



Guidelines 1/2026 on processing of personal data for scientific research purposes

Privacy
Management
Partners

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Processing of personal data for scientific research

Please find below Privacy Management Partners' (PMP) response to the draft Guidelines 1/2026 on processing of personal data for scientific research purposes. As PMP, we have read the Guidelines with interest and are happy to share our observations with you. Our comments aim to support the EDPB in refining the guidelines so that they remain both protective and workable for the research community.

Concept of scientific research

We appreciate the EDPB's effort to articulate six indicative factors that help determine whether processing activities qualify as "scientific research" under the GDPR. These factors align with established scientific norms and provide a useful interpretative framework.

Request for Clarification:

We invite the EDPB to elaborate on how these factors should be applied in research contexts that are:

- iterative or exploratory, such as AI model development, data mining, or hypothesis-free research;
- embedded in open science ecosystems, where data sharing and reuse are central;
- conducted within large, multidisciplinary or public-private consortia, where independence, governance and methodological consistency may vary across partners.

Further guidance would help ensure that the factors are applied consistently and proportionately.

Data retention

We welcome the EDPB's confirmation that further processing for scientific research purposes is presumed compatible with the original purpose of data collection. This presumption is essential for enabling data reuse, reproducibility, longitudinal studies, and the development of sustainable research data infrastructures.

Request for Clarification:

We encourage the EDPB to clarify how this presumption interacts with:

- FAIR data principles (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, Reusable);
- open data repositories and long-term preservation infrastructures;
- situations in which data are retained for future, not yet fully defined research purposes.

Such clarification would support institutions in designing retention and reuse policies that are both GDPR-compliant and aligned with open science objects.

Dynamic vs. broad consent

The recognition of broad consent and dynamic consent is highly relevant for long-term, multi-phase and data-intensive research. These models reflect the practical realities of modern research, where future analyses cannot always be specified at the outset.

Request for Clarification:

We request additional guidance on:

- what constitutes appropriate supplementary safeguards when relying on broad consent;
- how dynamic consent mechanisms can be implemented effectively in international or multi-institutional consortia;
- how broad consent interacts with open data publication, where future uses are inherently unpredictable.

Concrete examples would support harmonised implementation across institutions.

We are more than happy to answer your questions, if you have any. Please feel free to contact us.

Kind regards,

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