Data and Information Re-use Chief Executives' Steering Group

2012 Report On Agency Adoption of the New Zealand Declaration on Open and Transparent Government

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New Zealand Open Government Data and Information Programme Secretariat

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Executive summary

1. This progress report provides the first picture of government agencies' adoption of the 2011 Declaration on Open and Transparent Government by reporting on adoption by public service departments. This presents a benchmark for annual measurement of the adoption and impact of re-use of high value public data.

2. The adoption of the Declaration has begun well. All public service departments have appointed a Data Champion at senior management level, 27 departments (75%) have already released data for re-use, and 20 (56%) have plans for future releases.

3. Two departments (6%) regularly license and release their high value public data for re-use in accordance with the Declaration. Twenty five departments (69%) still focus on publication or dissemination. Many report that they are now releasing some of their data for re-use in accordance with the Declaration.

4. Departments' planned releases of new high value public data indicate they are moving to prioritising for release high value public data with potential economic, social, transparency and efficiency outcomes.

5. There is encouraging evidence of the re-use of government data by third parties. Smartphone applications are being developed, businesses are using government data to support and grow their core business, Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Authority (CERA) data is being re-used widely by local government and industry and there has been strong interest in the Chief Executives' expense data.

6. Over 2012 the Open Government Data and Information programme will focus on working closely with the Data Champions, providing further guidance and practical assistance for departments, finding and publishing more case studies, gaining industry and community feedback and implementing the programme across the wider public sector. It will also support the development of a business case to test the feasibility of the concept of a Shared Data Service and explore the costs and benefits of such a service.

Context

7. The Declaration on Open and Transparent Government[1], (the Declaration) approved by Cabinet in August 2011 [Cab Min (11) 29/12 refers], anticipated that the private and community sectors could use high value public data "to grow the economy, strengthen our social and cultural fabric, and sustain our environment". Cabinet also wished to "encourage business and community involvement in government decision-making". It anticipated "a more efficient and accountable public sector, more services tailored to citizen needs, and a greater level of participation in shaping government decisions".

8. Public service departments were directed to adopt the Declaration, and other agencies across the public sector encouraged or invited to do so. Cabinet noted that an aggregated progress report would be presented to the Ministerial Committee on Government Information and Communications Technology annually.

[1] http://www.ict.govt.nz/programme/opening-government-data-and-information/declaration-open-and-transparent-government

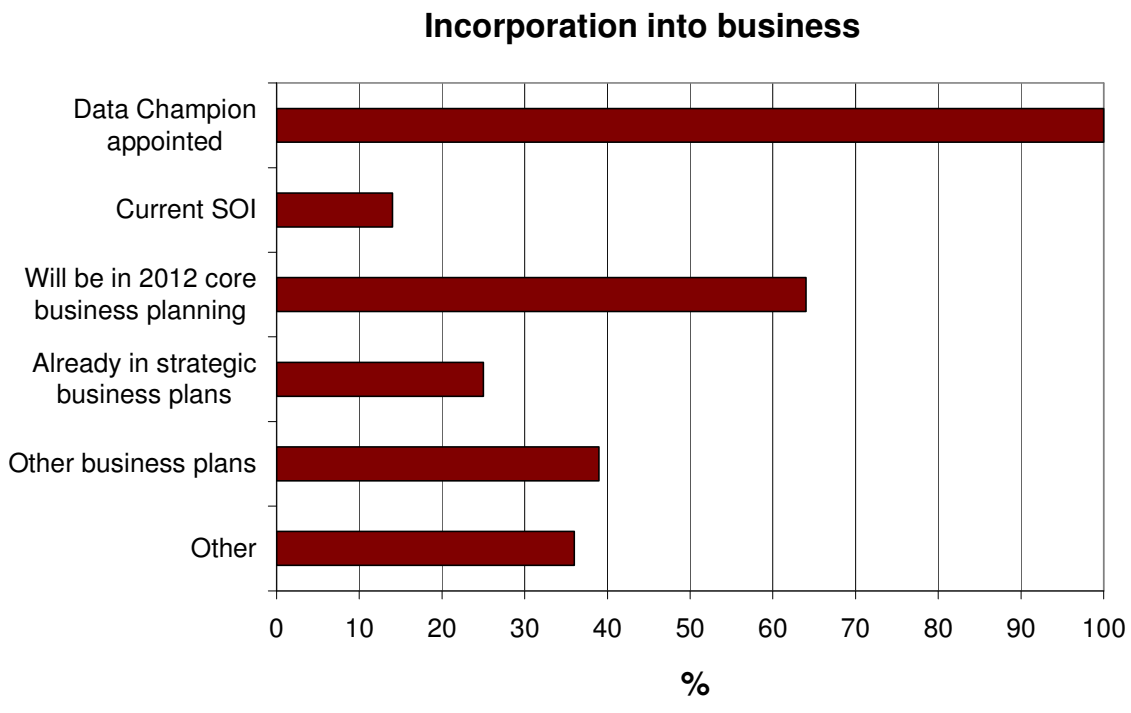
9. The Data and Information Re-use Chief Executives' Steering Group[2] has overseen an active programme to support adoption of the Declaration, application of the New Zealand Government Open Access and Licensing framework (NZGOAL)[3] and the release of high value public data for re-use. They have provided guidance to public service departments and ensured that each department has selected a Data Champion from their senior management to lead and drive releasing their public data for re-use. The Minister of Local Government has also written to Mayors, alerting them to the Declaration and encouraging them to adopt it. Statistics New Zealand has provided advice outlining the support they can provide on key aspects around confidentiality, metadata standards and data dissemination standards. The Department of Internal Affairs has piloted a draft data release prioritisation process and shared this approach with other government departments.

10. This report is based on responses from public service departments that were directed to report on their adoption of the Declaration. It summarises the progress made between August 2011 and March 2012, forms a benchmark from which to measure future adoption, and sets out the next steps for supporting departments in their adoption of the Declaration.

11. Public service departments were selected as the first stage, as their data is generally fully taxpayer funded.

Analysis of survey results

12. The following results aggregate and analyse survey responses from 31 (86%) of New Zealand's public service departments[4]. (See survey questions in Appendix 2)



[2] http://www.ict.govt.nz/directions-and-priorities/data-and-information-reuse-chief-executives-steeri

[3] Approved by Cabinet in August 2010 [Cab Min (10) 24/5A refers]; see http://www.ict.govt.nz/guidance-and-resources/information-and-data/nzgoal

[4] The SIS, GCSB, and the Ministry of Defence as security agencies, did not provide a return. Note that the New Zealand Defence Force did provide a return. The Department of Building and Housing and the Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs did not provide a return.

13. All 36 public sector departments, including all security agencies, have appointed a senior management Data Champion to lead adoption of the Declaration in their departments[5].

14. With only five departments (14%) having plans in their current Statement of Intent to release high value public data for re-use, it is encouraging to see that almost three quarters (72%) of the departments are intending to incorporate release of data in their core business planning in 2012.

15. The four departments (14%) not intending to incorporate the Declaration in their 2012 core business planning report that they either do not hold high value public data or that their information is protected.

16. "Other" initiatives (see question six of the survey) reported include:
    - developing a business group data steward model;
    - reviewing OIA requests to identify data to proactively release;
    - preparing a data inventory;
    - incorporating NZGOAL licensing in operational research contracts;
    - applying NZGOAL licensing to websites;
    - developing a draft data release prioritisation process; and
    - incorporating licensing and release for re-use into their publishing processes.

17. Six departments (16%) have licensed and released high value public data for re-use in accordance with the Declaration, compared with 25 departments (69%) that have focused on publishing or disseminating their data. The Declaration and the New Zealand Data and Information Management Principles[6] both state that all high value public data be routinely licensed and released in re-usable, machine readable formats that are open and non-proprietary.

18. Two departments (Land Information New Zealand and Statistics New Zealand) provide most of the public data currently licensed, released for re-use, and exposed on data.govt.nz. The Treasury provides regular updates to data.govt.nz, using an automated feed process.

19. Two departments (the Serious Fraud Office and Statistics New Zealand) have updated their website copyright statements to reflect NZGOAL[7].

20. Statistics New Zealand, New Zealand's main producer of official statistics, releases vast amounts of high value public data. The data complies with the New Zealand Government Open Access Licensing framework and the majority of it is accessible through data.govt.nz and available for public re-use in fully open formats. Statistics New Zealand is working towards a standardised data dissemination system, which will also improve their capability to provide data in fully open formats and expose it on data.govt.nz. Note here that Statistics New Zealand also releases other agencies' data, such as Customs data.

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[5] This includes the two departments that did not respond to the survey.

[6] http://www.ict.govt.nz/programme/opening-government-data-and-information/new-zealand-data-and-information-management-princi

[7] Approved by Cabinet in August 2010 [Cab Min (10) 24/5A refers]. http://www.ict.govt.nz/guidance-and-resources/information-and-data/nzgoal

21. Statistics New Zealand's official yearbooks from 1893 have also been digitised and placed online. The tables in these yearbooks can be copied and pasted for re-use.

22. Departments planning future data releases indicate that they are less likely to use NZGOAL and expose their future data on data.govt.nz. This could indicate:
    - a lack of awareness and understanding of NZGOAL and the role of data.govt.nz; or
    - an interpretation that they can only report on using NZGOAL at the time of actual release.

23. No departments reported insurmountable barriers to releasing high value public data. The issues they raised include:
    - restrictive licensing terms imposed by third parties;
    - issues with data quality and inconsistent data;
    - a lack of data standards, which causes confusion with data formats;
    - a lack of resources to address the above barriers;
    - a shift in culture is required;
    - considerable time is required to analyse the risks of releasing data for re-use;
    - a perceived lack of data to release; and
    - a lack of analysis of what information is of interest to consumers.

Departments' suggestions on overcoming barriers for release for re-use

24. Suggestions included a shared application programming interface (API)[8] service and a data repository for releasing data, which may be more efficient than everyone building their own. Web-enabled tools that support data releases were also suggested. This feedback suggests that the availability of shared services could remove technology as a barrier to releasing data and information and could avoid agencies investing in point-to-point solutions that are unhelpful for end users and that duplicate investment across government as a whole.

25. Consistency in the data model used to manage the relationship between address, land parcel, building and rating unit data would make sharing of data across departments easier. CERA and LINZ have initiated work in this area.

26. Departments also requested guidance on formats, data quality standards, and a more detailed definition of personal data.

Feedback from direct engagement with departments

27. In addition to receiving responses from departments, the Open Government Information and Data Programme Secretariat has provided written guidance and engaged in one-on-one consultations to support departmental Data Champions. These discussions have revealed that departments are largely willing to comply, but there is:

    a) low awareness of:

[8] API, an abbreviation of application program interface, is a set of routines, protocols, and tools for building software applications.

- NZGOAL and what it means;
- how to actually release data;
- what "open" and "machine readable" mean;
- the difference between data dissemination and making data available for re-use;
- the value of making data machine readable; and
- how their data could be utilised.

b) an underestimation of the value of their data to others; and

c) a lack of clarity on the difference between information and data.

Achievement of outcomes

28. The outcomes anticipated by the Declaration will be achieved when there is evidence of the marketplace, communities and people creating new products, business and services based on the re-use of government's high value public data. There will be instances of new knowledge collaboratively built and applied, and central, regional and local government programmes and business initiatives will be regularly aligned.

29. Planned data releases reported by agencies indicate a move to prioritising high value public data with potential economic, social, transparency and efficiency outcomes. Examples are data on the value of water network assets, local government development contribution levels, pesticides summaries map data, and reconviction and re-imprisonment rate data.

30. At this stage it appears that departments are still developing mechanisms for identifying how the high value public data they have released for re-use has been re-used and what impact this may have had. An obvious exception is the wide use of official statistics.

31. There is some encouraging evidence of re-use by third parties (see also Appendix 1):

- smartphone applications add value to public data released by the Department of Conservation, LINZ and the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry; for example, regulations for recreational fishing and tide prediction data;
- businesses are mashing up government data from multiple departments, adding value to it and selling it; for example, reports for people wishing to purchase property in specific education zones;
- industry is partnering with government to host government's geospatial data, creating successful new business models;
- industry is using open government data to support their core business, for example national forest health assessment, and soil strength data to calculate the cost of laying broadband cable in trenches;
- industry is using open data web services to reduce cost and processing time and provide a faster turnaround time to advise customers, for example the Before-U-Dig asset protection service (survey marks); and

- land zone and technical category data released publicly by CERA is being used by a range of central and local government departments to assist with the Canterbury earthquakes recovery.

Next Steps

32. The following next steps will be overseen by the Data and Information Re-use Chief Executives' Steering Group:

    a) continue to work with departmental Data Champions to ensure adoption of the Declaration is incorporated in departments' core business activities;

    b) Continue to work with industry and communities, particularly, OpenNZ[9], to meet their requirements for re-using high value public data for economic and social gain;

    c) Focus on practical assistance for departments, including:

        - regular NZGOAL training;
        - guidance on how to release data for re-use, covering process, open formats, technical methods, and including georeferencing where appropriate;
        - involving Data Champions in the data.govt.nz data request register response process; and
        - providing regular assistance with exposing data on data.govt.nz.

    d) Support the development of a business case that would test the feasibility of the concept of a Shared Data Service and explore the costs and benefits of such a service;

    e) Accelerate the preparation of case studies describing:

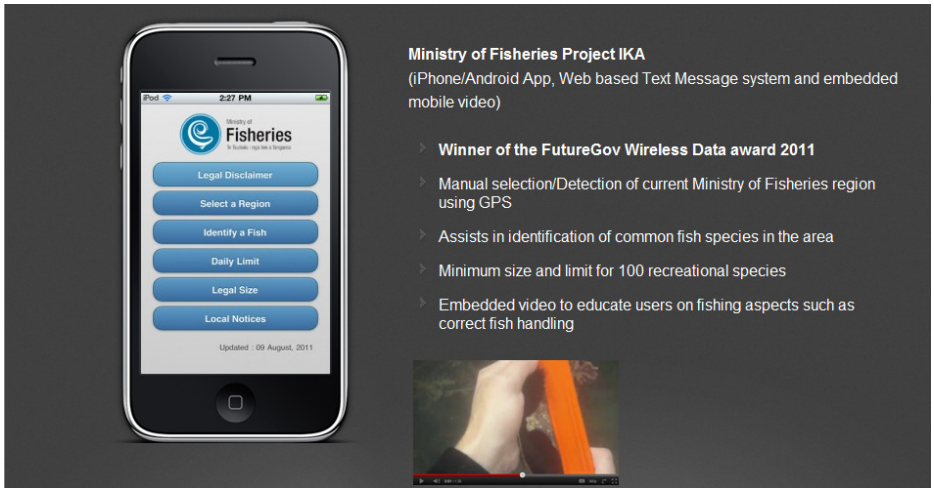
        - how high value public data has been re-used and the impact of that re-use on the economy and society; and
        - the efficiencies gained from government departments' re-use of high value public data; and
        - Implement the programme across the wider public sector.

[9] OpenNZ develops and hosts projects around transparency, participatory democracy, and generally making central and local government useful to citizens and businesses. http://wiki.open.org.nz/Main_Page

Appendix 1: examples of the re-use of departmental data

Project IKA: www.mogeo.co.nz

The Ministry of Fisheries has partnered with a private web developer Mogeo.co.nz to develop multiple applications to make recreational fishing easier for the general public.



beforeUdig: http://www.beforeudig.co.nz

The Before-u-Dig asset protection service directly sources LINZ base topographic map layer and survey marks. This reduces cost and processing time and provides a faster turnaround time for advising customers.

Appendix 2: Declaration Adoption Survey Questions

1. In which ways have you incorporated the Declaration in your core business activities?

☐ A senior manager has been appointed as Data Champion

☐ In current Statement of Intent already

☐ In strategic business plans already

☐ In other business plans already

☐ Will be included in 2012 core business planning

☐ Other: please describe

2. Have you released high value public data for re-use in accordance with the 2011 Declaration?

☐ No (Go to Qu 3.) ☐ Yes

If yes, please use Table 1 below to list what has been released for re-use, and which outcomes it contributes to. (Please refer over to the definition of High Value Data for assessing outcomes. Please add rows as required.)

Table 1

Data Description	**Date first published**	**Format(s) published**	**Listed on data.govt.nz**	**Uses NZGOAL licensing**	**Outcomes**		
					Economic & Social	Transparency & Democratic	Efficiency
			☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
			☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
			☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
			☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

3. Have you identified potential high value public data for re-use?

☐ No (Go to Qu 4.) ☐ Yes

If yes, please use Table 2 below to list what you plan to release for re-use, and which outcomes it will contribute to. (Please refer over to the definition of High Value Data for assessing outcomes. Please add rows as required.)

Table 2

Data Description	**Planned Release Date**	**Format(s) published**	**Listed on data.govt.nz**	**NZGOAL BY licence**	**Outcomes**		
					Economic & Social	Transparency & Democratic	Efficiency
			☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
			☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
			☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
			☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

4 Please provide details of any case studies of successful re-use of your agency's data.

5. Please comment on any significant or insurmountable barriers to the release of your high value public data for re-use to date?

6. Please add any other comments about your release of high value public data in accordance with the Declaration on Open and Transparent Government.

DEFINITIONS OF HIGH VALUE PUBLIC DATA

Data is factual information (as measurements or statistics) used as a basis for reasoning, discussion, or calculation or information in numerical form that can be digitally transmitted or processed (http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/data)
Agencies publish data in a variety of re-usable and less re-usable formats, for example, databases, datasets, spreadsheets, tables in reports. Note that any published data with totals, averages and other aggregates is likely to meet the statutory definition of official statistics and would thus be managed under the provisions of the Statistics Act 1975.

Public data is non-personal, unclassified and non-confidential data:

- collected, commissioned or created by the agency in carrying out its functions or statutory responsibilities;
- publicly funded; and for which there is no restriction:

(a) in the case of copyright works, to its release and re-use, in accordance with NZGOAL[10], under any of the Creative Common NZ law licences, or

(b) in the case of non-copyright material, to its open release and re-use.

High value data released for re-use may have at least 1 of these outcomes:

Economic & social outcomes	**Transparency & democratic outcomes**	**Efficiency outcomes**
Business can use it to add value, innovate & create new products to spur economic growth.	It reports on the performance of an agency or service.	It supports cross-sector service delivery, e.g. other agencies & NGOs can use it to improve their services.
Communities and people can use it to: – develop useful applications/new services – make informed decisions about the government services they use – make personal decisions that improve their quality of life	It provides details of government funding and/or expenditure:	Releasing it for re-use could: – make it easier for government agencies to work together – reduce the cost of providing an existing government service – reduce the cost of accessing and processing this information for existing users
It provides information about sustainability and risk.	It provides an evidence base informing & encouraging external participation in policy development	It helps align central &local government initiatives through a more coordinated national view of government data

[10] http://www.ict.govt.nz/guidance-and-resources/information-and-data/nzgoal