



UNITED NATIONS
OFFICE OF INFORMATION AND
COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY



OSPO++



OpenForum
Europe



United Nations
Office of the Secretary-General's
Envoy on Technology

OSPOs for Good

Building & Designing Cooperative Digital Infrastructure

June 21, 2023 - UN Headquarters New York

Concept Note

Whether we realize it or not, we rely on open source software every day. Open source software powers the cloud and provides professional tools for big data and for information and knowledge management. It is in supercomputers, blockchain, the internet of things and artificial intelligence. There are high chances that any new project involving software is based on open source software, built through open source Initiatives key parameters and protected by a standard Open Source License.

The open source paradigm is based on the idea that software reuse need not stop at organizational boundaries. By sharing source code freely under a license that generously permits copying, modification, and redistribution, open source projects allow collaborative software development that benefits a larger community. By removing barriers between innovators, Open source promotes free exchange of ideas within a community to drive creative, scientific and technological advancement. By definition, open source development is collaborative, inclusive and revolutionary when compared to traditional software and businesses built on proprietary and closed practices.

The term open source also applies beyond software and can include openly licensed content, data, standards and AI models that allow access for anyone to view, use and adapt them. These different types of open source solutions reinforce one another, creating increasingly open and accessible systems that have enormous capacity to advance the sustainable development goals and ensure the benefits of increased internet connectivity can be fully and equitably realized.

Recognizing this potential, Member States are also increasingly interested in ways to better leverage open source technologies for sustainable development. Promoting open source technologies is thus critical to ensuring that technologies' full benefits are harnessed to achieve the United Nations' mandates, goals and perspectives.

As such, the open source ethos and culture embodies the ideals of the United Nations as it rests on openness, transparency, equality and collaboration. The open source approach comes with

very low barriers to entry, allowing for ICT professionals and future generations of technologists from developed, developing as well as least-developed countries alike to collaborate with existing and new global technology communities and build strong and sustainable capacity.

Introducing this open source ethos within an organization must be a concerted effort spearheaded by Open Source Program Offices (OSPOs), which are designated bodies where open source strategies, policies and guidance are supported, shared, explained and grown inside an organization. Such offices are instrumental in establishing and executing an organization's open source strategies, giving leaders, developers, marketers, and other staff the tools they need to make open source a success within their operations.

OSPOs are industry-proven methods of accelerating open source adoption among Governments, not-for-profit organizations and academia alike leading to an unmistakable uptick in open source thought, strategy and long-term goals and implementation at all scales globally.

Insofar as OSPOs are good for fostering an open source community, they are ineffective if siloed solely within their respective organizations. Their presence, though beneficial to the organization, still houses significant untapped potential as open source is inherently collaborative and global. OSPOs that don't work together for a greater impact run counter to the ethos of open source. Thus, existing OSPOs must work together and build cross-border digital cooperation between organizations enabling unified progress towards realizing the open source paradigm.

Objective of the event

This action symposium aims to address the issue of wasted potential by fostering collaboration among government, academia, and industry through a novel cooperative infrastructure. The goal is to work together towards achieving positive outcomes for society. Connecting OSPOs for Good will help build on the existing model of OSPOs and extend it further to address societal challenges and create positive social, environmental, and humanitarian impact.

The event will provide education and challenges for attendees to join in building OSPOs for Good. Through panel discussions, talks, workshops, and networking sessions, the event seeks to promote the concept of OSPOs for Good, explore infrastructure opportunities, and scale up initiatives while creating a dynamic and interactive environment for meaningful exchanges and collaboration among diverse stakeholders in the open source community. Participants will also have the opportunity to practice building and designing OSPOs for Good through sample organizations and case-studies, allowing for hands-on experience and practical application of the concepts discussed during the symposium.

Proposed agenda

The proposed agenda features panel discussions, talks, workshops, and networking opportunities, covering various topics related to OSPOs as digital public infrastructure, from

digital public goods, philanthropy, and global collaboration. With specific time slots for each session and expert moderators, panelists, and session leaders, it aims to facilitate meaningful exchanges and promote collaboration among attendees.

Agenda

Time	Agenda
09:30am - 10:30am	Arrival, Check-In & Networking
10:30am - 11:00am	Opening Segment and Keynotes from Organizers Master of Ceremonies: Paula Grzegorzewska
	UN Secretary-General Technology Envoy - Mr. Amandeep Singh Gill
	UN OICT - Mr. Bernardo Mariano Jr
	OSPO++ & Open Forum Europe: "OSPO for Good"
11:00am - 11:30am	Panel 1: The Roles of OSPOs in Government Networks
11:30am - 12:00pm	Panel 2: Open for Good: Showcasing OSPOs' Plans and Actions for Community Impact
12:00pm - 12:15pm	Presentation - French Government Open Source community - "Les Blue Hats Global"
12:15pm - 12:45pm	Networking Session
12:45pm - 1:45pm	Lunch & Networking- UN Tour
1:45pm - 2:15pm	Panel 3: Cross-border Collaboration in Open Source Digital Infrastructure: a Baltimore Gateway
2:15pm - 2:45pm	Panel 4: Open source as a key enabler for Sustainable Development Goals
2:45pm - 4:00pm	Plenary Interactive Session: Scaling together
4:00pm - 4:30pm	Wrap-up & Next Steps
4:30pm - 7:00pm	Social @ UN Delegates Lounge