

GODAN Action Webinar Notes

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Strategies for Collaborations for Opening Data in Agriculture

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Introduction

- GODAN is a network of over 600 partners who all advocate for open data in agriculture and nutrition.
- Each partner has unique challenges, needs, strategic approaches, and partnership priorities.
- The key points are from my experience with the GODAN partner base and from the projects I am working on specifically for the GODAN Secretariat.

Webinar Structure:=

- stakeholder groups
- open data strategies and stakeholder involvement
- apply them in a GODAN context.

Stakeholder Groups

- GODAN uses the word “partner” and when we talk about convincing others about open data, we talk about “audiences”.
- when we use the word stakeholder, we mean organizations or individuals who have data that others need or are seeking benefits from open data.

Within the GODAN partner network, partners (stakeholders) divided into the following groups.

- Government
- Industry (Private Sector)
- NGOs (Civil Society)
- Foundations/Donors
- Universities/Research Institutions

Each of these sectors have different needs, and challenges.

- Each of these sectors can be sub-divided into many different sections also, each of which have their individual needs and challenges
- They should all want to produce a common goal.
- In the example here, if you have only one of any of the representatives, you are missing out on a potentially important stakeholder. Just because you have “someone from

government” involved, doesn’t mean they necessarily represent the entirety of the government’s opinions, needs, goals and challenges.

- It is very important to consider within a sector in addition to cross sector collaborations.
- You can quickly run into the problem of “everyone is important and must be included”, if you have a specific goal of which a certain sector needs to be involved, carefully consider exactly who from the sector or organization is the best person.

Understanding what you are trying to achieve.

- To start out on creating an open data strategy, you and your organization must have a clear understanding and agreement on what you are trying to achieve.
- What do you hope for in the short and long term? Are you trying to create a strategy to open up data because of a policy that has already been created or are you creating a new policy? What data do you want? Do you want the data to be open to make a certain decision, or to perform a specific research project, or should the data be open for transparency and accountability?
- Once you know your own goals you can
 - More easily discuss with other stakeholder groups and it is easier to determine whose voice is necessary in the space as well
 - See what success looks like and determine your measurements of impact, indicators of success and the sustainability of the goal. If you are a project that depends on external funding, this will help you guide the project in the right direction and be realistic about achieving your success indicators.
 - Start to identify who has the power to make the decisions or who has the power to influence that person. This will help you begin to identify further stakeholders who potentially have the power to help push your strategy forward, and again where having an explicit goal helps.
- Your goal doesn’t necessarily need to be a specific data question, it can be around the decisions that you want to make with that data or the agriculture and nutrition outcomes you’re hoping for.

Look behind goals of organizations to see where the underlying open data question is.

- If you are trying to engage with large organizations, identify the underlying open data question in their goals.
- It is very difficult to convince a large organization to obtain a completely new goal, so linking to a goal they already have is another option.
- Just because a stakeholder or audience isn’t asking an explicitly data focused question, doesn’t mean they shouldn’t be involved in the open data conversation to help them achieve their goals.

Understanding user needs

- Open data is meant to benefit everyone and the overarching goal should be to improve lives.
- Whether you are developing a policy, a training, releasing datasets, or working in open data advocacy, there is always an end user who you are expecting to follow your policy, participate in your training, use your datasets or be receptive to your advocacy. You must make sure you identify your end user, work with them and understand their needs each step of the way.
- No policy or open data strategy can be successful without deeply understanding how the data or policy will be used. There are countless stories of fantastic ideas and goals that were not as successful as they could have been because they did not engage their users.

How to get people to release the data?

- Having a joint common goal is a useful step for beginning to open and share data. If you can find out how specifically a certain stakeholder, whether it be an organization or a person can benefit from the data being open, this can increase the likelihood that they will open their data.
- Trust is a massive component of convincing people to share their data.
 - Paper from Makerere University in Uganda about information quality, sharing, and usage in farmer organizations in Uganda. The main result of the paper is that information and data quality, sharing and usage of information all increased due to trust among organizations and individuals.
- Trust also has an aspect of data responsibility. Opening data responsibly means that open data does not result in a power imbalance amongst stakeholders.
 - GODAN's data responsibility paper

FAIR Principles

- GODAN use the FAIR Principle to define what open data means.
- FAIR stands for Findable, Accessible, Interoperable and Reusable
- When creating a policy, or an open data strategy, or releasing datasets it should comply with and encourage all aspects of the FAIR principle.

How do you get a policy in place? Where to start?

- The Open Data Institute's "how to write a good open data policy" document is an excellent resource for creating an open data policy.
- The ODI also has a specific template for data ethics, called the Ethics Canvas, which can help you and your stakeholders to determine the potential ethics considerations associated with your open data strategy or goal. By carefully completing the ethics

canvas, you may see what future stakeholders must be engaged and considerations that must be applied.

Examples from GODAN

GODAN Partner Network

- GODAN is an advocacy organization and the explicit goal of GODAN is to convince the world that open data for agriculture and nutrition is important.
- We focus on the audience that isn't already convinced about open data or hasn't heard of it, and through working with our partners, show tools and success stories to help achieve that overarching goal.
- GODAN's approach for the partner network is through that of inclusivity. Everyone has a story to share, everyone should be an advocate for open data in agriculture and nutrition, everyone's voice should be heard because everyone has something to gain from the data being open.
- To convince large organizations that open data is important, GODAN is showing that large numbers of people globally are seeking data and opening data which may help to influence at the high level.

Donors – donor open data policy and practice document

- GODAN has just released a report in October 2017 on open data policy and practice from three donors of jointly agricultural programmes, USAID, DFID, and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.
- GODAN was approached with a question: We as donors have open access policies, but we don't know how the policy is used and how effective the policies are. We need evidence to justify strengthening the policy and investing in building capacity both within the donor organization and with implementing partners.
- The users of the final result, the implementing partners and the donors were kept in the loop and asked their needs throughout the process.
- The final results of the paper was an analysis of the policies and how they could be strengthened. We used the Open Data Institute's How to write a good open data policy template to show where the strengths and weaknesses of the policy were.
- Now we are hoping to get more donors involved to hopefully see wider change towards better open data policy in the foundation and donor space.

Universities – PUSH project

- GODAN is also working on a project with PUSH to analyze university open data policy.
- PUSH is a consortium of universities from around the world that have the collective mission to end hunger and poverty, both locally and globally.

- The project seeks to understand universities' views in terms of obstacles and opportunities in advancing open data.

The explicit goals are to identify issues and obstacles universities must address in developing university policies, procedures, and platforms for open access and open data;

- Identify best practices and guidelines (as well as cautionary lessons learned) for implementing open access and open data systems;
- Create a set of open data tools, policy and practice guidelines, templates and best practice examples that can be housed on the GODAN web site as a resource for academia;
- We are primarily working with university stakeholders but this is a good example of showing where there are many perspectives, even within universities.
- We are speaking with librarians, researchers, grant writers, heads of institutes, IT experts. Etc.
- We are working with them as both informants to our project and users who may use open data tools and policy and practice guidelines.

Governments - Agriculture Open Up Guide

- GODAN has been working on the agriculture open-up guide (previously known as the ag pack) which aims to help governments to open up their data and create policies.
- Open Data Charter
- The justification for a government open up guide for agriculture is that achieving SDG2 (food security through sustainable agriculture) is no simple task, and it means sustainably increasing agricultural productivity, while creating more resilient food systems, it also means shaping more accessible and equitable food markets, and in order to meet these challenges, growing volumes of data generated by governments must be organized.
- Currently, critical datasets that governments currently own could be used to accelerate innovation and change but are often inaccessible and existing efforts to share and publish data are not always joined up for maximum impact, making open data work for agriculture requires a shared agenda across governments and ministries.
- The first version was trying to speak to too many audiences at the same time. We were trying to speak to governments as a whole, rather than recognizing that each ministry has different level of open data acceptance and technical knowledge.
- In order to overcome this, we reorganized our goals, audiences and approaches.

We focus on three questions in our resource.

1. **Why** is open data important to realize SDG2? What should be the role of governments in regards publishing open data for agriculture?

2. **What** data is needed to catalyze sustainable agricultural production in support of SDG2?
And
3. **How** to implement an open data strategy to realize impact with data on SDG2?

Nairobi Declaration

- In July 2017, GODAN hosted a conference together with the Government of Kenya and 15 African ministers including from South Africa, Congo, Sudan, Kenya, Uganda, Sierra Leone, Rwanda and Ghana.
- The conference was initiated because of the joint goals of the ministers: to achieve sustainable agriculture, food security, and protect smallholder farmers. This is an example of the government committing to open data to achieve a goal that already exists.
- The Conference saw over 800 high level participants attend from 100 countries, private sector, academia, think-tanks, civil society, youth organisations, research networks and development practitioners, the United Nations and multilateral institutions. It was stated in the declaration how essential the other sector participation was to help achieve the joint government's goal.
- This example shows how the goal was outlined, the declaration explicitly shows their goals and the stakeholders that should be involved so it's easier to understand which data needs to be opened, which stakeholders should be involved and how to create a strategy.