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Unit.D2 (Interoperability Unit)

Open Source Software Country Intelligence Report

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ITALY

Executive Summary

The Ministry of Technological Innovation and Digitalisation¹ and the Agency for Digital Italy (AgID)² are the main governmental actors in charge of coordinating, promoting and drafting open source software (OSS) policies in Italy. In 2017, Developers Italia³ was created as a project of AgID in collaboration with the Digital Transformation Team.⁴ Today, the Ministry of Technological Innovation and Digitalisation entrusts the Digital Transformation Department to carry out all open source activities that were previously maintained by the Digital Transformation Team.⁵ This community is dedicated to the development of OSS in support of the delivery of digital public services in Italy.

AgID has made amendments to the Code for Digital Administration (CAD) - the law governing the reuse of open standards and prioritisation of the use of OSS solutions in Italy. To facilitate the legal application of the CAD, technical guidelines for software acquisition in the Italian public administration and the reuse of software were published in 2019.⁶ AgID has also contributed to the development of a dedicated community working on OSS solutions for the sharing and reuse of solutions. While various initiatives in favour of OSS solutions have been implemented at the sub-national level in recent years, very few are implemented at the national level.

Actors

This section presents the key governmental bodies that are responsible for setting OSS policies and the main strategic players that work together with the government at all levels to raise awareness on OSS.

Policy makers

- The Ministry of Technological Innovation and Digitalisation⁷ works to support the President of the Council of Ministers in the domain of public administration innovation. Citizens are at the fore of innovation projects in order to ensure that they receive the best digital services. The projects are based on three tools: cooperation, technology, and software and standards which include OSS, design system and interoperability standards. The Ministry has entrusted the Digital Transformation Department with this work ever since the tenure of the Digital

¹ <https://innovazione.gov.it/it/progetti/developers-italia/>

² <https://rio.jrc.ec.europa.eu/en/organisations/digital-italy-agency-agiid>

³ <https://developers.italia.it/>

⁴ The Digital Transformation Team ceased to exist on 31 December 2019.

⁵ <https://teamdigitale.governo.it/en/>

⁶ <https://docs.italia.it/italia/developers-italia/gl-acquisition-and-reuse-software-for-pa-docs/en/stabile/index.html>

⁷ <https://innovazione.gov.it/>

Transformation Team came to an end. One core project of the Department is the Developers Italia website⁸, a community dedicated to the development of OSS solutions for Italian public services.

- The Agency for Digital Italy (AgID)⁹ guarantees the achievement of the Italian digital agenda objectives. It also contributes to the promotion of ICT and encourages public administrations to transition from using proprietary software to using OSS solutions and open source formats.

Strategic players

- There are various open source competency centres throughout Italy. Their aim is to promote the use of OSS both in their own region and nationwide, and provide resources that support the acquisition, development and reuse of informatic resources for public administrations. Prominent examples of such competency centres include the Competency Centre for Reuse and Open Source (CCROS)¹⁰, LibreItalia¹¹, the PDP Free Software User Group¹², and the Linux User Group Bolzano-Bozen-Bulsan (LUGBZ)¹³.

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. The list is presented in a chronological order, starting from the most recent milestone.

- In May 2019, the guidelines on the acquisition and reuse of software in public administrations were published by the AgID.¹⁴ These comprehensive guidelines provide instructions on the reuse of OSS solutions and standards, including how to correctly select and evaluate solutions based on individual needs. Key requirements outlined in these new guidelines include the following:
 - Public administrations will have to carry out a comparative assessment which will favour OSS solutions (including those which have been reused by other administrations) prior to acquiring new software.
 - The development of new software and the purchase of proprietary software licenses must be justified.

⁸ <https://developers.italia.it/>

⁹ <https://www.agid.gov.it/>

¹⁰ <https://www.agid.gov.it/it/design-servizi/riuso-open-source/centro-competenza-riuso-open-source>

¹¹ <https://www.libreitalia.org/>

¹² <https://pdp.linux.it/chi-siamo/>

¹³ <https://www.lugbz.org/>

¹⁴ <https://docs.italia.it/italia/developers-italia/lg-acquisizione-e-riuso-software-per-pa-docs/it/bozza/>

- The relevant source code should be made available in full, complete with relevant documentation, and released in a public repository under an open licence, free of charge for other public administrations or legal entities that intend to adapt it to their own requirements.

In order to effectively apply the guidelines, a set of Technical Attachments¹⁵ to the guidelines has been developed. These Attachments include the description of simple actions that software providers must perform to fulfil the release obligation of the administrations commissioning the request for OSS solutions. Within the new legislative framework, reuse is directly linked to open source: it is no longer possible to reuse a software solution if it does not have a free and open source license attached.

- The Triennial Informatic Plan for Public Administration of 2017-2019¹⁶ has prioritised favouring the widespread adoption of OSS and facilitating the creation of communities of applications and software components that can be reused by public administrations.
- Since 2013, the Code of Digital Administration (*Codice Amministrazione Digitale*)¹⁷ makes it mandatory for Italy's public administrations to use free and OSS solutions, as stipulated in Article 68. In particular, this Article stipulates that public administrations must acquire computer programs (or parts thereof) through the following solutions available on the market: a) developing a solution internally; b) reusing a solution developed internally; c) using/reusing a software covered by a free and open source license; d) obtaining a proprietary license; e) a combination of the above. The acquisition of software should be accompanied by a technical and economic assessment.
- The first policy for the use of OSS in Italy was developed in 2002 when the Government published guidelines for the development of Information Society.¹⁸ The document lists the benefits of the use of OSS solutions, including a reduction of costs, and the possibility to implement OSS on web services, operating systems and productivity tools. Public administrations are thought of as a catalyst for the widespread use of OSS solutions because they can help small projects and platforms gain exposure to a critical mass.

¹⁵ <https://docs.italia.it/italia/developers-italia/lq-acquisizione-e-riuso-software-per-pa-docs/it/bozza/>

¹⁶ <https://docs.italia.it/italia/piano-triennale-ict/pianotriennale-ict-doc-en/en/stabile/>

¹⁷ <https://www.agid.gov.it/it/agenzia/strategia-quadro-normativo/codice-amministrazione-digitale>

¹⁸ <http://www.interlex.it/testi/pdf/lineeguida.pdf>

Open source software initiatives

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

- **Developers Italia, 2017¹⁹:** Launched in 2017, Developers Italia is a website managed by the AgID. The use of Developers Italia is obligatory for public administrations, as highlighted in the guidelines on the acquisition and reuse of software for public administrations.²⁰ The Developers Italia website hosts a catalogue of OSS that Italian public administrations can access and use. Administrators can look for solutions, check the vitality of projects, explore the source code, and get in contact with the community working with the software solution.
- **Trento's Protocol of Understanding, 2017²¹:** In 2017, the LibreItalia Association²² and the Provincial Institute for Educational Research and Experimentation (*Istituto Provinciale di Ricerca e Sperimentazione Educativa*, IPRASE) signed a Protocol of Understanding in the province of Trento. The aim of the collaboration is to support IPRASE in their pursuits of distributing free software and open formats.
- **LibreDifesa, 2015²³:** In 2015, the Ministry of Defence of Italy decided to switch to LibreOffice in a project known as *LibreDifesa*. They plan to migrate a total of 100,000 PCs to OSS solutions in 2020, but the final date depends on the end of their proprietary licences with Microsoft Office. The migration has been a smooth process thus far thanks to the management skills and pro-activity of the project leaders in responding to users' questions and needs.
- **Smart City Project in Emilia Romagna, 2012²⁴:** This project is focussed on developing sustainable technological innovation in Emilia Romagna, with many elements of the project running on OSS solutions. One key example is Smart Catcher²⁵, a location-tracking application built for smartphones using the open source Android system. Users of this application can locate various facilities in the city such as gas stations, hospitals and restaurants.
- **Memorandum of Understanding between the Province of Pisa, the Tuscany Region, the University of Pisa, and the Technological Centre of Navacchio, 2008²⁶:** This Memorandum of Understanding was signed in 2008, with the aim of promoting free software solutions and products in schools, universities and businesses.

¹⁹ <https://developers.italia.it/>

²⁰ <https://docs.italia.it/italia/developers-italia/lq-acquisizione-e-riuso-software-per-pa-docs/it/bozza/>

²¹ <https://www.libreitalia.org/libreitalia-per-la-scuola-sottoscritto-accordo-con-iprase-trento/>

²² <https://www.libreitalia.org/chi-siamo/>

²³ <https://www.zdnet.com/article/from-microsoft-to-libreoffice-how-italys-military-is-starting-its-march-to-open-source/>

²⁴ <http://smartinnovation.forumpa.it/story/69613/la-regione-emilia-romagna-smart-city-exhibition>

²⁵ <https://joinup.ec.europa.eu/collection/open-source-observatory-osor/news/italys-emilia-romagna-smart>

²⁶ <http://www.provincia.pisa.it/it/provincia/4538/Protocollo-sull-Open-Source.html>

- EcoGIS, 2007²⁷: Approximately 100 municipalities in Italy are using EcoGIS, a tool designed to help citizens and administrations reduce their carbon footprints. The open source tool helps to map emissions data, test interventions, and monitor changes in energy consumption. The tool was developed with funding obtained from the European Fund for Regional Management 2007-2013.
- OSS in sub-national and local entities: Many regions and cities in Italy have been making the switch from proprietary software to OSS solutions. Key contributors include the city of Trento (since 2012)²⁸, the region of Apulia (since 2011)²⁹, and Umbria (since 2007).³⁰ Various cities and regions have migrated to LibreOffice and/or the use of open document formats, including Umbria (since 2014)³¹, Bari (since 2015)³², Savona (since 2007)³³, Modena³⁴, and San Giorgio (since 2008).³⁵

²⁷ <http://www.ecogis.info/>

²⁸ <https://www.forumpa.it/pa-digitale/software-libero-e-open-source-a-trento-e-legge/>

²⁹ <https://www.forumpa.it/pa-digitale/in-puglia-lopen-source-e-legge/>

³⁰ <https://www.punto-informatico.it/umbria-lopen-source-legge/>

³¹ <https://itsfoss.com/italian-cities-switch-libreoffice/>

³² <https://conference.libreoffice.org/assets/Conference/Aarhus/Slides/MarinaLatini.pdf>

³³ <https://joinup.ec.europa.eu/collection/open-source-observatory-osor/news/it-savona-province-switch>

³⁴ https://urbanistica.comune.modena.it/info/PDFA/LibreOffice/index_LibreOffice.html

³⁵ <https://joinup.ec.europa.eu/collection/open-source-observatory-osor/news/it-city-san-giorgio-begin>

