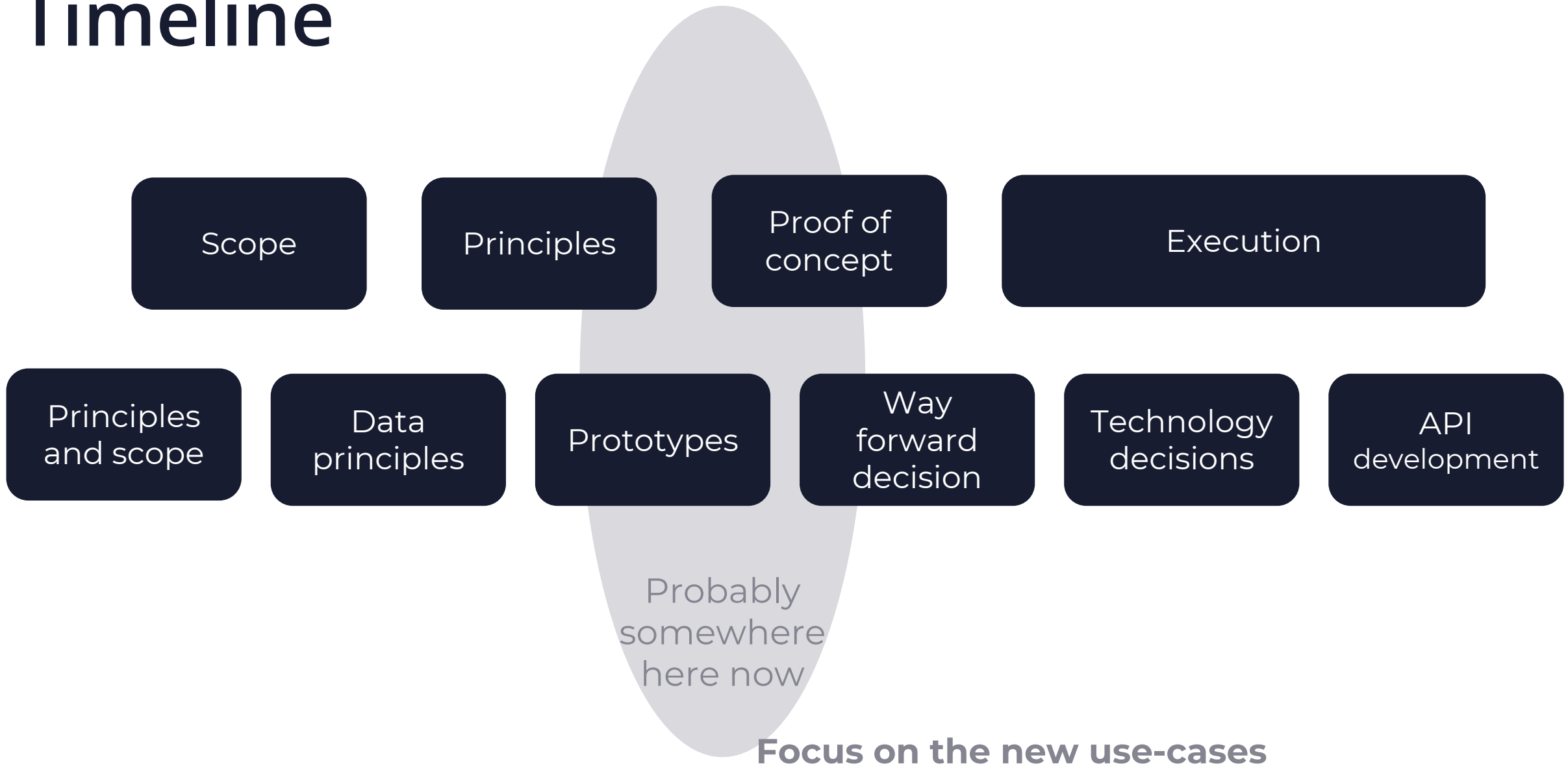
API
development

Feels stable

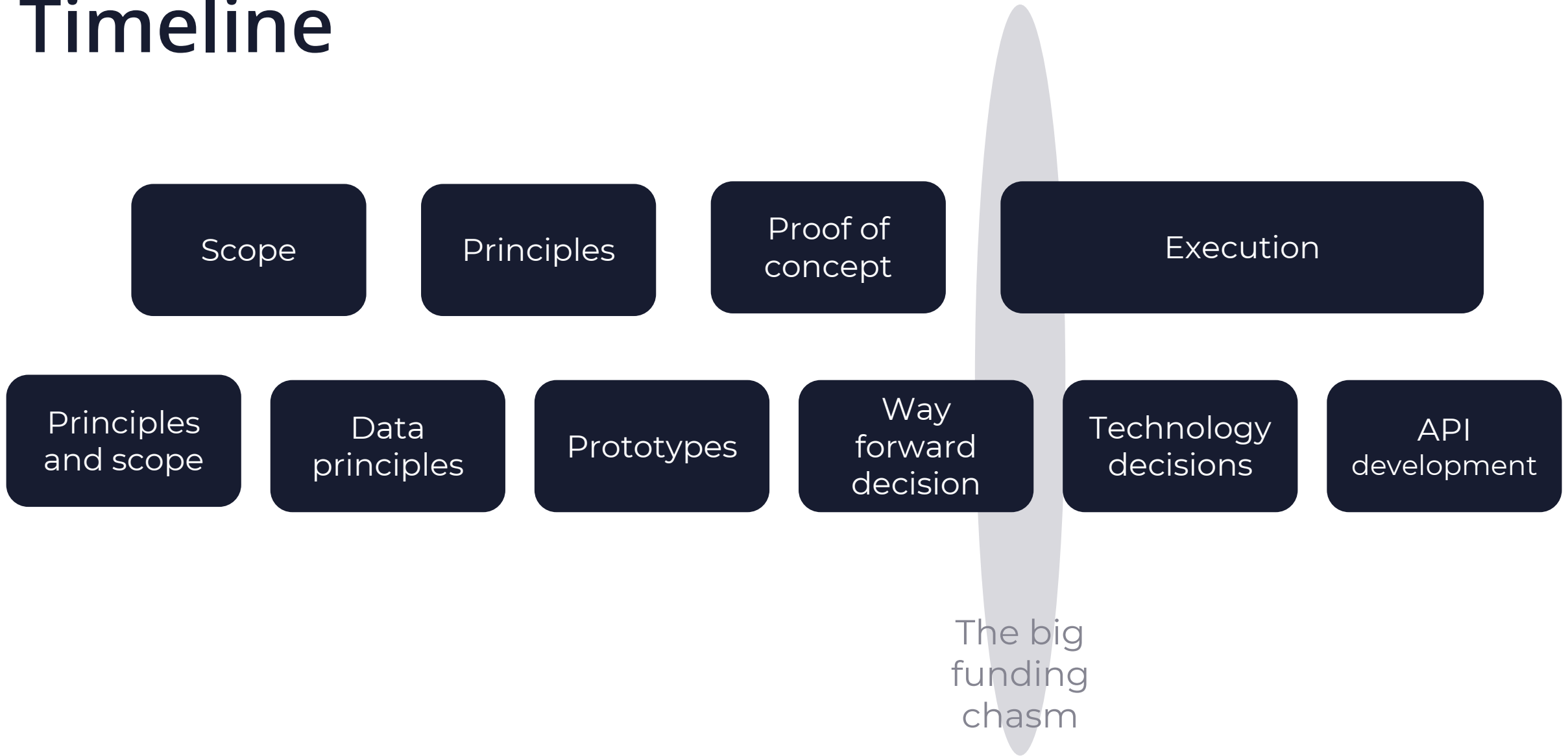
Timeline



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Timeline



Stop talking and show

Prototypes

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Timeline at some point....

Drastically cut
down
lightweight
minimum IFC 5

Super simple geometry;
no bells and whistles

Timeline at some point....



Timeline at some point....



Timeline at some point....



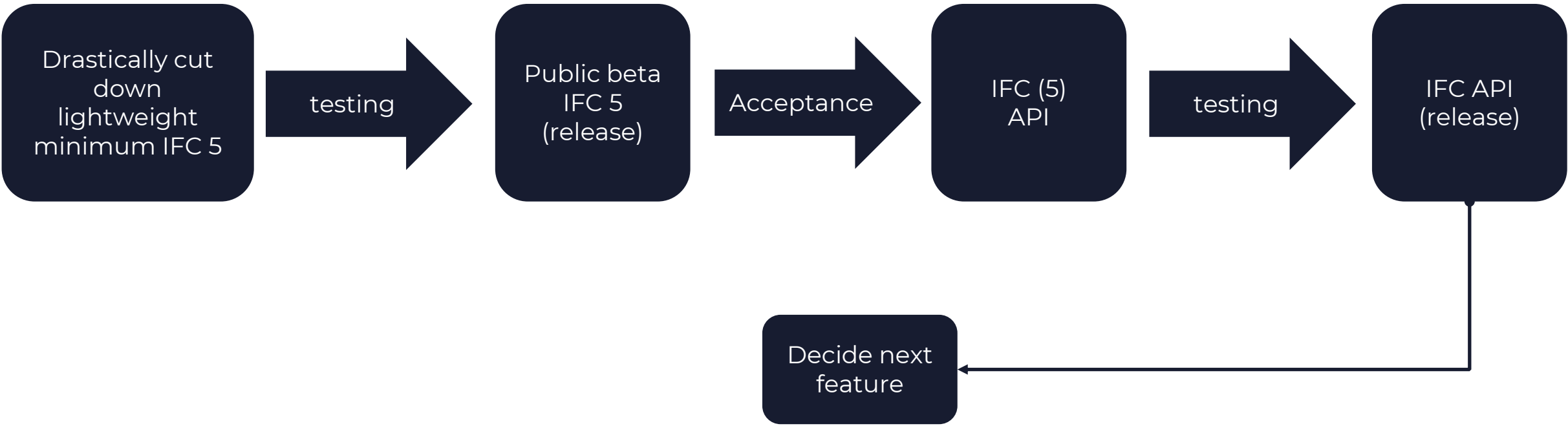
Timeline at some point....



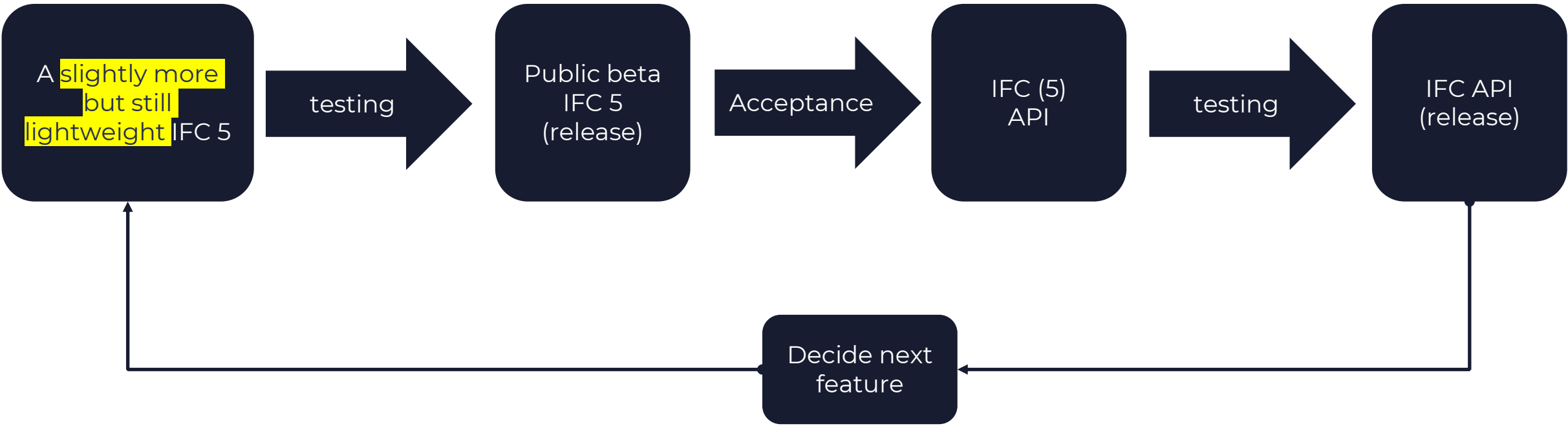
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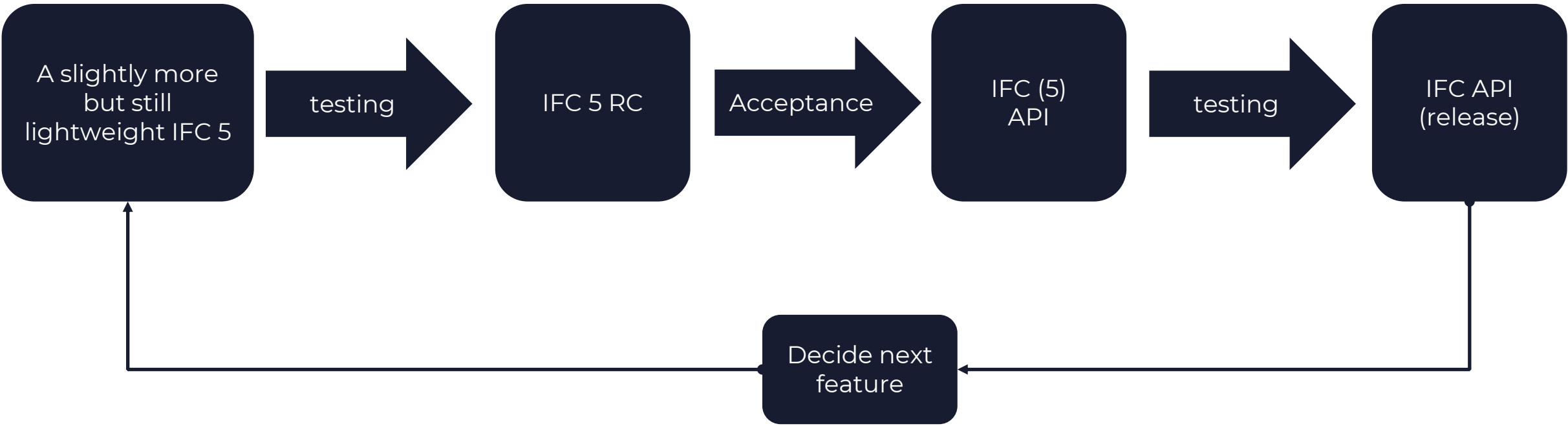
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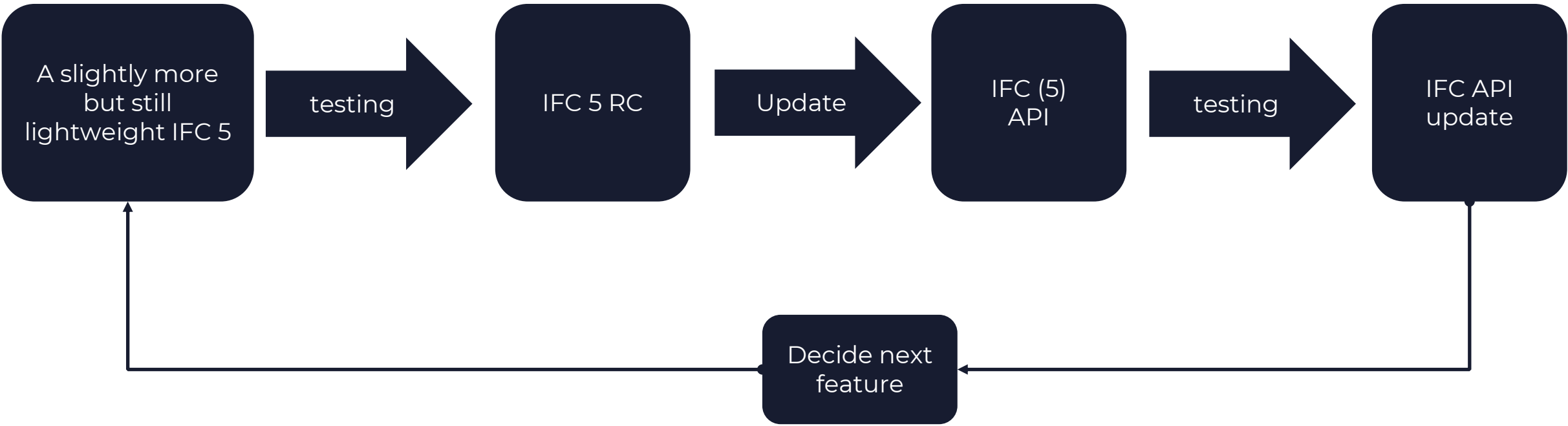
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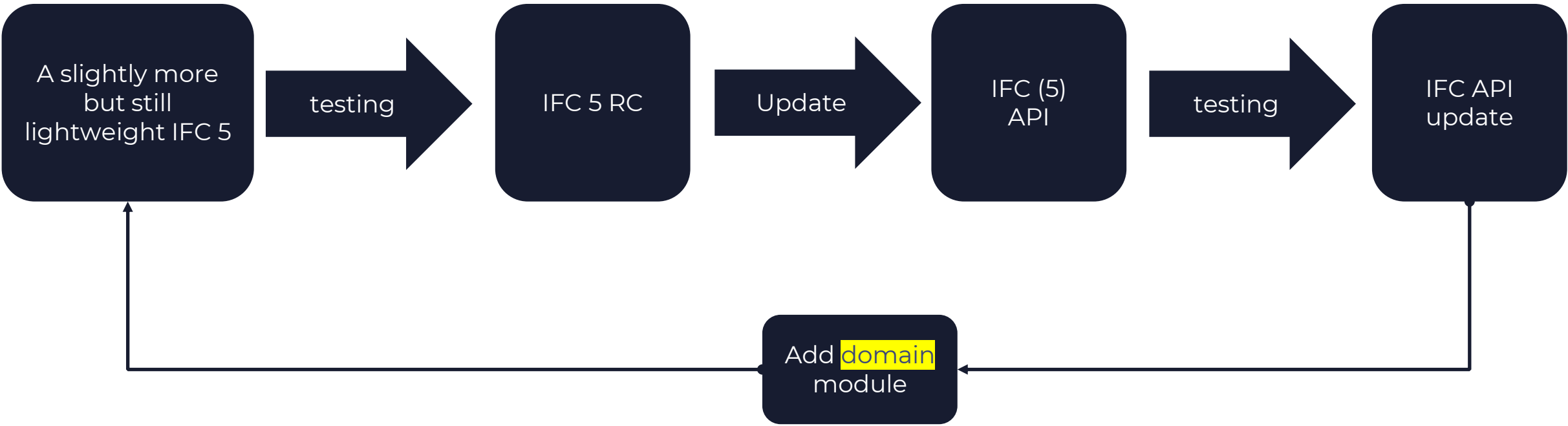
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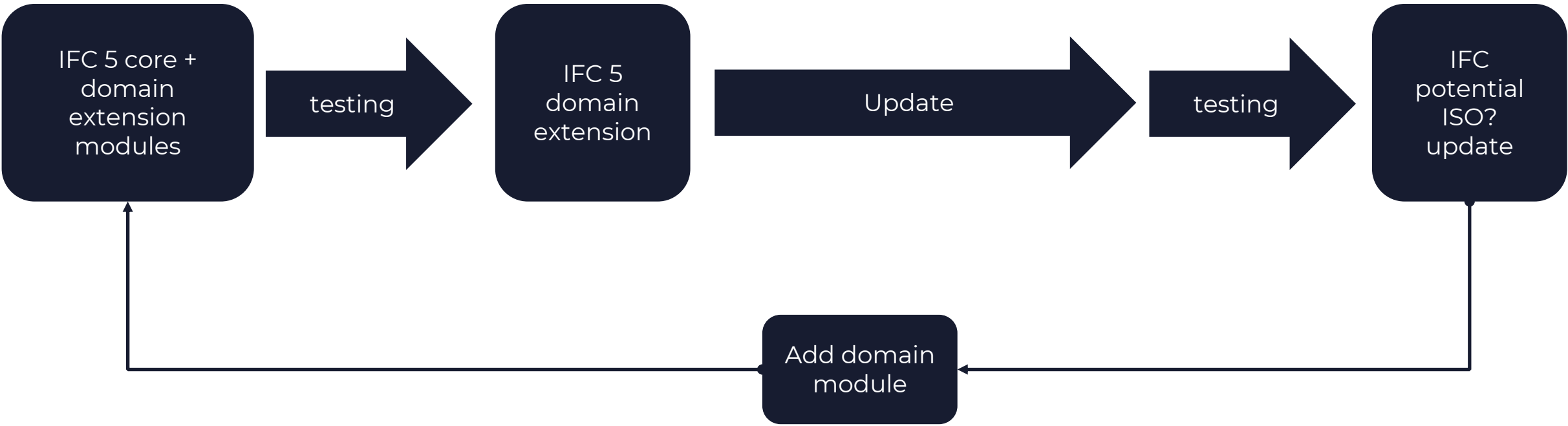
Timeline at some point....



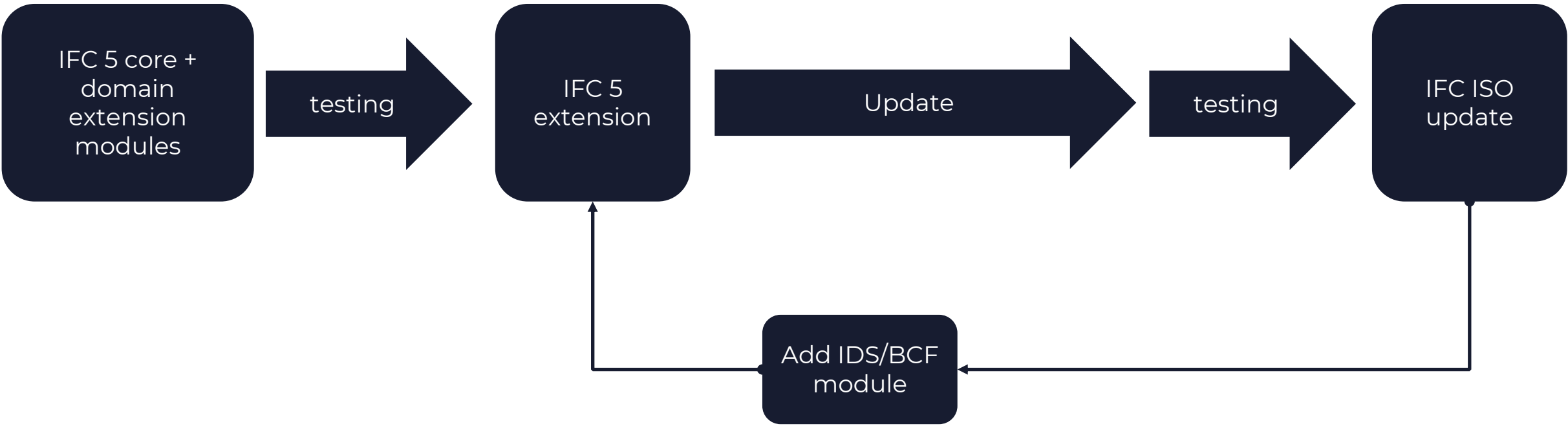
Timeline at some point...



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Timeline at some point....



Sidenote: IFC 5 core and modules

- Technical
- Organizational
- Release + Standardization bodies
 - ISO parts
 - Part 1: current IFC
 - Part x: new IFC core
 - Part xx: domain module
 - Etc...

Parts organization of ISO in next meeting

So a different way to visualize

IFC domain
extensions

IFC core
extensions 'other'

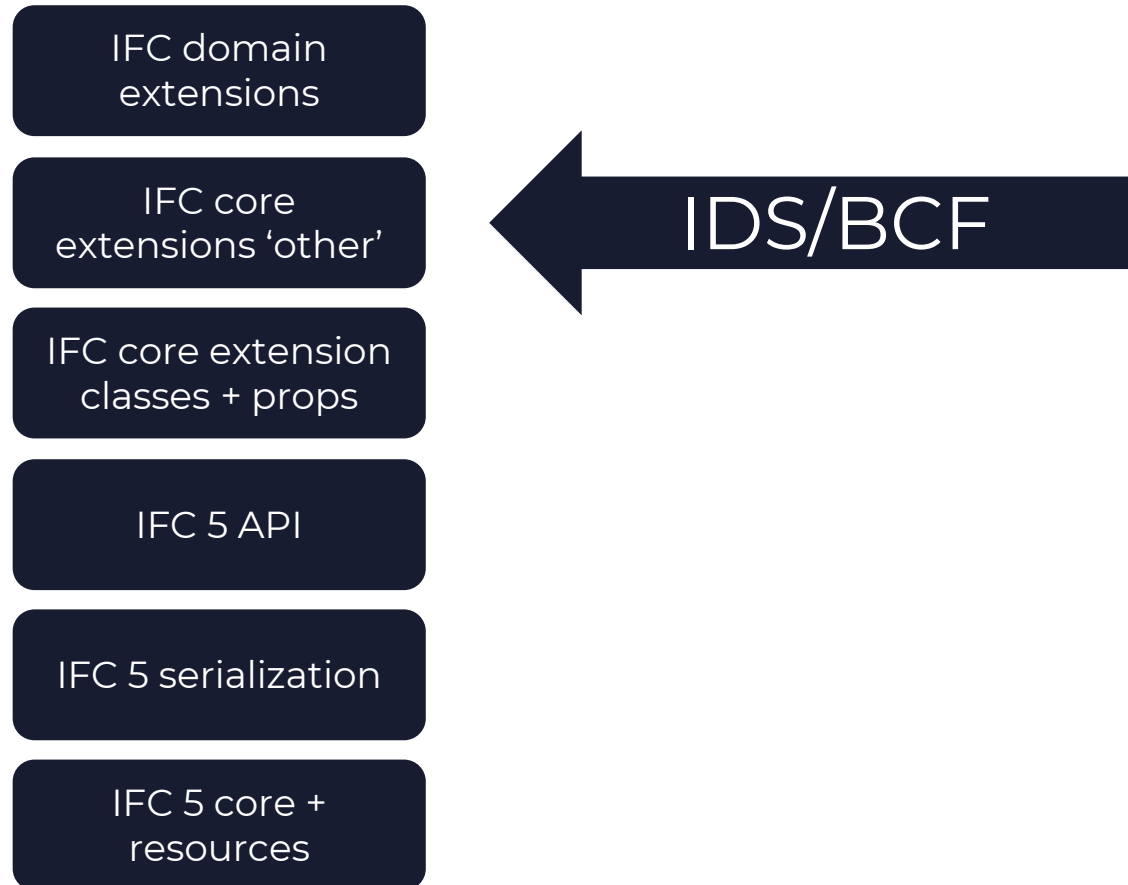
IFC core extension
classes + props

IFC 5 API

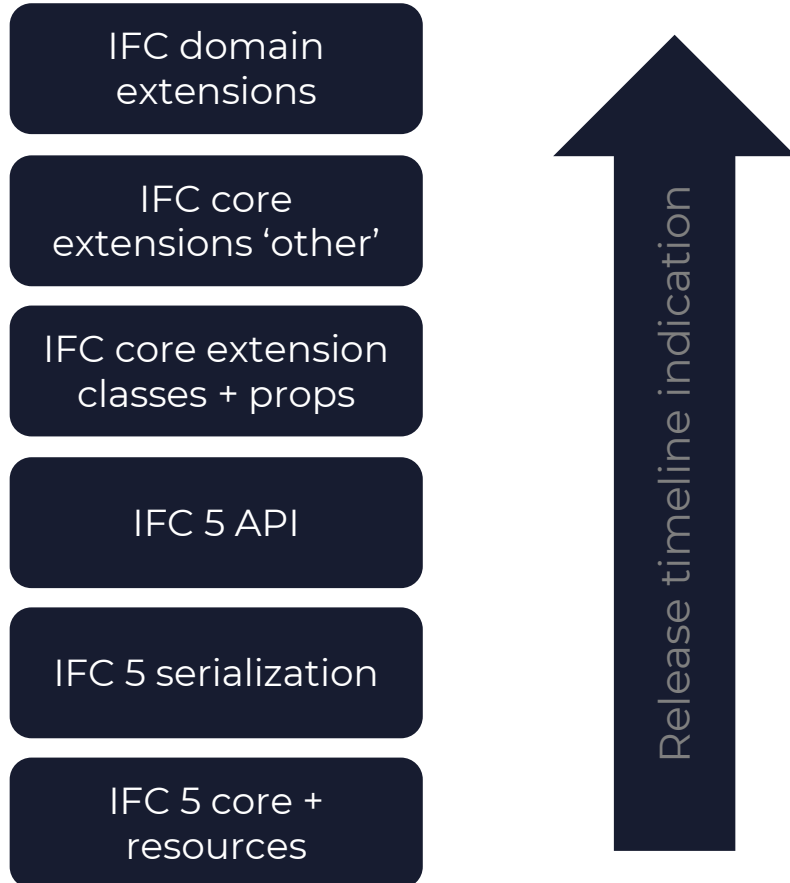
IFC 5 serialization

IFC 5 core +
resources

So a different way to visualize



So a different way to visualize



So a different way to visualize

IFC domain
extensions

IFC core
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IFC core extension
classes + props

IFC 5 API

IFC 5 serialization

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Notice a similarity?

So a different way to visualize

IFC domain extensions

IFC core extensions 'other'

IFC core extension classes + props

IFC 5 API

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IFC 5 core + resources

List of STEP (ISO 10303) parts

[Add languages](#)

[Article](#) [Talk](#)

[Read](#) [Edit](#) [View history](#) [Tools](#)

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

An incomplete list of parts making up **STEP (ISO 10303)**:

Descriptions methods [\[edit \]](#)

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- **Part 11 - EXPRESS language reference manual**
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- Part 14 - *EXPRESS -X language reference manual*

Implementation methods [\[edit \]](#)

- Part 15 - *SysML XMI to XSD transformation*^[1]
- **Part 21 - STEP-File Clear text encoding of the exchange structure**
- **Part 22 - SDAI Standard data access interface specification**
- Part 23 - *C++ language binding of the standard data access interface*
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Conformance testing methodology and framework [\[edit \]](#)

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Integrated generic resources [\[edit \]](#)

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- **Part 44 - Product structure configuration**
- Part 45 - *Materials*
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So a different way to visualize

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IFC core extensions 'other'

IFC core extension classes + props

IFC 5 API

IFC 5 serialization

IFC 5 core + resources

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Yes, we are turning ISO 16739 into parts as well

(current IFC 4.3 = part 1)

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IFC core extension
classes + props

IFC 5 API

IFC 5 serialization

IFC 5 core +
resources

IFC 5 timeline

- Gradual releases
- Finetuning as early as possible
- Critical success factor: keeping things out of scope

IFC 5 timeline

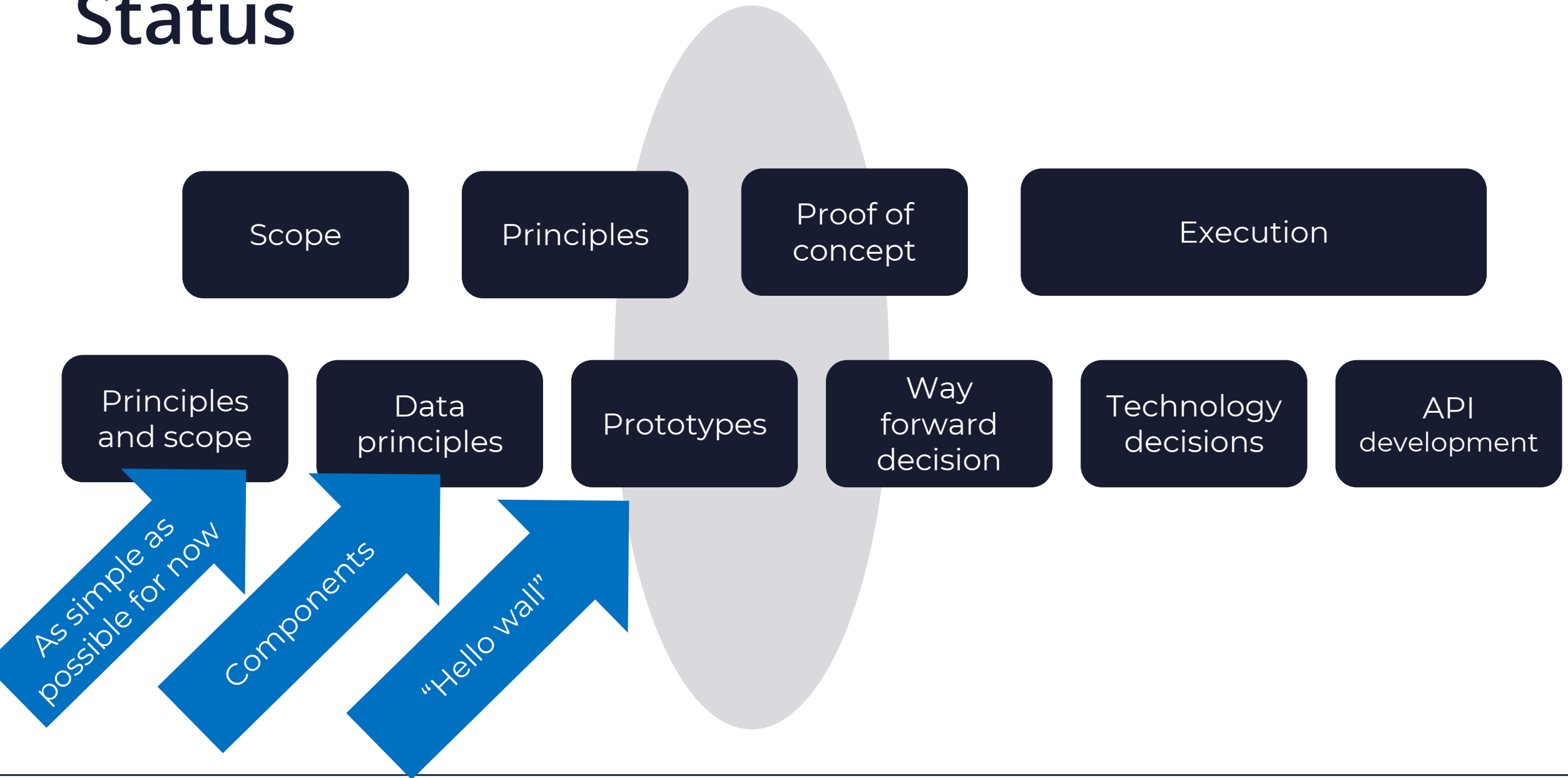
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Adequate functionality
Maximum reliability

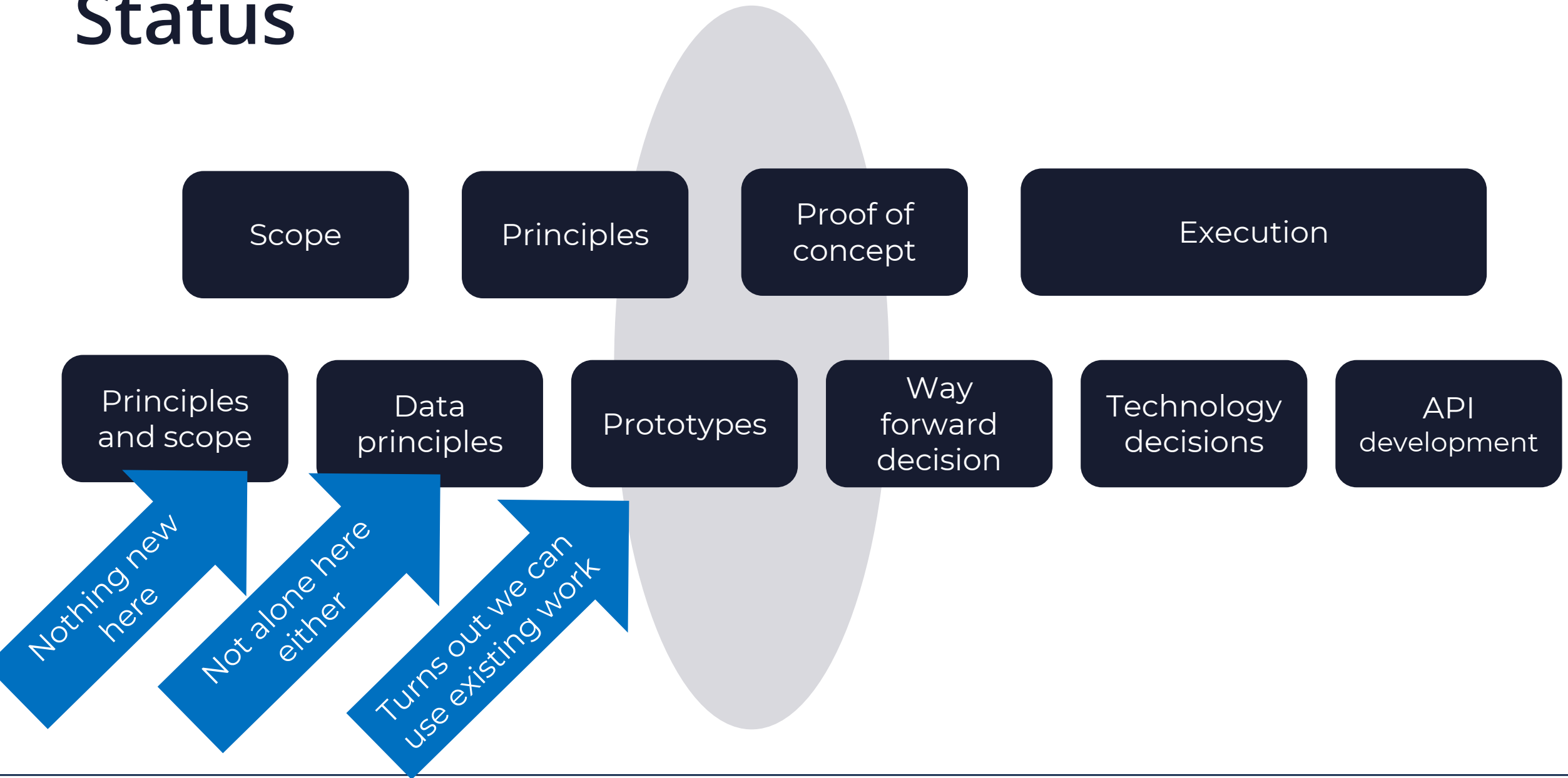
Stop talking and show

Prototypes

Status



Status



“Hello Alignment”

Decisions:

- Automation first; predictable and stable as a result requirement
- Versioning is external of the data
- Layers per user; layer per change request (putting in layer from user when accepted)
- At some point discard history and 'merge' layers
- Communicate changes per layer (change request == change set)
- No groups anymore; or groups are components with one-to-one relations from the (instance)entity to the group entity
- Classification reference as a 'property'
- Extensions cannot have information in the header
- Extensions also need to have the non-extension info (alignment needs to have resolved station points as well)
- Don't oversell it
- Space boundaries need to be object
- Header in the layer/file to trace back where the component information came from
- GUID version: ask Autodesk and trimble what version they use
- UTF 8
- All SI units;
- Display units are different from storage units

Todo:

- Header info (version? Date? Hash?) → what needs to be in the header besides what is already in USD?
 - Example file with GUIDs
 - Example file from Revit
 - Web rendering / binary file streaming
 - Experiment with IFC 5 schema on top of USD
 - How fast is composition on a flat list
-
- Explain why we don't want extrusions anymore; but 'original' info about how a mesh is created
 - API?
 - Change things
 - How are we going to call it?
 - Guidelines for 'diff' (which is just data)