

Data Lifecycle Checklist #2

Motivation

Motivation or the 'why' behind data science projects is a key element of equity and transparency that is often overlooked. At We All Count, we believe that going through a simple definition process **at the beginning** of a project. Knowing what questions you're asking, and having a transparent definition of success will not only get you better answers from your science but will make our results more trustworthy and equitable.

Use this checklist to define the motivations behind your data project, both the **outward facing public ones** and the **internal, private ones**. Knowing the 'why' of a data project is key to crafting the 'how' in the remaining steps in the data life cycle.



Context

FINANCIAL

Where is the money coming from?

Does the funding come with oversight? What kind?

How much does the funding impact the direction of the project?

Does the source of the funding have a vested interest in the outcome?

Does the outcome of the project relate to securing funding in the future?

INSTITUTIONAL

Mandate: What is the overarching purpose of the group/institution under taking the project? How might this affect the project?

Previous experience: What previous institutional experience do you have?

Will similar past projects impact how this one is carried out? What is the group's relationship to this type of project?

TIME

Deadlines: What are the relevant internal and external deadlines?

How will they affect the project?

Is this project ongoing or finite?



Motivation



Purpose

- Why are you starting this project?
- Is it in some way required?
- Where did the research question(s) you're asking come from?
- Who stands to gain from this project happening (both on your end and on the client/stakeholder/participant end)?

Research Goals

- What are the public criteria that would make this project a success?
- Are you hoping for a specific result?
- What result would make you happy, why?
- What are the private criteria that would make this project a success?
- Is the project for a specific person?
- Is the project outcome related to the success of your organization/other projects?

Motivation



Data Product Goals

HOW MANY OF THE FOLLOWING USES FOR THE DATA PRODUCT FIT YOUR GOALS?

- Persuade (the data is intended to be part of an effort to support an argument for something).
- Inform (the data is intended to be an objective source of information).
- Decide (this data will be used to make a decision).
- Confirm (the data will confirm an existing result or theory).

Audience

- Who will see the results of your project?
Is this question impacted by what the results are?
- How will the results be communicated?
What mediums?
What communication style?
- Who is intended to understand the results?