OSS activities
in public administrations:
A report from the Europea level

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Agenda

▶ **Policy Background: Is there a strategy?**

▶ **OSS: Main Players in the Commission**

    ▶**IDABC**

    ▶**DIGIT**

    ▶**DG Information Society and Media**

▶ **Towards professionalism and collaboration**

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OSS at European level

▶ **European public administrations were among the early users of OSS (1990s). The European Commission took up the issue around 2000. Since then it initiates, sponsors and manages projects that further OSS, deal with the OSS usage and the benefits of using OSS for the Information Society at large.**

▶ **Back-up at the policy level came early, but varies in scope over the time and depending on the context.**

Change of Approach

▶ **The previous eGovernment Action Plan (2005 eEurope) focused still on the dissemination of "Good Practice" – also concerning the use of Open Source Software in public administrations ➔ Information about OSS was paramount.**

▶ **The request to "share" und to collaborate in cross-border projects in the i2010 Initiative calls for a new kind of measures ➔ namely to actively support collaboration, by setting up infrastructures (also) at European level, by supporting networking, by coordinating the generation of common rules, specifications and standards.**

What is the OSS strategy of the Commission?

There is not, for the time being, a "unified" official Open Source Software strategy of the European Commission …

→ **The Commission does not have a legal mandate to become active in the area of "software strategy".**

→ **There are different actors in different DGs (Informatics, Information Society, Entreprise et al.) working on ground of different legal bases**

→ **Their activities have different scopes (Technological questions, eGovernment, businesses etc.)**

→ **They might need to follow different approaches – Research, implementation, strategic concepts**

Is there an OSS strategy for the Commission?

Yes, there is, since 1/2007 an strategy for the implementation of OSS in the Commission services

- **In December 2000, the Commission defined an internal strategy concerning OSS. The main idea was to adopt OSS where it was most suitable in the Commission's context. The rationale behind the strategy is to formalise the use of Open Source Software where clear benefits can be expected.
Benefits can be financial, technical or tactical.**

- **The OSS Strategy document is periodically revised. The last version was presented to the EC IT Committee and approved in February 2007. The previously adopted approach to OSS was confirmed.**

http://ec.europa.eu/idabc/en/chapter/5998

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OSS in the European Commission: Main Players

▶ **IDABC in Directorate General for Informatics**

➔ **OSS for pan-European eGovernment services**
http://ec.europa.eu/idabc

▶ **Directorate-General for Informatics (DIGIT)**

➔ **responsible for the Commission's internal OSS strategy**

➔ **IT services for the Commission: uses internally a substantial amount of OSS**

➔ **OSS projects**
http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/informatics/index_en.htm

▶ **Information Society and Media Directorate-General: eGovernment unit, Software Technology unit et al.**

➔ **Information Society Policy: i2010 Initiative**

➔ **Research and development - OSS projects with focus on business, administration, education etc.**
http:// ec.europa.eu/information_society/activites/open/source/ european_activities/index_en.htm

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**IDABC
stands for:**

**Interoperable Delivery
of pan-European eGovernment Services
to Public Administrations,
Businesses and Citizens**

... in a few words

IDABC is a programme of the European Commission:

▶ **Objectives/Activities**
  - Funding European eGovernment projects in the Commission services (Projects of Common Interest = **PCIs**)
  - Supporting the implementation of pan-European services by making available generic services and common tools (Horizontal Actions and Measures = **HAMs**)

▶ **Budget: 148 Mio Euro in total / Duration: 2005 - 2009**

▶ **Managed by the IDABC unit in Directorate General for Informatics (as of 1 January 2007, formerly in DG ENTR)**

▶ **IDABC Management Committee PEGSCO: Member State representatives discuss and approve the IDABC work programme**

Why does IDABC promote OSS in Public Administrations?

First, it's in the programme's mission!

▶ **The "IDABC Decision"** that implemented the IDABC programme requests:

◆ The dissemination of Good Practice in OSS
◆ The support of reuse and sharing of applications

▶ **The eGovernment Action Plan i2010** puts a strong emphasis on **"sharing"** eGovernment applications and experiences across borders.
This calls for new collaborative projects and measures in support of these.

Why does IDABC promote OSS in Public Administrations?

Second, it makes sense!

► **European administrations produce many customised applications to represent their processes.**
  - ◆ **These are similar and can be reused in localised versions.**
  - ◆ **Why should the tax payer pay twice for the same?**

► **OSS is a key element in interoperability and open standards → freedom of choice, avoid vendor lock in, accessibility – also for businesses and citizens.**

► **Development methods and the legal framework of OSS (licences) fit well (better than anything else) to the requirements of cross-border collaboration.**

► **The openness of the code is likely to lead to higher quality of the software.**

OSS in IDABC

IDABC is funding and/or implementing:

▶ **Projects to create awareness and promote knowledge on OSS in public administrations (Open Source Observatory on the website, workshops etc.)**

▶ **Projects producing practical advice for public administrations (for example studies on OSS licences that lead to the creation of the European Union Public Licence, EUPL v 1.0**

▶ **Projects building applications based on OSS and being distributed under the EUPL v 1.0**

▶ **Projects in support of collaboration between member states' administrations and their partners**

http://ec.europa.eu/idabc/en/document/2627/5938

New: Open Source Observatory & Repository (OSOR)

▶ **Information platform**
- Website delivering news around OSS
- Providing guidance on legal, technical, organisational issues around OSS and collaboration

▶ **Registry and Repository**
- Facilities for download/uploading and search/retrieval of public sector software
- Providing visibility for and connect to other European collaboration platforms (-> building a network)

▶ **Platform for collaboration**
- Supporting collaborative cross-border projects (hosting communities)

http://ec.europa.eu/idabc/en/chapter/5932

OSOR Development I: Prototype (Jan – June 2008)

Bringing the OSOR online:

▶ **Basic technical platform: Implement basic system and core functionalities (CMS, forge=gForge and repository)**

➔ **beta version is already online (URJC Madrid); plone as CMS and Gforge for the collaborative platform**

▶ **Principles, policies,governance processes: Define and publish the OSOR's "terms of use" (IPR, languages, quality assurance etc.)**
➔ **studies and workshops ongoing (Strateqo/Merit)**

▶ **Information Platform: Migrate the current Open Source Observatory (OSO) content to OSOR to become the core of the information platform**
➔ **migration study completed; migration to start soon (URJC, Unisys)**

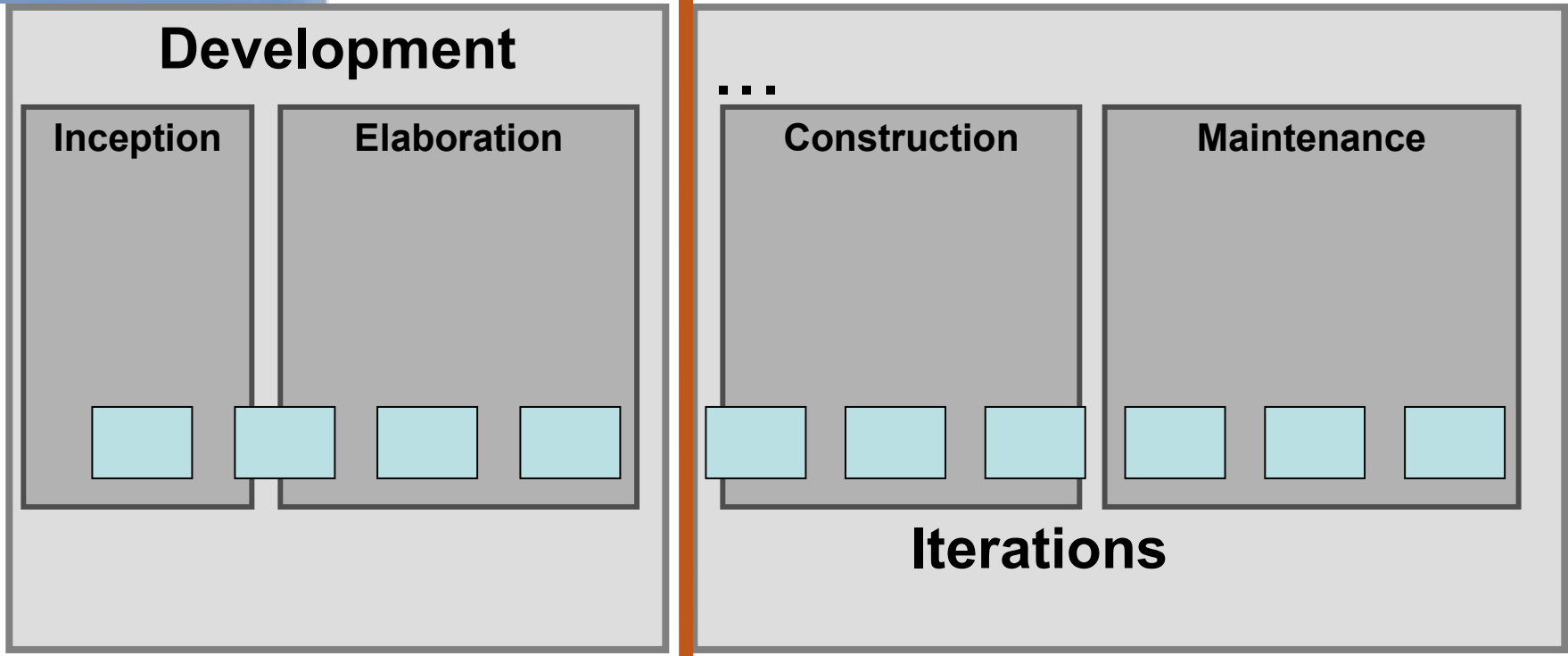# OSOR Development II: Prototype (Jan-June 2008)

Bringing the OSOR to life:

▶ **Involvement of stakeholders: Identify partners -> Establish systematic and steady contact with interested stakeholders (motivation is the criterion!)** ➡ **Strategy study and stakeholder matrix completed: The Strateqo team is contacting stakeholders.**

▶ **Towards federation: Network European initiatives** ➡ **Workshop with European Repositories and Forges on 19 May 2008.**

▶ **Repository: collect and upload an initial population from Member State administrations and Commission** ➡ **pilot partners are testing the platform: cities of Munich and Freiburg, Flemish GIS etc.** ➡ **GIS workshop end of June**

OSOR: Candidates for collaboration

▶ **Pan-European network of public administrations**
- 12 repositories and forges in European Member State administrations

▶ **Flexible Platform (Commission)**
- Multilingual toolkit for Web 2.0 (Blogs, forums, wikis, collaborative CMS etc.)

▶ **OSS in the European Statistical System (Commission)**
- Open Source for statistics (already on CIRCA)

▶ **CIRCABC (Commission)**
- Tool for online collaboration

▶ **OSS projects in different regions (GIS, parlamentary software, eJustice)**
- Belgium, Netherlands, Spain, Germany, Italy etc.
- Cities of Munich and Schwäbisch Hall

Project "Roadmap"

Development

...

Inception	Elaboration	Construction	Maintenance

Iterations

Working prototype   **Building in iterative way, improving content**

Migration of OSO services   **Launching additional services**

January - June 2008   **July - December 2008**

Launch of the OSOR

▶ **IDABC OSS Expert meeting on 18 June 2008: OSOR is available to the IDABC community**

▶ **Open Source World Conference in Málaga on 22 October 2008 Official Launch with pilot-partners and stakeholders at the IDABC OSS Event 2008**

http://www.opensourceworldconference.com

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OSS in DG for Informatics (DIGIT)

Goals of the strategy and related activities:

➔ **Create a complete OSS portfolio (catalogue – as alternative to proprietary products)**

➔ **Test and validate software for internal use**

➔ **Provide guidance for tendering OSS (fair procurement)**

➔ **Work collaboratively! (CitNet)**

➔ **Release more Commission software under OSS licence (CIRCABC, Flexible Platform etc)**

Underlying motivation:

➔ **Avoid vendor lock-in / more choice**

➔ **Get best software for all purposes at reasonable prices**

➔ **Keep the system running so that the EC always get "best value for money"**

http://ec.europa.eu/idabc/en/chapter/5998

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▶ **i2010 eGovernment Action Plan: does not mention OSS, but focuses on sharing and exchange**

http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/activities/egovernment_research/doc/analysis_of_european_target_groups.pdf

▶ **"ICT Policy Support Programme" in CIP (Comptitiviness and Innovation Programme): requires that Pilot A projects ("implementing and demonstrating interoperability") be based on OSS**
http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/activities/ict_psp/index_en.htm

OSS in DG INFSO: selected F/OSS projects in FP6

▶ **OSS is key to several eTEN eGovernment projects**
- ◆ **e-POLL (e-voting) http://www.e-poll-project.net/**
- ◆ **SPES (security for citizen/administration exchanges) http://www.spesproject.org**

▶ **Two big IST-Research projects have investigated the use of OSS in public administrations**
- ◆ **COSPA http://www.cospa-project.org**
- ◆ **FLOSSPOLS http://www.flosspols.org**

▶ **The SELF project is providing a platform for educational and training material on OSS**
- ◆ **SELF http://www.selfproject.eu**

▶ **Technology-oriented is the xtreemOS – developing an Linux-based operating system for next generation GRIDs**
- ◆ **xtreemOS www.xtreemos.eu/**

OSS in DG INFSO - New focus on Quality

Qualipso = Quality Platform for Open Source Software

▶ **… is the most ambitious OSS project up to now:**

- ◆ **22 Mio Euro budget**
- ◆ **more than 20 founding members from Europe and across the world**
- ◆ **Partners in business, academia and public sector**

▶ **Among the planned activities are ...**
- ◆ **an international network of competence centres**
- ◆ **studies on legal issues**
- ◆ **studies on qualities that can sustain trust in OSS**
- ◆ **developing a new approach to assessing the quality of OSS**
- ◆ **defining business models to facilitate the use of OSS**
- ◆ **providing test environments and qualified integration stacks to demonstrate OSS interoperability**

http://www.qualipso.org/

- **SQO-OSS = Source Quality Observatory for OSS**
  http://www.sqo-oss.eu/

- **FLOSSMETRIC = Free/Libre/OSS - Metrics and Benchmarking Study**
  http://flossmetrics.org/

- **QUALOSS = QUALity of OSS**
  http://www.qualoss.eu/

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▶ **Outlook: Professionalism and Collaboration**

Outlook

▶ **It is obvious that the approach of Commission and European public administrations towards OSS has changed: From candid observation of best practice to active involvement.**

▶ **The activities of the near future will focus on**

  ▶ **the development of methodologies and platforms for working together**

  ▶ **the development and implementation of methodologies and tools that safeguard (and certify) quality and professionalism**

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