

Open Data for Business Tool: Enabling the Private Sector's Use of Government Data for Economic Growth

The Open Data for Business Tool supports governments in the release of open data for private sector use to drive economic growth, create jobs, and improve the investment climate.

Context

Open data is free, publicly available data that anyone can access and use, without restrictions. It is a major global resource that can spur economic growth by helping launch new businesses, optimize existing companies' operations, create jobs, and improve the climate for foreign investment. While social media, businesses, and NGOs can all be sources of open data, the most widely-used open data comes from government and government-supported institutions. But despite growing international awareness and interest, many countries have not yet realized the potential value of government data for business use.

Like any public resource, open data needs to be developed, managed, and provided in a way that meets the needs of the people and organizations that use it. The Open Data for Business Tool (OD4B) is the first effort to assess the private sector's use of government data from the demand-side perspective to achieve the economic benefits of open data.

What the Tool Offers

The OD4B Tool is an assessment methodology to help inform governments' data strategies and investments to meet the needs of the private sector by evaluating four key areas:

- High Value Data: The key datasets that businesses most need to expand into new markets, optimize operations, and develop customized solutions.
- Barriers to Use: The major obstacles that prevent data use and their impact on business such as lack of financing.

- Capabilities: The technical skills and financial resources required for businesses to leverage open data.
- Engagement Channels: The most effective ways the government can engage with the private sector on an ongoing basis.

The Tool also provides a recommended Action Plan for follow-up projects and ongoing engagement with private sector stakeholders.

Project Examples

In **Sierra Leone**, the OD4B engagement focused on private sector use of data to support SMEs and agribusinesses and build a stronger entrepreneurial and tech community. A follow up DataFest and business competition are now being planned in collaboration with key private sector stakeholders.

In **Serbia**, key medical datasets were identified and subsequently opened following an OD4B engagement. This now allows pharmaceuticals and wholesalers to help track the ingredients of various drugs and fight counterfeit products in real-time.

In **Kazakhstan**, an OD4B engagement bringing 40+ private sector representatives from a dozen sectors together to discuss the value of government data for their businesses. This solidified the importance of private sector participation in data policy and facilitated the establishment of an ongoing private sector advisory council.

Follow Up Projects

The OD4B Tool has been conducted in eight countries. These engagements have identified several follow up opportunities:

1. Capacity-building for business use of government data: Data literacy and computing trainings, data analysis workshops, or development of value-added data services have been cited as a specific business need specifically for SMEs.
2. Grants for business competitions using government data: Business competitions to raise awareness and build community momentum around concrete applications of open data have been requested after several pilots.
3. Financing to improve sustainability of relevant data ministries: Business registries, procurement data, commodity prices, taxes and tariffs, employment and labor data, and demographic data have consistently been identified as high value for businesses to expand and optimize operations. With initial funding, business registry data can be made widely and freely available. Revenue from added analytical services could then make the program self-sustaining.
4. Support of public-private partnerships to improve data infrastructure: Projects may include developing a centralized data portal, data access points, or additional servers.

Relevant Publications

[Open Data for Economic Growth](#)

[Open Data for Sustainable Development](#)

[Open data:Unlocking innovation and performance with liquid nformation](#)

[Open Data Economy: Unlocking Economic Value by Opening Government and Public Data](#)

For More Information

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