

PLANNING AND MANAGING OPEN DATA INITIATIVES : A STANDARD PLAN

Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia



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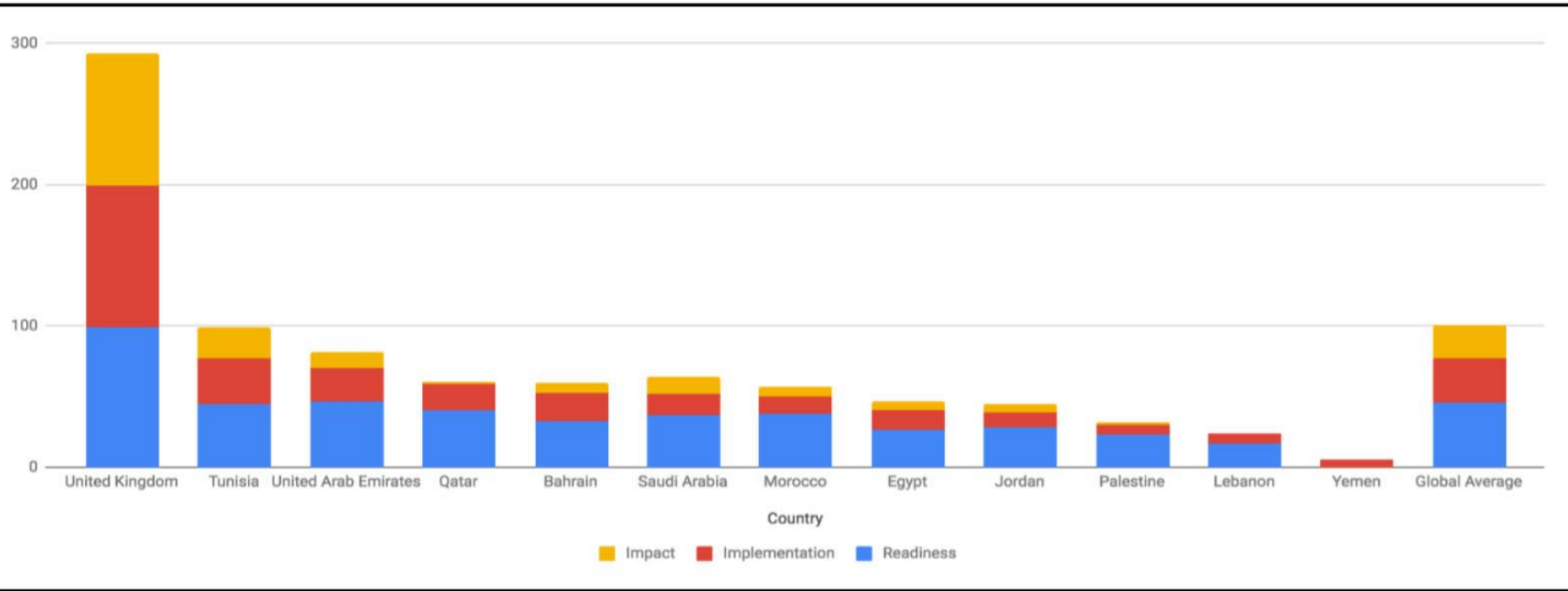
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- When executing open data programs or projects, a one-size-fits-all approach will not be effective.
- Each country, city or even a Government organization has its unique context that can be defined by many factors, such as :
 - the objectives of launching such programs;
 - the surrounding political and socioeconomic environment;
 - the human and financial resources available.

Arab States in the Open Data Barometer



Source: Calculated from <https://opendatabarometer.org/>.

- A **standard plan** is recommended for open data initiatives.
- The plan was developed based on global references, successful international open data programs, and supported with examples from the Arab region and around the world.
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The recommended open data program plan

The recommended standard plan consists of the following four phases:

- 1. preliminary phase;**
- 2. development phase;**
- 3. roll-out phase;**
- 4. standard practice phase.**

Four phases of the recommended open data programme plan

#	Phase	Key tasks
1	Preliminary phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Running the baseline data maturity assessment; ● Developing the open data strategy.
2	Development phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Developing the open data policy; ● Creating the open data portal; ● Prioritizing and publishing the datasets that should be released first; ● Recruiting the central team for coordinating the open data initiative/programme; ● Building up the human capacity.
3	Roll-out phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Publishing more high-value datasets; ● Improving organizational capacity; ● Promoting the use of the published open data.
4	Standard practice phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Maintaining the sustainability of the open data programme.

PHASE 1: PRELIMINARY PHASE

1. **Baseline data maturity assessment** : the Open Data Maturity Model (Evaluation section)

2. **Developing the open data strategy** :
 - Making the process open and collaborative by communicating the strategy design plans to all stakeholders, including the public;
 - Making it engaging by following an approach that allows the public to contribute to the design of the strategy through public consultation;
 - Aligning the strategic destination with the higher organizational or national objectives and agendas.

PHASE 1: PRELIMINARY PHASE

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Key stakeholders in the open data programme

Stakeholder	Expected role
Political leadership	Securing support and sponsorship for the open data programme, and helping to overcome the barriers or challenges that it may face.
Public-sector organizations	Engaging continuously in the open data programme, and making sure that open data becomes an integral part of their day-to-day work.
Legislatures	Supporting the development of any enabling legislation needed at any stage of the open data programme.
Businesses/startups	Using the published data effectively and demonstrating cases of that use, and providing feedback to data publishers on their datasets, in addition to recommendations for new datasets.
Civil society/citizens	Engaging with the data publishers to guarantee that open data supports the practice of maximizing transparency and accountability.
Information professionals and librarians	Contributing with their knowledge and expertise in data management, curatorship and archiving.
Researchers and scientists	Identifying economic, social and other opportunities of open data. This leads to promoting and fostering a data-driven research culture.
Media	Engaging with the open data programme to promote it and deliver its message to all the stakeholders.

Source: <https://www.per.gov.ie/wp-content/uploads/Draft-Open-Data-Strategy-2017-2022.pdf>.

Outline of the open data strategy

- a) Context and background
- b) Stakeholders and governance
- c) Strategic direction
- d) Objectives
- e) Actions
- f) Metrics for measuring progress
- g) Open data release
- h) Principles
- i) Budget
- j) Others : success factors

PHASE 2: DEVELOPMENT PHASE

1. Developing the open data policy :

- Outline the details of the organization's commitment to publishing, sharing and consuming data;
- Help the internal stakeholders (such as the data owners) identify and prioritize releases of open data according to a standard process;
- Help the external stakeholders (such as developers) understand how the organization will be releasing its data and ways in which they can be involved;
- Offer a central reference for all stakeholders on how the various open data activities should be carried out and how the different stakeholders communicate and collaborate;
- Offer a common educational content of the essentials of open data (for instance, definition) so that all stakeholders have the same understanding and expectations

PHASE 2: DEVELOPMENT PHASE

2. Outline of the open data policy

- a) Context and background
- b) Basics of open data
- c) Purpose and scope
- d) Policy provisions or directives :
Governance, Data selection and release, Data licensing,
Privacy and security considerations, Data quality and
publishing standards, Review and measuring progress,
Engaging with the data users
- e) Others : technical templates

PHASE 2: DEVELOPMENT PHASE

3. **The open data portal**
4. **Prioritizing and publishing the first wave of the datasets**
5. **The open data team :**

Suggested roles for the open data team

Role/title	Suggested responsibilities
Programme sponsor	Secures political and legislative support and approvals as necessary.
Chief data officer	Leads the entire programme with its various tracks, including the development of the open data strategy, policy and data prioritization and release.
Legal advisor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In charge of the process of drafting the suitable open licence; • Leads the development of any necessary legislation.
Portal/IT manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sponsors the development of the open data portal; • Provides advice and guidance on agency-specific technological issues.
Subject matter expert	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides the detailed technical knowledge of open data; • Participates in the regular review activities to ensure that datasets are published and updated as required.
Coordinator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leads the communication work of the initiative within the Government, including briefing political sponsors and raising external awareness; • Leads the communications with stakeholders and partners outside the Government, including the civic community; • Manages the process and participation in activities; • Arranges suitable training and capacity-building activities; • Acts as the programme's focal point for partners and stakeholders.
Data publisher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publishes data on the data portal as required by the approved process and quality standards.

Sources: <https://www.gartner.com/smarterwithgartner/understanding-the-chief-data-officer-role/>; <https://theodi.org/article/how-to-plan-and-budget-an-open-data-initiative/>; and <https://data.sa.gov.au/sites/default/files/Toolkit/Open-Data-Process-Guide.pdf>.

PHASE 2: DEVELOPMENT PHASE

6. Capacity-building : examples of needed skills

- Basic concepts and practices of open data;
- Managing the open data portal;
- Training relevant staff in the necessary skills to publish data and in the use of the portal software;
- Training data publishers in the skills necessary for finding high-value datasets and prioritizing their release;
- Skills related to legal, privacy and security aspects;
- Skills needed for successfully engaging with the public and stakeholders.

PHASE 3: ROLL-OUT PHASE

- Respond properly to the needs and expectations of the data users;
- Handle some difficult (or precedent-setting) cases of data release including privacy and anonymization;
- Improved and add features open data portal that were not available in its initial version;
- Developer-oriented events carried such as hackathons, to promote the use of the published datasets and generate examples of data reuse;
- Data innovation challenges and competitions outside the developers' community may be carried.

PHASE 4: STANDARD PRACTICE PHASE

- The frequent review and update of the open data standards and references (for instance, the policy);
- The update and maintenance of the open data portal;
- Continuing the publication of datasets in alignment with the prioritization plans and user needs;
- The frequent and continuous evaluation of the open data program to assess the level of progress achieved and to identify areas for improvement;
- Maintaining engagement with data users inside and outside the Government.

Barriers to publishing open data and their remedies

Barriers	Recommended remedies
Data is not interesting	Focus should be on publishing high-value datasets and then letting the users judge how interesting or useful they are. Even niche datasets have people that care about them. It should be remembered that "open by default" is one of the open data principles.
Questioning the purpose or benefit for our organization	The value of open data has been demonstrated and documented in many cases in different countries around the world.
Too many user requests on our data will be received	On the contrary, when raw data is provided, end-users will extract and combine the data according to their needs. This will potentially reduce the number of requests.
Users will draw superficial conclusions from the data	This risk exists in any form of publication. Generally, the data is accompanied by supplementary documentation which provides the context.
Data is not sufficiently accurate to be shared	Improving the data quality and the whole organization data maturity takes time. Publishing data can help through receiving feedback from the users and improving the quality of the data.
It is too costly to put the data into a standard format	With good planning, the production of or conversion to an open standard format requires little effort.
Will there be a risk of getting a negative reputation?	On the contrary, publishing open data can enhance the image of openness and transparency of the organization in addition to creating the desired public value.
Publishing low quality data will harm the image of the Government/organization	User feedback provides an opportunity to improve the quality of data. Open communication should be maintained while publishing data.

SUCCESS FACTORS

- Strong and sustainable leadership and sponsorship for the program;
- Appropriate governance structures in place within public sector bodies to ensure success. This includes the necessary support at senior level and the designation of an open data liaison officer in each organization;
- Implementation of the open data strategy will require collaboration and cooperation between data producers and data users to ensure that resources and efforts are targeted where most value will be derived;

SUCCESS FACTORS

- Focusing on creating impact and value to all stakeholders as per the goals defined in the open data strategy;
- Publication of high-quality datasets underpinned by the national quality standards and framework and aligned to international best practices to ensure cross-border inter-operability;

Thank You

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