16 September 2024

15:00 – 16:15

Online

CSTD-UNCTAD Workshop on Data Governance Principles

Unlocking Potential Through Data Sharing: The Need for Common Principles

Background

Our interaction with digital data, as humanity, has grown at an extraordinary pace, driven by the advancement of digital tools and technologies that continuously collect, process, share, and utilize vast amounts of information. Data can be a powerful engine for sustainable development, not only fueling economic growth but also driving significant progress for both individuals and society as a whole. The true value of data lies in its ability to spark innovation, advance scientific research, and enable transformative breakthroughs across various sectors, while also providing critical insights that guide us in understanding the actions needed to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The potential of data to contribute to social good, enhance public services, and drive innovation is immense. However, to fully harness these benefits, it is crucial to strike a careful balance between encouraging data sharing and use while ensuring robust data protection.

The diversity of data types, access mechanisms, and national perspectives on data sharing underscores the need for globally interoperable approaches. These approaches must facilitate the secure and trustworthy flow of data across borders, supporting both national interests and global collaboration.

To achieve this, we need a common understanding of data principles that underpin data flows, the conditions under which data can be shared, and the behaviors that should be promoted or discouraged in data handling. Building consensus on data principles will require addressing and considering various factors. The varying interests and priorities of different countries and stakeholder groups, as well as the disparities in technological development and data infrastructure, demand a

creative approach to global data governance. While differences in national regulations, particularly concerning data privacy and access, present challenges, data sharing must be encouraged and rendered beneficial for all Member States.

Objective

As part of a new mandate from the United Nations Economic and Social Council, the CSTD will consider establishing a working group that will engage in a comprehensive and inclusive multistakeholder dialogue on the fundamental principles of data governance at all levels, as relevant for development. To facilitate future discussions on data governance principles and explore opportunities for leveraging data for development, the CSTD secretariat and the UNCTAD Secretariat will jointly host an online workshop on data sharing on 16 September 2024, which is also to commemorate the United Nations International Day of Science, Technology, and Innovation for the South.

Target participants

Participants will include representatives of governments, civil society, the business community, academia and international and regional organizations.

Topics for the discussion

What foundational principles should guide data governance to ensure accessibility, fairness, transparency, and accountability?

What mechanisms can be implemented to ensure secure and trusted cross-border data flows?

What emerging trends and technologies will influence the future of data governance, and how should we prepare for them?

How can we build robust and transparent data supply chains that encourage stakeholders to share data with trust and use it responsibly?

Contact

sticourses@unctad.org