

# New strategy for providing free access to government data

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## Introduction

On 30 November 2018 the Federal Council adopted a new open government data strategy for providing the public with free access to government data. From 2020 onwards, all government data will gradually be made available for free and in a computer-friendly format.

Replacing a previous version, the new strategy is mandatory for the federal administration and is recommended for Swiss cantons and municipalities. Discussions will be held with research funds and universities to encourage wider access to their work. One of the strategy's objectives is to promote innovation in Switzerland.

The Federal Council's press release and relevant documentation are available in [German](#), [French](#) and [Italian](#).

## Free access to government data

Government data will be centralised and available on '[opendata.swiss](#)', which already contains many federal publications to support economic and state activities. Data which is particularly important to the Federal Council will be added to the existing catalogue, including that which relates to:

- the environment;
- health;
- mobility;
- education;
- culture; and
- research.

Cantonal government registers (eg, cantonal company registers) will be harvested and added to this database.

The federal authorities are gradually removing the fees required to obtain government documents and a significant amount of data will eventually be provided for free.

## Quality criterion

To qualify for publication, relevant data must satisfy a quality criterion and be described using standardised metadata. Therefore, quality will be maintained through regular analysis of data formats and metadata as part of publication requests. This will allow users to quickly access complete data on various electronic devices.

## AUTHORS

[Jürg Schneider](#)



[Christophe Gösken](#)



## Supporting innovation

With this new strategy, the federal authorities wish to encourage a broad spectrum of people to use the data. Therefore, measures will be provided to support:

- publications (eg, manuals);
- tutorials;
- hackathons; and
- crowd science.

## Comment

The Federal Council's new open government data strategy aims to strengthen transparency, accountability and innovation. With a centralised source of information and appropriate support for data users such as researchers and creators, Switzerland will remain an important innovative hub.

*For further information on this topic please contact [Jürg Schneider](#) or [Christophe Gösken](#) at Walder Wyss by telephone (+41 58 658 58 58) or email ([juerg.schneider@walderwyss.com](mailto:juerg.schneider@walderwyss.com) or [christophe.goesken@walderwyss.com](mailto:christophe.goesken@walderwyss.com)). The Walder Wyss website can be accessed at [www.walderwyss.com](http://www.walderwyss.com).*

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