

Ministry of Defence

Open Data Strategy 2012-2014

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Introduction

1. Transparency is key to the Coalition Government's vision for how public services should be delivered. Through Transparency the Government is aiming to:

- promote social and economic growth;
- drive improved service delivery;
- and increase the accountability of public services.

2. The Ministry of Defence is playing a significant role in promoting Transparency across Government. Over the next two years we will build on the progress made to date and, subject to operational and resource constraints, seek to embed Transparency as normal business.

3. The MOD is committed to handling information as a valued and valuable asset, both in terms of an individual's personal data which must be held securely and protected from unauthorised access, and in ensuring that the maximum value is derived from other data by ensuring its re-use within the Department, across government, and wherever feasible, by the public and developer community. To this end, our approach is aligned through the MOD Information Strategy (MODIS) and the Defence ICT Strategy[1], as far as practicable to the Information Principles published as part of the Government ICT Strategy. Moreover, the MOD is committed to ensuring that public information is signposted in line with the public data principles set out by the Transparency Board, including registering it on www.data.gov.uk.

Strategy and Approach

4. The Open Data Strategy (ODS) is a comprehensive strategic plan which outlines how MOD will drive reform and improvement through Transparency. The Strategy provides an insight into the type of Transparency datasets produced by the Department which fall under the following categories:

[1] http://www.mod.uk/DefenceInternet/AboutDefence/CorporatePublications/PolicyStrategyandPlanning/ModInformationStrategymodis.htm
http://www.mod.uk/DefenceInternet/AboutDefence/CorporatePublications/PolicyStrategyandPlanning/DefenceIctStrategy.htm

- Big Data – routinely collected and held by the Department as part of its everyday activities or through initiatives;
- My Data – data about individuals held by the Department that is released for access by the individual (under the subject access terms of the Data Protection Act);
- Satisfaction and Experience Data – data that provides customer insight about levels of satisfaction of public service users.

5. The Strategy sets out the context and background to our approach; outlines the types of data we hold and how we intend to treat them in line with our drive to greater Transparency.

6. It is also important to emphasise MOD's starting point. Defence is not a traditionally outward facing Department. We are currently subject to a Transformation Programme that will result in a smaller Department that will need to adopt changed behaviours and working practices. All this will take some time, so our approach to Transparency, although aspirationally universal, will, in practice focus mainly on those areas with the most outward facing activities.

7. Examples of such areas are the Defence Infrastructure Organisation which, inter alia, manages and deals with public access to the Defence estate and the Hydrographic Office which produces marine charts and other products for the maritime community.

Business Plans

8. Business plans for all Departments were published in November 2010 and included an initial 'Transparency' section. The initial commitments made are continuously reviewed and public authorities are proactively publishing information to:

- assist the public to hold government to account;
- inform choice of public services;
- increase public service productivity;
- improve public service outcomes;
- support social growth;
- and support economic growth.

9. These initial business plans made commitments to the publication of key data sets aimed at improving the Transparency of the public authorities and committed to providing data of good quality, for effective comparison and accessibility. It also included input and impact indicators to be used to assess performance in key priority areas.

10. The Transparency element of the MOD business plan was circulated for public consultation from 15 November 2010 to 14 January 2011. Although the public response return rate was low, it did provide an opportunity for organisations MOD works closely with to engage on particular issues outside of the Transparency section of the business plan, for example RUSI and The Royal British Legion.

11. A summary form of this Strategy will be included as the Transparency section of the latest MOD business plan[2]. Beneath that, MOD Command plans set out what each Top Level Budget (TLB) – which control business and military units in Defence - will deliver in support of the MOD business plan. An annex to the Command plan template contains the information objectives which tells the commands what they must do and poses a large number of questions to gather evidence of development and compliance, by which an annual assurance of progress will be undertaken. Two of these measures relate to Open Data and require business areas to report quarterly the quantity of datasets that have been published in the quarter and the quantity planned to be published in the following quarter.

Scope

Arms Length Bodies

12. As well as focussing on the core Department through its TLBs, we will work with the Departments Trading Funds and NDPBs[3] to maximise their contribution to the Transparency agenda. It is our aim to put in place a culture whereby information assets will be reviewed to assess opportunities to provide usable data to support Transparency, whilst considering the operational risk of doing so.

[2] http://www.mod.uk/DefenceInternet/AboutDefence/CorporatePublications/BusinessPlans/ModBusinessPlans/

[3] http://www.mod.uk/DefenceInternet/AboutDefence/Organisation/AgenciesOrganisations/TradingFundsAndNdpbsStructureCharts.htm

The UK Location Programme

13. The MOD is a signatory of the UK Location Programme that reports annually to the European Commission on the quality and extent of INSPIRE compliant data available. The programme facilitates work by groups of data providers to coordinate, monitor and assure data quality. This work will continue and expand over the next two years as INSPIRE data publishing requirements mean further themed data sets are published. The programme is coordinating the transformation of data as required by the INSPIRE Directive to make it interoperable and encourage re-use. MOD will review the data it holds which meets the data categories INSPIRE plans to publish over the next two years and, wherever possible, will publish them.

Embedding Transparency

14. The MOD is committed to embedding Transparency as 'business-as-usual'. To achieve this we have engaged with Top Level Budget (TLB) areas and identified a network of named Transparency contacts. Together, we aim to:

- Identify data which should be published by each TLB;
- Identify those responsible for ALBs and agree Transparency plans with them;
- Identify additional sources of underlying data (eg: in reports and publications) which should be signposted on www.data.gov.uk;
- Work with TLBs and ALBs to change the way we publish data – ie: digital by default and in reusable formats wherever possible;
- Encourage TLBs to seek feedback from customers, developers and the public, on the data published and what new data they would like to have.

15. The Open Data Strategy is supported by a prioritised schedule which sets out the data release commitments for April 2012 to March 2014, Annex A. In producing this dataset release schedule, MOD has focused on the more public facing elements of the Department, in order to efficiently identify, prioritise and release those datasets that will be of public interest.

16. MOD maintains maturity models to benchmark and set targets for information-related behaviours across the Department including, at present, Information Management Skills, Records Management and Information Assurance. These underpinning models are used to drive management and improvement efforts such as training and organisational development. During 2012 we will seek to incorporate Transparency maturity factors into an overarching information maturity model which, with the Command Plans outlined above, we will use to help drive openness behaviours into wider Defence business.

Data holdings

Big Data

17. The majority of datasets that MOD creates or collates fall into this category. This applies to data that is routinely collected and held by organisations either as part of their everyday activities or through specific initiatives. MOD has responded to the Transparency commitments outlined by the Prime Minister and successfully published data in respect of:

- **Contracts;**
  All new ICT contracts over the value of £10,000. All new tender documents for contracts over £10,000. All new contracts to be published in full from January 2011.

- **Senior Pay;**
  The Senior Staff remuneration dataset gives corresponding information on civilian salaries of those working at Director level and above.

- **Organograms;**
  Details of the top structure of the Department. These show all Military 1*/Senior Civil Service (Pay Band 1) and above posts and junior staff posts below SCS level who report to them including their pay scales.

- **Spend over £25k including GPC transactions.**
  Payments over £25,000 and GPC payments over £500 made by the Ministry of Defence and it's family members, as part of the Government's commitment to Transparency in expenditure.

18. In addition to these commitments, MOD has also proactively released a number of

other big datasets, such as:

- **Operational Fatality and Casualty Statistics;**
  The number of UK Military and UK Civilians on Operations in Afghanistan who are; Very seriously injured (VSI), Seriously Injured (SI), admitted to a field hospital under the categories of Wounded in Action (WIA), Diseases or Non Battle injuries (DNBI) and Aeromedically evacuated. The fatalities figures presents UK Military and UK Civilians who are Killed in Action (KIA), Died of Wounds (DOW) and those who died of 'Other' causes.

- **UK Armed Forces Manpower Statistics;**
  This is a monthly publication containing requirements, strengths, intake and outflow from the UK Armed Forces by Service. Voluntary Outflow information by Service is also shown.

- **UK Armed Forces Mental Health Report**;
  Statistics on mental health in the Armed Forces.

- **Armed Forces Continuous Attitude Survey.**
  The AFCAS provides a consistent method of collecting information from Service personnel.

19. MOD will continue to publish these datasets regularly on the MOD website and signpost on data.gov.uk. This brings the total number of datasets released and signposted by MOD to almost 200.

20. The big datasets identified to be published by MOD are outlined in Annex A. Releasing these big data sets has the potential to deliver the following of the six overarching benefits of Open Data: accountability; choice; public service productivity; and public service quality (outcomes).

My Data

21. Each year MOD receives some 25,000 Subject Access Requests (SAR) in accordance with the Data Protection Act. It is most important that MOD is seen to be answering all these requests swiftly and accurately. The priority challenge for Information Rights is to maintain or improve standards, through good guidance and training, while

dealing with the resource challenges and organisational reforms of transforming Defence.

22. The Information Rights policies that MOD has established will continue to be used by individuals to request access and release of data that MOD holds on them. These policies can be found on the MOD website[4]. Data collected from or about individuals is used by MOD to create anonymised, statistical datasets and these will be proactively published. Anonymised individual datasets are likely to be made available through a secure data lab which will allow users to manipulate individual level data but limit extraction to aggregated summarised data. Preliminary exploratory work is being initiated in 2012/13 with implementation likely to be mid 2014.

Satisfaction and Experience Data

23. This is data that provides customer insight about levels of satisfaction of public service users. Such data does not necessarily need to be captured directly by the organisation to which it relates. Satisfaction and experience data provides an evidence base for organisations to analyse and address the concerns of their users, customers or stakeholders.

24. While the MOD captures a large amount of internal customer satisfaction data, which will be released under the big data category, collection of satisfaction data from public service users is not widely gathered. This is due to the particular nature of public facing business MOD undertakes.

25. However, MOD will continue to review the data it holds and release any datasets that fall into this category. MOD does welcome feedback and comments from the public on various policies through consultations. A detailed list of consultations can be found on the Public Consultations section of the MOD website.

The creation of dynamic Information Markets

26. This is the development of an infrastructure or ecosystem that supports, allows and encourages data users to access the data being released by the Department.

[4] http://www.mod.uk/DefenceInternet/FreedomOfInformation
http://www.mod.uk/DefenceInternet/FreedomOfInformation/FOIContact/MinistryOfDefenceDataProtectionActSubjectAccessRequestForm.htm

27. MOD will be focusing particularly on those areas of the Department that have public facing roles in order to establish where and how such information markets can be developed. MOD has contacts with potential data developers through its ICT contracts and business partnerships. MOD will continue to review how these relationships can be leveraged in order to create dynamic information markets.

The continuous improvement of quality of data

28. There should be a presumption of high quality publication for all data that is created with public funds and government must be held to account for meeting that standard.

29. Our approach to data quality will recognise the trade-off between achieving high data quality and the cost of doing so and we will continue to seek feedback from data users and use this to make improvements to the data we publish.

30. Data quality standards will vary between different parts of the Department but will include:

- Accuracy of data
- Timeliness of data publication
- Compliance with recognised standards such as INSPIRE, the UK Statistics Authority and standards mandated by the Open Standards Board
- Provision of adequate metadata so that users can match data to their needs in terms of coverage and content
- Provision of metadata to support searching and discovery of data on the Web
- Ease of access to data including publication in formats enabling it to be easily understood and re-used by public and business.

31. MOD's short-term approach is to identify and release datasets quickly, provided they at least meet the one star quality rating. However improved accuracy will not be overlooked. Over time the focus will turn to driving up the quality of data in accordance with the 5 star quality rating and measurement system which is defined as follows:

★Available on the web (whatever format), but with an open licence

★★ As (one star) plus available as machine-readable structured data (e.g. Excel instead of image scan of a table)

★★★ As (two star) plus use non-proprietary format (e.g. CSV and XML)

★★★★ All the above plus, use open standards from the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) such as RDF and SPARQL21 to identify things, so that people can point at your data

★★★★★ All the above, plus link your data to other people's data to provide context

32. MOD's future approach will also consider:

- how to maximise the joining up of datasets through commonality of terms used when capturing and formatting data at input and publication stages;
- contextualisation and linkage of datasets.

Success measures

33. Measures of success will include:

- The number of datasets signposted on www.data.gov.uk
- The number of additional datasets published
- The proportion of datasets meeting 3/4/5-star ratings for open data
- Feedback about MOD's published data received on www.data.gov.uk

Governance

34. MOD's Chief Information Officer is the Department's Transparency champion. The Department is currently undergoing significant organisational change and re-structuring under the Defence Transformation Programme. We will ensure that the new structure provides an effective means of responding to and pro-actively developing a transparent approach to data publication. As part of this we intend to establish new governance arrangements for Transparency aligned to the new organisational structure.

Summary and Conclusion

35. The Open Data Strategy demonstrates our commitment to the Transparency agenda and the Public Data Principles. However, the size of MOD, and the diverse range of data we hold means that delivering this is a very ambitious undertaking. We have made positive first steps and through this Strategy we aim to build on our achievements to date such that Transparency becomes 'business as usual'. We are doing this at a time of great change within an MOD that is changing in shape and reducing considerably in size, so this is a challenging agenda. That said our key aims are:

- To make Transparency a key part of our everyday activities;
- To publish data in line with the Public Data Principles;
- To make datasets available for re-use, and in a re-usable format where reasonable and practical;
- To keep our data under review, so as to examine and improve the amount and frequency of data released into the public domain;
- To signpost all datasets released on www.data.gov.uk, the single online portal for central and local government data.

36. Feedback on our Open Data Strategy can be sent to:

Head of CIO-CI-Access
Ministry of Defence
1st floor, Zone N
Main Building
Whitehall
London, SW1A 2HB
CIO-TransparencyGroupMailbox@mod.uk

Annex A

List of MOD datasets to be released during period 1 April 2012 to 31 March 2014

Dataset Name	Description of data (including fields)	To be first published on[5]	Frequency of update[6]	Issued under the Open Government Licence (OGL) Yes or No
UK National limits	6 and 12 mile limits in SHP file format	TBA	Annually	Yes
Traffic Separation Schemes	Schemes for use by shipping in busy waterways, as issued by the International Maritime Organisation	TBA	Annually	Yes
Wrecks	Data on wrecks in UK waters	TBA	Annually	Yes

[5] Workshops are being held with data owners to ascertain the work required prior to dataset release in order to establish the release date

[6] The frequency of updates for MOD datasets are inline with current business practice

Accommodation Customer Satisfaction statistics	Includes Service accommodation helpdesk, customer satisfaction and complaints data	Q2 2012	Monthly	Yes
Bathymetry	Data of publicly funded bathymetry (underwater depth of the ocean floor) in UK waters	TBA	Ad Hoc; new data added as soon as available	Yes
Disposals	MOD disposals data	TBC	TBC	Yes
Byelaws	A list of MOD byelaws and their current status	TBC	When the status of a byelaw changes	Yes