

# Estimating the cost of an open data initiative

In September 2014, the UNDP and the Partnership for Open Data (the World Bank, the Open Data Institute and Open Knowledge) [brought together](#) government leaders from 15 countries from across Eastern Europe and Central Asia in Istanbul. While some of the participating countries have made great strides in moving to open data, others are in the early stages of designing and implementing an open data initiative.

**One burning question for this second group is how much their governments should expect to spend developing an open data policy.**

There is, of course, no simple answer. A lot depends on what infrastructure and expertise is already in place, how much data has already been collected, which data sets are published, and which policies are put in place to support the open data ecosystem.

Without listing exact numbers, the group collectively came up with a useful list of costs to be considered.

**We captured these and have presented them below.**

**We would like to invite the community to update, add or comment from their experience from other regions by the end of September 2014.**

The list that the group developed highlighted the following costs - **what did we miss?**

## **Set up costs:**

- Technical:
  - Portal development costs (purchasing software or using open source software)
  - Cost of storage including cloud storage
  - Cost of creating APIs
- Admin/ governance:
  - Getting legislation or policy written and approved
  - Digitisation of paper records or upgrading of data systems
  - Costs of changing the way data is collected
  - Creating a coordination unit within government
- Skills:
  - Capacity building of developers
  - Awareness raising activities to promote use
  - Capacity building for the use of data within government

**Marginal costs:**

- Technical:
  - Maintenance of the system
  - Person hours to updating and administering the portal
  - Hardware and other overhead costs
- Admin/ governance:
  - Maintaining and enforcing the policy or legal requirements
  - Co-ordination unit human resource costs
  - Managing requests or questions from the ecosystem

**We will leave this document open for comments until the end of September, and then collate and publish the findings. If you would like to contribute with details of actual costs of your initiative, please contact us on [international@theodi.org](mailto:international@theodi.org)**