



Gaia DPAC Code of Conduct

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Abstract

This document contains the Gaia DPAC code of conduct. It applies to all current and future DPAC members as of 2022-02-07.

Document History

Issue	Revision	Date	Author	Comment
1	1	2023-02-20	AB	Added a conflict resolution flow that accomodates ad-hoc procedures.
1	0	2022-02-07	AB	Issued on Livelink and posted to Gaia web pages.
D	3	2021-01-14	AB	Final comments included, documented ready to be issued.
D	2	2021-11-05	AB	DPAC comments included.
D	1	2021-10-07	AB	Circulated to DPAC members for comments.
D	0	2021-10-05	AB	Creation.

References

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1 Background

Following the DPAC member survey conducted in early 2021 it was agreed that a DPAC Code of Conduct (CoC) will be created. The CoC is contained in this document and sets out the standards by which DPAC members are expected to conduct themselves. In addition the role of the DPAC Ombudsperson is defined and a procedure is outlined that should be followed in case conflict resolution is called for.

The first draft of this document was written by a committee chaired by R. Guerra. The committee members were O. Creevey, M. van Leeuwen, T. Roegiers, M. Schultheis, G. Gracia, F. Jansen, and A. Brown. The document has already been reviewed by the DPSPACE and the draft text was agreed during its 88th telecon in September 2021 (AB-123). Comments from DPAC members were collected between October 7 2021 and November 1 2021 and included in version 1 of this document.

The text of the CoC will be reviewed every two years in order to make any necessary updates.

The CoC is in effect as of 2022-02-07 and applies to all current and future DPAC members.

2 Introduction

Gaia is an ESA mission and the on-ground data processing is performed by the Gaia Data Processing and Analysis Consortium (DPAC). The consortium is made up of a large pan-European team of expert scientists and software developers, drawing its membership from over 20 countries (with a small number of contributions from outside Europe), bringing together a wide variety of skills and expertise. All DPAC members work together in a collaborative way with an overarching structure dividing the work to be done into nine Coordination Units (CU), together with six Data Processing Centres (DPC), representing the essential astrophysical quantities that together will make up the Gaia catalogue(s).

The Gaia DPAC has been in existence since 2006 and attaches great value to upholding the following general principles:

- Using generally accepted, courteous, language in all interactions, without any offensive references.
- Being open and empathic towards the needs of other DPAC members.
- Expressing and accepting constructive criticism.
- Focussing on maintaining the highest scientific quality standards for the agreed DPAC activities, products, and publications.

This Code of Conduct (CoC) is intended to describe general behavioral principles governing the interaction of all DPAC members and describes the DPAC values, which exclude any form of harassment or bullying. In support of this CoC, the role of an ombudsperson has been created. ‘Ombudsperson’ here refers to the specific role as defined in this document for the Gaia DPAC consortium. This role is in no way intended to replace any such role inside the organisation(s) where DPAC members are employed. While at the time of writing it is intended to implement this role by allocating one person (supported by a small group of DPAC members, see section 4), it is not excluded that in the future this role may be fulfilled by a small, diverse, committee.

As for the support provided in dealing with complaints about harassment or bullying, there can only be limited support in the case of intra-institutional¹ relationships as it has to be assumed these are governed by institutional human resources (HR) department rules. It is however requested to inform the DPAC Ombudsperson (or the other points-of-contact indicated below) of any such conflicts in the sense of their impact on the functional tasks performed in the DPAC context, such that when/if needed essential tasks can be re-distributed.

The Code of Conduct is applicable to all DPAC members and is a precondition to join DPAC for new members.

This CoC and the points of contact will be located at: <https://www.cosmos.esa.int/web/gaia/dpac-coc>

3 Our Standards / Ethics statements

The contents of this section are partly adapted from the Open Science MOOC code of conduct², version 2019-11-26.

As a consortium we strive to make participation in our project and our community a harassment-free experience for everyone, regardless of age, body size, disability, ethnicity, sex characteristics, gender identity and expression, level of experience, education, socio-economic status, nationality, personal appearance, race, religion, or sexual identity and orientation.

Examples of behaviour that contributes to creating a positive environment include:

- Using welcoming and inclusive language
- Being respectful of differing viewpoints and experiences
- Gracefully accepting constructive criticism

¹‘Intra’ refers to relationships between people working in the same institute or organization.

²<https://opensciencemooc.eu>

- Focusing on what is best for the community
- Showing empathy towards other community members
- Supporting democratic decision-making
- Being generous when giving credits for the work done

Examples of unacceptable behavior by consortium members include:

- The use of sexualized language or imagery and unwelcome sexual attention or advances
- Trolling, insulting/derogatory comments, and personal or political attacks
- Public or private harassment
- Other conduct which could reasonably be considered inappropriate in a professional setting

Further to the points above the following are important for maintaining a positive environment in DPAC:

- Trust that DPAC members act and communicate in good faith (i.e. that they are honest, sincere, and positive in their intentions).
- Be mindful and tolerant of cultural and personal differences in communication as well as language barriers.

Professional ethics and standards within DPAC

- DPAC members are expected to work according to the commonly understood standards of professional conduct for academic researchers, information technology specialists, engineers, or project specialists.
- DPAC members must adhere to the publication policy defined in FM-039, and in particular follow the guidelines on:
 - Fairness in authorship.
 - Fairness toward others in DPAC.
 - Soundness and quality of results presented in publications.

- Appropriate use and presentation of non-public data.
- DPAC members must adhere to the data access policy defined in FM-044.
 - In particular they must respect the boundary between data processing and results validation on the one hand and scientific exploitation on the other hand.
- DPAC members should realise that despite strict data access and release policies they nevertheless have positions of power as gatekeepers of information regarding what does or does not get published (in a paper or data release). They should not abuse this position to inhibit the work of others within DPAC or unfairly promote their own.

4 Ombudsperson and member responsibilities

The Ombudsperson's objective is to provide confidential, neutral, informal and independent guidance to contribute to the resolution of conflicts that arise between individuals or groups from different organizations within DPAC.

The Ombudsperson serves as a safe, off-the-record resource for DPAC members seeking ways to identify and address professional issues and other interpersonal concerns. They are also there to facilitate conversations, seeking processes and resolutions that are equitable to all parties.

If the parties request that a conversation be facilitated or a matter be mediated, with a goal of reaching an agreed-upon solution with the assistance of a neutral person, the Ombudsperson can serve in that capacity.

The Ombudsperson will not discuss identified concerns with anyone without the complainants' permission.

The Ombudsperson will also help DPAC to examine risks, strengthen culture, and address issues that stand in the way of achieving its goals.

The Ombudsperson will report annually to the DPACE the anonymized statistics of the cases brought to their attention (i.e. how many and what kind of cases).

The Ombudsperson will be nominated by DPACE and must have an adequate background and training to fulfill their role.

DPAC has designated three points of contact (the Ombudsperson and two other DPAC members with appropriate skills) to ensure that all sensitivities are covered and all DPAC members can approach this process with enough confidence. The points of contact will be nominated taking into account diversity.

All DPAC members have a responsibility for enforcing this Code of Conduct in all the activities they carry out both in their day-to-day activities and in the organization and when participating in meetings or special events of the consortium.

DPAC members are encouraged to step forward and bring issues to the Ombudsperson (or one of the points-of-contact) even if the issues they are worried about are not affecting them personally but could negatively affect DPAC as a whole.

5 Procedures for resolution of conflicts

While all DPAC members are encouraged to try to solve any potential conflicts at the working level at an early stage (through de-escalation, talking to each other, etc), it is recognized that this will not always be possible. Hence a procedure to come to conflict resolution is outlined in this section.

5.1 Procedure for early resolution

Conflicts that have been brought to the attention of the contact persons or the Ombudsperson directly, will be addressed according to the flowchart shown in figure 1 below.

1. The complainant contacts the ombudsperson or one of the two additional contact persons.
 - As stated above, the complainant may or may not be the person directly involved in the conflict. That is, if someone sees conflicts/harassment/bullying in their environment, they can report this to the Ombudsperson.
2. The person contacted will discuss with the complainant whether an action is needed. If not, the issue will be resolved, and the issue is filed anonymously (i.e. recorded without naming the persons involved). If an action is needed the complainant will be informed of the procedure and will also be informed that by default the Ombudsperson will be involved.
 - If the complainant does not want to involve the Ombudsperson the contact person can opt for an ad-hoc procedure to handle case, of which the (anonymized) details must be documented. The issue will then be resolved through the ad-hoc procedure.
 - As part of the ad-hoc procedure the case may be referred to the DPSPACE, but only if the complainant agrees to this. In this case the contact person will summarise the case at hand and pass it to DPSPACE (see 5.2).

3. Once the issue has been analysed it will be discussed with the complainant to find out if an immediate action is required. The issue may be in a very initial stage and no concrete short term action is required. In such a case the issue is resolved and must be followed up with the complainant to ensure that the situation does not get worse.
4. If an action is needed and it is an intra-institute issue which cannot be resolved internally within DPAC the complainant will be advised to contact the local HR department. No actions from the Ombudsperson will follow. The issue is considered resolved (nothing will be done in the short term) although follow up with the complainant will still be done to monitor the situation.
5. If an action is needed, and the issue can in principle be resolved internally within DPAC even in case of an intra-institute conflict, the ombudsperson will first verify that the complainant agrees to all parties being contacted individually. If the complainant does not agree to the parties being contacted, the Ombudsperson can opt for an ad-hoc procedure to handle the case, of which the (anonymized) details must be documented. The issue will then be resolved through the ad-hoc procedure.
 - As part of the ad-hoc procedure the case may be referred to the DPSPACE, but only if the complainant agrees to this. In this case the Ombudsperson will summarise the case at hand and pass it to DPSPACE (see 5.2).
6. If the complainant agreed to the parties being contacted it will be made clear to the complainant that from this stage onward the conflict will ultimately be resolved through a DPSPACE decision if no other solution is found. Next, all parties will be contacted individually. Besides the complainant and the respondent, other witnesses may be contacted if considered useful. The Ombudsperson may also contact other DPAC people who are considered relevant or who may help to resolve the conflict because of their expertise or their relation with the parties (hereafter facilitators). Before contacting any other party (apart from the complainant and Ombudsperson themselves), the complainant will be asked whether they agree with their complaint and/or identity being disclosed to these other parties. The following steps can be taken:
 - (a) Explain the reported issue to the respondent who may not be aware of the problem they are causing.
 - (b) Get the different views of the conflict.
 - (c) Find out if mediation is possible.
7. If mediation is not accepted, required actions will be determined to address the conflict.
8. If mediation is accepted a joint meeting will be called involving the parties required. In this meeting the parties will try to find an agreement and a way forward to solve

the conflict. The mediators (ombuds and initial contact person, and facilitators) will support them in the process but ideally the proposed solution should be conceived and agreed by the parties involved in the process.

9. If a way forward to solve the conflict cannot be agreed a formal procedure will start to determine the actions required to solve the conflict (see section 5.2). In this case the Ombudsperson will summarise the case at hand and pass it to DPACE.
10. If a way forward is agreed the issue is resolved. In such a case, the Ombudsperson will contact the complainant regularly to ensure that the conflict does not restart.
11. These regular contacts will be discontinued and the issue closed when considered appropriate or requested, leaving always the possibility to restart the process if the conflict reappears later (this re-open path is not shown in the flow chart).

5.2 Procedure for issues without resolution

In the unlikely case where a satisfactory solution has not been found or agreed upon in the above procedure the DPACE will decide on the action to take, which may include sanctions, taking into account the previous history of the behaviour of the DPAC member in question and the severity of the problem. Sanctions may range from temporary to permanent measures, including the ultimate sanction of expelling a person from DPAC.

In this procedure the first step is to identify any DPACE members who are a party in the conflict. These DPACE members will be excluded from the discussions and decisions on the action to take.

6 Acronyms

The following table has been generated from the on-line Gaia acronym list:

Acronym	Description
CU	Coordination Unit (in DPAC)
CoC	Code of Conduct
DPAC	Data Processing and Analysis Consortium
DPACE	Data Processing and Analysis Consortium Executive
DPC	Data Processing Centre
ESA	European Space Agency
HR	Human Resources (department)

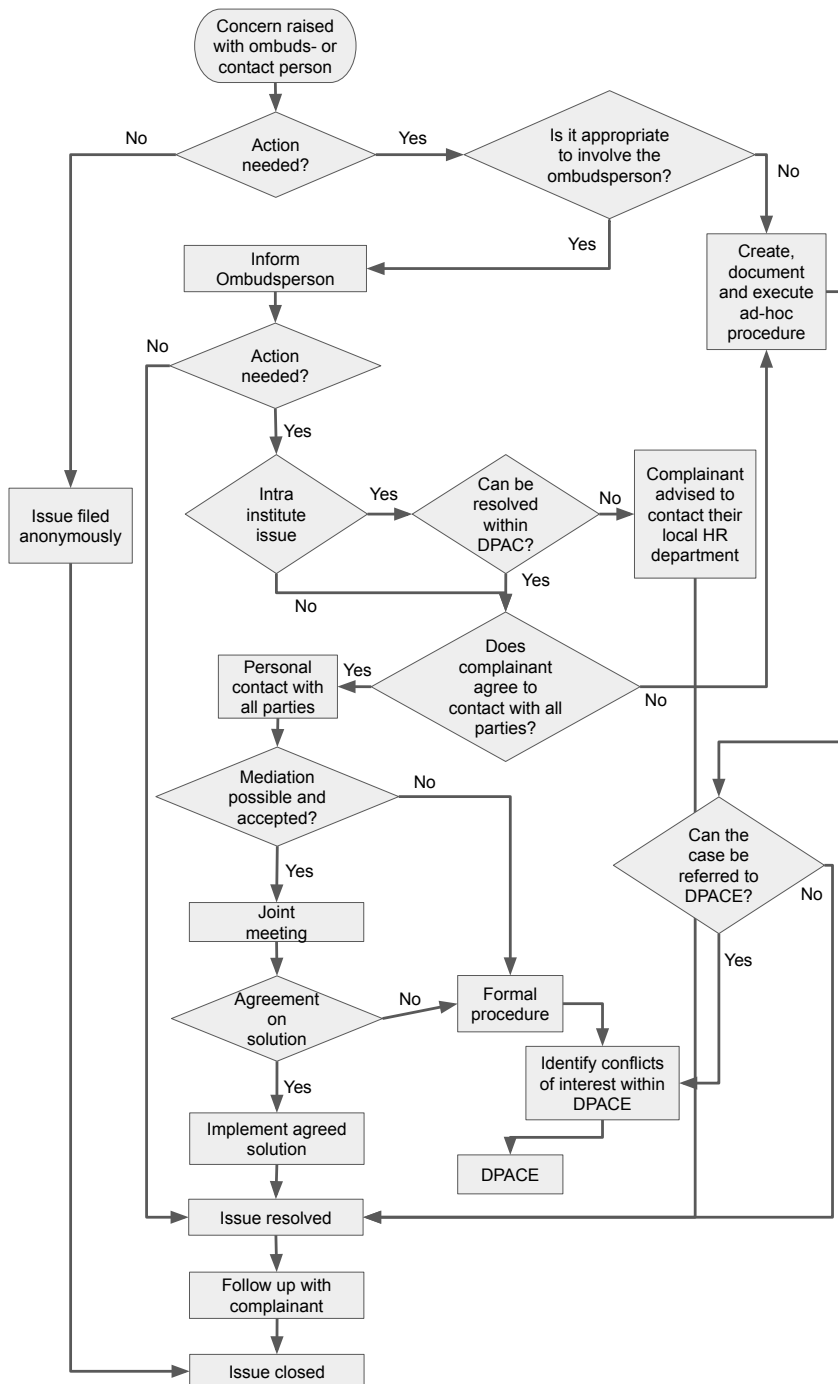


FIGURE 1: Flowchart for conflict resolution.