

CASE STUDY: Open Government Indicators

Developing indicators of open government

About

In 2009 Involve was commissioned by the OECD to produce a set of indicators for measuring open government. The indicators sought to complement the OECD's existing measures for evaluating legal and institutional mechanisms for transparency, accessibility and responsiveness in governments worldwide, by focusing on the implementation, use and enforcement of these mechanisms. The work builds upon past and ongoing work of the [OECD on public engagement](#) to build greater accountability and transparency in government.

Background

Existing open government indicators focus either on the presence of key laws and institutions, or on citizens' perceptions of government performance. Neither option provides a full picture of comparative openness: the former gives little insight into the scope of the laws and institutions measured and the latter does not provide a quantitative picture of actual activities. The proposed indicators are intended to fill this gap.

Purpose

The overall aim of the project was to create a more in-depth measure of the extent to which legal and policy frameworks for open government are actually applied in practise.

Intended outcomes are:

- To improve the ways in which open government is assessed
- To increase understanding of what open government means in practise
- To influence improvements in the delivery of the openness agenda in OECD member countries and worldwide



Name of project:

Open Government Indicators

Type of project:

Promoting good practise and embedding engagement in government

Date:

2009

Partners:

[Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development \(OECD\)](#)

Contact details:

Simon Burall
simon@involve.org.uk

About Involve:

Involve believes that honest and open dialogue between citizens and government strengthens democracy, helps make better decisions and leads to more innovative and efficient public services. We work with government, elected representatives and civil society organisations to open new channels for dialogue at all levels of government and society.

involve

Project Activities

Involve undertook extensive research and analysis in developing the indicators which included a scoping study of available open government indicators and sources of comparative data; gap analysis of key indicators not available in data sets and the development of an analytical framework. As part of the process, international experts and national practitioners were engaged to contribute their input and ideas and conduct a peer review of the paper Involve produced.

These activities generated an initial list of over 60 potential indicators and sub-indicators, which were amalgamated into a series of top-level indicators each with a series of sub-indicators. These top level indicators were then narrowed down to 17. The long listed indicators were selected on the basis of four criteria:

1. **Relevance:** indicator contributes to building a deeper understanding of the scope and impact of the institutions, laws and policies intended to support open government
2. **Comparability:** indicator is useable across different cultural and bureaucratic contexts, is clearly defined and unambiguous
3. **Reliability:** indicator measures what it purports to measure
4. **Feasibility:** datasets must be readily accessible or relatively easily pulled together by OECD member countries if not already available



For more information on this case study or the work that Involve does, please contact us.

Involve
Royal London House
22 – 25 Finsbury Square
London
EC2A 1DX

Tel: +44 (0) 207 920 6470
Email: info@involve.org.uk
Web: www.involve.org.uk

Results

17 short listed indicators were presented to the OECD. These indicators fell into six main categories relating to:

1. Laws on access to information and documents
2. Ombudsman/Information Commissioner Institutions
3. Supreme Audit Institutions
4. Consultation Policy
5. Laws on the right to observe meetings held by public agencies
6. Laws on administrative procedures

