

Ministry of Finance - First Czech Ministry to publish its Open Data

Submitted on 03 Feb 2015 by Michal Kuban

Two weeks ago, Lukáš Wagenknecht (Czech First Deputy Minister of Finance) announced that the [Ministry of Finance](#) had become the first Czech ministry to systematically publish its information in an Open Data format.

For those purposes, the [Open Data portal](#) was launched. The portal, which runs on the DRUPAL platform and uses modules of DKAN, now provides datasets from various departments of the ministry. For instance, it includes tax figures, fiscal summaries, budget deficits, tax reliefs, ministerial invoices from 2010-2014, the lists of permits for gaming machines, the running costs of the ministry from 2010-2014, and state budget for 2015. Data is available in XLS and CSV formats.

For developers who want to use the data to build their own applications, metadata is also available in JSON and RDF. Some datasets are still only available in PDF format, although portal administrators claim that during January and February all these datasets will be published in XLS and CSV.

The number of datasets will be doubled during 2015 according to Deputy Minister Wagenknecht. The main analysis of datasets and procedure was done by adviser [Jiří Skuhrovec](#), head of the Centre for Applied Economics in the Czech Republic, and by the [Open Data Forum](#), an expert platform of the [Otakar Motejl Fund](#), [Charles University](#) and the [University of Economics](#).

The entire process of opening up the Ministry of Finance took only 4 months to process the analysis of data. The most difficult part was to analyse which departments deal with which type of datasets and find the way of publishing through various type of IT departments systems. The open data community who came up with suggestions of which datasets to publish have played a big role. Other suggestions were also collected from universities, business entrepreneurs, non-governmental organisations and requests from citizens via the Freedom of Information Act. People are still now able to contact the portal to make suggestions for new datasets and give feedback about quality of available datasets.

Within the first few hours of launching the portal, public interest was so huge that it initially caused some servers to collapse.

Unfortunately, some of the published datasets are not such good quality. For instance, some of the information on the contracting authority is missing in the dataset of contracts.

The publication of the first datasets attracted a great deal of media attention, which saw The Ministry of Finance being covered in all major media outlets in the Czech Republic. Some representatives from other ministries also expressed their interest, including the Ministry of Transport.

To sum up, this is a big step for open data in the Czech Republic, since the imprint can have real impact on the entire process of opening data. The Ministry of Finance is willing to offer their know-how, process and its open data outlines to other ministries. Hence, this effort and experience must be applied to another ministries to follow the example of the Ministry of Finance.