

Digital Single Market

Open standards

Building open ICT systems by making better use of standards in public procurement will improve and prevent the lock-in issue.

The Commission issued on June 2013 a [communication](#) [1], accompanied by a [Staff Working Document](#) [2] that contains a practical guide on how to make better use of standards in procurement, in particular in the public sector, and including some of the barriers.

The change to standards-based systems

Even though the short term costs might seem to prevent change in the long run, the change to a standards-based system will benefit the overall public procurement scenario. It should therefore be carried out on a long-term basis (5 to 10 years), replacing those systems that require new procurement with alternatives that are standards-based.

This requires public authorities to list of all their ICT systems and understand how they work together, within their own organisation and with their stakeholders' systems. They should identify which of these systems cannot be easily changed to other alternatives (these are systems causing the lock-in). For all potential threats, they should consider standard-compelling alternatives.

In addition, the process should be replicated for every system that is part of the same network, in turn improving the adoption of common standards

Best practices

Fighting lock-in requires support by public authorities at all levels. Some countries are actively promoting the use of standards, and have already gained a lot of practical experience. In order to learn from their experience, the Commission organises meetings with public authorities, ICT supply industry, standards organisations and civil society from Europe.

By sharing their experience on a regular basis, public organisations learn from each other, adapt to emerging best practices and tackle common problems and solutions. This sharing of best practice will ensure that the choices made in different Member States will converge, reduce fragmentation and help to ensure a real digital single market.

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Team responsible

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[1] <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/news/against-lock-building-open-ict-systems-making-better-use-standards-public>

[2] <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/news/guide-procurement-standards-based-ict-%E2%80%94-elements-good-practice>

[3] https://ec.europa.eu/info/departments/communications-networks-content-and-technology_en