

## National Open Data Initiative

### Policy statement on linking to the National Open Data Portal and the use of Regional/Local Portals.

The National Open Data Portal at [data.gov.ie](http://data.gov.ie) was created as part of a federated approach to facilitate the publication of open data across various levels of government and the public sector. The National Portal facilitates the linking of datasets from a public body to the central portal. It does not host datasets. A federated approach was taken because the number of datasets and dataset owners is large and crosses various levels of government and public bodies, making it difficult to implement a central solution where all owners unify their data in one system. The federated approach also avoided the need for changes to the internal processes of the various bodies who produce the datasets.

#### Advantages of Federated tools

- Datasets are accessible via a central national resource- [data.gov.ie](http://data.gov.ie)
- Federated/distributed tools for open data collection enable the automatic publication of metadata for each dataset, which allow for the creation of a complete national index of reusable public information.
- Users do not need to know and find the website of the public entity holding the data, but can access the national portal to find the data they need and details of the source website/repository if required.
- Where datasets are linked dynamically (e.g. via APIs or harvesters) any updates to the source data are reflected on the national Portal.

#### Linking to the National Portal

There are a number of ways that a public body may link their datasets to the national portal.

- Create a link manually on the central Portal back to the data held on their own website or repository by following the process to publish to the Portal.
- Programmatically link to the portal via an API (Applications Programmable Interface)
- The Portal can harvest data from a public body if a harvester is created for that public body

The preferred option depends on the type and volume of data a public body holds as well as its frequency of update and can be discussed on a case by case basis. For example, if a public body holds a large quantity of data or if this data is frequently updated then an automated approach such as APIs or harvesters is recommended.

In terms of local data storage this is a matter for the public body to consider in the context of data management developments in the public sector generally. A public body may choose to host data on its own website or other repository. Whatever option is chosen the data on any such data source should comply with the [Technical Framework](#).

It is not a requirement for a public body to develop its own Open Data portal but it is a matter for public bodies to consider and decide if they wish to have one. The data has to be published somewhere before [data.gov.ie](http://data.gov.ie) can link to it and given the amount of data held by some agencies, a local portal may be a reasonable approach. For example, the HSE and a number of Local Authorities have their own Open Data portals which are harvested by the national Portal. The [National Open Data Strategy 2017-2022](#) does not preclude a public body from developing its own Portal. However, there are strategic government plans to simplify and rationalise the amount of departmental and

State body websites to create a better user experience. It is therefore, important to ensure that Open Data sites/portals at least align to this strategic direction. Any locally created public sector Open Data portal should be linked to the national Portal.

### **Recommendations**

As the end users of open data are from different domains, there is a need for common understanding and common output standards.

The National Open Data Portal uses the DCAT-AP metadata schema to ensure standardised metadata. Data Publishers should ensure that new datasets are DCAT compliant (this will automatically happen when creating a link to the national Portal). It is also recommended that a suitable DCAT endpoint is included.

Data Publishers should also ensure that their datasets are compliant with the Technical Framework which specifies standards to be followed in relation to metadata, licence, format, standards and URIs (Uniform Resource Identifiers). Programmatic tools such as APIs and harvesters should also be compliant and an API should always include appropriate access documentation when linked to the Portal.

Data protection considerations remain with the data provider. Publishing to the national Open Data Portal does not transfer rights or data responsibility to the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform.

A Framework for Open Data training for public bodies is available and public bodies are encouraged to avail of same. The training includes modules on the Technical Framework and on best practice generally.

A Framework for Open Data technical support for public bodies is available to those who require assistance with data audit, data cleaning and preparation, anonymization and linked data and data visualisation. The creation of individual local portals is out of scope of this Framework. Should a public body require this to be done they may conduct their own tendering process.

Should a local Portal be created then this must be linked to the national Open Data Portal via automated means. The best means to create the link will be discussed between the data provider and the Open Data Unit with technical support/advice.

Open Data Governance Board

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