GLOBAL INDIGENOUS DATA ALLIANCE COMMUNIQUÉ
CARE Directs Us Home: Prioritizing Indigenous Peoples' Community Standards

In 2019, the Global Indigenous Data Alliance (GIDA) developed and published the CARE Principles for Indigenous Data Governance (Collective Benefit, Authority to Control, Responsibility, Ethics) to complement the FAIR principles for open scientific data management (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, Reusable) (Wilkinson et al., 2016; Carroll et al., 2020, Carroll S. R. et al., 2021). FAIR are data-centric, focusing on the attributes of data objects themselves. The CARE Principles serve as high-level guidance toward more equitable creation, collection, use, and storage of Indigenous data that focuses on the people to whom data relate, and the purpose for which those data are collected, analyzed, and used. In the six years since their original publication, the CARE Principles have garnered significant interest and induced uptake, informing policy and processes across many institutions, governments, organizations, communities, Tribal Nations, and other data-related entities.[1] There has also been interest in applying the principles and framework beyond Indigenous contexts (Lipphardt et al 2021; Suchikova and Nazarovets 2025).

This Communiqué aims to:

(1) support local Indigenous Data Sovereignty (IDSov) and Indigenous Data Governance (IDGov) initiatives,

(2) underscore broader CARE application as a minimum standard for all Indigenous data, and

(3) reiterate CARE's original purpose of guiding open data projects involving Indigenous data to uphold Indigenous Peoples' rights and interests.

Indigenous Peoples have long called for implementation of their local, regional, and nation-state IDSov definitions and frameworks, with principles such as OCAP® (Ownership, Control, Access, Possession) predating and informing the creation of the CARE Principles (FNIGC n.d.; Carroll et al., 2020; Taitingfong et al. 2024).

Effective CARE implementation requires data actors and entities to establish data governance mechanisms that incorporate IDSov and IDGov principles, frameworks, and mechanisms. Application of CARE increases awareness and facilitates the operationalization of Indigenous Peoples' rights to govern their own data. Data governance encompasses strategic decision-making across the entire data lifecycle, from conceptualization, creation, and collection to analysis, interpretation, sharing, and storage. IDGov ensures that Indigenous Peoples' definitions and principles regarding data at local, regional, or national levels are implemented, reflecting their worldviews and priorities while enabling self-determined, data-driven decision-making. Where locally designed IDSov and IDGov models, principles, and guidelines exist, the CARE Principles emphasize their prioritization (Garrison and Carroll 2023; Collaboratory for Indigenous Data Governance n.d.). Using such locally designed structures ensures that both institutional and individual implementation of the CARE Principles maintains clear lines of accountability to specific data rights-holders.

Indigenous communities that lack specific data governance mechanisms and sovereignty principles may look to the CARE Principles and the Care Data Maturity Model as a framework to provide specific, local guidance on what it means for external data actors to implement CARE for their data (Collaboratory for Indigenous Data Governance n.d.). CARE should be applied both to new data relationships and previously collected data. To strengthen both FAIR and CARE principles in data systems and infrastructures, leading with CARE helps ensure that efforts to make data more Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, and Reusable are context-driven and grounded in accountability and relational responsibility to the people to whom the data relate.

In addition to policy and institutional transformation, Indigenous Peoples also advance IDSov and IDGov by building technologies and data infrastructures grounded in their own knowledges and rights systems. Indigenous Peoples' locally designed frameworks, principles, and protocols remain vital resources to ensure that existing and emerging technologies – and the policies that govern their use – uphold Indigenous Peoples' rights, embed Indigenous values, and support self-determined futures.

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1 | See examples of 'CARE in Policy' at The Collaboratory for Indigenous Data Governance's CARE Data Maturity Model.

CANADA

- First Nations OCAP® Principles
- The First Nations Information Governance Centre Online Library
- First Nations Data Governance Strategy
- National Inuit Strategy on Research

Updated Inuit and Métis resources coming soon

UNITED STATES

- US Indigenous Data Governance Principles
- Resolution of the Tribal Council of the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe regarding Support for Tribal Data Sovereignty and Research Governance Plan (forthcoming)
- Practicing Pikyav: Policy for Collaborative Projects and Research Initiatives with the Karuk Tribe

CARE Directs Us Home: Local Resources

INTERNATIONAL

- CARE Principles for Indigenous Data Governance
- Indigenous Peoples' Rights in Data
- CARE Data Maturity Model
- Maiam nayri Wingara (2025), Global Indigenous Data Sovereignty Conference Communiqué, Canberra, Australia (forthcoming)

SÁPMI

(Finland, Sweden, & Norway)

- Sámi Ownership and Data Access (SODA) Principles
- Ethical Guidelines for Research Involving the Sámi in Finland
- Ethical Guidelines for Sámi Health Research (Norway)
- Proposal for Ethical Guidelines for Sámi Health Research and Research on Sámi Human Biological Material (Norway)

ASIA

- Asian Framework on Indigenous Knowledge and Data Sovereignty

AUSTRALIA

- Maiam nayri Wingara Principles
- Taking Control of our Data: Discussion Paper
- AIATSIS Code of Ethics
- Australian Framework for the Governance of Indigenous Data

AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND

- Te Mana Raraunga Māori Data Sovereignty Principles
- Māori Data Governance Model
- Kaitiakitanga License
- Pacific Data Sovereignty Principles

For a regularly updated list of Local Resources for Indigenous Data Governance, please see The Collaboratory for Indigenous Data Governance's CARE Data Maturity Model.

References

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