

Open government data for climate action

Access to data generated by governments is fundamental to facilitate data-driven decision making, user-centred service design, and evidenced-based policies. For example, during the COVID-19 pandemic, open government data supported countries' crisis responses, proving that it can contribute to boosting resilience in the face of shocks and emergencies by enabling better communication and services to address new needs. The release of reliable, standardised and timely open data also offers opportunities to improve climate policy making and transparency around climate action, in line with the Paris Agreement's Enhanced Transparency Framework (ETF). It enables stakeholders from across the public, private and third sector to collectively monitor and respond to critical vulnerabilities related to climate change, using information drawn from, for example, open geospatial data, climatological observations, emissions, and pollution levels (Grinspan and Worker, 2020; UNFCCC, 2023).

The existence of a whole-of-government open data strategy or action plan is a critical step to steer public sector organisations in their general work on open government data. In turn, this can eventually help strengthen open data maturity to support climate action. 30 out of 36 OECD countries with data available (83%) have an open government strategy or action plan (Figure 9.7). Sweden and France are examples of countries that explicitly discuss provisions to address climate change in their open data strategy.

Additionally, most OECD countries have identified priority datasets to publish as open data to support climate action: 34 out of 35 OECD countries (97%) have identified a list of datasets to be released as open data for the purpose of monitoring or tackling climate change (Figure 9.8). Across OECD EU member states, the Implementing Regulation (C(2022)9562) to the EU Open Data Directive (2019/1024) defines a list of high-value datasets. The list ensures that the public data with the greatest socio-economic potential are made available free of charge for re-use with minimal legal and technical restrictions. The list includes data relevant to climate change, including habitats and biotopes, greenhouse gas emissions, climate financing, waste plants, and air quality. Other OECD non-EU countries have also defined priority datasets related to climate change for open data release, including Canada, Chile, Colombia and Korea. In Canada, the Directive on Open Government is being updated to clearly identify datasets that can support federal government departments in the timely release of high value data and information. Environmental protection and climate change has been identified as one of these categories. In Korea, the government regularly defines 'National Core Data', which they identify as data of high value and high demand to publish as open data. These currently include data related to climate action, such as air pollution emissions. In New Zealand, key datasets for resilience and climate change are also already available

as open data. These datasets include data on population, rivers and land.

Other countries, like Australia, Costa Rica, Japan and Mexico, regularly publish climate-related open data. For example, Australia makes a database of its emissions of each greenhouse gas broken down by year, industry sector and state and territory available as open data through application programming interfaces (APIs).

Methodology and definitions

Data were collected through the OECD Survey on Open Government Data 5.0, which was conducted between May and June 2022. Thirty-six OECD countries and three accession countries (Brazil, Croatia and Romania) participated. Respondents were delegates to the Expert Group on Open Government Data under the OECD Working Party on Senior Digital Government Officials (E-Leaders).

Open data arrangements refer to non-discriminatory data access and sharing arrangements, where data is machine readable and can be accessed and shared, free of charge, and used by anyone for any purpose subject, at most, to requirements that preserve integrity, provenance, attribution, and openness.

Application programming interfaces (APIs) are interfaces used by information systems to communicate with each other. These interfaces allow automated access to and exchange of data within the limits established by the information system operator.

Further reading

UNFCCC (2023), "Introduction to transparency", United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, <https://unfccc.int/Transparency>.

Grinspan, D. and J. Worker (2020), "Implementing open data strategies for climate action: Suggestions and lessons learned for government and civil society stakeholders", Working Paper, World Resources Institute, Washington DC, <https://doi.org/10.46830/wriwp.19.00093>.

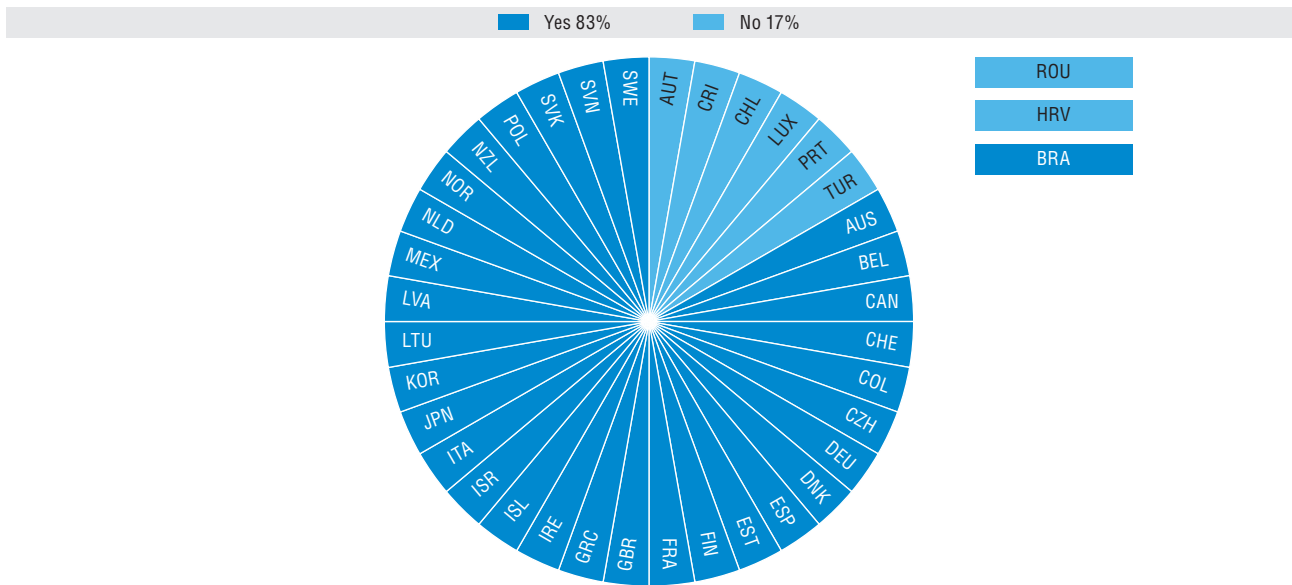
European Union (2019), Directive (EU) 2019/1024 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 June 2019 on open data and the re-use of public sector information, <http://data.europa.eu/eli/dir/2019/1024/oj>.

Figure notes

9.7. Data are not available for the United States and Hungary.

9.8. Data are not available for the United Kingdom, the United States and Hungary.

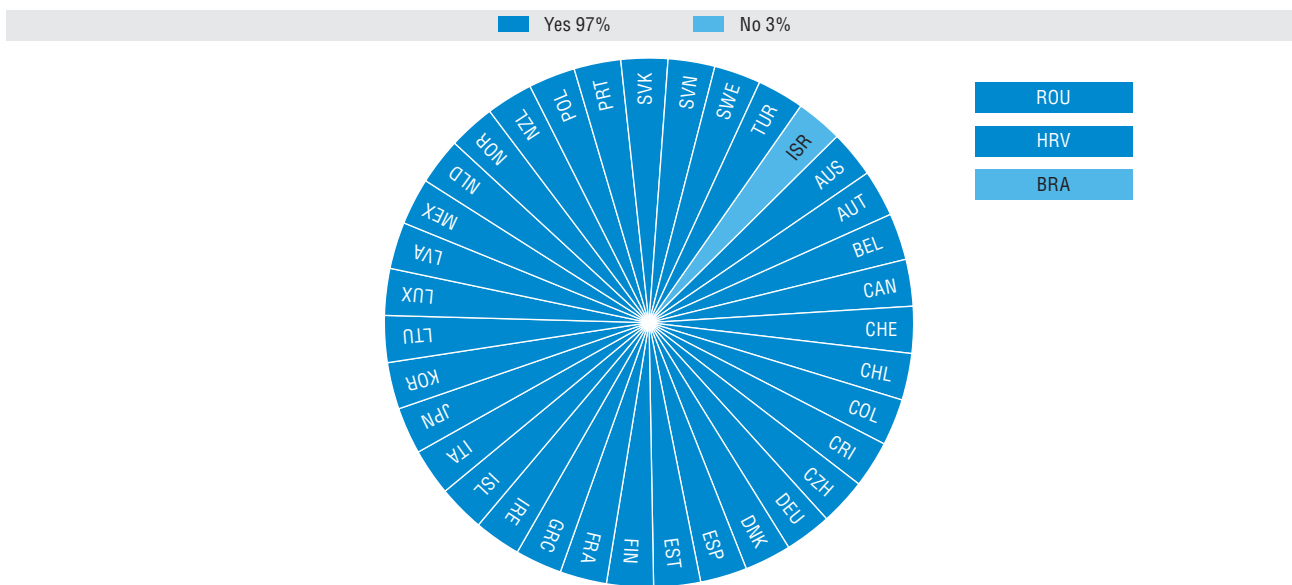
9.7. Availability of an open government data strategy or action plan, 2022



Source: OECD (2022), Survey on Open Government Data 5.0.

StatLink <https://stat.link/a27wpk>

9.8. Priority datasets identified for open data release to support climate action, 2022



Source: OECD (2022), Survey on Open Government Data 5.0.

StatLink <https://stat.link/o9bl76>



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