



Data policy for local government air quality monitoring

Digital information, or 'data', is a local government asset, and must be treated as such. Data can be purchased, leased, or created, and each of these cases requires the owner/ user to understand their obligations and responsibilities associated with this data. Much like procurement policies or workplace health and safety policies, a local government needs guiding principles regarding the acquisition, administration, use, and disposal of data.

Data is meaningful only when it is put to good use, and this often requires sharing the data in some form. Air quality data gathering, monitoring, and analysis will result in a lot of data. This data will be shared in several forms with several partners and stakeholders. Some of the data will likely be shared with the public, while other more detailed data will be shared with state agencies, other local governments, and partners.

A data policy is a very high-level statement that sets out the local government's desire to share data appropriately and safely. Policies are reviewed and approved by elected local government officials and senior operational executives. Typically, a policy would declare the local government's desire to make appropriate data available to the public, while taking great care to protect privacy, personal information, and commercially sensitive details.

A DATA POLICY PROVIDES THE FOUNDATION THAT SHAPES A LOCAL GOVERNMENT'S APPROACH TO SHARING DATA.

Key data policy concepts

A useful data policy should include the following:



Policy objective and scope

A declaration of intent to share data effectively, and to make data available that is safe to share. The policy should state if it covers all of the organisation's data, or only a specific project's data.



Policy statement

A simple statement that embodies the overall organisation's objective to openly share as much data as is practical and ethical.



Data sharing goals

Goals reflect what the organisation expects to achieve through the sharing of data (preferably linked to a local government's overall vision), and a recognition that in the future, data and data sharing increasing become part of everyday local government operations.



Stakeholder engagement

Data sharing is a two-way process. It is vital that a local government includes citizens and stakeholders throughout the data sharing process. Identify who the key stakeholders are, and how they will be engaged.



Roles and responsibilities

Identify who within a local government is responsible for enforcing and updating the policy. As data is often a new area of responsibility, it is vital that ownership of the data sharing policy is well-understood within the organisation, and externally by partners and other stakeholders.



Policy implementation

A description of the operational procedures, process, and templates required to deploy and implement the policy.

Further reading

This factsheet provides a high-level introduction to data policy for local governments. For further detail and in-depth practical guidance on this topic, please refer to the OPENAIR Best Practice Guide chapters *Data policy for local government air quality monitoring*, and *Sharing air quality data*.

The data.nsw.gov.au website also provides resources on data policy, data sharing and open data, related to the NSW Government data policy framework.

FIND OUT MORE AND ACCESS OPENAIR RESOURCES

This factsheet is part of a suite of resources designed to support local government action on air quality through the use of smart low-cost sensing technologies. It is the first Australian project of its kind. Check the project website for resources and updates on post project collaborations: www.openair.org.au

