



THE WHY NOT LAB

# Co-Governance of Algorithmic Systems - a guide

Ensuring a seat at the table

A Guide, developed by Dr. Christina J. Colclough, The Why Not Lab

# The Governance Suite

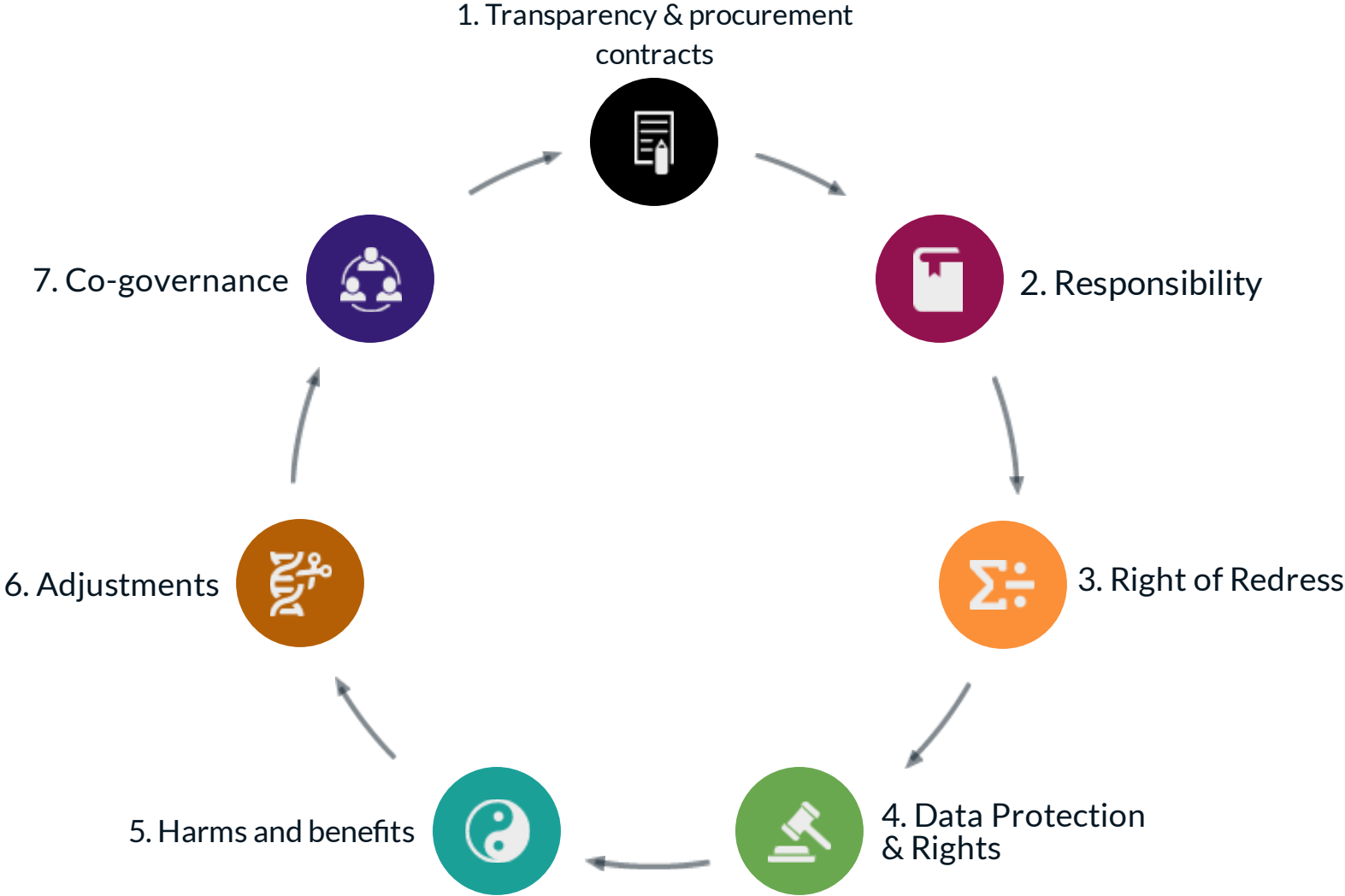
Algorithmic systems can be governed in multiple ways. The Governance Guide refers explicitly to **Collective Bargaining and Co-Governance Structures**



# How to use this guide

- The Guide consists of questions workers and their union should be asking management in connection with the implementation of digital systems in workplaces.
- There are 7 themes - the order of which is important
- Practice with your colleagues - which issues do you think you can answer? Which ones will be “sticky”.
- Prepare before approaching management - play the Devil's Advocate. How will management respond? Can you respond to their responses?

# The 7 Governance themes of the Guide. Go through them numerically



# Theme 1: Transparency / procurement contract



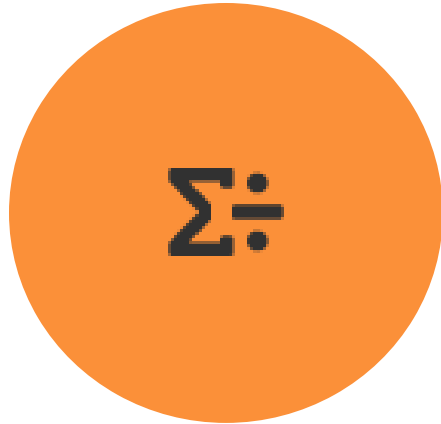
1. Which digital systems is the employer using that affect workers and their working conditions? What are the purposes of these systems?
2. Who designed and owns these systems? Who are the developers and vendors?
3. What are the contractual arrangements between developer, vendor and the employer with regards to data access and control as well as system monitoring, maintenance, and redesign?
4. What transparency measures can be established to ensure disclosure of any algorithms being used in the digital system?

## Theme 2: Responsibility



1. What oversight mechanisms does management have in place? Who is involved?
2. What remedies are in place if a system fails its objectives, harms workers, and/or if management fails to govern the digital system?
3. How do you ensure the system is in compliance with existing laws and collective agreements?
4. Which managers are accountable and responsible for these systems?

## Theme 3: Right of Redress



1. What mechanisms can be established to ensure that workers have the right to challenge actions and decisions taken by management that are assisted by algorithms?

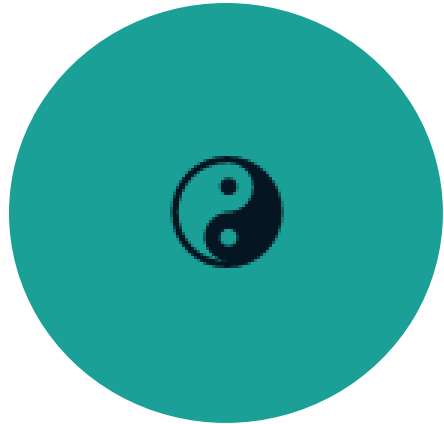
## Theme 4: Data Protection & Rights



1. If personal data and personally identifiable information are processed in these systems, what protections for that data currently exist? What additional protections are needed?
2. Are datasets that include workers' personal data and personally identifiable information sold or moved outside the company?
3. What mechanisms can be established to ensure workers have the right to access, edit and/or erase personal data and personally identifiable information?



## Theme 5: Harms/benefits



1. What assessments have you and/or a third party made of risks and impacts (positive as negative) on workers' well being and working conditions?
2. How do you control for and monitor possible worker harms in these systems, e.g. health and safety, discrimination and bias, work intensification, deskilling?
3. What is your plan for periodically reassessing the systems for unintended effects/impacts?

# Theme 6: Adjustments



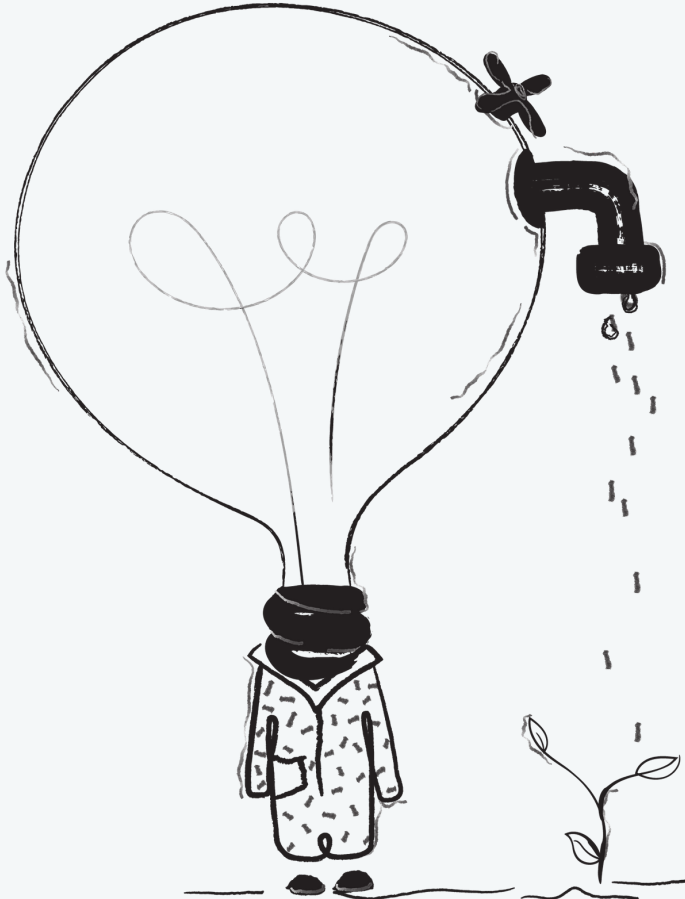
1. What are the mechanisms and procedures for amending the digital systems?
2. How will you log your assessments and adjustments?

# Theme 7: Co-governance



1. What mechanisms can be put in place, so unions are party to this governance?
2. What skills and competencies do management and workers need to implement, govern and assess the digital systems responsibly and knowledgeably?

## Well done!




- 1 Congratulations on going through the themes and the questions.
- 2 Prepare thoroughly before approaching management!
- 3 Keep a log of their responses...
- 4 Return to this guide periodically - digital systems need to be governed, and governed again and again.

**Link this Guide to the [Data LifeCycle at Work](#) guide**



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