

# The Data Values Project

## FAQS

### What is the Data Values Project?

The Data Values Project is a new policy consultation and advocacy campaign aiming to unlock the value of data for all. Led by the [Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data's Technical Advisory Group](#), we are working with a network of 275 partners to tackle how governments, businesses and civil society are using data - to develop common positions and policies on data ethics, rights and governance issues.

We are aiming to influence decision makers at national, regional and global levels to develop policies that:

- Engage and include people in data systems that govern their lives
- Drive sustainable and equitable development
- Promote balanced data governance.

### What are the problems The Data Values Project is looking to tackle?

Together, we are looking to tackle wide-ranging issues and challenges relating to data use, ethics, rights and governance:

1. *Growing global inequalities*, with data and technology exacerbating inequalities in societies.
2. *Data and technology use is outpacing regulation*. Most countries are not equipped to adapt governance at the speed of technological change, leading to many social and economic harms. Large tech companies have supranational powers that outweigh most countries' influence and ability to regulate.
3. *Too many people are invisible in data* - whether accidental or by design.
4. *There are deep-running power imbalances at all levels*. New technology and data analysis is developed by a small demographic of people. Yet the rest of the world has to live with the consequences. All too often people are not consulted on the use and reuse of their data.
5. *Government capacity* to understand the technology landscape is lacking, public trust in data sources and sharing is low.
6. *A lack of coordination - locally, regionally and nationally*:
  - Lacking coordination between and across governments means no common approach to hold businesses accountable or provide clarity.
  - Dialogue and experimentation on how to address data challenges is fragmented. There is limited learning across sectors, and a failure to unite behind common norms and push policy makers for change.

These are complex and multifaceted issues - The Data Values Project will establish where common consensus exists and where significant divergences remain in policy positions on data. Where consensus is strong we believe that developing common messaging and outreach as a community can provide clarity, and encourage action by governments, businesses and other data holders to achieve more equitable outcomes.

## **What is The Data Values Project aiming to achieve?**

*Mission statement: Working together towards a world in which data is used responsibly to produce a more equitable, fair and sustainable future for all.*

Across the Global Partnership's global network, partners are producing new research, testing innovative governance approaches, experimenting with new mechanisms for citizen participation, and shaping the data ecosystems to power the world we want. The World Bank just published its landmark [2021 World Development Report Data for Better Lives](#), proposing a new social contract for data. Taking these ideas forward requires a broad-based collective effort.

We are building a global policy consultation that will bring together diverse and often underrepresented perspectives, research and experience on major data challenges, leading to joint advocacy based on a common manifesto for action to achieve this vision.

## **Why now?**

The datafication of society - and its implications for equity and opportunity - have become one of the most significant issues of our time. Yet there is no unified movement advocating for pathways that will unlock the opportunities of data, while guarding against the potential harms and putting people at the center. Debates around data issues are fragmented, becoming ever-more polarised, with compromise and consensus in policy seeming impossible.

A lack of clarity, regulation and common agreement on how to protect people's data rights has created a vacuum that is contributing to rising inequality, insecurity and worse health outcomes, amid the pandemic. The challenges posed by Covid-19 to communities, societies and economies make the need for action to unlock the power of data for all more urgent than ever.

## **What is the timeframe?**

The project kicked off in early 2021, with an open dialogue that draws together key players from the public sector, the private sector, regulatory and legal bodies, international institutions and civil society.

White papers from several consultation tracks will be shared and discussed at international fora over 2021. This will culminate in the launch of a manifesto for action and dynamic multimedia experience next year - charting a practical path forward on what should be the global norms around data access and use.

Beyond 2022 we will put recommendations into action, enabling society to leverage data for a more sustainable, equitable and inclusive world.

## **What makes The Data Values Project different?**

*We are global, spanning countries and sectors.* This project is not about the views of one sector or one type of stakeholder, nor is it based on the research of one organization. It is about surfacing diverse perspectives on how people, communities and societies use data, bringing different voices into a dialogue together that grounds conceptual analysis in real-world experience.

*We are open and inclusive.* Through an open consultation process, we will develop overarching policy positions that have broad support and are anchored in the real experiences of our partners, and then leverage the power of our network to launch a compelling advocacy campaign.

*We embrace and accept the messiness and the fault lines.* There will be issues where consensus can't be reached yet. For these, we'll continue to foster rigorous debate, bring diverse perspectives to the table and surface the important work being done by our partners to build understanding and advance action.

## **Who is involved?**

The project is led by the [Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data's Technical Advisory Group](#), a unique convening of experts spanning a diversity of sectors and geographies. This group provides sectoral expertise on areas including open data, statistics, citizen voices, big data, earth observation technologies, and remote sensing.

An open consultation phase across Spring/Summer 2021 is looking to engage and mobilize a diverse range of partners and champions across geographies, bringing together research and policy expertise with the practical experiences of people wrestling with the difficult daily trade-offs of developing and implementing data policy.

## **How can I get involved?**

We want to hear from you - your ideas, your challenges and any resources you think might be helpful - as part of our open consultation. Get in touch and register your interest by dropping us a line at: [info@data4sdgs.org](mailto:info@data4sdgs.org).

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