



ÖSTERREICHISCHES BUNDESHEER
Direktion 6 IKT und Cyber

Migration to LibreOffice

A step to digital sovereignty;
Approach and experiences

Michael HILLEBRAND

Austrian Armed Forces
libreoffice@bmlv.gv.at

Nicolas STOCKER

Austrian Armed Forces
libreoffice@bmlv.gv.at



ELTE | IK
INFORMATIKAI KÖZPONT

Agenda

- Our approach to the various topics in the project
- Lessons learned
- Call for collaboration



Mission targets

- Strengthening the digital sovereignty of the ÖBH
- Introduction of internal collaboration based on LibreOffice
- Saving on license costs WAS NOT a goal

Project environment 1/2

- Linux with samba as fileserver on premises
- No Microsoft mail or collaboration services
- Microsoft Office 2016 Professional
- Many VBA and Microsoft Access solutions
- IT-services with deep Microsoft Office integration
- Mobile devices with IOS

Project environment 2/2

- ~16.000 Users
- Office skills
 - Basic to expert level
 - No total beginners
- National and international collaboration with
 - Government & industry parties
 - Microsoft OOXML often mandatory

Milestones 1/2

- 2020
 - Decision-making process started
- 2021
 - Decision-making process finished
- 2022
 - Migration order placed and ÖBH-wide order distributed
 - Detailed planning phase started
 - Internal developer training finished – application migration started
 - Support staff retraining finished
 - LibreOffice installation on users's request



Milestones 2/2

- 2023
 - Tender for support and development services finished
 - E-Learning started
 - Mandatory use of LibreOffice in general services introduced
- 2024
 - Command support staff survey finished
- 2025
 - MS Office 2024 LTSC demand assessed
 - MS Office 2016 as standard software removed
 - MS Office 2024 LTSC (modules) installation only after approval



Our Approach – fields of action

- Users: empowering and acceptance
- Solutions developed by users
- Collaboration
- LibreOffice support and development



Users: empowering and acceptance

- Classic change management „mechanics“
 - See e.g. HIATT and KOTTER
- Prepare and train support staff
 - Centralized & decentralized
- E-Learning
 - Fast tracks and detailed modules
- User guides and discussion boards
- Side by side installation with Microsoft Office
 - Announce end of MS Office early
- Enforcement of early usage of LibreOffice
- Listen to user input
- Weekly tips & tricks to raise awareness

Solutions developed by users

- Switching to a standardized solution portfolio from the inhouse IT provider
- Introduction of new, platform-independent software development tool for web applications
- Reduce new Microsoft Access solutions with mdb runtime
- No new user solutions with LibreOffice

Collaboration

- Internal collaboration in ODF with LibreOffice
- Provide Information for reading as PDF
- External OOXML „forms“ are filled in with LibreOffice
- External parties demand OOXML files with Microsoft Office
 - Microsoft Office licences upon request after approval
- When ÖBH is in charge:
 - ODF with LibreOffice or COOL (provided by ÖBH) is mandatory



External LibreOffice services

- Tender for support and development services in 2023
- Improvements and enhancements as contributions to LibreOffice > 5 person years invested
- Creating ÖBH-Builds with sponsored features
- License necessary fonts

Sponsored features (selection)

- Notes pane
- Paste format improvement
- Assign paragraph format
- Ordered and unordered list format
- Open presentations via hyperlink
- Livemode slideshow editing
- Search in cliparts
- Insert page number in a range
- Import of protected pivottables sheets
- Deleting Metadata on demand
- Copying graphic bullets in Impress
- Scroll through presentation slide
- Define zoom level preset for writer
- Rotate graphics with click to frame for Writer and Calc

Conclusions

- Establish a project organization with sufficient resources
- Provide internal and/or external support services
- Improving LibreOffice is possible (if needed), but needs money and effort
- Announce project plan early
- Enforce early usage of LibreOffice
- Check workflows not only used features
- Bring users back to “LibreOffice” comfort zone
- Community building is key





Thank you!!!

Any questions?

libreoffice@bmlv.gv.at
Austrian Armed Forces (ÖBH)



LibreOffice Conference

Budapest 2025