Guidance to support public sector investments in location data

[The Geospatial Commission today publishes appraisal guidance](#) to help public sector organisations make more effective cases for investing in location data.

Location data is a strategic national asset, delivering significant value for people, organisations and wider society. It supports key government priorities such as Net Zero, Levelling Up and had an important role in managing the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Public sector investments have previously struggled to understand, assess and articulate the economic, social and environmental value of location data coherently, constraining their ability to unlock funding.

By providing a more structured and practical approach to assessing value that is based on best-practice methods, existing research and the experiences of stakeholders, we aim to drive greater consistency in the way that these benefits are routinely captured, improving the quality of investment cases presented to decision makers.

Thalia Baldwin, Commissioner of the Geospatial Commission said:

> Linking data to location improves analysis, decisions and outcomes. It is vital that the public sector invests to maintain our strategic national geospatial assets. Our guidance will support organisations to make a coherent and persuasive case for improved geospatial data.

The seven-step framework presented in the guidance sets out an approach to understanding, assessing and articulating the value of a location data project, from the inception stage to the presentation of benefits. Many of the principles set out in this guidance are also relevant for data investments more generally and support commitments to improve the use of digital and data, as set out in the [National Data Strategy](#) and the [Roadmap to Digital and Data 2022-2025](#).

David Henderson, Chief Geospatial Officer at Ordnance Survey said:

> We all know the practical value of maps and location data in supporting our everyday life. But expressing that value in a way that supports future investment in geospatial data and services by government and business remains a challenge. This work provides a valuable foundation on how to express those benefits and a more consistent approach to making the case for geospatial data.

The guidance was developed in conjunction with Frontier Economics, with contributions from a wide range of location data users and suppliers. It includes case studies where the framework has been applied to past investments, acting as a helpful reference and learning tool for users.

Sarah Snelson, Director of Public Policy Practice at Frontier Economics said:

> Geospatial data has the potential to unlock a variety of important use cases across the UK economy but there are challenges to valuation that can inhibit their application. We have worked closely with stakeholders to develop a practical valuation approach that public sector organisations can apply. We are excited to see how the framework is used.