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Russia is Latest Country to Move Towards OpenDocument Format and Open Standards

Washington, DC, August 28, 2007. The OpenDocument Format Alliance (ODF Alliance) today congratulated Russia for its recent commitment to evaluate the economic benefits of ODF, and for adopting an Action Plan to embrace open standards.

The “Action Plan on Open Source Software Development and Usage in the Russian Government,” as presented for publication by Russia's Ministry for Information technologies and Communications (www.mininform.ru), envisions legislative requirements to mandate the procurement of software based on how well it adheres to “widely used standards (primarily ISO standards), and creates conditions and requirements for government contracts that [would otherwise] want to use closed / proprietary specifications.”

The stated rationale for this legislation is that “open standards will contribute to an increased number of bidders for government contracts and will increase opportunities for Russian software developers... [and] the problem of interoperability will be addressed as will the ability to access information into the future.”

“With its recommended study and legislative action, Russia is demonstrating that it has a clear vision for stimulating local competition, controlling costs, reasserting its authority, and preserving its heritage for future generations,” said Marino Marcich, ODF Alliance Managing Director. “By giving preference to open software formats such as ODF, it is sending a message worldwide that software should be affordable, innovative, and accessible, now and for the foreseeable future. We salute the direction that Russia has taken.”

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.”

This recent action in Russia follows the Malaysian Administration Modernization and Management Planning Unit (MAMPU) announcement earlier this month to further evaluate ODF and open standards in its ICT deployment.

The OpenDocument Format Alliance is an organization of governments, academic institutions, non-government organizations and industry dedicated to educating policy makers, IT administrators and the public on the benefits and opportunities of ODF.