[APRIL 14, 2017](http://www.opalproject.org/blog/2017/4/14/opal-workshop-in-senegal-the-data-revolution-is-an-opportunity)

[**OPAL USER NEEDS ASSESSMENT: USER NEEDS & GOVERNANCE WORKSHOP IN SENEGAL AND SYNTHESIS REPORT**](http://www.opalproject.org/blog/2017/4/14/opal-workshop-in-senegal-the-data-revolution-is-an-opportunity)

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The pilot workshop “Open Algorithms” (OPAL) took place in Dakar, on January 24th 2017. 48 speakers, specialists, researchers, academics, experts and algorithm developers from 24 public, private, national and international organizations gathered to discuss inputs.

Sonatel, a key partner in Senegal shared that engaging in OPAL is not only building on their past experience in the Data for Development (D4D) Challenge, but also Sonatel sees in the new approach exposed by OPAL an “opportunity for public authorities and development actors to improve the formulation, implementation and monitoring of public policies”.

The *Agence Nationale de la Statistique et de la Démographie* (ANSD), another key partner, helped to open the workshop, stating that OPAL could “revitalize socio-economic development in Senegal”.

Complex issues concerning the protection of privacy of users are intrinsic to use of this type of data. The objective of OPAL is to build results, by providing a transparent and equitable solution to the recurrent dilemmas that face those who want to use data for good.

Mitigation of risks is taken into account in the technical platform (architecture conceived to protect data, anonymization/pseudo anonymization, access rights) and in governance with the creation of an internal body for monitoring, the CODE (Comité d’Orientation pour le Développement et l’Ethique).

The governance body will have the following role:  
1. Advising the alignment of priorities for development  
2. Providing recommendations on Security and Privacy  
3. Advising on sensitive use cases  
4. Supporting a “balanced” development of the project

A discussion session opened space to better understand the expectations of the institutions that were invited. Questions on the availability of data for organizations such as ANSD or the possibility to sign partnerships with Telcos and other data providers were asked. Important questions regarding the protection of personal data and the need to adapt the project to the Senegalese context were also raised.

Mr Saikou Fall, Head of Information and Control Systems at the “Commission des données personnelles” (CDP), recalled the importance of protecting personal data and respecting privacy: “The owners of the data should be informed. This is mandatory. Right to prior information.” Regarding this, Emilie DIP of the DRJ of Sonatel, partner and member of the CDP, “assured the CDP that Sonatel is and have always been concerned about respecting privacy. Sonatel reached out to the CDP to take further the collaboration on Big Data projects. Concerning the consent of clients, there is an application that asks clients for their consent in using their data for Big Data project. This will be applied to OPAL soon.

**Detailed Assessment of Users Needs**

Groups were formed to discuss different topics for potential use cases for OPAL – such as health, education, poverty, etc. Each moderator introduced a challenge regarding data analysis, such as the definition and implementation of appropriate indicators, the inventory of data, and access to important target groups. In conclusion, the main speakers identified more than 40 case studies and indicators for Senegal.

In complement to the Workshop on Users Needs, interviews with various stakeholders were organized including with representatives of ANSD, *Ministère de l'enseignement Supérieur*, *Ministère de la Primature*, IPAR, UNFPA, Orange, Baamtu and Deloitte in order to better understand their ideas and contributions to development issues, institutional priorities as well as considerations to develop case studies and identify services and indicators relevant to OPAL.

Priority indicators for the Plan Sénégal Emergent were identified around 3 areas:  
1. Structural transformation of the economy and growth  
2. Human capital, social protection and sustainable development  
3. Governance, institutions, peace and security

Following this workshop, case studies will be selected for the pilot phase in Senegal.