



Press release

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Confederation sets targets for the use of data science

The federal government wishes to use data science in a more targeted way in the future to support the government and the administration in their work. On 2 December 2022, the Federal Council adopted the federal data science strategy and issued various mandates.

Numerous offices within the federal administration apply data science, for example, to calculate trends in passenger transport or to improve thunderstorm forecasts. The potential, however, is still great. The Federal Council therefore wishes to advance the use of data science in order to promote the public good and to support public policy.

To this end, it firstly set up a Data Science Competence Center (DSCC), which has been making its expertise available to the administrative units of the Confederation, cantons and communes since January 2021. Secondly, it adopted a data science strategy (DSStB). This shows how the federal administration should use data science in the future, what goals it is pursuing in its use and what measures are required for its accelerated, targeted and coordinated implementation.

Data science is an interdisciplinary science. Besides statistics, it also has links to fields such as data management, engineering, machine learning, artificial intelligence, optimisation and data visualisation.

Objectives of the strategy

At the heart of the strategy is the coordinated use of data science. More specifically, awareness and competence in data science applications within the federal administration are to be promoted. The accessibility and availability of data science tools and platforms should be increased. Furthermore, the Federal Council also wishes to exploit potential synergies and expand cooperation with cantonal and communal administrations, the scientific community, civil society and the private sector, as well as international exchanges of experience.

The strategy highlights how the administration uses data science. For example, rules of conduct for the application of data science are to be formulated for the federal government's administrative units. The federal administration serves as a role model for the responsible use of data science.

Use of existing structures

The implementation of the strategy is aligned with the federal government's digitisation strategy for 2020-2023 and its data policy, as well as the work of the DSCC and the Competence Network for Artificial Intelligence (CNAI). Its further development is carried out by the federal administration's existing digitisation committees.

Various mandates

At the same time as adopting the strategy, the Federal Council issued various mandates. In this way, the Federal Statistical Office (FSO) is working together with other departments and the ETH Domain to create a report describing where data science can be used throughout the policy-making process. In addition, a code of practice for human-centric and trustworthy data science, and a concept on the application of data science to safeguard privacy are to be drawn up. Finally, the Federal Chancellery (Digital Transformation and ICT Governance Sector (DTI)) and the FDHA/FSO, together with internal federal IT service providers, are to create a concept on how a collaborative data science platform can be established in the federal administration.

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Annex:

Federal data science strategy (available in French and German. English and Italian versions will follow in early 2023)