Introduction

The astronomic growth of the ICT sector globally with attendant benefits has

NIGERIA
OPEN DATA POLICY

enabled   governments all over the world to leverage on the sector to create opportunities for economic growth , investment, jobs, and information sharing. In Nigeria's development Agenda the use of ICT as a veritable tool for Economic recovery and growth is widely recognised. Arising from the digital revolution, Countries across the globe have leveraged on Open Data to create value hence data is now regarded as the new oil. Open data initiatives involve the use of technology to provide access to non-sensitive public sector information in open machine readable formats by default to all who need it.

Open data describes large datasets that governments at all levels release online and free of charge for analysis by anyone for any purpose. Entrepreneurs may use open data   to

create

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new products and services, and citizens may use it to gain insight into the government. A plethora of time saving and other useful applications have emerged from open data feeds, including more accurate traffic information, real-time arrival of public transportation, and information about crimes in neighborhoods

The history of Open Data globally is rooted in Freedom of Information Acts and Open Government. Open Data has gained traction in the global scene due to a number of factors including increased advocacy for good governance; increased awareness by citizens of their rights and the emergence of Open Government Partnership and its commitments. Other factors include the signing of the Open Data Charter, the Digital revolution and the recognition of the economic benefits of Open Data. The increased number of Government Applications, increased number of Open Data Practitioners and companies, increased interest by Government across the Global and increased activities in the area of Open Government and Open Data including legislation all accounted for the increased interest in Open Data.

In Nigeria, the right to information is entrenched in the Constitution but the Freedom of Information Act of 2011 and the increase in the use of ICT, the work of International Organizations such as World Bank and DFID promoted the advancement of Open Data in Nigeria.

However the emergence of the Government of President Muhammadu Buhari and enlisting of Nigeria into the Open Government partnership has provided further enabling environment for Open Data. As a result , there are now many activities going on in Nigeria in the Area of Open Data:

- Civil Society groups have increased

- Increased demand for transparency & accountability

- More Society aware youth & emergence of social media

- Increased access to ICT by Nigerians

- Increased effect of Globalization

- More data Companies emerging

- More Government activity in putting information and services online

- Emergence of Mobility and Data analytics

- Increased number of Government Applications

All these have necessitated a policy framework for Open Data implementation in Nigeria .Open Data policy is a framework for management of non sensitive public sector data assets as a national resource.

The objectives of the Open Data Policy are :

i.   To Communicate Government information to public data as a national resource that should be managed in the interest of Nigerians;

ii.   To demonstrate the commitment, willingness and readiness of leadership at the highest level in the Country to implement Open Data by default and to provide enabling environment for its implementation;

iii.   To mobilize Government MDAs for participation in Open Data and to Open up Public Sector data;

iv.   To provide direction and co-ordinate the implementation of Open Data in the Government;

v.   To support the growth and development of data driven governance and decision making;

vi.   To promote the growth of ICT provided data industry.

Vision, Mission and objectives of the Nigeria Open Data Policy

5.   The Vision of the Nigeria Open Data Policy is to manage Government information as a national asset and opening up its data, where possible, as a public good to advance government efficiency, improve accountability, and fuel private sector innovation, scientific discovery, and economic growth.

. Having an open data policy would help to improve governance and support implementation of the new Nigeria Freedom of Information Act (2001). Following the passage of the FOI bill by the Federal Government of Nigeria, it is important to establish a framework that supports the adoption of the Open Data initiative. ICT and Open Data policy thrusts will focus on how certain data within the government confines will be made freely available to the public, for viewing and republishing without restrictions.

6.   In line with the policy therefore, the goals of the Open Data policy are to :

  i.   create employment and reduce poverty

 ii.   attract investment to the economy

 iii.   release and share available government data assets for effective decision making, policy formulation, implementation and evaluation as well as for Research and Development

 iv.   foster inclusive development through youth participation in the ICT sector

  v.   promote efficient, effective and less costly public service delivery

 vi.   develop a sustainable indigenous software economy and products

7. The strategies envisaged for achieving the goals are to :

i. Ensure that a knowledge exchange platform is developed which allows MDA's to exchange experiences and ideas on open projects;

ii. Ensure that innovative applications that can provide insights into publicly available data; and

iv. Coordinate the creation of a portal platform where all relevant data from MDA's are maintained and always available. regular workshops, conferences and seminars are done in conjunction with civic society in order to educate government practitioners on how to publish data online;

iii. Encourage the development of

Benefits of the Open data Policy

8. There is more than $3 trillion of potential additional economic benefit from open data worldwide, according to a   McKinsey report. Entrepreneurs and innovators are constantly working on new and interesting ways to use the public, free resource of open government data Data policy as a tenet of open government drives economic growth, boosts entrepreneurship and improves productivity through the opening up of Government data. In line with developments globally, it is expected that faithful implementation of the open Data initiative will help Nigeria in addressing a number of its developmental challenges including the following:

   i.   Creation of opportunities for youth employment and empowerment
  ii.   Availability of data
 iii.   Reduction of cost of governance
 vii.   Attraction of foreign investment

The Open Data Ecosystem

This policy is part of the data ecosystem that is now fueled by a number of developments including Open Government, smart cities,   data analytics , e-Government and , Open Data Advocacy .

Open Government

Open Government is a new multilateral initiative aimed at securing concrete commitments from governments to promote transparency, increase civic participation, fight corruption, and harness new technologies to make government more open, effective, and accountable. Nigeria has recently enlisted into the Open Government Partnership which promotes Open Government across the globe.

Smart Cities

Smart cities are generally viewed as initiatives that use technology to connect infrastructure such as transport, health, energy and water, generating data that can be used for better services and better planning. Open data makes this information available to everyone, from families to retailers, commuters to investors. Open data allows everyone to understand and interact with our cities, to contribute to their growth and development.

Mobility and Data Analytics

Mobility and Data Analytics will facilitate data sharing between agencies and management of   whole-of-government analytics projects. It will do that by leveraging internal and external partnerships so that the right capabilities, tools and technologies are applied. Mobility and data analytics projects work with data from a variety of sources, including open data, to derive insights that support strategic decision making, evidence based policy development and improved service delivery.

e-Government

The Economic Recovery and Growth plan views the implementation of e-Government as a major strategy for transforming Government. Digitization in Government will contribute to providing enabling environment for open data.

Progress to date

In 2011, the Freedom of Information Act established Nigeria's commitment to opening government information, proactively and responsively, to the public. Data.gov.ng has been developed as an initial catalogue of Open Data in the Country. The Open Data Policy is being introduced to support simple and efficient compliance with the Freedom Of Information Act and encourage the release of high value datasets for use by industry and the community. The Policy aimed to assist agencies in embedding open data principles in their operations. Data.gov.ng now receives ---visits every month. The site is envisaged to contain a wide variety of catalogue entries to provide access to a large no. of government datasets, which will be published on agency portals. This approach allows open data to be searched in a central location, but also made available alongside data on the same subject – such as education, health or environment. Data.gov.ng will eventually also be federated with open data portals from other jurisdictions such as state Governments so that a search will provide links to datasets from states and Local Governments. The Nigeria Open Data initiative will adopt an open access licensing framework to support the release and reuse of public information. It will also adopt the National Bureau of Statistics framework for standard data quality reporting. The National Open Data Policy will drive the release of data, in open formats, using automated processes for fast publication. There will be established, an Open Data Rolling Release Schedule which will indicate agency targets to improve the openness of their published data and to release new, high value datasets.

PROGRESS IN IMPLEMENTATION OF OPEN DATA IN NIGERIA

Progress in implementation of Open Data in Nigeria is demonstrated by the emerging no of companies that now live on analyzing Government data . TA no of

states have not commenced their own open data initiatives and portals. There is increased number of published data sets as well as increased awareness and practice of Open data in Government. Apart from that, more Civil society organisations and academic intstitutions are now engaged in Open Data and open data related advocacy. There also more government Apps and spatial systems.

Information Management Framework

Information management under the Open Data Policy will be based on the Data inter operability standards 2016 and Data protection Guidelines 2017 issued by the National Information Technology Agency (NITDA)   and other information management frameworks applicable in nigeria .

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this policy are to assist Government agencies to: • release data for use by the community, research, business and industry • accelerate the use of data to derive new insights for better public services • embed open data into business-as-usual • use data to inform the design of policy, programs and procurement • support the use of data by the Nigeria Mobility and Data Analytics Centre for research and evidence-based decision making • advance citizen engagement with government and the work of government • support the Freedom Of Information (FOI) Act 2011 and promote simple and efficient compliance with the requirements set out in that Act.

DEFINITION OF OPEN DATA

This policy focuses on datasets as an aspect of information defined in the Freedom Of Information Act 2011. A dataset is an identifiable collection of government

held information or data. Most commonly a dataset corresponds to the contents of a single database table, or a single statistical data matrix. The term can also be used to refer to the data in a collection of closely related tables. A dataset may comprise a smaller grouping (or subset) of data which, though limited by some constraint or feature type, is located physically within a larger dataset.

Data is open to the extent that its management, release and characteristics meet the principles of openness outlined in this policy. Open data should be both technically available and usable, and have licensing frameworks in place to facilitate its release and use.

Open data is defined as data that can be freely used, reused and redistributed by anyone - subject only, at most, to the requirement to attribute and share alike.

Government data is considered open if it is made public in a way that complies with the principles below:

1. Complete

All public data is made available. Public data is data that is not subject to valid privacy, security or privilege limitations.

2. Primary

Data is as collected at the source, with the highest possible level of granularity, not in aggregate or modified forms.

3. Timely

Data is made available as quickly as necessary to preserve the value of the data.

4. Accessible

Data is available to the widest range of users for the widest range of purposes.

5. Machine processable

Data is reasonably structured to allow automated processing.

6. Non-discriminatory

Data is available to anyone, with no requirement of registration.

7. Non-proprietary

Data is available in a format over which no entity has exclusive control.

8. License-free

Data is not subject to any copyright, patent, trademark or trade secret regulation. Reasonable privacy, security and privilege restrictions may be allowed

GOVERNMENT DATA

Government data is structured information that is created, collected, processed, disseminated, or disposed of by or for the Federal government . For the purpose of this policy Government data includes all data generated in the course of Government business and all data sets arising from Government funded activities and operations including data arising from Government funded studies, and contracts.

Scope of Application

This policy applies to all Federal Government of Nigeria Ministries, Departments and agencies including Statutory Bodies , shared Service Providers and State Owned Corporations. The Policy is not mandatory for State Owned Corporations, although it is recommended for adoption. Federal Government funded research data must also be made open under this policy. Target audiences for this policy include government agencies, non-government organisations (NGOs), academia,

industry (including ICT developers) and members of the public who are interested in or have a specific use for government data.

Open Data Principles

Open data principles lead to more responsive and smarter government, and better service delivery. To meet the obligations of this policy, agencies must manage data as a strategic asset to be: • Open by default, protected where required • Prioritised, discoverable and usable • Primary and timely • Well managed, trusted and authoritative • Free where appropriate • Subject to public input.

POLICY COMMITMENTS

On June 18, 2013, President Obama and other G7 leaders endorsed the Open Data Charter which has become a major pursuit of the Open Government Partnership.. The Open Data Charter sets out five strategic principles:

i. Open Data by Default – foster expectations that government data be published openly while continuing to safeguard privacy;

ii. Quality and Quantity – release quality, timely and well-described open data;

iii. Useable by All – release as much data in as many open formats as possible;

iv. Releasing Data for Improved Governance – share expertise and be transparent about data collection, standards and publishing processes; and

v. Releasing Data for Innovation – consult with users and empower future generations of innovators

By joining the Open Government Partnsership Nigeria subscribes to the Open Data Charter.

POLICY COMMITMENTS

The Federal Government commits to the following actions in concert with the Open Data Charter and its principles:

1. **Publish open data in a discoverable, machine-readable, useful formats**. The public can also get information about open government data from each Federal Government Ministry, Department and Agency . Many Federal agencies will develop websites at [department].gov/data to better explain the data assets they create, manage and publish. All executive branch agencies are now required to develop a machine-readable catalog of their public data at [department].gov/data.json, such as www.Commtech.gov/data.json, allowing simple software tools to automatically get updated information about the latest data available and have access to the same information that Data.gov .ng collects and publishes.

Even when government data assets are technically public and available online, there can still be barriers to using and understanding them. The Federal Government will improve the way it describes and publishes data sets by better focusing on user needs. Specific actions include:

2. **Federal Government will work with the public and civil society organizations to prioritize open data sets for release** . New data sets will be prioritized for release based on public feedback. To make that feedback loop possible, each agency will use online feedback mechanisms such as an email address or an online platform to solicit input. The public can give feedback and browse listed data sets that could potentially be made open but are not yet publicly available for download at [department].gov/data. Publishing a list of public data sets that include data that could be made public lets civil society, entrepreneurs, researchers, and the general public more easily connect with the Federal

government employee responsible for a particular data set and explain why its release should be prioritized.

3. **Federal Government will support innovators and improve open data based on feedback** .

The Federal Government will make it simpler for entrepreneurs and innovators to find, understand, and use open government data to develop new products, services, and companies.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF MINISTRIES, DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES (MDAs)

Open By Default and Protected where Applicable

Agencies will start from a position of data openness, favouring the release of data, unless there is an overriding public interest legislation against disclosure. A Rolling Release Schedule for agencies' plans to publish open data will be made available on Data.gov.ng. The Rolling Release Schedule targets improved formats for data and identifies new high value datasets for release. Agencies must:

• Create and collect data in ways that support downstream processing and release • Incorporate open data into project, program, service, system and policy design

• Make data available without reference to its potential end use by other parties

• Ensure they own all intellectual property rights in the dataset, or that they have a sufficiently broad licence to permit its release

• Comply with Nigerian Government policies for information security and the management of privacy for the individual

• Apply information labels and security classifications which indicate whether data is protected, in line with the Government Information Classification, Labelling and Handling Guidelines

• Ensure safeguards are in place to manage and assess the release of sensitive datasets

• Apply managed methods to support the release of otherwise sensitive data such as: redacting, consent, ethics approval, aggregating and third party brokerage (mediator or integrator).

PRIORITISED , DISCOVERABLE AND USEABLE

High-value datasets will be prioritised for release, in line with demand from the public and industry, as a result of stakeholder consultation, or where the release of the datasets will contribute to better service delivery in Nigeria . Data will be in a format that makes it easy to use, transform and reuse. Commonly accepted open data standards, are published by the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) to enhance data usability. When procuring or upgrading systems according to the ICT Investment Policy and Guidelines, agencies will consider the use of technologies that enable data to be consumed by other systems, without the need for manual intervention. Metadata allows datasets to be found, understood, controlled and managed. It will be published with all datasets. It will define or describe content, quality, format or structure of a dataset, the system, location and context in which the dataset was produced, collected, processed or stored. Agencies must:

• Release data which supports a range of outcomes, including; social, enhanced service delivery, agency core business, economic opportunity, generates efficiencies or reduced costs, supports evidence based research or policy

 • Prioritise the release of datasets in response to public requests

• Link datasets to Data .gov.ng for discoverability and availability

• Ensure datasets are technically open (machine readable)

• Apply creative commons licensing (default CC-BY) to facilitate the reuse of data, making it legally open

• Apply the correct data standards to manage their data. See the Information Management Framework

• Publish metadata with all datasets and the details of a contact person in their agency. Data.gov.ng can assist with this and may be contacted through the contact form on the site

• Assess the quality of their datasets prior to release with the Data Quality Standard. The standard can be used to report whether datasets meet the above requirements.

PRIMARY AND TIMELY

Data will be released as collected at the source, with a high level of granularity, and not in aggregate or modified forms unless required to safeguard confidential or personal data. Reuse will acknowledge the source and include the metadata. Agencies must:

• Implement mechanisms that enable automated, ongoing or periodic regular release of data, without the need for manual intervention

• Publish live, real-time feeds where it enhances the utility of the dataset

• Include timestamps or other information for users to identify the currency of the data

• Make newer, replacement data available to users in a timely manner.

FREE WHERE APPROPRIATE

Access to open data will be free by default. The widespread use of data for innovation will be encouraged to achieve the maximum value from the data for the people of Nigeria , and to enhance transparency of government. Agencies must:

• Provide data free of charge

• Establish standard parameters for cost recovery (only for specialised data services).

 • Publish any fees for data use.

WELL MANAGED, TRUSTED AND AUTHORITATIVE

Users will be alerted to the quality and limitations of the data to ensure confidence that it is trustworthy and authoritative. Data governance arrangements will be established and maintained in accordance with Government's information management principles and the Data and Information Custodianship Policy. Agencies must:

• Manage data in accordance with legislative and legal requirements, including those for data security and protection of personal information, intellectual property, business confidentiality and legal professional privilege

• Apply sound archival practices to preserve data.

SUBJECT TO PUBLIC INPUT

Agencies will engage with and are informed by the community, research sector and industry on the design of new datasets and data portals, and in deciding what data to publish and about publication practices. Agencies must:

• Provide data in a way that is relevant to the transaction being undertaken or service being used

• Participate with activities across jurisdictions to share and integrate data at the national level.

• Publish community and industry feedback about the data.

Implementation

This Policy is supported by an action plan to assist agencies in achieving open data objectives. This Policy is maintained by the Federal Ministry of Communications.