

Trade in Space: Monitoring supply chains with satellite data

Case Study



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Trade in Space

Trade in Space makes global trade in soft commodities (such as coffee, cocoa, sugar, corn, wheat, and soybeans) more ethical, sustainable, and accessible. We spoke with Robin Sampson, Founding Director at Trade in Space, about the impact and value that The Data Lab has had for them.

The Challenge

Trade in Space had big ambitions and knew what they wanted to achieve was possible – but they needed support to understand and implement the technology and data sets and business support to make their ideas come to life. Specifically, Trade in Space was in talks with a huge global coffee trading business who challenged them.

It was a huge moment for Trade in Space.

Robin knew that their idea was possible but equally knew that their small team couldn't go at it alone.

The Solution

With support from The Data Lab, they were able to define and implement technical solutions, and support their next steps in pitching and client acquisition to ensure the work that was put in front of this major client was top-notch.

The Data Lab funded research experts at University of Edinburgh to create a report on the art of possible regarding modelling satellite and climate data, including an understanding of data requirements with an aim to demonstrate the value of predicting yield under various scenarios, and developing an age model from data and soil variability to understand impact of environmental issues. The Data Lab also assisted in creating a data set used to train a machine learning tool to identify different types of coverage.

The Outcomes

Not only was the client satisfied that Trade in Space were worth the investment, but they also made a seed investment, citing their reason for investment as Trade in Space's ability to problem solve and leverage the support of the local community. This client is now worth over six figures annually to Trade in Space.

"I don't know where we would be now today if we hadn't had support from The Data Lab.

We were against the clock to prove something to a major client that changed our life as a business, and we couldn't have done it on our own.

I don't think it's too much to say that we might never have really gotten started as a business without the support from The Data Lab."

The Data Lab has also helped them with networking, recruitment, data analysis, strategic planning, funding and connecting them to the local tech and business ecosystem. Beyond transactions, Trade in Space is now embedding sustainability data in their work to support sustainable, eco-friendly and transparent trading.



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