

OFE UK PSG
18th Meeting
3rd February 2012, 1030 - 1330
Home Office, 2 Marsham Street, London SW1P 4 DF

Draft Minutes

PRESENT:	Sam Roddick (SR)	Deloitte
	Robin Pape (RP)	Home Office
	Linda Humphries (LH)	Cabinet Office
	Tariq Rashid (TR)	Home Office
	Graham Haslehurst (GH)	FCO
	Geoff Nott (GN)	Alfresco
	Chris Francis (CF)	IBM
	Simon Godfrey (SG)	Oracle
	Simon Phipps (SP)	OSI
	Phil Scott-Lewis (PS-L)	Redhat
	Roger Marshall (RM)	Socitm
	Graham Taylor (GMT)	OFE
	Basil Cousins (WBC)	OFE
APOLOGIES:	Paul Vagg	Cabinet Office
	Toby Ellenor (TE)	Government Procurement Service
	Amanda Brock (AB)	Canonical
	Stuart Mackintosh	OpusVL
	Maha Shaikh (MS)	Warwick University
	Alastair Mangham (AM)	LB Camden
	Andrew Katz (AK)	Moorcrofts
	Alan Bell (AB)	OFE

1) Welcome and Introductions

SR welcomed and introduced all. Apologies were noted.

2) Co-Chairmanship

It was noted that Qamar Yunus had changed his role in the Cabinet Office and would no longer be involved with the PSG. A Cabinet Office Co-Chairman would be appointed in due course.

3) Minutes of 17th Meeting held on 16th November 2011

Agreed

4) Open Standards – Next Steps

LH stated that the Cabinet Office: 'Open Standards: Open Opportunities Flexibility and efficiency in government IT' had been agreed and would be issued shortly. It would focus specifically on Software and would not apply to hardware nor telecoms.

5) OSS Toolkit Overview

RP introduced the progress review, saying that under Materials? and Mechanisms, a major advance education programme in the concepts of Open Standards and Open Source Software had been instituted, designed to get rid of unnecessary blockers and

myths. A major Spring Conference for 90 Senior Civil Servants on these subjects was planned.

5.1 Maturity Model

RP referred to the HMG Information Assurance Maturity Model and Assessment Framework published by Cabinet Office and CESG. He proposed to introduce an extra sixth level which would contain metrics on the percentage of procurement compliant with Government IT Policy.

GMT asked about processes to enforce such policy. RP noted that the situation had improved markedly over the past 18 months. The main control at present was the Project Approval Process. TR noted that departments were starting to refer their projects to HO.

5.2. Skills

SR asked about a the level of suitable skills to implement the programmes. TR replied that there was a great shortage of such skills, stressing the need to recognise the different level of skills and capabilities in various departments. A programme of internal seminars was being arranged in the short term supplemented by skills assessments and project surgeries. The longer term aim was to embed the necessary skills levels throughout the departments. RP noted that there was a great deal of activity in this area.

CF suggested that education programmes should include The Cloud.

5.3. Introduction to Open Source

No change proposed.

5.4. Options Catalogue

Update. Being Updated. Further entries sought.

5.5. Procurement Guidelines.

Considerable disappointment was expressed that the review had been set back. TE had proposed that a redraft would be ready for the 19th PSG on 29th March. OFE offer of support was re-affirmed. (? should OFE approach John Collington??)

5.6. ICT Commercial Principles

TR presented a strawman draft summary of the ICT Commercial Principles for the acquisition of software, whether Proprietary or Open Source. This will be an important set of practical principles to be observed by all departments in their procurements – all new contracts must align with the agreed principles:

Crown retains IPR for designs and software, to enable unencumbered reuse and availability to public.

It was strongly argued that this approach would not achieve its aim of enabling Government Departments to share software freely. The BBC had used this approach and found themselves locked in. In contrast, Ordnance Survey had opted for a model based on licencing which gave them a free hand.

Government ownership of IPR could create a major barrier to the adoption of Open Source.

If UKG decided to retain the IPR in its software applications, it would then incur a considerable overhead, ensuring that the applications are patent free, do not infringe copyright et al. IPR Ownership could severely restrict UKG's ability to do anything

incrementally with existing open source projects. In effect it forces the government to act as a software provider in order to ensure access to the IPR for third parties and other parts of the public sector.

It is more important that government identifies its objectives and uses appropriate licensing strategies - for example rights to re-use, copy, disseminate etc.

Competitive tension to be sustained beyond point of purchase. All IT investment will be subject to **multi-vendor competition**, even within long term contracts.

There must be **no counter incentives** to lower prices/better value.

IT change **risk be unbundled and right-sized** to optimise value from market. **Impact** of risk is always with HMG.

Departments must undertake **assurance** of supplier **commercial** and **technical** activity for value.

(It has been subsequently that the PSG should run a separate session on the proposed ICT Commercial Principles).

UKG needs to move away from brand and product based to generic procurement.

5.7. Prior Information Notice for an Application Development.

A Delivery and Support Services Framework was circulated by Sarah Hardy with a request that it should be distributed to the Open Source Community.

ACTION: WBC

5.8. Security

The 1 Pager prepared by CESG underling the fact that OSS is no more or less vulnerable than Proprietary is now on the Cabinet Office Website.

5.9. LSO/TCO Study Re-launch

This document has now been mounted on the Cabinet Office
www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/cio/shared_services/toolkit.aspx

It was agreed that every effort should be made to publicise this study.

ACTION: WBC/MS

5) Case Study: UK Border Agency international data sharing project.

TR described the various barriers to the development of this project using an open source solution which would save 86% of the cost. The projected supplier unwilling to implement an OSS solution; Various myths also raised barriers, particularly on security. These objections had been overcome. The final barrier lay in the presumption that a major Government application would merit the more expensive proprietary solution.

7) Presentations

7.1 Reforming the Open Source Initiative (OSI)

Simon Phipps is a Director of the Open Source Initiative, a California non-profit with a global mission to advocate for and enable the adoption of open source software and methods.

- OSI has been an effective vehicle for popularising open source since its inception

in 1998;

- Now that open source is so widespread, OSI has decided to modernise;
- It is becoming a member organisation, opening to all stakeholders in a phased approach;
- The first phase is the announcement of 12 key non-profit Affiliates who will guide further change. They include Mozilla, Eclipse, Creative Commons and Apache.
- Government bodies are invited to help design membership processes that allow government stakeholders to engage at OSI.

Slides attached (hybrid PDF).

7.2 Open Source in Government

GH presented a summary of his findings in the research that he had undertaken across UK Government Departments in a paper entitled 'If Open Source is free; why isn't commercial desktop adoption of it greater?'

The principal conclusion was that employees need to be appropriately educated and must be coherent to get a timely and fit for purpose business outcome

It was agreed that GH be invited to submit his paper to the Openforum Academy. WBC to arrange.

6) Government Seminar

Not discussed

7) Government Open Solutions Advisory Forum/Panel

No report

8) SIF and OSIG – meetings programme.

GMT noted that it was the application suppliers that had stopped Bristol City from exploiting Open Source to the full. RP noted that the Government needs to develop an open platform. TR was working on a matrix which would facilitate open source and proprietary components to interwork. Exit points would be built so that various components could be substituted at contract refresh points. The Government has the power to create markets and can lay down what it needs.

PS-L noted that one key barrier in the normal SI business model lay is their wish to include the licencing revenue gained from proprietary software in their turnover figures even though the SI s generally gained minimal profit from this.

Transparency and interoperability remained key.

SG noted that it was early days yet. The legal flow up and down of obligations needed to be explored.

TR described how the SI s were being asked to sign up to a series of principles supporting the Government's initiatives on Open Standards and Open Source. Considerable resistance was being met. The next SIF forum would be held on 5th March. TR agreed to invite RJB.

RP noted that various internal meetings were being arranged for the members of OSIG.

9) **Summary and Conclusions - Next Steps**

SR noted that the Government creates markets through its procurement power. Technology Neutrality was important in this context. Value should be placed on flexibility.

He underlined that members of the PSG are willing to contribute their support and advice in confidence on key issues such as the Procurement Guidelines. It was hoped that a revised draft of these Guidelines could be ready well before the next PSG meeting on 29th March 2102

He thanked RP and TR for hosting the meeting in HO HQ.

10) **19th Meeting** – Thursday 29th March 2012, 1300 – 1700, Home Office

Basil Cousins
Secretary