BAC BIM Open Standards Policy

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1 Definitions

2 Introduction

2.1 Policy Statement

This policy establishes the principles for ownership, interoperability, long-term accessibility, and vendor independence of digital building information.

This policy does not assess or compare the operational advantages and disadvantages of proprietary formats versus open standards, but focuses on strategic objectives.

More specifically it states the strategic choice of BAC to use the open ISO standard IFC (Industry Foundation Class) over proprietary formats, whenever possible.

2.2 Goal

The goal of this document is to:

- Ensure long-term control and accessibility of BIM data.
- Prevent structural vendor lock-in.
- Standardize quality assurance across projects.
- Reduce strategic and financial risks linked to proprietary ecosystems.
- Position BAC as a leader in open standards within the industry.

3 Scope

This policy defines the strategic principles on the use of open standards, vendor neutrality, and longterm data accessibility. It applies to all BIM data delivered, maintained, archived, or exchanged within BAC led projects across the asset lifecycle, including internally executed works and externally delivered projects.

The policy sets the direction for the use of IFC as the foundational standard, clarifies the role of native formats within a hybrid model, and establishes boundary conditions for quality control, archiving, and software independence, without prescribing operational procedures.

4 Policy

4.1 IFC (Industry Foundation Class) as Foundation

BAC adopts an IFC-first strategy based on the following principles:

- IFC is the most widely supported and vendor neutral BIM schema in the industry.
- IFC is a schema, not a fixed format, and can be serialized differently depending on use case.
- IFC ensures long-term accessibility and interoperability.
    - For example: IFC2x3 (2005) remains widely supported, including by free viewers.
- Free accessibility ensures data ownership and control.

BAC will not structure its portfolio around proprietary formats that create vendor lock-in.

4.2 Vendor Lock-In Risk

Proprietary formats create structural dependency on certain vendors.

Risks include:

The current trend of monetization of APIs and token-based AI models introduces recurring operational costs that are externally controlled, with no fixed pricing guarantees. Building additional processes on top of proprietary ecosystems increases this exposure.

4.3 Freedom of software for external users

BAC supports project partners to use software that is fit for their purpose. In practice, this results in BAC receiving models in multiple native formats. Building processes on top of all the used formats in the industry is not manageable. However, IFC is widely supported in most of these applications.

4.4 Hybrid Model

Not all business requirements are available by the use of open formats, therefore it should be applied as much as possible, leaving room for proprietary formats when necessary. This is supported by a hybrid approach model:

- Native as-built files must be delivered.
- IFC is the contractual final deliverable.
- All quality checks are performed exclusively on IFC.

This ensures:

- One quality assessment pipeline.
- Scalability.
- Software neutrality.
- Consistency across project portfolio.

Native software choice remains with the supply chain, but IFC ensures standardization.

4.5 Operational Context

BAC has acquired Autodesk modeling software (such as Revit & Civil3D) as native authoring software for models. This means that any native Autodesk models coming for projects can be maintained by BAC if capacity and skillset allow it.

Other native formats delivered will have to be maintained externally and delivered to BAC as IFC. This can be done through integrating the maintenance within project contracts or framework agreements with external contractors that have the licenses and knowledge to work within those native tools.

When IFC becomes fully editable at scale, BAC will be structurally prepared without transition risk.

4.6 Archiving

- Long-term archiving requires stable, non-proprietary formats.
- Known backward compatibility issues in proprietary formats create archival uncertainty.
- Access to archived proprietary formats can be uncertain and can be costly if engineered by the supplier.
- IFC, as an ISO standard, has demonstrated long-term stability and broad support over decades.

Therefore, IFC is also the required archival format.

4.7 Industry Position

BAC has the vision to support and invest in the industry and open standards rather than reinforce single-vendor dominance.

Furthermore, strategic technology decisions must reflect long-term independence, including in the current geopolitical context.

5 Responsabilities

5.1 Policy Accountable

BIM Product Owner

5.2 Delegated Responsibilities

BIM Office Manager

BIM Coordinator

BIM Modeler

5.3 Compliance

Mandating proprietary formats in public tenders restricts competition and is legally problematic.

Requiring open standards such as IFC ensures compliance with public procurement principles, such as:

- Fair competition.
- Vendor neutrality.
- Legal defensibility in procurement procedures.

All procurement documentation must align with this principle.

6 Related Documents

All documents of the BAC BIM Standard

Revision management

Revision history

REVISION DATE	SUMMARY OF CHANGES	AUTHOR
30/03/2026	Document creation	Louis Casteleyn

Changes since last revision

CHAPTER	CHANGES