This policy describes the MRM Standards Board (Board) approach to the development of MRM products and services (Products). The policy is intended to provide consistency in development activities and to assist members in planning their commitments to Product development projects.

This policy has been reviewed by the MRM Project Steering Committee and others. It is not intended as a static or rigid policy. The Board welcomes comments.

**MRM Standards Board Foundation**

**Goal:**

Ensure that MRM products and services (the Products) continue to be useful to and usable by the members of the MRM community.

**Mission:**

Govern the continuing development of Products at the direction of the MRM Project Steering Committee.

**Mandate:**

Set standards for Products, and review and approve Products offered to members

**MRM Standards Board Foundation Principles**

MRM Product development is based on the following Board principles that are foundational to Product development policy.

**Member contribution**

The power of the Board lies in the intellectual contributions of its members. Voluntary investment of effort and expertise is required at every stage of the Product development process. Business requirements, development priorities and Product solutions (within a consistent architecture) are determined by the members who choose to be active participants in the development process. The pace of development is controlled by members' input of resources. Product development is impossible without the active involvement of members.

This principle ensures that the expertise and priorities of members are incorporated into the Products.

**Business driven requirements**

The Products are only successful when they are implemented by MRM Community members and enable members to achieve benefits. Members express their requirements through active participation in the development process (and other means to be determined).

This principle ensures that Product development is tightly linked to the business needs of members.

**Orderly Development Process**

The MRM Steering Committee sets the overall strategy for Product development to meet the business requirements expressed by members, and approves an overall plan based on available resources. Members provide input to the development process through:

* Discussions at member events, such as conferences and user meetings.
* Discussions with MRM Project Steering Committee or MRM Standards Board members.
* Creation of one-page proposals that can be distributed to other members for comment and involvement.

This principle ensures that Product development is orderly and does not impose excessive change on the members.

**Resources**

The MRM Project does not commit significant membership fees to Product development. The members of the MRM Community who elect to participate in Product development will typically fund the proposed development work.

This principle ensures that Product development is driven toward concepts that are important enough to the members to attract resources.

**Decision Making**

The Board strives to reach decisions by consensus without voting. If consensus cannot be reached, a decision requires a two-thirds majority of Board members.

This principle ensures decisions are not dominated by a particular interest group.

**Access to the Products**

The Board operates with the presumption that some Products must be available to the public, some products must be available to all members, and access to some products must be restricted to some members only.

This principle ensures consideration for the means to protect intellectual property without creating unreasonable impediments for individuals and smaller organizations to participate.

**Governance and Reporting**

The Board reports regularly on the status of requests and progress on the development plan.

This principle ensures that the members of the community are assured that the resources contributed are being used as intended.

**Development Principles**

These principles apply to the Product development process.

**Workgroups**

Workgroups are a key organization feature of the MRM Project’s goal to further develop Products to meet member needs. The Steering Committee and Board encourages broad and effective member participation in workgroups.

Workgroups are proposed when a member produces a one-page proposal and circulates it for comment and expressions of interest among the members, who indicate their interest through preliminary offers of resources.

Workgroups are formally initiated when the members of a proposed workgroup typically:

* Publish a Workgroup Charter that describes their proposed development work in more detail.
* Recommend access to the proposed Product, i.e. made available to the public, all members and so forth.
* Indicate the amount of staff effort and funding they are prepared to commit to achieve the proposed development work.

Members of a proposed workgroup typically seek an endorsement from the MRM Standards Board before investing too much time and resources. On the advice of the Board, the MRM Steering Committee approves proposed Workgroup Charters. Criteria for workgroup approval include:

* Participation by at least three members. For most workgroups, the Board prefers that workgroup membership include least two municipalities and one other party that may be a municipality, vendor or other.
* Described business need expressed by many members.
* Expertise committed to the workgroup by members.
* Degree of interdependence with other Products.
* Realistic project goals and plans.
* Availability of sufficient resources – seconded staff and funding commitments

This principle ensures that Product development is positioned for success.

**Consistent architecture**

All Products must conform to the MRM Architectural Standards and Guidelines (covering the Metamodel, Diagram Constructs, Reference Model, Best Practice Models, Techniques and Methods, Technology & Tools, and other standards as indicated).

This principle ensures ease of understanding of the Products and consistent behaviour of the tools.

**Guidance and coordination**

The MRM Standards Board provides strategic and technical advice to the Steering Committee, members and workgroups. It is established by the Steering Committee and is accountable through the Chair. Members of the committee are chosen for their acknowledged expertise in the Product domain. The Board monitors the process of Product development and defines the MRM's technical methodology and standards.

This principle ensures guidance of Product development is approached with sufficient expertise.

**Change management**

All proposed changes to the Products are assessed to ensure that the value the change offers exceeds the cost of implementing it. Any workgroup proposing to rework a particular Product is expected to address this trade-off between enhancement and stability.

This principle ensures the cost of change is adequately recognized.

**Timing of development**

The Products can only be developed with substantial input from the members as well as confirmed through adequate testing. Therefore, the pace of Product development cannot be pre-determined by the Board.

This principle ensures the pace of development is roughly aligned with the pace at which members can absorb new versions of the Products.

**Role of MRM Project staff**

The staff and contractors engaged by the MRM Project facilitate the workgroups that are endorsed by the Board and approved by the Steering Committee, and support ongoing operations and activities of the Board. MRM Project staff assess workgroup submissions for conformity to Product architecture and compatibility with other Products, implement the Product as required, test the Product for compliance and integrity, process change requests, and provide technical support.

This principle ensures that Product development achieves reasonable quality and consistency.

**Version approval process**

Every new Product version is subject to approval by the membership. The Steering Committee determines when and how new versions will be released to the members for testing and approval based on guidance from the Board. Criteria for Product version approval include:

* Product version conformity to the Architectural Standards and Guidelines.
* Evidence of participation of multiple members in the design and production of the Product version.
* Evidence of sufficient testing to ensure sufficient Product version quality.
* Evidence that the Product version will produce value to multiple members.

This principle ensures that membership oversight over Product development is maintained, and single member or narrow interest group domination of the Product development process is minimized.