As citizens demand accountability, governments keep data locked away

The Web Foundation believes that open data must be:

- **for everyone — a right for all**
- **the data people need**
- **data people can easily use**

In this edition of the Barometer, 1,725 datasets from 15 different sectors across 115 countries were assessed. We found that most governments are not meeting the basic Open Data Charter principles. In most cases, the right policies are not in place, nor is the breadth and quality of the datasets released sufficient.

Almost all countries in the MENA region are backsliding on open data, with rankings and scores down since the previous Barometer.

There is not one truly open dataset in the region, out of the 180 datasets we analysed in our study.

Due to a lack of civil society engagement with open data, there is little pressure for governments to make data public, particularly in relation to social issues.

General regional highlights and findings

Climbing one place, Israel is the only country in the MENA region to improve its ranking in the fourth edition, and remains the only country in the top 50 of the global ranking. In general, countries in the region have made no progress on open data implementation and barely improved on open data readiness. The momentum the region had when most countries began their initiatives a few years ago appears to have faded.

No government in the region publishes data, open or closed, in some areas usually considered essential to improve social policy or government accountability. While some do recognise the potential of open data to drive economic development, the general absence of political leadership in this area has led to a lack of open data awareness, capacity and legal frameworks.

### Open Data Barometer 4th Edition Regional Ranking

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Global Rank</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Readiness</th>
<th>Implementation</th>
<th>Impact</th>
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</table>

Produced by: [Open Data Barometer](opendatabarometer.org)
Middle East and North Africa

Readiness for open data initiatives

- **Government Policies**: 45/36
- **Government Action**: 44/35
- **Citizens and Civil Rights**: 53/25
- **Entrepreneurs and Business**: 43/40

Some countries, including Israel and Saudi Arabia, have recently started working to improve their open data strategies.

Countries have shown no, or very little, progress on their respective open government data agendas. No government has adopted the Open Data Charter, making the region one of only two in our analysis (alongside the Caribbean) with no Charter adoptees.

Implementation of open data programmes

- **Innovation Datasets**: 34/20
- **Social Policy Datasets**: 36/24
- **Accountability Datasets**: 27/17

Some datasets in the region are frequently available — such as national census, government budget and international trade data — although not as truly open data.

Only 66% of data in our analysis was available online. Most data in the MENA region is locked with legal or technical restrictions. Land ownership, government spending and company registers are the least accessible datasets in the region.

Impact that open data is having

- **Political Impact**: 24/10
- **Social Impact**: 15/4
- **Economic Impact**: 16/9

While social impact has been non-existent in the past, the region showed the first signs of impact in this edition. For example, an Israeli startup is using available air quality data to combat pollution.

With the exception of some limited examples in Israel, the region is failing to harness the impact of open data. It is even missing out on the kind of economic impacts that are commonplace in the rest of the world.

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