Data Sharing Pilot

Digital Agrifood Collective

In 2023 a small pilot training on informed consent among 3900 farmers with DAC member Yielder led to some remarkable outcomes. Farmers were more willing to share data with organisations and third parties when receiving information about how their data would be used. However, follow up research showed that it was not so much the information as the trust they had in intermediaries and organisations asking them to share data that played a key role in their decision. Generally, there was low interest in the value of their data as an abstract concept unless there was an immediate benefit gained from it. In 2024 the DAC wants to build on this training with a data sharing pilot that makes these benefits much more tangible for farmers in relation to their consent.

Based on this discussion, a problem statement was identified with the group, including individual DAC members from SNV, Dalberg Research, Mercy Corps, Rabobank, Netherlands Space Office, Maastricht University, PUM, Solidaridad and CBI. This problem statement shows the urgency for a lasting solution and need for larger scale pilots around data sharing and standardized approaches to data collection and governance.

Pilot problem statement

The collection, use, and governance of farmer data in the agriculture sector are currently very fragmented. A multitude of businesses and NGOs are independently gathering and managing farmer information, which is quickly out of date and needs to be kept clean - resulting in substantial resource expenditures. Farmers, meanwhile, are burdened by multiple surveyors requesting the same data and various organisations employing different applications to collect this information for their services. This is further complicated by diverse governance models, leading to farmers being repeatedly asked to give consent for the use of this data under complex terms. This fragmentation and inefficiency not only creates frustration but also hinders the potential for streamlined, effective agricultural support systems.

To improve this situation the sector needs to move to a model where farmers receive easy, streamlined access to services under a single registration that applies a farmer centric data governance approach. This model should allow organisations to share and re-use data between partners for service delivery - leaving the ownership of the data with farmers.

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Pilot Objective

The overarching aim of this pilot is to promote and operationalise data sharing in a farmer-centric way. We do this by taking a crucial and basic part: informed consent. We aim to identify different models for gathering informed consent related to specific business cases, with a vision to create an industry standard. In this pilot we identify such models based on new and existing use cases that share data to bring more services to farmers. By setting models for how organisations discuss data with farmers in these use cases we will enable interoperability and reusability of data in the agriculture sector, helping to prove the economic value of data sharing in a farmer-centric way.

What we are looking for

From potential pilot participants, we are seeking **solid use cases** that incentivize farmers to share their data for concrete benefits, making it easy to discuss both benefits and risks transparently. We hope to involve organisations:

- Offering various benefits to farmers, such as information, loans, inputs, and other products and services
- That represent a large number of farmers, or hold data on large numbers of farmers (transactional, survey based, payment data, supply chain data, remote sensing data, farm household data, etc.)

OR

- That have existing / ongoing cases of data sharing between two or more organisations that can be used to capture informed consent models

What will you get out of it?

Through this pilot, we aim to develop (or observe) robust models for discussing data and consent with farmers that respects their autonomy while facilitating access to services. Participating in the pilot may benefit you in several ways, depending on the organisation. Potential benefits include:

- Tailored insights into improved data governance within your organisation
- Collaborating with others to solve concrete problems will ensure you benefit from their experience as well as experts DAC will bring into the activity
- Access to data of piloting partners
- Better served clients, lower costs and better adapted products

Together, we can establish best practices for data management, consent mechanisms, and service expansion that prioritise farmer well-being and data security.

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