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Boosting climate data accessibility for financial decision-making

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Abstract

The escalating impacts of climate change pose extraordinary challenges to the global financial system, underscoring the urgent need for financial institutions, regulators and policymakers to access reliable, comprehensive climate data for robust risk management and strategic planning. In light of this pressing requirement, the Network for Greening the Financial System (NGFS) and its partners have created the NGFS Data Directory 2.0 – marking a substantial advancement over the directory’s initial 2022 release. Built from the ground up, the NGFS Data Directory 2.0 reflects a thoughtful redesign driven by lessons learned since the release of the original version. Through an intensive process involving design thinking workshops and continuous dialogue with prospective users, the development team has engineered a versatile, user-focused platform that addresses prior shortcomings while embedding innovative features to ensure easier access and more effective use of climate data within the financial sector. This document offers a comprehensive overview of the development process behind the NGFS Data Directory 2.0 – covering stages from initial ideation, collaborative design sessions, iterative prototyping with the NGFS Expert Network on Data, to agile implementation and a successful soft launch at COP29 in November 2024. It highlights how adopting a user-centred approach and fostering collaborative development have resulted in a platform tailored to meet the complex needs of the financial community in navigating climate-related risks.

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1. Introduction

The financial sector increasingly recognises the imperative to embed climate-related risks into risk management frameworks, investment strategies and regulatory compliance (Huang et al (2018), Nefzi et al (2025)). Central to these efforts is access to accurate, comprehensive climate data. However, significant challenges remain in data accessibility, consistency, quality and comparability across diverse sources (Fareed et al (2025)). The NGFS Data Directory 2.0 addresses these challenges by providing a centralised, user-friendly platform designed for efficient climate data discovery and sharing (Hoffmann et al (2025)). This initiative received strategic support from the Bank for International Settlements Innovation Hub (BISIH), the Monetary Authority of Singapore (MAS) and the Bank of France, whose collaborative efforts have been instrumental in the development of the directory. Building on the foundation of its predecessor, the enhanced platform aims to serve as a trusted, comprehensive reference tailored specifically to the needs of the financial sector.

The primary objectives of the NGFS Data Directory 2.0 project are to:

- enhance search and browsing functionalities to improve data discoverability
- significantly elevate the user experience through intuitive design and navigation
- implement well-governed content management systems to ensure data quality
- facilitate user-driven content updates via collaborative features
- enable data providers to upload data in bulk through the platform
- empower contributors to rate, comment and add contextual information on data and metrics.

This report offers a detailed analysis of how these objectives were systematically pursued and achieved through a user-centred development process. It explores the rationale underpinning the initiative, the methodological approach adopted and the key features that distinguish this iteration from the original directory. Additionally, the report discusses the broader implications for climate risk management within the financial sector and outlines future pathways for ongoing enhancement and adaptation.

2. NGFS Data Directory – version 1

2.1 Addressing data gaps through a centralised data repository

The inception of the NGFS Data Directory was driven by recognition that significant gaps in climate-related data posed substantial barriers to effective climate risk management within the financial sector (Grisey (2022)). Developed by the NGFS Workstream on Bridging Data Gaps, this directory was formally introduced alongside the publication of the *Final report on bridging data gaps* in 2022, representing a tangible step towards mitigating these challenges (NGFS (2021, 2022)). The primary aim of the original Data Directory was to establish a comprehensive repository of climate-related data sources and metrics pertinent to a broad spectrum of financial institutions and regulatory bodies. By systematically cataloguing available data, the directory enhanced transparency regarding existing resources, facilitated access and identified areas where data deficiencies persisted. This effort aligns with the NGFS's overarching mission to advance environment and climate risk management within the financial sector and to mobilise mainstream financial flows towards a sustainable economy – bolstering the financial system's capacity to manage climate risks and channel capital into green and low-carbon investments.

The initiative achieved noteworthy success in aggregating climate data and compiling an extensive inventory that included 329 unique metrics and methodology combinations, 1,262 raw data

items, 748 data source links and 514 identified data gaps. This comprehensive compilation provided vital insights into the climate data landscape and served as a valuable reference for stakeholders seeking to embed climate considerations into their operational frameworks. By systematically classifying climate data sources and highlighting key gaps, the directory contributed significantly to the collective understanding of climate data availability and needs. It underscored both the diversity of existing data sources and the critical areas requiring further development. This dual focus laid the foundation for ongoing efforts to improve data accessibility, quality and relevance.

2.2 Challenges and opportunities for enhancement

Despite its considerable contributions, the original NGFS Data Directory had several limitations that affected its efficacy and sustainability (Grisey (2022), Hoffmann et al (2025)). User feedback and internal assessments identified key challenges, informing the development of subsequent iterations:

- A primary concern was the static nature of the directory. In a rapidly evolving field characterised by continual methodological advancements, new data sources and emerging metrics, the absence of mechanisms for regular updates rendered the directory increasingly outdated. This diminished its reliability and utility as a comprehensive reference tool for those seeking the most current climate data.
- User experience constraints limited the directory's impact. Many users reported difficulties navigating the platform, citing unclear information hierarchies and an unintuitive interface design. The lack of advanced search functionalities hindered efficient data retrieval, causing frustration and discouraging sustained engagement. These usability issues disproportionately affected users with limited prior familiarity with climate data sources.
- The directory's limited mechanisms for community engagement hindered its capacity to evolve organically. The absence of features enabling user contributions, feedback or collaborative interactions prevented the platform from benefiting from collective expertise and real-time updates. This constraint placed the maintenance burden solely on the NGFS, posing sustainability challenges.
- Operational hurdles also played a significant role. The lack of formal processes or dedicated resources for content management led to gradual obsolescence. Without clear governance structures or sustainable funding, maintaining the directory's relevance proved increasingly difficult.
- Finally, awareness and visibility issues curtailed its reach. Many potential users remained unaware of the directory's existence or uncertain about how to leverage its resources effectively, limiting its overall impact as a public good. Without active promotion and community engagement, it remained underutilised.

These challenges underscored the necessity for a more dynamic, user-centric and collaborative platform – one capable of addressing these shortcomings. The insights gained from the initial iteration have been instrumental in shaping the NGFS Data Directory 2.0, with a focus on enhancing usability, fostering community involvement, ensuring sustainability and expanding visibility to better serve the evolving needs of stakeholders.

3. Design thinking workshop series

3.1 Mapping out the desired user journeys

To ensure that the NGFS Data Directory 2.0 effectively addresses user requirements and surpasses the limitations of its predecessor, the NGFS adopted a rigorous, user-centric design thinking methodology. In collaboration with the BISIH Singapore Centre, the NGFS Secretariat organised a series of workshops aimed at eliciting comprehensive insights from key stakeholders and prospective users (BIS (forthcoming)). The design process started with the engagement of an external consultancy to facilitate four workshops between September and December 2023. These sessions were strategically sequenced to enable iterative refinement, progressing from exploring the initial concept to prioritising features in detail. The inaugural workshop, held on 29 September 2023, convened a core project team comprising representatives from the NGFS Secretariat, BISIH Singapore Centre, MAS and the Bank of France. This foundational session centred on aligning the team's understanding of project objectives, establishing clear success metrics and identifying potential challenges. Collaborative deliberations culminated in a shared vision for the directory as a trusted, comprehensive and dynamically updated reference platform for climate-related data – fostering community contributions and serving as a valuable public resource.

Subsequent workshops, on 18 and 31 October 2023, expanded stakeholder engagement to include potential users from the public and private sectors. Workshop 2 primarily involved members of the NGFS Expert Network on Data, while Workshop 3 targeted financial institutions, including banks, insurers and asset managers. These sessions explored participants' experiences with the original directory, their information needs and expectations for an enhanced platform. Notably, while awareness of the directory was widespread, active use was limited among many participants, underscoring the need for greater visibility and an improved user experience.

Across both stakeholder groups, despite varying familiarity levels, consensus emerged around key expectations for Data Directory 2.0. Participants noted the importance of comprehensive coverage, emphasising the inclusion of diverse data sources and metrics. They highlighted the imperative for current and real-time information, reflecting the evolving nature of climate data. Additionally, they expressed a strong preference for a community-driven, crowd-sourced content management approach, facilitating collective contributions to the directory's growth and accuracy. All participants identified ease of use, characterised by intuitive navigation and efficient search functions, as a priority.

The final workshop (Workshop 4), on 7 December 2023, brought the core team together to synthesise insights from previous engagements and prioritise development features. Facilitators presented a consolidated list of potential functionalities derived from stakeholder input, which the team systematically evaluated based on user value, technical feasibility and resource considerations. This rigorous assessment culminated in the selection of high-priority features that would underpin the initial release of the NGFS Data Directory 2.0.

Through this comprehensive series of workshops, the project team garnered critical insights into user needs and expectations. The process unveiled a clear demand for a dynamic, collaborative platform capable of serving as a central, authoritative repository for climate-related data within the financial sector. By engaging a diverse array of stakeholders early in development, the NGFS ensured that the directory's design remains genuinely user-centric, directly addressing the specific challenges and preferences of its intended audience.

3.2 Creating a wireframe

Following the design thinking workshops, the project team systematically translated the collected requirements and insights into a detailed wireframe for the NGFS Data Directory 2.0 (BIS (forthcoming)). This wireframe outlined the user interface, information architecture and core functionalities of the

envisioned platform. The creation of this tangible prototype enabled iterative refinement of the concept and facilitated targeted stakeholder feedback before initiating technical development.

The wireframe development process started with a comprehensive analysis of the prioritised features identified during Workshop 4. These features were organised into logical clusters aligned with key aspects of the user experience, including account management, content discovery, data interaction and administrative controls. For each cluster, the team delineated specific user flows, screen layouts and interaction paradigms, ensuring a cohesive, intuitive and user-centric interface.

Furthermore, the wireframe presented distinct user journeys tailored to the three primary user archetypes identified during the workshops. For guest users – members of the general public – the wireframe depicted a streamlined browsing interface facilitating access to publicly available content without registration barriers. For registered or accredited users – such as representatives from central banks, financial institutions and recognised organisations – it showcased enhanced functionalities, including content contribution, commenting and rating systems. For administrative users, the wireframe outlined comprehensive management dashboards supporting content moderation, user verification and overall platform oversight.

To validate and refine the design, the team engaged in a feedback cycle. Early wireframe drafts were shared with select stakeholders from the workshop series, who provided insights on usability, clarity and feature integration. This feedback was incorporated into successive versions, ensuring the evolving design more closely aligned with user needs and expectations. Throughout the development process, particular attention was paid to addressing the limitations of the original data directory. The information architecture was crafted to promote intuitive navigation through clear categorisation and contextual guidance. Advanced search and filtering functionalities were prominently incorporated to facilitate efficient content retrieval. Additionally, collaborative features – such as content contribution and feedback mechanisms – were seamlessly integrated to foster community engagement, with validation protocols to uphold content quality.

The finalised wireframe served as a comprehensive blueprint for the NGFS Data Directory 2.0, visualising a platform designed to surpass its predecessor's limitations while delivering increased value and usability. This meticulous design phase laid a robust foundation for subsequent development, ensuring that the technical implementation would accurately embody user requirements and project objectives.

4. Developing NGFS Data Directory 2.0

4.1 Methodology and approach

Building on insights gleaned from design thinking workshops and creating the wireframe, the development phase translated conceptual frameworks into a fully functional platform that not only addressed the limitations of the original directory but also introduced pioneering features to enhance usability and performance. A defining characteristic of the NGFS Data Directory 2.0 development process was its unwavering adherence to user-centred design principles. The project team adopted an agile methodology, implementing the Scrum framework with one-week sprint cycles. This iterative approach facilitated continuous refinement and real-time validation, ensuring responsiveness to emerging requirements and user feedback while maintaining steady progress towards strategic objectives.

The foundational insights derived from the design thinking workshops established clear user requirements and prioritised essential features. Recognising that prototypes and theoretical models alone could not guarantee an optimal user experience, the team engaged the NGFS Expert Network on Data early and throughout the development lifecycle. This proactive engagement proved instrumental in refining the platform's usability and functionality. Early involvement of the Expert Network allowed

potential users to interact with prototypes at various development stages, providing invaluable real-world feedback on navigation, information architecture and feature integration. Such iterative testing enabled the team to identify and resolve usability challenges proactively, preventing issues from becoming embedded in the final product and significantly enhancing overall user-friendliness and effectiveness.

Multiple prototype iterations were conducted based on this feedback:

- Initial prototypes were showcased to the Expert Network, eliciting critical insights into navigation complexities, ambiguous terminology and search inefficiencies.
- Systematic refinements followed, addressing these concerns through successive prototypes, progressively aligning the platform with user expectations.

This cycle of testing and refinement transformed the platform from a technically robust but potentially cumbersome interface into an intuitive, user-centric resource that aligns closely with actual workflows and user needs. By embedding usability considerations at every stage, the development team ensured that NGFS Data Directory 2.0 not only offers advanced features but also presents them in a manner that maximises accessibility and utility across its diverse user base.

4.2 Technical implementation

The technical development of the NGFS Data Directory 2.0 centred on establishing a resilient and scalable infrastructure to underpin the platform's capabilities and future expansion. The development team – consisting of the project partners and an IT vendor – delivered a first version within a condensed time frame of 3.5 months, aligning with the COP29 soft launch scheduled for November 2024. This milestone was achieved through the implementation of robust continuous integration/continuous delivery (CI/CD) pipelines and cloud-based infrastructure, ensuring the platform's reliability, scalability and optimal performance. Development activities progressed concurrently across multiple streams, with dedicated teams working on user interface/user experience (UI/UX) design as well as on application programming interface (API) development and backend integration using a headless Strapi content management system (CMS). This parallel approach facilitated specialised focus, enabling the refinement of both the front-end user interface and the underlying data architecture to meet high standards of usability and robustness.

Key technical components of the implementation included:

- Responsive design: The platform was engineered to operate seamlessly across a diverse range of devices and screen sizes, ensuring broad accessibility and user engagement.
- Headless CMS integration: Strapi is a flexible, API-driven content management system, providing a clear separation between content and presentation layers, thereby enhancing content management agility and scalability.
- Automated CI/CD pipelines: The team established sophisticated GitHub Actions workflows to automate the integration, testing and deployment processes, fostering a reliable and efficient development cycle with rapid iteration capabilities.
- Comprehensive documentation: With Confluence as a centralised knowledge repository, detailed documentation covering architectural decisions, implementation specifics and operational procedures was maintained to facilitate knowledge transfer, onboarding and sustainable maintenance.

To ensure a data-enriched experience from launch, the team preloaded critical data sets, enabling immediate and meaningful user interaction. These seed data supported both the COP29 showcase and the platform's transition to production, delivering a seamless experience with demonstrable end-to-end data flows and operational readiness.

4.3 COP29 soft launch

The development of the NGFS Data Directory 2.0 culminated in a strategic soft launch at the NGFS Finance Day Event during COP29 in Baku, Azerbaijan, in November 2024. This prominent international platform provided global exposure for the initiative, introducing it to key stakeholders within the climate finance community at a critical juncture. The soft launch effectively demonstrated the platform's comprehensive user journey – from discovering climate data and metrics to uploading data via the website. The project team showcased the platform's enhanced functionalities and collaborative features to an audience comprising international financial authorities, climate experts and prospective users. This presentation at COP29 underscored how the NGFS Data Directory 2.0 addresses the limitations of its predecessor. By aligning the platform's unveiling with this high-profile climate event, the project team maximised visibility and positioned the directory as a vital component of the global climate finance infrastructure.

Subsequent to the soft launch, the platform entered a structured user acceptance testing (UAT) phase, ending with its first UAT production release in December 2024. This phased approach facilitated ongoing refinement based on initial user feedback while maintaining momentum towards full deployment.

5. NGFS Data Directory 2.0 – a growing resource for climate risk data

5.1 Key features and innovations

The NGFS Data Directory 2.0 introduces a suite of advanced enhancements and innovative features that elevate it from a static archive to a dynamic, collaborative ecosystem. These developments directly address the limitations identified in the original directory and align with the strategic priorities defined during the design thinking workshops.

User-centric interface design

The platform boasts an intuitive navigation framework that seamlessly guides users through the discovery process, with clearly delineated pathways tailored to diverse information needs and user profiles. Its responsive architecture ensures optimal accessibility across a broad spectrum of devices – including desktops, tablets and smartphones – facilitating access to climate data anytime, anywhere. Complementary educational resources, such as interactive tutorials and contextual help features, empower users to navigate the directory efficiently and leverage its functionalities fully, thereby reducing entry barriers and enhancing the overall user experience.

Advanced search and discovery capabilities

Significantly surpassing its predecessor, the directory now incorporates sophisticated semantic search technology that allows users to retrieve relevant information through natural language queries, removing the need for precise keyword input or specialised search syntax. Augmented with comprehensive filtering options – based on criteria such as data availability, geographic scope, sector relevance and data provider – this search function substantially accelerates the data discovery process. These enhancements enable users to swiftly locate specific data sets within the directory's extensive repository, thereby optimising research efficiency.

Collaborative, community-oriented framework

Inspired by successful collaborative platforms like Wikipedia, the directory fosters a participatory environment where authorised users can contribute, update and refine content. Accredited contributors

– primarily representatives from central banks, financial institutions and recognised organisations – can submit new data points, suggest modifications and add contextual information. This collective approach harnesses the expertise and insights of the user community to ensure that the directory remains current, comprehensive and responsive to evolving information needs.

Content quality assurance mechanisms

To uphold high standards of accuracy and reliability, the directory employs a structured validation workflow. Contributions undergo a rigorous review process prior to publication, ensuring consistency with established standards and maintaining the platform's credibility as a trusted reference. Designed for efficiency and transparency, this workflow includes clear criteria for approval and constructive feedback, balancing the benefits of crowd-sourced content with the imperative for quality assurance.

Enhanced user interaction features

Interactive features, such as rating systems, enable users to assess the quality and utility of data sources, thereby guiding fellow users and motivating data providers to uphold high standards. Comment and discussion functionalities foster active knowledge exchange, transforming the directory into a vibrant community of practice. These engagement tools elevate the platform from a passive repository to an active forum for dialogue and collaboration, amplifying its overall value.

Seamless data provider integration

For contributors, the directory facilitates streamlined data submission processes, including bulk upload functionalities for large data sets and multiple entries. API integration capabilities enable data providers to push core data directly into the platform, minimising manual input and ensuring timely updates. Clear guidelines and templated submission procedures simplify onboarding, while adherence to existing standards reduces redundancy and enhances interoperability.

Collectively, these features forge a platform that is more accessible, dynamic and valuable than its predecessor. By addressing the specific challenges identified in the original directory and embedding innovative approaches to collaboration and content management, the NGFS Data Directory 2.0 will be an indispensable resource for climate-related data within the financial sector.

5.2 Success criteria and metrics

The success of the NGFS Data Directory 2.0 will be evaluated against clearly defined criteria across several dimensions.

Data quality

- Completeness: assessing whether the directory encompasses all data sets essential to users.
- Consistency: ensuring data are uniformly formatted and structured throughout the directory to facilitate seamless integration and analysis.
- Timeliness: monitoring the frequency and recency of data updates to maintain relevance and accuracy.

Usage metrics

- User adoption: tracking the number of active users and analysing trends to determine growth over time.
- Frequency of engagement: measuring how often users access and interact with the directory and its data sets.

- User satisfaction: collecting feedback via surveys and usability assessments to gauge whether the directory effectively meets user needs.
- Search effectiveness: monitoring the proportion of searches where users quickly locate pertinent data – ie the success rate.

Together, these metrics establish a comprehensive framework for evaluating the directory's performance and identifying opportunities for enhancement. Regular monitoring of these indicators will enable the team to ensure that the platform continuously aligns with user requirements and delivers sustained value to the financial community.

6. Outlook and future directions

The completion of the NGFS Data Directory 2.0 development and its subsequent soft launch at COP29 mark pivotal milestones in the platform's evolution. These achievements also herald the onset of a new strategic phase, characterised by ongoing refinement and expansion. Several critical dimensions will shape the directory's future trajectory and influence within the climate data ecosystem. The directory is currently in a comprehensive pilot testing phase. This period is instrumental in garnering nuanced insights into user interactions, detecting residual issues and informing targeted improvements. Feedback collected during this phase will be systematically integrated into subsequent iterations, ensuring that the platform remains responsive to user needs and evolving expectations.

While the platform launched with a curated selection of foundational data sets, sustained growth in both scope and depth is imperative to ensure its utility. This will be achieved through strategic initiatives aimed at addressing identified data gaps, alongside fostering organic contributions from the user community. Particular emphasis will be placed on emerging areas such as transition risk metrics, adaptation indicators and biodiversity-related data, thereby positioning the directory at the vanguard of climate data innovation.

These initiatives underscore a commitment to transforming the NGFS Data Directory 2.0 into a dynamic, adaptive resource that evolves in tandem with the rapidly changing climate finance landscape. Continuous improvement will expand its functionalities, enhance user engagement and reinforce its role as a vital tool for stakeholders navigating climate-related risks and opportunities.

The directory introduces several pioneering features – advanced search functionalities, collaborative content contributions and integrated quality assurance mechanisms – that directly address the limitations of the original platform. These enhancements facilitate superior climate data discovery, sharing and validation, thereby empowering financial institutions, regulators and other stakeholders to better understand and manage climate-related risks. Following the COP29 soft launch, the directory is poised to serve as a vital public resource, underpinning climate risk management and promoting the transition towards a greener financial system. Through ongoing refinement, targeted content expansion and active community engagement, the NGFS Data Directory 2.0 will adapt to emerging challenges and opportunities within the evolving landscape of climate finance, delivering sustained value to its expanding user base.

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NGFS Data Directory 2.0: a new era of climate data accessibility

Léopold Gosset, climate risk specialist, NGFS Secretariat



NGFS: Foster awareness of climate information

- In 2022, the NGFS released the **Data Directory 1.0**, a catalogue of climate-related metrics (~1,200) and datasets (~750).
- In 2024 and early 2025, the NGFS developed the **NGFS Data Directory 2.0**: a **collaborative website** where information can be **crowdsourced** and **curated** by a **community of users**.
- The NGFS now aims to make the DD 2.0 available as a **public good** to **unlock the full potential of the wealth of already existing climate data** and **further bridge gaps**.



Data Directory 2.0: a user-centered development process

1

Design thinking workshop series

- Initial exploration
- Stakeholder engagement with private & public sector
- Synthesis & prioritization of development features

2

Agile wireframe creation & website development

- logical clusters for wireframe creation
- Sprint cycles for development
- Iterative feedback with workshop participants

3

Soft launch & pilot testing phase

- Soft launch at COP29
- User Acceptance Testing phase

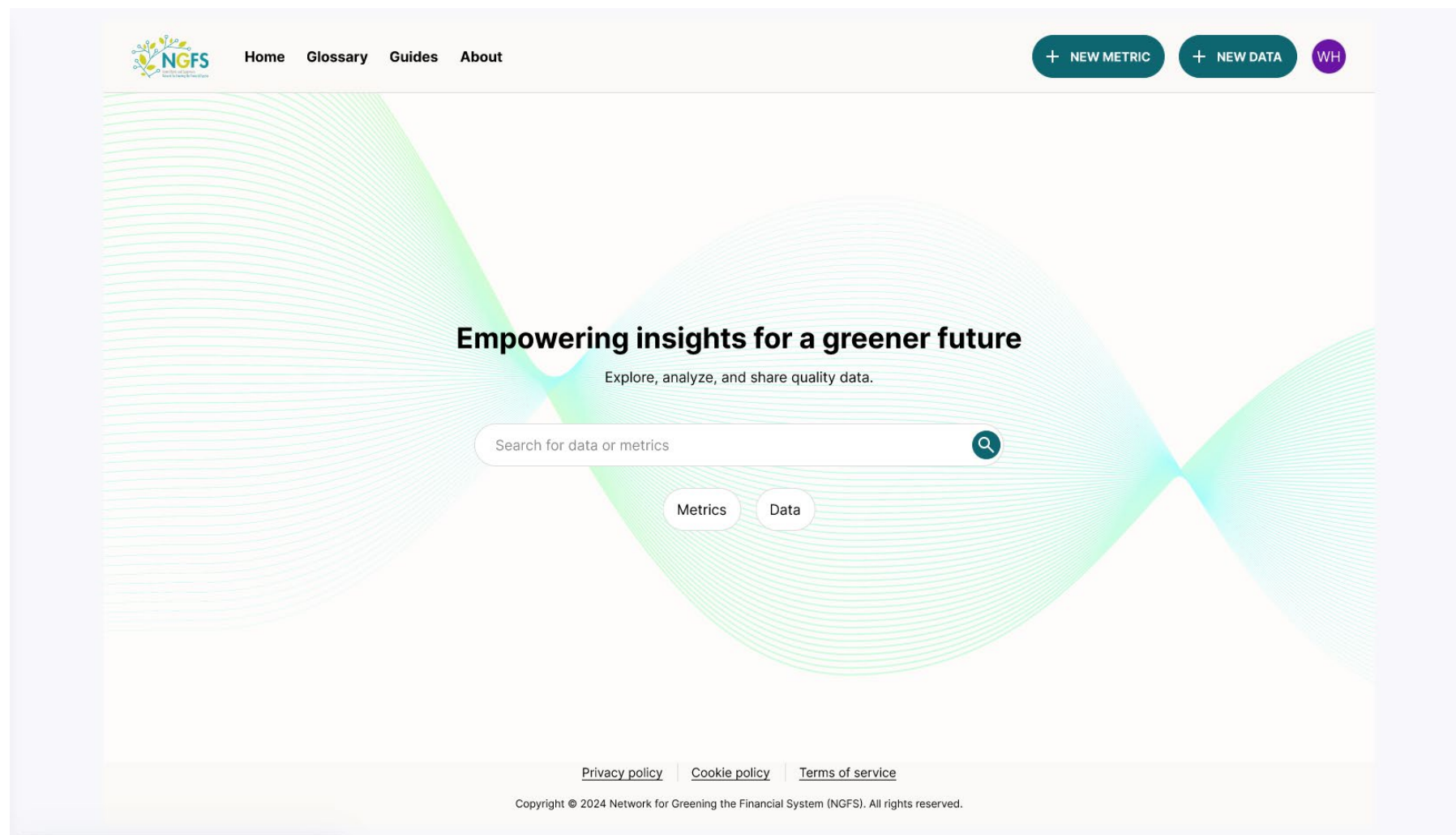
Data Directory 2.0: a new era of climate data accessibility

- **User-centric design** to enhance **usability** and hence **effectiveness** : different user journeys
- **Advanced search** and **analytics**
- **Web analytics** tools
- Building on the expert contribution of **NGFS members, finance practitioners, data providers, non-profit initiatives, academics** etc.



- **Contributive website** (e.g. wiki) : add info, ratings, comments
- Information **crowdsourced** from the community of users, while maintaining **credibility and reliability** (content management system)
- **Enhanced data integration**: partners (bulk) uploading information on their climate resources

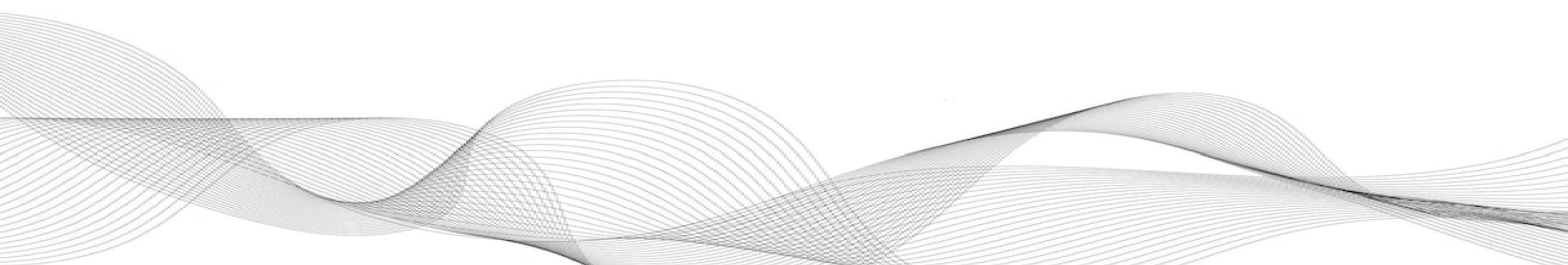
Sneak-peek of the Data Directory 2.0



[Link to demo video](#)

Our solution is you!

- **Bringing the community together:** the DD 2.0 is open to **any interested participant**. Knowledge doesn't add, it multiplies!
- **Partnering with content providers:** core information can be **bulk uploaded**
- Need for **supporting partners** in hosting the website.



Thank you for your attention!

