



## Recommendation of the Council on Open Government

14 December 2017 - [C\(2017\)140](#) - [C/M\(2017\)22](#)

### THE COUNCIL,

**HAVING REGARD** to Article 5 b) of the Convention on the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development of 14 December 1960;

**HAVING REGARD** to the Recommendation of the Council for Enhanced Access and More Effective Use of Public Sector Information [C(2008)36], the Recommendation of the Council on Principles for Public Governance of Public-Private Partnerships [C(2012)86], the Recommendation of the Council on Regulatory Policy and Governance [C(2012)37], the Recommendation of the Council on Digital Government Strategies [C(2014)88], the Recommendation of the Council on Budgetary Governance [C(2015)1], the Recommendation of the Council on Gender Equality in Public Life [C(2015)164], the Recommendation of the Council on Public Procurement [C(2015)2], the Recommendation of the Council on Water [C(2016)174/FINAL], and the Recommendation of the Council on Public Integrity [C(2017)5];

**RECOGNISING** that open government is critical to building citizen trust and is a key contributor to achieving different policy outcomes in diverse domains including: public sector integrity and anti-corruption, public sector modernisation, civic freedom, digital government, public procurement, public sector innovation, public financial management and human resource management, as well as all major socio-economic targets within the framework of the 2030 Global Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals;

**RECOGNISING** that stakeholder participation increases government accountability, broadens citizens' empowerment and influence on decisions, builds civic capacity, improves the evidence base for policy-making, reduces implementation costs, and taps wider networks for innovation in policy-making and service delivery;

**RECOGNISING** the need for establishing a clear, actionable, evidence-based, internationally recognised and comparable framework for open government, as well as its related process, output, outcome and impact indicators taking into account the diverse institutional and legal settings of the Members and non-Members having adhered to the Recommendation (hereafter the "Adherents");

**CONSIDERING** that open government strategies and initiatives are a shared responsibility of all branches and levels of government, according to their existing legal and institutional frameworks, and that therefore this Recommendation is relevant to all of them;

### On the proposal of the Public Governance Committee

I. **AGREES** that, for the purpose of the present Recommendation, the following definitions are used:

- **Open Government:** a culture of governance that promotes the principles of transparency, integrity, accountability and stakeholder participation in support of democracy and inclusive growth;
- **Open State:** when the executive, legislature, judiciary, independent public institutions, and all levels of government - recognising their respective roles, prerogatives, and overall independence according to their existing legal and institutional frameworks - collaborate, exploit synergies, and share good practices and lessons learned among themselves and with other stakeholders to promote transparency, integrity, accountability, and stakeholder participation, in support of democracy and inclusive growth;

- **Open government strategy:** a document that defines the open government agenda of the central government and/or of any of its sub-national levels, as well as that of a single public institution or thematic area, and that includes key open government initiatives, together with short, medium and long-term goals and indicators;
- **Open government initiatives:** actions undertaken by the government, or by a single public institution, to achieve specific objectives in the area of open government, ranging from the drafting of laws to the implementation of specific activities such as online consultations;
- **The policy cycle:** includes 1) identifying policy priorities 2) drafting the actual policy document, 3) policy implementation; and 4) monitoring implementation and evaluation of the policy's impacts;
- **Stakeholders:** any interested and/or affected party, including: individuals, regardless of their age, gender, sexual orientation, religious and political affiliations; and institutions and organisations, whether governmental or non-governmental, from civil society, academia, the media or the private sector;
- **Stakeholder participation:** all the ways in which stakeholders can be involved in the policy cycle and in service design and delivery, including:
  - **Information:** an initial level of participation characterised by a one-way relationship in which the government produces and delivers information to stakeholders. It covers both on-demand provision of information and “proactive” measures by the government to disseminate information.
  - **Consultation:** a more advanced level of participation that entails a two-way relationship in which stakeholders provide feedback to the government and vice-versa. It is based on the prior definition of the issue for which views are being sought and requires the provision of relevant information, in addition to feedback on the outcomes of the process.
  - **Engagement:** when stakeholders are given the opportunity and the necessary resources (e.g. information, data and digital tools) to collaborate during all phases of the policy-cycle and in the service design and delivery.
- **Open government literacy:** the combination of awareness, knowledge, and skills that public officials and stakeholders require to engage successfully in open government strategies and initiatives;
- **Levels of government:** refers to central and sub-national levels of government.

**II. RECOMMENDS** that Adherents develop, adopt and implement open government strategies and initiatives that promote the principles of transparency, integrity, accountability and stakeholder participation in designing and delivering public policies and services, in an open and inclusive manner. To this end, Adherents should:

1. take measures, in all branches and at all levels of the government, to develop and implement open government strategies and initiatives in collaboration with stakeholders and to foster commitment from politicians, members of parliaments, senior public managers and public officials, to ensure successful implementation and prevent or overcome obstacles related to resistance to change;
2. ensure the existence and implementation of the necessary open government legal and regulatory framework, including through the provision of supporting documents such as guidelines and manuals, while establishing adequate oversight mechanisms to ensure compliance;
3. ensure the successful operationalisation and take-up of open government strategies and initiatives by:
  - (i) Providing public officials with the mandate to design and implement successful open government strategies and initiatives, as well as the adequate human, financial, and technical resources, while promoting a supportive organisational culture;
  - (ii) Promoting open government literacy in the administration, at all levels of government, and among stakeholders.
4. coordinate, through the necessary institutional mechanisms, open government strategies and initiatives - horizontally and vertically - across all levels of government to ensure that they are aligned with and contribute to all relevant socio-economic objectives;

5. develop and implement monitoring, evaluation and learning mechanisms for open government strategies and initiatives by:
  - (i) Identifying institutional actors to be in charge of collecting and disseminating up-to-date and reliable information and data in an open format;
  - (ii) Developing comparable indicators to measure processes, outputs, outcomes, and impact in collaboration with stakeholders; and
  - (iii) Fostering a culture of monitoring, evaluation and learning among public officials by increasing their capacity to regularly conduct exercises for these purposes in collaboration with relevant stakeholders.
6. actively communicate on open government strategies and initiatives, as well as on their outputs, outcomes and impacts, in order to ensure that they are well-known within and outside government, to favour their uptake, as well as to stimulate stakeholder buy-in;
7. proactively make available clear, complete, timely, reliable and relevant public sector data and information that is free of cost, available in an open and non-proprietary machine-readable format, easy to find, understand, use and reuse, and disseminated through a multi-channel approach, to be prioritised in consultation with stakeholders;
8. grant all stakeholders equal and fair opportunities to be informed and consulted and actively engage them in all phases of the policy-cycle and service design and delivery. This should be done with adequate time and at minimal cost, while avoiding duplication to minimise consultation fatigue. Further, specific efforts should be dedicated to reaching out to the most relevant, vulnerable, underrepresented, or marginalised groups in society, while avoiding undue influence and policy capture;
9. promote innovative ways to effectively engage with stakeholders to source ideas and co-create solutions and seize the opportunities provided by digital government tools, including through the use of open government data, to support the achievement of the objectives of open government strategies and initiatives;
10. while recognising the roles, prerogatives, and overall independence of all concerned parties and according to their existing legal and institutional frameworks, explore the potential of moving from the concept of open government toward that of open state.

**III. INVITES** the Secretary-General to disseminate this Recommendation.

**IV. INVITES** Adherents to disseminate this Recommendation at all levels of government.

**V. INVITES** non-Adherents to take due account of, and adhere to, this Recommendation.

**VI. INSTRUCTS** the Public Governance Committee to:

- a. develop process and impact indicators against which to measure the implementation of this Recommendation; and
- b. monitor the implementation of this Recommendation, including through the use of the developed indicators, open government reviews and comparative studies, and report thereon to the Council no later than three years following its adoption and regularly thereafter.

Relevant body: [Public Governance Committee](#)