Procurement Policy Note – Open Standards when specifying IT requirements

Information Note 09/11   30 November 2011

Issue

The Government ICT Strategy (March 2011)[1] stated that the Government will create a common and secure ICT infrastructure based on a suite of agreed, open standards.

This note updates and supersedes Procurement Policy Note 3/11, Use of Open Standards when specifying ICT requirements.

Dissemination

Please circulate this Procurement Policy Note (PPN) within your organisation, agencies, non-departmental public bodies (NDPBs), and any other bodies for which you are responsible, drawing it to the particular attention of those with a purchasing role.

Contact

Please direct your any general enquiries to the ServiceDesk on 0845 000 49999 or via servicedesk@cabinet-office.gsi.gov.uk

Background

The Government ICT Strategy (March 2011) states the following commitment in relation to Open Standards:-

> "The Government will create a common and secure ICT infrastructure based on a suite of agreed, open standards which will be published and updated. The use of common standards can make ICT solutions fully interoperable to allow for reuse, sharing and scalability across organisational boundaries into local delivery chains. The adoption of compulsory open standards will help government to avoid lengthy vendor lock-in, allowing the transfer of services or suppliers without excessive transition costs, loss of data or significant functionality."

The Strategic Implementation Plan[2] is designed to be read alongside the ICT Strategy and provides further detail on how the ICT Strategy will be implemented, including specific milestones for open technical standards.

PPN 3/11, Use of Open Standards when specifying ICT requirements, published in January 2011, described work that was planned to define the suite of agreed open standards. A survey was launched in February to gather views on:

- ⋏ the definition of the term open standard
- ⋏ the open standards that should be a priority for Government to consider

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1 https://update.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/content/government-ict-strategy

2 https://update.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/content/government-ict-strategy-strategic-implementation-plan

- whether particular standards should be mandated, recommended or avoided

The survey has provided a rich source of information, however it has also raised many questions that need to be investigated in more detail to ensure that the open standards policy is robust and delivers the outcomes Government is seeking to achieve in providing better services for less cost.

A formal public consultation will be published to gather evidence and further develop the open standards policy. The consultation will be published on the Cabinet Office website. PPN 3/11 has therefore been withdrawn.