

Open Government Partnership New Zealand

National Action Plan 2018-2020

Progress report to: January 2020 – June 2020

Commitment 11: Authoritative dataset of government organisations as open data for greater transparency

Lead agency: Department of Internal Affairs

Objective:

To release and maintain an authoritative dataset of government organisations as open, machine-readable data to enhance the transparency of government structures to the public.

There will be cross-agency agreement to maintain this dataset, providing assurance that the data being used is the authoritative source. This dataset becomes a foundation for both digital services and information about government.

Ambition:

New Zealanders and others will have access to authoritative, open data about government agencies and their roles, learn more about how government is structured, what agencies do, and be able to reuse the open data in new and innovative ways.

OGP values: Transparency, Accountability and Technology and Innovation

Milestones		Progress
1	Identify owners contributors and maintainers for the data held in the proposed dataset. <i>Start/End dates:</i> October 2018-December 2018	
2	Investigate and agree on the appropriate open standards for the dataset. <i>Start/End dates:</i> October 2018-December 2019	
3	Work with identified dataset contributors to agree process for ongoing maintenance of the dataset. <i>Start/End dates:</i> December 2018 – June 2019	
4	Release the open data set on data.govt.nz and make it available via the data.govt.nz open data Application Programming Interface (API) and promote the opportunities of reuse that the dataset provides with government agencies, non-governmental organisations, business, and the public. <i>Start/End dates:</i> December 2018 – June 2020	

Progress key:



some delays



underway



completed

WHAT WE HAVE BEEN DOING

- Major meeting in March where the stakeholder group was taken through the data the Cabinet Office holds e.g. Ministers, Portfolios. There is a lot of excitement around the value that opening-up this data holds.
- Setting up workstreams within the stakeholder group. The first is looking at creating a data model of the 'machinery of government'. The other's focus is on creating an open standard. This conversation is off the [back of the work done last year](#), but is looking to leveraging standards work be done in local government.
- State Services Commission (SSC) have released their dataset of government organisation names, events (changes to government agencies like disestablishment), and a public sector table which provides access by sector groupings, on data.govt.nz. This is a major milestone for this commitment and provides a great foundation.
- Continue to work with the Product owner of Govt.nz to reuse the SSC organisational name data in the Government A-Z.

HOW WE ARE INCLUDING DIVERSE VOICES

N/A

HOW WE ARE KEEPING DIVERSE COMMUNITIES INFORMED

- Continuing to blog in the open and use public and private Twitter accounts amplify and extend the reach of this work.

WHAT'S NEXT?

- Booking in an open planning session for the year extension to June 2021 where the 'strawperson' for the data model will be discussed along with general planning e.g. governance, engagement, communications.
- Proactively marketing opportunities for use of the SSC agency name dataset.

LINKS – EVIDENCE OF PROGRESS AND MILESTONES ACHIEVED

- Agency name open dataset – ready for reuse!
<https://www.digital.govt.nz/blog/agency-name-open-dataset-ready-for-reuse/>

IMPACTS

Immediate

Improved access to information about the structure of government agencies

The only authoritative list of government organisations is owned by the State Services Commission. There is no open data option for this list, only an html page and PDF, so there are no options for reuse.

It lists the agencies by legal title which means that organisations aren't discoverable by the sub-agencies or working brands (eg only Department of Internal Affairs – Archives NZ, and National Library can't be found, Ministry of Social Development, but not Work and Income). It also means that organisations that are known by a trading name (eg Creative NZ, NZ on Air) are only discoverable by their legal title (eg Arts Council, Broadcasting Commission). Other alternative names, such as Māori name, also aren't listed. This reflects the intent of the data from a government perspective but limits its usefulness for citizens who want to find out where to get government services, or who want to know which agency is accountable, so needs to trace the government's structure. Note that government agencies themselves are a major beneficiary to having this data available for reuse.

Up-to-date authoritative information

An authoritative list would enable better access to people's democratic rights – such as finding out which agencies to contact about the Official Information Act. Currently, data on the [Directory of Official information](#) is updated periodically and published via PDF. With machinery of government changes and agencies on the move, it doesn't take much to make this information out of date.

Medium Term

[Impacts that you expect to be visible by the end of the next NAP – that we could refer to in the Self-Assessment at the completion of NAP 4]

Opportunities for improved and innovative service delivery

There is a global shift in governments to the idea of 'government as a platform', where governments are responsible for foundational components, such as data, that can then be reused by anyone to create and innovate from. There is great potential for improved service delivery from businesses or NGOs being able to 'plug-in' (using APIs) to updated government data. For example, the [Citizens Advice Bureau](#) is an intermediary for people who either don't know where to go or don't trust government enough to approach them directly. They put time and effort into maintain data about government agencies that could better be spent serving people's needs and/or improving their services.

Simply work for those people and businesses who rely on legal lists of organisations

Having authoritative government data has multiple benefits for business and civil society/civic tech. It opens up the ability for more innovative government directories, building off the base of existing ones like the [New Zealand Government Sector Directory](#) or [Neighbourly](#).

There is also the potential to open up citizen engagement, and government through initiatives like [MySociety](#)'s writing to your MP service.

UPDATED MILESTONES

Milestones		Progress
1	Identify owners contributors and maintainers for the data held in the proposed dataset. <i>Start/End dates: October 2018-December 2018</i>	
2	Investigate and agree on the appropriate open standards for the dataset. <i>Start/End dates: October 2018-June 2021</i>	
3	Work with identified dataset contributors to agree process for ongoing maintenance of the dataset. <i>Start/End dates: December 2018 – June 2021</i>	
4	Explore and then agree on a governance model and ongoing ownership for the data model and data set. <i>Start/End dates: August 2020-June 2021</i>	
5	Draft and then confirm a data model of the 'machinery of government' to support the ongoing release of data about government organisations. <i>Start/End dates: January 2020-June 2021</i>	
6	Release the open data set on data.govt.nz and make it available via the data.govt.nz open data Application Programming Interface (API). Secure active users of the dataset/API by promoting the opportunities of reuse to government agencies, non-governmental organisations, business, and the public. <i>Start/End dates: December 2018 – June 2021</i>	