Data Ecosystem Prototype Documentation

Release 0.1

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INTRODUCTION

The Federal Chancellery supports "prototypes that accelerate the further development of the Swiss data ecosystem. These prototypes are intended to help gain experience with interoperable and trustworthy data spaces." Our proposal "Gouvernanz und gemeinnütziges Geschäftsmodell für eine Dateninfrastruktur für politische Geschäfte (OpenParlData.ch)" was accepted in Summer 2025. Work started in the subsequent Fall. We will document our progress in this report.

At the center of our "prototype" is the following question: **How can we operate an (open) data infrastructure sustainably and in the public interest?** The question can be divided into the following sub-questions:

1. How can we govern it democratically and value-based?

2. How can we operate it efficiently and financially sustainable?

3. What can we learn from this? What synergies are there? (cf. "legislative data space")

1.1 Status Quo (DE)

Gesamtvorhaben: Ob als Einwohner:in, Journalist:in, Politiker:in, Verwaltungsangestellte:r, Wissenschaftler:in, in Unternehmen oder zivilgesellschaftlichen Organisationen – aktuell ist es nur mit hohem Aufwand oder Kosten möglich, ein spezifisches politisches Thema auf unterschiedlichen föderalen Ebenen oder ein politisches Geschäft über den ganzen Politik-Zyklus hinweg zu verfolgen . Der Grund: Die Schweizer Parlamente veröffentlichen ihre Daten in unterschiedlichen Formaten, Strukturen und Qualitäten, die nicht harmonisiert, interoperabel und verknüpft sind. Es gibt keine kostenfreie oder -günstige Möglichkeit, Daten von mehreren Parlamenten strukturiert zu beziehen. Die fehlende Standardisierung erschwert den genannten Akteuren den Zugang und die (Nach-)Nutzung der Parlamentsdaten und Daten zu politischen Geschäften. Dies stellt eine unnötige Barriere für unsere Demokratie dar. Bis jetzt existiert kein – staatlicher oder nichtstaatlicher – Akteur, der sich der Aufgabe angenommen hat, die Daten des Bundes, der Kantone und der Städte zu harmonisieren, geschweige denn "offen" und maschinenlesbar zur Verfügung zu stellen. Die Bereitstellung von qualitativ hochwertigen Daten zieht Kosten nach sich, die gedeckt werden müssen. Aus demokratiepolitischer Sicht müssen die Daten aber für alle Akteure kostenlos zugänglich sein. Es ergibt sich also ein Trittbrettfahrerproblem bei der Finanzierung, vergleichbar mit (anderen) Open Source Software (OSS) Projekten. Im Rahmen des Prototyps stellt sich deshalb die Herausforderung, wie und durch welche Trägerschaft eine offene Dateninfrastruktur nachhaltig, demokratisch, zuverlässig und effizient betrieben werden kann. Neben öffentlichen Parlamentsdaten werden insbesondere zwischen Parlamenten und den zugehörigen Exekutiven zahlreiche Daten zu politischen Geschäften geteilt (teilweise auch interföderal). Diese Daten sind oft nicht harmonisiert und werden nicht machine-to-machine bzw. mit Reibungsverlust übertragen. Auch Dritte bieten Daten gegen Entgelt an (z.B. Smartvote-Daten von Politools).

1.2 Approach (DE)

Im Rahmen des Gesamtvorhabens bauen wir eine offene Infrastruktur auf, die Parlamentsdaten aller föderalen Ebenen zusammenträgt und zur Verfügung stellt. Die Daten werden über eine Schnittstelle (API) und eine Weboberfläche (Minimal GUI) frei zugänglich und durchsuchbar gemacht. So legen wir den Grundstein für eine offene Nachnutzung der strukturiert erfassten Daten und fördern Transparenz, Partizipation und Innovation in der Schweizer Politik. Bestehende Initiativen und Projekte aus Forschung, Wirtschaft und Zivilgesellschaft, arbeiten aktuell lediglich mit der API der Parlamentsdienste CH. Diese Initiativen können im Rahmen des Gesamtvorhabens auch Daten von Kantonen und Gemeinden einbeziehen. Damit eröffnen sich grundsätzlich neue Anwendungsfelder für die Nutzung und Analyse von Schweizer Parlamentsdaten. Darüber hinaus zielt das Gesamtvorhaben darauf ab, die Datenbereitstellung und -strukturierung bei den Parlamenten zu optimieren und einen einheitlichen eCH-Standard zu etablieren. So soll das Problem der Harmonisierung zukünftig bereits an der Quelle – insbesondere auch den Anbieter:innen der Ratsinformationssystemen (RIS) – gelöst werden. Der Standard in Kombination mit einer Referenzimplementierung soll auch als Orientierung für (insbesondere kleine) Gemeinden dienen. Im Rahmen des Prototyps konzipieren und implementieren wir eine Gouvernanz und ein (gemeinnütziges) Geschäftsmodell für die oben genannte Dateninfrastruktur. Grundlagen sind die Anforderungen und Prinzipien: Offenheit der Daten und Software, Ethik, Verlässlichkeit und Qualität, Transparenz, Partizipation, Nachhaltigkeit etc.. Die Beteiligung der wichtigen Stakeholder soll einen nachhaltigen und gemeinnützig orientierten Betrieb gewährleisten. Zusätzlich evaluieren wir, inwiefern es ein Bedürfnis für einen "Datenraum Politik" gibt (inkl. möglicher Anwendungsfälle). Hierfür wird bewertet, ob und inwiefern das Gesamtvorhaben und der Prototyp die Grundlage dafür sein können. Ebenfalls werden mögliche Synergien (Interoperabilität, Standards, offene Metadaten, Gouvernanz, Geschäftsmodell etc.) evaluiert. Dafür führen wir Stakeholder-Interviews durch und beziehen diese Fragestellungen bzw. Perspektive von Data Sharing bei der Erarbeitung des Geschäftsmodells und der Gouvernanz mit ein.

1.3 Involved Stakeholders = Target Groups

- **Companies**: Glue, Fortae, polsan, DemoSquare, Adorable Squid

- **Civil society**: Opendata.ch, CH+, Politools (Smartvote)

- **Academia**: UZH, PHZ, ZHAW, APS,

- **Parliaments and government+**: Basel-Stadt, Bern, EDK, Thurgau

- **Journalists**: WAV, tbd

BUSINESS MODEL

2.1 Project Goals and Key Metrics

2.1.1 Goals

As part of the prototype (i.e. project), we are designing and implementing a non-profit business model that allows us to make the core data[1] openly available while at the same time financing (and, if necessary, further developing) the data infrastructure in a sustainable manner. In this way, we are addressing the collective action problem. The findings regarding use cases, pricing, revenue, and cost models, services provided, and cost structures will be relevant for the data ecosystem. The following questions are central to this[2]:

- What are the goals and principles of the data infrastructure (see also Governance)?

- What are the use cases based on the data infrastructure?

- What resources and activities are needed to maintain and, if necessary, expand the operation of the data infrastructure?

- What revenue streams (e.g., patron memberships, freemium, feature/data requests, etc.) can contribute to the financing of the operation (and, if necessary, further development) of a data infrastructure whose core data can be obtained free of charge, and to what extent?

    – What can we learn from (non-)functioning OSS communities and digital commons projects (e.g., Wikipedia and OpenStreetMap)?

- How can stakeholders be incentivized to contribute their (enriched[3]) data and other contributions (code, etc.) to the data infrastructure? (see also Governance)

    – What can we learn from (non-)functioning OSS communities and digital commons projects?

- How can third parties (technically) "contribute" data or offer interoperable data in a machine-readable format? (see Data Space Politics)

    – What can we learn from (non-)functioning OSS communities and digital commons projects?

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[1] In this case: data made publicly available by parliaments on their websites or via API. Additional data (including from third parties) could be offered for a fee.

[2] In addressing these questions, we consider the scenario of a legislative data space.

[3] e.g., classification of business topics or IDs for parliamentarians who are members of several parliaments.

2.1.2 Key Metrics

- Objectives and principles defined and documented (Q4 2025)

- Use cases defined and documented (Q4 2025)

- Budget for 2026–2027 defined (Q4 2025)

- Sources of income evaluated and documented ex ante (Q4 2025) and ex post (Q3 2026)

- Incentives for contribution implemented and documented* (Q2 2026)

- Business model implemented and documented (Q2 2026)

- → Income covers costs (Q4 2026)

2.2 Objectives and Principles

In accordance with the Data Space Support Center's (DSSC) Blueprint v2.0, we define the thematic scope, objectives and principles of the data infrastructure:

2.2.1 Thematic Scope

Our infrastructure focuses on harmonized (open) data on legislative processes produced by Swiss parliaments and other actors (executive branches, researchers etc.). It currently includes public data[1] provided by 78 parliaments. Private legislative data can be included at a later stage (cf. Data Space).

2.2.2 Objectives

The data infrastructure's objective is to improve 1) democracy (transparency, accountability, and participation), 2) performance (efficiency and data quality), and 3) innovation in Swiss politics i.e. Swiss legislative processes through data exchange and use:

1. **Democracy (transparency, accountability, and participation)**: We make data from Swiss parliaments accessible and (directly or indirectly) usable for researchers, journalists, civil society organizations and the public. Their observations and analyses will make the Swiss political process more transparent. Political actors and processes will be more accountable and gain democratic legitimacy. We will directly or indirectly (through tools) enable people and organizations to more effectively engage in political processes and advocate for their interests. All of this will help to strengthen Swiss democracy.

2. **Performance**: Our initiative should improve the performance of the Swiss legislative information system: make data provision and use more efficient through standardized APIs, improve data quality through standards, higher exposure and feedback loops and improve coordination and collaboration between actors.

3. **Innovation**: Our data infrastructure should enable the creation of new services and business models. Providers of council information systems receive data standards for political proceedings, which make it easier to scale their offerings and, where applicable, reduce lock-in effects, thereby fostering competition and innovation. (Potential) providers of political monitoring and civic tech tools can integrate legislative data more easily and cost-effectively and focus on innovative applications and features.

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[1] During this project we will evaluate the inclusion of private data.

In accordance with the DSSC's Starter Kit for Data Space Designers our data infrastructure business-case pattern can be foremost classified as "Greater Common Good": "Public and private sector share data for a greater common, societal goal (e.g., climate protection)." Extending it into a legislative data space would add the business-case pattern of "Cost Sharing": "Data space participants share their data to meet shared requirements (e.g., compliance, process efficiency, transparency). Every member saves money and time by sharing the burden.".

2.2.3 Principles

The following principles are the result from a stakeholder workshop and have been inspired by the Code of Conduct for operating trustworthy data spaces based on digital self-determination and the Swiss Data Ecosystem's principles:

Transparency and Openness

Transparency enables trust.

This infrastructure is developed in the open. Decisions are made and communicated openly. Stakeholders and interested parties are regularly and proactively informed about upcoming changes and developments. Information on the characteristics, quality, terms of usage and provenance of our data (products) is easily accessible (cf. data as a product).

The data infrastructure's code is open source. We provide the unenriched data we collect from parliaments via their websites or via APIs ("core data") as open data. Additional data and services may be offered for a fee.

Public Interest/Common Good

This infrastructure should benefit the many, not the few. It should be human-centered, fair to participants and non-participants, accessible, digitally self-determined[2], privacy-preserving[2], secure and should not cause harm.

Participation

This infrastructure should directly or indirectly enable people and organizations to more effectively engage in political processes.

The infrastructure is built collaboratively. Participation in the initiative should be open to anyone sharing our values and adhering to our principles[4], rules and guidelines. Stakeholders or their representatives shall be involved in decisions on the data infrastructure. Participation (decision-making as well as data provision and usage itself) must take into account asymmetrical power and resource distributions among stakeholders.

Participants who violate rules should face sanctions that increase in severity for repeat offenses.[5] Mechanisms and arenas are in place to fairly and efficiently (rapidly, low cost) resolve conflicts between participants[5].

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[2] Our data infrastructure currently does not involve personal data that is not already public. Thus, privacy and digital self-determination are not standalone principles (yet).

[4] This includes the choice of licenses such as Creative Commons Attribution Licence (CC BY), Open Data Commons Open Database License (ODbL) or a value-based license.

[5] Based on the principles for managing common-pool resources: Ostrom, E. (1990). Governing the Commons: The Evolution of Institutions for Collective Action. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Efficiency, Quality and Reliability

We will make the data provision and use of Swiss legislative data more efficient through standardized APIs.

Generally, we provide information from Swiss parliaments' websites *as is*, correcting obvious errors and harmonizing them according to standards[3]. We have measures in place to improve data quality. We and our users can feedback errors directly to parliaments (as well as our users to us) to contribute to higher data quality. We continuously monitor data and service (API) quality involving data providers and being accountable to data users[Page 5, 5].

Our initiative promotes the once-only principle and interoperability adhering to Swiss and international good practices and standards and cooperating with like-minded initiatives in Switzerland and abroad. We strive for decentralization by enabling Swiss parliaments (and their providers) and other actors to provide harmonized (open) data via APIs by developing and promoting standards and enabling parliaments and their providers. This will allow us to gradually phase out our crawlers.

Sustainability

Our data infrastructure should be environmentally, socially and economically sustainable. All profit must be reinvested and cannot be extracted (non-profit).

2.3 Revenue Streams

The collection, transformation and provision of high-quality data incurs costs[1] that have to be covered. From a democratic perspective, however, legislative data should be easily accessible (i.e. open) to (political) actors and citizens to enable them to be informed and participate. Thus, we want to provide "core data", meaning unrefined data we collect from parliaments via their websites or via APIs free of charge. This results in a collective action problem with regard to financing, comparable to (other) open source software (OSS) and digital commons projects.[2] Next, we will explore different business models within literature and existing OSS, digital commons, open data and data space initiatives and projects with the sole focus of deriving and evaluating possible revenue streams in regard to our data infrastructure *ex ante*. Therefore, the following list of business models is neither exhaustive nor free of overlapping characteristics.

> **Legend:** 1 = first priority, focus during prototype; 2 = second, future priority; 3 = last priority or not applicable

2.3.1 Freemium Business Models

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[3] As soon as they exist. The publication of eCH standards is planned for 2026 and 2027.
[1] In our case roughly CHF 100'000 p.a.
[2] https://www.sprind.org/taten/projekte/sovereign-tech-fund

Freemium Business Models

Business Model[3]	Description[3]	Revenue Streams	Evaluation	Prio	Expected Revenue 26 (CHF)
Freemium	Giving away a *core* product/service for free and selling a premium product/service via a subscription or usage fee	Charge usage fees for:• enriched or additional (including third party) data• advanced analytics• real-time data• extensive API use[4]	Given the goals of the project, we will further evaluate users needs to determine demand for enriched or additional data (e.g. policy lifecycle, text data, private data; cf. Use Cases and Contributions) and analytics comparing them to respective implementation costs and deciding on offerings.At the current stage, we offer real-time (daily) core data without any rate limits. Implementing an API gateway with rate limits and/or free access to e.g. weekly or monthly updated data would be possible with reasonable effort and would go in line with our principles.	1	50'000 (including membership fees and enterprise licenses)
Membership, Cooperative Model[5]	Users, providers and contributors become members of the data intermediary and are granted access to *governance privileges* and potentially premium products/services (cf. Freemium).	Tiered membership fees	Given the principles and continuous involvement of stakeholders, a membership model including governance privileges would be obvious. We will evaluate possible membership tiers during the project including whether potential premium products/services (cf. Freemium) should be offered through membership tiers or through separate subscription or usage fees (decoupling governance and access).	1	see above
Dual Licensing	Applying either open (free) or closed (paid-for) licences to the product/service under different conditions	(Tiered) closed licenses:• for commercial usage• for LLMs• based on company size or revenue from usage• including service level agreements	During the project, we will evaluate whether it is more feasible to charge fees based on the *kind and/or amount* of data used (cf. Freemium) or the *purpose* for which it is used (Dual License).	1	see above
Charging for Changes	Charging the data subjects to include or update their information (especially if they are obliged to provide information to a public body e.g. a register)	Charge parliaments the cost to integrate and update their data	Parliaments are not obliged to provide their data neither as OGD nor to a central database. However, parliaments could contribute to data integration due to intrinsic or extrinsic (political pressure[6]) motivation. This could go hand in hand with supplying their data as OGD (ideally through an API) and according to eCH standards (as well as consulting) reducing our integration costs. This option will be explored from *2027*.	2	0
Open Source Software (OSS)	Offering OSS to enable businesses to use source code for free but charge on an 'added-value' basis and through dual licensing	E.g. Charge companies for commercial usage of *software*	Our software is fully open source (cf. principles) and has no unique selling point.	3	-
Free, as Branded Advertising	Providing data to promote a company and its products	*Indirect*	As a sole data infrastructure, there is no company or product to advertise and subsidize. Furthermore, the costs of distribution and usage are not very low which is a prerequisite.[3]	3	-

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[3] data.europa.eu, Zeleti et al., Charalabidis et al.

[4] API Architektur Bund (7.3.3 Preismodelle)

[5] Verhulst et al. (2025)

[6] As part of this initiative, we plan to lobby for the implementation of *eCH standards* at all federal levels as soon as they exist.

2.3.2 Premium Business Models

Premium Business Models

Business Model[I]	Description[Page 7, 3]	Revenue Streams	Evaluation	Prio	Expected Revenue 26 (CHF)
Sponsorship	Giving away a product/service for free while receiving money from sponsors or advertisers (uncoupling usage and funding)	• One-time or recurring donations by data users, beneficiaries and supporters• One-time or recurring grants by institutional funders (governmental, philanthropic)	• So far, we have been relatively successful with acquiring institutional funding. Especially during the scale up phase of the infrastructure, we will depend on grants and donations to maintain and expand our data infrastructure.	1	100'000
Support and Services	Selling support and services, such as training, technical support, or consulting related to the core product/service (but disentangled from their licenses)	• Consult parliaments to publish their data as OGD and/or eCH standard compliant• Selling:∘ prioritisation on features and bug fixes (both in data and its provision)∘ customer support∘ training to data users∘ data analysis ∘ certification of software implementations (e.g. council information systems)	As usage proliferates we will be confronted with requests for support and services which we can then explore further.	1	20'000
Demand-oriented Platform	Intermediaries charge *users* for the added value built into the original (raw) data through aggregation, curation and enrichment activities that allow aligning the final output with users' needs.	see Freemium	This business model essentially describes what we are doing but the core data will be free and open.	-	cf. Freemium
Supply-oriented Platform	Intermediaries charge *data providers* a monthly fee to manage, store and maintain their data.	Charge parliaments	This is a role currently filled by suppliers of council information systems. They are a crucial partner in our endeavor when it comes to developing and implementing eCH standards and APIs. Taking this role would furthermore contradict the principles of a data space.	3	-
White-label Development	Offering a product/service to other companies for them to customise, brand and market it	Charge companies for white-labeling	Since we currently only supply open data this is not feasible.	3	-
Premium	Offering high-end services and products (while usually seeking a high-profit margin while targeting a lower sales volume)	Selling API access through a subscription or usage fee	Making even the core data subject to a fee would contradict our principles and goals of the initiative.	3	-

2.3.3 Cost-saving Business Models

Cost-saving Business Models

Business Model[Page 7, 3]	Description[Page 7, 3]	Revenue Streams	Evaluation	Prio	Expected Revenue 26 (CHF)
Increasing Quality through Participation / Crowdsourcing	Maintaining the data and increasing its quality by enlisting the help (update, cleaning, feedback) of other parties who benefit from having the data (This business model does not completely cover costs)	Enable scientists, journalists, developers, public servants and interested parties to contribute to reduce costs; no revenue	In line with the goals of the project, we will explore enabling users to contribute (cf. Contribution).	1	0
Cost Reduction	Reducing overall publishing costs through proactively publishing FAIR "raw" data meeting the needs of different target groups (instead of different specialized products or reactively answering to freedom of information (FOI) requests only catering to individual target groups)	None	Since we are a data intermediary our data is not affected by FOI and OGD laws.	3	-

2.3.4 Further Business Models

Further Business Models

Business Model[Page 7, 3]	Description[Page 7, 3]	Revenue Streams	Evaluation	Prio	Expected Revenue 26 (CHF)
Supporting Primary Business	Providing data naturally supports the primary business goal of the organisation e.g. by other organisations building data-driven products that can be used by the data provider or drive revenue or efficiency of its products/services	None	As a data infrastructure there is no other primary business goal.	3	-
Infrastructural Razor and Blades	Datasets are stored for free on cloud computing platforms being accessible by everyone via APIs ("razor") while re-users are charged only for the computing power that they employ on-demand in as-a-service mode ("blades"). This model is limited to contexts and domains in which the computational costs are significant.	Charging users for API calls	In our case, computational costs are not significant.	3	-

2.4 Budget 2026

Topic	Description	Annual Costs (CHF)
Server (current)	Dedicated Hetzner server (€53/month)	600
Server (future)	1 Managed VM (8 CPU / 64 GB RAM / 500 GB) Hardware via Stepping Stone• Operation and Maintenance incl OS Updates• 500 CHF / month	6000
System Administration	Operations & maintenance:• software updates• ~1 day/month → 8 h × 150 CHF	15'000
Data Import[1]	Fixing errors, updating and maintaining ETL pipelines.~1 day/week → ~50 days/year → 400 h × 140 CHF	60'000
Data Quality	Monitor and improve data quality (including third-parties) ~1 day/month → 8 h × 150 CHF	15'000
Stakeholder Engagement	Regular stakeholder engagement, community management and communication~2 days/month → 16h × 150 CHF	30'000
Administration and Fundraising	Financial and legal (e.g. compliance) administration, meetings, reporting, coordination and fundraising ~2 days/month → 16 h × 150 CHF	30'000
Total		**156'000**

2.5 Use Cases

2.5.1 Introduction

We define and document use cases focusing on target groups that are in line with our objectives and principles and have not yet been addressed by commercial providers: civil society organizations (CSOs), (data) journalists, researchers, and intercantonal conferences. Governments and parliaments will be addressed in a later stage of the project (cf. Data Space). The use case documentation can be considered a "living document", facilitating a shared understanding of the problems and use cases and elaborating as we develop the project further. Our approach was and will be inspired by Building Block Use Case Development, DSSC, Use Case Playbook, Data Sharing Coalition, Use Case Blueprint, Data Sharing Coalition and SINE Foundation's Use Case Template (not publicly available).

A priori, there seem to be overlap between the use cases for CSOs, intercantonal conferences and journalists (continuous tool-assisted political monitoring) as well as between research and data journalism (one-time or recurring data analyses). Thus, we will further evaluate synergies and they might be (partially) consolidated at a later stage depending on exact user needs and requirements.

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[1] Costs could be reduced through contributions by volunteers.

2.5.2 Monitoring by Intercantonal Conferences

User Story – In a Nutshell

As a subject specialist/research associate at an intercantonal conference, I want to continuously monitor certain political topics and bills on the national and cantonal level in order to reliably provide the relevant committees, specialist conferences, and specialist agencies with critical policy-making information.

Status Quo and Problem

In federalist Switzerland, more than a dozen intercantonal conferences foster exchange and cooperation between the 26 cantonal authorities and represent their interests vis-à-vis the federal government for their respective topics such as education (EDK), health (GDK), finance (FDK), and security (KKJPD)[1]. Comprehensive monitoring of political affairs in 27 unharmonized parliaments is currently very time-consuming, resource-intensive (i.e. costly) and error prone. Furthermore, in a manual process, existing synergies between intercantonal conferences cannot be used. All this makes it challenging to reliably provide the relevant committees, specialist conferences, and specialist agencies with critical policy-making information.

Various intercantonal conferences (KdK, SODK, GDK, EDK, and KKJPD) are currently making efforts to reorganize the monitoring of political affairs or modernize existing processes.

Use Case

OpenParlData.ch imports, cleans, harmonizes and openly publishes data from Swiss parliaments. It currently offers public data on political actors, parliamentary proceedings, decrees, consultations, votes and more from 78 parliaments. Directly or more likely indirectly (via tool) using our API *continuously* supplying harmonized legislative data, subject specialists/research associates at intercantonal conferences can more efficiently and comprehensively. . .

- monitor and compare progress on (specific) bills relating to a certain topic at different federal levels,

- monitor (parliamentary) motions on certain topics at different federal levels,

- monitor (topical) trends in parliaments in their respective field,

- monitor and compare decrees relating to their respective topics at different federal levels,

- monitor politicians/parties who comment on topical issues (including the extent of their comments), and thereby. . .

- promote exchange and collaboration between cantons and improve cantonal participation in federal political processes.

Furthermore, intercantonal conferences can share enriched data and insights and coordinate their activities. Tool providers can share enriched data (e.g. topic classification) with our data infrastructure.

Current scale

Lead by our project partner EDK and their specialist agency IDES, we are currently gathering the requirements of all interested conferences in order to develop a detailed project application for a joint solution. Their tool should focus primarily on being easy to use and integrate with existing systems.

Intercantonal conferences can potentially be a strategic partner/multiplier when it comes to cantonal parliaments and governments implementing eCH standards and providing Open Government Data.

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[1] https://haus-der-kantone.ch/organisationen

2.5.3 Advocacy (Monitoring) by CSOs

User Story – In a Nutshell

As an advocacy/public policy manager at a civil society organisation, I want to monitor certain political topics and bills at all federal levels continuously, comprehensively and efficiently, in order to participate more effectively in political processes.

Status Quo and Problem

In Switzerland the most important political decisions are not only made on the national but also on the cantonal and municipal level (26 cantons, 461 municipalities). Currently, individual interests have more influence on law-making than those of a majority of society or the planet i.e. civil society organisations (CSOs) are not as influential as corporate lobbyists.[1] Two reasons for this, both connecting to money, are asymmetries in power and resources (time and money). A resource-intensive (time for manual labor or license fees for commercial monitoring tools) part of advocacy is the monitoring of political issues through their lifecycles and at all federal levels. The reason for this is that parliamentary data in Switzerland is currently not harmonized and easily accessible and it is not possible without a vast amount of resources to build (monitoring) tools based on this data.[2]

Use Case

OpenParlData.ch imports, cleans, harmonizes and openly publishes data from Swiss parliaments. It currently offers public data on political actors, parliamentary proceedings, decrees, consultations, votes and more from 78 parliaments. Directly or more likely indirectly (via tool) using our API *continuously* supplying harmonized legislative data, advocacy/public policy managers at CSOs can more effectively and efficiently[3]...

- automatically monitor bills/items of business ("Geschäfte") relating to a certain topic at all federal levels,

- follow a bill (including related bills[4]) through its lifecycle including parliamentary commissions,[5]

- easily integrate monitoring data into their advocacy processes, and thereby...

- create insights and more effectively participate[6] in political processes and advocate for the public interest.

Furthermore, allied CSOs can share enriched data and insights and coordinate their activities. Tool providers can share enriched data (e.g. topic classification) with our data infrastructure.

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[1] In the Swiss militia system, members of parliament (MPs) have limited resources (time and money). CSOs compete with special interest groups for MP's attention and time. They can provide two highly valued goods to MPs: insider/technical/detail knowledge of their field of competence and legitimacy towards their voters to signal that their wishes are heard.

[2] The problem currently is not solved because no official institution is in charge of harmonizing and providing the data and parliaments in Switzerland are not affected by Open Government Data laws.

[3] Bühlmann, Rouven ... (add link to paper)

[4] e.g. a parliamentary debate is related to a consultation procedure of the same law

[5] Due to insufficient data published by parliaments this is not yet comprehensibly possible through our API. The implementation of an eCH standard should improve linkability between bills.

[6] Including knowing when and where to act and who to contact e.g. MPs.

Current scale

Our project partner Adorable Squid is currently developing a political monitoring tool for CSOs (*transParliament*) using our data infrastructure. It is currently in a prototype state. Our project partners Glue, Polsan and the Swiss Association of Municipalities with their monitoring tool POLITmonitor as well as Fortae with their consultation tool Demokratis.ch will switch to our API in the upcoming months. The former furthermore plan a comprehensive update of POLITmonitor. Our partner DemoSquare is currently evaluating the integration of our cantonal and municipal data.[7]

2.5.4 Scientific Data Analysis

User Story – In a Nutshell

As a political scientist, legal scholar or linguist, I want to efficiently analyze data on political processes, issues, actors, decrees, and more in order to generate scientific insights into Swiss politics, policy and/or polity.

Status Quo and Problem

In the Swiss political system, characteristic of federalism, political decisions are made at different jurisdictional levels, from municipal over cantonal to federal. For the study of Swiss politics and policy-making, taking into account this multi-level structure is crucial. Especially given the subsidiarity principle in Switzerland, which often delegates relevant decision-making power to lower federal levels. However, the effort for researchers to obtain subnational legislative data is disproportionately large (i.e. time-consuming and/or costly). Data is mostly not machine-readable, not harmonized and dispersed across 26 cantonal and 461 municipal parliaments. Thus, many scientific analyses focus on national data, missing an important part of the picture, and efforts of the research community to obtain lower-level data are often one-off efforts and create duplicated, but not harmonized datasets, which is very inefficient.

Use Case

OpenParlData.ch imports, cleans, harmonizes and openly publishes data from Swiss parliaments. It currently offers public data on political actors, parliamentary proceedings, decrees, consultations, votes and more from 78 parliaments. Using our API supplying harmonized legislative data[1], political scientists, legal scholars or linguists can (more efficiently) analyze:

- progress and success (factors) of bills e.g. relating to certain topics or by specific political actors at different federal levels,[2]

- topical trends on political discourses in parliaments and how certain topics make it onto the legislative agenda and others do not,

- decrees including their origins (e.g. legislative footprint) and how policies diffuse across different stages at different federal levels,

- politicians' actions (including voting behavior) and how it reflects on their parties (i.e. party cohesion), and

- links between legislative data and other data sources (including media coverage, campaign donations or company registry to better understand the interplay between the parliamentary, media and economic arena, and thereby. . .

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[7] They currently only cover national politics using the parliamentary services' API.

[1] As opposed to political monitoring, scientific analyses usually do not require a continuous data supply i.e. real-time data. This might make a "data dump" more attractive for them.

[2] Being able to filter by topics, specific actors or different levels proves highly beneficial to the analysis.

- efficiently generate scientific insights into Swiss politics, policy and/or polity (also for parliaments and governments).

The harmonized structure of our data also enables researchers to make their cleaned and/or enriched data available to other researchers in an interoperable way to use synergies and gain relevance. This relates for example to the sharing and retraining of pre-trained machine learning classifiers, topic models, data processing pipelines or open source software packages for analysis of Swiss parliamentary data. Thus, OpenParlData.ch significantly raises the capacity of an entire research ecosystem.

Current scale

We are currently in close contact with researchers from multiple universities (UZH, PHZ, ZHAW, University of Bern, USI) that plan to use our data in ongoing (e.g. EPTI)[3] or planned projects (pending funding).

2.5.5 Journalistic Data Analysis

User Story

As a data journalist, I want to analyze and visualize parliamentary proceedings, decrees, consultations, political actors and votes in parliament in order to inform and/or entertain my readers.

Problem and Status Quo

In the Swiss political system, important political decisions are made at the subnational (cantonal or municipal) level (cf. subsidiarity). However, the effort for data journalists to obtain subnational legislative data is disproportionately large (i.e. time-consuming and/or costly). Data is mostly not machine-readable, not harmonized and dispersed across 26 cantonal and 461 municipal parliaments. Thus, many news articles containing data analyses and visualizations focus on national data, missing an important part of the picture, and efforts of data journalists to obtain lower-level data are often one-off efforts and create duplicated, but not harmonized datasets, which is very inefficient.

Use Case

OpenParlData.ch imports, cleans, harmonizes and openly publishes data from Swiss parliaments. It currently offers public data on political actors, parliamentary proceedings, decrees, consultations, votes and more from 78 parliaments. Using our API supplying harmonized legislative data, data journalists can analyze and/or visualize e.g. . . .

- (topical) trends and political discourse in parliaments,

- progress and success of bills e.g. relating to certain topics or by specific political actors at different federal levels,

- politicians' and parties' actions (e.g. voting behavior), and thereby. . .

- efficiently inform and/or entertain their readers and contribute to an informed public.

The harmonized structure of our data also enables data journalists to share cleaned and/or enriched data interoperably as well as topic models and data processing pipelines. This enables reproducing existing analyses and visualizations for different parliaments (i.e. regions).

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[3] *Zusatzmodul "Kantonsratsdebatten und Regierungsgeschäfte" im Projekt "Educational Policy Transparency Interface"*: "Mit dem Projekt wird auch generell getestet, wie diese hochstrukturierten Daten in die LiRI Corpus Platform importiert werden können. Die Daten sind dank des Projekts OpenParlData zugänglich."

Current scale

The latter has already happened with a data journalist from Le Temps using our data to analyze voting behavior in the Grand Conseil of Geneva after having already done the same analysis for the National Council. Furthermore, a journalist from 20 Minuten already built an LLM for journalists using our API: https://huggingface.co/spaces/tomvaillant/cojournalist-data. It is currently in private beta.

2.5.6 Monitoring by Journalists

User Story

As a journalist, I want to search and monitor certain political issues and bills at all federal levels continuously, comprehensively and efficiently, in order to inform my readers about current political events.

Problem and Status Quo

In the Swiss political system, important political decisions are made at the subnational (cantonal or municipal) level (cf. subsidiarity). However, the effort for journalists to obtain information and be up to date on subnational political events is disproportionately large (i.e. time-consuming and/or costly). Data is mostly not machine-readable, not harmonized and dispersed across 26 cantonal and 461 municipal parliaments.

Use Case

OpenParlData.ch imports, cleans, harmonizes and openly publishes data from Swiss parliaments. It currently offers public data on political actors, parliamentary proceedings, decrees, consultations, votes and more from 78 parliaments. Via a tool using our API *continuously* supplying harmonized legislative data, journalists can more efficiently and comprehensively...

- search for current political events relating to a specific topic across cantons,

- monitor political issues and trends at different federal levels,

- monitor specific bills, and thereby...

- efficiently inform and/or entertain their readers and contribute to an informed public.

Furthermore, journalists can share enriched data and insights within news organizations. Tool providers can share enriched data with our data infrastructure.

Current scale

Cf. Journalistic Data Analysis

2.5.7 Parliaments – Governments

A potential legislative data space would facilitate the exchange of data and information between parliaments and administrations, within administrations, between the federal government and cantons, and, if necessary, between administrations of different cantons.

This use case will be explored in Q2 2026 (cf. Data Space)

REFERENCES