

## Open Systems Environment

Open Systems Environment (OSE) covers a comprehensive area of Information Technology including interoperability and portability of applications, data and people. According to the original definition published by U.S. Government agencies OSE encompasses the functionality needed to provide interoperability, portability, and scalability of computerized applications across networks of heterogeneous hardware/software platforms. User interfaces, application program interfaces (API), operating system services, document structures, data management services and networking (OSI - Open Systems Interconnection) are important items both within the scope of OSE and compatible with market requirements.

CECUA WGS is aware of the efforts of many groups addressing OSE and whilst supporting these initiatives, is concerned that no international consensus on the facilities required in the open systems environment is available to help coordinate these efforts. A 'framework of Requirements for the OSE' would ensure the relevance of this work. Priority should therefore be given to establishing a framework compatible with the requirements of the real market.

CECUA WGS is not seeking 'standard systems' that may stifle innovation and competition, but will actively support systems that incorporate those international standards to facilitate standard interoperation of generic IT&T functions.

Many subjects within OSE have to be furnished with international standards and profiles. Until these are ratified publicly available specifications can be useful. International standardization has to be provided especially for key items of crucial relevance. But unnecessary standardization could prevent desired competition. Users need competitive, but not identical products.

The frame work for requirements will provide a top down approach to the positioning and definition of interfaces to be standardized. This opportunity should be taken in contrast to the current restrictions and iterations involved in standardization where there is a less defined purpose.

There is an urgent need for a framework addressing within the scope of OSE the technical subjects, priorities and type of necessary activity. This framework has to be agreed by all interested parties. Formal recognition should be given to users' needs and views. .

CECUA WGS recognizes special priorities for the following items:

- Register of requirements for the OSE
- Interoperability
- standard user access procedures
- portability, APIs
- Transparent digital communications

CECUA WGS recommends that projects like EPHOS (European Procurement Handbook for Open Systems) should also address items beyond OSI but within the scope of OSE.