

**Open Data Governance Board Meeting**  
**Tuesday, 26 September 2017 – Note of Meeting**

**Attendance:** Dennis Jennings, Denis Parfenov, Dietrich Rebholz, Andrew O’Sullivan, Emer Coleman (Chair), Daithí Mac Síthigh (by phone), Barry Lowry

**Apologies:** Ashling Cunningham, Sandra Collins, Cronan McNamara, Sue Duke

**Others:** Stephen Rigney (Houses of the Oireachtas Service) and Deirdre Lee (Derilinx) – attended for their respective presentations.

**Secretariat:** Evelyn O’Connor, Marian Beakey, Fiona Morley Clarke, Krystyna Pycinska-Taylor

A number of documents had been issued to the Board in advance of the meeting as follows:

- Note of meeting held on 5 July, 2017;
- Progress report and update from a number of Public Bodies on their open data activities;
- Draft Engagement Fund 2017/2018 and Application Form.
- Draft Evaluation report on pilot 2016 Open Data Engagement Fund
- Note on portals and approach taken in relation to setting up regional portals across other jurisdictions.
- A document prepared by Derilinx, (company who provide technical support for the Open Data portal) outlining proposals for improving and updating the portal and other proposals regarding the Open Data Initiative in light of the recently published Open Data Strategy.

The items on the agenda were discussed as set out below:

**1. Minutes of 5 July meeting.**

The Minutes were taken as approved and it was noted that these have been published on the portal.

**Matters Arising from the last meeting**

Progress Report

Fiona Morley Clarke updated the board on progress made since the last meeting. This included the launch of the Open Data Strategy in July 2017, the commencement of the roll out of Open Data training for public bodies, the first 4 courses being held in September. The framework for Open Data technical support is also now in place. The national portal has been exhibited at a number of data related seminars/conferences in the past few months with more events planned. The report was circulated in advance of the meeting and will be published on the portal.

<b>Action 1 (Secretariat)</b> Ensure note of meeting and progress report are published on the portal.
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**2. Presentation by Deirdre Lee (Derilinx) ‘Queries that may be addressed by Open Data’**

A document prepared by Derilinx, outlining proposals for improving and updating the portal as well as ideas around the Open Data Initiative had been discussed at the last meeting and it had been suggested that Derilinx could be invited to this meeting to present on the matter. Deirdre outlined proposals for improvements to the portal and these will include enhancements to support the actions in the recently published Open Data Strategy.

The Board emphasised the importance of data and metadata standards and noted that the quality at present is variable and that the portal should drive adherence to standards. It was

suggested that data standards should be put on the agenda as a strategic item for a future meeting (mandate for standards). The importance of the 'showcase' feature was also noted with the need to have a number of good examples of open data use available, apps etc.

It was noted that public bodies should use the opportunity when revamping websites to facilitate open data and the importance of the use of APIs to allow streamlined publication of open data was also noted.

**Action 2 (Secretariat)**

Put data standards and the importance of adherence to standards on the Agenda of a future meeting (see also Action 5).

**3. Presentation on Oireachtas Open Data (Stephen Rigney)**

Stephen Rigney, Houses of the Oireachtas Service gave an overview of work underway in the Oireachtas on their new website (a beta version was launched earlier this year), the result of which will potentially see all data 'open by default' with real time availability of published data via API. The website will be much easier to navigate with a granular URI structure to allow linkages.

Stephen is also currently developing a programme for data governance, management and reuse for the Houses of the Oireachtas which will put open data at the forefront, both in terms of publishing it and integrating other open data sets with their own data.

**4. Open Data Engagement Fund 2017/2018**

Fiona Morley Clarke advised that following an evaluation of the 2016 Pilot Engagement Fund, the view was that the 2016 pilot was a success and the Board's agreement was being sought to run the Fund again in 2017. It is proposed that the 2017 fund will have greater focus on outreach and engagement and innovative use of data and less focus on training given that an Open Data Framework for Training is now in place. The amount of the Fund will remain the same as last year (€30,000) and pending the Board's approval it will be launched the following week. Board members were asked to revert with any obs. on the draft proposal and application form for 2017 by the end of the week.

The Open Data Unit advised that subject to availability of funding within the department it was intended that the Fund would remain available for each year to the end of the Open Data Strategy (up to 2022). Volunteers were sought from the Board to participate in the Selection Committee.

**Action 3 (Open Data Governance Board)**

Revert with any observations on the draft 2017/2018 Engagement Fund by Friday 29 September. Board members to volunteer to sit on Selection Committee.

**5. Hospital Waiting Lists Project - Denis Parfenov**

Denis Parfenov gave an overview on a number of hackathons on hospital waiting lists run by Open Knowledge Ireland. 2 hackathons were part funded by the 2016 Engagement Fund, one of which took place in March. Open Knowledge Ireland are due to hold a second hackathon on hospital waiting lists in the coming months.

The difficulties of getting citizens to donate their time and the need to make volunteer efforts more sustainable was noted and that extra funding is required to support civil society in their activities. Denis Parfenov will put together a paper on time and resource issues for consideration by the Board.

**Action 4 (Denis Parfenov)**

Denis Parfenov will put together a paper on time and resource issues for volunteers for consideration by the Board.

**6. Open Data portals**

An information note on the use of regional or organisational portals in other jurisdictions which was circulated in advance of the meeting was discussed, in particular in the context of the recently launched ehealth portal by the HSE at the meeting. In summary countries tend to encourage local initiatives and then determine harvesting strategies to ensure that data is harvested on the national portal in the respective country. It was noted that the ehealth portal as well as other local portals (CSO, Dublinlinked, Cork City) are fully synched with the national portal and datasets are automatically harvested to data.gov.ie. In particular it was noted that we need to ensure that data harvested is of the highest quality with regards to standards, metadata etc. and that data published is fully in line with the technical framework. It was suggested that the Open Data Unit prepare a note on portals and harvesting, and that, over time, tease out what guidance we should be giving in relation to the role of the national portal versus regional portals in the context of consistency with regard to standards, metadata etc.

**Action 5 (Secretariat)**

Open Data Unit to prepare a note on the role of the national portal in relation to harvesting and guidance on consistency with regard to standards, metadata etc. in relation to regional portals

Information provided on the reasoning behind the building of the ehealth portal and its associated costs as well as the costs associated to date with the setting up and ongoing maintenance of the national open data portal was also noted.

**7. AOB to include Implementation of Open Data Strategy 2017-2022 and role of ODGB in this regard**

Implementation of the Open Data Strategy published in July was discussed in particular the Board's contribution based on the actions that have been assigned to them which are in the main around raising awareness of and promoting open data. Overall it was agreed that the Board's role was strategic and should also include promotion of open data which includes attending events, and provision of advice from their own experience.

A number of dates were suggested for the next meeting around the end of November. The 28th November was the preferred date.

**Action 4** Secretariat to circulate agreed date for the next meeting.