



Global  
Partnership  
for Sustainable  
Development Data

ATHENA  
INFONOMICS

# Development Data Partnership

**A platform to facilitate data-sharing partnerships between technology companies and international development organisations.**

## Summary

This case study was developed as part of *Effective Data Sharing: Beyond Platforms*, a study conducted by Athena Infonomics and commissioned by the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data. This project was made possible by a grant from [Google.org](https://www.google.org).

Public sector and development actors often operate in a data-scarce environment. High-frequency, timely and granular data is required to effectively achieve the development goals and increase the efficiency and effectiveness of public service delivery and policymaking. However, conventional data collection methods or public datasets do not always satisfy these needs. Hence, the World Bank ('Bank') looked toward alternative data sources in private companies which can be used to inform public sector decision-making.

While access to private sector datasets increased the efficiency and effectiveness of the Bank's operations in some projects, forging individual partnerships with different organisations was a long-drawn process. Typically, an International Development Organisation (IDO) faces challenges in finding the data, getting access to it, and investing in in-house expertise to set up an IT system to securely receive, store and analyse the data. Hence, a Bank led consortium established the Development Data Partnership (DDP). DDP, as a data sharing platform, is a two-pronged solution that allows scaling up the data sharing partnerships between Development Partners, i.e., IDOs and Data Partners, i.e., technology companies. Firstly, DDP provides a ready legal framework and an IT infrastructure for data sharing transactions on the platform. It saves partners' resources on negotiating access rights and setting up the IT system for sharing. Secondly, it provides a data marketplace to match Development Partners' data demands with the data supply with Data Partners. In this way, DDP looks to create a data-sharing ecosystem by lowering the barriers to data access for partners. Since its launch, the DDP has facilitated over 150 development projects.

**“DDP opens access to researchers to do analysis that previously would not have been feasible. From more of a budget perspective, this project brings together data from different data providers. And if I estimate that if you were just to pay data license from these 5 or 6 companies, it would probably cost USD 1-2 million dollars. So, what DDP has made possible is to bring together this data in a way that is not only feasible from a technical perspective but also from an economic perspective”**



## Facts and figures

**Founded:** 2018

**Sector:** Cross-Sectoral

**Typology by use:** Capacity Building and Knowledge Transfer

**Geography:** Global

**Governance Structure:** Data Marketplace

**Number of Member Organisations:** 27 Data Partners and 8 Development Partners

**Ownership:** It is housed in the World Bank and was founded by a consortium of the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, the Inter-American Development Bank, UN Development Programme, and the OECD.

## Key Challenge(s) that the initiative was trying to solve

- Promote the use of alternative data in the international development sector and allow IDOs to experiment with private sector data to bridge data gaps in decision-making.
- Create a data marketplace to match Development Partners' data demands with the data supply from Data Partners.
- Reduce barriers in sharing and accessing the data by creating a ready legal and IT infrastructure that the players can use to share or receive data.

## How are they solving the problem?

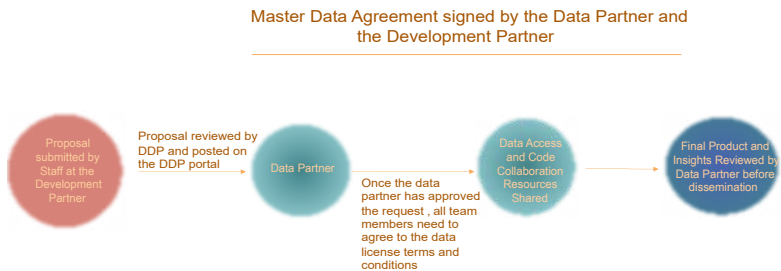
While public-private collaborations on data presented an immense potential for the public good, privacy concerns, repeated requests from IDOs, and the high cost of transaction acted as barriers to such partnerships. Given the limited bandwidth of private companies to negotiate and sign legal agreements with different entities, format the data, transfer the data and answer the technical queries regarding the data, there was a mismatch between the demand and the supply; entities were crowding out each other and getting access to the data at the expense of others.

DDP was established as an intermediary to reduce the barriers for its Data Partners in data sharing, allowing for a seamless experience. It introduced a standardised framework to streamline the process. DDP required the Data Partner only to sign a Master Data Licensing Agreement ('Master Agreement') and share the data with DDP once. DDP assists the Data Partners in ingesting, processing, standardising, and storing data. DDP uploads metadata on its data marketplace for Development Partners to access. They can review the metadata and request data access by submitting a proposal. The Data Partners review the proposal and grant access depending on the suitability of the datasets to achieve the proposed public good use case.

**“What was missing was an efficient market that could match the supply of private sector data and public-sector demand, grounded in a shared legal and IT framework that would protect rights and benefit both parties”**

The DDP platform is only available to a select number of Development Partners / IDOs which have been approved by the Bank. These include: the Development Bank of Latin America, International Development Bank, International Monetary Fund, OECD, The Rockefeller Foundation, the United Nations Development Programme, and the World Bank Group.

## Data Sharing Structure



## What were the key considerations in designing the initiative?

**1. Developing the legal and technical architecture:** The Bank identified that negotiating a legal framework and building a technical infrastructure were the two prominent barriers hindering public-private data sharing. The Bank initiated the pilot for DDP by drawing a Master Agreement for all departments of the Bank. Once a company signed the Master Agreement with the Bank, it allowed all the staff facilitated access to the datasets by submitting proposals for their use. It was replicated in the DDP, where once both partners had shared the Master License Agreement, the Development Partner could access the datasets of a Data Partner. This agreement facilitates multiple/future instances of data sharing by the two partners. Once the agreement is signed, the two partners can engage directly in adherence with the principles of the DDP. This framework drastically reduces the legal turnaround time and the cost of accessing and sharing data.

**“From the outset, we committed to designing and implementing an effective and agile legal framework that would efficiently facilitate the Partnership’s activities.”**

Further, the DDP sought to reduce reliance on the Data Partners for the technical capacity by taking up the responsibility of ingesting, harmonising, processing and storing the data. Once, a Data Partner has shared a dataset, a Development Partner can access Data Partner’s dedicated section in the documentation hub. This section contains information about their dataset – how to access the data, frequency of collection of data, relevant sectors for use of the data, data schemas and summaries, and code snippets. The DDP manages the access to the shared data; once a Data Partner approves the project, DDP facilitates access to the data. In some instances, the Data Partner might share an API or additional datasets with the research team. The nature of the process might differ slightly depending on the type of data requested and can include APIs, or specific login modalities for the IDOs.

**“The World Bank has made it really easy for us. We get hundreds of requests every year, and we end up having to turn that down because we have limited resources. There is just as much legal work for non-profit data sharing as there is for profitable data licenses. DDP has built the legal templates and data pipelines for sharing data. So, we share this data once, and the distribution is handled in a safe and secure way which saves us a lot of time.”**

**2. Building a Data-Sharing Community:** Given the sheer diversity in types of data requests and users, the DDP recognised the importance of creating a common knowledge hub which would help users navigate the complex but rich data-sharing platform created by DDP. DDP actively puts out knowledge around technical aspects of data sharing to build the capacity of the Development Partners.

The DDP has instituted a Data Fellows program which allows academics, foundations, and grantees to work with the DDP. Each Fellow is a temporary staff of the Bank, allowing them access to the DDP. The DDP also engages in several workshops and knowledge management events.

**3. Developing Data Goods:** In addition to creating a data marketplace, DDP also creates and releases data goods in the marketplace. This includes accessible code repositories for derived data products and algorithms. For example, internet connectivity maps from a data partner (supplementing sometimes unreliable self-reported data) were used in a project to understand the digital divide in Ukraine. This approach was shared as a data good on DDP, which was then replicated in projects in South America. Data goods allow the Development Partner to replicate approaches and expand its impact.

**4. Ensuring Robust Data Governance:** One of the foundational pillars of DDP is a robust and participatory governance model. DDP’s Board has representatives from the founding Development Partners. The Board is responsible for inviting other Development Partners into the DDP. The DDP is guided by the Strategic Advisory Group, which has representatives from all Development Partners and Data Partners. It meets

twice a year to discuss broader strategic issues. The DDP also has working groups that deal with issues such as legal and communications and guide specific domain decisions for the DDP.

## Financial Sustainability of the initiative

DDP charges a membership fee from the Development Partners to cover basic operating costs.

### Lessons Learned

- **Technology companies are willing to share non-personal data for public good use cases if barriers are lowered.** Currently, there are no internationally accepted standards for data licensing, privacy, and security. These issues must be discussed before finalising every potential partnership making the cost of sharing very high for the companies. There will be an increased flow of data from these companies if they are given an easy system under which they can share the data. In the DDP, they must sign the agreement once and share the data once. The majority of the work then is done by the DDP.
- **This type of shared data marketplace exists within certain trusted networks only.** While the DDP presents an innovative model for public-private data sharing, it is unclear if such a model can be replicable without certain unique circumstances. The legal framework is built on the strong relationships and a history of collaboration that already exists between the different Development Partners. This trust in international organisations helps foster relationships with Data Partners too. The DDP also benefited from the existing technical capacity and infrastructure within the Bank, which was crucial to facilitating smooth data partnerships.
- **Data sharing collaborations combined with active knowledge building can create replicable and effective data goods.** A unique value-add of the DDP is the data goods it creates, which promotes efficiency across projects. The data goods, products and methodologies are also shared with the Data Partners. Thus, demonstrating to them the value of sharing the data through the DDP.

The DDP presents a unique model to unlock the value of public-private data collaborations. The DDP has built an impressive legal and technical infrastructure that reduces the cost of accessing and sharing data. The DDP intends to move from individual data requests toward developing a coherent approach to broader societal challenges.

## Sources

Data.org, [Big Tech and International Development Leaders Collaborate through Development Data Partnership](#), 2021

UNESCO Inclusive Policy Lab, [Partner on Data, Make it Work for Good](#), 2021

IMF Connect, [Development Data Partnership: Bridging the Data Gap for Public Good](#), 2020

Primary Stakeholder Interviews