

The following is a 1st draft of an possible agreement on interoperability and open standards, to be discussed at the next IGF meeting in Hyderabad, India, December 3-6, 2008. Send comments or suggestions to Thiru@keionline.org

Agreement on Procurement and Support for Interoperability and Open Standards

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Version 1.0

Preamble

The Contracting Parties,

Recalling the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) Declaration of Principles which states that “[i]nternational standards aim to create an environment where consumers can access services worldwide regardless of underlying technology,”

Recognizing that standards are increasingly global concerns, involving goods and services that move in international trade across borders,

Aware that current competition and legal remedies may not be enough to solve the inherent tensions that routinely arise in the realm of patents and standards,

Desirous of encouraging procurement policies that require evaluation of multiple, competing products based on open ICT standards in order to ensure a level playing field for vendors, governments and consumers,

Cognizant of the need for procurement policies for software programs that are predicated upon an open standard,

Governments, Businesses and Non-Profit Institutions agree to implement the following policies.

Governments

Hereby agree to the following measures that will promote where appropriate interoperability and the use of open standards.

1. To create a policy advisory statement on the topic of interoperability and open standards, to be available to employees and the public.
2. By 2010, procurement of all word processing and presentation graphics programs should require that users can choose as a default the choice of document and data formats that are based upon open standards that satisfy the following conditions:
 - (a) The standard is not effectively controlled by one company.

- (b) The standard can realistically facilitate competition in the market for such programs, for example, by being implemented effectively by multiple vendors on at least the three leading personal computer operating system platforms.
- 3. By 2011, procurement of audiovisual software and services that use open standards compliant formats that work on at least the three leading personal computer operating system platforms.
- 4. By 2010, procurement should include requirements that manufacturers provide the driver and interface information necessary to work with at least the three leading operating system platforms, for the following devices,
 - (a) Printers
 - (b) Scanners
 - (c) Devices to connect personal computers to telephone and computer networks using wireless means
- 5. By 2010, government web pages that provide services to the public should be accessible through standards compliant web browsers that are available from multiple suppliers on at least the three leading operating systems for personal computers.
- 6. By 2011, government agencies should review policies regarding the storage and archiving of government data and records to ensure that where feasible, data are stored in open data and document formats.

Businesses and Non-Profit Institutions

Hereby agree

- 1. To create a policy advisory statement on the topic of interoperability and open standards, to be available to employees and the public.
- 2. By 2010, procurement of word processing and presentation graphics programs should require that users can choose as a default the choice of document and data formats that are based upon open standards that satisfy the following conditions:
 - (a) The standard is not effectively controlled by one company.
 - (b) The standard can realistically facilitate competition in the market for such programs, for example, by being implemented effectively by multiple vendors on at least the three leading personal computer operating system platforms.

By 2010, procurement should include preferences for manufacturers provide the driver

and interface information necessary to work with at least the three leading operating system platforms, including in particular, but not limited the following devices,

- (c) Printers
 - (d) Scanners
 - (e) Devices to connect personal computers to telephone and computer networks using wireless means
3. By 2010, web pages that provide services to the public should be accessible through standards compliant web browsers that are available from multiple suppliers on at least the three leading operating systems for personal computers.
 4. By 2010, meetings and conferences should support the use of the most common open document formats that can be effectively implemented by multiple suppliers on the leading three personal computer systems.

Individuals

Hereby agree

1. To become educated on the importance of interoperability and open standards.
2. To use word processing, spreadsheet and presentation graphics programs that have as a default setting the choice document and data formats that are based upon open standards that satisfy the following conditions:
 - (a) The standard is not effectively controlled by one company.
 - (b) The standard can realistically facilitate competition in the market for such programs, for example, by being implemented effectively by multiple vendors on at least the three leading personal computer operating system platforms.
3. To encourage organizers of meetings and conferences to support the use of the most common open document formats that can be effectively implemented by multiple suppliers on the leading three personal computer systems.
4. To make audiovisual works available in open data formats,
5. To contact manufacturers of ICT equipment and publishers of software and give feedback when products fail to address user concerns regarding interoperability and support for open standards.

Committee on Interoperability and Open Standards

Governments signing this agreement shall create a Committee on Interoperability and Open Standards. (CIOS). The CIOS shall create an executive committee that includes seven (or a different number) of government representatives, and an equal number of representatives among businesses, non-profit institutions and individuals who are contracting parties.

The CIOS shall periodically review the this agreement, with a view to propose a modified agreement by the year 2012.