

## NON-BINDING PRINCIPLES FOR FACILITATING ACCESS TO OPEN GOVERNMENT DATA IN THE APEC REGION

### APEC Committee on Trade and Investment

Open Government Data (OGD) refers to non-sensitive data<sup>1</sup> produced or commissioned by government entities<sup>2</sup> that is published and updated by the public sector for anyone to search, retrieve, use, reuse, and redistribute; easily available in common machine-readable standard formats; and available at no or reasonable cost.<sup>3</sup>

When governments choose to make data available to the public, these datasets can enable innovation, foster government transparency and efficiency, and enable citizens to be more informed. Citizens can also better engage their governments and drive the improvement of public services by providing direct feedback to government agencies.

OGD remains a largely untapped opportunity for most APEC economies as the scope and scale of public data made accessible varies widely across the region. However, enabling OGD offers a wide range of social, economic, and governance benefits to economies at all levels of development. Strengthening the frameworks that support and encourage OGD, as well as cooperating across different economies to ensure that the core principles of interoperability and access are upheld, will support the creation of more targeted, coordinated, and sophisticated OGD approaches.

In 2023, Ministers reaffirmed their “call to accelerate the implementation of the APEC Internet and Digital Economy Roadmap, which prioritizes actions that support inclusive, sustainable and innovative economic growth, including the facilitation of e-commerce and advancing cooperation on digital trade.” Facilitating access to OGD further progresses the key focus areas (KFAs) of the APEC Internet and Digital Economy Roadmap, specifically KFA #4 (*Development of holistic government policy frameworks for the Internet and Digital Economy*), KFA #10 (*Enhancing inclusiveness of Internet and Digital Economy*), and KFA #11 (*Facilitation of E-commerce and Advancing Cooperation on Digital Trade*). In addition, APEC economies have committed in the Aotearoa Plan of Action to “promote approaches for a digital economy that fosters competition and promotes innovation”.

For APEC member economies to reap the multiple benefits of OGD, the following non-binding principles may serve as a reference for governments towards meaningful and impactful OGD operationalization:

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<sup>1</sup> Data that is not restricted under domestic law.

<sup>2</sup> Government data could also apply to data created for governments by external organizations, and data of significant benefit to the public that is held by external organizations and related to government programs and services.

<sup>3</sup> Open government data by default must involve appropriate anonymization and must not include sensitive personal data. Anonymizing datasets prevents potential bad actors from misusing data and will reduce any privacy risk to justify data release in the public interest.

- **Implement and sustain supportive policy frameworks:** Governments are encouraged to further their OGD initiatives by establishing the necessary data protection, privacy, and information security frameworks to ensure personal and commercial data are adequately protected and enforced. Such frameworks may also be regularly assessed by relevant entities of each economy and updated to consider technological changes.
- **Put the needs and experiences of people at the center of OGD initiatives:** Governments are encouraged to ensure the accessibility of data collected across the government to streamline access to public services and make them more readily available and usable for all people.
- **Implement OGD initiatives across government organizations:** Serving as data providers, governments are encouraged to ensure datasets are published on interoperable and connected registers, with appropriate privacy, and information security safeguards to ensure confidentiality and personal data protection, in order to streamline and rationalize processes to allow for more comprehensive and insightful datasets.
- **Make datasets visible, accessible, and usable:** Governments are encouraged to ensure the accuracy, reliability, and timeliness of OGD, as well as interoperability across government agencies, that is machine-readable and made freely and easily available.
- **Strengthen governance frameworks:** Governments are encouraged to develop governance frameworks to ensure the long-term use and effectiveness of OGD, and adopt relevant monitoring and measurement efforts to demonstrate the value of OGD policies and further promote OGD use.
- **Promote collaboration in the OGD space:** Governments are encouraged to promote communication within government organizations and with other stakeholders including the private sector, non-government organizations, academia, and civil society.
- **Share policies and best practices around OGD:** Governments are encouraged to share policies and best practices, as appropriate, around OGD for reference to take better advantage of OGD and realize its value by facilitating and encouraging meaningful use of the datasets.
- **Position OGD as a tool for crisis readiness and response:** Governments are encouraged to take into account past crises and utilize available OGD, including through coordinating rapidly with different ministries and actors to support effective early warning and emergency responses.