Co-governance guide

A checklist to responsible use of algorithmic systems, developed by The Why Not Lab

Updated, autumn 2023

How you can use this guide

- The guide consists of 27 questions that you should ask management in connection with the use of digital systems in the workplace.

- There are 8 themes in total - the order is important.

- Practice with your colleagues - which ones questions do you think you can answer ? Which ones will be "sticky"?

- Prepare before you approach management – play the "devil's advocate." How will management respond to your questions ? Can you respond to their answers?

The 8 themes in the co-governance guide

1. Transparency, tenders/supplier contracts
2. Responsibility
3. Harms and benefits
4. Data protection and rights
5. Rights of Redress
6. Adaptations
7. Disruptions obligations
8. Co-governance

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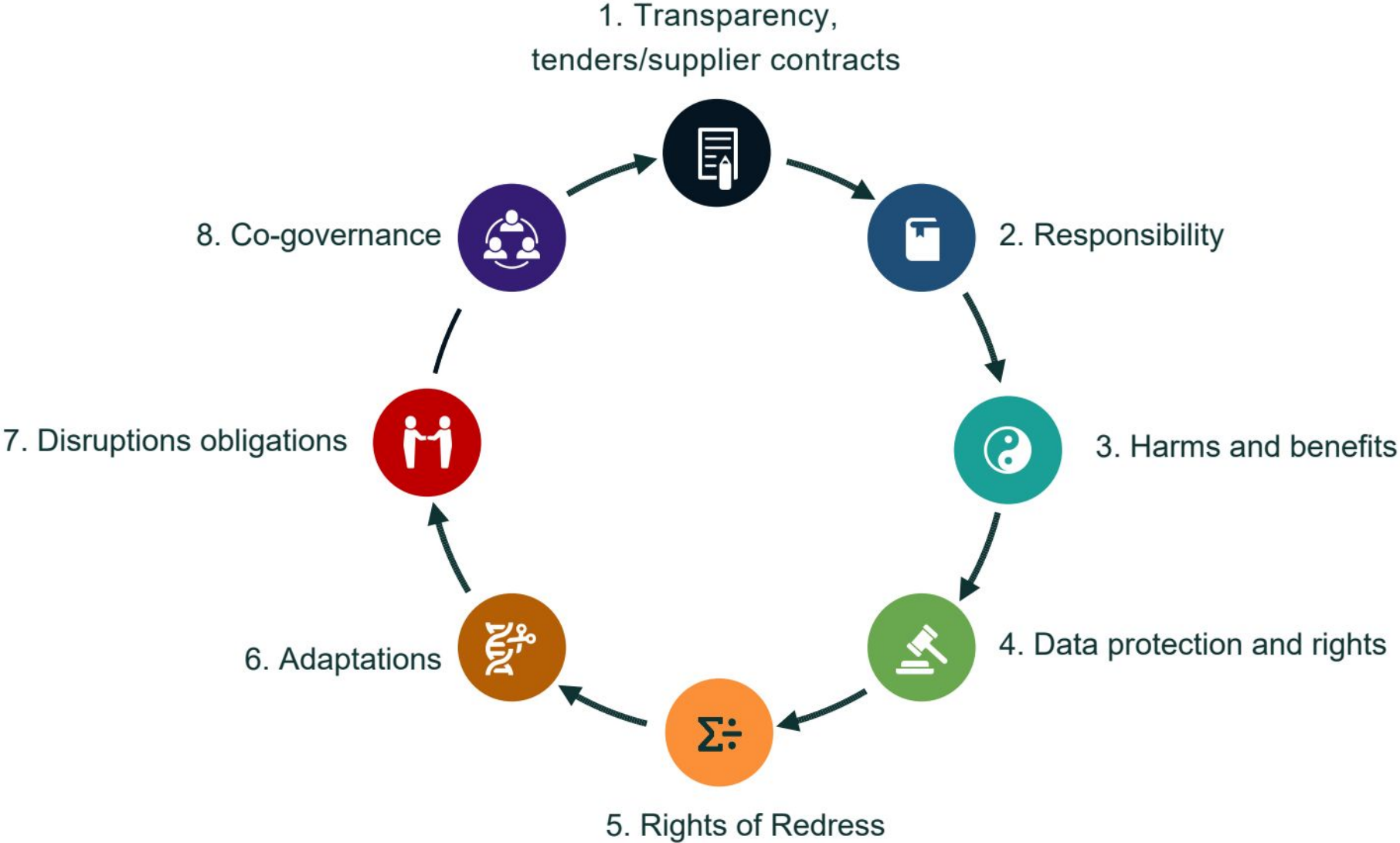
Theme 1: Transparency, tenders and contracts with suppliers

1. What digital systems does the employer use that affect the workers and their working conditions? What is the purpose of each of these systems?

2. Who designed and owns these systems? Who are the developers and vendors?

3. In which parts of the workplace will each of these systems be used and which groups of workers will be affected by them?

4. Have the affected workers been clearly informed about each system's purpose and instructions via the trade union, published announcements, intranet or similar?

5. Have the union representatives been consulted?

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Theme 2: Responsibility

6. Who are the responsible managers for each system?

7. Can the responsible managers explain how the systems work, what the instructions to the systems are, how the results are obtained, and what data the systems have been trained on?

8. How have you ensured that the systems are in compliance with existing agreements/policies in the workplace , such as work environment, data protection, equality and human rights? Is this documented?

9. How do you ensure that compliance is maintained when the systems change or new functions are added?

Theme 3: Harms / benefits

10. Has the management carried out impact assessments **before** the systems were introduced? If so, who was responsible? Do the workers and/or their representatives have access to these assessments?

11. Have the workers and/or their representatives been consulted as part of the impact assessments?

12. Do you plan to regularly reassess the systems for unintended effects/impacts?

13. What improvements to the workers working conditions and wellbeing do you foresee that the use of the system(s) will lead to?

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Theme 4: Data protection and rights

14. Are data sets containing workers' personal data and/or personally identifiable information sold or moved outside the company?

15. What data profiles (inferences) are created on the basis of the workers' data and how are they used?

16. Which data profiles are the workers compared to, measured against or otherwise used?

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Theme 5: Right of Redress
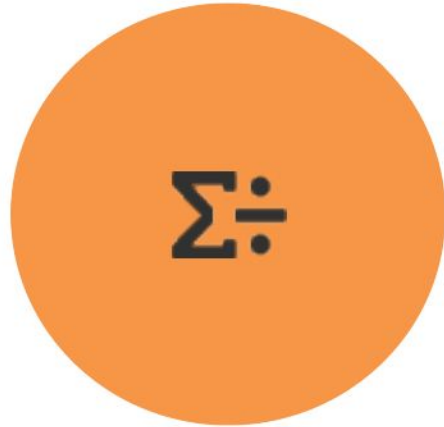
17. How do you ensure that workers have the right to challenge or complain about decisions made by management with the help of algorithms?

18. Have these been clearly communicated to workers?

Theme 6: Adjustments

19. What arrangements, mechanisms and procedures are there in the contract with the suppliers of the systems, if the systems do not meet their objectives, harm workers or produce other unintended results?

20. Do you log what adjustments are required and what solutions the developers propose?

21. Can workers have access to the developers' responses, including any compromises that have been agreed between, for example, system efficiency and fairness?

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Theme 7. Disruption's obligations

22. Has management considered how cost savings achieved by introducing digital technologies can be reinvested in the workforce through e.g. training programs or reduced working hours?

23. Which training policies can ensure that workers always have the skills and competences necessary to adapt to new tasks and working methods?

24. What is management's attitude towards supporting disrupted workers in finding new career paths within or outside the workplace?

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Theme 8: Co-governance

25. What skills and competences do management (and workers) need to implement, manage and assess the digital systems in a responsible and knowledgeable way?

26. What mechanisms can be introduced so that the workers are involved in this management?

27. Has management considered establishing a whistleblower system that can be used by workers and management to report system failures or suspected system failures?

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Tip

You can reformulate the
27 questions into
collective agreement
requirements !

For example

Theme 1, question 2:

"Who designed and owns these systems? Who are the developers and vendors?"

could be reformulated:

"Management must, prior to the implementation of digital technologies, provide all workers with information about the developers and/or suppliers who have access to the workers' personal data and/or personally identifiable information."

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