

Module 6

**Minimising
harmful impacts
from data sharing**

Cheat Sheet

Minimising harmful impacts from data sharing

This cheat sheet gathers all the key points from eLearning on **minimising harmful impacts from data sharing**.

Some of the biggest barriers to delivering data that is findable, accessible, interoperable and reusable (FAIR) within investments can be concerns about the level and type of impact that might occur. Worries around data security and privacy, mis-trust in data or others use of data, can limit the extent to which people and organisations are willing to share data.

The best way to minimise the harmful impacts of sharing data is to consider carefully in advance what those impacts are likely to be, and how to avoid or reduce them.

How we talk about risk

To decide how we're going to minimise a risk, we first need to define some key elements:

- An **action** is the thing you want to do, for example, publish data online.
- A **concern** is something you or others think might happen as a result of sharing data, for example a concern about the data being used by someone with criminal intentions.
- A **cause** is the reason there is a possibility of it going wrong (the cause for concern), for example data being entered into a system without validation.
- An **impact** is the effect of something, for example someone identifying an individual and causing them harm.



Assessing risk

To assess the level of risk it is necessary to evaluate the **likelihood** and the **severity of the impact**. A common method of doing this is to complete a risk matrix and assign a risk score. Only those concerns that rate above a certain level are then considered to be worth introducing minimising actions.

The level of acceptable risk and the metrics by which likelihood and severity are measured will vary between organisations, but it is helpful to consider past instances of concerns and the actual impact sharing had. For example, many countries have published highly detailed crime data, and although many had concerns, there has been no significant actual impact as a result of the data being published.

Many risk assessments associated with data sharing only consider the risks and impacts associated with sharing data, this is not balanced with the **risks and impacts of NOT sharing data**. The risks are the same. Sometimes it is of greater risk to be closed, than open. When building a risk assessment you should always consider the impact of both sharing and not sharing data.



Categories of risk and how to minimise them

Understanding concerns and being able to evaluate their real impact is critical to increasing confidence in wider sharing of data while minimising harmful impacts. The potential real impacts of using data, and their solutions, can be categorised as followed:

- **Legal risks** might be the result of data you are sharing containing personal information that does not have a lawful basis for being stored or shared
- **Ethical risks** such as discrimination or exclusion can occur even if the collection, use or sharing of data may be lawful
- **Commercial risks** can include unwanted affiliation with a company that is using your data, changes in the revenue model, imitation by rival companies, and copycat or counterfeiting.
- **Reputation risks** can cover risks related to data quality and misuse
- **Wider economic, societal and environmental risks** from sharing some data include making locations targets in times of conflicts, while *not* sharing some data can prevent combating the spread of a disease for instance.

There are many actions that can be taken to help minimise risks, including:

- Increasing data literacy
- Implementing a data management plan
- Using a variety of data licenses and data sharing agreements
- Documenting data and decisions, and communicating openly.

Where can you find guides and tools to help?

The Data sharing toolkit contains resources to help identify risks in data, with questions related to the data sources, data types and impacts.

- Guide: Sharing agricultural data: managing risk to minimise harmful impacts
- Guide: Protecting People – managing risk when handling personal data
- Guide: Anonymising data in agriculture
- Case study: Sharing data while maintaining a competitive advantage

There are also external resources available that could help:

- Guide: [Developing a data management plan](#)
- [ODI Data Ethics Canvas](#)
- [Tech Transformed Consequence Scanning Toolkit](#)
- Specialist legal or technical support from Foundation business partners

Data Sharing Toolkit



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