

CANADA OPEN GOVERNMENT WORKING GROUP: HIGH VALUE DATASETS CRITERIA

BACKGROUND

Open data provides significant opportunities for citizens, businesses, non-government organizations and academics to create value from government datasets in a way that can enhance government transparency, create internal efficiencies, and stimulate innovation and economic growth. The value from government datasets increases when the data is comprehensive, up-to-date, accurate, accessible in a non-proprietary open format, and is in compliance with jurisdictional security, privacy, confidentiality, and intellectual property rules. Publishing high-value government datasets that are easily discoverable, comparable, and accessible enables governments, the public, civil society and private sector organizations to realize the true benefits envisioned for open data.

One of the priorities of the Canada Open Government Working Group (COGWG) is the identification of high value datasets that could be released across jurisdictions. Currently, each government jurisdiction sets its own criteria for identifying high-value datasets. However, releasing common types of data across Canadian jurisdictions will help to foster innovation and provide greater socio-economic impact.

The purpose of this document is to provide common criteria to help identify high value datasets and provide examples of common types of datasets. It was based on jurisdictional scans of high value dataset criteria, recent surveys¹, and the [International Open Data Charter](#).

CRITERIA FOR IDENTIFYING HIGH VALUE DATASETS AND CORRESPONDING DATA EXAMPLES

HIGH VALUE DATA IS DATA THAT:

1. Helps identify social, environmental and economic conditions

Datasets are considered of high value if they can be integrated or analyzed across programs, sectors, and geographic locations to help highlight trends, identify social and economic conditions and inequities, and help address global challenges such as poverty, hunger, climate change, and inequality. Effective and timely access to these high value data can help individuals and organizations develop new insights and innovative ideas that can generate social and economic benefits, empower marginalized communities, and improve the lives of people.

EXAMPLES

- Demographic Data
- Family Income Statistics
- Social Assistance Supports
- Public Housing Data
- Weather Data
- Correctional Facilities Statistics
- Socioeconomic Statistics
- Geographic/Geospatial Data
- Employment and Labour Market Survey and Statistics Data
- Administrative Boundaries

¹ Examples include (a) [Analysis found which open data the public likes](#) and (b) [Open data across Canada – a snapshot](#)

2. Helps promote better outcomes for public services

Datasets are of high value if they enable citizens to benchmark progress in public programs and services and make better informed choices about the services they receive and the service standards they should expect. These datasets are expected to encourage better development, implementation, and assessment of programs and policies to meet the needs of citizens, and enable civic participation and better informed engagement between government and its citizens. These high value datasets empower governments, citizens, civil society, and private sector organizations to work toward better outcomes for public services in areas such as health, education, public safety, environmental protection, human rights, and natural disasters.

3. Encourages innovation and sustainable economic growth

Datasets are considered high value if they can contribute to the generation of sustainable inclusive economic growth by supporting the creation and strengthening of new markets, enterprises, jobs, and technological innovation. These benefits can multiply as more civil society and private sector organizations use reference data such as public registers to improve the quality of their own services, and adopt good open data practices, including sharing their own data with the public. For example, geolocation and earth observation references support comparability and interoperability allowing for geographic layering of data for more effective analysis and to drive innovation.

4. Increases government transparency, accountability and the flow of information

Datasets are of particularly high value if they can help improve the flow of information within and among governments, and make government decisions and processes more transparent. Increased transparency promotes accountability and good governance, enhances public debate, and helps combat corruption. Showing how and where public money is spent encourages governments to demonstrate that they are using public money effectively. For example, datasets that promote awareness about how Canada's natural resources are used, how mining, gas, and oil revenues are spent, and how land is transacted and managed are crucial to improved governance and flow of information on natural resources.

EXAMPLES

- Waitlists
- Math Marks
- Road Hazards
- Air Quality
- Water Quality
- Environmental Inspections
- Health
- Education
- Public Safety

EXAMPLES

- Public company registers
- Location-based Data
- Tourism Data
- Restaurant Inspection and Ratings
- Lidar Data
- Park Reservations
- Scientific Research Data

EXAMPLES

- Budget and Financial Data
- Grants and Loans
- FOIPOP Stats
- Natural Resources Data
- Mineral Rights
- Public Tender and Contract Data
- Civil Service Expenditures
- Election Results

5. Is in high demand by the community

Datasets are of high significance when they meet the needs and values of the citizens. Frequent requests for (or high interest in) certain datasets by citizens and communities is an indication of public demand for that data. The popularity of certain datasets may vary over time or by geographic area.

EXAMPLES

- Police and Crime
- Transportation
- Building Safety, Housing Developments, and Property Data
- Education
- Baby Names