

**CONCEPT NOTE**

**DEPLOYMENT OF OPEN DATA DRIVEN SOLUTIONS FOR SOCIO-ECONOMIC VALUE THROUGH  
GOOD GOVERNANCE AND EFFICIENT PUBLIC SERVICE DELIVERY**

**DATE: 30 August 2018**

**Venue: CSIR International Convention Centre, Pretoria**

**1. INTRODUCTION**

Open Data refers to information that can be freely used, modified, and shared by anyone for any purpose, without restrictions from copyright, patents or other mechanisms of control. The data must be available, ideally, in an electronic format that is modifiable and machine readable. The term “open data” is a recent term that gained popularity with the rise of the internet. The concept of open data, however, was popularised in the early 1940s with the idea that scientific research should be free to all and that it should be shared freely for the common good.

In 2007, a group of thought leaders gathered in California to discuss and define the concept of open public data and how the concept can be adopted by the US presidential candidates. The objective was to advocate the value of making data, particularly government data, available as a public resource for the common good. Various governments have subsequently launched open-data government initiatives and the key driver is to increase transparency & participation from citizens. The concept of open data has since spread rapidly around the globe with governments and organisations opening up different kinds of data and making it accessible through internet platforms. Among these entities is the United Nations, which established an open data portal that publishes statistical data from Member States and UN Agencies on a variety of topics, including, among other things, millennium development goals indicators, national accounts, trade and communication. The World Bank also publishes a range of statistical data relating to developing countries to improve the capacity, efficiency and effectiveness of national statistical system.

South Africa together with other 7 governments, co-founded the Open Government Partnership (OGP), formally launched in September 2011, to endorse the Open Government Declaration. The aim of the initiative is to secure concrete commitments from governments in order to promote transparency, empower citizens, fight corruption, and harness new technologies to strengthen governance. The government has subsequently initiated the development of the portal, [www.data.gov.za](http://www.data.gov.za) as a central access point for public government data and to promote applications and events related to open data in South Africa, through the Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA). The portal

hosts a range of datasets covering areas such as employment, community safety, housing & infrastructure, public health, and tertiary education, amongst others. Despite these efforts, South Africa is still lagging behind and the progress has been very marginal. Malaysian government, in partnership with the World Bank, has embarked on an open-data-readiness-assessment (ODRA) to assess the government's capacity and readiness to implement open data program to improve public service delivery and accountability. The assessment showed a mixed picture, in that, although Malaysia shows evidence of readiness in most of the eight dimensions of ODRA, the lack of readiness in terms of policy framework and government management policies, poses a significant barrier in achieving this goal, despite the country's data-rich environment. Nonetheless, Malaysia has established institutional structures and experienced government leadership to manage the open data agenda. The notion of making data 'open by default' challenges the deep rooted cultures of national privacy as it calls for data to be treated as a public resource.

This Innovation for Inclusive Development learning intervention hosted by the Academy of Science of South Africa (ASSAf) and supported by the Department of Science and Technology (DST) sets out to look at how open data-driven solutions can create economic and social value, improve service delivery in public services, support more transparent and accountable governments and foster innovation to transform citizens' well-being, cities, and governments for good.

## **2. INNOVATION FOR INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT (IID)**

The IID learning interventions align with one of DST's strategic objectives, namely, to use "knowledge, evidence and learning to inform and influence how science and technology may be used to achieve inclusive development". The purpose is to demonstrate how innovative technology solutions may be used to improve the capacity of the state to deliver and improve access to basic services, and thereby advance local economic development.

## **3. OBJECTIVES**

The objectives of this IID learning intervention will be to:

- Provide a platform for the dissemination of evidence-based knowledge to inform and influence decision-making, and thereby contribute to better-informed policymakers and policy-interested researchers.
- Bring in sector leaders representing government, academia and the private sector able to contribute to and advance policy-relevant knowledge and simultaneously increase capacity and build networks.
- Disseminate contemporary scientific research findings and transmit a body of new knowledge.
- Identify policy gaps and suggest new research agendas.

This IID will be a policy dialogue where experts who have been doing research on this subject will share their expertise by means of presentations. Other practitioners from private and public sector will also share lessons learnt either as speakers or from the floor as experts. The presentations will be followed by engagement through a question and answer session; and comment session. There will also be an opportunity in the day to continue discussions with the panel speakers. The sessions ensure that there is an academic, business and policy side of the discussion in terms of speakers and participants.

#### **4. EXPECTED OUTPUTS**

- A report containing the results of the discussion.
- Annotated list of participants and their research.

#### **5. POLICY RATIONALE**

The National Development Plan (NDP) recognises the role and responsibility of science, technology and innovation (STI) in socio-economic development that is inclusive and sustainable. In executing this role and responsibility, STI has to be continuously applied in policies, instruments and programmes so that South Africa can create and expand opportunities as well as capabilities for all who live in it. The inclusion in STI has to be more deliberate and better aligned to South Africa's economic, industrial and education policies and programmes. In so doing, STI sector would seek better efficiencies in developing and harnessing the STI potential in good governance for national socio-economic growth. Observations show that the government is already implementing various initiatives and interventions to ensure that technology contributes to addressing the plethora of challenges facing the environment, the economy and basic human needs.

#### **6. ATTENDEES**

It is expected that approximately 30 delegates will participate. These will be drawn from a multi-sectoral constituency such as government, the private sector, civil society, science councils and science societies.

#### **7. PROPOSED SPEAKERS AND TOPICS**

The programme will be provided in a separate document.

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