

How about defining Open Government principles?

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Open government has many definitions. By articulating transparency, social participation, accountability and technological innovation, this concept and its practice has been increasingly prominent in the public policy agenda. The richness of interpretations can generate expectations and frustrations among those who participate in open government processes and distance those who might be involved in these processes. Because it is addressed by different areas of knowledge, different actors and political and cultural contexts, it is important to ask: after all, what is open government? What are the principles of open government?

From the point of view of the main institutions that deal with this subject, open government is mainly linked to the promotion of transparency policies and their related themes, as well as the participation of society in the public policy cycle. In this perspective,

for some actors, it is fundamental to emphasize accountability and fighting corruption as structural axes and, in general, technological innovation as transversal to other policies. This data collection can be seen in Table 1 of the research* [“What is the concept of Open Government? An approach to its principles”](#), which seeks to draw new perspectives for this agenda.

However, there are cross-cutting themes of major importance that are not clearly included in these definitions of open government, such as gender, diversity, inclusion, language, and accessibility. The inclusion of these themes would allow a better dialogue with the goals of the [Sustainable Development Goals](#) (SDGS or 2030 Agenda) and with international declarations on women’s rights, minorities and human rights standards. In addition, we believe it is necessary to conceptualize social participation, to include open data as a basic component, and to assume collaboration and co-creation as a method for the construction of open governments.

Briefly, we propose here a set of guiding principles of a clearer and more objective concept of open government, at the same time as comprehensive and inclusive. The idea is that they can serve as a reference for governments, civil society, private sector and international agencies to discuss and elaborate their policies.

Proposed Principles for Open Government

Principle	Description
1. Effective participation	Participation is encouraged and includes informing, consulting, involving and empowering citizens and social organizations.
2. Transparency and accountability	Governments must actively account for all their actions and take public responsibility for their actions and decisions.
3. Open Data	Open, complete, primary, timely, accessible, machine processable, non-discriminatory, non-proprietary, license-free data must be made available and in accordance with international standards for publishing data on the Web.
4. Opening and reusing public information	Public information must circulate to reach its full potential. Priority is given to the use of license-free, allowing the reuse of information.
5. Access and simplicity	Whenever possible, simple and easy-to-understand language is used.

6. Collaboration and co-creation.	Practices and policies are designed to encourage collaboration and co-creation at all stages of the process.
7. Inclusion and diversity	There is attention to diversity and inclusion. Women, the disabled, minorities and / or vulnerable are included. Attention includes the use of appropriate languages, technologies and methodologies to include minorities.

We do not expect this text to end such an important discussion, but rather to challenge the fundamental principles with which the agenda must dialogue. Thus, on the one hand, it will translate into more effective changes in the way it is governed and, on the other hand, that attracts new actors to this promising agenda.

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* The full paper “What is the concept of Open Government? An approach to its principles.” Is available at: <https://goo.gl/1fRLli>

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