

Guiding Principles for Building and Implementing Data Partnerships

Purpose

The purpose of these guiding principles is to inform the development and implementation of appropriate and responsible data partnerships brokered by the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data (GPSDD) between government entities, the private sector, development agencies, civil society, academia and others. These principles are intended to inform practices that avoid harm to individuals, social groups and national systems, and that build partnerships with lasting impact, contributing towards a robust, ethical data ecosystem. They encourage stakeholders to understand ethical considerations, address them within partnerships, and support responsible innovation.

Using this principles-based approach to building data partnerships will reduce the risks of adverse impacts on people and planet and ensure that GPSDD's guidance, advice and facilitation contribute to building a strong and fair system for the production, analysis and use of data for decision making.

Context

The GPSDD secretariat and network has five years of experience supporting a range of data partnerships. In that time, we have applied ethical standards to individual partnerships on a case by case basis, guided by the ethics committee of our Board. We have developed a [GPSDD Ethics and Integrity Framework](#), and within the secretariat team have conducted training to ensure that all team members are equipped to raise concerns and tackle problems.

We have been informed by a number of data and partnership ethics frameworks and guidelines from other sources, including the [Guidelines on Cooperation between the United Nations and the Business Sector](#), the [UK Government Digital Service's Data Ethics Framework](#), the [UN Global Pulse Risks, Harms, and Benefits Assessments](#), the [ODI Data Ethics Canvas](#), the [Ten Principles of the Global Compact](#), [WHO Data Principles](#), and the [#RestoreDataRights Declaration](#).

As we scale up our work, it has become necessary to codify our case by case approach into a more transparent and uniform set of principles. These principles are distilled from our practice, what we have learned together with our network over the last five years, and build on the good work of many of our partners and other organisations over many years. The

list below sets out the principles and how the GPSDD secretariat intends to put them into practice in our work.

1. Partnerships must deliver for the public good, as defined by national stakeholders.

- Collaborations between and among government and non-government actors should aim to achieve a common objective of delivering for the benefit or well-being of the public.
- Priorities and focus areas should be informed by national/sub-national needs for making progress on their development priorities aligned with the SDGs.

The GPSDD secretariat will:

- Work with governments to define needs and priorities and then ensure that partnership activities are driven by those needs, government leadership, and the benefit of their populations, as defined by governments, civil society and other relevant stakeholders, and are aligned with national SDG priorities.
- Facilitate learning between collaborating partners on relevant issues and support exchanges with the wider global and regional network, to scale up impact for the public good.

2. Partnerships must be inclusive.

- Outcomes should be non-discriminatory and consistent with international human rights standards and democratic values.
- Partnerships should contribute to the building of inclusive data systems based on popular consent, by involving a broad range of stakeholders in their design and implementation.

The GPSDD secretariat will:

- Involve national civil society organizations, academia and other non-state actors as relevant in the design and implementation of specific partnerships, helping to ensure the needs, rights and perspectives of the most vulnerable are included in the design of solutions and decision-making.
- Continue to work with civil society organisations to build partnerships which increase the production and use of data for the benefit of the most marginalised groups.

3. Partnerships must be transparent.

- Information about the objectives, activities, scope, governance, and impacts of the collaboration should be available to the public in an open, understandable, easily accessible, and free format.
- Partners should be transparent with each other about their incentives, contexts and constraints, and maintain good communication throughout the duration of the partnership.

The GPSDD secretariat will:

- Publish and maintain a live list of facilitated partnerships, including brief descriptions and contact information to enable follow-ups from interested parties.
- Encourage all participating partners to publish terms of agreement and other relevant information, or provide alternate avenues through which the public can learn more about the partnership.
- Facilitate regular communications between partners and provide channels for information sharing.
- Ensure that external communications by all partners will reference the contribution of all relevant parties, and be shared well in advance.

4. Partnerships must be accountable.

- Effective governance and oversight mechanisms should be identified or established to ensure that partners are committed to maximizing sustainable development impacts while minimizing risks to people and planet, including minimising risks to privacy.
- Collaborations should identify and ensure legal and regulatory compliance with policies and procedures of all participating partners. Partners involved in each partnership are responsible for ensuring compliance with legal requirements.

The GPSDD secretariat will:

- Conduct due diligence of partners by mirroring the approach of the UN Sustainable Development Group (UNSDG) Common Approach to Due Diligence to the greatest extent practicable, and will facilitate agreements between participating partners based on the above principles.
- Use GPSDD's Ethics and Integrity framework to guide our approach to partnership design and implementation.

- Monitor compliance with these principles by GPSDD partners. Any partner not abiding by these principles and agreed accountability mechanisms of the partnership will no longer be eligible to participate in GPSDD sponsored activities.

5. Partnerships must create sustainable impact.

- Participating entities should aim to anchor partnerships' activities and processes within their respective institutional governance and accountability mechanisms to ensure sustainability.
- Partners should ensure that technology, tools, data storage and other solutions that are part of the partnership can be interoperable with existing or transitional country systems, consistent with international data standards, and can be sustained beyond the life of the partnership.
- Exit clauses with countries and other partners should be in good faith and must integrate recognized international and other fair practices including the freedom of choice of other alternative solutions.

The GPSDD secretariat will:

- Build capacity to adopt and institutionalize data solutions through knowledge sharing and skill building
- Engage with the whole data ecosystem to coordinate across organizations and sectors, including technical experts and policy/decision-makers to ensure that partnerships not only address barriers to access, but also help improve data use within existing technical and political systems.
- Work with solutions partners to make systems requirements and recurrent costs transparent from the outset of partnership development, and where relevant to develop business plans for long term sustainability.