



## Draft Policy on Open Data for the Government of Pakistan

WHEREAS, most of the data collected by the Government of Pakistan (hereafter, “the government”) is stored in mediums which hamper the ability to synthesize, analyze, and aggregate information for the better allocation of public resources; and

WHEREAS, access to public information encourages community engagement and allows residents of Pakistan to provide productive feedback to government officials about localized needs and problems; and

WHEREAS, as per article 19-A of the constitution, right to information, every citizen has the right to have access to information in all matters of public importance subject to regulation and reasonable

WHEREAS, the careful enforcement of an open data program increases accountability and transparency, improves the understanding and provision of services, increases access to public information, and enriches coordination and efficiencies among departments, partner organizations and citizens; and

WHEREAS, one of the aims of an Open Data policy is to proactively release information that is usually requested by the public, before it is requested, therefore saving time, effort, resources and duplication and

WHEREAS, to promote Open Governance, the government will create an inventory for information that is to be open by default and will proactively publish data and data containing information, consistent with the relevant law; and

WHEREAS, the use of information technology is important for Open Governance; and

WHEREAS, by publishing structured, standardized data in machine readable formats the government seeks to encourage the development of software applications and tools using

public government data in a different, beneficial and fresh method; and

WHEREAS, the protection of confidentiality, privacy and safety will be a top priority while forming the open governance movement for transparency and accountability through open data; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the **Open Data Board** of the Government of Pakistan that:

### **Section 1: Definitions**

- a. "Data" means statistical, factual, quantitative, or qualitative information that is maintained or created by or on behalf of a government department. This definition is inclusive of software source code developed or maintained by or on behalf of the government.
- b. "Open data" means data that is available online, in an open format, with no legal encumbrances on use or reuse, and is available for all to access and download in full without fees or a requirement of registration. "Legal encumbrance" includes national copyright protections and other, non-statutory legal limitations on how or under what conditions a dataset may be used.
- c. "Open format" means any widely accepted, nonproprietary, platform-independent, machine-readable data format, which permits automated processing of such data and facilitates data syntheses and search functionalities.
- d. "Dataset" means a named collection of related data resources or records, with the collection containing data organized or formatted in a specific way, often in tabular form.
- e. "Protected information" means any dataset or portion thereof to which the competent authority may deny access pursuant to the public records statute or any other law or rule or regulation.
- f. "Sensitive information" means any data, if published online, , can raise confidentiality, privacy, or security concerns or have the potential to jeopardize public health, safety or welfare to an extent that is greater than the potential public benefit of publishing that data.
- g. "Publishable data" means data which is not protected or sensitive and which has been prepared for release to the public.

### **Section 2: Open Data Pakistan Program**

- a. the government pledges to create and implement standard operating procedures that will allow it to:
  1. Proactively release all government data that is classified as publishable and public, making it available in free and open formats, applying an open license with no restrictions on use or reuse, and fully accessible to the broadest range of users to use for varying purposes;
  2. Publish up to date and high quality data with additional information of the data or documentation or metadata
  3. Provide data for a maximum time span; and permanence to encourage maximum use;
  4. Link the government's public program priorities to the access of open data to measure the effectiveness of datasets made available through the Open Data Pakistan Program;

5. Minimize limitations on the disclosure of public information while appropriately safeguarding protected and sensitive information; and
  6. Support innovative uses of the government's publishable data by departments, the public, and other partners.
- b. The development and implementation of these practices shall be overseen by the **Chief Data Officer**, reporting to the Open Data Board.
  - c. The requirements of this Act shall apply to any government department, office, administrative unit, commission, board, advisory committee or other division of government ("department"), including the records of third party agency contractors that create or acquire information, records, or data on behalf of a government agency.
  - d. Appropriate funding shall be made available to achieve the goals of this program.

### Section 3: Governance

- a. Implementation of the Open Data Pakistan Program will be overseen by the Chief Data Officer, who will work with the government's institutions and departments to:
  1. Determine, identify and publish information about a **lead open data coordinator** who will be responsible for managing each department's participation in the Open Data Pakistan Program;
  2. Supervise and oversee the development of a comprehensive inventory of datasets held by each government department which is to be published and regularly updated on the central open data location i.e Open Data Pakistan Portal
  3. Create and enforce a process for determining the relative level of risk and benefit for the public associated with potentially sensitive, non-protected information to determine whether and how to publish it in a safe manner;
  4. Create and enforce a process for prioritizing the release of datasets which takes into account new and existing interests from the public (such as the frequency of public records requests), the government's public program priorities, existing opportunities for data use in the public interest, and cost;
  5. Proactively consult with members of the public, government staff, journalists, researchers, and other stakeholders to identify the datasets which will have the greatest benefit to public and government if published in a high quality manner;
  6. Establish processes for publishing datasets to the central open data location, including processes for ensuring that datasets are high quality, up-to-date, are open formats, and exclude protected and sensitive information;
  7. Ensure that appropriate additional information or metadata is provided for each dataset in order to facilitate its use;
  8. Develop and oversee a routinely updated, public timeline for new dataset publication; and
  9. Make recommendations for historical document additions, define a schedule for approved historical document publication
  10. Ensure that published datasets are available for bulk download and/or available via public application programming interfaces (APIs) without legal encumbrance.
- b. In order to increase and improve use of the government's open data, the Chief Data Officer will actively encourage government and public participation through providing regular opportunities for feedback and collaboration.

#### **Section 4: Open Data Pakistan Portal**

- a. the government will develop and maintain a publicly available location on the government's website or in another suitable online location where the government's published data will be available for download.
- b. Published datasets shall be placed into the public domain. Dedicating datasets to the public domain means that there are no restrictions or requirements placed on use of these datasets.
- c. Each published dataset should be associated with contact information for the appropriate maintainer or publisher of that dataset as well as with a file layout or data dictionary that provides information about field labels and values.
- d. government departments will specify a recommended data citation format available for viewing on the central online location for published government data to encourage responsible reuse of government data.

#### **Section 5: Open Data Report and Review**

- a. Within one year of the effective date of this **Act**, and thereafter no later than [31<sup>st</sup> December] of each year, the Chief Data Officer shall publish an annual Open Data Report. The report shall include an assessment of progress towards achievement of the goals of the government's Open Data Pakistan Program, an assessment of how the government's open data work has furthered or will further the government's programmatic priorities, and a description and publication timeline for datasets envisioned to be published by the government in the following year.
- b. During the review and reporting period, the Chief Data Officer should also make suggestions for improving the government's open data management processes in order to ensure that the government continues to move towards the achievement of the policy's goals.