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# DRAFT International Open Data Charter

*The text of the **International Open Data Charter** has been prepared based on the **G8 Open Data Charter**, developed under the UK's presidency and signed by all G8 leaders in 2013. The OGP Open Data Working Group, inspired by the G8 Open Data Charter, has worked to modify the Charter's text to facilitate its adoption by any nation that wishes to implement an ambitious plan of action in support of Open Data.*

## Preamble

1) The world is witnessing the growth of a global movement facilitated by technology and social media and fuelled by information – one that contains enormous potential to create more accountable, efficient, responsive, and effective governments and businesses, and to spur economic growth.

Open data sit at the heart of this global movement.

2) Access to data allows individuals and organisations to develop new insights and innovations that can improve the lives of others and help to improve the flow of information within and between countries. While governments and businesses collect a wide range of data, they do not always share these data in ways that are easily discoverable, useable, or understandable by the public.

This is a missed opportunity.

3) Today, people expect to be able to access information and services electronically when and how they want. Increasingly, this is true of government data as well. We have arrived at a tipping point, heralding a new era in which people can use open data to generate insights, ideas, and services to create a better world for all.

4) Open data can increase transparency about what government and business are doing. Open data can also increase awareness about how countries' natural resources are used, how extractives revenues are spent, and how land is transacted and managed. All of which promotes accountability and good governance, enhances public debate, and helps to combat corruption.

5) Providing access to government data can empower individuals, the media, civil society, and business to fuel better outcomes in public services such as health, education, public safety, environmental protection, and governance. Open data can do this by:

- showing how and where public money is spent, providing strong incentives for that money to be used most effectively;
- supporting citizens, civil society groups, governments and private enterprises to collaboratively design and deliver better public services, responding to the particular needs of local communities; and

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- enabling people to make better informed choices about the services they receive and the standards they should expect.

6) Freely-available government data can be used in innovative ways to create useful tools and products that help people navigate modern life more easily. Used in this way, open data are a catalyst for innovation in the private sector, supporting the creation of new markets, businesses, and jobs. Beyond government, these benefits can multiply as more businesses adopt open data practices modelled by government and share their own data with the public.

7) Charter signatories agree that open data are an untapped resource with huge potential to encourage the building of stronger, more interconnected societies that better meet the needs of our citizens and allow innovation and prosperity to flourish.

8) We, therefore, agree to follow a set of principles that will be the foundation for access to, and the release and re-use of, data made available by governments. They are:

- Open Data by Default
- Quality and Quantity
- Useable by All
- Releasing Data for Improved Governance
- Releasing Data for Innovation

9) We agree to work within our political and legal frameworks to implement these principles in accordance with the technical best practices and timeframes set out in an action plan developed in support of Charter implementation. Charter signatories will develop action plans with a view to implementation of the Charter and technical annex.

## **1. Principle 1: Open Data by Default**

10) We recognise that free access to, and the subsequent re-use of, open data are of significant value to society and the economy, and that government data should, therefore, be open by default, subject to applicable restrictions related to privacy, confidentiality, and security.

11) We recognise that the term government data is meant in the widest sense possible. This could apply to data owned by national, federal, local, or international government bodies, or by the wider public sector.

12) We recognise that there is domestic and international legislation, in particular pertaining to intellectual property, personally-identifiable and sensitive information, which must be observed and updated where necessary.

13) We will:

- Adopt policies and practices to ensure that all government data is made open by default, as outlined in this Charter, while recognising that there are legitimate reasons why some data cannot be released.

## **2. Principle 2: Quality and Quantity**

14) We recognise that governments and the public sector hold vast amounts of information that may be of interest to citizens, and that it may take time to identify data for release or publication. We also recognize the importance of consulting with citizens, other governments, non-governmental organizations, and other open data users, to identify which data to prioritise for release or improvement. We agree, however, that governments' primary responsibility should be to release data in a timely manner, without undue delay.

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15) We will:

- create public, comprehensive lists of all government information holdings to set the stage for meaningful public discussions around data release;
- release high-quality open data that are timely, comprehensive, and accurate in accordance with prioritisation methods informed by public requests. To the extent possible, data will be in their original, unmodified form and at the finest level of granularity available, and will also be linked to visualizations or analyses created based on the data;
- ensure that information in the data is written in plain, clear language, so that it can be understood by all, though this Charter does not require translation into other languages;
- make sure that data are fully described, and that consumers have sufficient information to understand their strengths, weaknesses, analytical limitations, and security requirements, as well as how to process the data;
- ensure that, where possible, open datasets include common core metadata, unique identifiers, and an international public domain dedication;
- release data as early as possible, allow users to provide feedback, and then continue to make revisions to ensure the highest standards of open data quality are met; and
- apply consistent recordkeeping practices, ensuring historical copies of datasets are archived and kept accessible as long as they retain value.

### **3. Principle 3: Usable by All**

16) We recognise that opening up data enables citizens, businesses, civil society organisations, and governments to make more informed decisions.

17) We recognise that open data should be made available free of charge in order to encourage their most widespread use.

18) We recognise that when open data are released, they should be made available without bureaucratic or administrative barriers, such as registration requirements, which can deter people from accessing the data.

19) We will:

- release data in open formats wherever possible, ensuring that the data are available to the widest range of users to find, access, and re-use it. In many cases, this will include providing data in multiple formats, so that they can be processed by computers and understood by people.

### **4. Principle 4: Releasing Data for Improved Governance**

20) We recognise that the release of open data strengthens our democratic institutions and encourages better policy-making to meet the needs of our citizens. This is true not only in our own countries but across the world and in multilateral organisations and initiatives. 25) We will:

- implement oversight and review processes to measure the impact of our open data initiatives;
- engage with civil society representatives working in the domain of transparency and accountability to determine what data they need to effectively hold governments to account;
- encourage the use of open data to develop innovative policy solutions that benefit all members of society, and empower marginalized groups;

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- share technical expertise and experience with other countries and international organizations around the world, so that everyone can reap the benefits of open data; and
- be transparent about our own data collection, standards, and publishing processes, by documenting all of these related processes online.

## **5. Principle 5: Releasing Data for Innovation**

21) We recognise the importance of diversity in stimulating creativity and innovation, and that the more people and organisations that use our data, the greater the social and economic benefits that will be generated. This is true for government, commercial, and non-commercial uses.

22) We will:

- create or explore potential regional and private-public partnerships;
- work to increase open data literacy and encourage people, such as developers of applications, civil society organisations, academics, media representatives, government employees, and other open data users, to unlock the value of open data; and
- empower a future generation of data innovators by supporting an enabling environment for open data reuse, including training and fellowship programs, courses on data literacy and seed funding for entrepreneurs and startups developing innovations build on open data.