

Evaluating the Quality of Open Government Data for Sustainable Urban Development in Africa

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SUMMARY

Africa's population is projected to double by the year 2050, and a significant portion of this growth is expected to occur in urban areas. This raises several questions regarding the ability of African countries to prepare and provide for the expected growth, using data (e.g., geospatial, demographic, environmental, infrastructure, economic) and evidence-based decisions. Nonetheless, there has been an increased proliferation of fundamental datasets even as open government data (OGD) initiatives continue to thrive on the continent. Despite this reality, there is little understanding of cross-country and regional disparities in the quality of these OGD portals, and the available fundamental datasets for sustainable urban development. These concerns have received little attention in the existing literature. Using a robust framework, this paper evaluates the quality of open government data (OGD) portals on the continent, to determine if they are fit for purpose. The second part of the evaluation addresses the quality, availability, accessibility, usability, and impact of the fundamental datasets provided on the portals. Our preliminary results show varying functionality of the OGD portals, and cross-country differences in the data characteristics. The findings suggest the presence of disparities in the impact of OGD portals and fundamental datasets which could limit their potential benefits. Addressing these challenges can unlock the full potential of OGD to drive sustainable urban development in Africa.

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