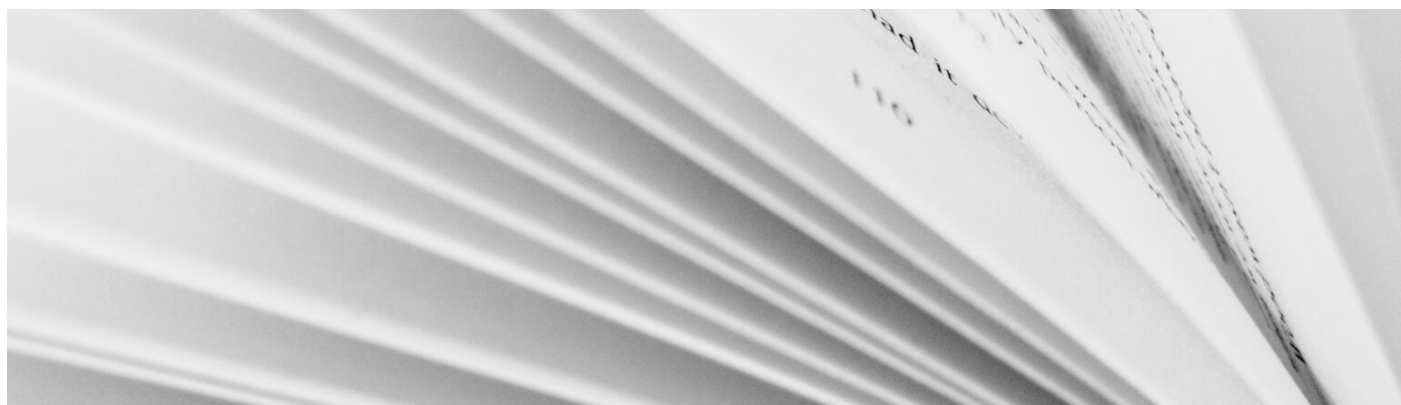




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Advancing the development of Data Access Guidelines through Resolution 620

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On 3 September 2025, RIA convened a one-day workshop in Johannesburg under the auspices of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR), together with the African Alliance for Access to Data (AAAD) (<https://dataalliance.africa/>), the Association for Progressive Communications (APC), (<https://www.apc.org/en>) the International Development Research Center and UNESCO, to discuss the importance of data access for Information Integrity research (<https://researchictafrica.net/programme/information-integrity/>) and regulation.

Shaping rights-based African frameworks for data access

The workshop advanced the development of Data Access Guidelines, which could function as an instrument to operationalise Resolution 20 on *Promoting and Harnessing Data Access as a Tool for Advancing Human Rights and Sustainable Development in the Digital Age*. This workshop was one of multiple consultations (<https://dataalliance.africa/consultations-on-african-data-access-resolution-kicks-off-at-drif25/>), and represents a milestone in shaping a rights-based, inclusive, and future-oriented African framework on data (<https://researchictafrica.net>)

The event was attended by a diverse group of experts and stakeholders, including Commissioner Ourveena Geereesha Topsy-Sonoo, Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression and Access to Information, and representatives of the South African Information Regulator, Adv. Pansy Tlakula and Mr. Mukelani Dimba. Other representatives from SANEF, the African Editors Forum and the AUDA-NEPAD reflect a strong cross-section of expertise across information regulation and media sectors.



Key outcomes

- Recognition of the need to balance the right to privacy with the right to information;

- Emphasis on data justice, accessibility by design and the inclusion of marginalised groups;
- Calls to strengthen institutional capacity, proactive disclosure, and accountability mechanisms; and
- Consideration of data sovereignty, cross-border coordination, and environmental impacts in governance approaches.



Discussions underscored the urgent need to move beyond access to information laws toward frameworks that recognise data access as a public good, balance the rights to privacy and information, and ensure inclusive participation. The deliberations also emphasised the role of private sector data holders, the importance of regional harmonisation, and the need for actionable strategies to translate principles into practice when it comes to data access guidelines. Participants noted that these measures could have a major impact on African electoral integrity and tech accountability in the Global South, (<https://researchictafrica.net/project/data-access-for-tech-accountability-and-electoral-integrity-in-africa/>) not to mention cross-border trade flows, localised AI development and media freedom.

Taking the Data Access Guidelines forward

Next steps include the circulation of the revised draft data access Guidelines in mid-September, engagement with technology platforms, and further expert consultations. A final draft of the data access guidelines is expected by the end of 2025, accompanied by an implementation plan to ensure the Guidelines are translated into actionable tools for African governments, regulators, and civil society.

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