

Regulations for use of IT standards in the public administration

Legal basis: Stipulated by Royal Decree on 25 September 2009 in pursuance of Section 15a of the Act of 10 February 1967 on procedure in cases concerning the public administration (the Public Administration Act). Stipulated by the Ministry of Government Administration and Reform

Amendments: Amended by the Regulations of 24 June 2011 No. 648.

Section 1. *Purpose and scope of application*

The purpose of these Regulations is to help ensure that all State and municipal bodies (cf. Section 1, first sentence of the Public Administration Act) adopts IT standards that will facilitate and promote electronic interaction between public enterprises and between the public sector and the general public.

The Regulations may comprise technical, semantic and organisational standards.

Section 2. *Definitions*

Within the context of these Regulations, the meaning of the terms in italics shall be as follows:

- (1) *standard*: normative documents, including specifications, instructions and guidelines
- (2) *administrative standard*: specified requirements, recommendations or guidelines given by a relevant authority to the effect that certain standards shall be adopted for the entire or large parts of the administration
- (3) *technical standard*: standards for how ICT systems are to be designed, including user interfaces and interfaces with other ICT systems
- (4) *semantic standard (standard of meaning or interpretation)*: standards that clarify the meaning of data
- (5) *organisational standard*: standards that clarify the relationship between interacting parties with respect to organisational, role, procedural or contractual matters
- (6) *Standards Council*: consultative body appointed by the Agency for Public Management and eGovernment (Difi). The Council is broadly constituted and has representatives from central, regional and local authorities
- (7) *form*: a set of questions and explanations that facilitate submission of a limited amount of information on behalf of a sender in a delivery or dispatch, where the information is to be used as a basis for public decisions, official statistics or social planning

The role of the Standards Council is to act as a facilitator of and driver for systematic use of IT standards in the public sector. The Council shall make recommendations to Difi on which IT standards the administration should use. The Council shall primarily devote its time to standards that are relevant to a large number of players in the public sector.

Section 3. *Process, changes, etc.*

- (1) Mandatory standards are stipulated by the Ministry of Government Administration and Reform (FAD). The Standards Council are to consider specific proposals for such standards in accordance with the guidelines stipulated for the Council.
- (2) Other guidelines and proposal for standards will be published on Difi's website

and be available via standard.difi.no.

Section 4. Mandatory standards

(1) Publication of text documents on public websites

When read-only documents are to be published on public websites, the following mandatory requirements shall apply regarding the technical standards to be used:

On publication of finished read-only documents, the following shall be used

- a. HyperText Markup Language, HTML 4.01/Extensible HyperText Markup Language, XHTML 1.0 as a general rule, or
- b. Portable Document Format (PDF), version PDF/A-1 (ISO 19005-1:2005), PDF 1.4, PDF 1.5, PDF 1.6 or PDF 1.7 (ISO 32000-1:2008) in case the format needs to be maintained.

Publication of documents in other formats in addition to those specified above shall be permitted when this is appropriate.

Public websites shall comply with the requirements of these Regulations upon publication of new documents on websites from and including 1 January 2010, and, with respect to all formerly published documents, by 1 January 2014.

(2) Exchange of text documents enclosed with e-mails

When documents containing text are to be exchanged as enclosures to e-mails from the public sector to citizens and businesses, the following mandatory requirements shall apply regarding the technical standards to be used:

PDF 1.4-1.6, PDF 1.7 (ISO 32000-1) or PDF/A (ISO 19005-1) for exchange of read-only documents.

Public enterprises must be able to receive regular e-document formats, including Open Document Format (ODF), Office Open XML (OOXML) and the doc format.

(3) Publication of multimedia content on public websites

On publication of multimedia content on public websites, the following mandatory requirements shall apply regarding the technical standards to be used:

- a. On publication of videos, at least one of the following standards shall be used:
 - Video track encoded in Theora 1.0 (Xiph.org 2008) and sound track in Vorbis 1 (Xiph.org 2004) encapsulated in Ogg (RFC 3533, IETF 2003).
 - Video track encoded in H.264 (ISO/IEC 14496-10:2009) and sound track in ACC (ISO/IEC 13818-7:2003) encapsulated in MP4 (ISO/IEC 14496-14:2003).
- b. On publication of audio with lossy compression on public websites, at least one of the following standards shall be used:
 - Vorbis 1 (Xiph.org 2004) encapsulated in Ogg (RFC 3533, IETF 2003).
 - MP3 (ISO 11172-3), without encapsulation.
- c. On publication of audio with lossless compression on public websites, at least one of the following standards shall be used:
 - FLAC 1.2.1 (Xiph.org 2007) encapsulated in Ogg (RFC 3533, IETF 2003).
 - FLAC 1.2.1 (Xiph.org 2007) with FLAC's own encapsulation format.

d. On publication of images on public websites, the following standards shall be used:

JPEG (ISO/IEC 10918-1) for images with lossy compression of bitmap graphics.

PNG (ISO/IEC 15948:2003) for images with lossless compression of bitmap graphics, preferably supplemented by GIF.

Central government websites must comply with the above requirement relating to new multimedia content as of 1 January 2012, while municipal websites must comply with the requirement by 1 January 2013. With respect to formerly published multimedia content, central government websites must comply with the requirement as of 1 January 2014, while municipal websites must comply with the requirement by 1 January 2015.

(4) *Design of forms on public websites*

The ELMER 2.1 Guidelines (Brønnøysund Register Centre 2011) are mandatory for design of business forms and citizen forms on public websites, adapted for use on PC screens or equivalent. The "shall" requirements in the guidelines are to be regarded as mandatory, while the "should" requirements in the guidelines are to be regarded as recommendations.

Public enterprises shall implement the ELMER 2.1 Guidelines at the most appropriate time, at the latest in connection with the first necessary replacement and further development requiring a comprehensive change of existing solutions.

(5) *Character sets for exchange of information between public enterprises and with citizens and businesses*

The character set standard ISO/IEC 10646, represented by UTF-8, shall be used for all exchange of information between public enterprises and with citizens/businesses. For the time being, limited support is accepted for characters in ISO 8859-1 supplemented by 6 additional North Saami characters in large and small presentations (Č, č, Đ, đ, D, d, Ŧ, ŧ, Ž, ž). The central government sector must comply with the above requirements as of 1 January 2012, while the municipal sector must comply with the requirement by 1 January 2013.

(6) *Character sets in internal systems*

It is mandatory for all public enterprises to implement full support for ISO/IEC 10646 in connection with major changes through establishment or further development of all types of IT solutions. This requirement shall apply as of the date these Regulations enter into force.

(7) *Electronic invoices and credit notes*

Public enterprises must receive invoices and credit notes based on the standard "Elektronisk handelsformat" (EHF). The municipal sector shall comply with the requirement by 1 January 2014.

Suppliers of goods and services submitting electronic invoices or credit notes to

public enterprises must use the standard "Elektronisk handelsformat" (EHF) for such items. This requirement applies as of 1 January 2014.

1 <http://www.brreg.no/elmer/>.

2 The standard is available from: http://www.anskaffelser.no/filearchive/implementeringsveileder-for-ehf-faktura-og-kreditnota-v1.4_1.pdf.

Section 5. *Deadline for adapting to specified mandatory standards*

The deadlines for complying with the requirements in these Regulations for use of mandatory standards have been stipulated for each individual standard and are listed in Section 4.

Section 6. *Exemptions*

Exemptions

- (1) In the event of any conflict between the requirements related to accessibility stipulated in acts or regulations and ELMER 2.1, or if compliance with the standard entails a solution documented to be not very user-friendly, partial deviation from the standard is permitted. This exclusionary provision applies to Section 4, no. 4.
- (2) If compliance with a mandatory standard entails a particularly disproportionate burden for an enterprise, the enterprise may deviate from some or all standards listed in Section 4, no. 5.

If an enterprise determines that it cannot comply with the mandatory standard, it shall report this to the Agency for Public Management and eGovernment immediately and state the grounds for lack of compliance.

Section 7. *Entry into force*

The regulations enter into force on xxxxxxxxxx.
