Open Source Observatory Policy Factsheet
Belgium

OSOR

1 General Information

Belgium's public sector adoption of open source software is a result of collaboration of the national government, the governments of the three regions, the governments of the language communities, and local municipalities. At the federal level, the Belgian Federal Public Service Policy and Support (FPS BOSA) is the primary entity actively contributing to open source software solutions on platforms like GitHub. Examples of their contributions include OpenFed (a customised distribution of Drupal) and the eID middleware. Typically, Belgium's approach to open source leans towards practical implementation rather than formal policy.

2 Actors

POLICY MAKERS
Within the Belgian Federal Public Service Policy and Support (FPS BOSA), the Directorate-General for Simplification and Digitalisation (DG SD) is responsible for the implementation of the federal digital agenda. They published the source code of the Belgian e-ID Middleware and Accessibility check solution that were both developed in-house.

STRATEGIC PLAYER
iMio (La mutualisation informatique au service des pouvoirs locaux), is an IT sharing body offering services to local authorities. It was created as a result of the Minister of Local Authorities' desire to establish a unique structure to promote and coordinate the pooling of organisational solutions, IT products and IT services for the local authorities of Wallonia. It is the largest provider of open source solutions to local administrations in Belgium.

3 Policy and Legal Framework

The Political Declaration of Wallonia 2019-2024
It aims to promote the use of open standards and OSS, both of which are deemed as essential tools to ensure accessibility to ICT while simultaneously guaranteeing the freedom of individual users. For this reason, Walloon public administrations intend to adopt OSS solutions.

The Policy Statement of the Wallonia-Brussels Federation 2019-2024
Features a dedicated chapter on digitalisation. It promotes open standards, OSS, and open data as indispensable tools within public administrations.

2019

4 Open Source Software Initiatives

FOSDEM, 2000
A yearly event, the FOSDEM conference is a non-commercial, volunteer-organised European event centred on free and open-source software development. An institution in the European open source community, it gathers thousands of participants to discuss various thematics related to open source. The event features many talks around policy and the public sector use of open source.

OSS in Walloon municipalities, 2019
In 2017, 75% of municipalities in the Walloon Region were using OSS and open source services. Today, 290 cities, towns, villages, and other public administrations in the region are using eight open source-based solutions that are managed and maintained by iMio.

Orthanc, 2012
Orthanc is an award-winning Belgian lightweight DICOM server for healthcare and medical research. Development of the server began in 2012 at the University Hospital of Liège. It has since been awarded with the Digital Public Good Alliance label. Work to integrate Orthanc into GNU Health began in 2019 and was completed in July 2023.

BOSA Accessibility Check and eID Middleware 2006 and 2019
BOSA has developed a JavaScript's application that checks web pages and detects non-adherence with a defined presentation or accessibility standard. It is a fork originating from HTML Sniffer. It also created the middleware of the state-issued electronic identity cards.