



Concept Note

CBAS Expert Survey on a Framework for Digital Public Goods for SDGs

Background

The rapid digital transformation around the world in past two decades has revealed unique opportunities for global progress and development with evident risk and challenges that we face collectively. In 2018, the UN Secretary-General appointed a High-Level Panel (HLP) to deliberate on the question of digital cooperation to maximize benefits and minimize their negative impacts. The HLP submitted its recommendations in June 2019. Following the recommendations from the HLP, the Secretary-General presented his Roadmap for Digital Cooperation in June 2020. One of the recommendations of the HLP was to establish a platform to share digital public goods and consequently led to the establishment of a Digital Public Goods Alliance in 2019.

On the occasion of the commemoration of the 75th anniversary of the United Nations, following extensive multi-stakeholder consultations the UN Member States adopted a Declaration on the Commemoration of the Seventy-Fifth Anniversary of the United Nations (A/RES/75/1), which contains a pledge to improve Digital Cooperation and to ensure safe and affordable digital access for all. This pledge recognizes the unprecedented opportunities of digital technologies, the associated challenges, and seeks to realize their potential to accelerate progress towards fulfilling the 2030 Agenda.

Following this declaration, the UN Secretary-General released a report entitled “Our Common Agenda” in September 2021. One of the proposals in the Common Agenda is a Global Digital Compact to be finalized and agreed upon at the Summit of the Future, which will be held in September 2023. The Secretary-General has proposed that the Compact would be the main outcome of a multistakeholder technology track (involving all stakeholders: governments, the UN system, the private sector, civil society, and individuals, including youths) at the 2023 Summit. The UN Secretariat is now developing this proposal through an inclusive preparatory process ahead of the negotiations on the Compact at the Summit.

1- Introduction

The international Research Center of Big Data for Sustainable Development Goals (CBAS) was established in response to the call by Chinese President Xi Jinping to



utilize science, data, technology, and innovation to facilitate global progress towards sustainable development. CBAS is therefore working to establish big data ecosystems with a particular focus on Big Earth Data. The vision of CBAS is to provide a range of services essential for addressing the most challenging problems to sustainable development, such as lack of data and technology barriers in the implementation of the SDGs, through methods like data sharing, technology solutions, decision-making support, as well as capacity building for developing countries. Towards this end CBAS is working to develop data infrastructure and information and data products, create new knowledge for SDG monitoring and evaluation, develop and launch a series of SDG satellites, provide policy and advisory services through an SDG Think tank and improve global capacity for SDGs in developing countries.

Another area emphasized in the Secretary-General's Digital Roadmap is the implementation and standardization of digital public goods. Digital public goods are generally defined as open-source software, open data, open artificial intelligence models, open standards, and open content. Realizing the importance of informed policies and decision-making in the implementation of the SDGs, CBAS supports the idea of digital public goods particularly within the earth science information domain. CBAS holds the belief that information generated on air, water, ecosystems, and biodiversity etc. are information that should be publicly accessible for awareness, knowledge, and research to encourage innovative solutions to global and regional challenges. Therefore, CBAS proposes the idea to develop a mechanism to identify, evaluate and standardize new and existing digital public goods relevant to the SDG indicator framework, with the aim to continually upgrade to the latest and most precise methods, models, data products and datasets to improve global SDG monitoring, facilitate the filling in of existing data gaps and create opportunities to improve global scientific and technical capacities.

2- Consultation Process

CBAS is initiating this process of consultation to seek expert advice on the idea of a global project working towards improving recognition, visibility, and accessibility of Digital Public Goods for SDGs to improve global evaluation and assessment of SDG indicators. The core concept is to select Digital Public Goods for SDGs that ensure access and availability of data, data services, data products models, digital resources, and information necessary to evaluation and monitor SDG indicators. This will help to ensure digital resources relevant to monitoring SDGs are updated to incorporate rapid developments in science and technology and to ensure that they remain accessible around the world to support information, science-driven policy, and decision support systems.



3- Scope of Consultation

The scope of this consultation is to shape a broad conceptual framework based on the experiences of experts working in international initiatives, projects, and organizations to help identify opportunities and challenges in the conception of digital public goods for SDGs summarized in Section 2.

The format of this consultation process is a question-based survey designed to collect opinion, suggestions, and guidelines to identify core principles and key actions to guide development of a framework for action. The opinions of the experts during this round of consultation will subsequently be submitted to the UN for consideration as a CBAS contribution to the UN Global Digital Compact.

4- Guidelines for Experts

Experts are encouraged to provide their direct opinions to the survey questions and provide a response from their expert perspective and experiences. Experts are welcome to share their opinion in detail and elaborate on topics coinciding with their interests. CBAS hopes to collect diversified, yet practical opinions of experts for each question, and therefore requests the experts to preferably limit their response to a max of 500 words.

The deadline to submit response is **August 5th, 2022**. Kindly share your completed survey forms to

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Mr. Siming Deng at smdeng@cbas.ac.cn