

Open Data Specifications Guidelines for UAE Government Entities

Edition No. 3 - 2022

1- What is Open Data?

Open data is data that can be freely used, re-used and redistributed by anyone without technical, financial or legal restrictions, subject only to two requirements:

- attribute the document to the source
- abide by copy left licenses.

The word 'open' refers to the fact that everyone can access, use, modify and share data for any purpose (provided that the source is mentioned, and data is re-subjected to 'open data principle').

1.1- Characteristics of Open Data

Following are the key characteristics of the open data:

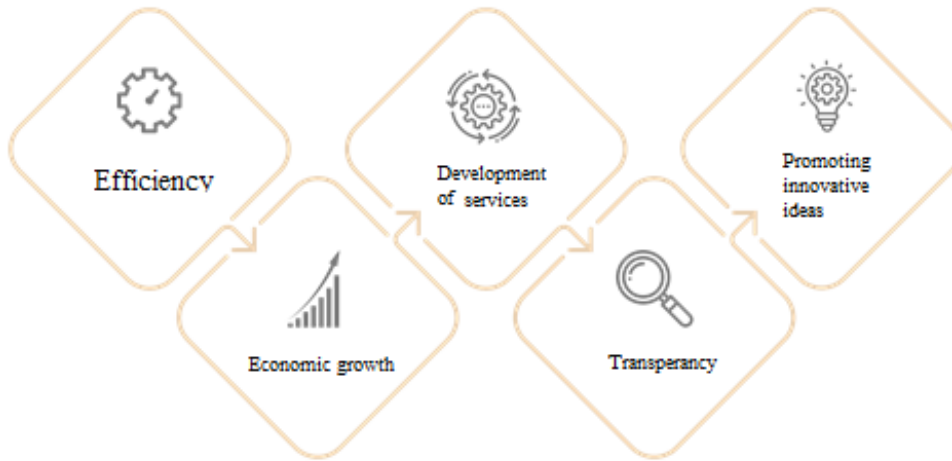
- **Availability and access:**
The data must be freely available as a whole, by downloading over the internet. It should also be available in a modifiable form, in accordance with the users' needs.
- **Re-use and Redistribution**
The data must be provided under terms that permit its re-use and redistribution including the intermixing with other datasets. The data must be machine-readable.
- **Universal Participation**
Everyone must be able to use, re-use and redistribute the data. There should be no restrictions that would prevent use for certain purposes.

In line with this definition, open government data is data published by government entities, to be shared with the public freely or with minimal restrictions that observe the requirements of legal licenses and preservation of rights. Open government data include government statistics in various sectors such as health, education, economy, environment and other statistics that benefit the society.

1.2- Benefits of Open Data

The following figure illustrates the benefits of using open data¹.

Benefits of open government data



¹ Starting an Open Data Initiative – The World Bank

General guidelines for open data

When adopting the open data policy on their website, government entities are expected to abide by the following guidelines, at minimum:

- ❖ Publish data that covers services and activities that would be of value to the customers and website visitors
- ❖ Publish data over several years (for example: from 1995 till present)
- ❖ Publish data in a raw format, as much as possible, taking into consideration privacy, confidentiality, or any given restrictions
- ❖ Provide access to data without any restrictions (for example: requesting the user to register)
- ❖ Provide real-time open data in a structured format and suitable for technical use (for example: (CVS, XML, XLS)
- ❖ Publish data in adjustable and reusable file formats in 'cut-paste' mode as well as downloadable
- ❖ Publish data in a clear manner, using 'Meta Data' descriptions
(Metadata is defined as structured information that describes, explains, locates, or otherwise makes it easier to retrieve, use, or manage a data resource)
- ❖ Enable users to express their opinions on the published data²
- ❖ Enable users to know the type and size of the files, as well as the time required to download them beforehand
- ❖ Provide statistics on the number of times the files are used/ downloaded

² For more details about this point, refer to eParticipation Guidelines for the UAE Government entities issued by the UAE Digital Government.

- ❖ When a file needs special software to run, users must be notified, and the necessary software made available, if possible.
- ❖ Provide all possible platforms for interaction with data users, share links to other platforms such as forums, blogs, Facebook and so forth, in which the data can be discussed
- ❖ Provide information on the direct relationship between datasets and the applications use of the available datasets
- ❖ Provide a mechanism for the public (researchers/students and others) to request data through the entity's website
- ❖ Provide a feature for evaluating the dataset and feedback on each file available to users
- ❖ Provide 'data visualization' of some available data
- ❖ Provide 'bulk download option'
- ❖ The open data page on the entity's website must contain the open data licence, giving the users a clear and unambiguous permit to use and distribute the data etc.... (Appendix A)
- ❖ Government entities should strive to exceed the minimum, and utilise the principles of open government data as stipulated in the document' [Ten Principles for opening up Government Information](#)' and as recommended by the UN. In addition, they need to raise the level of data openness according to ['5-star deployment scheme for Open Data.'](#)

2- Training and knowledge

The Internet is rich with materials that enhance the level of knowledge and skills for practitioners and users of open data. Telecommunications and Digital Government Regulatory Authority-TDRA have held several workshops and seminars to build capacity in the field of open government data. You can find an introductory material about open data in [TDRA Virtual Academy](#).

3- Conclusion

The guidelines contained herein represent the minimum requirements for the government entities wishing to pursue the open data policy with their users. The commitment to these guidelines reflects the seriousness the entities to bring success to this policy and take advantage of its results, particularly, increasing customers' trust, improving public services, and promoting an innovative, sustainable environment.

For Inquiry Contact



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Appendix A: UAE Federal Open data license³

The Federal Open Data Licence is shown below in two forms:

- A user-friendly, plain language summary for publication on the web pages of Open Data Portals
- The detailed licence terms which support this and which should be available for download from Open Data Portals and linked from the summary.

Federal open data license: A summary

This is a summary of (and not a substitute for) the licence that applies to your use of information accessed via [name of Open Data Portal] ("**Licence**"). A copy of that licence may be accessed <here>.

1. Overview

We grant you a worldwide, royalty-free, perpetual, non-exclusive licence to use and re-use the information that is available under this licence freely and flexibly, subject to the conditions below:

2. You are free to:

- ✓ Copy, reproduce and communicate to the public the information in any format
- ✓ Adapt or modify the information
- ✓ Exploit the information for both commercial and non-commercial purposes
- ✓ Permit third parties to use the information

3. You must comply with the following terms:

- ! Not use the information in any way that is unlawful and/or misleading to the general public
- ! *Include the name or identification of the author and retain any copyright notice featured in the original material*
- ! *Where possible, include a URL or hyperlink to the licensed material*

These are important conditions of the licence and if you fail to comply with them the rights granted to you under this licence may be withdrawn.

4. Exemptions:

The licence does not permit the use of:

- X any trademarks associated with a database or with the open data platform
- X any images (including logos, graphics or photographs) which appear in a database.

³ UAE Smart Data Framework (EN) - Part 1 Principle and Standards