IDRC Technical Report

Global Partnership on Open Data for Development
IDRC Center File - 107893-003

Produced by the World Wide Web Foundation

Summary

The World Wide Web Foundation is carrying out an exploratory project to better understand the role of standards to achieve a citizen-centered data revolution.

The project aims are to:

- Improve and deepen the methods to measure quality, use, and, ultimately, impact of Open Data policy commitments such as those in the G8 Charter, the International Open Data Data Charter, the OGP action plans, the UN Data Revolution and similar policy instruments;
- Identify common technical and policy issues across Open Data standards which require community coordination and input and develop initial recommendations on the way forward; and
- Identify the processes that ensure users needs are being incorporated into the design and construction of open data standards to address actual societal issues;

The following outlines work completed to date and the steps necessary to ensure these efforts benefit new and ongoing efforts of International Open Data Charter as well as the Joined-up Data Alliance as part of broader Open Data for Development (OD4D) programme of work.

These two initiatives mentioned above represent a clear complimentary focus to the work activities described in this grant and as such it is proposed that the remaining resources be placed to strengthen these initiatives, in particular the International Open

Data Charters' accountability mechanisms, revision of the Charter principles, and orchestration of the technical working group.

Work Completed to Date

The following outlines the work completed to date.

Open Data Principles and Policies for Enhanced Impact Assessment

- For the sample selection the first research was conducted in order to analyse the different widely adopted reference Open Data Practices and Policies, with a mix of OGP country member as well as other potential supporters of the new International Open Data Charter. The preliminary research can be found in the accompanying spreadsheets[1]

- The different good practices and policies selected during the previous phase have begun to be evaluated and compared in order to detect main commonalities and differences. Eventually a reference harmonized model will be established after on the basis of convergence with the International Open Data Charter.

- A new government self-assessment consultation process was initiated based on the above research which included a measurement of current open government data policies according to the draft charter principles.[2] (*54 government completed self assessments*).

- The barometer and its accompanying guide[3] was restructured it to include elements of the International Open Data Charter principles to tweak the supporting infrastructure for the production process of its 3rd edition. This entailed some changes to both the systems and the research methods used to date.

---

[1]
https://docs.google.com/a/webfoundation.org/spreadsheets/d/1-IPDTvf7JaysZeLDcHpvx1HIrZgowSKWg9VGRGWdOhw/edit?usp=sharing

[2]
https://drive.google.com/drive/u/1/folders/0BwIOB9Zf2WCdfm5hcFBOU09Pa0h5UGs5NXhuN3FoSnh0Y2lHTlhGams4MVZ6M0s3NUJ6eTg

[3]
https://docs.google.com/document/d/1t3MuJ4IctIbVY4a7U52MxgLA6toDdaULdtY4PjwL81E/edit#heading=h.8ni96e5592ie

Open Standards Study

Initial efforts to explore the key stakeholders and circumstances by which open data standards were initiated and what, if any, demand-side research was conducted resulted in a workshop carried during the Third International Open Government Data Conference in Ottawa (May 2015) which brought together more than 60 participants and organizations who shared their experiences.

The results of this effort fed directly into the development of the global OD4D agenda collaboration with leading international initiatives on open data policy and standards.

Further efforts were initiated during the IODC to align this project and International Open Data Charter with the launch of the Joined-up Data Alliance to which the Web Foundation participated as well as discussions to coordinate the Web Foundation efforts with the JDA and specifically Development Initiatives.

Alignment with International Open Data Charter

The principles in the International Open Data Charter provide governments with a common foundation upon which to realise the full potential of open data. For governments that have already established open data initiatives, the Charter provides continuing guidance for maximizing the release of data. For countries that are just getting started with their open data activities, the Charter can serve as a statement of commitment and the means to pursue political support for the fundamental principles of openness.

There are two key components of the International Open Data Charter that compliment the work of this grant include:

1) The design of an accountability mechanism for the Charter to improve and deepen the research methods to measure quality, use, impact, and, ultimately, accountability of Open Data policy commitments in the Charter through tools such as the Open Data Barometer. As such an Accountability working group has been established to further explore and build upon the preliminary research carried out above; and
2) The creation of a charter technical working group that seeks to answer the question: how can we ensure that different open data standards are connected, inter-operable and not siloed (e.g. open contracting data standard, extractives

data standard, budget data technical specification etc.). - a key focus will be on ensuring the interoperability of these open data policy and technical standards.

Thus we feel a different approach should be taken for the remainder of the grant that strengthens the connection with the OD4D Charter efforts and specifically sets out two clear pieces of work related to standards and policy.

The end of this project will coincide with the rolling launch of the Open Data Charter principles in the fall of 2015 with close linkages to its ongoing efforts. As such it is recommended the remainder of the time in this project should be oriented to bootstrapping preliminary efforts of the working groups related to the accountability mechanism (policy) and technical working group (standards) as well as the revision of the principles.

Specifically this would entail:

Policy

- To continue the support for the principles consultation;
- To continue to support a monitoring process through the Open Data Barometer (ODB) for the Charter principles as they become finalized; and
- Conclude Analysis of the data gathered to date through the Open Data Barometer Survey and the OGP countries analysis and extract early findings that show initial adoption of the draft Charter principles to be included in the final Open Data Barometer report.

Standards

- To propose a preliminary process and criteria for evaluating those standards for potential application and adoption by the Charter Secretariat.

Timeline

The work described above would be carried out through to the end of 2015.