

European Union's Euro 660 000 Boost for Global Free/Open Source Research

May 26, 2005: The European Union has approved funding for FLOSSWorld, a unique project to promote global collaboration relating to Free/Libre/Open Source Software (FLOSS). Started earlier this month, the 2-year project involves 17 partners in 12 countries around the world, who will share the Euro 660 000 (USD 830 000) grant from the EU's 6th Framework Research programme. Focusing on FLOSS communities in Argentina, Brazil, Bulgaria, China, Croatia, India, Malaysia and South Africa, the project will enable research and policy development at a global level for the first time, and facilitate further collaboration between the EU and developing countries in this area.

Led by the Maastricht Economic Research Institute on Innovation and Technology (MERIT) in the Netherlands and involving researchers from MERIT and the United Nation University Institute for New Technologies (UNU-INTECH), the project brings together major European research institutes and leading public research institutes in the target countries.

FLOSSWorld will build upon the past research of the EU partners - MERIT, the Oxford Internet Institute, Universidad Rey Juan Carlos Madrid and FUNDECYT/Government of Extremadura, Spain - and extend this research experience beyond the EU, embedding it in a high-profile global network.

Members of the FLOSSWorld consortium who will be funded by the EU include USUARIA - the largest ICT business user organisation, and Fundacion Via Libre, a developer community organisation, both in Argentina; the National Information Technology Institute of the Office of the President of Brazil, and the University of Campinas Brazil; Internet Society Bulgaria; China Education and Research Network under the Ministry of Education and China Standard Software Co., Ltd, the country's leading Free/Libre/Open Source Software vendor; Multimedia Institute MI2, Zagreb and the Croatian Academic Research Network under the Ministry of Science and Technology; the Centre for Development of Advanced Computing - under Ministry of Information Technology in India; MIMOS Bhd, an R&D organisation owned by the government of Malaysia and author of the draft National Open Source Policy; Council for Scientific and Industrial Research, the largest R&D organisation in Africa and home to the Meraka Institute's Open Source Centre, and the University of the Western Cape, South Africa.

Supporting organisations include the National Association of Software and Service Companies which represents India's IT industry; Stanford University's Institute for Economic Policy Research, USA; Mitsubishi Research Institute Inc, Japan, the Open Society Institute and UNCTAD, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development.

A project factsheet is available at www.flossworld.org

For more information, contact:

Rishab Aiyer Ghosh,
FLOSSWorld coordinator
MERIT, University of Maastricht, the Netherlands
Postbus 616,
6200MD Maastricht,
the Netherlands
e-mail: Rishab.flossworld@dxm.org