New Zealand's Open Government Data Action Plan
1 July 2017-30 June 2020

Introduction

Data held by government is a valuable asset – a national taonga. It can transform evidence-based policy; revolutionise service design and delivery; boost data-driven innovation to support economic growth, and empower New Zealanders to better understand the world they live in. Data can deliver exciting new possibilities and improve the lives of New Zealanders.

The Government has signalled its intent to use data to make a difference in the lives of New Zealanders. A system-wide response is required to ensure there is a joined-up and coordinated approach exists across government. Systemic change is required to ensure clear roles and responsibilities, common rules, consistent approaches and standards, and, where appropriate, centralised and shared solutions.

Only by working together in partnership will government agencies be able to overcome challenges and move at pace, seizing the growing opportunities to generate greater value from open government data.

Open data plays a key role in supporting this vision. By releasing public data (where appropriate to do so protecting privacy and confidentiality) government, citizens, civil society and private sector organisations are enabled to make better informed decisions. Effective and timely access to data helps individuals and organisations develop new insights and innovative ideas that can generate social and economic benefits, therefore improving the lives of New Zealanders.

Open government data as an enabler of open government

In 2014, New Zealand signed up to the Open Government Partnership (OGP). Open data is a core enabler for open government under the first and current National Action Plan 2016-2018 (under Commitment 3 and Commitment 4).

Commitment 4 (Tracking progress and outcomes of open government data release) aims to help government agencies improve public access to non-personal, government-held data by openly tracking progress on efforts to open up their data. This helps to drive the culture change required to gain value from data.

Commitment 4's goal is that government agencies will be knowledgeable about what data they should and should not publicly release and why, understand how to remove obstacles to reuse, and consistently assess how this applies to the data they hold. This will increase the amount and quality of data released.

Commitment 4 is led by Stats NZ and Department of Internal Affairs (and previously Land Information NZ who hosted the Open Government Data Programme until March 2017).

Six Areas of Focus for open government data in NZ

The [Open Data Barometer](#)[1] sets out six recommendations to increase the readiness, implementation and impact of open data. These recommendations form the basis of the New Zealand Open Government Data Action Plan which will operate from 1 July 2017 to 30 June 2020.

The six areas of focus will be:

1. Adopt a core set of principles for open government data

New Zealand is reviewing the principles under which our open government data is released, and considering adoption of the International Open Data Charter. These new/amended principles will provide systematic backing and resources to translate growing open data policy commitments into successful implementation and impact.

The new/amended principles aim to lock in momentum around data needs by establishing clear and solid guidance on policy, and will help the New Zealand Government to develop long-term plans that set out timelines, resources and responsibilities for implementation.

2. Expand and deepen open data practice

Embrace open data as a long-term cultural shift in government with sufficient resources and staffing, ensuring that infrastructure, laws and policies are strong enough for long-term open data implementation and results.

The open data portals that centralise open data on dedicated websites through specific catalogues should lead to the establishment of open data infrastructures supporting open by design policies and increased open data maturity across the whole of government.

3. Make sure the open government data published is truly open

More and more government data is becoming publicly available, but not always in an open format given frequent issues with licensing, formats, bulk downloads or free availability.

Ensure key requirements are in place for true ease and power of data reuse.

4. Harmonise open data, privacy and freedom of information efforts

Ensure wider political and institutional enablers are available to drive the cultural shift required to proactively release open government data.

Open data officials in government will work more closely with transparency, privacy and right to information advocates to achieve better mutual understanding and coordination of efforts.

---

[1] Produced by the [World Wide Web Foundation](#), the Open Data Barometer ranks 115 countries on their readiness for open data initiatives, implementation of open data programmes, and the impact open data is having on business, politics and civil society. New Zealand was ranked 7th in 2016.

The revised open data principles will help educate stakeholders that open data cannot be fully effective in the absence of basic foundations such as an effective freedom of information regime and robust privacy safeguards.

5. ## Consult data users and prioritise what data citizens and data users want
Government and civil society will work together to identify the most pressing societal priorities and the data needs linked to these.

This will include systematically investing in user capacity to harness open data to solve these challenges, as part of a clear long-term open data strategy.

6. ## Provide funding, training and support to close the data gap
Provide initial support and assistance to help government agencies tackle and overcome long-standing barriers of data management infrastructure not designed for this purpose, unclear legal foundations, and limited capacity and capability which prevents agencies achieving expectations to proactively release open government data.

Future State for Open Government Data in NZ

The Open Government Data Action Plan seeks to work towards the following future state for open government data in New Zealand:

1. **Buy-in** – Government Ministers and Chief Executives are familiar with the concept of open government data and see the value and potential benefits; sufficient resourcing is available to proactively release open government data; and all are aware of the rational for sharing data, view the work required as business-as-usual, and understand the importance of working towards an 'open by design' approach.

2. **Organisational** –the data.govt.nz portal is adaptable and sustainable, and embedded in agencies' business-as-usual processes; government officials have the relevant required skills for working with open data, including technical, statistical, analytical, business insights/domain knowledge; and there is coordinated stakeholder management between data providers and users.

3. **Legal** – there are clear and specific legal frameworks for working with open government; privacy constraints are actively managed; NZGOAL[2] licensing is successfully applied to released data.

4. **Technical** – data released meets the relevant quality standards; data is easy to find and access; it has consistent metadata; is published in machine- and human-readable formats; and follows consistent standardisation requirements.

5. **Funding** – agency funding models support the release of open data (shifting from a cost-based pricing model to a free or marginal-cost priced model where possible); sufficient funding is

---

[2] New Zealand Government Open Access Licensing Framework - https://www.ict.govt.nz/guidance-and-resources/open-government/new-zealand-government-open-access-and-licensing-nzgoal-framework/

available to enhance operational processes and development of new services/products; the benefits for publishing open data for free are clearly demonstrated; sufficient investment in infrastructure, people and processes; and the data.govt.nz portal has sustainable funding available for business-as-usual operations and new developments.

6. **Awareness** – the clear benefits of open government data to everyday life are understood across government; ongoing cultural change including understand the value drivers, knowledge of specific needs of users, and understanding of business needs; wide familiarity of the concept of open data; and continuous dialogue between data providers and users.

The New Zealand Open Government Data Action Plan

The Action Plan will take effect from 1 July 2017, and be reviewed and updated annually until 30 June 2020 (see Appendix I). The work planned over the 3 year period is set out under the Areas of Focus. Other data ecosystem work is detailed to provide a wider vision of work which complements the planned open data work underway.

A more detailed timeline with deliverable dates is being used by the lead government agencies, Stats NZ and Department of Internal Affairs, to deliver the work.

New Zealand Open Government Data Action Plan (1 July 2017-30 June 2020)

Future state	New Zealand Government agencies proactively provide public access to non-personal, government-held data					
Areas of focus	**Adopt a core set of principles for open government data**	**Expand & deepen open data practice**	**Make sure the open govt data published is truly open**	**Harmonise open data, privacy & freedom of information efforts**	**Consult data users and prioritise what data citizens & data users want**	**Provide funding, training & support to close the data gap**
Open Data work underway or planned	Review the principles under which NZ open govt data is released. Responsible agency: Stats NZ	Implement the Open Data Maturity Model to enable agencies to benchmark their data maturity. Responsible agency: Stats NZ	Application of the NZGOAL licensing framework to open data and supporting resources. Responsible agency: Stats NZ	Encourage agencies to publish data released under Official Information Requests as open data. Responsible agency: Stats NZ	Annual public consultation with publishers & users on priority open data needs. Responsible agency: Stats NZ	Implement a 3-year open data training programme for govt officials. Responsible agency: Stats NZ/DIA
	Assist agencies to implement the principles under which they release open data. Responsible agency: Stats NZ	New funding committed to accelerate open data release/ reuse & support agencies delivery. Responsible agency: Stats NZ	Ongoing development of the data.govt.nz portal including improving accessibility & usability. Responsible agency: Stats NZ/DIA	Work with the Office of the Ombudsman on issues concerning open data requests as required. Responsible agency: Stats NZ	Ongoing publishing of open data case studies on data.govt.nz & other forums. Responsible agency: Stats NZ	Implement the Open Data Skills Framework to benchmark open data skills & manage learner journeys. Responsible agency: Stats NZ
	Support Minister responsible for Open Data. Responsible agency: Stats NZ	Undertake required work to release the Top 10 Priority Datasets. Responsible agency: Stats NZ	Development of the DIA Information Asset Register. Responsible agency: DIA	Work with the Office of the Privacy Commissioner to ensure the principles for open data release are met in a way that respects and fosters individuals' control over their own information. Responsible agency: Stats NZ	Encourage agencies to have increased stakeholder engagement with their data users. Responsible agency: Stats NZ	Expand the Open Data Toolkit & Knowledge Portal to provide resources for agencies. Responsible agency: Stats NZ/DIA
	Clarify the roles & responsibilities as lead agency for open data. Responsible agency: Stats NZ	Stocktake and published catalogue of the data held by data rich government agencies. Responsible agency: Stats NZ	Development of data content & metadata standards to ensure data is interoperable. Responsible agency: Stats NZ		Work with users to identify their Top 10 Requested Datasets & support relevant agencies to release. Responsible agency: Stats NZ	Launch a flying squad of open data experts available to assist data-rich agencies accelerate their release of open data
	Data rich agencies commit to working towards an 'open by design' approach. Responsible agency: Stats NZ		Development of the Data & Statistics Bill. Responsible agency: Stats NZ		Develop an all-of-government data brokering service for data requests. Responsible agency: Stats NZ	Work with the Policy Project to embed sufficient training & resources at the policy level. Responsible agency: Stats NZ
						Ongoing work with users to greater understand & work towards meeting demand. Responsible agency: Stats NZ
Other data ecosystem work underway or planned	Information Group governance providing a strategic, system-wide approach to improving government data & information management. Responsible agency: Stats NZ	Support agencies to address key data capability, standards, governance & analytics gaps. Responsible agency: Stats NZ	Gap analysis of critical data standards across the system, developing key standards & guidance to implement. Responsible agency: Stats NZ			Create a single point-of-contact (front door) for customers to access data brokerage & consultancy services, training, standards, guidance, information & tools. Responsible agency: Stats NZ
		Co-create a Data Roadmap for New Zealand, providing a shared plan & priorities around which agencies will align their efforts & guide future investment. Responsible agency: Stats NZ	Build data capability across government. Responsible agency: Stats NZ			Provide proactive support for agencies to use data to solve problems. Responsible agency: Stats NZ