

# India doubles down on use of Open Source software

By Neha Alawadhi, ET Bureau | 29 Mar, 2015, 11.27PM IST



"Government of India shall endeavour to adopt Open Source Software in all e-Governance systems implemented by various Government organizations, as a preferred option in comparison to Closed Source Software," said the policy statement.

NEW DELHI: The government on Sunday announced a policy on adoption of open source software, which makes it mandatory for all software applications and services of the government be built using open source software, so that projects under [Digital India](#) "ensure efficiency, transparency and reliability of such services at affordable costs".

"Government of India shall endeavour to adopt [Open Source Software](#) in all e-Governance systems implemented by various Government organizations, as a preferred option in comparison to Closed Source Software," said the policy statement, put on the website of the Department of Electronics and Information Technology.

ET had reported in November that the government was looking to adopt open source development in a big way. At that time, the [DeitY](#) secretary had said open source would be preferred "wherever possible".

However, the new policy clearly states that "All Government Organizations, while implementing e-Governance applications and systems must include a specific requirement in Request for Proposal (RFP) for all suppliers to consider open source software (OSS) along with closed source software while responding.

Suppliers shall provide justification for exclusion of [OSS](#) in their response, as the case may be."

"Government Organizations shall ensure compliance with this requirement and decide by comparing both OSS and CSS options with respect to capability, strategic control, scalability, security, life-time costs and support requirements," it adds.

The only exceptions considered would be ones where OSS solutions meeting functional requirements, or if the skillset in the identified open source technology are not available. In either case, departments option for CSS technology would have to justify the choice.

The move is likely to meet with approval from several open source activists across the country who have been rooting for the use of this technology that would significantly bring down costs.

The source code, according to the newly announced policy, shall be available for the community / adopter / end-user to study and modify the software and to redistribute copies of either the original or modified software, and would be "free from royalty".

The move is also in line with several governments across the world which prefer open source and open standards for development of their applications and services.

The United States, United Kingdom and several countries in the European Union also prefer use of open source over proprietary software. Closer home, the State of Kerala has consistently been held up as a remarkable example of the use of open source and open standards.

The Indian government has already upped its use of open source technology. Its crowdsourcing platform MyGov.in is a case in point, which has been developed entirely on open source technology.