

ICN/HEDAMO-DL-2026:01 · INSTITUTIONAL CATEGORY NOTE ·
FIRST EDITION

The Disclosure Layer

*Where Producer-Declared Product
Information Becomes Portable*

An Institutional Category Note from Altibbe Inc.

Shams Ahmed

FOUNDER & CEO · ALTIBBE INC.

SECTION 1

The Disclosure Layer

Producer-controlled disclosure is the category in which HEDAMO should be understood. It is distinct from certification, verification, compliance assessment, audit, software, quality marks, and regulatory clearance. The purpose of this note is to locate HEDAMO within that category before institutional discussion begins.

HEDAMO structures product distinction so that producer-declared attributes become portable across buyers, institutions, and markets — without relocating operational responsibility. More specifically: HEDAMO structures producer-declared product information so that health-relevant attributes can travel with clearer ownership, source attribution, and responsibility. It is a disclosure methodology for food, agriculture, and allied systems — addressing a structural layer that is distinct from the operational functions most food systems currently manage.

This note defines that layer, explains how it relates to adjacent institutional functions, and identifies where the distinction matters for programme design, procurement, and quality infrastructure.

SECTION 2

How Disclosure Relates to Adjacent Functions

Food and agriculture systems rely on well-established institutional functions: certification, verification, regulatory approval, compliance assessment, audit, technology implementation, and quality marking. Each performs a specific role within the operational architecture of food systems. Disclosure is adjacent to all of them and dependent on none.

Certification evaluates a product or process against a defined threshold. Disclosure structures what the producer declares about the product. Certification asks: does this meet the standard? Disclosure asks: what can the producer tell us about this product? HEDAMO belongs to the disclosure function.

Verification confirms whether specific claims are accurate. Disclosure structures the form and content of what is claimed. Whether and how a disclosure is later verified belongs to operational systems. HEDAMO structures the declaration, not its verification.

Regulatory approval determines whether a product may enter a market, a use category, or a distribution channel. A product's disclosure profile exists independently of market-entry status. HEDAMO does not provide regulatory clearance.

Compliance assessment evaluates whether a product or producer meets applicable requirements. A product can be fully compliant across every applicable requirement and remain fully opaque at the disclosure layer — its regulatory status complete, its product identity unstructured. HEDAMO addresses the second condition.

Audit examines records, processes, or claims against expectations. Disclosure creates the structured record of what the producer has declared. One examines; the other structures what is available to be examined.

Technology and software are implementation tools. HEDAMO is a methodology — a structured approach to organising producer-declared product information. How it is implemented in technology is a separate decision, made by institutions and vendors independently of the disclosure standard.

Quality marks and rankings rate, score, or grade products against evaluative criteria. HEDAMO structures disclosure without evaluation. A product within scope is not endorsed; a product outside scope is not condemned.

Existing operational systems — including TraceNet, GS1, national food safety frameworks, and Codex Alimentarius — each produce valuable outputs within their domains. HEDAMO does not replace them. It provides a product-level disclosure structure where their outputs can be situated alongside producer-declared information that currently has no structured home.

SECTION 3

The Operational Layer and the Disclosure Layer

This is the structural distinction at the centre of HEDAMO's contribution.

Existing food and agriculture systems manage the operational layer: the movement of goods, storage and cold-chain integrity, certification against standards, compliance with regulatory requirements, and the commercial transactions through which products change hands. These systems are mature, well-resourced, and essential to the functioning of national and international food systems. HEDAMO does not replace or perform those functions.

HEDAMO structures a different layer: the disclosure layer. This layer concerns what the product is, where it comes from, how it was produced, what its compositional attributes are, and what health-relevant context accompanies it. These are questions of product identity and producer-declared information — not questions of operational performance.

“The operational layer confirms the product was handled correctly. The disclosure layer articulates what the product actually is. The first does not produce the second.”

This separation is not a gap in any single system's design. It is an architectural characteristic of food systems as they currently function. Traceability systems track movement. Certification bodies evaluate against thresholds. Compliance frameworks assess regulatory conformity. None is designed to structure the full scope of producer-declared product information into a portable, readable form. That is the disclosure layer.

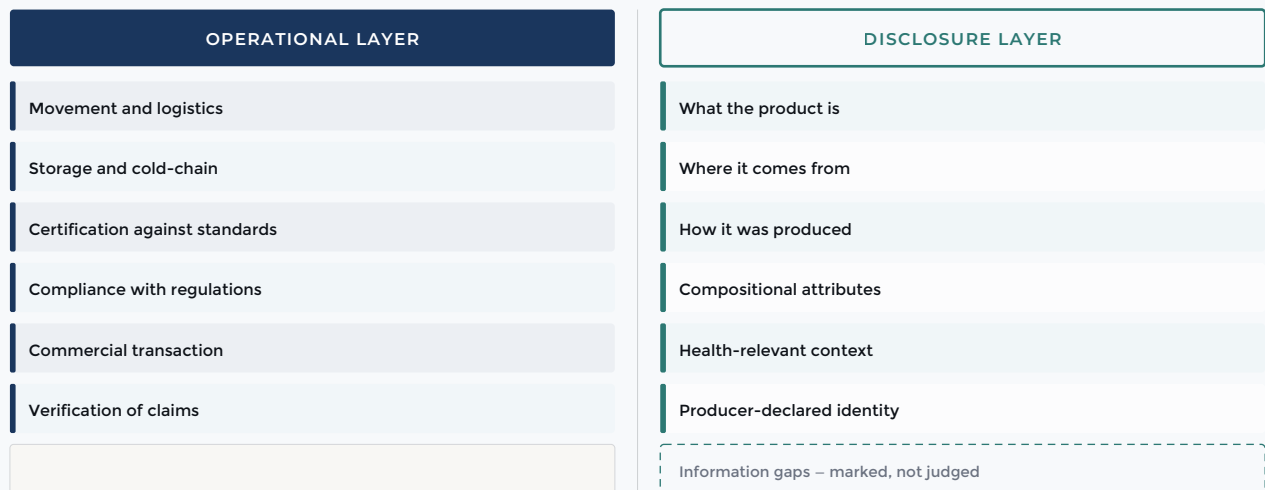


Fig. 1 · A product can be fully operational and fully opaque at the disclosure layer.

SECTION 4

The Declared Gaps Principle

Where information is not declared, HEDAMO marks the gap rather than converting absence into judgment.

This principle serves three functions simultaneously. It protects producers from exposure for information they have not chosen to declare — absence of disclosure is recorded as a gap, not as concealment. It protects buyers and institutions from treating missing information as evidence of wrongdoing — a gap in disclosure is a gap in information, not an indictment. And it protects the disclosure methodology itself from being misread as a ranking or scoring instrument — HEDAMO structures what is declared and marks what is not, without assigning value to either condition.

The methodology is designed so that non-disclosure is not converted into accusation, penalty, or comparative judgment. The gap is visible. Its meaning is not predetermined.

SECTION 5

Where the Category Matters

For institutions designing food and agriculture programmes — the disclosure layer is the information that procurement and programme specifications currently do not capture. What remains unspecified is the structured disclosure of producer-declared product identity — what the product is, beyond what compliance requires it to be.

For advisory bodies shaping programme specifications and tender design — producer-declared product identity is a layer that can be specified alongside existing traceability and compliance requirements. It does not replace them. It addresses a dimension they were not designed to cover.

For quality infrastructure and standards bodies — disclosure methodology is a structural contribution to the quality infrastructure conversation — adjacent to but distinct from certification, accreditation, and conformity assessment. It sits within the broader architecture of product information without claiming territory that belongs to existing functions.

SECTION 6

How Institutions Can Reference This Work

Institutions, advisory bodies, and programme designers may reference the disclosure layer as a category distinction when designing programme specifications, research agendas, procurement frameworks, or quality infrastructure discussions. Such reference does not require adoption of the HEDAMO methodology, endorsement of Altibbe, regulatory change, or replacement of existing systems. It requires only the recognition that producer-declared product information constitutes a structural layer — and that this layer can be named, specified, and addressed.

HEDAMO is the disclosure standard under development by Altibbe Inc., a research-and-standards organisation. The methodology is available for reference by institutions that encounter the disclosure gap in the course of their own work.