G8 OPEN DATA CHARTER

Preamble

1. The world is witnessing the growth of a global movement facilitated by technology and social media and fuelled by information – one that contains enormous potential to create more accountable, efficient, responsive, and effective governments and businesses, and to spur economic growth.

2. **Open data sit at the heart of this global movement.**

3. Access to data allows individuals and organisations to develop new insights and innovations that can improve the lives of others and help to improve the flow of information within and between countries. While governments and businesses collect a wide range of data, they do not always share these data in ways that are easily discoverable, useable, or understandable by the public.

4. **This is a missed opportunity.**

5. Today, people expect to be able to access information and services electronically when and how they want. Increasingly, this is true of government data as well. We have arrived at a tipping point, heralding a new era in which people can use open data to generate insights, ideas, and services to create a better world for all.

6. Open data can increase transparency about what government and business are doing. Open data also increase awareness about how countries' natural resources are used, how extractives revenues are spent, and how land is transacted and managed. All of which promotes accountability and good governance, enhances public debate, and helps to combat corruption. Transparent data on G8 development assistance are also essential for accountability.

7. Providing access to government data can empower individuals, the media, civil society, and business to fuel better outcomes in public services such as health, education, public safety, environmental protection, and governance. Open data can do this by:

    - showing how and where public money is spent, providing strong incentives for that money to be used most effectively;
    - enabling people to make better informed choices about the services they receive and the standards they should expect.

8. Freely-available government data can be used in innovative ways to create useful tools and products that help people navigate modern life more easily. Used in this way, open data are a catalyst for innovation in the private sector, supporting the creation of new markets, businesses, and jobs. Beyond government, these benefits can multiply as more businesses adopt open data practices modelled by government and share their own data with the public.

9. We, the G8, agree that open data are an untapped resource with huge potential to encourage the building of stronger, more interconnected societies that better meet the needs of our citizens and allow innovation and prosperity to flourish.

10. We therefore agree to follow a set of **principles** that will be the foundation for access to, and the release and re-use of, data made available by G8 governments. They are:

    - ***Open Data by Default***
    - ***Quality and Quantity***
    - ***Useable by All***
    - ***Releasing Data for Improved Governance***
    - ***Releasing Data for Innovation***

11. While working within our national political and legal frameworks, we will implement these principles in accordance with the technical best practises and timeframes set out in our national action plans. G8 members will, by the end of this year, develop action plans, with a view to implementation of the Charter and technical annex by the end of 2015 at the latest. We will review progress at our next meeting in 2014.

12. **We also recognise the benefits of open data can and should be enjoyed by citizens of all nations.** In the spirit of openness we offer this Open Data Charter for consideration by other countries, multinational organisations and initiatives.

Principle 1: Open Data by Default

13. We recognise that free access to, and subsequent re-use of, open data are of significant value to society and the economy.

14. We agree to orient our governments towards open data by default.

15. We recognise that the term *government data* is meant in the widest sense possible. This could apply to data owned by national, federal, local, or international government bodies, or by the wider public sector.

16. We recognise that there is national and international legislation, in particular pertaining to intellectual property, personally-identifiable and sensitive information, which must be observed.

17. **We will:**
    - **establish an expectation that all government data be published openly by default**, as outlined in this Charter, while recognising that there are legitimate reasons why some data cannot be released.

Principle 2: Quality and Quantity

18. We recognise that governments and the public sector hold vast amounts of information that may be of interest to citizens.

19. We also recognise that it may take time to prepare high-quality data, and the importance of consulting with each other and with national, and wider, open data users to identify which data to prioritise for release or improvement.

20. **We will:**
    - **release high-quality open data that are timely, comprehensive, and accurate.** To the extent possible, data will be in their original, unmodified form and at the finest level of granularity available;
    - **ensure that information in the data is written in plain, clear language,** so that it can be understood by all, though this Charter does not require translation into other languages;
    - **make sure that data are fully described**, so that consumers have sufficient information to understand their strengths, weaknesses, analytical limitations, and security requirements, as well as how to process the data; and
    - **release data as early as possible**, allow users to provide feedback, and then continue to make revisions to ensure the highest standards of open data quality are met.

Principle 3: Usable by All

21. We agree to release data in a way that helps all people to obtain and re-use it.

22. We recognise that open data should be available free of charge in order to encourage their most widespread use.

23. We agree that when open data are released, it should be done without bureaucratic or administrative barriers, such as registration requirements, which can deter people from accessing the data.

24. **We will:**
    - **release data in open formats wherever possible**, ensuring that the data are available to the widest range of users for the widest range of purposes; and
    - **release as much data as possible**, and where it is not possible to offer free access at present, promote the benefits and encourage the allowance of free access to data. In many cases this will include providing data in multiple formats, so that they can be processed by computers and understood by people.

Principle 4: Releasing Data for Improved Governance

25. We recognise that the release of open data strengthens our democratic institutions and encourages better policy-making to meets the needs of our citizens. This is true not only in our own countries but across the world.

26. We also recognise that interest in open data is growing in other multilateral organisations and initiatives.

27. **We will:**
    - **share technical expertise and experience** with each other and with other countries across the world so that everyone can reap the benefits of open data; and
    - **be transparent about our own data collection, standards, and publishing processes**, by documenting all of these related processes online.

Principle 5: Releasing Data for Innovation

28. Recognising the importance of diversity in stimulating creativity and innovation, we agree that the more people and organisations that use our data, the greater the social and economic benefits that will be generated. This is true for both commercial and non-commercial uses.

29. **We will:**
    - **work to increase open data literacy and encourage people,** such as developers of applications and civil society organisations that work in the field of open data promotion, to unlock the value of open data;
    - **empower a future generation of data innovators** by providing data in machine-readable formats.