Principles for Leveraging Data as a Strategic Asset

Federal data is both a strategic asset and a valuable national resource. It enables the government to carry out its mission and programs effectively. It provides the public with knowledge of the government, society, economy, and environment – past, present, and future. Federal data is also a means to ensure the accountability of government, to manage the government's operations, and to maintain and enhance the performance of the Nation's economy, public health, and welfare. Appropriate access to federal data significantly enhances its value and the return on the Nation's investment in its creation.

The following principles are intended to guide the development of a comprehensive data strategy that encompasses federal and federally sponsored program, statistical, and mission-support data. These principles include concepts reflected in existing principles, such as those for the protection of personal information, for the management of information as an asset, for federal statistical agencies, and for federal evidence building. These principles will inform the development of practices and action steps for the Federal Data Strategy throughout the data lifecycle.

Mission Statement: The mission of the Federal Data Strategy is to fully leverage the value of federal data for mission, service, and the public good by guiding the Federal Government in practicing ethical governance, conscious design, and learning culture.

Ethical Governance

1. **Uphold Ethics**: Monitor and assess the implications of federal data practices for the public. Design checks and balances to protect and serve the public good.

2. **Exercise Responsibility**: Practice effective data stewardship and governance. Employ sound data security practices, protect individual privacy, maintain promised confidentiality, and ensure appropriate access and use.

3. **Promote Transparency**: Articulate the purposes and uses of federal data to engender public trust. Comprehensively document processes and products to inform data providers and users.

Conscious Design

4. **Ensure Relevance**: Protect the quality and integrity of the data. Validate that data are appropriate, accurate, objective, accessible, useful, understandable, and timely.

5. **Harness Existing Data**: Identify data needs to inform priority research and policy questions; reuse data if possible and acquire additional data if needed.

6. **Anticipate Future Uses**: Create data thoughtfully, considering fitness for use by others; plan for reuse and build in interoperability from the start.

7. **Demonstrate Responsiveness**: Improve data collection, analysis, and dissemination with ongoing input from users and stakeholders. The feedback process is cyclical; establish a baseline, gain support, collaborate, and refine continuously.

Learning Culture

8. **Invest in Learning**: Promote a culture of continuous and collaborative learning with and about data through ongoing investment in data infrastructure and human resources.

9. **Develop Data Leaders**: Cultivate data leadership at all levels of the federal workforce by investing in training and development about the value of data for mission, service, and the public good.

10. **Practice Accountability**: Assign responsibility, audit data practices, document and learn from results, and make needed changes.