Digital Single Market

Open Data

Team responsible
[DG CONNECT](#) [1]

Open data refers to the idea that certain data should be freely available for use and re-use.

[2]

The Commission's work in this area currently focuses on generating value through re-use of a specific type of data: public sector information, sometimes also referred to as government data. That is all the information that public bodies produce, collect or pay for. Examples are geographical information, statistics, weather data, data from publicly funded research projects, and digitised books from libraries.

Open data policy is linked with [open research data policy](#) [3] since both are publicly funded data or their data results from public funding. Therefore, in principle, the data should be openly accessible

and re-useable.

The European Commission supports open data for 4 reasons:

- Public data has significant potential for re-use in new products and services;
- Having more data openly available will help discover new and innovative solutions to address societal challenges;
- Public administrations will achieve more efficiency gains by sharing data between them;
- Open data fosters participation of citizens in political and social life and increases transparency of government.

The European Commission has set up a legal framework [4] to allow the reuse of public sector information through the Directive 2003/98/EC [5]. This Directive is built around two pillars of the internal market: transparency and fair competition. It focuses on the economic aspects of the reuse of information. It was revised by the Directive 2013/37/EU [6], which included museums, libraries and archives into the scope.

In 2017, the European Commission has launched a public online consultation [7] on the Review of the Directive 2013/37/EU, fulfilling the periodic review obligation prescribed by the Directive. This is part of the initiative on accessibility and reuse of public and publicly funded data foreseen in the mid-term review [8] of the Digital Single Market strategy. Within this context, the Commission also explores the possibility to allow public sector bodies to access and use data coming from private sector entities if this would be justified by public interest considerations.

Furthermore, a number of non-legislative measures [9] support the opening up of public sector information, such as the Public Sector Information expert group (PSI Group) [10].

Since 2015, the European Commission funds the European Data Portal [11] through the Connecting Europe Facility programme [12]. This is a pan-European repository of public sector information open for reuse in the EU. This portal also offers a training centre on how to reuse open data and a database of success stories from European and international re-users.

The Commission leads by example, with a solid legal framework for the reuse of its own data [13] (COM (2011) 882), complemented by an EU Open Data Portal [14] where re-users can find datasets from the Commission, as well as from the other EU institutions and agencies.

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[3] https://ec.europa.eu/research/openscience/index.cfm?pg=openaccess
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[9] https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/non-legislative-measures-facilitate-reuse

[10] https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/news/public-sector-information-group-main-page

[11] http://www.europeandataportal.eu/

[12] https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/connecting-europe-facility

[13] http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2011:0882:FIN:EN:PDF

[14] http://open-data.europa.eu/