

Open Data Guidelines in the Czech Republic

Submitted on 30 Apr 2015 by Michal Kuban

In the middle of April, the pilot version of the [Czech National Open Data Catalogue](#) was launched. After two years of waiting, Czech state institutions and local municipalities now have their own space where they can put their own open data.

Consequently, they do not need to use their own local open data catalogues. Now they can send only metadata regarding the source, structure and description of their own datasets to be published in the National Open Data Catalogue.

Now that Czech state institutions and local authorities have determined WHERE to put their datasets, the questions of HOW and WHAT have been raised. Fortunately, the solution regarding standards, structure, metadata, description as well as general guidelines and technical schemes could be set to appear soon.

In February 2015, the Czech Ministry of the Interior launched a new open data project. The goal of this project is to create standards and define the procedure for publishing open data by public institutions in the Czech Republic.

The most important outcome of the project will be the so called “Sample of Publication Plans” which will be designed for the purposes and utilization of 4 different kinds of institutions. A sample publication will guide an institution through the publication process, such as:

- A selection of datasets that should be published as open data by the institutions (and which of these published datasets should be presented to the public)
- A selection of formats and structure of the datasets
- Licences and legal conditions of the datasets
- Cataloguing the datasets and keeping them up to date

The sample publication plans will reflect the best practices in publishing open data and will be based on existing methodologies that have been created by open data communities across Europe. Some of the publication plans and methodology will be inspired from [COMSODE Project](#). The Ministry of the Interior of the Czech Republic will then authorize those samples and models for publication. The outcomes of the project will be integrated into Czech legislation.

The Sample Publication Plans will be created for 4 types of Czech institutions, since each has different needs and capacities. The institutions are: ministries, other central government institutions, regional governmental authorities, and municipal authorities.

For instance, the Sample Publication Plan for regional and municipal authorities will try to classify datasets, which generally appear across all regions and municipalities. Each regional and municipal authority can choose from the list of recommended datasets where the benefits and risks associated with publication will be described, for example, a dataset with the locations of towed cars or public toilets or public containers for recycling. All municipalities should maintain such a dataset and the Sample Publication Plan would recommend how to handle its disclosure. Furthermore, the value and usability of such a dataset decreases when each municipality creates its own structure of datasets, data fields. Hence, the Sample Publication Plan will also provide the basic required structure of such a dataset, which can then be individually extended by each municipality if

necessary. So please, if you have ideas, tips regarding sample of data scheme, structure of dataset which is frequently used in your area, do not hesitate to [contact me](#).

By using such guidelines, each institution will be able to conduct its own way of publishing open data. Before this project, there has not been any such unifying guidelines and thus it can be a crucial part for the activation of an open data publication process in the Czech Republic. Based on our experience, many Czech institutions just put some (more or less) machine-readable data files on their web. Although, this can be viewed as a good starting point, it would not be sustainable in the long term. Furthermore, there is a lack of proper legal licences. Hence, this lack of legal strengthening of open data in the Czech legal system may cause a lot of problems in the near future.

This open data project could help to give open data in the Czech Republic a clear, unified technical and legal framework and thus we can then focus on the issues connected to the re-use of such information. However, the active re-use of public sector information for economic and social purposes may be even harder than this creation of a theoretical framework, but it will then finally show what open data can really mean.