Japan

OSOR

1 General Information

Japan has a long history of using and supporting open source software (OSS). Both the Japanese government and the private sector collaborated in the development and implementation of OSS in Japanese society in the early 2000s. However, this participation has decreased since then and has been replaced by increased efforts in digital infrastructure standardisation and software development. The Japanese government does not actively promote OSS in the public sector at the national level but the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) is active on the issue of OSS cybersecurity.

2 Actors

POLICY MAKERS

Digital Agency: Japan established its Digital Agency in 2021 to spearhead the development of public and private digital infrastructure. Its establishment was prompted by the imperative need for a broader digital transformation highlighted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

STRATEGIC PLAYER

Code For Japan: Established in 2013, Code for Japan promotes the use of open source in Japan's public sector as a tool for citizens to be engaged in social and democratic changes. It is engaged in various projects related to open source and the public sector at national and local level. Code for Japan has an extensive network of more than 90 local and sectoral organisations which span the entirety of Japan.

3 Policy and Legal Framework

METI's OSS security initiative (2019)

METI established a Task Force for Evaluating Software Management Methods with the aim of improving cybersecurity. This Task Force explores how to further secure the software supply chain. It also introduced a draft reference for a guidebook on software bill of material.

Priority Plans for Realising a Digital Society (2022)

Led by the Digital Agency, this plan structures the policy efforts for the digitalisation of Japan. While the plan doesn't specifically focus on open source solutions, it sets up the main principles and objectives of the digitalisation program of Japan. Among these principles are openness and transparency.

2019 ——— 2022

4 Open Source Software Initiatives

Tokyo Metropolitan Government Open Source Software Release Guidelines

Following the March 2021 "Future Tokyo" strategy for the Tokyo Metropolitan Government, the city decided to actively participate in the development and use of open source software after the collaboration on Stopcovid19.

IT-DG OSS Meeting & Northeast Asia OSS Promotion Forum

Established to promote active collaboration on development of OSS initiatives in Northeast Asia, the Forum gathers initiatives and governments from Japan, China, and South Korea. During the first edition of this forum, the countries agreed to each set up working groups, which have since produced several projects and standards to harmonise development of OSS among the three countries.

Geospatial Information Authority of Japan (GSI)

GSI rebuilt the Electronic National Land Web System using the Open Source Geospatial Foundation software tools as the core of its system. GSI has released various components, scripts, and data related to their work to the public. This led to their collaboration with the United Nations Open GIS on projects related to the development of more open geospatial information tools.

OSS Bird's-eye View

Bird's-eye View was created to provide an overview of the existing open source solutions used in Japan. It has been updated annually since 2014 and acts as a guide to new OSS users when introducing them to their IT systems. This document was reused by METI in its 2021 report on "Case studies on OSS utilization and management methods for ensuring security"