Digital Cities Toolkit

Policy Toolkit for people-centered smart cities

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Data For Public Good

Open City Data is a necessary element of technological sovereignty and must be managed and provided in an ethical, transparent, accessible and sustainable manner.

As well as supporting local innovation, Open City Data empowers citizens and enables better data-driven decision making in cities and, by providing visibility and accountability, induces more trust in local government and greater citizen engagement in policy making.

Municipal data is a strategic resource that enables local government to carry out its mission and its programs effectively. Appropriate access to municipal data significantly improves the value of the information and the return on the investment involved in generating it. Municipal data is also a means of ensuring accountability and transparency, promoting openness and public participation in government, while providing actionable insights for the government.

The goal of this new data management model is to enhance the value of the city's public information data and infrastructure, and guarantee (as an essential requirement) privacy and responsible use of the data associated with the public and the use of municipal public services. The goal is to provide a public and open data infrastructure for the development of innovative data-driven applications aimed at better access to public services and improved quality of life while guaranteeing data sovereignty for the public.

Adding value to the data and turning it into a public good, with the aim of promoting accountability and citizens' rights, requires new actions, new integrated procedures in an organic, transparent and cross-departmental way. A comprehensive governance strategy makes it possible to promote this revision and avoid redundancies, increased costs, inefficiency and bad practices.

Principles to follow designing the city's data strategy:

1. Reuse and open-source licenses.

Making municipal information accessible, usable by everyone by default, without having to ask for prior permission, and analyzable by anyone who wishes to do so can foster entrepreneurship, social and digital innovation, jobs and excellence in scientific research, as well as improving the lives of residents

2. Quality, integrity and security.

The city government must take firm steps to ensure and maximize the quality, objectivity, usefulness, integrity and security of municipal information before disclosing it, and maintain processes to effectuate requests for amendments to the publicly-available information.

3.Care throughout the data's life cycle.

Paying attention to the management of municipal registers, from when they are created to when they are destroyed or preserved, is an essential part of data management and of promoting public responsibility. Being careful with the data throughout its life cycle combined with activities that ensure continued access to digital materials for as long as necessary, help with the analytic exploitation of the data, but also with the responsible protection of historic municipal government registers and safeguarding the economic and legal rights of the municipal government and the city's residents.

4. Privacy and Ethics "by design"

The City Council has to consider and protect individual and collective privacy during the data life cycle, systematically and verifiably, as specified in the general regulation for data protection (Regulation 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council) with particular emphasis on informed consent, minimization of information and limiting to purpose, in an explainable, safe way and in accordance with the law.

5. Open data and civic participation

Publish an open data strategy that specifies principles and best practice in making data open across the breadth of public services in the city, and a baseline for measuring progress and the impact of making more data available for re-use. Open public data is a movement promoted by public authorities in order to make the best use of available public resources, enabling access and re-use of public information and knowledge to local companies, researchers, other public institutions or the general public. This fosters the efficiency and transparency of public management, better service delivery, and generates more business activities based on public data. For example, sharing mobility and environment can facilitate the creation of smarter public transport networks, leading to reduced congestion, improved air quality due to lower co2 emission and lower energy costs. In a democratic city, residents must be able to use the shared knowledge and add to it. Furthermore, active participation by the public can help resolve the city's challenges. One of the key challenges is to **maintain the right balance between policies based on data openness and citizens' privacy, by combining transparency and security.** The publication of data must always ensure that citizens' privacy is maintained intact, even when various data sources overlap. The data life-cycle must ensure that every stage is developed following ethical standards; from how data are generated, stored and shared to the procedures and purposes for which they are used.

6. Data commons and citizens' data sovereignty.

Citizens and the common good must be at the heart of all technological plans and platforms that collect, create or manage data and other information. Citizens must be able to control their data and have their rights to privacy and encryption preserved. Making it possible for city residents to control the data, minimizing the digital gap and preventing discriminatory or unethical practices is the essence of technological sovereignty.

7. Interoperable Data Infrastructure.

Through a technology road map will enable the development of a secure data sharing environment for public services and other private partners. This includes the development of an urban platform capable of handling Internet of Things data at volume and speed with a standardized data ontology and data analytics capabilities, and create trust in citizens to handle their data.