

# Open information and utilisation of government information

Contents

[Up](#)

Share publication

Print page

9.9.2019

When performing their duties, public authorities compile many kinds of information in their registers and other datasets. Opening data for the use of citizens, other authorities and companies can benefit the economy and society in many ways. Opening of data has been a goal in several Government Programmes, and datasets have also been opened. Wider re-use of datasets has a number of obstacles, such as the lack of information on them as well as the data opened from them, and the factors that limit the use of the data technically and legally, and in terms of substance.

When performing their duties, public authorities compile, for example, location, weather, real property, personal and company data in their registers and other datasets. The opening of datasets for everyone's use increases the transparency of government operations, provides raw material for business, and enables the development of public administration. The National Audit Office of Finland (NAOF) has audited how these objectives have been achieved in the opening of datasets.

The opening of public sector datasets for the use of citizens and companies has been included in Government Programmes since 2011. According to a survey by the European Commission in 2011, the direct financial benefits of the re-use of information would amount to up to EUR 40 billion within the EU, which would mean almost EUR 700 million in Finland.

Many issues related to making datasets accessible and available are linked with the comprehensive planning and management of central government's processes and information management. The current budgeting procedures do not take sufficient account of the fact that datasets are a significant resource for public services and social functions. The opening of government datasets lacks predictability, for example. Each authority has decided whether and when, and to what degree they open datasets. The data opened has not been interoperable in technical, legal and substantial aspects, and the methods of accessing the data have varied.

The NAOF recommends that central government should introduce arrangements for providing reliable information on central government datasets, their contents, the status of their opening and related plans, the conditions for the re-use of data, and other such relevant issues. Risk management should respond to the risks in the opening of data to be protected.

The NAOF also recommends a broader central government perspective for the management and utilisation of datasets. When datasets are increasingly seen as central government's shared resources, public administration can achieve productivity benefits and reduce the administrative burden of companies, other organisations and citizens.

Share publication

Additional information

[Matti Mattila](#)

Performance Audit Counsellor, CPFA, CISA, CIA

[+358 40 734 1057](tel:+358407341057) [matti.mattila@vtv.fi](mailto:matti.mattila@vtv.fi)