

Ministry of Communication & Information Technology

Department of Electronics & Information Technology

POLICY

**Title of Policy: “Policy on Adoption of Open Source Software for
Government of India”**

Preamble

Government of India (GoI) is implementing the Digital India programme as an umbrella programme to prepare India for a knowledge based transformation into a digitally empowered society and a knowledge economy. Under the overarching vision of Digital India, GoI aims to make Government services digitally accessible to citizens in their localities and to ensure efficiency, transparency and reliability of such services at affordable costs. To meet this objective, there is a need to set up a commensurate hardware and software infrastructure, which may require significant resources.

Organizations worldwide have adopted innovative alternative solutions in order to optimise costs by exploring avenues of “Open Source Software”. GoI has also been promoting the use of open source technologies in the e-Governance domain within the country in order to leverage economic and strategic benefits.

Further, the National Policy on Information Technology, 2012 has mentioned, as one of its objectives, to “Adopt open standards and promote open source and open technologies”.

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In view of the above, there is a need to formulate a policy for the Government Organizations to adopt Open Source Software. The “Policy on Adoption of Open Source Software for Government of India” (hereinafter referred to as “Policy”) will encourage the formal adoption and use of Open Source Software (OSS) in Government Organizations.

1. Objectives

- To provide a policy framework for rapid and effective adoption of OSS
- To ensure strategic control in e-Governance applications and systems from a long-term perspective.
- To reduce the Total Cost of Ownership (TCO) of projects.

2. Definitions

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3. Policy Statement

Government of India shall endeavour to adopt Open Source Software in all e-Governance systems implemented by various Government organizations, as a preferred option in comparison to Closed Source Software (CSS).

The Open Source Software shall have the following characteristics:

- 3.1 The source code shall be available for the community / adopter / end-user to study and modify the software and to redistribute copies of either the original or modified software.
- 3.2 Source code shall be free from any royalty.

4. Nature of Compliance

Mandatory

5. Applicability

The policy shall be applicable to all Government Organisations under the Central Governments and those State Governments that choose to adopt this policy for the following categories of e-Governance systems:

- All new e-Governance applications and systems being considered for implementation.
- New versions of the legacy and existing systems.

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6. How to comply

All Government Organizations, while implementing e-Governance applications and systems must include a specific requirement in Request for Proposal (RFP) for all suppliers to consider OSS along with CSS while responding. Suppliers shall provide justification for exclusion of OSS in their response, as the case may be. Government Organizations shall ensure compliance with this requirement and decide by comparing both OSS and CSS options with respect to capability, strategic control, scalability, security, life-time costs and support requirements.

7. Exception

Goi shall endeavour to adopt Open Source Software in all e-Governance applications and systems implemented by Government Organizations. However, in certain specialised domains where OSS solutions meeting essential functional requirements may not be available or in case of urgent / strategic need to deploy CSS based solutions or lack of expertise (skill set) in identified technologies, the concerned Government Organization may consider exceptions, with sufficient justification.

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8. Implementation Mechanism

- i) GoI shall publish a policy framework for rapid and effective adoption of OSS covering the prioritization of the application areas and illustrative list of OSS & OSS Stacks etc, required for various functional areas.
- ii) All future Requests for Proposals (RFPs) of e-Governance projects shall include a mandatory clause for considering Open Source Software (OSS) as a preferred option in comparison to Closed Source Software (CSS). Suppliers shall provide justification for exclusion of OSS in their response.
- iii) Government Organizations shall ensure compliance with this requirement and decide by comparing both OSS and CSS options with respect to capability, strategic control, scalability, security, life-time costs and support requirements.
- iv) GoI shall establish suitable support mechanism for the available OSS that includes Institutional Mechanism, Partnership with Industry, Academia and OSS Community.
- v) GoI shall actively collaborate with OSS communities in India as well as at the International level and contribute wherever appropriate.

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9. Review of the Policy

Gol shall have the right to review the Policy as and when required.

10. Point of Contact

All queries or comments related to the “Policy on Adoption of Open Source Software for Government of India” shall be directed to JS (e-Governance), DeitY (jsegov@deity.gov.in).

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GLOSSARY

Definitions

- 1 **Domain:** A sub-category under an Information Technology field is a Domain; specific purpose within a “Domain” is known as “Area”. For example, “Document type for Web publishing content” is one Area under the “Presentation” domain.
- 2 **e-Governance:** A procedural approach in which the Government and the citizens, businesses, and other stakeholders are able to transact all or part of activities using Information and Communication Technology tools.
- 3 **Government Organization:** For the purpose of this policy, Government organisation refers to all Ministries/ Departments/ offices/ statutory bodies/ autonomous bodies, both at the Central and State levels. Government organizations offering commercial services are not included.
- 4 **Legacy System:** An old method, technology, computer system, or application program that continues to be used, typically because it still functions for the users' needs, even though newer technology or more efficient methods of performing a task are now available.
- 5 **New version of Legacy System:** The legacy system which has undergone a major version change due to re-engineering like functional changes, architectural changes, technology changes,

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change in storage mechanism, design implementation changes etc.

- 6 **Open Source Software:** OSS is commonly known as Free and Open Source Software (FOSS). Here the “Free” refers to “Freedom to use” and not “Free of Charge”. Here “Open Source” refers to the “availability of Source code for the community / adopter / end-user to study and modify the software and to redistribute copies of either the original or modified software (without having to pay royalties to previous developers).
- 7 **Proprietary Software/ Closed Source Software:** CSS/proprietary software typically prohibits the access to / modification of the source code. It restricts the copy, modification, distribution and reuse of the software. The restrictions may be applicable to the whole or part of the software so that the control is with the concerned company. Revenue, profit and IPR drive the development and marketing of the products and solutions.
- 8 **Royalty:** A stream of payments for use of a certain type of asset/technology, most typically an Intellectual Property Right (IPR).
- 9 **Systems:** A group of interacting, interrelated, or interdependent elements forming a complex whole. Information System is a combination of people, hardware, software, communication devices, network and data resources that processes (can be storing, retrieving, transforming information) data and information for a specific purpose.