

Call for proposals

Regional Coordination of the Africa Open Data Network

The Open Data for Development Network (OD4D) is pleased to announce an Open Call for Proposals from organizations interested in coordinating the Africa Open Data Network (AODN), a planned regional hub.

Call Issued: 13th July 2016

Deadline for submission of proposals: 15 August 2016

Submissions by email: contact@od4d.com

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Open Data for Development

Open Data for Development (OD4D) is a global partnership to advance the creation of locally-driven and sustainable open data ecosystems around the world. Open Data for Development works with leading open data organizations to create knowledge and inform policies, standards, innovation and research around the world.

Funding for this multi-donor partnership is provided by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), the World Bank, Global Affairs Canada and United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID).

This call was developed jointly by IDRC and the Web Foundation as part of the OD4D network and in consultation with a wider network of African researchers and institutions actively working in Open Data in Africa, first at the [Africa Open Data Conference](#) and OGP Regional Meeting ([draft consultation document](#)).

This project will actively seek collaboration with existing and emerging initiatives with similar goals and interests and will try to leverage synergies between them.



Rationale for the Creation of an Africa Open Data Network

The [data revolution](#) is rapidly emerging in Africa. As governments agreed on the sustainable development goals, there is global attention on Africa as a continent and great demand for innovation that can help on SDGs implementation and monitoring. The growing importance and scope of the Open Government Partnership (OGP) in Africa is helping to get national and subnational governments to commit to open data initiatives. In addition, open data is

becoming a key issue for sub-national governments keen to engage the emerging African entrepreneurs to deliver better services to its citizens.

The '[High-Level Conference on Data Revolution in Africa](#)', held in Addis Ababa in March 2015 helped to bring together a range of African civil society organisations, open data advocates and technology pioneers. Together with other data communities, the conference resulted in the '[Africa Data Consensus](#)'. Stating that data should be 'open by default, the Africa Data Consensus contains a powerful vision of "Data for Africa, by Africa"'.

To build a prosperous, socially just world we need a transparent, accountable, and participatory society. Opening up decision making to all citizens, enabling collaboration around key social challenges, and providing effective checks on power requires citizens to be able to access and have the capacity to understand and engage with data and information affecting their daily lives.

However, the emerging open data community in Africa still lacks local research capacity, resulting in limited learning from existing experiences, wasteful duplication and excessive dependence on the agenda of external actors. There are huge gaps that exists in the ecosystem. Diverse communities working in different levels and domains of Open Data in the continent are barely aware of others' engagements and activities in the domain. Existing collaborations are national, regional or only tied to donor-led initiatives.

Despite the enthusiasm of a growing number of actors, there are challenges in terms of allocation of resources and time to advance collective ideas and projects. This is partly due to the fact that individual non-governmental organisations are sometimes working only on intra-national issues. For example, through the Ebola data crises, most cross border activities were initiated and carried out by donor-supported and donor-driven alliances.

Many African-led initiatives for setting its own agenda are still very young and do not have a track record to demonstrate impact. Key among these are the Africa Open Data Conference, the Africa Data Report, Code for Africa, the diverse Openstreetmap initiatives and the Civil Society platform of the Open Government Partnership. Being mostly less than five years in

existence and mostly with limited reach, these initiatives are now looking forward to more engagement from continental stakeholders for more entrenched and sustainable impact.

Civic engagement with governments is still low and more African leadership is critically needed in the domain. Policy process in many countries are not engaging civil society stakeholders effectively, and key data initiatives are not ensuring active civil society-government collaboration. In order to support a regional vision set out by the Africa Data Consensus, stakeholders need supporting evidence-based policies and innovations across the continent' - an **Africa-led research network that informs emerging communities and initiatives**. To this end, we are seeking to catalyze a more vibrant, viable and multi-stakeholder data ecosystem in Africa.

Key Objectives for the Africa Open Data Network

The Open Data for Development (OD4D) Network is proposing the creation of an Africa Open Data Network to serve as a knowledge hub: amplifying the impact of open data in Africa, and powered by a connected and collaborating network of actors. This African-based initiative will support the sharing of emerging evidence among diverse data actors, stakeholders, communities and enthusiasts, mobilizing them for a greater impact. This impact will be seen in the engagement of actors in the demand, production, and use of data. It will also be evident in the capacity of the actors themselves to pursue data-driven sustainable development.

The long-term objective of the ***Africa Open Data Network*** is to amplify the impact of the open data initiatives taking place in the African continent.

This will be achieved based on the following specific objectives:

- Increase the awareness of effective Open Data Innovations in Africa at all levels, promoting and supporting related initiatives, events and convenings;
- Support and scale activities among non-governmental actors and stakeholders in Africa Open Data to increase the Open Data capacity of civil society, businesses and governments;
- Promote the adoption of open data principles, practices, policies and viable partnerships among all stakeholders;

- Link research with advocates, implementers, governments, civil society, communities, and private sector to increase the effectiveness of research results in informed policy decision making;
- Collaborate towards policies, and strategies for the inclusion of Open Data as catalyst and prime component of the Sustainable Development Goals, with strong emphasis on the role of Open Data in economic rights, benefits, and growth; and
- Support and elevate existing work and convening longstanding actors from the continent to advance practices and policies that are developed and sustained locally.

The Africa Open Data Network will be a virtual, networked structure of actors, acting as a network for supporting; promoting, growing communities and creating linkages around Open Data activities in Africa. This hub builds on similar OD4D initiatives in Latin America, the Caribbean, Asia and East Europe, while addressing the specific opportunities and challenges in the African continent. During its initial phase, Network members will be built from actors and potential champion governments as well as new projects on engagement, research, innovation and capacity building.

Background on the OD4D network in Africa

OD4D's work in Africa started in 2012, when the Web Foundation and IDRC began to develop a [global research network](#) to explore the emerging impacts of open data in developing countries (via the [ODDC project](#)). ODDC funded a variety of research projects in Africa, including [Understanding the impacts of Kenya open data applications and services](#) (iHUB), [The use of open data in the governance of South African higher education](#) (University of Cape Town), [Investigating the Impact of Kenya's Open Data Initiative on Marginalized Communities](#) (JHC), [How open data could contribute to poverty eradication in Kenya and Uganda](#) (DRT) and [Taking Stock of the Effectiveness and Efficiency of Open Data Initiatives in Sierra Leone](#) (SDI).

OD4D's work in Africa expanded in 2015 when the IDRC-funded Open Data for Development program merged with the World Bank's Partnership for Open Data (POD), creating one coordinated mechanism to provide open data support that soon attracted other donors. The Open Knowledge Foundation (OK) and the Open Data Institute (ODI) began to advance a number of OD4D-funded projects in the region. In Africa, ODI provided direct technical assistance to Burkina Faso and Tanzania. Open Knowledge Foundation expanded

the School of Data project, and also improved its Open Data Index to respond to local needs in coordination with Code for Africa. Finally, the Web Foundation's Open Data Barometer (Barometer) uses in-country researchers across the world. Of the eighty-six countries studied for the last edition of the Barometer, at least 20 of these are in Africa. This network of researchers provide a valuable human resource for the Network.

In consultation with the broad international community, the Open Data Programme (OD4D) developed a global program based on its grounded work around the world. OD4D aims to promote increased transparency and accountability of governments, enhanced innovation, service delivery and economic inclusion. The model has been influenced by experiences in Latin America, Asia and Africa. (see [OD4D Annual Report](#) for more details).

A key part of the OD4D workplan for 2015-2020 is to expand on the existing model of building regional initiatives that support regional coordination to address the needs of specific contexts. This model has been successfully implemented in Latin America (ILDA), the Caribbean (the Caribbean Open Institute) and in Eastern Europe and Central Asia (ODECA). These regional initiatives play a central role in implementing work, linking goals across continents, and sharing learning.

The Africa Open Data Network will build on this existing work developed by OD4D partners, creating linkages with the Open Data community in Africa.

Funding scope and duration

As a result of this call, we expect to issue a grant of up to USD\$100,000 for an initial phase of the activities of the AODN. For this initial phase, the suggested activities include:

- To review past and on-going work developed by the OD4D network in Africa.
- Together with OD4D partners, documenting significant outcomes and identifying future priorities for the program in Africa
- To develop and implement a communication strategy to disseminate African research products
- To strengthen the support the Africa Open Data community of practice;

The duration of this initial grant should not exceed 9 months, and it should lead to the development of a long term proposal for the network, in consultation with OD stakeholders in

Africa. In this initial phase, the focus will be in English-speaking Africa. Additional hubs are planned for the MENA region and Francophone Africa.

Submission process

- Applications must be submitted by no later than 15 August, 23:59 EDT.
- Applications must be submitted in English
- Applications received after the deadline will not be considered

Proposals should be submitted by e-mail to contact@od4d.com. As host of the OD4D program, IDRC will be responsible for managing the grant to the host of the Africa Open Data Network.

Format and requirements

The proposals submitted via applications should be concise and presented in single-spaced, Arial point 12-font text, with a maximum length of up to 8 pages (not including abstract and annexes).

The proposal should include the following items:

- A brief description of the current state of open data in Africa and the need for an African-led open data network;
- The recent experience of the proponent organization in open data research in Africa;
- Current engagement in open data activities (e.g. awareness raising, capacity building, technical assistance etc.) and African regional processes;
- Description on how the proponent would approach this assignment;
- Preliminary schedule; and
- Tentative budget.
- Annexes:
 - Short one-page CV of the proposed team member(s)
 - List any previous projects that demonstrate your relevant skills and experience (500 words)
- Tentative budgets should include projected expenses per budget category (as per [IDRC eligible expenses](#)) including: personnel, consultants, evaluation, equipment, international travel, research expenses (include funds provided to any third-party organizations), indirect project costs, financial contribution by other donors, estimated

local contribution to project and other supporting funds and in-kind contributions such as salaries of regular staff, equipment, infrastructure and overhead costs.

Eligibility criteria

Organizations based in all parts of the African continent can in principle qualify for support. Applicant organizations are considered to be those that have legal corporate registration in an eligible country.

The primary considerations in selecting a host will be the quality of the proposal and experience of the proponent team in the range of areas of the open data for development program.

The committee will also evaluate the experience of the proponent organization in building communities in Africa, and other operational considerations, including the institutional capacity to monitor research activities and capacity to exercise proper stewardship of its resources.

Timeline

Estimated duration: 9 months starting in September 2016

- Call opens: July 15
- Call closes: August 15
- Estimated announcement of the results: September 15
- Formal Launch Date: 1 October (at the International Open Data Conference)

Permission for use and disclosure of information

All personal information collected by will only be used to review applications and to the development of the grant. By way of submitting an application under this Call, the applicant consents to the disclosure of the documents submitted by the applicant to the reviewers involved in the selection process, both within IDRC and externally. The applicant further consents to the disclosure of the name of the applicant and the name of the project leader in any announcement of selected proposals.

The deliverables produced by the approved proposals over time will be made available under open and standard licenses.

OD4D Partners

- International Development Research Centre
- Web Foundation
- The Open Data Charter
- Open Data Institute
- Open Knowledge
- UNDP - United Nations Development Programme

OD4D is a partnership funded by:

