



EVALUATION OF THE OPEN DATA FOR DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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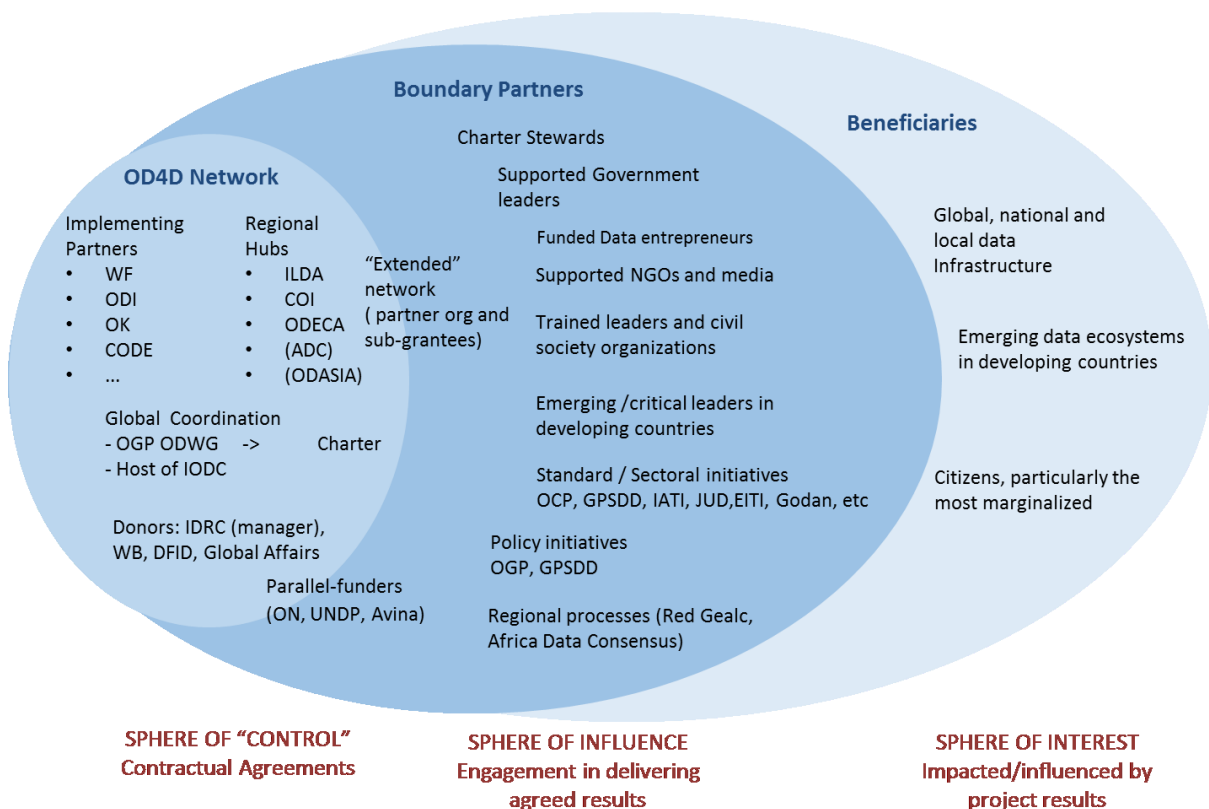
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Open Data for Development (OD4D) program is a global partnership to drive up both the availability of quality open data as well as its use by actors in government, civil society and the business sector, in order to advance public interests and improve peoples’ lives. The evaluation assessed the first phase of the program, extending from January 2015 until March 2017, funded by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), the World Bank, Global Affairs Canada, and the UK’s Department for International Development (DFID). During this time, the OD4D program supported the work of over 50 organizations from all continents on open data-related policies, standards, datasets, innovations and research. The evaluation also included the work of the Partnership on Open Data (POD), carried out by the Open Data Institute (ODI) and Open Knowledge International (OKI) from September 2013 until December 2014, and funded by the World Bank. The POD merged into the OD4D program in 2015.

The OD4D ecosystem comprises a large and diverse set of actors and initiatives, as represented by the figure below.

Open Data for Development – Boundary Partners



The evaluation focuses on both accountability and learning. The primary intention of the evaluation is to provide accountability to the program's management and organizational governance structures for program results. In addition, it reflects upon OD4D’s implementation in order to inform future programming on open data for development themes. The process was

guided by five evaluative questions, on (1) Results, (2) Design, (3) Management, (4) Policy and (5) Gender. The evaluation report addresses these five topics, and also refers to some cross-cutting issues which were identified during the process. The analysis is completed with a brief propositional final sections with key recommendations for the upcoming new phase of the program.

The methodology was based on the following:

- Review of the literature about the state of open data for development and related fields (open development, open government).
- Participation/observance in the 2016 International Open Data Conference (IODC16) event in Madrid and its related pre/side events.
- In depth interviews with (i) partners/grantees; (ii) stakeholders external to the program¹ and (iii) program donors/managers. Separate scripts/questionnaires were used, tailored to each group. In all, some 40 informants were interviewed (over half being in the first category).
- Review of documentation related to the program (circa 150 documents) and other program related information resources (mostly institutional webs).
- Analysis: descriptive, discursive (expectations vs. occurrence) and on the theoretical foundations (to reflect on basis of Theory of Change).
- Findings presentations (in Ottawa and Washington) to the program team, partners/stakeholder and donors, to gain further insights and incorporate feedback into the final report.

Evaluation Question 1 - Program Results

Referred to the generation/achievement of the program's results, in terms of products (outputs) and outcomes.

Overall, the evaluation found that the program has made critical contributions to advancing the open data (OD) field, and of OD for development, through the results obtained in a relatively short time span (less than 3 years for most of the program partners and grantees).

The program both created, or made substantial contributions to, various initiatives that resulted in a large number of products, diversified by geographical domain and type (tools, standards, policy-support, regional hubs/networks, research, events, etc.). The table below contains the main initiatives and interventions, and provides a glimpse at the outputs achieved by the program.

¹ These are experts in the topic who were not directly involved in the work of the program.

Contribution to Global Initiatives	Regional Initiatives ²	National & Sub-National Interventions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Open Data Charter - IODC15 & 16 (OD Roadmap) - Open Data Leaders Network - OGP Open Data Working Group - School of Data (Southern expansion) - OD Barometer - OD Index - OD Impact Map - Research (ODDC, OD Research Network/Symposia) - Contribution to sector initiatives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Global Open Data for Agriculture and Nutrition (GODAN), International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI), Open Cities, Open Contracting, National Statistics (OD Watch), etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Latin America Open Data Initiative (ILDA) (Condatos, Abrelatam) - COI (Developing the Caribbean) - Open Data in East Europe and Central Asia (ODECA) (ODECA Conference, Challenges) - Africa Open Data Network (AODN) (Africa OD Conference) - OD Middle East and North Africa (MENA) (recently underway) - Francophone Africa network (in planning) - Open Jakarta Labs (OD Asia 2020) - Training, knowledge sharing, regional reports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Technical support to Govts (Tanzania, Burkina Faso, Philippines, Serbia, Peru, El Salvador, etc.) and civil servant training - Civil society organization (CSO) training - Research (nationally targeted) - Innovations, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Edo Agrihub (Nigeria) - ATuServicio.org (Uruguay) - PiMaa (Uganda) - Cuidando do Meu Bairro (S.P., Brazil)

All the quantitative indicators formulated in the program document were met or exceeded.

Results formulation	Indicators		
	Baseline (end 2014)	Planned (Dec 2016)	Achieved Mar 2017
R1 Consolidated OD4D multi-stakeholder regional initiatives	2	5	5

² Refers to regional hubs/networks (which are outputs in themselves), the key regional outputs they provided or were instrumental for, and other regional outputs.

R2 Significant OD4D contributions to advance global sectorial efforts (e.g. open data for agriculture, cities)	0	8	8
R3 Governments that received significant support to improve the quality and ambition of open data plans and their implementation	0	14	14
R4 Public servants who have received online and offline training and peer support	0	200	844
R5 OD4D contributions to standards and applications that significantly scale impact in developing countries (in at least 3 countries)	0	8	5 + 14 pilots
R6 People from CSOs that participate in OD4D training and capacity building activities (limited to people in developing countries)	0	500	1031
R7 Developing countries tracked on the state of open data supply and use	50	50	115 Barometer 94 Index
R8 High-quality evaluations on targeted open data initiatives ³	2	12	23
R9 Direct and indirect funds to implement global and regional OD4D strategy (\$ million US)	6M	10M	10.1M direct 4.8M indirect

There was satisfactory progress in the eight program outcomes, although in a comparative basis the two more directly related to the demand-side of open data appeared to generate lesser effects (or induced changes) than the others. The color scheme in the table below indicates: (i) dark green – high achievement; (ii) green – adequate achievement; (iii) light green, adequate achievement but with lesser effects, in relation to the others. The column in the right identifies key expressions of the Outcome achievements.

Program Outcomes	Key expressions
O1 Development of regional and global collaborative action plans guide future efforts from donors, governments, private sector, and civil society.	Open Data Charter. IODC16 Roadmap. Regional Hubs. African OD Conference. Condatos/AbreLatam
O3 New policies and practices adopted by governments in low and middle-income countries that strengthen the open data eco-system in these countries.	Direct support to various governments on policy and frameworks (Tanzania, Burkina Faso, Serbia, Phillipines, Peru, El Salvador, etc).
O4 Skills development in civil society organizations, governments and the private sector in participating countries.	Extensive training in many countries (eg. OD camps and challenges). School of Data. ODLN activities.

³ These refer to works published in peer-reviewed outlets

O6 Robust cross-country comparisons enable open data benchmarking within settings and regions.	OD Index. OD Barometer. OD Impact Map.
O7 Well documented evidence of the impact of open data initiatives on development enable the widespread sharing of good practices.	Significant exploration of deployment of OD initiatives: case studies, OD Research Network, some regional studies (LAC). More limited exploration of impact/transformation potential of OD for development.
O8 Demonstration of effectiveness of the coalition behind OD4D attracts new funders making it the partner of choice on open data for development issues.	New funding mobilized. Uncertain picture on major new donors.
O2 Adaptation and reuse of OD applications that stimulate socio-economic impacts.	Growing but still limited number of apps with national usefulness, lack of systematic appraisal on their impact.
O5 Increasingly coordinated and networked development initiatives built on open data standards.	(similar to O2). Examples: GODAN. Contracting, Africa OD Collaborative Fund, microgrants in Africa, OD and cities in Latin America. Little productive networking (collaborative work). Limited effectiveness of knowledge management.

Among the points for attention regarding program results, the following are highlighted:

- Most results have been on the supply-side of OD; there is a need to increase demand-side results (so less emphasis on the OD and more on the 4D).
- Relatively little research on: (i) enabling conditions for successful OD development use; (ii) impact measurement; (iii) OD transformational potential.
- Challenges in uncovering new donors and funding.
- Need to clarify relationship with the OD Charter, and OD4D's role in its implementation.

Evaluation Question 2 – Program Design

Referred to how the program design and elements thereof were conducive to achieving the intended results, and their influence on the sustainability of the results.

The evaluation found the OD4D design to be appropriate at a time when there was a significant void in terms of OD and especially in terms of OD for development. The OD4D program was able to set the wheels in motion in a complex context and without a clear blueprint on OD for development. Much of the work of the program was aimed at capacity building and institutional weaving, which showed satisfactory results, even taking into account that both aspects require a longer time than the short program period to achieve maximum results. A decentralized approach that fostered actions by enabling regional hubs, as well as global and national projects, proved a successful means to create a global momentum and to raise global awareness on the

need to put in motion OD4D strategies, programs and projects. The design was conducive to results achievement, although with diminishing with granularity; i.e., prioritizing leaders vs. OD intermediaries; global products (agenda, tools, events) vs. OD-based local solutions or evidence to support introducing OD innovations. The theory of change, reformatted in 2015 to serve until 2020, was purposeful and logical. However, it may be sensible to re-examine it early on the next program phase as (i) the OD field evolves, (ii) the OD4D community becomes more aware of complementarities and capacities, and (iii) there is a drive to increase the work on its demand-side.

Evaluation Question 3 - Program Management

Referred to how the OD4D program team managed the implementation of the program, their contributions to achieving expected results and the adequacy of choices made during implementation.

Overall, the evaluation found that the OD4D program was effectively implemented, due mainly to the widely-recognized personal dedication of the program management team. The meaningful involvement by donors and partners in program governance was also a positive factor that aided the implementation, including the appropriate decision to incorporate the POD which proved beneficial to all parties. The flexibility exercised in program management was coherent with the program design, given the novelty of the field and the sizable, intense, and diverse OD4D community. However, it was also observed that management resources appeared severely stretched for a program of this size and complexity, which likely affected adversely certain aspects of the implementation including (i) knowledge management (including actionable program data and reporting), (ii) gender-productive outcomes and (iii) a sense of community and networked social capital.

Evaluation Question 4 – Policy Influence

Referred to the extent to which the OD4D program has been relevant to advance OD policies and influenced agenda setting.

One of the most notable successes of the OD4D program has been to firmly put the idea of OD in the global public agenda and to stimulate governments to join or at least to interact with the OD global community. In that sense, the program has helped instill a notion of ‘no-turning-back’ when it comes to openness for public data. A variety of channels supported by OD4D (partnerships, norms/protocols, research, metrics, events, datasets, etc.) have contributed to raise awareness for policy-makers about OD, leading to political commitment and reflected in new laws and regulations, open data portals, and evolving standards for transparency and accountability. The OD Charter and its principles are rapidly being adopted just over a year after being developed, a major policy achievement. Success is more mixed, though, when putting these policies into practice to obtain impacts on development progress, particularly for the poorest and the marginalised – evidence is still scarce on this front. Much more work (including research) needs to be done to solidify the policy-to-practice links for OD and development.

Evaluation Question 5 – Incorporation of Gender Outcomes

Referred to the incorporation of gender analysis and gender sensitive outcomes into the programming, and how it could be addressed in future initiatives.

The OD4D program did not achieve significant progress in terms of gender-sensitive programming. In terms of female participation in the program, there was a noticeable presence of women among partners, grantees (e.g. in trainings) or as participants in the IODC conferences (which provides a window into the larger OD community). While a large share of the evaluation informants manifested interest in gender-meaningful actions/results, they seldom incorporated gender issues into their work, and expressed limited understanding on how to do so. There was a lack of results showing how open data can contribute to gender equity and women's empowerment. A section of the key recommendations indicate some possible avenues to address these shortcomings.

OD4D Cross cutting issues

- **Networking.** OD4D presents itself as a program and a network. The program design/implementation were strongly influenced by a networking outlook, most evident in the regionalization approach (regional hubs). Yet OD4D more resembles an ecosystem architecture and functionality, since it lacks a clear network strategy, and network effects occur spontaneously but are not sought/planned.
- **Institutional capacity.** The issue of developing institutional capacity for the sustainability of the program (one of the OD4D program objectives) was examined at three levels, highlighting next where focus is needed:
 - Project management (IDRC) – towards cohesiveness and a sense of common purpose;
 - Partners – to weave their capacities via productive connections/collaborations
 - Regional hubs – strengthening their networking capacities, facilitating inter-regional collaborations.
- **Partnerships.** The OD landscape is complex, and actors in it here are often involved in a variety of initiatives. Branding is important for OD4D to project a differentiated sense of purpose and identity. Also, to be attractive for new prospective partners and donors (and remain attractive to the ones already in). Strategic partnerships are key to build fertile ground for OD and can be key for sustainability; at the same time, they need to be clearly identified and require special care/efforts.
- **The Openness of OD4D.** The OD4D program should be open as a matter of intellectual coherence, and because it contributes to its effectiveness and efficiencies. The 1st phase was fairly open, especially regarding the access to program resources (e.g. tools, etc.) and about participation. To extend openness further, improved knowledge management and communications are key, along with expanded internal collaboration.
- **OD4D and the 'Data Revolution' for Sustainable Development.** The challenge of relying on evidence to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) goes well beyond OD. There are still major gaps in developmentally-actionable data that is

reliable and comprehensive. National Statistics Offices (NSOs) are still the ‘guardians of the vault’ in this regard. The program promoted contacts between the OD and NSO communities in its second year, but much more work is required in the next years to place OD as a core component of this Data Revolution.

Main recommendations

- A. **Greater emphasis on the 4D of OD4D.** Most OD4D program results have hinged on the ‘supply-side’ of OD, although there has been shifting weight to the ‘demand-side’ along its implementation period. It is now recommended to place priority on the demand or ‘for development’ (4D) side of the OD4D equation, in order to produce more evidence of the impact of OD on development as well as facilitating the conditions for the use and applicability of OD. This includes increasing the work from a sectorial approach.
- B. **Expanding (and defining) the network vision of OD4D.** The OD4D program has had a networked orientation from the start, as shown for example in the regional hubs. But it lacked clear guidance and strategy about networking, thus functioning more as an ecosystem with largely sporadic, unsystematic collaborations. The next phase of the program could improve its performance and extend its reach by formulating and implementing an explicit network strategy. Its main purpose would be the generation of network effects (i.e., positive benefits of direct/indirect interactions among nodes), articulated by the program objectives (or outcomes). Such a strategy, developed in participatory fashion among the partners, would be applicable both for overall program management as well as for guiding/promoting collaborative capacities for the partners and at the regional hubs and other sub-networks (eg. The Open Data Leaders Network). The position of a network manager could be introduced into the program team to help implement the network strategy.
- C. **Engagement with the D4D community.** The Data for Development (D4D) movement is picking up momentum and incorporating ever more organizations, as could be seen in the 1st UN World Data Forum celebrated in January of this year in Johannesburg. One way of increasing the development outcomes of OD would be by trying to ‘inoculate’ openness within the D4D movement. In essence, OD4D would seek to lead the ‘open branch’ of the larger D4D sphere. Three possible lines of actions could facilitate this: (i) establishing a close relationship with National Statistics Offices (NSOs), as indicated earlier; (ii) working to promote data capacities (not just on OD) to increase partnerships/legitimacy for OD4D actors while indirectly applying openness in the wider D4D community; and (iii) engaging with other developmentally-relevant data intensive fields, like Big Data, Internet of Things and Smart Cities.
- D. **Investing in strategic partnerships.** As the program moves into a new phase, there are some specific partnerships that could prove particularly valuable for OD4D’s outcomes, as well as coherent with an expanded networking approach. It is recommended to invest special

efforts in the three listed below. And it should be noted that from a network perspective, there can be interactions among them under the larger OD4D umbrella; i.e., these need not (and should not) be exclusively bilateral relationships between OD4D and each one of them.

- a. (i) Open Data Charter. OD4D had a major contribution in creating it, and now it is acquiring an organizational framework of its own. It would be advisable to establish complementary and collaborative tasks, avoiding overlap and competition for scarce resources.
- b. (ii) Open Government Partnership (OGP). OGP is institutionally close to governments, and OD4D has already supported its OD Working Group (ODWG). As the governance of ODWG is reviewed, it could open the doors for an even more productive relationship.
- c. (iii) Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data (GPSDD). This is a relatively new initiative, emerging perhaps as the main global forum in the D4D field. A symbiotic relationship could open the door for OD4D to plan a leading role in advocating for openness within the D4D.

- E. **Focus on OD intermediaries.** The evaluation observed that end users (*micro level*) were quite difficult to reach for the program. Our research also showed the success of engaging and building the capacity of collectives that bridge the needs of the underserved with the actors that can address them (*macro level*). Setting as a priority the support for OD intermediaries (*meso level*) can bring much more capillarity to program outcomes (in effect widely extending the overall network), and would move the program further in the direction of the demand-side, as was raised earlier. These intermediaries include (data) journalists, openness activists, data advocates, hacktivists and grassroots networks.
- F. **Gender as an operational OD4D priority.** It was earlier noted that the OD4D was not successful in gender-sensitive outcomes and programming, and also that this appears to be a common feature of many technology-related development initiatives. To address these shortcomings, it is recommended to carry out a specific project to build gender-analysis capacities among the OD4D actors and deliver concrete gender outcomes. Such a project could (i) use existing gender resources within the OD4D network, (ii) develop tools to routinely perform gender analysis in project design/implementation/monitoring, and (iii) be run by an organization (or a network) with proven expertise in gender and data/ICT. The results would likely have utility in the larger D4D environment (e.g. within the GPSDD), and not just for the OD4D community itself.
- G. **Knowledge management at the core of the OD4D network.** The key underlying process for most major institutional development networks is knowledge management (KM). Regardless of the specific KM methodologies chosen and constituent elements identified (knowledge generation, dissemination, absorption, etc.), KM is essentially about getting the right knowledge to the right person at the right time. The OD4D network produced considerable knowledge assets (alongside information, and, of course, data), but the evaluation found no systematic approach to collecting/curating/circulating knowledge assets. It would be beneficial for the next phase of the OD4D program to formulate a KM strategy, including among other measures (i) how information/documentation is provided

by program stakeholders, (ii) a communications platform which enable knowledge exchange among stakeholders (e.g. on new activities, soliciting collaboration, posting research pieces, etc.), (iii) a web site that serve as the information showcase for external communications, (iv) 'toolkitting', i.e. providing a set of tools, applications, guides and other useful resources for OD usage; (v) training and other educational materials, and (v) activities aimed at technical outreach (webinars, seminars, lectures, competitions, awards).