



DG DIGIT

Unit.D2 (Interoperability Unit)

Open Source Software Country Intelligence Report

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FRANCE

Executive summary

The Interministerial Directorate for Digital Services (*Direction Interministérielle du Numérique*, DINUM)¹ 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. Etalab³ is part of DINUM and coordinates the design and implementation of the government's (open) data strategy. It also contributes to the formulation of open source software (OSS) policies within France. In national law, the most recent developments in OSS are the Digital Republic Bill (*Loi pour une République Numérique*) of 7 October 2016^{4,5}, and the Decree no. 2017-638 of 27 April 2017⁶ specifying which open source licences can be used for administrative documents.

In France, the central government and local authorities show a high level of involvement with OSS. Various ministries have taken the initiative to use OSS on their internal workstations, and Etalab continuously promotes OSS across the country. A willingness to use OSS is also demonstrated by the ever-increasing admission requests to Adullact⁷ (Association of Developers and Users of Free and Open Source Software for Public Administrations). The DINUM and Adullact signed a partnership in February 2020 to articulate their efforts on various OSS topics. International events on OSS are also held in France to increase awareness and foster adoption, such as the annual Paris Open Source Summit⁸.

Actors

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

Policy makers

- Etalab (French Taskforce for Open Data)^{9,10}, a key component of DINUM¹¹, oversees OSS policies in France. Etalab has also contributed to the Digital Republic Bill (*Loi pour une*

¹ <https://www.numerique.gouv.fr/dinum/>

² <https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do?cidTexte=JORFTEXT000039281619>

³ <https://www.etalab.gouv.fr/en/qui-sommes-nous>

⁴ <https://www.economie.gouv.fr/republique-numerique>

⁵ <https://wipolex.wipo.int/en/legislation/details/16380>

⁶ <https://disic.github.io/politique-de-contribution-open-source/en/introduction/>

⁷ <https://adullact.org/>

⁸ <https://www.opensourcesummit.paris/>

⁹ <https://www.etalab.gouv.fr/en/qui-sommes-nous>

¹⁰ <https://www.numerique.gouv.fr/>

¹¹ <https://www.numerique.gouv.fr/dinum/>

République Numérique)¹², which created the 'open by default' principle within the government by specifying which licences can be used for administrative documents.

- MIM (InterMinisterial Mutualisation - *Mutualisation Interministérielle*)¹³, a working group of French public servants, publishes a list of free software recommendations for the French public sector (SILL) (*Socle Interministériel de Logiciels Libres*)¹⁴ on a yearly basis.
- The DITP (Interministerial Directorate for Public Transformation - *Direction Interministérielle de la Transformation Publique*)¹⁵ is an actor that may be involved, either directly or indirectly, in the development and usage of OSS in France.
- *Territoires Numériques Bourgogne-Franche-Comté* (Digital Territories Bourgogne-Franche-Comté)¹⁶ (previously named e-Bourgogne), aims to implement an electronic platform of public services provided by public or private bodies in order to modernise the public administration and improve access to these services. Small towns that may not have the necessary means to implement these services are given additional support for their digital transition.

Strategic players

- Adullact¹⁷ is an association that aims to promote the use, reuse, and development of OSS by French regions and municipalities. Among many initiatives, the association created an OSS repository for public administrations.
- The Union of Free Software and Open Digital Enterprises¹⁸ (CNLL) is a representative organisation of more than 300 French companies working in the free software industry.

Policy and legal framework

This section recapitulates the main OSS related policies and legal acts of the last ten years, including the first known milestone in this domain. The list is presented in a chronological order, starting from the most recent milestone.

- The Contribution Policy for Free Software of the state (*Politique de contribution de l'Etat aux logiciels libres*) of 15 May 2018¹⁹ 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.

¹² <https://www.gouvernement.fr/en/the-digital-bill>

¹³ <http://www.journal-officiel.gouv.fr/mimo/>

¹⁴ <https://www.mim.ovh/mimo/>

¹⁵ <https://www.modernisation.gouv.fr/mots-cle/ditp>

¹⁶ <https://www.ternum-bfc.fr/>

¹⁷ <https://adullact.org/>

¹⁸ <https://cnll.fr/cnll/>

¹⁹ <https://www.etalab.gouv.fr/publication-de-la-politique-de-contribution-de-letat-aux-logiciels-libres>

- The Decree no. 2017-638 of 27 April 2017²⁰ specifies the families of OSS licences that can be used for administrative documents that are communicable and reusable.
- The Digital Republic Bill (*Loi pour une République Numérique*) of 7 October 2016^{21,22} 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.²³
- The National Action Plan for a transparent and collaborative public action (2015)²⁴ was adopted in the framework of the Open Government Partnership. This Partnership was launched in 2011, however, France joined in 2014.²⁵ 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 2015²⁶ emphasises three principles: open format, free access, and freedom to re-use public sector information.
- The Ayrault Circular of 19 September 2012²⁷ 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 OSS related initiatives in France. The list is presented in a chronological order, starting from the most recent initiative.

- Collaboration tool in the University of Lille, 2020²⁸: 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, collaborative, file backup and office automation tools thanks to Zimbra, Nextcloud and Collabora Online.

²⁰ <https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do?cidTexte=JORFTEXT000034502557&categorieLien=id>

²¹ <https://www.economie.gouv.fr/republique-numerique>

²² <https://wipolex.wipo.int/en/legislation/details/16380>

²³ <https://web.archive.org/web/20180611031039/https://ambition.cnnumerique.fr/>

²⁴ https://joinup.ec.europa.eu/sites/default/files/document/2015-08/2015_07_09_plan_gouvernement_ouvert_en_version_finale_0.pdf

²⁵ <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/countries/france>

²⁶ <https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/eli/loi/2015/12/28/PRMX1515110L/jo/texte>

²⁷ http://circulaire.legifrance.gouv.fr/pdf/2012/09/cir_35837.pdf

²⁸ <https://www.lemondeinformatique.fr/actualites/lire-l-universite-de-lille-mise-sur-le-collaboratif-open-source-pour-la-mobilite-78081.html>

- Tchap messaging service, 2019²⁹: 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.
- Etalab OSS repository, 2019³⁰: The French government launched an open source repository of all software developed or contracted by French administration bodies.
- *WebMarché*, 2019³¹: Adullact teamed up with Cogitis to develop an online platform for procurement management³² that French local administrations can freely use.
- DINUM “Blue Hat” Team, 2018³³: DINUM formed the “Blue Hat” OSS community to raise awareness of OSS solutions across the French public administration. To that effect, the team organised several trainings for ministries and public agencies.
- TOSIT, 2017³⁴: TOSIT is an OSS support structure that aims to support the emergence of code, software, and IT solutions under open source and/or open license, particularly in the field of cybersecurity. Its purpose is to act as a forum for the meeting and exchanging of 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, 2017³⁵: The National Park contributed to the development of an OSS application for hiking information, Geotrek³⁶. The application is now used by numerous French national parks.
- France-Germany declaration, 2016³⁷: In a joint declaration in 2016, 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, 2016³⁸: 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 proprietary licenses to purchase support for the OSS it uses, thus converting public expenditure into innovative investments that are accessible to all.

²⁹ <https://joinup.ec.europa.eu/collection/open-source-observatory-osor/news/tchap-messaging-service>

³⁰ <https://joinup.ec.europa.eu/collection/open-source-observatory-osor/news/etalab-open-source-repository>

³¹ <https://joinup.ec.europa.eu/collection/open-source-observatory-osor/news/share-adapt-and-reuse>

³² <https://webmarche.adullact.org/?page=entreprise.EntrepriseAdvancedSearch&AllCons>

³³ <https://joinup.ec.europa.eu/collection/open-source-observatory-osor/news/les-blue-hats>

³⁴ <http://tosit.fr/>

³⁵ <http://www.ecrins-parcnational.fr/actualite/rencontres-geotrek-numerique-service-valorisation-territoires>

³⁶ <http://geotrek.fr/index-en.html>

³⁷ <https://joinup.ec.europa.eu/collection/open-source-observatory-osor/news/france-germany-promote-open>

³⁸ <https://joinup.ec.europa.eu/news/nantes-metropole-releases-ope>

- Annual Paris Open Source Summit, 2016³⁹: Paris hosts an Open Source Summit each year, organised by the Systemic Paris-Region association and the Weyou Group, in partnership with the Union of Free Software and Open Digital Enterprises. The event brings together numerous stakeholders from the OSS industry.
- City of Nanterre, 2015⁴⁰: Nanterre created an open source platform to enhance citizen participation in the city's decision-making process. The digital platform uses Decidim, an open source tool.
- Gendarmerie, 2013⁴¹: In 2013, the national police force reported working with 72,000 Ubuntu Linux workstations and 37,000 Linux desktops. It the largest public service in Europe using OSS on almost all workstations and desktops.

³⁹ <https://www.opensourcesummit.paris/>

⁴⁰ <https://participez.nanterre.fr/?locale=fr>:

⁴¹ <https://joinup.ec.europa.eu/news/french-gendarmerie-open-sou>

