Toward a National Strategy for Open Source Software

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Presentation Outline

- Source of motivation
- Study approach
- Study results
- Study challenges and weaknesses
- Further work
Source of Motivation

- Studies have focused on regional and organizational level strategies but little have written about national strategies.
- KACST has a national initiative to support open source software (OSS), and is interested in learning new ways to support OSS.
- KACST is currently developing a national open source policy with other government agencies in Saudi Arabia.
Study Approach

- We surveyed government approaches to support OSS.
- We chose to study strategies of twenty major economies, otherwise known as the Group-of-Twenty (G20).
- Following a loosely based grounding theory approach, we identified common national strategies.
Study Results
Seven Strategies

• Issue a policy document
• Publish guides
• Implement national projects
• Issue legislation
• Public comments to support
• Implement OSS in education
• Create national research programs.
Issue a Policy Document

• Guides the government and its partners to use OSS technologies to achieve national objectives.

• Countries: South Africa, UK, Australia, India, and France.
Publish Guides

- Written instructions that guide organizations or individuals on how to use OSS.
- Countries: Australia, Italy, Germany, and Russia.
Implement National Projects

• Government OSS funded projects that have a high impact on the community.

• Countries: India (Hindi Linux), Brazil (PC Conectado).
Issue Legislation

• Support OSS by law. Either mandate the use of OSS, or prefer the use of OSS when ever it shows clear benefits.

• Countries: Four countries, among them are: Italy, Australia, Mexico, European Union.
Public Comments to Support OSS

• Indicate clearly the government’s support for OSS through a written or verbal statements.

• Countries: fourteen countries, among them are: Australia, France, Canada, UK.
Implement OSS in Education

- Allow new generations/users to be exposed to OSS solutions early.
- Countries: South Africa, France, Russia.
Create National Research Programs

• Establish center(s) of excellence that combine knowledge and talent to produce tools and new methods to improve how the community may use OSS more effectively.

• Countries: six countries, among them are Saudi Arabia, Russia, Brazil.
Growth in adapting the seven strategies identified from literature by G-20 members. The graph reveals that `public comments to support OSS’ and `national projects in OSS’ have been implemented significantly more than others.
Strategies by country from 2000 to 2012. The graph shows each strategy implemented by each country over time. Australia has implemented five out of seven strategies among the G-20.
Study challenges and weaknesses

• Study has excluded active national initiatives in countries such as Malaysia and Sweden.

• Some national efforts may have not been captured either because they were only accessible through a native language other than English, or because they were not announced in the public media.
Further work

• We believe that efforts should be consolidated to implement a comprehensive vision of open source

• Implement a roadmap to coordinate national efforts within each country.

• Expand the study to include local government and governments other than G-20.