Governance, Transparency, and Accountability Focus Area

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Findings

Focus Area Findings

• The history and experiences of Federal, as well as state and local, agencies can inform the implementation of the Evidence Act; and the Evidence Act can inform the future of the agencies

• Use cases and multiple focus area findings have pointed to the ways in which the NSDS should produce value through coordination, transparency & accountability, communication, facilitating innovation, and promoting data standardization

• Recent examples demonstrated new approaches to measuring data value which can be used to better capture the return from data creation and dissemination leading to increased investment

• Frameworks exist, from NIST and DoD for example, to measure and mitigate information system and privacy risk. The Future of Privacy Forum has published a template outlining how to evaluate the information a dataset contains while weighing and evaluating the value and benefits against potential privacy risks associated with a release
Findings (Continued)

Focus Area Findings

• The Five Safes framework provides an approach for operationalizing both value and risk metrics. Value is increased through projects, people and data while risk is managed through people, settings, data, and output.

• The availability of new types of data, linkage technology, and the value of information has increased, but has resulted in limited benefit realization for the public compared to the transformational impact of data analytics apparent in private industry.

• The lack of realized public benefit combined with limited public understanding of the utility and relevance of government data make it difficult to address public perception of the tradeoff between utility and risk regarding information release.

• The government has multiple models for establishing infrastructure it can use and different models have proven effective in different circumstances. The NSDS should be structured to evolve and adapt its model as its circumstances warrant.
Draft Recommendations

• The role of NSDS should include coordinating across stakeholders on the best practices for implementing access and confidentiality regulation, modeling and testing those best practices, offering administrative infrastructure to government agencies at all levels as well as academic and non-technical communities, and innovate and communicated around risk-utility metrics and tiered access using a five safes framework.

• America’s Data Hub should be established as the pilot foundation for a future NSDS from which it can evolve over time to realize the Committee’s full vision.

• The NSDS should be a legally recognized government owned and contractor operated entity with a dedicated PMO within NCSES and contractor responsible for managing and operating it.

• NCSES, in coordination with stakeholders, should assess potential for a network of centrally managed NSDS operational nodes with strategy and priorities informed by an advisory group.
Draft Recommendations (Continued)

Operating and Governance Structure Recommendations

• The NSDS should have a managing entity, led by a CEO and appropriately staffed, responsible for ensuring effective operations, maintaining ongoing compliance, and managing risks.

• The Policy Steering Committee will be responsible for advising the NCSES Director on strategic direction and significant policy issues around research priorities, protecting sensitive data, cybersecurity, data quality, and other relevant policy concerns.

• The Board of Directors will provide oversight in areas such as guiding principles and strategic planning, utility-risk framework, an ethical framework, including Diversity Equity and Inclusion, business management and operations, outreach and partnerships, infrastructure investment.

• The Research and Technical Advisory Board, including relevant experts, state & local and research community representatives, will be responsible for providing technical advice about privacy and access modalities, as well as the measurement of risk and value.
Draft Recommendations (Continued)

Recommendations

• The NSDS should be independently externally evaluated every three years by a professional evaluation organization that would be chosen by the Board of Directors, the Policy Steering Committee and the Research and Technical Advisory Board.

• OMB, coordinating with ICSP, should adopt a risk-utility framework that (1) affirms that utility and risk should be separately measured but jointly determined and (2) serves as the basis for standards on sensitivity levels, access tiers, and risk evaluations.

• OMB, in coordination with NCSES, should identify ways for the NSDS to coordinate with the ICSP and the Chief Data Officer Council to establish a publicly-accessible integrated data inventory for all federal data assets.