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**TANDON SCHOOL
OF ENGINEERING**

PRESS OFFICE • 1 MetroTech Center, 19th Floor, Brooklyn, NY 11201

CONTACT • Karl Greenberg
646.997.3802 / mobile 646.519.1996
Karl.Greenberg@nyu.edu

Immediate Release

Using data to help transform governance

The GovLab at NYU Tandon, The Asia Foundation, the Centre for Strategic and International Studies in Indonesia, and the BRAC Institute of Governance and Development launch 100 Questions “Governance” Domain.

BROOKLYN, New York, Monday, December 14, 2020 – [The Governance Lab](#) (The GovLab) at the NYU Tandon School of Engineering, along with the The Asia Foundation, the Centre for Strategic and International Studies in Indonesia, and the BRAC Institute of Governance and Development, announce the launch of the Governance domain of [The 100 Questions Initiative](#), which identifies the most pressing, impactful questions for which data and data science have the potential to answer.

The effort is premised on the idea that complex problems, from climate change to global inequality, threaten the stability of our economy, health, and society. Traditional governance systems have attempted to address these challenges but face a crisis of efficacy, legitimacy, and trust. They are often unable to respond effectively and legitimately when faced with these seemingly intractable global challenges.

“COVID-19 has exposed multiple weaknesses in governance systems globally,” said Nicola Nixon, The Asia Foundation’s Director of Governance. “In order to build those systems back better, we need new forms of collaborative action to enable data and technology to be used to solve the most pressing of the myriad problems the pandemic has exposed.”

There exists widespread interest and enthusiasm in the use of data to address these governance challenges, but stakeholders lack a clear, expert-sourced, and publicly validated list of priorities to guide their work. This initiative works with a global cohort of experts to develop and curate this list of priorities.

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“The focus of governance should be on making development outcomes efficient, effective, and equitable. By tapping into experts, this initiative will allow us to identify a set of actionable questions that can help us achieve these development outcomes,” said Imran Matin, Executive Director, BIGD.

The Governance Domain, as with the previous initiative domains of migration, gender, air quality, future of work, and disinformation, will tap the expertise of “[bilinguals](#)” to identify these questions. These practitioners across fields who possess both knowledge about a given domain (in this case governance), and data science expertise, will work collaboratively to identify the 10 most pressing, high-impact questions answerable through a combination of new and existing data sources and data science methods.

“An agenda on good governance should be centered around the pillars of inclusivity and accountability, in order to develop good governance practices across the public and private sectors. The 100 Questions initiative will allow us to unlock data’s potential in promoting these pillars” said Philips Vermonte, Executive Director, CSIS Indonesia.

“We need to become more data-driven in how we govern, developing innovative systems where both leaders and citizens collaborate to address societal challenges” adds Stefaan Verhulst, co-founder, and chief research and development officer of The GovLab. “To meet modern challenges, we first need to first identify the most pressing questions that data assets, and data science, can meaningfully and responsibly answer.”

Through the 100 Questions Initiative, The GovLab and the Asia Foundation, along with the Centre for Strategic and International Studies in Indonesia, and the BRAC Institute of Governance and Development, will facilitate the establishment of data collaboratives—new forms of public-private partnerships that harness data from different sectors for public good. This effort builds on The GovLab’s, The Asia Foundation’s, the CSIS’, and BIGD’s many efforts to improve the effectiveness and legitimacy of governance through data and collective intelligence.

Professionals interested in collaborating are encouraged to send an email to contact@the100questions.org. For more information about the 100 Questions Initiative, visit www.the100questions.org, or contact Stefaan Verhulst, lead of the initiative at sverhulst@thegovlab.org.

About the 100 Questions Initiative

The 100 Questions Initiative is presented by The Governance Lab at the NYU Tandon School of Engineering with initial funding support from Schmidt Futures. It is supported by a global advisory board comprising data science and subject matter experts from the public, corporate, and non-profit sectors. Members include Ciro Cattuto, scientific director of ISI Foundation; Gabriella Gómez-Mont, founder and former director at Laboratorio Para La Ciudad; Molly Jackman, leader of Content-Product Data Science and Engineering at Netflix; Vivienne Ming, founder of Socos Labs; Wilfred Ndifon, director of research at AIMS Global Network; Denice Ross, fellow at Georgetown University’s Beeck Center for Social Impact and Innovation; and Matthew Salganik, professor of sociology at Princeton University. For more information, visit the100questions.org or <https://the100questions.org/faq>

About The Governance Lab at the NYU Tandon School of Engineering

The Governance Lab's mission is to improve people's lives by changing the way we govern. Our goal at The GovLab is to strengthen the ability of institutions — including but not limited to governments — and people to work more openly, collaboratively, effectively, and legitimately to make better decisions and solve public problems. We believe that increased availability and use of data, new ways to leverage the capacity, intelligence, and expertise of people in the problem-solving process, combined with new advances in technology and science, can transform governance. We approach each challenge and opportunity in an interdisciplinary, collaborative way, irrespective of the problem, sector, geography, and level of government. For more information, visit the govlab.org.

About The Asia Foundation

The Asia Foundation is a nonprofit international development organization committed to improving lives across a dynamic and developing Asia. Informed by six decades of experience and deep local expertise, our work across the region addresses five overarching goals—strengthen governance, empower women, expand economic opportunity, increase environmental resilience, and promote international cooperation. Headquartered in San Francisco, The Asia Foundation works through a network of offices in 18 Asian countries and in Washington, DC. Learn more at asiafoundation.org

About the Centre for Strategic and International Studies

The Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) in Jakarta is an independent, non-profit organisation focusing on policy-oriented studies on domestic and international issues. CSIS' mission is to contribute to improved policy making through policy-oriented research, dialogue, and public debate. This is based on the belief that long-term planning and vision for Indonesia and the region must be based on an in-depth understanding of economic, political, and social issues, including regional and international developments. CSIS research and studies are channeled in various forms as independent input to government, universities and research institutions, civil society organizations, media, and business.

About the BRAC Institute of Governance and Development

The BRAC Institute of Governance and Development aims to influence policy and practice using rigorous research and by building fit-for-future capabilities through quality educational programs. BIGD works on rigorous, multimethod research through the dual lens of governance and development, in order to address policy problems and implementation challenges, and to promote innovation and improvement in governance and development processes.

About the New York University Tandon School of Engineering

The NYU Tandon School of Engineering dates to 1854, the founding date for both the New York University School of Civil Engineering and Architecture and the Brooklyn Collegiate and Polytechnic Institute. A January 2014 merger created a comprehensive school of education and research in engineering and applied sciences as part of a global university, with close connections to engineering programs at NYU Abu Dhabi and NYU Shanghai. NYU Tandon is rooted in a vibrant tradition of entrepreneurship, intellectual curiosity, and innovative solutions to humanity's most pressing global challenges. Research at Tandon focuses on vital intersections between communications/IT, cybersecurity, and data science/AI/robotics systems and tools and critical areas of society that they influence, including emerging media, health, sustainability, and urban living. We believe diversity is integral to excellence, and are creating a vibrant, inclusive, and equitable environment for all of our students, faculty and staff. For more information, visit engineering.nyu.edu.

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