



FLOSSWorld Africa Regional Workshop Agenda
Venue, Safari Park Hotel, Nairobi, 23 to 25 February 2006

Organised by

**University of the Western Cape
&
Meraka Institute - Council for Scientific and Industrial Research**



in association with

Idlelo



FLOSSWorld Participating Institutions:

- 1 UM NL: University of Maastricht – MERIT/Infonomics)
- 2 OII UK: University of Oxford – Oxford Internet Institute)
- 3 FUND ES: Government of Extremadura –FUNDECYT
- 4 URJC ES: Universidad Rey Juan Carlos, Madrid
- 5 USUA Argentina: USUARIA
- 6 FVL Argentina: Fundacion via libre
- 7 ISOCBG Bulgaria: Internet Society Bulgaria
- 8 CERNET China: China Education Research Network
- 9 CS2S China: China Standard Software Co., Ltd
- 10 CDAC India: Centre for Development of Advanced Computing
- 11 MIMOS Malaysia: MIMOS Bhd
- 12 CSIR South Africa: Council for Scientific and Industrial Research
- 13 UWC South Africa: University of the Western Cape
- 14 MI2 Croatia: Multimedia Institute MI2
- 15 CARNET Croatia: Croatian Academic Research Network
- 16 ITI Brazil: ITI
- 17 CAMP Brazil: University of Campinas

INTRODUCTION

The FLOSSWorld Regional Workshop for Africa, will be held in conjunction with Idlelo 2, the foremost conference on FLOSS in Africa which will bring together people from across the continent (and the world) to assess current status and plot a way forward for FLOSS in Africa.

FLOSSWorld is a world-wide impact study of free/libre and open source software. At Idlelo 2 we will be seeking collaborators to extend its reach across the continent.

There are three research tracks: (1) Human capacity building: investigating FLOSS communities as informal skills development environments, with economic value for employment generation, (2) Software development: what are the regional and international differences – technical, organisational, business – between FLOSS projects across countries? and (3) e-Government policy: what policies and behaviour do governments around the world adopt towards FLOSS, open standards and interoperability?

A fourth track involves workshops and work group activities to build an international research and policy development constituency, initially through collaboration on FLOSSWorld, and later by building long term relationships for research collaboration.

The Africa Regional FLOSSWorld workshop is blended into Idlelo 2 as indicated below. Idlelo 2 participants may volunteer to assist FLOSSWorld in meeting certain objectives, by attending FLOSSWorld specific sessions, sharing insights, and starting to build a network of researchers for future collaboration.

ALL WELCOME :-)

FLOSSWORLD @ IDLELO 2

The FLOSSWorld Track participants, and others registered as FLOSSWorld collaborators, will blend into the Idlelo sessions, and each will attend at least one of the two dedicated FLOSSWorld sessions.

There are several research questions to be discussed under the three FLOSSWorld tracks, and where possible, these will be raised in appropriate Idlelo sessions (on e-governance, software developers, and education/ capacity building, etc.):

E-GOVERNANCE

- What, and how large, is the role of government in the ICT sector in target countries?
- What is the degree of IT use in government authorities?
- What are the main hindrances to increased and effective IT use in government? E.g. cost, availability of support, choice of vendors...
- What is the awareness of FLOSS and open standards?
- What is the behaviour towards open standards and interoperability in practice?
- What is the extent of FLOSS usage?
- What policies do local and regional government authorities want to adopt?
- What is the relation between international, national, regional and local policies and actions towards FLOSS and open standards/interoperability?

FLOSS DEVELOPERS

- What local FLOSS projects can be observed in target countries?
- How do these local projects differ between regions and countries?
- How much do target countries participate in major global FLOSS projects?
- Are projects in target countries funded differently from each other, or from Europe? E.g. the existence of “prizes” or “bounties” for writing specific software modules (sponsored by Shuttleworth in South Africa, Red Hat in India) is not seen in Europe.
- What is the demographic composition (including gender break-up) of the FLOSS community, how developers in target countries think, what motivates them and how do they structure their activities – does this differ from country to country, and does it differ from Europe? Comparisons with previous studies such as FLOSS, FLOSS-US, FLOSS-Japan.
- How are local FLOSS activities in target countries related with other institutions (public administration, companies, schools, universities, etc.)?
- What is the present and possible future impact of FLOSS activities on the labour market, education, governance, and the economy of developing countries?

EDUCATION/ CAPACITY BUILDING

- What role do informal FLOSS communities, universities and other HEIs, and businesses play in the development of skills related to the software sector?
- How important are secondary skills (such as knowledge of licensing legal issues, teamwork and management) to software development, and how and where are these skills best learnt?
- How do attributes such as demographics and gender affect interest from participants?
- What is the impact on businesses – such as better skills and cost savings – of skills learnt through (unfunded) participation in FLOSS communities? What are the specific benefits to small and medium enterprises (SMEs)?
- What is the consequent impact on employment generation and employment levels?
- How, if at all, should universities and formal HEIs respond to maximize the skills provided in their environments, to best incorporate further skills learnt informally through FLOSS communities?
- How, if at all, should governments respond?

If discussions take different, or unexpected turns, FLOSSWorld will participate and learn from these – and not try to guide the discussion. The FLOSSWorld report will highlight the questions which emerge as priority concerns of the participants and comment on approaches to addressing the issues.

PROGRAMME BLENDING

There will be two dedicated FLOSSWorld sessions (in Idlelo sessions 5 and 7). Idlelo 2 participants are invited to participate in at least one of these and become part of an international FLOSS research network.

SESSION 5 (Friday 24th February, 8:30 – 10:30)

FLOSSWorld Research Track: developers, capacity building, education and survey localisation.

The research questions listed above under “FLOSS Developers” and “Education/ Capacity Building” will be discussed for about an hour, followed by a discussion of survey localisation issues.

SESSION 7 (Friday 24th February, 14:30 – 16:30)

FLOSSWorld research Track: e-government practices in Africa, surveys and localisation.

The first hour will cover the other questions above (under “e-governance”), synthesising discussions during Idlelo 2. The second hour will focus on localisation, African language/ culture and FLOSS development projects.

If required, additional time will be set aside on Saturday for outstanding FLOSSWorld issues. Ideally, we should capture the discussions on-the-fly (including the names of speakers, organisations, etc.), and be well prepared to produce a report with consolidated recommendations on the way forward.

FLOSSWORLD, IDLELO AND THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS

FLOSSWorld is ultimately about impact. FLOSS is an essential enabler for making accessible the knowledge required to meet these goals. The FLOSSWorld team will engage in Session 8 with a view to discussing the implications. The research questions above still apply, but with a broader perspective. For example, consider events such as Africa Source (Asia Source etc.) which bring together NGOs and developers for mutual learning. Such activities are implicitly orientated towards the MDGs.

Our task here is to listen attentively and record aspects of the discussions of relevance to FLOSS research, and pro-actively to raise the research questions where needed and relevant.

FLOSSWorld track: all welcome :-)