



# Government of Malta

Reference: GMICT P 0099:2010

Version: 1.0

Effective: 1 June 2010



## Open Standards Policy

This document is part of the GMICT Policy Framework

<http://ictpolicies.gov.mt>

Underlined terms are defined in the **Vocabulary Standard**.

### 1. Purpose

Within the spirit of Public services delivery, it is Government's intention to strive in ensuring that maximum benefit is derived from all technology investments. In this regard, Open Standards have been recognised as key enablers to implement flexible, re-usable and interoperable ICT resources.

The intention of this policy is to identify Open Standards that best serve the purpose of Government in order to reach the following objectives:

- Avoid unwarranted lock-in scenarios and / or dependencies on specific hardware and software stacks
- Ensure a level playing field so that multiple vendors can fairly compete on the feature set and performance levels of their products
- Create re-usable business and technical resources so they can be effectively shared within Government
- Enable the next generation of Public services that combine their own resources (application and data) with other external services
- Facilitate inter-connectivity and information exchange (at hardware, network and software levels) between solution constituents, Public services and EU-wide implementations
- Ensure reliable long term access to public information.

### 2. Scope and Applicability

This Policy covers ICT Assets that enable the delivery of Public services. It is applicable to ICT services originating from the Public Sector.



### 3. Policy

1. All prospective ICT investments, procured and / or developed internally within the Public Sector, shall adopt Open Standards as directed in the Open Standards Directive.
2. Existing ICT investments shall, when required, employ Open Standards to provide compatible interfaces through adaptation ("Adapters") schemes where appropriate. Open Standards based solutions and approaches should be preferred when selecting replacement systems or when major enhancements to the existing system are required.
3. All requests to adopt an Open Standard which is not listed in the Adopted Specifications (GMICT X 0071) shall be approved by the Regulator and shall be accompanied by:
  - a. A description of the business specific problem that the Open Standard intends to address
  - b. Any relevant studies (including market research) that indicates the reasons for selecting the candidate Open Standard
  - c. Reference to recognised standard setting organisations and Open Standard formal identifier
  - d. Any enforceable royalties and / or claims from patents, intellectual property rights and any other terms and conditions which can effect implementers and users of the Open Standard in question.



## 4. Deviations from GMICT Policy

Instances where it may not be technically possible or cost-effective to comply with a particular GMICT Policy requirement shall be reported to Government's ICT Compliance function. This is done in order to evaluate the security, architectural, operational and other risks anticipated to result from the deviation, to identify additional compensating controls required to mitigate these risks and to formally acknowledge any residual risk and assign appropriate responsibility. In such instances, a request for exemption shall be forwarded to the ICT Compliance function for assessment in line with the Exemptions and Waivers Policy and Directive (GMICT P 0048). This also applies to deviations from best practices adopted by the Agent on behalf of Government.

Breaches of GMICT Policy shall be brought to the attention of ICT Compliance function in order to determine appropriate corrective action and potential internal control improvements.

## 5. References

Name	Reference	Location
Open Standards Directive	GMICT D 0099	<a href="http://ictpolicies.gov.mt">http://ictpolicies.gov.mt</a>
Compliance Policy and Directive	GMICT P 0018	<a href="http://ictpolicies.gov.mt">http://ictpolicies.gov.mt</a>
Exemptions and Waivers Policy and Directive	GMICT P 0048	<a href="http://ictpolicies.gov.mt">http://ictpolicies.gov.mt</a>
Exemptions and Waivers Procedure	GMICT R 0048	<a href="http://ictpolicies.gov.mt">http://ictpolicies.gov.mt</a>

## 6. Modification History

Version	Effective Date
1.0	1 June 2010

## 7. Issuing Authority

This document has been issued with the authority of the **Malta Information Technology Agency**.

## 8. Contact Information

Government ICT Policies, Directives, Standards and associated publications can be found at <http://ictpolicies.gov.mt>.

Any suggestions, queries or requests for clarification regarding Government ICT Policies, Directives and Standards may be forwarded to [ictpolicies@gov.mt](mailto:ictpolicies@gov.mt).