



Ethics Policy

1. Introduction

a. Scope

- i. MADAR Network Plus activities, including research as it is carried out but also informing approaches to Safeguarding, Risk, and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.

b. Definitions

i. Research

- includes any investigation undertaken in order to gain knowledge and understanding
- involves the generation of new data but also the use of existing data to generate new insights
- encompasses outputs, including collaborative outputs
- is processual, iterative and involves multiple stages, so approach to ethics should reflect this.

ii. Parties

- ROs
- Project partners
- Researchers
- Research participants

2. Checklist

See bottom of this document

3. Principles

a. *Duty of care*

In the context in which MADAR commissioned projects take place, individuals and groups within and outside of the Network Plus may be vulnerable in distinct ways due to intersecting factors including (but not limited to) gender, sexuality, age, race, ethnicity, marital status, class or economic precarity, maternity and paternity (as well as other care roles), and migration status. Researchers, Project Partners and ROs should work together to avoid harm and maximise benefits for individuals and society. They should avoid, minimise and mitigate harm to communities, displaced people and research participants; be aware of potential risks to themselves and each other – reputational, legal, moral, physical and material; and should take appropriate precautions to avoid these and to treat them if they arise.

b. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Respect for the rights and dignity of others – research participants, stakeholder communities, and everyone involved in collaborative partnerships – should be built into commissioned projects from the outset, and considered at every stage from research design through to dissemination. MADAR as a Network Plus emphasises the importance of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, and ROs and researchers should engage with how this framework informs research ethics for specific projects. MADAR's interdisciplinary and collaborative approach brings together institutions, academic disciplines, and non-academic partners with different research cultures, values and methodologies. Commissioned projects and collaborative partnerships should be premised on respect – rather than tolerance alone – for these differences and dialogue between them. Researchers should not impose more than necessary upon participants and communities, and should treat them with sensitivity.

c. Transparency

MADAR is committed to transparency at all levels of the Network Plus, in relationships between the core team, Project Partners, ROs and research teams, as well as between research teams and stakeholder communities. Our policies will be available both internally and externally, and the structure of the Network Plus (as well as its aims and objectives) will be accessible through dissemination channels such as the website and creative outputs from projects. Researchers, Project Partners and ROs should take care to ensure that participation in research is not coerced, and that consent is both informed and clearly given. Researchers should make clear to participants what recourse they have to withdrawing from the project, and whether there are any limits to confidentiality (e.g. for safeguarding purposes). Consent should not be treated as a one-off agreement, but should be part of an ongoing and open dialogue between researchers and participants. This should include making clear what the purpose of the research is and how the data will be used and kept safe, bearing in mind that research participants will be co-owners of the creative outputs generated through participatory methods.

d. Participatory Approaches

MADAR is rooted in collaboration and equitable partnerships. Researchers should engage with Project Partners with an appreciation of the different kinds of knowledge, capacities, needs and values that each party brings to the table. Efforts should be made to anticipate any issues that may arise in working collaboratively and to agree jointly, in advance, how they might be addressed. Important considerations for agreement include: the roles of researchers and team members; issues relating to intellectual property and acknowledgement (especially when working across sectors or disciplines); how roles and contributions may change over the lifespan of the project. ROs and researchers should work together with Project Partners to identify competencies and divide workloads accordingly, whilst being mindful of the need to address any power imbalances that may arise in the context of North-South partnerships. Researchers should have open discussions with partners in order to ensure that contrasting views are heard and mutual understanding reached. Work should be delegated appropriately and safely, and communication channels should allow for openness, negotiation, and the sharing of successes and learning opportunities.

e. *Responsiveness and Co-Learning*

Commissioned projects will present opportunities for learning and reflective practice at a variety of levels, and researchers should consider these carefully. While research is carried out, researchers and ROs should consult Project Partners about capacity, mentorship and training needs. Thought should be given to how capacity can be developed and sustained beyond the lifespan of the project e.g. through training of trainers. MADAR requires commissioned projects to produce a MEL strategy as part of research design, to implement it and to take opportunities to revise it and share what has been learned with Project Partners and the Network Plus as a whole. Research findings should be made available honestly, accurately and in a timely fashion to contribute to the outputs and pathways to impact that are part of MADAR's overall aims; this includes not only Knowledge Exchange within the Network Plus, but public engagement that goes beyond it.

f. *Moral and Financial Efficiency*

MADAR's policies set out standards of research integrity, moral and financial efficiency. We take a zero tolerance approach to misconduct, moral or financial, and seek to prevent instances occurring as well as treating them if they do arise. No one within the Network Plus should engage in misconduct (e.g. fabrication, fraud, misrepresentation, plagiarism) or conceal it. Any conflicts of interest should be made identified, declared and addressed in line with RO policies and any additional external requirements. Personal information and any sensitive data relating to either staff or participants will be protected via the Data Management Plan, and research teams will be asked to create their own project-specific plan during the application stage. Researchers should respect the right of research participants to withdraw from participation, to have personal information kept confidential, and to be anonymised if vulnerable. ROs and researchers should ensure that all research carried out fulfils legal health and safety requirements and adheres to best practice. Research in the Maghreb, particularly in the context of humanitarian advocacy and intervention (where research participants may be vulnerable), involves specific risks that should be considered as part of the initial ethical review for the project. Researchers should consult the MADAR risk register, and regularly review risks and possible mitigations that pertain to their own planned activities.

Before

Research design

- Are the research questions LMIC-led and relevant to protection needs?
- Is the research design collaborative, cross-sector and interdisciplinary in approach?
- Has the research been designed to be inclusive and sensitive in line with MADAR's approach to EDI?
- Is it appropriate for addressing these questions?

Risk assessment

- Have the relevant risk registers and assessment procedures (MADAR and RO) been considered?
- Have strategies for mitigating foreseen risks been outlined?

Application process and ethics review

- Have ethical issues been fully considered by the research team?
- Has the project been scrutinised via the relevant ethical review process?

Compliance with institutional standards

- Does the project meet RO ethical standards?
- Does the project accord with MADAR's ethical principles/terms of engagement?

Compliance with monitoring standards

- Has the research team considered how ethical issues will be monitored and any incidents reported prior to beginning research?

Finance

- Have any conflicts of interest been acknowledged and disclosed?

Collaborative working

- Have ethical issues related to collaborative working been discussed with Project Partners, and has a mutual understanding of the values informing research been reached?

Roles and responsibilities

- Have the research team, RO and Project Partner reached an agreement as to their roles and responsibilities during the research?

During

Monitoring and risk register

- Are risks being regularly monitored and incidents reported?
- Are learning opportunities, and opportunities for dialogue being identified via the MEL strategy?

Data Management

- Is data being properly managed in accordance with the Data Management Plan?

Misconduct

- Do researchers and participants feel safe and supported in reporting misconduct?
- Are they aware of the channels for doing so?
- Are any issues of misconduct being appropriately handled?

Collaboration and equitable partnerships

- Are project partnerships collaborative and equitable?
- Could anything be done to strengthen these relationships?

EDI

- Are participants and researchers treated respectfully and inclusively throughout research?
- Is consideration being given to the diverse protection needs of parties involved in the research, and the wider community?

Capacity building

- Have opportunities for capacity development been identified?

Reviewing changes

- Are there regular opportunities for dialogue and sharing around what has been learned?

After

Publication

- Have research findings been made available honestly, accurately, and in a timely fashion?

Proper attribution and acknowledgement

- Are the contributors (including, for creative outputs, research participants) given proper attribution as authors?
- Have other contributors been appropriately acknowledged?

Dissemination

- Have research findings been disseminated through the appropriate channels (e.g. the KEI event, exhibition, website) that will contribute to MADAR's Pathways to Impact?

Data storage and archiving

- Has an agreement been reached as to which data will be stored and archived, and whether this is anonymised/meets standards of confidentiality?

Does the project comply with all legal, ethical and contractual requirements?