6 Open data policy

Preamble

1. This policy contains recommendations on open data in implementation of the EITI. It builds on lessons emerging from national level implementation and emerging international best practice.[8]

2. The EITI Principles declare that "a public understanding of government revenues and expenditure over time [can] help public debate and inform choice of appropriate and realistic options for sustainable development" (EITI Principle 4). The EITI Standard therefore requires EITI Reports that are "comprehensible, actively promoted, publicly accessible, and contribute to public debate" (EITI Requirement 7.1). Improving the accessibility and comparability of EITI data is essential to realise these objectives.

Open data objectives

3. Open EITI data can increase transparency about what government and business activities, and increases awareness about how countries' natural resources are used and how extractives revenues are levied and spent, providing strong incentives for that money to be used most effectively.

4. Open data promotes accountability and good governance, enhances public debate, and helps to combat corruption. Providing access to government data can empower individuals, the media, civil society, and business to make better informed choices about the services they receive and the standards they should expect. Open data, can also be a valuable tool for government in improving policy making and sector management.

5. Free access to, and subsequent re-use of, open data are of significant value to society and the economy.

Open data in EITI implementation

6. EITI Implementing countries are encouraged to:

   a) orient government systems[9] towards open data by default. It is recognised that there is national and international legislation, in particular pertaining to intellectual property, personally-identifiable and sensitive information, which must be observed;

   b) ensure that this data are fully described, so that users have sufficient information to understand their strengths, weaknesses, analytical limitations, and security requirements, as well as how to process the data;

   c) release data as early as possible, allow users to provide feedback, and then continue to make revisions to ensure the highest standards of open data quality;

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8. Including the Open Government Partnership, the G8 Open Data Charter and Technical Annex, the Open Data Charter (http://opendatacharter.net/), and the open definition (http://opendefinition.org/).

9. The term government data is meant in the widest sense possible. This could apply to data owned by national, federal, local, or international government bodies, or by the wider public sector.

d) release data under an open license that allows users to freely obtain and easily re-use it;

e) share technical expertise and experience with other countries to maximise the potential of open data;

f) work to increase open data literacy and encourage people, such as developers of applications and civil society organisations that work in the field of open data promotion, to unlock the value of open data;

g) ensure that data is interoperable with national and international standards, including adopting data standards approved by the EITI Board and additional guidance provided by the EITI secretariat;

h) where possible use unique identifiers to link data across years of reporting or different sources;

i) work towards mainstreaming the creation of open data for EITI into government systems to ensure timeliness, data quality, reuse and cost effectiveness;

j) provide data in granular, machine-readable formats.