

**IGF 2022 Open Forum proposal,
Background paper
July 3, 2022**

Proposal for Open Forum session: **Data as new gold: how to avoid ‘goldrush’ and create value for all**

Chosen theme: ‘Governing data and protecting privacy’

Data policy has become a key feature of policy and decision making across the globe. Data access, sharing and use, how to guarantee data protection and privacy, cybersecurity – all these elements have to be taken into account when designing data policies aimed at developing a country’s data economy. The crucial question is – **what is the ultimate goal and how to achieve it?**

The European strategy for data, published in February 2020, sets out the vision for the EU to create a single market for data where ample quality data is available for use and flows across border and between sectors, for the benefit of the society and the economy. The strategy announced policy, legislative and funding measures to realise that vision. The European approach to data, based on the respect of fundamental values and rights and the empowerment of all actors in the data economy, have made of the EU a leading example globally on data governance. Countries in other continents have designed data policies and legislations according to the principles of the European ones. **Allowing the sharing and use of data while guaranteeing privacy protection is crucial**, the consensus of public, private sectors and civil society is needed to strike the right balance.

Data policy is a part of digital policies, which have become key in today’s world characterised by the digital revolution. Digitalisation is transforming the economy and it can contribute to meet the climate neutrality targets. Digital Single Market initiatives date back to 2014 in the EU. Since then, it has been a history of successes and mistakes which have allowed us to learn important lessons and a track record. Successful work on abolishment of roaming charges when travelling within the EU, better access to online subscriptions, consumer protection rules, the end of unjustified geo-blocking, the action plan to step up efforts to counter disinformation are only few examples of what we have accomplished.

The EU vision to become the most attractive, secure and dynamic place to store, share and use data is based on:

- setting clear and **fair rules on access and use of data**,
- pooling data in key sectors by creating **common and interoperable European data spaces**, and
- guaranteeing that individuals and businesses keep **control** on the data they contribute to produce or that is about them, **by giving them the right to decide who can use which data and under which conditions**.

The legislation on data the EU is tabling to implement the data strategy, namely the Data Governance Act and the proposal for a Data Act is fully compliant with existing EU legislation on data protection, privacy and cybersecurity. The new rules proposed **for access and use of data are fair, practical and clear**. This a key to success in data policy.

With the **proposal for a Data Act**, adopted in February 2022, the Commission aims to maximise the value of data for the economy and society, while respecting the interests of all parties involved in data generation and creating a safe and trustful data-sharing ecosystem. The proposed measures will unlock the value of data generated by connected objects in Europe - one of the key areas for innovation in the coming decades. The Data Act will clarify who can create value from such data and under what conditions. The new rules are expected to create €270 billion of additional GDP for EU Member States by 2028 by addressing the legal, economic and technical issues that lead to data being underused.

Thanks to the Data Act, European businesses and citizens will benefit from:

- cheaper prices for aftermarket services and reparation of their connected objects;
- new opportunities to use services relying on access to this data;
- better access to data collected or produced by a device.

The **Data Governance Act** will increase trust in voluntary data sharing by fostering the emergence of trusted data intermediaries and by facilitating data altruism for the common good. The governance framework for data created by these rules will also support **the development of common European data spaces in strategic sectors of the economy and domains of public interest** such as health, environment, energy, agriculture, mobility, finance, manufacturing, public administration and skills.

Some examples of the benefits the new measures will realise:

- Good data management and data sharing will enable industries to develop innovative products and services, and will make many sectors of the economy more efficient and sustainable. It is also essential for training AI systems.
- With more data available, the public sector can develop better policies, leading to more transparent governance and more efficient public services.
- Data-driven innovation will bring benefits for companies and individuals by making our lives and work more efficient.

It is important to mention that the EU is aiming at realising the twin transition – green and digital – and the data is crucial to achieve that. By having the necessary information suppliers, consumers and users would be in a position to take better decisions such as providing and / or buying greener, more sustainable and higher quality or products and services, thereby contributing for example to the **Green Deal objectives**. At the same time, the policy should not follow the ‘goldrush’ patterns; a strategic approach (long term strategy, progress indicators, monitoring systems) is a must for success in data policy.

The EU is also developing digital partnerships to promote **a human centric digital agenda around the globe**. The **Digital Global Gateway** is a key instrument in this regard. It contributes to promote efficient data governance on the global scene. One of the main focuses of EU action is Africa.

Some important digital projects:

- (1) **EU-AU data flagship**;
- (2) African European Digital Innovation Bridge (AEDIB),
- (3) Secure EurAfrica Gateway Cable;

- (4) Secure digital connectivity between the Northern and Southern shores of the Mediterranean Sea (DG NEAR);
- (5) Secure Regional Fibre Optic Backbones across Sub-Saharan Africa; and
- (6) Satellite secure connectivity project.

The EU-AU Data Flagship is a very relevant project to set the **data policy framework for African countries**. It is a joint effort (EU, AU, Smart Africa, Germany) to boost the development of the African data economy. The main objective of the flagship is **to create an enabling environment** for the data economy in Africa to unlock data innovation and data value creation at local level. At the same time, the project aims at protecting digital rights and national data sovereignty, and at promoting human-centred and sustainable data infrastructures.

With the aforementioned package of measures, the EU aims at achieving ambitious goals and take the lead in global digital policy. Some data economy projections by 2025:

2025: 530% increase of global data volume	2025: €829 billion value of data economy in the EU27	2025: 10.9 million data professionals in the EU27	2025: 65% Percentage of EU population with basic digital skills
			
From 33 zettabytes in 2018 to 175 zettabytes in 2025	From €301 billion (2.4% of EU GDP) in 2018	From 5.7 million in 2018	From 57% in 2018