

November 28, 2022

A new report by the Internet & Jurisdiction Policy Network released at the 17th Internet Governance Forum, taking place in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia this week, identifies a significant need for African countries to enhance coordination around data policies.

The “Internet & Jurisdiction Report on Framing, Mapping, and Addressing Cross-Border Digital Policies in Africa” is the accumulation of knowledge and stakeholder inputs gathered during a year-long project, supported by Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) on behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).

“More policy coordination is needed across Africa to leverage the benefits of digital technologies and especially data. Surveyed stakeholders across the region emphasized that progress towards harmonization should require human rights safeguards and take into account development capacities and national contexts” said Bertrand de La Chapelle, Executive Director and Co-founder of the Internet & Jurisdiction Policy Network.

The report combines a regional data collection engaging over 100 stakeholders from governments, internet companies, technical operators, civil society, academia, and international organizations. Detailed desk research was undertaken by Research ICT Africa, a digital policy, regulation, and governance think-tank based in South Africa.

“As Africa seeks to build its path and strengthen its regional voice in global policy debates we hope that this report will help support further dialogue and evidence-based research to foster coordination on cross-border digital policies across the region.” said Dr. Alison Gillwald, Executive Director, Research ICT Africa and Author of the report.

Report’s Key findings

- Data sovereignty can be realized without data localization through reciprocal protection of personal data and continental policies to share benefits.
- There is generally a data deficit on the continent, particularly in accurate data and data-sharing structures that can foster the attainment of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- A common African voice in international fora should advocate for data policies that support inclusive development, encourage cross-border data flows and uphold both individuals as well as collective rights.

With the emergence of data-driven digital technologies leading to innovations in service delivery and business, data has become an essential asset in the digital economy, be it global, regional, or national. New and innovative policy approaches are needed now more than ever to facilitate data sharing and leverage digital technologies to reach the SDGs. The report explores why policy coordination is important and offers a framing agenda to support future research and policy efforts to understand and support data policy development in Africa.

- Download the report [here](#).
- Download the infographics [here](#).

About the Internet & Jurisdiction Policy Network

The Internet & Jurisdiction Policy Network is the multistakeholder organization addressing the tension between the cross-border internet and national jurisdictions. Its Paris-based Secretariat facilitates a global policy process in which over 400 key entities including governments, the world’s largest internet companies, technical operators, civil society groups, academia and international organizations from over 70 countries work together. They enhance policy coherence and legal interoperability through the joint development of operational solutions.

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