Central Digital & Data Office

Thursday, 8th February 2024
14:00
Virtual meeting

Data Standards Authority Steering Board
MINUTES

Members	**Observers and speakers**
Sue Bateman - CDDO (chair) Nicholas Oughtibridge - NHS Berenice Uden - HMRC Rob Lee - HMRC Rachel Davison - DWP Francesca Henshaw - DWP Paul Downey - DLUHC Teresa Soter - DSIT Charles Baird - ONS	Firoze Salim - CDDO (secretariat) Didac Fabregas-Badosa - CDDO (secretariat) Anand Ash - CDDO (secretariat) Rhian Jones - CDDO Elena Hess-Rheingans - CDDO Alexander Hart - CDDO Mark Durkee - RTAU Liz Adams - RTAU Kevin Xu - DBT Angus Barry - DBT Catherine Tabone - DBT Amita Stephenboyd - DBT

Actions and Decisions

Action/Decision	Owner	Deadline
• NO to connect DBT with NHS Standards Directorate	Nicholas Oughtibridge	Next SB meeting
• CDDO and the RTAU to engage with DWP to follow-up on the various points raised by RD	CDDO and RTAU	Next SB meeting

Record of discussions

1	**Chair welcome and introductions** Sue Bateman (SB), CDDO
	● SB introduced the agenda and welcomed attendees. ● SB provided a brief update on the status of the ESDA and ownership beta testing. SB reminded the attendees that CDDO is gathering initial ESDA returns from departments ahead of the final returns expected by April 2024. SB highlighted the importance of departments providing their ESDA returns for the delivery of the Data Marketplace. ● SB mentioned that the data quality work between CDDO and ONS is progressing, and that an update will be given to the group in due time. SB shared that the DSA PRG is also being updated as this work progresses.
2	**Open Regulation Document Standard** Kexin Xu, Catherine Tabone - DBT
	Summary of presentation: ● KX and CT presented the proposal from DBT to create the Open Regulation Document Standard (ORDS), a metadata standard for regulatory data and content. ● This work is led from the Smarter Regulation Directorate at the Department for Business and Trade (DBT). ● The strategic driver behind the ORDS is to gather regulatory information in the UK into a single platform to make it easier for users to identify and solve compliance issues. ● CT presented details on the design of the ORDS ontology. CT highlighted that the idea is to create something simple, flexible and reusable that aligns with existing standards. Current best practice and the current publishing conventions for regulators have been taken into account when developing the ORDS ontology. The idea behind it is to keep the sets of regulatory data as minimal as possible. ● KX shared information about the stakeholder engagement carried out to date. This includes engagement with the DSA and 20 regulators through data standards seminars held over the last 8 months. The regulators have used the extensive opportunities provided to them to give feedback on the proposed standard. ● KX advised that though governance for the standard is not currently in place, the importance of building strong governance is recognised, as demonstrated by the willingness to work with PRG, SB and the Open Standards Board. KX also mentioned that there is interest from senior civil servants at DBT to invest resources on the standard. ● The presentation concluded with a short review of related projects to the ORDS.

Discussion

- Nicholas Oughtibridge (NO) asked:
  - If DBT is looking at the schema.org legislation type:
    - CT noted that schema.org is legislation specific and not regulation specific but also agreed to look for alignment when possible
  - If the scope of the work would extend to standards used by regulation and not only regulation, noting that for example the health area uses standards as part of regulation:
    - KX said that the current focus is regulation but that in the future they will look at expanding the scope to include standards and other resources
    - NO offered to connect them to the NHS standards directorate. NO noted that the medical devices example is a good example of why standards should be included in scope. Harmonised standards are a good way of demonstrating compliance with regulations.

- Rob Lee (RL) asked if they tested the proposed taxonomy with the existing regulatory landscape, noting that for example HMRC holds a lot of diverse regulations. RL also queried the scope and in particular the inclusion of international regulations
  - KX noted that this work is at an early stage and that DBT has carried out engagement with some government departments and regulators
  - Angus Barry (AB) flagged that the goal of going through the DSA structures and engagement with PRG and the OSB is to get further input and views on this work.

- Paul Downey (PD) asked about the problem statement for this work and about the potential users of the standard and how they would find the data
  - AB shared that the problem statement lays around having more than 80 regulators that are publishing regulation in different places and that there is no consistency on how these are published
  - PD suggested bringing this problem statement forward in future discussions. PD agreed that the problem statement is relevant.
  - SB suggested to articulate use cases to highlight the importance of this work

- Rachel Davison (RD) asked about the expectations for the ICO to meet the ORDS for regulations around data protection
  - AB replied that this would be out of scope as DBT wouldn't be the data owners themselves.

Actions/Decisions

- SB asked the DSA SB if they supported the development of the ORDS standard and for it to proceed to the next steps as a potential standard for DSA endorsement

	○ The members agreed that it makes sense for the DSA to work on this and they offered support ○ No objections were made and there was agreement on the approach taken. ● NO to connect DBT colleagues with NHS Standards Directorate
3	**Algorithmic Transparency Recording Standard** Rhian Jones - CDDO, Mark Durkee - RTAU
	● RJ updated the Board on the progress of the ATRS to date: ○ Mandation of the ATRS has been agreed by write-round and announced in the AI White Paper Consultation response ○ CDDO and RTAU (formerly CDEI) want to work with the DSA on designing a workable, phased approach to implementation. ● RJ presented an overview of the ATRS: ○ The ATRS helps government departments and public bodies to share information on their use of algorithmic tools with the general public in an accessible way ○ The benefits of the use of the ATRS include improved public trust, promotion of the ethical and responsible use of algorithmical tools and innovation. ● RJ provided further detail about the reasons to mandate the ATRS: ○ First, the UK has been at the forefront of responsible AI innovation, and appropriate transparency on government use of AI is critical ○ Second, the government has had a design principle of “make things open: it makes things better” for over 10 years. In the context of algorithmic tools, experience suggests so far that digital leaders are very positive towards this but meet internal resistance to algorithmic transparency ○ Third, CDDO and RTAU have received both Commons and Lords amendments to the Data Protection and Digital Information Bill to introduce a legislative obligation on public bodies using algorithmic tools to publish an ATRS record. ● RJ presented the scope and exemptions for the mandation of the ATRS: ○ Organisations in scope: Ministerial and non-ministerial government departments ○ Tools in scope: Algorithmic tools that either have a significant influence on a decision-making process with direct or indirect public effect; or directly interact with the general public ○ Exemptions: It is recognised that some information should not be openly shared with the public as it may cause harm. Hence, the CDEI and CDDO have developed a high-level proposal for an exemptions framework ■ The exemptions proposal include security and intelligence reasons (always) as well as defence, criminal justice, trade secrets, commercial interests and operational effectiveness when assessed that information would cause harm.

- MD presented the next steps and shared the timeline for the mandation of the standard with the following key dates:
    - Discuss the proposal with the DSA SB (8 Feb)
    - Present the proposal to the CDO Council (20 Feb)
    - Present the proposal to the Digital and Data Board (24 Apr)
    - Cabinet Secretary to send a letter to Permanent Secretaries (~April)

- MD asked the Steering Board to
    - Note the changing landscape and the intention to mandate the ATRS to all central government departments
    - "Endorse" the proposal for mandation, covering the types of tools in scope and the exemptions framework
    - Discuss the next steps with the departmental CDOs, that will be present on the CDO Council with a formal commission to departments.

Discussion

- SB reiterated the importance of the support from the Steering Board on the mandation of the standard, recognising that this is different from technical standards that are usually brought to the board.

- RD was supportive of the mandation of the ATRS and flagged as positive the idea of the exemptions under FOI as the starting point for the exemptions framework.

    - RD recognised that further conversations will be needed around specific terms and concepts such as "significantly", "AI" and "Algorithmic Decision Making Tools". RD suggested having further conversations in forums such as the DSA SB to come together with definitions that can ultimately help populate internal departmental inventories.

    - MD noted that the use of "Algorithmic Decision Making Tools" over the "AI" has been used, given that the scope of the latter is unclear.

    - NO shared that in the healthcare space a simple algorithm can be a medical device if used to diagnose or treat patients.

        - EH-R - Our approach re impact on a decision making process is supposed to include tools that completely automate or supplement or assist decision making processes (e.g. by making predictions or recommendations).

    - RL added to the conceptual discussion by saying that "tools" are/can be a different thing from "algorithms".

- NO asked if devolved administrations are in scope.

    - Liz Adams (LA) answered that the current scope only includes UK central government departments but that there are good working relationships with the Welsh government in particular, who are looking at rolling out the ATRS in Wales.

	Actions/Decisions ● No objections were raised on the approach taken. Steering Board members were positive and supportive of the mandation of the ATRS, the scope for mandation and the exemptions framework detailed. ● CDDO and the RTAU to engage with DWP to follow-up on the various points raised by RD
4	**Any Other Business and Close**
	● The chair summarised the meeting and decisions taken by the board ● There was no AOB ● The chair closed the meeting **Next meeting:** April 2024