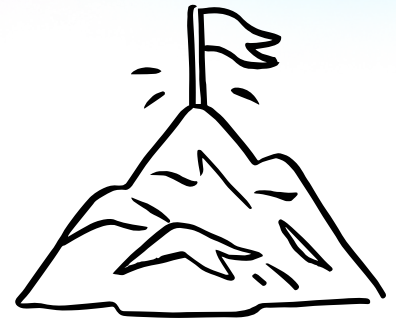# Annual Report, 2023

Last year was a time of transition for us
at the Open Knowledge Foundation.

Recently, we have been working primarily on developing new open technologies and supporting technical communities. Without leaving this legacy behind, **in 2023 we revisited our strategy, resumed our vocation for global advocacy and regained our voice of leadership and influence** among the communities of the open movement worldwide.

On a global scale, we are now very dedicated to advancing (and opening) Digital Public Infrastructures (DPI), which has recently made its way onto the global agenda after the 2023 G20 summit in India. We are also committed to enabling us as a society to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) – in 2023, CKAN, the world's leading open source data management system, was officially recognised as a technology that is helping tackle 9 of the 17 global challenges identified by the United Nations.

On a grassroots level, we remain committed to our core values of openness, accessibility, and the ethical use of technology. We want everyone to be able to make digital technologies their own, which is why we keep promoting and **empowering communities with simple, open-by-design alternatives to the complex software offered by the Big Tech industry**. A milestone reached in 2023 was the beta release of the Open Data Editor (ODE) application, for non-technical users who are unfamiliar with code. ODE is an extension of the features from the decade-old Frictionless project. We expect that ODE will unlock the power of open data for key groups, including scientists, journalists and data activists.

Despite the global turbulence and all the pessimism about the coming years, we ended 2023 hopeful that our contributions can be key to creating "a fair, sustainable and open future", as our mission statement says.
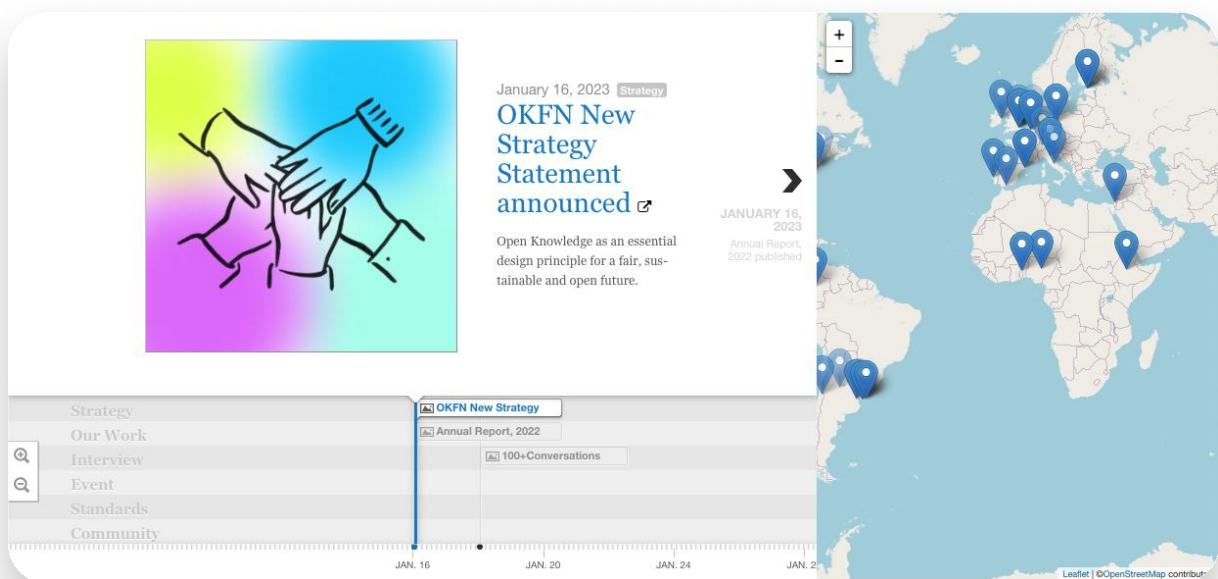
We will continue to be hopeful and hands-on in 2024, a key year for democracy around the world. We're counting on you. You can count on us!

#BetterOpenThanClosed
#BetterTogetherThanAlone

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OKFN's Global Impact, Month by Month

In 2023 we engaged with communities on every continent, with important activities and announcements practically every month.

It was a rush that paid off. Take a look back and browse the main moments of Open Knowledge in 2023 on the timeline above, built with our open source tool TimeMapper, with which you can make timelines and maps from a Google Spreadsheet in seconds. TimeMapper was launched back in 2011 and still runs smoothly. It's the kind of simple, open-by-design technology that we are proud to keep betting on.

Highlights from the Network

In mid-June 2023, the Open Knowledge Network chapters met in Zurich for our annual gathering. Together, we defined our "dream Network" and started laying the foundation towards it: a globally connected local Network that works in close collaboration to produce insight for participatory platforms that enlightened politicians across the globe use to make decisions.

We are continuing to grow the Network curated platforms, bringing together open knowledge projects and specialists launched at the end of 2022. The Project Repository currently counts 89 projects, a 64% growth in 1 year. The Global Directory currently counts 84 curated specialists, a 35% growth.

During 2023 we also welcomed several new members, based in 🇦🇲 Armenia, 🇨🇦 Canada, 🇬🇲 Gambia, 🇬🇭 Ghana, 🇬🇹 Guatemala, 🇸🇸 South Sudan and 🇹🇬 Togo. Our Global Movement has a new "home" on the recently redesigned website launched in 2023. There you can find details about each member and learn how to join the Network.

↪ Read all the updates from Network chapters and members

Highlights from our Projects

Frictionless

Senior Developer Evgeny Karev speaks at csv,conf,v7

We started the year going back to FOSDEM, giving an overview of the main functionalities of the Frictionless Application.

In April, an alpha-release of the application was presented at csv,conf,v7. Frictionless was a popular subject at csv,conf, with two other talks mentioning it, and many community members attending.

In October, we presented the beta version of the now-renamed Open Data Editor.

The Frictionless community stayed engaged throughout the year with monthly calls – you can read a summary of each call on the project's blog.

In November, thanks to the generous support of **NLnet**, we have kickstarted the Frictionless specifications update. Our overarching goal is to make the Frictionless specs, namely the Data Package; Data Resource; File Dialect; and Table Schema standards a finished product, establishing a sustainable mechanism for future maintenance extension. We have a working group of community members focusing on the update, and we are aiming at releasing the v2 of the Frictionless specs by June 2024.

In December, the podcast Code for Thought devoted a full episode to Frictionless Data.

Highlights from our Projects

CKAN

In June, CKAN was added to the Digital Public Good Registry by the **Digital Public Goods Alliance (DPGA)**, which means that the world's leading data management system is now officially recognised as a tool helping tackle 9 of the 17 global challenges identified by the United Nations.
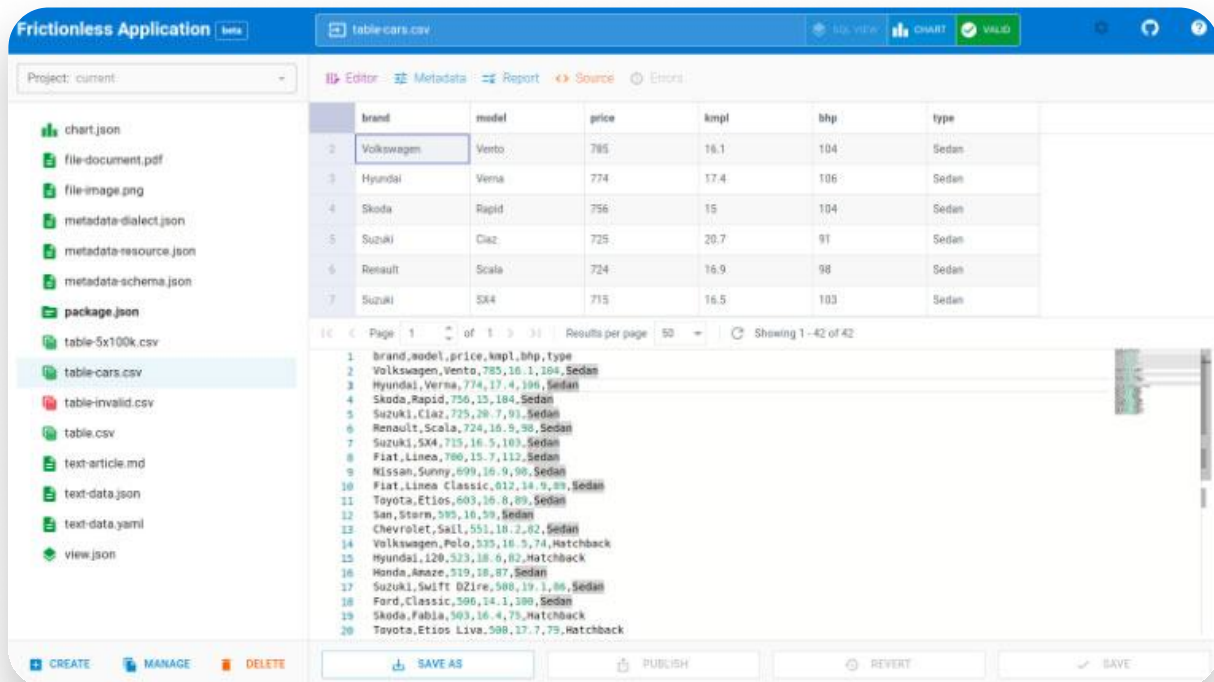
Several hundreds of CKAN instances exist around the world, including National Governments e.g. Canada, USA, Finland, Argentina, Japan, Germany etc. and Sub-national and Local governments e.g. Montreal, Barcelona, and Buenos Aires.

Throughout 2023, we continued to support the development of CKAN, hold its code in trust and manage the community. We are also offering CKAN-based services to humanitarian initiatives such as the **UNHCR**, the UN Refugee Agency, and the **Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC)**.

Highlights from our Projects

Open Data Editor

Released in Oct 2023, ODE maximises data interoperability with no need to write code

Built on top of Frictionless Data specifications and software, in October we released the Open Data Editor (beta), which we hope in the future will become a no-code, easy-to-use application to explore and publish all kinds of data: datasets, tables, charts, maps, stories, and more, with feedback and contributions of interested developers and a broader community. A forever free and open source project powered by open standards and generative AI.

The goal of Open Data Editor (beta) is to make it easier to manage and publish data. Public officers, journalists, gender, social and environmental justice activists currently lack a tool enabling them to publish data, without requiring sophisticated equipment, connectivity or programming skills.

At the end of the year, we received the news that the Patrick J McGovern Foundation will fund the development of the Open Data Editor in 2024, following their commitment to fostering advancements in digital technology solutions that prioritise human-centric outcomes. We want to once again express gratitude for such recognition and support.

Highlights from our Projects

Digital Public Infrastructure for Electoral Processes

Following our recent strategic focus on developing digital public infrastructure, in 2023 we launched an initiative specifically focused on electoral processes. We are organising an alliance of organisations around the world to create open-by-design technology that can be reused to make democratic processes more trustworthy, resilient, and transparent.

Between October and November, we held four round tables with experts from 21 countries in all continents, in three languages (English, Spanish and French), in order to gather critical mass and identify gaps, the most urgent needs and elements that can be reused. This first phase of mapping local and global projects will be the first delivery of this alliance in 2024.

Highlights from our Projects

Open Definition

Open Definition session at RightsCon Costa Rica

In 2023 we prioiritised revisiting and updating the Open Definition. This initiative was a collaborative process led by the Open Knowledge Foundation more than a decade ago that created a consensus among experts by defining openness in relation to data and content. It turned out to be one of the most historically important collaborative works for the open movement.

However, technology and policy have profoundly changed since the 2.1 version, its last update from 2016. Since then, technology, society and conversations around what should be open and shared have expanded in geography and complexity.
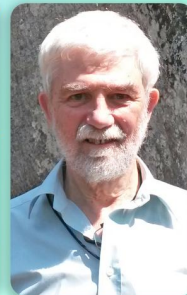
The first steps of this review were carried out in consultative sessions with open communities on three continents, relying on established platforms and events such as MozFest, RightsCon and Wikimania. Thanks to this feedback, we were able to identify the most urgent needs, such as reviewing what is meant by "machine readability" after the challenges posed by artificial intelligence, the abuse of the term "open" by market initiatives (open washing), and ways to broaden the diversity of representation to protect traditional communities.

Highlights from our Projects

100+ Conversations to inspire our new direction

This was one of the key projects to regain our voice as a thought leader in the open movements space. Announced in 2022 but carried out last year, we began holding conversations with 100+ people to discuss the future of open knowledge. We want our strategy to stay grounded in reality and that's why we seek to listen to a diverse set of visions from artists, activists, academics, archivists, thinkers, policymakers, data scientists, educators and community leaders from all over the world.

So far we've held seven conversations, with Balázs Bodó, Zoë Kooyman, Thais Ruiz de Alda, David Eaves, Beatriz Busaniche, Peter Murray-Rust, and Stefania Maurizi, and we're preparing for the 2024 season, in what has become an ongoing project.

Highlights from our Collaborations

Open Data Day

ODD23 community-run event in the Philippines

Open Data Day (ODD) is an annual celebration of open data all over the world, where groups and communities gather to reach out to new people and build new solutions using open data. It is a bottom-up initiative created in 2010 and supported by the Open Knowledge Foundation for the last 8 years.

Participating and supporting these actions is one of our ways to promote the sustainability of the open movement and help circulate knowledge globally in a fair, sustainable and open way.

In 2023, a total of 184 events happened all over the world, in 25+ countries using 15 different languages. After a widely publicised open call funded in partnership with Datopian and Link Digital, we selected 20 small organisations and collectives to receive mini-grants to help promote local events, most of them based in the Global South.

You can read all the amazing #ODD2023 Stories here.

Highlights from our Collaborations

Digital Public Goods Alliance

OKFN and Ushahidi teams in Addis Ababa during the DPGA summit

In 2023 we were very proud to announce our membership to the Digital Public Goods Alliance (DPGA). The DPGA is a multi-stakeholder initiative with a mission to accelerate the attainment of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in low and middle-income countries by facilitating the discovery, development, use of and investment in digital public goods.

This strategic partnership brings together two impact-driven entities with a joint mission: to advance open source as a design principle and strengthen access to digital commons resources worldwide. Three OKFN initiatives are now part of the DPGA's Roadmap: CKAN, Digital Public Infrastructure for Electoral Processes, and Updating the Open Data Commons and the Open Definition.

Our first official interaction as members of the alliance took place in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, during the annual members' meeting. Our workshop in partnership with Ushahidi demonstrated how DPI can help fight information pollution during elections in three stages of the electoral process: voters' registration, campaigns, and election day.

By joining the DPGA, we are helping establish an ecosystem of open-source technologies that will increase the trust and resilience of democracies.

Highlights from our Collaborations

The Tech We Want to Open Governments

On September 4th, together with Open Knowledge Estonia and Open Knowledge Finland, we held a parallel one-day event to the Global Open Government Partnership (OGP) Summit in Tallinn, Estonia, called The Tech We Want to Open Governments.

The event began with an outstanding keynote speech on how to pierce the walls of State secrecy by Italian investigative journalist Stefania Maurizi, followed by a panel composed of Natalia Carfi (Open Data Charter), Mel Flanagan (Nook Studios), open data activist Kateryna Borysenko, and Patricio del Boca (OKFN). After lunch, during which we shared information about projects such as Querido Diário by Open Knowledge Brazil, Bilberry e-invoice, and Care Economy Open Data by Open Data Charter.

In the afternoon, we ran a hands-on session with tech demonstrations in a fair-like mode, featuring stands for Link Digital, Open Knowledge Hub, Transparency International Estonia, Eesti Fotopärand, ParliamentSampo, Texta, Wikimedia Suomi and Wikimedia Eesti.

It was a remarkable moment for the community gathering in Eastern Europe for OGP (in which we were also present) and a great opportunity to carry out joint projects with members of the Open Knowledge Network. The event was kindly sponsored by Link Digital and the Estonian National Foundation of Civil Society (NFCS – KÜSK).

Remembering our top blog posts

How to organise a successful Open Data Day event – a complete guide!

This blog will highlight how you can host/organise/run a successful ODD event in your country by making the best utilisation of the available resources.

February 23, 2023

Updating the Open Definition to meet the challenges of today

OKFN is kicking off the process of rethinking what "open" and "openness" mean beyond licences, for our complex digital infrastructures of today and tomorrow. Join us with your vision to shape a common digital future.

March 16, 2023

CKAN is now a Digital Public Good

The Digital Public Good Alliance approved Open Knowledge's application and has added it to the Digital Public Good Registry.

June 15, 2023

#OpenGov Retrospective – What we've done inspires what comes next

Join us in looking back on open government past projects and in re-igniting the conversations in such a challenging time for democracies.

July 5, 2023

Introducing Open Data Editor (beta): Towards a No-Code Data App for Everyone

OKFN is thrilled to introduce the initial version of the Open Data Editor (beta) today. We hope it will become a no-code, easy-to-use application to explore and publish all kinds of data.

October 4, 2023

New Release: Problematising Strategic Tension Lines in the Digital Commons

As a part of our exploration of the open movement, last May, we hosted a workshop with a small group of the movement's leaders. It was co-organised by our partners at Open Future and Wikimedia Europe.

November 9, 2023

A special thanks to our donors

OKFN would like to thank the generous contributions we received by individual donors in 2023. Your support helps us to fulfil our mission of promoting openness as a design principle and building a fair, sustainable and open future.

The donations directly fund initiatives that drive positive change by supporting open data projects, advocating for policy change, and promoting standards and software that empower individuals and communities. Without your generosity, our mission would remain an aspiration rather than a reality. We are honoured to have you as a valued member of our community.

If you're not yet a donor, consider making a one-off or recurring donation by clicking on the button below.

Donate

How to get involved

Join the Open Knowledge Forum to connect with people across the world pursuing open knowledge and open data projects. To follow the work of the Open Knowledge Foundation, you can connect with us via Twitter/X, LinkedIn, Mastodon, BlueSky, Github, YouTube or subscribe to receive our Newsletter every month which features updates on our projects, network and events.

Open Knowledge is a not-for-profit organisation incorporated in England & Wales with company number 05133759. VAT Registration № GB 984404989.

Check out our Articles of Association, past Annual Reports and Annual Accounts at the Governance page on our website.

Let's build together a world where all knowledge is accessible to everyone

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