Question: The new license (AGPL) has raised the question whether OpenERP s.a. will continue to apply the same codebase as the "public" OpenERP distribution. Could this be guaranteed ?

Of course, our goal has always been to be fully open source. The AGPL is a stronger guarantee for the community that any improvement on the software will be published. We want, and we always wanted, to have only one base which is the same for every one (see other question about AGPL later)

Question: How to prevent a situation OpenERP (Saas offer) becomes a competitor of the community members / partners with their own SaaS offer ?

OpenERP is free as in freedom. With OpenERP, everyone is free to launch is own SaaS offer, including OpenERP SA. You cannot ask OpenERP sa to not launch its own SaaS offer, as we invest millions of EUR each year to improve the product.

Question: All the licenses on the code in the trunk changed from GPL to AGPL. Is such change legally possible for an existing open source product like OpenERP ? Or is in the opinion of OpenErp the copyright on all the code in the trunk proprietary ?

Yes, because we have the copyright on the whole code of the server, web client and addons. We did not apply this change on modules for which we do not own the copyright (like community addons). If we made a mistake and you made some contribution on which you have a copyright, report to us and we will find a solution. We applied this on the trunk/development version only.

Question: Allows AGPL still the creation of an OpenERP fork which needs to contain a copyrighted trademark?

This change of license was requested by the community and was decided because it provides a stronger Open Source protection for software that runs over a network. It is only meant to close a hole in the GPL when the software is not distributed to the users, but only used over a network. This is typically the case for OpenERP server, and the Free Software Foundation itself recommends using AGPL "*for any software which will commonly be run over a network*" (http://www.gnu.org/licenses/index_html#AGPL)

Now, what do you mean by a copyrighted trademark ?

- Neither the AGPL nor the GPL allow distributing software with proprietary developments on an open source project. Every contribution has to be open source.

- As we own the original copyright, we can choose to publish our work under any license. However anyone else working on OpenERP code needs to abide by the what this license permits.

- The AGPL is not different from the GPL in this regard

Recommendation: If Openerp s.a. takes the community seriously the general strategic directions and change in license policy should be shared and discussed in an early stage.

This change in the licence is not related to our opinion only. The AGPL change in the licence has been requested by the community and partners for several months and we followed their recommendation because it allows a better protection on the open source nature of OpenERP.

Recommendation: At the community days OpenERP s.a. said that only clients with a maintenance contract get a direct security fix and that the community has to wait until the next stable release. For a healthy open source project, this is an unacceptable policy. The community should be able to retrieve such fix from the code repository as soon as available.

No, this is not the case. Every bugfix (from maintenance contracts or directly from our R&D) is applied on the public repository directly. It's important that the community works on the same version than everyone else.

The only bugfixes we do not publish directly are bugfixes related to security **holes**. In such special cases, it's important that we release the bugfix for the customers one month before a public announcements on the security issue. So that real customers have a delay of one month to migrate their instance before the security hole becomes public.

Recommendation: Participants that contribute (not only to code, but also translations, bugreport, bugfixes, community tasks) must get credits for their work. For example: In the case that a person contributes substantially to a code improvement it is important that this is also mentioned in the official release. Nearly all modules / addons bear uniformly the copyright of OpenERP s.a. (c.q. Tiny SPRL), irrespective of their actual contributors.

Sure, third-party modules that are promoted to official addons of course bear the name of their authors if it was correctly set. And module files themselves contain the GPL license header **and** the name of the original author if it's not OpenERP (as long as the author sets it properly, again). For code patches and merge proposals we always try to set the contributor of the code as the author in the commit, that's the correct way to give credit to a developer (check the history for example on http://bazaar.launchpad.net/~openerp/openobject-addons/5.0/changes) For translations unfortunately Launchpad does not allow us to export the name of the contributors.
We also mention the list of Launchpad bugs in release notes, so anyone can see who reported and who worked on any given bug.

TOOLS

Question: Does OpenERP s.a. use internally a different Source Management System (Subversion) for version control than the official launchpad branches making it impossible for the community to follow exactly what is happening in the source code?

No, we have always been very clear on this topic. We are the most open source and transparent possible. Everything we do is published on Launchpad, just have a look at the number of commits per day.

Question: How is it possible that Dutch (NL) translations got lost using the community tools while merging the translations into the stable release?

It's not clear if you are talking about bug 439241 or something else. Management of translations via Launchpad is currently not perfect: translations are synchronized automatically for trunk (5.2/6.0), but must still be done manually for stable (5.0). In the past we have had issues with the import/export process of Launchpad as well.

Starting with the next version the process should be much simpler for everyone, as Launchpad will synchronize everything automatically in both directions, so no manual step will be neeed.

Please see this post trying to clarify the current translation process:
http://odony.wordpress.com/2010/02/03/openerp-translation-process/

Note: normally Launchpad never forgets manual translations on Rosetta (at worst they are put as suggestions), so even if they were never checked in as .po files in the code repository you should be able to restore them. But until release 6.0 it might be a good idea to export a backup of the translations you do on Rosetta in the stable/5.0 branches.

Recommendation: The OpenObject platform is a nice generic framework for business applications. However, in order to gain its full potential the documentation of the API should be improved.

Yes, documentation is quite important. The past months, we released several new documentations: functional books, reviewed technical guide, a technical memento, etc. And we will continue to invest on documentation.
Recently we have also automated the generation of the framework API documentation from the docstrings in the Python code itself. So the documentation you see on http://doc.openerp.com/developer/2_5_Objects_Fields_Methods/methods.html is always up-to-date and matches the API closely (still, it needs to be improved further, of course).

We also consider that having a good and continuously improving documentation is a community process. Everyone is free to contribute to the documentation, the doc repository which produces the doc.openerp.com website is public for every member of the community.

The latest contributions we made on the technical documentation:

- http://odony.wordpress.com/2010/04/07/openerp-official-guidelines/

- http://www.openobject.com/memento/

- http://doc.openerp.com is being reviewed for 6.0

FUNCTIONALITY

Question: Will OpenERP s.a. develop a procedure so that the community can influence the core functionality of OpenERP s.a.?

The procedure already exists, any member of the community can develop his own branch with his own features and propose for merging. Merges are processed at least once a week.

For suggestions, you can write a bug or a blueprint.

Question: At the community days OpenERP s.a. said that required localizations will be incorporated in the core. Does this mean, that the Dutch community can decide what are necessary adaptations for the Dutch market and can develop software solutions accordingly, upon which OpenERP s.a. incorporates this software in the core OpenERP distribution ? What (and/or certify) if quality standards are fulfilled?

Yes, if you have dutch modules, you can submit them before May 1st and we will review and integrate them in next release if they are good enough.

QUALITY

Question: Could OpenERP sa elaborate in more detail on the announces new quality and testing processes ? What kind of testing is done and on which platforms ? Will the applied test scripts & tools come available for the community / partners ?

We are working on several testing approaches:

- A continuous integration server that runs all tests at each commit: test.openobject.com

- A full set of scenario tests implemented in YAML: http://julienthewys.blogspot.com/2010/03/using-yaml-syntax-to-write-your-tests_12.html

- The firsts tests developped in the trunk are described here: http://piratepad.net/openerp-tests

Question: Is there a central list of bugs that is easily accessible by everyone? Above I.T. has found two bugs in the year end closing. These bugs will actually change the balance slightly in a way that is not easily found. We've come to the conclusion that either no company closes the year in OpenErp or there are a lot of broken administrations in OpenErp. We've submitted the bug and patch, but nobody has looked at them. Are there any procedures to check submitted bugs? The bug is here: https://bugs.launchpad.net/openobject-addons/+bug/531507

The normal process is to report bugs on launchpad. We have a full time dedicated team that fixes bugs reported on launchpad. Currently, they fix about 90% of the bugs reported. But sometimes they do not notice that a bug is much more important than another (whishlists). The openerp-drivers team in launchpad (which is composed of members of the community) is

in charge of pointing us which are the most important bugs so that we don't miss important ones.
Specific bugs like this one most likely need to be discussed by experts on the matter, so sometimes our teams ask the OpenERP expert teams to participate in the discussion around a specific bug before accepting/implementing a solution.

Question: The website claims that the OpenERP code runs on python 2.4. This is no longer true for the openerp-client that contains code that is specific for newer Python versions. What kind of checks are executed to ensure that it runs on the supported platforms?

Every commit on OpenERP is tested by the continuous integration framework on test.openobject.com which works on Python 2.5 (2.5.2 to be precise), which is the official version as of OpenERP 5.2/6.0.

If you notice a commit in OpenERP 5.0 that does not work with Python 2.4, please report it as a bug, as we do not yet have separate continuous integration servers.

Question: OpenErp claims to support asset management. However, this module is broken. Claiming functionality while it doesn't work harms the reputation of OpenERP. For this reason it is very important that functionality communicated by OpenERP is working. Is OpenERP aware of any other communicated functionality that is not working.

We do not claim to have a fully featured asset management module. This module (http://doc.openerp.com/technical_guide/account_asset.html) is not a quality certified module.

We try to keep a clear distinction on what's maintained and fully working and what's not. It's why we launched the quality certification on modules.

Question: Could OpenERP elaborate in more detail on the plans to improve the quantity and quality of the documentation? When possible it would be nice when the English documentation could be reviewed by an English native speakers.

We think it's the role of the community to improve the documentation. We do our best to improve the documentation at each new version. But we strongly request the community to help us in this very big task:
http://doc.openerp.com/contribute/09_documentation_translation.html
http://odony.wordpress.com/2010/03/06/openerp-documentation-source-streamlined/

The OpenERP documentation project on Launchpad is open to everyone, you don't special access to directly contribute or correct it directly.

We are also working on a way to publish the translated versions of the documentation on doc.openerp.com.

Recommendation: Ensure that reported bugs and repair patches are included in the new official releases.

That's what we do: 90% of the bug reported on launchpad are fixed. We clearly assign bugs to releases, for each new release.

Recommendation: The mismatch between the "promised" and "actual" content and timing of new releases has caused problems in the past. The Dutch community recommends OpenERP s.a. to be realistic in announcing forthcoming functionality. Announcements of things that will not be realized has a negative impact on the perception of OpenERP in the market / community.

SCALABILITY

Question: The core of OpenERP is single thread so you can not benefit from multi-core processors. Are there any plans to make OpenERP multi thread ?

OpenERP is already multi-threaded, you are mistaken. You are maybe referring to the Python GIL.
The GIL as no impact on Open ERP as PostgreSQL and C libraries (cPickle, etree) consume most of the time. The GIL only has significant impact when the bottleneck is python, which is not the case in Open ERP. Moreover, it seems that the GIL is faster (because it simplifies) in multi-threaded programs that use a lot of C libraries or in/out calls. (which is the case of Open ERP),

Here is a discussion about this on the forum, read the posts of Fabien:
http://openerp.com/forum/topic10544.html?sid=0a8be9efaf61b5a2abebfb8af4aae265

CONTRIBUTION DUTCH COMMUNITY:

Question: Has OpenERP sa any thoughts / ideas / suggestions how the Dutch community could contribute to the OpenERP developments in the most efficient and constructive way?

The answer is the same as for the everyone in the community:

- Develop modules and push them on the OpenERP addons-community branch on Launchpad. This is the branch we look into for finding new modules to be integrated in new versions.
- If you have a clean localisation for Dutch accounting, send your modules to lpi@openerp.com, before the 1st of may. We will review and apply our quality certification process to integrate it in the core in next version.
- Translate the documentation, we need this for the book mainly:
  http://doc.openerp.com/contribute/09_documentation_translation.html
- Contribute in the normal way: translate on Launchpad, report bugs and fixes, discuss on the forum and mailing-lists, ...