

AfriSIG2025, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania Practicum

23 to 28 May 2025

“Multistakeholder consultation on African priorities concerning data governance for input into national, regional and global digital governance processes”

Background

AfriSIG is known for its annual practicum, a part of the School that involves participants tackling a contemporary digital governance challenge or opportunity toward producing a multistakeholder outcome document. Participants can either assume a role (e.g. a government official can participate as a journalist) or participate as themselves. The idea is that the differences in perspectives and needs of different sectors and groups drive the debate and shape the outcome. Sometimes consensus cannot be reached, which should not be seen as failure, but as a reflection of the complexity of the issues under discussion. The process create opportunity to learn about the topic, but also about what is involved in drafting text collaboratively while also defending the interest of your sector or the people and institution you represent. Over the years most participants have rated the AfriSIG practicum as the most valuable part of the AfriSIG experience in spite of the hard work and late nights it entails.

About this document

This document describes the AfriSIG 2025 practicum and outlines the process by which participants from all stakeholder groups will collaborate to produce an output document on key African priorities for the [Commission on Science and Technology for Development \(CSTD\) Working Group on Data Governance](#). This consensus document will reflect the diverse perspectives, discussions and insights of Africa’s needs in navigating the interplay of data governance and digital rights. It also contains the schedule, a step-by-step guide to the work process and various roles and responsibilities.

Goals of the process

- To enable participants to deepen their understanding of data governance and enable them to apply critical thinking to current data governance debates
- To deepen understanding of the main current African data governance legal and policy frameworks and how these relate to the global data governance agenda.
- To build a “hands-on” understanding of the advantages and challenges of multistakeholder collaboration and of the differences in perspectives of various sectors and interest groups
- To enable participants to gain the knowledge and confidence needed to participate effectively in digital policy dialogues, debates and negotiations
- To strengthen African participation in global data governance discussion and decision-making forums

The Context

Data governance is increasingly vital for fostering economic development, digital innovation, human rights and effective public administration in Africa. With the continent rapidly digitizing across sectors like finance,

healthcare, agriculture, identity, trade and education, data governance has become central to digital policy and governance broadly. Standards that ensure privacy, security, interoperability and equitable and ethical use of data and data flows across borders are essential if Africans are to benefit from the economic and social potential of digital transformation.

In Africa, several regional documents and frameworks provide data governance standards, covering data protection, cybersecurity, access to information, and digital rights. Main ones include the [African Union Convention on Cyber Security and Personal Data Protection \(Malabo Convention, 2014\)](#); [African Union Data Policy Framework \(2022\)](#); [African Continental Free Trade Area \(AfCFTA\) Protocol on Digital Trade \(Adopted 2023\)](#); and the [Digital Transformation Strategy for Africa \(2020–2030\)](#). The [African Declaration on Internet Rights and Freedoms \(2014\)](#) also provides a normative benchmark for data governance aligned with human rights and last year the African Commission on Human and People's Rights passed a milestone Resolution on Promoting and Harnessing Data Access as a Tool for Advancing Human Rights and Sustainable Development in the Digital Age - [ACHPR/Res.620 \(LXXXI\) 2024](#).

Nevertheless, enforcement, public awareness, and institutional frameworks remain inconsistent. The rise of technologies like AI and digital records has underscored the urgency for harmonized data governance policies to avoid surveillance abuse, data exploitation, and geopolitical manipulation.

At the global level, in 2024, as a result of the adoption of the **Global Digital Compact (A/RES/79/1)**, the United Nations General Assembly requested the Commission on Science and Technology for Development (CSTD) to establish a dedicated working group to engage in a comprehensive and inclusive multi-stakeholder dialogue on data governance at all levels as relevant for development.

Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Djibouti, Egypt, Republic of the Gambia, Rwanda, and the United Republic of Tanzania are the African regional group State members. The African Union Commission (AUC) is represented amongst the intergovernmental and international organizations, and the WG is also composed by representatives of civil society from the region. The working group is chaired by Peter Major from Hungary, and current chair of the CSTD, Ambassador Kah, is the working group's vice-chair.

The working group will report on its progress to the General Assembly, by no later than the eighty-first session (September 2026), including on follow-up recommendations towards equitable and interoperable data governance arrangements, which may include:

- **Fundamental principles** of data governance at all levels as relevant for development.
- Proposals to support **interoperability between national, regional and international data systems**.
- Considerations of **sharing the benefits of data**.
- Options to facilitate **safe, secure and trusted data flows, including cross-border data flows** as relevant for development (all SDGs).

African regional standards offer a distinctive and much-needed perspective on global data governance debates by centering developmental justice, sovereignty, regional integration, and inclusion. Together, they can provide a unique African lens to global data governance.

The goal of the current consultation is for participants to work towards a consensus on how best to include an Africa lens on data governance into key global digital governance processes, in particular, on the work of the CSTD Working Group.

The Task

To produce a negotiated input to the CSTD WG on Data Governance, building on adopted African data governance frameworks and standards and relevant resolutions.

The document will cover, at a minimum, the four areas of thematic recommendations listed above, namely: fundamental principles; interoperability between national, regional and international data systems; sharing the benefits of data; and safe, secure and trusted data flows, including cross-border data flows.

If consensus can be achieved among participants, these priorities could be presented to the CSTD WG through a formal submission and at relevant sessions of the 2025 African and global Internet Governance Forums.

Good Faith and Diversity within Stakeholder Groups

No matter which stakeholder group participants are part of, or whether they agree with one another or not, they should approach the consultation in good faith and with the assumption that they all share the goal of reaching an acceptable consensus. Stakeholder groups are also not homogenous. There can be as much diversity among views held by different people in different governments, or even among different departments in the same government, as there is between, for example, government and civil society. The same applies to civil society. Members of parliament come from different political parties, and represent different constituencies. Sometimes their priorities are the same, but sometimes they are not.

The Output Document

- Its length, table of contents and format should ideally follow these guidelines:
- Three to four pages maximum
- It should respond to the task
- Paragraphs will be numbered. **Use of the sub-categories within each main section is optional.**

Structure of the output document

Preamble: About the document and data governance in Africa

Section A: Fundamental principles of data governance

Section B: Proposals to support interoperability between national, regional and international data systems

Section C: Considerations of sharing the benefits of data

Section D: Options to facilitate safe, secure and trusted data flows, including cross-border data flows

Sharing the Output

If the practicum produces an agreed output document this document will be considered for presentation to the 2025 African Internet Governance Forum and or to the CSTD WG if all participants in the process agree to this.

However, it is the decision of participants how to proceed. In other words, even if consensus is not achieved by all stakeholder groups, participants can discuss if, and if so, how and with what framing the output can be shared. The organisers might also choose to share the output, or part of it, as part of the larger reporting on the event, without attributing its contents to any specific participant or group of participants.

Work Process

Refer to the programme of AfriSIG 2025.

24 May

11:30 to 12:45h

Main Session 3: The Global Digital Compact and the CSTD Working Group on Data Governance at All Levels – Introduction to the AfriSIG 2025 Practicum

12:45 to 13:00h	1st Practicum session – Assignment for lunch discussions
16:15 to 17:15h	2nd Practicum session – Informal plenary working session – stakeholder groups present initial questions and concerns at an informal chaired session
19:30 to 20:00h	3rd Practicum session – Self organised informal working sessions in stakeholder groups – goal is to produce written submission to be sent to the secretariat the following day
25 May	
17:00 to 17:30h	4th Practicum session – Working session for stakeholder groups to prepare for the formal session after dinner – all written inputs to be shared with the secretariat by 18:00h
20:00 to 21:00h	5th Practicum session – Formal practicum plenary – stakeholder groups will present their text contributions to the outcome document at a formal chaired session
26 May	
16:45 to 18:30h	6th Practicum session – Formal plenary and negotiations – groups discuss draft output document based on compiled inputs from the stakeholder groups
27 May	
16:15 to 17:30h	7th Practicum session – Final Plenary – negotiations on final text of the output document

Stakeholder Groups

Participants will be randomly assigned to stakeholder groups and given roles. However, everyone is free to request a change in the group they have been assigned to, or the role they have been given.

- Business
- Civil society
- States and Intergovernmental Organisations
- Members of Parliament
- Technical community and Research and academic community

Each stakeholder group needs to identify a rapporteur who will liaise with the Secretariat

Chairing and Secretariat Roles

Several of the faculty will have been asked to co-chair the practicum and play the role of the Secretariat. These roles will include chairing plenary sessions and working with the fellows to achieve consensus on an outcome without imposing their points of view. Their efforts will be coordinated by the Chair of the Practicum with the assistance of the Secretariat.