

Product Life Cycle Policy

1. Introduction

Each proALPHA product and product release has various milestones and activities that determine the stage the product is in its life-cycle. This document will describe each stage of the lifecycle, and outline the scope of software maintenance that proALPHA customers may be entitled to as part of their SaaS or Maintenance Contract. The aim of the document is to help customers with the planning of upgrades and migrations of proALPHA applications, aligned with their business objectives. In case there are any additional questions please reach out to your Account - or Customer success manager.

2. Product Software Delivery

2.1 Overall principle

proALPHA will deliver product features and fixes in releases. Each release is fully tested, and will be labeled with a unique version number using the versioning scheme as referred to below. The release will come with supporting documentation, such as user- implementation- and installation guides, as well as an overview of the changes compared to the prior release. Lastly, update and migration scripts are provided. Update scripts initialise new fields in the DB-schema, while migration scripts may reformat data to accommodate DB-schema changes.

The overall objective of the proALPHA product-life cycle policy is **stability**, so that customers have as least disruption in production environments as possible. Therefore 'breaking changes' are avoided as much as possible.

Breaking changes are changes that require a re-implementation of processes and a re-training of users such as:

- DB-schema changes requiring migration scripts;
- significant UI redesigns and process changes
- new technology platforms and code rewrites requiring a re-install of the system.

DB-additions, that only require initialisation scripts and don't require data migrations, as well as small functional extensions that can be implemented when required by the customer are not considered as 'breaking changes'.

New releases are cumulative and available to all customers with a maintenance agreement. Customers will need to go to the highest release number of each major release to have the most up to date version with all fixes, including security fixes.

2.2 Release types

proALPHA recognises 3 different release types that each have a different scope.

- **'Major'** releases should be considered as a new product generation, as it includes either a new platform technology or significant feature changes or additions. The release will have breaking changes and therefore requires a data migration and (partial) reimplementation effort
- **'Minor'** releases include new functionality and maintenance-related fixes, with no or as few as possible breaking changes. Where technically feasible, any new functionality will be disabled by default and therefore will not be disruptive in existing implementations, unless or until a customer opts-in to turn on specific functionality.
- **'Patch'** releases include a collection of maintenance-only fixes such as fixing software errors, security updates, localisation updates and new versions of 3rd party components. It will not have any breaking changes.

In addition, in exceptional cases where immediate action is required proALPHA may deliver **'hot-fixes'** on top of the latest 'patch release' to address category A issues (as described below in this document), such as security related issues.

2.3 Porting

Porting, historically referred to as 'downgrades' is the process of retro-fitting fixes from the latest code branch to older code branches or customer-specific code base. There are 3 porting scenarios:

1. from the latest 'patch' release of a major release (such as proALPHA ERP 9.0.1) to the **latest patch release of a previous major release** (e.g. proALPHA ERP 7.2d build xxx; or 6.2e)
2. from the latest 'patch' release of a major release (such as proALPHA ERP 9.2.0) to a previous 'minor' and/or 'patch' release **of the same major release** (e.g. proALPHA ERP 9.0.1)
3. from the latest 'patch' release of a major release of the 'standard' software to a **customer-specific code base** that includes customer-specific modifications.

Only scenario 1 is supported as part of this product life cycle policies. At Customer's request, proALPHA may, in its sole discretion and for additional professional service fees, provide specific support or application management services to also include porting scenarios 2 and 3.

2.4 Add-ons

Some software, such as localisations, are delivered as add-ons to the core product. The product-life cycle policy for add-ons will be derived from the main version the add-on applies to.

2.5 Release cadence

proALPHA intends to release products in a fixed cadence, where new functionality is released each 6 months, either in 'major' or 'minor' releases. We intend to avoid 'major' releases as much as possible, as we are aware 'major' releases require more implementation effort than 'minor' releases. Software maintenance related changes are released as 'patch' release every 2 months.

The timing of releases is at the sole discretion of proALPHA product management. proALPHA will reserve the right to change the cadence when they feel the need to do so.

2.6 Versioning scheme

Starting 2021, proALPHA will number its applications with the following versioning scheme: <major> <minor> <patch>, for example 9.0.1; 9.1.0 or 9.2.2

3. Scope of maintenance

3.1 Overview of maintenance categories

Each product release will be in a maintenance category based on the phase the product is in its lifecycle. There are 3 maintenance categories, each with their own scope of services, as summarised in the table below. Each component is described in further detail in the paragraphs below.

Component	Mainstream Maintenance	Extended Maintenance	Lifetime Support
Duration	Latest 'major' release (N) and prior 'major' release (N-1)	for 2 years after end of mainstream maintenance	Available at proALPHA discretion after end of extended maintenance.
Pricing	Standard maintenance pricing	Standard maintenance pricing plus premium	Extended maintenance pricing + premium to be determined at proALPHA discretion
Access to proALPHA customer portal (to inquire product documentation and the knowledge base; log incidents, submit service requests and submit ideas for new product capabilities)	Included	Included	Included
Access to proALPHA support agents	Included	Included	Included
Access to new releases (Access to newer major/minor/patch software releases, including scripts to accommodate migrations and updates)	Included	Included	Included
Scope of software errors (What severity levels of software errors are included in releases for each maintenance category)	Category A and B only	Category A only	Category A only, back ported from a successor major release.
Localisation updates for localised countries to support regulatory changes (such as Tax/VAT, regulatory reports, invoice and payment formats)	Included	Not Included	Not Included
Certification¹ with new versions of existing 3rd party components (application platform technologies, report writers, operating systems and browsers, office apps)	Included	Not Included	Not Included
Certification of application integrations of newer versions of the product	Included	Not Included	Not Included

3.2 Duration

In principle, only the last major release (N) and the predecessor version of the last major release (N-1) will be in mainstream maintenance. However, at the sole discretion of proALPHA Product Management, we may override the maintenance duration for specific releases. Therefore, customers should always refer to the [Product Life Cycle](#) in the appendix of this document to understand the support direction for their specific product and product release.

There may be cases, where an earlier communicated maintenance duration needs to be shortened, for instance due to an unexpected change in the maintenance policy of a key 3rd party platform technology which is out of our control. In this case proALPHA intends to inform the affected customers at least 6 months in advance.

3.3 Classification of software errors

A software error is reproducible behaviour of the software which does not meet the functional specifications or poses a potential security risk. Each software error will be assigned a severity level. The classification of software errors to severity levels will be done against the criteria below, and is at the sole discretion of proALPHA R&D and Product Management only.

Severity level	Description	Definition
A	Critical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Critical functionality of the software enabling key customer business process (invoicing, shipping, production, supplier payments) does not work at all, with no acceptable workaround. Software issues that create an immediate and severe security risk for our customers, such as a security vulnerability that has become public or which would be exploitable with simple means.
B	Major	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Important functionality of the software is disrupted or significant data-corruption is created (e.g. wrong financial bookings or inventory numbers) and any available workaround requires significant efforts. Non-critical security issues in the software
C	Medium	A business process is (partially) disrupted, but there is an acceptable workaround. Data is not corrupted, or the corruption has minimal business impact.
D	Minor	There is a software error that needs to be fixed, but there is a limited or no impact to the business process

Software errors with severity 'C' or 'D' will not be solved as part of the maintenance agreement, but considered for future releases. 'B' errors will only be delivered for products that are in the maintenance category 'mainstream maintenance'

3.4 Enhancements

Cases where the functionality of the software is working as described in the product documentation, but an improved or different functionality would be desirable, are considered potential enhancements, not software errors. Whilst proALPHA understands that a product limitation may impact the business operations of a customer, enhancements will not be part of the maintenance agreement. Any suggestion to enhance the product functionality of proALPHA products can be logged in the idea management system of proALPHA: [Idea Management](#). Any idea logged in proALPHA idea management will be evaluated and prioritised for a future release based on customer votes and the product strategy. The decision if a reported issue is a software error or an enhancement is at the sole discretion of proALPHA product R&D and Product Management only.

3.5 Releases to deal with regulatory and other localisation-related changes

Any capability delivered in proALPHA software that is required to operate in a specific country will be considered a localisation. Localisations include language translations and software-related capabilities to comply with regulatory requirements. Regulatory requirements include statutory reporting, VAT calculation and reporting, electronic payment processing and invoice formats. As regulatory requirements may change over time, localisation related software changes and documentation updates may be required for customers to stay current with changed regulatory requirements.

The determination if a regulatory change requires a software delivery as part of the maintenance agreement is at the sole discretion of proALPHA. proALPHA preserves the right to license additional functionality, or position solution partners to achieve regulatory compliance.

ProALPHA makes the distinction between **localised** and **pre-localised** countries:

- For localised countries, proALPHA will actively monitor upcoming regulatory changes and will commit to stay current with regulatory requirements. Any software changes related to regulatory requirements will be delivered as part of the mainstream maintenance only. Next to delivery of software modifications, proALPHA will certify the proALPHA solution by a 3rd party auditing firm to confirm compliance to local regulatory requirements.
- For **pre-localized** countries, proALPHA also monitors regulatory changes, but no certification takes place. If the customer wants to change the scope of services according to the proALPHA product and service description, proALPHA will make an offer.

The list of localised and pre-localised countries for each proALPHA product release can be found on the [proALPHA documentation portal](#). Any request to add countries or languages should be submitted in [Idea Management](#), and will be considered for a future release.

3.6 3rd party components

3rd party components can be classified in the following categories

- **Platform Technologies:** 3rd party technologies that are incorporated in the proALPHA application development platform such as Progress OpenEdge, Microsoft .net and Combit List and Label. Also UI components such as Netronic and KendoUI fall in this category.
- **Operating Systems** for desktop applications such as Microsoft Windows
- **Web Browsers** that are required to run proALPHA web-based applications such as Microsoft Edge, Google Chrome, and Apple IOS Safari.
- **Office Applications** such as Office 365 applications or Google Apps.
- **Mobile Platform Technologies**, such as Apple IOS and Google Android to run native mobile applications

The list of supported 3rd party components can be found in the Compatibility Matrix on the [proALPHA documentation portal](#)

As part of mainstream maintenance, proALPHA intends to stay current with newer versions of existing 3rd party components by either:

- **Certification:** Meaning that proALPHA will test the new version of the 3rd party component to confirm that the proALPHA software is working correctly with no regression of functionality with the new version of the 3rd party component
- **Software Modification:** Meaning that proALPHA will make changes to the proALPHA software to ensure that the proALPHA software will work with the new version of the 3rd party component. Such a modification is delivered in a release. After issuing the release, certification of the new version of the 3rd party component will take place

The Compatibility Matrix will be updated to reflect which versions of 3rd party component will be supported in which release version of proALPHA software.

The decision to certify new versions of 3rd party components or to modify proALPHA software to adapt to such new versions of 3rd party components is at sole discretion of proALPHA, and will only be done when technically and economically viable. For example, proALPHA will stop onboarding new versions of 3rd party components at least 6 months before the end of the proALPHA maintenance period, except when it concerns a security related issue. Compatibility with *new* 3rd party components, such as additional operating systems will not be done as part of the maintenance agreement but planned as enhancement for a future release.

3.7 Integration to 3rd party applications

proALPHA offers the ability to integrate business applications. Examples of such applications are eCommerce and CRM software, Quality Management Systems and Manufacturing Execution Systems. There are two types of integration approaches in proALPHA:

- **Certified application integrations:** these are productised integrations that have a product description provided by proALPHA that clearly states the scope of the integration, including supported end-to-end processes, known limitations and required application licenses. The integration will not require any custom code or configuration to work, as long as the customer is using the product against the scope described in the product description. Also, these integrations are regression tested when one of the applications involved in the integration will release a new version.
- **Connectors:** these are not productized integrations, but there is preparation work done for instance by developing API's. To make the integration work, customer code may be required. proALPHA is also not regression testing these integrations, when new versions of one of the involved applications is released the integration is not regression tested.

The Compatibility Matrix outlines for each integration the supported integration type and what versions are certified. Only integrations that are certified as part of the overview are maintained. Note that the scope of integration may vary for each release, so please check the appropriate product description.

4. Product life cycle phases

Each proALPHA product and product release has various milestones and activities that determine the phase the product is in its life-cycle. Each phase is connected to a unique maintenance category. Other than the maintenance category, the phase in the life cycle determines to what customer types the software is available, and to what extent proALPHA will be capable to service its customers.

The description of the product life cycle can be found below.

Phase	Gateway criteria	Maintenance category	Availability to customers	Professional Services
Limited Available (Optional)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited functional scope Tested and documented German or English only 	Not available No formal support as product is not released yet. Early adopters can log support incidents on software issues they are finding, that will be dealt with by proALPHA R&D	Limited Available <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only available to 'pilot customers' approved by product management Only supported on 'test-environments' and not 'production environments' 	Limited Available <ul style="list-style-type: none"> proALPHA professional services not yet trained, or partly trained services may be provided by R&D
General Available	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Full scope for target market Fully documented, tested and translated 	Mainstream	Available	Available
Mature	When successor major release becomes General Available.	Mainstream	Limited Available Only additional users of existing customers	Available
Sunset	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At proALPHA product management discretion. In general: 6 years after General Availability of the major release. 	Extended More restricted maintenance category, premium pricing	Limited Available Only additional users of existing customers	Limited Available <ul style="list-style-type: none"> due to the age of the release, knowledgeable resources may be limited premium pricing
Retired	End of extended maintenance	Life-time Most restricted maintenance category, premium pricing	Limited Available Only additional users of existing customers	Limited Available <ul style="list-style-type: none"> due to the age of the release, knowledgeable resources may be limited premium pricing
Archive	End of life-time support	Not available Product no longer supported	Not available Only additional users of existing customers	Not available

5. Retirement of modules, features and technologies

5.1 Rationale to retire

In addition to the product-life-cycle of releases, specific modules, features and technologies – further discussed as 'features' only – may be retired as well. There can be multiple reasons why proALPHA can decide to retire specific capabilities:

1. **replacement by new products** with a similar functional scope. These new products could be either newly developed; products from companies that proALPHA has acquired or product from product partners.
2. **(3rd party) technologies no longer supported**. A feature may be developed on a 3rd party technology that is no longer supported by the vendor, and as a result, proALPHA is not in a position to support its customers anymore.
3. **economical**: due to the adoption rate of the feature and the associated cost it is no longer economical viable for proALPHA to maintain and/or host the product

5.2 Technical approaches

There are two approaches for proALPHA to retire features:

- **de-supporting**: which means that the feature will not be longer maintained. The software-code for these features will not be removed.
- **removal**: the code, related to the features will be removed from the product, and thus is no longer maintained and supported.

The both approaches, the product documentation will not be removed, but will clearly indicate that the feature is retired and no longer supported.

5.3 Communication around retirement of features

As part of the product life cycle policy, proALPHA commits to communicating at least one year in advance when modules and products will be retired in existing releases of the product. Where possible, the communication will also include recommendations for customers using the 'to be retired' features on a migration plan to alternative products. During the transition period, when the retirement was announced and becomes effective, proALPHA will continue to do its best effort to continue to support the customers

6. Appendix: Product Life Cycle

6.1 ProALPHA ERP

Major release	Phase Product Life-Cycle	Maintenance status	GA date	End-of-life Mainstream Maintenance	End-of-life Extended Maintenance	End-of-life Life-time support
5.2	Retired	Life Time	30 Sept 2008	30 Sept 2018 (9 years)	30 Sept 2021 (3 years)	tbd on a contract basis
6.1	Sunset	Extended Maintenance	2 Aug 2013	31 Jul 2022 (9 years)	31 Jul 2024 (2 years)	tbd on a contract basis
6.2	Sunset	Extended Maintenance	31 Jul 2016	31 Jul 2023 (7 years)	31 Jul 2026 (3 years)	tbd on a contract basis
7.1	Mature	Mainstream Maintenance	31 Jul 2018	31 Dec 2024 (6 years)	31 Jul 2028 (4 years)	tbd on a contract basis
7.2	Mature	Mainstream Maintenance	31 Dec 2020	31 Dec 2026 (6 years)	31 Dec 2030 (4 years)	tbd on a contract basis
8	Mature	Mainstream Maintenance	30 Nov 2021	30 Nov 2027 (6 years)	30 Nov 2029 (2 years)	tbd on a contract basis
9.0 – 9.2	Mature	Mainstream Maintenance	31 Mar 2022	31 Mar 2028 (6 years)	31 Dec 2030 (2,5 years)	tbd on a contract basis
9.3	General Available	Mainstream Maintenance	2 Jun 2023	2 Jun 2028 (5 years)	31 Dec 2030 (2,5 years)	tbd on a contract basis