



Cabinet Office
70 Whitehall London SW1A 2AS

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Dame Meg Hillier
Chair, Public Accounts Committee
House of Commons
SW1A 0AA

29 October 2021

Dear Chair,

I am writing to you in relation to recommendation 2 of the Thirteenth Report of the 2021-22 Session of the Public Accounts Committee, on 'Initial Lessons from the Government's Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic'.

The recommendation included an action for the Cabinet Office to provide the Committee with a list of ongoing projects aimed at improving the quality and interoperability of the data available to government.

The Data Standards Authority (DSA) is a part of the Central Digital & Data Office (CDDO), and is responsible for cross-government work to improve the quality and interoperability of data across government. The DSA is currently driving four key initiatives to achieve this:

- Setting common data standards: Metadata standards were published in August 2020. The DSA is now working on data-enabled programmes across government, on potential common standards such as Beneficial Ownership, a single Legal Entity Identifier and Digital Identity work.
- Application Programming Interfaces (APIs): initial milestones to establish an API catalogue and community of expert practitioners have been achieved. The DSA has recently expanded the API catalogue to include 230 APIs from 27 departments and is developing an API assessment process.
- Data Sharing Governance: implementing a shared framework to centralise and standardise data sharing documentation, create a shared understanding of resource implications and agree a shared language of terms for creating agreements.
- Adoption of data standards: The first iteration of changes to Point 10 of the Technology Code of Practice (TCoP) were made in December 2020 and further changes are planned as well as potential updates to the Service Standards.

There are also a number of other key projects being implemented across the wider Cabinet Office; these are included in Annexe A.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J M Davinson', with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

**Joanna Davinson
Executive Director
Central Digital and Data Office**

Annexe A: list of ongoing projects aimed at improving the quality and interoperability of the data available to government

Programme/ Project	Programme Goals	Target Dates	Progress to Date
<i>Data Standards Authority (CDDO) Projects</i>			
Data standards	Setting common data standards in order to enable a shared understanding and linking of a wide range of data and services across government.	This work is delivered on a rolling annual basis as needs for new standards are identified and agreed.	Governance and processes to enable the standardisation agenda have been established. Metadata standards were published in August 2020. The DSA is now working on data-enabled programmes across government, on potential common standards such as Beneficial Ownership, a single Legal Entity Identifier and Digital Identity work.
Application Programming Interfaces (APIs)	Setting standards and best practise around API's, including an API catalogue, which will allow government departments to develop their own API strategies and therefore make the flowing of data across department boundaries more efficient and practical.	API assessment process is currently being developed over the remainder of the 2021-22 financial year.	The initial milestones to establish an API catalogue and community of expert practitioners have been achieved. The DSA has recently expanded the API catalogue to include 230 APIs from 27 departments.
Data Sharing Governance	Implementing a shared framework to centralise and standardise data sharing documentation, create a shared understanding of resource implications and agree a shared language of terms for creating agreements. This will make data sharing across government faster and easier for users.	This will be published and rollout commenced by the end of the 2021-22 financial year.	Discovery for the framework has been undertaken, and drafting has been completed and distributed for cross-government feedback.
Data standards adoption	To ensure data standards and data best practices are adopted, the DSA has been working to strengthen existing delegated spend controls and associated assessment and assurance processes in relation to data.	Further changes to Point 10 of the Technology Code of Practice (TCoP) are planned as well as potential updates to the Service Standards by Q1 2022.	The first iteration of changes to Point 10 of the Technology Code of Practice (TCoP) were made in December 2020.

Other Cabinet Office Projects/Programmes			
Border Flow Service (BFS)	To deliver data and analytical capability to border agencies and local resilience forums, and to improve responses to emerging issues in real-time.	Key upcoming milestones include: - Continuing to develop the BFS throughout 2021, including integrating additional government data to build out understanding of trade patterns. - Further development in Jan-June 2022 to support understanding of border resilience	Since December 2020, BFS has been increasing the resilience of the border by powering the analysis of a number of things, including the flow of goods at the border, empty freight flow, predicting passenger volumes in response to international travel restrictions easing, and planning resources around border health measures.
The Discovery Science and Insights platform (DSI)	To provide data delivery, access and analytics, and is aiming to become a central data exchange for the Cabinet Office, allowing it's business units to have access to data from multiple sources across government, and to provide richer and more reliable insights.	Key upcoming milestones include: Plans to enhance the platform over the course of the next 3 years, in order to support all Cabinet Office business units with data that is automated, joined up, and potentially aggregated for common business purposes.	The DSI platform has been developed iteratively over the past 12 months, to enable data access, analysis and visualisation in response to urgent requirements by the Covid 19 Task Force, the Winter Resilience, G7 support, the National Situation Centre, and analysis for the Afghanistan exit.
National Fraud Initiative	To utilise data from across 1200 organisations to prevent and/or detect an average of over £100m per year via a range of services used to detect fraud.	Key upcoming milestones include: - Making savings of £171m - Progressing secondary legislation to extend the permitted purposes for data matching beyond fraud.	£45m of savings were made by end of August 2021. The consultation for the secondary legislation has been completed and the response publication is expected to be done by the end of 2021.
Geospatial Commission (various projects)	To deliver a range of initiatives aimed at promoting and safeguarding the use of location data, improving access to better location data, enhancing capabilities, skills and awareness, and enabling innovation.	Key upcoming milestones include: - Publishing guidance to help unlock value from location data while mitigating ethical and privacy risks by Summer 2022 - Delivering pilots to improve the findability and accessibility of land use data to support a range of policy actions at local level by Autumn 2022 - Completing the build of the National Underground Asset Register by 2024.	The Public Sector Geospatial Agreement has been established and reports have been published on the UK's Geospatial Data Market. A number of data improvement projects have been delivered to harmonise licensing terms, standardised metadata and enable data sharing across our Partner Bodies. It has also delivered regional pilots and procured for the build of the National Underground Asset Register.
Digital National Asset	To deliver a property asset register, providing a central line of sight and	Key upcoming milestones include: Implementing the register	The beta product, the InSite asset register, is now currently under development, which will

Register	improving strategic management of the whole of government estate. It will be used to improve cross-public sector collaboration and utilisation, make it easier to find land for development and drive up performance.	in central government from January 2022 Expanding this to wider public sector, including devolved administrations and local authorities from April 2022.	have the ability to automate data flows with departments.
Data.gov.uk	To provide better data on a range of digital services, following the retirement of the performance platform earlier this year which publically measured the performance of digital products and services.	Key upcoming milestones include: Replatforming in mid 2022 to update the operating system.	GDS continues to provide technical support to the data.gov.uk platform, including significant upgrades to the security and operating systems.