

EPA Data Governance Council Charter

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1. Background

In January 2019, The Foundations for Evidence-Based Policy Making Act of 2018 was signed into law. The primary objectives of the Act are the following:

- Increase the use of data-based evidence into decision making with special attention to attaching evidence in the evaluation of strategic plans and outcomes.
- Ensure that all data assets are OPEN (open, publicly available, electronic and necessary) unless otherwise protected by law.
- Improve sharing of data across the Federal government with specific reference to statistical uses along with strengthening security of confidential information.

The act also required the establishment of three officials who would oversee the activities under the act:

- Chief Data Officer (CDO)
- Evaluation Official (EO)
- Statistical Officer (SO)

2. Purpose

The CDO is responsible for agency lifecycle data management. The CDO is further required to coordinate with officials across the agency responsible for using, protecting, disseminating, and generating data to ensure that the data needs of the agency are met. The Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA) Data Governance Council (DGC) shall serve as the primary venue by which the CDO fulfills this coordination function in service of EPA and its mission. The DGC shall be a principle mechanism for the Agency Programs and Regions to provide input into the CDO’s fulfillment of statutory functions under the Evidence Act and the Agency’s responsibilities under the Federal Data Strategy. The DGC will advise and recommend actions to promote a coordinated and collaborative approach to oversee strategic data collection and acquisition, responsible lifecycle data management, secure storage, improved interoperability of data, open/transparent release of its data assets, and advancements in internal and external uses of data. Additionally, the DGC will sponsor and otherwise

encourage agency-wide actions to develop an open data culture, and work to improve the capacity to leverage data as a strategic asset for evidence building and operational decisions.

3. Authority

Creation of an agency-wide data governance body is mandated by Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Memoranda M-19-23 (Phase 1 Implementation of the Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act of 2018: Learning Agendas, Personnel, and Planning Guidance) and in accordance with the Evidence Act and the 2019 Federal Data Strategy.

4. Membership

The DGC shall be convened and chaired by the CDO and will consist of at least one senior level staff member who works with or manages data assets within each of EPA's ten Regions and eleven of our Program Offices. In order to maintain impartiality, the Office of Inspector General is exempt. Additional members shall be considered if a Program or Region has a diversity of high value data assets and would like the expertise and experience covering those assets represented on the council. Additionally, the Evaluation Officer and the Statistical official will be members of the DGC as required by M-19-23. A list of Council members will be maintained at <https://epa.gov/data>, as required by OMB.

5. Scope

The DGC shall develop and maintain EPA's enterprise data roadmap, policies, and procedures to improve and standardize the Agency's data governance. The DGC's efforts will enable the Agency to harness EPA's enterprise data by facilitating data management, oversight and related activities throughout the information lifecycle. The scope of activities may include the following non-exhaustive list of topics:

- Data Acquisition and Creation – Facilitate sound and effective methods and standards for data creation, collection and assimilation from external sources including States, Tribes, municipalities, regulated entities, and additional partners and stakeholders.
- Identify and Describe – Facilitate the continual improvement and management of an enterprise data inventory and related metadata.
- Provision and Share – Develop and maintain policies and procedures that enable stakeholders to effectively and efficiently find, access and use data assets by making data available more quickly and in more useful formats and services.
- Ensure Data Quality – Improve and maintain the overall high quality of EPA data assets to enhance their value for decision-making and accountability by providing relevant, accurate and timely information to inform evidence-based decision-making and learning.
- Data Security – Partner with EPA's cyber security apparatus to maintain data security policies, refine and evaluate roles and responsibilities for data privacy, security, and confidentiality protection as needed.
- Assess Data and Related Infrastructure Maturity – Implement regular maturity assessments with special emphasis on needs to address agency priority questions and to ensure internal and external stakeholder needs are met.
- Maintain an Effective Open Data Plan – Facilitate compliance with Open Data related Federal mandates, including maintaining current Open Data policy with special reference to data assets identified as priorities for EPA's Open Data requirements.
- Enhance Data Architecture and Interoperability – Review the Agency's infrastructure for data asset accessibility and promote common data architecture, data standards, processes and technologies, where appropriate, that will increase efficiency and expand the use of existing data.

- Support Statutory Data Requirements – Provide support at strategic, tactical and operational levels for data-related Federal legislations and related guidance, especially the Evidence Act and Federal Data Strategy.
- Workforce Enhancement – Assess workforce data literacy and data skills and promote training activities to address identified gaps.
- Data Governance – Create overall data governance strategies to promote and ensure data is of the highest quality and available across the agency.
- Champion Data Use – Foster a culture of data stewardship and use by identifying and deploying resources to maximize the value of data for decision-making, accountability, and the public good.

6. Operations

Meetings – The DGC shall meet at least every two months to deliberate and provide guidance to the CDO in order to meet responsibilities. Additional meetings of the DGC may be called by the Chair as needed. Any member may propose additional meetings by contacting the Chair, if needed. The Chair shall provide the agenda based on Agency and Council priorities. Any member may propose an agenda item by contacting the Chair.

Reports – The Council shall maintain minutes of its meetings and make them available to the membership of the Council. As required by OMB, a summary of each meeting will be made available at <https://epa.gov/data>.

Executive Level Reporting – In order to integrate DGC activities into the executive management at EPA, the CDO will report activities to the executive level Chief Information Officer – Strategic Action Committee at each of their meetings, which are currently three times per year.

Subcommittees – The DGC may form and delegate authority to subcommittees, consisting of one or more members of the overall Council. These subcommittees would be responsible for evaluating and providing recommendations for specific topics before the Council.

Amendment – At least once a year, or more frequently as necessary, the Council shall review the Charter. The Charter may be amended with the recommendation of the Council and approval of the Chair.