



Open Source Observatory Policy Factsheet

Germany

OSOR

1 General Information

Germany has developed a comprehensive open source policy at federal level. Where open source initiatives were previously mainly placed at the local level, the federal government coalition formed in 2021, designed a comprehensive digital strategy that emphasises the importance of open source. The establishment of the Centre for Digital Sovereignty of Public Administration (ZenDiS) in 2022 was motivated by the perceived need for increased digital sovereignty.

2 Actors

POLICY MAKERS

The Centre for Digital Sovereignty of Public Administration (ZenDiS) founded in 2022 will centrally manage and steer open source developments in Germany. The centre aims to enhance the digital sovereignty of German public administration in key areas by providing secure, stable, and scalable open source software solutions and improving awareness of open-source software.

STRATEGIC PLAYER

The Open Source Business Alliance e.V. (OSB Alliance) is a not-for-profit business association that represents more than 200 companies from the open source industry, and includes research institutions and public administrations in its community. The OSB Alliance organises and promotes events about open source and participates in policy discussions on the topic of OSS nationally and on the European level.

3 Policy and Legal Framework

Germany's Digital Strategy for 2025 (2022)

The document strongly focuses on digital sovereignty which is to be achieved in part through the systematic use of open source. While the strategy doesn't set any binding measures towards achieving this objective, it lists measurable indicators such as the support given to the Sovereign Tech Fund.

German government cloud strategy (2022)

This policy document is part of the strategy adopted to strengthen digital sovereignty of public administration. The goal is to create of common standards and open interfaces for cloud solutions in public administration in order to establish an interoperable and modular federal cloud infrastructure.



4 Open Source Software Initiatives

ZenDiS's "Sovereign Workplace"

Interoperable open source software based workplace developed for the public sector, the "Sovereign Workplace" project started in mid-2022. It aims at offering a secure alternative to proprietary software, accessible through a browser-based interface independent of the operating system.

Open CoDE

A publicly accessible code repository and open-source platform launched in June 2022, Open CoDE serves as a collaborative space for public administration to share source code. The platform aims to enhance visibility, promote cooperation, and ensure reusability of open-source solutions in the public sector.

Sovereign Tech Fund

Incubated by Sprin-D, the agency for Breakthrough Innovations, funded by the Federal Ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate Action, this project aims at funding open digital infrastructure. It supports maintenance and development of various open source projects.

Schleswig-Holstein open source strategy, 2012-2023

The German state of Schleswig-Holstein has been increasing its use of free and open source since 2012. In collaboration with Dataport, the state started using GNU/Linux for its administration's operating systems. Since then, it has participated in the Open Government Partnership, which entailed creating an Open Data platform, and a source code repository.