



TUNISIAN INSTITUTE FOR PEACE AND CONFLICT STUDIES

POLICY DOCUMENT · TIPCS-POL-07

Research Ethics and Editorial Independence Policy

Version 1.0 – issued by the Secretary General on 25 October 2026

This policy sets the binding rules that keep TIPCS research honest, safe for the people who take part in it or carry it out, lawful in its handling of personal data, and free from control by funders, authorities or any political interest. It applies to every research, evaluation, survey, publication and data activity carried out by or for TIPCS.

TIPCS-POL-07 · Version 1.0 · 25 October 2026

Issued by the Secretary General · ratified by the Board of Directors · legally reviewed

Questions and concerns: Contact@tipcs.org · www.tipcs.org

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1. Purpose and status

TIPCS produces research on peace, conflict, violence, migration, security and social cohesion. This work is valuable only if it is trusted: by the people who share their experiences with us, by the communities we study, by readers and decision-makers, by Tunisian authorities and by our funders. Trust depends on three commitments that this policy turns into rules: the integrity of the work, the protection of participants and fieldworkers, and the independence of our findings.

This policy is issued by the Secretary General under the authority of the Board. It is binding on everyone listed in Section 2. It expands and replaces, for all purposes other than public information, the summary published on the TIPCS website. Where this policy and a grant agreement differ, the stricter rule applies, except that no agreement may reduce the independence and participant-protection guarantees set out here.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- all members of the Board, the officers (Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, Secretary General, Treasurer) and the executive team;
- employees, researchers, research assistants, enumerators, interpreters, transcribers, interns and volunteers, whether paid or unpaid;
- associate fellows, consultants, co-authors and partner organisations working on a TIPCS project or publishing under the TIPCS name;
- all research activities: desk studies, interviews, focus groups, surveys, observation, online and social-media research, evaluations, policy briefs, Academy training materials based on research, and datasets;
- all outputs published, presented or shared under the TIPCS name, in any language or format.

Commissioned work for an external client is covered in full. Personal opinion pieces written by staff in their own name, without TIPCS affiliation, are outside scope, but the Code of Conduct still applies.

3. Definitions

Term	Meaning in this policy
Participant	Any person who provides information, opinions or data to a TIPCS project, directly or through observation.
Principal investigator (PI)	The person designated as responsible for the design, conduct and ethical compliance of a project.
Fieldworker	Anyone who collects data in direct contact with participants, including enumerators, interpreters and local facilitators.
Personal data	Any information that identifies or can identify a natural person, directly or indirectly, as defined in Organic Law No. 2004-63.
Sensitive data	Data revealing racial or ethnic origin, religious, political or trade-union views, health, or offences and criminal proceedings, and any data whose disclosure could expose a person to violence, prosecution, stigma or reprisal.

Term	Meaning in this policy
Anonymisation	Irreversible processing so that a person can no longer be identified by any means reasonably likely to be used.
Pseudonymisation	Replacing identifiers with codes, the key being kept separately; pseudonymised data remain personal data.
Raw data	Recordings, notes, transcripts, questionnaires and files before anonymisation, together with consent records and contact lists.
Research misconduct	Fabrication, falsification or plagiarism in proposing, performing, reviewing or reporting research, and other serious breaches listed in Section 14.
Funder	Any public or private body, foreign or Tunisian, that finances or commissions a TIPCS activity in cash or in kind.

4. Guiding principles

All TIPCS research shall be guided by the following principles, which are drawn from the internationally accepted principles of research integrity (reliability, honesty, respect and accountability) and of research with human participants.

- Do no harm: no person is placed at risk for the sake of data; the safety of participants and fieldworkers overrides deadlines, deliverables and publication.
- Respect and autonomy: participation is voluntary and based on free, informed consent that can be withdrawn.
- Independence: questions, methods, findings and publication decisions are determined by the researchers and TIPCS alone.
- Honesty and rigour: methods and limits are stated, evidence is reported fully and findings are not overstated.
- Confidentiality and data minimisation: only necessary personal data are collected, and they are protected throughout their life cycle.
- Fairness and inclusion: the burdens and benefits of research are shared fairly; marginalised voices are represented accurately and with dignity; findings are returned to communities where safe.
- Transparency and accountability: funding and conflicts are disclosed, errors are corrected openly and decisions under this policy are recorded.
- Conflict sensitivity: research design and dissemination take account of how they may affect tensions, power relations and the safety of groups in conflict-affected settings.

5. Legal and standards basis

5.1 Tunisian law

- Decree-Law No. 2011-88 of 24 September 2011 on the organisation of associations, which guarantees the independence of associations and governs their funding, including the publication and declaration of foreign funding under Article 41.
- Organic Law No. 2004-63 of 27 July 2004 on the protection of personal data, in particular: prior declaration of processing (Art. 7); lawful, specific purposes and necessity (Arts. 10-11); prohibition of processing data on offences (Art. 13) and of sensitive data save as permitted, with authorisation of the National Authority (Arts. 14-15); security and confidentiality duties (Arts. 18-19 and 23); express written consent and the special regime for children (Arts. 27-28); prior information of data subjects (Art. 31); rights of access and rectification (Arts. 32

and 40); destruction at the end of the retention period (Art. 45); communication to third parties (Art. 47); transfers abroad (Arts. 50-52); processing for scientific research (Arts. 66-68); and criminal penalties (Arts. 86-90).

- Decree-Law No. 2011-115 of 2 November 2011 on freedom of the press, printing and publishing, which frames TIPCS publications.
- Organic Law No. 2015-26 of 7 August 2015 on combating terrorism and the suppression of money laundering, as amended, and other criminal legislation, which may bear on research into violent extremism and on the duties of researchers who receive certain information (see Section 10.5 and the verification notes).
- The rights and freedoms guaranteed by the Constitution of the Republic of Tunisia, including freedom of opinion, expression, publication and academic freedom, and the protection of private life and personal data.

5.2 International standards

- UNESCO Recommendation on Science and Scientific Researchers (2017), UNESCO Recommendation on Open Science (2021) and UNESCO Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence (2021).
- The European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity (ALLEA, revised edition 2023), used as the reference for European-funded projects.
- The guidance of the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE), including its retraction guidelines and its position on authorship and AI tools.
- The Convention on the Rights of the Child, which Tunisia has ratified, for any research involving children.
- Ethics and data requirements of individual funders, which apply in addition to this policy when written into an agreement.

Where a provision of foreign law (for example the data-protection law of a funder's country) is imposed by contract, TIPCS shall comply with it to the extent that it does not conflict with Tunisian law; any conflict shall be referred to the Secretary General for legal advice before data are collected.

6. Roles and responsibilities

Role	Responsibilities under this policy
Board	Approves this policy and its revisions; protects the independence of research from any pressure, including from its own members; receives the annual report under Section 25; decides on appeals and on cases involving an officer.
Chairperson	Represents TIPCS in any dispute with a funder or authority on independence; ensures no Board member interferes with research content.
Secretary General	Issues and maintains this policy; decides on high-risk projects with the head of the Research Department; decides on requests for raw data from authorities or funders; handles misconduct allegations; acts as reviewer when the head of the Research Department is conflicted; ensures the declarations to the National Authority for the Protection of Personal Data (INPDP) are made.
Treasurer	Ensures that funding sources are correctly recorded and can be disclosed in publications; confirms that grant terms submitted for signature contain no clause contrary to Section 7.
Head of the Research Department	Runs the ethics screening process; reviews and approves medium-risk projects and co-reviews high-risk ones; organises internal and peer review; keeps the ethics register, data-management plans and corrections log; leads training.

Role	Responsibilities under this policy
Principal investigator	Completes the screening checklist and data-management plan; obtains approval before fieldwork; ensures consent, security and data rules are followed by the whole team; reports incidents within 24 hours.
All researchers and fieldworkers	Follow this policy; complete training; stop data collection when a participant or colleague is at risk; report concerns.

No person may review, approve or investigate a matter in which they have a personal, financial or authorship interest. In that case the next role in the table above takes their place, and the substitution is recorded in the ethics register.

7. Editorial independence and relations with funders

7.1 Core rule

Research questions, methodology, analysis, findings, conclusions, recommendations and the decision to publish belong to the researchers and TIPCS. No funder, partner, authority, political actor or member of TIPCS governance may dictate conclusions, require the removal or softening of findings, or block or delay publication for reasons other than accuracy, legality or safety.

7.2 Funding agreements

- Before signature, every agreement for research shall be checked against this section by the head of the Research Department and the Treasurer. TIPCS shall seek to include an independence clause based on the wording in this section.
- TIPCS shall not accept clauses that give a funder a veto over content or publication, ownership of raw personal data, or the right to identify participants.
- A funder may set the topic, scope and deliverables of commissioned work, may request a reasonable embargo (normally not more than 60 days after delivery of the final report) and may decline to be named only where the law and Section 18 allow.
- All foreign funding is declared and published as required by Article 41 of Decree-Law No. 2011-88, whatever the content of the research.

7.3 Funder comments on drafts

Funders and partners may be invited to comment on a draft for factual accuracy, safety, legal risk and clarity, normally within 15 working days. The authors shall consider all comments in good faith and record how each was handled. Comments that seek to change conclusions without evidence are declined. If a funder disagrees with a finding, TIPCS may, at the authors' discretion, note the funder's view in the publication, but shall not withdraw the finding.

7.4 Pressure and declining work

Any attempt by a funder, authority or other party to influence findings improperly shall be reported to the Secretary General within two working days and recorded. The Secretary General, with the Chairperson where needed, shall respond in writing. A project that cannot be carried out in line with Section 7.1 shall be declined or ended, and the Board informed. TIPCS research shall remain non-partisan: TIPCS shall not produce research on behalf of a political party or campaign.

8. Ethics screening and review of projects

8.1 When screening is required

Every project involving human participants, personal data, fieldwork or publication of findings on sensitive matters shall be screened before data collection starts, using the checklist in Annex A. Desk research using only published, non-personal sources may be screened by a short declaration of the PI. Screening shall be repeated when the design, location, population or risk level changes significantly.

8.2 Risk levels and reviewers

Risk level	Typical features	Reviewer and decision	Time limit
Low	Adult participants speaking in a professional or public capacity; no sensitive data; no identifiable publication; no security concerns.	PI self-screening; head of the Research Department countersigns.	5 working days
Medium	Personal experiences of conflict or discrimination; sensitive data that will be pseudonymised; fieldwork in tense but accessible areas; online data collection.	Head of the Research Department reviews the checklist, consent material, data-management plan and security plan.	10 working days
High	Children or adults at risk; victims or perpetrators of violence; violent extremism, security forces, irregular migration, detention; data on offences; transfer of identifiable data abroad; significant risk of harm to fieldworkers.	Joint review by the head of the Research Department and the Secretary General, who may seek the written opinion of an independent external reviewer with relevant expertise. The Board is informed of approved high-risk projects.	15 working days (plus up to 10 if an external opinion is sought)

8.3 Possible decisions

- Approved as submitted.
- Approved with conditions, which must be met and documented before fieldwork.
- Revision requested and resubmission required.
- Not approved, with written reasons.

Decisions are recorded in the ethics register with the checklist, the reviewer's name and any conditions. The PI may ask the Secretary General to reconsider a decision within 10 working days; for decisions taken by the Secretary General, the request goes to the Board. No data may be collected while a project is unapproved. Where a funder or a partner university requires approval by an external ethics committee, that approval is obtained in addition to, not instead of, TIPCS screening.

Submit the screening file at least 15 working days before planned fieldwork for medium-risk projects and at least 25 working days before for high-risk projects. Ethics review time shall be built into every proposal and work plan.

9. Informed consent

9.1 Content of the information

Before taking part, each participant shall receive, in a language and form they understand, clear information on: who is carrying out and funding the research; its purpose; what participation involves and how long it takes; foreseeable risks and benefits; how their data will be recorded, stored, used, shared, transferred and destroyed, and for how long; whether and how they will be identified or quoted; their right to refuse, to skip any question, to stop at any time and to withdraw their data until the date stated; their rights of access and rectification; and whom to contact with questions or complaints. This meets the prior-information requirement of Article 31 of Organic Law No. 2004-63. The model form is in Annex B.

9.2 Form of consent

Organic Law No. 2004-63 requires, as a rule, the express and written consent of the data subject (Article 27). TIPCS shall therefore obtain written consent wherever personal data are recorded. Where a written signature would itself endanger the participant (for example because it creates a record linking them to a sensitive topic) or the participant cannot read or write, consent may be given orally and recorded in writing by the researcher, with a witness or audio record of the consent statement where safe, and the reason documented; this approach must be approved at screening and its legal basis confirmed (see verification notes). Consent is a process: it is checked again before sensitive questions, before recording, and before any new use.

9.3 Children and adults at risk

Children (persons under 18) and adults at risk shall take part only where the research cannot be done otherwise, the project has been classified as high risk and approved, and the additional protections of the TIPCS Safeguarding policy apply. For children, the law requires the consent of the guardian and the authorisation of the family judge for processing of their personal data (Article 28 of Organic Law No. 2004-63); TIPCS shall obtain legal advice on how this applies before any project collects identifiable data from children, and shall also seek the child's own assent in age-appropriate language. A child's refusal is always respected.

9.4 Voluntariness, incentives and withdrawal

- No payment, gift or service shall be offered that could pressure a person to consent. Reasonable reimbursement of travel and other costs, or a modest token approved at screening, is allowed.
- Access to humanitarian or other services shall never depend on participation; where TIPCS works with a service provider, participants are told this explicitly.
- Gatekeepers (officials, employers, community leaders) may facilitate access but may not consent on behalf of others or learn who took part.
- A participant may withdraw at any time without giving reasons and without consequence. Their identifiable data are destroyed on request until the withdrawal deadline stated in the consent form (normally the date of anonymisation or analysis), after which only anonymised data that can no longer be linked to them remain.
- Covert research or deception is not permitted, except for observation of genuinely public behaviour or analysis of public online content approved at screening, where no individual is identified in outputs.

10. Sensitive topics and security of fieldworkers and participants

10.1 Risk assessment and security plan

For every medium- or high-risk project, the PI shall prepare a written risk assessment and security plan covering: the political and security context of each site; risks to participants (identification, reprisal, legal exposure, re-traumatisation, stigma); risks to fieldworkers (physical, legal, digital, psychological, gender-specific); mitigation

measures; communication and check-in arrangements; and conditions under which fieldwork is suspended. The plan is approved with the project and updated if the context changes.

10.2 Fieldworker safety

- Fieldworkers are briefed and trained before deployment, carry an identification letter from TIPCS where this does not increase risk, and never work alone in high-risk settings.
- Any fieldworker may stop an interview or leave a site if they feel unsafe, without penalty; safety decisions on the ground are respected.
- TIPCS shall provide debriefing and access to psychosocial support for staff exposed to distressing material, and shall ensure appropriate insurance where available.
- Security incidents, arrests, threats, seizure of devices or data breaches are reported to the PI and the Secretary General within 24 hours.

10.3 Protecting participants in the field

- Interviews take place in locations chosen with the participant for privacy and safety; recording is used only with consent and only when necessary.
- Researchers use a distress protocol: they pause or end the interview when a participant shows distress, and offer information on support services prepared in advance for each site.
- Names, contact details and identifying descriptions are not written in field notes; codes are used from the start.
- Group settings (focus groups) are not used for topics where disclosure in front of others could endanger participants.

10.4 Digital security

Data are collected on TIPCS-managed devices or approved applications with encryption enabled; devices are protected by strong passwords and, where possible, full-disk encryption; raw data are transferred from field devices to secure storage as soon as practicable and then deleted from the device; personal messaging applications and personal cloud accounts are not used for raw data; and fieldworkers are trained on what to do if a device is lost or seized.

10.5 Disclosures of harm and legal limits of confidentiality

Confidentiality is promised only to the extent the law allows. Where a participant discloses that a child or other person is at serious risk of harm, the Safeguarding policy applies. Before research on violent extremism, terrorism, trafficking or other serious crime, the PI shall obtain guidance from the Secretary General on any legal duty to report under Tunisian law (including Organic Law No. 2015-26, as amended), and the consent form shall explain honestly any limits to confidentiality. Researchers shall not seek operational details of planned offences.

10.6 Dissemination risk

Before publication, the authors shall check that no participant, community or fieldworker can be identified or endangered by the text, quotations, maps, photographs, metadata or combination of details, and that the framing does not stigmatise groups or inflame tensions. Photographs and video of identifiable persons require separate consent; images of children follow the Safeguarding policy.

11. Data management, protection and cross-border transfer

11.1 Lawful processing

- TIPCS acts as the data controller for its research unless an agreement provides otherwise. Processing of personal data shall be declared in advance to the National Authority for the Protection of Personal Data (INPDP)

as required by Article 7 of Organic Law No. 2004-63, and its authorisation shall be obtained where the law requires it, notably for sensitive data under Articles 14-15. The Secretary General keeps copies of declarations and authorisations.

- Data collected for research are used only for research (Article 66), are collected only for stated, specific purposes and only to the extent necessary (Articles 10-11), and are not reused for a new purpose without fresh consent or another legal basis.
- Data on offences and criminal proceedings (Article 13) are not recorded in identifiable form; projects shall be designed so that such information is collected only anonymously.
- Every project processing personal data has a data-management plan (Annex C), approved at screening and kept up to date by the PI.

11.2 Security of data

In line with Articles 18, 19 and 23, TIPCS shall: store raw data only in encrypted, access-controlled locations approved by the head of the Research Department; limit access to named team members; keep identification keys separately from pseudonymised data; maintain secure back-ups; keep a log of who accesses identifiable data; bind transcribers, translators, survey firms and other processors by written confidentiality and data-processing terms (Article 20); and keep data confidential after the project ends. Data breaches are handled under the TIPCS data-protection procedures and reported to the Secretary General within 24 hours.

11.3 Transfer of data abroad

Organic Law No. 2004-63 prohibits transfer of personal data abroad where it may endanger public security or the vital interests of Tunisia (Article 50), requires that the destination country ensure an adequate level of protection (Article 51) and requires prior authorisation of the INPDP in all cases (Article 52). Accordingly:

- identifiable personal data, including recordings and transcripts, shall not be sent, uploaded or made accessible outside Tunisia (including to foreign cloud services, foreign partners or funders) unless the INPDP authorisation has been obtained, the participants were informed and consented, and the Secretary General has approved;
- by default, international partners receive only anonymised or aggregated data;
- the choice of storage and survey platforms shall take the location of servers into account, and this shall be recorded in the data-management plan;
- unauthorised transfer abroad is a criminal offence under Organic Law No. 2004-63 and a serious breach of this policy.

12. Anonymisation, storage, retention and deletion

Data shall be anonymised as early as the research allows; where the research permits, personal data used for research shall not contain elements that reveal identity (Article 67), and identifiable research data may be published only with the participant's express consent, except as permitted by Article 68. Anonymisation considers indirect identifiers (job title, village, age, event, rare characteristics) and the risk of combining sources. Personal data shall be destroyed when their retention period expires or their purpose has been achieved (Article 45). Unless a grant agreement or the law requires longer, the following retention periods apply:

Category	Retention	Action at end
Audio and video recordings	Until transcription is verified, and no later than 12 months after the end of the project	Secure deletion, recorded in the DMP
Identification keys and contact lists	Until the end of the project, unless participants agreed to be recontacted	Secure deletion; data become anonymous

Category	Retention	Action at end
Signed consent forms or consent records	As long as any identifiable data are held, plus the period needed to answer audits or complaints set in the DMP	Secure destruction
Pseudonymised transcripts and datasets	Until anonymisation, and no later than the end of the project	Anonymise or delete
Anonymised data and outputs	May be kept indefinitely for verification and reuse	Archive; open where safe (Section 20)
Ethics register, screening files, corrections log	Permanently (they contain no participant identities)	Archive

Deletion means secure erasure from all devices, accounts and back-ups, or shredding of paper. The PI certifies completion in the data-management plan, and the head of the Research Department checks a sample of closed projects each year.

13. Requests from authorities, funders or third parties for raw data

Raw interview material and the identities of participants shall never be given to any funder, partner, journalist, authority or other third party unless there is a binding legal obligation and, where possible, the participant agrees. Communication of personal data to third parties requires express consent save for the exceptions in Article 47 of Organic Law No. 2004-63. Every request shall be handled as follows:

1. Any staff member who receives a request (written or oral, formal or informal) refers it immediately to the Secretary General and does not hand over or confirm any data.
2. The Secretary General acknowledges the request in writing within 2 working days, asks for its legal basis in writing, and records it in the ethics register.
3. The Secretary General obtains legal advice where the request claims a legal obligation (for example a judicial requisition) and checks whether less intrusive alternatives exist, such as anonymised or aggregated data.
4. Where disclosure is legally compelled, only the minimum required is disclosed, the participant is informed where lawful and safe, and the Chairperson is informed.
5. Requests without legal obligation are declined in writing within 10 working days, citing this policy and the consent given by participants.

Requester	What may be provided	What is never provided without legal obligation
Funder (audit or verification)	Anonymised data, aggregated results, list of activities, evidence that consent was obtained (without names)	Recordings, transcripts, identities, contact lists
Public authority	Published outputs; anonymised data; information required by law about TIPCS as an association	Identifiable participant data, unless a binding legal order applies
Partner researchers or journalists	Published outputs; anonymised data under a data-sharing agreement	Any identifiable data or introductions to participants without their consent

14. Research integrity: fabrication, falsification and plagiarism

The following are research misconduct and are prohibited:

- fabrication: inventing data, interviews, quotations, cases or results;
- falsification: manipulating data, methods, images or quotations, or selectively omitting results, so that the research is not accurately represented;
- plagiarism: using another person's work, ideas or words, including translation without attribution and recycling one's own published text without disclosure;
- other unacceptable practices: paying enumerators per completed questionnaire without quality checks, inventing respondents to meet quotas, misrepresenting credentials, manipulating authorship, concealing conflicts of interest, and retaliating against anyone who raises a concern.

To prevent misconduct, TIPCS shall: apply quality checks to survey data (back-checks, timestamps, location checks where consented); keep an audit trail from raw data to findings; use similarity-checking software on substantial publications where available; and document every methodological choice. Honest error and differences of interpretation are not misconduct, but must be corrected under Section 19.

15. Use of artificial-intelligence tools

- AI tools (including generative text, translation, transcription and coding tools) may support research tasks, but the named authors remain fully responsible for all content. An AI tool cannot be an author.
- Significant use of AI tools (beyond spelling and grammar correction) is disclosed in the methods section or acknowledgements, stating the tool and the purpose.
- Facts, figures, references and quotations produced or summarised with AI are verified against the original source; AI-generated references that cannot be verified are removed.
- Identifiable or confidential data shall not be entered into an AI tool unless the tool has been approved by the head of the Research Department for that purpose, its data handling (including storage location and reuse for training) is compatible with Section 11, and participants were informed where required.
- AI-generated images or synthetic data are not presented as real; any such material is clearly labelled. Reviewers shall not upload manuscripts under review into AI tools.

16. Authorship and credit

Authorship is based on substantial intellectual contribution to the conception, design, data collection or analysis, and to drafting or critical revision, together with approval of the final text and acceptance of responsibility for it. Seniority, funding or institutional position alone do not justify authorship. Gift, guest and ghost authorship are prohibited.

- Authorship and order are discussed at the start of each project, recorded in the data-management plan and revisited before submission.
- Contributions of field researchers, local partners, interpreters and research assistants, especially in Tunisia and the region, are fairly recognised as authorship where criteria are met, and otherwise in a contributor statement or acknowledgements, with their agreement and where it is safe to name them.
- Authorship disputes are first resolved by the head of the Research Department, with recourse to the Secretary General.

17. Internal and peer review before publication

Output	Minimum review
Research report, working paper or book chapter	Internal review by a qualified colleague not involved in the project and at least one external peer reviewer with relevant expertise
Policy brief, commentary or data note	Internal review by a qualified colleague and approval by the head of the Research Department
Any output from a high-risk project	In addition, a dissemination-risk check under Section 10.6 signed by the head of the Research Department

Reviewers declare conflicts of interest, keep manuscripts confidential and give constructive, evidence-based comments. Authors respond to each comment in writing. Review checks the accuracy of facts and quotations, the soundness of methods, the fairness of interpretation, the accuracy of translations and compliance with this policy. Review cannot be used to impose a funder's or an officer's preferred conclusions.

18. Funding and conflict-of-interest disclosure in publications

Every TIPCS publication shall include a funding and conflict-of-interest statement using the model in Annex D. It names all funders of the work, states whether any funder reviewed the draft and confirms that the content is the sole responsibility of the authors and TIPCS. Authors and reviewers disclose any financial, professional, political or personal interest that a reasonable reader could consider relevant, including paid roles, advisory positions and close relationships with organisations discussed in the work. Where a funder legitimately asks not to be named for security reasons, the statement says that the work was funded by a donor that asked to remain anonymous for security reasons, and the Secretary General records the funder's identity; this never affects legal declarations of foreign funding under Decree-Law No. 2011-88.

19. Corrections, clarifications and retractions

TIPCS corrects errors openly. Anyone may report a suspected error to TIPCS through the contact address on each publication. The head of the Research Department acknowledges the report within 5 working days and, with the authors, assesses it within 20 working days.

Type	When used	Action
Minor correction	Typographical or formatting errors that do not affect meaning	Corrected in the online version; logged
Correction notice	Error of fact, figure, quotation, attribution or translation that affects understanding but not the main conclusions	Dated correction note at the top or end of the publication, explaining what changed, within 10 working days of confirmation; funders notified
Retraction	Main findings unreliable because of serious error or misconduct, or publication endangers someone	Decided by the Secretary General; a retraction notice replaces or accompanies the text, which stays accessible marked as retracted unless safety requires removal

Where a publication endangers a participant or fieldworker, it is taken offline immediately while the matter is assessed. Every correction, clarification and retraction is recorded in the corrections log (Annex E), which TIPCS shall publish in summary on its website. If a DOI has been assigned, the correction is linked to the DOI record.

20. Open access, licensing and persistent identifiers

- Consistent with the UNESCO Recommendation on Open Science, TIPCS publications shall be freely available online wherever possible, normally under a Creative Commons Attribution licence, unless a publisher contract, funder condition or safety concern justifies otherwise.
- Each substantial publication carries a citation line, publication date, version number and, where possible, a persistent identifier such as a DOI registered through a recognised registration agency or repository.
- Publications are issued in Arabic, French or English according to the audience, with key summaries in Arabic wherever possible so that findings are accessible to Tunisian participants and communities.
- Anonymised datasets may be shared openly or on request where consent covers sharing, the risk of re-identification has been assessed as negligible, and the data-management plan provides for it. Data are "as open as possible, as closed as necessary".

21. Records and protection of records

The head of the Research Department shall keep: an ethics register listing each project, its risk level, the reviewers, decisions and conditions, substitutions for conflicts, incidents and data requests; the screening files and data-management plans; and the corrections log. The Secretary General keeps INPDP declarations and authorisations and the files on misconduct and data requests. Registers shall contain no participant identities. Files on misconduct allegations are confidential, accessible only to those handling the case, and processed in line with Organic Law No. 2004-63.

22. Training and awareness

- Everyone covered by this policy receives it on joining and signs the TIPCS acknowledgement under the Code of Conduct.
- Researchers and fieldworkers complete training on research ethics, informed consent, data protection, digital security and safeguarding before their first fieldwork, and a refresher at least every two years.
- Each medium- or high-risk project includes a project-specific briefing on its consent procedure, security plan and distress protocol.
- Partners and consultants receive a briefing on this policy and confirm compliance in their contract.

23. Concerns, complaints and investigation of misconduct

Participants, staff, partners and members of the public may raise concerns about research conduct through the TIPCS Whistleblowing and complaints policy, including anonymously. Reporters acting in good faith are protected from retaliation. The procedure for alleged research misconduct is:

1. Acknowledgement by the Secretary General within 5 working days; immediate measures to protect participants, data and evidence where needed.
2. Preliminary assessment within 20 working days to decide whether a full inquiry is warranted.
3. Full inquiry by a person or panel without conflict of interest, which may include an external expert; the person concerned is informed of the allegations and heard; normally concluded within 60 working days.
4. Decision by the Secretary General (or by the Board where an officer is concerned), with corrective actions under Sections 19 and 24 and notification of funders where the agreement requires.

24. Breaches and sanctions

Breaches of this policy may lead, in proportion to their seriousness and in accordance with employment law and contracts, to: a warning; additional supervision or training; suspension from research activities; withdrawal or correction of publications; termination of employment, consultancy, partnership or membership; recovery of losses; and referral to the competent authorities where a criminal offence may have been committed, including offences under Organic Law No. 2004-63. Serious breaches include fabrication or falsification, endangering participants or fieldworkers, unauthorised disclosure or transfer abroad of personal data, and accepting or applying improper pressure on findings.

25. Monitoring and review

The head of the Research Department shall present to the Secretary General, each year, a short report covering: the number of projects screened by risk level; decisions and conditions; incidents; data requests and responses; corrections and retractions; training completed; and lessons learned. The report, without any personal data, is submitted to the Board. This policy is reviewed every year, and earlier if the law, a funder requirement or a serious incident so requires. Revisions are approved by the Board and issued by the Secretary General.

26. Relationship to other TIPCS policies

- Code of Conduct: general standards of behaviour and the acknowledgement signed on joining.
- Safeguarding policy: additional protections for children and adults at risk, and reporting of harm.
- Data protection and privacy policy: general rules on personal data, rights of data subjects and data breaches.
- Conflict-of-interest policy: declaration and management of interests.
- Whistleblowing and complaints policy: channels for concerns and protection of reporters.
- Funding acceptance, transparency and anti-fraud policies: due diligence on funders, declaration of foreign funding and financial integrity.

In case of overlap, the rule giving the higher level of protection to participants and the greater guarantee of independence applies.

27. Glossary of abbreviations

Abbreviation	Meaning
INPDP	National Authority for the Protection of Personal Data (Instance nationale de protection des données à caractère personnel)
JORT	Official Journal of the Republic of Tunisia
PI	Principal investigator
DMP	Data-management plan (Annex C)
DOI	Digital Object Identifier, a persistent identifier for publications and datasets
COPE	Committee on Publication Ethics
AI	Artificial intelligence

28. Version history and approval

Version	Date	Change	Issued by
1.0	25 October 2026	First full version, expanding the web summary	Secretary General, under the authority of the Board

Next scheduled review: October 2027.

Approval and document control

Document number	TIPCS-POL-07
Version	1.0
Date of issue	25 October 2026
Policy owner	Secretary General
Next review	October 2027 (and after any serious incident or change of law)
Applies to	Board members, staff, experts, researchers, interns, volunteers, consultants, partners and suppliers acting for TIPCS
Status	In force; ratified by the Board of Directors and legally reviewed

Version	Date	Change
1.0	25 October 2026	First issue

Issued by the Secretary General
Name, signature and date

Ratified by the Board of Directors — Chairperson
Name, signature and date

References

- Loi organique n° 2004-63 du 27 juillet 2004 portant sur la protection des données à caractère personnel (French text, INS) — <https://www.ins.tn/sites/default/files/2020-04/Loi%2063-2004%20Fr.pdf>
- Organic Act n° 2004-63 of 27 July 2004 (English translation, ICT Policy Africa) — <https://ictpolicyafrica.org/en/document/1bmfv348zxf>
- Décret n° 2013-5183 du 18 novembre 2013 (public funding of associations; refers to art. 41 of DL 2011-88), ICNL — https://www.icnl.org/wp-content/uploads/Tunisia_decret-5183.fr_.pdf
- Décret-loi n° 2011-115 du 2 novembre 2011 relatif à la liberté de la presse, de l'imprimerie et de l'édition — https://legislation-securite.tn/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2023/11/Decret-loi-n°-2011-115-du-2-Novembre-2011-Fr_0-2.pdf
- Loi organique n° 2015-26 du 7 août 2015 relative à la lutte contre le terrorisme et à la répression du blanchiment d'argent (reference page) — <https://osn.openum.ca/en/ressources/loi-organique-n-2015-26-du-7-aout-2015-relative-a-la-lutte-contre-le-terrorisme-et-a-la-repression-du-blanchiment-dargent/>

6. UNESCO Recommendation on Science and Scientific Researchers (2017) — <https://en.unesco.org/about-us/legal-affairs/recommendation-science-and-scientific-researchers>
7. UNESCO Recommendation on Open Science (2021) — <https://en.unesco.org/science-sustainable-future/open-science/recommendation>
8. ALLEA – The European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity, revised edition 2023 — <https://allea.org/allea-publishes-2023-revised-edition-of-the-european-code-of-conduct-for-research-integrity/>
9. COPE position statement – Authorship and AI tools — <https://publicationethics.org/guidance/cope-position/authorship-and-ai-tools>

This document is public. It is a governance commitment and does not replace legal advice.

Annex A — Ethics screening checklist for a project

To be completed by the PI and submitted to the head of the Research Department with the consent material, data-management plan and, for medium- or high-risk projects, the risk assessment and security plan.

Project title

Principal investigator and team

Funder(s) and partner(s)

Locations and dates of fieldwork

Methods and expected number of participants

Part 1 – Participants and topic

Question	Answer	If yes: required measure
Does the project involve children under 18?	Yes / No / N.A.	High risk; Safeguarding policy; legal advice on Art. 28 of Law 2004-63; assent
Does it involve adults at risk (e.g. survivors of violence, detainees, people in irregular situation)?	Yes / No / N.A.	High risk; distress protocol; referral information
Does it address violent extremism, security forces, crime, or political opposition?	Yes / No / N.A.	High risk; legal guidance on duties to report (Section 10.5)
Could participation expose anyone to reprisal, stigma or legal risk if known?	Yes / No / N.A.	Oral consent option; no gatekeeper knowledge of participants
Will any incentive or reimbursement be offered?	Yes / No / N.A.	State amount and justify (Section 9.4)
Is any deception, covert observation or online data scraping planned?	Yes / No / N.A.	Justify; allowed only as in Section 9.4

Part 2 – Data

Question	Answer	If yes: required measure
Will personal data be collected or recorded?	Yes / No / N.A.	DMP (Annex C); INPDP declaration checked
Will sensitive data (origin, religion, political views, health) be collected?	Yes / No / N.A.	Check INPDP authorisation (Arts. 14-15); pseudonymise

Question	Answer	If yes: required measure
Could information on offences be disclosed?	Yes / No / N.A.	Anonymous collection only (Art. 13)
Will identifiable data be stored on or sent to servers or partners outside Tunisia?	Yes / No / N.A.	INPDP authorisation (Art. 52), consent and Secretary General approval
Will external processors (transcribers, survey firms, AI tools) handle identifiable data?	Yes / No / N.A.	Written confidentiality and processing terms; tool approval

Part 3 – Fieldworkers, independence and publication

Question	Answer	If yes: required measure
Are there physical, legal, digital or psychological risks to fieldworkers?	Yes / No / N.A.	Security plan; briefing; check-in; debriefing
Does the funding agreement give the funder any right over content, publication or raw data?	Yes / No / N.A.	Renegotiate or decline (Section 7)
Does any team member have a conflict of interest?	Yes / No / N.A.	Declare; manage under the Conflict-of-interest policy
Could publication identify participants or inflame tensions?	Yes / No / N.A.	Dissemination-risk check (Section 10.6)

Part 4 – Classification and decision

Proposed risk level (low / medium / high) and justification

PI declaration: the information above is complete and accurate – signature and date

Reviewer(s) and any conflict substitution

Decision: approved / approved with conditions / revise / not approved

Conditions and reasons

Reviewer signature, date and ethics register reference

Annex B — Model information sheet and informed consent form (interview or survey)

Adapt to each project and translate into the participant's language. Keep wording simple. For oral consent, the researcher reads the sheet aloud and completes Part 3 instead of the participant signing.

Part 1 – Information for participants

- Who we are: this research is carried out by TIPCS (Tunisian Institute for Peace and Conflict Studies), an independent Tunisian association, and funded by [funder]. The funder does not decide what we find or publish and will not receive your name or recording.
- Purpose: [one or two sentences].
- What you will be asked to do: [interview / questionnaire], lasting about [duration], at a place you choose.
- Your choice: taking part is voluntary. You may refuse, skip any question or stop at any time, without giving a reason and without any consequence for you or for any service you receive.
- Risks and benefits: [describe risks, e.g. discomfort with some questions]. There is no direct payment; [travel costs will be reimbursed]. The findings may help [expected benefit].
- Your data: with your permission we will [take notes / record audio]. Your name will be replaced by a code. Recordings are stored encrypted in Tunisia, are accessible only to the research team and will be deleted by [date]. Anonymised data may be kept for research. Your data will not be sent abroad [or: anonymised data only will be shared with (partner) in (country)].
- Publication: we will not publish your name or details that could identify you unless you agree below. Short anonymous quotations may be used.
- Confidentiality limits: [state any legal limit, e.g. if you tell us a child is in danger we may have to act to protect them].
- Withdrawal and rights: you may withdraw your data until [date] by contacting us with your code. You may ask to see or correct your data.
- Contact: [researcher name, phone, e-mail]. Complaints: TIPCS Secretary General, [address / e-mail].

Part 2 – Consent (tick each box)

Statement	Yes	No
I have read or heard the information and could ask questions.	☐	☐
I agree to take part voluntarily and know I can stop at any time.	☐	☐
I agree to the interview being audio-recorded.	☐	☐
I agree to anonymous quotations being used in publications.	☐	☐
I agree to be named in publications (only if relevant).	☐	☐
I agree that anonymised data may be kept and shared for future research.	☐	☐
I agree to be contacted again about this research.	☐	☐

Participant code

Participant signature (or mark) and date

Researcher name, signature and date

Part 3 – Record of oral consent (where approved at screening)

Reason written consent was not used

Items agreed (as in Part 2)

Witness or audio reference of consent statement (if safe)

Researcher certification: I read the information sheet in full and the participant agreed freely – signature and date

Annex C — Data management plan template

Completed by the PI before screening, approved with the project and updated at each change. Section 6 is completed at project closure.

1. Project and responsibilities

Project title and ethics register reference

Data controller and any joint controllers or processors

Team members with access to identifiable data

Agreed authorship and contributor credit

2. Data collected

Types of data (notes, audio, survey, images, online content) and formats

Personal and sensitive data collected and why each is necessary

INPDP declaration / authorisation reference and date

3. Storage and security

Devices and applications used in the field; encryption

Storage location(s), country of servers, back-up arrangements

Where the identification key is kept and who holds it

Processors (transcribers, survey firms, AI tools) and their written terms

4. Sharing and transfer

Who will receive which data (identifiable / anonymised / aggregated)

Any transfer abroad: country, recipient, INPDP authorisation, consent obtained

5. Anonymisation, retention and open data

Anonymisation method and indirect identifiers addressed

Retention period for each category (Section 12) and withdrawal deadline

Archiving, open-access licence and DOI for outputs and datasets

6. Closure certificate

Data deleted or anonymised (what, when, how)

PI signature and date

Verified by head of the Research Department – signature and date

Annex D — Publication funding and conflict-of-interest disclosure statement

Part 1 – Model text to be printed in every publication

This publication was produced by TIPCS with funding from [name(s) of funder(s)] under [project title / grant reference]. [The funder reviewed a draft for factual accuracy only. / The funder did not review the draft.] The content, findings and conclusions are the sole responsibility of the authors and TIPCS and do not necessarily reflect the views of the funder. The authors declare [no conflicts of interest / the following interests: ...]. [Use of AI tools: ...]. Suggested citation: [authors, year, title, TIPCS, DOI].

Part 2 – Individual declaration by each author and reviewer

Name and role (author / reviewer)

Publication title

Paid or unpaid roles in the last 3 years with organisations discussed in or funding the work

Political, professional or personal interests a reasonable reader might consider relevant

Any attempt by a funder or other party to influence the findings (describe or state none)

AI tools used and for what purpose

I confirm this declaration is complete and true – signature and date

Annex E — Corrections log template

Kept by the head of the Research Department. One line per report received, whether or not a correction results. A summary (without the names of people who reported) is published on the TIPCS website.

No.	Date received	Publication (title, version, DOI)	Issue reported	Assessment and decision (none / minor / notice / retraction)	Date published and new version	Funder notified (date)	Approved by

Notes on recurring issues and lessons for the annual report
