# Procurement Policy Note – Open standards when specifying technology requirements

Action Note 07/15    27 March 2015

## Issue

1. This Procurement Policy Note (PPN) replaces PPN 09/11. It directs users to:

- government policy on open standards for software interoperability, data and document formats - the open standards principles
- open standards that have been selected for use across government
- practical guidance on specifying one of the government's selected standards, Open Document Format (ODF), within procurement for office productivity software

## Dissemination and Scope

2. The contents of this PPN apply to all Central Government Departments, their Executive Agencies and Non Departmental Public Bodies. Together these are referred to in this PPN as 'In-Scope Organisations'. Local government, the wider public sector and the devolved administrations are encouraged to adopt the principles to deliver wider benefits.

3. Please circulate this PPN within your organisation, drawing it to the attention of those with a purchasing role.

## Timing

4. Immediate.

- The policy on open standards was published on 1 November 2012
- The policy on ODF was published on 22 July 2014
- Guidance on ODF in procurement was published on 27 March 2015

## Action

5. When specifying IT requirements for software interoperability, data and document formats, In-Scope Organisations must:

- request that open standards adhering to the definition described in the open standards principles are adopted, subject to the principle of equivalence

- use compulsory open standards profiles that have been adopted for use in government, subject to a comply or explain process, eg through spending controls

6. When procuring office productivity tools, In-Scope Organisations should follow the practical guidance on specifying ODF.

## Background

7. The open standards principles set out government policy on defining, selecting and implementing open standards. In-Scope Organisations must adhere to the open standards principles in specifications for government technology. The principles help government to:
    - work more efficiently
    - deliver more innovative services
    - encourage more competition for government contracts

8. One of the open standards that must be used is ODF. This is a standard for creating and managing documents in software such as office productivity tools.

9. The use of ODF is described in the policy on sharing or collaborating with government documents. The benefits are that users are:
    - able to efficiently share and work on editable government information
    - not required to buy new software to submit or work with government information
    - able to reuse data and text, where licences permit

## Contact

10. Enquiries about this PPN should be should be directed to the Crown Commercial Service Helpdesk (telephone 0345 410 2222, email info@ccs.gsi.gov.uk).