New Zealand Open Data Action Plan

1 July 2017 to 30 June 2020 (updated 2 March 2018)

The value of open government data

Open government data[1] is an immensely valuable asset that, when safely made open, can multiply in value for New Zealand many times over. It can inform evidence-based policy, service design, and delivery. Its use can lead to innovative solutions to social or environmental problems, grow employment through new commercial ventures, and empower New Zealanders to better understand the world they live in.

Open government data is also a fundamental enabler of an open and transparent government. It supports better accountability and informed participation by all sectors of society in the important decisions affecting us all. This in turn leads to stronger trust and confidence in government and the public service.

New Zealand is currently ranked seventh in the world on the Open Data Barometer, behind the United Kingdom, Canada, France, United States of America, Korea, and Australia. The barometer is a global measure of how governments are publishing and using open data for accountability, innovation, and social impact.

A coordinated, government-wide response

Providing a coordinated and joined-up approach to releasing open government data requires a government-wide response – the New Zealand Open Data Action Plan. 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 data.

The Open Data Action Plan took effect on 1 July 2017, following public consultation, and sets out goals and initiatives to 30 June 2020. The action plan has been updated to include initiatives for implementing the principles of the Open Data Charter adopted in August 2017[2]. The action plan is accompanied by an implementation plan that includes time-bound activities and milestones, and describes how the action plan will be delivered.

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[1] Open government data is non-personal, unclassified, and non-confidential government-held data. Personal, confidential, and classified data remains protected.

[2] The Cabinet paper proposing adoption of the International Open Data Charter:
http://www.stats.govt.nz/about_us/what-we-do/our-publications/cabinet-papers/adoption-int-open-data-charter.aspx

The aim of the Open Data Action Plan is to develop an enabling open data environment and accelerate the release and reuse of open government data so that New Zealand is maximising the value of open data. As the value of data is only realised through its use, maximising the value is enabled by:

- increasing access to government held data through understanding what data government agencies hold, and enabling agencies to release data
- increasing use of data by improving the discoverability and usability of data, and improving skills and knowledge
- building an open by design culture that sustains the value of increased access to data through expanding and deepening open data practice in government agencies, and continued engagement with data users.

Stats NZ is the agency responsible for the Open Data Action Plan.

Short to medium term goals for opening up government data

The action plan has set a number of goals to be achieved by 2020.

In relation to government agencies, the goals are:

- Data champions and chief executives advocate for working towards an open by design approach, and releasing open government data. They actively measure their progress in improving their open data maturity and overcoming key capability gaps and barriers to data release.
- The government workforce understands the data needs of users, the value and potential benefits of open data, and is actively building data capability.
- The proactive release of high value, in-demand government data has been accelerated, and the data is regularly updated (or available real-time where possible).

In relation to data users, citizens, and stakeholder groups, the goals are that they:

- can easily discover and access usable open data of known coverage and quality, and access training, tools and resources to improve their data use capability.
- can more effectively judge the performance of government agencies and programmes and hold them to account.
- are working with government agencies to identify the most pressing societal priorities and the data needs linked to these.

Challenges

There are a number of challenges that we have to address to meet the above goals and to ensure that all government agencies routinely release open government data. Capability is a problem for agencies and users. Many agencies lack the data expertise and literacy needed to open up and use data. Some users are unable to find the data they need, or use the data they do find. Another problem for data users is the lack of standardisation of data which makes it difficult to bring together data from different sources.

For many agencies, an open data culture is lacking. Some agencies don't fully understand their obligation to release data under the open data mandate and related principles. Open data release is often a secondary priority behind agencies' primary statutory roles and responsibilities. Concerns about data quality, misinterpretation, and unforeseen negative consequences also contribute to a reluctance to release open data. This is at odds with an open by design approach.

Agencies that are willing and able to open up their data can be hindered by commercial business models that restrict release of open, freely available data.

Contribution to Open Government Partnership

The action plan contributes to Commitments 3 and 4 of NZ's Open Government Partnership National Action Plan and is the mechanism for implementing the principles of the Open Data Charter that the NZ government has agreed to adopt.

Regular updates of the action plan

The action plan and implementation plan will be regularly updated to reflect what has been learnt as we progress, changes in the needs of data users and government agencies, feedback from the data community, and changes in the data landscape.

We will publish quarterly progress reports that provide an overview of activities completed, key feedback themes and environmental changes, and updates to the plans.

Have your say

We need your feedback to help us keep the action plan relevant, effective, and working towards the best interests of New Zealanders. Join the discussion on Loomio or email opendata@stats.govt.nz.

Our vision is that New Zealand is maximising the value of government open data. To achieve this we will:

Increase access to government held data	Increase use of data	Build an open by design culture

Better understand what data government agencies hold
- Publish inventories of data held by agencies, and ensure they are maintained

Foster an enabling environment for agencies
- Establish a clear mandate and principles for releasing open government data
- Explore options for resolving constraints imposed by agencies' commercial business models eg support the next phase of reviewing access to weather data (lead by MBIE)
- Reinvigorate the Data Champions Network

Equip agencies to proactively release and maintain high value, in-demand data
- Establish a 'front door' for support & consultancy services, training, information, and tools
- Develop key data content and metadata standards to ensure data is interoperable
- Support agencies to apply the NZGOAL licensing framework to open data
- Explore centralised and shared solutions for publishing data
- Support agencies to navigate barriers preventing release (technical, cultural, organisational)

Motivate agencies
- Build awareness of the value of open data
- Support agencies to define their open data aspirations and plans
- Enable agencies to benchmark their data maturity and measure progress

Improve the discoverability and accessibility of data
- Refresh data.govt.nz to ensure the changing needs of users are met
- Develop an all-of-government data brokering service to facilitate access to data

Raise awareness of data availability
- Share information with the open data community
- Develop online resources including case studies, training resources, support information, and tools
- Bring open data to the attention of potential users

Equip users to use data
- Provide training, online resources, and tools to lift capability
- Enable data users to share their experiences, tools, and code
- Actively engage with the international open data community to develop solutions to increase citizen participation in government

Build awareness and understanding
- Deepen understanding of data users' needs and work with agencies to meet those needs
- Design user-centric resources for agency induction programmes

Enable two-way connections between citizens and government
- Support agencies to increase stakeholder engagement with their data users
- Share knowledge and insights on data users' needs
- Demonstrate the value of open data
- Continually engage with the data community to identify data priorities

Equip the government workforce with a data mindset
- Define core data competencies for the government workforce

NZ Open Data Implementation Plan

This implementation plan lists the tasks underway or planned for the next six months to implement the Open Data Action Plan. This is a rolling plan that will be regularly updated to reflect what we've learnt as we progress, changes in needs and priorities, feedback, and changes in the data landscape.

Publish inventories of government-held data for an initial tranche of three government agencies.

- Initiate compilation of data inventories for the three government agencies by **20 April 2018**.
- Publish completed data inventories for tranche one by **31 August 2018**, ensuring that it is clear what data is openly available or the reasons for restricting access.
- Define and document processes for maintaining the tranche one data inventories by **31 August 2018**.
- Revise the process for conducting data inventories by **28 September 2018**.
- Identify possible government agencies for tranche two by **28 September 2018**.

Track progress on release of open government data.

- Analyse the feedback received on the prototype dashboard and define requirements for a dynamic visualisation of the progress made by government agencies to release open government data, by **16 March 2018**.
- Initiate a procurement process to develop the dynamic visualisation, by **31 March 2018**.

Re-invigorate the cross-government Data Champions Network.

- Re-establish connections with existing data champions by **27 April 2018**.
- Recruit new data champions by **1 June 2018**.
- Work with data champions to define terms of reference for the data champion role by **15 June 2018**.
- Identify the resources required to support data champions by **15 June 2018**.

Clarify the open data mandate for government agencies.

- Consolidate the information about the principles and frameworks under which open government data is released (including Declaration on Transparent and Open Government, NZ Data and Information Management Principles, NZ Government Open Access and Licensing Framework, and Open Data Charter) and publish on a central location by **31 May 2018**.
- Publish guidance resources (such as help notes and FAQs) to help government agencies understand how the Open Data Charter principles could be implemented, by **31 May 2018**, and seek feedback on these resources.

Establish a central location (or front door) for accessing open data resources, services, and tools.

- Develop a content strategy by **25 May 2018**.
- Conduct a content audit and consolidate required content into the central location by **30 June 2018**.
- Start promotion of the central location as the 'place to start' by **30 June 2018**.

Understand capability gaps in government agencies.

- Analyse existing insights, feedback, and research to understand the causal factors contributing to the issues and barriers agencies currently face with releasing open data and adopting an open by design culture by **8 June 2018**.
- Identify possible interventions that could address the causal factors by **31 July 2018**.
- Contribute to the next phase of reviewing access to weather data by **31 May 2018**.

Build awareness of the value of open data.

- Develop a digital engagement strategy by **27 April 2018**.
- Develop a schedule of communications, blog posts, events, and workshops to deliver the strategy by **11 May 2018**.