MAIB-NOR 24/04 28 NOV

MAA-NOR Best practice principles for document version management

Background

For formal documents like the exposition of an approved organisation, it is important that the correct *version* and date is clearly shown in the document to avoid misunderstandings and uncertainty about the validity of the copy the reader looks at.

This MAIB-NOR provides some best practice principles for procedures and practises for *version* control, dating and approval of documents. Although it is the **exposition** that is discussed, parts of the best practice described may as well be implemented for all managed documentation in an organisation.

Exposition ownership and approval marking

The exposition is a document owned by the organisation. It is approved for publishing by the Accountable Manager, and the document should be clearly marked with the name of this person as well as the date of publishing. The publishing date may also be considered to be the date of organisational approval, or the organisation may choose to add a separate (internal) approval date to the document.

MAA-NOR indicates its approval of a given *version* of the exposition on the Approval Schedule (EMAR M/G, EMAR 145 and EMAR 147) or Terms of Approval (EMAR 21/G and EMAR 21/J).

MAA-NOR therefore see no need for marking of the authority approval of a direct approved *version* of the exposition on the document itself.

It only complicates the approval process, and the marking becomes meaningless for an indirect approved *version*, as MAA-NOR has not approved this.

Version numbering formats and marking

The use of the terms *issue*, *revision*, *version* or *edition* are not standardised, but some are more often used for formal documents than others. MAA-NOR use the term **version** in the management of our quality system documents. Therefore this MAIB-NOR uses the term throughout the document.

MAA-NOR fully accepts that other terms may be preferred, and encourage the approved organisations to define the details of *version* code scheme used for their exposition in the exposition's chapter on *Exposition amendment procedures*.

It is however, MAA-NOR's firm view that the *version* code used on the exposition document should clearly show if the new *version* is the result of a **direct approved** change, or the result of an **indirect approved** change.

It is up to the organisation's preference how many levels the *version code* should have to reflect the scope of the change from the previous *version*.

The following two examples are considered good practices by MAA-NOR:

Version n.xy

The document is marked with a **Version** code consisting of an integer part **n** and a decimal part **xy** separated by a full stop. The first time the document is officially published, it is marked with **Version 1.00**.

The range of the number **n** is not limited, its value can be incremented indefinitely. The range of the digits **x** and **y** is limited to 0 - 9.

For a change within the scope of an **indirect approval**, the integer number remains as before.

The $1/10^{th}$ digit or the $1/100^{th}$ digit is incremented by **1** according to the criteria **the organisation has defined in its exposition** for the use of the two.

If the $1/100^{th}$ digit is incremented, the $1/10^{th}$ digit remains unchanged.

If the $1/10^{th}$ digit is incremented, the $1/100^{th}$ digit is set to **0**.

For a change that needs a **direct approval** by MAA-NOR, the integer number is incremented by **1**, and the decimal digits are set to **00**.

Examples

New *version* by **Indirect** approval, defined to change the $1/100^{th}$ part: Before: 2.15 → After: 2.1**6**

New *version* by **Indirect** approval, defined to change the $1/10^{th}$ part: Before: 2.15 → After: 2.**20**

New *version* by **Direct** approval: Before: 2.15 → After: **3.00**

Version n   Revision m

The document is marked with a **Version Revision** code consisting of an integer **version** number **n** and an integer **revision** number **m**. The first time the document is officially published, it is marked with **Version 1 Revision 0**.

The range of the numbers **n** and **m** is not limited, their values can be incremented indefinitely.

For a change within the scope of an **indirect approval**, the **Version** number remains as before, and the **Revision** number is incremented by **1**.

For a change that needs a **direct approval** by MAA-NOR, the **Version** number is incremented by **1**, and the **Revision** number is set to **0**.

Examples

New *version* by **Indirect** approval: Before: Version 2 Revision 5 → After: Version 2 Revision **6**

New *version* by **Direct** approval: Before: Version 2 Revision 5 → After: Version **3** Revision **0**

> Although two very explicit examples are given, MAA-NOR fully accepts any *version code* numbering scheme using other logical combinations of terms and numbering that clearly differentiate **indirect** and **direct** approved *versions,* and encourage the approved organisations to define the details of this in the exposition's chapter on *Exposition amendment procedures*.

Version code marking

MAA-NOR encourage that the *version* code is visible on all pages of the exposition.

Dates format and marking

The date shown on the exposition front page and throughout the document, should be the date that the responsible entity within the organisation has approved the document as an official publication.

As already discussed, the organisation may choose to have one or two dates shown on the exposition.
Either way, MAA-NOR consider both the following formats good practice:

day.month.year as numbers with leading zeros and separated by "." (recommended by Norwegian *Språkrådet*):
Example: **08.10.2024**

day Month year in a combination of day and year as numbers without leading zeros and the month as a three-letter abbreviation in Norwegian or English depending on the language of the document:
Example: **8 Oct 2024**

Date marking
MAA-NOR encourage that the date (or dates) is/are visible on all pages of the exposition.

Publishing process
Revision and publishing of an exposition is the responsibility of the organisation, regardless of whether it requires **direct** approval by MAA-NOR, or if the organisation can publish and make it current by an **indirect** approval.

Best practice process for indirect approved documents

The organisation marks the new, **indirect** approved exposition with the *version* number and the date of release/publishing in its own document management system, and forwards a copy of the new exposition *version* to MAA-NOR for information.

Best practice process for direct approved documents
A new exposition *version* that requires **direct approval** by MAA-NOR, becomes current only after approval by MAA-NOR. Normally this may require one or more iterations between the organisation and MAA-NOR. In this iteration period, updated new *versions* will be sent to MAA-NOR for approval.
To prevent that the *version* number increases unnecessary, MAA-NOR will accept that received document copies have the same *version* number. However, the document should be clearly marked as PROPOSAL x **in a manner decided by the organisation**, and the date shall always be the date it was officially released from the organisation. When the final PROPOSAL x *version* is approved by MAA-NOR, the organisation removes the PROPOSAL x marking from the document, and forwards a copy of the regular new *version* of the document to MAA-NOR for information.

Example showing expected *version* numbering, proposal marking and dating of exposition copies sent to MAA-NOR
(Current *version* of the document is 3.20. The organisation applies to have *version* 4.00 approved as new *current*.)
First proposal for a new *version* of the document: *Version* 4.00 PROPOSAL 1 , dated 30.09.2024   **Not** approved
Second proposal: *Version* 4.00 PROPOSAL 2 , dated 17.10.2024   **Not** approved
Third proposal: *Version* 4.00 PROPOSAL 3 , dated 05.11.2024   **APPROVED**
Approved copy: *Version* 4.00, dated 05.11.2024

Summary / Practical tips

- Define the *version* management for the exposition in the exposition regarding which *version* terms and which numbering scheme to use, to clearly differentiate between new *versions* being direct approved and new *versions* being indirect approved.
- Describe the document marking scheme related to the approval iterations between the organisation and MAA-NOR in the publishing process, in the exposition.
- The best practice given here may as well be applied in general to all managed documents in the organisation's quality system.
- Use document automation (bookmarks, document properties, fields, etc.) to secure that the *version* code of the document is the same throughout the document.
- Check that the publishing date shown in the document header/footer, on the front page and in the *version* history table of the document, is the same everywhere. As in the bullet above, document automation may help.