

ACCELERATING THE RELEASE OF PUBLIC DATA: REPORT BACK ON ACTIONS TO INCREASE UPTAKE AND ADDRESS BARRIERS

Purpose

- 1) I propose that Cabinet notes the steps being taken to achieve the right balance between coercion and encouragement for departments to uptake the Declaration on Open and Transparent Government, and addressing the barriers to full participation by departments.

Background

- 2) The 2014 Report on Agency Adoption of the Declaration on Open and Transparent Government (the 2014 Report) showed that the release and re-use of public data was solving a range of economic and social challenges, improving agencies' efficiency and providing greater scrutiny of government's performance.
- 3) The report noted that departments need to be more vigilant about publicising released datasets on data.govt.nz, which is a requirement of the Declaration on Open and Transparent Government (the Declaration) and in applying the required Creative Commons licensing statements to their data and publications.
- 4) The State Sector Reform and Expenditure Control Committee agreed to the release of the 2014 Report, and added a recommendation "inviting the Minister to report to Cabinet by 15 August 2014 on, achieving the right balance between coercion and encouragement for departments to uptake the Declaration on Open and Transparent Government, and addressing the barriers to full participation by departments".

Comment

Directions to departments

- 5) The Chair of the Open Government Data Chief Executives' Governance Group has subsequently written to the Chief Executives of the 33 public service and non-public service departments requesting them to accelerate their release of high value public data. They were also asked to consider whether their Data Champion, who is responsible for adoption of the Declaration in the department, is at the appropriate executive level to achieve this.
- 6) Five departments were identified as priority given their data-intensive functions and the importance of their data for re-use: Ministries of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE); Health (MoH); Social Development (MSD); and Ministries for Primary Industries (MPI) and the Environment (MfE). Their Chief Executives have been asked to submit their plans to actively release public data to their portfolio Minister(s). They were also advised that the Open Government Information and Data Programme Secretariat will work with them to identify potential datasets for release and work through any barriers to full participation.

- 7) The Programme Secretariat has discussed each department's plans with their Data Champion, and reports that:
- a) MBIE has identified a series of immediate and medium term actions that will facilitate the release of datasets and enhance their re-use. These include a review of published content and licences; an audit of all published and unpublished datasets to determine any gaps, opportunities or currency issues; implementing further promotion of MBIE datasets through a range of different channels; and clarifying roles, responsibilities and governance arrangements for the management of MBIE's data release activities.
 - b) MoH will increase executive support for the Data Champion; in liaison with the Secretariat identify priority datasets for release following a recently completed stocktake; review its data release processes; and commence a programme of work, which includes review of copyright and licensing policies, to introduce Creative Commons licensing to its publications and website. This work will support data sharing initiatives across government. MoH is cognisant of the NZ Data Future Forum's recommendations to harmonise regulations and practices for trusted sharing and use of personal data.
 - c) MSD is expanding the range of data it provides to the Integrated Data Infrastructure with some care and protection data and youth justice data being added by December 2014. MSD is collaborating with academic researchers, which is increasing access to customised datasets. Production of the 2015 Social Report, and a more structured approach to data sharing agreements across agencies, will create opportunities to further expand the range of aggregated public data that is available to the public. Data release and publishing processes are being reviewed to ensure data is released in open formats and under Creative Commons licences.
 - d) MPI's strategic priorities include a focus on integrated information insight and knowledge, demonstrating an increased organisational maturity regarding the value of data. MPI has dedicated specific resource to implement a targeted open data work programme, initially focussed on raising awareness and increasing enablement. Specific activities include: developing organisational policies, an enterprise data catalogue, data release and publishing processes, an audit of released data for compliance with licensing and data.govt.nz requirements. Open data activities are expected to increase under a sustainable and managed programme to develop the opportunities within MPI and for industry.
 - e) MfE is working in partnership with local government on integrated regional/national environmental data collection networks to accelerate the release of environmental monitoring and reporting data. Approximately 60 datasets will be released for the 2015 Synthesis Report. MfE is reviewing its data release and publishing processes to include Creative Commons statements on websites, datasets, in publications, and to update data.govt.nz. The data release checklist will provide a consistent way of assessing risks associated with releasing data, e.g. Resource Management Act process time and cost data from the National Monitoring System due in mid-2015.

- 8) The remaining 28 departments have been asked to set out their plans to accelerate the release of their public data in their annual update to their portfolio Minister(s). The Secretariat has also started its next six-monthly series of meetings with each department's Data Champion to provide support for the agencies' initiatives.
- 9) The explicit reminder of the Cabinet requirement (CAB Min (11) 29/12 refers) to annually submit plans for data release to portfolio Minister(s) will raise the profile for release of public data among senior management. I consider this level of direction, along with increased support from the Secretariat (outlined below) achieves the right balance to increase uptake and help address barriers.
- 10) The Minister of Finance will present Government's open data expectations to the strategic workshop of the Governance Group and departmental Data Champions on 27 August 2014. This will provide an opportunity for cross-agency discussion on delivering these expectations.

Additional Secretariat resources

- 11) The Secretariat will have two additional fixed-term full time resources by the end of September¹. This will enable the Secretariat to work with departments on their data release and publishing procedures, provide more regular training, and also encourage Crown entities and local government to release public data.

Improving data.govt.nz support for the Programme

- 12) The Department of Internal Affairs (DIA²) will prioritise data.govt.nz enhancements that enable ease of use. This work can only proceed once the funding source has been identified. DIA will commit technical expertise to provide specialist advice and guidance to help agencies to lift their capability in efficient and effective release of high value data online.
- 13) Better Public Services seed funding has recently been approved to progress the first stage of Action 13.1 in the ICT Strategy and Action Plan to 2017, which will develop a viable mechanism for funding and delivering effective public data dissemination services. Data.govt.nz is one of the existing services that will be considered.

Addressing the barriers to full participation

- 14) Active advice and technical support from the Secretariat, and from DIA for data.govt.nz, will help departments embed this knowledge into their business processes to ensure continuity. This support is expected to help manage the resource constraints being experienced in some departments and also respond to the other challenges noted in the 2014 Adoption Report.
- 15) There may be some barriers, such as constraints of existing systems, which cannot be addressed. Better knowledge of open data requirements at executive level should ensure that release of public data is included in all system development plans.

¹ Funded from a 2014 Budget allocation and club funding from the Open Government Data Steering Group.

² DIA is responsible for managing data.govt.nz and this is its 'in kind' contribution to the Programme.

Next steps

- 16) The Open Government Data Steering Group will continue to oversee progress on the steps outlined in paragraphs 5 to 15. The next survey on agency adoption, to be undertaken in February 2015, will report back on the impact of the actions described in this paper.

Consultation

- 17) The recommendations in this paper were prepared in consultation with the Ministries of Business, Innovation and Employment, Health, Social Development; Ministries for Primary Industries and the Environment, Department of Internal Affairs, The Treasury, and Chairs of the Open Government Data Chief Executives' and Steering Groups.

Financial implications

- 18) No financial implications arise from this paper.

Human rights, legislative implications, regulatory impact analysis, gender, disability and Treaty of Waitangi implications

- 19) No human rights issues arise from this report, under either the New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990 or the Human Rights Act 1993. There are no legislative, regulatory impacts, gender, disability or Treaty of Waitangi implications.

Publicity

- 20) Once approved by the Cabinet Business Committee, I intend to publicly release this Cabinet paper and the accompanying Cabinet minute.

Recommendations

- 21) I recommend that the Cabinet Business Committee:
1. **Note** the steps being taken to accelerate the release of public data;
 2. **Note** that the Open Government Data Steering Group will oversee the completion of the steps outlined in this paper;
 3. **Note** the 2015 Report on Agency Adoption of the Declaration on Open and Transparent Government will update on the impact of these steps on accelerating the release of public data; and
 4. **Note** that I propose to release this Cabinet paper and accompanying Cabinet minute publicly.

Hon Michael Woodhouse
Minister for Land Information

/ /2014