AfriSIG 2023 Practicum Outcome Document v.2.1, 17 October 2023

Guidelines to inclusive, multistakeholder implementation of the African Union Data Policy Framework

Table of contents

1. Preamble

[The African Union (AU) Data Policy Framework](#) (AUDPF) sets out a common vision, principles and strategic priorities and makes key recommendations to guide African Union member states in the development of their national data systems and capabilities to effectively use and derive value from data. The AUDPF was commissioned by the African Union Commission (AUC) and endorsed by the AU Executive Council in February 2022.

The AUDPF is part of an effort to create a consolidated data environment and harmonised digital data governance systems to enable the free and secure flow of data across the continent while safeguarding human rights, upholding security and ensuring equitable access to and sharing of benefits arising therefrom.

As indicated in the 84-page document, through the AUDPF, African countries agreed to put in place the needed mechanisms and regulations to cooperatively enable data to flow across Africa and pave the way to the achievement of the Digital Single Market and ultimately, [Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want](#).

The framework seeks to harness the potential of the data revolution to empower people, institutions and businesses, boost intra-Africa digital trade, contribute to economic integration efforts, raise citizens' awareness on data protection and privacy issues, promote research and innovation, preserve the digital sovereignty of states, build trust in the data ecosystem, and reinforce Africa's participation through a united front and a uniform stance in multilateral discussions on various areas of the subject.

It is expected by the AU that the domestication of the framework by African countries and the implementation of its key recommendations and proposed policy interventions at national, regional and continental levels, along with the development of the necessary human and institutional capacity, will enable Africans, particularly the youth, to participate and thrive in the global digital economy and society.

Building on the implementation process taking place at the level of regional economic communities and among AU member states, this follow-up strategy document was developed as an output document arising from multistakeholder discussions and consultations, during the 11th African School on Internet Governance (AfriSIG) held in Abuja, Nigeria, from 13 to 18 September 2023, ahead of the 11th African Internet Governance Forum (AfIGF), which also took place in Abuja, from 19 to 21 September

2023. The output document is aimed at facilitating and contributing to the domestication and implementation of the AUDPF and its key recommendations by African countries.

The 11th AfriSIG was convened by the Association for Progressive Communications (APC), the AUC and Research ICT Africa, in collaboration with Paradigm Initiative, the United Nations Internet Governance Forum Parliamentary Track, the hosts and organisers of the 2023 African IGF, the Federal Government of Nigeria, represented by the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC), and the AfIGF Secretariat and Multistakeholder Advisory Group.

This outcome document was developed by a multistakeholder group of parliamentarians and representatives of African governments, civil society and media organisations, the business and technical communities, as well as academic and research institutions.

2. The African Union Data Policy Framework (AUDPF)

The guiding principles for the AUDPF seek to align with the AU values and international law to achieve greater unity and solidarity between African countries and their people, ensuring balanced and inclusive economic development, including promoting and protecting peoples' rights through the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and other relevant instruments. The following high-level principles guide the AUDPF and are endorsed in this document:

Cooperation: African Union member states shall cooperate in exchanging data, acknowledging data as a central input of the global economy and the importance of the interoperability of data systems to a flourishing African digital single market.

Integration: The AUDPF shall promote intra-Africa data flows and remove legal barriers to data flows, subject only to necessary security, human rights and data protection.

Fairness and inclusiveness: In the implementation of the AUDPF, member states shall ensure it is inclusive and equitable, offering opportunities and benefits to all Africans, and in so doing, seek to redress national and global inequalities by being responsive to the voices of those marginalised by technological developments.

Trust, safety and accountability: Member states shall promote trustworthy data environments that are safe and secure, accountable to data subjects, and ethical and secure by design.

Sovereignty: Member states, the AUC, regional economic communities, African institutions and international organisations shall cooperate to create capacity to enable African countries to self-manage their data, take advantage of data flows and govern data appropriately.

Comprehensive and forward-looking: The AUDPF shall enable the creation of an environment that encourages investment and innovation through the development of infrastructure, human capacity and the harmonisation of regulations and legislation.

Integrity and justice: Member states shall ensure that data collection, processing and usage are just and lawful, and data should not be used to discriminate unfairly or infringe peoples' rights.

While each guiding principle is significant and equal in weight, it may be argued that achieving the others depends on establishing a reliable and secure data environment and facilitating data flows for integration. For the purposes of this document, we have chosen to concentrate on the best methods for achieving the two above-mentioned goals because of this.

3. Main challenges and opportunities related to the implementation of the AUDPF

AfriSIG fellows identified challenges and opportunities in implementing the AUDPF's recommendations that apply across all sectors and stakeholder groups in Africa.

3.1 Overarching opportunities and challenges

Opportunities

a. **Data-driven decision making:** Data can be used for evidence-based policy making, leading to more effective and efficient public services and policies, which will benefit all stakeholders.
b. **International cooperation:** International cooperation in issues such as data access and sharing can facilitate the implementation of the AUDPF.
c. **Public transparency and accountability**: Improved data systems also allow for better monitoring and evaluation of public services and policies, promoting increased transparency and accountability. This will aid in creating a trusted and safe data environment.
d. **Collaboration and networks:** The data revolution is an opportunity for different stakeholders to engage with peers and communities that work in similar areas and

share the goal of responsible data practice; these collaborations may extend their impact and value in time, promoting ongoing learning opportunities across the continent in the long run.

Challenges

a. **Inadequate legal frameworks and fragmented regulatory provisions:** These ultimately lead to confusion and incoherent implementation strategies.
b. **Difficulty in balancing data access with protection of sensitive data:** Balancing the need for data access with data privacy and security concerns can be challenging – for example, ensuring that sensitive data is protected while still being accessible for legitimate purposes.
c. **Inadequate data Infrastructure:** This limits the creation, storage and movement of data and hence the implementation of the recommendations of the AUDPF. Further, infrastructure issues, such as power outages (loadshedding) and internet shutdowns, disrupt the flow of data and hinder access to data.
d. **Lack of robust data and/or statistical systems:** This impedes targeted interventions and implementation of projects/initiatives, as it results in insufficient access to data and data inequality. Ample access to public interest data is key for different stakeholders. A stark divide often exists concerning access to and control over data. On one side, multinational corporations and external entities amass and exploit vast quantities of data from the continent. On the other side, local communities, stakeholders and governments often find themselves with restricted access and control over their own data, perpetuating a power imbalance that demands redress.
e. **Data governance language barrier:** Data governance has its own terminology and concepts. Different stakeholders may struggle to understand and communicate effectively in this specialised language.
f. **Limited individual and institutional capacity:** In addition to technical jargon, understanding and engaging in discussions on data policies often require a certain level of technical expertise. However, there is limited capacity both at the institutional and individual level when it comes to such technical matters across stakeholder groups.
g. **Donor priorities vs. national priorities:** Sometimes, donor-driven initiatives may not align with national priorities. This misalignment can divert resources and attention away from critical local data governance issues, creating challenges in implementing policies that truly benefit our communities.
h. **Data collaboration and alignment:** Collaborating and aligning data efforts across different entities and stakeholder groups can be challenging. Coordinating data collection, sharing and utilisation requires effective collaboration mechanisms, which may be lacking or underdeveloped in some cases.

i. **Insufficient trust among different stakeholders:** Insufficient trust among stakeholders like civil society organisations (CSOs), businesses, parliaments, researchers and government institutions may discourage the free flow of data among various stakeholder groups.

3.2 Opportunities and challenges for specific sectors and stakeholder groups

3.2.1 Academia and research institutions

Opportunities

a. **The opportunity to provide evidence for the implementation of the AUDPF**, highlighting its potential benefits and long-term effects.
b. **The opportunity to promote research collaboration** at national, regional and global level as a solution to the fragmented nature of data governance across the continent.

Challenges

a. **Lack of access to repositories for research relevant to the implementation of the AUDPF:** There are no common repositories to collate and showcase research and academic work related to the AUDPF's agenda, particularly highlighting success stories from various African countries on data governance work. There is also limited access to free academic journals and other platforms for the exchange of academic production. This limitation impedes the dissemination of valuable insights and best practices, hindering the broader understanding and adoption of effective data governance approaches.

3.2.2 Business

Opportunities

a. **A predictable framework for collecting and leveraging data** for market expansion and data driven innovation.
b. **Introducing newer, more efficient technologies and systems** for the gathering, sharing and processing of data can assist with implementing recommendations of the AUDPF, if these technologies and systems are designed in a manner that complies with its provisions.

c. **Improved optimisation of operations and customer experiences** to aid in building a trusted data environment. This should also improve the competitiveness of the African digital economy.
d. **Opportunities for African tech startups** that provide applications and other solutions that can support the implementation of the recommendations of the AUDPF.
e. **Enabling collection and access** to larger and more diverse data sets

Challenges

a. **Compliance with good data governance practices.** This is often due to a general unwillingness to comply or lack of capacity or financial resources, among other factors.
b. **Poor data management practices** among many African businesses and a shortage of businesses with good practices that can serve as role models for others.

3.2.3 Members of parliament

Opportunities

a. **To introduce bills initiated by private members** and urge relevant committees to initiate and spur legislation from the executive on the AUDPF.
b. In jurisdictions where MPs also serve in the executive, they are in a unique position to **push the cabinet to initiate implementation of the recommendations** of the AUDPF.
c. **Cross-fertilisation of ideas from inter-parliamentary meetings** that facilitate MPs learning best practices from their peers in these fora and taking lessons learned back home to spur action.
d. **To build the capacity of MPs** using regional and continental parliamentary groups like the Africa Parliamentary Network on Internet Governance (APNIG). The resource available to MPs in these groupings comes from the synergies and relationships with national, regional and global CSOs which are not necessarily available to Parliaments directly.
e. **To ensure that consideration is given** to "fringe" or sidelined groups in shaping government policy related to implementing the AUDPF
f. **To insist on socioeconomic impact assessments** and analysis of budget proposals before approval to ensure that the allocations made can effectively support the implementation of the recommendations of the AUDPF.

a. **Resistance from the executive:** In some cases, parliaments face resistance or lack of prioritisation from the executive in the passage of legislation aimed at improving data governance in the country.
b. **Disconnect between national and regional parliaments:** The absence of policy coherence in sub-regional parliamentary bodies poses a risk to enabling effective data flows between countries. It would be important to ensure consistency between implementation of the AUDPF's recommendations in individual countries and implementation taking place at regional level.
c. **Intentional abuse of the parliamentary calendar:** Instances where, for example, the executive takes advantage of parliamentary recess to fast track the passing of repressive data policies without proper scrutiny by parliament. No laws are better than having bad laws that do not effectively comply with the recommendations of the AUDPF.
d. **Effect of attrition on parliamentary work:** Parliament is only as effective as the quality of MPs in the chamber. It is important to curb the high attrition rate in parliaments, and take advantage of permanent members, particularly in committees that deal with digital and data governance matters.
e. **Conflicting interests in parliament:** Partisanship in parliament and conflicting personal interests of MPs can hinder the passage of legislation that enables the realisation of the AUDPF.
f. **Rivalry between local assemblies and national parliaments:** Unhealthy rivalry between members of local assemblies and national parliaments disrupts the required synergy needed for effective law making and implementation of laws made.

3.2.4 Civil society

Opportunities

a. **Strategic thinking for long-term impact:** The AUDPF should not be treated as a one-off compliance project but rather as an opportunity for civil society organisations to develop strong, long-term data management capacity and processes.
b. **Sharing of resources among CSOs:** While compliance with the AUDPF may seem resource-intensive, collaboration and coordination can help civil society organisations share knowledge and make the most of their resources.

Challenges

a. **Limited training opportunities:** Implementation often requires resources and opportunities for training. Smaller civil society and media organisations may struggle to mobilise or allocate the necessary human and financial resources.
b. **Participation in decision making:** Civil society has to navigate obstacles in reaching policy and decision makers and actively contributing to the development of laws and policies. In some countries, opportunities for formal participation in policy and law making processes are limited or restricted.

3.2.5 Government including information regulators and data commissions

Opportunities

a. **Mobilising global and regional commitments:** The implementation of the AUDPF can be strengthened by drawing on the African Declaration on Internet Rights and Freedoms to domesticate the Malabo Convention on Cyber Security and Personal Data Protection.
b. **The African Continental Free Trade Area:** Implementation of the AUDPF can be leveraged to strengthen cross-border digital economy policies and initiatives.

Challenges

a. **Fragmented institutional arrangements:** There is fragmentation and discord in regulation between different levels and sectors of government. Ministries, agencies and departments are not always in harmony.
b. **Insufficient financial resources to implement policies:** Across many countries, the budget allocation to the ICT sector is generally below desired levels. This is worsened by fiscal constraints and debt sustainability issues.
c. **Lack of human capacity and specialised skills:** This applies to all stakeholder groups but is particularly prominent in the public sector across the continent. Capacity gaps exist at the level of subject expertise in data and digital governance, but also at the level of management and administration.

3.2.6 Media

Opportunities

a. **Data journalism:** The AUDPF provides a platform for promoting open data in journalism.
b. **Fact checking:** All stakeholder groups should support and collaborate with the media and enhance evidence-based journalism to amplify data governance research outputs drawing on the methodologies of fact checker organisations to source and advocate for credible and verifiable information.

a. **Media ownership and financing:** Many media houses are financed by third parties and often have to follow their bidding, which may undermine their independence and ability to manage and promote data in the public interest.

4. Recommendations on how to implement the AUDPF in a manner that ensures inclusion and participation of all stakeholders

4.1 General recommendations

a. **Assess regional policy gaps for AUDPF implementation:** Identify and analyse policy gaps between the AUDPF and existing national and regional regulations and institutional structures, focusing on key regional initiatives like the African Continental Free Trade Agreement and the Digital Transformation Strategy for Africa. In-depth assessments can pinpoint areas of misalignment and potential hindrances to the effective implementation of the AUDPF. This is an activity in which leadership of the research and academic sector can play a key role, but all stakeholder groups should be involved. For example, media could be leveraged and investigative journalism used to amplify data governance research outputs; methodologies used by fact checker organisations could be also used to source and advocate for credible and verifiable information and for building media and digital literacy.
b. **Capacity development:** Data literacy programmes should be integrated into broader media and digital literacy strategies. All stakeholders should engage and collaborate in putting together specific training on data issues to develop policy and technical knowledge in these areas.
c. **Monitoring, evaluation and follow-up of implementation of the AUDPF:** Track impact and effectiveness of the implementation of the AUDPF through periodic reviews and experience sharing.[1]
d. **Talent attraction and retention:** All stakeholders should engage in efforts to attract and keep local data governance talent through attractive remuneration, non-financial incentives and better working conditions in academic and research institutions, the public sector, civil society and the private sector.

---

1 The use of digital policy implementation tracker platforms like https://lexota.org/about-page/ can be helpful.

e. **Transparency and accountability:** Transparency and accountability are essential in the digital sphere. Civil society and media play a key role in monitoring and reporting on how governments implement data governance policies. Parliament plays an oversight role and can help hold the executive accountable for implementing agreed plans. All stakeholder groups have a role to play.

4.2 Recommendations to specific stakeholder groups or sectors

4.2.1 Recommendations to academia and research institutions

a. **Building knowledge and skills:** Partner with the government to develop and deliver training programmes in data governance for journalists, civil society, law enforcement agencies, media, civil servants, the business community and other relevant stakeholders. Although this is a recommendation to all stakeholders, academia could take the lead in promoting these efforts.

b. **Data access:** Develop national and regional data portals and repositories that speak to needed data flows for different stakeholders.[2] Academic and research institutions should make more research datasets open to encourage more researchers and media practitioners to use them for research, learning and fact-based reporting.

f. Develop a comprehensive **data governance ontology** to provide a common language for data-related discussions and facilitate seamless partnerships, collaborations and innovations among diverse stakeholders. Academic and research institutions should collaborate with information regulators in this activity and **create a glossary** of key terms and concepts relating to data governance tailored for the African context.

g. Continuously **produce relevant, innovative and practical research** on the different aspects related to data governance that will inform continuous improvement of the data ecosystem on a national and continental level. These could include academic articles, field research, monitoring and reporting on the implementation, impact and effectiveness of the AUDPF at national and regional level.

h. **Promote the use of open data in research:** Open access publishing and making research data available, while also applying the necessary protections of people's personal data and complying with research ethics, can strengthen collaborative research across the continent.

i. Provide academic expertise, through **submissions and hearings**, for example, in multistakeholder consultations during national data strategy development.

j. Develop **data governance curricula** at undergraduate and postgraduate levels and at the level of continuous professional development (CPD).

---

2 E.g. https://data.humdata.org/ and https://datafirst.uct.ac.za/dataportal

k. Create a **data governance toolkit** based on the AUDPF for online dissemination with specific emphasis on media practitioners on data governance terminologies and policies and key considerations.

4.2.2 Recommendations to business

a. Establish **channels for businesses to discuss and provide feedback** on implementing data protection policies and regulations. This feedback can be considered to refine and improve the AUDPF over time.
b. Create an **enabling compliance environment** for businesses through incentives such as a reward-based ranking system and other measures, including tax breaks.
c. **Tailor the implementation of the AUDPF** in business data management processes to the specific needs and challenges of the region or country where your business operates.
d. Invest in **capacity-building programmes** to enhance data management and analytical skills through educational workshops and seminars to raise awareness among businesses about the importance of implementing the AUDPF and its benefits to help demystify compliance requirements.
e. Business and industry associations should **prioritise SMEs in AUDPF implementation** by allocating necessary resources.
f. Proactively **engage government stakeholders** through town hall meetings, awareness campaigns and road shows to emphasise the benefits of collaborative policy development and implementation.
g. **Support industry associations** by collaborating with them to develop a ranking system that rewards businesses for data policy compliance.
h. Businesses and government should collaborate to establish channels including **helplines or online platforms** where businesses can seek guidance on compliance-related questions. This can be managed by industry associations or in collaboration with relevant government agencies. The feedback could also be used to refine and improve the AUDPF over time.
i. Commit to create **easy-to-understand compliance guides** that break down the AUDPF's key components and provide step-by-step instructions for businesses to follow.

4.2.3 Recommendations to parliaments and members of parliament

a. Prioritise the **training and capacity building** of MPs and the technical parliamentary service staff. Relevant parliamentary committees must engage more with the technical community to get better insights before passing legislation.
b. Parliaments must exercise their **oversight role**. In instances where the executive seeks to unilaterally impose policies that relate to the AUDPF's implementation

without recourse to stakeholder consultations, it is important that MPs move speedily to ensure that due process is followed.

c. Ensure that **partisanship does not stall the work** of the parliament when facilitating and overseeing implementation of the recommendations of the AUDPF.

d. Make recommendations to **increase the budgetary allocation** to the ICT sector and monitor expenditure to enable increased investment in key digital economy areas, including the digital public infrastructure, required for the effective implementation of the AUDPF.

e. Regional parliaments should adopt implementation plans for the AUDPF to act as a guide for national parliaments to **harmonise implementation across the region**. In cases where there are no regional parliaments, bilateral and multilateral policy efforts would allow for policy coherence across countries.

f. National representatives sent to regional parliaments should be persons with **technical knowledge** who could bring that knowledge and competence to the work done regionally. It is therefore important that the executive and national parliaments work together in selecting these representatives.

g. Within national parliaments, those responsible for discussion and oversight of implementation of the AUDPF's recommendations should be chosen on the basis of **competence and not patronage**.

h. As an institution, parliament should **prioritise any AUDPF-related legislation** on its order paper. Parliaments should also show leadership by example in implementing data policy actions within their own operations.

i. Support MPs to participate actively in **ICT inter-parliamentary networks**.

j. Ensure the **education of the leadership of parliament** (speakers, majority and minority leaders) on the value and need for implementing the AUDPF.

4.2.4 Recommendations to civil society

a. CSOs should initiate a **demystification strategy** that breaks down the AUDPF away from the technical jargon and focuses on its benefits for different stakeholder groups. This will form part of an awareness campaign and should incorporate targeted workshops bringing together policy makers and legislative agenda setters to discuss how the AUDPF offers benefits that can trickle down to them and their electorates.

b. CSOs should **monitor situations** where the executive seeks to unilaterally impose policies without recourse to stakeholder consultations and call on parliaments to act on such occasions

c. CSOs should highlight the need to **protect the digital rights of citizens** and urge government, through advocacy, partnership and public education, to implement AUDPF-related legislation.

d. Civil society should advocate for and participate in the development of **codes of conduct** for companies and governments to use as a basis for monitoring good data governance practices.

e. Ensure **accountability and transparency** in AUDPF implementation through annual progress monitoring, shadow reports and compliance reports. Foster feedback mechanisms for civil society and media, and support independent data audits for data quality and compliance assessment.

f. In order to build trust in the use of data, civil society will also lead by example through developing **internal data policies** to safeguard both personal and non-personal data of its stakeholders.

g. CSOs should advocate for the **harmonisation of data systems** across African countries to facilitate inter-country digital collaboration and data flows on trade and commerce. This harmonisation should prioritise data protection and respect for privacy while promoting economic cooperation. Civil society should also lobby governments who are yet to ratify the African Union Convention on Cyber Security and Data Protection (Malabo Convention), in order to increase governments' commitment to the AUDPF.

h. Identify **digital data champions** who will include experts and leaders across all stakeholder groups and sectors in data protection, telecom regulation and government to support the implementation of the AUDPF.

4.2.6 Recommendations to the media

a. Take the lead in conducting **localised contextual analysis** at the national and subnational levels.

b. Build **public awareness** among the masses on the AUDPF and on the benefits that it carries for them and for businesses to create positive public goodwill that can lead to positive political will among the people setting the legislative and policy agenda. In this regard, CSOs should collaborate with the media to embark on large-scale public awareness campaigns on the AUDPF and the benefits it holds for the average person, whether in person, through traditional media and on social media.

c. Engage in **fact-checking and verification measures** to minimise misinformation related to data issues.

d. **Monitor situations** and report on governments' implementation of the AUDPF.

e. Highlight the need to **protect the digital rights** of individuals through information sharing and reporting.

f. **Document and disseminate case studies** showcasing how good data governance has improved people's lives. Utilise digital platforms and multimedia formats to tell compelling stories. By illustrating tangible benefits of data-driven journalism, media can inspire others and contribute to a culture of data-driven decision making in line

with the AUDPF objectives.

4.2.7 Recommendations to government and information regulators and African associations of information regulators

a. Conduct a **capacity needs assessment** across relevant governmental agencies and design training/capacity building programmes on data policy. This can be done in collaboration with academia and research institutions.

b. Adopt the AUDPF and establish **independent data policy authorities** to execute this mandate if they do not currently exist. For countries where they exist, collaborate with regional bodies such as the AU to strengthen the implementation of these frameworks.

c. Implement a **policy framework** to enable data flows both nationally and regionally while ensuring data protection, security and equality and safeguarding human rights and dignity.

d. Implement policies to build a trusted and **robust data environment**. These policies should address the core areas outlined below:

   ○ Data protection laws and regulations to ensure the security and privacy of personal and non-personal data.

   ○ Human rights, including the rights to privacy and freedom of expression. Governments and information regulators should collaborate with CSOs and the media to ensure alignment with regional and international standards.

   ○ Cybersecurity measures to safeguard data against breaches and cyber threats. Governments and information regulators should collaborate with computer/cybersecurity incident response teams, national security agencies, and other relevant government organisations in ensuring a secure and stable cyberspace which is a prerequisite for a trusted data environment.

   ○ Data lifecycle management to ensure the responsible collection, aggregation, storage and deletion of data, both personal and non-personal, in order to maintain data integrity and protect individual rights.

e. Embrace a **multistakeholder approach** and ensure policy development is inclusive: To promote inclusive policy development, civil society, the media and other stakeholders should be engaged in shaping digital data governance policies, and the active participation of marginalised communities should also be ensured.

f. Clear **delineation of roles and responsibilities**: Data framework adoption and implementation presents an opportunity for governments to (a) map out their digital ecosystem, (b) identify the gaps and core competencies needed for data policy implementation, and (c) assign roles, revise mandates or even consider merging units/agencies with similar data policy mandates.

g. Strengthen **collaboration and coordination efforts** to enhance compliance by different tiers and departments of government with laws and guidelines related to implementing the AUDPF's recommendations.

h. Adopt **innovative financing channels** to effectively fund data policy projects and initiatives. An example could be enforcing digital taxation strategies to generate revenue from data brokers and others who profit from the data generated by Africans online. Governments and regulators should collaborate with central banks, ministries of finance, universal service funds, businesses, digital economy regulators and other relevant government agencies in developing and implementing such strategies.

i. Establish a **multistakeholder steering committee/advisory group** with representatives from key stakeholder groups (civil society, parliament, academia, development partners, government agencies, regional bodies, etc.) to conduct periodic reviews and assessments on the implementation of the AUDPF with a dynamic and forward-looking approach.

j. Embed data policy frameworks across **robust digital identity management systems** to create trustworthy and inclusive exchange of data across different government agencies. Governments and information regulators should collaborate with national statistical offices and government agencies.

4.2.8 Recommendations to African intergovernmental institutions

a. African intergovernmental organisations (IGOs) can aid in the fulfilment of the AUDPF by conducting **training and education programmes** to conscientise people on data-related issues and their rights.

b. African IGOs should actively **engage with local communities** for tailored data policies. They can also be instrumental in ensuring that the policies formulated align with the principles of fairness, equity and respect for human rights, thus benefiting the entire African population.

c. African IGOs should allow for **flexibility in implementing the AUDPF** in African countries, as a one-size-fits-all approach may not be suitable due to varying local contexts and challenges.

d. IGOs can promote **accountability and transparency** in AUDPF implementation through annual progress monitoring and compliance reports.

e. Setting up a **digitised record management system** will build trust and improve data flow, processing and management for easy access and archiving.

4.2.9 Recommendations to the international community

a. **Infrastructure challenges**: Africa faces persistent challenges in its physical infrastructure, including road, rail and air connectivity. To address these issues, prioritising data sharing is crucial. Establishing clear data sharing agreements among government agencies, the African Union, civil society and media organisations is essential. These agreements should define access, usage and sharing protocols to enhance transparency and trust, ultimately facilitating better coordination of resources and infrastructure development projects across the continent.

b. **Financing for implementation of the AUDPF:** Collaborate with international organisations, donors and development banks to secure funding for the implementation of the APAUDPF. Advocate for increased domestic investment in data and digital public infrastructure, emphasising its crucial role in long-term development. Engage governments, businesses and parliaments in this endeavour.

c. **Financing for data protection framework promotion and monitoring by CSOs and media:** CSOs and media also need access to funding to continue to strengthen their capacity for projects aimed at promoting the adoption of national frameworks, awareness about them across stakeholders, and their implementation.

Contacts

For more information on this document and the African School on Internet Governance contact Anriette Esterhuysen at afrisig@apc.org or Hanani Hlomani at hhlomani@researchictafrica.net.

Abuja, 17 September 2023

http://afrisig.org