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Open Source Software Country Intelligence Report

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ISA²

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SWEDEN

Executive Summary

In Sweden, civic society and municipalities play a leading role in developing and mandating the use of open source software (OSS) solutions. Established in 2018, the main actor at the central governmental level working to regulate software ownership and set the conditions for sharing OSS solutions is the Agency for Digital Government (DIGG). Serving as a hub for the digitalisation of the public sector, it is hoped that the use of OSS solutions will help DIGG achieve its goal of transparent governance that benefits citizens. The existence of such a central governmental body is promising for the future development of OSS policies and legislation.

At the sub-national level, numerous Swedish municipalities have developed user-friendly open source platforms on their websites with the aim of simplifying the use of eServices. The initiative is also supported by the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions. The scale and variety of these initiatives and projects at the local and municipal level signal a gradual willingness among citizens and government staff to move away from proprietary software towards OSS solutions in public administrations.

At present, Sweden has not adopted any legislation on the use of OSS. However, two policy documents were drafted on the topic of using OSS solutions and open IT standards in 2010 and 2016 respectively. Furthermore, in 2019, a framework agreement was signed on the procurement of OSS solutions throughout the public sector across the whole country.

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 Agency for Digital Government (*Myndigheten för digital förvaltning* (DIGG))[1] was founded in September 2018. Its OSS development policy aims to standardise and regulate software ownership and to set the conditions for sharing OSS solutions. In December 2019, the Swedish Government assigned a project to DIGG and eight other authorities with the aim of establishing a common digital infrastructure for the exchange of information in the Swedish public sector. The project assignment states that building blocks included within the national infrastructure

[1] https://www.digg.se/about-us

should build on open standards and OSS solutions. Newly developed building blocks should be published as open source, where possible.[2]

- The Swedish Government Agency for Innovation Systems (*Vinnova*)[3] invests in the development of public e-Services and encourages public agencies and software vendors to use OSS solutions and open standards.[4]

- The Swedish National Procurement Services (*Kammarkollegiet*) is the purchasing body for the country's public sector. It advocates in favour of a new approach in the acquisition of software for information and communications technology services by promoting the use of open standards and OSS in procurement.

- The Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (*Sveriges Kommuner och Regioner*)[5] represents all 290 Swedish municipalities and all regional governments. It is active in developing and deploying open source-based solutions for local administrations.[6]

- *Kivos* and *Open Jämtland* are two regional organisations coordinating in the areas of interoperability and open standards issues for their respective municipalities. Both organisations encourage public agencies and software vendors to use OSS solutions and open standards, while enabling the implementation of open source-based solutions in local government.[7]

Strategic players

- The Swedish Agency for Public Management (*Statskontoret*)[8] conducts studies and evaluations at the request of the Government. It aims to modernise public administration using IT and studies the potential use of free and OSS solutions.

Policy and legal framework

This section recapitulates the main OSS 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.

- DIGG participated in the creation of the public sector digitalisation hub, which adopted a Software Development Policy in 2019.[9] This policy decision states that software that is

[2] https://www.regeringen.se/regeringsuppdrag/2019/12/uppdrag-att-etablera-en-forvaltningsgemensam-digital-infrastruktur-for-informationsutbyte/
[3] https://www.vinnova.se/en/
[4] https://joinup.ec.europa.eu/collection/open-source-observatory-osor/document/swedish-public-open-source-movement-working-bottom
[5] https://skl.se/
[6] https://sverigesradio.se/sida/artikel.aspx?programid=83&artikel=766567
[7] https://joinup.ec.europa.eu/collection/open-source-observatory-osor/document/swedish-public-open-source-movement-working-bottom
[8] http://www.statskontoret.se/
[9] https://www.digg.se/nyheter--publikationer/nyheter/digg-tar-policybeslut-kring-oppen-kallkod

developed and/or procured for the authority's activities should predominantly be published as an open source code.

- The Swedish National Procurement Services[10] published a report on open IT-standards in 2016[11]. This research found that the use of OSS software and related services by public authorities is restricted to specific Swedish framework agreements with mandatory requirements for certain open IT-standards.

- In 2010, Sweden signed a framework agreement for the procurement of OSS at the national level (*Upphandling Öppna programvaror 2010*).[12] The central government, the public education sector, twenty county councils, and 225 municipalities signed the agreement.

- In 2003 and 2005, the Swedish Agency for Public Management published two studies on OSS.[13] The 2003 document made general and specific recommendations to the State Office on the use of OSS. These included the provision of cost-effective alternatives (both proprietary and OSS), the promotion of open standards, and the creation of a software directory with information about OSS. In 2005, the Agency recommended that other agencies and municipal administrations "draw up detailed action plans to gain practical experience of open source software".

Open source software initiatives

This section presents an overview of the main OSS related initiatives in Sweden. The list is presented in a chronological order, starting from the most recent initiative.

- KOHA library system, 2016[14]: In 2016, various libraries across Sweden started developing features for KOHA, an open source library management system, in order to meet the needs of Sweden's public libraries.

- *Försäkringskassan* (the Social Insurance Office), 2016[15]: In 2016, the Social Insurance Office switched from a licence-based operating system to open source Linux, mainly for financial reasons.[16] Open source experts were hired and training sessions were provided to current

[10] http://avropa.se/
[11] https://www.avropa.se/globalassets/dokument/open-it-standards.pdf?_t_id=1B2M2Y8AsgTpgAmY7PhCfg%3d%3d&_t_q=open+source&_t_tags=language%3asv%2csiteid%3a95d515a5-23ca-47bf-87a9-07b10d8ac360&_t_ip=165.225.81.20&_t_hit.id=Avropa_Core_Models_Media_GenericMedia/_ff07d720-f793-44b0-994d-27e79b28f6bd&_t_hit.pos=10
[12] https://www.avropa.se/contentassets/70ba13dc311f40228ee98f67986a5015/redpill-linpro-ab-7067-10.pdf
[13] https://people.dsv.su.se/~sveno/200308.pdf
[14] https://koha.se/koha-bibliotek-i-sverige/
[15] https://www.forsakringskassan.se/
[16] https://www.voister.se/artikel/2016/10/forsakringskassan-sankte-it-kostnaderna-med-29-miljoner/

employees in order to ease the transition to the new system. The office has also shared guidelines on open source code and OSS on their GitHub page.[17]

- Open ePlatform, 2016: Various Swedish municipalities such as Härnösand, Sundsvall, Timrå, Kramfors, and Örnsköldsvik began developing and using Open ePlatform in 2016.[18,19] The platform is built using OSS on a user-friendly interface and it aims to simplify the use of eServices for citizens. The initiative is supported by the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (*Sveriges Kommuner och Regioner*)[20].

- Helsingborg City, 2015[21]: The city maintains an active GitHub account with various repositories of web and app projects. Citizens can help maintain and contribute to the account in order to keep it up to date. The city also has an open data portal, Oppna Helsingborg[22].

- Swedish municipality of Alingsås, 2014[23]: The municipality of Alingsås has turned to open source solutions by introducing 'Mule', an enterprise service BUS framework in 2014. The municipality is also making use of Apache Solr, an open source search platform.

- IT Solutions for Citizens Project, 2008[24]: With support from the Gender Equality Ministry and Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SALAR), Sweden's municipalities and county councils implemented various projects to enhance citizens' government participation. Three such projects were based on OSS solutions; the Dialogue Web portal[25], the Chat web-based dialogue tool[26], and the Budget Simulator[27]. The project operated from 2008 to 2013.

[17] https://github.com/Forsakringskassan
[18] https://www.voister.se/artikel/2016/10/oppen-kallkod-lyfter-kommuner/
[19] https://utveckling.sundsvall.se/oppna-losningar/open-eplatform/
[20] https://skl.se/
[21] https://github.com/helsingborg-stad
[22] https://oppna.helsingborg.se/
[23] https://joinup.ec.europa.eu/collection/open-source-observatory-osor/news/still-more-open-source-swe
[24] https://skl.se/tjanster/englishpages/activities/dialoguewithcitizens/itsolutionsforcitizensdialogues.1424.html
[25] http://www.dialogguiden.se/
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[27] http://www.dosf.se/blogs/blog/tag/Budgetsimulatorn