



## Asia-Pacific Development Information Programme

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### International Open Source Network : The Vision

Developing countries in the Asia-Pacific Region can achieve rapid and sustained economic and social development by using affordable yet effective Open Source ICT solutions for bridging the digital divide.

The Asia-Pacific Information Development Programme (APDIP) aims to promote the strategic and effective use of information and communication technology (ICT) for poverty alleviation and sustainable human development.

In line with APDIP's goals of improving access to developing countries, the overall objective of this project is to create a Center of Excellence for Open Source. The Center will shape its activities around Open Source technologies and applications. It will seek to network users and advocates in the region so that resources and capacities will be better known and available to all. APDIP will develop and incubate the Center, designing its central functions and work program. As it is doing this, APDIP will also look for a permanent home somewhere in the Asia-Pacific region to permanently house this initiative.

While Open source has become more accepted, there is a lack of understanding on benefits of Open Source, policy implications and resources available to Governments. Open Source software refers to applications and operating systems whose source codes are open for other parties to review, comment, refine, and add to. Very often this model includes a "bug reporting" process and is often quoted as a good model whereby resilient software is produced. This open concept allows further customization of the software to users' needs. Open Source represents an opportunity for developing countries to adopt cheaper software and solutions toward bridging the digital divide. It represents an alternative to purchasing expensive software and applications. Cost-savings will allow funds to be used on other priorities and development objectives.

As a first step, APDIP will hold an Open Source Regional Consultation to systematically map on-going open source programmes and activities in the region, identify needs and priorities, and develop a detailed joint action plan for the proposed Center. The Regional Consultation will be conducted for policy-makers and FLOSS (Free/Libre Open Source Software) advocates. It is a preparatory step with its central function also of creating awareness for open source solutions. Subsequent to the regional consultations a detailed action programme on capacity building in application development, R&D, training and localization efforts will be developed and implemented.

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