**Open Data Working Group3**
**Convening #4 | 29 April 2021**
**Discussion Notes**

The Open Data Working Group—an initiative of International Innovation Corps (UChicago Trust) and the Data Governance Network (anchored by IDFC Institute)—hosted its fourth convening on Thursday, April 29, 2021.

The agenda for the convening focused on:

A.  Gaining critical first-hand insights from the National Informatics Centre (NIC) representative on their current modes and modalities for capacity building and performance evaluation of Open Data personnel, including Chief Data Officers (CDOs) and Data Contributors (DCs) within government departments and agencies;
B.  Discussing Open Data capacity building interventions conducted by Group participants (like CivicDataLab) for government departments and agencies to date;
C.  Soliciting suggestions from Group participants on bolstering NIC's efforts directed at capacity-building and performance evaluation of CDOs and DCs.

*NIC's capacity-building and performance evaluation of CDOs and DCs*

● CDOs are generally Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officers at the Joint-Secretary level. With wide-ranging administrative functions and responsibilities demanding significant accountability, they have limited bandwidth to meet their obligations under the open government data (OGD) mandate, which is perceived as a secondary duty. To tackle this deficit in capacity for OGD, NIC consistently encourages CDOs across line ministries and government agencies to publish their collected data via Web Services or APIs, as it obviates the need for manual uploading of datasets to the OGD platform.
● NIC  provides handholding support to CDOs and DCs with dedicated personnel on an as-needed basis for creating APIs/WebServices and other related activities.
● The NIC periodically organizes hackathons to promote innovative usage of Open Data for students,  startups, non-government organizations, and citizens in general. CDOs are invited to attend these demonstrations in the hopes of familiarizing them with the immense potential value of Open Data and bolstering their motivation.
● A separate Open Data Champion Category has been created in Digital India Awards, instituted by NIC, and is given once in two years. Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Delhi has formulated the process to choose the awardees. Since 2018, only the Ministries contributing datasets through Web Services are eligible for this award.
● Under OGD 2.0, frequency of CDOs and demand-side stakeholders' interactions will be increased by holding more periodic (tentatively monthly) activities with relevant parties.

CDOs will also be ranked in order of their performance. Additionally, IIT Delhi will support NIC to develop a 'CDO of The Month' ranking system highlighting CDOs on the basis of their accomplishments with respect to the realization of the Open Data mandate. In OGD2.0, there is a consideration for adopting policies around high value datasets (HVD).

- Given the increasing adoption of APIs and the consequent automatic release of data under OGD 2.0, soft skills (i.e. time management, project management) may become more important than technical skills for CDOs and DCs.
- The NIC welcomes the opportunity to collaborate with civil society to design and execute capacity building and performance evaluation programs.

*Open Data Capacity Building Interventions by Civic Data Lab*

- CivicDataLab has taken a sector-specific approach in their efforts to upskill government officials in releasing data from their departments. They approach government departments in sectors where they have expertise. They have worked with government departments at the state level in Himachal Pradesh and Assam, and are now planning to expand their efforts to other states like Odisha and Uttar Pradesh.

*Bolstering NIC's efforts directed at capacity-building and performance evaluation of CDOs and DCs*

- Untapped opportunities for OGD could be identified by auditing e-governance initiatives with CDOs.
- Notwithstanding the pending enactment of the Personal Data Protection Bill, 2019, CDOs and DCs should be sensitized towards the imperative of adopting a privacy-first approach in their data sharing practices.
- DCs and others within the NDSAP cell should be equipped with a working knowledge of intellectual property laws as they relate to the sharing of proprietary data.
- Use of case-studies in workshops conducted by NIC could be helpful to sensitize CDOs to the potential value of OGD, motivating them to deliver on the OGD mandate with greater will and vigour.
- Given that CDOs typically have other more pressing matters demanding their attention, upskilling support should enable them to manage their time more effectively.

**Session Participants**

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