

Building a Trustworthy Digital State:

Delivering Speed, Fairness, and Inclusion at Scale



Manish Srivastava

CTO, eGov Foundation



Ranchi,
Jharkhand
(birth +
schooling)



IIT (BHU)
Varanasi
(graduation)



1996: Infosys,
Bangalore



Global Tech
Consulting
(US, Japan,
Australia,
Global 2000)



2013: SaaS
Startup
(Wind Energy
Scheduling &
Forecasting)



2015: SaaS
Startup
(Customer
Experience
Management)



Last 5 years:
eGov Foundation

Current work

Urban (AI CoE IIT Kanpur),
Public Finance, Health, Water,
Justice, Energy

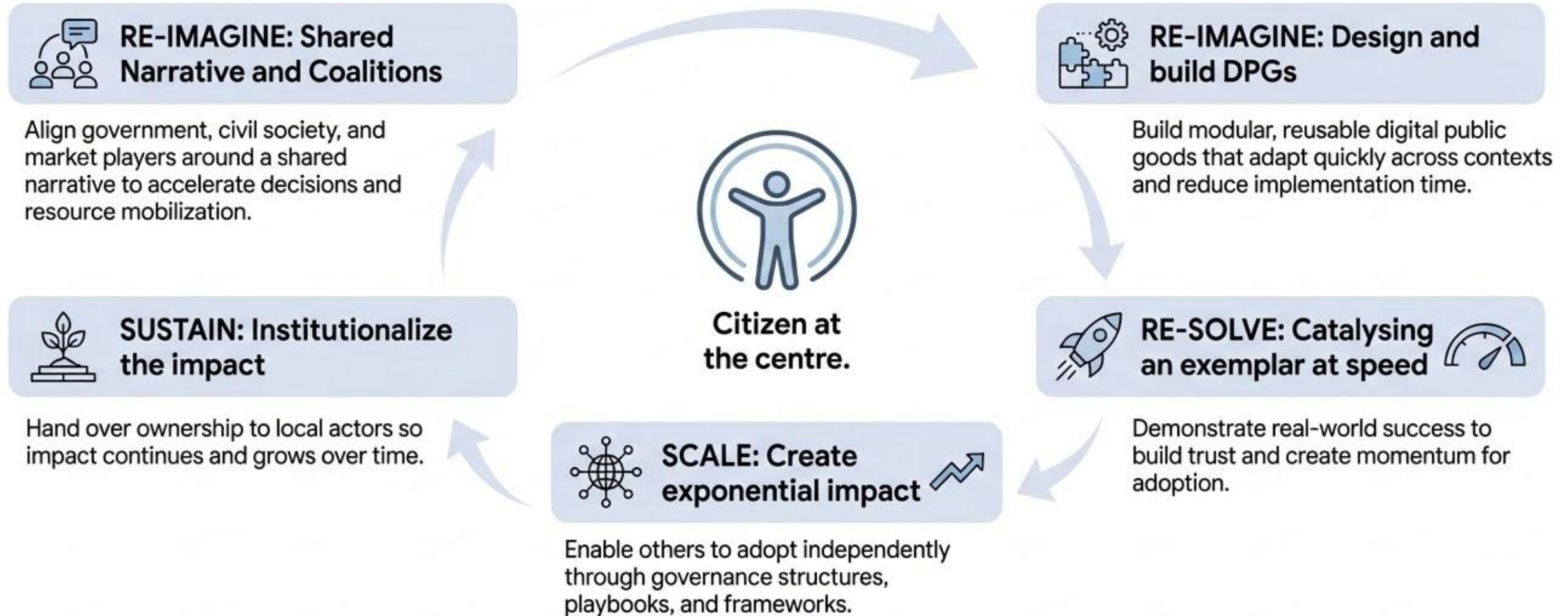
Advisor: Shikshalokam

Writes: Digital Statecraft (Substack)

Advises companies and social enterprises globally

eGov Theory of Change: The 5-Thread Approach

The eGov Way: 5 threads to achieve exponential impact in public service delivery at speed and scale.



Networks of trust and partnership build local capacity so diverse challenges can be met by diverse local solutions, each effective in its context.



Rules + Facts + Decision Receipt

Digitisation put services online, but decisions often stayed opaque because technology mirrored siloed, vertically integrated departments. Rules are hard to interpret, facts are fragmented, and outcomes can vary across counters, portals, and intermediaries.

DPI is lowering coordination costs by making identity, payments, and credentials portable, but it still doesn't make decisions defensible.

To deliver speed, fairness, and inclusion at scale, governments must publish machine-readable rules, govern authoritative facts, and issue a digitally signed decision receipt for every outcome. That receipt makes decisions traceable, auditable, and appealable, even when AI is involved.



Speed



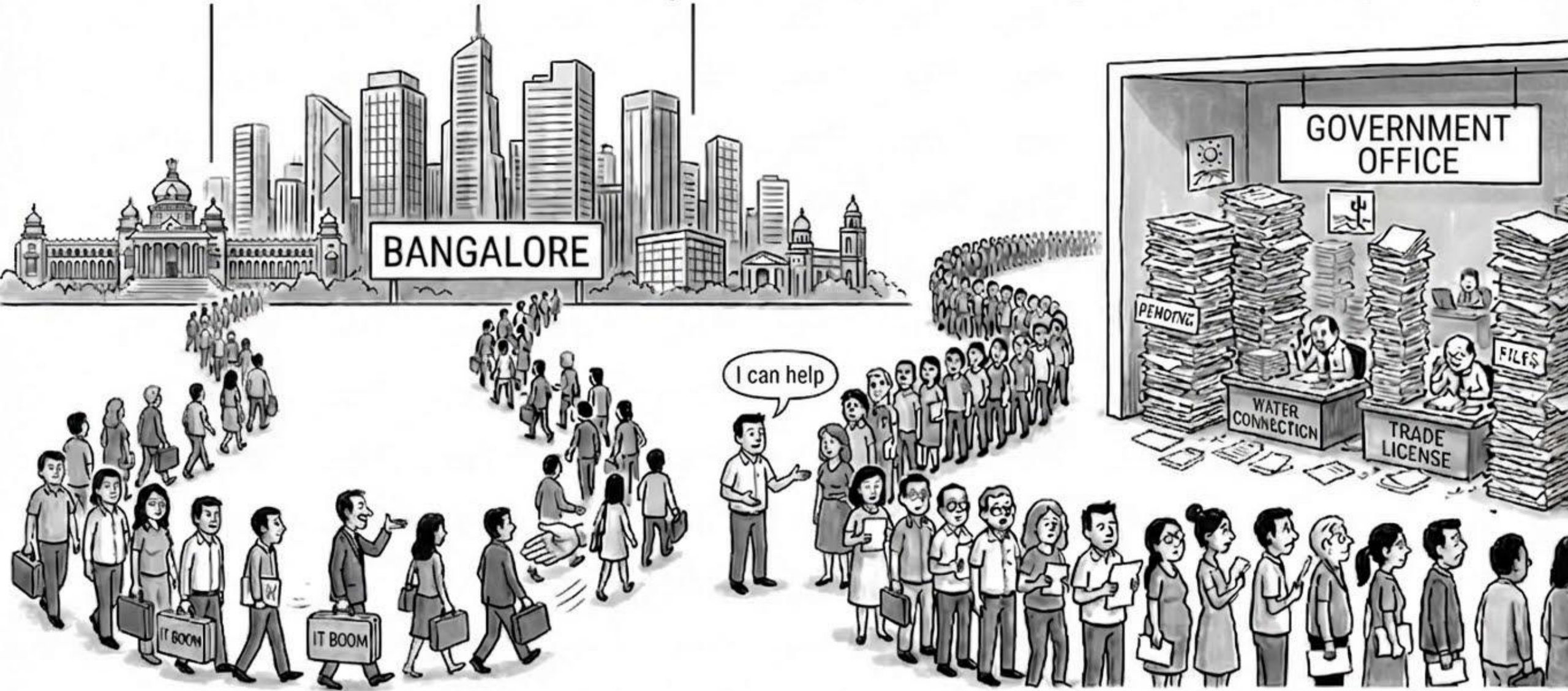
Fairness



Inclusion

1996: ~4M

Today: ~12M (order-of-magnitude demand growth)



Demand grew faster than service capacity.

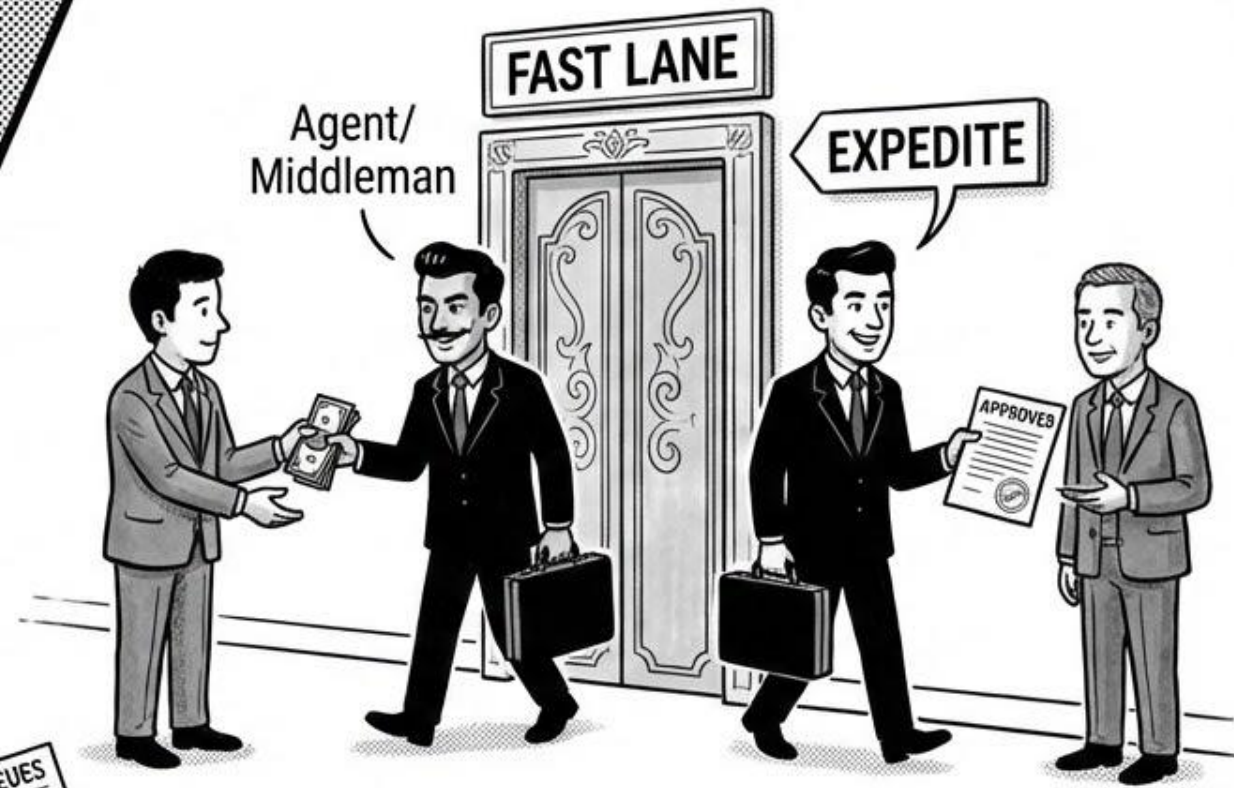
Digitisation 1.0



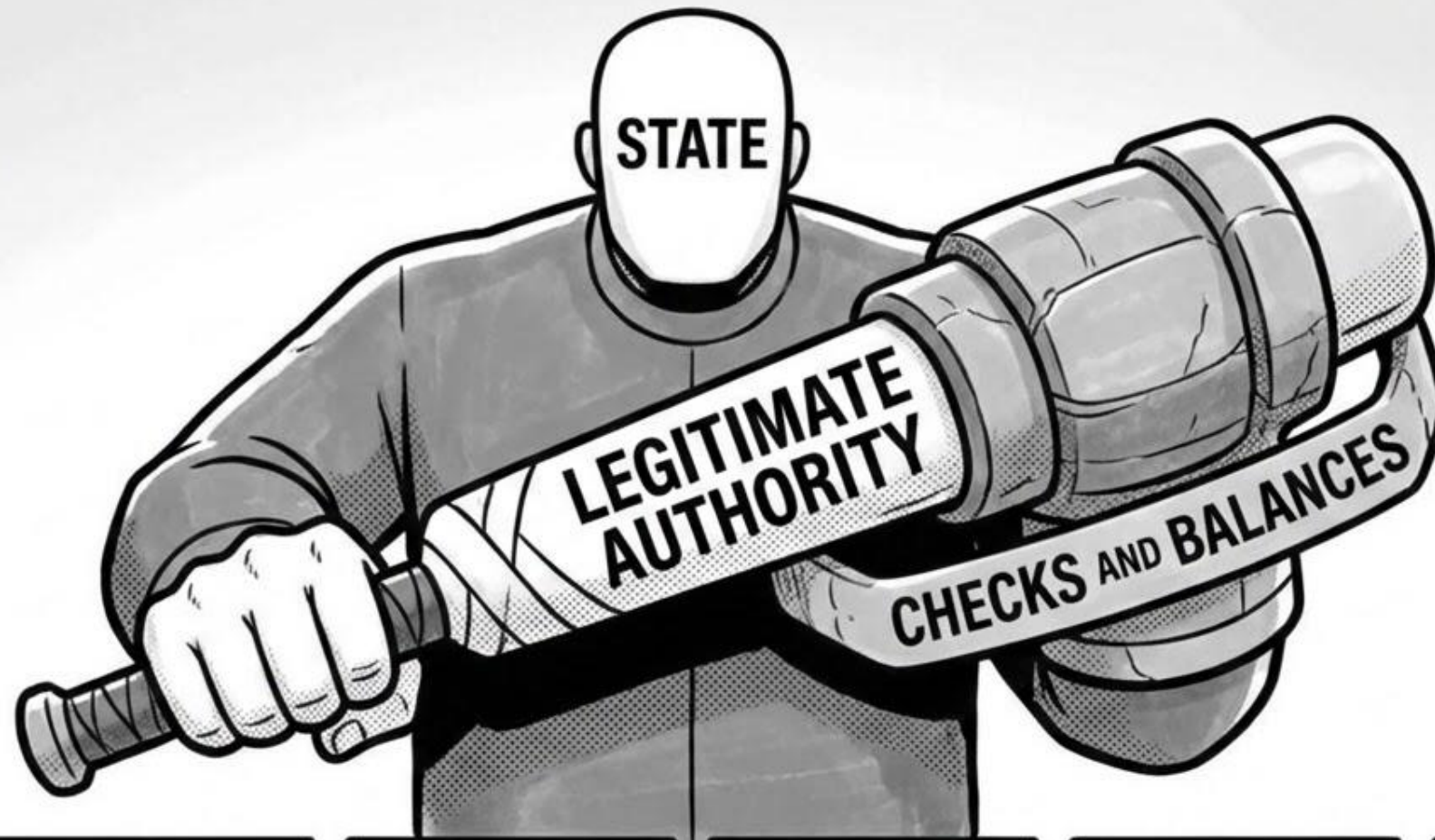
Paper reduced. Waiting didn't.



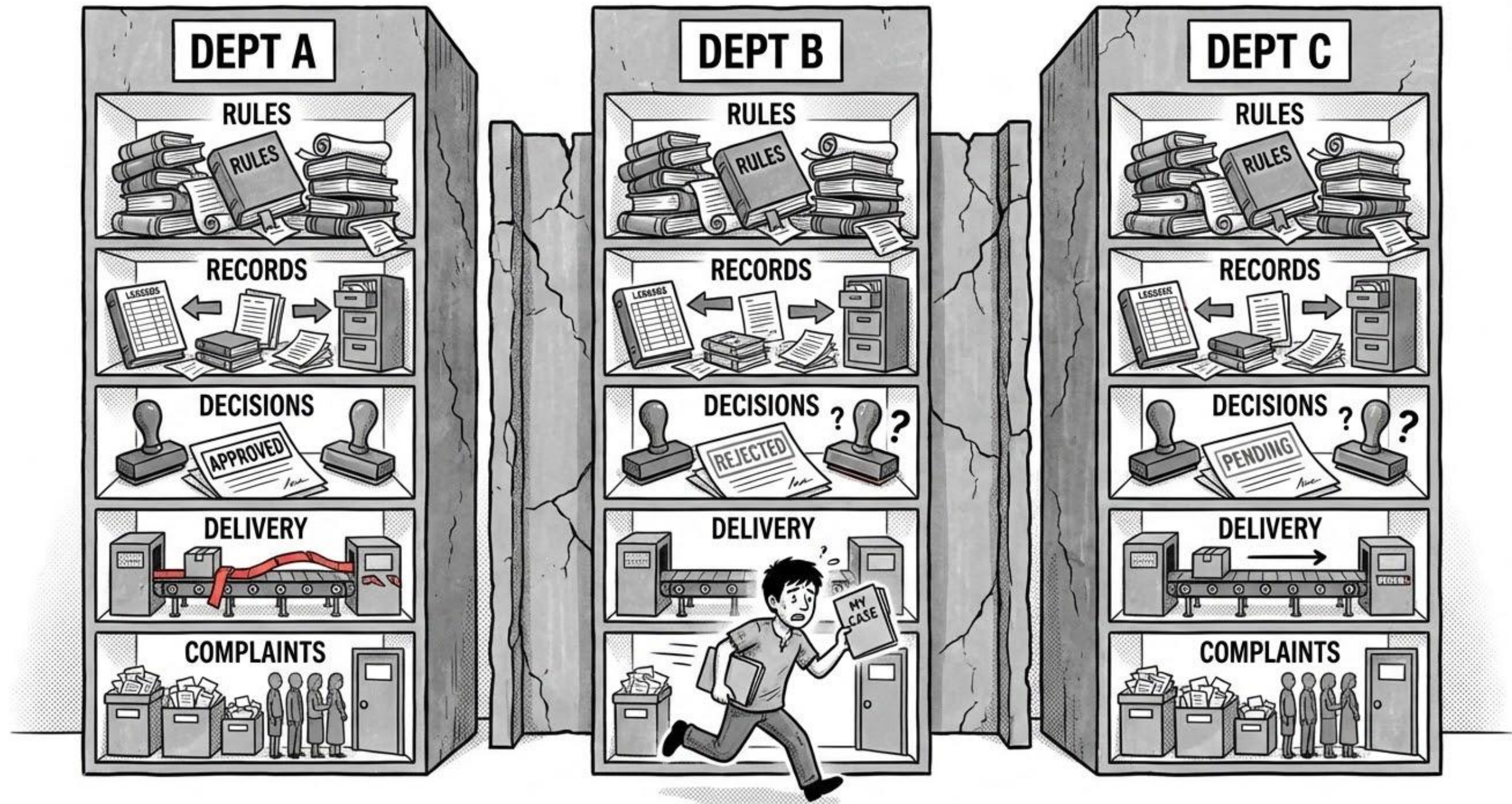
Queues moved. Explanations didn't.



Opacity creates bypass markets. Inequality grows.

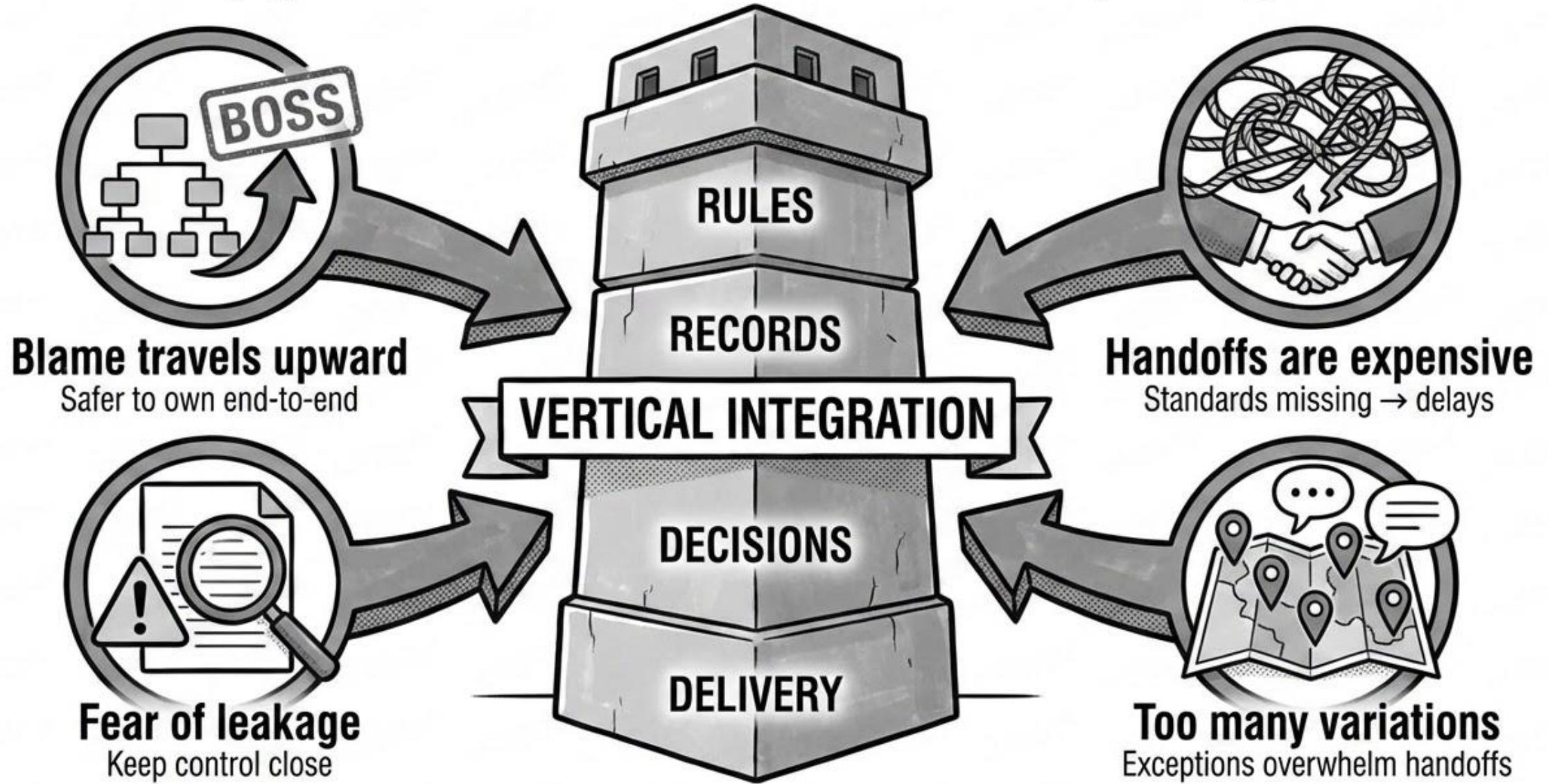


Don't let one actor control everything.



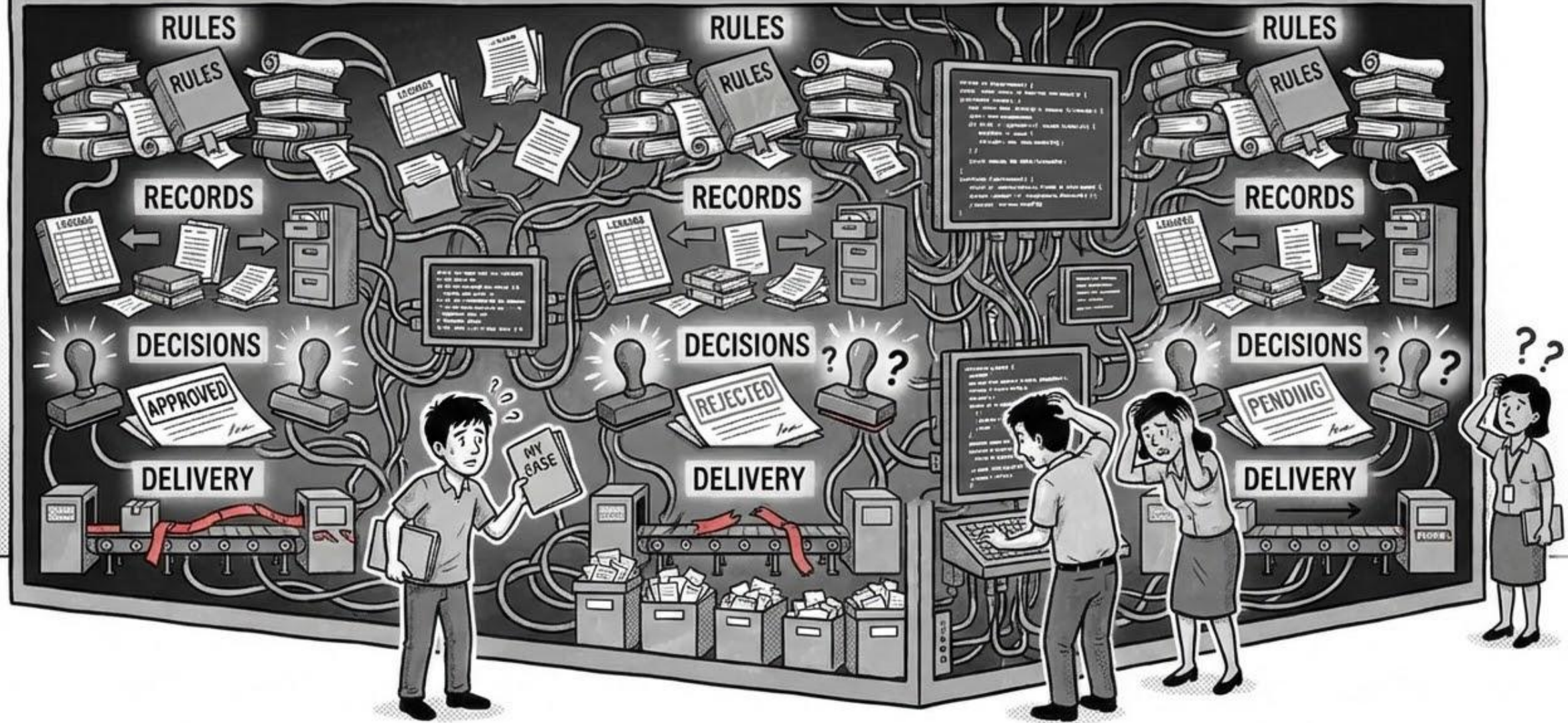
Each department controls rules + records + decisions + delivery + complaints.

Why governments became **vertically integrated**

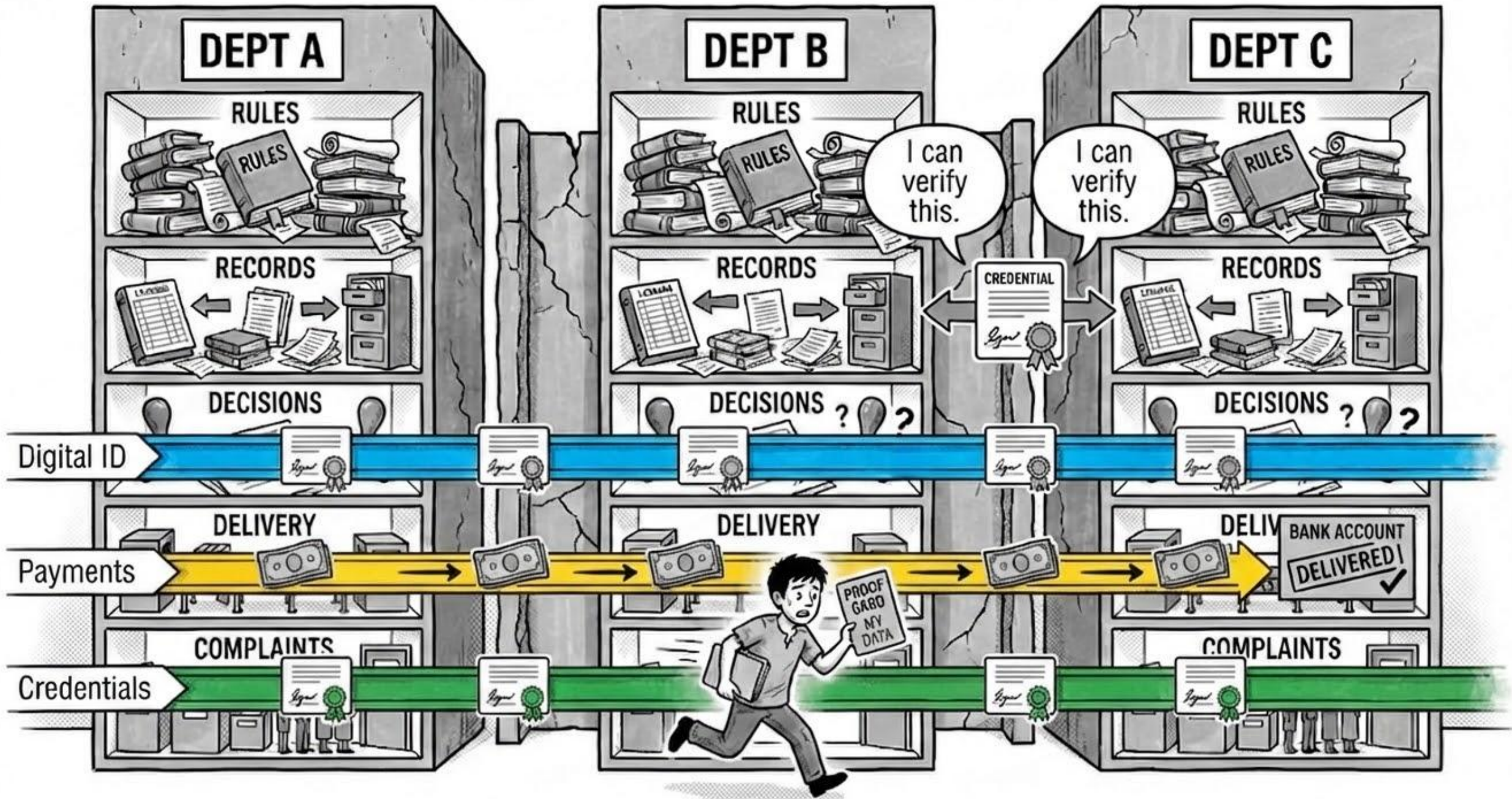


Vertical integration was a rational response to scale, diversity, and weak coordination infrastructure, but it concentrates power and makes decisions opaque.

DIGITISATION 1.0

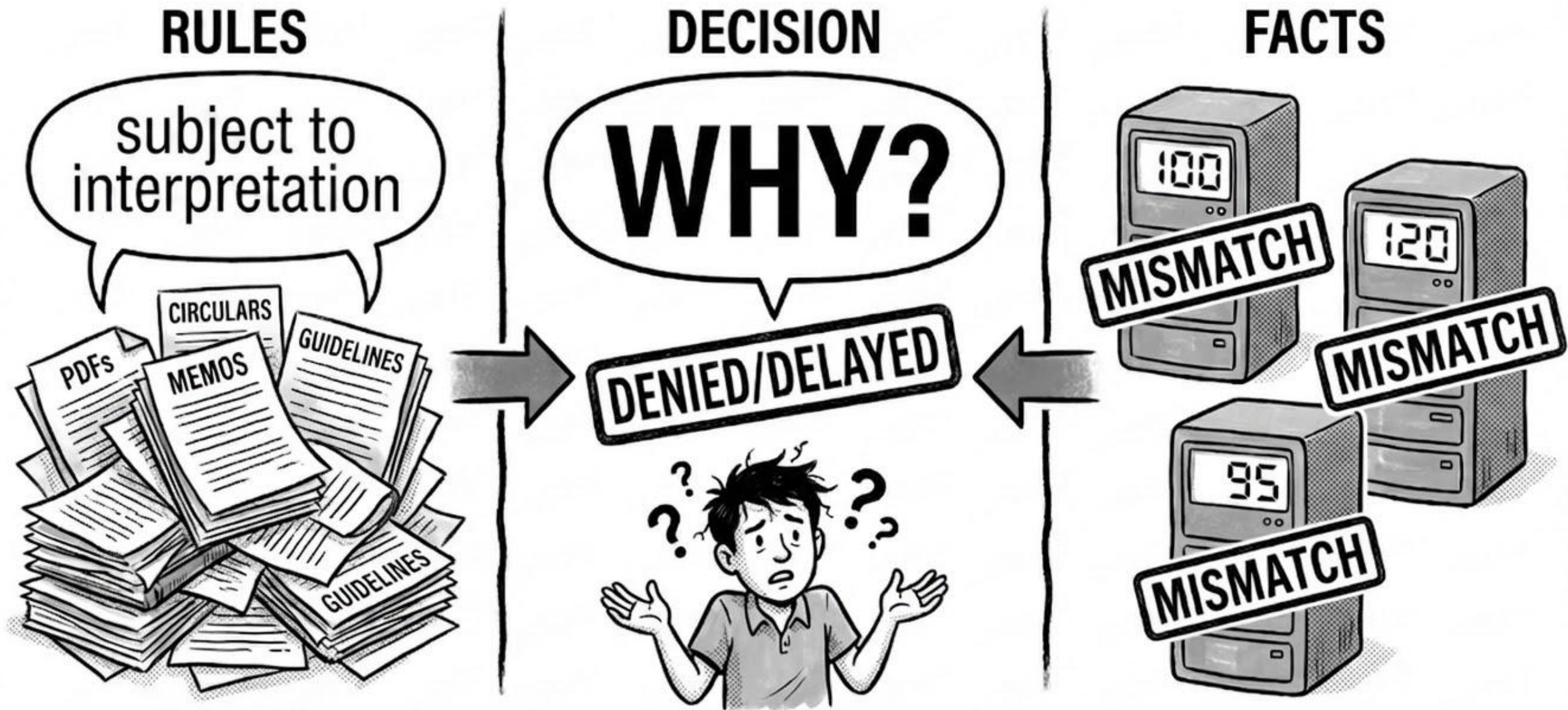


DIGITISATION 1.0 encoded rules, records, decisions, delivery and complaints into one opaque system. It scaled opacity, making it harder even for employees to explain.

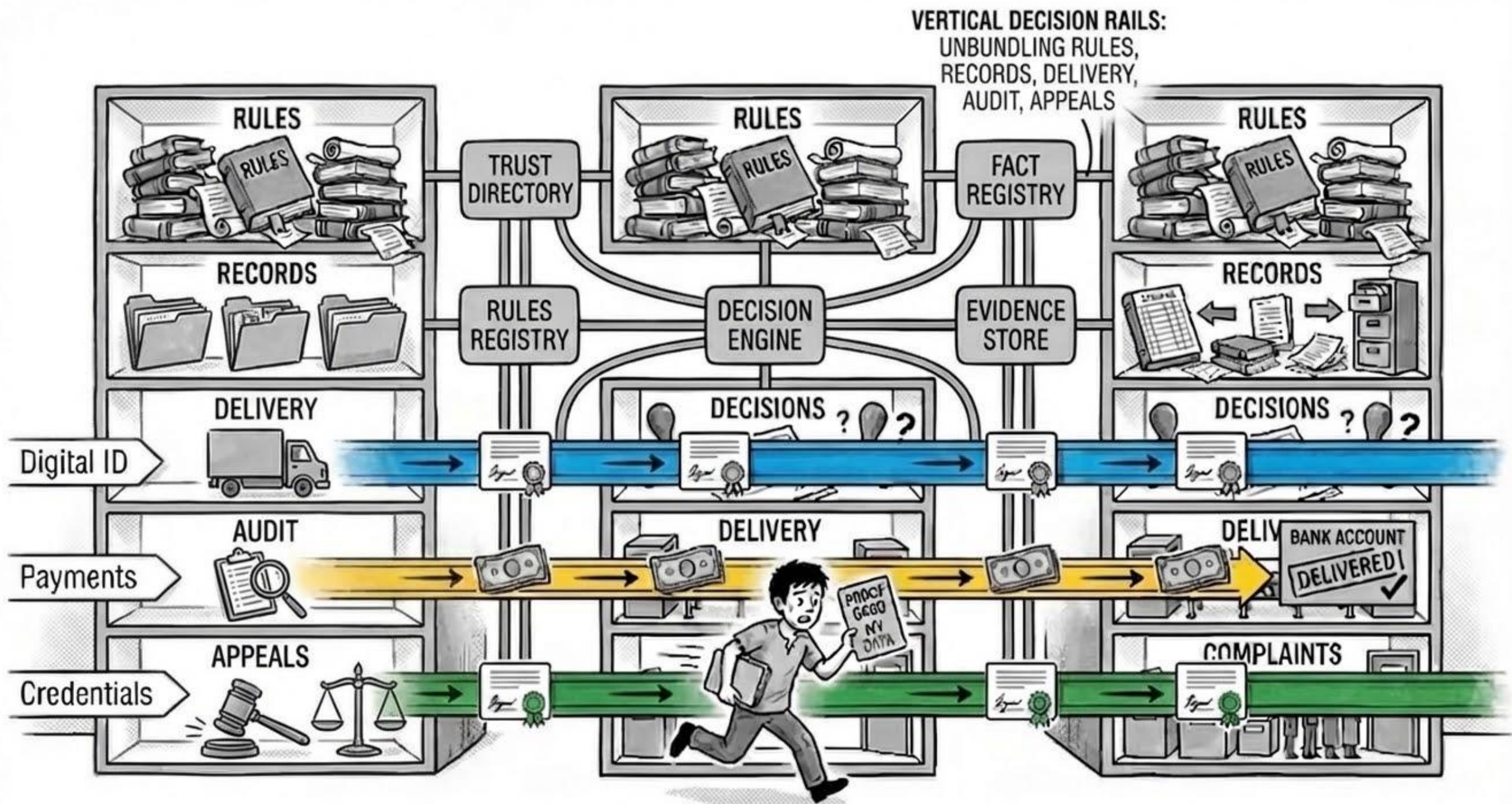


DPI makes trusted exchange possible, but doesn't fix unclear rules and contested facts in decisions.

CORE GAP: DECISION = RULES APPLIED TO FACTS.

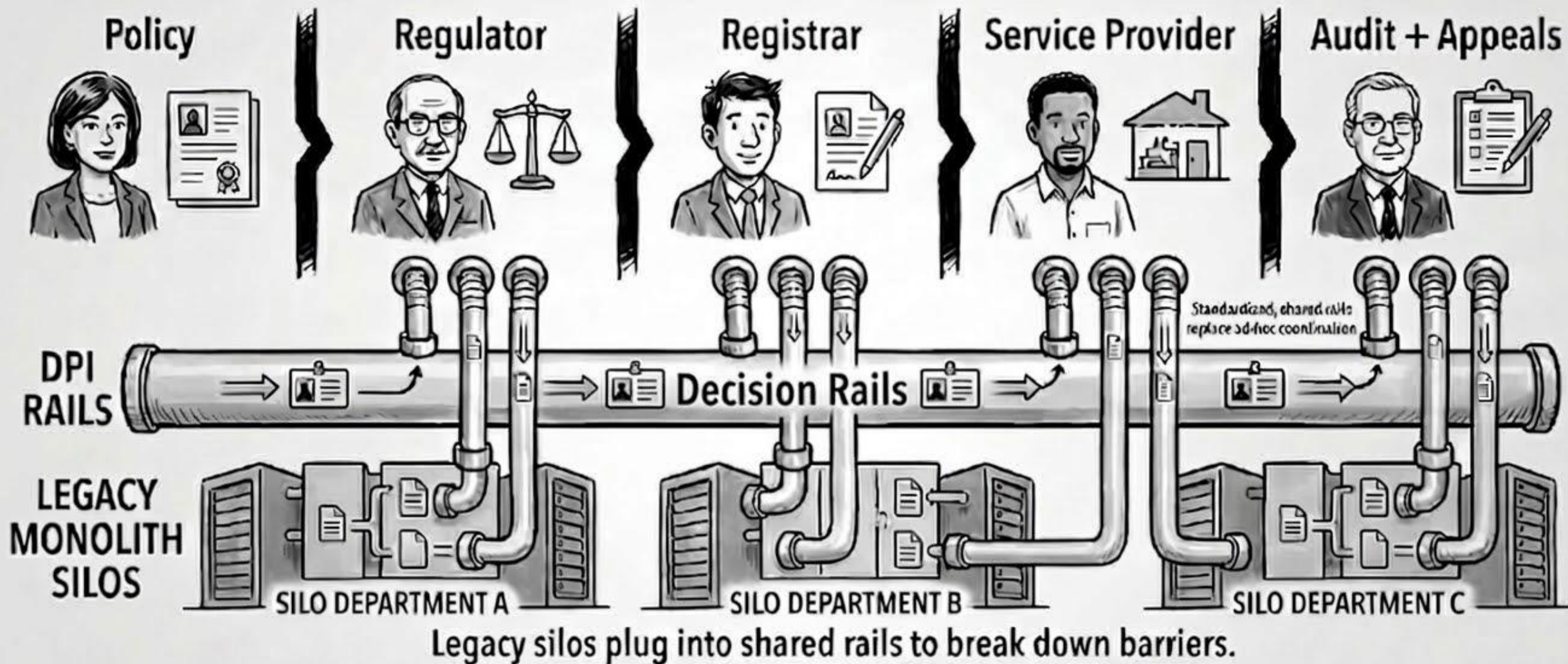


When rules and facts aren't clear, 'system says no' becomes unexplainable.



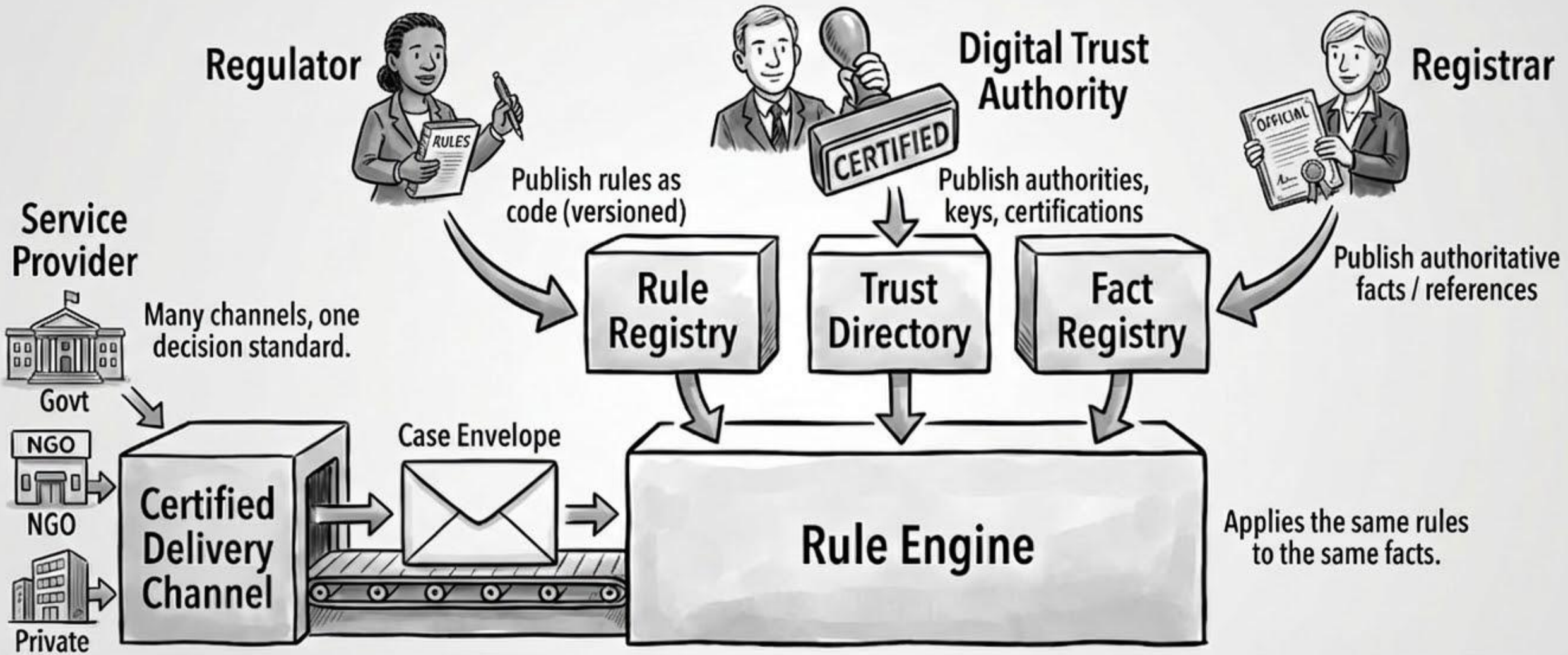
DPI enables horizontal trusted exchange; Vertical rails unbundle and streamline decisions, rules, records, delivery, and audit across agencies.

Reimagining the State in the Digital Era



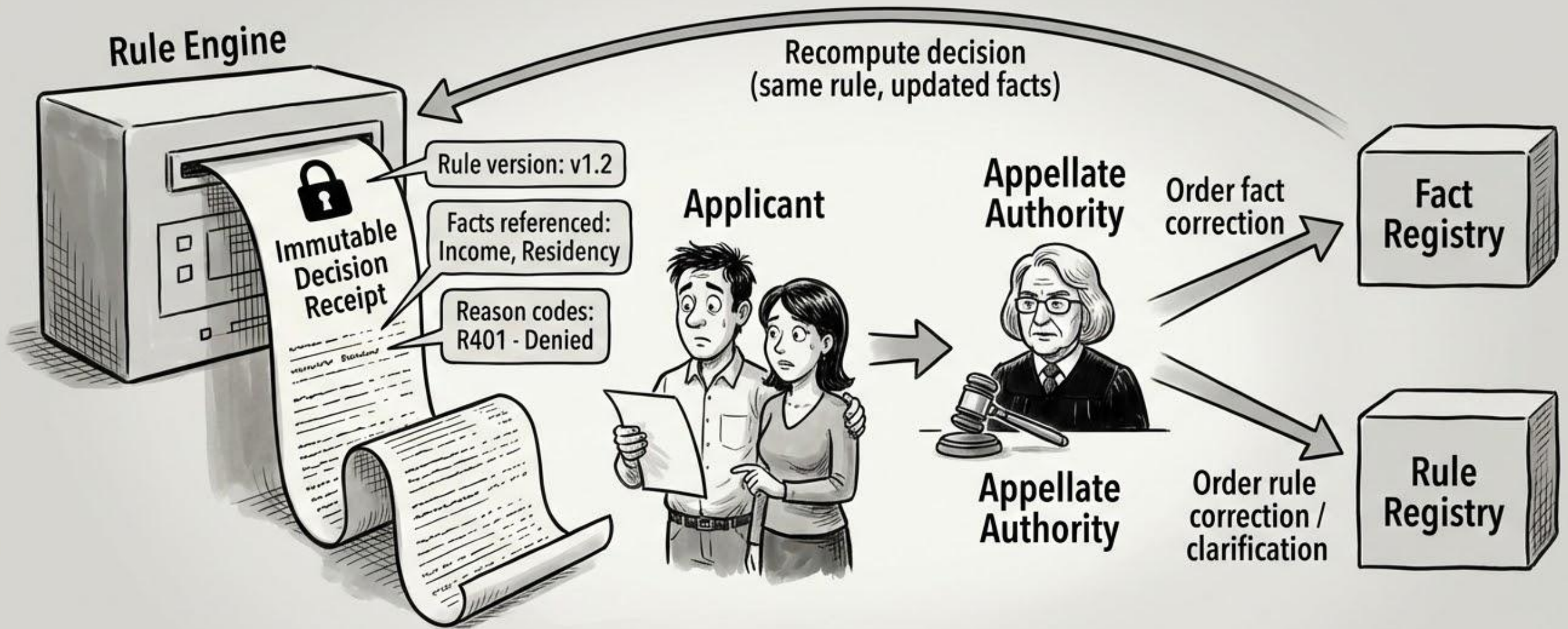
With Decision Rails, modular institutions become feasible at scale:
faster delivery, clearer accountability, and fairer outcomes.

Decision Rails: Trust + Rules + Facts = Decisioning at Scale with Institutional Roles

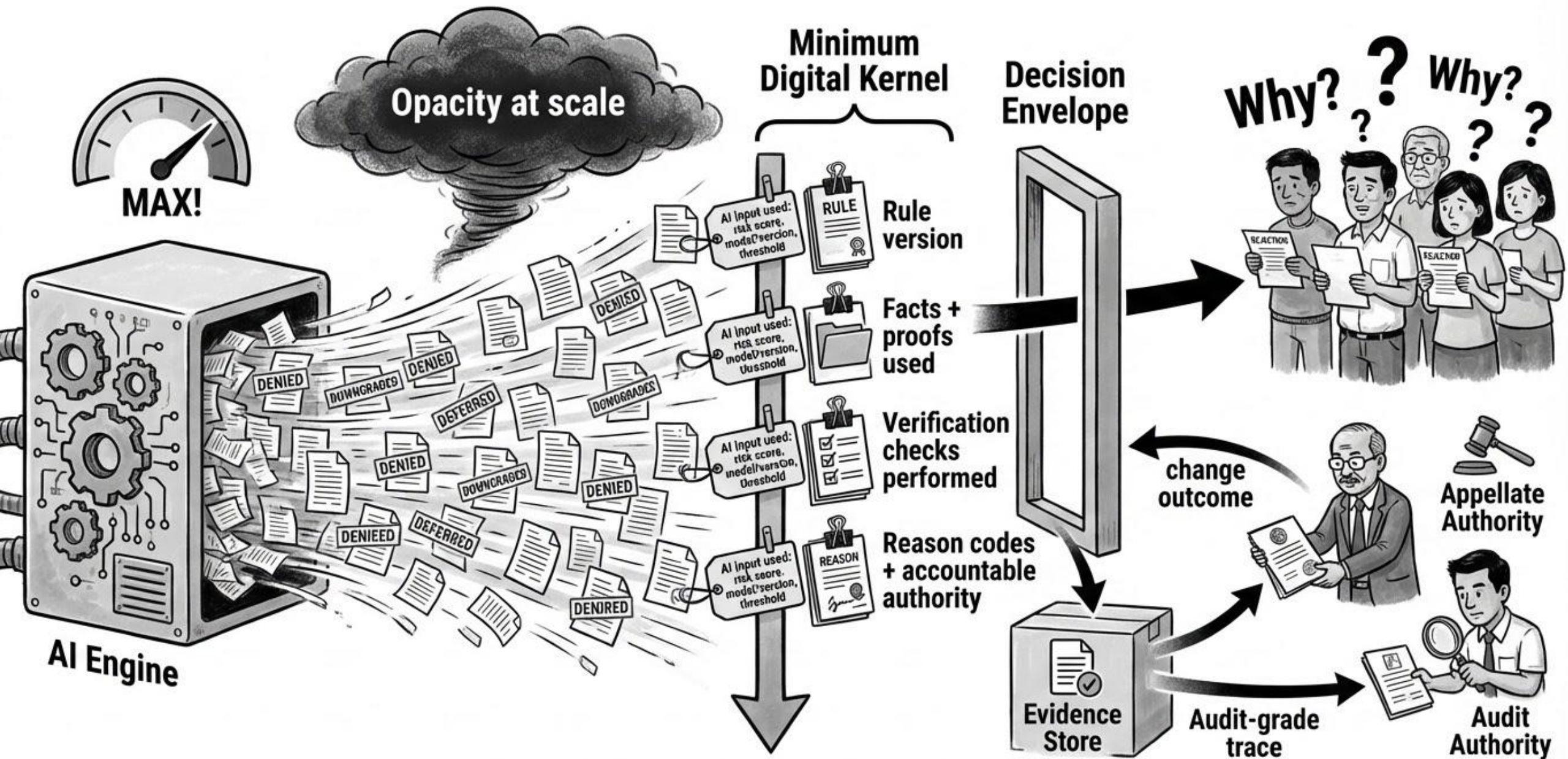


Once the Regulator publishes rules into a shared Rules Registry, the Registrar publishes authoritative facts into a Fact Registry, and the Trust Authority publishes who is certified into a Trust Directory, a Rule Engine can apply decisions consistently at scale across plural delivery channels (government, NGO, private) without returning to a monolith.

Decision Contestation: Building Trust when Rules and Facts are Imperfect

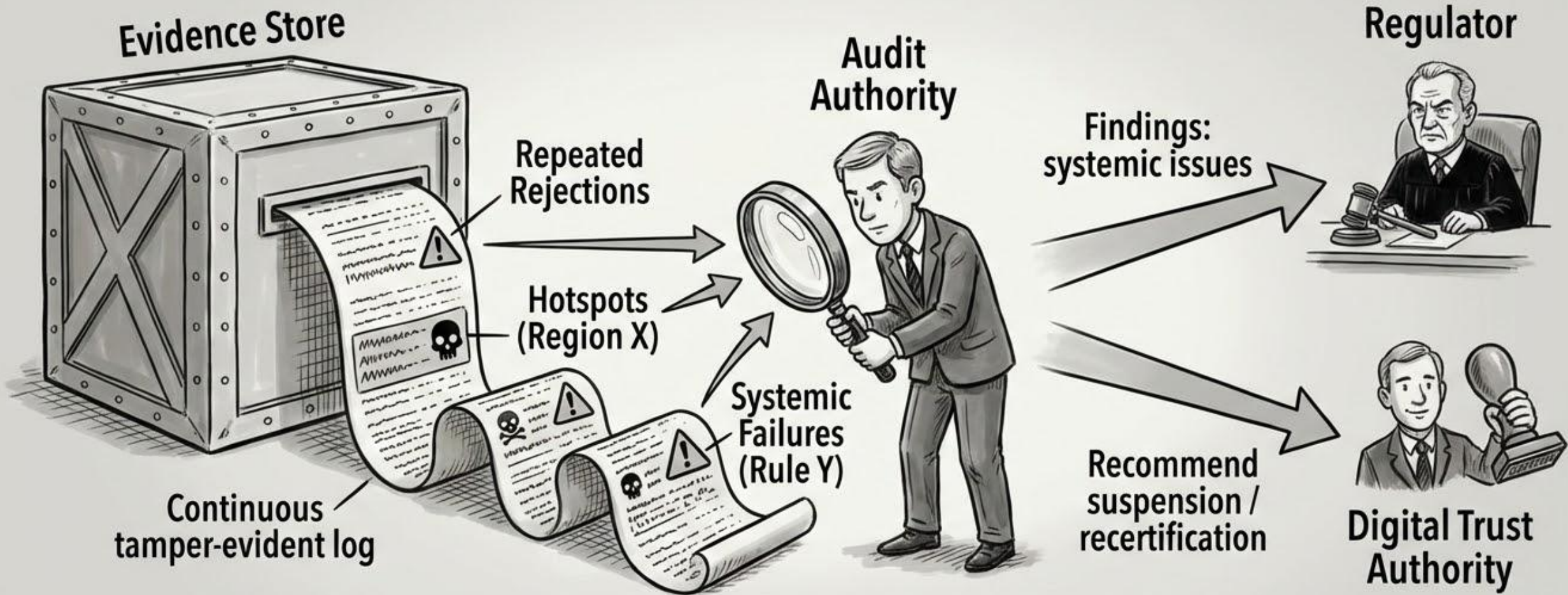


The message is: when facts and rules are imperfect, the system must support fast contestation and structured correction, so trust improves over time.



Do not regulate the model. Regulate the decision.
Innovation at the edges, due process at the core.

Continuous Oversight: Proactive Systemic Improvement, Not Just Post-Facto Investigation

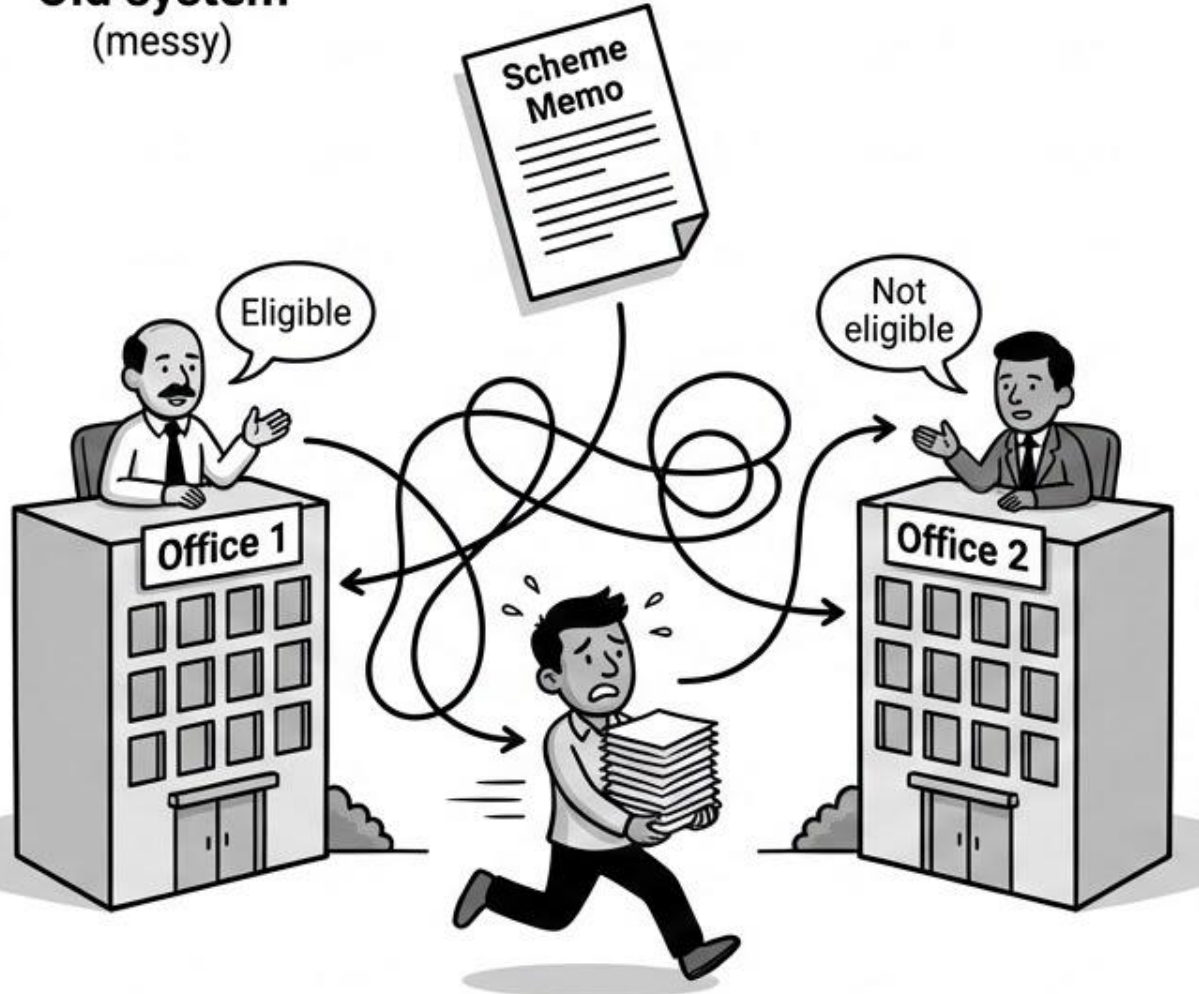


The message is: audit shifts from occasional inspections to continuous monitoring, enabling systemic fixes rather than case-by-case firefighting.

A Simple Example: How it Flows

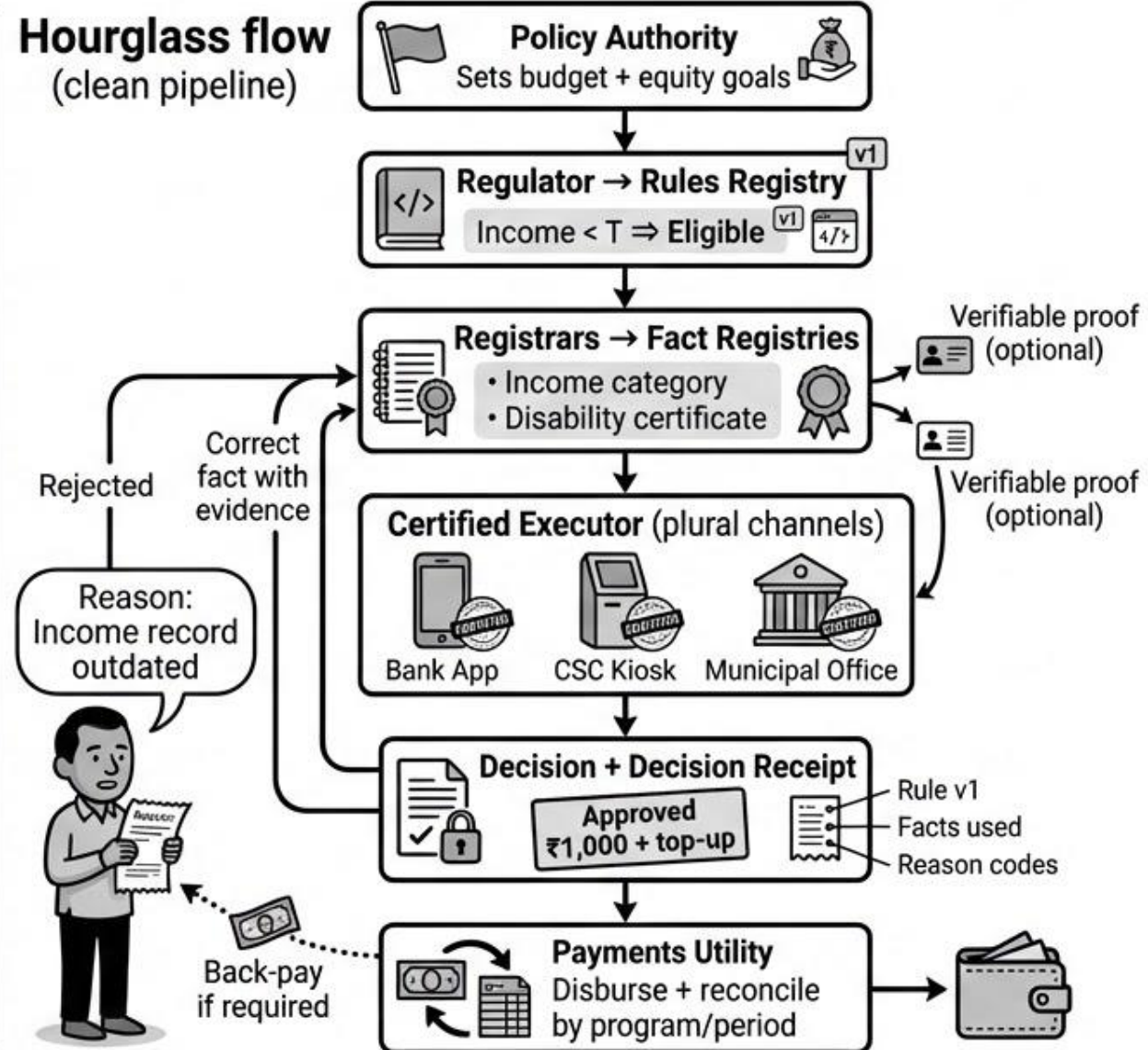
Policy: ₹1,000/month if Income < T + disability top-up

Old system (messy)



Interpretation drift + citizen as integrator.

Hourglass flow (clean pipeline)



Legitimacy Safeguards: Speed with Rights

Citizen safeguards

Choice of channel (no coercion)



Data minimization (prove, don't expose)



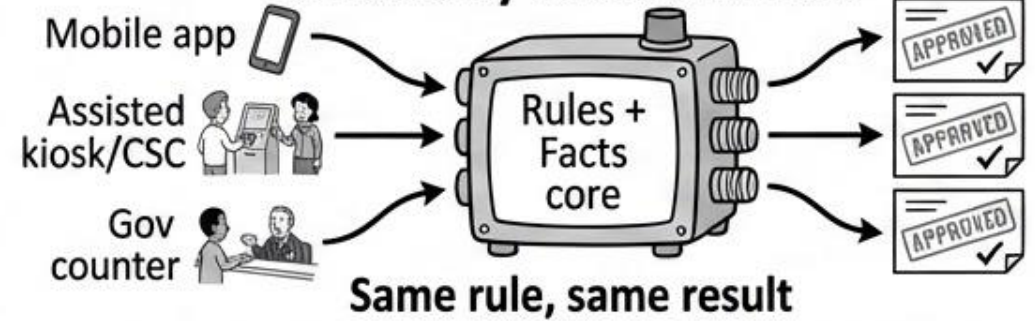
No silent denials (right to reasons)



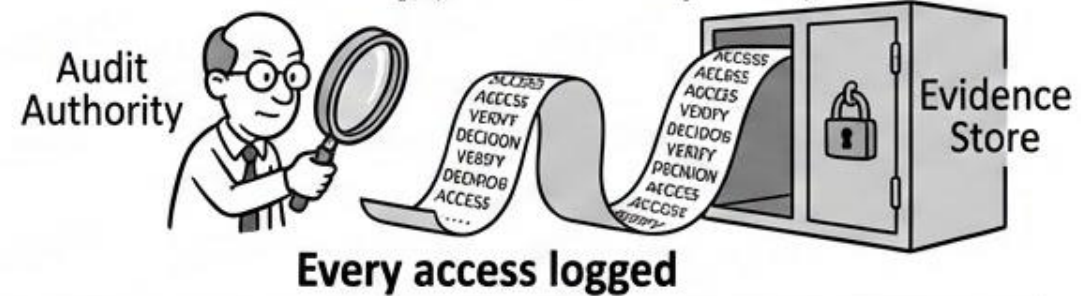
Standardize truth and due process, not the channel.

System safeguards

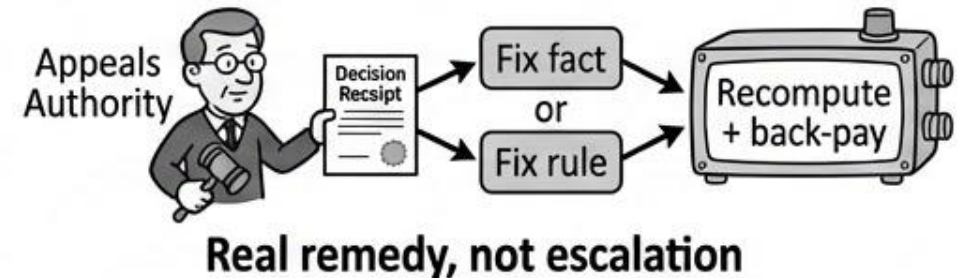
Consistency across channels



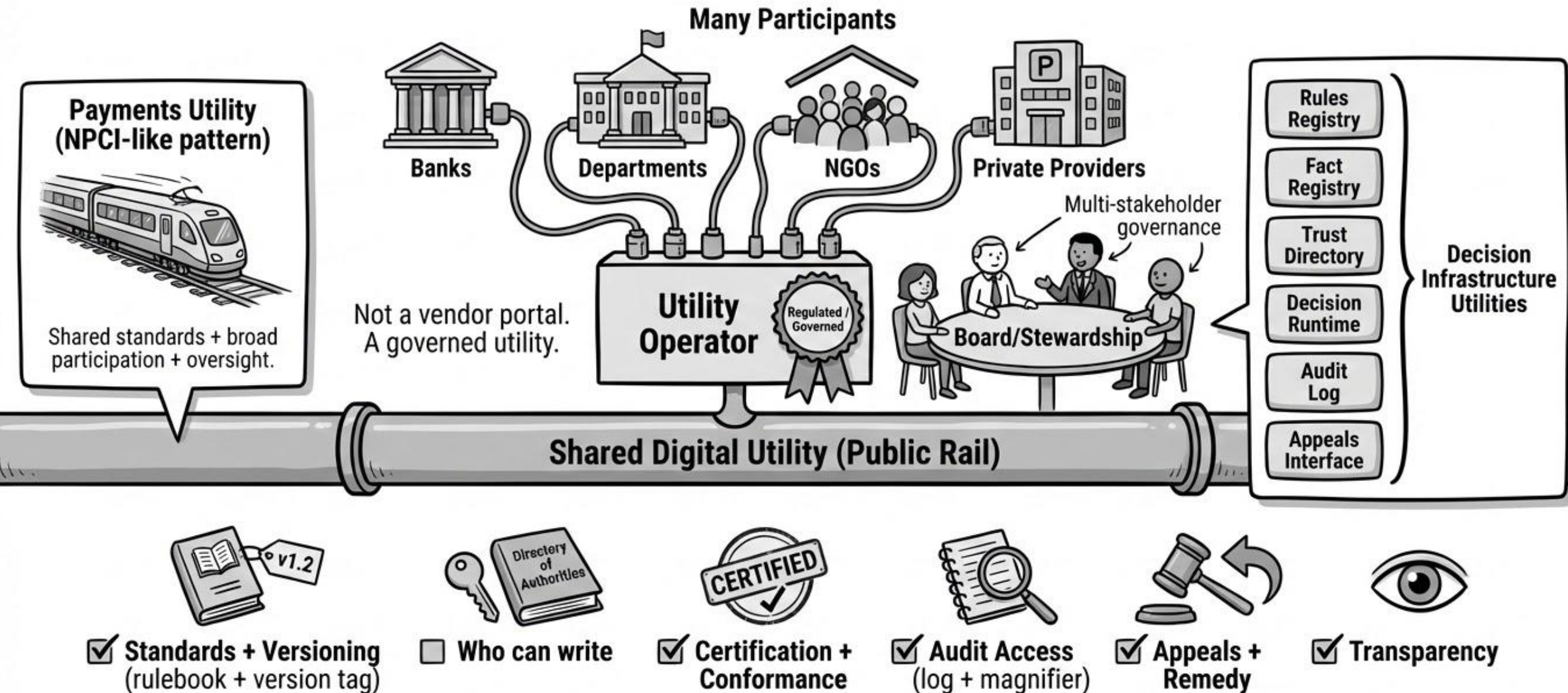
Auditability (watch the system)



Remedy (appeals can change outcomes)

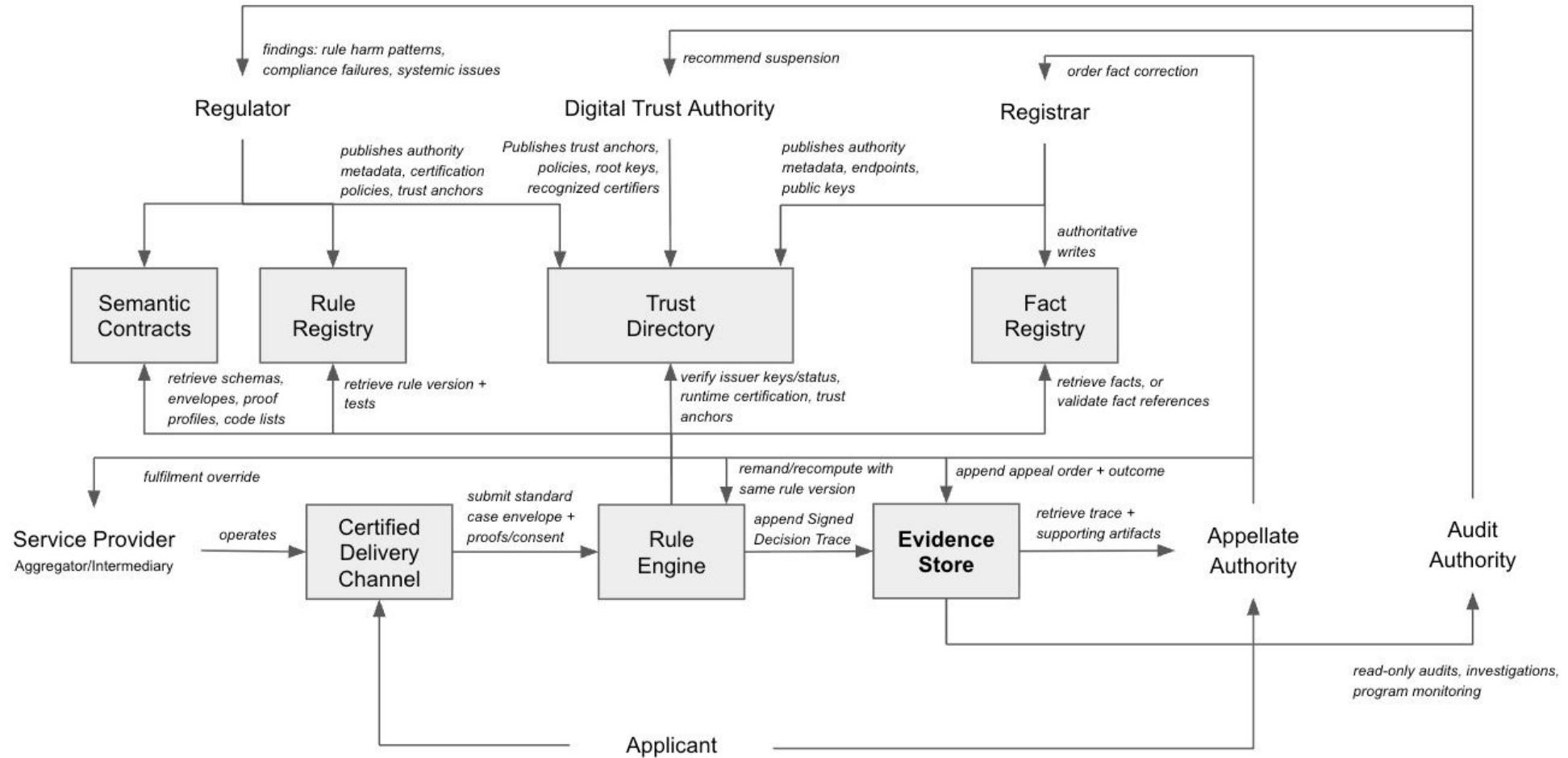


Digital Utilities Need Utility Governance



Good governance prevents monopoly, enables trust, and keeps participation open.

The Minimum Digital Kernel of an Unbundled State



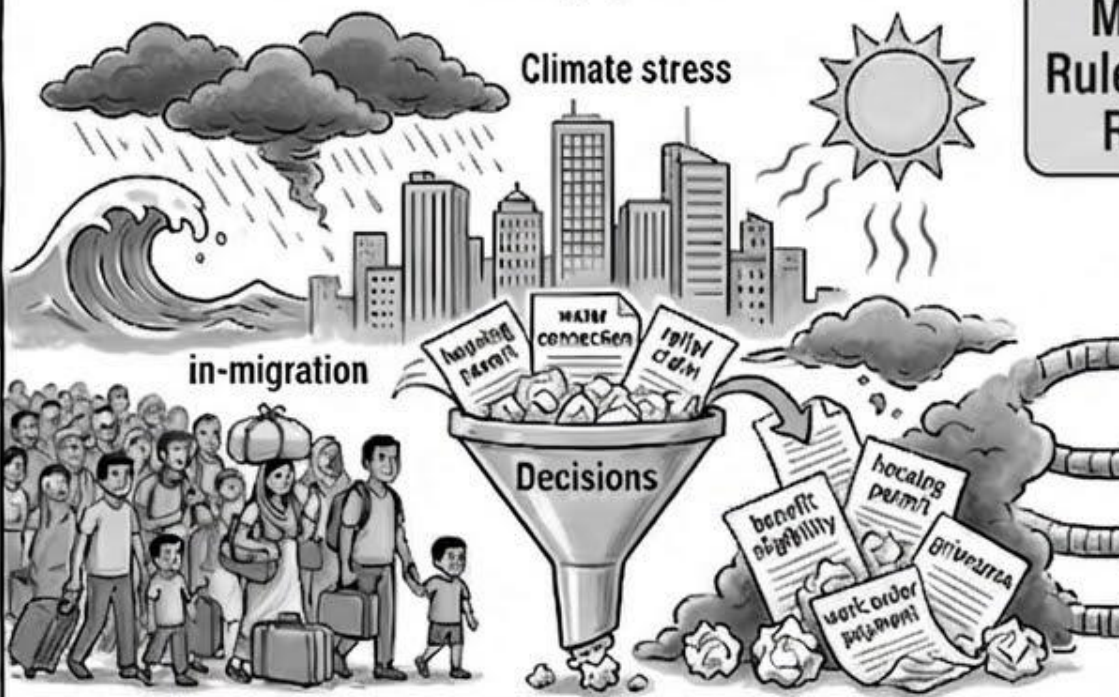
400M to 600M people will move into cities in next 20 years



Rapid increase in population and pressure of climate change will overwhelm government machinery causing unprecedented administrative backlog and service failure.

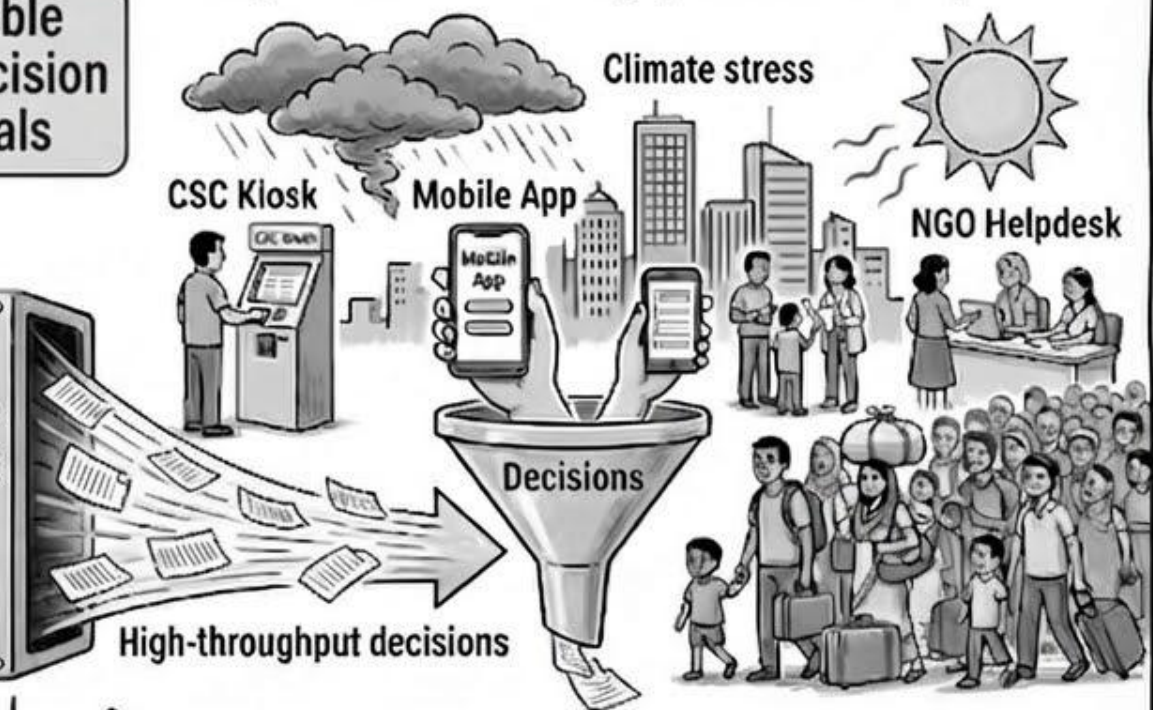
Why decision throughput matters for climate urbanization

Low decision throughput: cities choke



Slow, inconsistent decisions → backlog, leakage, distrust.

High decision throughput: cities adapt



Fast, consistent, contestable decisions → inclusion, resilience, trust.

Cities will be defined by how fast they can decide and pay fairly at scale, across millions of new residents.

The Blueprint: Five Institutional Building Blocks

1 Policy & Regulation

Same rules, any channel

2 Registries & Registrars

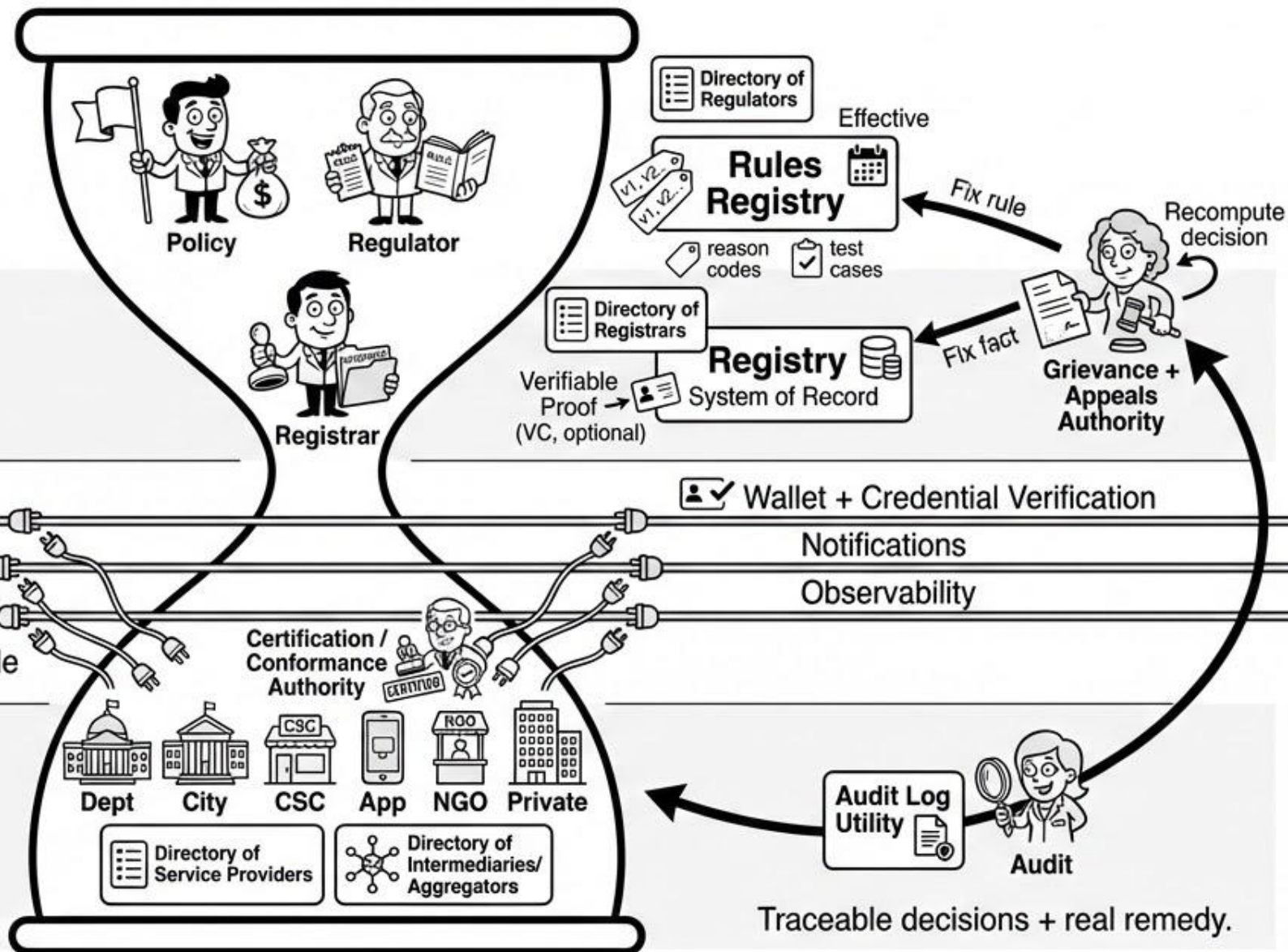
Facts are accountable and correctable.

3 Common Utilities/Rails

Participation becomes cheap + interoperable

4 Delivery & Compliance

Open network delivery, governed and safe.



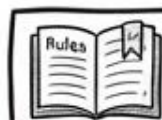
Five roles, clear owners, shared truth in the middle, plural delivery at the edges.

A Cross-Sector Working Hypothesis

Same invariants, sector-specific playbooks. I'm looking for your inputs.



Invariants (the narrow waist)



Rules Registry



Decision Engine +
Signed Decision Receipt



Fact Registries



Appeals (Remedy)



Trust Directory



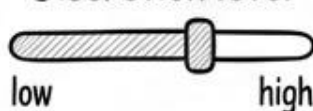
Audit Logs
(Oversight)

These should generalize across sectors.

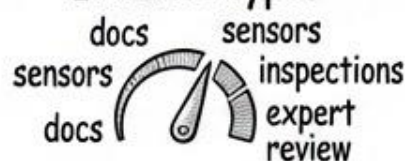


Adaptations (sector playbooks)

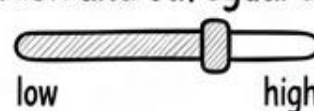
Discretion level



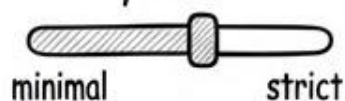
Evidence types



Risk and safeguards



Privacy constraints



Delivery modes



How it's implemented changes by sector.



Benefits /
Eligibility



Permits /
Licenses



Public Works /
Payments



Health
Programs



Justice /
Disputes



Energy /
Climate services

Different domains, same decision infrastructure.

Where will this break?
What edge cases should
we test? Help us build the
sector playbooks.

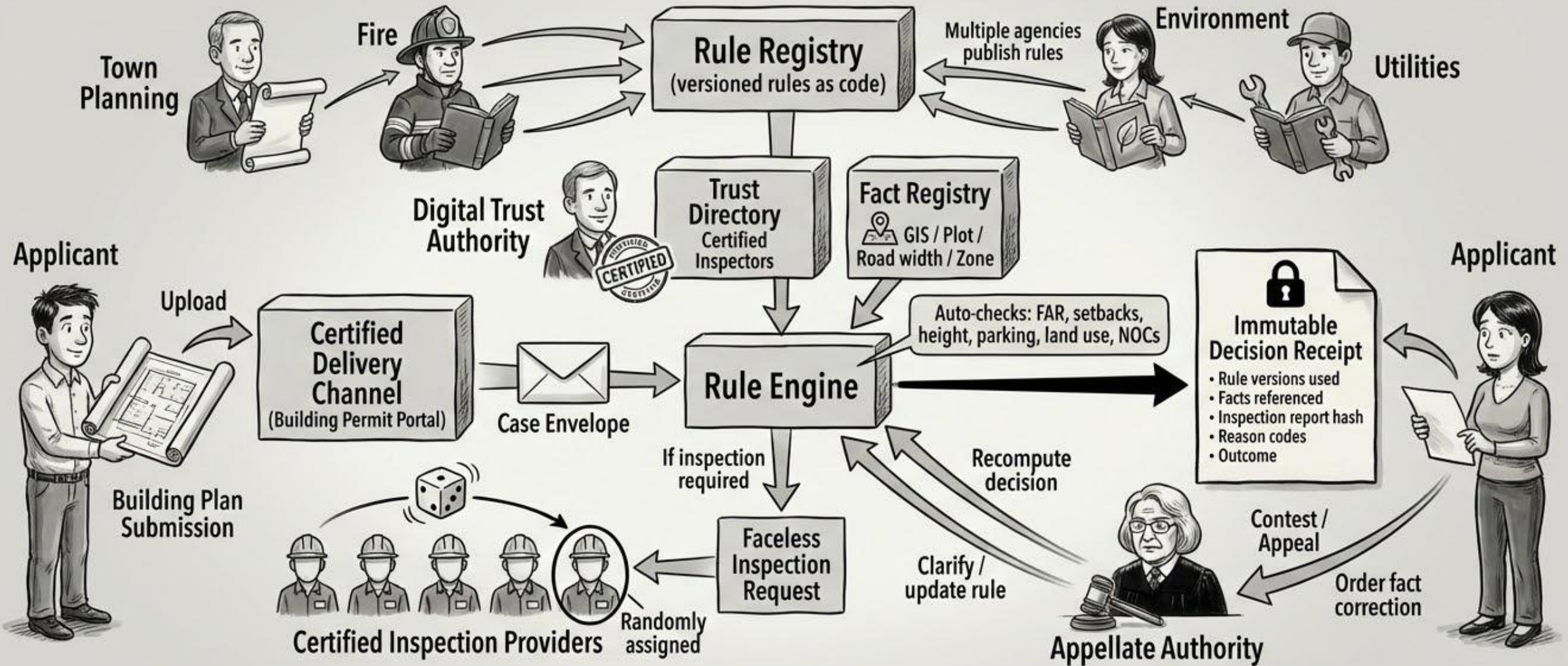


Building a Trustworthy Digital State:

Delivering Speed, Fairness, and Inclusion at Scale



Building Plan Permit on the Minimum Digital Kernel



Building Plan Permit becomes consistent and scalable when multiple agencies publish versioned rules as code, the rule engine executes them against submitted plans and referenced facts, inspections are faceless and randomly assigned to certified providers, every outcome produces an immutable decision receipt, and applicants can contest decisions to trigger correction of rules or facts over time.

(1)	width (2)	(3)
<u>A. Passage</u>		
(i) In Economically Weaker Section areas and continuous building areas:		
a) For single plot	1.0 metre	The passage will remain private
b) For two to four plots	1.5 metre	
(ii) When it is intended to serve upto two plots and length of the passage does not exceed 40 metres.	3.0 metres	The passage will remain private
(iii) When it is intended to serve up to four plots and length of the passage does not exceed 80 metres.	3.6 metres	-Do-
(iv) When it is intended to serve up to ten plots and length of the passage does not exceed 100 metres.	4.8 metres	-Do-
<u>B. Streets and Roads</u>		
(i) Streets of length does not exceeds 120 metres	7.2 metres	All streets shall become public
(ii) Streets of length more than 120 meters but below 240 metres	10.0 metres	All streets shall become public
(iii) Roads of length more than 240 metres but below 400 metres	12.0 metres	All streets shall become public
(iv) Roads of length between 400 metres to 1,000 metres	18.0 metres	All streets shall become public
(v) Roads of length more than 1000 metres	24.0 metres	All streets shall become public

Note

- (1) In case of layout the minimum extent of plot shall be 32 sq.mts. for EWS and 72 sq.mts. for other category of plots.

http://127.0.0.1:8000

Change Detection

Satellite Analysis Tool (2020 → 2024)



No area selected — draw on the map.

Quick Presets

Buildings All Changes

Roads High Precision

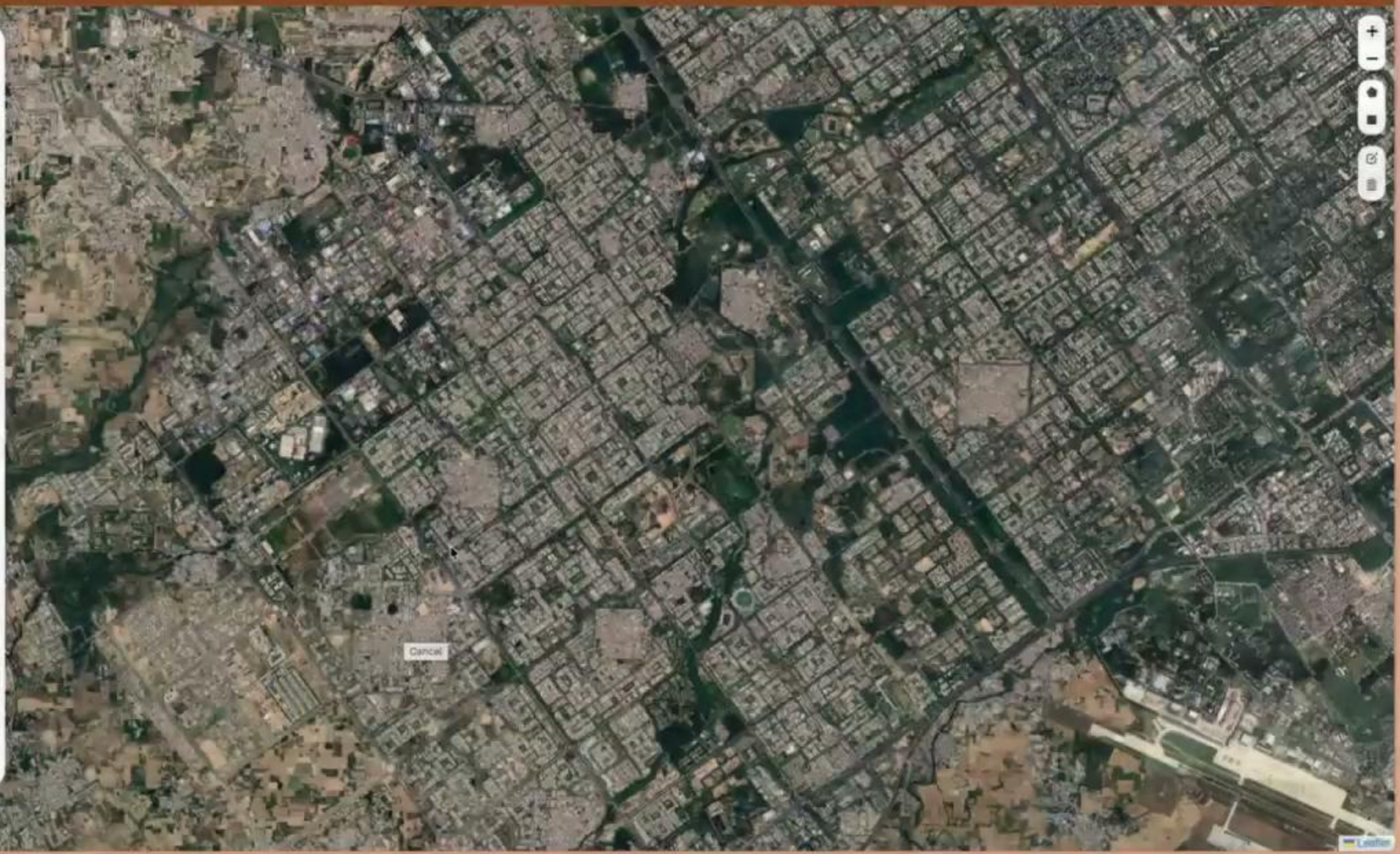
Presets auto-configure detection parameters for common use cases.

Advanced Settings

Run Analysis

Getting Started

1. Click the [polygon tool](#) on the right side of the map
2. Draw an area you want to analyze
3. Choose a [preset](#) or adjust settings
4. Click [Run Analysis](#)



Using Voice and Local Language to
drive Property Tax Collection.