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5 THINGS you need to know about OPEN DATA



1 WHAT IS OPEN DATA?

Open data is computer-readable data that can be used freely, re-used, and redistributed by anyone without any restrictions.

Users should be able to use open data in any way they want, including its transformation, combination with other data and free sharing, as well as the possibility of their commercial use.

Accordingly, the data is open when anyone can access it, freely use it and share it, without any technical or legal restrictions.



2 OPEN DATA PRINCIPLES



The International Open Data Charter¹ sets out number of principles that reflect open data:

- **Automatically open:** The concept of opening information and data should be completely changed, from the current concept of submitting requests to institutions for access to information, to the concept of automatic openness, i.e. to the concept of publishing all public information.
- **Timely and comprehensive:** The value of open data is that they are relevant. Open data should be published in a timely manner after their production and they should include all elements that are valuable to users, which means that institutions should publish the data in their original and unchanged form.
- **Accessible and useful:** The data should be published in machine readable format and be available through platforms that will enable their easy detection. This means that user experience should be taken into account when retrieving and downloading data, such as user interface, data

description and data set formats. The data should be published under an open license.

- **Comparable and interoperable:** Data sets need to meet quality standards in order to be used in correlation with other data sets, thus increasing the potential of their value.
- **Towards better governance and civic inclusion:** Open data enables greater transparency in creation and implementation of policies by institutions. Transparency improves public services and makes institutions accountable.
- **Towards inclusive development and innovation:** Open data has the potential to develop the economy, through development and use of new business opportunities.

3 LEGAL FRAMEWORK

The Law on the Use of Public Sector Data adopted in 2014 (Official Gazette no. 27 of 05.02.2014) regulates the obligation of the institutions in North Macedonia to publish data they create in the exercise of their competencies in accordance with the law, in order enable the use of that data by legal entities or citizens for the creation of new information, content, applications or services. Subject to use are all public sector data except:

¹<https://opendatacharter.net/>

- a) the data excluded by the Law on Free Access to Public Information;
- b) data to which access is restricted by law;
- c) data which creation is not the subject of a public sector body or institution;
- d) data on which third parties have the right of intellectual property;
- e) the data belonging to the public broadcasting service, its correspondence and the data of the institutions in charge of enabling the broadcasting of the public broadcasting service;
- f) data belonging to the bodies and institutions performing educational or research activity, including organizations established for the exchange of research results; and
- g) data belonging to cultural institutions with the exception of libraries, museums and archives.



The Law on the Use of Public Sector Data is based on the 2003 Public Sector Information Directive of EC (PSI Directive 2003/98 / EC²) and its changes in 2013³, which focuses on the economic aspects of information reuse, rather than just providing greater access to information to citizens.

4 BENEFITS OF OPEN DATA

Publishing open data enables multiple benefits for the society.

INNOVATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Open data fosters innovation by removing barriers for accessing, using and sharing data.

Open data supports innovation and economic growth by discovering new business opportunities for creation of new services, reducing costs and improving operations.

Entrepreneurs see the potential of open data in that they can use it to build innovative services and applications that are of interest to citizens, and to receive revenue based on different models: for example, paying a membership fee for using the services, buying services or revenue from marketing.



GREATER TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY OF INSTITUTIONS AND BETTER PUBLIC SERVICES

Publishing open data means increased access to government data and information that allows the public better insight into government activities, delivery of services and the use of public money. Release of open data can provide evidence that public money is well spent and that policies are being implemented.

The possibility of unlimited combination of data and data sets allows to develop a much higher level of transparency and accountability of institutions and allows citizens, journalists and researchers to develop different information about the activities of institutions.

What the citizens expect from the institutions are better public services. The institutions themselves provide administrative services based on data that they create, collect and maintain within their competences. If the data is public, the institutions will publish it as open data and enable the private sector to use it and provide public services. Open data also allows governments to save in many key areas such as health, education and utilities.

² <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/en/ALL/?uri=CELEX:32003L0098>

³ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/FR/ALL/?uri=CELEX:32013L0037>

BENEFITS FOR SOCIETY

Open data enables creation of additional value in society and helps citizens in the implementation of various socially beneficial initiatives. In this regard:

- Open data has the power to revolutionize the way we travel. Open transport data saves commuters time, makes journeys more accessible and helps tourists to travel in unfamiliar cities.
- Open data is changing the way we work. Open data reduces the time needed to find information and allows professionals to focus more of their time on productive activities.
- Open data helps farmers to improve yields through easier access to important information and the latest research.
- Open data is helping to save lives. Open geographic data and aid statistics are being used by humanitarian groups to deliver targeted supplies in disaster zones.
- Open data is connecting people with important cultural issues and helping to shape a more informed debate around them.

5 THREE USEFUL RECOMMENDATIONS FOR OPENING GOVERNMENT DATA IN THE INSTITUTIONS

I. Start by opening the data sets step by step. Initially make a catalog of all the data sets that your institution produces. There is no requirement that all databases should be opened at once. Prioritize the publishing of the open data sets according to the model recommended and described in the Open Data Strategy 2018-2020. It is okay to start by opening only a few data sets, or even a part of a large data set, of course, the more data that can be opened the better. Remember that it is important to work continuously on opening data sets and improving their structure.



II. Involve data users. Include current and potential data users as early as possible in the process of opening the data sets and do it as often as possible, whether they are citizens, businesses and other stakeholders. This will allow the data you publish to be in line with needs of the users.



III. Resolve any fears and misunderstandings that may occur among employees. This is especially important when working with or in large institutions. When opening the data many questions and fears arise among employees. It is important to identify the most important issues and fears and address them as soon as possible. Provide the necessary training to employees so that they can improve their knowledge of the process, explain how the publication of data will affect their work and highlight the benefits of the process.

