

# **CONCEPT NOTE**

## **Second National Workshop**

### **Implementing the National Data Governance Framework in Ethiopia**

**Annotated Agenda**

**Data: 11-12 January 2024**

**Venue: Addis Ababa**

#### **Background**

The utilization of digital data and its relevance in the public sector have become increasingly vital for enhancing government services' effectiveness and efficiency. Data has evolved into a fundamental component of every government sector and function, comparable in importance to physical assets and human resources. Governments now heavily rely on data-driven operational activities, making it challenging, if not impossible, to function efficiently without data.

Governments, being among the largest producers and consumers of data, play a crucial role in regulating data supply and demand.<sup>1</sup> While the proliferation of digital technology and data has positively impacted our interconnected world, it has also brought forth a host of risks and challenges concerning data governance. Security, privacy, and ethical concerns are major issues, and digital and data literacy, along with institutional capacities, remain insufficient, particularly in African countries, least developed countries (LDCs), and small island developing states (SIDS). As government data exponentially grows and its potential, along with associated challenges, becomes increasingly evident, the urgency to establish effective data management and institutions has gained new urgency.

In light of this, in recent years, the Ethiopian government has demonstrated a steadfast commitment to advancing its e-government capabilities, recognizing the transformative potential of digitization in public services. A series of substantial investments and initiatives have been undertaken since 2007, addressing key aspects such as infrastructure, application development, mobile government, standards, ICT human capacity development, facilities, policies, and forums. The Ministry of Innovation and Technology (MInT) has played a pivotal role in driving these efforts, releasing overarching strategies and implementation plans to propel the nation towards a digitally inclusive future.

At the forefront of Ethiopia's digital transformation is the first ever digital strategy, namely Digital Ethiopia 2025, launched in 2018 with the ambitious goal of achieving inclusive prosperity through the strategic use of digital technologies. A crucial component of this strategy involves the cultivation and widespread

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid, page 146.

adoption of legal and regulatory frameworks pertaining to digital technologies. Substantial progress has already been witnessed, with notable achievements in developing necessary legal and institutional frameworks, exemplified by the successful implementation of the digital ID project.

In parallel, recent trends underscore a growing governmental emphasis on harnessing the power of data for developmental purposes. The Ministry's proactive stance is evident in initiatives such as the open data initiative, national data set design, national open data policy, e-government interoperability framework, and the personal data protection proclamation. These initiatives collectively aim to unlock the inherent value of data, promoting accessibility and sharing.

To spearhead national data governance, specific government institutions have been entrusted with pivotal responsibilities in managing various aspects of data governance. Notably, the Ministry of Innovation and Technology has taken a prominent role, demonstrated by the establishment of a dedicated data governance desk under the Electronic Government Development section. While commendable progress has been made, there exists an urgent need to strengthen data governance efforts, particularly in the realm of national-level data sharing. Strengthening these practices will play a pivotal role in fostering the development of a robust digital economy in Ethiopia.

To this end Ethiopia has now part of the Project “Developing institutional capacities for digital data management and cooperation to advance progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals” has been conceived by UN DESA, in supporting developing countries to assess key data management and governance challenges and strengthen government officials’ and stakeholders’ knowledge of sound and secure data management. The project aims to support countries in developing institutional capacities for developing national digital data policies and strategies for ensuring data quality, access, usage, security, and privacy, making available relevant legislative information and toolkits for advancing digital data cooperation agreements through case studies. UN DESA has identified Ethiopia as one of the countries to implement the Project. The project is now in its second phase.

Phase I of the project involved conducting a comprehensive baseline study on national data governance in Ethiopia, which occurred from August to October 2022. The study focused on understanding the current data governance landscape and identifying key challenges. At the end, a workshop was conducted in the presence of ICT personnel from various government institutions including representatives from regions and other stakeholders from the private sector, civil society and academia.

Phase II of the project commenced in April 2023 by considering findings of Phase I and with the objective of supporting the Government of Ethiopia in developing a National Data Governance System, mainly towards establishing the national data governance leadership body, which demands a cross-sectoral cooperation. This workshop is a part of courses of action for this purpose.

## **Objective**

The workshop aims to:

- (a) Facilitate the engagement of higher officials in an official dialogue and knowledge exchange focused on the national data governance leadership scheme for Ethiopia, fostering awareness and shared understanding.

(b) Engage selected ICT leaders and professionals from both government and non-government organisations in discussions regarding the necessity and various aspects of the national data governance leadership scheme for Ethiopia.

(c) Foster discussions on key topics, including:

- The significance of effective national data governance for e-government and the digital economy.
- Assessing the efforts undertaken by the Ministry of Innovation and Technology (MInT) thus far.
- Reviewing the draft Terms of Reference for the national data governance leadership.
- Examining the draft data sharing directive.

(d) Enable participants to collectively identify the next course of action in strategic planning and implementation, with a focus on advancing the national data governance leadership and governance framework in Ethiopia.

### **Expected Outcomes**

The following are the expected outcomes of the Workshop:

- **Increased Awareness and Understanding:** Officials learn about Ethiopia's data governance leadership through active engagement and dialogue.
- **Improved Framework:** ICT leaders share practical expertise, improving the national data governance scheme and promoting collaboration among stakeholders.
- **Better Decision-Making:** Discussions evaluate the importance of data governance and MInT's efforts, guiding practical decision-making and speeding up progress in Ethiopia's digital landscape.
- **Action-oriented Documents and Roadmap:** Collaborative efforts refine important documents and outline actionable steps, advancing Ethiopia's national data governance leadership and framework.

### **Format of the meeting**

#### **January 11, 2024 – High-Level**

The format of the high-level meeting will consist of a series of high-level presentations, succeeded by open discussions, and concluding in the formulation of a collective way forward.

#### **January 12, Technical Workshop**

The style of the second day meeting will be an interactive panel discussion followed by open Q&As, under the Chatham House Rule. Breakout group discussions, with framing and concluding plenary sessions. Informal meeting proceedings will be drafted to keptag of recommendations and follow up actions.

## Date/time/venue

**Date/time: January 11 - 12, 2024**

### **Venue:**

- 1. January 11<sup>th</sup>, High-level Meeting, 7th Floor, Ministry of Innovation and Technology Compound**
- 2. January 12<sup>th</sup>, at Inter-Luxury Hotel, Kazanchis.**

### **Number of participants:**

1. January 11<sup>th</sup>, Day 1 High-level, **15- 20, by invitation only**
2. January 12<sup>th</sup> Day 2, **40 – 45, by invitation only**

## Participants

It is expected that the participants for the workshop to include:

- Federal government Higher officials and ICT professionals and leaders from MinT and other ministries
- Staff representatives from UN Resident Coordinators' Office and other related UN agencies
- Private sector experts that have demonstrated experience in supporting public sector innovation, policy experiments and sandboxes
- Representatives from civil-society organisations
- Experts and staff members from Division for Public Institutions and Digital Government (DPIDG), UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA)

## Organizers

The workshop is jointly organised by the Ministry of Innovation and Technology (MinT), the Government of Ethiopia, and in collaboration with the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), Division for Public Institutions and Digital Government (DPIDG),