

## **OFE COMMENT - Government ICT Strategy - Strategic Implementation Plan**

OpenForum Europe welcomes the publication of the UK Government's ICT Strategic Implementation Plan. It represents nothing short of a revolution in the way the government uses ICT. OFE encourages the emergence of different profitable business models that sustain product development in a collaborative environment, and it urges ICT suppliers both large and small, new and existing, to develop business models that will enable them to contract profitably with government in the new environment.

OFE has always believed that the lack of ICT strategic skills within Government itself has been a significant blocker, so the plan to refresh those skills and create new positions of responsibility in-house is very welcome. We also welcome the implementation plans around a level playing field for Open Source and the firm foundation being built on Open Standards. And in particular we welcome the plans regarding public procurement, including the creation of a toolkit for procurers on best practice for evaluating the use of open source solutions. We hope this will finally open up the public sector to competition from SMEs.

The UK Government faces a difficult path ahead. Not only will the technological and cultural implications of implementing cloud based solutions be challenging, but the effort needed to break with the status quo will be immense. In central government the dependence on a small number of systems integrators remains alarmingly high. We advise Government to use both the carrot and the stick to ensure that these previously favoured suppliers enthusiastically support the Government in its transition. No easy trick, but one which will be essential and probably remains the most critical part of Government plans. OFE and its members and partners will continue to support those efforts in any way possible.

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