| **Assignment 6** | Ethical and Legal considerations and data management plan |
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| **Group** | FieldLab 8 - Analytics of COVID trends data |
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This report aims to define the ethical, legal and data management plan considerations and procedure for FieldLab 8. The data that are being analysed by FieldLab 8 includes health data. As per the European Union, health data is considered to be sensitive data (European Union, 2016). Thus, the data needs comply with specific, robust regulation to ensure that the data are protected. The data that FieldLab 8 is analysing has been gathered by researchers from VODAN Africa. Thus, it conforms to the standards defined by VODAN Africa. As a result, the researchers conform to the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the FAIR guidelines.

GDPR addresses the protection of health data. Since the data that FieldLab 8 is working with includes health data, GDPR is an appropriate regulation to comply with as it includes the protection of health data. Although the research is conducted in Africa, GDPR, which is a European Union regulation, is complied with as this is viewed as the central framework for data privacy (Plug et al., 2022). Additionally, by using GDPR, interoperability is supported.

Furthermore, the FAIR principles have guided the data management procedure. The researchers from VODAN Africa have conducted a regulatory study to see if the FAIR guidelines aligned with the regulatory framework of Uganda, Indonesia, Ethiopia, Zimbabwe, Nigeria and Kenya. They concluded that the FAIR guidelines align with the national policy documents (Van Reisen et al., 2022). FAIR data aligns with privacy regulations, as it does not require all information to be open access. Rather, the accessibility aspect of FAIR aims to ensure appropriate access is granted to a select group and not unlimited access to the public, as is the case with Open Data (Purnama Jati et al., 2022). Thus, access to the data is controlled and limited as to protect the data.

Within FieldLab 8, we are working with two datasets, one for media reports and one for interviews. Since the interviews may have included personal information about the participants as well as their health, the raw data is considered to be sensitive data. Identifying information was removed from the dataset to ensure that the participants could not be identified (Ghardallou et al., 2022). Thus, data are no longer considered personal data as the individuals can no longer be identified.

VODAN Africa recognises the importance of data ownership. This is reflected in the way the data is hosted and managed. Previously, data was documented on paper records within the health facilities and then transferred to the Ministry of Health or platforms outside the African continent. As a result of this process, the facility and often the African continent could not benefit from the data but rather places external to the African continent were gaining value from the data. Therefore, VODAN Africa aims to restore the local ownership of the data and thus, Africa can benefit from the data that is being collected. Data visiting is applied to enable health facilities to retain ownership of data, while also allowing for the data to be analysed. The data is stored in the local facility and can be accessed from external locations using queries (Van Reisen et al., 2022). Access to the data has to be approved and granted by VODAN Africa.

The above report shows that ethical and legal considerations were taken, and informed the data management plan. The data that is being analysed by FieldLab 8 complies with both GDPR and FAIR guidelines to ensure that the data are protected.

**References**

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*Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Directive 95/46/EC (General Data Protection Regulation).* European Union. https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:32016R0679&from=EN#d1e40-1-1

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