

A Global View of ODF Policy

After its adoption as an international standard (ISO 26300) in May 2006, OpenDocument Format (ODF) has achieved growing acceptance as the document format of choice for governments around the world. Below are some examples of policy actions taken by governments to promote the adoption of ODF and ensure the benefits of choice, interoperability and control for all. Government action can be spearheaded by different agencies and branches and generally take the form of laws, executive decisions, interoperability frameworks, or policy statements. For an overview of the growing software support for ODF, see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_applications_supporting_OpenDocument.

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. 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 Sep 2007, writing functionality by 1 Sep 2008, and document exchange in ODF by 1 Oct 2008. (FEDICT- http://www.siiia.net/govt/docs/pub/Belgium_FEDICT_OpenForumEurope_060704.pdf)

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. 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. (ePING v2.0 – <https://www.governoeletronico.gov.br/acoes-e-projetos/e-ping-padres-de-interoperabilidade/versoes-do-documento-da-e-ping>)

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. The government also announced it would adopt ODF and PDF/A as Croatian national standards. (Plan for eCroatia 2007 – <http://www.e-hrvatska.hr/sdu/hr/e-hrv/vijest.html?h=/hr/e-hrv/contentParagraph/011111111111113&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, after lengthy negotiations with the IT spokespersons of the Danish Parliament, announced a plan making both ODF and OOXML obligatory for a one-year trial period in 2008. 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 the first six months of 2009 by a third party, with a view towards a new evaluation by the parliament.

([Danish Government Announcement](#) -

(<http://videnskabsministeriet.dk/site/forside/nyheder/pressemeddelelser/2007/vigtigt-politisk-fremskridt-for-aabne-standarder>)

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. 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.

([Référentiel Général d'Interopérabilité \(RGI\)](#) -

https://www.ateliers.adele.gouv.fr/ministeres/domaines_d_expertise/architecture_fonctio/public/rgi/folder_contents)

Japan

Japan adopted a policy under which government ministries and agencies will solicit bids from software vendors whose products support internationally recognized open standards. 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.

([Japan's Interoperability Framework](#) – <http://www.meti.go.jp/press/20070629014/20070629014.html>)

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. The recommendation, presented by Norway's Minister of Renewal Heidi Grande Røys (Socialist Party), also calls for the convergence of ODF and OOXML in order to avoid having two standards covering the same usage. The Council's recommendations will be the subject of a public hearing, with opinions to be provided before 20 August 2007. The Cabinet is then expected to make a binding decision.

([GotzeBlogged](#) – <http://gotze.eu/2007/05/norwegians-launch-interoperability-framework-mandate-odf.html#respond>)

Region/State Governments Pro-ODF Policies

Extremadura, Spain

By 25 July 2007, the government approved a motion that all public administrations must use ODF for document exchange and PDF/A “when guaranteed unalterable visualization is required.”

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.

([Extremadura Govt Council Agreement](#) –

http://www.hispalinux.es/files/mocion_consejo_gobierno_english.pdf)

Hong Kong, China

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

(<http://www.ogcio.gov.hk/eng/infra/download/s18.pdf>)

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." The "Information Technology Policy: towards an inclusive knowledge society," was published in January 2007 and the subject of a lengthy public consultation process.
(Kerala ICT Policy 2007 – <http://www.keralaitmission.org/web/main/ITPolicy-2007.pdf>)

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. It is proceeding with plans to migrate all Executive Department agencies to compliance with ODF, in phases.

(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&csid=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&csid=Aitd))

MA Mid-Year Statement –

(http://www.mass.gov/?pageID=itdmodulechunk&L=3&L0=Home&L1=Open+Initiatives&L2=OpenDocument&sid=Aitd&b=terminalcontent&f=accessibility_odef_accessibility_midyear_ltr&csid=Aitd)

Misiones, Argentina

Misiones, a province in the northeast of Argentina, became the first regional government in Latin America to adopt ODF. 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.

Province of Misiones Resolution (esp) -

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. (http://www.news-ticker.org/pm.php?news_id=4855707&aktion=nf). **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.

(http://www.opensourceacademy.gov.uk/osacademy/our_partners/bristol-city-council/bristol-city-council)

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 (<http://opendocumentfellowship.org/government/precedent>). Examples include **India's Election Commission**, which has adopted ODF nationally, and **Finland's Ministry of Justice**, 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 (USD 7.6m) over five years.

(<http://ec.europa.eu/idabc/servlets/Doc?id=27850>)