DATA FOR DEVELOPMENT

High quality development data is the foundation for meaningful policy-making, efficient resource allocation, and effective public service delivery .Use of an effective and consistent methodology can ensure organizations collect reusable data that can contribute to lasting impact.

The data journey

The data journey methodology consists of four phases: Design, Capture, Understand and Act.The journey is not linear but is intended to represent the different steps and activities that could be undertaken to produce meaningful information from data.

Design

The goal of this phase is to examine the feasibility of the project.Decisions are made concerning the problem you are trying to solve, which party (or parties) you will work with and their roles,and the data needed.Questions to be answered include the following:

- What exactly are you trying to achieve?
- Which data will you need and how will it be collected if it doesn't exist?
- How will we use the data? e.g present to national government
- Is it a one off exercise?
- Which sampling and survey design is best and cost effective?
- Who are possible partners in this project?

Capture

Collect quality data if non-existent while tracking progress.If there is data available,the concerned partner shares the data and you try to understand how it is interlinked. Questions to be answered include the following:

- Are the required tools and people ready to commence data collection?
- How will quality checks be done?

Understand

Clean, analyse, visualise your data and extract the relevant insights.Cleaning the data before using it for analysis includes correcting formatting, removing or correcting erroneous data,removing outliers etc.Analysis involves use of different statistical techniques e.g cluster analysis to draw conclusions from the data or make predictions about future events.

- Is your data clean and ready for analysis?
- Which tools will you use to clean and extract insights from your data?
- How will you visualise the data? e.g reports, dashboards

Act

Share insights with the relevant people and how they can act upon them e.g to make new policies.

- How best to share the insights?
- How can you use these insights to make decisions?

It is also trivial that the data scientists involved have these key skills:

1. **Programming** - creative problem solving,structured thinking
2. **Communication** - being able to communicate effectively to partners especially to those who don't have a data science background
3. **Inquisitive** - continuously asking questions and always learning

Conclusion

The stated methodology, and a competent data team is key to the success of a data development programme.