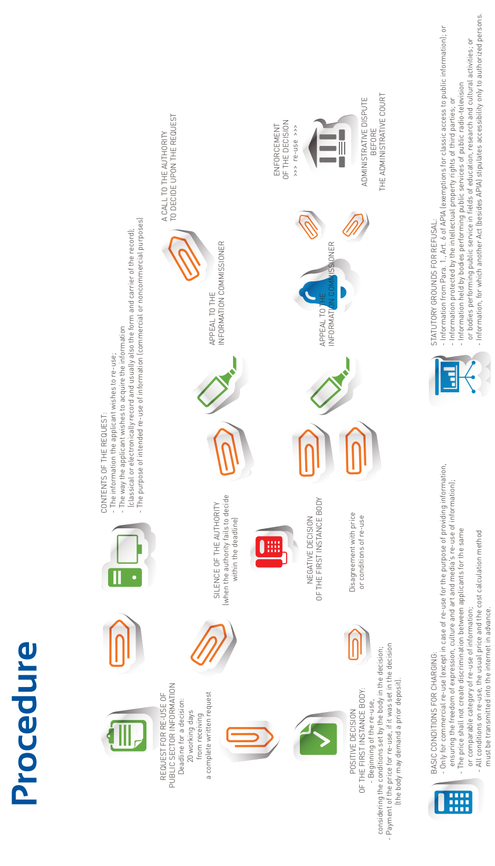
Procedure



We wish you
successful re-use!

Information Commissioner

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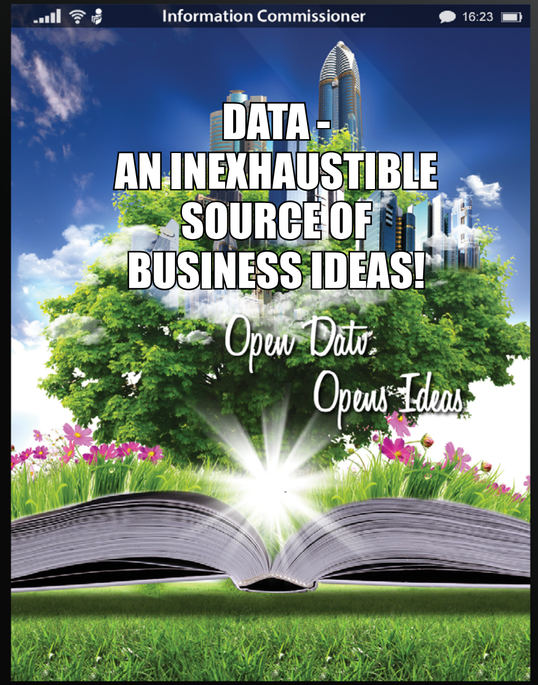


Did You **Know?**

- That you can find out in every moment where the fire is burning and where the fire brigade is headed to?
- That data from intelligent navigation devices originate from public information (re-use of public information)?
- That publishing food inspection results helped reducing emergency room visits due to food poisoning by 16 % in one city in the USA?
- That data from roadworthiness tests was used to prepare a list of the most common failures of different car models?
- That patient waiting times in health care may reduce due to the use of public sector information, and that the application, showing patient waiting times, may be prepared for smart phones?

In the course of their work, regulated by different laws, public sector bodies collect and produce a wide range of information. These are called public sector information. With the advances in technology and the development of the Internet, "ordinary" citizens have gained the opportunity to analyze, modify and re-use this information, and thus creating something entirely new – a new product, a service etc.. One can, for example, obtain meteorological data, created by a state authority, and use them to create a program or an application for mobile phones that informs users re-gularly on weather forecasts in the area where theyare located. If the developer sells such a program, he can even earn some money. This is the reason why the value of public information increased considerably over the last years. The estimated value of the market for public sector information in the EU in 2008 was 28 billion Euro, and the total annual economic gains from re-use of public sector information in the whole EU economy around 140 billion Euro.

With all this said, however, not only economic benefits are important consequences of the re-use of public sector information. Modified and enriched data also become more available and even more understandable for average citizens; this helps to spread the knowledge and increase the accessibility of information.

In 2003, the EU adopted a directive, which governs the field of re-use of public sector information. Slovenia transposed this Directive2 in its legal system with the amendments of the Access to Public Information Act in 2005. The aim of this brochure is to present a few interesting examples of re-use of public sector information, show the procedure for exercising the right to re-use, and explain the appeal possibilities before the Information Commissioner.

From Data Portals to Re-Use of Data

As it can be seen from many examples presented in this brochure, public sector information may be used for many different purposes. The use of public sector information is, so to speak, limited only by the imagination of individuals. It may happen, however, that public sector bodies do not recognise the data they have as useful or interesting for the re-use. For this reason, bodies should make available as much data as possible and leave the judgment on what can be done with such information to creative individuals. It can be said with a certainty that opening data stimulates the development of interesting and useful ideas.

One of the possible ways of making information available to the public is through the so-called open data portals. Data portals facilitate access and re-use of information held by public sector (mainly in the form of data sets) so that individuals can analyse and process such information and thereby create added value.

On the one hand, open data portals help increase transparency of public sector and, on the other hand, such portals stimulate innovation (for example developing useful web and smart phone applications) and lead to new or improved products and services on the market. All this combined positively influences the economic growth.

The creation of open data portals stimulates and facilitates the re-use of public sector information, because the potential re-users are made aware of all the information available for the re-use and can easily access such information, avoiding sometimes complicated and long-lasting bureaucratic procedures.

The number of states, regions and cities that have already established open data portals is rising monthly. It is popular to have an open data portal!!

Key elements of a quality open data portal:

- Clear rules of the game – simple and clear conditions (e.g. with the use of licences) for the re-use of information that is available for the re-use;
- Quality, transparent, up-to-date and timely information;
- Machine readable formats of published information suitable for further, automatised, data processing;
- Publishing of raw, non-processed information;
- The possibility of users to influence the content of open data portals.

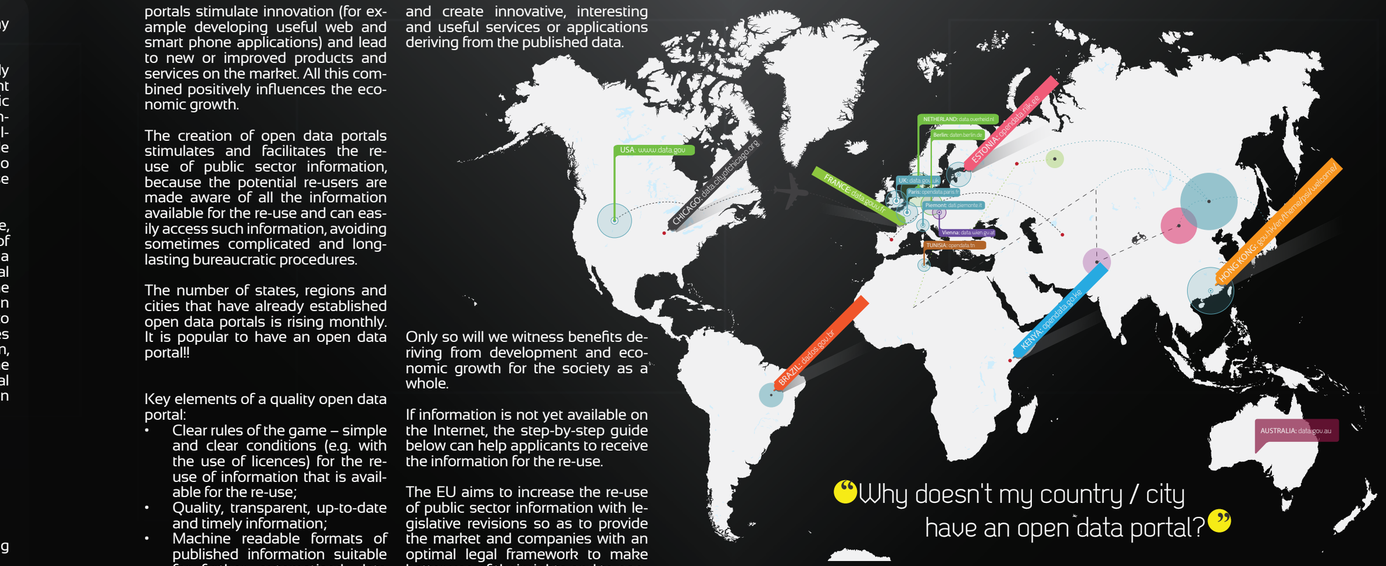
It is safe to say that it is important to start establishing open data portals in the state and municipal levels in Slovenia as well. However, the true value of such portals will be demonstrated only if citizens will use them and create innovative, interesting and useful services or applications deriving from the published data.

Only so will we witness benefits deriving from development and economic growth for the society as a whole.

If information is not yet available on the Internet, the step-by-step guide below can help applicants to receive the information for the re-use.

The EU aims to increase the re-use of public sector information with legislative revisions so as to provide the market and companies with an optimal legal framework to make better use of their rights and to operate on the market.

In preparation for a revision of the Directive on the re-use of public sector information, the European Commission also financed the LAPSI project,4 which was dedicated to analysing this topic and to create incentives for "opening up" data, held by public sector. The Slovenian Information Commissioner actively participated in the project since it was launched in 2010.



Useful Links

Information Commissioner: www.ic-rs.si
LAPSI: www.lapsi-project.eu
European Public Sector Information Platform: epsiplatform.eu
Open Knowledge Foundation: okfn.org
European Commission, Europe's Information Society - Thematic Portal: ec.europa.eu/information_society/ policy/psi

Area / type of public sector information	Examples of services that re-use public sector information
Real estate, Cadastre	• A service that provides information on prices of real estate in different areas (with the possibility of filtering) • A registry of empty municipal and state real estates • A service that provides information on living conditions in individual districts (with information on proximity of facilities like schools, police stations, public transport, on crime rates, sizes of parks, average GDP of residents..)
Occurrences	• Crime-mapping – a map with information about crime locations or locations of police interventions • A map of current and past fires, earthquakes and similar natural disasters; • Lists of municipal festivals and holidays, bulky waste pick-up schedules, blood donor campaigns etc.
Healthcare	• Crime-mapping – a map with information about crime locations or locations of police interventions • A map of current and past fires, earthquakes and similar natural disasters; • Lists of municipal festivals and holidays, bulky waste pick-up schedules, blood donor campaigns etc.
Finances and Business	• Application that shows analyses of financial and corporate information gathered from different registries, which helps with preparing credit assessment reports • Reports on fast-growing companies and markets from different regions, including analysis on political situation, foreign investments etc.
Taxes	• "Where did my taxes go" and similar applications can demonstrate how tax payments of an individual were spent – how much was spent for healthcare, schools system, army, environment...
Law and regulation	• Collections of legal texts with added information, links and additional services • Enriched collections of case-law with links to foreign and European case-law
Politics, Public finances	• Structured information on (former and current) activities of politicians (e.g. tracking everyday political engagements of an individual MP who you voted for) • Analysis of proposals of laws, votes for individual laws, expressed positions and opinions of the politicians • Collection of questions posed to politicians (e.g. to ministers and MPs) and their answers, structured by content, political parties etc. • Analysis of business transactions with the government, tracking allocation of money from government or municipal budget • Personal connection diagrams that show links between influential people and politicians, lobbyist and government officials, donations and investments etc.
Administration, Public services	• Applications for alerting of current public tenders • Applications for reporting irregularities to public services (e.g. damages on the street, to the signalisation, missing benches on bus stops etc.) drawn up on the map of public infrastructure • Analysis of inspection reports
Traffic	• Smart navigation systems for avoiding congestions • Alert systems for current road closures and accidents • Cargo management systems
Weather (meteorological data)	• Weather forecasts for mobile phones • Combination of meteorological forecasts and spatial data • Support applications for different types of traffic: applications for aviation may help with planning of defrosting airplanes and runways; applications for road traffic may be used to determine possible locations of road damages due to freezing and other weather hazards; and applications for marine traffic show winds, waves, tide, hurricanes... • Applications for support in agriculture (such that help with farm planning, crop insurance planning with regard to meteorological data etc.)
Tourism and Free Time	• Applications for finding tourist attractions, hotels, restaurants, ... • A service that combines information on restaurants in a certain area with information on inspection controls (e.g. with regard to suitability of food, hygiene minimum etc.)
Geographical information	• Satellite and air images that enable different types of cartography • 3D area projections