Data and Public Services Business Case Canvas

ODI

Methodology and training tools

This **Data and Public Services Business Case Canvas** is for people designing data-enabled public services.

It aims to help you make a business case for a project or service that uses data.

This tool is part of the ODI's wider Data and Public Services Toolkit. You can find all the tools and resources at **theodi.org/tools**

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Through our research we have defined three high-level 'patterns' for how open data is used in public services. They can be used singularly or in combination.

	1 Better access to public services	**2** More efficient service delivery chains	**3** More informed policy development
Direct beneficiaries	Citizens Businesses	Commissioners Managers Frontline staff	Public sector workers Elected representatives
Decisions / actions taken	How and where to access public services	Where to prioritise operational resources	Where to target policy interventions
Information produced	Targeted service information	Insight and patterns	Data visualisations and analyses
Types of data	Open real-time service data	Open performance data	Open data across government

How are data and services related?

Data that is made open, or shared, presents huge opportunities for the public sector to enable innovative services. For example, the datasets that Transport for London has made open – openly licensed for anyone to access, use, and share – have been used by innovators to create journey-mapping apps to help people navigate the city.

Why use this tool?

Scope your project
The canvas helps to articulate why to use data in a service, and understand how using specific data helps meet organisational aims and user needs. It also promotes constructive debate around project objectives, intention and potential impact.

Create broader change
The canvas raises issues and considerations that help inform better products and services, and grow the positive impact of your work. It encourages using and publishing open data – which other services can reuse – contributing to the wider data ecosystem and infrastructure, innovation and cost savings. It also helps you to consider the impact data activities have on people and society, and steps to mitigate any harmful impacts.

Complement other business case guidelines
The canvas is a flexible tool, designed to tease out potential opportunities, and can sit alongside more formal business case guidelines.

How to use this tool

You can use this tool as an individual or in a group exercise – such as in a team meeting or workshop – to prompt areas for discussion, gather ideas and help decide what to do next.

You can start anywhere on the canvas and complete the sections in any order.

For each section, take time to consider your answers. It helps to note these on sticky notes and stick them to the sections as you go. Where you can, share and discuss your responses with others.

Who to involve

Primary users will be service delivery managers responsible for designing, justifying and delivering new services.

We recommend that you ask for contributions and feedback from a range of people in your organisation.

Useful people to consult include: service design teams (to shape ideas); service users (to understand their needs); budget holders (to inform what is viable); data users (for a technical perspective); compliance or data protection officers (to understand risks); digital transformation leads (to bring departments together); and suppliers or third parties who contribute to service delivery.

What next?

Once your business case is approved, you can return to the canvas and keep refining it.

Visit theodi.org/tools to access:

- A print-at-home version of the canvas
- An online template to use alongside or instead of this hard-copy canvas

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About the service

What will the service you are planning do? How will it work?

User needs and benefits

Who is the service for and what are their needs? What are the benefits the service will bring them?

Tip: Create personas and map journeys for your service users. Some tools that might help you are Smaply (smaply.com) and Xtensio (xtensio.com/how-to-create-a-person).

Service and organisational aims

What does the service aim to achieve? How does that relate to your organisation's aims?

Data

What data do you need to achieve your aims? Consider what you have, and what you need. Note down the data sources – whether they exist or will be new – along with who controls the data, and how you will access it.

Tip: Use the Data Ecosystem Mapping tool (theodi.org/tools).

Enabling decisions

Would this service help its users to make decisions? What are those decisions? For example: how to get to work quicker, when to put the bins out, how/where to invest?

Cost and investment

What are the costs associated with designing and implementing this proposed service solution? What costs are currently being incurred by the existing service provision?

Justification

Why do you need to do this project? What will happen if you don't do this project?

Savings and revenue

What projected cost savings could a data-enabled solution create? What potential revenue sources could be created?

Advocating for data

How will you promote the benefits of using data in your service? What other organisations/projects have inspired you? What impact did they have? Have you engaged them or built on their work?

Tip: See the Data and Public Services Toolkit for a set of case studies to provide examples and inspiration (theodi.org/tools).

Risks

What are the primary risks associated with this project? How will you mitigate these risks?

Tip: Use the Data Ethics Canvas to think through the ethical implications of your data use (theodi.org/tools).

There is also advice on how to mitigate risks in The Green Book: central government guidance on appraisal and evaluation (HM Treasury).

Stakeholders

Apart from the service users, what other organisations and stakeholders are involved in this service? Do any of them own or provide the data you will be using? Do any of them use it?

Tip: Use the Data Ecosystem Mapping tool to establish the technical and organisational relationships involved in your service. By focusing on mapping the flow of value you can demonstrate the opportunities (theodi.org/tools).

Timeline

What is the timescale associated with this work?

Open approach

What reasons are there for using shared or open data? If you are publishing open data, who else could benefit from it? What networks are you supporting if you are using another source of open data?

Tip: Use the eLearning modules 'Making an impact with data' (theodi.org/makeanimpact) and 'Making transparency work for you' (theodi.org/maketransparencywork).

Open Data Institute

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