



## Data Sovereignty Statement, January 2021

### Local Indicators of Climate Change Impacts (LICCI) Observation Network

The LICCI Observation Network (LICCION) aims to serve as a bridge between Indigenous peoples and local communities (IPLCs) and decision-making processes in climate change policy and research. Data sovereignty is defined as information managed in a way which is “consistent with the laws, practices and customs of the nation-state in which it is located.”<sup>i</sup> While we work in partnership with Indigenous peoples as well as local communities, this statement is concerned specifically with Indigenous Data Sovereignty (IDS). As defined in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples<sup>ii</sup>, Indigenous peoples are the primary rights-holders to their knowledge systems and practices. In this context, IDS refers to adhering to those customary and traditional practices or protocols over national ones.

As a policy-tool initiative, LICCION is concerned with the use of data through its [OpenTEK](#) digital platform, a space designed to amplify the voices of those who directly experience and observe climate change impacts yet are often most left out of regional climate change decision-making processes. While OpenTEK was initially created as a citizen-science platform, it is currently being reconfigured to meet the demands of LICCION partners, and specifically meet the diverse and context-specific requirements and values of IPLCs globally. LICCION is in the process of creating an Advisory Group which will be able to steer our direction and guide our decision-making regarding data, information, and knowledge broadly speaking. This Advisory Group will be established by April 2021.

Regarding LICCION-OpenTEK's management of data, the following initiatives serve as our guiding frameworks: 1) [CARE](#); 2) [OCAP®](#); 3) [TK & BC Labels](#); 4) [Te Mana Raruanga Charter](#). While some of these initiatives are context-specific (i.e., Te Mana Raruanga, OCAP®), they offer implementation ideas for common core principles. These essential principles call for, among others, a) Indigenous ownership of knowledge and its relationship to uses; b) Indigenous authority to control and access; c) prioritizing collective benefit over individual benefit; d) recognition of context-specificity; e) a values-based approach which goes beyond the consultation process; and f) consideration for future use and generations. We have conducted one of four assessments for how we intend to meet the CARE principles during the duration of the project, which we are sharing directly with representatives at [GIDA](#). We hope that by adhering to these ethical frameworks, we will be better equipped to understand or implement future demands from non-Indigenous local communities as well.

LICCION aims to develop its own data sovereignty implementation measures by Q1 2022, based on 1) the abovementioned frameworks, 2) guidance from our Advisory Group, and 3) workshops and feedback sessions which will be conducted in partnership with various IPLC, representative bodies and partners, which we are still identifying. These implementation measures will prioritize the above principles to contemporary data management practices. For example, while the current OpenTEK platform uses the [FAIR](#) principles, the CARE principles will take precedence upon a relevant users'

(individual or group) request. Furthermore, implementation of these principles will relate specifically to the use of, management, and relationship with *climate change*, *environmental* and *biocultural* knowledge, and therefore the holders of that knowledge. LICCION-OpenTEK's relationship with data should therefore be determined by its relationship to knowledge holders, thereby allowing data or knowledge to remain within its context and its associated human rights.

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<sup>i</sup> Snipp, C.M. (2016). What does data sovereignty imply: what does it look like? In Kukutai, T. & Taylor, J. (Eds.). *Indigenous Data Sovereignty: Toward an agenda*. (pp. 39-56) ANU Press

<sup>ii</sup> [UNDRIP](#) articles most relevant to IDS in the context of LICCION:

**Article 4** Indigenous peoples, in exercising their right to self-determination, have the right to autonomy or self-government in matters relating to their internal and local affairs, as well as ways and means for financing their autonomous functions.

**Article 11.1** Indigenous peoples have the right to practice and revitalize their cultural traditions and customs. This includes the right to maintain, protect and develop the past, present and future manifestations of their cultures, such as archaeological and historical sites, artefacts, designs, ceremonies, technologies and visual and performing arts and literature.

**Article 13.1** Indigenous peoples have the right to revitalize, use, develop and transmit to future generations their histories, languages, oral traditions, philosophies, writing systems and literatures, and to designate and retain their own names for communities, places and persons. 2. States shall take effective measures to ensure that this right is protected and also to ensure that indigenous peoples can understand and be understood in political, legal and administrative proceedings, where necessary through the provision of interpretation or by other appropriate means.

**Article 18** Indigenous peoples have the right to participate in decision-making in matters which affect their rights, through representatives chosen by themselves in accordance with their own procedures, as well as to maintain and develop their own indigenous decision-making institutions.

**Article 19** States shall consult and cooperate in good faith with Indigenous peoples through their own representative institutions in order to obtain their free, prior and informed consent [[FPIC](#)] before adopting and implementing legislative or administrative measures that may affect them.

**Article 31.1** Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain, control, protect and develop their cultural heritage, traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions, as well as the manifestations of their sciences, technologies and cultures, including human and genetic resources, seeds, medicines, knowledge of the properties of fauna and flora, oral traditions, literatures, designs, sports and traditional games and visual and performing arts. They also have the right to maintain, control, protect and develop their intellectual property over such cultural heritage, traditional knowledge, and traditional cultural expressions.

**Article 32.1** Indigenous peoples have the right to determine and develop priorities and strategies for the development or use of their lands or territories and other resources.

This statement was written by Adrien Tofighi-Niaki and Ramin Soleymani of the LICCI Observation Network ([LICCION](#)). For questions or comments, please contact [liccion@uact.cat](mailto:liccion@uact.cat). LICCION is funded by the European Research Council under an ERC Proof of Concept Grant (ERC-2019-PoC-899209)