

## **New data methods are helping the Government of Ghana fight COVID-19**

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**Ghana Statistical Services (GSS), Vodafone Ghana, and the Flowminder Foundation are using innovative data science techniques to support the government's response against COVID-19.**

The long-standing Data For Good partnership between Ghana Statistical Services, Vodafone Ghana, and the Flowminder Foundation has enabled the production of rapid mobility estimates using anonymised and aggregated mobile phone data to support the government's interventions against COVID-19.

The analysis aims to identify the extent to which mobility restrictions put in place by the government are being adhered to within districts, regions, and nationally. These new mobility estimates will help the government understand how effective its restrictions have been and enable it to plan its next move in the fight against the virus.

Flowminder and the GSS have utilised anonymised, aggregated telecommunications data, provided by Vodafone Ghana, to provide the government with analysis comparing changes in Vodafone subscribers' mobility patterns since travel restrictions started.

The data, collected by Vodafone Ghana, is anonymised before it is analysed, removing any personal information to protect individuals' identities. The data are then looked at as a whole to see the big picture of how lots of people are moving, rather than individuals' activities.

Prof. Samuel Kobina Annim, GSS's Government Statistician adds:

"Understanding changes in mobility patterns is important for the government in order to establish whether the current restrictions are likely to contain the spread of the disease, and whether more, or different, interventions should be put in place in the coming days or weeks. This work shows the power of data and is a good example of how it can benefit everyone."

Patricia Obo-Nai, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Vodafone Ghana remarks:

"This milestone puts Ghana in a unique position as a trailblazer across Africa and offers an undeniable proof why data from mobile networks can become a force for the good of society. Our commitment remains to positively impact the lives of people, businesses and communities through innovation and technology during this pandemic. I am extremely happy that this data will help the country to better analyse and make predictions for the benefit of everyone at this crucial time. "

Tracey Li, Data Scientist at Flowminder, explains:

"The government of Ghana needs to understand how and when people are moving. From mobile data, we are analysing, for example, the number of Vodafone subscribers in each district or region, the number of subscribers travelling between districts and between regions, and the increase in movements out of Accra and Kumasi over the weekend. By comparing these data pre- and post- travel restrictions, we can assess how the regulations have affected people's behaviour."

Various analyses have been produced, including a focus on understanding movements out of Greater Accra and Ashanti over the last few days. Outputs have been shared with GHS to inform their approach to planning interventions.



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**About the Flowminder Foundation**

Flowminder is a non-profit foundation that specialises in the analysis of anonymised mobile phone data, satellite imagery, and household survey data for humanitarian and international development purposes. Flowminder was the first organisation to respond to a large-scale infectious disease epidemic (the Haiti cholera outbreak in 2010) using mobile operator data, and Flowminder's researchers were the first to show that mobile operator data can predict the spatial spread of an infectious disease. The foundation provides information to governments, non-governmental organisations, inter-governmental organisations, and researchers, and has developed sustainable partnerships with numerous mobile network operators in low- and middle-income countries. Flowminder's multidisciplinary team of experts includes epidemiological researchers, data scientists, software developers, and humanitarian practitioners. Flowminder is one of the implementing partners of the GRID3 programme, currently active in Ghana.

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