

## 1. Ethics Plan

### 1.1 Abstract

Indigenous knowledges are crucial for coping with current global crises, such as climate change, loss of biocultural diversity and rise of xenophobic nationalisms. This pivotal historical moment requires multi-centred thinking and action, bringing together the multiplicity of Indigenous and academic expertise. Universities and academia are critically important in developing knowledge, education, and policy directives. Consequently, EDGES adopts those significant arenas to respectfully advance innovative, collaborative methodologies and new strategies for the entanglement of Indigenous knowledges in research, teaching and policy-making institutions. While there have been efforts to foster dialogue with Indigenous knowledges, these experiences remain elusive, local and not structurally transformative, as the shortcomings of multiculturalism and interculturality have demonstrated. How can we question the existing frameworks and develop new and effective entanglements of knowledges that draw from different epistemologies?

EDGES addresses this question through six different analytical layers with the significant participation of Indigenous academic researchers and the active collaboration of Indigenous intellectuals and experts. To accomplish this endeavour, EDGES creates a future sustainable and disciplinary diverse network of more than 150 researchers from 18 European and South and North American universities and one SME. The project contributes to a pluralist and multi-scale approach to knowledge production, research and dissemination through symposiums, workshops, mini-courses, open-access scientific publications, policy recommendations and social media. It will provide critical tools for universities, schools and communities to foster critical dialogue with Indigenous peoples and other cultural minorities by entangling Indigenous knowledges into university curricula and praxis, contributing to the education of future generations, improving policies and science renewal.

### 1.2 Structure of the Ethics Plan

The Ethics Plan consists of two equally important and inter-connected parts:

- A) General Principles of the Ethics Plan
- B) EDGES Code of Ethics for research undertaken by, with and about Indigenous Peoples

## A) General Principles of the Ethics Plan

EDGES is committed to the highest ethical standards upheld by the European Union (EU). This ethics plan outlines the principles, guidelines, and procedures that will govern all aspects of research. Researchers must also follow the guidelines of the Data Management Plan to comply with the Ethics Plan.

Ethical considerations pertinent to EDGES were evaluated during both the project and Grant Agreement preparation stages. The following ethical concerns were identified as relevant to the project: Humans, Personal data, non-EU countries, and Environment, health and safety. These issues are elaborated within the project's context, and the steps taken to address and adhere to ethical principles are outlined.

In this sense, it is important to highlight that the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Staff Exchanges programme is dedicated to providing financial support for short-term international and inter-sectoral exchanges of personnel engaged in research and innovation endeavours within the consortium. The primary objective is to cultivate long-lasting collaborative partnerships among diverse organisations spanning academic and non-academic domains. Therefore, even though this programme includes research and innovation activities, it does not involve long-term field research, and the ethics plan was developed accordingly.

### **European Commission ethics principles**

European Commission defines ethics in the following way:

“The EU Ethics appraisal process considers ‘ethics’ as including questions of legal and regulatory compliance as well as questions on moral principles, fundamental rights and values, and how these apply to research activities. It is part of a process of ‘governance’, that aims to ensure the protection of the rights and interests of all those affected by research and related activities, respect for fundamental EU values and human rights, and that EU funded research is not misused.” (Page 3 of Ethics Advisors and Ethics Advisory Boards. Roles and Function in EU-funded Projects. Version 2.0. 15 February 2023. (Available at: [https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/roles-and-functions-of-ethics-advisory-ethics-advisory-boards-in-ec-funded-projects\\_he\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/roles-and-functions-of-ethics-advisory-ethics-advisory-boards-in-ec-funded-projects_he_en.pdf))

## Relevant legislation

EDGES reiterates its commitment to ensuring that the activities will comply with the “European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity” published by *All European Academies* and that no activities excluded from funding will be conducted. It further confirms that activities carried out outside the EU would have been allowed in a Member State.

The plan adheres to internationally recognised ethical standards, including those set forth by the EU and various international laws, bodies, instruments, programmes, strategies, standards, reports and processes of relevance, including:

- a) Regulation 2021/695 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 28 April 2021 establishing Horizon Europe – the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation, laying down its rules for participation and dissemination, and repealing Regulations (EU) No 1290/2013 and (EU) No 1291/2013 – Article 16, 18, 19, 20;
- b) The European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity (European Federation of Academies of Sciences and Humanities - ALLEA (2023));
- c) Charter and the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and
- d) Fundamental Freedoms and its Supplementary Protocols;
- e) The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination (1965);
- f) The Convention No.169 on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples (ILO 1989);
- g) The Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (UNESCO 2003);
- h) The Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (2005);
- i) The Universal Declaration on Human Rights (1948);
- j) The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966);
- k) The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966);
- l) The United Nations Second International Decade of the World's Indigenous Peoples (2005-2014);
- m) The Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity (UNESCO 2001);
- n) The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007).

## Humans

This section refers to research activities involving work with human beings that are not part of the EDGES staff.

It is crucial to note that some of the methodologies, such as collaborative research methodologies, local epistemologies and research methods, oral history research, ethnographies and auto-ethnographies and linguistics, anthropological linguistics, Native language studies and language technology, involve the participation and collaboration of human beings.

### Free, prior, and informed consent

Researchers are required to secure free, prior, and informed consent from all relevant research participants. The focus should not solely be on legal obligations, though these remain important; rather, it should prioritise obtaining consent through clear, honest explanations of the research's purpose and objectives, how data will be utilised, the duration and scope of its use, potential positive and negative impacts, and with mitigation strategies.

Participants will be given all information regarding their complete voluntary participation, and they are free to withhold from the research and withdraw consent at any time during the process. Informed consent will be acquired according to each participant group's requirements and with special attention to gender dimensions and women participation. If required by the participants, consent can additionally be obtained in written form or recorded in audio and/or video.

Researchers should be sensitive to the fact that not all information obtained should be published, whether explicitly stated or not. Free, prior, and informed consent does not grant researchers indefinite rights to use the data. Consent should be obtained specifically for the deliverables and outputs produced within the EDGES project. Researchers are strongly encouraged to seek additional consent if they intend to use the data beyond the scope of EDGES. Researchers should consider that as people, communities, knowledge, and political, social, and economic contexts change over time, the nature and validity of consent obtained at a specific moment may also change.

Regarding the specifics of consent regarding working with Indigenous Peoples, please consult document B) EDGES Code of Ethics for research undertaken by, with and about Indigenous Peoples.

Accordingly, researchers must ensure:

- The respect for persons and for human dignity.
- Non-discriminatory practices or unfair treatment.
- That all efforts will be made to prevent the negative impact of the research on the people and communities involved.
- That they respect the available time and schedules of the participants.
- The rights and interests of the participants and communities in the research.
- That the interlocutors, who will be volunteers, may request anonymity or pseudonymity and can withdraw from the research at any time without any adverse consequences or the necessity of providing justification. When a participant decides to withdraw from the project, all personal data will be deleted, and they may request the removal of all other data they have provided. The interlocutors may also specify the scope of confidentiality concerning both social spaces (within or outside the communities and region) and the timespan for data disclosure.
- Conversely, due credit should be given to participants, especially if requested.
- No children and disabled adults should participate in the research, nor human tissues or invasive techniques be used. These categories should be discussed with the participants and/or communities to comply with their cultural determination.

## **Personal Data**

This section concerns research activities that involve the processing of personal data.

Definition of personal data: Information relating to an identified or identifiable natural person.

An identifiable natural person is one who can be identified, directly or indirectly, in particular by reference to an identifier such as a name, an identification number, location data, an online identifier or to one or more factors specific to the physical, physiological, genetic, mental, economic, cultural or social identity of that natural person (Article 2(a) *EU General Data*

*Protection Regulation 2016/679 (GDPR)*). Individuals are not considered ‘identifiable’ if identifying them requires excessive effort.

Special categories of personal data (formerly known as ‘sensitive data’) — Include personal data revealing racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, or trade union membership, as well as the processing of genetic data, biometric data for the purpose of uniquely identifying a natural person, data concerning health or data concerning a natural person’s sex life or sexual orientation (Article 9(1) GDPR).

EDGES is a multidisciplinary project that will employ several research methodologies. Collaborative research methodologies, local epistemologies and research methods, oral history research, ethnographies and auto-ethnographies and linguistics, anthropological linguistics, Native language studies and language technology involve collecting, storing, analysing, and publishing personal data and observing behaviours and discourses. Moreover, the use of archival research may involve further processing of previously collected personal data and could include importing personal data (even of mainly deceased people) from non-EU countries into the EU. Besides using personal data, EDGES also provides research that involves information pertaining to collectives, such as Indigenous peoples in America and Europe.

The project will safeguard fairness, transparency, accountability in data processing, quality, and confidentiality. Ensuring free, prior and informed participation and consent of the people and communities, they will be notified of how their data will be collected, stored and used during the project. At any stage, they will have the opportunity to ask questions about the research.

For historical sources, EDGES is committed to considering the consequences of the proposed research and those directly and indirectly affected by it. Although some of the data is currently available in digital format on the Web or in public archives, the consortium is fully committed to thinking carefully about how the collected data could reconstruct lives in the present and future. The consortium is also fully committed to making accessible historical archives and maps to indigenous communities as research should always benefit them.

Regarding image rights, we will ask people to sign a free, prior and informed image consent form in the relevant cases. In cases where written consent is not congruent with local forms of

interaction, non-written consent must be formally recorded and independently witnessed. Both the photographer or filmmaker and the individuals depicted in the image retain rights to its authorship.

Regarding collecting information from collectives, such as Indigenous peoples, EDGES researchers must respect cultural traditions and ensure that their work benefits local participants and communities, responds to local needs, and involves Indigenous peoples, institutions, and representatives.

Participants' data during scientific events will be processed per the principles and conditions protecting the persons concerned while ensuring data quality and confidentiality to ensure voluntary and fully informed participation.

Data collection and storage: Please consult Data Management Plan

### **Non-EU Countries**

This section concerns activities involving non-EU countries.

It applies to the following situations:

- activities conducted, partially or wholly, in a non-EU country;
- participants or resources coming from a non-EU country;
- material imported from or exported to a non-EU country.

During their secondments, all EDGES researchers from European institutions will develop research and communication activities in nine non-EU countries: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Mexico, Peru, the United Kingdom, and the USA. They will participate in scientific and communication encounters at host universities (research seminars, PhD seminars, master's seminars, etc.) and, in communication activities designed to reach wider audiences, such as radio programmes and interviews in local newspapers, among others.

Additionally, they will develop short research periods with Indigenous communities. However, they will mainly conduct research with Indigenous peoples they already know and with whom they already have close personal and professional relationships (sometimes spanning more than

25 years). The fieldwork aims to clarify, deepen and better analyse ethnographic or linguistic material already collected.

The ethical issues related to activities carried out in non-EU countries mainly relate to using personal data from those countries (see previous section). Additionally, in non-EU countries, researchers must respect cultural traditions and share benefits (i.e., benefit local participants and their communities, involve local stakeholders — as equal partners — and respond to local needs). This is particularly important for research projects in low-income and lower-middle income countries.

During fieldwork, EDGES researchers will behave according to their own employing institutions and the Deontological Code of Ethics of their respective national associations and universities. They will also be informed by national legislation and codes of the South American countries of the host university. Additionally, they will reach other agreements with local communities.

#### Benefits-sharing actions

EDGES has planned a series of research and scientific training activities to foster inter- and multidisciplinary dialogue between European and South and North American universities. These research activities will benefit the universities of the seven South American countries involved in the project.

Most of these benefits will be scientific, at least in the early stages of the project. In that sense, all European researchers will engage during their secondments with professors and students at host universities. Events and publications will strengthen the collaboration between European and South American universities and researchers, including ESRs.

Besides knowledge exchange, scientific and communication training will also enhance the professional profiles of EDGES researchers. Universities will also benefit from this training, as the PhD programmes of the South American universities will benefit from the exchange with European institutions. Finally, EDGES will contribute to the creation of a PhD programme at UMSA.



## Safety

This section concerns the safety of EDGES researchers during secondments.

A self-risk assessment should be undertaken by researchers before secondments. Additional appropriate safety measures may be taken, including:

- Insurance cover.
- Using mobile phones to keep in touch with the home base.
- Formally notifying authorities of activities being conducted in an area.
- Carrying authorised identification.

## **B) EDGES Code of Ethics for research undertaken by, with and about Indigenous Peoples**

The *EDGES Code of Ethics for research undertaken by, with and about Indigenous Peoples* acknowledges the value and diversity of Indigenous knowledges. Indigenous peoples have the right to fully engage in any processes, projects and activities that may influence them. EDGES aim is to ensure that the research undertaken not only respects but also upholds the rights, dignity, sovereignty, agency, and interests of Indigenous peoples, communities, and individuals while producing valuable knowledge that benefits both them and the broader society. The enduring impacts of colonisation on Indigenous peoples, including land and resource appropriation, knowledge extractivism, cultural and identity suppression, racism, and overall exploitation, should be acknowledged and taken into consideration when devising and conducting research. EDGES recognises that Indigenous peoples have the right to control their knowledges and benefit from research undertaken by, with and about them. By adhering to these guidelines, researchers can contribute to enhancing knowledge while fostering respectful and equitable partnerships with Indigenous communities.

Research must follow the international data principles of FAIR (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable and Reusable). However, EDGES is aware that FAIR principles regarding open data and open science can contradict Indigenous rights and interests. For that reason, the project takes into consideration the CARE (Collective benefit, Authority to control, Responsibility and Ethics) Principles for Indigenous Data Governance ([www.gida-global.org/care](http://www.gida-global.org/care)) to complement the FAIR principles and adhere to the principle of “as open as possible, as closed as necessary.”

While existing legislation and general ethical principles acknowledge certain Indigenous rights, the *EDGES Code of Ethics for research undertaken by, with and about Indigenous Peoples* is not focused on institutional ethics. Instead, it emphasizes relational ethics, acknowledging that ethical considerations occur within the interplay of relationships, encompassing diverse ways of being a person and a collective, either human or other-than-human. Ethics should also be attuned to the various shared *ethos* and simultaneously recognize that each relation is differentially and situationally experienced, potentially fostering other ways of being together. Hence, this document remains open to revision throughout the project's duration.

EDGES has established a dedicated Working Group focused on ethics during the preparation for this deliverable. This initiative involved organising meetings and seminars for discussions and active engagement, particularly with Indigenous researchers within the consortium.

The discussion seminars also draw from the work previously undertaken by Indigenous Studies at University of Helsinki and their contribution together with Sámi professors and communities in the design of Ethical Guidelines for research involving the Sámi in Finland. This resulted in the advancement of ethical issues from Indigenous perspectives. Indigenous research ethical guidelines highlight four core values: **relevance**, **respect**, **responsibility**, and **reciprocity**, which were also considered equally relevant for the EDGES Code of Ethics for research conducted by, with, and about Indigenous Peoples.

## **Principles of the EDGES Code of Ethics for research undertaken by, with and about Indigenous Peoples**

### **Relevance**

- Researchers should consider the research's relevance to the Indigenous individuals and communities they work with.
- Researchers should involve Indigenous individuals and communities in defining research objectives and interpreting findings at every stage.

### **Respect**

- Indigenous individuals and communities involved in the research have the right to be informed about the nature of the research before it begins, including its potential impacts and risks.
- Indigenous individuals and communities have the right to not participate in the research or only participate to the extent that they consider appropriate.
- Research by, with, and about Indigenous Peoples must be based on building and sustaining relationships of mutual trust, responsibility, respect, and reciprocity. Furthermore, relational ethics recognizes that relationships encompass diverse dimensions, including the environment, past and future generations, and other-than-human entities, which must also be acknowledged when relevant.
- Researchers should endeavor to comprehend the local ethics and shared *ethos* governing relationships, including interactions between humans and human and other-than-

human entities. These protocols pertain to specific sensitive topics and places but are also present in everyday conviviality, such as sharing meals, engaging in conversation, and even moments of silence. Local ethics and shared *ethos* are not necessarily explicitly stated but can be grasped over time. Researchers must be patient in getting to know them.

- Researchers should recognize and respect the decision-making processes within Indigenous communities, namely that decisions may take long time to achieve and require consensus. Researchers should consult with community leaders, elders, and other relevant representatives throughout the research process. Researchers should also pay attention and contribute to the participation of women in research decision processes.
- Researchers should avoid generalizations that overlook the diversity of communities in the past and in the present and should minimize potential harms and risks associated with the research, including cultural appropriation, stigmatization, exploitation, and negative impacts on well-being.
- Researchers should acknowledge that translation is not a transparent or neutral process and that retaining the Indigenous wording may be more respectful, providing an appropriate and thorough explanation.
- Free prior, and informed consent: In contexts involving Indigenous peoples, consent is community based whether expressed in collective or individual's ways. This approach is particularly relevant because Indigenous knowledges have diverse regimes of ownership that differ from Euro-American legal frameworks. Additionally, securing community consent helps prevent or mitigate potential issues within the community. Furthermore, some communities have already established explicit or implicit research protocols. Researchers should assess the existence of these protocols before commencing their research. Finally, the concept of personhood may extend beyond humans in certain contexts, and researchers should inquire with the communities on how to approach this aspect, including in terms of consent. The researcher is responsible for guaranteeing the relational nature of these different facets of consent.

### **Responsibility**

- Communication with communities and individuals, namely regarding the research's impact and risks, should follow appropriate formats and languages and minimize

potential misunderstandings. This responsibility is a long-term engagement and might also imply not to share data in ways not agreed with communities and indigenous persons.

- Researchers must maintain open and transparent communication with Indigenous communities, funding agencies, academic institutions, and other relevant stakeholders throughout the research process.
- Researchers need to ensure that the collaboration offered for the research is not utilized with the intent to harm the group under investigation.
- Researchers must respond responsibly to any concerns, complaints, or feedback raised by Indigenous communities or research participants. Researchers should take appropriate measures to address and rectify any ethical breaches or unintended consequences of the research.
- Researchers should strive to ensure that research is as environmentally, culturally, socially and economically sustainable as possible.
- Researchers should take into consideration the impacts and risks of the research over the long term.
- Indigenous individuals and communities have the right of access to research results during every stage of the research.
- Researchers should strive to make sure data and information gathered during research may be available to the community and its future offspring through restitution or appropriate and sustainable online archiving.

### **Reciprocity**

- Researchers should ensure that the research benefits Indigenous individuals and communities in tangible and intangible ways.
- Researchers should ensure that the rights of authorship and co-authorship of Indigenous individuals and communities over their own cultural production is warranted.
- Researchers should work for the recognition of Indigenous knowledge within academic, legal, and policy frameworks.

- Relational accountability means that research never ends because reciprocity implies the long-term entanglement of researchers, other individuals, and entities. It implies a specific consideration for the young indigenous generation and sustains in all the ways possible to be an interface for the transmission of local and indigenous knowledges.