

Open Data Policy

Application

This policy applies to all public bodies listed in Part I in the First Schedule of the *Public Service Labour Relations Act*.

Authority

Board of Management Minute: JB2016-04-20-01

Policy Statement

This policy creates a framework for the public release of government-held data with the goal of moving government toward an “open by default” environment where government-held data is made available proactively, without barriers for its reuse and consumption, except where there are legitimate restrictions on its release. This policy also provides foundational assurance and guidance to government departments with respect to identifying, preparing, and releasing data through open data portals on a routine basis going forward.

Government regards data held by or for the Province as a valuable provincial resource and strategic asset that should be made freely available to the public, barring any privacy,

confidentiality, security or legal restrictions. Citizens and businesses are increasingly demanding and expecting more access to government-held data. Providing public access to these data holdings, with the aforementioned caveat, can increase government transparency and accountability, support meaningful public engagement on public policy, and facilitate significant social and economic benefits for New Brunswick.

By implementing Open Data, the Government of New Brunswick will be making significant progress toward Open Government and will support the principles and commitments made in the G8 Open Data charter.

Definitions

Departments means the government departments, boards and agencies in Part I of the Public Service as defined in the *Public Service Labour Relations Act*.

Open Data is any content, information or data that people are free to use, re-use and redistribute — without any legal, technological or social restriction.

Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of this policy is to provide direction, assign responsibilities, facilitate the release of Open Data by departments and allow for a standardized approach to Open Data in the province.

The objectives of this policy are to:

1. **Improve transparency and public trust:** In a well-functioning democratic society, citizens need to know

what their government is doing to foster trust and accountability.

2. **Enhance research, science, and innovation:** Government will facilitate the discovery of new knowledge, connections and patterns leading to innovation and problem solving.

3. **Release social and commercial value:** Government will facilitate the creation of new business and services that deliver social and commercial value.

4. **Support public participation and engagement:** Citizens will be more directly informed and involved in decision-making.



5. **Support decision making:** Government will be better equipped to make informed decisions.
6. **Improve government services:** Services will be redesigned to make it easier for the citizen to interact with government – this is often referred to as citizen-

centric services.

7. **Minimize costs, maximize efficiencies:** Managing data as an enterprise asset will reduce duplication, rationalize business processes and enable efficiencies.

Principles

The following principles will be adopted:

1. **Open Data by Default:** Government-held data is made available proactively, without barriers for its reuse and consumption, except where there are legitimate restrictions on its release.
2. **Open Data is Quality Data:** Government data released as Open Data is accurate, timely, open access, interpretable, coherent, and primary:
 - a. **Accurate:** The accuracy of data is the degree to which the data correctly describes the phenomena it was designed to measure. It is usually characterized in terms of error in statistical estimates.
 - b. **Timely:** The timeliness of data refers to the delay between the reference point (or the end of the reference period) to which the data pertains, and the date on which the data becomes available.
 - c. **Open Access:** The accessibility of data refers to the ease with which it can be obtained as well as the suitability of the form or medium through which the data can be accessed.
- d. **Interpretable:** The interpretability of data reflects the availability of the supplementary information and metadata necessary to interpret and utilize it appropriately. This information normally covers the underlying concepts, variables and classifications used.
- e. **Coherent:** The coherence of data reflects the degree to which it can be successfully brought together with other data within a broad analytic framework and over time. Coherence does not necessarily imply full numerical consistency.
- f. **Primary:** Published data should be as detailed as possible. Data should be published in primary forms (i.e. as collected at source) at the finest level of granularity available. Aggregate data may be published when granular source data is not available.

Roles and Responsibilities

Deputy Heads or Delegates:

1. Ensure implementation of this policy and supporting materials.
2. Lead their departments in enhancing government transparency and accountability through releasing government data.
3. Promote the benefits of open data initiatives, encouraging citizen participation and engagement with government.
4. Designate a point(s) of contact for data released as Open Data.
5. Approve the release or removal of departmental Open Data.

Departments:

1. Identify and prioritize data for release as open data.
2. Consider the objectives of this policy when creating or modifying data or developing business solutions.
3. Ensure that open data is only released in accordance with this policy and any procedures and guidelines developed by the Open Data Program.
4. Renegotiate and adjust information licensing contracts as they expire - to ensure they comply with this policy.
5. Provide information required for reporting on open data.

Open Data Program (Service New Brunswick):

1. Develop strategies, procedures, guidelines and standards to support this policy.
2. Assist departments in implementing this policy and supporting materials.
3. Educate stakeholders on the topics of privacy and Open Data.
4. Help to establish government data release strategies and oversee the release of this data on a provincial Open Data portal.
5. Develop and maintain a provincial Open Data portal.
6. Document any decisions not to release government-held data.
7. Develop and report on performance measures for open data and related matters.
8. Develop and maintain the Open Government Licence.
9. Develop partnerships, engage with industry and represent New Brunswick in national and international forums.

Office of the Chief Information Officer (Executive Council Office):

1. Maintain and update this policy.
2. Provide oversight and monitor and evaluate compliance with this policy.
3. Consult on the Open Government License, strategies, standards, guidelines, processes and best practices with the appropriate GNB governance bodies.
4. Review department data initiatives for strategic alignment and compliance.
5. Endorse the Open Government Licence, strategies, standards, guidelines, processes and best practices developed by the Open Data Program.
6. Act as a point of escalation for issues related to the Open Data Program, the Open Government License, strategies, standards, guidelines, processes, best practices and deliverables such as portals.
7. Develop partnerships, engage with industry and represent New Brunswick in national and international forums.
8. Report on compliance with the policy and progress of the Open Data Program.

Monitoring

Departments are responsible for the consistent implementation and monitoring of the policy as it relates to their data.

The Executive Council Office, Office of the CIO, will consult

periodically with stakeholders (including: departments, the Open Data Program, program users, etc.) to receive feedback regarding the relevancy, usefulness, and effectiveness of the policy and supporting materials and make updates and revisions as required.

Exemptions

A department seeking an exemption from all or part of this policy must obtain approval for the exemption from

the Executive Council Office, Office of the CIO.

Inquiries

General inquiries about this policy can be directed to the Executive Council Office, Office of the CIO at: 453-2259 or admin.ocio@gnb.ca