FOUNDATION FOR INTELLIGENT PHYSICAL AGENTS

FIPA Policies and Domains Specification

Document title	FIPA Domains and Policies \$	Specification	
Document number	PC00089D	Document source	FIPA TC Architecture
Document status	Preliminary	Date of this status	2001/08/10
Supersedes	None		
Contact	arch@fipa.org		
Change history			
2000/12/15	An initial summary of use cas	se scenarios and architect	ural elements that have
	been identified to support po	licy mechanisms in agent	platforms
2000/12/26	Edits and clean ups of initial	text	
2001/01/03	Format conversion to FIPA 2	000 compliance, edits and	l clean-up
2001/01/29	Additional use cases and ma	terial concerning conversation	ation policies
2001/08/10	Line numbering added		

- ...

15 © 2000 Foundation for Intelligent Physical Agents - http://www.fipa.org/

16 Geneva, Switzerland

Notice

Use of the technologies described in this specification may infringe patents, copyrights or other intellectual property rights of FIPA Members and non-members. Nothing in this specification should be construed as granting permission to use any of the technologies described. Anyone planning to make use of technology covered by the intellectual property rights of others should first obtain permission from the holder(s) of the rights. FIPA strongly encourages anyone implementing any part of this specification to determine first whether part(s) sought to be implemented are covered by the intellectual property of others, and, if so, to obtain appropriate licenses or other permission from the holder(s) of such intellectual property prior to implementation. This specification is subject to change without notice. Neither FIPA nor any of its Members accept any responsibility whatsoever for damages or liability, direct or consequential, which may result from the use of this specification.

17 Foreword

The Foundation for Intelligent Physical Agents (FIPA) is an international organization that is dedicated to promoting the industry of intelligent agents by openly developing specifications supporting interoperability among agents and agentbased applications. This occurs through open collaboration among its member organizations, which are companies and universities that are active in the field of agents. FIPA makes the results of its activities available to all interested parties and intends to contribute its results to the appropriate formal standards bodies.

The members of FIPA are individually and collectively committed to open competition in the development of agentbased applications, services and equipment. Membership in FIPA is open to any corporation and individual firm, partnership, governmental body or international organization without restriction. In particular, members are not bound to implement or use specific agent-based standards, recommendations and FIPA specifications by virtue of their participation in FIPA.

The FIPA specifications are developed through direct involvement of the FIPA membership. The status of a specification can be Preliminary, Experimental, Standard, Deprecated or Obsolete. More detail about the process of specification may be found in the FIPA Procedures for Technical Work. A complete overview of the FIPA specifications and their current status may be found in the FIPA List of Specifications. A list of terms and abbreviations used in the FIPA specifications may be found in the FIPA Glossary.

FIPA is a non-profit association registered in Geneva, Switzerland. As of January 2000, the 56 members of FIPA
 represented 17 countries worldwide. Further information about FIPA as an organization, membership information, FIPA
 specifications and upcoming meetings may be found at http://www.fipa.org/.

36 Contents

37	1 Introduction	1
38	1.1 Contents	1
39	1.2 Audience	2
40	1.3 Acknowledgements	2
41	2 Policies, Domains and Agent Platforms	3
42	3 Policy Scenarios	5
43	3.1 Access Use Case	5
44	3.1.1 Description	
45	3.1.2 Scenario	5
46	3.2 Social Grouping Use Case	5
47	3.2 Description	0
48	3.2.7 Scenario	6
40 /0	3.3 Obligation Use Case	0 6
49 50	3.3 Obligation Use Case	0 6
50		0
51	3.3.2 Scendrio	0
52	3.4 Compositional Use Case	0
53		0
54	3.4.2 Scenario	/
55	3.5 Refrain Use Case	1
56	3.5.1 Description	[
57	3.5.2 Scenario	[
58	3.6 Content Use Case	7
59	3.6.1 Description	7
60	3.6.2 Scenario	7
61	3.7 System Configuration Use Case	8
62	3.7.1 Description	8
63	3.7.2 Scenario	8
64	3.8 Cooperation use case	8
65	3.8.1 Description	8
66	3.8.2 Scenario	8
67	3.9 Delegation Use Case	8
68	3.9.1 Description	8
69	3.9.2 Scenario	9
70	3.10 Meta Order Use Case	9
71	3.10.1 Description	9
72	3.10.2 Scenario	9
73	3.11 High Order Use Case	9
74	3.11.1 Description	9
75	3.11.2 Scenario	9
76	3.12 Trust Use Case	9
77	3.12.1 Description	9
78	3.12.2 Scenario	9
79	4 Architectural Elements Needed to Support Policies	11
80	4.1 Introduction	11
81	4.2 Policy Structures	
82	4.2.1 Policy	. 11
83	4.2.2 Policy Language	
84	423 Policy Library	
85	424 Interpretation Engine	
86	425 Distribution Mechanism	12
87	4.2.6 Conversation Policy	12
01 00	T.2.0 CONVERSALION FONCY	12
00		12

89	4.3.1	Guards	13
90	4.3.2	Sanctions	13
91	4.3.3	Policy Exception	13
92	4.3.4	Reputation Service	13
93	4.3.5	Policy Domain	13
94	4.3.6	Domain Manager	13
95	4.4 Do	main Management	14
96	4.4.1	Directory Functions	14
97	4.4.2	Conflict Resolution	14
98	4.4.3	Policy Derivation	14
99	4.4.4	Policy Change Notification	14
100	4.4.5	Querying of Domain Policies	14
101	5 Elemer	Its for Testing Conformance	15
102	6 Commu	unicative Acts	16
103	3 6.1 Promise		
104	7 Refere	nces	17
105			

105 **1** Introduction

106 This document gives a set of use cases and abstract architectural elements that can be used to guide the specification 107 of policy mechanisms in concrete Agent Platform architectures. It is based on and derives from the FIPA Abstract 108 Architecture Specification [FIPA00001].

- As this specification is defined in terms of generic abstractions rather than specific concrete elements, this specification
 would require reification in order to derive specifications for particular types of agent platform. However, we anticipate
 that the architectural elements identified here will be present in all agent platforms that support policy mechanisms.
- The basic services offered by an agent platform¹ to an agent are unconstrained. An agent may register any attributes that it chooses through the Agent Directory Service; it may use the Agent Message Transport Service to communicate with any reachable agent using any available transport and messages of any size or encoding, and it may operate on behalf of any principal.
- 119 In practice, however, developers and users of multi-agent systems often wish to place strong constraints on the 120 behaviour of agents within agent environments. This especially means being able to apply and enforce these 121 constraints and policies across distributed agents and systems.
- 123 Typical constraints that we may wish to enforce include:
- 124125 Requiring that an agent use a particular encoding for its messages.
- Preventing an agent from communicating with non-local agents (agents which lie outside some domain, in the transport addressing sense of the word).
- Requiring than an agent select a particular quality of service (e.g. encryption, non-repudiation) when communicating with non-local agents.
- Preventing an agent from registering certain attributes with the Agent Directory Service unless it is operating on behalf of a particular principal.
- 136 Limiting the total number of agents registered with a platform.
- 137
 138 Restricting access to certain host directories or setting ceilings on the amount of system resources that can be
 139 used.
- 140

113

118

122

126

129

132

135

All of these constraints may be expressed as constraints over agent platform services. There may be other types of constraint that we wish to apply to an agent *X* for example, requiring the use of a particular conversation policy when interacting with a particular class of agent, or preventing an agent from transmitting confidential data to a non-local agent *X* but these lie outside the scope of this specification.

145

146 **1.1 Contents**

- 147 This document is organized into the following sections:
- 148
- 149 This **Introduction**.
- 150

The Scope and Methodology section explains the background of this work, its purpose, and the methodology that
 has been followed.

154 The **Policies, Domains and Agent Platforms** section is a description of the concepts and considerations 155 necessary to the creation of policy driven agent systems.

¹ The Abstract Architecture specification does not refer to an Agent Platform. However, we use the term here informally to mean the set of interrelated services that are offered to an agent in order for it to discover other agents, and to communicate with those agents.

- 157 The **Policy Scenarios** section contains a selection of use cases illustrating the contexts in which policies are 158 applied to agent systems.
- 160 The **Architectural Elements** section describes architecture components required.

162 **1.2 Audience**

163 The primary audience for this document is developers of concrete specifications for agent systems – specifications 164 grounded in particularly technologies, representations, and programming models. It may also be read by the users of 165 concrete specifications including implementers of agent platforms, agent systems, and gateways between agent 166 systems.

167

156

159

161

This document describes abstract architectural elements for guiding the creation of policy mechanisms in intentional multi-agent systems. It assumes that the reader has a good understanding about the basic principles of multi-agent systems. It does not provide the background material to help the reader assess whether multi-agent systems are an appropriate model for their system design, nor does it provide background material on topics such as Agent Communication Languages, BDI systems, or distributed computing platforms.

173

174 1.3 Acknowledgements

- 175 TBD.
- 176
- 177
- 178

178 2 Policies, Domains and Agent Platforms

A set of constraints is termed an **Agent Service Policy**. In this specification, we are only concerned with policies that are *public*, i.e., accessible to systems, *machine readable*, i.e., can be processed by computer systems and in particular *declarative*, i.e., amenable to inference.

- Policies may be expressed in a variety of languages. At one extreme they may be written in some propositional or constraint language such as SL2, in terms of some kind of agent platform service ontology. There are a wide variety of simpler schemes, each of which gives up some types of expressivity. The choice of language will be affected by (at least) the following considerations:
- 188 **Composability** The ability to combine two or more policies.
- 190 **Computability** The ability to compute the legality of some service request.
- 192 **Efficiency** The resource cost of evaluating the legality of a request.
- 194 **Consistency** Whether it is possible to express Đ or detect Đ inconsistent or contradictory requirements.
- 196 **Expressivity** Whether it is possible to express the required constraints in the language.
- 198EquivalencyWhether it is possible to compute the functional equivalence of two policies (and so, for199example, reduce "legality of request" to "membership of some class associated with a given200policy").

We assume that there are fundamentally two kinds of **policy constraints**: those relating to **permissions** and those relating to **obligations**. Not all platforms require both kinds of policies; however this specification introduces architectural elements that correspond to both forms. These policies are often related: by entering into particular obligations an agent may acquire specific permissions; and vice versa: when an agent is given permission to access a shared resource, it may incur obligations as a result.

Associated with policies and the mechanisms required to support policy application is the concept of a **contract**. A contract is an agreement entered into by agents and services to be constrained by one or more sets of policy constraints. In addition to the architectural elements needed by platforms to support policy mechanisms a given reification of these architectural elements may also require the **promise** communicative act. A promise is a speech act uttered by an agent when it agrees to abide by a set of policy constraints.

213

220

182

187

189

191

193

195

197

201

207

Many policies are applied at the point where an agent invokes a service of the agent platform (what about invariants?). The constraints on the use of a service can be of many kinds: constraints on the parameters supplied by the agent (for example on the size or format of a message), and constraints based upon the state of the agent platform, including the history of the interactions between the agent and the platform. In order for a service request to be honored, an inference procedure must be used to verify that the applicability requirements of the service may be satisfied in relation to the policies in force.

- In principle, the inference procedure can be performed for every service request performed by every agent on a platform. However this may be prohibitively expensive from a computational standpoint. There are also situations when it is desirable to ask whether or not a request, or set of requests, would be permitted if an agent were to make them. (For example, a mobile agent might wish to know this before deciding whether to move to a particular agent platform.)
- It is common to associate **policy mechanisms** with **policy domains**. A policy domain is simply a set of agents that is characterized by a set of policies. However, there are many benefits to constructing explicit domains: as aids to efficiently applying policies for example. The infrastructure needed to support policy domains typically includes constructs such as **domain managers**, etc.
- 230

Policy domains enable agent users to be assured of policy uniformity across multiple platforms and hosts, as long as semantically equivalent monitoring and enforcement mechanisms are available across those platforms and hosts. Under these conditions, it follows that a given domain could extend across host boundaries and, conversely, multiple domains could exist concurrently on the same host. With respect to platform independence, it should be possible for agents running on the same platform to be in different domains (for example, a resident and a visiting mobile agent running on the same platform may belong to different domains having more or less restrictive security privileges).

It is easy to imagine that agents might want to simultaneously belong to multiple domains. For example, it might be useful to structure an agent application as a series of hierarchically nested sub-domains. It might also be useful in some instances to specify a policy that precludes an agent from simultaneously belonging to more than one domain (e.g., if two domains are governed by incompatible security policies). Simultaneous membership of agents in multiple domains raises a number of currently unsolved technical issues.

243 **3 Policy Scenarios**

In this section, we identify a number of use case scenarios that illustrate many of the classical situations where policies
 and policy enforcement are relevant. They cover a range of situations that we may expect to encounter in policy
 application.

240 c 247

The scenarios are abstract in nature, rather than examples of concrete situations. Their emphasis is on illustrating the many different situations that policies may be applied and the kind of architectural support that would be required on Agent Platforms in order to support them. For the sake of continuity and comparison each of the use case scenarios is expressed using aspects of lawyer-client interaction.

- 252
- 253

254 3.1 Access Use Case

255 3.1.1 Description

Many policies relate to the provision of shared resources to agents. Shared resources are often constrained by quality of service constraints, access constraints and availability constraints. A key aspect of this class of policy scenarios is that an *owner* of each resource must be identifiable (which may or may not be an agent) and that an *owner* be responsible for applying any policy constraints to the resource.

- This scenario is characterized by a set of resources, methods for accessing those resources, ownership of the
 resources and quality of service constraints upon the resources.
 - 263

264 **3.1.2 Scenario**

The resource may be viewed as an entity offering a selection of legal services: a lawyer agent. To apply for access to the resource, an agent must present its credentials and requirements to the lawyer.

The lawyer agent applies policy constraints to the request, relating to its contractual requirements of the client agent.

The result is a 'quality of service' specification that constrains the set of actions that the client agent may perform on the lawyer resource.

272

267

273 3.2 Social Grouping Use Case

274 3.2.1 Description

There may be policy constraints on the permissible communication between agents based on external attributes of those agents.

277

In many situations agents with access to one set of resources are not permitted to communicate with agents that have access to other resources. For example, in a merchant bank, agents (typically human agents) who have access to the stock market - i.e., are able to buy and sell stocks and shares, are not permitted access to financial services such as loan arrangements. This is the so-called 'Chinese Wall' encountered in larger merchant banks and represents the conditions that legislation imposes on merchant banks to allow them to do business in multiple sectors.

283

These policy constraints are therefore strongly connected to groups of agents rather than the ability of individual agents to access resources.

287 3.2.2 Scenario

The different groups of agents in a merchant bank are divided into disjoint domains. An agent is required to register with a domain, either the stock domain or the mortgage domain (say), in order to communicate with agents in those domains.

- An agent enters a domain by registering with the domain manager of that domain. Once registered, the agent is permitted to send and receive messages from agents in the same domain. In general, an agent may be permitted to be a member of several domains; depending on the policy constraints of the various domain managers.
- 296 This policy is enforced by preventing agents in one domain from communicating with agents in another domain.

In addition to preventing communication, other restrictions may include *hiding* agent descriptions: a directory service can hide information about agents to non-member agents.

300

291

295

297

301 **3.3 Obligation Use Case**

302 3.3.1 Description

Agents may enter into agreements that oblige them into a certain future behaviour. Obligation constraints cannot be enforced *a priori*, however sanctions can be applied to agents that fail to meet their obligations.

305

There are many situations where an agent may be obliged to perform a task: for example, a clock agent will enter into an agreement to send a message at specific intervals, a database update agent will agree to inform the requester that an update has taken place within the database and a file printing agent will agree to print a file within some interval or at an agreed time.

310

An important service that can support obligations is the reputation service (see *Section 4.3.4, Reputation Service*). Such services provide a means for agents to 'complain' about other agents' failure to meet obligations and for agents to verify the reliability of other agents before entering into agreements.

314

315 **3.3.2 Scenario**

A lawyer agent agrees the terms of legal contract with a client. After contractual negotiation between the lawyer and client the terms are submitted to a recognised reputation service.

318

The client agent notices that an action required of the lawyer agent has not taken place and files a complaint with the reputation service.

321

A subsequent query to the reputation service reveals that the lawyer agent failed to complete on a contractual obligation, thereby potentially affecting future agreements clients.

324

325 **3.4 Compositional Use Case**

326 3.4.1 Description

An agent may require or be required to enter into several conjunctive policies. The relationship between the individual policy expressions may vary in strength, from weak influence to a strong propositional binding. Compositions may be changed dynamically (in agreement with a policy authority) through the addition, modification or removal of constraint clauses.

Constraint clauses may be: directly conjunctive to those describing the policy expression, at an upper-level changing the context of the policy, or at a sub-level modifying an individual constraint by adding a conditional factor.

335 3.4.2 Scenario

An agent that has an active contract with a lawyer agent may wish to augment the contract policies with respect to a specific legal scenario.

- This implies retention of the original contract policy with an extension for the additional requirements, resulting in a new,
 composed policy expression.
- 341

342 3.5 Refrain Use Case

343 3.5.1 Description

An agent may be required to subjectively refrain from a particular action or set of actions according to the policy constraints governing its interactions with other agents.

346

349

This implies that no direct intervention is required on behalf of another agent or policy authority. Rather the agent knows that it must refrain from an action, perhaps one requested by another agent, in accordance with its policy constraints.

350 3.5.2 Scenario

A client agent wishes to express to a Lawyer agent that legal action should always be taken autonomously in regard to a specific case instance, with the exception that on the satisfaction of certain constraints the Lawyer should refrain from action.

354

The lawyer agent may be authorized to proceed with legal action with the constraint that no contact is to be made with agent X at any time. The lawyer agent will exert a refrain if such an instance arises.

357

358 **3.6 Content Use Case**

359 3.6.1 Description

Agents often apply policy constraints to their interactions with other agents. Policy driven agents such as these may publish public policies to guide interactions with other agents.

For example, an agent may choose to constrain the form of messages it receives from other agents, and publish those policies in a way that is revealed to certain other agents. This may perhaps include requirements that messages are signed or have specific content attached.

366

369

372

362

367 3.6.2 Scenario

368 A Lawyer agent may only interact with a client agent if the messages contain a form of payment.

The client agent must therefore ensure that, in addition to any of its own requirements, any messages it sends to the Lawyer agent contain some form of payment.

A third party, such as a bank service, may be involved to provide the client agent with appropriate modification to its messages thereby ensuring the Lawyer agent recognize the payment portion of the message content.

376 3.7 System Configuration Use Case

377 3.7.1 Description

In addition to individual agents entering into individual obligations, a group or system of agents (and services) may enter
 into coordinated performance related obligations. For example, a group of agents may guarantee to provide high
 availability for an explicit period.

- Such obligations may not, in fact, be honoured by individual agents but by the agent system as a whole; and therefore will typically require monitoring and maintenance services.
- 384

387

391

381

385 **3.7.2 Scenario**

A group of agents is required to offer continuous high availability, with automatic reconfiguration as necessary.

A monitoring agent is used to observe the health of this group of agents and exert control if necessary. For example, if it observes that one or more agents are not performing as expected, it can compensate by adjusting the properties of the offending agents or by launching additional agents to offset the performance deficit.

Such a group service may be governed by service level agreements established between the agents and the monitoringagent.

394

395 3.8 Cooperation use case

396 3.8.1 Description

This is an agreement to agree between agents. For example, an agent may enter a non-antagonistic posture agreement with other agents incorporating guarantees and obligations on future behavior. This amounts to a sharing of goals between agents.

400 **3.8.2 Scenario**

In the Lawyer-client scenario, the client can pay a retainer to the Lawyer agent thereby creating a co-operational stance
 between the two.

403

404 The client can then make requests without submitting further payment for the duration of the contract.

405

This may require use of a reputation service to which a client agent may submit a complaint if the Lawyer agent refuses a request covered by the cooperation agreement.

408

409 3.9 Delegation Use Case

410 3.9.1 Description

An agreement where an agent delegates authority or obligation. For example, an agent may choose or be forced to defer authority on a particular stance, to another agent or group of agents. In the case where an agent segments a policy governed task and delegates it across a number of other agents, the policy should be transposed according to the actions of each delegated task segment.

415

In terms of contractual obligations, an agent may delegate only if the authority governing the obligation is aware of and
 accepts the action.

419 3.9.2 Scenario

The Lawyer agent may delegate a contractual obligation to a 'legal specialist' agent, perhaps operating within the same legal entity.

The delegatee is then required to meet the contractual obligations (or agreed subset thereof) specified by the delegator and agreed with the policy authority.

This requires the policy authority managing the contract, say a guard mechanism, to accept the delegation and make appropriate changes to the contract terms.

428

422

425

429 **3.10 Meta Order Use Case**

430 3.10.1 Description

A meta order policy governs the nature of other policies. For example, it may specify that all agreements between agents must involve a 'consideration' on both sides. (In Anglo-Saxon law, it is not possible to have a contract without something of value being exchanged between all participating parties.)

434

435 **3.10.2 Scenario**

In the Lawyer-client scenario; the exchange of information between the two parties may be governed by the mutual-consideration meta order policy.

438

In such a case, the reputation service must ensure that the client agent receives information from the Lawyer agentsufficient to represent any payment made.

Therefore, when a reputation service is asked to validate an agreement, it must verify that it contains an co-exchange of
 appropriate value. It will refuse to validate non-conforming agreements.

444

445 3.11 High Order Use Case

446 **3.11.1 Description**

A higher order constraint is parameterized by other constraints. This is a form of dependency amongst constraints; however, it is different to normal conjunction (which is implied by policy inheritance for example), in that a higher-order policy refers explicitly to a `policy variable'.

450

451 **3.11.2 Scenario**

A contract specifies that in the event of a dispute, the conflict resolution procedure associated with the domain that a particular agent is in should be used.

454

455 3.12 Trust Use Case

456 **3.12.1 Description**

457 Multiple levels of security may govern the relationships between agents and establishing a level of trust constrains the 458 type of agreement relationships agents can enter into. A particular trust level, indicated by a label or directly by a set of 459 policies, defines the constraints applicable to a given relationship.

460

461 **3.12.2 Scenario**

462 A new agent registers with a domain manager in order to interact with other agents within the domain.

463

464 The manager determines an appropriate trust level to assign the new agent and thereby a set of policies governing its
465 interaction with other agents within the domain.
466

467 4 Architectural Elements Needed to Support Policies

The elements of the policies and domains framework are defined here. For each element, the semantics are described informally followed by the relationships between the element and others.

470

471 **4.1 Introduction**

472

476

480

482

473 4.2 Policy Structures

474 4.2.1 Policy

475 A policy is a constraint or set of constraints on the behaviour of agents and services.

We are concerned with policies that are both public, i.e., available for inspection by third parties (although with obvious
caveats regarding access control) and machine readable, i.e., a software system should be able to interpret a policy
statement and determine legal courses of action.

481 Types of constraints are defined as:

483 **Structural constraints** specify policies about agents, their states, relationships, and communications that should not 484 be violated. For example, a purchasing agent that is on probation may not place more than three orders. Or, there may 485 never be more than seven agents bidding for a given item. The requirement that all messages must be encoded in a 486 particular manner is another example of a structural constraint.

487

488 **Operational constraints** specify policies about agent behaviour that should not be violated. For example, an Order 489 agent may not close a particular order unless it has been shipped and paid for. Or, an Order may only be cancelled in it 490 has not yet been shipped. Interaction protocols are also an example of operation constraints.

491

496

499

492 **4.2.2 Policy Language**

The language used to express policy statements and contracts. Semantically, a policy statement and contract are equivalent: they express an agreement between an agent and other agents and/or services that constrain the behaviour of both.

497 We are assuming that policy languages are *declarative*. This fits with the overall FIPA methodology as well as providing 498 a number of substantial benefits to policy developers and policy mechanism implementers.

Logically, a policy statement takes the form of a conjunction of implications: when a condition holds then an action is permitted, prohibited or whatever. In fact, the consequence of a policy rule need not be limited to single actions: it may also denote an enabling condition which allows other policy rules to trigger.

504 In addition to standard predicate logic, we envisage a policy language having built-in ontologies for the concepts of 505 *action, permission,* and *obligation.* For example, SL can be straightforwardly extended to include permission and 506 obligation in a manner similar to its model for action.

507

503

508 4.2.3 Policy Library

A set of rules that form coherent collections of policy statements. A policy library may introduce higher-level policy concepts (for example, National Security Classification) to simplify the task of generating specific policy rules for agents and services.

513 4.2.4 Interpretation Engine

An interpretation engine is a mechanism for interpreting a set of policy rules and a proposed action to determine if the action is legal according to the policy rules. It is possible that for certain classes of policy languages an interpretation engine could also determine that a particular action is *required* at a given situation. However, in general this is a hard problem.

518

520

522

519 The interpretation mechanism uses:

521 **Inference rules** that state if a certain facts are true, a conclusion can be stated of inferred.

523 **Computation policies** that define how to derive results via algorithms. For example, the net price of a product can be 524 computed as follows: (product price * (1 + tax percentage / 100)). Or, the set of all Managing Salesperson agents can 525 be computed as the intersection of all Manager agents and Salesperson agents.

526

527 4.2.5 Distribution Mechanism

528 A distribution mechanism is a means for distributing policy rules from originating authorities to mechanisms that have 529 the ability and responsibility of applying policies.

530

531 4.2.6 Conversation Policy

532 A number of research groups are working to extend the concept of FIPA *interaction protocols* to accommodate recent 533 research in agent conversation policies.

534

539

545

548

551

535 Conversations are sequences of messages involving two or more agents intended to bring about a particular set of 536 (perhaps jointly held) goals. In contrast to early agent communication research, agent researchers now acknowledge 537 that agent communication is better modelled when conversations rather than isolated messages are taken as the 538 primary unit of analysis.

540 Conversation policies are declarative specifications that govern specific instances of communications between agents 541 using an agent communication language. Contrary to current transition net approaches to specifying FIPA interaction 542 protocols, recent research suggests conversation policies are best represented as sets of fine-grained constraints on 543 ACL usage. These constraints define the computational process models that are implemented in agents. The key 544 notions here are:

- 546 Conversation policies provide a level of analysis that abstracts from the actual propositional content, agent 547 communication language, and implementation of individual conversations.
- 549 Conversation policies help ensure reliable communication between agents whilst simplifying any inference required 550 in determining which communicative act or other action should be made in response to a message.

552 The abstract architecture specifies a set of abstract objects that allow for the explicit representation of "a conversation", 553 i.e. a related set of messages between interlocutors that are logically related by some interaction pattern. It is desirable 554 that this property be achieved by the minimum of overhead at the infrastructure or message level; in particular, it is 555 important that interoperability remain un-compromised. For example, a concrete implementation may deliver messages 556 to conversation-specific queues based on an interpretation of the message envelope. To achieve interoperability with 557 an agent that does not support explicit conversations (i.e. which does not allow individual messages to be automatically 558 associated with a particular higher-level interaction pattern), it is necessary to specify the way in which the message 559 envelope must be processed in order to preserve conversational semantics.

560

561 4.3 Enforcement mechanisms

562 The two classes of constraints, corresponding to prohibitions and obligations, require different kinds of enforcement 563 mechanisms. The former can be supported with policy domains and the latter with reputation services. 564

565 **4.3.1 Guards**

An active computational element that interprets high level policies and ensures their enforcement in a platform-specific way. Permissions are necessarily enforced in a different fashion than obligations. Permissions are granted or not before an action is taken; whereas one can only monitor an agent's performance on its obligations and apply necessary remedies after the fact. (Include examples of exception handling here, e.g., rollback.)

571 4.3.2 Sanctions

572 Violations of policy can result in remedies being applied to the offending agent; e.g., restrictions on the future behavior 573 of an agent, price controls, reduction in access. An indirect consequence of policy violation can also be that other 574 agents choose not to communicate with an offending agent. The most extreme form of sanction could be loss of domain 575 membership and even termination.

576

577 4.3.3 Policy Exception

578 An event raised as a consequence of a policy violation.

579

580 4.3.4 Reputation Service

Is a service that allows agents and services to monitor the public performance of agents and services in terms of their compliance to publicly entered-into policy agreements.

583

A reputation service takes the role of a trusted third party that agents and service providers may use to monitor compliance with agreements. Reputation services are one of the few mechanisms that are able to enforce obligations; since obligations cannot be prevented but only required.

587

588 A typical use of a reputation service is for all parties to an agreement to `escrow' their agreement with the reputation 589 service. If one of the parties determines that another party has defaulted on an obligation it may lodge a complaint with 590 the reputation service.

591

In software systems the concept of a legal remedy may seem moot; however, simply recording instances of default and offering that information to others querying the service may be a powerful deterrence mechanism. If an agent defaults on an obligation, other agents and services may become more reluctant to offer it facilities if they are able to query a reputation service.

596

597 4.3.5 Policy Domain

A set of agents to which a given set of policies apply. In certain cases it may be possible to use domain membership as a shorthand for applying the policy constraint inference procedures. In other words, the inference that a particular service request is consistent with the policies in force in a given context may be reduced to the tests that (1) the domain policies are consistent with the agent platform and (2) that the agent is a member of the domain.

602

A major purpose of Policy Domains is to ensure consistency of policy across a set of agents potentially running on different agent platforms and hosts. This can be accomplished as long as semantically equivalent monitoring and enforcement mechanisms are available across those platforms and hosts. Under these conditions, it follows that a given domain could extend across host boundaries and, conversely, multiple domains could exist concurrently on the same host. With respect to platform independence, it should be possible for agents running on the same platform to be in different domains (for example, a resident and a visiting mobile agent running on the same platform may belong to different domains having more or less restrictive security privileges).

610

611 4.3.6 Domain Manager

An agent domain consists of a unique instance of a domain manager along with any agents that are registered to it. The

- 613 function of a domain manager is to serve as a single point of administration for policy management, i.e., configure, re-
- 614 configure, store, publish and enforce where possible the set of policies declared for that domain.

615 4.4 Domain Management

616 It is possible to define domains that explicitly require registration, as well as domains that require no registration, or 617 subordinate registration to other elements of the FIPA environment, such as physical agent platforms. In this 618 specification, we are only concerned with policy domains that are active, and have explicit notions of domain 619 membership (i.e., there is an explicit list of agents that are members of a given domain).

620

621 4.4.1 Directory Functions

Provides services for agents register directory-entries. Other agents can search the directory-entries to find agents with which they wish to interact. In other words, it provides services for registration, lookup, discovery, authentication, etc.

624

625 4.4.2 Conflict Resolution

Resolves conflicts that may arise between any combination of: agent, domain, host, and computational environment.

628 4.4.3 Policy Derivation

629 (rule generation)

630

631 4.4.4 Policy Change Notification

- 632 (broadcast/sub-domain broadcast).
- 633
- 634 **4.4.5 Querying of Domain Policies**
- 635
- 636

636 **5 Elements for Testing Conformance**

637 6 Communicative Acts

638 6.1 Promise

Summary	The action of agreeing to a contract; equivalent to signing the contract. The normal effect of		
	promising is that the agent is bound by the terms of the contract.		
Message Content	A proposition outlining the terms of the contract. Logically, a contract is a proposition, however it		
	is normally in the form of conditional rules: if A is true then Y is true; where the various conditions		
	of the contract and their consequences are outlined.		
Description	Promise is a general purpose agreement that an agent will abide by the terms of a contract.		
	Normally, the promise does not directly imply that the agent will perform some action(s); but that		
	if called upon under the right circumstances will agree to perform the actions.		
	The agent sending the promise informs the receiver that it does intend to abide by the terms of		
	the contract.		
Pragmatic Note	The form of the proposition should be of the form of a conjunction of conditional rules. Each rule		
	may be of the form:		
	if Condition then feasible (A, Action)		
	underen Alie energetate energie de des exercises de la manufacture de		
	where A is one of the agents party to the contract. Essentially, a promise is a promise to agree to		
E	act on future requests - provided that the preconditions of the rules apply.		
Formal Model	<i, (j,=""))="" phi,="" promise=""></i,>		
	<1, INIORM (J, 11 Ph1,))>		
	rr. Rr: Ri Ti Phi		
Examples	Fix me		

639

640

641 7 References

642[FIPA 00001]FIPA Abstract Architecture Specification. Foundation for Intelligent Physical Agents, 2000.
http://www.fipa.org/specs/fipa00001/