

## ODF Government Adoptions: A Global View of ODF Policy

Approved as an international standard (ISO 26300:2006) in May 2006, OpenDocument Format (ODF) has achieved growing acceptance as the document format of choice for governments around the world. Below are examples of policy actions taken by governments to promote the adoption of ODF and ensure the benefits of access, choice, interoperability and cost savings. Government action can be spearheaded by different agencies and branches and generally take the form of laws, executive decisions, interoperability frameworks, or policy statements.

### ***National Government Pro-ODF Policies***

#### **Belgium**

On 23 June 2006, Belgium's Council of Ministers adopted a recommendation which would effectively introduce ODF as the preferred standard within its governmental agencies for the creation and exchange of text, spreadsheets, and presentations.<sup>1</sup> The guidelines state that all documents exchanged within the federal government must be in an open, standard format based on XML and implemented by more than one vendor. The Council is recommending a phased approach in which reading functionality would be implemented in the Belgian public administrations as of 1 September 2007, writing functionality by 1 September 2008, and document exchange in ODF by 1 October 2008.

#### **Brazil**

With the publication of version 2.0 of its e-Ping Interoperability Framework, Brazil became the first country in South America to officially recommend ODF.<sup>2</sup> The framework states that all .xls, .doc and .ppt files are in transition, meaning they do not comply anymore with its technical policies, and that ODF is now the Brazilian Government's officially recommended format.

#### **Croatia**

As part of its eCroatia 2007 program, Croatia announced an implementation deadline of September 2007 for its work on using ODF and PDF as a basis for electronic document exchange by public administrations.<sup>3</sup> The government also announced it would adopt ODF and PDF/A as Croatian national standards.

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1 See presentation of Peter Strickx, CIO, FEDICT, at the 1<sup>st</sup> International ODF User Workshop in Berlin: <http://www.odfworkshop.org/3.pdf>.

2 See ePING 2.0: <https://www.governoeletronico.gov.br/acoes-e-projetos/e-ping-padres-de-interoperabilidade/versoes-do-documento-da-e-ping>.

3 See Plan for eCroatia: <http://www.e-hrvatska.hr/sdu/hr/e-hrv/vijest.html?h=hr/e-hrv/contentParagraph/01111111111113&c=hr/ProgramEHrvatska/Provedba>.

## Denmark

Following up on the passage of a law (B103) by the Danish Parliament on June 2, 2006 requiring the use of open standards in the public sector, Denmark's Minister of Science, Helge Sander announced a plan making both ODF and OOXML obligatory for an 18-month trial period beginning in January 2008.<sup>4</sup> During this period the public authorities should be able to receive both ODF and OOXML, and new purchases should be able to handle at least one. The trial period will be evaluated in 2009 by a third party, with a view towards a new evaluation by the parliament.

## France

France's Direction Générale de la Modernisation de l'État (DGME) specifically refers to ODF in its draft Référentiel Général d'Interopérabilité (RGI), or Interoperability Guidelines.<sup>5</sup> Under the RGI, which are generally followed by public administrations throughout France, it is required to be able to accept all documents in ODF, recommended to use ODF for office applications (text, charts, presentations), and prohibited to migrate to a format currently used by only one organization.

## Japan

Japan adopted a policy under which government ministries and agencies will solicit bids from software vendors whose products support internationally-recognized open standards.<sup>6</sup> Previously, government agencies could ask bidders to submit bids based on whether their products offered functions comparable to particular software suites. The interoperability framework, which takes effect immediately and specifically references ODF, gives preference to procuring products that adhere to open standards, and which interoperate easily with other software.

## Malaysia

The Malaysian Administration Modernization and Management Planning Unit (MAMPU) issued a tender for a nine-month study that will provide a roadmap for implementing ODF in Malaysia's public sector.<sup>7</sup> The decision to implement ODF follows lengthy consideration by MAMPU of open formats, their importance for the current and future accessibility of government records, and the relative "openness" of the options available.

## Netherlands

On December 12th 2007 the Tweede Kamer (Second Chamber) of the Netherlands parliament officially backed government plans to require use of ODF by all government organizations for reading, publishing and information exchange purposes in 2008.<sup>8</sup> The transition to ODF is one of the main points of a long awaited action plan defining the open standards and open source policy for the Netherlands. All Dutch political parties enthusiastically supported the action plan set forth by the Netherlands Economic Affairs State

4 Danish government announcement: <http://videnskabsministeriet.dk/site/forside/nyheder/pressemeddelelser/2007/vigtigt-politisk-fremskridt-for-aabne-standarder>.

5 See RGI: [https://www.ateliers.modernisation.gouv.fr/ministeres/domaines\\_d\\_expertise/architecture\\_fonctio/public/rgi/folder\\_contents](https://www.ateliers.modernisation.gouv.fr/ministeres/domaines_d_expertise/architecture_fonctio/public/rgi/folder_contents).

6 Japan's Interoperability Framework: <http://www.meti.go.jp/press/20070629014/20070629014.html>.

7 <http://www.zdnetasia.com/news/software/0,39044164,62030781,00.htm>.

8 See <http://www.heise.de/english/newsticker/news/100520>.

Secretary Frank Heemskerk in September. The transition to ODF should be completed by Dutch national government bodies by April 2008 and at other government levels by December 2008 at the latest. The ambitious plan was accepted in full and even enhanced on a number of points - including a significant increase in budget for the accompanying program, the set-up of an "open standards swat team" and a separate program to bring ODF (and other open standards) and open source into the Dutch educational system.

### **Norway**

The Cabinet-appointed Norwegian Standards Council has recommended that ODF be mandated for document exchange and downloads of editable documents, and PDF for publication of non-editable documents on the web.<sup>9</sup> The recommendation, presented by Norway's Minister of Renewal Heidi Grande Røys also calls for the convergence of ODF and OOXML in order to avoid having two standards covering the same usage. The Cabinet is expected to make a binding decision.

### **Poland**

The Council of Ministers of the Government of Poland approved the National Computerization Program (NCP), which recommends the use of open, publicly available IT standards and calls for technological neutrality in all government led IT projects.<sup>10</sup> The program is scheduled to be implemented from 2007-2010.

### **Russia**

The "Action Plan on Open Source Software Development and Usage in the Russian Government" envisions legislative requirements to mandate the procurement of software based on how well it adheres to widely used standards.<sup>11</sup> In a statement, Russia's Ministry for IT and Communications said, "Open document standards must be supported on a governmental level. Within the project to form an e-government concept in the Russian Federation, support of ISO/IEC 26300:2006 is planned."

### **South Africa**

South Africa's Minister of Public Service and Administration, Ms. Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi, signed the Minimum Interoperability Standards V4.1 (MIOS V4.1), which requires the use of ODF for exchange of data and information between government agencies and with citizens and other external entities.<sup>12</sup> The South African ODF migration plan will proceed in three phases: 1) By 1 March 2008: government officials should be able to read ODF documents; 2) By 1 September 2008: government officials should be able to read and write ODF documents; 3) By 1 January 2009: All documents must be in ODF.

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9 <http://gotze.eu/2007/05/norwegians-launch-interoperability-framework-mandate-odf.html#respond>.

10 <http://www.standardy.org/node/67>.

11 [http://www.odfalliance.org/press/Release20070828\\_Russia.pdf](http://www.odfalliance.org/press/Release20070828_Russia.pdf).

12 See MIOS v4.1: [http://www.i-gov.org/images/articles/4760/MIOS\\_V4.1\\_final.pdf](http://www.i-gov.org/images/articles/4760/MIOS_V4.1_final.pdf).

## **Regional/State Governments Pro-ODF Policies**

### **Extremadura, Spain**

On 25 July 2006, the government approved a motion that all public administrations must use ODF for document exchange and PDF/A "when guaranteed unalterable visualization is required."<sup>13</sup> Extremadura decided in 2002 to migrate 70,000 desktops to a local version of free, open source Debian software, called gnuLinEx. The government is estimating cost savings of 18 million euros.

### **Hong Kong, China**

In March 2006 ODF was added to the Hong Kong Government's Interoperability Framework (IF) as a recommended standard.<sup>14</sup>

### **Kerala, India**

Kerala, a state in southwestern India, has now officially adopted its information-technology policy, which states that "[o]pen standards like Unicode and Open Document Format and Open Architectures will be followed in e-governance projects to avoid total dependence on select vendors."<sup>15</sup> The "Information Technology Policy: towards an inclusive knowledge society," was published in January 2007 and the subject of a lengthy public consultation process.

### **Massachusetts, United States**

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts' Enterprise Technical Reference Model of September 2005 states that ODF must be used for documents such as text, presentations, and spreadsheets.<sup>16</sup> It is proceeding with plans to migrate all Executive Department agencies to compliance with ODF, in phases.<sup>17</sup>

### **Misiones, Argentina**

Misiones, a province in the northeast of Argentina, became the first regional government in Latin America to adopt ODF.<sup>18</sup> According to the resolution that took effect one day after its publication in the province's official journal on 21 December 2006, all documents created and exchanged between public administrations must be in ODF for documents in which the recipient needs to make edits; for documents in public circulation and where read-only access is needed, PDF/A must be used. Proprietary formats, including .doc, .ppt., .xls, RTF, and WordPerfect are explicitly not permitted under the resolution.

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13 See Extremadura Government Council Agreement:

[http://www.hispalinux.es/files/mocion\\_consejo\\_gobierno\\_english.pdf](http://www.hispalinux.es/files/mocion_consejo_gobierno_english.pdf)

14 See HKSARG Interoperability Framework: <http://www.ogcio.gov.hk/eng/infra/download/s18.pdf>.

15 See Kerala ICT Policy 2007: <http://www.keralaitmission.org/web/main/ITPolicy-2007.pdf>.

16 See MA ETRM v4.0:

[http://www.mass.gov/?pageID=itdterminal&L=4&L0=Home&L1=Policies%2C+Standards+%26+Guidance&L2=Enterprise+Architecture&L3=Enterprise+Technical+Reference+Model+-+Service-Oriented+Architecture+\(ETRM+v4.0\)&sid=Aitd&b=terminalcontent&f=policies\\_standards\\_etrmv4\\_etrmv4dot0intro&sid=Aitd](http://www.mass.gov/?pageID=itdterminal&L=4&L0=Home&L1=Policies%2C+Standards+%26+Guidance&L2=Enterprise+Architecture&L3=Enterprise+Technical+Reference+Model+-+Service-Oriented+Architecture+(ETRM+v4.0)&sid=Aitd&b=terminalcontent&f=policies_standards_etrmv4_etrmv4dot0intro&sid=Aitd).

17 See MA Mid-Year Statement on ODF Implementation:

[http://www.mass.gov/?pageID=itdmodulechunk&&L=3&L0=Home&L1=Open+Initiatives&L2=OpenDocument&sid=Aitd&b=terminalcontent&f=accessibility\\_odf\\_accessibility\\_midyear\\_ltr&csid=Aitd](http://www.mass.gov/?pageID=itdmodulechunk&&L=3&L0=Home&L1=Open+Initiatives&L2=OpenDocument&sid=Aitd&b=terminalcontent&f=accessibility_odf_accessibility_midyear_ltr&csid=Aitd).

18 See Province of Misiones Resolution:

[http://www.misiones.gov.ar/egov/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=133&Itemid=26](http://www.misiones.gov.ar/egov/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=133&Itemid=26).

## **Municipalities Moving to ODF**

Following the trend of many national and regional governments, many municipalities are moving to ODF. **Freiburg (Germany)** will adopt ODF in order to become vendor and product independent, and in the process expects to save Euro 0.5m (USD 0.7m) over the next two years on 2000 government desktops by moving to an ODF-supporting application.<sup>19</sup> **Bristol City Council (UK)** has gathered a wide range of information in support of their decision, which cut its software costs for 5,500 desktops by 60 percent over 5 years.<sup>20</sup>

## **Government Agencies**

In addition to these policy actions at the national, regional and municipal level, more than 50 government agencies across the globe are using office applications that support ODF. Examples include **India's Election Commission**, which has adopted ODF nationally, and **Finland's Ministry of Justice**<sup>21</sup>, which has adopted ODF for document exchange as part of a migration to an ODF-supporting application, resulting in an estimated cost savings of Euro 5.6m (\$ 8.3m) over five years.<sup>22</sup>

For more information about ODF, please visit the ODF Alliance web site:  
[www.odfalliance.org](http://www.odfalliance.org).

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19 [http://www.news-ticker.org/pm.php?news\\_id=4855707&aktion=nf](http://www.news-ticker.org/pm.php?news_id=4855707&aktion=nf).

20 See supporting material from Open Source Academy:

[http://www.opensourceacademy.gov.uk/osacademy/our\\_partners/bristol-city-council/bristol-city-council](http://www.opensourceacademy.gov.uk/osacademy/our_partners/bristol-city-council/bristol-city-council).

21 See *Migrating A Ministry To OpenOffice.org*: <http://ec.europa.eu/idabc/servlets/Doc?id=27850>.

22 For cost-savings case studies involving migration to ODF, see:

<http://www.odfalliance.org/resources/PrelimCostAssess20070312.pdf>.