Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office

# Understanding geo-ethics in a data driven world

## How we can support the responsible use of geospatial data

UN World Geospatial Information Congress
October 2022

# Who we are

**FCDO**

The UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office pursues the UK's national interests and project the UK as a force for good in the world. Some of the ways we do this include reducing poverty and tackling global challenges with our international partners.

**Data for Development**

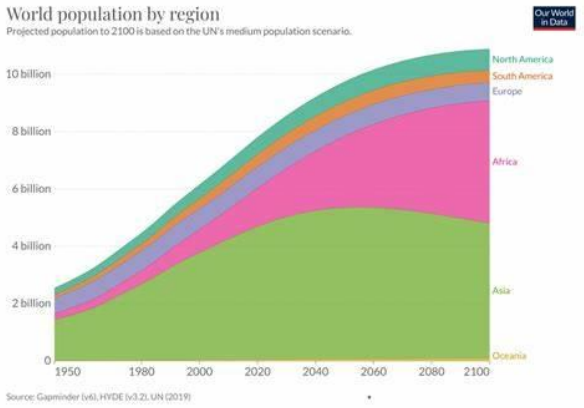
The Data for Development team, supports partner countries to produce and use responsible inclusive open data and to improve the quality and availability of essential data including census and surveys.

Examples of our programmes:

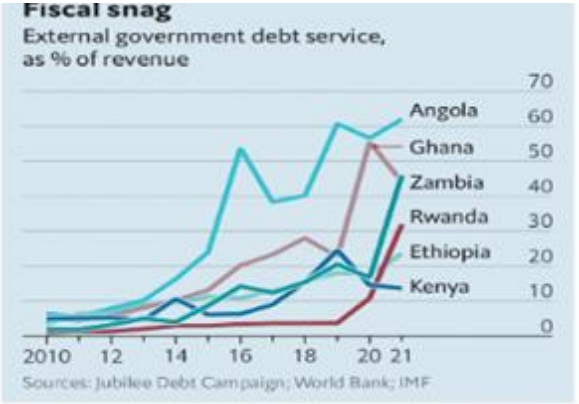
- Monitoring the SDGs
- GRID3
- Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data
- PARIS21

# Geospatial data is critical to solving many global problems

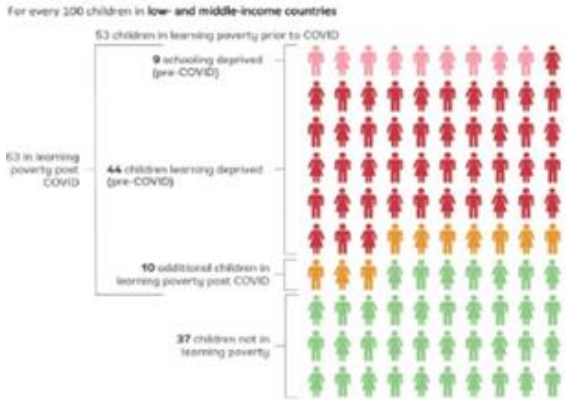
**Urbanisation – Africa population set to double by 2050**



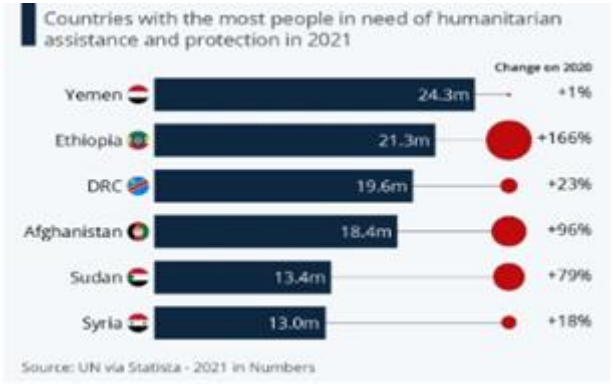

**Economic Growth – Poorest countries face challenge in growth, tax and export**



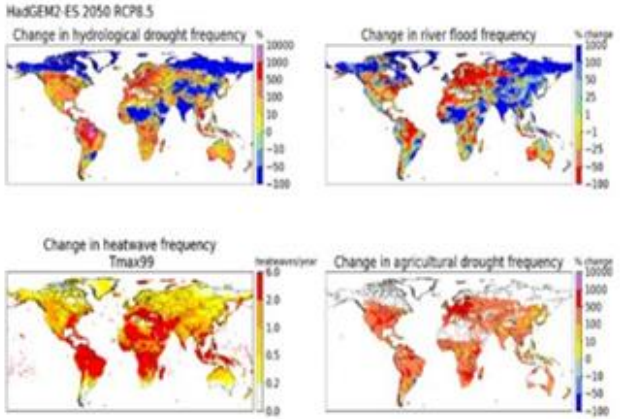

**Access to Education – Pandemic will lead to trillions in lost earnings**




**Humanitarian Need – New crises emerge while old ones persist**




**Climate Disaster – Higher frequency of heatwave, drought and flood**



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Coronavirus

# Contact-tracing app for England and Wales 'hampered by loss of public trust'

**Summer of UK government scandals will reduce take-up of Covid-19 app, says expert**

- Coronavirus - latest updates
- See all our coronavirus coverage

**Alex Hern** *UK technology editor*

@alexhern

Mon 21 Sep 2020 06.00 BST

**Realising opportunity – striking the right balance between no data and data hoarding**

**Data Fearing – The Wasteland**

There is a danger that unaddressed fears prevent us from realising its full benefits.

**Data hoarding – The Oil Field**

There is a danger that in some places, organisations hoard data.

*"As global efforts to develop new frameworks around the responsible use of emerging technologies begin to take shape, it is imperative that they address not only the human rights implications of 'misuse,' but also those of 'missed use'"* – *Robert Kirkpatrick*

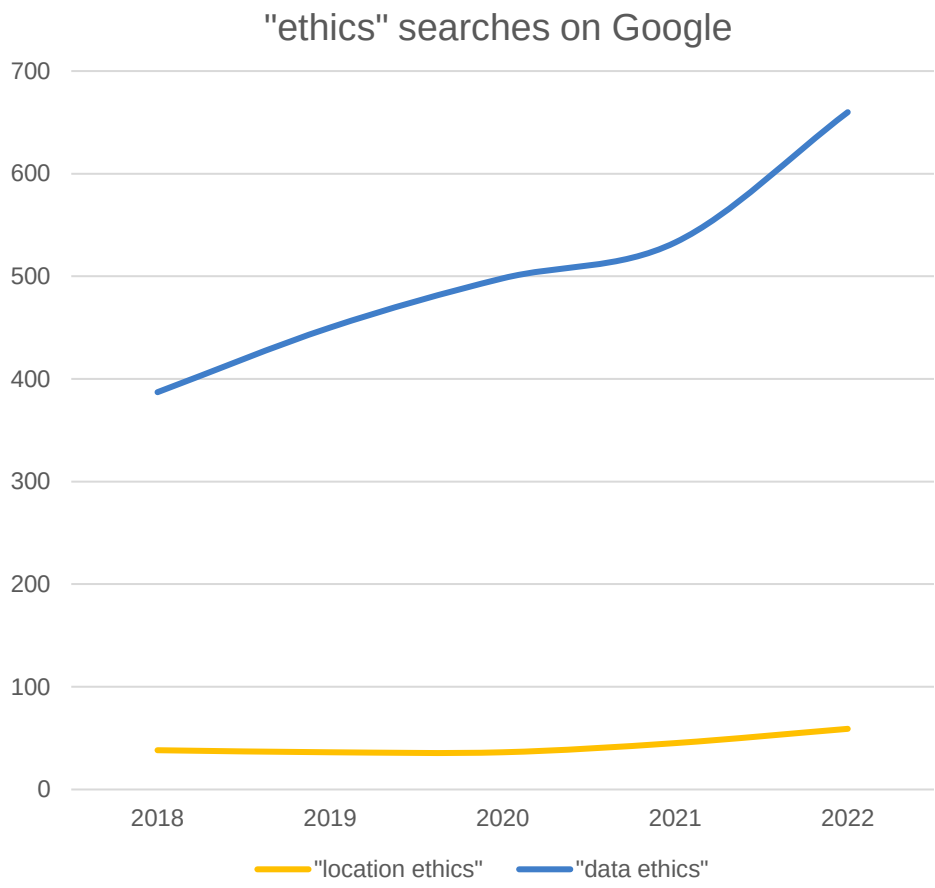
# “Data ethics” is more established as a concept

As data ethics becomes more established as a concept – the number of initiatives, frameworks and principles begins to grow

Interest in ethics:

- Searches for ‘data ethics’ have increased 75% since 2018
- 20% increase in searches for ‘location ethics’ in 2022

But is this interest and activity adding value?



# Legislation vs guidance

A robust policy and legal framework is essential for instituting effective, efficient and secure management and exchange of geospatial information

Legislation important part of ensuring that data is used responsibly but not agile enough to adapt quickly to the pace of technology change – risk that data might be misused legally to cause harm

Guidance needed to support users where the legislation doesn't yet cover the needs of people who might be harmed by data.

Integrated Geospatial Information Framework will deal with this under pathway 2 (legal and policy). Ethics not in original draft but currently working on an ethics paper

# A crowded geo-ethics landscape

OECD
BETTER POLICIES FOR BETTER LIVES

Geospatial Lab - Ethics

Development Geographies Research Group @RGS-IBG

Ethical Guidelines

URISA
Fostering Excellence in GIS
www.URISA.org

GIS Code of Ethics

EthicalGEO

Locus Charter

UNITED NATIONS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GROUP

Data Privacy, Ethics and Protection. A Guidance Note on Big Data for Achievement of the 2030 Agenda

Open Geospatial Consortium

GeoEthics Ad Hoc Working Group

EUROCITIES

10 Data Principles for the Common Good

accenture

Universal Principles of Data Ethics

Gemeente Amsterdam

6 Principles of the TADA Manifesto

GEONOVUM

Ethical Framework

GODAN
Global Open Data for Agriculture & Nutrition

Code of Conduct

TRENDS
Thematic Research Network on Data and Statistics

Contracts for Data Collaboration

planet.

Code of Ethics

UK Statistics Authority

Ethical Considerations in the Use of Geospatial Data in Research and Statistics

GEO GROUP ON EARTH OBSERVATIONS

Data Working Group on Ethics Best Practice

Geospatial Commission

Location Data Ethics Report

ON OMIDYAR NETWORK

Ethics Explorer

Code of Ethics for Professional Data Scientisists

W3C

Note on the Responsible Use of Location Data

Data Principles

open data institute

Data Ethics Canvas

unicef

Ethical Considerations When Using Geospatial Technologies for Evidence Generation

# OCED Geospatial Lab – understanding the geo-ethics landscape

Initiative to encourage the widespread adoption of geospatial data in shaping policies. Creating an international community of stakeholders to share knowledge and co-operate in production and use of geospatial data – emphasising policy implications of geospatial data use.

## Ethics workstream:

1. To create an overview of all the geo-ethics/data ethics principles developed worldwide, so that they can be shared and compared.
2. To create a space where geo-ethics practices and perspectives from various countries, cultures and systems can be shared and compared.
3. To investigate how geo-ethics can be translated into policies.

Developing interactive knowledge sharing platform/ repository hosted by the OECD, filled with geo-ethics initiatives and experiences and methodology on how to enable collaboration on geo-ethics in the policy arena.

https://oecd.org/regional/regional-statistics/ethical-data.htm

# WHAT ACTION CAN WE TAKE TO SIMPLIFY THE UPTAKE OF GEO-ETHICS?

# Collaboration

Take every opportunity to push initiatives to work more closely together

Committee of Experts on GGIM uniquely positioned to help consolidate activity for the benefit of users

There are lessons to be learned from the integration of statistics and geospatial – sudden burst of interest led to lots of duplicating activity – EG-ISGI, IAEG-SDGs, GISCO, UNECE etc

Push for organisations to work together on statistics and geospatial – start with technical standards for integrating statistics and geospatial information

Workshop on Integrating Geospatial and Statistical Standards 2017
Panel sessions: Overcoming technical challenges
Session chairs: Carol Agius (EuroGeographics) & Martin Brady (Australian Bureau of Statistics)

# OPAL – Open Algorithms Project

Unlock potential of data collected by private organisations to support the **Sustainable Development Goals** (SDGs) around the globe, through safe, open and fair technological and governance systems.

Use of big data for policy hampered by legitimate ethical and commercial sensitivities.

OPAL concept combines privacy-preserving technology and participatory governance system as well as capacity strengthening activities.

Framework enabling public-private data collaborations where data can be fostered to provide an accurate picture to policymakers **with governance, ethics and privacy as the essence of the work.**

# PLACE Data Trust

PLACE delivers optical imagery of countries that they would usually find difficult to finance, produce, and maintain on their own.

Established as a legal trust – a permanent legal data trust which holds all PLACE data and licenses. All data held by PLACE belongs to the government of each country but PLACE receives an irrevocable, perpetual, royalty free license to a copy of all data and its use by PLACE members.

Built around ethical use of data. PLACE and their members support the Locus Charter international principles that support ethical and responsible practice when using location data.

# Summary

- As the use of geospatial grows so do the opportunities to misuse the data. We must let fear of use restrict opportunity.
- Interest in ethics as a concept has led to a number of initiatives to develop principles and frameworks – creates a risk of duplication and confusion for users.
- Most initiatives are coming from developed countries – need more views on ethics from developing countries to ensure equity
- We need to focus on consolidating existing work programmes to avoid duplication, fill gaps and make ethics easier to implement
- Also need to look beyond ‘frameworks’ to other models of ensuring data is used responsibly