



Open Source **United**

Common Policy Framework - Executive Summary

Executive Summary

Open source technologies are key to advancing the UN System's transformation and achieving sustainable development goals, aligning closely with the UN 2.0 Quintet of Change and the proposed Global Digital Compact. Open source fosters innovation through scalable, transparent, and collaborative solutions that help address complex global challenges. By embracing open source, UN entities can create cost-effective, customizable tools that empower member states, enhance interagency collaboration, and drive impactful digital transformations.

To fully realize these benefits, a unified policy framework is essential to guide open source implementation across the UN System, building consistency and sustainability into digital efforts. An incremental approach is proposed, allowing each agency, program, and specialized body to gradually adopt open source practices, ensuring they align with organizational capacities and needs. This approach supports UN entities in creating Open Source Program Offices (OSPOs), setting governance standards, and implementing guidelines that collectively strengthen the UN System's digital ecosystem.

In September 2023, the CEB-Digital Technology Network initiated the "Open Source United" Community of Practice (CoP), conducting a survey across 16 UN entities to assess open source adoption and readiness. By August 2024, this led to a comprehensive review of open source practices within the UN, focusing on OSPOs, policies, and best practices. Key findings from the 2023 survey revealed that 22% of entities had an OSPO, 39% were developing policies (5% completed), and 28% were working on guidelines (11% completed). In 2024, results showed a sharp increase: nearly 47% of responding entities were establishing OSPOs (30% completed), 85% were actively developing governance policies, and 62% were implementing guidelines. Additionally, 50% had developed specific recommendations for open source, and 75% had documented best practices.

These findings reveal significant progress and a strong commitment to open source across the UN System, underscoring the need for a unified framework to harmonize efforts and maximize impact. With open source adoption growing rapidly, this is an opportune time to establish a cohesive strategy that supports collaboration, enhances efficiency, and drives innovation, aligning UN efforts with global goals and strengthening support for member states' digital transformations.