



# The Geneva Data Community



## The Geneva data community: Cooperating to deliver on the Summit of the Future

*Summary of the meeting of 2 May 2024*

### Objectives of the meeting

Following up on its first meeting on 10 October 2023, this meeting, co-hosted by the Swiss Federal Statistical Office (FSO) and GRID-Geneva, provided an opportunity for the **Geneva data community** to exchange on how to best collaborate for delivering on the UN Summit of the Future for data-related topics. Moreover, the meeting followed up on previous discussions around data governance and the opportunities of strengthening interoperability with a common (meta-)data platform.

### Cooperating to deliver on the Summit of the Future

Discussions around digital governance at the UN have accelerated in recent years, including in view of the upcoming Summit of the Future and the Global Digital Compact (GDC). The heightened awareness for the importance of data represents is seen as an opportunity for the International Geneva data community to contribute its expertise to the policy processes. While all topics discussed at the Summit of the Future contain data aspects, the GDC and the “beyond GDP” process were mentioned as particularly pertinent for the data community.

The Global Digital Compact follows on from a series of discussions and reports on digital governance, of which many have taken place in Geneva. The GDC’s goal is to provide a coherent “chapeau” over all these existing processes. While the GDC contains many topics, it was underlined that one of five chapters focused entirely on data. The added value of Geneva-based actors in contributing to this chapter was underlined, in particular in advocating for a human-rights-based approach to data. Moreover, the current draft text would charge the Statistical Commission and the Geneva-based Commission on Science and Technology for Development (CTSD) with a joint mandate to convene a process to develop

common definitions and standards on the use and reuse of data. A good coordination between the two Commissions will be essential.

### **International (meta-)data platform and interoperability**

The FSO presented the progress made since the last meeting towards the vision of an international (meta-)data platform. Such a platform would bring together existing national (meta-) data platforms and those of international organizations. In this way, it could increase transparency, enable more evidence-based policy-making, and facilitate the re-use of data by governments, science and all other actors. The FSO is currently planning a feasibility study, to be conducted until the end of 2024. Geneva-based organizations will be included in the research for this study and might also play a central role in a later pilot version of the platform.

Several organizations underlined the pertinence of the project and noted their interest in being involved in the study and potentially in later stages. Some challenges in setting up such a platform were discussed, such as incentivizing and financing NSOs to invest in documenting their metadata, as well as making sure the metadata on the platform is well-structured, findable and updated regularly. To ensure the longevity of the project, it was also mentioned that the responsibilities for the platform and its institutional anchorage should be clarified from the outset.

### **Recommendations and follow-up**

- I. The whole **Geneva data community should remain engaged to have a say** in the Summit of the Future and notably in the negotiations for the Global Digital Compact;
- II. The FSO will plan an **exchange between the Chairs of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development (CTSD) and the Statistical Commission**, to ensure a better coordination between these two bodies on questions relating to data governance;
- III. A **mapping of the actors and projects involved in data topics in Geneva** might be a useful tool to better understand the potential roles of International Geneva in discussions around data governance and potential impacts of decisions in this field on International Geneva. FSO will contact all members of the Geneva data community as soon as this is set up;
- IV. The **FSO will pursue a feasibility study on an International (meta-)data platform**. The research for the study will include discussions with Geneva-based organizations.;
- V. A **next meeting of the Geneva Data Community will be proposed in autumn 2024**.