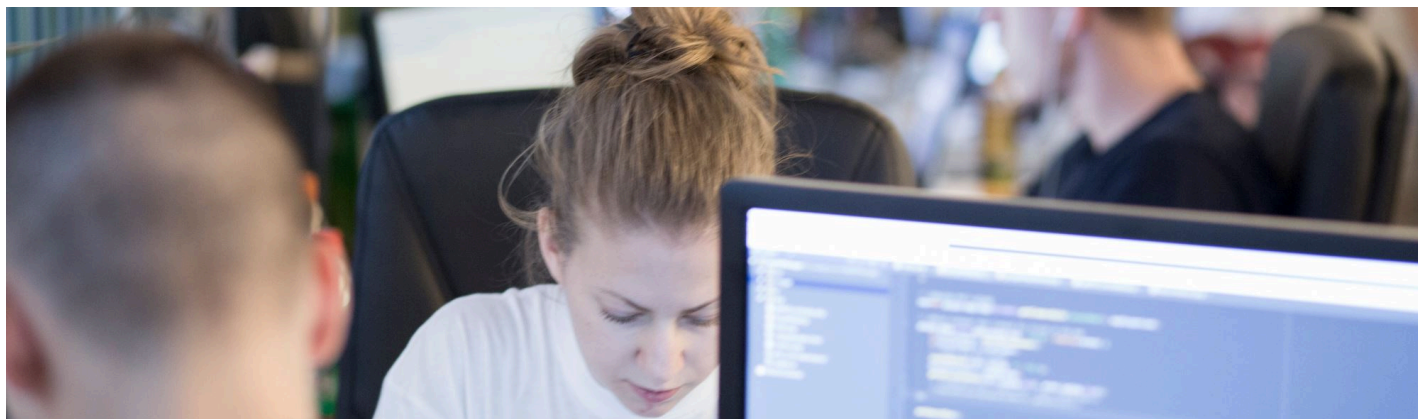


# REGIONAL BRIEF

Governance and Peacebuilding



Empowered lives.  
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## OPEN DATA FOR INCLUSIVE GOVERNANCE

Countries and territories in Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) are making important efforts to improve their governance record. Open data is key to strengthening transparency and accountability, and preventing corruption. It is also an essential tool for advancing the 2030 Development Agenda.

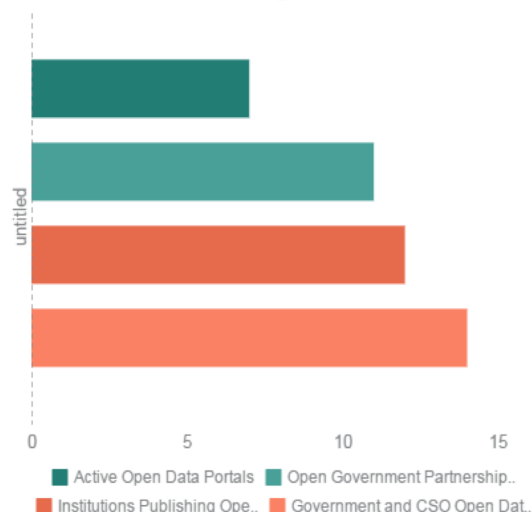
New technologies are leading to an exponential increase in the volume and types of data available, creating unprecedented possibilities for informing and transforming societies. From that perspective, opening up government data can help empower and engage citizens, accelerate economic growth and innovation, and improve the efficiency and effectiveness of public institutions.

Timely, reliable and diverse data from different sources is key to measuring progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This is especially true for SDG 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions) which includes a specific indicator for measuring access to public information and open data.

Still, lack of investment, support and knowledge will further the divide between the data-rich and data-poor countries, as well as data literate and illiterate communities within societies.

Innovation and new technologies should be harnessed to improve the availability and quality of data, as well as ensure the visibility of the most vulnerable groups.

## Open Data and Open Government in the Region



The ECIS region is showing increasing interest in e-governance and one-stop-shops. It has become a trailblazer in using data – both government and citizen-generated – to increase transparency, accountability and improve public services.

So far, 11 countries have made Open Government Partnership (OGP) action plans, which symbolizes a significant commitment to becoming accountable and transparent governments. Others are also exploring ways of opening data, not only to address public policy problems, such as corruption in public procurement, but also to tap into collective knowledge and skills of citizens for inclusive governance and betterment of society.

## What is Open Data?

Open data is data that can be freely used, re-used and redistributed by anyone - subject only, at most, to the requirement to attribute and share alike.

In order to rate the quality of data, Sir Tim Berners-Lee developed a five-step process of deploying an open data system. Making the information available online merits only one star, whereas its availability in a structured format is worth two. When available in a non-proprietary format, the data earns three stars, while the ability to use Uniform Resource Identifier to be able to point at the data is rated four. Finally, when data is readily linked to context, it is considered a five-star source.

Opening data removes the obstacles for communication and information-sharing within and between institutions. This leads to the improvement of public service delivery and more effective resource allocation. From finding open pharmacies to avoiding unsafe areas, open data can also help communities at the city level, to understand and interact better with urban environment.

## Regional Initiatives

UNDP in ECIS manages the Transformative Governance and Finance Facility, a regional project funded by the Ministry of Finance of the Slovak Republic and the Open Data in Europe and Central Asia (ODECA) network, a regional node of the Open Data for Development.

Jointly, these efforts aim to promote open data, support building bridges of collaboration between governments and civil society, and encourage exchange of knowledge and experiences. In doing so, they seek to advance the agenda of SDGs through the use of open data initiatives.

Experience so far suggests that open data supporters in the region share similar challenges: political buy-in, access to relevant, timely and good quality data, and growing the ecosystem of re-users. Through its work with ODECA and partners, UNDP is working to provide support through the following initiatives:

- Capability building for institutions in good practices, standardization, management and re-use of open data,
- Tailored trainings and master classes for representatives of governments, civil society and civic groups,
- Regional data journalism courses for civil society and media,
- Knowledge-sharing on good practices and lessons learned within and beyond the region.

## Transformative Governance and Finance Facility

The overall goal of the project is to support partner societies in the region in harnessing the data revolution and alternative financing for improved governance and sustainable development. To do so, TGFF will support counterparts in:

- **Designing and implementing** country-level interventions that improve accountability, transparency and public service delivery, through data and civic engagement.
- **Tapping into collective knowledge and skills** of citizens at the country level to address development challenges, especially those affecting the most vulnerable groups of society.
- **Offering online and offline opportunities** for regional learning, collaboration and experience sharing.
- **Using alternative finance mechanisms** to support public policy and public service delivery.

## Key Achievements

UNDP support for open data and government includes:

- In **Kyrgyzstan, Serbia, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan**, governments have developed plans and endorsed regulations for their open data initiatives.
- **Kazakhstan** has adopted a new law on Access to Information, making it eligible for OGP.
- Many institutions in **Kosovo\*** have increased transparency and curbed the space for corruption in public tendering at the local level, and improved waste management services leading to cleaner cities.
- In **Ukraine**, opening budget data has increased transparency in spending at local levels.
- The government of **Uzbekistan** has opened over 600 datasets.
- A sub-regional open data challenge for the Western Balkans, **Ministry of Data**, resulted in an app simplifying and comparing the use of public funds.
- In **Serbia**, a hackathon produced an innovative set of solutions for daily issues of citizens, ranging from road safety to availability of different medicines in pharmacies.

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\*References to Kosovo in this document shall be understood to be in the context of Security Council Resolution 1244 (1999).