



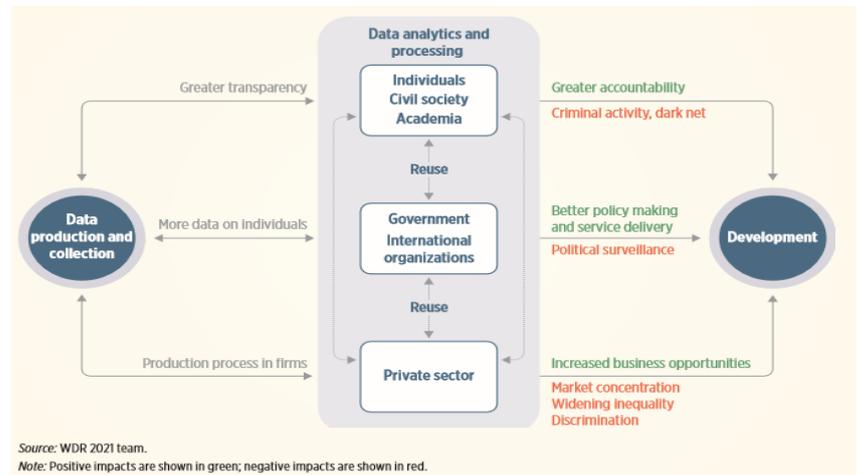
## World Development Report 2021 : Data for Better Lives

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**Fig 1: Pathways along which data can foster development**

### Introduction

The World Development Report 2021 describes data as a double edged sword. Due to recent technological innovations there has been a massive increase in the availability of real-time, granular data. Data can lead to better lives through multiple channels but needs to be used in an ethical manner. This report primarily answers two questions- 1. How can data be used to further development goals? 2. What governance arrangements are needed to aid the generation and use of data in a safe, ethical and secure way?



### Key Highlights

- Though data can be multiplied through repurposing and reuse, hoarding of data needs to be stopped. Hoarding restricts data use, prevents data from delivering on their full development potential and increases the possibility of data misuse.
- Data can be abused through multiple channels such as the government, the private sector and even individuals.
- Governance arrangements to prevent data abuse are inadequate and legal and regulatory frameworks are incomplete. Even places having some sort of data governance framework, lack institutions which have the capacity to implement and enforce these frameworks.
- To address these concerns, World Development Report 2021 puts forward five high-level recommendations:
- **Forge a new social contract for data** at both national and international level. A contract that will “enable the use and reuse of data to create economic and social value, while ensuring equitable access to the value realized, as well as fostering participants’ trust that they will not be harmed by data misuse.” Such a contract would especially help lower-income countries who are often disadvantaged.
- **Increase data use and reuse to realize greater value.** But to realize this greater value, focus needs to shift from generating data for onetime use to expanding access, reuse, and analytics for both new and existing data. Rules and standards are needed to aid overlaying different data sources to leverage analytical synergies and to allow safe domestic and international data transfers.
- **Create more equitable access to the benefits of data.** Fairness of the global data system needs to be improved in order to reduce inequities between people and between countries. Marginalized people need better representation in data systems, greater access to modern data infrastructure, and the skills to benefit from it. For lower-income countries to gain more economic value from data-driven businesses greater domestic attention to, and international coordination of, economic policies on competition, trade, and tax for platform businesses is required.
- **Foster trust through safeguards that protect people from the harm of data misuse.** The more data are reused, the greater is the risk of data misuse. Thus, there is an immediate need to strengthen data protection not only for personal data, but also for personally identifiable data that permits identification of individuals. Also, more attention is required to strengthen cyber security regulations that are often deficient and lack adequate implementing institutions.
- **Work toward an integrated national data system (INDS).** “A well-functioning INDS explicitly builds data production, protection, exchange, and use into planning and decision-making and actively integrates the various stakeholders— individuals, civil society, academia, and the public and private sectors—into the data life cycle and into the governance structures of the system.” While building INDS, countries must consider a collaborative approach to data governance and establish a strong culture of data use that builds demand for reliable, credible data. Moreover, these integrated data systems should be created in a phased manner and must be tailored to specific local conditions.

- Data can be an important tool for economic and social progress but without proper regulation data-based value creation may come at the expense of human rights. Thus, “forging a new social contract for data—one grounded in principles of value, trust, and equity—is what ultimately will make the difference.”
- **Read more:** <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/35218>

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