

Department of Economic and Social Affairs

Division for Public Administration and Development Management

Open Government Data Assessment Methodology



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Preface

This document was developed as part of the implementation of the project “Strengthening of capacities to Developing Countries to provide Access to Information for Sustainable Development through Open Government Data” coordinated by the Division for Public Administration and Development Management (DPADM) United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA). More information about the project can be found at: <https://publicadministration.un.org/en/ogd>

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Objective

This open government data (OGD) assessment methodology is designed to support governments, people and other stakeholders to assess the specific conditions for the implementation of OGD initiatives at the national and/or at the sub-national level. The objective of the assessment is threefold:

1. Help understand the specific local context (including enabling factors and obstacles and their implications) for the introduction of OGD initiatives and identify opportunities as well as challenges that impact the formulation of appropriate actions and policies to address them.
2. Build a starting point of an appropriate knowledge base and facilitate knowledge sharing and capacity building.
3. Assist in defining an action plan for the implementation of OGD initiatives by exploring key elements along the eight dimensions of sustainable OGD ecosystems, namely: government commitment; policy/legal framework; institutional structures and capabilities in government; supply of relevant data; demand for data; citizen engagement and capabilities for open data; funding for the OGD programme, and national technology and skill infrastructure.

In many countries, assistance from the international community may be instrumental to acquire the capacity needed to evolve towards OGD and improve the statistical system and availability of data.

Methodology

The methodology builds on the rich experience of practice and combines elements of the Open Government Data for Citizen Engagement Guidelines from UNDESA, the Open Data Readiness Assessments (ODRA) from the World Bank as well as similar assessment methodologies from the World Wide Web Foundation and OECD.

The methodology follows a mixed-method approach, combining literature review and media monitoring, desk research, survey work, a self-assessment tool, expert interviews (semi-structured, open ended and informal), in-country reviews, and stakeholder workshops.

It fully recognizes that there is no single model for OGD and aims to help governments adapt it to their national contexts.

The methodology contains three elements:

1. **Self-Assessment Tool:** The self-assessment tool is designed to quickly assess the key factors for the introduction of an OGD initiative present in the local conditions and identify opportunities and challenges specific for the implementation in a country.
2. **Perception Survey:** A short survey is designed to capture people's perception of the supply and demand side of OGD in a country and the general conditions for the implementation of OGD programmes.

3. Desk research and **Interview Questionnaire**: Desk research provides quantitative and qualitative data in preparation for expert interviews during in-country reviews and workshops. The questionnaire is used as a baseline for conducting the interviews with county and domain experts; however, interviews might be conducted more like conversations centred on the expertise and experiences of the respective interviewee.

These elements are complementary and build on each other. None of the elements is designed to be used as a stand-alone. The results from all three measures should inform an OGD assessment report as the final product of the assessment.

The assessment is a lightweight and pragmatic approach to get a basic understanding of the local context for the introduction of OGD initiatives to identify opportunities and challenges (including enabling factors and obstacles and their implications), in order to formulate appropriate actions and relevant policies. The assessment does not provide any legal advice nor is designed to deliver final recommendations. Instead it highlights opportunities, and points to gaps and challenges that need to be addressed to formulate recommendations and define appropriate actions.

N.B.

This is a diagnostic and planning tool; it is not a measurement tool. This tool is intended to provide diagnostics and recommendations for action based on existing good practice elsewhere, but it is not a prescription for Open Data, nor is it a formal evaluation exercise. The output of any diagnostic, even following the guidance in this tool, needs to be carefully and critically considered in the context of the particular circumstances in which it has been made.

Using the tool will not guarantee a successful and sustainable Open Data initiative on its own; implementation is crucial to ensure success. The purpose of the tool is to provide a plan for action for an Open Data programme, as well as initiating a robust and consultative dialogue among relevant stakeholders. In that sense, the use of this tool is the beginning and not the end result of a process. This tool is a 'living' document and will be subject to continuous updating and revision based on experience from actual practice. In addition, other means of assessing readiness for Open Data are available, and this tool is not necessarily the only, or always the most appropriate, in all particular circumstances.

The preliminary analysis and recommendations in the Policy/Legal Framework section are based on information and opinions collected from interviews undertaken and materials provided by the government and other local stakeholders during the assessment. This section is not based on detailed, legal due diligence and does not constitute legal advice. Accordingly, no inference should be drawn as to the completeness, adequacy, accuracy or suitability of the underlying assessment, or recommendations, or any actions that might be undertaken resulting therefrom, regarding the enabling policy, legal or regulatory framework for Open Data in the country. It is therefore recommended that, prior to undertaking any legal action to address any legal assessment issue raised herein, a formal legal due diligence be performed by competent, locally qualified legal counsel, preferably assisted by international legal experts with relevant experience and knowledge of these areas.

OGD Self-Assessment Tool

The OGD Self-Assessment Tool is designed to quickly assess the specific local context (including enabling factors and obstacles and their implications) for the introduction of OGD initiatives to identify opportunities and challenges specific for the implementation in a country. The tool is a simple questionnaire assessing key elements in the eight dimensions that are essential for sustainable OGD initiatives, namely: government commitment; policy/legal framework; institutional structures and capabilities in government; supply of data; demand for data; citizen engagement and capabilities for open data; funding for the OGD programme; and national technology and skill infrastructure.¹

In each of the eight dimensions a total score between 0% and 100% can be obtained, where 0% means that no supportive conditions for an OGD initiative are identified and 100% means that the country meets all key conditions for an OGD initiative in this dimension.

In each dimension a set of five questions have to be answered. Questions can be answered with “Yes/No” and “Not Sure” or on a “Scale between 0 and 4”. To inform the final product of the assessment, the Self-Assessment Tool should be conducted with 20 selected stakeholders (recommended), including domain experts and legal experts with the following composition: eight government representatives, six representatives from civil society, two representatives from media, two from the private sector and two from academia.

“Not Sure” answers will not be counted in the score, but will be listed separately as an indicator on which areas deserve more attention or clarification. To calculate the % of how many of the “Yes/No” or “Scale” answers per question was a “Yes”. The formula is:

$$\frac{\text{Yes}}{\text{Yes} + \text{No}} \times 100\%$$

Yes/No score example

	Yes	No	Not Sure	Yes Score
Answers	12	6	2	$\frac{\text{Yes}}{\text{Yes} + \text{No}} \times 100\%$
				66.66%

0-4 scale score example

Scale	0	1	2	3	4	Yes Score
Percent	0%	25%	50%	75%	100%	
Answers	5	5	3	5	2	Answers:

¹ The eight dimensions have been introduced by the Open Data Readiness Assessment of the World Bank, and are used in this methodology. See: <http://opendatatoolkit.worldbank.org/en/odra.html>

						$0\% \times 5 = 0\%$ $25\% \times 5 = 125\%$ $50\% \times 3 = 150\%$ $75\% \times 5 = 375\%$ $100\% \times 2 = 200\%$ Total: 850% / 20 participants = 42.5%
--	--	--	--	--	--	--

To calculate the overall score of a dimension, simply add all % results from all 5 questions and divide them by 5. See the 2nd dimension below for an example.

The final result of the questionnaire will highlight those areas where actions are required. An overall scoring across all eight dimensions will not be presented as the assessment is not designed to provide a country ranking (like “country XY scores a 68% open data readiness and is 20% above country YZ”), which would not provide any useful statement and also would be an over-simplistic view on such complex issues like an open data ecosystem.

This assessment does not introduce any weighting between dimensions or between specific elements/elements with a dimension. Although the ODRA methodology of the World Bank introduces such weighting, it is unclear if this weighting applies/makes sense in all countries under all circumstances. The table below shows all eight dimensions with their max. score and the respective weighting in the ODRA methodology.

8 Dimensions for sustainable OGD initiatives	ODRA weighting	Max score
1. Government Commitment	Very high	100%
2. Policy/Legal Framework	High	100%
3. Institutional Structures, Responsibilities and Capabilities within Government	High	100%
4. Government Data Management Policies and Procedures	Very high	100%
5. Demand for Open Data	Very high	100%
6. Civic Engagement and Capabilities for Open Data	High	100%
7. Funding an Open Data Program	Medium high	100%
8. National Technology and Skills Infrastructure	High	100%

The following table translates green-yellow-red colour coding to percentage:

Green		means there is clear evidence of readiness	66-100%
Yellow		means that evidence of readiness is less clear	33-65%

Orange		Orange is overlapping with yellow and red. It means there is evidence for some readiness but substantial concerns remain	25-50%
Red		means there is evidence of absence of readiness	0-32%
Grey		means insufficient information to assess readiness	NA

The following table shows all questions for all dimensions, e.g. 5 x 8 = 40 questions total. Each question has an explanation that can be assessed from within the Self-Assessment Tool to provide information and context about the question. In addition, a glossary is available to explain common terms and concepts, such as “access to information” or “privacy” or “media literacy”. To understand the specific national context under each question, the table has to be completed following the scoring rules described above including additional comments, obtained from interviews, desktop research, and workshops.

1.	Government commitment			Overall comment:	
	Total Score	X % out of 100%			
	Questions	Scale 0 - 4	Not sure	Score	Specific comments
1.1	To what extent is there political commitment from top-level decision makers for opening up government data?	Scale 0-4 0 x 25 x 50 x 75 x 100 x			
1.2	To what extent is there political commitment from top-level decision makers for related rights such as access to information, transparency, accountability and to fight corruption?	Scale 0-4 0 x 25 x 50 x 75 x 100 x			
1.3	To what extent does the Government actively consult/involve citizens in policy making?	Scale 0-4 0 x 25 x 50 x 75 x 100 x			
1.4	To what extent is there an established political leadership and governance model for policy and implementation of programs across	Scale 0-4 0 x 25 x 50 x			

	multiple institutions or across government as a whole?	75 x 100 x				
1.5	To what extent has the government officially committed to international programs (such as the Open Government Partnership) that mandate for OGD, transparency, accountability and citizen engagement?	Scale 0-4 0 x 25 x 50 x 75 x 100 x				
2. Policy/legal framework						
Total Score		X% out 100%			Overall comment:	
	Questions	Yes	No	Not sure	Score	Specific comments
2.1	Is there legislation on Privacy that effectively safeguards the protection of personal information?					
2.2	Is there legislation on Access to Information, with an independent oversight body?					
2.3	Does the Access to Information regime include provision for proactive disclosure? (pro-active publication)					
2.4	Is Public Sector Information clearly/explicitly licensed in a way that allows reuse for all purposes?					
2.5	To what extent is Public Sector Information available free of charge? (or at charges no higher than marginal cost?)	Scale 0-4 0 x 25 x 50 x 75 x 100 x				
3. Institutional structures and capabilities in government						
Total score		X% out of 100%			Overall comment:	
	Questions	Scale 0 - 4	Not sure	Score	Specific comments	
3.1	To what extent is there an agency with relevant capabilities, mandates, project management	Scale 0-4 0 x 25 x				

	experience and technical skills to be a suitable as lead institution in the planning and implementation of an Open Data Program?	50 x 75 x 100 x				
3.2	To what extent is Public Sector Information available in digital formats? (versus available only on paper)	Scale 0-4 0 x 25 x 50 x 75 x 100 x				
3.3	To what extent is there interagency ICT coordination across government?	Scale 0-4 0 x 25 x 50 x 75 x 100 x				
3.4	To what extent are civil servants at the middle layer of government sufficiently skilled and resourced to implement an OGD program?	Scale 0-4 0 x 25 x 50 x 75 x 100 x				
3.5	To what extent are civil servants at the middle layer of government sufficiently skilled and resourced to use data for analysis? (for evidence based policy)	Scale 0-4 0 x 25 x 50 x 75 x 100 x				
4. Government Data Management Policies and Procedures						
Total score		X% out of 100%			Overall comment:	
Questions		Yes	No	Not sure	Score	Specific comments
4.1	To what extent does the government have a coherent view of its data holdings? (e.g. an inventory or asset information register)	Scale 0-4 0 x 25 x 50 x 75 x 100 x				
4.2	To what extent are these inventories complete, detailed, and up to date?	Scale 0-4 0 x 25 x 50 x 75 x 100 x				
4.3	Are there policies or standards for data quality, including provenance, accuracy, timeliness and					

	completeness?					
4.4	To what extent is data easily shared between agencies of government? (e.g. shared horizontally and vertically between agencies)	Scale 0-4 0 x 25 x 50 x 75 x 100 x				
4.5	To what extent are OGD publicly available?	Scale 0-4 0 x 25 x 50 x 75 x 100 x				
5. Demand for data						
Total score		X% out of 100%			Overall comment:	
Questions		Yes	No	Not sure		
5.1	Is there an established process for identifying and meeting demand for data, either inside or outside government?					
5.2	To what extent are there Civil Society Organizations actively demanding for OGD?	Scale 0-4 0 x 25 x 50 x 75 x 100 x				
5.3	To what extent are there private sector companies actively demanding for OGD?	Scale 0-4 0 x 25 x 50 x 75 x 100 x				
5.4	To what extent are there Media Organizations or other intermediaries actively demanding for OGD?	Scale 0-4 0 x 25 x 50 x 75 x 100 x				
5.5	To what extent is the Government responsive to requests for Public Sector Information from external stakeholders ² ?	Scale 0-4 0 x 25 x 50 x 75 x 100 x				

² Citizens, Civil Society Organizations, Academia, Private Sector, International organizations including donors.

6.	Citizen engagement and capabilities for open data				Overall comment:	
	Total score	X% out of 100%				
	Questions	Yes	No	Not sure	Score	Specific comments
6.1	To what extent do citizens make active use of their basic rights, such as access to information and freedom of speech?	Scale 0-4 0 x 25 x 50 x 75 x 100 x				
6.2	To what extent are there Civil Society Organizations or other intermediaries able to help translate OGD into meaningful information for the public?	Scale 0-4 0 x 25 x 50 x 75 x 100 x				
6.3	To what extent does the Government actively promote reuse of government-held data?	Scale 0-4 0 x 25 x 50 x 75 x 100 x				
6.4	To what extent is civil society engaged in consultations with the government about relevant policies such as Access to Information, Transparency, and Accountability?	Scale 0-4 0 x 25 x 50 x 75 x 100 x				
6.5	Are there academic/other data analysis training programs available to produce enough technical experts?					
7.	Funding for the OGD program				Overall comment:	
	Total score	X% out of 100%				
	Questions	Yes	No	Not sure	Score	Specific comments
7.1	Is there secured funding for the initial phase of the OGD program (including: public consultations, stakeholder workshops, development of a OGD action plan and the publication of key datasets					

	as OGD on a central data portal)?					
7.2	Is there secured funding to implement efficient production, sharing and archiving of OGD?					
7.3	Is there secured funding for capacity building for civil servants at the middle layer of government enabling them with the adequate ICT and data analytical skills?					
7.4	Is there secured funding for support actions to promote reuse of OGD and capacity building to enable data intermediaries?					
7.5	To what extent are there donor organizations willing to support the OGD program?	Scale 0-4 0 x 25 x 50 x 75 x 100 x				
8. National technology and skill infrastructure						
Total score		X% out of 100%			Overall comment:	
	Questions	Yes	No	Not sure	Score	Specific comments
8.1	To what extent does the majority of population have access to basic ICT education?	Scale 0-4 0 x 25 x 50 x 75 x 100 x				
8.2	To what extent does the majority of population have access to mobile communication technologies?	Scale 0-4 0 x 25 x 50 x 75 x 100 x				
8.3	To what extent does the majority of population have access to media and the Internet?	Scale 0-4 0 x 25 x 50 x 75 x 100 x				
8.4	Is there a national ICT industry, entrepreneurs, startups, developer community?					

8.5	To what extent are there programs to address gender equality and the digital divide?	Scale 0-4 0 x 25 x 50 x 75 x 100 x			

OGD Perception Survey

Survey questions aim to capture **people’s perception** of the supply and demand side of OGD in a country and the general conditions for the implementation of an OGD programme. The Survey should be completed by selected individuals representing different sectors (private sector, government/public sector, bilateral/multilateral funding agencies/foundations, civil society organizations, academia/research, civic technologists, and media). The questions of the Survey are:

SECTION 1: About you

Male/Female

1. What sector do you represent? (select all that apply)

- Private Sector
- Government / Public Sector
- Bilateral/Multilateral funding agencies / Foundation
- Civil Society Organizations
- Academia / Research
- Civic Technologists
- Media
- Other (please specify)

Please, write the name of your country: _____

SECTION 2: Government data openness

2. Have you ever heard about “Open Government Data”?

- Yes
- No

2.1 If you answered yes, please specify in what context and what is your understanding of Open Government Data: _____

3. In general, do you think that making government data available to the public is beneficial?

- Strongly agree

- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

4. How satisfied are you with the current availability and relevance of government data in your country (from 1 = not satisfied to 4 = very satisfied)

4.1 Please give a short explanation for your response: _____

5. Have you ever used government data? (e.g. maps, weather forecasts, transport timetables, etc.)

- Yes
- No

5.1 If you answered yes, please specify the particular data and service through which you accessed the data, including references if available: _____

6. Do you think there is demand for government data that is not yet available for reuse? (from 1 = no demand to 4 = high demand)

SECTION 3: Data value

7. Do you think that your country's citizens currently have the resources and skills to create value with government data? (from 1 = very limited resources and skills to 4 = very high resources and skills)

7.1 Please list what is missing: _____

8. Do you think that your country's private sector currently has the resources and skills to create value with government data? (from 1 = very limited resources and skills to 4 = very high resources and skills)

8.1 Please list what is missing: _____

9. In your view, how valuable would the following government data be when publicly available? (from 1 = not valuable to 4 = very valuable)

- Health and welfare (e.g. public health inspections, hospitals performance, etc.)
- Education and training (e.g. school performance, educational resources, etc.)
- Public finances and procurement (e.g. detailed national budget, disaggregated expenditure, taxes distribution, contracts, etc.)
- Natural resources and environment (e.g. extractive industry, pollution, etc.)
- Geospatial (e.g. maps, points of interest, etc.)
- Politics and Policies (e.g. laws, official proceedings, bulletins, election results, etc.)
- Justice and Public Safety (e.g. crime data)

- Public directories (e.g. addresses and contact information for schools, hospitals, libraries, police stations, etc.)
- Transportation (e.g. information about roads and public transportation)
- Statistics (e.g. socioeconomic and demographic information)

10. Apart from the aforementioned, please specify any other government data that you are interested in: _____

11. Which of the following benefits could be achieved through an increased availability of government data? (select all you consider relevant)

- Transparency and accountability
- Public participation
- Efficiency and innovation
- Social benefits
- Economic benefits
- Others (please specify): _____

12. Do you think that opening government data could have any negative consequences?

- Yes
- No

12.1 If you answer yes, please specify: _____

SECTION 4: Government's attitude to the provision of data

13. Do you believe that the current government would be responsive to the public demand for government data?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

13.1 Please give a short explanation for your response: _____

14. Which of the following potential barriers do you think could be currently preventing the government from opening more data? (select all you consider relevant)

- Economic (e.g. high costs)
- Cultural (e.g. government secrecy)
- Legal (e.g. privacy issues)
- Expertise (e.g. absence of specific knowledge on Open Government Data)
- Data availability (e.g. data is of bad quality or non-existent)

- Technological (e.g. lack of adequate infrastructure)
- Lack of interest (e.g. not being considered necessary)
- Organizational (e.g. lack of leading agency or government collaboration)
- Strategy (e.g. lack of leading policy and action plan)
- Others (please specify): _____

FINAL REMARKS

15. Finally, feel free to provide any other additional comment or suggestion you may have:

Questionnaire for Interviews

The third element of the methodology is a set of interviews with stakeholders and selected experts. The interviews are semi-structured, open ended and informal. Please see the full list of potential questions for all 8 dimensions in the [Questionnaire Document](#). For each of the eight dimensions a minimum set of stakeholders (10) should be interviewed:

- Three representatives from central Government
- One or two representatives from district or province Government
- Three representatives from leading CSOs working on related issues
- One representative from both private sector and media

In addition, it is recommended to select domain experts and legal experts on the following issues:

1. Legal Framework, specially
 - a. Access to Information
 - b. Intellectual Property
 - c. Protection of Privacy and personal data
2. Data Management, policies and procedures on:
 - a. Data collection, data management, archiving, preservation, and sharing
 - b. Anonymization

The list of interviewees should be carefully selected in advance of the in-country review. This [TEMPLATE](#) can be used for the assignment of interviews.

Assessment of (key) Datasets

An in-depth assessment is necessary to understand the existence, accessibility, quality, openness and actual usefulness of data as well as the ease or possible restrictions/barriers to open up the data. Thus, the assessment of key datasets contains of six elements:

1. existence and accessibility of data
2. quality of data
3. openness of data
4. usefulness of data
5. ease to open up the data
6. restrictions/barriers to open up the data

In a nutshell, we **First** need to understand if the data exists at all and if it is available on paper only or in digital formats. **Second**, we need to understand the quality of the data, including: aggregated/disaggregated, granularity and detail, updating frequency, etc. **Third** we need to assess the legal and technical openness of the dataset, using the Open Data Index methodology. **Fourth** we want to understand if the data is useful for existing stakeholders, including the government itself, usually data can be useful if it is available as high-quality data with a high degree of openness, however it might be still little useful for specific needs of re-users. Thus, this part of the assessment can only be done by interviewing potential stakeholders. **Fifth** we assess how easy/difficult it would be to open up the data. This includes issues like structuring the data, adding metadata, cleaning and transforming the data into formats that can be processed automatically by machines. Attention should be given to the protection of personal data, ensuring that data selected for publication does not contain any personal data or that such data has been anonymized. **Sixth** we need to understand other non-technical implications of making data open, like potential loss of revenue, policy objections and excluding factors such as data that cannot be published because of state secrecy or security reasons.

While it may not be possible to persuade the data owners to publish the data (and that is not the prime purpose of the Assessment) the assessment should report what the objections would be and what steps could be taken to manage or mitigate them.

Final Product - OGD Country Report

The final product of the Assessment Methodology is a 10 to 20 pages report (please see the [OGD Assessment Report Template](#)) that compiles the results from the perception survey, the self-assessment, the stakeholder and expert interviews and the desk research into a coherent report. Please find below how the results of the three elements of the assessment are conducted and feed into the final result:

1. **Self-Assessment Tool:** A minimum 10 participants will be asked to complete the Self-Assessment, with a composition of the following stakeholders:
 - a. Three representatives from central Government
 - b. One or two representatives from district or provincial Government
 - c. Three representatives from leading CSOs working on related issues

- d. One representative from both private sector and media
Answers will be anonymized but sorted by stakeholder group.
2. **Perception Survey:** A minimum 50 participants will be asked to complete the survey. Answers will be anonymized but sorted by stakeholder group.
3. **Interview Questionnaire:** A minimum 10 participants will be asked to complete the Self-Assessment, with a composition of the following stakeholders:
 - e. Three representatives from central Government
 - f. One or two representatives from district or provincial Government
 - g. Three representatives from leading CSOs working on related issues
 - h. One representative from both private sector and mediaAdditionally, 2 domain and/or legal experts will be interviewed. Answers will be anonymized but sorted by stakeholder group.

A first version of the report will be drafted before the first workshop in the country, with the input of the results from all three elements of the assessment with complimentary desk research. The initial findings will be presented and discussed during the first workshop. Additional interviews will be conducted between the first and the second workshop. There are two main sections that will be added:

1. Addressing capacity gaps
2. Recommendations for Action Planning

The report is a lightweight and pragmatic document to help with the basic understanding of the local context (including enabling factors and obstacles and their implications) for the introduction of OGD initiatives to identify opportunities and challenges, in order to formulate appropriate actions and policies to address them. In other words, the report should point people to those areas along the eight dimensions that require more attention and more in-depth analysis. The report does not provide any legal advice nor is designed to deliver final recommendations. Instead it highlights gaps and challenges that need to be discussed with all stakeholders in a collaborative process to actually formulate recommendations and define appropriate actions.