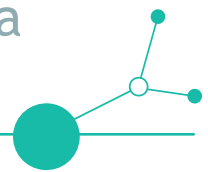


Communication Toolkit - Internal Draft Posts

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



29 May 2026





Overview

INTRODUCTION.....	2
WHY OPEN DATA MATTERS FOR OUR ADMINISTRATION: A PILLAR OF TRANSPARENCY AND GOOD GOVERNANCE	5
WHY WE HAVE OUR OWN LOCAL OPEN DATA PORTAL: BENEFITS AND IMPACT.....	6
OPEN DATA QUICK START: A CHECKLIST WITH TASKS AND RESPONSIBILITIES	7
BEHIND THE SCENES: HOW MUNICIPAL DATA REACHES THE OPEN DATA PORTAL	8
PRESENTING THE DATASETS ON OUR OPEN DATA PORTAL: WHAT DO WE HAVE AND HOW DEPARTMENTS CAN PROPOSE NEW DATASETS.....	9
OPEN DATA LICENSING: WHY IS IT MORE IMPORTANT THAN YOU THINK.....	10
FROM INTERNAL DATA TO OPEN DATA: WHAT CAN BE PUBLISHED AND WHAT CANNOT	11
MAKING DATA FINDABLE: THE IMPORTANCE OF (GOOD) METADATA	13
MAKING DATA INTEROPERABLE: REDUCING MANUAL WORK THROUGH COMMON FORMATS	14
KEEPING OPEN DATA UP TO DATE: HOW TO MOVE FROM ONE-OFF UPLOADS TO RELIABLE UPDATES.....	16
THE MOST FREQUENT DATA REQUESTS FROM CITIZENS AND BUSINESSES: REDUCING WORKLOAD THROUGH PROACTIVE PUBLISHING	17
TRAINING NEEDS FOR OPEN DATA: SKILLS, TOOLS, AND SUPPORT	18
COOPERATION WITH EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS ON OPEN DATA: DOS AND DON'TS.....	19
WHAT TO DO WHEN DATA IS MISSING OR INCOMPLETE (OR BOTH): ASSESSING DATA QUALITY FOR OPEN PUBLICATION	21
HOW TO DOCUMENT OPEN DATA PROCESSES: ENSURING CONTINUITY AND KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER	23
WHICH REGULATIONS ARE WE IMPLEMENTING WITH OUR OPEN DATA PORTAL: MUNICIPAL, NATIONAL AND EUROPEAN STRATEGIES AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORKS	24
SERVICES BUILT ON OPEN DATA: EXAMPLES, LESSONS LEARNED, AND BEST PRACTICES	26



Introduction

This communication toolkit provides ready-to-use draft texts for internal communication on open data within municipalities. It has been developed in the context of the DoorCE project, which supports public authorities in Central Europe in making public open data more accessible, dynamic, secure and useful through local Open Data Hubs, practical strategies and user-friendly tools.

The toolkit is designed for municipalities that are developing, launching or further improving their local open data activities. It focuses on internal communication because open data is not only a technical or external communication topic. It also depends on awareness, cooperation and clear responsibilities inside the administration.

Municipal departments already collect, maintain and use many types of data in their daily work. Some of this information may be suitable for open publication, while other data must remain internal, protected or confidential. The purpose of this toolkit is to help municipalities explain these differences, build trust, and encourage colleagues to actively contribute to open data processes.

What are these draft posts for?

The texts in this toolkit can be used as internal blog posts, intranet articles, newsletter items, staff updates or short explanatory briefings. They are intended to support communication with municipal employees and departments that may be involved in identifying, preparing, publishing, maintaining or reusing open data.

The drafts cover key questions that often arise inside an administration, such as:

- Why does open data matter for our municipality?
- What is the purpose of our local open data portal?
- Which datasets can be published, and which cannot?
- Why are licensing, metadata and data quality important?
- How can departments propose datasets?
- What kind of training or support is available?
- How should we cooperate with external stakeholders?
- Which municipal, national and European frameworks are relevant?

The posts are meant to make open data understandable and practical. They should help colleagues see that open data is not an abstract policy concept, but a concrete part of good governance, transparency, digitalisation and better data management.

How to use this toolkit

The posts are provided as adaptable drafts. Municipalities are encouraged to adjust them to their own context before publication.

Before using a text, please check and adapt:

- the name of the municipality, department or portal,
- internal contact persons, teams, email addresses and links,



- references to local strategies, national regulations or municipal procedures,
- examples of datasets already available on the portal,
- the tone and length required for the chosen communication channel,
- any country-specific legal, data protection or licensing requirements.

The placeholders in square brackets, such as [insert contact person / team / email] or [link], should be replaced with local information. Where useful, municipalities can also add screenshots, examples from their own portal, short interviews with colleagues, or links to training materials and internal guidance.

The posts do not need to be published in the order presented. They can be selected according to the stage of the municipality's open data journey. For example, a municipality preparing to launch a portal may first use posts explaining why open data matters, how the portal works and how departments can propose datasets. A municipality with an existing portal may focus more on data quality, updates, interoperability, reuse and cooperation with external stakeholders.

Whom are the posts targeting?

The main target group is municipal staff. This may include colleagues from digitalisation, IT, statistics, urban planning, mobility, environment, culture, tourism, communication, legal services, data protection, procurement, citizen services and other departments that work with data.

The toolkit is to be used by the open data coordinators, project teams and communication officers who need to explain open data internally and motivate departments to participate. It can support awareness-raising, training activities, internal campaigns and the development of more structured open data processes.

How to adapt the tone

The texts are written in an accessible and practical style. They avoid overly technical explanations and focus on what open data means for everyday administrative work. Depending on the municipality, the tone can be made more formal, more motivational or more operational.

For internal audiences, it is often helpful to emphasise practical benefits:

- reducing repeated information requests,
- improving cooperation between departments,
- making responsibilities clearer,
- supporting better documentation and data quality,
- increasing transparency and trust,
- enabling useful services for residents and businesses.

Open data should be presented as a shared effort. The aim is not to create additional pressure on departments, but to show how existing information can become more useful when it is prepared and published responsibly.

Recommended use



For best results, the posts should be combined with clear internal support. Communication works best when colleagues know whom to contact, where to find guidance and how to propose a dataset.

Municipalities may therefore wish to accompany the posts with:

- an internal contact point for open data,
- a dataset proposal form,
- a simple publication checklist,
- guidance on licensing and data protection,
- training sessions or office hours,
- examples of published datasets,
- success stories showing how open data has been reused.

This toolkit can be used as a starting point for building a stronger open data culture inside the administration. Step by step, it can help colleagues understand their role, recognise the value of the data they manage, and contribute to making municipal information more transparent, reusable and useful.



Why open data matters for our administration: a pillar of transparency and good governance

Open data is often discussed as something we publish “for the outside world”. But it is just as relevant inside the administration.

Every department works with information: may it be addresses, facilities, maps, statistics, permits, services, infrastructure, environmental data, planning information and many other datasets. Some of this information may already be public, but it is often spread across different systems, documents or web pages. Open data helps us make selected public information easier to find, understand and reuse.

For our administration, open data supports transparency and good governance in very practical ways:

- It creates clearer access to information. When datasets are documented and published in one place, colleagues can find them more easily and avoid repeated requests between departments.
- It supports more consistent communication. Instead of different versions of the same information circulating in different formats, the portal can become a reliable reference point.
- It strengthens accountability. Publishing suitable data openly shows what information we work with and makes public decisions easier to understand.
- It improves internal data culture. Preparing data for publication encourages us to look at quality, structure, update cycles, responsibilities and documentation.
- It supports cooperation. Open data can be reused by residents, businesses, researchers and civic initiatives – but also by colleagues in other departments.

This is also closely linked to the wider European open data ecosystem. Local governments play an important role not only as providers of open data, but also as reusers of data for better services and decision-making. We support this by helping our municipality establish local open data hubs that provide more accessible and dynamic public open data.

Of course, open data does not mean publishing everything. Data protection, confidentiality, security, legal obligations and quality must always be checked carefully before publication.

But where data is public, non-sensitive and useful, opening it can help us work more transparently, efficiently and collaboratively.

If your department manages data that could be useful for the public or for colleagues across the administration, please contact *[insert contact person / team / email]*. We are happy to support you in assessing whether it may be suitable for publication.

Explore our open data portal here: *[link]*



Why we have our own local open data portal: benefits and impact

Why does our municipality need its own open data portal? The simple answer: because local data has local value.

Our municipality manages information that is directly relevant to residents, businesses, researchers, journalists, civic initiatives and our own colleagues. This can include data about public facilities, mobility, green spaces, services, addresses, statistics, infrastructure, environmental information, events, planning or other local topics.

A local open data portal gives this information a central and structured home. Instead of publishing data across different pages, reports or documents, the portal helps us make suitable datasets easier to find, understand and reuse. It also allows us to describe datasets properly: who is responsible, what the data contains, how often it is updated, what format it is available in, and under which licence it can be reused.

The benefits are practical:

- For residents: easier access to reliable public information.
- For businesses: reusable data that can support services, planning or innovation.
- For researchers and schools: material for analysis, visualisations and education.
- For civic initiatives: a basis for participation, transparency and local projects.
- For our administration: clearer responsibilities, better documentation and fewer repeated information requests.

Our local portal also helps us connect to wider European standards and practices. The project DoorCE focuses on establishing local Open Data Hubs to improve access to public open data and support innovative digital services in Central Europe. European open data work also highlights that high-value datasets can create important benefits for society and the economy when made available for reuse.

In practice, our portal is not only a technical platform. It is a working tool for better data management. It helps us answer important questions:

- Which datasets do we already have?
- Who is responsible for them?
- Are they suitable for publication?
- Are they up to date?
- Are they documented clearly?
- Can they be reused by others?

Our open data portal will grow step by step. We do not need to publish everything at once. What matters is that we start with useful datasets, maintain them responsibly and continue improving the portal over time.

If your department has data that could be added to the portal, please contact *[insert contact person / team / email]*.

Explore the portal here: *[link]*



Open data quick start: a checklist with tasks and responsibilities

Starting with open data can feel complex – but breaking the process into clear steps helps municipalities move from idea to publication.

Here is a simple quick-start checklist in two parts:

1) What data to publish

Before publishing anything, it is useful to build an overview of what is already there.

-  Check which public information is already available on the municipal website, but not yet in an open and reusable format
-  Check which information is frequently requested by residents, businesses, journalists, or other stakeholders
-  Check which additional datasets could potentially be published by different municipal departments

2) How to publish specific datasets

Once a dataset has been selected, the next step is to prepare it for publication.

-  Check whether the data is available in a machine-readable format
-  Check whether a clear open licence has been assigned
-  Check whether the dataset is properly described with metadata so others can understand and reuse it

For both steps, it is crucial to clarify responsibilities:

- Who identifies relevant data, who decides on publication, and who coordinates the process?
- Who prepares the dataset, who reviews quality, and who approves publication?

Open data works best when tasks and responsibilities are clear. A structured checklist can help municipalities get started step by step – and turn existing information into a resource for transparency, reuse, and innovation.



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

How does our municipal data actually make its way onto our open data portal? It is not just a technical upload – it is a structured process that turns existing information into a resource that can be reused by everyone:

1. Identifying a relevant dataset

A dataset may be selected for different reasons: a department wants to publish it, the data has been requested regularly, the city's open data expert focuses on a specific topic, or inspiration comes from best practices in other municipalities.

2. Clarifying ownership and responsibilities

Once a dataset is identified, responsibilities need to be clear. Who owns the data? Who decides when it can be published? Who updates it, and how often? Clear roles are essential for sustainable publication.

3. Preparing the data for opening

Before publication, the data needs to be checked and prepared. This can include data cleaning, format adjustments, and compliance checks to make sure the dataset is suitable for release.

4. Describing the metadata and assigning a licence

To make the dataset understandable and reusable, it needs good metadata: a title, description, update cycle, publisher, and contact point. An open licence is also assigned so users know how the data may be reused.

5. Uploading the data to the data management panel

Once prepared, the dataset is uploaded into the data management system and reviewed before publication.

6. Publishing the data on the portal

Finally, the dataset is published on our data portal. At the same time, its metadata can be published to CKAN, helping make the data searchable not only locally, but also on regional, national, and European data portals.



Presenting the datasets on our open data portal: what do we have and how departments can propose new datasets

Our open data portal is the central place where publicly available municipal datasets can be accessed and reused. It helps make information easier to find, supports transparency and enables data to be used by residents, researchers, businesses and colleagues across the administration.

The portal already includes datasets from areas such as *[individually per municipality to fill in]*. With each dataset published, our municipality makes information more accessible and useful.

A sincere thank you to all colleagues and departments who have already contributed to our dashboard. Your input and cooperation helps make existing information more visible, more reusable and more useful both within the administration and beyond it.

At the same time, for our portal there is still room to grow. Many departments manage valuable data in their daily work and your knowledge is essential when it comes to identifying further datasets that could be published.

A good starting point is to look at the information your department already collects or maintains. Here are a few questions, which might help you consider whether a dataset could be suitable for publication:

- What data does the department already collect or maintain?
- Could this information also be useful for the public, researchers, businesses or other departments?
- Is the data available in a structures format?
- Are there any legal, privacy, confidentiality or security reasons that would prevent publication?

But, not every dataset can or should be published only and every proposal needs careful review. In particular, data protection, legal obligations, confidentiality and data quality must always be taken into account before publication.

At the same time, many datasets may be suitable for publication, especially when they are factual, non-personal and already maintained in a structured format.

If your department has an idea for a dataset that could be included in the portal, we welcome your proposal. Please use *[depending on the municipality]* to get in touch. With everyone's support, we can continue to develop the portal step by step and make municipal information more accessible and reusable.

Explore our existing datasets here: *[link]*



Open data licensing: why is it more important than you think

Publishing a dataset is not enough. People also need to know what they are allowed to do with it. This is why licensing is an essential part of open data.

An open data licence explains under which conditions a dataset can be reused. It tells users whether they can copy it, combine it with other data, build a service with it, use it in research, create a visualisation, or include it in an app. Without a clear licence, even if technically accessible, data may not be reusable.

Licensing matters because it creates clarity for everyone:

- For external users: they know what reuse is permitted.
- For colleagues: we know which conditions apply when we publish or share a dataset.
- For the municipality: clear licensing reduces uncertainty and supports responsible publication.
- For innovation: businesses, researchers and civic initiatives are more likely to reuse data when the rules are clear.

Licensing is also connected to European open data policy. The EU framework for open data and public sector information aims to make public sector data easier to reuse, while high-value datasets should be made available with minimal legal and technical restrictions and free of charge.

Before publishing a dataset, we therefore need to ask:

- Who owns or maintains the data?
- Was the data created by the municipality, or does another organisation have rights to it?
- Are there any third-party restrictions?
- Which licence should apply?
- Does the licence allow the intended reuse?
- Is the licence clearly visible in the metadata?

A common misunderstanding is that “publicly visible” automatically means “openly reusable”. This is not the case. A PDF on a website, a table in a report or a map image may be public, but without a clear licence and reusable format, it may still be difficult or legally uncertain to reuse.

Licensing should therefore be considered early, not only at the moment of publication. If your department wants to publish data, please do not choose a licence on your own. Contact *[insert legal/data/open data contact]* so that the correct licence can be checked and documented.

Clear licensing is not a technical detail. It is what turns public information into reusable open data. More information: *[link to internal licensing guidance/ DoorCE Data Opening Strategy]*. Contact: *[insert contact person / team / email]*.



From internal data to open data: what can be published and what cannot

Many departments manage data that could be useful beyond the original purpose for which it was collected. But not every internal dataset can become open data. Before publication, every dataset needs to be assessed carefully.

A dataset may be suitable for open publication if it is:

- factual and non-personal,
- already public or suitable for public release,
- useful for residents, businesses, researchers, civic initiatives or other departments,
- available in a structured and reusable format,
- maintained by a responsible department,
- documented clearly enough for others to understand,
- free from legal, confidentiality or security restrictions.

Examples of potentially suitable datasets may include:

- locations of public facilities,
- playgrounds, parks, public toilets or sports facilities,
- municipal service points,
- selected mobility or parking information,
- aggregated statistics,
- environmental or climate-related data,
- cultural facilities or tourist information,
- public infrastructure datasets,
- historical non-personal public data.

However, some data cannot be published as open data, or can only be published after careful preparation. This includes data that contains or reveals:

- personal data,
- confidential information,
- commercially sensitive information,
- security-relevant details,
- information protected by legal restrictions,
- internal working documents not intended for publication,
- data where the municipality does not have the right to publish it,
- data that could create risks if combined with other information.

In some cases, data can be adapted before publication. For example, personal details may be removed, values may be aggregated, locations may be generalised, or sensitive fields may be excluded. But this must always be checked carefully.

A useful first assessment can start with these questions:

- What is the purpose of the dataset?
- Who created and maintains it?



- Does it contain personal or sensitive information?
- Is it already publicly available in some form?
- Would publication create any legal, privacy, confidentiality or security risk?
- Is the data understandable for people outside the department?
- Can it be updated reliably?
- Under which licence could it be published?

The European open data framework encourages the reuse of public sector information, but it does not remove the need for careful checks. Open data is about responsible publication, not publication at any cost.

If you are unsure whether a dataset from your department could be published, please contact *[insert contact person / team / email]*. We can help assess the dataset together with the relevant legal, data protection and technical colleagues. Publication checklist: [\[link\]](#). Open data portal: [\[link\]](#).



Making data findable: the importance of (good) metadata

Publishing data is only the first step. Data users need to understand what a dataset contains, who published it, when it was updated, or how it can be reused. If this information - the metadata - is missing, the data will be hard to find and even harder to use.

What is metadata and why does it matter?

A simple way to think about metadata is a library catalogue. When you search for a book, you do not start by reading every page. You look at the title, author, subject, publication date, language, or shelf location. Metadata does the same for datasets: it helps people find the right information quickly and understand whether it is relevant.

For example, metadata for a municipal dataset on playgrounds could include:

- title of the dataset
- short description
- publisher
- date of publication and latest update
- geographic coverage
- file format
- licence for reuse
- contact point

In the EU, metadata is often structured using DCAT-AP – the European application profile for data catalogues. In simple terms, DCAT-AP provides a common way to describe datasets, catalogues, and downloadable files or APIs, so data can be found and reused more easily across portals. It helps public authorities use consistent fields such as publisher, licence, format, update date, and access link. This makes open data more searchable, interoperable, and easier to connect across local, national, and European platforms.

Good metadata may seem like a small detail – but it is what turns published data into findable data.



Making data interoperable: reducing manual work through common formats

Many of us have probably experienced this: you receive a dataset from another source, but before you can use it, you have to rename columns, adjust the format, clarify what certain entries mean... The data exists and may already be available, but extra manual work is still needed before it can be reused. This is where Interoperability becomes important.

Simply said, interoperability means that data can be more easily understood, exchanged and reused across departments, organisations and systems. When data follows clearer structures and common standards, it becomes easier to combine information, compare results and avoid repeated manual corrections, therefore saving time, effort and energy. [European interoperability](#) work also highlights that standardisation in areas such as metadata, data formats and vocabularies are essential for broad data sharing and reuse.

In our open data dashboard, interoperability is already thought through. We use DCAT-AP, which is the European standard application profile for describing datasets across portals. [DCAT-AP](#) is designed to support standardised dataset descriptions, improve discoverability and enable exchange of metadata between portals.

[DCAT-AP](#), the European metadata profile for describing datasets across portals: Interoperable Europe. It is designed to support standardised dataset descriptions and improve cross-portal exchange and reuse.

It may sound technical, but in practice this starts with a few simple questions:

- Are we using consistent column names and definitions?
- Are dates, addresses or locations recorded in a standard way?
- Is data stored in a structured format such as CSV for structured tabular data, GeoJSON for geographic data or another reusable format?
- Do colleagues in another department immediately understand what each field means?
- Could the same structure be used (and understood) again next year, or for another dataset?

Ask yourself these questions and remember that even a small improvement can make a difference and save time later for colleagues and external re-users alike.

Would you like to learn more about Interoperability? The topic is also addressed in the DoorCE project trainings and in the strategy for opening data. More information at [/link/](#).

LEARN MORE

DCAT-AP on Interoperable Europe - overview of the European metadata standard used for dataset descriptions across portals

Data.europe.eu - European Training website, giving background on why open standards matter for more efficient public services and reuse of data

Examples from the real world - [GTFS](#) for transport data and multi-format city portals for geodata/open data publication

Country specific resources:

Germany <https://www.dcat-ap.de/>



Poland https://dane.gov.pl/06/2024_odm_factsheet_poland.pdf / https://data.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2025-06/2024_odm_factsheet_poland.pdf

Slovenia <https://interoperable-europe.ec.europa.eu/collection/slovenian-interoperability-portal-nio>

Slovakia <https://data.slovensko.sk/> <https://opendata.mfsr.sk/en/page/odata> (Standards for quality, publication method, licenses, metadata, ontologies etc. described)

Croatia <https://data.gov.hr/> / <https://mpudt.gov.hr/open-data-policy/30146>

Austria <https://www.dcat-ap.at>
https://www.data.gv.at/static/uploads/2023/07/Open_Data_Guideline.pdf



Keeping open data up to date: how to move from one-off uploads to reliable updates

If you have set up a dataset for publication, this is already an important first step. But for open data to remain useful, it also needs to stay up to date.

A dataset that was uploaded once and then not updated may still be accessible via the portal, but over time it becomes less reliable for anyone wanting to use it. This applies internally as well as externally: colleagues in other departments, researchers, businesses, civic initiatives and innovators alike often depend on current data if they want to analyse developments, build services or combine municipal data with other sources. European open data guidance also stresses that good metadata and maintained datasets improve discoverability, trust and therefore overall re-use.

Keeping data up to date is also closely linked to metadata. In DCAT-AP, dataset descriptions can include information such as when a dataset was issued, when it was last modified and the update frequency through the property for accrual periodicity. [DCAT-AP](#) is designed to support [standardised dataset descriptions](#) and better reuse across portals, so update-related metadata is part of making a dataset more understandable and manageable over time.

In practice, this means that maintaining open data is not only about replacing a file from time to time. It is also about making the update cycle visible and predictable:

- How often is the dataset expected to change?
- Who is responsible for the update?
- Is the data updated manually or can it be taken from an existing source system?
- Is the metadata updated at the same time?

Even a simple and transparent approach can make a big difference. A dataset that is clearly marked as “updated monthly” or “reviewed annually” is often more useful than one with no update information at all. Likewise, a dataset that is updated automatically e.g. from a source system is usually easier to maintain than one that depends on manual updates.

A practical next step is to introduce a lightweight update routine, like:

- Assign a responsible contact person or department for each dataset
- Define an expected update cycle
- Document that cycle in the metadata
- Set calendar reminders or internal review dates
- Where possible, move towards (semi-)automated data flows from the original source

Over time, this can develop into a more robust process

Keeping datasets up to date is not only a technical task. It is a practical step that makes municipal data more reliable, reusable and valuable over time.



The most frequent data requests from citizens and businesses: reducing workload through proactive publishing

Being asked the same question again and again can quickly become tiresome and time-consuming. Responding to them takes time, not because the answers are difficult, but because the same information has to be located, checked and shared repeatedly. Time that could be used for other important tasks. Common examples include parking, roadworks, planning procedures, public transports, environmental information or addresses.

This raises a practical question: which of these recurring requests could be addressed more efficiently through proactive publication?

Open Data can become the simple answer for that. It can help reduce repetitive work, improve the consistency in responses and make information easier to access for citizens, businesses as well as colleagues across the administration.

For example, in 2024, the UK Information Commissioner's Office analysed more than 150.000 requests made through the [WhatDoTheyKnow](#) platform. They concluded that understanding what people ask for most often can help decide what to publish proactively and may reduce future requests.

Proactive publication means that instead of answering the same request many times, the municipality created one reliable source that can be reused by many people. Identifying these priorities does not have to be complicated, as in most administration, repeated requests are already visible in daily work.

These often include:

- Parking, roads and mobility
- Planning procedures and land use
- Public transport
- Environmental information
- Addresses and geospatial data
- Contracts and procurement

However, not every topic needs to become a fully developed open dataset series immediately. In some cases, a clearly structured information page may already reduce repeated enquiries.

A practical next step could be:

- Identify 2 or 3 topics that generate repeated requests
- Check whether the relevant data already exists in a usable form
- Assign a responsible contact person or department
- Decide how often the information should be updated
- Publish it in a format that is easy to access and reuse

Proactive publication is therefore not only a question of transparency. It can also be a practical way to reduce repeated work, provide more consistent information and make municipal data easier to use for everyone who needs it.



Training needs for open data: skills, tools, and support

Open data is a shared task. It does not depend only on one portal, one tool or one person. To make our open data portal useful and sustainable, colleagues across the administration need practical knowledge: how to identify datasets, assess quality, prepare metadata, understand licences, update data and work with the portal.

The good news: not everyone needs to become a technical expert. Many open data skills are practical and can be learned step by step. The DoorCE project offers a variety of trainings for public administrations that want to strengthen their open data work, from first orientation to more advanced organisational, legal and technical questions.

The training programme covers the following topics:

- Data Governance: Who in an organisation is responsible for deciding which datasets should be made public? How are responsibilities organised? How can datasets be kept up to date over time?
- Open Data Basics: What is open data and why should public institutions provide it? Explaining the three key steps towards open data: licensing, technical formats and metadata
- Open Data Deep Dive: What are more practical publication questions? What are the different type of formats, how to choose a suitable license...
- Legal framework: What are the relevant EU and national legislation on open data and what is the general legal context for publishing and reusing public sector data?
- Data Security and Anonymisation: What is the difference between Data Security and Anonymisation, when are they needed and how are they applied?

DoorCE also highlights that sustainable local data ecosystems are not only about technology, but about people, processes and accessible tools. Training can therefore support both individual skills and organisational development

If your department would like support or training on open data, please contact *[insert contact person / team / email]*. Training can be adapted to your needs, whether you are just starting or already preparing a dataset for publication.

Training materials: *[link]*

Upcoming sessions: *[link]*

Open data support contact: *[email]*



Cooperation with external stakeholders on open data: dos and don'ts

Open data becomes more valuable when it is reused. Residents, civic initiatives, journalists, universities, schools, local businesses and developers can all bring useful perspectives. They may help identify missing datasets, test whether published data is understandable, create visualisations, build digital services, or show how data can support local projects.

Cooperation with external stakeholders can therefore strengthen our open data work. But it also needs clear expectations and responsible processes.

Local governments are not only open data providers; they are also part of a wider ecosystem of data reusers, where cooperation and feedback can improve the value of published data. Here are a few practical dos and don'ts.

- Do: listen to data needs. External users often know which information is difficult to find or which datasets could support practical services.
- Do: explain what is possible. Some datasets can be published quickly, while others need legal, technical or quality checks. It is helpful to explain the process.
- Do: use clear contact points. Questions and feedback should not get lost. A shared mailbox, contact form or named open data contact can help.
- Do: document feedback. Repeated requests from external users can help us identify priority datasets.
- Do: encourage reuse examples. If an external organisation creates a map, dashboard, analysis or app using our data, this can help show the value of the portal.
- Do: be transparent about limitations. If a dataset is incomplete, updated only once a year or limited to certain areas, this should be clearly documented.

At the same time:

- Don't promise publication before checks are complete. Every dataset needs review for data protection, confidentiality, licensing, security and quality.
- Don't share internal or sensitive data informally. Open data must go through the correct publication process.
- Don't create special access for one stakeholder if the data should be public. Where possible, publish suitable data openly so that everyone has equal access.
- Don't assume that external users understand internal abbreviations or structures. Metadata and explanations are essential.
- Don't treat feedback as criticism only. Questions from users can help us improve datasets, descriptions and update routines.

Cooperation works best when roles are clear: the municipality is responsible for responsible publication, while external stakeholders can help identify needs, reuse data and provide feedback.

If you are contacted by an external stakeholder about municipal data, please involve *[insert open data contact/team]*. We can help assess the request and decide whether it could lead to a new or improved dataset on the portal.

Contact: *[email]*

Feedback form: *[link]*



Reuse examples: [\[link\]](#)



What to do when data is missing or incomplete (or both): assessing data quality for open publication

Missing or incomplete data is a challenge to understand or read. Publishing open data is not only about making information available, it is also about making sure the data is clear, reliable, easy to (re-) use and useful for others. In practice, this means that even before the dataset is published, the data quality should meet a certain standard. Information may be incomplete, outdated or recorded differently across teams or time periods. This does not always automatically imply, that the dataset cannot be published, but it does mean it should be assessed and reviewed carefully.

One key lesson learned from the Interreg CE project about Open Data DoorCE was in fact, that a dataset does not need to be perfect to be useful. Many valuable datasets contain some gaps or limitations. What matters then, is that these issues are identified, understood and where possible, explained before publication.

The following questions might help in assessing the data quality before publication:

- Are any values missing, blank or marked as unknown?
- For example: Empty cells, “N/A”, or placeholder values such as -9999 or 0 used to mean “no data”
- Are all records complete or are some only partly filled in?
- For example: Some entries include a street name but no postcode
- Is the dataset up to date?
- Are dates, addresses, categories or other fields recorded consistently?
- For example: Dates appear as both 01/02/2025 and 2025-01-02, addresses are written in different ways such as “Road”, “road” and “Rd.”
- Are there duplicates, errors or entries that seem incorrect?
- For example: The same record appears more than once, coordinates fall outside the municipal area, numbers are clearly unrealistic etc.
- Is the meaning of each field clear to someone outside the department?
- For example: Internal abbreviations, codes or acronyms are used without explanation
- Can known limitations be explained in a short note or description?
- For example: the dataset only covers certain year or certain neighbourhoods

In many cases, missing or incomplete data can then be managed in a practical way; e.g.:

- Missing values can be left blank if explained clearly
- A short note can explain how missing values are shown (Blank cells = Not available)
- Incomplete coverage can be described in the dataset notes
- Description should state which time periods, areas, services are included and which aren't
- Older data can still be published if the time period is stated
- Add a clear note showing the period covered and the date of the last update
- Known issues can directly made transparent to users
- Add a short quality note in the dataset description



What is most important is transparency. If a dataset has known limitations, point them out and document them clearly.

If you would like support in assessing a dataset for publication, please contact *[insert person, link, mail]*; You can also find our publication guidance here: *[link]*

Explore existing datasets on our data portal: *[link]*



How to document open data processes: ensuring continuity and knowledge transfer

In many departments, open data tasks are handled alongside many other responsibilities. In most cases, it involves recurring updates, checks and coordination between colleagues and departments. But what happens if the colleague who usually prepares or publishes a dataset is away, changes roles or leaves the department? Good documentation supports continuity, makes handovers easier and helps ensure that knowledge is never lost.

Documenting the open data process does not need to be complicated, because even short, practical notes can make a difference. Here is a list of information which could be useful to record:

- Which department is responsible for a dataset?
- Where is the data from (data source)?
- How often is the data updated?
- What (data) checks are carried out before publication?
- Are there any legal, privacy or confidentiality considerations?
- Is there a contact for possible questions?

If your department already published data or is preparing a dataset for publication, this is a good opportunity to make sure the main steps are written down.

For support, templates or further guidance, please contact *[insert person, link, mail]*

[ODI Open Standards for Data Guidebook](#) – helpful guidebook to improve consistency reuse and interoperability through clearer standards.



Which regulations are we implementing with our open data portal: municipal, national and European strategies and regulatory frameworks

Our open data portal is not only a local digitalisation project. It is also part of a broader policy and regulatory framework for transparency, reuse of public sector information and digital government.

At municipal level, the portal supports our own goals around *[insert municipal strategy: transparency / digitalisation / smart city / innovation / citizen participation / administrative modernisation]*. It helps us make suitable public information easier to access, improves internal data management and supports more transparent communication.

At national level, the portal contributes to *[insert national open data law, public sector information law, e-government strategy, digital administration strategy or national data portal requirements]*. Depending on the country, this may include rules or guidance on public sector information, open government data, metadata standards, accessibility, digital services, data protection and reuse.

At European level, several frameworks are especially relevant. The Open Data Directive provides the EU framework for open data and the reuse of public sector information. It encourages public sector bodies to make information available for reuse, while respecting legal limits such as data protection and confidentiality.

The EU also defines high-value datasets: datasets with strong potential to create social, environmental and economic benefits when reused. These include thematic areas such as geospatial data, earth observation and environment, meteorological data, statistics, companies and company ownership, and mobility.

Another important element is interoperability. Open data becomes more useful when datasets are described and exchanged in common ways. DCAT-AP is the European application profile for describing datasets across data portals and supports metadata exchange and discoverability.

For our municipality, this means that the open data portal helps us work towards several goals at the same time:

- implementing transparency and digitalisation objectives,
- improving access to public sector information,
- supporting reuse by residents, businesses, researchers and civic initiatives,
- preparing data in line with common metadata and interoperability standards,
- contributing to national and European open data ecosystems,
- improving internal processes around data quality, responsibilities and updates.

However, regulations and strategies do not mean that all data must be published automatically. Every dataset still needs to be assessed carefully. Data protection, confidentiality, security, intellectual property rights, licensing and quality remain essential. Our open data portal gives us a structured way to implement these requirements step by step.

If your department is working with datasets that may fall under municipal, national or European open data requirements, please contact *[insert open data/legal/data protection contact]*. We can help clarify what applies and how the dataset should be handled.

Internal guidance: [\[link\]](#)

National open data resources: [\[link\]](#)

European open data resources: [\[link\]](#)



Open data portal: [\[link\]](#)



Services built on open data: examples, lessons learned, and best practices

Open data is often seen mainly as a transparency or compliance task. But its practical value becomes clear when it is used for services such as maps, apps, dashboards or planning tools.

When data is published in a structured and reusable way, it can support residents, businesses, researches and public administrations themselves. For municipalities, this means open data is not only something to publish, but also something that can be used.

There are many examples. Open data can power flood alert maps, solar potential tools, mobility apps, dashboards, neighbourhood information platforms or interactive maps. Some services are simple, others more advanced but they all show the same thing: useful data can create high everyday value.

A few lessons appear again and again:

- Good services usually start with a real user needs
- Data does not need to be perfect to be useful
- Simple tools can already create value
- Clear documentation is essential
- Reuse often comes from outside the administration

For municipalities, this is important. Not every authority needs to build an app itself. But by publishing useful datasets well, it becomes easier for others, or for colleagues in other departments, to build services based on them.

Datasets are especially likely to be reused when they are relevant to daily life, regularly updated, easy to understand and published in machine-readable formats with clear metadata.

A practical next step to encourage the reuse of open data:

- Identify 2 or 3 datasets with strong reuse potential
- Check whether they are already available in a reusable format
- Improve the description and update information
- Publish them clearly on the portal or website
- Document examples of reuse where possible

Open data is not only about publication. It can also support better services, easier access to information and new forms of reuse, inside and even outside the administration.

If you would like support in assessing a dataset for publication, please contact *[insert person, link, mail]*; You can also find our publication guidance here: *[link]*

Explore existing datasets on our data portal: *[link]*