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Contact:

Marino Marcich, ODF Alliance, +1.202.251.2901, mmarcich@odfalliance.org

Beth Dozier, Rational PR, +1.202.429.1833, bethdozier@rationalpr.com

Germany Joins Growing Ranks of Governments Adopting ODF

Washington, D.C. December 3, 2008. The ODF Alliance welcomed the decision by the Federal Government of Germany to implement use of the OpenDocument Format (ODF) by federal agencies beginning in 2010.

“2008 will end on a high note, with Germany joining the growing ranks of governments that have adopted ODF,” said ODF Alliance managing director Marino Marcich. To date, 16 national and 8 provincial governments have now formally recommended or required the use of ODF by government agencies and with the public.¹

According to the plan, German federal agencies will be able to receive, read, send and edit ODF documents beginning no later than 2010. State Secretary Dr. Hans Bernhard Beus, federal government IT officer and chairman of the IT Council, described the decision regarding ODF as “a major step to increase competition among software vendors, promote IT security, and improve interoperability.”² Microsoft's Office Open XML (OOXML), which is the default-format for its Office 2007 productivity suite, remains under review. The action comes on the heels of the 5 July 2007 request by the German Bundestag “to strengthen competitiveness, the use of open document standards and open document exchange formats should be promoted.”

“By supporting open IT standards such as ODF at the government level, and with several dozen powerful word processing, spreadsheet, and presentation software products now supporting ODF, many of them available free of charge, the German federal government has demonstrated that it has a clear vision for promoting software choice, reducing costs, and ensuring access to public information,” said Marcich. “Longer term, this action, together with those of other governments, will promote interoperability and help put an end to the era of single-vendor lock-in.”

About the ODF Alliance:

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.

¹ See <http://www.odfalliance.org/resources/Adoptions-ODF-Aug2008.pdf>

² See <http://www.bmi.bund.de/Internet/Content/Nachrichten/Pressemitteilungen/2008/12/ODF.html>