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Open Source Software Country Intelligence Report

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ISA²

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CYPRUS

Executive summary

While Cyprus does not have an appointed government entity for the development and supervision of open source software (OSS), the KIOS Research and Innovation Center of Excellence (KIOS CoE)[1], part of the University of Cyprus, has emerged as a key player with regards to the promotion of OSS in Cyprus. During the last five years, the Center has worked on notable OSS initiatives in conjunction with the Cypriot public sector, particularly with regards to disaster management.

There exists no formalised policy or legal framework to encourage the uptake of OSS solutions in public administrations throughout Cyprus. To illustrate, the current Digital Strategy for Cyprus[2], the eGovernment Strategy[3], the Memorandum of Understanding in the Area of eGovernment between the Republic of Cyprus and Estonia[4], and the Public Administration Reform[5] make no explicit reference to the use of OSS in Cypriot public administrations.

Given the country's strong background in the provision of user-centric and interoperable eGovernment services, there is a strong potential to incorporate the promotion and use of OSS within Cypriot public administrations.

Actors

This section presents the policy makers who are active in digitalisation efforts and influence the status of open source in public sector, as well as the main strategic players that work together with the government at all levels to raise awareness on OSS. In Cyprus, there is no governmental body that is specifically responsible for OSS policies.

Policy makers

- While there are currently no references to the use or promotion of OSS solutions in the Cypriot public sector, a relevant a law was passed in February 2020 to launch the Deputy Ministry of Research, Innovation and Digital Policy.[6] The Deputy Ministry works to establish a modern, functional and citizen-friendly state, with a dynamic digital economy and strong eGovernment capabilities designed with user-centricity in mind.[7]

[1] https://www.kios.ucy.ac.cy/index.php
[2] http://www.mcw.gov.cy/mcw/dec/digital_cyprus/ict.nsf/ict_02_gr/ict_02_gr?opendocument
[3] https://joinup.ec.europa.eu/sites/default/files/inline-files/Digital_Government_Factsheets_Cyprus_2019_0.pdf
[4] https://www.valitsus.ee/sites/default/files/news-related-files/mou_est-cyprus.pdf
[5] http://www.reform.gov.cy/en/
[6] http://www.dmrid.gov.cy/dmrid/research.nsf/home/home?OpenForm
[7] http://www.dmrid.gov.cy/dmrid/research.nsf/mission_el/mission_el?OpenDocument

- The Department of Information Technology Services (DITS)[8] was the governmental body responsible for the promotion and implementation of eGovernment and IT within the public sector. The department worked to plan, develop, implement, manage, and maintain ICT systems that help to modernise Cypriot public administrations. Since March 2020, the responsibilities of DITS were transferred to the Deputy Ministry of Research, Innovation and Digital Policy.

Strategic players

- Established in 2008, the KIOS Research and Innovation Center of Excellence (KIOS CoE) operates within the University of Cyprus as a funding recipient of the EU Horizon 2020 Programme.[9] KIOS CoE is the largest research and innovation centre in Cyprus addressing ICT and the extent of its governmental collaboration is wide. A key aspect of their work involves promoting a comprehensive framework for open knowledge to support open data and open access. While not explicitly mentioned among their key capabilities[10], KIOS CoE has participated in several projects and events supporting the use of open source software in the public sector since its inception.

- The Hellas Cyprus – Cypriot Free Software Community[11] is a group of volunteers that aim to promote free and open source software in Cyprus, they research this subject matter with other bodies and legal entities and raise awareness of OSS in public and private sector bodies. In March 2020, the Community began campaigning for the implementation of a pilot training platform based on OSS solutions to meet the needs of Cypriot schools with regards to distance learning.[12]

Policy and legal framework

This section summarises the main open source software related policies and legal acts of the last ten years, including the first known milestone in this domain. It must be noted, however, that there appears to be no policy or legal framework for OSS policies in Cyprus.

- With regards to specific strategies, policy frameworks and legal acts, there is no formalised or specific policy in place to encourage the uptake of OSS adoption in Cypriot public administrations. To illustrate, the current Digital Strategy for Cyprus[13], the eGovernment

[8] https://www.mof.gov.cy/mof/dits/dits.nsf/page02_en/page02_en?OpenDocument
[9] https://www.kios.ucy.ac.cy/index.php
[10] https://www.kios.ucy.ac.cy/index.php/about-us/kios-at-glance.html
[11] https://ellak.org.cy/%ce%ba%ce%bf%ce%b9%ce%bd%cf%8c%cf%84%ce%b7%cf%84%ce%b1/
[12] https://ellak.org.cy/2020/03/20/%cf%80%cf%81%cf%8c%cf%84%ce%b1%cf%83%ce%b7-%ce%b3%ce%b9%ce%b1-%cf%85%ce%bb%ce%bf%cf%80%ce%bf%ce%af%ce%b7%cf%83%ce%b7-%cf%80%ce%bb%ce%b1%cf%84%cf%86%cf%8c%cf%81%ce%bc%ce%b1%cf%82-%cf%84%ce%b7%ce%bb/
[13] http://www.mcw.gov.cy/mcw/dec/digital_cyprus/ict.nsf/ict_02_gr/ict_02_gr?opendocument

Strategy[14], the Memorandum of Understanding in the Area of eGovernment between the Republic of Cyprus and Estonia[15], and the Public Administration Reform[16] make no explicit reference to the use of OSS in Cypriot public administrations.

Open source software initiatives

This section presents an overview of the main open source software related initiatives in Cyprus. The list is presented in a chronological order, starting with the most recent initiative.

- SWIFTERS, 2017[17]: SWIFTERS leverages drone swarms in order to study, design, develop and test drone cooperation strategies that can help assist civil protection operations, particularly with regards to disaster management. The project was developed by KIOS CoE, the Centre for Security Studies of the Ministry of Interior, and the Cyprus Civil Defence.[18] The software package has been released under an open source licence. The project received funding from the European Union Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection department (ECHO).[19]
- ProximAid, 2015[20]: ProximAid is an OSS smartphone application designed to operate without a connection to a network infrastructure, while still enabling communication between a network of mobile phones. ProximAid can serve as a vital communication tool in areas where communications infrastructure is affected by natural disasters such as earthquakes, floods, tsunamis, fires, or man-made disasters. The application was developed by KIOS CoE.
- University of Cyprus Library, 2012[21]: Since 2012, the University of Cyprus Library has supported OSS solutions, even developing its own open source mirror server and making it fully available to the public.[22]

[14] https://joinup.ec.europa.eu/sites/default/files/inline-files/Digital_Government_Factsheets_Cyprus_2019_0.pdf
[15] https://www.valitsus.ee/sites/default/files/news-related-files/mou_est-cyprus.pdf
[16] http://www.reform.gov.cy/en/
[17] https://www.kios.ucy.ac.cy/research/research-projects/active/458-emergency-response-technology-for-uav-swarms-swifters-safe-and-rapid-evacuation-facilitated-by-uav-swarms.html
[18] https://www.kios.ucy.ac.cy/swifters/project/
[19] https://www.kios.ucy.ac.cy/research/research-projects/active/458-emergency-response-technology-for-uav-swarms-swifters-safe-and-rapid-evacuation-facilitated-by-uav-swarms.html
[20] https://www.kios.ucy.ac.cy/news-a-events/latest-news/311-award-winning-technology-open-source-technology-proximaid-available-for-download.html
[21] http://library.ucy.ac.cy/en/services/open-source-software
[22] https://mirror.library.ucy.ac.cy/

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