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The Geneva Data Community



The Geneva Data Community: Trusted Data for a Resilient Future: The Trusted Data Observatory (TDO) and Solutions to Combat Misinformation

An Unlocking the Power of Data Initiative
from the Swiss Federal Statistical Office
hosted by Data For Change (the PARIS21 Foundation)

Thursday, 3 April 2025, 13:30 – 17:30

Venue : International Environment House ([MIE 1](#)), Chem. des Anémones 11,
1219 Vernier

1. Setting the scene

[The Unlocking the Power of Data Initiative](#) aims to bridge the gap between the data and statistical community and a diversity of stakeholders to advance data ecosystems and provide the information needed for a fact-based worldview. Partnerships are necessary to build more robust data ecosystems that provide support for evidence-based decision-making and make it possible to respond adequately to crises. Within the context of the United Nations, there is a broader role of data and its application to sustainable development. The Secretary-General has put forward a proposal to ensure a UN fit for a new era, by the inclusion of the evolutions in five areas: data, analytics and communications; innovation and digital transformation; strategic foresight; behavioural science; and performance and results orientation, resulting in a “UN 2.0”.

More than ever, the development of agile and resilient capabilities in a constantly evolving technological and financial landscape is crucial for National Statistical Offices (NSOs). It is essential to ensure sustainable funding and improve the quality of spending, while establishing common standards for NSO preparedness for artificial intelligence (AI), particularly through robust metadata requirements. During the 56th session of the UN Statistical Commission in March 2025, the topic of metadata and platform was high-

lighted several times. Indeed, a coordinated approach, moving beyond isolated pilot initiatives, is necessary for a comprehensive and long-term transformation of national data and statistics systems as well as the data systems of international organisations. Effectively involving policymakers is also key to driving national resource mobilization and improving data utilization. Several participants called for expanding current initiatives towards a partnership approach with measurable commitments from all stakeholders. Finally, the focus was placed on evolving from isolated efforts to a cohesive strategy that integrates digital infrastructure improvements with core statistical work, strengthens data governance within ministries and agencies, and leverages innovative tools to ensure (trusted) data preparedness for AI.

2. Background of Trusted Data Observatory (TDO)

In 2024, Switzerland commissioned a feasibility study. This study proposes the development of the *Trusted Data Observatory* (TDO), an international platform focused on standardized, open, and machine-readable metadata to facilitate the discovery of trusted data sources. Unlike a data platform, the TDO will not contain any data itself but will serve as a tool for discovering data held by other institutions. Initially, the TDO will focus on the data of National Statistical Offices (NSOs) and International Organizations (IOs) with dedicated statistical divisions. Over time, the platform could expand to include other trusted data sources.

The TDO aims to address key challenges such as the lack of standardized metadata, varying quality of metadata, and the risk of creating a metadata “swamp.” It also needs to establish appropriate governance, a sustainable business model, and incentives for data providers to contribute. Moreover, it seeks to build an active user base that will benefit from easy access to reliable data, especially given the growing reliance on AI-powered search engines to source information. The potential value of the TDO is substantial, particularly in combating the negative effects of fake news and alternative facts on society. By supporting improved search results and helping AI search engines prioritize trusted data, the TDO can enhance decision-making processes for various user groups, including researchers, policymakers, NGOs, the media, and the public. Additionally, it will foster harmonization in metadata standards and help address the issue of “metadata silos,” where inconsistencies across platforms hinder data comparability and discovery.

3. Summary of the exchange on 6 November 2024

The meeting on 6 November 2024, organised by Switzerland (the Swiss Federal Statistical Office (FSO)) and hosted by Deloitte, focused on the feasibility study for a global metadata platform aimed at improving data access and trust. It discussed the creation of a **Trusted Data Observatory** to help users navigate and verify data from various sources, addressing challenges like standardization and misinformation. The meeting also explored the role of digitalization in data governance, highlighting issues such as digital sovereignty and Geneva's potential as a hub for digital governance. Insights were shared on enhancing Geneva's position in digital governance through recommendations on technological literacy and infrastructure investment.

4. What's going to happen?

During this April's meeting of the Geneva Data Community, during Block A, we will be focusing more in depth on the 2 first phases of the Trusted Data Observatory: 1) identification of all relevant stakeholders and detailed engagement to identify needs and develop specification for the TDO, 2) identify and engage with potential partners to participate in the Proof of Concept (PoC) exercise. During the Block B, a panel discussion will explore the growing risks of misinformation and disinformation, which destabilise economies and erode trust in institutions, and to discuss various ways of how the TDO and other initiatives can ensure transparency, quality control, and collaboration in data governance. The event is hosted by Data For Change (The PARIS21 Foundation) which works to improve the availability and use of high-quality data for decision-making, especially in developing countries. It focuses on strengthening national statistical systems by promoting the use of data for evidence-based policies and development goals.

Meeting Objective: Strengthening the Geneva Data Community by fostering collaboration and actionable progress towards the Trusted Data Observatory (TDO); The meeting will also feature a panel discussion on misinformation and disinformation, based on the latest WEF Global Risk Report.

Geneva Data Community (GDC) Meeting – Agenda	
13:00 – 13:30	Arrival & Networking
13:30 – 13:40	Introduction by the Swiss Federal Statistical Office (FSO) and Data For Change (the PARIS21 Foundation)
Block A: Metadata platforms	
13:40 – 14:45	Advancing the Trusted Data Observatory (TDO) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recap: Key findings from the TDO feasibility study • Update from UN Statistical Commission • Collaborative Brainstorming: Identifying shared priorities & group engagement using interactive tools
14:45 – 15:00	Global Platform example & experiences: UNEP-GRID in Geneva
15:00- 15:30	<i>Tea Break Networking with refreshments</i>
Block B: Misinformation & Disinformation – What can we do?	
15:30 – 16:30	Panel Discussion: Tackling Misinformation & Disinformation Framing the Issue: Insights from the WEF Global Risk Report (2025-2027) Key Questions for Discussion: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The role of trusted data in mitigating misinformation • Public trust in information: Facts versus feeling • The role of citizen-generated and grassroots data
16:30 – 16:45	Next Steps
16:45	<i>Closing remarks Apéro</i>