



NOVEMBER 7, 2025

# RESEARCH AND ACADEMIC GOVERNANCE MANUAL

*CUSTODIAL GOVERNANCE FOR UCE/UACE RESEARCH, DOCTORAL  
EDUCATION, PEER REVIEW, ETHICS, DATA STEWARDSHIP, AND EQUITABLE  
KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER UNDER AGENDA 2074*

**CREATED BY**

EUSL AB

*Care to Change the World*



## Table of Contents

<b>Chapter 1 — UCE and UACE Mandates .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Chapter 2 — Centers of Excellence (18 per continent) .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Chapter 3 — Doctoral and PhD Program Governance .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Chapter 4 — Peer Review and Accreditation Standards .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Chapter 5 — Research Ethics and Data Governance .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Chapter 6 — Knowledge Transfer and Publication Protocols .....</b>	<b>11</b>

# Research and Academic Governance Manual

## **Preamble**

This Manual constitutes the binding governance instrument for research and academic functions within the Global Social Equity Alliance (GSEA), including the Unity Center of Excellence (UCE) and the Unity Academy Center of Excellence (UACE). It codifies mandates, structures, fiduciary controls, and assurance protocols applicable to research, doctoral and PhD education, peer review, accreditation, ethics, data governance, and knowledge transfer. The Manual is to be interpreted in harmony with Agenda 2074 and the separation-of-functions doctrine already established under the GSEA Charter and Agenda 2074 Master Framework, thereby preserving the necessary institutional firewalls between policy-setting, delivery, assurance, and public reporting. Where external norms and international standards are referenced, they serve as authoritative guidance for equivalency and alignment, without derogation from applicable national law or host-country regulatory requirements.

The Manual is anchored in global normative baselines, including the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development ([link](#)), the Paris Agreement (UNFCCC) ([link](#)), the African Union Agenda 2063, including the First Ten-Year Implementation Plan ([link](#)), and in safeguards and responsible-business instruments used for equivalency determinations: the World Bank Environmental and Social Framework (ESF) ([link](#)), the IFC Performance Standards (2012) ([link](#)), the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises on Responsible Business Conduct (2023 Update) ([link](#)), and the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs) ([link](#)). Social responsibility and continuity requirements are informed by ISO 26000 ([link](#)) and ISO 22301 ([link](#)), respectively. Where research involves human participants or sensitive data, GSEA requires adherence to the Declaration of Helsinki ([link](#)), recognized data-protection regimes such as the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) ([link](#)), and scholarly integrity frameworks such as COPE (Committee on Publication Ethics) ([link](#)).

This Manual shall be read together with Agenda 2074 Chapters 3–8 on governance architecture, financing and safeguards equivalency, MEL, public transparency and participatory flow, and value-chain stewardship. It applies to all GSEA jurisdictions and delivery partnerships, including DESA/SDEP/PCPP/PCGG interfaces, and shall be incorporated by reference into institutional statutes, academic bylaws, and programme-level standard operating procedures. All terms herein have the meanings assigned in the GSEA Charter and the Agenda 2074 Glossary unless expressly defined in this Manual.

## **Chapter 1 — UCE and UACE Mandates**

### **1.1 Purpose and Scope.**

The Unity Center of Excellence (UCE) is constituted as the research arm of GSEA, responsible for applied and foundational research, methods development, and translational knowledge that underpins the Alliance’s policy instruments, programme designs, and safeguards equivalency assessments. The Unity Academy Center of Excellence (UACE) is constituted as the advanced academic arm of GSEA, responsible for doctoral and PhD programmes, academic credentialing, and advanced professional formation, including the curation of inter-disciplinary curricula aligned with Agenda 2074 and the Global Social Equity canon.

### **1.2 Normative Alignment.**





UCE and UACE shall design and deliver research and academic activities in alignment with the UN 2030 Agenda and Paris Agreement for climate consistency and social equity, the AU Agenda 2063 for continental development coherence, and shall embed safeguards and responsible-conduct requirements consistent with the World Bank ESF and IFC Performance Standards, the OECD Guidelines (2023), the UNGPs, and ISO 26000 for social responsibility. Where programme continuity is material to public interest or safety, academic operations shall maintain business continuity capacities calibrated to ISO 22301.

### **1.3 Separation of Functions and Assurance.**

UCE produces research and methods; UACE delivers degree-granting education and academic assessment. Assurance over research integrity, academic quality, and ethical compliance is exercised by GSEA's independent Compliance and Ethics Function and by external peer-review and accreditation bodies recognized under Chapter 4. This maintains institutional firewalls consistent with the Agenda 2074 separation-of-functions doctrine and the public transparency flow, including external publication of policies, MEL findings, and summaries of ethics determinations.

### **1.4 Mandated Outputs.**

UCE shall deliver peer-reviewed papers, technical standards, evaluation toolkits, and open-access working papers that support DESA/SDEP/PCPP/PCGG implementation. UACE shall deliver doctoral and PhD programmes, graduate seminars, qualifying examinations, dissertations, viva voce procedures, and post-doctoral pathways, including dual-degree and cotutelle options with accredited partner universities.

### **1.5 Human-Subjects and Sensitive Research.**

Where research involves human participants, personal data, or sensitive communities, UCE/UACE must obtain prior approval from an Institutional Review Board (IRB) or Ethics Committee operating under the Declaration of Helsinki, the UNGPs due-diligence logic, and data-protection frameworks such as GDPR. Research designs shall evidence risk identification and mitigation consistent with World Bank ESF (notably ESS2, ESS4, ESS10) and IFC PS1–PS4 for risk management, labor, community health and safety, and stakeholder engagement.

### **1.6 Funding and Conflicts of Interest.**

Core UCE/UACE functions are structurally loss-making at holding level and financed through SLUC project margins and balancing flows from GSIA/WOSL/GSDA/GSCA pursuant to Support & Transfer Agreements, subject to stress-testing and disclosures aligned with IFRS-style transparency and Agenda 2074's financing architecture. All funding relationships must be disclosed and managed under conflict-of-interest policies consistent with the OECD Guidelines (2023) and UNGPs.

### **1.7 Governance Instruments.**

UCE and UACE shall each maintain: a Charter; Academic Bylaws; an Ethics and Data Governance Code; a Peer Review and Publication Policy; and a Graduate Research Handbook. These instruments are subsidiary to this Manual and shall be reviewed biennially.

## **Chapter 2 — Centers of Excellence (18 per continent)**

### **2.1 Purpose and Topology.**

GSEA institutes a distributed network of eighteen Centers of Excellence (CoEs) per continent, functioning as thematically specialized nodes that integrate research (UCE) and advanced training (UACE) within a unified governance umbrella. The network is designed to enable scalability, methodological consistency, safeguards equivalency, and technology transfer into public-purpose programmes, consonant with the UN 2030 Agenda, Paris Agreement, and AU Agenda 2063 pillars.

## **2.2 Establishment and Legal Seat.**

Each CoE shall be established under applicable host-country law, with legal seat, governing board, and an Academic-Scientific Council. Where a CoE is hosted in Sweden or within the EU, corporate administration and filings shall reflect Swedish Companies Act (SCA), SE Statute where applicable, and competent-authority practice (Bolagsverket) for corporate compliance. Academic recognition shall be sought through nationally competent higher-education authorities and/or internationally recognized accreditation bodies referenced in Chapter 4.

## **2.3 Thematic Taxonomy.**

The eighteen CoEs per continent shall encompass a comprehensive taxonomy spanning social equity, climate-smart development, digitalisation, public-health systems, food systems and agricultural transformation, urban resilience and housing, water-energy-mobility systems, governance and rule of law, financial inclusion and cooperative economics, gender equity and youth futures, cultural economies and creative industries, education systems and TVET, labor markets and new work (INWE), data and AI governance, cybersecurity and digital rights, disaster risk reduction and continuity (anchored to ISO 22301), peacebuilding and displacement, and cross-border trade and logistics. The taxonomy may be adjusted by decision of the GSEA Academic Board, provided continuity with Agenda 2074 objectives and external standards alignment is maintained.

## **2.4 Operating Model and Assurance.**

Each CoE operates with dual lines of accountability: academic quality to UACE and research integrity to UCE. Programmatic interfaces with DESA/SDEP/PCPP/PCGG are executed through SLUC project vehicles under standard project agreements. MEL is embedded in all CoEs, with indicators and data dictionaries harmonized with Agenda 2074 Chapters 5–6 and stakeholder engagement requirements reflecting World Bank ESF and IFC PS1. Business-continuity and crisis-response capabilities are maintained in proportion to risk exposure, consistent with ISO 22301.

## **2.5 Ethics, Data, and Participant Protection.**

CoEs shall implement unified research-ethics procedures, IRB operations aligned with the Declaration of Helsinki, and data-governance controls compatible with GDPR or a demonstrably equivalent regime. Data minimization, purpose limitation, and lawful bases for processing must be evidenced for all personal data. Community engagement and grievance channels shall follow ESF ESS10 and IFC PS1 stakeholder-engagement principles, with accessible remedies and escalation to the GSEA Compliance Function where warranted.

## **2.6 Peer Collaboration and External Recognition.**

CoEs shall enter framework cooperation agreements with accredited universities, national research councils, and standards-setting bodies to enable co-supervision, shared labs, and joint appointments. Recognition of joint degrees and credit portability shall reflect national rules and the standards catalog under Chapter 4, with explicit provisions safeguarding academic freedom and research independence consonant with OECD Guidelines (2023) and UNGPs expectations for scientific integrity and non-retaliation.

## **2.7 Funding, Transparency, and Conflicts.**

CoE budgets are approved annually by the GSEA Academic Board, with disclosures of funding sources, material donations, and in-kind contributions. Procurement and sponsorship shall be screened under conflict-of-interest rules and responsible-conduct criteria aligned with the OECD Guidelines (2023). Where donor conditions could affect academic independence, the CoE shall either reject the funding

or mitigate through governance instruments ensuring protection of methods, results, and publication rights.

## **2.8 Publication, IP, and Knowledge Transfer.**

CoEs shall prioritize open science and equitable access, encouraging open-access publication models and data-sharing consistent with privacy and IP obligations. Publication ethics shall accord with **COPE** best practices; IP arrangements shall preserve researchers' moral rights and enable public-purpose utilization in line with Agenda 2074's value-chain stewardship. Technology-transfer instruments shall include fair-licensing pathways for low-income public partners and social-purpose waivers during emergencies.

## **2.9 Quality Assurance and Periodic Review.**

CoEs undergo quadrennial external review covering academic quality, research integrity, safeguards compliance, MEL performance, stakeholder engagement, and continuity posture. Reviews shall use rubrics mapped to ESF/IFC PS equivalency, ISO 26000 social responsibility criteria, and ISO 22301 continuity controls, with public summaries disclosed under Agenda 2074's transparency chapter. Corrective actions are tracked through time-bound management responses overseen by the GSEA Compliance and Ethics Function.

## **2.10 Suspension and Exit.**

Material breaches of this Manual, ethics violations, or persistent academic-quality failures may trigger suspension, probation, or de-designation of a CoE following due process, including right to respond and independent panel review. Where exit is necessary, GSEA shall ensure orderly teach-out, research data custodianship, and continuity of essential public-purpose functions, consistent with **ISO 22301** principles and the public interest mandate embedded in Agenda 2074.

# **Chapter 3 — Doctoral and PhD Program Governance**

## **3.1 Degree Purpose, Level and Outcomes.**

Doctoral and PhD programmes delivered under UACE constitute the highest academic qualification within the GSEA ecosystem. They are designed to generate original contributions to knowledge with demonstrable public-purpose utility consistent with Agenda 2074. Programme learning outcomes shall be framed at the third cycle and aligned, where applicable, with the Dublin Descriptors for doctoral level knowledge, skills and competences and the competence-based approach reflected in the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) Level 8, while respecting host-country frameworks and recognition regimes. Where cross-border recognition is contemplated, UACE shall reference the UNESCO Global Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education (2019) and bilateral/national instruments in the relevant jurisdiction.

## **3.2 Programme Architecture and Separation of Academic Functions.**

Each programme shall be established by Academic Bylaw specifying: admission standards; progression milestones; supervision model; research training; ethics approvals; data governance; and viva voce procedures. Academic deliberation (curriculum and assessment) remains independent from operational management and financial functions, preserving the separation-of-functions doctrine in Agenda 2074 and the assurance firewalls codified in the GSEA Charter. Quality assurance and periodic review shall be conducted against the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) or a demonstrably equivalent national framework.



### **3.3 Admissions, Equity and Due Process.**

Admission shall be merit-based with transparent criteria, publication of selection rubrics, and mechanisms for reasonable accommodation. Equity objectives shall be evidence-based and consistent with the UN 2030 Agenda and OECD Guidelines (2023) on non-discrimination and inclusion in access to opportunity. Admissions decisions must be documented, appealable, and auditable under public-transparency provisions in Agenda 2074.

### **3.4 Supervision and Candidate Support.**

Primary supervision requires an accredited faculty member with doctoral qualification and research track record commensurate with the field; co-supervision is encouraged for interdisciplinary work. Supervisory loads are capped by Academic Bylaw to safeguard quality and candidate welfare. Supervision agreements shall specify meeting cadence, feedback timelines, authorship expectations pursuant to COPE guidance, and conflict-resolution pathways. Annual progress reviews are mandatory and shall include at least one external assessor.

### **3.5 Research Training, Fieldwork and Ethical Clearance.**

All candidates must complete research-methods and integrity training, including modules on human-subjects protection consistent with the Declaration of Helsinki, stakeholder engagement aligned with World Bank ESF (ESS10) and IFC Performance Standard 1, and data-protection training aligned with GDPR or an equivalent regime. Fieldwork commences only after IRB approval and registration of a data-management plan.

### **3.6 Milestones and Candidature.**

Programmes shall define time-bound milestones: doctoral proposal approval; confirmation/upgrade from MPhil or provisional status; data collection clearance; pre-submission review; and final thesis submission. Extensions require reasoned decisions balancing academic rigor with continuity and force-majeure considerations under ISO 22301 where disruption affects the candidate's ability to progress.

### **3.7 Thesis Format, Originality and Plagiarism Controls.**

Theses may be monographs or article-based compilations, subject to field norms. UACE shall operate originality checks using recognized tools and maintain a plagiarism and research-misconduct code aligned with COPE and UNESCO guidance on academic integrity. Findings of misconduct are adjudicated by an independent panel with due process and right of appeal.

### **3.8 Examination and Viva Voce.**

Examination panels comprise at least two external examiners unaffiliated with the candidate's supervisory team or primary institution, and one internal chair safeguarding process integrity. Examiners shall issue independent written reports before viva voce. Outcomes include pass, pass with minor/major revisions, resubmission, or fail, with reasoned decisions provided to the candidate. Conflicts of interest are screened ex-ante under the OECD Guidelines (2023) expectations for independence in evaluations.

### **3.9 Publication, IP and Open Science.**

Candidates retain moral rights; economic rights are governed by institutional IP policies that prioritize public-purpose licensing and open access where feasible, consistent with Agenda 2074 value-chain stewardship and ISO 26000 guidance on social responsibility. Embargoes may be granted on narrow

grounds (security, third-party IP, active commercialization) with time limits. Publication ethics follow COPE standards; data-sharing follows FAIR principles subject to privacy and consent constraints.

### **3.10 Candidate Well-Being, Grievances and Remedies.**

UACE shall maintain confidential advisory services, ombudsperson access, and grievance channels with escalation to the GSEA Compliance & Ethics Function. Whistleblowing protections are aligned with the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs) non-retaliation expectations and the procedural justice ethos underpinning the OECD Guidelines (2023).

### **3.11 Joint/Dual Degrees and Cotutelle.**

Joint or dual awards require a written cotutelle agreement covering admissions equivalence, supervision and examination standards, IP and publication, fee and funding allocation, and dispute resolution. Quality assurance shall evidence equivalency to ESG standards or a recognized national QA framework, and recognition considerations shall reflect the UNESCO Global Convention (2019).

### **3.12 Records, Transparency and Archiving.**

Programmes shall maintain a definitive record of candidature, milestones, ethics approvals, examiner reports, and final award. Public summaries of programme performance and completion rates are disclosed under Agenda 2074's transparency chapter, with data governance aligned to GDPR principles.

## **Chapter 4 — Peer Review and Accreditation Standards**

### **4.1 Purpose and Scope.**

This Chapter sets the binding standards for internal and external peer review of research outputs and for programme and institutional accreditation applicable to UCE/UACE and to the network of Centers of Excellence. It operationalizes Agenda 2074's assurance architecture, ensuring independence, transparency, and methodological rigor.

### **4.2 Principles of Peer Review.**

Peer review under GSEA is independent, competent, transparent in process, and proportionate to risk. Review modalities (double-blind, single-blind, open peer review) shall be selected to maximize integrity and minimize bias consistent with COPE ethical guidelines and international editorial norms.

### **4.3 Reviewer Selection, Eligibility and Independence.**

Reviewers must demonstrate subject-matter competence, absence of conflicts, and adherence to the OECD Guidelines (2023) expectations for integrity and to non-retaliation principles under the UNGPs. Cooling-off periods apply where prior collaboration, supervisory relationships, or financial ties could impair independence. All reviewers sign a confidentiality and conflict-of-interest declaration.

### **4.4 Process Controls and Documentation.**

Editorial or grant-review processes use standardized templates: scope of review, criteria, scoring, and reasons for recommendations. Appeals are permitted on procedural grounds. All decisions are recorded in an auditable system, and aggregated statistics are disclosed annually under Agenda 2074's transparency provisions. Data processing within review systems shall comply with GDPR where personal data are involved.

### **4.5 Research Integrity, Misconduct and Sanctions.**

Allegations of fabrication, falsification, plagiarism, or undisclosed conflicts are investigated under a documented procedure aligned with COPE flowcharts and due-process safeguards. Sanctions may include article retraction, funding clawback, ineligibility periods, or referral to competent authorities. Public notices follow COPE retraction guidelines.





#### **4.6 Programme and Institutional Accreditation.**

UACE programmes and the CoE network shall be quality-assured and, where applicable, accredited against internationally recognized frameworks. In the EHEA context, the ESG constitute the baseline for internal and external QA; outside the EHEA, UACE shall demonstrate equivalency to robust national frameworks or reputable regional bodies (e.g., African Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance if/when adopted nationally). Where cross-border recognition is sought, alignment with the UNESCO Global Convention (2019) and relevant regional conventions shall be evidenced. References: ESG (link); UNESCO Global Convention (2019) (link).

#### **4.7 Safeguards Equivalency in Research and Training.**

Accreditation reviews shall test for safeguards integration consistent with the World Bank ESF and IFC Performance Standards (2012), including labor and working conditions (ESS2/PS2), community health and safety (ESS4/PS4), stakeholder engagement (ESS10/PS1), biodiversity and resource efficiency where relevant (ESS6/PS3). Findings inform corrective action plans and capacity-strengthening measures.

#### **4.8 Ethics Review Systems and Human-Subjects Protection.**

Accreditation panels verify the design and performance of IRBs/Ethics Committees, including membership diversity, quorum rules, conflict management, adverse-event reporting, and continuing review. Standards shall be consistent with the Declaration of Helsinki and compatible national laws/regulations, with particular attention to vulnerable populations and informed consent in low-literacy settings.

#### **4.9 Data Governance and Security.**

Panels assess data-governance policies, data-protection impact assessments, encryption and access controls, data-retention schedules, and lawful bases for processing. Where operations involve the EU or EU residents, **GDPR** compliance is mandatory; in other jurisdictions, documented equivalency must be shown. Business-continuity and disaster-recovery capabilities are calibrated to ISO 22301. References: GDPR (link); ISO 22301 (link).

#### **4.10 Social Responsibility and Public-Purpose Orientation.**

Accreditation reviews include an assessment of social-responsibility posture and value-chain stewardship aligned with ISO 26000 and the public-interest mandate of Agenda 2074, including equitable access, gender and youth inclusion, and knowledge transfer to public institutions. References: ISO 26000 (link).

#### **4.11 External Benchmarking and Continuous Improvement.**

UACE and UCE shall benchmark acceptance, completion, publication and citation metrics, research income composition, and student experience indicators against peer institutions, with time-bound improvement plans where variance is material. External examiners and accrediting bodies may recommend targeted audits. Annual public reports summarize actions under Agenda 2074's transparency code, observing confidentiality and GDPR.

#### **4.12 Recognition of Prior Learning and Non-Traditional Evidence.**

Where recognition of prior learning (RPL) or professional portfolio admission is used for doctoral entry, policies must map evidence to third-cycle descriptors and be subject to external moderation. Cross-border RPL recognition should align with the UNESCO Global Convention (2019) principles.

#### **4.13 Publication Venues and Predatory Practices.**

UACE shall maintain a positive list of recognized journals and conferences, updated against community curation and whitelists/blacklists, applying COPE criteria and due diligence to avoid predatory venues. Where open-access fees are used, transparency on APCs and funder policies is required. References: COPE guidance on predatory publishing ([link](#)).

#### **4.14 Sanctions, Probation and Loss of Accredited Status.**

Material non-conformities trigger corrective action plans, with probation where risks are contained and suspension where risks are acute to participants or integrity. Reinstatement requires independent verification. Public notices of accreditation status changes are issued in line with Agenda 2074 transparency provisions and OECD Guidelines (2023) expectations for truthful public communication.

## **Chapter 5 — Research Ethics and Data Governance**

### **5.1 Ethical Foundations and Applicability.**

All research conducted under UCE/UACE shall comply with internationally recognized ethical principles and safeguards, including the Declaration of Helsinki for research involving human participants, the due-diligence and remedy expectations in the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs), and responsible-conduct norms reflected in the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises (2023 Update). Research planning and implementation must evidence safeguards equivalency to the World Bank Environmental and Social Framework (ESF)—notably ESS2, ESS4 and ESS10—and to the IFC Performance Standards (2012), with proportionality to risk and context.

### **5.2 Ethics Oversight and Independence.**

Each unit shall operate an Institutional Review Board (IRB) or Ethics Committee with defined terms of reference, quorum, member expertise, and rotation rules to safeguard independence. The committee's determinations are subject to appeal and external audit by the GSEA Compliance & Ethics Function, consistent with Agenda 2074's separation-of-functions and public-transparency provisions. References: UNGPs ([link](#)); OECD Guidelines (2023) ([link](#)).

### **5.3 Risk Assessment and Safeguards Equivalency.**

Protocols must include a risk assessment that identifies foreseeable harms to participants and communities, with mitigations mapped to ESF ESS2/ESS4/ESS10 and IFC PS1–PS4. Where environmental or resource-efficiency risks are implicated, IFC PS3 and ESF ESS3/ESS6 are tested. Risk registers and management plans are reviewed at pre-fieldwork, midline, and prior to dissemination. References: World Bank ESF ([link](#)); IFC Performance Standards (2012) ([link](#)).

### **5.4 Informed Consent and Community Engagement.**

Consent processes shall be understandable, freely given, documented, and revocable. For vulnerable participants and low-literacy settings, enhanced safeguards and independent witnesses are required. Community engagement and grievance pathways must satisfy ESF ESS10 and IFC PS1 principles, ensuring accessible channels, timely responses, and escalation to independent oversight when necessary.

### **5.5 Human Biological Materials, Genetic Resources and Traditional Knowledge.**

Collection, storage, transfer, and secondary use of human biological materials require explicit consent and ethics approvals; cross-border transfers must respect applicable laws and benefit-sharing obligations. Access to genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge must comply with the

Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit-Sharing, including due authorization and mutually agreed terms.

#### **5.6 Data Protection and Lawful Processing.**

Personal data shall be processed lawfully, fairly, and transparently, with purpose limitation, data minimization, accuracy, storage limitation, and accountability consistent with the **EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)** or a demonstrably equivalent regime. Lawful bases for processing, Data Protection Impact Assessments where required, and data-subject rights must be evidenced in the protocol and participant-facing materials.

#### **5.7 Security Controls and Privacy-by-Design.**

Information-security management systems shall align with ISO/IEC 27001. Privacy management shall align with ISO/IEC 27701, and public-cloud processing of personally identifiable information should follow ISO/IEC 27018 guidance. Encryption in transit and at rest, access controls, logging, and breach-notification procedures are mandatory; notifications follow GDPR Articles 33–34 where applicable.

#### **5.8 Cross-Border Data Transfers.**

International transfers of personal data shall rely on an adequacy decision or appropriate safeguards. For EU-origin data, Standard Contractual Clauses (SCCs) or other approved mechanisms must be in place, with transfer-impact assessments reflecting destination-country law and practice.

#### **5.9 Data Lifecycle, Retention and Archiving.**

Data-management plans define collection, processing, anonymization/pseudonymization, retention, and secure destruction. Where data are shareable, the FAIR principles (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, Reusable) govern repository selection and metadata; for Indigenous or community data, the **CARE Principles** (Collective Benefit, Authority to Control, Responsibility, Ethics) shall be applied.

#### **5.10 AI, Automated Decision-Making and Model Governance.**

Projects involving AI or automated processing must conduct risk assessments covering bias, fairness, explainability, and human oversight, publish model and data cards where feasible, and document mitigation consistent with the OECD AI Principles. Where profiling or automated decisions affect rights, a DPIA is mandatory under GDPR.

#### **5.11 Adverse Events, Protocol Deviations and Incident Response.**

Serious adverse events and material protocol deviations shall be reported promptly to the IRB and relevant authorities, with corrective and preventive actions. Operational continuity and crisis response shall be maintained in proportion to risk and calibrated to ISO 22301.

#### **5.12 Training, Certification and Competency.**

All researchers and supervisors shall complete periodic training in research integrity, human-subjects protection, data protection, and information security, evidencing competence for assigned roles. Training content references COPE guidance for publication ethics and GDPR for data processing obligations.

#### **5.13 Whistleblowing, Non-Retaliation and Remedies.**

GSEA shall maintain confidential reporting channels and protect whistleblowers against retaliation, consonant with the UNGPs and the truthful communication expectations of the OECD Guidelines (2023). Verified violations trigger proportionate remedies and, where appropriate, public notices under Agenda 2074 transparency.

#### **5.14 Oversight, Audit and Continuous Improvement.**

Annual ethics and data-governance audits shall review IRB performance, consent practices, DPIAs, breach logs, and repository compliance with FAIR/CARE. Findings lead to time-bound management responses overseen by the GSEA Compliance & Ethics Function.

## **Chapter 6 — Knowledge Transfer and Publication Protocols**

### **6.1 Purpose and Public-Interest Orientation.**

Knowledge transfer under UCE/UACE advances Agenda 2074's public-purpose mandate by ensuring that research outputs, methods, and data are disseminated ethically, accessibly, and with due regard to rights, security, and equity. Dissemination choices shall balance open science with legitimate confidentiality and safety concerns, and remain free from sponsor interference consistent with the OECD Guidelines (2023).

### **6.2 Publication Ethics and Dissemination Pathways.**

All publications, including preprints, follow the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) standards and, where biomedical content is involved, the ICMJE Recommendations on authorship and transparency. Journals and conferences must be vetted to avoid predatory practices; editorial independence is preserved in agreements.

### **6.3 Open Access and Licensing.**

GSEA encourages immediate open access consistent with the Budapest Open Access Initiative (BOAI) and, where funder-mandated, compliance with Plan S. Preferred licensing is Creative Commons (CC BY or CC BY-NC where justified), with machine-readable license statements and repository deposit of the author-accepted manuscript where publisher policies allow.

### **6.4 Authorship, Contributions and Acknowledgment.**

Authorship must reflect substantial scholarly contribution and accountability. The CRediT (Contributor Roles Taxonomy) shall be used to declare roles; funding and material support are disclosed. Disputes are handled under a documented process aligned with COPE guidance.

### **6.5 Data and Code Sharing.**

Underlying data and code shall be shared to the extent lawful and safe, aligned with FAIR Principles, with persistent identifiers (DOIs) minted through DataCite or Crossref. Author identifiers (e.g., ORCID) are required in submissions. Where Indigenous data are implicated, CARE Principles govern sharing and permissions.

### **6.6 Registered Reports, Trials and Reproducibility.**

Where appropriate, UCE/UACE promote registered reports and prospective registration of clinical or interventional studies in recognized registries, including the WHO ICTRP and national platforms. Protocols and analysis plans should be time-stamped to enhance reproducibility.

### **6.7 Intellectual Property (IP) and Equitable Access.**

IP policies respect creators' moral rights while promoting non-exclusive, socially responsible licensing for public-purpose uptake, with humanitarian-use provisions and tiered-access mechanisms where suitable. Frameworks draw from the WIPO Berne Convention principles and university licensing norms that facilitate equitable access (e.g., AUTM guidance), while accommodating reasonable commercial pathways.

References: WIPO Berne Convention ([link](#)); AUTM Global Health & Licensing Resources ([link](#)).



#### **6.8 Technology Transfer, Standards and FRAND.**

When results inform standards or interoperable technologies, licensing should consider FRAND-style commitments to avoid exclusionary practices, consistent with competition law and standard-setting policies such as ETSI IPR Policy. Conflicts of interest and sponsor rights are transparently managed under the OECD Guidelines (2023).

#### **6.9 Material and Data Transfer Agreements.**

Transfers of materials or datasets shall be governed by MTAs/DTAs specifying permitted uses, privacy and security controls, onward transfer limits, attribution, and benefit-sharing where required, including compliance with the Nagoya Protocol for genetic resources and associated knowledge.

#### **6.10 Governmental, DFI and Public Disclosures.**

Projects financed by public or DFI resources shall meet applicable access-to-information policies, including timely disclosure of non-confidential outputs, summaries of environmental and social assessments, and lessons learned. Where the World Bank is a comparator, the World Bank Access to Information Policy shall guide equivalency.

#### **6.11 Metrics, Assessment and Responsible Indicators.**

Assessment of research quality and impact shall prioritize qualitative evaluation and field-appropriate metrics, rejecting journal-based proxies where misaligned, consistent with DORA (San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment) and the Leiden Manifesto. Programme-level dashboards are disclosed under Agenda 2074 transparency with context to avoid misinterpretation.

#### **6.12 Media, Embargoes and Public Communication.**

Public communication must be accurate, non-misleading, and respectful of confidentiality and participant safety. Embargoes are honored per journal policies; preprint communications must clearly state peer-review status. Public statements comport with the truthfulness expectations under the OECD Guidelines (2023).

#### **6.13 Policy Translation and Stakeholder Uptake.**

Policy briefs, open lectures, and practitioner toolkits shall accompany major outputs to accelerate uptake in public systems. Stakeholder dialogues and feedback loops follow ESF ESS10 and IFC PS1 engagement principles, with accessible repositories and multilingual summaries where relevant.

#### **6.14 Dispute Resolution and Corrections.**

Errors, contested interpretations, or post-publication concerns are addressed through corrigenda, expressions of concern, or retractions in line with COPE guidance, with parallel updates to repositories and media notices as needed.

#### **6.15 Governance, Records and Audit.**

Knowledge-transfer agreements, publication decisions, embargoes, and licensing determinations shall be documented in an auditable system with retention periods consistent with GDPR and institutional policy. Annual audits review compliance with open-access, IP, FAIR/CARE, and disclosure commitments.