

Open Data Policy

Arab Republic of Egypt

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Table of Contents

Preamble	2
1. Introduction.....	2
2. Policy Objectives.....	2
3. Scope and Applicability	3
4. Guiding Principles.....	3
a. Open by Default.....	3
b. Timeliness.....	4
c. Accessibility and Usability.....	4
d. Free of Charge	4
e. Data Quality.....	5
5. Institutional Framework.....	5
a. National Council of Artificial Intelligence- Interagency Data Release Board	6
b. Egyptian Data Governance Authority (EDGA)	7
c. Open Data Officers	7
d. Technical Secretariat	7
6. Data Licensing.....	8
7. Publication and Portals.....	8
8. Public Engagement and Feedback.....	8
9. Capacity Building and Innovation.....	9
10. Legal and Regulatory Alignment.....	9
11. International Cooperation.....	9
12. Review, Amendment, and Termination of Policy.....	10
Annex I: Metadata Standards for Open Data	10
Annex II: Open Data Licensing Models.....	12

Preamble

The Government of the Arab Republic of Egypt affirms its commitment to democratic values, transparency, and digital innovation. In the digital era, data is a cornerstone of modern governance and a catalyst for socio-economic transformation. Governments across the globe are increasingly recognizing the value of making non-sensitive public data openly available, enabling better decision-making, service delivery, entrepreneurship, and civic engagement.

This policy outlines Egypt's roadmap to promote and expand open data practices throughout the public sector during the transitional period preceding the enactment of the forthcoming Data Governance Law, its executive regulations, and the accompanying data classification framework. It seeks to create an enabling environment where data becomes a national asset accessible to all, fostering inclusive growth and trust between government and citizens.

1. Introduction

Open data refers to government-held data that is made available in a machine-readable format, and with minimal restrictions on use or reuse. When responsibly managed, open data can unlock significant value in terms of economic development, scientific research, and public accountability.

This policy sets out the overarching framework for data openness across Egyptian public institutions during the transitional period prior to the enactment of the Data Governance Law and its accompanying data classification framework. It lays down clear guidelines, principles, and responsibilities to ensure that the publication, management, and reuse of open data are consistent, secure, and effective.

2. Policy Objectives

A coherent open data policy must be underpinned by clearly defined goals. These objectives serve to align national data-sharing initiatives with Egypt's broader development vision.

The Open Data Policy of Egypt aims to:

- Promote transparency, accountability, and public trust.
- Encourage the development of innovative digital products and services.
- Improve public service delivery and operational efficiency.

- Support data-informed policy decisions and planning.
- Align with global standards and Egypt's commitments under the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and digital transformation agenda.

3. Scope and Applicability

For the policy to have maximum impact, it must cover a broad range of government entities while defining clear boundaries on what data can and cannot be shared. This policy applies to all ministries, departments, public agencies, local government units, and state-owned enterprises.

This policy governs the release of government-held datasets during the transitional period preceding the enactment of the forthcoming Data Governance Law, its executive regulations, and the accompanying data classification framework. No dataset may be made publicly available unless it has undergone review and approval in accordance with this policy — and subsequently, in accordance with the Data Governance Law — ensuring full alignment with national security, privacy, and confidentiality standards.

The policy governs the release of non-sensitive, non-personal, and non-confidential datasets. The following categories are excluded from disclosure:

- Data classified as sensitive under national security or defense laws.
- Personal data protected under the Personal Data Protection Law (Law No. 151/2020).
- Proprietary or commercial information covered by contracts or licensing agreements.
- Data subject to legal privilege or court orders.

4. Guiding Principles

To ensure the effective and sustainable implementation of open data initiatives in Egypt, this policy is anchored in a set of guiding principles that reflect both global best practices and national priorities. These principles aim to build public trust, empower citizens and businesses, and promote responsible data stewardship across the public sector.

a. Open by Default

The principle of "open by default" shall apply exclusively to datasets that have been affirmatively classified as public under this policy during the transitional period preceding the enactment of the Data Governance Law and its accompanying Data Classification

Framework. This approach ensures that only data sets deemed non-sensitive, non-personal, and suitable for public release are made accessible.

b. Timeliness

Timely access to accurate data is critical to ensure its usefulness for decision-making, policy development, and citizen engagement. Outdated or stale data undermines trust and limits the potential for economic or civic innovation.

This principle in Egypt will help:

- **Support emergency and disaster response** through real-time publication of critical datasets (e.g., health outbreaks, floods).
- **Enable media and watchdog groups** to monitor developments as they happen.
- **Facilitate timely market analysis** for entrepreneurs and investors.

Datasets must be published as early as feasible and updated regularly in accordance with a published release schedule.

c. Accessibility and Usability

Merely publishing data is not sufficient. It must be accessible to the average citizen, regardless of technical skill or location. Data must be discoverable, machine-readable, and published in open formats (e.g., CSV, JSON, XML) rather than proprietary or locked files (e.g., PDFs without structured tables).

To address **digital divides** and **language barriers** in Egypt:

- Datasets must include **Arabic metadata and documentation** alongside any English versions.
- Where applicable, visualizations and summaries should be provided to support understanding by non-specialists.
- A feedback loop should be established to understand user needs and improve dataset formats accordingly.

This approach will empower a broader range of users—from local NGOs and small businesses to university students and journalists.

d. Free of Charge

The policy recognizes that the cost of making data available may vary depending on the type, volume, and complexity of data services offered. While many datasets may be

released free of charge, individual ministries and public entities retain the authority to impose reasonable fees for access to datasets—especially when cost recovery is necessary due to significant investments in data generation or specialized formatting.

This principle will:

- Support the **growth of Egypt's digital economy** by reducing entry barriers for tech innovators.
- Encourage **academic research and policy analysis** without financial constraints.
- Promote **equity in data access**, ensuring small organizations and individuals have the same opportunities as larger entities.

However, exceptions may be considered for specialized services involving high operational costs, such as custom APIs or high-volume downloads.

e. Data Quality

High-quality data is a prerequisite for meaningful reuse. Poorly formatted, incomplete, or inaccurate datasets damage user trust and reduce impact.

In Egypt's case, this principle is essential to:

- **Support planning and monitoring** for Vision 2030 programs.
- **Enhance the reliability of official statistics**, especially at governorate and municipal levels.
- **Enable predictive analytics** for health, education, transport, and agriculture.

To ensure quality, each dataset must be:

- **Complete and internally consistent**
- **Described with accurate metadata**
- **Accompanied by data dictionaries, update logs, and source details**

5. Institutional Framework

To ensure successful implementation, governance of open data must be embedded within existing institutional structures, while enabling accountability, technical leadership, and public oversight.

a. National Council of Artificial Intelligence- Interagency Data Release Board

During the transitional period prior to the enactment of the Data Governance Law and its accompanying data classification framework, this policy establishes an interim governance mechanism to enable the responsible release of public datasets. The **National Council for Artificial Intelligence (NCAI)** shall assume oversight responsibility for public data disclosure during this phase, ensuring alignment with emerging national standards and international best practices.

To operationalize this mandate, a **Temporary Interagency Data Release Board** will be formed under the NCAI, serving as a centralized review body to coordinate data release across ministries and public entities. The board will apply uniform guidelines, uphold safeguarding privacy, and enhance transparency in the data governance process.

The board responsibilities shall include:

- Reviewing datasets submitted for public release
- Applying interim open data governance guidelines
- Providing technical, legal, and ethical guidance to government entities
- Coordinating data quality assurance processes, including internal validation and user feedback mechanisms

Until the Data Governance Law is formally enacted, all government entities shall adopt the following **interim procedure** to responsibly identify and release datasets:

- 1. Conduct a Provisional Risk-Based Assessment**

Each dataset must be evaluated to determine its sensitivity, re-identification risk, and potential for reputational, legal, or societal harm if misused.

- 2. Identify “Safe-to-Release” Datasets**

Entities should prioritize datasets that are clearly non-sensitive and of high public value—such as public transport schedules, geospatial and weather data, government spending summaries, and anonymized census aggregates.

- 3. Apply Privacy and Anonymization Measures**

All datasets must undergo de-identification and aggregation. Where applicable, advanced techniques such as differential privacy or noise-injection should be considered to further mitigate risk.

- 4. Submit the Dataset for Review by the Interagency Data Release Board**

Prior to publication, all proposed datasets must be submitted to the Temporary Interagency Data Release Board under the NCAI. The board will assess the dataset's compliance with emerging national data governance standards and determine its suitability for public release.

5. Implement Open Data Licensing and Metadata Standards

Approved datasets must be released with standardized metadata and appropriate open data licenses. Metadata should clearly indicate the purpose of release, source, update frequency, data format, and any applicable privacy disclaimers.

This transitional mechanism ensures that Egypt's public sector can begin advancing open data practices in a responsible, risk-aware manner while building institutional readiness for full implementation of the forthcoming legal framework.

b. Egyptian Data Governance Authority (EDGA)

As mandated by the forthcoming Data Governance Law and its executive regulations, the Egyptian Data Governance Authority EDGA will serve as the central coordinating body. It will set priorities, monitor compliance, responsible of the release of public data sets, and approve strategic initiatives. Upon its formation, the Egyptian Government Digital Authority (EGDA) shall assume the responsibilities of the National Council for Artificial Intelligence (NCAI) and the Interim Interagency Data Release Board - as mentioned in this policy- with regard to overseeing the disclosure of public data.

c. Chief Open Data Officer (CODO)

Each government entity shall designate a Chief Open Data Officer tasked with overseeing the identification, classification, publication of datasets; ensuring quality assurance; facilitating user engagement; and coordination with the National Council for Artificial Intelligence— and subsequently with the Egyptian Data Governance Authority (EDGA) once it is established.

d. Technical Secretariat

The Ministry of Communications and Information Technology will provide technical infrastructure, develop the national data portal, and support capacity-building.

6. Data Licensing

Clear licensing is essential to ensure that users understand their rights and obligations when using government data. International experience shows that standardized, permissive licenses are most effective.

Egypt will adopt a national open data license aligned with global standards such as Creative Commons Attribution (CC-BY) or Open Data Commons Attribution (ODC-BY). This license shall:

- Permit copying, reuse, redistribution, and modification.
- Require appropriate attribution.
- Exclude liability for the original data provider.

7. Publication and Portals

A centralized digital platform is critical for user access, visibility, and cross-agency coordination. This section outlines how data should be published and organized.

A National Open Data Portal (data.gov.eg) will serve as the single point of access. Agencies may maintain sectoral sub-portals that must integrate with the national platform. The portal must support:

- Dataset search and categorization
- Bulk downloads
- API-based access
- Public dataset requests and feedback
- Dataset versioning and archiving

8. Public Engagement and Feedback

Public participation strengthens data quality, relevance, and trust. Meaningful engagement helps identify new datasets, uncover errors, and support innovation.

The government will establish formal mechanisms for:

- Dataset request and prioritization
- Public consultation on licensing, quality, and formatting
- Hosting annual hackathons, data challenges, and civic tech events

Feedback received will be reviewed regularly and integrated into updates to the portal and datasets.

9. Capacity Building and Innovation

Public officials, researchers, entrepreneurs, and citizens must be equipped with the tools and knowledge to generate value from open data. This section outlines capacity-building and innovation enablers.

Ministry of Communications & Information Technology MCIT, in collaboration with academic and civil society partners, will:

- Train public officials on data ethics, formats, standards, and anonymization.
- Support university courses and incubators on open data innovation.
- Fund pilot projects and local initiatives that demonstrate social impact through data reuse.

10. Legal and Regulatory Alignment

A strong legal foundation ensures clarity, enforceability, and long-term sustainability of open data reforms.

This policy shall operate in conjunction with:

- The Personal Data Protection Law (Law No. 151/2020)
- Law No. 72/2017 on Investment Incentives
- The Cybercrime Law (Law No. 175/2018)
- Any future regulations such as data classification, data sharing, anonymization protocols, dispute resolution mechanisms, or public interest exemptions.

11. International Cooperation

Egypt's digital and data agenda is part of a broader global transformation. The country seeks to align with leading multilateral frameworks and share lessons regionally.

Egypt will:

- Align with the **Open Data Charter** and **Open Government Partnership (OGP)** principles.
- Participate in regional data-sharing platforms.
- Collaborate with multilateral institutions (e.g., World Bank, OECD, UNDP) on data projects, assessments, and funding.

12. Review, Amendment, and Termination of Policy

This policy shall be formally reviewed every **three (3) years**, or earlier if directed. Reviews shall include consultations with stakeholders from government, civil society, academia, and industry. The policy must remain responsive to technological developments, legal changes, and user needs.

Upon the formal enactment of the Data Governance Law, this policy will cease to be in effect.

Annex I: Metadata Standards for Open Data

This annex sets out a minimum metadata schema aligned with DCAT-AP (Data Catalog Vocabulary – Application Profile), localized for Arabic-English dual usage. Metadata must accompany every dataset to ensure clarity and usability.

Metadata Field	Description	Example
Title	Dataset name	Electricity Consumption by Sector, 2024
Description	Brief summary of the dataset contents and purpose	Monthly electricity usage by residential, commercial, and industrial sectors.
Keywords/Tags	Searchable terms	Energy, Electricity, Utilities
Publisher	Organization responsible for the dataset	Ministry of Electricity
Contact Email	Person or unit responsible for inquiries	data@moe.gov.eg
Temporal Coverage	Time period covered	January 2024 – March 2024
Spatial Coverage	Geographic scope	Nationwide
Update Frequency	Schedule of updates	Monthly
License	Usage terms (see Annex II)	Egypt Open Data License v1.0
Access URL	Direct download link	https://data.gov.eg/download/electricity_2024.csv
API Endpoint	If available, API URL	https://api.data.gov.eg/electricity/v1/
Language	Language(s) of the data and metadata	Arabic, English
Data Format	File types available	CSV, JSON

Version	Dataset number	version v1.1
Date of Publication	First release	2025-05-01
Date of Last Update	Latest refresh	2025-06-01

Annex II: Open Data Licensing Models

This annex outlines the licensing framework for open data in Egypt, adapted from the UK's OGL, Creative Commons, and India's NDSAP.

A. Default License: Egypt Open Data License v1.0

- Rights Granted
 - Use, copy, modify, publish, translate, adapt, distribute, or commercially exploit the data.
 - Combine with other datasets for derivative works.
- Conditions
 - Attribution required: Users must cite the source of the data.
 - No endorsement: Use of the data must not imply government endorsement.
 - No warranty: Data is provided "as is", without liability.

B. Permitted Alternatives

Entities may, in exceptional cases, apply:

- Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 (CC BY 4.0): For academic and cultural institutions.
- Open Data Commons Attribution License (ODC-By): For databases and registries.

C. Non-Open or Restricted Licenses

The following cases are excluded from open licensing:

- Datasets involving personal or classified information.
- Data under third-party copyright.
- Data restricted under national security or contractual provisions.