

# Procurement Policy Note – Use of Open Standards when specifying ICT requirements.

## Action Note 3/11 31 January 2011

### Issue

1. When purchasing software, ICT infrastructure, ICT security and other ICT goods and services, Cabinet Office recommends that Government departments should wherever possible deploy open standards in their procurement specifications.

### Dissemination

2. The requirements detailed in this PPN apply to all departments, their agencies, non-departmental public bodies (NDPBs) and any other bodies for which they are responsible.

### Contact

3. Enquiries about this paper should be addressed to the Service Desk 0845 000 4999 [ogcservicedesk@cabinet-office.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:ogcservicedesk@cabinet-office.gsi.gov.uk).

### Background

4. Government assets should be interoperable and open for re-use in order to maximise return on investment, avoid technological lock-in, reduce operational risk in ICT projects and provide responsive services for citizens and businesses.
5. For this reason, Government departments should ensure that they include open standards in their ICT procurement specifications unless there are clear business reasons why this is inappropriate.
6. Government defines “open standards” as standards which:
  - result from and are maintained through an open, independent process;
  - are approved by a recognised specification or standardisation organisation, for example W3C or ISO or equivalent. (N.B. The specification/standardisation must be compliant with Regulation 9 of the Public Contracts Regulations 2006. This regulation makes it clear that technical specifications/standards cannot simply be national standards but **must also** include/recognise European standards);
  - are thoroughly documented and publicly available at zero or low cost;
  - have intellectual property made irrevocably available on a royalty free basis;and

- as a whole can be implemented and shared under different development approaches and on a number of platforms.

7. The Cabinet Office Business Plan, published in November 2010 (<http://transparency.number10.gov.uk/transparency/srp/view-srp/1#>) makes a commitment to improve the rules around designing and running ICT projects and services.
8. As part of this commitment work is underway to define a range of specific open standards and procurement practices for ICT goods and services. A consultation on these standards will commence shortly and will be available on the Cabinet Office website.