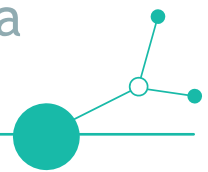


Communication Toolkit - External Draft Posts

WP1 - Development and transfer of public data
opening and security strategy



29 May 2026





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Introduction

This communication toolkit provides ready-to-use draft texts for external communication on open data by municipalities. It has been developed in the context of the DoorCE project, which supports public authorities in Central Europe in making public open data easier to access, more dynamic, more secure and more useful for society. DoorCE does this by supporting the creation of local Open Data Hubs, practical strategies and user-friendly tools for data provision and reuse.

The toolkit is designed for municipalities that are preparing to launch, promote or further develop their local open data portal. It helps explain open data to external audiences in a clear, accessible and practical way.

Open data can sound technical at first. However, for residents, local businesses, researchers, schools, civic initiatives and journalists, it can create very concrete value: easier access to public information, better understanding of local developments, new opportunities for analysis and innovation, and more transparent communication between the municipality and the community.

What are these drafts for?

The posts in this toolkit can be used for municipal websites, news sections, social media channels, newsletters, stakeholder updates or campaign pages. They are intended to help municipalities communicate why they publish open data, how the portal works, what kind of information is available, and how different groups can benefit from it.

The drafts cover key external communication topics, including:

- launching a new open data portal,
- explaining what open data means for residents,
- connecting open data with transparency, participation and European values,
- showing how the portal will grow over time,
- explaining how data reaches the portal,
- presenting maps, visualisations and services built on data,
- explaining privacy and GDPR safeguards,
- inviting citizens to suggest datasets,
- promoting cooperation with local initiatives,
- showing how open data supports better local policies,
- introducing the people behind the portal,
- addressing businesses, researchers, students and young people,
- highlighting accessibility,
- announcing newly published datasets.

The purpose of the toolkit is not only to inform, but also to build trust and encourage reuse. External communication should help people understand that open data is not about publishing everything, but about publishing suitable public information responsibly, in a way that is useful and reusable.



How to use this toolkit

The texts are provided as adaptable drafts. They should be tailored to the local context before publication.

Before using a post, please check and adapt:

- the name of the municipality and the open data portal,
- links to the portal, specific datasets, forms or contact points,
- local examples of datasets, maps, dashboards or services,
- target groups relevant for the municipality,
- references to local initiatives, events or partnerships,
- the preferred tone for the chosen communication channel,
- any country-specific legal, data protection or licensing wording,
- the level of detail needed for the audience.

Placeholders such as [municipality], [link], [dataset name] or [insert contact] should be replaced with local information. Municipalities are encouraged to add concrete examples wherever possible, for example a published dataset on playgrounds, parking areas, trees, public services, mobility, tourism, climate measures or election statistics.

The posts do not need to be used in the order presented. They can be selected according to the municipality's stage of open data development. For example, before or during a portal launch, posts explaining the portal, open data basics and privacy safeguards may be most useful. Once the portal is active, municipalities can focus on new dataset announcements, reuse examples, stakeholder cooperation and targeted posts for businesses, researchers or students.

Whom are the posts targeting?

The main audiences are external stakeholders who may benefit from open data or contribute to its reuse. These include:

- residents and local communities,
- civic initiatives and non-profit organisations,
- local businesses and SMEs,
- researchers, universities and schools,
- students and young people,
- journalists and media,
- developers and citizen developers,
- local innovators and service providers,
- other public institutions.

Different audiences will have different levels of knowledge. Some may be familiar with open data, while others may be encountering the topic for the first time. The texts therefore use simple explanations, practical examples and everyday benefits rather than technical language.



How to adapt the tone

The texts are written in an accessible, positive and trust-building style. They should help residents and stakeholders understand what open data can do for them and how they can engage with it.

Depending on the channel, the tone can be adapted:

- for social media: shorter, more direct and more engaging,
- for municipal websites: slightly more explanatory and informative,
- for newsletters: practical and action-oriented,
- for stakeholder communication: more focused on reuse, cooperation and benefits,
- for schools or youth audiences: simpler language and concrete learning examples,
- for businesses or researchers: stronger focus on reuse potential, data quality and access.

Where possible, external communication should make open data tangible. Instead of only saying that data is available, show what it can help people do: find services, understand local trends, create maps, develop applications, support research, improve participation or identify local needs.

Recommended use

For best results, external posts should be combined with clear calls to action. Each post should guide readers towards a next step, such as:

- explore the open data portal,
- view a specific dataset,
- suggest a new dataset,
- contact the open data team,
- join an event or workshop,
- share a reuse example,
- subscribe to updates,
- use the data in a project, analysis or service.

Communication should also be realistic. Open data portals grow over time. It is better to explain that the portal will expand step by step than to create the impression that all municipal data will be available immediately. This helps manage expectations and builds trust.

The toolkit can be used as a starting point for an external open data communication campaign. By adapting the drafts to local examples and audiences, municipalities can show how open data supports transparency, participation, innovation and better public services – and invite the community to become part of the local open data ecosystem.



Our new open data portal: welcome to our informative series

What is an open data portal and how can it help residents, local businesses, researchers, civic initiatives and public administration?

With this post, [municipality] is launching a short series about our new open data portal. The portal will make selected municipal information easier to find, access and reuse, for example data on public facilities, green spaces, mobility, environment services or local infrastructure.

Open data is public information that is made available in a way that others can find, access and reuse. Our open data portal is part of our effort to make municipal information more accessible, transparent and useful. It will help us share data in structured formats so that it can be used in maps, dashboards, digital services, research, reporting or local innovation projects.

What can you expect from this series?

- We will explain what open data means in simple terms.
- We will show how municipal data can become useful in everyday life.
- We will introduce examples of datasets that can support better services and more informed decisions.
- We will explain how data is prepared responsibly before it is published.
- We will invite local stakeholders to explore, use and discuss open data with us.

Our portal will not be complete on day one and it does not need to be. Open data grows step by step. We will start with selected datasets, learn from feedback, improve quality and expand the portal over time. With every dataset, we open a new door: to transparency, participation, innovation and better public services.

Follow our series and discover how open data can support *[municipality]* and our community.

[Link to portal]



Open data: what it means for you and why *[municipality]* is publishing it

Open data may sound technical but at its core, it is about making public information easier to access, understand and reuse.

Municipalities already collect and manage many types of information: where public facilities are located, how local services are organised, what mobility options exist, where construction works take place, how green spaces are distributed, or how the local population is changing. Some of this information is already public, but it may be hidden in PDFs, web pages, lists or internal systems. Open data means taking suitable public information and publishing it in a structured, reusable format.

Why does this matter for you?

- Because information becomes easier to find. Instead of searching across different pages or documents, datasets can be accessed through one portal.
- Because data can support useful digital services. For example, open data can help create maps of playgrounds, parking spaces, public toilets, municipal offices, schools or cultural facilities.
- Because transparency becomes more practical. Open data helps residents see what information the municipality works with and how it can be used.
- Because local innovation becomes easier. Civic initiatives, businesses, researchers, journalists and developers can reuse public data to create new insights, tools or services.
- Because the municipality can also use open data internally. When data is better structured and documented, it can support cooperation between departments and improve everyday administrative work.

Of course, not every dataset can or should be published. Before data is released, we check whether it is suitable for open publication. Personal, sensitive or protected information is not published as open data. Data protection, security, quality and responsible use are part of the process.

For *[municipality]*, publishing open data is not only a technical step. It is a commitment to openness, better information and more collaborative local development. Our goal is simple: to make public data easier to use for public value.

[Link to portal or first datasets]



Open data and European values: transparency, participation, and innovation

Open data is far more than just a digital tool, it is a powerful mechanism for translating European values into local action. When we talk about digital tools, often we forget the “why”. As the [European Commission](#) puts it: it’s about “putting people first”. Open data can be the bridge between high-level EU values and the tangible impact we see in our cities every day.

This matters because openness is not only about the access to information in general. EU law also states that citizens have the right to participate in the democratic life of the Union and that decisions should be taken [“as openly and as closely as possible to the citizen”](#).

For municipalities, open data can support all of this at once, more transparency, better participation and new opportunities for innovation by residents, researchers and innovators alike.

Our goal is to make public data easier to access, easier to reuse and more useful in everyday life. By opening up local data, we want to support informed participation, encourage new ideas and help building a more open and connected community. Start exploring our open data portal today: [\[link\]](#)



Open data is a journey: how our portal will grow over time

Building an open data portal is not a one-time project – it is an ongoing process. Step by step, *[municipality]* will identify, prepare, and publish more data over time. New datasets will be added continuously as we learn, improve, and expand our efforts:

- ➔ Because starting small is still a strong start. Even a few published datasets can show what is possible and encourage other municipal departments to look at their own information and ask: what could be shared openly, too?
- ➔ Because municipalities often already have valuable material. Before new datasets are created, it is worth taking time for a data inventory. Many useful resources already exist and can become open data with the right preparation.
- ➔ Because examples make open data tangible. As soon as datasets are used in maps, dashboards, apps, or other practical services, open data becomes less abstract and applications become tangible.
- ➔ Because open data culture grows through participation. When civil society, local businesses, journalists, researchers, and civic initiatives show interest in free and open data, it creates momentum within public administration to publish more.

Our portal will grow over time – and with every new dataset, it becomes more useful for the whole community.



Behind the scenes: how municipal data reaches the open data portal

How does municipal data actually make its way onto an open data portal? It usually starts with information that already exists – but is not yet published in a reusable format.

Take a common example: *[municipality]* publishes a list of parking locations on its website, in bullet points. The information is public and useful, but it is difficult to search, combine, or reuse in digital tools. As open data, the same information could be provided in a structured format that could be integrated in the official city app or other services. And the big advantage: if the data is updated on our portal, the new additions will automatically be visible in our city app as well as in all applications in which the open data is integrated.

So how do we get there? What happens behind the scenes?

The dataset is identified as suitable for open publication – either because one of departments suggests it, or because an open data expert spots its potential during a data inventory. The decision is taken, the dataset should be published.

Next, responsibilities are clarified. Who owns the data? Who maintains it? And is it clear under which open licence it can be published? Legal and ethical considerations and questions also matter. Does the dataset contain sensitive information? Is there any risk in publishing it? If needed, data must be anonymised or pseudonymised before release.

After that, we check the quality of the data and prepare its publication: Is it in the correct format, complete and up to date? Is it clear who will update it and how often? Have we described the dataset (metadata) so that it is findable? Once everything is ready, the dataset is uploaded into the open data system - first for internal use and then published on the portal for everyone to use.



Open data beyond numbers: maps, visualisations, and stories from [municipality]

When municipal data is reused in maps, visualisations, or digital tools, it becomes tangible for our citizens. Instead of downloading a spreadsheet, residents usually want clear answers to practical questions: What are the opening hours of a tourist landmark? Where is the nearest public toilet? What public services are available nearby?

Check out our services, which we built on our open data:

[choose one example and describe what datasets are used. Use examples from the list below]

Open data can help create useful services:

- ➔ *Interactive maps showing playgrounds, sports facilities, schools, public toilets, or green spaces*
- ➔ *Visualisations of roadworks, construction sites, or traffic restrictions*
- ➔ *Clear displays of mobility options such as bike stations, parking areas, or public transport stops*
- ➔ *Maps of trees, parks, climate measures, or environmental data*
- ➔ *Charts and dashboards showing population trends, housing development, or local economic data*
- ➔ *Service maps that help residents find municipal offices, advisory services, or community spaces]*

These kinds of applications turn numbers in spreadsheets into something our citizens can see, explore and use.



Your data is protected: how privacy and GDPR are respected in open data

[“Responsible open data is not about publishing everything. It is about publishing the right data in the right way.”](#) - Data.Europa.eu, 2024

Open data is about transparency, but never at the expense of privacy. For municipalities/for our municipality, this means one thing very clearly: no data will be openly published if it contains personal or sensitive information. Before datasets are published, they are thoroughly checked to make sure that publication is in line with all data protection rules.

In our data opening practice, this means that personal data is removed, sensitive fields are excluded and where necessary data is anonymised and aggregated before publication. Making data available is not just a technical step, but a legal and ethical one as well.

Our open data portal supports this process by providing a structured way to prepare, document and publish datasets. It helps ensure that data is shared with clear metadata and reuse conditions, while respecting GDPR and protecting residents' right. For us as municipality, open data means being transparent about public information while being equally careful with personal data. Start exploring our open data portal today: *[link]*



Historical open data: explore our local election data from the last XY years

Local elections shape the future of our municipality and your life, from public services and infrastructure to climate action, mobility, culture, education and community life.

With our open data portal, *[municipality]* is making historical local election data from the last XY years easier to access, explore and reuse.

What does this mean in practice? Instead of searching through separate documents, reports or web pages, residents, journalists, researchers, schools, civic initiatives and other interested users can access election-related data in one structured format. This can include information such as voter turnout, results by district, changes over time, or other publicly available election statistics.

Why publish historical election data as open data?

- Because it supports transparency. Election data is part of public democratic life, and making it easier to access helps citizens better understand local political developments.
- Because it helps show trends over time. Historical data can make changes visible – for example in voter turnout, participation across districts, or long-term shifts in local voting patterns.
- Because it supports education and research. Schools, universities, journalists and civil society organisations can use the data for analysis, visualisations, reports or civic education projects.
- Because it makes public information easier to reuse. Structured open data can be used to create charts, maps, dashboards or other tools that help communicate complex developments clearly.

As with all open data, only information suitable for public publication is shared. Personal voting choices remain private. The dataset contains aggregated public information and is prepared responsibly before publication.

Historical election data helps us look back, but it can also support better conversations about the future of our community. Explore the dataset on our open data portal:

[Link to dataset]



Your voice matters: suggest/request new open data datasets

Open data is most valuable when it meets real needs!

This is why your suggestions for new datasets matter. They can help identify information gaps, improve transparency and make our local data landscape more useful and relevant over time. Open data policy is not only about publishing data, but also about supporting reuse and understanding user needs.

Do you have an idea for a dataset that should be made openly available? We welcome your suggestions!

Share your idea

- Via our online form
- Via our open data portal
- By email
- Via our municipal contact channel

When sending a suggestion, it can help to include

- What data you are looking for
- Why it would be useful
- Who could benefit from it

Of course, not every dataset can or should be published openly (e.g. due to privacy reasons). But every suggestion helps us better understand what information is most important to our community.

Let's shape a stronger open data landscape together!



Partnering for innovation: how we collaborate with local initiatives on open data

Open data creates the greatest value when it is shaped together with the people who want to use it. That is why collaboration with local initiatives, civic groups, businesses, researchers, and community organisations is an important part of our work on open data in [municipality].

How do these partnerships foster open data activities?

By helping us to **identify relevant data**: Local stakeholders often know best which information is missing, which datasets could be useful, and where better data collection could support public services or local projects.

By unfolding **open data value through reuse**: Publishing data is not the final goal – it is the starting point. An open data ecosystem grows when data is reused in research, journalism, civic engagement, digital tools, and practical services for everyday life.

By **engaging in dialogue**: Exchange with local initiatives helps us understand needs, priorities, and barriers. It allows us to improve how data is selected, prepared, documented, and published.

By growing **innovation through cooperation**: When public administration and local actors share knowledge and ideas, new opportunities emerge – from better information services to creative solutions for local challenges.

If you are interested to join the conversation, please contact us. Everyone is welcome to participate in our open data events and activities, such as:

- ➔ hackathons or civic tech challenges around municipal datasets,
- ➔ open data roundtables or community meet-ups with local stakeholders,
- ➔ our cooperation with schools and universities.



Data-driven decisions: how open data supports better local policies

Good local policies need good information. Municipal decisions affect everyday life: mobility, public spaces, social services, climate measures, infrastructure, housing, tourism, business development and many other areas. To plan, improve and evaluate these policies, municipalities need reliable data. Open data can support this work in several ways.

First, it helps create a shared evidence base. When selected municipal datasets are published openly, different departments, local stakeholders and residents can refer to the same information. This can make discussions more transparent and better informed.

Second, it helps identify needs and patterns. For example, data about mobility, public facilities, population trends, green spaces or service locations can help show where access is good, where gaps exist, and where improvements may be needed.

Third, it supports monitoring over time. When datasets are updated regularly, they can help track developments: Are new cycling routes improving connectivity? Are public services evenly distributed? Where are climate adaptation measures being implemented? Which areas need more attention?

Fourth, open data can encourage cooperation. Local businesses, universities, civic initiatives, journalists and residents may use municipal data to create visualisations, analyses, apps or project ideas. These external perspectives can help the municipality see familiar challenges in new ways.

Finally, open data supports accountability. By making public information more accessible, *[municipality]* can show what data is available, how it develops over time and how it may inform local planning.

Data does not replace democratic decision-making. It does not make choices automatically. But it can make decisions clearer, more evidence-based and easier to discuss.

With our open data portal, *[municipality]* is taking another step towards transparent, informed and future-oriented local governance.

[Optional example to insert: Explore our dataset on xxxx and see how it can support planning for xxx.]

[Link to portal]



Who works with data in our municipality: introducing the people behind our open data portal

An open data portal does not run on technology alone — it depends on the people who make data understandable, reusable, and ready for publication. Behind the scenes, different roles come together to make open data possible *in [municipality]*.

Here are some of the people involved:

Data expert: *[employee name]* is our main data champion and the person who coordinates all activities around open data. This role helps connect ideas, processes, and departments, and keeps the development of the open data portal moving forward.

Data providers: *[selected employees from municipal departments]* work with data in their daily activities and know which information may be valuable for the public. Their expertise helps identify datasets that are useful, relevant, and worthwhile to publish as open data.

Data security expert: *[employee name]* makes sure that all data protection considerations have been carefully addressed. This role helps ensure that datasets are checked responsibly and that legal and ethical requirements are taken seriously before publication.

Open data is a shared effort. It grows through cooperation between people with different expertise — from identifying data and preparing it for release to making sure it can be published safely and responsibly.

With every dataset, these colleagues help turn existing municipal information into a resource for transparency, innovation and public value.



Open data for businesses: turning municipal data into new opportunities

Did you know that open data can create real practical value for businesses? In the EU's open data framework reusable public-sector data is explicitly linked to benefits for both society and the economy.

And there are already many examples of businesses showing what this can look like in practice. Finnish company [Vainu](#) for example uses official and open company data to support lead generation, lead scoring and sales intelligence. In Spain, [BBVA Data & Analytics](#) has been presented as a case of turning data analysis into services that help organisations gain business insights and improve performance. Or, the [PlantwisePlus](#) is a tool, which makes open crop-health available to farmers and advisors can respond more quickly to pests and diseases and therefore improve their yield.

For municipalities, this matters because local open data can become a building block for innovation. Publishing useful data can help create the foundations for new products, smarter services and data-driven business ideas. Open data does not create value on its own, but it can create the conditions for others to build that value.

[Municipality name] is committed to making public information more accessible and reusable. By opening data step by step, we aim to support innovation, strengthen our local data ecosystem, and make it easier for businesses and other organisations to create useful new applications and services. Start exploring our open data portal today: *[link]*



Open data for research: accessing municipal data for analysis and studies

When does data become valuable for research? When it can be found, accessed, reused and analysed, and is reliable. This is where open data can make a real difference. When municipal information is published in open, machine-readable formats with clear metadata, it becomes much easier for researchers, students and institutions to work with.

For example, researchers have used open data about the “[311 city service requests](#)” to analyse what residents report to local governments and to compare municipal service patterns across cities. Further, in Munich the city has gone a step further by offering “[starter code](#)” for datasets from its open data portal, helping users begin analysis directly in Python or R. And in the environmental field the open platform [OpenAQ](#) has shown how openly accessible public data can support research on air quality and pollution trends.

By publishing useful local datasets, municipalities can help create the basis for studies, collaboration and new insights into local challenges and trends. Start exploring our open data portal today: [\[link\]](#)



Open data and youth: how students can learn from municipal data

Open data is not only a resource for experts, it can also help students, pupils and young people. For example, to build data literacy, explore how their municipality works and ask better questions about the place they live in. But at the same time, vice versa, open data can help municipalities better understand youth participation, local challenges, and the issues that matter most to [younger generations](#).

How does this look like in the real world? An example is the [YouthMetre](#) project which uses open data to help young people engage with EU youth policy through dashboards, maps, and learning resources. In [London](#), youth-focused datasets and a systems map have been published to better understand the challenges and opportunities young people face in civic action. These examples show that open data can be both a learning tool and a source of evidence for better youth-related decisions.

For municipalities, this creates two opportunities at once: to help students, schools and young people work with real local data, and to use open data to build a clearer picture of youth needs, interests, and increase participation in community life. Start exploring our open data portal today: [\[link\]](#)



Open data for everyone: accessibility matters

Still sceptical about the benefits of open data for communities? Maybe a look at what open data can actually do for you would help.

Across Europe, open data is already being used in ways that make everyday life more accessible, inclusive and connected. In the cultural field, [OpenGLAM](#) supports open access to cultural heritage and helps connect people with shared histories, collections and memories. Programmes such as ODI's Data as Culture also show how data can be presented in ways that engage wider and more diverse audiences, helping people connect with data beyond technical contexts.

We, *[Municipality name]*, believe public information should create value for the whole community, not remain limited to expert use. That is why we are opening data step by step to make it easier for residents, organisations, researchers, and businesses to turn information into insight, participation, and everyday benefit. Start exploring our open data portal today: *[link]*



New dataset published: discover our latest open data release

We have published a new dataset on our open data portal: *[dataset name]*. This dataset provides information on *[topic/ area/ context]* and is now available *[for anyone to access and reuse/ under the ____ license]*.

Quick info: Formats / access: *[CSV / JSON / API / etc.]*

Update frequency: *[monthly / yearly / real-time / etc.]*

Publisher/Data owner: *[department / person / etc.]*

This dataset includes *[description]* and can be useful for *[insert target group]*. By publishing this dataset, we want to make information on *[topic]* easier to access, easier to reuse and more useful for the community.

Explore it here: *[link]*

