



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

Swiss Confederation

Federal Department of Home Affairs FDHA
Federal Statistical Office FSO

UNLOCKING
THE POWER
OF DATA
INITIATIVE



The Geneva Data Community



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

Summary of the meeting of 3 April 2025

The 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 standardised, 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 the national statistics systems) and International Organisations (IOs) with dedicated statistical divisions. Eventually, the platform could expand to include other trusted data sources.

Trusted Data for a Resilient Future

Metadata Platforms

The discussions surrounding the development of the Trusted Data Observatory emphasised the importance of having concrete steps and secure finance resources. A key proposal was to agree on a limited set of metadata fields, as introduced by Pádraig Dalton in November 2024, to ensure better interoperability and clarity across various systems. On the **technical and budget considerations**, it was also noted that overcoming the challenges posed by heterogeneous data sources and the complexity of engaging multiple stakeholders is crucial. Looking ahead, the **next steps for the Trusted Data Observatory (TDO)** involve developing and launching updated communication materials, including the TDO website within the next two weeks. The initiative also aims to re-engage experts and collaborate with key partners such as the World Bank, focusing on the technical aspects and cost breakdowns of the project.

Regarding data sovereignty, there were concerns about the increasing influence of major tech companies. It was emphasised that using official metadata standards is essential to ensure that AI tools, such as ChatGPT, have access to accurate, reliable, and up-to-date data. The need for **interoperability and open protocols** was also discussed, with a particular focus on adopting open-source protocols. This would allow AI systems to directly interact with trusted data sources. The discussions also highlighted the importance of **engaging civil society and academic communities** to broaden the impact of official data. Trusted data must be grounded in solid methodologies.

In a demonstration of the **GRID's metadata and data platform**, UNEP GRID showcased a prototype that integrates both geospatial and statistical data. This platform aggregates data from over 3500 providers and supports interactive mapping and statistical visualisations. Some features include the ability to change between geospatial views and statistical analyses. The prototype is scheduled for further development, with a target launch date around September 2025, for 40th GRID anniversary.

Misinformation & Disinformation – What can we do?

The meeting focused on the challenges posed by **misinformation** and **disinformation** and discussed ways to enhance **data authenticity, trust, and quality information** in both the public and private sectors. Panellists exchanged insights on the roles of statisticians, technological advancements, and interdisciplinary collaboration to counter the spread of false information. The discussion focused on various strategies to improve public awareness, data quality, and collaborative efforts to tackle misinformation. A key theme was the importance of producing quality information to inform policy decisions aimed at improving people's lives. Citizen-generated data and citizen science were suggested as ways to enhance the richness of data.

The panel also highlighted the distinct roles of statisticians in producing accurate data and those tasked with translating complex data into accessible narratives for the public. The importance of **cross-sector collaboration** was stressed, especially between the tech industry, government agencies, and international organisations. Challenges in aligning the rapid development of tech with the slower-moving processes in other sectors were also discussed. The topic of **digital trust and data governance** was introduced, with *Unlimitrust Campus* serving as a case study for creating a trust ecosystem. The panel discussed new ideas like using crowdsourced AI models to identify and reduce misinformation. *AICrowd*, with its community of 250,000 AI researchers, was cited as an example of leveraging open challenges to address complex problems.

Recommendations and follow-up

- I. The BFS is working on putting together a financing plan for the for the **Trusted Data Observatory (TDO)** and pursue next steps of the **TDO**. Entities interested to be involved and to fund should get in touch with FSO;
- II. Commitment to refine and agree on a limited, standardised set of metadata fields for global adoption;
- III. The group agreed to continue hosting biannual data meetings in Geneva. **The next meeting of the Geneva Data Community, co-organised with WHO, will be on Thursday, 30 October 2025.** An extended format could be used once to include several further actors. The WHO and the FSO will clarify this opportunity. Further information will follow in due course.