Governance & Finance

Data Strategies: Principles, Standards, Digital Rights and Data Ethics

Concept Note

In the last few years, cities have upskilled their data capabilities and data governance has become mainstream discussion. City governments and authorities are deploying sensors in public spaces to support the delivery of public services, such as better traffic control or more efficient management of the energy grid. But, in the rush to install sensors and other 4IR technologies, fundamental questions about the governance of data are often forgotten.

In parallel, citizens are not always aware of the data they are giving away and its value. Moreover, digital rights are frequently not clear, or expressed in language that is difficult to grasp. In this scenario, privacy, security, accountability, and neutrality by design are concepts that remain elusive, although the European GDPR and Data Protection Act (DPA) have contributed in raising individuals' awareness of their rights over their data.

Some cities, like Amsterdam and Barcelona, are now working on general principles to make digital rights clear for everybody and fully explain what technological sovereignty implies. There are also other examples of citizen-centered data governance. And this is a step forward.

However, there are still strong concerns about the governance of smart city data. Failure to address this issue could not only risk inappropriate access to citizens' data, and the associated bad press, but also increase the lack of people acceptance of potentially useful technologies. In this sense, exploring approaches like 'data trusts' is now part of an important discussion about who gets to use and benefit from citizens' data.

In the end, all the stakeholders need to have an agreed set of objectives and a shared toolbox of measures not only to establish regulations, but also to look for investment and active participation. All of this in an effort to advance towards a successful and responsible management of data.

Outcomes of the talk

Participants will:

- Learn about all the implications of data governance.

- Discover successful cases of data governance and innovative experiences such as the development of data trusts.
- Identify the key challenges and obstacles to overcome to help citizens regain control of their data.
- Get new perspectives on the way forward.

Guiding questions

- Data governance impacts common good, business value and civil society. How can cities better address this issue?

-What are the data principles a smart city should consider?

-How to make digital rights clear for everybody?

-Can experimenting on small scale projects first be a way forward?

Keywords

data governance; open data platforms; privacy; data sovereignty; digital rights; data ethics; data trust