

Nordic Instructions for Nordic Article Numbers (Vnrs)

Supplementary information – Norway

This document provides an overview of the handling of Vnrs (Nordic Article Numbers), and the information associated with the Vnr in Norway. Some supplementary information on issues addressed in the common Nordic regulatory framework is also presented, mainly concerning changes to a marketed Vnr.

This document is prepared and maintained by Farmalogg. The Association of the Pharmaceutical Industry in Norway (LMI) serves as the national contracting party for the Nordic Number Centre (NNC), operated by Pharmaca, Finland, and for the Nordic regulatory framework.

1. The flow of article information

Farmalogg maintains a common, national article register for all Norwegian pharmacies and pharmaceutical wholesalers. Farmalogg.no is the portal for submitting new products and product codes to be listed in the article register. With only a few exceptions, the register includes all products sold through pharmacies and contains information necessary for a safe and efficient handling and dispensing of the products from manufacturer/supplier, via wholesaler and retailer, to consumer.

The operation of the article register is carried out by Farmalogg in cooperation with NOMA (Norwegian Medical Products Agency), Helfo (The Norwegian Health Economics Administration), WHOCC (WHO Collaborating Centre for Drugs Statistics Methodology) and the pharmaceutical wholesalers. Product information in the article register is exchanged between these partners through data files twice monthly, enabling the information to be processed and updated in relevant systems.

FEST, maintained by NOMA, is a national database with all articles available for prescription in Norway, both primary and specialist healthcare services (GPs, specialists, hospitals) and is available for the various systems for prescribing/EPJ (Electronic Patient Journal). FEST is updated with information from the article register. Information from FEST, including information from the reimbursement system (Helfo), is included in the article register.

The management of the exchange of product information via FEST is essential for the coordination of information in the prescribing- and dispensing systems. This coordination is a prerequisite for the Norwegian system for electronic prescription. All information in the databases is carried by the Vnr, both the *Nordic Article Numbers* and *National Article Numbers*, as the identifier. Fig. 1 gives an outline of the flow of information on medicines in Norway.

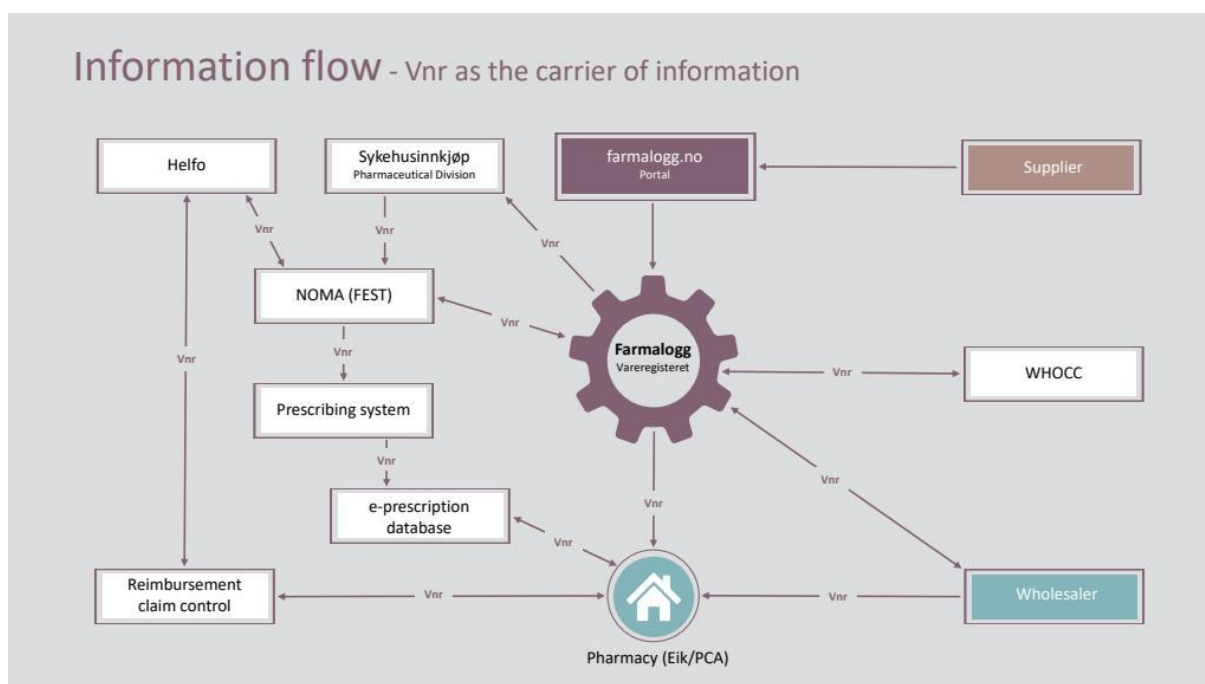


Fig. 1

2. Vnr - the carrier of information

The information flow (fig. 1) is based on the Vnr as the identity and carrier of all information for prescription and dispensing in Norway. The Vnrs carry information to facilitate the handling of the products and as a structural basis for drug statistics.

The stakeholders receive customized updates from Farmalogg or NOMA as they may use different information elements linked to the Vnr or in some cases add their own elements. Many of the information elements coordinated across these systems are used by most stakeholders. Information on pricing and reimbursement provided by NOMA and Helfo is used by many stakeholders, whereas information on shelf life, storage and transportation mainly concerns the wholesalers. Farmalogg adds different types of information to the Vnrs for specific stakeholders, such as predefined labelling choices added for the pharmacies and subcategories for statistical use in addition to the statistical information provided by WHOCC.

Regardless of type of information element, it is of paramount importance to ensure that the Vnr represents a unique identity as defined by the Nordic instructions. As the Vnrs carry information for different functions, changes must be handled with great care to avoid mix-ups.

3. Changes to a marketed Vnr

For the common Nordic regulatory framework on changes, see Nordic Instructions. On the topics of changes in the Nordic Instructions, please note the following elaborations:

Change to the trade name

A change to the trade name normally requires a new Vnr. Adjustments or minor changes in the name may be allowed if the product appears principally unchanged.

Change of package type

Change of package type, e.g. from blister to container, requires a new Vnr. For changes to *package materials* with no impact on pricing, the Vnr can be kept. The register distinguishes between ordinary blisterpack and unitdose blisterpack to facilitate handling in hospitals and hospital pharmacies.

Change of prescription group for medicines with marketing authorisation

A new Vnr is required when a product changes from prescription-only (C) to non-prescription (F). The package must be approved by the NOMA if the prescription group is to be changed from C to F.

When changing the prescription group from F to C, a new Vnr is normally required due to logistics and medicine statistic requirements. This distinction is required for medicine statistics purposes, as prescription and non-prescription sales must be recorded separately.

Notification of change

The pharmaceutical company/supplier must notify Farmalogg on changes to information elements maintained by Farmalogg. A guideline on what information the company must report is available on farmalogg.no after logging in.

There is no direct link between the NNC and Farmalogg. Therefore, any relevant changes relating to a Vnr must be reported to both the NNC and Farmalogg.

Please note that a new Vnr must always be registered and processed as *a new product* in the article register. Once a product has been marketed, its Vnr cannot be changed.

4. Product codes

Product codes must be registered on farmalogg.no, either via registration of new Vnrs, or by adding new product codes to existing Vnrs. The registered product codes are encoded in 2D codes and barcodes used by wholesalers and pharmacies to identify products during physical handling and are essential for verification at the point of dispensing. For further information about product codes, please see the Norwegian [Industry standard for product codes](#).

Change of product code

If a product code/GTIN is changed without a corresponding change of Vnr, the new product code must be added to the Vnr on farmalogg.no. Each Vnr may be linked to multiple product codes. For further information, see [Change situations Vnr vs. GTIN](#). Please note the general rule: If the Vnr changes, the GTIN always changes.

5. Product groups and Vnr-series in Norway

All products in the article register are grouped into nine different product groups, and the article number is either a *Nordic Article Number* or a *National Article Number*:

No	Product group	Article number (Vnr) series	Type of Vnr
1	Medicines with marketing authorisation	00 00 01 - 19 99 99 37 00 00 - 59 99 99	Nordic
2	Pharmacy produced medicines	20 00 00 - 36 99 99	National
3	Commodities incl. medical device and nutritional supplements approved for reimbursement by Helfo	80 00 00 - 99 99 99	National
4	Chemicals	20 00 00 - 36 99 99	National
5	Medicinal herbs	20 00 00 - 36 99 99	National
6	Medicines without marketing authorisation	20 00 00 - 36 99 99	National
7	Homeopathic and anthroposophic medicines	20 00 00 - 36 99 99	National
8	Natural remedies and herbal medicinal products	00 00 01 - 19 99 99 37 00 00 - 59 99 99	Nordic
9	Miscellaneous (work rates, packaging, publications, accessories, services etc.)	20 00 00 - 36 99 99	National

Nordic Article Numbers are assigned by Pharmaca for products with marketing authorisation (product group 1 and 8).

National Article Numbers are assigned and owned by Farmalogg. Due to different use of Vnr series in the Nordic countries, the National Article Numbers are *only* intended for use in Norway.