

INTRODUCTORY NOTE TO THE G20 ANTI-CORRUPTION OPEN DATA PRINCIPLES

Open Data in the G20

In 2014, the G20's Anti-corruption Working Group (ACWG) established open data as one of the issues that merit particular attention in the promotion of public sector transparency and integrity priority area.

In this regard, the development of the G20 Open Data Principles by the Anti-corruption Working Group has been identified as a first step towards leveraging open data as a crucial tool to enable a culture of transparency, accountability and access to information as efforts to prevent corruption.

These Principles have been developed considering international standards, good practices and under the scope of three pillars:

1. The exponential progress in digital technologies and the unparalleled **increase in the amount, sources, quality of available data** and common data standards provide the right environment and necessary tools to promote the availability and use of open data in the fight against corruption.
2. **Transparency** is paramount in the anti-corruption agenda and can be mutually reinforced through an active collaboration based on the availability and use of open data; and,
3. As such, Open Data can help **prevent, detect, investigate and reduce corruption.**

G20 Anti-corruption Open Data Principles

Background

Open data: digital data that is made available with the technical and legal characteristics necessary for it to be freely used, re-used, and redistributed by anyone, anytime, anywhere.

- 1) The world is witnessing a significant global transformation, facilitated by technology fuelled by data and information. One that has enormous potential to foster more transparent, accountable, efficient, responsive, and effective governments and civil society and private sector organizations, and to spur social and economic development.

Open data is at the center of this global shift.

- 2) Building a more prosperous, equitable and just society requires transparent, accountable governments that engage regularly and meaningfully with citizens. Accordingly, there is an ongoing effort to advance collaboration around key social challenges, to provide effective public oversight of government activities, to support sustainable economic development, innovation, and the development of effective, efficient public policies and programmes.

Open data is crucial to meeting these objectives.

- 3) Open data can help improve the flow of information within and between governments, and make government decisions and processes more transparent. Open data increases transparency around what government is doing, which promotes accountability and good governance, and enhances public debate.

Open data presents multiple opportunities to prevent and to combat corruption.

Open Data for Anti-corruption

- 4) Open data can help prevent and tackle corruption, accordingly to national law and experiences, by shedding light on government activities, decisions, and expenditures; as well as increasing levels of accountability, allowing citizens and government to better monitor the flow and use of public money within and across borders. Open data can facilitate this by, in particular:

- **Following the money:** showing how and where public money is spent, which provides strong incentives for governments to demonstrate that they are using public money effectively;
- **Open contracting:** allowing advanced search, analysis and understanding of public procurement processes, through the increased disclosure of reusable data in machine-readable formats around procurement's whole lifecycle, including planning, tendering, award, implementation and evaluation stages, in accordance to national laws and regulations, as well as national capabilities.
- **Changing incentives:** by modifying corruption-prone environments, and preventing regulatory capture, conflict of interest, and lobbying and revolving door opacity, through transparency and the increased monitoring of government affairs from all sectors of society; and,
- **Enabling cross sector collaboration:** supporting governments, citizens, and civil society and private sector organizations to collaborate on the design of policies to prevent corruption and increase government integrity.

- 5) Open data can help increase government performance, enabling decision-makers to design better policies for anti-corruption through the creation of incentives to avoid illegal acts by increasing the odds of exposing governmental misconduct. At the same time, open data can help discover and dismantle corrupt activities by facilitating critical information, tools and mechanism for judicial enforcement, and for media and society to detect the abuse of entrusted power for private gain
- 6) Open data can help create significant economic benefits for the private sector by providing companies with real-time information to strengthen their investment decisions and assess risks and opportunities in a specific market or sector.
- 7) Open data provides a platform to help expand social participation and enhance co-responsibility in areas such as, public procurement, political financing standards, judiciary and law enforcement, public officials' integrity, and fiscal and budget transparency.
- 8) Furthermore, the benefits of open data can multiply as more private sector and civil society organizations adopt open data practices for transparency as an instrument in the fight against corruption, by sharing their own data with the public.
- 9) Used in these ways, open data is a key public good which can reinforce transparency, increase trust, improve public sector integrity, strengthen rule of law and promote prosperity at a global scale.
- 10) We, the members of the G20 Anti-corruption Working Group, agree that open data is an under-used resource with potential to fight corruption and build stronger, transparent, and more accountable governments and societies.
- 11) We therefore agree to follow a set of principles based on the international Open Data Charter that will be the foundation for access to, and the release and use of, open government data to strengthen the fight against corruption.
- 12) These principles are:
 1. Open by Default;
 2. Timely and Comprehensive;
 3. Accessible and Usable;
 4. Comparable and Interoperable;
 5. For Improved Governance and Citizen Engagement;
 6. For Inclusive Development and Innovation.
- 13) We will work towards the implementation of these Principles in accordance with our political, legal frameworks, and taking into account our national contexts and maturity of our open data efforts, bearing in mind the technical best practices and standards
- 14) Furthermore, we will promote these common Principles in other priority areas of the G20, including working groups and task forces, by other relevant stakeholders, such as B20 and C20 work streams, and will support the development and adoption of common international standards around open data, to provide the foundation for countries to share their experience and ideas, strengthen the quality of data released and increase its potential impact.

Principle 1: Open Data by Default

Access to information has been widely accepted as a tool to increase transparency and fight corruption. Open data by default goes a step beyond transparency, as it promotes the provision of reusable data from its source, without requiring requests for information and increasing access in equal terms for everyone; while at the same time, assuring the necessary protection to personal data in accordance to laws and regulations already established in G20 countries.

- 15) We recognize that free access to, and the subsequent use of, government produced data promotes transparency, and is therefore of significant value to society and the economy, and that government data, should therefore, be open by default.
- 16) We acknowledge the need to promote the global development and adoption of tools and policies for the identification, creation, use, and exchange of anti-corruption related open data.
- 17) We recognize that the term ‘government data’ could also apply to public data commissioned by and created for governments by external organizations, and data that can have public value which is held by external organizations and related to government programmes and services.
- 18) We recognize that open data can only be unlocked when citizens are secure in the knowledge that openness will not compromise their right to privacy, and that citizens have the right to influence the collection and use of their own personal data or of data generated as a result of their interactions with governments, provided the protection of personal data is assured in accordance to national regulations.
- 19) Therefore, we will:
 - Promote, where possible, the development of information technology systems, adoption of policies, and best practices to ensure that all government data, is made open by default, while recognizing that there are legitimate reasons why some data cannot be released and providing clear guidelines for when certain data cannot be released;
 - Work towards the establishment of an anti-corruption culture of openness and prevention with the help of training and awareness programs, tools, guidelines and communication strategies designed to increase data literacy in government, civil society, and private sector, and promote awareness of the benefits of open data; and,
 - Observe domestic laws and internationally recognized standards pertaining to security, privacy, confidentiality, protection of personal data and intellectual property, trade secrets and subject to these legislation and standards, anonymize data prior to its publication, ensuring that sensitive, personally-identifiable data is removed.

Principle 2: Timely and Comprehensive

Releasing comprehensive data sets - which are accurate, timely and up to date, published at a disaggregated level, adequately documented, and following internationally agreed upon standards, metadata and classifiers - is crucial to increase data use for anticorruption. Such data openness will allow a better understanding of government processes and policy outcomes in as close to real-time as possible.

- 20) We recognize that it may require time and human and technical resources to identify data for release or publication, and that countries will work towards these goals in accordance to their capacities and national contexts.
- 21) We recognize the importance of consulting with data users and experts in the public sector transparency, including citizens, other governments and civil society and private sector organizations, to identify which datasets should be prioritized for release and/or improved for anti-corruption efforts.
- 22) We recognize that in order to be valuable to governments, citizens, and civil society and private sector organizations, open data as a tool to prevent corruption must be comprehensive and accurate.
- 23) Therefore, we will:
- Work towards a compendium of good practices and lessons learned on open data that can promote mechanisms for the identification of specific anti-corruption related datasets, standards and tools, and for the development of anti-corruption related data holdings;
 - Publish high quality open data sets that are timely, comprehensive, fully described, primary and accurate in accordance with prioritisation that is informed by public requests;
 - To the extent possible, release data in their original form and at the finest level of granularity available, and that can be linked to any visualisations or analyses based on the data;
 - Allow users to provide feedback, and continue to make revisions to ensure the quality of the data is improved as needed; and,
 - Apply consistent information lifecycle management practices, and ensure historical copies of datasets are preserved, archived, and kept accessible for a reasonable period of time.

Principle 3: Accessible and Usable

Lowering unnecessary entry barriers, and by publishing data on single window solutions such as central open data portals increases the value of data, as more citizens and organizations are able to find and use it to reduce opacity in government institutions.

- 24) We recognize that when open data is released, it should be easily discoverable and accessible, and made available without bureaucratic or administrative barriers, which can deter people from accessing the data. This is especially true with anti-corruption and transparency-related data.
- 25) Therefore, we will:
- To the extent possible, publish open data on central portals, or in ways that can increase its accessibility, so that it can be easily discoverable and accessible for users;
 - Release data in open formats to ensure that it is available to the widest range of users to find, access, understand and use. In many cases, this will include providing data in multiple, standardized formats, so that it can be processed by computers and used by people;

- Release open data that is free of charge, under an open and unrestricted license and without mandatory registration, allowing users to choose to download data without being required to identify themselves; and,
- Promote initiatives to raise awareness of open data, data literacy, and capacity building for effective use of open data;

Principle 4: Comparable and Interoperable

Enabling the comparison and traceability of data from numerous anti-corruption related sectors increases its potential to inform decisions and feedback between decision-makers and citizens.

- 26) We recognize that in order to be most effective and useful, data should be easy to compare within and between sectors, across geographic locations, and over time.
- 27) We recognize that data should be presented in structured and standardized formats to support interoperability, traceability and effective reuse.
- 28) Therefore, we will:
- Implement to the extent possible, open standards related to data formats, interoperability, structure, and common identifiers when collecting and publishing data;
 - Ensure that open datasets include consistent core metadata, and are made available in human- and machine-readable formats;
 - Ensure that data is clearly described, that all documentation accompanying data is written in clear, plain language, and that data users have sufficient information to understand the source, strengths, weaknesses, and analytical limitations of the data; and,
 - Engage with domestic and international anti-corruption standards bodies and other standard-setting initiatives to support increased interoperability between existing international standards, to support the creation of common, global data standards where they do not already exist, and to ensure that any new data standards we create are, to the greatest extent possible, interoperable with existing standards.

Principle 5: For Improved Governance and Citizen Engagement

Open data empowers citizens and enables them to hold government institutions into account. Open data can also help them understand, influence and participate directly in the decision-making processes and in the development of public policies in support of public sector integrity. This is paramount to build trust and strengthen collaboration between governments and all sectors of society.

- 29) We recognize that the release and use of open data strengthens the governance of our public institutions and provides a transparent and accountable foundation to improve decision-making and enhance the provision of public services, so as to better meet the complex realities faced by our populations.
- 30) We recognize that open data encourages better development, implementation, and assessment of programs and policies to meet the needs of our citizens, and enables civic participation and better informed engagement between governments and citizens.

31) We recognize that engagement and consultation with citizens can help governments to understand which types of data are in high demand, and can lead to improved data. Because of that, open data policies must promote the use of information by civic society as a whole.

32) Therefore, we will:

- Promote the use of digital participation platforms to engage with organizations working in the domain of transparency, accountability and anti-corruption to determine what data they need;
- Provide tools, success stories and guidelines designed to ensure government officials are capable of using open data effectively;
- Implement research, oversight and review processes to report regularly to the public on the progress and impact of open data as a tool to prevent corruption;
- Establish and improve the mechanisms and procedures around the use and application of open data by citizens and the public sector.

Principle 6: For Inclusive Development and Innovation

Open data, through reinforced transparency and integrity, can promote greater social and economic benefits by providing actionable information to build effective, accountable and responsive institutions; this alone can increase economic output and efficiency in government operations. Furthermore, while preventing corruption open data facilitates the development of new insights, business models and digital innovation strategies at a global scale.

33) We recognize the importance of openness in stimulating accountability, creativity and innovation. The more governments, citizens, and civil society and private sector organizations that use open data, the greater the social and economic benefits that will be generated.

34) We recognize the value of open data for identifying challenges and delivering, monitoring and achieving sustainable development worldwide, especially by promoting transparent and inclusive institutions.

35) We recognize that the potential value of our open data is greatly increased when it can be used in combination with open data from other governments and civil society and private sector organizations, considering that open data is an equitable resource which empowers all citizens by allowing them to access data regardless of who they are or where they live.

36) We recognize the role of governments in promoting good governance and development does not end with the release of open data. Governments must also play an active role in supporting the effective and innovative reuse of open data to strengthen transparency and integrity and to prevent corruption, as well as ensuring government employees, citizens, and civil society and private sector organizations have the data they need and the tools and resources to understand and use that data effectively.

37) Therefore, we will:

- Promote the adoption of open data related items in other principles and activities supported by the G20's ACWG where the application of open data can be useful.
- Encourage citizens, civil society and private sector organizations, and multilateral institutions to open up data created and collected by them in order to move towards a

richer open data ecosystem with multiple sources to strengthen transparency and integrity and to prevent corruption;

- Create or explore potential partnerships with relevant stakeholders working in the anti-corruption sector to support the release of open data and maximize their impact through effective use;
- Share technical expertise and experience with other governments and international organizations, and to create or support programs and initiatives that foster the development or co-creation of visualisations, applications, APIs, data mashups, and other tools based on open data.