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A Roadmap Towards Democratizing Data: A Case for Botswana as a Developing Country

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Data Democratization (DD) has been defined and conceptualized in many ways but all pointing towards making data more accessible to a wider range of people within an organization or a society (Zeng et al, 2018), (Shamim et al. 2021), (Awasthi et al, 2020). Data Democratization allows data to transition from the hands of a selected few so that it can be used by all. Due to the changing landscape brought by digitalization, data has emerged as a resource of prime importance to our daily lives and as such it must be made more accessible to businesses, employees, citizens, and the public sector. Hence modern organizations need to consider new, digitally relevant measures to adopt policies, structures, values, and assumptions in the context of Data Democratization.

Botswana has made provisions to address data through the instruments that provide various levels of guidance regarding the management of data in the country. However, a perusal of existing legal instruments indicates insufficiency of provisions for measures related directly to the support of open data due to the relatively low institutional capacities and adoption of open data. A situation analysis on data management established that Botswana's ratings on all the indicators for Open Data readiness were below acceptable levels, Open Data Readiness Assessment, (World Bank Group, 2015). (The Open Data Inventory, 2020/2021) further reveals that Botswana had not yet adopted the (The Open Data Charter (ODC), 2015. Another report (Open Data Inventory, 2022/2023) ranks the country as 93rd/193 with an overall score of 51%.

The research will discuss the efforts the country is making in response to these findings, in terms of showcasing potential enabling factors, opportunities and challenges towards Data Democratization aligned with a developing country.

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Student or Postdoc?

Primary author: Dr MASIZANA, Audrey (University of Botswana)

Presenter: Dr MASIZANA, Audrey (University of Botswana)

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