

Netherlands

In the Netherlands, the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations publishes and maintains NORA: Nederlandse Overheid Referentie Architectuur - Dutch Government Reference Architecture. NORA 2.0 was published in April 2007 as a single reference document of 283 pages. NORA 3.0 added a separate publication, a strategy chapter, in 2009. The rest of NORA is being updated and restructured in articles.

In addition to NORA, there is a list of open semantical and technical standards, which is governed by the Standardisation Board and Standardisation Forum, under the responsibility of the Ministry of Economic Affairs.

Part of the cabinet programme of 2007 is the vision of a citizen-oriented government, that is more efficient, less bureaucratic and offers high quality services. eGovernment plays a key role in over 50% of the expected efficiency gains. NORA is positioned as a framework for the creation of Step One in the eGovernment vision: the creation of reusable eGovernment assets.

The national implementation programme for service and e-government (NUP) has been agreed by all levels of government. NORA is explicitly part of this programme.

Key driver for the interoperability initiatives in the Netherlands is the Action Plan NOIV – “Nederland Open in Verbinding” (The Netherlands in Open Connection) dated November 2007 and approved by the Dutch parliament. In this plan, several actions have been defined, some of which are:

- The publication of the (abovementioned) list of open standards;
- The introduction of the comply-or-explain governance for implementation of these standards in the various layers of government;
- The revision of NORA to cover interoperability (version 3.0);
- Governance of open standards is based on the high trust principle with lightweight monitoring and tracking;
- ODF is supported for exchange of documents.

Although NORA has no legal basis in law, it has been deemed as the primary reference architecture for new ICT projects in the government by means of a cabinet's decision (June 2008), either directly (at the national level) or via derived reference architectures at the provincial and municipal levels.

NORA provides directive design principles at the levels of organisation, process, information and technology and is aimed to act as a reference for implementation projects of eGovernment assets. NORA is further refined to domain-specific reference architectures in the various layers of Dutch government (provinces, municipalities and water control boards).

There are no explicitly defined processes to capture and share best practices. The community approach to maintaining and updating NORA is expected to result in the capture of experiences with prior versions.

Because of its reference nature, NORA itself has relatively long update cycles that are also not yet planned exactly. The list of open standards is maintained centrally and there is an explicitly defined selection and update process that takes place twice a year.