

DG DIGIT
Unit.B2 (Interoperability Unit)

Open Source Software Country Intelligence Report France

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Updated in February 2023

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France

Executive Summary

France shows a high level of effort regarding the use of open source software (OSS) in public administrations at all levels of governance. The main coordinator of this effort is the Interministerial Directorate for Digital Services (Direction Interministérielle du Numérique, DINUM)¹ which was established as a successor to the Interministerial Directorate of the Digital and the Information and Communication System of the State (DINSIC) by the decree of 25 October 2019². Etalab's³ Free Software Unit is part of DINUM and coordinates the design and implementation of the Open Source Software and Digital Commons Action Plan coordinating open source use among all ministries of the French Government. Private and public actors are working together and have set up an efficient strategy to foster the use of open source in public administrations through the dedicated Open Source Software Council.

There are many initiatives at local and regional levels as local governments and administrative bodies rely heavily on the use of open source to digitalise their public services. Through the work of organisations such as Adullact, municipalities and regions have become active users of open source software, supporting the development of solutions through collaboration. The level of involvement of certain municipalities shows willingness to use open source solutions as much as possible.

France's open source work is also represented internationally through the INRIA project's "Software Heritage", the "European Initiative for Digital Commons", and the "BlueHats" group, which are all involved in advancing the use of open source in public administrations.

Actors

This section presents the key governmental bodies responsible for setting OSS policies and the main strategic players that work together with the government at all levels to raise awareness of OSS.

Policy makers

 Etalab (French Taskforce for Open Data)⁴, a department of DINUM, oversees open data policies in France. Etalab's Free Software Unit⁵ is responsible for open source policy and leads the Free Software and Digital Commons Action Plan, both created in 2021. Etalab has also contributed to the Digital Republic Bill (Loi pour une République Numérique)⁶, which created the 'open by default'

¹ La DINUM | numerique.gouv.fr

² Décret n° 2019-1088 du 25 octobre 2019 relatif au système d'information et de communication de l'Etat et à la direction interministérielle du numérique - Légifrance

³ Etalab

⁴ Etalab

⁵ Pôle d'expertise logiciels libres – Etalab

⁶ LOI n° 2016-1321 du 7 octobre 2016 pour une République numérique - Dossiers législatifs - Légifrance

principle within the government by specifying which licences can be used for administrative documents.

- DINUM (Interdepartmental administration for digital Direction interministérielle du numérique)⁷, is the administrative body responsible for coordinating the work of various parts of the French administration on information systems. This body is under the direction of the Minister for Transformation and Public Service.
- MIM (Interministerial Mutualisation Mutualisation Interministérielle)¹³, a working group of French public servants, was publishing a list of free software recommendations for the French public sector (SILL) (Socle Interministériel de Logiciels Libres)¹⁴ on a yearly basis until 2018. Currently, its members engage mostly through their role of SILL contributors and supporting the work of the Free Software Unit.
- The DITP (Interministerial Administration for Public Transformation Direction Interministérielle de la Transformation Publique)¹⁵ is a body of the Ministry for Transformation and Public Service. It is one of the actors responsible for the execution of The 2021-2023 National Action Plan for Open Government.⁸
- The ANSSI (French National Agency for the Security of Information Systems Agence nationale de la sécurité des systèmes d'information)⁹ is an administrative service created in 2009 under the direction of the Prime Minister's cabinet and is responsible for security-related matters. It works on the question of open source and its maintenance.¹⁰ ANSSI publishes its solutions and contributes to third-party projects.¹¹

Strategic players

- The Free Software Council (Conseil logiciels libres) ^{12 13}. As part of its free and open source software mission, in 2022 DINUM formed a council whose membership combines public agents from administrations committed to the use and development of free software as well as representatives of associations and foundations which in turn represent citizens, local authorities, and companies. It is a space for DINUM and members to share expertise which can later support DINUM in formulating its strategies.¹⁴
- Adullact¹⁷ is an association that aims to promote the use, reuse, and development of OSS by
 French regions and municipalities. Adullact describes itself as a community organiser when it

⁷ La DINUM | numerique.gouv.fr

⁸ Le plan d'action national 2021-2023 pour un gouvernement ouvert | Direction interministérielle de la transformation publique

^{9 &}lt;u>l'ANSSI</u>

¹⁰ L'engagement de l'ANSSI pour l'open source | Agence nationale de la sécurité des systèmes d'information

¹¹ ANSSI · GitHub

¹² <u>Mission logiciels libres et communs numériques</u>

¹³ Présentation du conseil logiciels libres animé par la DINUM - Speaker Deck

¹⁴ Mission logiciels libres et communs numériques

comes to the use of open source in public administrations.¹⁵ They facilitate all steps related to the development, procurement, and use of open source software among their community of public administrations while empowering their members in their choices.

- CNLL (The Union of Free Software and Open Digital Enterprises)¹⁸ is a representative organisation
 of more than 300 French companies working in the free software industry. It has been publishing
 reports and analysis of the open source market in France and Europe, with the latest report being
 from 2022.¹⁶
- Inria¹⁷ is the French Institute for Research in Computer Science and Automation (Institut national de recherche en sciences et technologies du numérique). It was founded in 1967 and is a research institution focusing on computer science and applied mathematics. It has been an important support for open source¹⁸ since 1996¹⁹ through the development of solutions, its initiatives InriaSoft²⁰ and Inria Academy²¹, and through the Software Heritage²² project it founded.
- April²³ (Association for the Promotion and Study of Free Computing Association pour la Promotion
 et la Recherche en Informatique Libre) is an NGO founded in 1996 and dedicated to free and open
 source software promotion. April has more than 2800 members, including local administrations,
 and works to promote the use of open source software to citizens and authorities.

Policy and legal framework

This section summarises the main open source software-related policies and legal acts in France, including the first known milestones in this domain. The list is presented in a chronological order, starting from the most recent milestone.

• Declaration by the French Presidency of the Council of the European Union calling for a European Initiative for Digital Commons²⁴ (7 April 2022), called for renewed effort on the support of open source software and digital commons. It also announced the establishment of a working group of European Member States to discuss how to support digital commons.

¹⁵ Groupes de Travail | Les Projets informatiques Libres de l'ADULLACT

¹⁶ CNLL Publications

¹⁷ Inria & son écosystème

¹⁸ Inria et le logiciel libre : un soutien sans faille depuis près de vingt ans

¹⁹ Amaya Home Page

²⁰ InriaSoft, Pour la diffusion des logiciels open source | Inria

²¹ Inria Academy, une formation continue dédiée aux logiciels libres

²² Software Heritage

²³ Présentation de l'association April

²⁴ <u>Joint statement by the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs and the State secretariat for the digital transition and electronic communications (7 Feb. 2022)</u>

- Decree No. 2021-1559 of 1 December 2021²⁵ specifies the families of OSS licences that can be used for administrative documents that are communicable and reusable.²⁶ This decree is an update from the 2017 version, enlarging the number of licences covered.²⁷
- Open Source Software and Digital Commons Action Plan²⁸ (Plan d'action logiciels libres et communs numériques) from November 2021 was conceived by the Ministry of Transformation and the Public Service²⁹ following the circular of April 2021. This plan is led by the newly created open Free Software Unit³⁰ from Etalab.
- Circular n°6264/SG of 27 April 2021³¹ on the public policy on data, algorithms, and source codes (Circulaire n°6264/SG du 27 avril 2021 relative à la politique publique de la donnée, des algorithmes et des codes sources) reasserts the need for the opening of public administrations source code and the use of open source software. This text also creates a mission dedicated to the interdepartmental promotion of the use of public software in the DINUM and the creation of the code.gouv.fr portal.³² This circular also led to the nomination of departmental administrators of data, algorithms, and source code (abbreviated AMDAC) in each ministry to coordinate the work to achieve the objectives of the text and to produce a roadmap for each ministry.
- The Contribution Policy for Free Software of the state (Politique de contribution de l'Etat aux logiciels libres) of 15 May 2018³³ defines the conditions for public servants looking to contribute to OSS created by third parties, anticipates the conditions for a new Open Data framework, and promotes the publication of new software initiated by the government.
- The Digital Republic Bill (Loi pour une République Numérique) of 7 October 2016³⁴ is the first French law co-created with citizens (following an open public consultation in 2015). It introduces the default opening of public data through the principle 'open by default', and highlights digital principles such as open data, digital death, net neutrality, data portability, conservation of the internet connection, and the right to be forgotten.³⁵
- The National Action Plan for a transparent and collaborative public action (2015)³⁶ was adopted in the framework of the Open Government Partnership. This Partnership was launched in 2011,

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²⁵ Décret n° 2021-1559 du 1er décembre 2021 complétant la liste des licences de réutilisation à titre gratuit autorisées pour les administrations - Légifrance

²⁶ Licences - data.gouv.fr

Décret n° 2017-638 du 27 avril 2017 relatif aux licences de réutilisation à titre gratuit des informations publiques et aux modalités de leur homologation - Légifrance

²⁸ Plan d'action logiciels libres et communs numériques

²⁹ Déclaration de Mme Amélie de Montchalin, ministre de la transformation et de la fonction publiques, sur le plan d'action du Gouvernement en matière de logiciels libres et communs numériques dans l'Administration, à Paris le 10 novembre 2021.

³⁰ Pôle d'expertise logiciels libres – Etalab

³¹ Circulaire n°6264/SG du 27 avril 2021 relative à la politique publique de la donnée, des algorithmes et des codes sources -Légifrance

³² Code Gouv

³³ French Gendarmerie: "Open sou... | Joinup

³⁴ LOI n° 2016-1321 du 7 octobre 2016 pour une République numérique - Dossiers législatifs - Légifrance

https://web.archive.org/web/20180611031039/https://ambition.cnnumerique.fr/

³⁶ National Action Plan for Open Government 1

France joined in 2014.³⁷ Within this National Action Plan, "Creating an Open Source Policy" was established as an international platform to support the opening-up, accountability, and responsiveness of governments towards their citizens. By implementing the National Action in 2015, France ensured its commitment to the Open Government Partnership and to the goal of establishing a collaborative democracy at the international level.

- The Law no.2015-1779 of 28 December 2015³⁸ "on the reuse of public sector information, free of charge and subject to certain conditions" emphasises three principles: open formats, free access, and freedom to re-use public sector information.
- The Ayrault Circular of 19 September 2012³⁹ defines the general orientations for the use of OSS in the public administration. According to the document, free software must be considered equal to other solutions. Customers should also avoid having to pay a high price for the products.

Open source software initiatives

This section presents an overview of the main open source software related initiatives in France. The list is presented in a chronological order, starting with the most recent initiative.

- Ministry of Education Digital Strategy for 2023-2027⁴⁰, 2023: This strategy supports the use of "digital commons", including free software, citing its sovereign, secured, free, and community characteristics. The strategy aims at providing students with digital skills and is the conclusion of a 2020 consultation.
- A forge for digital education⁴¹, 2023: Presented during FOSDEM 2023⁴², a national forge project for students and teachers to pool the source code of their software projects, is to be deployed at national level. The existing platform has been developed by the Association of Computer Science Teachers in France.⁴³
- DINUM partnerships 44, 2023 (and before)
 - OW2⁴⁵: OW2 is an independent, global, open-source software community which fosters open source projects and delivers software. Through this partnership, OW2 and DINUM are sharing their knowledge and good practices⁴⁶. OW2 will specifically share its projects' Good Governance Initiative⁴⁷ and Market Readiness Levels.⁴⁸

³⁷ France

³⁸ LOI n° 2015-1779 du 28 décembre 2015 relative à la gratuité et aux modalités de la réutilisation des informations du secteur public (1) - Légifrance

https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/download/pdf/circ?id=35837

⁴⁰ Stratégie du numérique pour l'éducation 2023-2027 | Ministère de l'Education Nationale et de la Jeunesse

https://forge.aeif.fr/explore

⁴² FOSDEM 2023 - A GitLab forge for all teachers and students in France?

⁴³ <u>Accueil – Association des enseignantes et enseignants d'informatique de France</u>

⁴⁴ Wiki du pôle logiciel libre d'Etalab

⁴⁵ Introducing OW2

⁴⁶ https://www.ow2.org/view/Events/DINUM_Partnership

⁴⁷ Good Governance Initiative

⁴⁸ Introducing the OW2 Project Market Readiness Levels

- ADULLACT: Through their partnership with ADULLACT, DINUM receives support for the publication of source code on the ADULLACT forge. The association also conducts studies with a view to deploy open source-based services to local governments.
- CentralSupélec⁴⁹: A prestigious engineering school, CentralSupélec's partnership with DINUM focuses on creating student projects related to contributing to an open source solution used by a public administration.
- NLnet⁵⁰: NLnet is a Dutch open source foundation that has supported various projects since 1997. Together with DINUM, they organise the Free Libre Open Source Software prize to reward citizens or associations for their work on a given project.
- AMUE Roadmap for 2023-2027⁵¹, 2023: The AMUE (Agency for the pooling of universities and higher education or research establishments and for support to higher education or research Agence de mutualisation des universités et établissements d'enseignement supérieur ou de recherche et de support à l'enseignement supérieur ou à la recherche) is a public interest group which organises cooperation between its members and serves as a support for their joint actions with a view to improving the quality of their management. It is engaged in supporting and working with open source solutions.⁵²
- Open Science European Conference⁵³, 2022: Open Science and Open Source Software Research Awards⁵⁴ highlight projects and research teams that work towards the development and dissemination of open source software and contribute to the construction of public commons. Their aim is to recognise the important contribution of open source software production and to draw the attention of the scientific community to outstanding or very promising achievements.
- Interdepartmental contracts for support and expertise in the use of open source software, 2022:
 The DGFIP (General Directorate of Public Finance Direction Générale des Finances Publiques) is piloting two interdepartmental contracts for the use of open source software. Their purpose is to cover the entire life cycle of open source software within the information system.
- Eco-responsible digital toolbox⁵⁵, 2021: Published by the interdepartmental Green Tech mission, it includes free and open source software mainly for measuring environmental footprint.
- Innovative and open source software support⁵⁶, 2020: The region Nouvelle-Aquitaine adopted its "responsible digital" roadmap which includes support for the development of open source software, its maintenance, and development of further functionalities.⁵⁷ This grant concerns both

⁴⁹ CentraleSupelec |

⁵⁰ NLnet Foundation

⁵¹ Macro-planning 2023 - 2026

⁵² L'open source vu par votre agence de mutualisation

⁵³ Journées européennes de la science ouverte (OSEC)

⁵⁴ Remise des prix science ouverte du logiciel libre de la recherche

⁵⁵ Boite à outils numérique écoresponsable

⁵⁶ Séance plénière du 5 octobre 2020 | La région Nouvelle-Aguitaine

⁵⁷ Logiciels libres innovants

public and private bodies.

- Video solution for French schools⁵⁸, 2020: The French Ministry of National Education started providing the software BigBlueButton to its students and teachers after working on scaling up the solution to deploy nationally. The French government is financially supporting the development of the solution and the deployment of new features.⁵⁹
- Report "For a public policy on data, algorithms and source code"⁶⁰, 2020: Commissioned by the
 Prime Minister, this report was compiled by the member of parliament Eric Bothorel. It is an
 extensive analysis on openness in public policy and, among others, it recommends the creation of
 an OSPO⁶¹ (Open Source Programme Office) in DINUM.
- Collaboration tool in the University of Lille, 2020: The University of Lille announced that 80,000 users are using open source software on a daily basis for their communication and document sharing needs. The University harmonised its messaging, collaboration, file backup, and office automation tools thanks to Zimbra, Nextcloud, and Collabora Online.
- Code for France⁶², 2019: Formerly known under the names "Open Democracy Now!" and "f0rk"⁶³,
 Code for France is a collective that promotes ideas and develops tools for a free and open digital world offering more opportunities. They take part in and support various projects related to openness in governments.⁶⁴
- Tchap messaging service, 2019⁶⁵: Members of the French ministerial cabinets can use the fully-encrypted Tchap messaging application to exchange confidential information. The OSS application was developed by the start-up New Vector and is based on the Matrix protocol.
- Etalab list of source code developed by administrations, 2019⁶⁶: The French government launched a list of all software developed or contracted by French administration bodies.
- Apps.education.fr, 2019⁶⁷: Apps.education.fr is an open source platform developed by the Directorate of Digital Education offering a set of digital tools to teachers and agents of the French Ministry of Education. Many solutions featured on the platform are open source.
- WebMarché, 2019⁶⁸: Adullact teamed up with Cogitis, a pubic IT provider, to develop an online platform for procurement management⁶⁹, which French local administrations can freely use.

⁵⁸ BigBlueButton - Prim à bord

⁵⁹ French Ministry of Education Chooses BigBlueButton - BigBlueButton - Open Source Web Conferencing

Mission Bothorel – Pour une politique publique de la donnée, des algorithmes et des codes sources

⁶¹ Mission Bothorel – Pour une politique publique de la donnée, des algorithmes et des codes sources, 2020 p.86

⁶² Code for France

⁶³ Histoire - Code for France

⁶⁴ Projets - Code for France

⁶⁵ Tchap messaging service | Joinup

⁶⁶ Etalab open source repository | Joinup

⁶⁷ Apps.education.gouv.fr

⁶⁸ Share, adapt and reuse | Joinup

⁶⁹ https://webmarche.adullact.org/?page=Entreprise.EntrepriseAdvancedSearch&AllCons

- DINUM "BlueHats" Team, 2018⁷⁰ ⁷¹: DINUM formed the "BlueHats" Free Software community to raise awareness of OSS solutions across the French public administration. The team organised several training events for ministries and public agencies.
- TOSIT, 2017⁷²: TOSIT is an OSS support structure that aims to support the emergence of code, software, and IT solutions as open source and/or under an open licence, particularly in the field of cybersecurity. Its purpose is to act as a forum for exchanging ideas on OSS solutions, to collect and identify the needs of its members, and to carry out or commission studies (both strategic and technical) related to the use of OSS solutions. The Ministry of the Armed Forces and the Ministry of Economics and Finance are both associate members.
- Ecrins National Park Geotrek application, 2017⁷³: The National Park contributed to the development of an OSS application for hiking information, Geotrek.⁷⁴ The application is now used by numerous French national parks.
- Free Digital Territory Label (Label Territoire Numérique Libre- TNL), 2016⁷⁵: Organised by ADULLACT, the Label TNL rewards cities and public bodies that pursue the use of free and open source collaborative solutions for their administration. The award recognises five different levels of open source integration and is based on the administration's pooling of resources, use of public money, accessibility of the solutions' and participation in the open source ecosystem⁷⁶.
- OGP Toolbox, 2016⁷⁷: A web portal bringing together digital tools to promote openness in government and improve democracy. The platform aggregates software and services used by governments and civil society around the world for referencing, sharing, and reuse.⁷⁸ Examples are open data portals, public consultation platforms, tools for monitoring and co-creating legislation, discussion forums, civic tech solutions, and online platforms to monitor the implementation of National Action Plans.⁷⁹
- France-Germany declaration, 2016⁸⁰: In this declaration, the French and German governments called on the digital industry to invest in and make best use of OSS, thus helping to contribute to the digital transformation of the economy.
- City of Nantes, 2016⁸¹: Nantes finalised the transition to LibreOffice in 2016, with forecasted savings of approximately EUR 260,000 per year. It uses part of its savings from not paying for

⁷⁰ Les Blue Hats | Joinup

⁷¹ La communauté "Blue hats, hackers d'intérêt général" est lancée. Rejoignez-nous! I numerique.gouv.fr

⁷² TOSIT

⁷³ Rencontres Geotrek, le numérique au service de la valorisation des territoires | Parc national des Ecrins

⁷⁴ https://geotrek.fr/index-en.html

⁷⁵ Territoire Numérique Libre

https://territoire-numerique-libre.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/TNL Form-candidature 2022.pdf

⁷⁷ OGP Toolbox – OGP Toolbox

⁷⁸ OGP Toolbox · GitHub

⁷⁹ aggregating open source software for open government (OGP Toolbox) | Joinup

⁸⁰ France, Germany promote open... | Joinup

⁸¹ Nantes Métropole completes sw... | Joinup

proprietary licences to purchase support for the OSS it uses, thus converting public expenditure into innovative investments that are accessible to all.

- City of Nanterre, 2015⁸²: Nanterre created an open source platform⁸³ to enhance citizen participation in the city's decision-making process. The digital platform is based on Decidim, an open source tool.
- Advice on drafting intellectual property clauses for software development and maintenance of free and open source software, 2014⁸⁴: The APIE (State Agency for Intangible Heritage- Agence du patrimoine immatériel de l'État) drafted guidelines on licensing and legality of open source software for public administrations.
- Gendarmerie, 2013⁸⁵: In 2013, the national police force reported working with 72,000 Ubuntu Linux workstations and 37,000 Linux desktops. It was, at that time, the largest public service in Europe using OSS on almost all workstations and desktops.
- SILL (Interdepartmental open source software platform Socle interministériel de logiciels libres),
 2012⁸⁶: A free software catalogue for public administrations originally maintained by the MIM. It is now being hosted and maintained by the Free Software Unit. The catalogue is maintained collaboratively by the SILL community.⁸⁷
- Annual Open Source Experience conference, 2008⁸⁸: Paris hosts an Open Source Summit each year, organised by the Systemic Paris-Region association⁸⁹ and the Weyou Group, in partnership with the CNLL (Union of Free Software and Open Digital Enterprises). The event brings together numerous stakeholders from the OSS industry.

⁸² Participez Nanterre

⁸³ Ville de Nanterre · GitHub

⁸⁴ Conseils à la rédaction de clauses de propriété intellectuelle pour les marchés de développement et de maintenance de logiciels libres | economie.gouv.fr

⁸⁵ French Gendarmerie: "Open sou... | Joinup

⁸⁶ https://sill.code.gouv.fr/software

⁸⁷ https://sill.etalab.gouv.fr/readme

⁸⁸ Opensource experience - Meeting with the european open source community

⁸⁹ Open Source Hub - Systematic Paris-Region