

# Developing an Open Data Infrastructure for Volunteering and Social Action

## **Working Group - Terms of Reference**

### 1. Introduction/Purpose:

This document outlines the Terms of Reference (ToR) for the Working Group established to advise on the development of data standards and infrastructure for Developing an Open Data Infrastructure for Volunteering and Social Action.

The Working Group will be convened to ensure standards and infrastructure are developed that meet the needs of all stakeholders and directly address requirements within the guardrails (strategic vision and policies) set by the Steering Group.

The Working Group will be responsible for making technical recommendations to the Steering Group and DCMS.

### 2. Programme Overview:

It is widely accepted that volunteering yields significant societal benefits, for example, boosting people's physical and mental health, reducing loneliness, and fostering stronger community cohesion. The Open Data Institute (ODI), an independent non-profit organisation working at the intersection of data and society, supported by DCMS, is enabling the growth of volunteering.

Data plays a significant role. In fact, we believe it can be transformative. By creating ways for data to flow more freely between systems, organisations and individuals, we think it will be easier for people to find volunteering opportunities.

We will co-design, test, and prove the value of a modern, open data infrastructure for volunteering. At the ODI we define data infrastructure in the broadest sense. It is the combination of data, technologies, policies and standards - as well as the organisations and people - that contribute to, and steward these things.

We aim to enhance existing digital services while driving innovation and strengthening the sector's data capabilities. We will also establish the governance and stewardship models needed to secure trust and adoption.

### 3. Working Group Responsibilities:

The Working Group will:

- Contribute to the enterprise data architecture and technical roadmaps required to enable open data standards and infrastructure to be implemented and adopted by stakeholders.
- Feed into the research, recommendations and creation of data standards that respond to the use cases and related user stories.
- Promote the adoption of the standards and infrastructure, supporting organisations in developing business cases for change.

### 4. Membership:

The working group will include subject matter experts from the:

1. Software Vendors - organisations involved in developing software used by the voluntary sector.
2. Users - organisations who will be impacted by the standards and infrastructure
3. Data experts – From the sector and associated sectors.

The Working Group will be a community of delivery. Membership will be by open, but members will be required to register and commit time to the work of the group. The group will work openly publishing minutes of meetings, drafts products and other artefacts.

The Group will be chaired by the technical lead from the ODI.

### 6. Meeting Frequency and Format:

- The Working Group will work collaboratively as a delivery team; they will meet on a schedule required to deliver product. It is expected that the group will meet at least fortnightly until January 2026.
- Meetings will be primarily held online, but in-person workshops may be held to co-work on specific products/artefacts. These will be held at a central location, for example, the ODI's offices at St Pancras. In-person meetings will include a hybrid option for members unable to travel to them.
- A shared workspace will enable working groups to collaborate between meetings.
- Meeting agendas/discussion topics will be shared in advance.

- Meetings will be recorded, with a short meeting summary and slides published online.

## 7. Roles and Responsibilities of Members:

- Members: Responsible for actively participating in meetings, providing constructive feedback, and contributing to the overall success of the Initiative.
- Chair: Responsible for chairing meetings, ensuring effective discussions, facilitating decision-making, and determining agendas/discussion topics ahead of each meeting.
- Secretariat: Responsible for logistics, and ensuring meetings are recorded and these recordings are shared.

## 8. Reporting and Communication:

- The Chair will provide regular progress reports from the Working Group to the Steering Group.

## 9. Decision-Making Process:

- Decisions will be made by consensus. If consensus cannot be reached a simple majority vote will be undertaken. Where multiple attendees from the same organisation join, their votes will count as one.
- Any dissenting opinions will be recorded in the meeting minutes.
- If a consensus cannot be reached the Working Group may ask the Steering Group for direction.

## 10. Confidentiality:

Outputs from meetings (including papers, minutes and any communications/social media) will be shared openly. These will be published under an open licence (CC-BY).

Working Group attendees' consent to be publicly listed as participants in meetings.

## 11. Competition Law and Conflicts of Interest

Group members must ensure that in participating in the Group they do not engage in [anti-competitive activity](#). Group members must advise the secretariat if they think there is a risk of anti-competitive activity occurring due to the group's work.

Group members are to declare any direct or indirect interest (whether personal, or by a duty of loyalty to another organisation) that conflicts or might conflict with the interests

of this programme at the outset of any discussion on the relevant issue. Declarations of conflicts of interest will be noted in the public record of discussions, together with details of any proposals made.

#### 12. Duration and Review:

- The Working Group will operate for the duration of the Initiative.
- These Terms of Reference will be reviewed and updated at least annually.
- These Terms of Reference were approved on: XX/XX/XXXX.